

# *Southern Spain in spring: Andalucía & Extremadura 21st April - 1st May 2008*



**Little Bittern pair at El Rocío**

Leader: John Muddeman

## **Daily Diary**

**Monday 21st April**  
Atunes

Flights to Seville, then transfer to Zahara de los

Broken cloud Seville, becoming cloudless to S; max. 21°C

We met in Seville airport, and after a few brief delays were soon away in a warm, bright evening. After skirting the city we headed S on the motorway and were soon noting how the intense recent rains, so desperately needed, had filled flood channels and overflowed into field corners, with greenery appearing everywhere as a result.

A few birds were seen en route, including fly-by Collared Pratincoles and White Storks of most note, though an unplanned short stop at the Laguna de Medina was a good choice. In fact, one of the first birds was a superb adult Black-shouldered Kite hovering repeatedly over a nearby field edge! Common Stonechats, Sardinian Warblers and Goldfinches flitted and called from the bushes, with passing Linnets also noted. Down towards the lake a Great Reed Warbler blasted out its song from some reeds, while dapper Common Pochards graced the far end and a few Black-necked Grebes in breeding finery bobbed somewhat closer. Poor views of passing Pallid Swift were had, but three passing Collared Pratincoles showing their rusty underwings in the clear low light. A super introduction to the region and its possibilities.

The rest of the journey was relatively uneventful, despite a few birds noted from the bus, and after checking into the hotel around 20:20, we readjusted down at (an excellent) dinner shortly afterwards.

**Tuesday 22nd April**  
area

Cape Trafalgar, Straits of Gibraltar

Almost cloudless, light W breeze, max. 20°C

We left before dawn for a pre-breakfast trip to Cape Trafalgar. Indeed so early we stopped en route at a little bar in Barbate for an excellent coffee before continuing on to our destination. The access road had now been barred and parking not technically possible, but two local Civil Guard consulted said it would be no problem and this halved the walk to the lighthouse!

We stepped out to beautiful still, cool conditions, with the moon reflected in a dune pool beside lighthouse! Kentish and Common Ringed Plovers livened up the edges of the pools, with numerous Crested Larks calling loudly too. With no parking, and hence trampling, a terrific dune vegetation was present, including numerous colourful flowers. Disappointingly perhaps, the sea was very quiet despite two small flocks of passing Gull-billed Terns, a smattering of Sandwich Terns, a Whimbrel, Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls and a few Gannets. A single distant Cory's Shearwater was only noted by Jill, while a flock of passing Black Terns was only noted as a series of dots by John!

After breakfast back at the hotel and gathering our things, we headed down to the Strait of Gibraltar for rest of day. After passing the serried ranks of enormous wind turbines, now (tragically in my opinion) such a feature of the Strait, an impromptu stop at the Mirador del Estrecho was made for a few raptors we could see coming in off the sea. These were to be the first of many during the day, and fine views were also had across to the N coast of Morocco, including of the highest visible mountain Djebel Mousa. Circling migrant Black Kites and Short-toed Eagles put in an appearance, a couple of local Griffon Vultures drifted past and two large flocks of stunning Bee-eaters suddenly appeared in front and whirled crazily past before dashing off inland. Our last raptor was a slender male Montagu's Harrier which elegantly sped past!

It was clear that lots of raptors were crossing, so we continued round to Punta Carnero. A fine move, since as we stepped out into hot sunshine in the lee of the cliff, so single Booted and Short-toed Eagles and Black Kite appeared just below eye level extremely close and wheeled up in the updrafts, seemingly relieved to have made landfall after their crossing. Another raised viewpoint a little higher up, already partially occupied by a few Dutch and Germans, saw us watching an almost continuous procession of numerous eagles and kites and a very healthy number of Sparrowhawks, plus a few large groups of White Storks, a few Bee-eaters, and a total of 5 Egyptian Vultures and a superb adult Peregrine coming over the Strait. This was a marvellous experience, so much so that we brought the van up and also had lunch here, breaking this briefly to watch as some heavyweights, a flock of Griffon Vultures, also laboured in low over the sea, a little off to the W, though high enough to be out of danger. The stress of the crossing was all too apparent in one Short-toed Eagle, which struggled to fly past a little above us, and at such close range we could clearly see through the binoculars how it gaping after the effort.

We finally called it a day as the passage abated a little, and we started back, with a quick pause at the Santuario Observatory. No animals had been dumped to attract vultures, though the local black pigs were remarkably friendly, and after taking in the fine views to the S, we returned via the Roman ruins near Bolonia.

The ancient city of Baelo Claudia (C2<sup>nd</sup> B.C. - C7<sup>th</sup> A.D.) has only been partly uncovered, but provides a great walk round with the added bonus of some excellent wildlife! After negotiating our way through the enormous new visitor centre, we walked out to find plenty of birds among the ruins. Stonechats were abundant, as throughout the Strait area, our first Corn Buntings put in a show and a few striking Woodchats Shrikes adorned the bushes. Streaky-fronted Thekla Larks gave a fine comparison to some Crested Larks we'd seen earlier, though the prize went to a superb pair of Black-eared Wheatears, which were unusually approachable.

The recent rains had left a couple of puddles, well appreciated by the local Gold- and Green- finches, Corn Buntings and Linnets, and seemingly also a pair of huge Ocellated Lizards, which were taking in enough sun on adjacent rocks to more than offset the very pleasant cool breeze.

**Wednesday 23rd April**  
Bolonia

La Línea, Río Palmones, Tarifa & Puerto de

Very fine and sunny, light +/- S breeze, max. 28°C

In order to look for a concentration of small bird migrants, we headed right round the bottom of the Strait and almost to the base of Gibraltar. With such fine conditions, things were not looking too promising, and to boot a huge street market was spread along the roads running through La Línea park! However, we persisted and took a stroll round, checking the palms, tamarisks and other bushes and trees as we went, and quickly noted that there were a few birds despite the disturbance. However, these were clearly more flighty than normal, though after much searching and struggling, a good range of small passerines including a Western Bonelli's and several Western Orphean and Garden Warblers, Blackcaps, European Robins, a 'pair' of Common Redstarts and lots of Common Whitethroats were all noted.

The nearby Río Palmones was much quieter and a good lunch spot, despite bad heat haze over the salt marsh given the strong sun. A few Spoonbills and Little Egrets were dozing together some way out, a few Sandwich Terns flew past at one point and the muddy edges and banks had attracted a Common Sandpiper, two Greenshanks, and Common Ringed and Kentish Plovers. Some noisy Yellow Wagtails of the Iberian race were nest building, with one or two seen quite close as they flew around looking for good material.

As we started our return, a short visit to the Tarifa Port breakwater was thwarted due to construction works, but not to be outdone we stood right next to the customs buildings to watch the antics of the local Lesser Kestrel colony instead! And fascinating it was, with a couple of frisky couples peering out of their nest holes, one pair 'kissing', while another female slowly tore apart a large Iberian Three-toed Skink clutched in her talons! A few Black Kites and three Egyptian Vultures even came in off the sea and passed over on passage as we watched!

With time moving on, we started back, though this was punctuated by another unexpected stop to view two large kettles of vultures which had risen up off nearby fields, but also produced a couple of Moorish Geckos and a superb Giant Peacock moth (attracted in by lights) on a roadside building!

Conditions were great, so we took a track across a hillside near the Puerto de Bolonia in search of a speciality of the area. The search for this drew a blank, but the fields and track borders were a swathe of colourful flowers, and listening to several singing Nightingales simultaneously in a wild olive grove while watching a tired migrant Turtle Dove sunbathing on a rock was delightful in the hot afternoon sun. Jill also came up trumps finding a female Pied Flycatcher in the bushes just before we left.

**Thursday 24th April**

Playa de los Lances, Barbate, Sanlúcar de Barrameda area, El Rocío

Very hot and sunny, though an E breeze in Strait a.m. Max. 33°C

A long day started with a trip down to the Playa de los Lances after an early (0730) cold breakfast. A few Black Kites and Short-toed Eagles were crossing even by the time we arrived, and numerous Pallid Swifts swept low past our heads over the dunes. The walk out produced a few Iberian race Yellow Wagtails feeding around the feet of some horses, plus the first of numerous Greater Short-toed Larks and two small groups of delightful Collared Pratincoles. One group flew off noisily, but the other remained with a few on the ground giving fine views. Waders were present in moderate numbers on the shallowly flooded rear part of the beach, mostly being Sanderling plus Kentish and Common Ringed Plovers, but a few Dunlin and Common Redshank were also noted, two summer-plumaged Grey Plovers looked very dapper, and a superb breeding-plumaged Red Knot was living up to its name! Perhaps the oddest bird of all was a superb adult Greater Flamingo, though with numerous walkers and plenty of dogs on the loose, it was sadly almost constantly on the move.

