

THE TRAVELLING NATURALIST

TRAVEL | EXPERIENCE | CONSERVE



CORSICA

Mountains in the Med

19 – 26 April 2015

TOUR REPORT

Leader: Mike Read

With 112 bird species, plenty of plants and much more besides, this was another super visit to the Isle de Beauté. The weather at the beginning was most un-Corsica-like! Rain during the journey to the first hotel and then rain the next afternoon. However, the rest of the week was fine, warm and sunny and the wildlife behaved very well. There were good sightings of the two endemic bird species (Corsican nuthatch and Corsican citril finch) as well as seeing a few birds that can often be absent or very elusive. This includes collared pratincole, Eurasian wryneck and golden oriole. We even added 4 new species for a Travelling Naturalist tour to Corsica namely tufted duck, northern lapwing, gull-billed tern and icterine warbler. The list of potential bird species seems to grow longer each year. We also saw good numbers of plant species and again this included some endemic species including Corsican hellebore and Corsican crocus. We even noted a dozen wild orchid species.

Everyone enjoyed the island and all it had to offer. A relaxing location (even when a Government Minister is visiting one of the intended sites!), great food, pleasant wine and great wildlife. So, as usual, Corsica proved its Springtime value as a tour destination.

Sunday 19 April

Weather: *Overcast but fine at the airport and at the start of the journey towards the hotel but rain began and by the time we reached Corti, it was pouring down.*

The group met in good time before our flight to Marseille. We left on time and arrived a little early so had plenty of time for some birding before the next flight. At first we had poor views of the area and were only seeing birds like yellow-legged gulls and common magpies but then we noted groups of common swifts and occasionally a few barn swallows and house martins. Carrion crows and wood pigeon were occasionally seen as was a white wagtail. There was quite a lot of wild thyme beside the concrete taxiways as well as a few plants of woad. Eventually a Black Kite drifted around and when we went through to the departure lounge we were able to see some common starlings and two male little bustards.

On arrival in Corsica we paused for some lunch at the airport 'bar' and from here we had our first Corsican birds which included three red kites, a female western marsh harrier, numerous common swifts, a few house martins and hooded crows and a very distant male golden oriole. We paid a brief visit to the Canonica Cathedral where we added Italian and tree sparrows, five little egrets, a few European goldfinches, common kestrel and a common buzzard, a single spotted flycatcher and a distant male hen harrier.

During the journey towards Corti we paused at Ponte Novu where Mike told some of the history of the place and then further on we stopped to find a few crag martins and another common buzzard but as it was now raining, we carried on to our hotel and then, a little later, we headed a short distance down the road for a superb Corsican evening meal to complete the day.

Monday 20 April

Weather: *Still and misty start to the day, partly cloudy skies as mist clears. Soon more cloud builds and rain sets in before and after lunch but there were a few dry spells.*

Outline of the day: We began the day with a stroll along the Restonica Valley where we encountered a few birds including blue rock thrush, crag martins, grey wagtail, winter wren, European robin and blue tit. We also heard a white-throated dipper fly along the river but sadly did not see it. After breakfast we assembled at the minibus and here we saw the blue rock thrush again as well as 10+ Alpine swifts, two common ravens, a few crag martins and a passing common kestrel. We then drove to Corti to purchase some picnic extras and from the car park area of the supermarket clients noted many common and a couple of Alpine swifts, red kite, European goldfinches, house martins and hooded crows. We then drove a little south of Corti where we found a few good plant species including pink butterfly orchids, narrow-leaved and sage-leaved cistus, tassel hyacinth, wall pennywort/navelwort and rusty back fern. Birds here included common cuckoo (one heard and another flying directly overhead), common buzzard, red kite and blackcap.

We then headed back towards the Restonica Valley with a quick pause at the river where we saw grey wagtail, great tit, a male pied flycatcher and a couple of orange tip butterflies. Within the Valley itself we made a few stops and walked a little in search of birds but they were few and far between – perhaps because of the impending weather! However, we did manage to find Eurasian jays, red kites, a Corsican nuthatch, coal tit and we also heard a firecrest. Interesting plants noted included common asphodel, Illyrian sea lily, spring sowbread, Corsican crocus and a species of yellow gagea (*Gagea fistulosa*). Some of these plants had been seen at the upper car park where, between the rain showers, we had our picnic lunch. During this time a couple of Alpine choughs were seen high above us along the skyline.

As light rain began to fall again we decided to head down the valley towards the shelter of the trees but the intensity of the rain increased and, as we could see clearer skies to the east, we left the mountains and headed along the N200 road. At a field containing a number of cows and a lone horse, we managed to find 3 male and a female ciril bunting while overhead there were at least three red kites, a few passing barn

swallows and numerous common swifts flying around. Flowers here included 4 species of wild orchids which were tongue, green-veined and pink butterfly orchid and dark ophrys as well as numerous *Polyanthus narcissus*. We then moved to a minor road and once the rain had stopped we were able to look at more plants including a fine display of *Polyanthus narcissus*. Birds included about 90 spotless starlings gathered on overhead wires, European greenfinch, a pair of common stonechats and, best of all, a male woodchat shrike. This completed our day's watching so we returned to the hotel. The rain eventually stopped towards the end of dinner!

