

Majorca, Spain

05th – 08th April 2018

Fairly laid back and lacked any intense birding. All the sites we visited were easily accessible and we had no issues at any one site. When visiting Majorca for birding a trip to S'Albufera is an essential visit, it is the largest expanse of reedbed in Europe. Whilst we visiting other locations for birding, without a doubt S'Albufera is the best site we visited. Special attention should be given to try and see Balearic Warbler, given its an endemic to the islands. Its likely that S'Albufera is one of the best locations in Europe in which to connect with Moustached Warbler, which was another reason we visited so early on in spring. We found both Moustached and Balearic Warbler easy to connect with on the island.



Black-winged Stilt - April 2018 - © Nikola Zalas

For this trip I was with my non-birding partner Nikola Zalas. I wouldn't expect a large trip list at any time of year. Though Majorca does offer some specialist birds, some being endemic and others being hard to see in other locations. April is warm and pleasant during the day, but can be cool on the morning and evenings. Most of the birds within this trip report can be expected to be seen in April, but with climate change it will be interesting to see how this changes the avifauna encountered on the island going forward.



THURSDAY 05TH APRIL 2018 – Travel & S'Albufera, Port de Pollenca

Our flight from Newcastle was early morning, but not too early. We took off at around 09:00 and were in Majorca (local time) for about 13:00 and in the hire car for 13:20. We wasted no time getting on the road and it didn't seem to take that long to reach the eastern end of the Island. Upon arrival we headed for S'Albufera. It was a warm but windy day, with little humidity. Upon entering the park, I was immediately impressed, a glance to the left onto the river produced a **Little Bittern!** It stood there a few minutes before walking away to seek cover, we were elated at such a good start. We continued on when a **Hoopoe** flew past over us at close quarters before disappearing into the pines. The track leading down to the reserve visitor centre was literally alive with birds with **Cetti's** and **Sardinian Warblers** amongst the most numerous birds, with **Zitting Cisticolas** adding entertainment. The river held **Gadwall** and **Mallard** and across the river itself **Woodpigeons** were commonplace with a few **Collared Doves** scattered. We decided as it was the first day to take it easy and so took the right turn toward the visitor centre. We passed the impressive egret colony with **Cattle** and **Little Egret** showing well along with a handful of stunning **Night Herons**. We arrived at the visitor centre to get a permit; upon arrival I heard a Serin singing on the tree immediately above the centre itself. It took me a short while but I managed to pick it up eventually, shortly after it flew off and stopped singing. We took a look into the visitor centre itself, which was very pleasant. We had a look out onto Sa Roca and had plenty of birds with **Red-crested Pochard**, **Garganey**, and two **Marbled Teal** the highlights, **Yellow Wagtails** were also seemingly plentiful. The circular walk back to the visitor centre around the green trail gave us **Nightingale** and **Cetti's Warbler** galore along with a few **Sardinian Warblers**. From the hide a flyover **Purple Heron** added some enjoyment and we had quick look at the **Black-winged Stilts** and **Kentish Plovers** before moving on. We stopped off next at the information board advising the conservation efforts for Marbled Teal, White-headed Duck and Red-knobbed Coot, as we approached the board a white neck collared ringed **Red-knobbed Coot** walked across the path in front of us, quite fitting! We headed on down the long walk toward the Ses Puntetes Deck. On the walk down, I heard my first **Moustached Warblers** opposite the Ses Eres Deck, sadly they did not want too cooperate. Ses Eres Deck itself was worth a look, I glimpsed my first **Purple Gallinule** of the trip, but the species apparently easier to hear than see this late in the afternoon. We walked on a bit further to the next viewing deck



Little Bittern – © Nikola Zalas



where I glimpsed a skulking **Moustached Warbler**, on the return walk it started singing and I had some mid distance brief bins views of two birds before deciding to call it a day. But **Moustached Warbler** was my first lifer of the trip, they had of course long since ceased singing at Saucedilla in Extremadura when I visited late May last year and so did not see the species there.

We checked in and decided to make the most of the rest of the day, a short 15-minute drive to the southern edge of Port de Pollenca was fruitful, we had not even gotten out of the car when I spotted two **Audouin's Gulls** hanging around the pier with **Yellow-legged Gull**. Upon approaching them we had a **Raven** fly past and **House Sparrows** were feeding around the picnic table. A walk along the beach produced a load of **Common Swifts** and by the time we had walked back to the car we must have seen upwards of 10 **Audouin's Gulls**. Tired and ready for some food we called it a day. **Audouin's Gull** was my second tick of the trip.