Ken and Jo walked into (and around) Tarifa leaving the rest of us to find a female Northern Wheatear, a few Tawny Pipits and Calandra larks, and a male Yellow Wagtail of the C European 'Blue-headed' race amongst others.

We met again in Tarifa and returned to the hotel a little before 12. After checking out we headed N on the first leg of a long day's journey. A chance sighting on the edge of Barbate led to a bit of unsuccessful diddling around on tracks, and it wasn't until we were just back en route that in the very same roadside field three Northern Bald Ibis - from the nearby reintroduction program - were again spotted!! Crossing the river at Barbate showed the tide was down and a fair assemblage of birds was present. Four feeding Spoonbills gave great views, while among numerous roosting gulls, a number of Audouin's Gulls were spotted, despite the range. The abundant fiddler crabs on the mud below us were also noted, claw-waving included!

We now put some miles under our belt and at 2 p.m. finally reached our next site near Sanlúcar de Barrameda, though sea-front works meant we couldn't enjoy the sea views or beach birds as hoped... That four Little Swifts were flying around as hoped was marvellous compensation though, and we ate lunch as John chatted to the leader of another group present at the same time.

Negotiating Sanlúcar with the aid of a Satnav was so much better than normal (!) and we were quite soon in the Salinas de Bonanza. The heavy recent rain meant all pans held water, but numerous small waders were scattered all along the tops of the bunds and a few were feeding down along the very steep edges. Plenty of Curlew Sandpipers were enjoyed, with a number of Pied Avocets and also Slender-billed Gulls of special note. A short drive also produced views to pans with abundant Greater Flamingos, plus Common Shelduck, Black-necked and Great Crested Grebes, Little, Black and Whiskered Terns and a smattering of other species also present. A couple of Moorish Geckos on a small building also appeared to be enjoying the heat, though so bizarrely were a few mosquitoes! Our return was punctuated by a series of stops for small birds on a fence, but apart from single Zitting Cisticola and Crested Lark, all were noisy Sardinian Warblers - a fine sight!

Time was now really pushing, but we headed for the nearby Laguna de Tarelo. The hot, still conditions were sadly ideal for the abundant mosquitoes, but before we ran away (!) we clocked up four distant White-headed Ducks and about a dozen Red-crested Pochards, plus lots of birds around an egret colony, including two Squacco Herons and numerous Black-crowned Night Herons. John and Jill picked out a Tree Sparrow as they returned through the pines.

We now started the long drive on towards our next destination, but with a quite recently resurfaced old main road, the drive to Lebrija was looking good. The Satnav accidentally came up trumps too, when as we negotiated our way back along a road unknown to me, so we came cut between two roadside pools. We just parked on the road and had scope-filling views of a number of stunning adult male White-headed Ducks disporting themselves on the water below us! What a find! The recent rains had also flooded large areas of salt-marsh along parts of the route, forming ideal habitat for Collared Pratincoles amongst others (noted during an ice-cream stop!), and even for an Osprey perched on a pylon off to one side!

We were slowed by traffic around Seville, but finally got out safely onto the Huelva road and arrived at El Rocío and our hotel around 1915 h. The incredible multi-layered House Martin nests as we entered the town and its extraordinary sand streets were a striking change to what we'd experienced. We were soon checked in and readjusted for an excellent meal at 2030 h after a very rewarding day.

### **Friday 25th April**

Doñana National Park - El Rocío, El Acebrón, La Rocina + El Acebuche

Fairly still, very hot and sunny. Max. 33°C. Cooling SE wind in evening for 1.5 hours.

We started after our 8 a.m. breakfast looking out over the water in front. The recent flooding meant it was much higher than normal, and though fewer species than 'usual' were present, there were still plenty of Greater Flamingos, Eurasian Spoonbills, Whiskered Terns and Black-winged Stilts among the more exotic, plus distant perched Spanish Imperial Eagle, and numerous Black and one Red Kite. Even the antics of the local House Sparrows trying to usurp House Martins from their nests on the hotel were enjoyed! The reedmace patch just in front was also the source of several tremendous birds, including singing Eurasian Reed and Great Reed Warblers, but above all, a male and two female Little Bitterns, which sat right up near the tops on several occasions giving fantastic views!

We finally dragged ourselves away and drove 'over the road' towards the Palacio del Acebrón. The road en route was a delight, with numerous Bee-eaters throughout its length, plus a Tree Sparrow on a fence, several Common Stonechats and Woodchat Shrikes, singing Corn Buntings and Thekla Larks, and a terrific little display by at least three Dartford Warblers in the low flower-studded scrub. A smart Whinchat rounded off a fine tally of sightings!

The woodland at the end is a fine mixture over dry and wet sand over very short distances, leading to a fine varied mix of birds too. Our first Common Chaffinches were suddenly indeed common, while Nightingales sang from all around, and a few migrants on some pines included Garden Warbler, Blackcap and a Pied Flycatcher. A pair of Short-toed Treecreepers gave lovely views, though a singing Iberian Chiffchaff was far more elusive. Fortunately we heard several more, and enjoyed excellent views of a less furtive male singing on the other side of a fine boardwalk over a wet channel full of willows. Nightingales were almost deafening here, but several local Long-tailed Tits put in a good showing too. A few more migrant Pied Flycatchers on the far side included our first male, and we enjoyed another after our walk as we ate lunch near the Palace. Indeed, when we stopped to watch this, also found a female, plus a 'pair' of Common Redstarts, and the delay led us to find a superb pair of Hawfinch, the female of which came down to feed on the track a short way in front, giving terrific scope views!

A short pause meant we enjoyed views from a hide at La Rocina, and despite willows blocking some of the views, two Great White Egrets, a couple of Glossy Ibis, a fly-by Kingfisher and perched Purple and Squacco Herons, plus singing Savi's Warbler were all noted. A very discrete Montpellier Snake eluded most of the group on our return, but being so hot, was very alert!

Before a good afternoon break we drove down to the El Acebuche Information Centre. After brief views of Azure-winged Magpies in the pines we were treated to superb views of birds coming down to drink in the pool just the

other side of the N-facing plate glass windows of the bar! What a spot! We also enjoyed seeing a couple of Iberian Pond and Stripeless Tree Frogs, a couple of Iberian Bluetail damselflies and abundant tiny fish in the pool with their vertically barred tails. These are an endemic species to the coastal pools of W Andalucía and bear the not so romantic name of Atlantic Fartet! John and Jill also enjoyed seeing a Red-rumped Swallow nest as Jo and Ken did a little 'shopping', though we'd all enjoyed watching the adults flying round over the courtyard.

A stiff, but thankfully cooling wind struck up later, but we readjusted from 1930 onwards for an evening watch, noting a few birds over and around the lagoon, including a small party of Black Terns and two distant perched Spanish Imperial Eagles, and then took a short drive round the back of town. The Sand Martins were massing here and bathing on the dirt tracks, while Little and Cattle Egrets gave a fine side-by-side comparison on a flooded field, and a Squacco Heron crouched very quietly in a secluded channel. A Hoopoe rushing around in a flowery meadow was remarkably our first, while a confiding White Stork also gave superb views.

Another great meal saw us walking out to still conditions and with plenty of time to relax before a long trip out in the morning (but not before noting at least 13 geckos just on the outside walls of the restaurant!).

### **Saturday 26th April**

Doñana N marshes + José Antonio Valverde centre

Very hot and sunny, max. 35°C in sun!

With a very still and sunny start, the temperature rapidly increased from the very pleasant 13°C in El Rocío to about 20°C. The drive out found as passing the extensive stone pine woods, with a couple of brief pauses en route for a Southern Grey Shrike and Common Raven. With resurfaced roads and ever more orchards later on, we moved on quicker than expected and were soon scanning a flower spangled meadow grazed by cattle. Cattle Egrets were in attendance and we noted hundreds more during the day, though numerous Bee-eaters, some on the ground around small scrapings, where they were making their nesting tunnels, and others on the rickety fences, rather stole the show.

Two other birds in the field required us to get closer, and once out on a track with the sun behind us we got super views of a Stone-curlew crouching in the flowers, keeping a close, and very yellow, eye on us! Being out was also good since we first heard, then saw, two pairs of fast-flying Pin-tailed Sandgrouse go over, though despite circling, they then headed distantly off.