Tuesday 21 April

Weather: *Fine and sunny all day with a maximum temperature of 25C*

More typical Corsican weather greeted us as clear blue skies encouraged us out on to go birding. However, it seemed the birds knew we were in for good weather and did not bother to get up as early as us! We strolled towards Corti and there on his usual rock was the male blue rock thrush. Occasional wood pigeons flew past and there were Eurasian jays, coal, great and blue tits among the trees. Close to the next hotel a male pied flycatcher was having some success feeding and then we saw a great spotted woodpecker land in a tree before it flew off across the valley. On the way back to the hotel, we found a female pied flycatcher and then we spotted a common buzzard perched just above us on a rocky outcrop.

After breakfast we began the journey towards the Asco Valley and paused before reaching Ponte Leccia. Pink butterfly and green-veined orchids were putting on a good show as a few barn swallows headed steadily northwards. Also here we saw a common buzzard sat in a tree and this was being mobbed by a hooded crow. However, the buzzard seemed unmoved! Highlight here though was a peregrine that flew past and headed towards the nearby hills.

Birds, particularly raptors were in short supply at our first two Asco stops however, we did manage to see two or three red kites and 18 or more common ravens. Smaller birds were represented by at least three woodlarks, spotless starlings, great spotted woodpecker, pied flycatcher and a common cuckoo. A short walk a little further on produced little more than a couple of tawny pipits. In this area we also saw at least two Tyrrhenian wall lizards. During coffee higher up the valley we saw a pair of golden eagles soaring high above the mountains along with occasional Ravens. Also seen from here were serins and chaffinches while a short distance beyond here we saw a pair of firecrests.

During lunch further up the valley we saw more common ravens and a few hooded crows. Coal and great Tits were almost constantly singing nearby, a few crag martins flew around feeding while a distant bird on a rocky ridge turned out to be a rufous-tailed rock thrush. Butterflies noted here included orange tip and small heath. A short drive after lunch took us to a regular Corsican nuthatch spot and sure enough one was very soon seen here. Driving on up the road alongside a stream, a dipper was seen by a few of the group and everyone saw a grey heron that flew up and followed the dipper's route. At Haut Asco there was much work in progress to reinstate the ski runs and as a consequence we saw no birds during our short walk, not even the usual Alpine choughs over the ridge high above us! As we left the area, close to the car park we encountered a young male and a female mouflon that stood and watched us for a while.

One final stop as we headed back to the hotel produced a few birds and occasional butterflies but nothing new for the day was seen.

Wednesday 22 April

Weather: *Clear blue skies a.m. but turning hazy later. Minimum temp 7, maximum 24*

We began the day with a drive to the edge of Corti in the hope of more people seeing dippers but sadly there was no sign of this species that we have usually seen from here. However, over the town dozens of common swifts could be seen while two male serins seemed to be having a 'singing duel'. Blue tits,

collared doves, grey wagtail, spotless starlings, European goldfinches and blackcaps were among those species we did see.

After breakfast we set off for the 'Gentle Valley', so named (by the leader) because of its gentle slopes in comparison to the previous two days of valleys! At the first stop things looked good with a male Sardinian warbler being the first sighting of note. At least three red kites were in the air together, circling buntings were noted nearby and a distant common nightingale could be heard. Narrow-leaved lupins were among the flowers seen here. At the next two stops many more common nightingales were heard and a couple were even glimpsed. Also noted at these places were great spotted woodpecker, pied flycatchers, common cuckoo, a Eurasian hoopoe was heard calling and Jays were regular. Raptors were present in good numbers too with many more red kites, a single common kestrel, at least three common buzzards and two sightings of a golden eagle. During a short walk at the latter of these stops we saw a spotted flycatcher and while we were watching good numbers of Swifts feeding, one was obviously much paler than the rest – a pallid swift!

Further into the Gentle Valley we paused to check a bird in a tree that turned out to be a Great Spotted Woodpecker. However, another bird flew into the same tree and this was instantly identified as a Eurasian Wren! We all watched the area for some while and probably heard three birds calling. Eventually one of these birds perched in a bare shrub long enough for everyone to get 'scope views. At this spot there were also a few more spotless starlings and one member of the group saw a couple of long-tailed tits. A little further into the valley we saw some Whinchats and this included two males sitting very close to each other in one bush. As we pulled into a side track for lunch we encountered at least three Corsican citril finches and a pair of circling buntings.

As we drove on through the valley after lunch, the first birds we saw were common cuckoo and Eurasian hoopoe. At the place where pink butterfly orchids and green-winged orchids grow on a cow shed roof, we saw two or three whinchats and a similar number of pied flycatchers. There were also some probable hybrid orchids of varying colours on the roof too. Further along the road we heard a pair of red-legged partridges calling but unfortunately they could not be seen. We then took a loop road to Castifao and paused for a short walk. Here we found three northern wheatears, two common cuckoos, two woodlarks, circling buntings and European goldfinches and as we were leaving there was a woodchat shrike on a roadside flowering hawthorn.

Our journey back to the hotel just added a few more red kites as well as more barn swallows and house martins but no new species. However, after dinner, in the stillness of the evening, there were at least two scops owls calling near the hotel to complete the day.

