

# Ebro Delta

Saturday 2 – Saturday 9 May 2009

**Leader:**

Mike Lockwood

## Trip Report

An excellent trip, if not for the weather alone, which was superb and even too hot at times throughout. Bird-wise the Delta revealed its treasures in great number as always, while inland we had good views of most of the birds we had hoped to see with the exception of the Wheatears, which eluded us.

The butterflies were quiet in the heat, although we were pleasantly surprised to find that the stunning Moroccan Orange-tip was one of the commoner species on show. The winter and spring rains had left the mountains stunningly green and the flora in general lived up to our expectations.

The best surprise were, however, the amphibians – it is hard enough at night to find newts and salamanders, but to see them so well by day was totally unexpected.

The hotel was excellent and the fish, paella and *fideuà* we were served up with were memorable!

### Day 1 Saturday 2 May: Barcelona Airport – Deltebre

Weather: sunny.

We had an uneventful journey from the airport with the part of the group that had arrived by plane and were in the Deltahotel in the heart of the paddy fields by just after three o'clock. After food and a rest we were ready by five o'clock to take the van out for a first tour of the nearby flooded fields.

Initially we birded from the van, with our first good views of Audouin's Gulls loafing in the paddy fields or hunting for crayfish in the channels, and both Whiskered and Gull-billed Terns hawking oblivious of our watching binoculars.

We pulled off the road next to a canal and wandered down towards a farm, where all the small brown birds were House Sparrows – about the only LBJ that flits around the Delta. A female Stonechat and a Little Grebe were reminders of home (for some), while overhead we had views of four Mediterranean Gulls (our only sighting in the end), the rarest of the Delta's breeding gulls, and a distant Marsh Harrier.

We followed a winding road through the paddies, stopping for a Common Sandpiper, Whimbrel and a more terns and gulls. At the end of the road, we halted for a while, getting our first views of Squacco and Purple Herons. On the way back, we stopped for a fine Purple Gallinule/Swampphen stomping across a wet paddy field, noting its enormous feet, and then watched a pair of displaying Black-winged Stilts in the paddy field next to the road who then proceeded to mate.

After more paddy fields, we got to the end of another minor road near a heron roost, populated by numerous Squacco and Purple Herons and Little and Cattle Egrets. Nearer by, a Fan-tailed Warbler proved to be elusive (largely because they are so small), and Swifts, Swallows and good numbers of Sand Martins passed over head. By 7.30 it was time to head home to our first fish-based delta dinner.

### Day 2 Sunday 3 May – Serra de Montsià

Weather: hot with a breeze in the afternoon

We awoke to find blue skies and so headed off inland to La Serra del Montsià (to avoid the Sunday rush to the beaches in the Delta) for our first full day in the field.

We had our first sight of the mighty river Ebro as we crossed it in the town of Amposta and took the main coast road down towards Sant Carles de la Ràpita, and turned off up into the olive and carob groves towards the stark limestone mountains that form a backdrop to the Delta.

First stop was for a high Short-toed Eagle, and then the sound of Bee-eaters also up high punctuated to the sky. We continued further up towards the hills along an ever-narrowing valley, finally parking at the start of the path up into the hills.

We started the walk up towards the cliffs in the distance, accompanied by Sardinian Warblers and Serins, with Common Swifts high up. The typical Mediterranean vegetation with well in evidence, consisting of stands of holm oak *Quercus ilex* subsp. *rotundifolia* and shrubs such as *Dorycnium pentaphyllum*, pitch trefoil *Psoralea bituminosa*, turpentine tree *Pistacia terebinthus*, sage-leaved cistus *Cistus salviifolius* and strawberry tree *Arbutus unedo*. Butterfly-wise, it was quite quiet and we only had a Wood White to show for our efforts on the way up.

We decided not to walk all the way up to the spring, largely because of the heat and so after a rest in the shade we walked back to the van. The highlight on the way back was a male and female Moroccan Orange-tip, flying around their food plant buckler mustard *Biscutella laevigata*, along with a Migrant Emperor dragonfly.

Back at the van we headed off to the other side of the ridge, where we drove up to a little picnic spot above the village of Godall. Here Mike and 5 intrepids investigated the local overgrown olive and carob groves, finding lots of woodcock orchids *Ophrys scolopax* well in flower, accompanied by rose garlic *Allium roseum*, Urospermum *urospermum delachampii* and wild jasmine *Jasminum fruticans*. Back at the van, those that stayed behind had good views of a Golden Oriole and Bee-eaters overhead.

We had lunch together and had views a Nightingale and watched how both Serins and Goldfinches took mud off a quarry wall, presumably to build their nests.

After lunch we picked up the old road back towards Amposta, passing through garrigue and old olive groves. We stopped in an abandoned olive grove to find Woodcock and a single mirror orchid *Ophrys speculum* and dull ophrys *O. fusca*. Following on along the road we all had reasonable views as a male Golden Oriole flashed across the road, and slightly less good views of a Woodchat Shrike.

Up high on the pass over La Serra de Godall, we wandered through the scrub in the afternoon sun, coming across a Stonechat, hearing a Red-legged Partridge and best of all, a calling Tawny Pipit. Sylvia, who had stayed behind, also reported good views of a Tawny Pipit. Flower-wise, we admired the woolly convolvulus *Convolvulus lanuginosus* and (pink-flowered) grey-leaved cistus *Cistus albidus*.