FRIDAY 6TH APRIL 2018 – S'Albufera, Boquer Valley & Cap de Formentor

Our first dawn and I was keen to get back to S'Albufera to experience the site at dawn. We arrived on site and at pretty much the exact same point as the previous day a **Hoopoe** flew over the path in front of us. The walk down the path was fruitful and the first **Cetti's Warblers** of the day were heard calling and it didn't take too long before the first **Sardinian Warblers** and **Zitting Cisticolas** to start up. Reaching the bridge, the river was alive, with some particularly dapper **Red-crested Pochards** showing well. The colony was a cacophony of sound, with **Cattle Egrets** and **Night Herons** being the most obvious with a few **Little Egrets** amongst the mix. Rather than head toward the visitor centre we decided to head down toward where I had seen the **Moustached Warblers** the day before. We made our way towards the first viewing platform south of the bridge, en-route we added **Common Snipe** and **Greenshank** to the trip list and we had our first proper view of **Purple Gallinule** and some distant **Common Terns** wheeling around in the air added some entertainment. The viewing platform allowed good views of the **Marsh Harriers** quartering and it wasn't long before I picked up a distant **Savi's Warbler** singing, much to my amazement I picked it up relatively easily in the tops of the reeds in the bins but it was difficult to get it in the scope. I tore myself away from it and swung the 180 degrees on account of the fact a **Moustached Warbler** had piped up and had become incredibly vocal! It took seconds to locate and we had excellent prolonged views in the scope of this gorgeous little warbler singing its heart



Marbled Teal – © Nikola Zalas



out in the reeds. S'Albufera is the best place in Europe in which to connect with the species and boasts in excess of a thousand pairs. Content with this we headed back to the bridge and headed down toward the visitor centre, a pair of ridiculously showing **Serins** were on the path in front of us and allowed us in the end to get within a few feet. We had excellent views of a **Night Heron** perched in the trees in the colony, meanwhile two **Purple Gallinules** marched proudly around the edge of the marsh. We headed off on the green trail again and were greeted by **Nightingale** before entering the Sa Roca hide which provided us with three snoozing **Marbled Teals**. The Sa Roca hide was very productive with an obvious passage of **Green Sandpipers** underway along with a handful of **Wood Sandpiper**. A few **Kentish Plovers** were defending their breeding islands and two **Purple Herons** flew over heading of in a SW direction. **Black-winged Stilts** showed pretty incredibly in front of the hide and **Little Ringed Plover** was a trip tick. A single drake **Garganey** was too quick for Nikola to pick up on as it flew in and landed and we decided to move on, en-route to the viewing platform on the green trail a **Woodchat Shrike** flew over and we managed to see **Purple Gallinule** from the viewing mound itself and the **Cetti's** and **Sardinian Warblers** were showing well. We headed off again back toward the visitor centre and we had an unringed **Red-knobbed Coot** showing ridiculously well.

We made our way half way down the brown route to the first viewing platform, we had good views once again of **Moustached Warbler** and just as we were about to move on a **Wryneck** burst from cover right next to the viewing platform. We walked down the route quite a way but we found it to be quite quiet and turned bac. Approaching the bridge, we heard a male **Little Bittern** calling but did not see it. We headed down the purple route and on the way we had stupidly good views of **Purple Gallinule** on the path and **Serins** sang in this wooded section. The "Es Cibollar I Hide" was lifting with birds! We sat down to a wader fest consisting of **Redshank**, **Temminck's Stint**, **Avocet**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Grey Plover**, **Dunlin**, **Kentish Plover**, and the best duck on view was **Garganey**. A **Marsh Harrier** flew over but was seen off swiftly, shortly afterwards we decided to move on. As we approached the visitor centre area we heard and saw a lot of **Serins** singing and a I had backend view of a **Night Heron** flying upriver. We took in the rest of the purple trail but it was rather disappointing and so we headed back toward the car. The journey back provided us with the best views of the trip of a **Moustached Warbler**, the bird was not far from the visitor centre on the track back toward the bridge. The bird was doing a circuit around a small stand of reeds not far from the path.



Moustached Warbler – ©Andrew Kinghorn



Excellent views. By the time we were leaving the morning was getting on and the birds had fallen increasingly quiet and we felt satisfied so headed off for some breakfast.