Thursday 23 April

Weather: *Heavy cloud in the mountains, less so in the lowlands, some warm sunshine. One light shower when we were driving.*

As we were changing hotels today, there was no pre breakfast walk to allow time for packing. However, a few of the clients ventured out and managed to glimpse a White-throated Dipper among other things.

We left the hotel fairly promptly at 9 a.m. and paused to look at hollow-stemmed asphodel on the outskirts of Corti. Much of the first part of the journey was fairly quiet with just occasional sightings of spotless starlings and red kites. At a Genoese bridge we paused to look for birds but all we could find was more red kites as well as a number of Italian sparrows, a pair or two of European goldfinches and a grey wagtail. Over coffee in Ghisonaccia there were lots of distant yellow-legged gulls and the queue for the gents was held up by people watching tree sparrows out of the restaurant's rear window!! Against the distant hills, a circling raptor (probably a common buzzard) was being 'followed' by a Eurasian sparrowhawk that then flew off northwards.

We then drove to the Marais de Canna and at the car parking area we were immediately hearing common nightingale and Cetti's Warbler. Three western marsh harriers flew off northwards and later we saw a further three or four out over the marsh while in the distance we could see at least six more red kites. The lake held many Eurasian coots, a few great crested grebes, four little grebes and at least five red-crested pochards. A great cormorant was wing-drying on the offshore wreck and another flew out of the marsh. Our attention turned to two raptors circling in the distance and these turned out to be red-footed falcons. However, having watched them for a while, we thought a closer bird heading directly towards us might have been another one which would give us better views but an elegant, sideways turn showed it to be a collared pratincole. It gave excellent views as it steadily made its way northwards and eventually disappeared into the distance. As we made our way back towards the car park through sea holly and past groups of sea stock, other birds noted included common reed warbler, zitting cisticola and a purple heron. A sudden roar of jet engines made us look round and there were the formation team of the Patrouille de France going through some training flights. Excellent to see; our own free air show! During our picnic lunch, a common sandpiper landed at the edge of the car parking area and in the nearby field we could see a good colony of lax-flowered orchids.

Lunch completed we began the northward journey towards our next hotel and soon made a stop at the Etang d'Urbino. From the roadside viewpoint we could see at least two great egrets and about a dozen little egrets. In a distant bay there were three common shelducks feeding close to a grey heron while a shallow pool held the attention of a wandering and pecking black-winged stilt. A purple heron flew into a reed bed area and was immediately lost to view and 3 Common Greenshanks were feeding in some shallow puddles close to a northern lapwing. The latter bird was a new species for Travelling Naturalist in Corsica. Smaller birds noted here were Cetti's warbler and corn bunting.

The Etang de Diane was our next stop and here we saw a couple of groups of greater flamingos totalling about 15 individuals. Also here were more little egrets and another great egret as well as dozens of yellow-legged gulls. The Etang de Terrenzana held a few coots and two pairs of red-crested pochards but other than that there was little to be seen. We therefore headed on northwards and just before reaching our second hotel, a fine male red-footed falcon was seen on roadside wires.

Friday 24 April

Weather: *Dry, mainly clear skies but some cloud. Up to 21 C.*

The pre breakfast walk took us out to the beach then around the nearby woodland. A few barn swallows and occasional house martins were heading northwards and to begin with we saw serin and European greenfinch at the edge of the trees. A Sardinian warbler and common nightingale were heard in the scrub beside the trees and a small group of European bee-eaters headed north unseen. As we moved further along the track, the birding seemed to improve even more. We could hear a hoopoe calling in the distance and a great spotted woodpecker flew off as we approached. Two tree pipits flew up from the ground a perched obligingly on some open branches and then at least three wood warblers were seen in their full springtime finery. Close to the coastal road two or three more nightingales could be heard and four red kites were circling in the distance to complete our early walk.

After breakfast we took a short drive to some nearby fields where we saw common kestrel, at least two western marsh harriers and more red kites. Birds obviously on migration included a few small groups of barn swallows and five European bee-eaters while looking much less energetic were three different stone curlews. Further north towards the Etang de Biguglia we made a couple of stops and had good views of a red kite perched on a fence post, saw distant bee-eaters flying around, had occasional views of a couple of northern wheatears and a female common redstart and heard Cetti's warbler and common nightingale. A road across part of the Etang was blocked by improvement work so after a discussion with one of the workers, clients began birding while Mike returned the minibus to the side of the road. More common nightingales and Cetti's warblers sang unseen while a woodchat shrike was more noticeable as it sat on the bare twigs at the top of a small shrub. Raptors were represented by at least six western marsh harriers, a

male common kestrel and a few red kites. A group of five cormorants did a passable impression of the Patrouille de France as they flew around in formation before heading off south and as we walked out to the road, we found a new species for the Travelling Naturalist in Corsica, a male tufted duck.

At the northern end of the Etang de Biguglia we were hoping to find some rarer gulls but unfortunately none were present but we did see five gull-billed terns perched on a row of posts and these were also a new species for Travelling Naturalist in Corsica. From here we moved close to le Fort, the new administrative building for the nature reserve that is the Etang de Biguglia. Not only did we have a really enjoyable picnic but we also saw a good number of birds. These included five collared doves, four Little egrets, three whinchats, two turtle doves but sadly no partridge in a pear tree!! Also here we saw yellow and white wagtails, two common sandpipers, a male common redstart, our first common moorhens, two northern wheatears and the only squacco heron of the tour.

