

Camargue & Pyrenees

Saturday 12 – Sunday 20 September 2009

Tour Leader:
Mike Read

Daily Diary

Saturday 12 September

Some of the group met up at Gatwick Airport well in time for the flight to Marseille which pushed back exactly on time and landed a few minutes early in the south of France. There were a few birds about as we taxied into the terminal building but similar species were seen once we had met up with the other members of the group. Species noted at this location were House Sparrow, Magpie, Barn Swallows, many Yellow-legged Gulls and about 20 Cattle Egrets. These last two species were especially seen when loud bangs were used to scare birds away from the runway area at the airport.

We were soon on our way towards Beaucaire but only a few birds were actually seen as we travelled. These included more Magpies, Swallows and Cattle Egrets as well as a few House Martins. The biggest assemblage of Cattle Egrets was noted as we turned into the hotel drive. In a field opposite this turning were about 15 egrets, which were feeding beside grazing ponies. Should they be called 'horse egrets'? Soon we were enjoying the delights of the first of many Provençal meals.

Sunday 13 September

We began the day with a gentle pre-breakfast walk up the hill behind the hotel. As we set out in the semi-darkness a couple of Cormorants flew by and three Carrion Crows greeted the day but flew off as we approached. Grey Heron, Sardinian Warbler and Green Woodpecker were all heard but other sightings included Collared Dove, Wood Pigeon, Chaffinch and Goldfinch. A group of 12 Cormorants disappeared over a hilltop and close to some housing at least 3 Serins and 3 Black Redstarts were noted.

After breakfast we set off towards part of the Camargue and again there was a group of Cattle Egrets feeding beside the ponies. During the drive down towards Fourques our first good sighting was of a very back-lit European Roller, unfortunately we couldn't see any real colouring on this bird but this was soon put to rights when we saw other birds before reaching Fourques. Other species noted during this part of the journey included Barn Swallows, 2 Common Buzzards, a number of European Starlings and we heard a couple of Cetti's Warblers calling. Needless to say wherever there was livestock in the fields, Cattle Egrets were present.

After passing Arles we turned onto a side road where our first sighting was of an unusual lump of soil in a ploughed field. As we pulled up, the lump of soil took off and was in fact a Kestrel! Further along the road we stopped to spend some time looking over a somewhat desiccated field and here we soon found a couple of Whinchats, a juvenile Red-backed Shrike, two or three more Kestrels and a pair of European Rollers. All the while we were there a Grey Heron stood sentinel on a gate post and nearby Marsh Harriers and Common Buzzards were drifting around seeking a meal and just overhead a group of perhaps a dozen Sand Martins had joined the Barn Swallows which were feeding on insects. When the shrike perched beside group of brambles we suddenly became aware a group of Tree Sparrows seemed to be objecting to its presence. A little further along the road we made another stop where egrets and herons were very much in evidence. This included our first Squacco Heron and three or four Great White Egrets. Marsh Harriers were noted at this spot too and at least five Northern Wheatears fed in a bare field. Shortly after we had seen our first Short-toed Eagle of the trip a Sardinian Warbler dashed across the road and disappeared into a Tamarisk bush and a couple of Collared Pratincoles were glimpsed landing some distance away. Despite prolonged intensive

searching these birds were never re-located unfortunately. However, our search did turn up three Crested Larks.

We then drove to the Musée Camarguais where our walk out to the hide and back took slightly longer than anticipated and so we ended up having a slightly late lunch. It was worthwhile because throughout the walk and especially at the hide we saw lots of wildlife. To begin with along the track we saw at least three Willow Warblers, a good few butterflies and absolutely masses of damselflies and dragonflies. Despite our efforts not all of the insects were actually identified! The fields alongside the track were lilac-coloured with masses of Sea Lavender. Sitting in the hide gave us some respite from the heat of the sun and also a good bird list. Species noted here included three Northern Lapwings, five Little Ringed Plovers, 8 or more Wood Sandpipers, one Whiskered Tern and two Glossy Ibis as well as a sprinkling of Moorhens, Mute Swans, Coots, Grey Herons, Little, Cattle and Great White Egrets.

After a good picnic lunch back at the Musée we began the journey towards the eastern part of the Camargue. From a tower overlooking a few pools we were able to watch lovely white horses grazing in a shallow pool. One of these horses sported the fine decoration of a Cattle Egret on its back. Some unidentified large fish could be seen in the waterway below the tower and these would certainly not have been on the menu for the two Kingfishers that were seen dashing about and fishing just across the road. Along the road to the Mas d'Agon there were five Great White Egrets as well as more Cattle and Little Egrets and a further single Glossy Ibis and Whiskered Terns.

Soon we were overlooking a little of the Etang de Vaccares where Great Crested Grebes, Cormorant and our first couple of Greater Flamingos were noted along with a passing Northern Shoveler. A little further on at least three Caspian Terns were seen while near La Capellier we added three Little Grebes and two Common Greenshanks. A little later than scheduled we arrived at the Etang du Fangassier where hundreds of flamingos dotted every available stretch of water. An Osprey was seen fishing over some distant water-filled channels, a group of 30 or more Shelducks were noted whilst the wading birds were represented by Pied Avocets, Little Ringed Plovers, Kentish Plovers and a good number of Little Stints. As we left this area a couple of Yellow Wagtails landed briefly beside the track but flew off again before we really had any good views of them.

When we reached where the Marais de Grenouillet should be, our feeling that there had been very little rain in recent weeks was confirmed. There was absolutely no water in the lake and consequently there were no birds to be seen. However, we did see a few more things during the drive back to Beaucaire and these included another Roller and at least six Corn Buntings. To complete the day we had another fine Hotel Robinson meal before retiring to bed satisfied with another excellent days birding.

Monday 14 September

We began the day with a pre-breakfast walk along the track in front of the hotel. Birds were a little on the quiet side but we soon heard the distinctive chatter of a Sardinian Warbler. Further along we heard a Cetti's Warbler calling down by the river over which a Yellow-legged Gull was flying and then we saw Blue Tit and Great Tit. Two small birds chasing each other in an evergreen oak turned out to be Firecrests and to complete our walk a lovely Hobby dashed out towards the river presumably hunting dragonflies and other insects.

After breakfast we drove to Remoulins and here we found Little Egret and a few White Wagtails beside the river and a rather strange sighting was another Firecrest. This bird was actually feeding underneath the bridge yet seemed a little confused and unable to find the way out. We then drove to the Pont du Gard where Little Egrets and White Wagtails were again noted but around the fabulous Roman Aqueduct were a number of Jackdaws and at least a dozen Crag Martins. After a break for coffee we drove to the Chaines des Alpilles, past Les Baux and then up to La Caume where we had our picnic lunch to the accompaniment of fire-fighters playing boule. Birds noted at this spot included two Crested Tits and another Firecrest amongst the trees and two Short-toed Eagles drifting overhead against a clear blue sky.

We then moved to an area of La Crau where at first in the somewhat breezy conditions our searches proved somewhat fruitless. Birds were certainly hard to find in this open location. However, it would seem that the

breeze was helping birds like Kestrels and Common Buzzards as a few of each of these species were noted. Wherever there were sheep, cattle or horses there were Cattle Egrets present and a few Wheatears were feeding here and there. Eventually we began to find a few more of the birds typically associated with this area and we began with the first of five Crested Larks. Little groups of Red-legged Partridges scuttled off here and there as we drove through the area and a Rabbit was noted running along a bank. Nearby a couple of Southern Grey Shrikes were perched on low lying bushes. We eventually managed to locate one of our major target birds here when a group of about 90 Little Bustards took to the air in the distance, perhaps disturbed by a passing predator. A few minutes later another 30 or so birds flew up from the same area and passed by and it was then that we saw a Black Kite in flight well beyond them. A Brown Hare was also noted at this location and then a bit further on we found two Stone Curlews as our last birds of the day.

