Trip Report — France's Loire Valley: Birds, Chateaux & Wine 2025

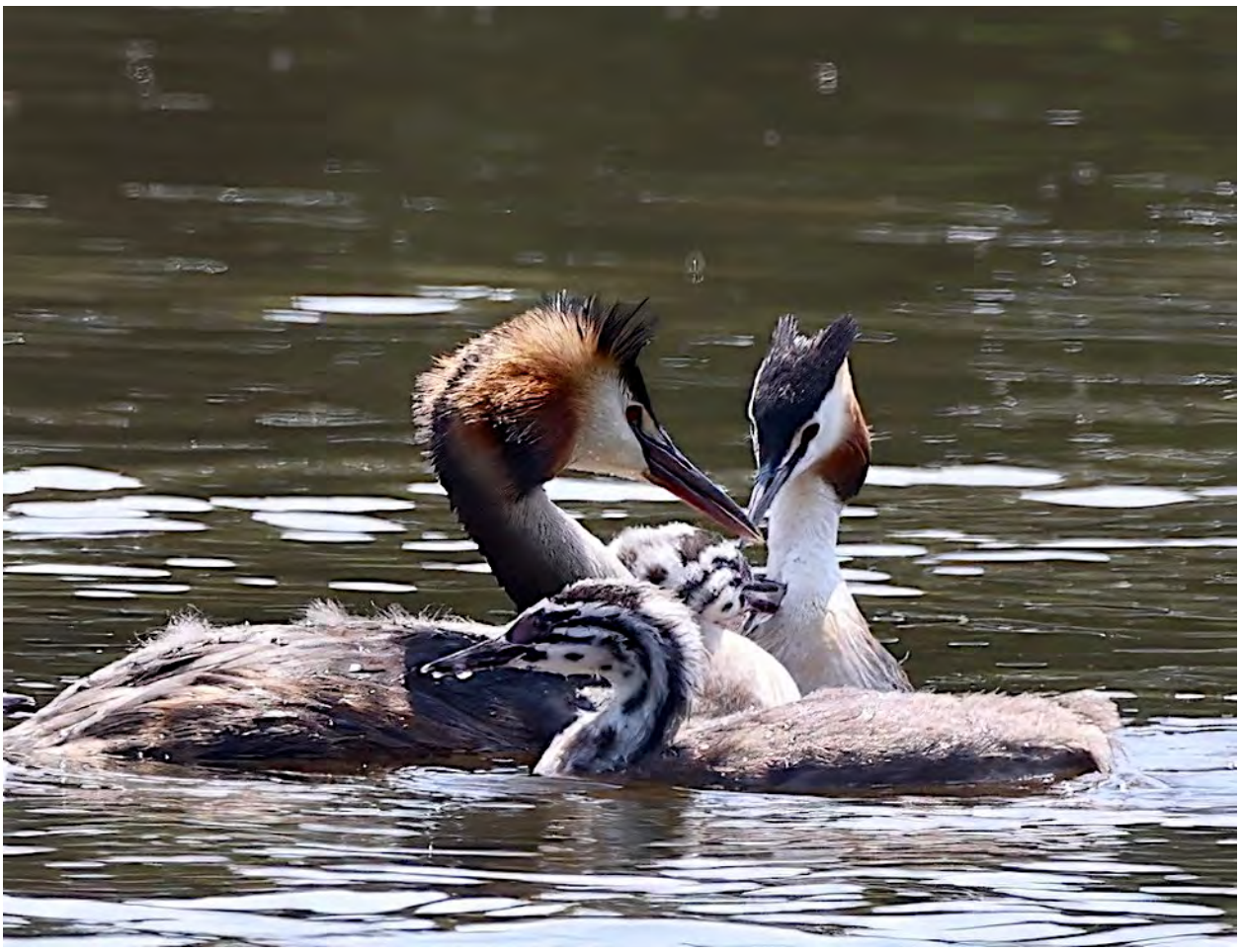
June 1-11, 2025 with Marcelo Padua

Chateau de Villandry is famous for its gardens, and participant Maureen Phair captured its essence in this lovely photo.

There are few better ways of spending a few days in spring than touring the countryside of France while birding, immersing yourself in history, and enjoying fine wines paired with exquisite food. So that is exactly what we did.