As it was still early, we decided to head back to the Delta, to the Bassa de les Olles, hoping that the weekend's crowds would have packed up their buckets and spades by now. Here we parked alongside some of the beach lovers and walked up to the tower hide, from where we had views of our first Great Egret on the other side of the Bassa, and on the track below us, two Crested Larks. We walked on behind the beach to the far end of the Bassa, where we approached the beach and lingered long over views through the telescope of a group of five elegant Slender-bill Gulls feeding in the shallow waters of the bay, with the males with a delightful rosy hue on their breasts, alongside a Grey Heron.

### **Day 3 Monday 4 May Ebro Delta**

Weather: hot.

We went out first for a quick pre-breakfast spin down to the viewing platform overlooking the Canal Vell. On the way out we had quick views from the road of a group of Glossy Ibises in flight.

Once at the viewing site we all had enjoyed easy views over the Canal Vell of numerous Night Herons, Great Egrets, Purple Swamphens, Common Terns, the usual gulls and some rather distant silhouetted Greater Flamingos. Behind us in a small reed bed, we had our first good sighting of both Fan-tailed and Great Reed Warblers. We noted Tree Sparrows on a wire and were able to contemplate a couple of Hoopoes feeding on the track through the telescope. Best of all, however, was a Little Bittern, that perched on a reed stem and gave us all good views.

After breakfast we set off for the southern side of the Delta, crossing the great river for the first time on one of the *transbordadors* (third time lucky!). Once over on the other side, we headed for La Gola del Mitjorn, one of the old mouths of the river Ebro. We passed through the paddy fields, stopping first for a group of 60 Glossy Ibises in a field near the road. We reached the tower hide just behind the beach in good time and ascended to spend a very pleasant 90 minutes surrounded by birds, which came thick and fast in all shapes and sizes.

All around the base of the tower there were large numbers of Purple Swamphens, as well as more familiar Whiskered Terns, Black-winged Stilts and our first Avocets. Greater Flamingos, Shelduck, Common and Little Terns, many gulls, Common Redshank and Mallards completed the picture. Of the smaller birds, we had the unusual experience of seeing Fan-tailed Warblers mate, and then saw how one of the birds hung from the claws of the other for a good ten minutes, all the time balancing on a tall reed. Savi's, Reed and Great Reed Warblers all caterwauled or reeled occasionally in the distance, but could not be located. Mike spotted a single male Reed Bunting and a Spotted Flycatcher showed well from the bushes below.

The highlight of the morning, however, was the arrival of a Collared Pratincole, which circled the tower for a while, before being joined by three other of these elegant birds.

We moved onto the beach itself, where we wandered for a while and noted the Sandwich Terns that were plunge-diving into the sea just of the beach. On the dry salt-marshes behind the beach, we watched two Kentish Plovers for a while. We spotted the Spotted Flycatcher again on a rope fence, which was briefly joined by a male Pied Flycatcher (which Mike missed and had to be convinced of). At the end of the reedy lagoon we stood and watched a hawking Lesser Emperor and then a Swallowtail.

Soon it was time to head homewards for lunch, but not before following a track towards the coast to explore some of the nearby paddy fields. We had more views of Glossy Ibis, Common Tern, Blue-headed (Yellow) Wagtail, and, best of all, a field of waders: above all Ringed Plovers, but accompanied by Greenshank, Redshank, Spotted Redshank in its all black summer plumage, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper and a single Kentish Plover.

By this time it was late and so we headed back to the hotel via the *transbordador* for lunch, which was taken in a relaxed fashion back at the hotel – paella for all and grilled seabass for AnneMarie.

We reconvened at six to head back over to the south side of the delta, this time nearer the beach and the Tancada lagoon.

After crossing on the *transbordador* we started off in an area of grazing between the Tancada lagoon and the Eucalyptus holiday resort. We stopped by a rickety collection of fences and palettes and found a collection of migrant passerines en route – maybe – to somewhere in Yorkshire: Northern Wheatear, Whinchat, Willow Warbler, Common Redstart and Pied Flycatcher! Also around were Crested Lark, Skylark, Common Redshank, Kentish Plover and a regular passage of calling terns.

We moved on to the saltpans of Sant Antoni, where we were delighted by the quantity of birds on offer: Greater Flamingos, Shelduck, Little, Common and Whiskered Terns, and a myriad of waders: Little Stint, Curlew Sandpipers (including one in full summer finery), Dunlin, Kentish and Ringed Plovers, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Crested Lark, Fan-tailed Warbler and Yellow Wagtail.

We decided that it was time to adjourn to our picnic dinner, which we had in the hide overlooking La Tancada. The Flamingos were at arm's length as we ate our sandwiches to the sight of these majestic birds flying back and forth against the setting sun and the mountains in the background.

Our final stop was the fields around La Tancada, where we hoped to find groups of Collared Pratincoles. However, only Mike had a quick view of one Pratincole and so we decided it was time to head back to the hotel. Our journey was only interrupted by a Nightjar of some description that flew up from the verge of the road.