We returned to the hotel Robinson in good time to relax before dinner.

Tuesday 15 September

For our pre-breakfast walk we drove the short distance towards Remoulins and took a walk beside the river. Three Mallard and a few Grey Herons were seen along with a couple of Little Egrets and one Great White Egret. In scrub beside the river we had a brief view of a Pied Flycatcher and there were a few Willow Warblers about. Green Woodpecker and Common Buzzard were heard calling in the distance and eventually a couple of Common Sandpipers were seen walking along the top of the dam. Just before we began our walk back to the minibus, a Red Fox walked out onto the track about 50 yards from us but then dived back into cover as soon as it realised there were humans about.

On the way towards the western part of the Camargue we paid another visit to the Gimeaux road. Cattle and Little Egrets were very much in evidence and there were also a few Great White Egrets and Grey Herons to be seen. Unusually, a Squacco Heron was stood on a fence post for some considerable time enabling us to get good telescope views. Swallows and Sand Martins were commonly seen and a couple of Corn Buntings flew by. Marsh Harriers drifted about in good numbers but it wasn't until a Sparrowhawk flew around that a good number of Yellow Wagtails took to the air. A Reed Warbler called occasionally in the nearby reeds and two or three Cetti's Warblers were heard in various locations. Other species identified on call were Greenshank and European Bee-eater but sadly neither of these two were seen. The final good find at this location were three White Storks that took to the air in the distance and gradually rose on a thermal and perhaps drifted off on their migration journeys.

After a refreshing drinks stop in Gallician we drove to the Petite Camargue where there were many more Egrets and Herons to be seen as well as a couple more Common Buzzards, 4 Marsh Harriers and 3 Common Kestrels. We found several plants of the unusual Squinting Cucumber which Liz delighted in demonstrating to some of the group. To the south of Gallician we found an area of shallow water amongst a huge reedbed and lake and felt this would be good to search for waders etc. This proved to be a good move as nine Wood Sandpipers and two Kentish Plovers were found and a group of about a dozen birds that flew by may well have been Little Stints. Also here were Grey Heron, Moorhen and at least six Marsh Harriers as well as three Kestrels and a passing Hobby. Searching for insects overhead was a large group of Sand Martins and a few Swallows and these were joined by one common and at least 15 Alpine Swifts. Our final good bird here was a Whinchat that perched on top of the reeds and mammals were represented by three Coypu.

By now we were all ready for lunch and a shady spot with picnic tables was soon located and a happy hour was spent devouring as much as we could of the Hotel Robinson offerings. From here we drove on down towards St Marie del la Mer only to find that the visitor centre where we normally stopped was now firmly closed. As a substitute we paid a visit to the Parc Ornithologique where did our best to ignore the caged birds and instead went for a walk around the areas of open water where wild birds were congregating. As we approached the etang a Spotted Redshank flew out giving its typical tewit call. From the bridge we could see at least eight Mute Swans and lots of Mallards and a couple of Sacred Ibis was a new species for the *Travelling Naturalist* in this area. At first we were dubious about including these on our list but in certain areas of France they breed in the wild and our suspicions that these may be free flying birds were confirmed when a third bird flew in and joined them. As we wandered on around the etang more and more Mallard were seen and amongst them were quite a number of Common Teal. Three or four Coypu were added to the

list and from one hide we could see a good group of Black-headed Gulls and a lone Gull-billed Tern. Waders were represented by numbers Little Ringed Plovers and Wood Sandpipers and a feeding group of 27 Common Snipe. This completed our watching here so we drove down to our final location of the day, which was the Plage Est at Saint Maries. Here we found numerous Ringed Plovers and two Kentish Plovers along with two Grey Plovers, perhaps 25 Redshanks and a Greenshank. More terns were noted here these being six Sandwich and a single feeding Caspian Tern. Most of these birds were out on a shallow lake to the south of a driveable track while to the north a group of over 200 Greater Flamingos could be seen and some of them gave fairly close views.

We then made the journey back to the Hotel Robinson and on the way saw a good few birds but perhaps most unusual of these was the flock of 20 or so Northern Lapwings that we noted not far from the Musée Camarguais.

Wednesday 16 September

With today being the journey day we didn't do a pre-breakfast walk to allow people plenty of time for packing. After breakfast we were under way by 9.15am and had soon joined the motorway and were heading west towards Toulouse and then the central Pyrenees. After very heavy overnight rain it was good that we only had occasional light rain in the beginning of the journey and by lunchtime we were in warm sunshine. While still in the Camargue area we managed to see a few Cattle Egrets normally wherever there were domesticated animals. As we headed further west Kestrels and Buzzards became a little more frequent no doubt responding to the dry weather and after a stop for coffee, a probable Short-toed Eagle was seen hovering over a nearby hill.

We had lunch just before reaching Toulouse and there was very little bird life to be seen here. Heading onwards we began to rise into the Pyrenean foothills where Common Buzzards and Kestrels were more frequently encountered. Eventually we were also seeing an occasional Red Kite. We left the motorway at Tarbes and headed due south past Lourdes and a little deeper into the mountains. A car park near Argeles Gazost provided a good stopping point with views to the mountains and almost immediately we were seeing lots Griffon Vultures as well as many other raptors. These included at least three Egyptian Vultures, three Short-toed Eagles, numerous Red Kites and Buzzards and a distant pale-phase Booted Eagle. A pair of Ravens was also noted in the area. As we left here the same or perhaps another pale Booted Eagle was seen over the road and a few smaller birds were also noted. Soon we reached our hotel in Luz St Sauveur and were settling in to our new accommodation.

Thursday 17 September

Being quite a lot further west and in a mountain valley, the sun seemed to come up quite a bit later than in the Camargue area. Consequently it was rather dark when we began our pre-breakfast walk up towards the castle above the hotel. Once we had completed the climb the views from the castle over the waking town were stunning. By now a few birds had begun to stir and we soon saw our first Carrion Crow and could hear a Robin ticking away in the woodland. Further along the footpath we heard Green Woodpecker calling and eventually managed to see a few more birds these included Nuthatch (heard), Great Tit and Long-tailed Tit. The meadow here was past its best but still had a lot of Bladder Campion, Scabious, Knapweed and Fat Hen.

After breakfast we headed towards Gavarnie and paused at a river bridge where we had brief views of a Dipper. A little further on Grey Heron stood on the rocks and as we approached the town of Gavarnie itself we noted a few large birds taking off from a hilltop. Gradually more and more birds rose into the air and in the end we estimated there were at least 60 Griffon Vultures to be seen. We also had an adult Lammergeier flying close to the cliffs and a group of Alpine Choughs could be seen against the skyline. Once parked in Gavarnie we began our walk towards the Cirque. However, as we left the car park the attendant pointed out a Dipper in the river nearby. Autumn crocus and Merendera decorated our onward path and then overhead we could see more Griffon Vultures and two adult Lammergeiers. A lone Isard was spotted high on the hill but closer to hand were Coal Tits in the conifers as well as Sparrowhawk, Kestrels and Common Buzzards

overhead. Along the trackside we noted Yellow Monkshood, Grass of Parnassus, Field Gentian, Round-headed Rampion and Cinnamon Rose. Long before we reached the Cirque hotel we paused to eat some of our lunch in an area where Red-berried Elder was common. There were a few other flowers to be seen including Meadow Cranesbill, Harebell and Wild Raspberry. Here we noted a good number of extra bird species including Blackcap, Robin, Bullfinch, Treecreeper, Goldcrest and Black Redstart. Many of these birds were visiting the Elder bushes to feed on the bright coloured berries. Perhaps disturbed by an unseen raptor two groups of Mistle Thrushes, totalling about 30 birds in all, flew up from one area of pines and headed eastwards. Throughout lunch two juvenile Lammergeiers were seen soaring around one of the high crags, Swallows were heading south and a few Alpine Swifts were flying around.