Our group met at the Paris airport and we quickly made our way out of the big city into the small town of Chinon, famous for being the town of Joan of Arc, and for producing some of the finest red wines from the Loire Valley. We spent four nights here exploring the beautiful Chinon Forest, where we found species like the elusive Eurasian Golden Oriole, Western

Bonelli's Warbler and Eurasian Nuthatch, as well as some agricultural fields that hosted Little Owls, Corn Buntings, European Stonechats and many others. Out there, we also got our first taste of wetland birding at Etang D'assay and found our first Red-crested Pochards, Whiskered Terns, Great Crested Grebes and Common Terns among others.



Great Crested Grebes are always fun to watch, but seeing them with chicks was an added bonus. Photo by participant Maureen Phair.

Another special outing we made had us visiting the Meron Grasslands, where we encountered displaying Little Bustards, Eurasian Thicknees, Eurasian Skylark and Montagu's Harrier.

On the historical side of things, we enjoyed a tour of one of Europe's most important abbeys, as well as the Villandry Chateau that is home to one of the most impressive gardens in the Loire Valley and perhaps Europe, before

packing up and moving to Cour-Cheverny where we would spend the following four nights.

Little Bustards are quite rare in the areas we visited but we had some great looks at this displaying male during our tour. Photo by guide Marcelo Padua.

From Cour-Cheverny we ventured out to the mosaic of parcs that form La Brenne Natural Park, and found a number of interesting species, including Black Stork, Common Reed Warbler, Mediterranean Gull, Eurasian Moorhen, Eurasian Coot and Tufted Ducks, as well as some forested habitats that got us onto Lesser, Middle and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Black Woodpecker, Eurasian Wryneck, Goldcrest and Cirl Bunting, just to name a few.

We also explored the magnificent Chateau de Chambord, one of the largest Chateaux of the Loire Valley and Chateau de Chennonceau with its unique gallery over the Cher River.

This was definitely an unforgettable tour with wonderful meals, excellent wines, fabulous birds, and an amazing group. I have enjoyed it thoroughly and I hope you enjoyed it too.

Everyone knows what Common Cuckoos sound like, but very few people have actually seen this species. Participant Maureen Phair captured a great shot of one during our tour.

Listed below you will find all the wonderful wines we got to try during our time in the Loire.

Winery, Wine name, Appellation, Wine type, Vintage

Domaine de La Commanderie, Blanc Petillant Naturel, Sparkling, No Vintage
Domaine de La Commanderie, Elegance, Chinon, White Wine, 2023
Domaine de La Commanderie, Elegance, Chinon, White Wine, 2023
Haitre de Chai, Quentin Gaufreteau, Pouilly Fume, White Wine, 2022
Chateau de la Bonneliere, Les Devants de la Bonneliere, Touraine, White Wine, 2023

Earl Brocourt, Les Truffieres, Chinon, White Wine, 2022
Pierre Sourdais, Les Cornuelles, Chinon, White Wine, 2022
Domaine Dozon, Le Grand Saut, Chinon, Red Wine, 2021
Comte Leloup, Cuvee des Ceps Centenaires, Mouscadet Sevre, White Wine, 2014
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, Les Blancs Closeaux , Chinon, White, 2024
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, Cremant de Loire, Chinon, Sparkling, No Vintage
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, “R”, Chinon, Rose, 2024
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, Chenin , Chinon, Red, 2022
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, “C” , Chinon, Red, 2023
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, “V” , Chinon, Red, 2018
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, Saint Louans , Chinon, Red, 2021
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, La Haute Olive, Chinon, Red, 2018
Pierre & Bertrand Couly, Les 4 Aiment, Chinon, Red, 2022
Domaine Des Bouquerries, Plaisir, Chinon, Rose, 2022
Domaine Charles Pain, Petit Pain au Raisin, Chinon, Red , 2024
Domaine de Huards, Pure, Cheverny, White Wine, 2021
Benoit Daridan, L’intemporel, Cheverny, White Wine, 2023
Domaine Du Croc Du Merle, Cheverny, White Wine, 2021
Amirault Vignerons, Armantine, Cremant de Loire, Sparkling, No Vintage
La Poussie, La Poussie, Sancerre, White Wine, 2023
Domaine de La Commanderie, Rose de Saignee, Chinon, Rose, 2022
Ca Croix, Chavet, Menetou-Salon, 2023
Phillipe, Loquineau, Cuvee Salamande, Cour-cheverny, White Wine, 2020
Domaine Regis Minet, Desert, Poully Fumé, White Wine, 2022

Participant Maureen Phair captured this great shot of our group birding in Chinon on our first morning of the tour.