Following our success here we drove south and then west and after a few kilometres we turned on to a side road that took us up into the mountains. The main objective here was to look at the flowers, especially a range of wild orchids. Species found included green-winged, common spotted (not yet blooming), pink butterfly, Barton's, Provence and dense-flowered orchids and narrow-leaved helleborine. A pair of blue tits and a Eurasian sparrowhawk were seen at the stopping point and as we drove back down the road, a male pied flycatcher darted out to catch an insect and then disappeared into the undergrowth. Two more stops were made on our way back to the hotel and these were for a group of dark ophrys and for a large group of tall pink butterfly orchids.

After dinner we tried unsuccessfully for scops owl.

Saturday 25 April

Weather: *Fine all day, cloudy and somewhat misty early but by lunchtime the weather had improved and we enjoyed a few sunny spells. Maximum temperature 19 C.*

The early stroll took us along a similar route to the previous day but we only managed half of the woodland. Before leaving the hotel grounds we were hearing a Eurasian hoopoe which then perched up in a dead tree close to a couple of spotless starlings. From the beach a few very distant Cory's shearwaters were glimpsed while on the beach itself a couple of northern wheatears could be seen. At the edge of the woodland a male serin sang from a bare twig and a common whitethroat dashed off into a bush then off beyond some fallen trees. A Sardinian warbler approached the edge of its habitat as we passed and within the wood we found great spotted woodpecker, two tree pipits and a blackcap. The final good bird here was a golden oriole that briefly perched in a plane tree before continuing its migration northwards.

After breakfast we began the journey past Bastia and up to Cap Corse. After coffee in Macinaggio we moved on to the smaller roads that led out to Barcaggio. Once parked we noticed the first of three common sandpipers in the small stream. Flying around were a few barn swallows and a few of these were seen to set off across the Mediterranean towards mainland Europe. Along our walk birds were in short supply at first but eventually we located a wood sandpiper, Sardinian warblers, a purple heron, two common redstarts, one European robin (the first to be actually seen this trip), at least four whinchats and some European bee-eaters. The latter birds flew around for a while before landing in a tree not far from us giving great 'scope views. In the end, another small group arrived and we ended up with at least 18 of these beautifully coloured birds to admire. Over a distant hill top, a European honey buzzard circled around and was lost to view and there were two or three western marsh harriers in the area. Back at the ringing station we were able to see icterine warbler in the hand (the first time for this species for a Travelling Naturalist group in Corsica) as well as male whinchats and cirl bunting.

After lunch we strolled along the beach and out over the sea we eventually saw about 15 or more Cory's shearwaters as well as numerous yellow-legged gulls. Much closer to us was a black-winged stilt sheltering by some seaweed while close to a small pool there were a couple of yellow wagtails. Overhead there were

numerous common swifts and barn swallows and these were joined by at least one sand martin. We walked on through the scrub and past many Italian catchfly flowers and blooming cistus plants but at the larger pond the only bird present was a common sandpiper so we returned to the minibus and headed for Capo Grosso. We turned on to the smaller road and after some distance we paused to view a couple of violet bird's nest orchids. However, a little further on we were challenged by two gendarmes. To the leader's surprise, they asked where we were going and what for. We explained that we were just going up the hill to search for a couple of rare birds. At first we were refused permission to proceed but after some polite grovelling from Mike (and explaining that we had to go onwards to be able to turn around as they were parked in the nearest/only other possible turning spot!) we were told that we could go up the hill and spend just five minutes searching for our birds before we had to return. And the reason for the original refusal? A French Government Minister was visiting the lighthouse at the end of the road and had to be protected from the band of criminal-looking clients Mike was taking with him!! As it happens, more or less as soon as we arrived, a Marmora's Warbler performed a super display flight which everyone saw so we were almost immediately on our way again! As we passed the gendarmes we thanked them for their help and understanding. However, we were not sure if the fact that they followed us back to the road was to stop any future traffic even entering the road in the first place or if they wanted to make sure that these rather odd Brits had actually left them in peace!

Mission accomplished we began the journey back to the hotel seeing very little as we went.

Sunday 26 April

Weather: *Overcast and cool with low clouds part-way down the mountains.*

With a 10.05 a.m. flight we took an earlier breakfast and by 8.00 we were on our way to Poretta/Bastia Airport. Close to where we had previously seen single red-footed falcons, there were now seven spaced out on the overhead wires, three males and four females. A western marsh harrier drifted over some fields and a few spotless starlings dashed past or sat in dead trees but other than that there was little to be seen. In the end, the flight departed approximately 15 minutes early and landed at Gatwick close to 30 minutes early. Baggage was on the conveyor belt before anyone was able to clear customs and soon everyone was heading homewards at the end of a super visit to the 'Isle de Beauté'.