After drinks at the Cirque Hotel we made the return walk with Common Redstart, Green Woodpecker and more Griffon Vultures noted along with a couple of different Grey Wagtails. From Gavarnie we drove to the Ossoue Valley where we paused to complete our picnic lunches. Further on more Griffon Vultures and two juvenile Lammergeiers were seen (perhaps many of the same birds we had noted earlier) and we then continued up the gravel road where we frequently paused to admire Water Pipits at close quarters. At a jumble of rocks we took a short walk to search for birds and again there were many Red-berried Elder bushes that attracted numerous species. These included Wheatear, Common and Black Redstart and a very attractive juvenile Rock Thrush. Also noted in this area were at least two Common Kestrels, a soaring Sparrowhawk and our only Golden Eagle of the trip. Marmots were numerous in the area as were Crag Martins and at least two pairs of Ravens completed our birding for the day.

Friday 18 September

Two Tawny Owls hooted as we made our way up the road in the semi darkness and a couple of Carrion Crows called to indicate the start of another day. A Common Buzzard called as it took off and crossed a field below us and two or three Robins were seen along the roadside. Other species noted included Chaffinch and Goldfinch.

After breakfast we headed for the Col de Tourmalet; one of the most famous climbs in the Tour de France. Thankfully for us we were letting the engine take the strain and not having to cycle up! Just outside of Luz St Saveur a very dark Red Squirrel was seen bounding across the ground and then it carried an acorn up a nearby tree.

Just beyond the halfway point of the sign-posted climb we paused to view some smaller birds which turned out to be Goldfinches, however, as we scanned around from here we saw a good number of Griffon Vultures, at least four Kestrels and two Common Buzzards. A Wren called unseen from amongst the vegetation. Once we arrived at the Tourmalet car park we embarked on a short walk to search for birds. Red-billed Choughs called and flew around in fair numbers and as we began to walk in while Water Pipits, Wheatears and Black Redstarts fed on the slopes. Higher up we saw more Red-billed Choughs plus a number of Griffon Vultures and a lone Lammergeier. Plants seen during our walk included Woolly Thistle, Yellow Saxifrage and Alpine Toadflax. Occasional showers of very light rain suggested we should head back to the car park. However, we could not help but pause to admire the changing scenery in the mountains and valleys as clouds obscured or revealed various parts of a stunning scene.

After a late coffee break we drove down the eastern side of Tourmalet a short distance for our picnic lunch. To say the breeze was cool was an understatement. However, everyone enjoyed a fine picnic as a Red Kite and a few more Griffon Vultures were seen overhead. Other birds noted at this time were more Red-billed Choughs a Kestrel and a few Wheatears.

We re-crossed the Col du Tourmalet and headed for the Foret de Lienz where we encountered a good flock of White Wagtails, a couple of Pied Flycatchers and a Serin even before we had left the vehicle. During our walk through the forest we were able to see a few more birds including another Pied Flycatcher, Chaffinches, Robins, Black Redstart, Common Redstart, Blackcaps and a Wren. Many of these birds were feeding in the Red-berried Elder. Also noted during this walk were a few species of fungi, one of which was a bright orange Stags Horn type fungus. Our walk back to the mini bus turned up a Great Spotted Woodpecker tapping away in a tree high above us and a European Nuthatch was heard calling in the distance. More light rain began as we neared the vehicle and we decided on a slightly early finish to the day.

Saturday 19 September

We began the day with a walk up to and beyond the castle in the early morning semi-darkness. Few birds were noted until we began our return walk and this was our original intention. Carrion Crows were the first to begin calling and flying around and we then saw a few other things including 3 Kestrels, a Pied Flycatcher. As we neared the hotel we happened upon a flock of about 12 Long-tailed Tits as well as a few Great and Blue Tits a few Willow Warblers and a couple of Blackcaps.

After breakfast we set off towards the Cirque de Troumouse and during the gradual climb towards and beyond Gèdre we saw a Red Squirrel, 3 Dippers, a few Wheatears, Common Buzzard, Black Redstart, Cirl Bunting and Yellowhammer and on the higher ground we started to see lots of Water Pipits and Red-billed Choughs. Up at the Cirque itself clouds were drifting around and constantly revealing a changing and magical scene. High on a ridge that was coated by a fresh fall of snow, a lone Isard stood right on the skyline for some while. More Red-billed Choughs flew around and as we took a walk out across the bole beneath the Cirque we saw lots more Water Pipits, Black Redstarts and Wheatears. There were also one or two Kestrels about but unfortunately we failed to find a couple of the high level species we were seeking. Here there were some lovely splashes of blue from the groups of Common Monkshood. We also noted Moss Campion and Alpine Clover. The mist and clouds continued to come and go as we walked back towards the car park and a slight breeze had sprung up making it a little cool at this altitude. As we crossed the bridge close to the car park another Dipper was seen in the stream.

We descended towards the Cirque Hotel for our lunch which we ate close to a rushing waterfall. Here there were lots of wild flowers to be seen including Alpenrose, Tormentil and Devil's-bit Scabious. Further Black Redstarts and Wheatears were noted and at least 10 Griffon Vultures drifted overhead. After a leisurely lunch we descended back towards Heas seeing a few Crag Martins and a Pied Flycatcher as we went. With the low cloud covering up many views on the higher ground we decided to go a little to the north and visit Hautacam. As we climbed this famous Tour de France road stage few birds were seen but on reaching the top we had reasonable views of Red Kite, a couple of Common Buzzards, at least 6 Kestrels, a few Ravens and more than 20 Griffon Vultures. At one stage we were actually looking down on a couple of Common Buzzards and a Kestrel hanging in the updrafts created by the southerly wind. Everyone agreed that it was fabulous to be able to get these kinds of views of these two raptors. The Alpenrose was very common here and we some of them still had their lovely bright pink flowers. As we made our way back down the hill a Whinchat was noted on one of the grassy slopes. We returned to the hotel in Luz with a little time to commence packing before our evening meal.

Sunday 20 September

Shortly after 9,00am we left the hotel and began a very leisurely journey towards Toulouse – with many stops on the way. Our first pause for birding was close to Argelès Gazost and along the river bank there were a number of birds in the surrounding trees. Unfortunately there were lots of anglers along the banks and standing in the river which meant there were no Dippers to be seen and we only noted 1 Grey Wagtails and 3 White Wagtails. Birds in the trees included at least a dozen Long-tailed Tits as well as a few Blue and Great Tits, 2 or 3 Robins hopped about in various locations and a common Treecreeper was noted creeping up one of the trees (strangely enough!). The only other bird of note here was a Grey Heron which flew past.

A short drive took us close to Ayzac-Ost and here we were again hearing a few birds in the woodland. A Great-spotted Woodpecker remained unseen but the constant calling of a couple of Nuthatches drew us to them and we eventually obtained reasonable views. A short walk into a quarry revealed occasional birds including Blackcap, 3 Rock Buntings, a Common Whitethroat, Pheasant and Common Redstart. High overhead a couple of Ravens drifted around as well as 5 Griffon Vultures and 2 Egyptian Vultures were perched in the same place as they were when we arrived in the Pyrenees. Also seen were some diminutive Fairy Foxgloves and some Caper Spurge plants, one of which must have been partly eaten at one point because it had sprouted many branches and looking down on it from above it made an unusual shape.