The road S led us past a superb heron and egret colony, with dozens of Cattle Egrets with their orange head and back plumes, some in display, and lots of dapper Black-crowned Night Herons too, plenty out in full view. The tamarisks are favoured shelter, and further en route we stopped again to see if one of the local specialities had arrived back. We were in luck! A rather coarse reed warbler-like song was emanating from some bushes, and after a while a rather large grey warbler appeared briefly before diving back into cover. It reappeared briefly a couple of times as we followed it by song over the next 20 minutes or so, and finally had good views of Western Olivaceous Warbler, a real speciality of S Spain and another new species for this trip for us!

Most of the rest of the drive saw relatively few birds, despite a very strangely plumaged slender harrier which in the heat haze it was impossible to see perfectly, but was actually an immature Montagu's Harrier, despite my suspicions of a possible Pallid Harrier at the time. In addition a Common Quail called from the marsh, a few Calandra Larks over fields and lots of Greater Short-toed Larks on the tracks, and a small group of flying Wood Sandpipers and another of feeding Collared Pratincoles were all nice to see. An Osprey was buzzed by an irate Black-tailed Godwit. Most notable however was an incredible concentration of butterflies feeding on thistles, with thousands of Small Whites, lots of Clouded Yellows and a few Western Bath Whites and a Painted Lady.

Various large and innumerable smaller pot-holes negotiated we finally almost reached the Jose Antonio Valverde Visitors' Centre when a large flooded area on the left required yet another stop. Numerous Red-crested Pochard, Black-winged Stilt and Pied Avocet were scattered across the water, while a large flock of small waders were mainly Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin and Common Ringed Plover, many in breeding plumage, with two Grey Plover off to one side. A couple of Glossy Ibis fed quietly in the *Suaeda* bushes, while a small flock close to the track included Cattle and Little Egret, Grey, Purple and Squacco Herons, while on the opposite side on the fence, two female Northern Wheatears and a male Whinchat were nicely perched up!

Lunch was taken in the centre beside the bar, with drinks and crisps to boot, with hundreds of ibis, herons and egrets visible through the plate glass windows and flying adult Greater Flamingos fantastic in the bright sun.

Our last main stop was at a little bridge nearby, looking over a wide channel lined by hundreds of Greater Flamingos. Abundant duck included a couple of male Northern Shoveler, while Great Crested, Black-necked and Little Grebes were all in gaudy breeding plumage. Masses of Whiskered Terns and plenty of Black Terns flickered over the water and marsh and the sound of singing Great Reed Warblers was almost deafening! A Purple Swamp-hen appeared briefly from the emergent rushes before suddenly disappearing again.

The drive back revealed dozens of Purple and a few Squacco Herons hiding rather well in the marsh, but the half dozen or so Great White Egrets stood out like sore thumbs, standing well proud of the sedges! A rather plain dark

buzzard on a post was apparently a rather dark Long-legged Buzzard, a very unusual visitor to the region from N Africa, though a couple of small, dark, streaky Lesser Short-toed Larks were real denizens of the salt-marsh, finally giving fine views (thankfully close to the bus!), mid-afternoon in the heat.

We returned to a well-earned rest after a long day on tracks, though the last hour or so before dinner was again spent looking out over the water at El Rocío, and with a slightly cooling NW breeze, the heat-haze went and amongst other species we finally found a distant (and un-ringed) Red-knobbed Coot amongst the dozens of its commoner cousins. A super end to the birding, even though two young Spanish Imperial Eagles which were now perched in their favourite tree, were just too far away to take top honours!

### **Sunday 27th April**

Matalascañas beach, El Rocío, en route, Alange, Finca Santa Marta

Very warm and sunny, though a little cloud and a NW breeze springing up in evening at FSM.

A chilly start was had pre-breakfast at Matalascañas beach, though the car park mosquitoes were much more of a problem! Sadly, despite a rather calm sea and good visibility there were virtually no birds either, apart from two small flocks of Black tern feeding over the sea, a couple of Sanderling, two passing Sandwich Terns and single Yellow-legged Gull and Raven on the beach!

A half hour outside the hotel looking over the marsh just before leaving was highly productive again, with most of the usual suspects present including the two young Spanish Imperial Eagles at distance as normal, plus the delightful Little Bitterns and Great Reed Warbler very close.

We loaded the van and said goodbye to El Rocío. Not far along our route we took a side road and track and stopped in the middle of a varied area of orchards and vineyards. Hardly typical habitat, but with a few Lesser Kestrels on the wires and two Montagu's Harriers off to one side it was clearly better than it first looked! Indeed, as the window came down, so some robin-like snatches of song greeted us and there on a fence a little in front was a superb Rufous-tailed Bush-robin, looking beautifully rufous in the morning sun. It flew round and gave several views in the orchards before we finally decided to leave, only for another to appear, and also sing, not far ahead!

Our long journey N took us past Seville before we entered the new A-66 motorway N through the mountains, and very fast and direct it was! We pulled off for a comfort break and to refuel, and were soon off again, reaching the dam at Alange in time for lunch in the hot sun. With the edge of the reservoir below teeming with various fish species in the clear water, lots of movement of Crag and House Martins, Red-rumped Swallows and a couple of Blue Rock Thrushes on the crag, and breeding Alpine Swifts coming in to their nests just below the dam, it was a terrific stop, but difficult to know where to look at times! In fact, passing Swallowtail and Spanish Marbled White butterflies, a Common Waxbill collecting nesting material from some grass tussocks below us, a hybrid Spanish x House Sparrow and a White Wagtail on the water's edge, plus a pair of mobile Black Wheatears also on the rocks above, it was a fine pause in the journey.

Returning via Merida along a stork-infested road we were quickly back on track and by mid-afternoon had turned off along a typical old narrow road through dehesa towards our accommodation, Finca Santa Marta. A small bird dropped onto the top of a roadside post and were treated to close views of a Woodlark carrying food for its young.

After the long drive and in the heat we decided to simply take a break for the rest of the afternoon, and even a spot of sun-bathing by the pool was enjoyed. We met again at 7:15 and drove to Trujillo for our dinner in the square, though with time to go up to the castle and take in the views, and a few birds, before enjoying a series of the local dishes in an old restaurant. A few calling Pallid Swifts were even flying round over the square in the dark as we left!

### **Monday 28th April**

A range of sites S and E of the Finca.

Cool and windy; light broken cloud a.m., mostly sunny p.m.; 14 – 22°C

It was a much cooler start, though the contents of the moth trap, including a superb Giant Peacock and 5 Cream-spot Tiger moths amongst a host of other moths, beetles and even a Hornet, was a great start. A small frog in the surrounding dew-laden grass, looking so like a Parsley Frog raised hopes, but on checking the photos it's 'simply' a peculiarly-coloured Iberian Water Frog!

The Zorita steppes to the S were difficult to watch, with the cool air over the hot ground creating a strong haze. Two large male Great Bustards at distance were enjoyed however, though a pair of Black-bellied Sandgrouse which rose up at our arrival very quickly hurtled off, not be seen well, or again! A little further along another stop produced a dapper calling male Little Bustard in the flowers and rocks, and it was just the right distance to see well in the scopes, but not be disturbed. A Calandra Lark also decided to finally get in on the act and flew in to sing, with wings dropped, from a closer rock, giving fine scope views.

The large Embalse de Sierra Brava was largely devoid of birds except a couple of Black-necked Grebes amongst the commoner Great Crested, but it was at a large, but mostly empty pool that we spent quite a bit of time out on

foot. A fine flock of displaying Gull-billed Terns gave us a noisy welcome, but other birds on the gravel banks included Common Ringed, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers, single Sanderling and Dunlin and a couple of Little Stints close to stately Black-winged Stilts. Numerous quite large Common Carp were very active, thrashing in the shallows in a spawning frenzy. A pair of Melodious Warbler gave rather fleeting views as they dived into willows, while our first Red Avadavats in the bulrushes were mostly NOT red unlike the pictures in the books!

A group of trees sheltered several dozen Turtle Doves and a Black-shouldered Kite, while just beyond, one and a half (!) newly flooded rice paddies beside the road then produced a series of terrific birds, with a large flock of waders including Wood Sandpipers, Redshanks and a Greenshank, plus 3 Lapwings apart, while a male Yellow Wagtail with strikingly deep yellow underparts and dark head was a male of the Fennoscandian *thunbergi* subspecies. Our luck was clearly in, and even as we headed to celebrate with a drink at a nearby bar, a shout from the back saw us stopping for a superb Roller on wires close to the road.

Time was rushing on, but we moved on to some fields near Vegas Altas to look again for sandgrouse. Almost as we arrived, a flock of 7 Black-bellied rose off the ground and flew across before settling again. While trying to check for more, so we also noticed several Collared Pratincoles on the ground and a pair of Stone-curlew too! The sandgrouse flew off again when approached a little, so as we'd seen them well in flight, we cut things short and moved back towards the road, only to accidentally flush two male Great Bustards, one giving fine views, and a superb male Little Bustard which flew off, wings flickering in display flight as it went!