#### **Day 4 Tuesday 5 May: Serra del Boix, Miravet**

For our second day inland we first headed for La Serra del Boix, inland and just north of the Delta.

We drove for 35 minutes before turning off on to a minor road heading towards the dramatic limestone mountains. First stop was for a Corn Bunting reeling, and then we drove on slowly as far as the parking place for the start of the walk.

As soon as we got out of the van we had quick view of a Dartford Warbler, before we set up off the path along the valley bottom. Serins and Sardinian Warblers were much in evidence as we scanned the limestone crags hoping to see Blue Rock Thrush. A Common Kestrel passed overhead before we came up with further raptors: a Peregrine perched on a crag, which we all saw through the scope, and a Montagu's Harrier passing over high and a bit too near the sun for comfort.

We stopped to scan the scrub and pines below, and were delighted to get scoped views of a Melodious Warbler, which very kindly sat in a pine and sang its heart out. A couple of Crag Martins passed overhead.

Walking back we looked more at the flowers: woody gromwell *Lithodora fruticans*, sage-leaved cistus and *Cistus chusii* (both with white flowers), the pale yellowy flowers of *Euphorbia serrata*, lots of bright red patches of *Anagallis arvensis*, lavender-leaved sage *Salvia lavandufolia* and, just off the path, St Bernard's lily *Anthericum liliago*.

Back at the van we drove off for our second wander of the morning, to a pool in the woods. We parked and as some of us were bending over examining a half-dead American crayfish that Mike insisted that everyone looked at, Annemarie pointed out a raptor overhead – an adult Bonelli's Eagle that circled 30 metres over us for a couple of minutes! Amazing views of what is one of Europe's rarest raptors.

Buoyed by this sighting (and by the Bee-eaters that then flew overhead) we headed off down the track, stopping to listen to Nightingales (and see two squabbling) and chat with a local, who was naturally puzzled as what we were doing!

Walking along the track we spotted a Dappled White and then after a quick view of a couple of Turtle Doves for Mike, John and Margaret, a little further on we came to the second of the area's ponds, this one a jewel with transparent waters, and emergent and submerged vegetation. We toured the pond once and were amazed at the sheer number of Iberian Pool Frogs that jumped into the water as we passed. We then spotted a swimming newt, which turned out to be a handsome male Marbled Newt. We decided to take a further spin around the pond, seeing this time a male Emperor Dragonfly and a Red-veined Darter, as well as finding the exuvia of many emerging damselflys. Better still was another swimming creature, the famous Sharp-ribbed Salamander: one floated to the surface, and we could see its orange points on its flank that highlight its ribs, but also a red wound on its other flank. Its sticking-out ribs are a defence against predators, and it would seem that in this case the defence had worked. But we remained puzzled as to what animal might attack it, given the obvious lack of fish in this pond.

By now it was time for lunch: from the van we saw an excellent Woodchat Shrike next to the road on an olive tree.

Lunch was held in an unmemorable spot, and a post-lunch stroll in the almond groves produced a chat with a man from Jersey, a Crested Tit for Mike and John and a Common Blue.

We moved on down to the boat opposite the town of Miravet and its impressive Templar's castle. We enjoyed the wait for the boat man to finish his lunch, listening to the Golden Orioles and Cetti's Warblers and appreciating our first Kingfisher on the boat mooring point.

In Miravet we headed straight for the castle, where inside we all enjoyed the superb solid stone walls and the Crag Martins. Outside, Mike and Margaret were lucky to see both Blue Rock Thrush and Rock Thrush from the walls itself. Outside, we all looked for these same birds and were pleased to see a Blue Rock Thrush fly into the walls a couple of times, and also noted the calls of the Rock Sparrows.

After this and because of the increasing heat it was time for a refreshing cup of tea or whatever in the village of Miravet itself, before the journey home along the Ebro Valley.

## **Day 5 Wednesday 6 May Riet Vell, L'Encanyissada**

Weather: Hot.

We started at a reasonable time and headed straight away via the *transbordador* to El Riet Vell, a small reserve run by the Spanish Ornithological Society ([www.seo.es](http://www.seo.es)). We parked and wandered along a track to a hide overlooking a small reedy lagoon where we were to stay for the best part of 1h 30 min (in company with a pair of swallows who had made their nest inside).

First up was a small wader on the mud in front of us, which with its yellowy legs and clear division between the patterning on the breast and its belly revealed itself as a Temminck's Stint, regular but uncommon in the Delta on passage! Also obvious in front of the hide was a single Common Redshank, Black-winged Stilt, numbers of Purple Swamphen, a pair of Common Terns, and Whiskered Terns overhead. Further away, a Great Egret hid in the reeds at the back, a Great Reed Warbler sang in the reeds off to our right, a very smart male Red-crested Pochard (and later the drake) and a pair of Gadwall. Soon a Common Tern with fish perched on the dead tree trunk metres in front of us, and then was joined by a Whiskered Tern just waiting to be photographed.

