



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Spain: La Mancha, Coto Donana & Extremadura 2019**

May 4, 2019 to May 16, 2019  
Chris Benesh & Godfried Schreur

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, [please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.](#)*



*Early morning encounter with some Greater Flamingos in El Rocío, Donana. Photo by guide Chris Benesh.*

One of the nice aspects of birding in Europe is the fact that you encounter bird species that are symbols in our common (“western”) folklore, art and culture. European birds have inspired musicians, poets, writers, storytellers, and painters. They have been the models for artists since ancient times, becoming symbols.

For example, we all know that the White Stork is supposed to bring good luck and to deliver babies to their parents. The Carrion Crow, with his scary call, brings bad luck and measures distances in direct flight. The Magpie steals silver, gold and jewels. The Cuckoo, from the clock, really says “cuckoo”, and is the unfaithful Cuckoo that cheats. The Robin comes to our window at Christmas time. The Blackbird singing in the dead of night... The Skylark as a messenger between Earth and Heaven. The Turtle Dove symbolizing love, fidelity and trust. The Goldfinch of Fabritius...

Of these, the Common Nightingale is special. It is generally known as the musical champion, the best singer in town. It has therefore inspired many musicians, from classic composers like Brahms and Stravinsky, to popular artists like The Everly Brothers (On the wings of a Nightingale), The Eagles, Leonard Cohen, Nora Jones, Judy Collins, etc... Who doesn't know the song “A Nightingale sang in Berkeley Square?” But the common Nightingale has also been used as a symbol of poets or their poetry. Poets chose the nightingale as a symbol because of its creative and seemingly spontaneous song.

Well, now we have seen and heard them all: White Stork, Carrion Crow, Eurasian Magpie, Common Cuckoo, European Robin, Eurasian Blackbird, Eurasian Skylark and European Turtle Dove. And yes, we have listened to the breathtaking Common Nightingale's concert.

It was a really great tour with a nice group of people! We saw many good birds and some stunning mammals, and we had generally pleasant weather, nice hotels and excellent food and wines. We also enjoyed visiting some highlights of Spanish historical and cultural heritage.

Thank you all for your fantastic contributions to the tour, and to Chris for your ever cheerful presence, musical assistance and superb guiding skills!

I hope to see you all again!

## KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**GRAYLAG GOOSE (EUROPEAN)** (*Anser anser anser*) – Seen with goslings at the marsh of El Rocío.

**COMMON SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna tadorna*) – Good numbers at the lagoons in La Mancha and in Coto Doñana National Park.

**GARGANEY** (*Spatula querquedula*) – One far away view for some of us.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Spatula clypeata*) – Some shovelers observed at the Veguilla lagoon.

**GADWALL** (*Mareca strepera*) – Common in most wetlands.

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – We saw Mallard every day, except for the days we spent in the mountains.

**MARBLD TEAL** (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) – We found a marvelous pair of Marbled Ducks resting in front of the hide in Dehesa de Abajo, next to a drake Ferruginous Duck.

**RED-CRESTED POCHARD** (*Netta rufina*) – Stunning views of this magnificent duck, both in La Mancha and in Coto Doñana.

**COMMON POCHARD** (*Aythya ferina*) – Often seen together with the Red-crested Pochard, with the latter receiving all the attention.

**FERRUGINOUS DUCK** (*Aythya nyroca*) – We saw one beautiful drake in breeding plumage, and with his distinctive white eye.

**WHITE-HEADED DUCK** (*Oxyura leucocephala*) – Good numbers of this rare duck in the lagoons of La Mancha Húmeda.

### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE** (*Alectoris rufa*) – We had good views of the Red-legged Partridge during the excursion through the Mediterranean woodland of Coto Doñana.

### Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

**GREATER FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) – Good views of hundreds of resting, flying, feeding, displaying, and a couple of mating birds.

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Good views from several hides. We even saw baby Little Grebes!

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Usually more distant and in lower numbers than the Little Grebe. Nevertheless, we can say that we had good views of this elegant bird.

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – Good numbers especially in the lagoons of Alcazar de San Juan.

### Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – We saw Feral Pigeons every day, but real Rock Pigeons in their natural habitat, we only recorded in the rocky areas of Extremadura.