As we left here and set off towards the motorway, a couple of Crag Martins were the final birds that we saw before rain set in. Soon it was raining quite heavily and after a slightly late coffee stop, we decided to have our picnic lunch at the Aire du Pic du Midi. Thankfully there was a sheltered picnic table that we could utilise. Here we noted a couple of Robins and Blackbirds and half a dozen Mallards flew past. After lunch we rejoined the motorway and continued towards Toulouse and at one particular point by a large river we saw Yellow Legged Gulls, Little Egret and a few Sand Martins. Further along occasional Common Kestrels and Buzzards were noted.

A brief visit to some industrial units just off the motorway revealed 2 Stonechats, Crested Lark, White and Grey Wagtails, a Common Buzzard being attacked by a Kestrel and a Red Kite. Onwards from here we noted 2 or 3 Common Buzzards on roadside fences and another bird flying across the motorway some distance ahead of us was originally identified as another Common Buzzard. However, as we made progress towards it we suddenly realised that it was not a Buzzard at all but in fact our second Osprey of the tour! We completed the journey to Toulouse airport in good time and we were soon through into the departure lounge ready for our homeward flights.

SPECIES LIST:

BIRDS

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| Red-legged Partridge | <i>Alectoris rufa</i> | A total of about 20 birds seen on 14 th in la Crau |
| Common Pheasant | <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> | A single bird seen briefly near Gallician on 15 th and one heard calling at Ayzac-Ost on 20 th |
| Greylag Goose | <i>Anser anser</i> | Birds of this species seen during the drive to Toulouse on 20 th may have been captive birds |
| Mute Swan | <i>Cygnus olor</i> | Nine on 13 th at the Musée Camarguais and then many noted in the western Camargue on 15 th then on 20 th a pair was seen during the drive to Toulouse but they may have been captive birds |
| Common Shelduck | <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> | Approximately 15 seen near the Etang du Fangassier on 13 th |
| Mallard | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> | Noted on 3 days in the Camargue area and then during the drive to Toulouse on 20 th |
| Northern Shoveler | <i>Anas clypeata</i> | A single bird was seen in flight on 13 th at the Etang du Vaccares |
| Eurasian Teal | <i>Anas crecca</i> | Good numbers seen on 15 th during our walk at the Parc Ornithologique |
| Little Grebe | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> | Just 3 seen on 13 th near La Capellier |
| Great Crested Grebe | <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> | At least 6 seen on the eastern etangs on 13 th |
| Greater Flamingo | <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i> | At least 750 seen on 13 th and many hundreds seen 2 days later |
| White Stork | <i>Ciconia ciconia</i> | Three seen soaring up on a thermal on 15 th in the northern part of the Camargue |
| Glossy Ibis | <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> | Two on 13 th during the Musée Camarguais walk and another later that day at Mas d'Agon |
| Sacred Ibis | <i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i> | Three free-flying birds seen at the Parc Ornithologique on 15 th should surely be included in the list as there are breeding birds in other parts of France |
| Squacco Heron | <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> | One seen near Gimeaux on 13 th was followed by another later that day then on 15 th there was 1 near Gimeaux and 2 to the south of Gallician |
| Cattle Egret | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> | Good numbers noted on each of the first 5 days |
| Grey Heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | At least 6 seen on 13 th then noted on a further 5 days including occasional birds in the Pyrenees |
| Great (White) Egret | <i>Ardea alba</i> | About a dozen seen on 13 th then seen on 15 th and 16 th in smaller numbers |

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| Little Egret | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> | Perhaps as many as 20 on 13 th then noted on the following 3 days and then a single bird was seen during the drive to Toulouse on 20 th |
| Great Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> | A single bird on 2 th was our first then seen close to the Hotel Robinson and in the Camargue on 13 th , 15 th and 16 th |
| Common/Eurasian Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> | Seen every day except 12 th |
| Eurasian Hobby | <i>Falco subbuteo</i> | Our first during the pre-breakfast walk on 14 th close to the Rhone and another was seen later that day. There were also 2 sightings the following day and a single sighting on 16 th |
| Osprey | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> | A single bird was seen on 13 th close to the Etang du Fangassier where it was obviously seeking a meal. The most surprising sighting was on our final day (20 th) when 1 was seen as we drove towards Toulouse airport |
| Red Kite | <i>Milvus milvus</i> | As usual our first sightings of this species were on 16 th as we neared the lower slopes of the Pyrenees; we noted at least half a dozen that day. Then we saw this species on the remaining 4 days |
| Black Kite | <i>Milvus migrans</i> | Just a single distant sighting on 14 th over La Crau. Unfortunately it was rather distant and the passing flock of 90 Little Bustards took precedence! |
| Lammergeier/Bearded Vulture | <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> | Probably half a dozen different birds seen on 17 th during our walk to the Cirque du Gavarnie and our drive into the Ossoue Valley. A further 2 birds were noted the following day close to the Col du Tourmalet |
| Egyptian Vulture | <i>Neophron percnopterus</i> | At least 3 seen close to Ayzac-Ost on 16 th and 2 seen in the same location on 20 th |
| Griffon Vulture | <i>Gyps fulvus</i> | A good number of sightings despite the less than perfect soaring weather in the Pyrenees. There were at least 15 near Ayzac-Ost on 16 th the following day we found some rather large flocks soaring up in 2 different locations and these were flocks of 60 and 50 respectively. The following morning before breakfast there was another group of perhaps 50 individuals taking off from a high ridge as well as being seen later that day and on 19 th and 20 th |
| Short-toed Eagle | <i>Circaetus gallicus</i> | Three seen on 13 th in the northern part of the Camargue. 2 on 14 th flew low overhead during our lunch at La Caume and then on 16 th at least 4 birds were seen during the journey to Luz St Sauveur |
| (Western) Marsh Harrier | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> | At least a dozen seen on 13 th with a similar number on 15 th in various parts of the Camargue |
| Eurasian Sparrowhawk | <i>Accipiter nisus</i> | Our first was on 15 th in the northern part of the Camargue and this species was also noted on 17 th high over the mountains during our Gavarnie walk and there was another on 18 th |
| Common Buzzard | <i>Buteo buteo</i> | The only raptor noted on every day of the tour |
| Golden Eagle | <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> | Just a single sighting on 17 th high in the Ossoue Valley |
| Booted Eagle | <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i> | A pale phase bird was noted on 16 th near Agos-Vidalos and it or another bird was seen further along the road towards Luz St Sauveur a little later |
| Little Bustard | <i>Tetrax tetrax</i> | Flocks of 90 and 30 approximately were seen on La Crau on 14 th . These were really amazing figures and far above any quantities that this leader had noted in the area previously |