We moved on towards L'Encanyissada, the largest of the Delta's lagoons. First, however, we drove down to the shore of the southside of the Delta, overlooking the shallow Alfacs bay, near Torre de Sant Joan, a ruined look-out tower that stands out from the distance. Here we looked over to a collection of herons (including a Great Egret with a black bill, apparently a colouration typical of the breeding plumage), Little, Whiskered and Common Terns, Common Redshanks, and the ubiquitous Great Reed Warbler from the reeds behind us. In the mid-distance Mike spotted a larger tern which soon proved to be a Caspian Tern, with its massive red bill. It gave reasonable views as it cruised around the birds on the shore, although given the quality of viewing that morning we half expected it to fly overhead and sit on our telescopes!!

We decided we wanted to get nearer the collection of birds on the shore, and so moved onto another track leading to the shore. Although we didn't quite get to the shore, we enjoyed a very productive session next to a paddy field with four Greenshanks, a single Grey Plover (which disappeared before Mick and Sylvia could see it) and more terns and herons galore. Best of all where the 4-5 Collared Pratincoles that flew in, mooched around a bit and sat in the next field. We got the scopes on them, although they were a bit hazy. However, as we left we drove right past them and had arm's length views, complete with collar and red bill base.

Next stop was L'Encanyissada, where we climbed a tower hide and enjoyed the view over the Delta and more of the same birds, but in vast number: Great Reed Warbler, Great Egret, Glossy Ibis, Tree Sparrow, a Marsh Harrier that only Annemarie really saw, Night Herons, Cattle Egret, and all the other usual suspects.

On to the next hide, it was pretty much the same story, with birds galore, including a group of rather distant Red-crested Pochards, with the males' heads looking silvery white in the sun. We had good views of a Reed Warbler trying to outgun the much larger and more powerful Great Warbler, and then a Purple Heron came and sat below the hide at about 20 m's distant and we all had fabulous views of its marvellous colours.

Final stop on this active morning was Ullals de Balthasar, where water from the surrounding mountains wells up in freshwater pools. We found a damselfly that Mike was unable to identify a distance, a Purple Heron and the reason we had come, a delightful display of white water lilies just coming into flower. From here it was back to the hotel for another wonderful sea-food meal.

After lunch we reconvened to head to El Ganxal, a low-lying bay and dune systems in northern half of the Delta. Here we sat in the hide, alone except for 30 or so children who came to look through our telescopes at the flamingos.

Here we had another good look at a group of waders – Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey Plover and Knot (including one in full summer plumage), mixed in with Great Egret, Purple Swamphen, a myriad of terns, a couple of a Gadwall and a disappearing male Pintail, that Mike found and then lost. He made up for it with a female Pintail later on. A Marsh Harrier gave us better views than we had had at lunchtime.

As we were leaving, Mick pointed out a large Moorish gecko, clinging motionless to the side of the hide. Walking back to the van we noted Sea medick *Medicago marino* and the song of a Lesser Short-toed Lark.

Our destination for a picnic was the north coast of the delta, where we parked next to a small port with a collection of ramshackle boats. We scanned the waders, dominated by Redshanks, a few Knot and Grey

Plover, and a number of Turnstones, our first. Yellow Wagtails, House Sparrow, Fan-tailed Warbler completed the picture. We had our picnic, drove around for a while on the tracks without coming across anything too exceptional and then headed for home.

### **Day 6 Thursday 6 May El Port**

Weather: hot, clear and wonderful

We started the day with a short pre-breakfast drive to one of the hides at Bassa de les Olles. Many of the usual suspects were on display - Great Reed and Fan-tailed Warblers, Whiskered and Common Terns, Squacco, Purple and Night Herons, Little and Cattle Egrets in their roost in the fig tree and lots and lots of Mallards. The best of all, though, was a very obliging Little Bittern close by in the reeds.

We set off for El Port (or Els Ports), stopping first at the information for this recently created Natural Park. We started up on the road to the summit of El Port, straight at first through the olive, almond and carob groves, and then tortuously winding up to the plateau at over 1000 m. First stop was once the curves had ended up in the Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* forests, where the understorey consisted of box *Buxus sempervirens* and bearberry *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, with flowers such as hepatica *Hepatica nobilis* and cowslip *Primula veris*.

We wandered down a track just off the road with a view up to the cliffs behind us: Annemarie called out and reported that she and Margaret had had quick views of a Spanish Ibex, which romped away and left the rest of the group without any chance of the rest of the group seeing it.

We carried on along the road, stopping for a view of a number of early purple orchids *Ophrys mascula* in full flower, as far as La Font del Mascar, where most of the group sat in the shade while Mike and Annemarie went for a wander. They found two delightful fritillaries *Fritillaria nigra* subsp. *boissieri*, as well as a number of sword-leaved helleborines *Cephalanthera longifolia*.

After lunch, with Orange-tips, Brimstones, Comma, Peacock and a solitary Osiris Blue. We decided to have a quick look at the road up to the summit of Mont Caro, but called it a day quickly because of the heat and the approaching storm.

We started to drop down back along the road, stopping at the first viewpoint, where we had a quick view of a Black Redstart and a couple of Red-billed Choughs flew. Next to the road Mike pointed out hedgehog broom *Erinacea anthyllis*, which he said was called mother-in-law's cushion in Catalan. Also next to the road, as we were looking at the broom, we spotted a lizard, which Mike identified as a Green Lizard.