Lunch was taken overlooking the Rio Gargáligas, to the sound of Great Reed and Eurasian Reed Warblers, Common Nightingales and assorted chippings from the assorted sparrows present! In fact, the sparrows under a large White Stork nest almost took main stage, with 2 Eurasian Tree Sparrows present at first, over a dozen House Sparrows occupying various holes between the sticks, and then a Spanish Sparrow-like bird, though probably a hybrid, also present!

With a stiffening cool breeze, but clear blue skies arriving from the N, we headed for the mountains. Little was seen on route, apart from some lovely countryside, and a stiff chill wind at the top meant it was hard to find anything. However, patience is a virtue and we took a walk to see what we could find. Despite getting quite cold (well, those of us not from Scotland!), our rewards were two male and a female Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, a singing male Black Redstart, a calling Rock Bunting, a pair of Red-billed Choughs zooming past and a very brief Dartford Warbler in song flight. Not at all bad considering the conditions!

Driving down into a valley lined with orchards we drove through to take our last planned stop overlooking the headwaters of the Rio Almonte. A family of Grey Wagtails greeted us, with a couple of White Wagtails for good measure, and a range of small birds in the trees and scrub. Griffon vultures were passing and sat on the cliffs, where House Martins were breeding in a truly natural setting. A couple more Blue Rock Thrushes, a passing Sparrowhawk and fly-by Great Spotted Woodpecker were also appreciated in this lovely setting. Our first Spanish Terrapins and an Iberian Pool Frog in the river were also scoped!

We finally left, rather late, and started the return. However, a raptor drifting in the wind caught our eye and we pulled off to admire a superb adult Bonelli's Eagle planing along a ridge, before it swooped in and landed at distance near the top of a crag. It wasn't there too long before lifting off again and planed fast back past us before suddenly dropping out of sight. A superb end to the day, despite a rather tortuous drive home down some 'real' roads!

We were also treated to an introduction to the Finca by its owner, Henri Elink-Schuurman, including a quick look at the old wine casks still in place in the cellar- a sadly rare sight now. Dinner was a copious warming affair, and rounded things off perfectly!

## **Tuesday 29th April**

Monfragüe National Park

Cool with a moderate - stiff mostly NW breeze. 7°C rising to max 20°C.

After a normal 0830 breakfast we were off N to the Monfragüe National Park. A few birds including two Pallid Swifts round the Finca's stork trees, a couple of Lesser Kestrels in Trujillo and a Red Kite were noted en route, though the first stop was by the little bridge in the Arroyo de la Vid. Stepping out we could hear a Cuckoo and calling Spanish Sparrow, and indeed, a pair of the latter were breeding in a Great Spotted Woodpecker hole in a telegraph pole, using the dry grass from a nest on another pole as their own material! Single Black and Griffon Vultures suddenly appeared low overhead, but of them wheeling around for several minutes before finally moving away. A male Subalpine Warbler then appeared in small trees on the opposite slope and at last we had views of this quite common, but often skulking little beauty.

Lovely conditions prevailed, being not too hot on the sunny and sheltered side of the first ridge for our walk up to the little castle (really an old watch tower) and chapel. Stepping out under a nice crag we were immediately faced with a dilemma of where to look first: at the displaying male Blue Rock Thrush, at the sitting Griffon Vultures, at the numerous Crag Martins and Red-rumped Swallows wheeling around or by trying to find a secretive singing

Black Redstart! Even the passing and circling vultures were largely ignored for a while! A couple of Black Storks flew past, as did an Egyptian vulture, while Alpine Swifts powered past just over the ridge top, but only the quickest could spot them. We settled mostly for trying to spot the remarkably cryptically coloured Griffon Vultures – adults and near-fledgling young - perched on various ledges, one or two of which were also making their ‘heavy breathing’ calls. Two male Blue Rock Thrushes were disputing their rights to the crag and flew round and round in a clearly serious, but seemingly half-hearted looking chase.

The climb up is short, but quite steep, so we took our time, listening to singing Rock Bunting as we went, though once at the top, the 360° views were a great reward. The more intrepid took the narrow spiral staircase up to the top, while the rest of us stood slightly lower down, watching the passing vultures, kites and occasional Black Stork, and as we left, Alpine Swift again, while a noisy Red-billed Chough put in a couple of brief fly-by appearances, clearly not wanting to come into the castle to see its mate, with plenty of people about. It was actually quieter here than expected, with a constant breeze having allowed the larger raptors to disperse out over the vast tracts of surrounding dehesa early, and before the thermals were necessary.

We finally pulled ourselves away and took a drive to the bar in the little village in the park, Villareal de San Carlos. After refreshments we moved on again, this time continuing right through to the far end of the park for a relaxed lunch watching the Portilla del Tiétar cliffs. Indeed, all those present left as or just after we arrived, leaving us to ourselves for a while! Indeed, no-one was around when a barking call alerted us to an adult Spanish Imperial Eagle, which suddenly appeared over the ridge in front and then flapped and soared rapidly up, calling regularly. Indeed, it climbed hard and fast in order to intercept two more, both young birds, which were soaring way up overhead! A bit of a chase ensued, with the adult closely shadowing one of the young birds, and eventually drove it off at enormous height above the ridge behind us. Some 10 minutes later, it returned, and dropped quietly back down over the ridge in front and was never even noticed by a few other birders who’d arrived in the interim!

Though the star bird here, it was certainly not the only one, with singing and displaying Blue Rock Thrushes, ‘bucket-loads’ of Griffons, a few passing Black Vultures, one or two Alpine Swifts among the Crag and House Martins over the opposite peak, singing Nightingale and Turtle Dove, calling Subalpine Warbler, and regularly passing Black Storks! When the other adult Spanish Imperial Eagle flew out and circled quite low overhead, this was the icing on the cake, the white leading edge to the inner wing even being visible from below. Our quest to see the Eagle Owl chicks drew a blank though, and despite scouring the rocks again and again, we eventually decided it was time to move on.

The return was quite quick, with just a couple of stops. A look over the river above the now flooded Puente del Cardenal (it had been high and dry just 2 weeks before). Revealed a few Griffon Vultures perched precariously close to the water’s surface, and an adult Black Stork walking cautiously around above them on the grass under the small trees. Some of the vultures, including one adult with a bloody head, were apparently resting right beside the stork’s nest with chicks. A Subalpine Warbler here simply shot off overhead never to be seen again, while singing Rock and Cirl Buntings were keeping hidden in the foliage of the trees in the hot sun, with just two of the latter seen momentarily as they flashed past during a chase!

Our last stop was of course (!) looking across to Peñafalcón from the car park. Numerous Griffon and a few high-flying Black Vultures kept us constantly watching, with Blue Rock Thrush, a superb Rock Bunting, passing Black Kite and Egyptian Vulture and a couple of pairs of mobile Black Storks also present. And despite a terrific breeze when looking from just through the gap, with the air funnelling through, fine views were also had of a Black Stork on its nest, including the arrival of its mate and a change-over, plus of a superb male Rock bunting, which perched in the shade close, before working the cracks and ledges in full view in its search for food. A terrific end to the day!

### **Wednesday 30th April**

Madroñera, Almaraz, Valdecañas Dam, FSM orchards

Very fine and sunny, light - moderate N-NW breeze. 6°C rising to max 20°C.

A day with a varied forecast and outlook, and with chilly breezy conditions early on, best spent in the vehicle. This found us searching the tracks close to the Finca in an area of grass and broom-filled steppe fields. Birds came thick and fast, including numerous Common Stonechats and Lesser Kestrels, Crested and a few Thekla Larks, Hoopoes, Southern Grey Shrikes, including a family party of four youngsters just fledging, and another fledgling along another track, all at point blank range. A fleeting view of a Dartford Warbler also saw the tail end of a *Phylloscopus* warbler diving into scrub never to be seen again, while after stopping for a delightful Little Owl adorning a shed roof, a strangely-plumaged young harrier hunting the slopes (unfortunately, against the sun) when we went to see it closer, coincided with the appearance of the ‘target’ bird for the morning – a Great Spotted Cuckoo. The chilly stiff breeze meant this kept its head well down in a low trackside bush, but suddenly flushed when chased out by a protective Common Magpie, its potential host. Indeed, what was presumably its mate also suddenly flushed out of grass on the other side of the track and both flew off and down a slope to disappear for good. The harrier decided to move off too, though was another young male Montagu’s Harrier, despite trying to make it something different!