**STOCK DOVE** (*Columba oenas*) – Only in the Retiro Park in Madrid.

**COMMON WOOD-PIGEON** (*Columba palumbus*) – An every day bird.

**EUROPEAN TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia turtur*) – This Turtle Dove is suffering a severe population decrease throughout Europe. Accordingly, we encountered only a few of them. Javi, our local guide in Doñana, pointed out one perched on a wire in Doñana.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – An every day bird.

### Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)

**PIN-TAILED SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles alchata*) – Distant but convincing views of sitting and flying birds in the plains near Trujillo. We also heard their call.

**BLACK-BELLIED SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles orientalis*) – We missed this species on the first sandgrouse excursion, but eventually saw some on the second attempt. In flight, the black bellies were very clear.

### Otididae (Bustards)

**GREAT BUSTARD** (*Otis tarda*) – Good views of some stunning displaying males!

**LITTLE BUSTARD** (*Tetrax tetrax*) – Seen and heard on the plains of Extremadura. Good views of some flying males with their black collars and white patches in the wings.

### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO** (*Clamator glandarius*) – Close views after the lunch stop in Tablas de Daimiel NP, and also in the Sierra de Andújar, while searching for lynx.

**COMMON CUCKOO** (*Cuculus canorus*) – The Common Cuckoo is the only cuckoo in the world that really sounds like "cuckoo", which is the origin of the family name. We heard the Common Cuckoo many times, and we managed to see them on a couple of occasions.

### Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**RED-NECKED NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*) – During an evening excursion close to Monfragüe NP we were lucky to see four insect-hunting individuals. A wonderful observation indeed!

**EURASIAN NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) – We managed to see and hear one individual next to our beautiful hotel in the Gredos mountains.

### Apodidae (Swifts)

**ALPINE SWIFT** (*Apus melba*) – Superb views of this huge swift at the dam next to Alange.

**COMMON SWIFT** (*Apus apus*) – Very common species, omnipresent. We managed the best views of them in the old town of Trujillo (Extremadura).

**PALLID SWIFT** (*Apus pallidus*) – It was sometimes hard to identify the Pallid Swift, as they are very similar to the Common Swift. In Trujillo the species were flying together at close range which made it easier to distinguish them.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**WATER RAIL** (*Rallus aquaticus*) – Heard only at the Veguilla and the Navaseca lagoons. They remained in the cover of the reed beds.

**EURASIAN MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – A regular bird at almost all the wetlands that we visited.

**EURASIAN COOT** (*Fulica atra*) – We saw hundreds of Eurasian Coots at many lakes and marshes. It was often the most common species present.

**RED-KNOBBED COOT** (*Fulica cristata*) – Chris Benesh found two individuals at the edge of the Dehesa de Abajo lake. With the telescopes, we all were able to see the red knobs.

**WESTERN SWAMPHEN** (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) – We saw outrageous numbers of Western Swamphen in the Caño del Guadamar, Coto Doñana NP. From several hides, we managed good views at close range of this stunning bird.

*Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**EURASIAN THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus oedipnemos*) – At the dry marshes of Doñana we found a couple of "Stone Curlews", as they are called in Europe.

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** (*Himantopus himantopus*) – By far the most common wader seen on this trip.

**PIED AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) – We had good views of this elegant wader in Coto Doñana NP.

*Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)*

**EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus ostralegus*) – 100+ at the long and unspoiled beach of Doñana.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**NORTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus vanellus*) – The first wader we saw after leaving Madrid was a Northern Lapwing. It's a rare breeding bird in southern Spain. Therefore we did not see many of them on this tour.

**KENTISH PLOVER (KENTISH)** (*Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus*) – We had the best views of the Kentish Plovers at the Laguna Larga Lagoon, right at the start of the tour.

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – Coto Doñana is an important "stepping stone" for the Common Ringed Plover on its migration to the breeding grounds further north.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius dubius*) – Only two seen at Tablas de Daimiel NP.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**WHIMBREL** (*Numenius phaeopus*) – One bird at the river mouth of the Guadalquivir river.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa limosa*) – One bird was spotted at the marsh next to our hotel in El Rocío.

**RED KNOT** (*Calidris canutus*) – We saw the Red Knot at the beach of Doñana together with gulls and terns. One Knot was partially red as a result of the molting process, going from grey winter plumage to the reddish breeding plumage.

**TEMMINCK'S STINT** (*Calidris temminckii*) – Two individuals showed very well at the Laguna Larga.

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – Good numbers seen from the Unimog vehicle at the beach of Doñana.

**DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) – Ones and twos here and there. Some already showing the black belly of the breeding plumage.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Recorded on five days, but always in small numbers.

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – Only two birds seen on this trip!

**COMMON REDSHANK** (*Tringa totanus*) – There were few waders around in the wetlands we visited, maybe because of the drought. Only three Common Redshanks were recorded on the whole trip...

*Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)*

**COLLARED PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola pratincola*) – At the very first birding stop at Laguna Larga we enjoyed close views of this elegant bird. In Coto Doñana we saw a group of Collared Pratincoles mobbing a Red Kite.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**SLENDER-BILLED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus genei*) – One group flying above the sea at Coto Doñana.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – Very common especially at the Pedro Muñoz lagoon.

**AUDOUIN'S GULL** (*Ichthyophaga audouinii*) – We had excellent views of this pretty gull at the coast of Coto Doñana. There were hundreds of them resting at the beach.

**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** (*Larus michahellis*) – Very common gull.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** (*Larus fuscus*) – The Lesser Black-backed Gull was also very common at the coast of Coto Doñana. Sometimes they were resting together with Yellow-legged Gulls, which gave us the opportunity to study the features of both and how to distinguish them.

**LITTLE TERN** (*Sternula albifrons*) – Over 200 Little Terns were resting on the beach together with other terns and gulls! Probably it's the highest number ever recorded on this tour.

**GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – The best views of this tern were at the reservoir of Alange while searching for Black Wheatear. Funny combination of species!

**BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias niger*) – The excursion in the Unimog vehicle along the coast of Coto Doñana was fantastic for the observation of terns and gulls. Over 100 Black Terns were resting at the shoreline close to the mouth of the Guadalquivir river.

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – We saw dozens of Whiskered Terns, specially at the Veguilla and Navaseca lagoons in La Mancha Húmeda.

**ROSEATE TERN** (*Sterna dougallii*) – A write-in species! We saw one bird at the Coto Doñana coast showing a pinkish flush on his chest. Rare in Spain!

**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna hirundo*) – Some birds mixed in the groups of terns and gulls on the Doñana beach.

**SANDWICH TERN** (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – Over 200 resting on the tern and gull beach of Doñana.

Ciconiidae (Storks).

**BLACK STORK** (*Ciconia nigra*) – Excellent views of this glossy stork at the Peña Falcón viewpoint in Monfragüe NP.

**WHITE STORK** (*Ciconia ciconia*) – An every day bird! They breed in almost all the villages in southern and central Spain. Lovely to hear them doing the bill clapping when greeting each other! Some of us had the privilege to look upon a nest from the hotel window in Trujillo.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets).

**NORTHERN GANNET** (*Morus bassanus*) – We actually saw some gannets diving for fish in front of the Doñana coast.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags).

**GREAT CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Common on the reservoirs of Extremadura.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns).

**LITTLE BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus minutus*) – Seen on 4 days! We achieved the best views right next to our hotel in El Rocío (Coto Doñana).

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Common in Coto Doñana and Extremadura.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – At the Caño del Guadamar (Coto Doñana) we had the best photographic opportunities of this elegant heron.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Ones and twos.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – Gorgeous to see the nuptial feathers typical of the breeding plumage.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – The most common egret of the area. Seen perched upon cows, sheep, horses :-)

**SQUACCO HERON** (*Ardeola ralloides*) – During the excursion with Javi in Doñana we managed to see the bright greenish-blue color at the base of the bill. This, together with the nuptial plumage, make this a wonderful bird to see in the breeding season.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Common in Coto Doñana. The night-herons were flying out while we were having dinner behind the window screen at our restaurant in El Rocío.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills).

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Hundreds in Coto Doñana NP. From our dinner table we saw dozens of Glossy Ibis flying in to roost at the mixed colony.

**EURASIAN SPOONBILL** (*Platalea leucorodia*) – We achieved superb views of the Spoonbills in El Rocío, Coto Doñana.

Pandionidae (Osprey).

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – We saw one bird perched at the mouth of the Guadalquivir river.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites).

**EGYPTIAN VULTURE** (*Neophron percnopterus*) – Good views of his yellow face and punky head feathers of a nesting bird in Monfragüe NP.

**EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Pernis apivorus*) – We discovered some birds on migration north, high up in the sky. On the last day, we also saw a Honey Buzzard flying low over deciduous tree woodlands, its breeding habitat.