We restarted our journey down and Annemarie quickly said that she had seen two large birds on the horizon. However, it wasn't until we stopped further down that we had excellent close-up views of two Griffon Vultures that cruised towards us at eye level, and then passed off to our left. From the same spot we had our only view of a Sparrowhawk on the same trip.

A little further down we watched five Griffon Vultures over the far mountain, but little else. And on our final stop, we were about to leave when Mike spotted a Short-toed Eagle on a rock pinnacle, which flew off, but unfortunately behind the nearest crag.

From here it was home time.

### **Day 7 Friday 7 May El Trabucador**

Weather: clear, but with a hint of humidity; clouds after lunch.

For the final day we headed for the long sand spit and on the way saw our first Oystercatchers. We saw mainly what we'd seen before in similar habitat – Audouin's and Slender-billed Gulls, Common and Sandwich Terns and Redshanks and Avocets. In front of the hide we watched five Shelducks head-nodding in some kind of mating display none of us had seen before. Coming back we beachcombed, and Mick took away the upper mandible of one of the two dead Audouin's Gulls we noted. Also of interest were the little

piles of olive stones, which Mike said had been regurgitated by the gulls that fly inland to feed in the olive groves.

Back at the vans we were reunited with Bobby and Bill, and stopped awhile to view the waders that were on display nearby – more Kentish Plovers, Redshanks and Avocets, as well as a group of Sanderling. A first a single Sanderling in summer plumage caused us a few problems as it was obviously bigger than the Kentish Plover, but too big for a stint. After conferring with a couple of Dutch birders, we came to a happy conclusion.

We moved on to the salt pans at Sant Antoni and saw much of what we had seen on the previous visit. At a hide overlooking L'Encanyissada we saw three Red-crested Pochard, two Great Egrets, a mass of Flamingoes and more of the other birds we were getting accustomed to seeing in the Delta..

After lunch we headed up into the hills and into the vast olive, carob and almond groves that coat the hills surrounding the Delta. We had a quick view of a Woodchat Shrike and Hoopoe and continued on to just under a group of wind turbines that dot the hills in this part of the world. We quickly spotted our first Thekla Lark, getting excellent views through the telescope, and then also noted Serin (inevitably) and Linnets. On the way up to the summit, amid the colourful scrub we saw a patch of violet limodore *Limodorum arbortivum* orchids, far from their normal habitat in shady woodland. A little further on, Mick caught up with a Blue Rock Thrush on a small cliff, which was also well viewed in the scope.

We retraced our steps and then started up the narrow road to the little chapel of Mare de Déu del Coll de l'Alba, where we had our picnic dinner to the sight of Swifts whizzing around and the sound of drums coming up from the city of Tortosa below. Our post-dinner activity consisted in driving to a small pool, where we had good torch-light views of some of the myriad Midwife Toads that were calling all around us. Further down the road we heard very well numerous European Nightjars, the horses' -hooves sound of the singing Red-necked Nightjar, Little Owl, Nightingale and a Peacock!

#### **Day 8 Saturday 9 May: Barcelona airport**

As the flight was not until 16.00, we had time to use the morning to some extent. We got in the van and headed through the rice paddies for the last time to the beach at El Fangar, a corner of the Delta we had not yet visited. We drove along a dirt track to one of the pumping stations that pumps the water out of the main canals and UP into the sea. Here we were rewarded with good views of an adult Night Heron and Purple Heron motionless on a wooden fishing structure. Back towards the road we stopped for a long time to a small group of Collared Pratincoles that were flying and then stopping in the fields. For many this was the week's most popular bird and so it was fitting to finish off the trip with excellent close-up views of a couple of these stylish birds.

A final drive through the paddy fields took us to the north coast of the delta near El Goleró, where we scanned the sea only to find Mallards. Behind us in and around the paddy fields, the usual suspects were flying and calling: Whiskered and Gull-billed Terns, Purple Heron, Fan-tailed and Great Reed Warblers  
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Travelling Naturalist Ebro Delta and inland bird list May 2009</b></p>												
English name	Latin name	Status	Abundance	Airport	Montsià	Delta	Serra del Boix Miravet	Delta	Els Ports	Delta	Airport	Observations
				2 May	3 May	4 May	5 May	6 May	7 May	8 May	9 May	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	R B	C	X	X			X			X	Fairly abundant in small numbers in Delta
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	R B	C					X				Abundant in larger lagoons in Delta
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	P	C	X	X			X			X	Singles here and there in Delta
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	R B	C	X	X	X		X		X		Very common in Delta
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	S B	C	X	X	X		X		X	X	Very common in Delta
Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	R B	U		X	X		X		X	X	Small numbers regular in Delta
Cattle Egret	<i>Ardeola ibis</i>	R B	V C	X		X		X		X	X	Very common in Delta
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	Very common in Delta
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	S B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Singles scattered all around Delta; roost near Bassa de les Olles
Black-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	S B	C			X		X		X	X	Scarce in Delta
Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	S B	U			X		X	X	X		Singles seen near reedbeds on 3 occasions
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	R B	C			X		X		X	X	Common in all lagoons
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	P	U								X	Groups of 30 in and around paddy fields
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	R B	V C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Ubiquitous!
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	R B	U			X		X		X	X	Odd pairs on lagoons
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	W	C					X				Male and female at El Garxal
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	R B	V C					X		X		Riet Vell, L'Encanyissada
Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	R B	C						X			Up to 5 birds in Els Ports, 1 at Miravet
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciatus</i>	E B	R				X					Low level flyover in Serra del Boix
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	P	R				X					Serra del Boix
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	S B	U		X				X			Montsià and Els Ports