We then drove up to near Almaraz to mix things a bit. A wander into a little quarry revealed various butterflies coming to lap salts at the beginning, including various Marsh Fritillaries and a Black-eyed Blue, colourful flowers long the tracks amongst the orchards, including the very faded vestiges of a few Yellow Bee Ophrys and seeding spikes of Naked Man Orchids, while the striking mats of blue Blue Pimpernel were a treat as well, having opened out fully in the sun. A fine Swallowtail butterfly was duly admired as it basked in the sun. John got to do a little bit of geological prospecting in the quarry itself where a male Cirl Bunting finally showed for all, though gentle warnings from a local kept us away from a large number of bee-hives along a side track! Intense scanning of the rock faces revealed nothing however, so we walked round to unsuccessfully view from above, listening to the songs of various birds of the orchards and just enjoying the lovely conditions.

Time ran short, as ever, so we headed off to look for a quiet lunch spot, after watching a very worn Scarce Swallowtail lapping salts from beside the minibus. This was achieved near the Valdecañas Dam, where in a little sun-drenched valley, we ate lunch listening to the calls of Golden Orioles and a Spanish Sparrow or two the *Eucalyptus* lining the road. The sun had also activated plenty of butterflies including fine male Orange-tips and a Brimstone amongst others, though the walk up to overlook the end of the reservoir started off perfectly when the male oriole sat out in the open and was then joined by a bright female foraging in the scrub below. An adult Egyptian Vulture amongst the Griffons over the slope also reminded us that an eye always needs to be kept on the sky!

Walk over we returned a little later than expected to the Finca, but still giving Jo time for her second spot of sunbathing whilst the rest of us went for a walk up the hill and into some old abandoned orchards off a donkey track. A Western Bonelli's Warbler showed and sang as we walked up, sign of a little migration going on again, though we spent far more time in the upper orchards hunting for flowers, including two species of Tongue orchids – one Small-flowered, the other uncertain still as I write! – and the very last few Champagne Orchids still in flower. Our return was just as good when a bunting flew up off the ground into a low olive. Being only partly visible the colour tones and habitat were wrong for Rock Bunting and indeed we were looking at a fine male Ortolan Bunting on migration! Unfortunately, it was not very confident, and despite giving a couple of brief views in the scope, suddenly disappeared without trace. But a really fine end to the tour!

#### **Thursday 1st May** airport

FSM transfer to Madrid +

Very fine and sunny, with light breeze. 8°C rising to max 22°C.

Leaving at 0915 we soon became aware of heavy traffic heading out for this long holiday weekend, and after a brief comfort stop decided that as it was one lane into, but three out of Madrid, it was most important just to get to the airport on time. Despite (!) seeing a few birds from the minibus, including a Great Spotted Cuckoo and plenty of raptors, we arrived perfectly on time in fact, with two hours for John and Jill to catch their flight home, and for Ken and Jo to drop off some luggage and go into Madrid for their extended stay there.

I would sincerely like to thank you all for making this such a pleasant trip to be on. The rather varied conditions from baking hot to chilly and breezy meant it was quite difficult in the field at times, but with 3 scopes between us and flexibility in the group, we were able to visit a wide and fine range of sites and enjoy a terrific period of spring in the Spanish countryside. Also seeing the differences between the hundreds of wind turbines in the Strait of Gibraltar, with the coast of Morocco in the background, and the vast expanses of *dehesa* stretching as far as the eye could see, with snow-capped mountains looming behind in Extremadura, also epitomises the variety of the areas visited. The 187 bird species seen was testament to this, with other groups such as butterflies in general lower than expected given the 'extreme' conditions.

I look forward to seeing you again soon, I hope, on another Travelling Naturalist trip. Very best wishes,

John Muddeman

([www.iberianwildlife.com](http://www.iberianwildlife.com))

#### **Species lists**

##### **BIRDS - AVES**

##### **GROUSE, PHEASANTS & allies - Phasianidae**

**Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa* One + heard Laguna de Medina on 21st, 2 en route on 23rd, 2 en route on 27th, 4 en route on 28th.

**Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* Heard en route on 26th, heard Madrigalejo rice fields & Vegas Altas on 28th.

**GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS - Anatidae**

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* Three of dubious origin El Rocío on 25th, and on 27th.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* Four Salinas de Bonanza on 24th.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera* Three Laguna de Medina on 21st, lots El Rocío on 25th, plenty various sites on 26th, lots El Rocío on 27th, and several Embalse de Sierra Brava+ on 28th.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* Several en route and then daily from 23rd - 28th at numerous sites.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* Just 2 males José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* A fine male El Rocío on 26th.

**Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* 10+ Laguna de Tarelo & 20+ El Rocío on 24th, c. 6 El Rocío on 25th, abundant José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, several El Rocío on 27th, and a pair Casa de Hitos on 28th.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* About 15 Laguna de Medina on 21st, Plenty Laguna de Tarelo on 24th, lots El Rocío, La Rocina+ on 25th, lots at various sites on 26th, lots El Rocío on 27th.

**White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala* Four males Laguna de Tarelo and 9 males + 3 females en route on 24th.

**PETRELS & SHEARWATERS - Procellariidae**

**Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea* Just 1 distantly Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd.

**GREBES - Podicipedidae**

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Several Laguna de Medina on 21st, plenty Laguna de Tarelo and en route on 24th, plenty various sites on 26th, plenty El Rocío on 27th, 1 en route on 30th.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Five+ Laguna de Medina on 21st, lots Salinas de Bonanza & Laguna de Tarelo on 24th, 2-3 El Rocío on 25th, lots on 26th, a few El Rocío on 27th, 30+ Embalse de Sierra Brava on 28th.

**Black-necked/Eared Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* Six Laguna de Medina on 21st, lots Salinas de Bonanza, Laguna de Tarelo & en route on 24th, several José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, 2 Embalse de Sierra Brava on 28th.

**FLAMINGOS - Phoenicopteridae**

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* An adult Playa de los Lances and 100s various sites on 24th, 150+ El Rocío on 25th, 1000s José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre+ on 26th, 100s El Rocío on 27th.

**STORKS - Ciconiidae**

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* 10+ Monfragüe on 29th.

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* Abundant, widespread and seen daily.

**IBISES & SPOONBILLS - Threskiornithidae**

**Northern Bald Ibis** *Geronticus eremita* Three adults from the reintroduction program at Barbate on 24th.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* Two El Rocío & 2 La Rocina on 25th, 100+ José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* Two Río Palmones on 23rd, 4 Barbate & 20+ El Rocío on 24th, 49+ El Rocío+ on 25th, lots Doñana area on 26th, and on 27th, and 1 possibly on passage to N Madroñera on 30th.

**HERONS & BITTERNS - Ardeidae**

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus* heard Laguna de Tarelo on 24th, a male & 2 females El Rocío on 25th, a pair there on 26th, and 2 pairs there on 27th.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Lots in a colony Laguna de Tarelo on 24th, 1 ad El Rocío on 25th, plenty José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, 1 ad El Rocío on 27th.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* Two adults Laguna de Tarelo on 24th, 2 La Rocina & 1 El Rocío on 25th, 7-8 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre+ on 26th.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Common, widespread and seen daily Andalucía from 21st - 27th, on 21st, then plenty Almaraz area on 30th.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Several at various sites on 24th, daily in number in the Doñana area from 25th - 27th on 25th, then 2 en route on 29th, and 2 en route on 30th.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* One in flight Barbate on 24th, several La Rocina+ on 25th, and abundant José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre+ on 26th.

**Great [White] Egret** *Ardea alba* Two La Rocina on 25th, and 6+ José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre+ on 26th.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* After 3 Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd, noted daily in moderate to large number until 27th, on 23rd, but just a few on 28th.

#### GANNETS & BOOBIES - Sulidae

**Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* Six+ Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd.

#### CORMORANTS - Phalacrocoracidae

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* One Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd, 6+ El Rocío on 26th, and 1 distantly Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

#### FALCONS & allies - Falconidae

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* 10+ Tarifa on 23rd, several Baelo Claudia & en route on 27th, lots various sites on 28th, a few Trujillo on 29th, and plenty Madroñera+ on 30th.

**Common/Eurasian Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* Overlooked among the Lessers, but noted daily in small number except on 23rd.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* One large adult crossing the Strait at Punta Carnero on 22nd.

#### HAWKS, EAGLES & allies - Accipitridae

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* One en route near Lebrija on 24th, 1 El Rocío on 25th, and 1 near José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**Black-winged/-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* One Laguna de Medina on 21st, and 1 Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* Two El Rocío on 25th, 1 El Rocío on 26th, singles en route on 29th, and on 30th.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* Common, widespread and seen daily, including large numbers crossing the Strait.