**CINEREOUS VULTURE** (*Aegypius monachus*) – Extremadura is the world's most important stronghold of this threatened species. In Monfragüe NP we saw dozens of flying Cinereous Vultures and one breeding on its nest.

**EURASIAN GRIFFON** (*Gyps fulvus*) – It was interesting to see the adult birds with their powerful beaks treating the chicks with such delicacy.

**SHORT-TOED SNAKE-EAGLE** (*Circus gallicus*) – Recorded on most of the days flying rather high or perched on electricity pylons, but on some occasions we also observed their noisy display.

**BOOTED EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) – The smallest eagle in Spain was recorded almost on a daily basis, the pale morph being more frequent than the dark morph.

**SPANISH EAGLE** (*Aquila adalberti*) – We struggled to see the emperor amongst the eagles in Spain. We were about to give up when he appeared, showing the white markings at the leading edge of the wing. What a relief!

**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – Two beautiful silhouettes in the sky above the lynx land of Sierra de Andujar.

**BONELLI'S EAGLE** (*Aquila fasciata*) – Two flying adults on a breeding territory close to Trujillo.

**EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER** (*Circus aeruginosus*) – Good views of both males and females in most of the wetlands.

**MONTAGU'S HARRIER** (*Circus pygargus*) – This species is suffering a dramatic decline in Spain. We were lucky to find four birds. One of them showed the blackish plumage of the melanistic morph.

**EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*) – One bird in the Sierra de Gredos mountains.

**RED KITE** (*Milvus milvus*) – We saw limited numbers of Red Kites in Coto Doñana, Extremadura and in Sierra de Gredos. Without doubt one of the most beautiful raptors of Europe.

**BLACK KITE** (*Milvus migrans*) – The most common raptor of Spain was seen and heard daily.

**COMMON BUZZARD** (*Buteo buteo*) – Regular but never numerous.

Strigidae (Owls).

**EURASIAN SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus scops*) – Tracey discovered one Scops Owl perched on the roof of a house in Trujillo. Thanks to her, we all managed to see this pretty little owl.

**LITTLE OWL** (*Athene noctua*) – The acoustic landscape of the Sierra de Andujar was delightful with the calls of numerous Little Owls.

Upupidae (Hoopoes).

**EURASIAN HOOPOE** (*Upupa epops*) – This superb, clownish bird was seen and heard every day of the trip. At the back yard of our hotel in Sierra de Gredos, a family of Hoopoes was feeding and offered good photographic opportunities.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters).

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER** (*Merops apiaster*) – Almost an every day bird. We had splendid views of the European Bee-eaters, the most colorful birds of Europe, in the Coto Doñana.

Coraciidae (Rollers).

**EUROPEAN ROLLER** (*Coracias garrulus*) – The plains around Trujillo host a good population of European Rollers, thanks to the nest boxes conveniently placed for them.



Picidae (Woodpeckers).

**EURASIAN WRYNECK** (*Jynx torquilla*) – Splendid views of this well camouflaged bird next to the Palacio del Acebrón (Coto Doñana NP). He started calling while we were looking for a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos major*) – Common specially in the Sierra de Gredos.

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates minor buturlini*) – We found a nest next to the Palacio del Acebrón, which offered us the possibility to have a good look at them.

**EURASIAN GREEN WOODPECKER (IBERIAN)** (*Picus viridis sharpei*) – The Iberian race of the Green Woodpecker showed very well in the Retiro Park in Madrid.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras).

**LESSER KESTREL** (*Falco naumanni*) – It was delightful to watch the Lesser Kestrels together with swifts, martins and swallows filling up the evening sky above the main square of Trujillo.

**EURASIAN KESTREL** (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Distributed in couples in their breeding territories.

**EURASIAN HOBBY** (*Falco subbuteo*) – One bird flying north, presumably on migration.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – We observed one couple at the Peña Falcón viewpoint in Monfragüe NP.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots).

**ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula krameri*) – One group flying in Seville, spotted from the bus.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots).

**MONK PARAKEET** (*Myiopsitta monachus*) – The Monk Parakeet was seen in the Retiro Park in Madrid. [H]

Laniidae (Shrikes).

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** (*Lanius collurio*) – On our last day, we visited a mountain pass aiming to see the Red-backed Shrike. When we arrived, a couple of them welcomed us next to the road, allowing splendid views.