<b>Montagu's Harrier</b>	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	S B	U				X					Serra del Boix
<b>Eurasian Marsh Harrier</b>	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	W	C	X				X				Up to 3 birds around larger reed beds
<b>Sparrowhawk</b>	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	R B	C						X			One bird in Els Ports
<b>Common (Eurasian) Kestrel</b>	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	R B	C		X	X	X	X	X	X		Common in Delta and elsewhere
<b>Peregrine</b>	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	R B	U				X					One perched bird in Serra del Boix
<b>Red-legged Partridge</b>	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	R B	C		H						X	Singles in hills near Delta
<b>Common Moorhen</b>	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	Abundant in Delta
<b>Purple Swamphen (Gallinule)</b>	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	R B	C	X	X	X		X		X		Groups of 30+ in lagoons in Delta
<b>Eurasian Coot</b>	<i>Fulica atra</i>	R B	C		X	X		X	X	X		Common in larger lagoons in Delta
<b>Eurasian Oystercatcher</b>	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	R B	C								X	5 birds on beach at El Trabocador
<b>Black-winged Stilt</b>	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	S B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Common in rice paddies
<b>Pied Avocet</b>	<i>Recurvirostra avocetta</i>	S B	C			X		X		X		Common in salt pans
<b>Turnstone</b>	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	W	U								X	5 birds north coast of Delta
<b>Collared Pratincole</b>	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	S B	U			X		X		X	X	Regular good ewes in southern half of Delta
<b>Grey Plover</b>	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	X	U					X		X		A few birds on north coast of Delta
<b>(Greater) Ringed Plover</b>	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	W	C			X		X				Two largish groups in rice paddies
<b>Little Ringed Plover</b>	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	S B	C	X								2 in rice paddies
<b>Kentish Plover</b>	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	S B	C			X		X		X	X	Common on beaches and salt pans
<b>Bar-tailed Godwit</b>	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	P	U					X				5 birds El Garxal
<b>Spotted Redshank</b>	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	P	U			X						1 male summer plumage Sant Antoni salt pans
<b>Common Redshank</b>	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	P	C		X	X		X		X	X	Commonest wader in paddy fields
<b>Common Greenshank</b>	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	P	C			X		X		X	X	Occasional in paddy fields
<b>Wood Sandpiper</b>	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	P	C			X						Small group in paddy fields near Illa de Buda
<b>Common Sandpiper</b>	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	P	C	X		X						Singles on edge of paddy fields
<b>Curlew</b>	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	P	C					X			X	Singles on coast
<b>Whimbrel</b>	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	P	C	X								Single in paddy field
<b>Sanderling</b>	<i>Calidris alba</i>	P	C								X	Summer plumage in salt pans on El Trabucador
<b>Little Stint</b>	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	P	C			X		X		X		Common in salt pans and paddy fields
<b>Temminck's Stint</b>	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	P	U					X				Single at Riet Vell

<b>Dunlin</b>	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	P	C			X						Sant Antoni salt pans
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	P	C			X		X				Summer plumage group Sant Antoni salt pans
<b>Ruff</b>	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	P	C		X							Single Bassa de les Olles
<b>Audouin's Gull</b>	<i>Larus audouinii</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere!
<b>Yellow-legged Gull</b>	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	R B	V C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere!
<b>Black-headed Gull</b>	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	R B	V C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere!
<b>Slender-billed Gull</b>	<i>Larus genei</i>	R B	C		X	X		X		X		In salt pans and shallow coastal waters
<b>Mediterranean Gull</b>	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	W	C	X								4 overhead near Bassa de les Olles
<b>Little Tern</b>	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	S B	C			X		X	X	X	X	Ubiquitous!
<b>Sandwich Tern</b>	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	R B	C			X		X	X		X	Strictly coastal
<b>Gull-billed Tern</b>	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	S B	C	X	X	X		X		X	X	Common in and around paddies
<b>Common Tern</b>	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	S B	C			X		X		X	X	Common in most aquatic habitats
<b>Whiskered Tern</b>	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	S B	C	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	Abundant throughout Delta
<b>Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)</b>	<i>Columba livia</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Group in field near hotel everyday
<b>(Common) Wood Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	R B	C				X		X			Singles inland
<b>European Turtle Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	S B	C				X			H		Serra del Boix and Coll de l'Alba
<b>Eurasian Collared Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere in Delta
<b>Little Owl</b>	<i>Athene noctua</i>	R B	C							H		Heard Coll de l'Alba
<b>Common Swift</b>	<i>Apus apus</i>	S B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere
<b>Pallid Swift</b>	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	S B	C		X							Probables in Serra del Montsià
<b>European Nightjar</b>	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	S B	U							H		Heard Coll de l'Alba
<b>Red-necked Nightjar</b>	<i>Caprimulgus ruficollis</i>	S B	U							H		Heard Coll de l'Alba
<b>European Bee-eater</b>	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	S B	C		X	X	X					Here and there inland
<b>(Eurasian) Hoopoe</b>	<i>Upupa epops</i>	S B	C			X	X	X			X	Occasional in Delta and elsewhere
<b>Kingfisher</b>	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	R B	U				X					One on jetty at Miravet
<b>(Eurasian) Wryneck</b>	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	S B	U		H							Heard Serra del Montsià
<b>Skylark</b>	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	R B	U					X				Erms de la Tancada
<b>Crested Lark</b>	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Common
<b>Thekla Lark</b>	<i>Galerida theklae</i>	R B	U							X		Serra del Boix - wind turbines