After a wholesome breakfast we were feeling a bit more awake and headed for the Boquer Valley. We arrived, parked the car, and headed for the walk into the valley. The trees around the entrance held a **Redstart** and a male **Sardinian Warbler** revealed itself through song. The first half of the walk into the valley itself was quiet with only **Serin** and **Linnet** in attendance aside from the seemingly common **Sardinian Warblers**. As we got further down into the valley bottom a beautiful flash of blue perched up briefly, it was of course a **Balearic Warbler**. No sooner had we clapped eyes on it than it melted away. We waited around a bit and were treat to a flyover **Black Vulture** over the ridge and a male **Subalpine Warbler** put in a brief appearance. We headed on down to the beach picking up another distant **Balearic Warbler** briefly. Nikola engaged in another one of her passions (rock climbing) and I added **Shag** to the site list, with at least two birds in the bay. We started heading back and as we reached the top of valley Nikola spied not one but two **Balearic Warblers** feeding in some suitable habitat, we waited around 10 minutes and were treat to some simply awesome views of the birds perched up and feeding low down in cover. On the walk back we had **Linnet**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Serin**, and when we reached the two large rock formations, I picked up a **Booted Eagle** hanging in the wind. We watched it for about 40 minutes, was impressed that it did not beat its wings a single time! Around the two large rock formations themselves we did not have a single Crag Martin or Blue Rock Thrush; they are supposed to occur but we failed to see any.



Balearic Warbler – ©Andrew Kinghorn

We had a coffee (a must in Spain mid-afternoon), and then headed off to Cap de Formentor lighthouse. The drive to the lighthouse was relatively quiet with the only highlight being seven or so **Crag Martins** at the second mirador before the lighthouse car park. We arrived at the car park and it was ridiculously busy! We managed to get a parking space and I set up the scope looking off the northern edge. After about five minutes my target came into view and I was watching a **Scopoli's Shearwater**, about half an hour later another two went past. The only other birds on this brief sea watch were **Shag** and **Yellow-legged Gull**. We got back into the car and were amongst the last tourists of the day, I heard a **Blue Rock Thrush** singing and it appeared some fifteen minutes later feeding on tit bits dropped by the hoards. On the way back, we stopped in



again at the second mirador from the lighthouse to look at the **Crag Martins**, they were showing really well, but nigh on impossible to photograph with a bridge camera. Nikola skilfully spied a male **Blue Rock Thrush** and we enjoyed good views of this stunning bird which turned out to be our final highlight of the day before heading back to the hotel.

SATURDAY 7TH APRIL 2018 –S'Albufera, Castell De Santueri, & Parc natural de Mondrago

This was our final day in this short trip and we wasted no time getting up and out early. As per the previous day we took the 10-minute drive to S'Albufera. On entering the reserve, we were greeted by the ever-present **Cetti's Warblers** and it wasn't long before we saw **Cattle Egrets** and **Woodpigeon**. Of course, the **Zitting Cisticolas** started up shortly after dawn. Unlike the previous day we did not take in the joys of the colony or even walk down the path to the visitor centre. Instead, we headed south, the ever-present **Sardinian Warblers** put on a show and **Purple Gallinules** were heard before seen. **Cattle** and **Little Egrets** headed out from the colony to feed. A **Moustached Warbler** was singing from the same location as the previous day but a quick scan could not locate the bird. I had been

commenting to Nikola how we had failed to see **Great White Egret** and as if by magic, a winter plumaged bird popped up and flew about 200 meters before landing again. **Marsh Harriers** were up and about in obvious attendance with at least three birds about. We headed off down the track to a backdrop of **Zitting Cisticolas** and **Cetti's Warblers**, a fortunate glance behind us revealed a single **Glossy Ibis** in flight before it landed out of view. Upon reaching the first block of woodland I was greeted by a singing **Woodchat Shrike**, as I was positioning for a view a **Hoopoe** alighted and flew off never to be seen again, with the wood itself a **Great Tit** added a flavour of familiarity to the mix. Continuing on a **Kestrel** perched up nicely on a derelict building and it became obvious where the **Cattle Egrets** had been flying too as they fed amongst the feet of cattle. The gate to the sewage works was locked so we headed off west along the track, **Swifts**, **House Martins**, **Sand Martins**, and **Swallows** were gathered in relatively in small numbers above the reedbeds and the sound of **Black-winged Stilts** was welcome, it wasn't long until these birds were passing overhead during almost the entirety of the walk along this pathway. A distant **Savi's Warbler** revealed itself with its reeling, but despite being very close to the bird it was seemingly not possible to get a view. I did however get good views of some silent **Moustached Warblers** in the process of trying to locate the Savi's. I moved onto a gated entrance where I looked back and after a few seconds picked up the **Savi's Warbler** in the scope distantly, its mouth open reeling away. Continuing on was a good idea as we soon heard the awesome song of a **Great Reed Warbler** in a dense patch of reeds, didn't even try to see the bird and moved on. Not much further on we heard a **Nightingale** and yet another **Great Reed Warbler**. Approaching the viewpoint, I had a third **Great Reed Warbler** singing in a fairly open patch of reeds, took a minute or two but I managed to locate the bird singing in the back of the reedbed. Positioned the scope and had good scope views, though understandably it was quite obscured. The viewpoint itself was not worth the walk, with only **Mallard** and **Marsh Harriers** to show for it,



