

Trip Report — France: Camargue & Pyrenees 2026

August 29-September 8, 2026 with Megan Edwards Crewe & John Coons



Our group heads off on the trail at Col de Tentes in search of Alpine Accentor with the Spanish border ahead at the pass. Photo by Rhys Harrison.

We enjoyed nine days of birding in two vastly different habitats in southern France. After all of our group arrived, we gathered at our hotel near the Montpellier airport and headed out, with our first stop across the airfield where we found a group of quite uncommon Little Bustards before heading to the nearby estuary where Greater Flamingos, Gray Herons, and our first Black-headed and Yellow-legged gulls were in good numbers along with the local Mediterranean Gulls. As we made our way east toward Arles, we

walked a boardwalk at Petite Camargue and had wonderful views of Water Rails, European Bee-eater, and Mute Swans before finding our way to the small hotel at the edge of the city.



Charlie Baisden captured this pair of Greater Flamingos from the hundreds that we saw in the Camargue.

We spent the next three days birding in the Camargue, a vast area of wetlands and pastures that is essentially the delta formed by the two branches of the Rhone where it enters the Mediterranean Sea. We visited large salt pans, open fields and some wooded areas, but the highlight, habitat-wise, was the stony plain of Crau Steppe. We had a wonderful morning with local park ranger Delphine Lenôtre, making many birding stops in this interesting area. The highlight was seeing very uncommon Pin-tailed Sandgrouse coming to drink at a puddle in the road, then a large flock flying over the steppe. A handful of Eurasian Thick-knees, a Montague's Harrier, a good number of Lesser Kestrels, Iberian Gray Shrike, Crested Larks, and a Greater Short-toed Lark were also at the top of the list.

Birds we encountered during a few visits to the salt pans and estuaries in the Camargue included Pied Avocet, both Common Ringed and Little Ringed plovers, Northern Lapwing, Kentish Plover, Green and Wood sandpipers, and Ruff. Also, White Stork, Short-toed Snake-Eagle, Tawny Pipits, and Corn Bunting in the open country between wetlands. We got into our first real woodsy birding at Scamandre, where we found Great Tit, Cetti's Warbler, the interesting Long-tailed Tit, Eurasian Blackcap, Garden Warbler, a very cool Short-tailed Treecreeper, Spotted Flycatcher, and European Pied Flycatcher. A late-afternoon and an evening venture to the rolling limestone hills yielded a mostly heard Eurasian Eagle-Owl (with some folks getting a glimpse), and we had nice views of Crested Tit and Common Firecrest.



European Robin was a bird we saw daily once we reached the Pyrenees. A few individuals were quite tame and interested in what we were doing, just as Megan had explained. Photo by Charlie Baisden.

After a walk near the hotel and our final breakfast at Arles, we packed our vans and started making our way west. Traveling a ways on major highways, we made a lunch stop at a rest area that looked out upon the walled city of

Carcassonne, a fairy-tale-looking stronghold dating back to the 1200's. Our next rest and gas stop was birdier, with our first Red Kites, Eurasian Jays, and White Wagtails. We arrived at our hotel in Gedre, and enjoyed a nice dinner and the fabulous scenery of the Pyrenees.



The Southern or Pyrenean Chamois is a goat-antelope endemic to the mountains along the Spain and French border. It was nearly hunted to extinction in the 1940's but has rebounded recently. Photo by Megan Crewe.

Our first morning in the Pyrenees found us driving 1500 ft higher to the village of Gavarnie along a route that was Stage 6 of this year's Tour de France. A Black Redstart near the parking area was our first new bird of the day. We strolled through this tourist village and found a fabulous White-throated Dipper along the stream in town, as Eurasian Griffons began to take flight above the mountains. We walked up a busy trail and found our first Coal Tit, Goldcrests, Eurasian Treecreeper, as well as European Goldfinch,

Tree Pipit, both Gray and White wagtails, and Common Buzzards. We had our picnic lunch along the way, and fantastic views of Gavarnie Falls tumbling 1384 feet at Cirque de Gavarnie. After birding a bit higher, we stopped for ice cream at the café before heading back, with a Golden Eagle appearing as we reached town.