<b>Lesser Short-toed Lark</b>	<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>	R B	U					X				Behind El Garxal
<b>Crag Martin</b>	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	R B	C				X		X			Common inland
<b>European Sand Martin</b>	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	S B	U	X	X	X						Larger numbers in Delta on first few days
<b>Barn Swallow</b>	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	S B	V C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Ubiquitous!
<b>Red-rumped Swallow</b>	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	S B	U	X	X							2 probables near motorway!
<b>Common House Martin</b>	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	S B	V C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Common
<b>Yellow Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	S B	C			X		X	X			Common in rice paddies
<b>White Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>	R B	C		X		X					Occasional around towns and on roads
<b>Tawny Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	S B	U		X							Serra de Godall
<b>Woodchat Shrike</b>	<i>Lanius senator</i>	S B	C		X		X			X		Olive groves inland
<b>Blue Rock Thrush</b>	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	R B	U				X		X	X		Miravet and Serra del Boix
<b>Rock Thrush</b>	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	S B	R				X					1 male Miravet
<b>Common (Eurasian) Blackbird</b>	<i>Turdus merula</i>	R B	C		X		X	X	X			Here and there inland
<b>Song Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	R B	C							H		Singing in Els Ports
<b>European Robin</b>	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	R B	C		H		H		X			Here and there inland
<b>Common Nightingale</b>	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	S B	C		X	X	X		X			Common in scrub
<b>Black Redstart</b>	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	R B	C						X			Els Ports
<b>Common Redstart</b>	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	P	R			X						Erms de la Tancada
<b>Whinchat</b>	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	P	U			X						Erms de la Tancada
<b>Common Stonechat</b>	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	R B	C	X	X	X						Pastures in the Delta
<b>Northern Wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	S B	C			X				X		Erms de la Tancada
<b>Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed Warbler)</b>	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	R B	C	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	Common in Delta
<b>Cetti's Warbler</b>	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	R B	C		X	X		X		X	X	Common near reedbeds
<b>Savi's Warbler</b>	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	S B	U			H		H	H			Heard singing near large reedbeds
<b>Reed Warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	S B	C			H		X	X			Heard and seen in reedbeds
<b>Great Reed Warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	S B	C			H	X		X	X		Heard and seen in reedbeds
<b>Melodious Warbler</b>	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	S B	C		X							Serra del Boix
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	P	U			X						Erms de la Tancada
<b>Blackcap</b>	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	S B	C						X			Els Ports
<b>Sardinian Warbler</b>	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	R B	C		X		X		X			Ubiquitous inland

<b>Dartford Warbler</b>	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	R B	C		X		X					Inland scrub
<b>Firecrest</b>	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	R B	C						X			Pine forests in Els Ports
<b>Spotted Flycatcher</b>	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	S B	C			X	X					Near Illa de Buda
<b>European Pied Flycatcher</b>	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	P	R			X						Migration in Delta
<b>Great Tit</b>	<i>Parus major</i>	R B	C		X		X		X			Inland
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	R B	V C		X				X			Inland
<b>Crested Tit</b>	<i>Parus cristatus</i>	R B	C				X		X			Near Rasquera and Els Ports
<b>Coal Tit</b>	<i>Parus ater</i>	R B	C						X			Els Ports
<b>Common Raven</b>	<i>Corvus corax</i>	R B	C				X		X			Els Ports and Serra del Boix
<b>Red-billed Chough</b>	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	R B	C						X			Els Ports
<b>Jay</b>	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	R B	C			X	X		X	X		Common
<b>Magpie</b>	<i>Pica pica</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere
<b>(Eurasian) Golden Oriole</b>	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	S B	C		X		X					Inland
<b>Spotless Starling</b>	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere
<b>House Sparrow</b>	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	R B	V C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere
<b>Tree Sparrow</b>	<i>Passer montanus</i>	R B	U			X		X		X		Fairly common in Delta
<b>Rock Sparrow</b>	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	R B	U				X					Miravet
<b>Corn Bunting</b>	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	R B	C				X					Serra del Boix
<b>Reed Bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	R B	R			X						Illa de Buda
<b>Common Chaffinch</b>	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	R B	C						X			Els Ports
<b>European Serin</b>	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	R B	V C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Common everywhere
<b>European Greenfinch</b>	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	R B	C		X	X	X		X			Common
<b>European Goldfinch</b>	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	R B	C	X	X	X	X		X	X		Very common
<b>Common Linnet</b>	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	R B	C				X			X		Serra del Boix and Delta
<b>RB = Resident breeder; SB = summer breeder; W = winter visitor; P = passage visitor</b>												
<b>Abundance: VC = very common; C = common; U = uncommon; R = rare; VR = very rare</b>												