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| Common Moorhen | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> | Noted on 13 th & 15 th in the Camargue and there was 1 on 16 th on the way to the Pyrenees |
| Eurasian/Common Coot | <i>Fulica atra</i> | Good numbers seen on 13 th & 15 th |
| Eurasian Stone-curlew | <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i> | Two seen on La Crau on 14 th |
| Pied Avocet | <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> | About a dozen seen on 13 th in the Etang de Galabert |
| Northern Lapwing | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> | Three on 13 th during our Musée Camarguais walk then a single bird on 15 th in the north of the Camargue was followed by a flock of 20 later that day in the same area as we headed back towards Beaucaire |
| Grey/Black-bellied Plover | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> | Two seen at Stes Maries on 15 th and both were still showing quite a lot of summer plumage |
| [Common] Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> | 26 seen to the east of Stes Marie on 15 th |
| Little Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius dubius</i> | Three on 13 th at the Musée Camarguais were followed by about a dozen in the Etang du Fangassier area later that day and there were about 15 noted on 15 th at the Parc Ornithologique |
| Kentish Plover | <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> | About 15 seen close to the Etang du Fangassier on 13 th and a further 4 noted on 15 th to the east of Stes Maries |
| Common Snipe | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> | There were a couple glimpsed by the leader only on 15 th but then later that day we had good views of 27 at the Parc Ornithologique |
| Eurasian Curlew | <i>Numenius arquata</i> | Five noted on 13 th at the Musée Camarguais |
| Spotted Redshank | <i>Tringa erythropus</i> | Just a single fly-by bird at the Parc Ornithologique on 15 th , thankfully it called! |
| Common Redshank | <i>Tringa totanus</i> | About 25 seen to the east of Stes Maries de la Mer on 1 th |
| Common Greenshank | <i>Tringa nebularia</i> | Two on 13 th near La Capelière |
| Green Sandpiper | <i>Tringa ochropus</i> | Just a single bird seen on 15 th at the Parc Ornithologique |
| Wood Sandpiper | <i>Tringa glareola</i> | Half a dozen seen on 13 th at the Musée Camarguais and the species was also noted on 15 th |
| Common Sandpiper | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | Two seen during a pre-breakfast walk on 15 th a little distance from the hotel along the river Rhone |
| Little Stint | <i>Calidris minuta</i> | About 15 seen on 13 th at the Etang de Galabert and possibly a dozen seen south of Galician on 15 th |
| Dunlin | <i>Calidris alpina</i> | Two seen on 15 th to the east of Stes Maries |
| Collared Pratincole | <i>Glareola pratincola</i> | Two seen landing at the usual site on 13 th but unfortunately they could not be relocated |
| Yellow-legged Gull | <i>Larus michalhlis</i> | Seen every day from 12 th to 16 th and then a single bird noted on 20 th during our drive towards Toulouse |
| Black-headed Gull | <i>Larus ridibundus</i> | Seen on 13 th , 14 th and 15 th in the Camargue area |
| Gull-billed Tern | <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> | Just one juvenile noted on 15 th at the Parc Ornithologique |
| Caspian Tern | <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> | Three seen on 13 th on the Etang de Vaccares and a single bird seen fishing to the east of Stes Maries on 15 th |
| Sandwich Tern | <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i> | Six seen near Stes Marie on 1 th |
| Whiskered Tern | <i>Chlidonias hybrida</i> | Two on 13 th near the Musée Camarguais and a further 3 on 15 th near Stes Maries |
| Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) | <i>Columba livia</i> | Noted every day |
| (Common) Wood Pigeon | <i>Columba palumbus</i> | Small numbers noted every day except 18 th |
| European Turtle Dove | <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> | Just a single bird noted on 13 th in the eastern Camargue |
| Eurasian Collared Dove | <i>Streptopelia decacocto</i> | Noted every day |
| Tawny Owl | <i>Strix aluco</i> | Two birds heard calling in the distance during the pre breakfast walk on 18 th |

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| Alpine Swift | <i>Tachymarptis melba</i> | About 15 on 15 th to the south of Galician and a further 3 noted on 17 th during our walk to the Cirque de Gavarnie |
| Common Swift | <i>Apus apus</i> | At least 1 noted along with the Alpine Swifts on 15 th |
| European Roller | <i>Coracias garrulus</i> | About a dozen seen on 13 th beginning on the road towards Fourques and then sighted throughout the rest of the day in various locations |
| Common Kingfisher | <i>Alcedo atthis</i> | Two seen just to the north of the Etang du Vaccares on 13 th |
| European Bee-eater | <i>Merops apiaster</i> | Two or three heard calling in the distance on 15 th to the east St-Gilles but sadly this colourful species was not actually seen |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopos major</i> | One on 16 th flew across the motorway during our journey towards the Pyrenees. One in the Foret de Lienz on 18 th and finally one was heard on 20 th close to Ayzac-Ost |
| (European) Green Woodpecker | <i>Picus viridus</i> | Heard on 5 days in widely separated locations and one was seen on 17 th during our Gavarnie walk |
| Red-backed Shrike | <i>Lanius collurio</i> | An adult and a juvenile seen in the northern part of the Camargue on 13 th |
| Southern Grey Shrike | <i>Lanius meridionalis</i> | Two birds seen on La Crau on 14 th |
| Eurasian Jay | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> | The first 2 were seen on 14 th near the Pont du Gard and then a few seen every day from 16 th |
| Eurasian Magpie | <i>Pica pica</i> | Seen every day |
| Red-billed Chough | <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> | At least 15 on 18 th at the Col du Tourmalet and also noted the following day at the Cirque de Troumouse |
| Alpine Chough | <i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i> | Good numbers seen above high ridges during our Gavarnie walk on 17 th |
| (Western) Jackdaw | <i>Corvus monedula</i> | Noted on six days |
| Carrion Crow | <i>Corvus corone</i> | Noted every day |
| Northern/Common Raven | <i>Corvus corax</i> | Four seen near Ayzac-Ost on 16 th and then seen on the following four days in the Pyrenees |
| Coal Tit | <i>Parus ater</i> | A few seen during our walk to the Cirque de Gavarnie on 17 th |
| (European) Crested Tit | <i>Parus cristatus</i> | Two at La Caume on 14 th and also heard during the Gavarnie walk on 17 th |
| Great Tit | <i>Parus major</i> | A single bird on 14 th near the Hotel Robinson was our first and the species was also noted on four days from 17 th in the Pyrenees |
| Blue Tit | <i>Parus caeruleus</i> | Four on 14 th and also noted on 15 th both before breakfast and then seen on four days from 17 th in the Pyrenees |
| Sand Martin/Bank Swallow | <i>Riparia riparia</i> | About a dozen seen on 13 th in the northern Camargue where the species was also seen on 15 th On 20 th a few were seen during our journey to Toulouse |
| Barn Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | Noted every day |
| Eurasian Crag Martin | <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i> | About a dozen seen at the Pont du Gard on 14 th and then noted on four consecutive days from 17 th in the Pyrenees |
| (Common) House Martin | <i>Delichon urbica</i> | A few seen during the drive from Marseilles airport on 12 th and also noted on 18 th in the Pyrenees |
| Long-tailed Tit | <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> | Seen the pre-breakfast walks on 17 th and 19 th and then at least a dozen seen on 20 th near Argeles Gazost |
| Crested Lark | <i>Galerida cristata</i> | Three seen on 13 th and 6 on 15 th in the northern Camargue, 7 seen on 14 th on La Crau and 3 seen on 20 th on the way to Toulouse |