both species really easy to see even just pottering around the visitor centre. Though close quarter views of **Sardinian** and **Cetti's Warblers** made up for it somewhat. The walk back didn't produce anything too much of note aside from a **Chiffchaff**, the **Savi's Warbler** was still reeling but the birdlife on the walk back was much the same as the walk down, however with the morning now moving on everything had become a lot quieter and more difficult to see.

Nikola wanted to visit Cuevas de Arta, which is meant to be less touristy than the others on the islands. Whilst still pretty cheesy it was very interesting to see how nature has produced something so utterly incredible, worth a visit. Round the cliffs and on the sea, we saw **Shag** and **Sardinian Warbler**, and the seemingly ever present **Yellow-legged Gulls**. I wanted to visit Castel de Santueri and so we headed there next, before we even parked the car the **Alpine Swifts** were whirling around the south side of the castle along with some **Crag Martins**. Both were vocal and we had a total of six **Alpine Swifts** during our visit. We made our way up the steps toward the old castle entrance and from here I had a **Peregrine** go down in the valley and later whilst scanning I had a distant pale morph **Booted Eagle** due south at roughly the same elevation as the castle. Inside the castle I heard a **Blue Rock Thrush** singing and it didn't take long to locate the bird, later on we also had the only female **Blue Rock Thrush** of the trip.

Our final visit of the trip was to Parc Natural de Mondrago, which is in the SE of the island. Nikola spotted this on a map and said she thought it would be good to visit. En-route we had a few **Red Kites** and two **Thekla Larks** were the only ones of the trip! We parked up and the area was literally alive with singing **Serins**, I was a little taken back by the sheer amount of song from them. We took the red route, which ran south past the river mouth that led toward the sea. On the walk we heard **Stone Curlew** and also had a flypast **Hoopoe** near to the start of the walk. Not surprisingly we also had **Sardinian Warbler**, another single **Red Kite**, and a ridiculously showy **Kestrel**. Nearing the end of the red route towards the beach I glimpsed a **Blackcap** which was a trip tick and there were some **Mallards** on the river. The end of the route was a café on the beach, one of the most touristy parts of the trip, especially the prices for a soggy ice cream cone! Nevertheless, the **Audouin's Gulls** here were mental, common and showed ridiculously well. Which is a good thing, as I didn't fancy lifting my bins in an area full of sunbathing tourists. Walking back to the car allowed for use of the bins again and we had a **Sardinian Warbler** in the wooded areas and we heard a **Wryneck**. Nikola was on form and alerted me to some Swifts high up. As expected, **Common Swifts**, then one of them banked and the perfect light revealed at least one was a **Pallid Swift**, in the end I had two definite **Pallid Swifts** and 2-3 **Common Swifts** together. I assume migrants, but a tourist board suggested both occur there. We headed off to Palma and a walk along the sea front for tea produced a **Sandwich Tern** and **Yellow-legged Gulls** off the sea front as we ate our tea, the former being the only one of the trip.

SUNDAY 8TH APRIL 2018 - Travel

The last day of the trip. We stayed in a hotel in Palma that was quite literally a 5-minute drive



from the Airport. We dropped the car off at the airport and were on our flight by 07:45 local time, by which point it was just getting light. We did not actually see a single bird this day and we were back in home before midday.