**IBERIAN GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius meridionalis*) – One bird was seen when we were searching for the Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin.

**WOODCHAT SHRIKE** (*Lanius senator*) – Very common in Sierra de Andújar, Coto Doñana and in Extremadura.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles).

**EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus oriolus*) – Heard more often than seen, as always with this species. Some of us did manage to see a male with the bright yellow contrasting with the jet black.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies).

**EURASIAN JAY** (*Garrulus glandarius*) – The Eurasian Jay showed very well during the walk towards the castle of Monfragüe. In the Gredos mountains we saw more of them.

**IBERIAN MAGPIE** (*Cyanopica cooki*) – We observed this beautiful endemic of the Iberian peninsula almost every day. It was nice to see them hovering half a meter above the meadow trying to catch insects. That was at the pre-breakfast walk close to our hotel in Monfragüe.

**EURASIAN MAGPIE** (*Pica pica*) – An every day bird. We saw them twice chasing after Great-spotted Cuckoos, who lay their eggs in Eurasian Magpie's nests.

**RED-BILLED CHOUGH** (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – Nice views from the Lynx-watching spot.

**EURASIAN JACKDAW** (*Corvus monedula*) – Present in most of the bigger towns.

**CARRION CROW** (*Corvus corone*) – Absent in the warmer Mediterranean area of Spain. We had the best views in the cooler Sierra de Gredos.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – Almost an every day bird.

Panuridae (Bearded Reedling).

**BEARDED REEDLING** (*Panurus biarmicus*) – We observed males and females in the reedbeds of Tablas de Daimiel NP. Mission accomplished!

Alaudidae (Larks).

**GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK** (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) – We did not manage to get clear views of them in Coto Doñana. But in Extremadura, at the plains close to Trujillo, some birds did show very well.

**CALANDRA LARK** (*Melanocorypha calandra*) – Very common at the plains around Trujillo. They are very vocal and we enjoyed their early morning concert very much.

**LESSER SHORT-TOED LARK** (*Alauda rufescens*) – Splendid views of this LBJ in Coto Doñana NP.

**WOOD LARK** (*Lullula arborea*) – We all were able to observe this species with the bright supercilium in the Mediterranean woodland in Coto Doñana NP.

**EURASIAN SKYLARK** (*Alauda arvensis*) – High up in the Sierra de Gredos we found our first and last Skylarks of this tour. Further down it's too warm for them.

**THEKLA'S LARK** (*Galerida theklae*) – Common in Extremadura but difficult to distinguish from the more common Crested Lark.

**CRESTED LARK** (*Galerida cristata*) – One of the most common birds in southern Spain.

Hirundinidae (Swallows).

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – One brief flyby of two birds at the Arrocampo reservoir.

**EURASIAN CRAG-MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) – Present in all the rocky and mountainous areas, even breeding in towns like Trujillo.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – There were already juvenile swallows flying around.

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) – Not so numerous as the Barn Swallow, but we saw this pretty swallow almost every day.

**COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon urbicum*) – Very numerous in some places, with hundreds of breeding pairs nesting under bridges, on dams and even attached to houses.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice).

**COAL TIT** (*Pariparus ater*) – Singing away in the pine woodland around our hotel in the Sierra de Gredos.

**CRESTED TIT** (*Lophophanes cristatus*) – We saw the Crested Tit during the Palacio del Acebrón walk in Coto Doñana and in the pine woodlands of the Sierra de Gredos.

**EURASIAN BLUE TIT** (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) – Charming little bird. It's always fun to see them!

**GREAT TIT** (*Parus major*) – Seen almost every day. I remember good views of them in Monfragüe NP.

*Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)*

**EURASIAN PENDULINE-TIT** (*Remiz pendulinus*) – At the Veguillas lagoon we achieved good views of one cooperative bird.

*Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)*

**LONG-TAILED TIT** (*Aegithalos caudatus*) – The subspecies *irbii* is endemic to the Iberian Peninsula.

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**EURASIAN NUTHATCH** (*Sitta europaea*) – Very common in the woodlands of the Sierra de Gredos. One Eurasian Nuthatch particularly showed well while searching for bugs on the walls of our hotel there.

*Certhiidae (Treecreepers)*

**SHORT-TOED TREECREEPER** (*Certhia brachydactyla*) – Heard more often than seen.

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**EURASIAN WREN** (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) – Brave little bird with a powerful song.