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| Zitting Cisticola | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i> | Just a single bird seen on 15 th along the Gimeaux road |
| Cetti's Warbler | <i>Cettia cetti</i> | At least 4 heard on 13 th in the northern and eastern Camargue, then heard during a pre-breakfast walk on 14 th and also noted the following day |
| Eurasian Reed Warbler | <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i> | A single bird was heard on 15 th beside the Gimeaux road |
| Willow Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> | Three seen on 13 th during the Musée Camarguais walk and then noted on our 3 full days in the Pyrenees |
| Common Chiffchaff Blackcap | <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> | Just a single bird seen on 18 th in the Forêt de Lienz Small numbers seen or heard on four consecutive days in the Pyrenees. Many of the birds noted were feeding on the berries of Red-berried Elder |
| Common Whitethroat | <i>Sylvia communis</i> | Just a single bird noted close to Ayzac-Ost on 20 th just prior to our departure from the Pyrenees |
| Sardinian Warbler | <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i> | At least heard during the pre-breakfast walk on 13 th and one was seen later that day on the Gimeaux road. Also noted on 14 th & 15 th during the pre-breakfast walks |
| Firecrest | <i>Regulus ignicapillus</i> | Two seen during the pre-breakfast walk on 14 th , then also seen at Remoulins (under the main bridge at that!) and also during our picnic at La Caume on that day |
| Goldcrest (Winter) Wren | <i>Regulus regulus</i> <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> | Heard on 17 th during the Gavarnie walk Heard on 17 th & 20 th in the Pyrenees and 1 was seen on 18 th in the Forêt de Lienz |
| (Eurasian) Nuthatch | <i>Sitta europaea</i> | Heard on 17 th during the pre-breakfast walk and on 18 th in the Forêt de Lienz and then 2 were seen near Ayzac-Ost just before we left the Pyrenees |
| Eurasian Treecreeper | <i>Certhia familiaris</i> | One or two seen on 17 th during the Gavarnie walk and another 2 noted on 20 th near Argeles Gazost |
| Common Starling | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> | Noted on six days |
| Common Blackbird | <i>Turdus merula</i> | Noted on six days |
| Mistle Thrush | <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> | About 30 seen on 17 th during our Gavarnie walk and also noted on the following 2 days |
| European Robin | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> | Noted on the three full days in the Pyrenees and also on 20 th during our picnic lunch |
| Black Redstart | <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> | Three seen near housing during our pre-breakfast walk on 13 th and then seen on four consecutive days in the Pyrenees from 17 th |
| Common Redstart | <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> | Singles seen on 17 th during the Gavarnie walk and the Ossoue Valley, then noted feeding on Red-berried Elder in the Forêt de Lienz and also seen near Ayzac-Ost on 20 th |
| Whinchat | <i>Saxicola rubetra</i> | Two seen on 13 th in the northern Camargue and then a single bird seen on 19 th on Hautacam |
| European/Common Stonechat | <i>Saxicola torquata</i> | Two seen on 20 th during a brief stop on the journey towards Toulouse |
| Northern Wheatear | <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> | Good numbers seen on 7 days in widely separated locations |
| Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush | <i>Monticola saxatilis</i> | A single juvenile bird seen high in the Ossoue Valley on 17 th was the only sighting |
| European Pied Flycatcher | <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i> | A single bird seen on 15 th during the pre-breakfast walk and also early in the day on 17 th & 19 th . Also noted on 18 th in the Forêt de Lienz. |
| White-throated Dipper | <i>Cinclus cinclus</i> | Three separate birds noted on 17 th on the way to Gavarnie and during the Gavarnie walk, then 3 seen together on our way to the Cirque de Troumouse and another was seen high up in the cirque that same day |

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| House Sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | Noted every day except 17 th |
| Eurasian Tree Sparrow | <i>Passer montanus</i> | At least 6 seen on 13 th along the Gimeaux road |
| Dunnock/Hedge Accentor | <i>Prunella modularis</i> | Our first was on 17 th during the Gavarnie walk and then noted on the following 2 days |
| Yellow Wagtail | <i>Motacilla flava</i> | Two on 13 th in the northern Camargue and then at least 8 in the same area on 15 th and finally 1 on 17 th during the Gavarnie walk |
| Grey Wagtail | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> | Noted on four days from 17 th in the Pyrenees |
| White Wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> | Seen every day from 14 th |
| Tree Pipit | <i>Anthus trivialis</i> | A single bird was seen on 19 th on the way to the Cirque de Troumouse |
| Water Pipit | <i>Anthus spinolett</i> | Good numbers seen on each of the 3 full days in the Pyrenees, especially in the Ossoue Valley and the Cirque de Troumouse |
| Common Chaffinch | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> | Two seen during the pre-breakfast walk on 13 th and then not noted again until 17 th in the Pyrenees and this was the first of four consecutive days of sightings |
| European Serin | <i>Serinus serinus</i> | Three seen during the pre-breakfast walk on 13 th then a couple on 18 th and 3 on 19 th in the Pyrenees |
| European Goldfinch | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | A relatively common species with sightings on six days |
| Eurasian Bullfinch | <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i> | Heard calling on 17 th during a pause on our walk to the Cirque de Gavarnie |
| Corn Bunting | <i>Miliaria calandra</i> | Six seen during the journey back from the eastern Camargue on 13 th |
| Yellowhammer | <i>Emberiza citrinella</i> | Just a single sighting on 19 th during the drive up to the Cirque de Troumouse |
| Rock Bunting | <i>Emberiza cia</i> | Three seen in a quarry near Ayzac-Ost on 20 th |
| Cirl Bunting | <i>Emberiza cirlus</i> | One seen during the pre-breakfast walk on 13 th , then a female noted on 17 th during the Gavarnie walk and then 3 seen on 19 th on the way to Cirque de Troumouse |
| MAMMALS | | |
| European Rabbit | <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> | Two seen on 14 th on La Crau and another on 15 th along the Gimeaux road |
| Brown/European Hare | <i>Lepus europaeus</i> | One on 14 th on La Crau |
| Eurasian Red Squirrel | <i>Sciurus vulgaris</i> | One on 18 th on our way to Col du Tourmalet and another the following day not far from Luz |
| Alpine Marmot | <i>Marmota marmota</i> | At least a dozen seen on 17 th in the Ossoue Valley, then similar numbers seen on 18 th at the Col du Tourmalet and 19 th on our way to the Cirque de Troumouse |
| Coypu | <i>Myocastor coypus</i> | Half a dozen seen on the 15 th at the Parc Ornithologique |
| Red Fox | <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> | One seen very briefly during the pre-breakfast walk on 15 th |
| Isard/Pyrenean Chamois | <i>Rupicapra pyrenaica</i> | Eight seen during the Gavarnie walk on 17 th and a single individual seen on a snowy slope high above the Cirque de Troumouse |
| REPTILES | | |
| Common Wall Lizard | <i>Podarcis muralis</i> | Three seen during the Musée Camarguais walk on 13 th |
| [Western] Montpellier Snake | <i>Malpolon monspessulanus</i> | A single brief sighting of 1 dashing across the road towards the Tour de Vallat on 13 th |
| Turkish Gecko | <i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i> | A single young individual probably of this species was seen during dinner at the Hotel Robinson on 13 th |