The Travelling Naturalist Ebro Delta and inland other fauna May 2009		Airport	Montsià	Delta	Serra del Boix Miravet	Delta	Els Ports	Delta Coll de l'Alba	Airport	
English name	Latin name	2 May	3 May	4 May	5 May	6 May	7 May	8 May	9 May	Observations
<b>MAMMALS</b>										
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>								X	On last day on north coast
Iberian ibex	<i>Capra hispanica</i>						X			Quick view of male in Els Ports
<b>AMPHIBIANS</b>										
Marbled newt	<i>Triturus marmoratus</i>				X					Inland
Sharp-ribbed salamander	<i>Pleurodeles waltl</i>				X					Inland
Iberian Water (Spanish Pond) Frog	<i>Rana perezi</i>			X	X	X	X			Inland and in Delta
Midwife toad	<i>Alytes obstetricans</i>							X		Coll de l'Alba
<b>REPTILES</b>										
Moorish gecko	<i>Tarentola mauretunica</i>					X				El Garxal
Green lizard	<i>Lacerta lepida</i>						X			Els Ports
<b>BUTTERFLIES</b>										
<b>PAPILIONIDAE</b>										
Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>			X						Beach Illa de Buda
<b>PIERIDAE</b>										
Large white	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>						X			Els Ports
Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamine</i>						X			Els Ports
Moroccan orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis euphenoides</i>		X		X		X			Inland
Dappled white	<i>Euchloe crameri</i>				X					Serra del Boix
Clouded yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>							X		Delta
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>						X			Els Ports
Wood white	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>		X		X		X			Inland
<b>LYCAENIDAE</b>										
Common blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>				X					Inland
Osiris blue	<i>Leptotes pirithous</i>				X		X			Serra del Boix and Els Ports
<b>NYMPHALIDAE</b>										
Red admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		X	X		X				Delta
Painted lady	<i>Cynthia cardui</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Everywhere!
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>						X			Els Ports
Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>						X			Els Ports
Speckled wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>		X		X		X			Inland
Wall brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>						X			Els Ports
<b>DRAGONFLIES</b>										
Emperor	<i>Anax imperator</i>				X					Serra del Boix
Vagrant Emperor	<i>Anax ephippiger</i>		X							Serra del Montsià

<b>Lesser Emperor Dragonfly</b>	<i>Anax parthenope</i>		X					Beach Illa de Buda
<b>Red-veined Darter</b>	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombei</i>			X				Serra del Boix

<b>Ebro Delta and inland flora May 2009</b>		
<b>English name</b>	<b>Latin name</b>	<b>Observations</b>
Spanish rusty foxglove	<i>Digitalis ferruginea</i>	Serra del Montsià
Pitch trefoil	<i>Psoralea bituminosa</i>	Common in Mediterranean habitats
Turpentine tree	<i>Pistacia terebinthus</i>	Serra del Montsià
Woodcock orchid	<i>Ophrys scolopax</i>	Near Godall
Dull ophrys	<i>Ophrys fusca</i>	Near Godall
Mirror orchid	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>	Near Godall
Wild jasmine	<i>Jasminum fruticans</i>	Common in Mediterranean habitats
Wild asparagus	<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	Common in Mediterranean habitats
	<i>Antirrhinum barrelieri</i>	Common by waysides in Mediterranean habitats
Grey-leaved cistus	<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Common in Mediterranean habitats
Woolly convolvulus	<i>Convolvulus lanuginosus</i>	Common in Mediterranean habitats
Sage-leaved cistus	<i>Cistus salvifolius</i>	Common in Mediterranean habitats
	<i>Cistus clusii</i>	Serra del Boix
Scarlet pimpernel	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Serra del Boix
Shrubby gromwell	<i>Lithodora fruticosa</i>	Serra del Boix
	<i>Salvia lavandulifolia</i>	Serra del Boix
St Bernard's lily	<i>Anthericum liliago</i>	Serra del Boix
Blue aphyllanthes	<i>Aphyllanthes monspeliensis</i>	Common in Mediterranean habitats
Wild caper	<i>Capparis spinosa</i>	Miravet castle
	<i>Asparagus horridus</i>	Miravet castle
	<i>Euphorbia serrata</i>	Miravet castle
Italian maple	<i>Acer granatense</i>	Els Ports
Strawberry tree	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	Els Ports
White water-lily	<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	Els Ports
Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>	Els Ports
Bearberry	<i>Arctosth</i>	Els Ports
Hepatica	<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	Els Ports
Box	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Els Ports
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvatica</i>	Els Ports
European nettle-tree	<i>Celtis australis</i>	Els Ports
Wild strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Els Ports
Early purple orchid	<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Els Ports
	<i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>	Els Ports
Sword-leaved helleborine	<i>Helleborus viridis</i>	Els Ports
Green hellebore	<i>Fritillaria nigra</i>	Els Ports
Snake's head	<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Els Ports
Grape hyacinth	<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Els Ports
Bloody cranesbill	<i>Lavatera arborea</i>	Els Ports
Tree mallow	<i>Carlina acaulis</i>	Els Ports
Stemless carline thistle	<i>Chaenorhinum organifolium</i>	Els Ports