SPECIES LIST:

BIRDS

Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	Just heard calling in the upper part of the Gentle Valley on 22 nd .
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	3 at the Etang d'Urbino on 23 rd .
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	A pair was at the Marais de Canna on 23 rd .
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	2 in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd and at least 3 at le Fort on 24 th .
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	5 at the Marais de Canna and 4 at the Etang de Terrenzana all on 23 rd .
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	A male was on the Etang de Biguglia on 24 th .
Cory's Shearwater	<i>Caolonectris diomedea</i>	2 or 3 seen in hazy conditions during the pre breakfast walk on 25 th then later the same day there were 20 or more seen at Cap Corse.
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	At least 4 at the Marais de Canna on 23 rd and also seen on the Etang de Biguglia the following day.
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	6 at the Marais de Canna and more on the Etang de Biguglia on 24 th .
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	About 15 juveniles seen at the Etang de Diane on 23 rd and a few seen in the distance at the Etang de Biguglia the following day. Also glimpsed as we drove past Biguglia on 25 th .
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Just a single bird seen close to le Fort on 24 th .
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2 seen near the Canonica Cathedral on 19 th then one seen high in the Asco valley on 21 st . Also noted in small numbers on 23 rd and 24 th at various coastal marshes.
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	1 at the Marais de Canna and another brief sighting at the Etang d'Urbino both on 23 rd and 1 near Barcaggio on 25 th .
Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	2 at the Marais de Canna and 1 at the Etang d'Urbino on 23 rd and 3 around the Etang de Biguglia on 24 th .
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	5 seen flying south near the Canonica Cathedral on 19 th then good numbers seen in coastal areas on 3 consecutive days from 23 rd .
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	First seen at the Marais de Canna on 23 rd then seen in other coastal locations later the same day and also on the following 2 days.
European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	1 seen wing-drying on coastal rocks at Macinaggio on 25 th .
Common (Eurasian) Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Noted every day except 26 th .
Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	First seen in the distance at the Marais de Canna on 23 rd then a male was near la Lagune later the same day. A female was seen in the same area as the latter bird of the previous day and as we drove to the airport on 26 th there were 7 birds (4 females, 3 males) in the same area.

Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 seen during a stop on the way towards Ponte Leccia on 21 st .
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Nest seen at Capo Grosso on 25 th but due to the enforced briefness of our visit, we were unable to set up a telescope to see if it was occupied.
European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	1 at Barcaggio on 25 th was our only sighting.
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Noted on Corsica every day except 26 th in fairly good numbers.
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	1 seen from Marseille airport on 19 th
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	2 seen near Poretta Airport on 19 th then seen in good numbers on 23 rd , 24 th & 25 th plus a single as we drove to the airport on 26 th .
Hen (Northern) Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1 male seen to the south of the Canonica Cathedral on 19 th
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	1 seen near Ghisonaccia on 23 rd and another the following day was near Campile.
Common (Eurasian) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Small numbers seen every day except 26 th .
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	2 seen near the village of Asco on 21 st and then we had closer views of an adult in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd .
Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	2 males seen at Marseille airport on 19 th .
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	At least 3 seen near le Fort on 24 th .
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Noted on 3 consecutive days from 23 rd .
European Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oediconemus</i>	3 seen south of the Etang de Biguglia on 24 th .
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	1 at the Etang d'Urbino on 23 rd and another at Barcaggio on 25 th .
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	A single bird seen at the Etang d'Urbino on 23 rd was the first sighting of this species by a <i>Travelling Naturalist</i> group in Corsica.
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	3 seen at the Etang d'Urbino on 23 rd .
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	1 seen very briefly during the first walk at Barcaggio on 25 th .
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Our first was near the Marais de Canna car park on 23 rd then we saw at least 2 near le Fort the following day and 3 together at Barcaggio on 25 th .
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	Great views of one heading steadily northwards at the Marais de Canna on 23 rd .
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	Good numbers seen in all of the coastal areas on 19 th and on 4 consecutive days from 23 rd .
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	5 seen on posts and occasionally flying at the northern end of the Etang de Biguglia on 24 th . Noted on 3 days.
Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>	Small numbers seen every day up to 24 th .
(Common) Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	2 on 24 th near le Fort and 1 at Cap Corse on 25 th .
European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Noted every day of the tour.
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decacoccto</i>	1 seen and another heard calling near Corti on 20 th then noted on the following 5 days.
Common (Eurasian) Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	2 birds heard calling near the Hotel Arena le Refuge on 22 nd . This was our only record
Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>	

Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	despite trying to locate them at the usually reliable La Lagune location.
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	At least 10 seen above the Restonica Valley during the pre breakfast walk on 20 th .
Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	Noted every day in good numbers. A single bird, much paler than the plentiful Common Swifts, was obviously a bird of this species. It was seen in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd .
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	5 seen flying northwards near the hotel on 24 th and a further 20 or more seen later the same day at the northern end of Biguglia. Also seen the following day at Cap Corse with good 'scope views of these beautifully colourful birds perching in a tree in full sunlight.
(Eurasian) Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Our first was in the lower part of the Gentle Valley on 22 nd and later that day we saw a further 2 (possibly 4) higher up the same valley. Also heard and seen close to the hotel on 24 th & 25 th .
(Eurasian) Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	At least 2 seen in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd .
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Small numbers seen on 6 consecutive days from 21 st .
Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	1 male well watched during rain on 20 th near Corti then singles also seen on 22 nd near Castifao and on 24 th at the Etang de Biguglia.
(Eurasian) Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	A very distant male seen at Poretta Airport on 19 th as we had lunch and then another bird seen briefly in the woodland beside La Lagune on 25 th . This latter bird called a couple of times from a Eucalyptus tree, was seen but it then flew off northwards.
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Noted every day except 26 th .
Black-billed (Common) Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Just seen at Marseille airport on 19 th .
Alpine (Yellow-billed) Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	At least 2 seen from the car park in the upper Restonica Valley during lunch on 20 th . Surprisingly none were seen at Haut Asco perhaps due in part to the work that was going on there!
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	A few were seen at Marseille airport on 19 th .
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Common on Corsica where the species was seen every day.
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Half a dozen seen in the Restonica Valley on 20 th then three times that number were seen together the following day in the Asco Valley where we also saw a few more individuals. Also seen on 22 nd , 23 rd & 25 th .
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	Noted on 3 consecutive days from 20 th in the mountains.
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Seen every day from 20 th to 25 th inclusive.
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	Seen every day from 20 th to 25 th inclusive.
European Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Singles seen near the Canonica Cathedral on 19 th and at Cap Corse on 25 th .

Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Seen every day with a steady north-bound flow most fine days.
Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Hirundo rupestris</i>	Seen every day in small numbers except 24 th and 26 th with our first ones being during the journey towards Ponte Leccia on 19 th .
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Seen every day except 26 th but in smaller quantities than Barn Swallow.
Long-tailed (Bush) Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	2 seen in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd and this was our only sighting.
Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	2 on 21 st in the Asco Valley and a further 2 near Castifao on 22 nd .
Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tld warb)	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	Heard on 23 rd at Marais de Canna and then seen the following day near the Etang de Biguglia.
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	First heard then seen on 23 rd at the Marais de Canna then noted elsewhere later that day and on the following 2 days.
(Eurasian) Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Heard singing at the Marais de Canna on 23 rd .
Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	1 seen at Barcaggio on 23 rd . This was a bird that had been caught by ringers and so we had excellent in-the-hand views. This was a new species for a <i>Travelling Naturalist</i> group in Corsica.
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	3 seen in the la Lagune woodland during the pre breakfast walk on 24 th . One perched up nicely in a shaft of sunlight and gave us excellent views.
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Seen or heard in small numbers every day from 20 th to 25 th inclusive.
Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Just a single bird seen near the beach at La Lagune on 25 th .
Marmora's Warbler	<i>Sylvia sarda</i>	A single bird seen in song flight at Capo Grosso on 25 th was all that we had time for on the day!
Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	A male was seen on 22 nd in the Gentle Valley with a female further along the same location later the same day. We also saw the species close to the hotel on 25 th and later at Cap Corse.
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	Heard in the Restonica Valley on 20 th then a pair was well seen in the Asco valley the following day.
(Winter) Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Heard on 5 days in widely separated locations but only glimpsed once or twice.
Corsican Nuthatch	<i>Sitta whiteheadi</i>	Briefly seen in the Restonica Valley on 20 th then well seen in the Asco Valley 21 st .
Common (European) Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Seen at Marseille airport on 19 th on the way to Corsica.
Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	Seen every day on Corsica from 20 th with the largest gathering being of 90 or more on overhead cables near Corti.
Common (Eurasian) Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Seen every day except 26 th .
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	First seen in the Asco Valley on 21 st then noted on the following 2 days.

European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Heard singing during the early walk on 20 th then actually seen at Cap Corse on 25 th .
Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	Heard near Ponte Leccia on 21 st then many heard and a few glimpsed the following day in the Gentle Valley. Also heard on 23 rd , 24 th & 25 th .
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	2 (one female and one male) seen in different areas around the Etang de Biguglia on 24 th then at least 3 seen in the Cap Corse area the following day.
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	At least 6 in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd then seen on the following 3 days.
Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	2 near Corti on 20 th were our first then also seen on 22 nd , 23 rd & 24 th .
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Small numbers (maximum 3) seen on 4 consecutive days from 22 nd .
(Rufous-tailed) Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	A single bird was seen on a high ridge above the Asco Valley on 21 st .
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	A male was seen in its usual spot close to the Arena le Refuge hotel on 20 th & 21 st .
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1 near the Canonica Cathedral on 19 th and another seen in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd .
European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	1 male seen at the 'town bridge' in Corti on 20 th then seen in the Asco Valley and the Gentle Valley on the following two days. Finally, a male was seen as we left the main orchid spot on the Campile Road.
(White-throated) Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	Heard during the pre breakfast walk on 20 th then glimpsed the following day fairly high up in the Asco valley and also seen in the Restonica Valley early on 23 rd .
House (Italian) Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Seen at the Canonica Cathedral on 19 th then seen every day from 22 nd .
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Seen at the Canonica Cathedral on 19 th then behind the café loos during our coffee stop on 23 rd !
Rock Sparrow (Petronia)	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	1 seen on a building roof in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd then 4 birds seen near Castifao later that day were thought to be this species.
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	A single grey-headed bird was seen near le Fort on 24 th and then there were 2 at Cap Corse the following day.
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Seen on 4 consecutive days from 20 th mainly in the mountains beside fast flowing rivers.
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>	1 seen at Marseille airport on 19 th then seen at le Fort on 24 th and at Cap Corse on 25 th .
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	2 seen together (so presumably a pair) in the Asco Valley on 21 st .
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	At least 2 seen in the woodland close to La Lagune during the early walks on 24 th & 25 th .
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Noted on 6 Consecutive days from 20 th .