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: **https://ebird.org/tripreport/440119**

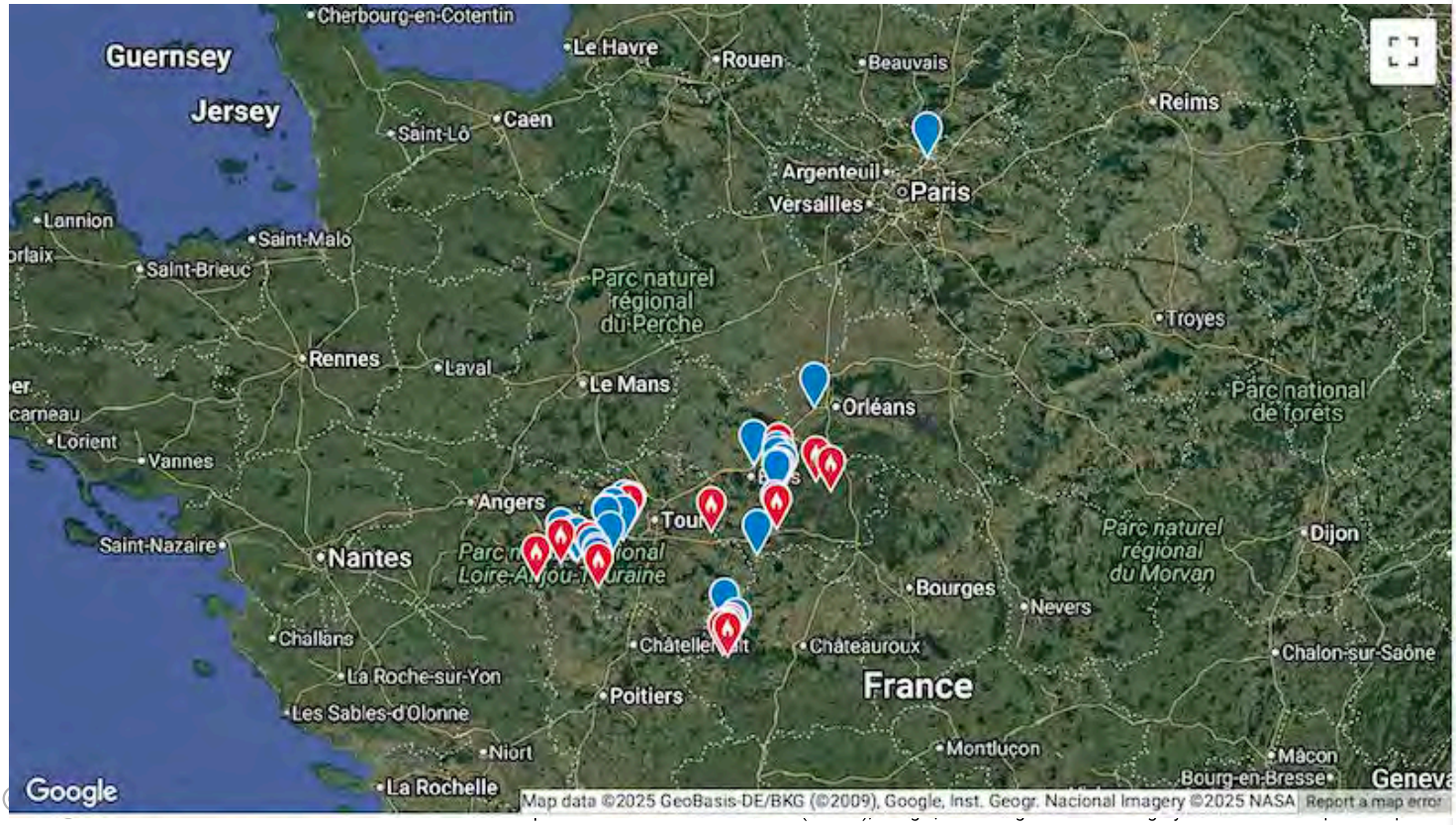
You can download a combined PDF of this page and the eBird report at this link: **https://fieldguides.com/triplists/flv25TRIPLIST.pdf**