AMPHIBIANS

Marsh Frog *Rana ridibunda* Just noted on 13th and 15th in the Camargue

BUTTERFLIES**APOLLOS**

Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*

WHITES, YELLOWS & SULPHURS

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

HAIRSTREAKS, COPPERS & BLUES

Small Blue/Little Blue *Cupido minimus*

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

VANESSIDS & SMALLER FRITILLARIES

Peacock *Inachis io*

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Comma *Polygonia c-album*

Piedmont Ringlet *Erebia meolans*

MOTHS

Hummingbird Hawkmoth *Macroglossum stellatarum*

DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES

Common Bluetail *Ischnura elegans*

Broad Scarlet [Darter] *Crocothemis erythraea*

Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*

PLANTS

Nos. on the right refer to **Mediterranean Wild Flowers – Blamey & Grey-Wilson**

Pinaceae

Pinus pinea Stone Pine, Umbrella Pine 3

Pinus pinaster Maritime Pine

Cupressaceae

Juniperus communis Common Juniper 13

Cupressus sempervirens Italian Cypress 11

Fagaceae

Castanea sativa Sweet Chestnut 23

Quercus ilex Holm Oak 25

Moraceae

Ficus carica Fig 42

Urticaceae

Urtica dioica Stinging Nettle 47

Chenopodiaceae

Beta vulgaris Sea Beet 80

Arthrocnemum perenne Perennial Glasswort 82

Suaeda maritima Annual Seablite 93

Caryophyllaceae

Silene vulgaris Bladder Campion 157

Ranunculaceae

Helleborus foetidus Stinking Hellebore 202

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|
| Crassulaceae | | |
| <i>Sedum album</i> | White Stonecrop | 386 |
| Platanaceae | | |
| <i>Platanus orientalis</i> | Plane Tree | 400 |
| Rosaceae | | |
| <i>Pyrus amygdaliformis</i> | Almond-leaved Pear | 416 |
| <i>Pyracantha coccinea</i> | Fire Thorn | 417 |
| <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> | Bramble | 428 |
| Fabaceae | | |
| <i>Psoralea bituminosa</i> | Pitch Trefoil | 508 |
| <i>Medicago sativa</i> | Lucerne | 596 |
| <i>Trifolium repens</i> | White Clover | 642 |
| <i>Trifolium pratense</i> | Red Clover | 645 |
| Euphorbiaceae | | |
| <i>Euphorbia rigida</i> | Narrow-leaved Glaucous Spurge | 802 |
| <i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i> | Cypress Spurge | 816 |
| Anacardiaceae | | |
| <i>Pistacia terebinthus</i> | Turpentine Tree/Terebinth | 861 |
| Malvaceae | | |
| <i>Malva sylvestris</i> | Common Mallow | 898 |
| <i>Malva neglecta</i> | Dwarf Mallow | 899 |
| <i>Lavatera arborea</i> | Tree Mallow | 912 |
| Tamaricaceae | | |
| <i>Tamarix gallica</i> | Tamarisk | 1017 |
| Cucurbitaceae | | |
| <i>Ecballium elaterium</i> | Squirting Cucumber | 1032 |
| Myrtaceae | | |
| <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> | Blue Gum | 1060 |
| Onagraceae | | |
| <i>Epilobium hirsutum</i> | Greater Willowherb | 1065 |
| Umbelliferae | | |
| <i>Eryngium campestre</i> | Field Eryngo | 1081 |
| <i>Bupleurum fruticosum</i> | Shrubby Hare's-ear | 1128 |
| <i>Ferula communis</i> | Giant Fennel | 1141 |
| Ericaceae | | |
| <i>Arbutus unedo</i> | Strawberry Tree | 1176 |
| Plumbaginaceae | | |
| <i>Limonium vulgare</i> | Common Sea Lavender | 1223 |
| Oleaceae | | |
| <i>Olea europaea</i> | Olive | 1248 |
| Convolvulaceae | | |
| <i>Convolvulus silvatica</i> | Great Bindweed | 1317 |
| <i>Convolvulus arvensis</i> | Field Bindweed | 1334 |

Boraginaceae

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|------|
| <i>Heliotropium europaeum</i> | Heliotrope | 1341 |
| <i>Anchusa arvensis</i> | Bugloss | 1413 |

Verbenaceae

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------|------|
| <i>Verbena officinalis</i> | Vervain | 1418 |
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Lamiaceae

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|------|
| <i>Thymus polytrichus</i> | Wild Thyme | 1508 |
| <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> | Rosemary | 1526 |
| <i>Salvia verbenaca</i> | Wild Clary | 1545 |

Solanaceae

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|------|
| <i>Solanum nigrum</i> | Black Nightshade | 1563 |
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Scrophulariaceae

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------|
| <i>Linaria vulgaris</i> | Common Toadflax | 1622 |
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Caprifoliaceae

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|------|
| <i>Sambucus ebulus</i> | Dwarf Elder/Danewort | 1710 |
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Dipsacaceae

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|------|
| <i>Dipsacus fullonum</i> | Wild Teasel | 1732 |
| <i>Knautia arvensis</i> | Field Scabious | 1735 |

Asteraceae

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------|
| <i>Bellis perennis</i> | Daisy | 1792 |
| <i>Conyza Canadensis</i> | Canadian Fleabane | 1803 |
| <i>Inula crithmoides</i> | Golden Samphire | 1837 |
| <i>Tanacetum parthenium</i> | Tansy | 1900 |
| <i>Cardopatum corymbosum</i> | Cardopatum | 1934 |
| <i>Echinops ritro</i> | Globe Thistle | 1937 |
| <i>Cichorium intybus</i> | Chicory | 2023 |

Liliaceae

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------|------|
| <i>Smilax aspera</i> | Common Smilax | 2222 |
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Gramineae

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|------|
| <i>Arundo donax</i> | Giant Reed | 2494 |
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Juncaceae

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| <i>Juncus acutus</i> | Sharp Rush | 2504 |
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PYRENEES

The nos on the right refer to page numbers in *The Alpine Flowers of Britain & Europe – Grey-Wilson & Blamey*.

Pinaceae

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------|----|
| <i>Abies alba</i> | Silver Fir | 22 |
| <i>Picea abies</i> | Norway Spruce | 22 |

Cupressaceae

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|----|
| <i>Juniperus communis</i> | Common Juniper | 22 |
| <i>Juniperus nana</i> | Dwarf Juniper | 22 |

