

Catara 2019, a trip in Andalucia

This was a trip resulting from a slowly developing tradition. Robert and Stefan are two birding pals that for years have spent days, sometimes a few days, a week, ten days in Ethiopia, Kenya, the Netherlands and Spain, birding, enjoying the company of others, food, drinks and ornithological fun. This year we met with three others at Sevilla Airport and after ten days split up there again, with many new birds on our lists. Robert drove, Stefan did the lists, Peter, Ellen and Ab did the photography.

Itinerary and Hotels

Date	Overnight	Hotel	
WE 17th of April Arrival Sevilla airport at 20.05, Robert had the van ready.	Sevilla e.o.	Cortijo Mezquetillas, Carretera SE-456 Km 7,5, Morón de la Frontera, 41530, Tel +34 656912623	
TH 18	Ronda	Lewis & Peter Apartments Los Remedios Virgen de los Remedios, 10-12, Ronda, 29400, Tel +34 665 50 41 76	
FR 19	Ronda	id	
SA 20	Tarifa	Hotel Copacabana Tarifa Beach Beach Valdevaqueros 12, Valdevaqueros, Tarifa, 11380 Tel +34 956 06 59 89	
SU 21 Easter Sunday	Tarifa		
MO 22	Tarifa		
TU 23	Jerez	Puerta de Algardir Carretera Nacional IV Km. 648, El Puerto de Santa María, 11500 Tel +34956861550	
WE 24	El Rocio	Casa Rural Doñana 51 Plaza Doñana 51, El Rocío, 21750, Tel +34 959 09 04 58	
TH 25	El Rocio		
FR 26	El Rocio		
SA 27th of April		Flight HV 6728 DEP 10.40 Sevilla ARR 13.00 Schiphol	Train AVE DEP 08.50 Sevilla ARR 12.33 Zaragoza

				DATE/DAY													
				17-04-19	18-04-19	19-04-19	20-04-19	21-04-19	22-04-19	23-04-19	24-04-19	25-04-19	26-04-19	27-04-19			
Species / Order	Español	Nederlandse naam	Scientific name	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	Days species were seen	as %	
ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae																	
Greylag Goose	Ansar Común	Grauwe Gans	Anser anser							N		X	X		3	27.3	
Common Shelduck	Tarro Blanco	Bergeend	Tadorna tadorna						N	X			X		3	27.3	
Gadwall	Anade Friso	Krakeend	Anas strepera							N	X	X	X		4	36.4	
Mallard	Anade Azulón	Wilde Eend	Anas platyrhynchos					N	X	X	X	X	X		6	54.5	
Northern Shoveler	Cuchara Común	Slobeend	Anas clypeata							N	X		X		3	27.3	
Marbled Duck	Cerceta Pardilla	Marmereend	Marmaronetta angustirostris								N		X		2	18.2	
Red-crested Pochard	Pato Colorado	Krooneend	Netta rufina							N	X	X	X		4	36.4	
Common Pochard	Porrón Europeo	Tafeleend	Aythya ferina							N	X	X	X		4	36.4	
Ferruginous Duck	Porrón Pardo	Witoogeend	Aythya nyroca										N		1	9.1	
Tufted Duck	Porrón Moñudo	Kuifeend	Aythya fuligula							N					1	9.1	
White-headed Duck	Malvasía Cabeciblanca	Witkopeend	Oxyura leucocephala							N	X				2	18.2	
GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae																	
Red-legged Partridge	Perdiz Roja	Rode Patrijs	Alectoris rufa						N	X	X				3	27.3	
Common Quail	Codorniz Común	Kwartel	Coturnix coturnix						N			X	X		3	27.3	
Common Pheasant	Faisán Vulgar	Fazant	Phasianus colchicus					N							1	9.1	
PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae																	
Little Grebe	Zampullín Común	Dodaars	Tachybaptus ruficollis							N	X	X	X		4	36.4	
Great Crested Grebe	Somormujo Lavanco	Fuut	Podiceps cristatus						N	X	X	X	X		5	45.5	
Black-necked Grebe	Zampullín Cuellinegro	Geoorde Fuut	Podiceps nigricollis							N	X				2	18.2	
PHOENICOPTERIFORMES: Phoenicopteridae																	
Greater Flamingo	Flamenco Común	Flamingo	Phoenicopterus roseus					N		X	X	X	X		5	45.5	
CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae																	
White Stork	Cigüeña Blanca	Ooievaar	Ciconia ciconia	N	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		9	81.8	
PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae																	
Northern Bald Ibis	Ibis Eremita	Heremietibis	Geronticus eremita					N		X					2	18.2	
Glossy Ibis	Morito Común	Zwarte Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus					N		X	X	X	X		5	45.5	
Eurasian Spoonbill	Espátula Común	Lepelaar	Platalea leucorodia					N	X	X	X	X	X		6	54.5	