We found Lesser Kestrels to be quite common in the Crau Steppe in the Camargue area. Photo by Rhys Harrison.

The next morning we retraced our drive to Gavarnie but continued through the town to Col de Tentes at 7200 feet in elevation. We got on the trail that was relatively flat at this higher elevation. We picked through a few Black Redstarts, Water Pipits, and Northern Wheatears while in search of our goal, Alpine Accentor, which we found about halfway along our route. This uncommon species gave us several minutes of great views. With that under our belts we continued to our next goal. Spain. We reached the border with

Spain at the high point of our trail, and took some time to enjoy the view and find some birds for this Iberian country. We ended up seeing seven species in Spain, including Red-billed Chough, before heading back. After lunch we took another road up to Vallée d'Ossoue where we made a handful of stops along the way. Highlights were two Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrushes, a great view of Rock Bunting, Yellow-billed Choughs, and European Stonechats, and we did quite well with raptors. A couple of Red Kites showed well, as an estimated 64 Eurasian Griffons soared along the ridge, and Short-toed Snake-Eagle, but the real stars were two Bearded Vultures (formerly Lammergeier) and a wonderful Egyptian Vulture that Chris spotted for us.

Our last full day in the Pyrenees started with a few birds around the hotel, including our first Iberian Green Woodpecker. We had a change of plans when we got a flat tire on our way up the road. After a tire change, we decided to head down to bird a forested reserve. This proved to be good choice, as we found Great Spotted Woodpecker, more Eurasian Blackcaps, Eurasian Nuthatches, Mistle Thrush, and Common Redstart. We double-checked the air in our tires on our way back up, and after a pit stop at the hotel, went up the mountain to Lac des Gloriettes where we birded around a small lake and its large dam. We spent some time with a Willow Warbler and watched another Dunnock under a car.



The walled city of Carcassonne appears like an image from a fairy tale. This fortress was built over a period of a thousand years with most of it constructed in Medieval times. Photo by Rhys Harrison.

We started our last day with a pre-breakfast trip above Gavarnie again, where we had more views of Eurasian Crag-Martins, Eurasian Kestrels, and Rock Buntings. We loaded up our luggage after breakfast and headed back to the forest we visited yesterday. A couple of Song Thrushes were new and we enjoyed our last Eurasian Jays. We hit the long windy road, climbing to Col de Tourmalet with lots of committed bicyclists sharing the road with us. At the top of the mountain pass at this traditional Tour de France stage, we stopped to enjoy the view but only had a few birds. Dropping down the other side, we passed through the ski town of La Mongie and stopped at a roadside rest where we found our first Middle Spotted Woodpecker and Marsh Tit, and Megan spotted a soaring Eurasian Hobby. We made a touristy stop at the Chateau de Mauvezin, an impressive steep walled castle that dates to the

12th century. We soon hit the highways and headed to Toulouse and made it to our motel for our final dinner together.

It was wonderful seeing a bunch of great birds together and enjoying fantastic scenery with all of you. We hope to see you again on a future birding trip.



Alpine Accentor is a local specialty in the Pyrenees Mountains. We had close views of this individual along the trail at Col de Tentes. Photo by Megan Crewe.

Mammals encountered during our trip:

European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

Alpine Marmot (*Marmota marmota*)

European Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)

Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

European Fat Dormouse (*Glis glis*) heard
Coypu (*Myocastor coypus*)
Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)
Southern Chamois (*Rupicapra pyrenaica*)

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link:

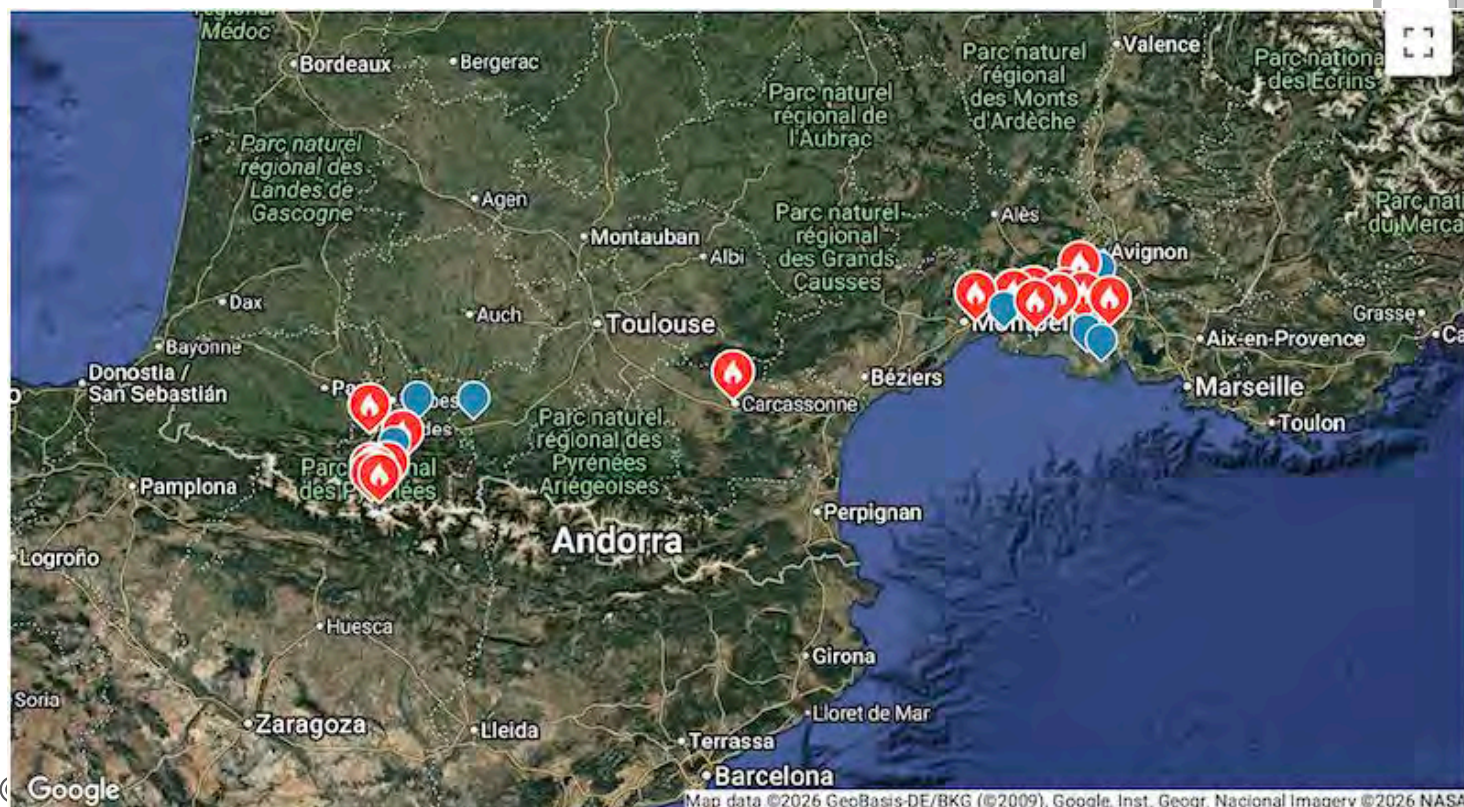
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You can download a combined PDF of this page and the eBird report at this link: <https://fieldguides.com/triplists/fra26TRIPLIST.pdf>

-- John Coons

Field Guides Birding Tours—France: Camargue & Pyrenees, 2026 (with Megan Crewe and John Coons)

30 Aug – 7 Sep 2026 (9 days) Link-only



France | Spain Subregions

John Coons



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

142

29

Species Observed

Checklists

LIFERS  51 

Species Observed

[Show all details](#)