*Regulidae (Kinglets)*

**GOLDCREST** (*Regulus regulus*) – Next to the hotel in Sierra de Gredos.

**COMMON FIRECREST** (*Regulus ignicapilla*) – Next to the hotel in Sierra de Gredos as well. The bright supercilium was clearly seen on several occasions.

*Scotocercidae (Bush Warblers and Allies)*

**CETTI'S WARBLER** (*Cettia cetti*) – We heard its explosive song in all the wetlands. Eventually we managed to see some.

*Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)*

**WESTERN BONELLI'S WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus bonelli*) – Very common in the pine woodland of Gredos.

**WILLOW WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – One bird in passage.

**COMMON CHIFFCHAFF** (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – Heard only. [\*]

**IBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF** (*Phylloscopus ibericus*) – Heard and seen at the Gardens of the Acebrón Palace, Coto Doñana NP.

*Acrocephalidae (Reed Warblers and Allies)*

**WESTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER** (*Iduna opaca*) – We achieved exceptional views of this elusive bird.

**MELODIOUS WARBLER** (*Hippolais polyglotta*) – We saw the first Melodious Warbler close to the hide of El Acebuche Visitor Centre.

**EURASIAN REED WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) – Common in wetlands with reedbeds.

**GREAT REED WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) – Showing off and singing very loud at many marshes with reedbeds.

*Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)*

**SAVY'S WARBLER** (*Locustella luscinioides*) – Seen and heard at the Veguilla Lake.

*Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)*

**ZITTING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola juncidis*) – Common in grasslands, showing very well most of the times. Easy to identify as there is only one Cisticola in Europe! :-)

*Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)*

**EURASIAN BLACKCAP** (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – We also saw the female with the chestnut brown cap.

**GARDEN WARBLER** (*Sylvia borin*) – Heard and seen briefly in the Sierra de Gredos.

**WESTERN ORPHEAN WARBLER** (*Sylvia hortensis*) – Exceptional views of this skulking bird in Monfragüe NP.

**SUBALPINE WARBLER (INORNATA)** (*Sylvia cantillans inornata*) – At the Peña Falcón viewpoint in Monfragüe there was a stunning male singing away.

**SARDINIAN WARBLER** (*Sylvia melanocephala*) – The most common Sylvia warbler, although sometimes hard to find. Eventually we all saw the red eye-ring.

**GREATER WHITETHROAT** (*Sylvia communis*) – Only seen higher up in the Gredos mountains.

**SPECTACLED WARBLER** (*Sylvia conspicillata*) – We had a good look at this pretty Sylvia warbler at the Veguillas lake. He also appeared when we were looking at the Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin.

**DARTFORD WARBLER** (*Sylvia undata*) – One family was discovered at the El Acebuche visitor centre walk. And we had even a better look at one Dartford Warbler at the Black-eared Wheatear site in Monfragüe.

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa striata*) – We spotted several Spotted Flycatchers in the Retiro Park in Madrid and at the Pedro Muñoz lake.

**RUFOUS-TAILED SCRUB-ROBIN** (*Cercotrichas galactotes*) – Superb views of this stunning and very rare bird in a vineyard of the Tierra de Barros wine area next to Almendralejo.

**EUROPEAN ROBIN** (*Erithacus rubecula*) – Mainly seen in the Sierra de Gredos.

**COMMON NIGHTINGALE** (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) – The powerful and melodious song is a delight for every birder visiting Europe. Finding one is not so easy though. We had the luck to see some birds walking on the footpath in front of us in Tablas de Daimiel and in Coto Doñana.

**EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) – The black and white males of the Sierra de Gredos are very distinctive.

**BLACK REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – In Monfragüe NP and in the Gredos mountains we achieved good observations.

**RUFOUS-TAILED ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola saxatilis*) – Wow, what a beauty!

**BLUE ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola solitarius*) – The blue of the males really stood out against the gray background of the rocks.

**WHINCHAT** (*Saxicola rubetra*) – One bird in Andújar.

**EUROPEAN STONECHAT** (*Saxicola rubicola rubicola*) – Always beautiful!

**BLACK WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe leucura*) – Our stop at the Alange dam aiming to see this species was successful. When flying, the white rump and base of tail are very distinctive.

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – Good numbers and good views higher up in the Gredos mountains.

**BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe hispanica*) – A surprisingly beautiful bird! We saw both male and female in Monfragüe NP.

#### *Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**MISTLE THRUSH** (*Turdus viscivorus*) – More common in the woodland of Sierra de Gredos but never numerous.

**SONG THRUSH** (*Turdus philomelos*) – The Song Thrush welcomed us with a song in the Jerte valley.

**EURASIAN BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus merula*) – An every day bird.

#### *Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**SPOTLESS STARLING** (*Sturnus unicolor*) – Very common. Maybe the most numerous bird recorded on this tour.

#### *Prunellidae (Accentors)*

**DUNNOCK** (*Prunella modularis*) – Only higher up in the scrubland of the Gredos mountains.

#### *Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**GRAY WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla cinerea*) – The rivers in the Sierra de Gredos maintain a good population of Gray Wagtails.

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (IBERIAE)** (*Motacilla flava iberiae*) – We saw the Iberian subspecies with the white throat and bright supercilium at various places.

**WHITE WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla alba*) – Recorded more frequently in the second half of the tour.

**WATER PIPIT** (*Anthus spinoletta*) – Displaying on their breeding grounds higher up in the Sierra de Gredos.

#### *Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**COMMON CHAFFINCH** (*Fringilla coelebs*) – A very colorful every day bird.

**HAWFINCH** (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) – Hard to find but eventually we succeeded.

**EUROPEAN GREENFINCH** (*Chloris chloris*) – Omnipresent.

**EURASIAN LINNET** (*Linaria cannabina*) – Maintains a low profile, nevertheless seen almost every day.

**RED CROSSBILL** (*Loxia curvirostra*) – Common in the pine woodland around the hotel in the Sierra de Gredos.

**EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** (*Carduelis carduelis*) – We recorded the European Goldfinch everywhere except in the Sierra de Gredos mountains.

**CITRIL FINCH** (*Carduelis citrinella*) – We struggled hard to find this rare species, but eventually we had a good view of a nice male.

**EUROPEAN SERIN** (*Serinus serinus*) – An every day bird.

#### *Emberizidae (Old World Buntings)*

**CORN BUNTING** (*Emberiza calandra*) – Present in virtually all the habitats visited during this tour. It's hard to avoid hearing this bird.

**ROCK BUNTING** (*Emberiza cia*) – Superb views of this stunning bird in the Sierra de Gredos.

**CIRL BUNTING** (*Emberiza cirius*) – At one moment, we had to choose between Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Wryneck or Cirl Bunting. You can't look at them all at the same time. Fortunately we had seen the Cirl Bunting on more than one occasion.

**ORTOLAN BUNTING** (*Emberiza hortulana*) – Fantastic views of this delicate bird with rosy pink bill and legs.

**REED BUNTING** (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) – While searching for the Bearded Reedling in the Tablas de Daimiel NP we discovered some Reed Buntings.

#### *Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Very, very common.

**SPANISH SPARROW** (*Passer hispaniolensis*) – Seen well in Coto Doñana and in Extremadura. They were even breeding in the hotel next to Monfragüe NP.

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*) – We saw some Tree Sparrows that were breeding in the nest-boxes in Doñana.

**ROCK SPARROW** (*Petronia petronia*) – Next to our hotel in Sierra de Gredos.

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## **MAMMALS**

**OLD WORLD RABBIT** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – Frequently seen, specially in the Andújar mountains. The Rabbit is the main food for Spanish Eagle and Iberian Lynx and therefore the key to success of these predators.

**EUROPEAN RED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus vulgaris*) – One sighting in the pine woodland next to our hotel in Gredos.

**RED FOX** (*Vulpes vulpes*) – A grayish Red Fox was discovered while driving through the Sierra de Gredos.

**WILD BOAR** (*Sus scrofa*) – Seen on several occasions. In Coto Doñana the Wild Boars were not afraid and allowed close views.

**FALLOW DEER** (*Dama dama*) – A large group in Sierra de Andújar.

**RED DEER** (*Cervus elaphus*) – Good numbers recorded in Sierra de Andújar and in Coto Doñana.

**SPANISH IBEX** (*Capra pyrenaica*) – Excellent observations of Spanish Ibex high up in the Gredos mountains.

**MOUFLON** (*Ovis musimon*) – We saw some nice groups of impressive Mouflons in the Sierra de Andújar.

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## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

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**Totals for the tour: 205 bird taxa and 8 mammal taxa**