Ardeidae

									N			1	9.1
									N			1	9.1
						N	X	X	X			4	36.4
						N	X		X			3	27.3
	N		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			8	72.7
		N		X	X	X	X	X	X			7	63.6
							N	X	X			3	27.3
							N	X	X			3	27.3
			N	X	X	X	X	X	X			7	63.6

Phalacrocoracidae

				N	X	X	X	X	X			6	54.5
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Pandionidae

			N	1	9.1
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Accipitridae

				N				X				2	18.2
	N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				8	72.7
	N	X	X			X						4	36.4
		N	X		X	X	X	X	X			7	63.6
			N									1	9.1
				N		X	X					3	27.3
						N			X			2	18.2
						N	X	X				3	27.3
		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			8	72.7
			N				X	X	X			4	36.4

What's Different?

							N	X				2	18.2
						N	X	X	X			4	36.4
				N	X	X	X	X	X			6	54.5
							N	X				2	18.2
						N	X	X	X			4	36.4

Burhinidae

[illegible]

				N	X	X	X	X	X			6	54.5
						N		X				2	18.2

				N		X						2	18.2
				N	X	X			X			4	36.4
			N	X	X	X						4	36.4

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								N	X			2	18.2
							N					1	9.1
				N	X							2	18.2
				N		X						2	18.2
				N	X	X						3	27.3
				N	X	X	X					4	36.4
				N	X							2	18.2
				N	X	X						3	27.3
						N						1	9.1
						N						1	9.1
				N	X	X						3	27.3
				N	X	X						3	27.3

				N	X	X	X	X	X			6	54.5
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100

						N						1	9.1
				N		X	X	X	X			5	45.5
				N								1	9.1
				N								1	9.1
			N	X	X	X	X	X				6	54.5
				N		X	X					3	27.3
							N					1	9.1
				N								1	9.1
				N	X	X	X					4	36.4
							N	X	X			3	27.3
							N	X	X			3	27.3

Great Skua	Págalo Grande	Grote Jager	Stercorarius skua					N							1	9.1
COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae																
Rock Dove	Paloma Bravía	Rotsduif	Columba livia		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		9	81.8
Stock Dove	Paloma Zurita	Holenduif	Columba oenas		N					X	X				3	27.3
Common Wood Pigeon	Paloma Torcaz	Houtduif	Columba palumbus		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		9	81.8
European Turtle Dove	Tórtola Europea	Zomertortel	Streptopelia turtur					N		X					2	18.2
Eurasian Collared Dove	Tórtola Turca	Turkse Tortel	Streptopelia decaocto		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		9	81.8
CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae																
Common Cuckoo	Cuco Común	Koekoek	Cuculus canorus		N	X			X			X	X		5	45.5
STRIGIFORMES: Tytonidae																
Western Barn Owl	Lechuza Común	Kerkuil	Tyto alba	N											1	9.1
STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae																
Little Owl	Mochuelo Europeo	Steenuil	Athene noctua		N			X							2	18.2
CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Caprimulgidae																
European Nightjar	Chotacabras Europeo	Nachtzwaluw	Caprimulgus europaeus	N											1	9.1
APODIFORMES: Apodidae																
Alpine Swift	Vencejo Real	Alpengierzwaluw	Tachymarptis melba			N									1	9.1
Common Swift	Vencejo Común	Gierzwaluw	Apus apus	N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10	90.9
Pallid Swift	Vencejo Pálido	Vale Gierzwaluw	Apus pallidus			N	X		X	X	X	X	X		6	54.5
CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae																
Common Kingfisher	Martín Pescador Común	IJsvogel	Alcedo atthis				N								1	9.1
CORACIIFORMES: Meropidae																
European Bee-eater	Abejaruco Europeo	Bijeneter	Merops apiaster		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		9	81.8
BUCEROTIFORMES: Upupidae																
Eurasian Hoopoe	Abubilla	Hop	Upupa epops		N						X	X	X		4	36.4
PICIFORMES: Picidae																
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Pico Menor	Kleine Bonte Specht	Dryobates minor			N									1	9.1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Pico Picapinos	Grote Bonte Specht	Dendrocopos major		N	X	X								3	27.3
Iberian Green Woodpecker	Pito Real	Iberische Groene Specht	Picus sharpei		N	X	X	X	X			X			6	54.5
FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae																
Lesser Kestrel	Cernícalo Primilla	Kleine Torenvalk	Falco naumanni		N	X							X		3	27.3
Common Kestrel	Cernícalo Vulgar	Torenvalk	Falco tinnunculus				N	X	X	X	X	X	X		7	63.6
Eurasian Hobby	Alcotán Europeo	Boomvalk	Falco subbuteo				N			X					2	18.2