-- Marcelo Padua

eBird

Field Guides Birding Tours -- France's Loire Valley: Birds, Chateaux & Wine 2025 (with Marcelo Padua)

1 – 11 Jun 2025 (11 days) Link-only



France

Centre-Val de Loire | Pays de la Loire | Île-de-France Subregions

Marcelo Padua

For a narrative summary of this tour, including a Field Guides photo gallery and additional media for this trip…

119 50

Species Observed

Show all details

16	Canada Goose	*Branta canadensis* *	2
150	Mute Swan	*Cygnus olor*	7
20	Gadwall	*Mareca strepera*	1
182	Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	11
79	Red-crested Pochard	*Netta rufina*	6
95	Common Pochard	*Aythya ferina*	6
48	Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*	6
2	Gray Partridge	*Perdix perdix*	1
2	Ring-necked Pheasant	*Phasianus colchicus* *	2
70	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia* *	2
4	Stock Dove	*Columba oenas*	1
55	Common Wood-Pigeon	*Columba palumbus*	18
19	European Turtle-Dove	*Streptopelia turtur*	12
13	Eurasian Collared-Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	5
1	Little Bustard	*Tetrax tetrax*	1
5	Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	5
166	Common Swift	*Apus apus*	8
14	Eurasian Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	6
171	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*	8
2	Eurasian Thick-knee	*Burhinus oedicnemus*	1
1	Little Ringed Plover	*Thinornis dubius*	1

5	Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*	2
1	Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*	1
1	Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*	1
1	Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*	1
198	Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	9
1	Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*	1
11	Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*	6
3	Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*	2
24	Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*	6
6	Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*	5
2	Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*	1
106	Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*	6
23	Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*	2
3	Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*	2
1	White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*	1
22	Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*	6
1	Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*	1
1	Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*	1
37	Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*	9
36	Western Cattle-Egret *Ardea ibis*	5
22	Great Egret *Ardea alba*	6
29	Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea*	12
2	Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*	2
3	Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*	2

2	**European Honey-buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*	2
2	**Short-toed Snake-Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*	2
1	**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*	1
2	**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*	2
4	**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*	4
6	**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*	5
1	**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*	1
4	**Common Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*	3
2	**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*	2
1	**Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*	1
4	**Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocoptes medius*	4
11	**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*	9
1	**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dryobates minor*	1
5	**Eurasian Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*	5
1	**Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius*	1
4	**Eurasian Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*	4
1	**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*	1
5	**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* *	1
5	**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*	4
2	**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*	2
4	**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*	3
4	**Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica*	4
71	**Eurasian Jackdaw** *Coloeus monedula*	3

61	**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*	3
45	**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*	10
2	**Crested Tit** *Lophophanes cristatus*	2
4	**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*	2
16	**Eurasian Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*	7
8	**Great Tit** *Parus major*	3
1	**Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea*	1
4	**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*	4
5	**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*	5
3	**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta*	3
2	**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*	1
7	**Common Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*	3
12	**Bank Swallow** *Riparia riparia*	2
48	**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*	9
257	**Western House-Martin** *Delichon urbicum*	10
3	**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*	2
4	**Western Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus bonelli*	2
28	**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*	18
7	**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*	5
22	**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*	3
22	**Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*	11
1	**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*	1
2	**Greater Whitethroat** *Curruca communis*	2

2	Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*	1
3	Common Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*	3
16	Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*	7
9	Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*	7
8	Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*	5
136	European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*	10
1	Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*	1
2	Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*	2
26	Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*	10
1	Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*	1
13	European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*	10
4	Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*	4
3	Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*	2
15	Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*	8
5	European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*	4
2	Dunnock *Prunella modularis*	2
87	House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*	11
4	Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*	3
9	White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*	6
1	Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*	1
38	Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*	18
1	Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	1
6	European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*	5

2	**Eurasian Linnet**	*Linaria cannabina*	2
8	**European Goldfinch**	*Carduelis carduelis*	3
1	**European Serin**	*Serinus serinus*	1
6	**Corn Bunting**	*Emberiza calandra*	3
4	**Cirl Bunting**	*Emberiza cirlus*	4