COMPLETE TRIP LIST

SPECIES LIST	COMMENTS
Shelduck	Present.
Mallard	Present.
Gadwall	Present.
Shoveler	Present.
Marbled Duck	Seen well at S'Albufera, a core site for this species on the island.
Teal	Present.
Garganey	Seen at S'Albufera from the Es Cibollar I Hide.
Pochard	Present.
Red-crested Pochard	Easy to see at S'Albufera on sizeable expanses of water.
Scopoli's Shearwater	Easily seen during a sea watch off Cap de Formentor lighthouse late in the afternoon.
Cormorant	Present.
Shag	Seen on the sea at the end of the Boquer Valley. Easily seen during a sea watch at Cap de Formentor lighthouse. Also seen around the cliffs around Cuevas de Arta.
Little Bittern	With patience you can easily hear and see the species at S'Albufera.
Night Heron	Easily seen amongst heron and egret roosts around S'Albufera.
Cattle Egret	Present.
Little Egret	Present.
Great Egret	Present.
Grey Heron	Present.
Purple Heron	Relatively easy to see around S'Albufera.
Glossy Ibis	Only a single bird seen at S'Albufera.
Black Vulture	Bird seen over the Boquer Valley.
Booted Eagle	Seen in the Boquer Valley and distant views of a pale morph from Castel de Santueri.
Red Kite	Seen enroute to Parc Natural de Mondrago.
Marsh Harrier	Easy to see around S'Albufera.
Kestrel	Present.
Peregrine Falcon	Seen from Castel de Santueri.
Water Rail	Easy to connect with around S'Albufera.
Moorhen	Present.



Coot	Present.
Red-knobbed Coot	Reintroduction birds easy to see around S'Albufera.
Purple Swamphen	Easy to see around S'Albufera.
Avocet	Easy to see around S'Albufera.
Black-winged Stilt	Easy to see around S'Albufera.
Stone Curlew	Heard in Parc Natural de Mondrago.
Little Ringed Plover	Seen from the Sa Roca hide at S'Albufera.
Kentish Plover	Present at S'Albufera.
Grey Plover	Seen from the Es Cibollar I Hide on S'Albufera.
Ruff	Present at S'Albufera.
Dunlin	Present at S'Albufera.
Temminck's Stint	Seen from the Es Cibollar I Hide on S'Albufera.
Wood Sandpiper	Present at S'Albufera.
Green Sandpiper	Present at S'Albufera.
Redshank	Present at S'Albufera.
Greenshank	Present at S'Albufera.
Snipe	Present at S'Albufera.
Black-headed Gull	Present.
Yellow-legged Gull	Present.
Audouin's Gull	Easy to see around Port de Pollenca. Very tame at Parc Natural de Mondrago café on the beach
Sandwich Tern	Seen offshore at Palma.
Common Tern	Present at S'Albufera.
Feral Pigeon	Present.
Wood Pigeon	Present.
Collared Dove	Present.
Swift	Present.
Pallid Swift	Seen around hotel buildings in Parc Natural de Mondrago.
Alpine Swift	Seen well around Castel de Santueri.
Hoopoe	Present, not particularly difficult to see.
Wryneck	Seen near one of the viewing platforms at S'Albufera. Noted too in the Boquer Valley and around Parc Natural de Mondrago.
Thekla's Lark	Present.
Sand Martin	Present.
Crag Martin	Seen on the road to Cap de Formentor lighthouse and at Castel de Santueri.
Barn Swallow	Present.
House Martin	Present.
Water Pipit	Present.



Yellow Wagtail	Present
Wren	Present.
Nightingale	Heard a few birds at S'Albufera.
Redstart	Seen at the entrance to Boquer Valley.
Stonechat	Present.
Song Thrush	Present.
Blackbird	Present.
Blue Rock Thrush	Seen in the car park at Cap de Formentor lighthouse. Also present around Castel de Santueri.
Wheatear	Present.
Zitting Cisticola	Easy to see around S'Albufera.
Blackcap	Seen on a rural walk around Parc Natural de Mondrago.
Sardinian Warbler	Present.
Western Subalpine Warbler	Seen in the bushes at Boquer Valley.
Balearic Warbler	Seen at Boquer Valley.
Moustached Warbler	The main target of this trip, birds start to sing early in the season and so April is one of the best months to see the species before they cease singing. They were easy to see around S'Albufera.
Cetti's Warbler	Easy to hear and see around S'Albufera.
Great Reed Warbler	Present at S'Albufera but by no means widespread on my visit at this time of year.
Savi's Warbler	The species was said to be scarce from my research before my visit, but I suspect that material was simply out of date. A walk around the extensive reedbed areas gave me at least three birds on my visit.
Willow Warbler	Present.
Chiffchaff	Present.
Great Tit	Present.
Woodchat Shrike	Easy to see around wooded sections of S'Albufera.
House Sparrow	Present.
Chaffinch	Present.
Linnet	Present.
Goldfinch	Present.
Greenfinch	Present.
Serin	Easy to see around the visitor centre trees at S'Albufera and also seen in Boquer Valley.