Peregrine Falcon	Halcón Peregrino	Slechtvalk	Falco peregrinus
PSITTACIFORMES: Psittacidae			
Monk Parakeet	Cotorra Argentina	Monniksparkiet	Myiopsitta monachus
PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae			
Southern Grey Shrike	Alcaudón Real	Iberische Klapekster	Lanius meridionalis
Woodchat Shrike	Alcaudón Común	Roodkopklauwier	Lanius senator
PASSERIFORMES: Orioliidae			
Eurasian Golden Oriole	Oropéndola Europea	Wielewaal	Oriolus oriolus
PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae			
Eurasian Jay	Arrendajo Euroasiático	Gaaï	Garrulus glandarius
Iberian Magpie	Rabilargo Ibérico	Blauwe Ekster	Cyanopica cooki
Eurasian Magpie	Urraca Común	Ekster	Pica pica
Red-billed Chough	Chova Piquirroja	Alpenkraai	Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax
Alpine Chough	Chova Piquigualda	Alpenkauw	Pyrrhocorax graculus
Western Jackdaw	Grajilla Occidental	Kauw	Coloeus monedula
Northern Raven	Cuervo Grande	Raaf	Corvus corax
PASSERIFORMES: Paridae			
European Crested Tit	Herrerillo Capuchino	Kuifmees	Lophophanes cristatus
Eurasian Blue Tit	Herrerillo Común	Pimpelmees	Cyanistes caeruleus
Great Tit	Carbonero Común	Koolmees	Parus major
PASSERIFORMES: Remizidae			
Eurasian Penduline Tit	Pájaro-moscón Europeo	Buidelmees	Remiz pendulinus
PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae			
Eurasian Skylark	Alondra Común	Veldleeuwerek	Alauda arvensis
Thekla Lark	Cogujada Montesina	Theklaleeuwerek	Galerida theklae
Crested Lark	Cogujada Común	Kuifleeuwerek	Galerida cristata
Greater Short-toed Lark	Terrera Común	Kortteenleeuwerek	Calandrella brachydactyla
Calandra Lark	Calandria Común	Kalanderleeuwerek	Melanocorypha calandra
PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae			
Common Bulbul	Bulbul Naranjero	Grauwe Buulbuul	Pycnonotus barbatus
PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae			
Sand Martin	Avión Zapador	Oeverzwaluw	Riparia riparia
Barn Swallow	Golondrina Común	Boerenzwaluw	Hirundo rustica
Eurasian Crag Martin	Avión Roquero	Rotszwaluw	Ptyonoprogne rupestris