150	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		5
3	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		1
60	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		1
29	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		4
4	Ring-necked Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		1
7	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		2
14	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>		3
14	Common Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		5
24	Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		9
59	Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles alchata</i>		1
8	Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>		2
3	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		1
4	Eurasian Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		2
1203	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		3
1	Western Swampen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>		1
6	Eurasian Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus oedichnemus</i>		1
72	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		5
190	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		2
13	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		1
14	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Thinornis dubius</i>		2
2	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		1

3	Kentish Plover	<i>Anarhynchus alexandrinus</i>	✓	▶  1
14	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		▶  4
4	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		▶  3
2	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		▶  1
2	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		▶  1
2	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>		▶  1
1	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		▶  1
3	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>	✓	▶  1
1920	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		▶  5
60	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyæetus melanocephalus</i>		▶  1
277	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>		▶  6
2	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>		▶  1
6	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>		▶  3
2	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>		▶  1
3	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>		▶  2
3	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>		▶  2
22	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		▶  3
54	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>		▶  1
4032	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>		▶  5
4	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		▶  1
5	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		▶  3
5	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	✓	▶  3
16	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		▶  3
53	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		▶  2

39	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	✓	▶  1
33	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		▶  4
8	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>		▶  2
90	Western Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>		▶  7
11	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		▶  2
27	Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		▶  5
2	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		▶  2
3	Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	✓	▶  2
1	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	✓	▶  1
1	European Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>		▶  1
109	Eurasian Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	✓	▶  9
4	Short-toed Snake-Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	✓	▶  4
1	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>		▶  1
1	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	✓	▶  1
12	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		▶  6
2	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	✓	▶  2
6	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓	▶  3
3	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>		▶  1
8	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		▶  6
1	Eurasian Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	✓	▶  1
35	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>		▶  8
2	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		▶  2
18	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>		▶  6

1	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>	✓	▶  1
1	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		▶  1
1	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>		▶  1
3	Iberian Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus sharpei</i>	✓	▶  2
11	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	✓	▶  1
32	Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		▶  12
1	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>	✓	▶  1
2	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	✓	▶  1
1	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		▶  1
1	Iberian Gray Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	✓	▶  1
10	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	✓	▶  7
15	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		▶  8
1	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	✓	▶  1
203	Yellow-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	✓	▶  3
84	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		▶  3
24	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		▶  8
3	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		▶  2
5	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	✓	▶  3
2	Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	✓	▶  2
4	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	✓	▶  1
3	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		▶  2
8	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		▶  5
13	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	✓	▶  2

1	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	✓	▶ 1
15	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		▶ 3
1	Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		▶ 1
9	Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		▶ 3
13	Eurasian Crag-Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	✓	▶ 3
593	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		▶ 13
42	Western House-Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		▶ 3
3	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		▶ 3
24	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		▶ 7
9	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		▶ 4
5	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓	▶ 1
5	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		▶ 2
3	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>		▶ 1
3	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>	✓	▶ 2
1	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Curruca conspicillata</i>	✓	▶ 1
2	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		▶ 1
3	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	✓	▶ 2
4	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		▶ 3
2	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		▶ 2
2	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	✓	▶ 2
1	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		▶ 1
3	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	✓	▶ 1
829	European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		▶ 8

2	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	✓	▶  1
2	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		▶  1
9	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		▶  3
2	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		▶  1
18	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		▶  5
14	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>		▶  9
2	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	✓	▶  2
13	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	✓	▶  4
4	Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	✓	▶  2
2	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		▶  2
4	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓	▶  1
11	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		▶  5
3	Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>	✓	▶  1
3	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		▶  3
8	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		▶  4
5	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>		▶  1
3	Gray Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		▶  1
118	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		▶  4
13	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		▶  4
11	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	✓	▶  3
3	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		▶  2
11	Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	✓	▶  3
14	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		▶  4

- 1

Eurasian Linnet

Linaria cannabina

▶

1
- 5

European Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

▶

2
- 1

European Serin

Serinus serinus

▶

1
- 2

Corn Bunting

Emberiza calandra

▶

1
- 4

Rock Bunting

Emberiza cia

▶

2