**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* 3 + 1 + 1 crossing Strait at Punta Carnero on 22nd, three crossing over Tarifa on 23rd, a pair Pico Villuercas and 1 en route on 28th, c. 6 Monfragüe on 29th, and 1 ad Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

**Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* Common, widespread and seen daily except on 21st; max. 80+ on 23rd and 100s Monfragüe on 29th.

**Cinereous/Monk/Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* Just 10+ Monfragüe on 29th.

**Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* Seen daily in variable number from 22nd - 30th, except on 25th; max. 40+ crossing Strait Punta Carnero on 22nd!

**[Western] Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* Three El Rocío on 25th, 4-5 various sites on 26th, 3+ males Vegas Altas on 28th.

**Hen/Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* A late female crossing Strait Punta Carnero on 22nd.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* A male Mirador del Estrecho on 22nd, single males Sanlúcar de Barrameda & near Seville on 24th, an immature male José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, a few en route in Extremadura on 27th, 6+ at various Madrigalejo rice fields+ on 28th, and an immature male Madroñera on 30th.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* 20+ crossing the Strait Punta Carnero+ on 22nd, and a male upper Río Almonte on 28th.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* At least 2 probable migrants Punta Carnero on 22nd, then 1-2 daily from 25th - 29th, except for 6+ on 28th.

**\*Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* One showing characters of this species near José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 25th.

**Spanish Imperial Eagle** *Aquila adalberti* Seen on 5 days! One immature El Rocío on 24th, with 1 - 2 immatures there daily until 27th, on 24th, and an adult pair and 2 immatures Monfragüe on 29th.

**Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciatus* An adult en route on 28th.

**Booted Eagle** *Aquila pennatus* Seen almost daily from 22nd (except on 24th and 29th); max. 50+ crossing Strait on 22nd!

#### BUSTARDS - Otidae

**Great Bustard** *Otis tarda* Two distantly Zorita steppes and 2 close Vegas Altas on 28th.

**Little Bustard** *Tetrax tetrax* Single males Zorita steppes & Vegas Altas on 28th.

**RAILS, CRAKES & COOTS - Rallidae**

- Purple Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* Heard El Rocío on 25th, and 1 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.  
**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* A few - several daily from 24th - 28th.  
**Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata* One distantly El Rocío on 26th.  
**Eurasian/Common Coot** *Fulica atra* Lots Laguna de Medina on 21st, then plenty at various sites daily from 24th - 27th.

**STONE-CURLEWS / THICK-KNEES - Burhinidae**

- Eurasian Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus* A pair Doñana N marshes on 26th, and a superb pair Vegas Altas on 28th.

**STILTS & AVOCETS - Recurvirostridae**

- Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Three en route on 21st, noted daily in moderate - large number from 24th - 28th, plus on 24th, plus 3 en route on 29th.  
**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avocetta* Plentiful Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, and also José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre area on 26th.

**PLOVERS & LAPWINGS - Charadriidae**

- Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* Three Madrigalejo rice fields were late birds on 28th.  
**Grey/Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* Three+ Playa de los Lances & 2+ Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, and 2 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.  
**[Common] Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* Four+ Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd, 12+ Río Palmones on 23rd, 100s Salinas de Bonanza+ on 24th, 100+ José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, and 80+ Casa de Hitos & Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.  
**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* Just 6+ Casa de Hitos on 28th.  
**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Two Cabo de Trafalgar & 1 Baelo Claudia on 22nd, 1 Zahara de los Atunes on 23rd, lots Playa de los Lances & Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, and c. 10 Casa de Hitos on 28th.

**SANDPIPERS, SNIPES & allies - Scolopacidae**

- Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* Two singles José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre area on 26th, and 5 El Rocío on 27th.  
**[Eurasian] Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* Just 1 Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd.  
**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* A few Playa de los Lances and several Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, 13 El Rocío on 26th, and 5 Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.  
**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Two Río Palmones on 23rd, 1 Playa de los Lances on 24th, 1 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, and 1 Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.  
**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Flocks of 12 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre & 20 El Rocío on 26th, and 9 Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.  
**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* One Río Palmones on 23rd, 2 Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, 10+ El Rocío on 25th, lots various sites on 26th, and 4 Madrigalejo rice fields & 1 Río Gargáligas on 28th.  
**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Just 1 Tarifa harbour on 23rd.  
**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* A superb summer-plumaged bird Playa de los Lances on 24th.  
**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* One Cabo de Trafalgar & c. 15 Baelo Claudia on 22nd, c.15 Zahara de los Atunes on 23rd, lots Playa de los Lances+ on 24th, and 1 Casa de Hitos on 28th.  
**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* Five Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd, 1 Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, and 2 Casa de Hitos & 5 Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.  
**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* Hundreds Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, and 150+ José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.  
**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* Two Río Palmones on 23rd, lots Playa de los Lances & Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, lots José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, and 1 Casa de Hitos & 3 Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.

**COURSERS & PRATINCOLES - Glareolidae**

- Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* Excellent numbers: 4 en route & 3 Laguna de Medina on 21st, 1 en route on 22nd, c.6 Zahara de los Atunes on 23rd, c. 20 Zahara de los Atunes, 9+ Playa de los Lances & various en route on 24th, 6+ en route on 26th, and plenty at various sites on 28th.

**GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS - Laridae**

**Audouin's Gull** *Larus audouinii* Only c. 12 Barbate on 24th.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis* Abundant, widespread and seen daily from 21st - 27th in the Strait and Doñana areas, except on 25th.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* Three Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd, a few various sites on 24th, 1 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, and 1 Alange Dam on 27th.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus* Several Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, c. 20 El Rocío on 25th, lots José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre area on 26th, lots El Rocío & Alange Dam on 27th, and plenty various sites on 28th.

**Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei* Plenty in the Salinas de Bonanza on 24th.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* 10 + 3 past Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd, 2 El Rocío on 25th, 12s José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre area on 26th, 2+ El Rocío on 27th, and 150+ Casa de Hitos & Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis* Lots at various sites on 22nd, 6+ Río Palmones on 23rd, 3 Playa de los Lances & 3-4 Barbate on 24th, and 2 Matalascañas on 27th.

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* Plenty in the Salinas de Bonanza on 24th.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* One Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, and then abundant Doñana marshes 24th - 27th.

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* Five Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd, c.12 Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, 4 El Rocío on 25th, 12s José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, 12s Matalascañas and El Rocío on 27th.

#### SANDGROUSE - Pteroclididae

**Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** *Pterocles alchata* Four briefly in flight Doñana N marshes on 26th.

**Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles orientalis* Two briefly Zorita steppes, then 7 well in flight Vegas Altas on 28th.

#### PIGEONS & DOVES - Columbidae

**Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia* Common, widespread and seen daily.

**[Common] Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus* Several at various sites on 25th, 1+ on 28th, and 3 near Almaraz on 30th.

**European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* Good numbers: 1 Laguna de Medina on 21st, 3 Puerto de Bolonia on 23rd, 1 Tarifa on 24th, 30+ Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th, and 2 heard different sites on 29th.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* Common, widespread and seen daily.

#### CUCKOOS - Cuculidae

**Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* Two Madroñera & 1 en route on 30th, and 1 beside motorway en route to airport on 1st.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* One en route on 23rd, 1 El Rocío on 25th, 1 seen + heard FSM on 28th, heard Monfragüe & 1 FSM on 29th, and 1 en route on 30th.

#### OWLS - Strigidae

**Eurasian Eagle-Owl** *Bubo bubo* Two juveniles at a secret location in Extremadura.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua* One en route on 24th, heard Pago de San Clemente on 27th, and 1 Madroñera & heard Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

#### SWIFTS - Apodidae

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarpis melba* Two Puerto de Bolonia on 23rd, 15+ Alange Dam on 27th, and lots Monfragüe on 29th.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus* Common, widespread and seen daily.

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus* Also common and widespread. Seen daily except 22nd in Andalucía, on 21st, 100s Playa de los Lances & Zahara de los Atunes+ on 24th, 6+ Trujillo on 27th, and 2 FSM on 29th.

\***Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Four seen in Andalucía at one site.

#### ROLLERS - Coraciidae

**European Roller** *Coracias garrulus* Singles Madrigalejo rice fields & Vegas Altas on 28th.

#### KINGFISHERS - Alcedinidae

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* One seen + heard La Rocina on 25th, and heard Monfragüe on 29th.

#### BEE-EATERS - Meropidae

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* 100+ seen & 100s heard in Straits on 22nd, 2+ en route on 24th, plenty Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, plenty Doñana N marshes on 26th, plenty on 27th and 28th, a few FSM on 29th, plenty various sites on 30th, and heard FSM on 1st.