European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	A singing male on the edge of Corti on 20 th was our first then there were a further 4 days with sightings.
European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Noted every day from 20 th .
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Noted every day of the tour except 26 th .
Corsican Citril Finch	<i>Serinus corsicanus</i>	3 seen at our picnic spot in the Gentle Valley on 22 nd then a further 4 seen later that same day. Finally, 2 seen at Cap Corse on 25 th .
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Heard singing at the Etang d'Urbino on 23 rd then seen the following day close to the Etang de Biguglia.
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirius</i>	At least 4 seen on 20 th at the 'cow field' not far from Corti and then seen on a further 4 days of the tour.
MAMMALS		
Mouflon	<i>Ovis orientalis</i>	2 seen in the Asco Valley on 21 st . Studying the photos of both later, it was discovered that there was one female and a youngish male.
AMPHIBIANS		
Marsh Frog	<i>Rana ridibunda</i>	
Italian Pool Frog	<i>Rana bergeri</i>	
Common Tree Frog	<i>Hyla arborea</i>	
REPTILES		
European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys Orbicularis</i>	
Tyrrhenian Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis tiliguerta</i>	
BUTTERFLIES		
Scarce Swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>	
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	
Orange Tip	<i>Anthoegaia rapae</i>	
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>	
Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>	
Painted Lady	<i>Cynthia cardui</i>	
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	
DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES		
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	
Island Blue-tail	<i>Ischnura genei</i>	
OTHER INSECTS		
Egyptian grasshopper	<i>Anacridium aegyptium</i>	
Dung Beetle	<i>Scarabaeus semipunctatus</i>	
Pepper Beetle		
FLOWERS		
Pinaceae		
<i>Pinus pinea</i>	Stone Pine, Umbrella Pine	
<i>Pinus pinasta</i>	Maritime Pine	

Cupressaceae

Cupressus sempervirens
Juniperus communis

Italian Cypress
Common Juniper

Salicaceae

Populus nigra italica

Lombardy Poplar

Betulaceae

Betula pendula
Alnus glutinosa

Silver Birch
Alder

Fagaceae

Castanea sativa
Quercus ilex

Sweet Chestnut
Holm Oak

Ulmaceae

Ulmus canescens

Mediterranean Elm

Aceraceae

Acer monspessulanum
Plantanus orientalis

Montpelier Maple
Plane Tree

Hippocastanaceae

Aesculus hippocastanum

Horse-chestnut

Aquifoliaceae

Ilex aquifolium

Holly

Oleaceae

Fraxinus ornus
Olea europaea

Flowering Ash (Manna)
Olive

Simaroubaceae

Ailanthus altissima

Tree of Heaven

Loranthaceae

Viscum austriacum

Mistletoe (parasitic on pines & larch)

Urticaceae

Urtica dioica
Urtica pilulifera

Common Nettle
Roman Nettle

Polygonaceae

Rumex acetosella

Sheep's Sorrel

Aizoaceae

Carprobrotus edulis

Hottentot Fig

Chenopodiaceae

Salicornia europaea

Glasswort

Caryophyllaceae

Silene italica
Silene galica
Kohlrauschia velutina
Stellaria media

Italian Catchfly
Small-flowered Catchfly

Common Chickweed

Ranunculaceae

Clematis vitalba
Anemone hortensis
Ranunculus parviflorus
Ranunculus aquatilis
Ranunculus sceleratus

Traveller's Joy

Small-flowered Buttercup
Common Water-crowfoot
Celery-leaved crowfoot

Berberidaceae

Pistacia lentiscus

Lentisc

Fumariaceae

Fumaria bicolor
Fumaria officinalis
Fumaria capreolata

Common Fumitory
Ramping Fumitory

Papaveraceae

Papaver rhoeas
Glaucium flavum

Common Poppy
Yellow-horned Poppy

Moraceae

Ficus carica

Fig

Brassicaceae

Isatis tinctoria
Mathiola sinuata
Alyssum alyssoides
Cakile maritima
Lunaria annua
Alliaria petiolata

Woad
Sea Stock
Small Alison
Sea Rocket
Honesty
Garlic Mustard

Crassulaceae

Umbilicus rupestris

Navelwort

Rosaceae

Prunus spinosa
Crataegus monogyna
Rubus fruticosus
Rosa canina
Fragaria vesca
Potentilla reptans

Blackthorn
Hawthorn
Bramble
Dog Rose
Wild Strawberry
Creeping Cinquefoil

Fabaceae

Cercis silquastrum
Acacia dealbata
Acacia retinoides
Sparticum junceum
Genista cinerea

Judas Tree
Silver Wattle/Mimosa

Spanish Broom

<i>Lupinus angustifolius</i>	Narrow-leaved Lupin
<i>Lupinus luteus</i>	Yellow Lupin
<i>Robinia pseudacacia</i>	False acacia
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch
<i>Vicia villosa</i>	Fodder Vetch
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common Vetch
<i>Lathyrus sphaericus</i>	Red Vetchling
<i>Pisum sativum</i>	Wild Pea
<i>Medicago marina</i>	Sea Medick
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Birdsfoot Trefoil
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium tomentosum</i>	Woolly Trefoil
<i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Star Clover