Salicaceae

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|----|
| <i>Salix pyrenaica</i> | Pyrenean Willow | 24 |
| <i>Populus nigra</i> | Black Poplar | 26 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Betulaceae | | |
| <i>Betula pendula</i> | Silver Birch | 28 |
| Corylaceae | | |
| <i>Corylus avellana</i> | Hazel | 28 |
| Fagaceae | | |
| <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> | Beech | 28 |
| <i>Quercus robur</i> | Pedunculate Oak | 28 |
| <i>Quercus pubescens</i> | Downy Oak | 28 |
| Caryophyllaceae | | |
| <i>Silene acaulis</i> | Moss Campion | 32 |
| <i>Silene vulgaris</i> | Bladder Campion | 32 |
| Ranunculaceae | | |
| <i>Helleborus foetidus</i> | Stinking Hellebore | 38 |
| <i>Helleborus viridis</i> | Green Hellebore | 38 |
| <i>Caltha palustris</i> | Marsh Marigold | 40 |
| <i>Aconitum anthora</i> | Yellow Monkshood | 40 |
| <i>Aconitum napellus</i> | Common Monkshood | 40 |
| <i>Hepatica nobilis</i> | Hepatica | 44 |
| Parnassiaceae | | |
| <i>Parnassia palustris</i> | Grass of Parnassus | 78 |
| Saxifragaceae | | |
| <i>Saxifraga aretioides</i> | Yellow Saxifrage | 84 |
| <i>Saxifraga longifolia</i> | Pyrenean Saxifrage | 88 |
| Rosaceae | | |
| <i>Filipendula vulgaris</i> | Dropwort | 90 |
| <i>Rubus idaeus</i> | Raspberry | 90 |
| <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> | Blackberry | 90 |
| <i>Rosa majalis</i> | Cinnamon Rose | 92 |
| <i>Rosa canina</i> | Dog Rose | 94 |
| <i>Potentilla erecta</i> | Tormentil | 100 |
| <i>Potentilla reptans</i> | Creeping Cinquefoil | 100 |
| <i>Alchemilla alpina</i> | Alpine Lady's Mantle | 102 |
| <i>Alchemilla vulgaris</i> | Lady's Mantle | 104 |
| <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> | Mountain Ash/Rowan | 106 |
| <i>Sorbus aria</i> | Whitebeam | 106 |
| <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> | Hawthorn | 106 |
| <i>Prunus spinosa</i> | Blackthorn/Sloe | 108 |
| Leguminosae | | |
| <i>Melilotus alba</i> | White Melilot | 122 |
| <i>Trifolium alpinum</i> | Alpine Clover | 124 |
| <i>Trifolium repens</i> | White Clover | 124 |
| Oxalidaceae | | |
| <i>Oxalis acetosella</i> | Wood-sorrel | 128 |
| Geraniaceae | | |
| <i>Geranium pratense</i> | Meadow Cranesbill | 130 |
| <i>Geranium rotundifolium</i> | | 132 |
| <i>Geranium robertianum</i> | Herb Robert | 132 |
| <i>Erodium cicutarium</i> | Common Storksbill | 132 |
| Euphorbiaceae | | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| <i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i> | Cypress Spurge | 134 |
| Cistaceae | | |
| <i>Helianthemum nummularium</i> | Common Rockrose | 140 |
| Onagraceae | | |
| <i>Epilobium montanum</i> | Mountain Willowherb | 148 |
| Cornaceae | | |
| <i>Cornus sanguinea</i> | Common Dogwood | 150 |
| Araliaceae | | |
| <i>Hedera helix</i> | Ivy | 150 |
| Umbelliferae | | |
| <i>Angelica sylvestris</i> | Wild Angelica | 158 |
| <i>Heracleum austriacum</i> | Hogweed | 158 |
| Ericaceae | | |
| <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> | Bilberry | 162 |
| <i>Rhododendron ferrugineum</i> | Alpenrose | 164 |
| <i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> | Bearberry | 164 |
| <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> | Ling | 164 |
| Gentianaceae | | |
| <i>Gentianella campestris</i> | Field Gentian | 180 |
| Boraginaceae | | |
| <i>Pulmonaria longifolia</i> | Long-leaved Lungwort | 186 |
| Labiatae | | |
| <i>Salvia pratensis</i> | Meadow Clary | 194 |
| <i>Prunella vulgaris</i> | Self-heal | 200 |
| <i>Origanum vulgare</i> | Marjoram | 202 |
| <i>Mentha longifolia</i> | Horse Mint | 202 |
| <i>Thymus serpyllum</i> | Wild Thyme | 202 |
| Scrophulariaceae | | |
| <i>Linaria alpina</i> | Alpine Toadflax | 204 |
| <i>Verbascum nigrum</i> | Dark Mullein | 206 |
| <i>Euphrasia alpina</i> | Alpine Eyebright | 212 |
| <i>Euphrasia rostkoviana</i> | Common Eyebright | 212 |
| <i>Erinus alpinus</i> | Fairy Foxglove | 204 |
| Rubiaceae | | |
| <i>Galium verum</i> | Lady's Bedstraw | 224 |
| <i>Galium mullugo</i> | Hedge Bedstraw | 312 |
| Caprifoliaceae | | |
| <i>Sambucus racemosa</i> | Red-berried/Alpine Elder | 226 |
| <i>Sambucus nigra</i> | Common Elder | 226 |
| Campanulaceae | | |
| <i>Phyteuma orbiculare</i> | Round-headed Rampion | 230 |
| <i>Campanula trachelium</i> | Nettle-leaved Bellflower | 234 |
| <i>Campanula rotundifolia</i> | Harebell | 234 |
| Dipsacaceae | | |
| <i>Succisa pratensis</i> | Devil's-bit Scabious | 238 |

Asteraceae

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| <i>Tussilago farfara</i> | Coltsfoot | 248 |
| <i>Petasites spp</i> | Butterbur | 248 |
| <i>Carlina acaulis</i> | Stemless Carlina Thistle | 250 |
| <i>Carduus nutans</i> | Musk Thistle | 252 |
| <i>Carduus carlinoides</i> | Pyrenean Thistle | 254 |
| <i>Cirsium acaulon</i> | Stemless Thistle | 254 |
| <i>Cirsium eriophorum</i> | Woolly Thistle | 254 |

Liliceae

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----|
| <i>Merendera Montana</i> | Merendera | 264 |
| <i>Colchicum autumnale</i> | Autumn Crocus/Naked Ladies | 264 |

Urticaceae

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------|-----|
| <i>Urtica dioica</i> | Common Nettle | 288 |
|----------------------|---------------|-----|

Loranthaceae

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------|-----|
| <i>Viscum album</i> | Mistletoe | 288 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----|

Aceraceae

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----|
| <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> | Sycamore | 306 |
| <i>Acer campestre</i> | Field Maple | 306 |

Buxaceae

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|
| <i>Buxus sempervernis</i> | Box | 308 |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|

Oleaceae

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|
| <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> | Ash | 310 |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|

Also noted during the tour:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Vicia cracca</i> | Tufted Vetch |
| <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> | Himalayan Balsam |
| <i>Oenothera biennis</i> | Evening-primrose |
| <i>Saponaria officinalis</i> | Soapwort |
| <i>Ononis repens</i> | Restharrow |
| <i>Verbascum blattaria</i> | Moth Mullein |
| <i>Datura stramonium</i> | Thorn-apple |
| <i>Solanum dulcamara</i> | Bittersweet/Woody Nightshade |
| <i>Digitalis purpurea</i> | Foxglove |
| <i>Buddleia</i> | Buddleia |
| <i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i> | Hemp Agrimony |
| <i>Achillea millefolium</i> | Yarrow |
| <i>Spartium junceum</i> | Spanish Broom |
| <i>Typha latifolia</i> | Reed-mace |
| <i>Linaria purpurea</i> | Purple Toadflax |
| <i>Veronica catenata</i> | Pink Water Speedwell |
| <i>Quercus cerris</i> | Turkey Oak |
| <i>Chenopodium album</i> | Fat Hen |
| <i>Juglans regia</i> | Walnut |
| <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> | Perforate St John's Wort |
| <i>Euphorbia lathyris</i> | Caper Spurge |
| <i>Saponaria officinalis</i> | Soapwort |
| <i>Populus nigra Italica</i> | Lombardy Poplar |
| <i>Populus canescens</i> | Grey Poplar |

What a lovely tour with enthusiastic clients who were a pleasure to lead. The hotels provided excellent food and wine too. What more could a leader ask for?!

Well, fine weather and lots of co-operative wildlife would be a help! And here we scored again.

The Camargue and surrounding areas more than lived up to expectations with plenty of waders, wildfowl, herons, flamingos and raptors. We also added a few terns and gulls along with more typical Mediterranean/Southern European species such as roller, two species of shrike, crested larks, warblers and so much more. When you add to that the couple of stone curlews and flocks of 90 and 30 little bustards and you realise that we did exceptionally well during the first part of the tour.

We then moved over to the central Pyrenees where the scenery was just amazing. Clouds drifted over the peaks, mist rose from the lower slopes and there were hoards of griffon vultures, a few lammergeiers, red kites and buzzards. Spectacular birds amongst stunning scenery. And what's more we kept adding new species right up until the time we began the 'homeward' journey towards Toulouse.

Mammals noted included red squirrel, Alpine marmot, brown hare, red fox (very briefly!) and a few isards – the Pyrenean equivalent of chamois. In the cooler weather of autumn, reptiles butterflies and other insects were not too plentiful but there were still many plants identified thanks, mostly to my unofficial assistant, Liz.

I think you all enjoyed the tour as did I and let's hope we meet up again on another *Travelling Naturalist* tour somewhere. I sincerely hope we do.

Mike Read, September 2009

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