**HOOPOES - Upupidae**

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* One El Rocío on 25th, several various sites on 26th, plenty on 27th and 28th, several various sites on 29th, plenty various sites on 30th, noted FSM on 1st.

**WOODPECKERS - Picidae**

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major* Just 1 upper Río Almonte on 28th.

**SHRIKES - Laniidae**

**Southern Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis* One en route on 26th, 3-4 Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th, 15+ including fledglings Madroñera+ on 30th.

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator* Common, widespread and seen daily in variable number.

**OLD WORLD ORIOLES - Oriolidae**

**[Eurasian] Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus* Two males + 1 female high over El Rocío on 25th, heard FSM on 28th, and a pair seen well Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

**CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES - Corvidae**

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* Singles Pico Villuercas & upper Río Almonte on 28th, 2 Monfragüe on 29th, and heard Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

**Iberian Magpie** *Cyanopica cooki* About 10 El Acebuche on 25th, lots various sites on 28th, several at various sites on 29th, lots on 30th, and noted FSM on 1st.

**Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica* About 10 various sites on 25th, a few en route on 26th, lots daily from 28th.

**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Two Pico Villuercas on 28th, and 1 Monfragüe on 29th.

**Western Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula* Plenty en route on 21st, a few en route on 24th, then plenty daily from 27th.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax* Noted widely in small numbers at various sites on 7 days.

**TITS & CHICKADEES - Paridae**

**Great Tit** *Parus major* One Baelo Claudia on 22nd, a few Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, and a few daily various sites from 28th.

**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus* Two+ Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, and then several daily in Extremadura from 28th.

**SWALLOWS & MARTINS - Hirundinidae**

**Sand Martin / Bank Swallow** *Riparia riparia* 500+ El Rocío on 24th, even more in the Doñana marshes on 25th, and plenty again El Rocío on 26th.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Common, widespread and seen daily.

**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* One en route on 22nd, then daily in number in Extremadura from 27th.

**[Common] House Martin** *Delichon urbicum* Common, widespread and seen daily; particularly large colonies in El Rocío.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* Quite common and widespread in small numbers. Seen daily except on 24th, with good numbers daily in Extremadura.

**BUSHTITS, LONG-TAILED TITS - Aegithalidae**

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus* Plenty Palacio del Acebrón+ on 25th, plenty FSM on 27th, a few upper Río Almonte on 28th, and 5 seen + lots heard FSM on 30th.

**LARKS - Alaudidae**

**Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra* Two - three Playa de los Lances on 24th, a few Doñana N marshes on 26th, and plenty Zorita steppes on 28th.

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* Plenty Playa de los Lances on 24th, plenty Doñana N marshes on 26th, and heard Zorita steppes on 28th.

**Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella rufescens* Three en route from José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* Common, widespread and seen daily from 22nd except on 23rd.

**Thekla Lark** *Galerida theklae* Plenty Straits area on 22nd, and on 23rd, singles Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, and Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, and heard Almaraz area on 30th.

**Woodlark** *Lullula arborea* One en route on 27th, and 1 FSM on 30th.

**CISTICOLAS & allies - Cisticolidae**

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* heard Laguna de Medina on 21st, then noted daily in variable number at various sites from 23rd - 28th.

**OLD WORLD WARBLERS - Sylviidae**

**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti* Plenty heard various sites on 22nd, heard various sites on 25th, 1 seen + others heard various sites on 26th, and 1 seen and others heard Río Gargáligas on 28th.

**Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides* Only heard distantly La Rocina on 25th.

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* One Laguna de Medina on 21st, 1 El Rocio daily from 24th - 27th, plus several noted daily various sites 26th - 28th.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* One seen en route on 26th.

**[Eurasian] Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* noted daily in small number at various sites from 24th - 28th.

**\*Western Olivaceous Warbler** *Hippolais opaca* A warbler, probably this species heard Laguna de Medina on 21st, and 1 Doñana N marshes was a great find on 26th.

**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta* Several La Línea park on 23rd, heard La Rocina on 25th, 1 en route on 26th, and a pair Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* Just 1 La Línea park on 23rd.

**Iberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus ibericus* Two seen & several heard Palacio del Acebrón on 25th.

**Western Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus bonelli* Just 1 La Línea park on 23rd, and 1 singing FSM on 30th.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* Several La Línea park on 23rd, a male & others heard Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, and heard upper Río Almonte on 28th.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* 3-4 La Línea park on 23rd, and 1 Palacio del Acebrón on 25th.

**Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia hortensis* 3-4 La Línea park on 23rd.

**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis* Two Cabo de Trafalgar on 22nd, and 12+ La Línea park on 23rd.

**Dartford Warbler** *Sylvia undata* Three+ Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, 1 Pico Villuercas on 28th, and 1 Madroñera on 30th.

**Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia conspicillata* Just 1 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans* Just 1 male near Monfragüe on 29th.

**Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala* Common, widespread and noisy, and recorded daily at various sites.

**WRENS - Troglodytidae**

**[Winter] Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* Heard Mirador del Estrecho on 22nd, heard Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, then noted daily in small number in Extremadura from 27th.

**NUTHATCHES & WALLCREEPER - Sittidae**

**Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea* Just 1 Palacio del Acebrón on 25th.

**TREECREEPERS - Certhiidae**

**Short-toed Treecreeper** *Certhia brachydactyla* Four+ Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, 2 FSM on 27th, and 1 there on 30th.

**STARLINGS - Sturnidae**

**Spotless Starling** *Sturnus unicolor* Abundant, widespread and noted daily.

**THRUSHES - Turdidae**

**Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula* Common, widespread and noted on 7 days.

**OLD WORLD CHATS & FLYCATCHERS - Muscicapidae**

**European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* Two HG on 22nd, 2-3 La Línea park on 23rd, heard Pico Villuercas on 28th.

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos* Common, widespread and heard almost daily from 22nd, with a few seen at various sites.

**\*Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes* Two en route to Seville on 27th were superb!

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* Just 1 male Pico Villuercas on 28th.

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* A 'pair' La Línea park on 23rd, and a 'pair' Palacio del Acebrón on 25th.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* A male Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, 1 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, and 2 Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.

**European/Common Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola* Very common, widespread and noted almost daily in the Strait and Doñana areas, and widespread and noted daily in Extremadura from 27th.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* A female Playa de los Lances on 24th, and 2 females José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**Western Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica hispanica* A male Santuario and a pair Baelo Claudia on 21st, and a male Monfragüe on 29th.

**Black Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucura* A super pair Alange Dam on 27th.

**\*Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis* Two males + 1 female Pico Villuercas on 28th.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* Two males + 1 female Alange Dam on 27th, 2 males upper Río Almonte on 28th, and several males Monfragüe on 29th.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* One - two La Línea park on 23rd.

**[European] Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* A female Puerto de Bolonia on 23rd, and 2 males + 3 females Palacio del Acebrón on 25th.

#### OLD WORLD SPARROWS & allies - Passeridae

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Abundant, widespread and seen daily.

**Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis* heard en route on 26th, 1 probable hybrid Río Gargáligas on 28th, a pair en route to Monfragüe on 29th, and 15+ Madroñera & heard Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* One Laguna de Tarelo on 24th, a few La Rocina+ on 25th, and 2 Río Gargáligas on 28th.

#### WAXBILLS, MUNIAS & allies - Estrildidae

**Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild* One collecting nest material Alange Dam on 27th.

**Red Avadavat** *Amandava amandava* Lots Madrigalejo rice fields & Río Gargáligas on 28th.

#### WAGTAILS & PIPITS - Motacillidae

**Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* Several *iberiae* Río Palmones on 23rd, a male *flava* Playa de los Lances and plenty of *iberiae* Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, 3 *iberiae* El Rocío on 25th, plenty of *iberiae* José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre+ on 26th, and 1 male *thunbergi* and 2 unknown females Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* One en route + 5-6 upper Río Almonte on 28th.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* Noted daily in small number in Extremadura from 27th.

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris* Three+ Playa de los Lances on 24th, and 1 El Acebuche on 25th.

#### FINCHES & allies - Fringillidae

**Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* Noted in wooded areas from 25th on 5 dates.

**European Serin** *Serinus serinus* A few Santuario on 22nd, then noted daily and widely from 25th.

**European Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris* Notably common this year and recorded daily from 22nd at numerous sites.

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* Abundant, widespread and noted daily.

**Common Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina* Common, widespread and noted daily except on 25th.

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* A pair Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, and a fly-over Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

#### BUNTINGS, NEW WORLD SPARROWS & allies - Emberizidae

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra* Abundant, widespread and noted daily from 22nd.

**Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia* A male Pico Villuercas on 28th, and a pair Monfragüe on 29th.

**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana* A male FSM orchards was a surprise on 30th.

**Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus* Two + heard Monfragüe on 29th, and a male Almaraz area on 30th.

A fine total of 185 wild species, including 5 new for this trip (marked with an asterisk).

**MAMMALS - MAMMALIA**

**RABBITS & HARES - Leporidae**

**European Rabbit** *Oryctolagus cuniculus* Several Laguna de Medina on 21st, and 1 Baelo Claudia on 22nd.

**MICE, RATS, VOLES & GERBILS - Muridae**

**Wood/Long-tailed Field Mouse** *Apodemus sylvaticus* A few FSM on 28th.

**VESPER BATS - Vespertilionidae**

**Small bat sp.** Vespertilionidae Just 1 noted at FSM on 28th.

**MARINE DOLPHINS - Delphinidae**

**[Common] Bottle-nosed Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus* One noted by Jill from the Mirador del Estrecho on 22nd.

**DEER - Cervidae**

**Red Deer** *Cervus elaphus* Two El Rocio on 25th, and a few there on 26th, plus 2 Monfragüe on 29th.

**Fallow Deer** *Dama dama* Five José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**REPTILES - REPTILIA**

**Spanish Terrapin** *Mauremys [caspica] leprosa* Six upper Río Almonte on 28th, and 1 Almaraz area on 30th.

**Moorish Gecko** *Tarentola mauritanica* Quite common, widespread and noted on 7 days.

**Large Psammodromus** *Psammodromus algirus* A few noted on 5 different days between 22nd and 30th.

**Ocellated Lizard** *Lacerta lepida* 3 adults + 1 juvenile on 22nd, Baelo Claudia on 23rd, plus 1 adult Monfragüe on 29th.

**Iberian Wall Lizard** *Podarcis hispanica* One Tarifa on 24th, 2 El Rocio on 25th, and 1 there on 27th.

**Western Three-toed Skink** *Chalcides striatus* One dead in the talons of a female Lesser Kestrel at Tarifa on 23rd.

**[Western] Montpellier Snake** *Malpolon monspessulanus* One briefly La Rocina on 25th.

**Viperine Snake** *Natrix maura* One El Rocio on 25th, 1 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, and 1 FSM on 30th.

**AMPHIBIANS - AMPHIBIA**

**Stripeless Tree Frog** *Hyla meridionalis* Two El Acebuche on 25th.

**Iberian Water Frog** *Rana perezi* Common and widespread but only noted on 4 days from 25th.

**BUTTERFLIES - LEPIDOPTERA**

**APOLLOS & SWALLOWTAILS - Papilionidae**

**Spanish Festoon** *Zerynthia rumina* Two Pico Villuercas on 28th, and several near Almaraz on 30th.

**Spanish Swallowtail** *Iphiclides feisthamelii* Only seen near Almaraz on 30th.

**Swallowtail** *Papilio machaon* Only noted on 27th, and on 30th.

**WHITES, YELLOWS & SULPHURS - Pieridae**

**Wood White** *Leptidea sinapis* One Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

**Large White** *Pieris brassicae* Noted on 5 days from 23rd.

**Small White** *Pieris rapae* Easily the commonest butterfly; noted on 8 days from 22nd with 1000s over Doñana N marshes on 26th.

**Bath White** *Pontia daplidice* 10+ José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**Orange-tip** *Anthocharis cardamines* A male Monfragüe on 29th, and several Valdecañas Dam on 30th.

**Green-striped White** *Euchloe belemia* Just 1 Puerto de Bolonia on 23rd.

**Clouded Yellow** *Colias crocea* One of the commoner species, and noted on 7 days from 23rd.

**Cleopatra** *Gonepteryx cleopatra* Single males on 27th, and on 30th.

**Brimstone** *Gonepteryx rhamni* Just a male Palacio del Acebrón on 25th.

**HAIRSTREAKS, COPPERS & BLUES - Lycaenidae**

**Small Copper** *Lycaena phlaeas* Several on 30th.

**Black-eyed Blue** *Glaucopsyche melanops* One near Almaraz on 30th.

**Common Blue** *Polyommatus icarus* One near Almaraz on 30th.

**Spanish Brown Argus** *Aricia agestis cramera* One FSM on 30th.

**Vanessids & smaller Fritillaries - subf: Nymphalinae**

**Painted Lady** *Vanessa [=Cynthia] cardui* Two Punta Carnero on 22nd, 1 Playa de los Lances on 24th, 1 on 25th, and 1 José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**Marsh Fritillary** *Euphydryas aurinia* A few FSM on 27th, and on 28th, but 100+ there on 30th.

**Browns, Ringlets & Satyrs - subf: Satyrinae**

**Speckled Wood** *Pararge aegeria* One Punta Carnero on 22nd, 1 La Línea park on 23rd, several Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, and 1 Monfragüe on 29th.

**Wall Brown** *Lasiommata megera* Just a few at various sites on 30th.

**Small Heath** *Coenonympha pamphilus* Noted FSM on 27th, Monfragüe on 29th, and on 30th.

**Meadow Brown** *Maniola jurtina* Only noted on 30th.

**Spanish Marbled White** *Melanargia ines* Noted Alange Dam on 27th, Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th, and on 30th.

**MOTHS - LEPIDOPTERA**

**Great/Giant Peacock [moth]** *Pavonia pyri* One en route on 23rd, and 1 FSM on 28th.

**Hummingbird Hawkmoth** *Macroglossum stellatarum* One FSM on 30th.

**Cream-spot Tiger** *Arctia villica* Five FSM on 28th.

**Silver Y** *Autographa gamma* One FSM on 28th.

**Straw Belle** *Aspitates gilvaria* One FSM on 28th.

**DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES - ODONATA**

**BLUE-TAILED & RED DAMSELFLIES - Coenagrionidae**

**Iberian Bluetail** *Ischnura graellsii* Two El Acebuche on 25th, and a female José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**HAWKERS & EMPERORS - Aeshnidae**

**Blue Emperor [Dragonfly]** *Anax imperator* Two near Almaraz on 30th.

**Lesser Emperor** *Anax parthenope* A few José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th.

**CHASERS, SKIMMERS & DARTERS - Libellulidae**

**Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa* A female near Almaraz on 30th.

**Black-tailed Skimmer** *Orthetrum cancellatum* Two females near Almaraz on 30th.

**Red-veined Darter** *Sympetrum fonscolombii* Plenty Salinas de Bonanza on 24th, several Casa de Hitos on 28th.

**OTHER SELECTED INSECTS - INSECTA**

**Egyptian Grasshopper** *Anacridium aegyptium* Noted Palacio del Acebrón on 25th, and FSM on 27th, and on 28th.

**Field Cricket** *Gryllus campestris* Quite common and widespread and heard calling on 6 days from 22nd.

**Mole Cricket** *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa* heard Zahara de los Atunes on 23rd.  
**Hornet** *Vespa crabro* One FSM on 28th.  
**Carpenter Bee** *Xylocopa violacea* A few noted on three days from 24th.  
**Rhinoceros Beetle** *Copris lunaris* Several FSM on 28th.  
**Dung Beetle** *Scarabaeus semipunctatus* One Palacio del Acebrón on 25th.  
**Oil Beetle** *Meloe sp.* One Madrigalejo rice fields on 28th.  
**Buprestid beetle** Buprestidae One Palacio del Acebrón on 25th.  
**Black-and-red Froghopper** *Cercopis vulnerata* Seen FSM on 30th.  
**Pyjama Bug** *Graphosoma italicum* 100+ FSM on 30th.

#### OTHER SELECTED TAXA

**Scorpion sp.** *Buthus occitanus* One FSM on 30th.  
**Centipede** *Scolopendra cingulatus* Two Valdecañas Dam on 30th.  
**West African Fiddler Crab** *Uca tangeri* Lots Barbate & Salinas de Bonanza on 24th.  
**Red Signal Crayfish** *Procambarus clarkii* One en route on 25th.

#### LARGER FISH - PISCES

**Common Carp** *Cyprinus carpio* Noted José Antonio Valverde visitors' centre on 26th, Alange Dam on 27th, and lots spawning Casa de Hitos on 28th.  
**Barbel sp.** *Barbus sp.* A few Alange Dam on 27th.  
**American Large-mouthed Bass** *Micropterus salmoides* Several Alange Dam on 27th.  
**Grey Mullet sp.** *Mugil sp.* Noted Tarifa harbour on 23rd, and on 24th.  
**Atlantic Fartet** *Aphanius baeticus* Lots El Acebuche on 25th.  
**Sun Perch** *Lepomis auritus* Lots Alange Dam on 27th.