Geraniaceae

<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-bill

Linaceae

<i>Linum bienne</i>	Pale Flax
---------------------	------------------

Euphorbiaceae

<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun Spurge
<i>Euphorbia wulfenii</i>	

Polygalaceae

<i>Polygala nicaensis</i>	Nice Milkwort
---------------------------	----------------------

Tamariceae

<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	Tamarisk
------------------------	-----------------

Malvaceae

<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow
-------------------------	----------------------

Clusiaceae

<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St John's-wort
-----------------------------	---------------------------------

Violaceae

<i>Viola alba dehnadtii</i>	
-----------------------------	--

Cistaceae

<i>Cistus creticus corsicus</i>	
<i>Cistus salvifolius</i>	Sage-leaved Cistus
<i>Cistus monspeliensis</i>	Narrow-leaved Cistus
<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey-leaved Cistus

Rafflesiaceae

<i>Cytinus ruber</i>	(Parasitic on pink cistus)
----------------------	----------------------------

Apiaceae

Eryngium maritimum
Smyrnum olusatrum
Apium nodiflorum
Ferula communis

Sea Holly
Alexanders
Fool's Water-cress
Giant Fennel

Ericaceae

Arbutus unedo
Erica arborea

Strawberry Tree
Tree Heath

Cactaceae

Opuntia ficus-indica

Prickly Pear

Myrtaceae

Myrtis communis
Eucalyptus globulus

Common Myrtle
Southern Blue Gum

Primulaceae

Anagalis arvensis
Anagalis arvensis
Cyclamen repandum

Scarlet Pimpernel
Scarlet Pimpernel (blue form)
Spring Sowbread

Oxalidaceae

Oxalis pes-caprae
Oxalis articulata

Bermuda Buttercup
Pink Oxalis

Gentianaceae

Blackstonia perfoliata

Yellow-wort

Rubiaceae

Galium aparine
Cruciata laevipes

Cleavers
Crosswort

Boraginaceae

Myosotis ramosissima
Echium plantagineum
Borago officinalis

Early Forget-me-not
Purple Viper's Bugloss
Borage

Lamiaceae

Lamium purpureum
Rosmarinus officinalis
Lavendula stoechas
Salvia verbenaca
Thymus vulgaris

Red Deadnettle
Rosemary
French Lavender
Wild Clary
Thyme

Plantaginaceae

Plantago lanceolata

Ribwort Plantain

Scrophulariaceae

Digitalis purpurea
Veronica persica
Parentucellia latifolia

Foxglove
Common Field Speedwell

Myoporaceae*Myoporum laetum*

Ngaio

Asteraceae*Bellis perennis*

Daisy

*Evax pygmaea**Helichrysum italicum*

Curry Plant

Cotula coronopifolia

Buttonweed

Calendula arvensis

Field Marigold

Silybum marianum

Milk Thistle

Galactites tomentosa

Galactites

Carlina acaulis

Stemless Carlina Thistle

*Hyoseris radiata**Urospermum dalechampii*

Urospermum

Liliaceae*Asphodelus fistulosus*

Hollow-stemmed Asphodel

Asphodelus aestivus

Common Asphodel

*Gagea fistulosa**Ornithogalum umbellatum*

Star of Bethlehem

Muscari comosum

Tassel Hyacinth

Asparagus officinalis

Common Asparagus

*Asparagus acutifolius**Smilax aspera*

Common Smilax

Allium roseum

Rosy Garlic

Allium triquetrum

Three-cornered Leek

Amaryllidaceae*Narcissus tazetta*

Polyanthus Narcissus

Iris pseudacorus

Yellow Flag

Araceae*Zantedeschia spp.*

Arum Lily

Gramineae*Briza media*

Quaking Grass

Arundo donax

Giant Reed

Juncaceae*Juncus acutus*

Sharp Rush

Hypolepidaceae*Pteridium aquilinum*

Bracken

Aspleniaceae*Asplenium trichomanes*

Maidenhair Spleenwort

Ceterach officinarum

Rusty Back Fern

Polypodium cambricum

Southern Polypodium

Posidoniaceae*Pocedonia oceanica*

Neptune Grass

Orchidaceae

Epipactis longifolia
Limodorum abortivum
Anacamptis laxiflora
Orchis olbiensis
Orchis papilionacea
Anacamptis morio
Orchis bartonii
Orchis provincialis
Neotinia maculata
Serapias cordigera
Serapias lingua
Ophrys incubacea

Narrow-leaved Helleborine
Violet Limodore
Loose-flowered Orchid
Southern Early Purple Orchid
Pink Butterfly Orchid
Green-winged Orchid
Barton's Orchid
Provence Orchid
Dense-flowered Orchid
Heart-flowered Serapias
Tongue Orchid
Dark Ophrys

Endemic Species

Crocus corsicus
Pinus nigra subsp Laricio
Helleborus lividus subsp Corsicus
Euphorbia pithyusa subsp cupanii
Pancratium illyricum
Sorbus aucuparia subsp praemorsa
Stachys glutinosa

Corsican Pine

Illyrian Sea Lily
Mountain Ash
Sticky Woundwort