Common House Martin	Avión Común	Huiszwaluw	Delichon urbicum			N	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			8	72.7
Red-rumped Swallow	Golondrina Dáurica	Roodstuitzwaluw	Cecropis daurica			N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			9	81.8
PASSERIFORMES: Cettiidae																		
Cetti's Warbler	Cetia Ruiseñor	Cetti's Zanger	Cettia cetti				N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			8	72.7
PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae																		
Long-tailed Tit	Mito Común	Staartmees	Aegithalos caudatus				N						X	X			3	27.3
PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae																		
Willow Warbler	Mosquitero Musical	Fitis	Phylloscopus trochilus			N			X								2	18.2
Iberian Chiffchaff	Mosquitero Ibérico	Iberische Tjiftjaf	Phylloscopus ibericus				N	X									2	18.2
PASSERIFORMES: Acrocephalidae																		
Great Reed Warbler	Carricero Tordal	Grote Karekiet	Acrocephalus arundinaceus										N	X			2	18.2
Reed Warbler	Carricero Común	Kleine Karekiet	Acrocephalus scirpaceus						N		X		X	X			4	36.4
Sedge Warbler	Carricerín Común	Rietzanger	Acrocephalus schoenobaenus									N	X				2	18.2
Melodious Warbler	Zarcero Políglota	Orpheusspotvogel	Hippolais polyglotta										N	X			2	18.2
PASSERIFORMES: Locustellidae																		
Savi's Warbler	Buscarla Unicolor	Snor	Locustella luscinioides										N	X			2	18.2
PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae																		
Zitting Cisticola	Cisticola Buitrón	Graszanger	Cisticola juncidis				N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		9	81.8
PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae																		
Eurasian Blackcap	Curruca Capirotada	Zwartkop	Sylvia atricapilla				N	X	X	X	X	X		X			7	63.6
Garden Warbler	Curruca Mosquitera	Tuinfluitier	Sylvia borin					N									1	9.1
Lesser Whitethroat	Curruca Zarcerilla	Braamsluiper	Sylvia curruca					N		X			X				3	27.3
Common Whitethroat	Curruca Zarcera	Grasmus	Sylvia communis					N	X	X	X	X		X			6	54.5
Dartford Warbler	Curruca Rabilarga	Provençaalse Grasmus	Sylvia undata					N									1	9.1
Subalpine Warbler	Curruca Carrasqueña	Baardgrasmus	Sylvia cantillans								N						1	9.1
Sardinian Warbler	Curruca Cabecinegra	Kleine Zwartkop	Sylvia melanocephala				N	X	X	X	X	X	X				7	63.6
PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae																		
Eurasian Wren	Chochín Común	Winterkoning	Troglodytes troglodytes					N	X		X			X			4	36.4
PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae																		
Eurasian Nuthatch	Trepador Azul	Boomklever	Sitta europaea					N						X			2	18.2
PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae																		
Short-toed Treecreeper	Agateador Europeo	Boomkruiper	Certhia brachydactyla								N			X			2	18.2
PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae																		

Spotless Starling	Estornino Negro	Zwarte Spreeuw	Sturnus unicolor	N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			10	90.9
PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae																	
Common Blackbird	Mirlo Común	Merel	Turdus merula		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			9	81.8
Mistle Thrush	Zorzal Charlo	Grote Lijster	Turdus viscivorus		N											1	9.1
PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae																	
Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin	Alzacola Rojizo	Rosse Waaierstaart	Erythropygia galactotes									N				1	9.1
European Robin	Petirrojo Europeo	Roodborst	Erithacus rubecula			N	X					X				3	27.3
Common Nightingale	Ruiseñor Común	Nachtegaal	Luscinia megarhynchos		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			9	81.8
European Pied Flycatcher	Papamoscas Cerrojillo	Bonte Vliegenvanger	Ficedula hypoleuca									N				1	9.1
Black Redstart	Colirrojo Tizón	Zwarte Roodstaart	Phoenicurus ochruros				N									1	9.1
Blue Rock Thrush	Roquero Solitario	Blauwe Rotslijster	Monticola solitarius		N	X		X								3	27.3
Whinchat	Tarabilla Norteña	Paapje	Saxicola rubetra					N								1	9.1
European Stonechat	Tarabilla Común	Roodborsttapuit	Saxicola rubicola		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			9	81.8
Northern Wheatear	Collalba Gris	Tapuit	Oenanthe oenanthe										N			1	9.1
Black-eared Wheatear	Collalba Rubia	Blonde Tapuit	Oenanthe hispanica										N			1	9.1
Black Wheatear	Collalba Negra	Zwarte Tapuit	Oenanthe leucura		N	X										2	18.2
PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae																	
House Sparrow	Gorrión Común	Huismus	Passer domesticus	N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			10	90.9
Spanish Sparrow	Gorrión Moruno	Spaanse Mus	Passer hispaniolensis		N											1	9.1
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Gorrión Molinero	Ringmus	Passer montanus			N										1	9.1
Rock Sparrow	Gorrión Chillón	Rotsmus	Petronia petronia			N										1	9.1
PASSERIFORMES: Ploceidae																	
Black-headed Weaver	Tejedor Cabecinegro	Zwartkopwever	Ploceus melanoccephalus									N	X			2	18.2
PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae																	
Common Waxbill	Estrilda Común	Sint-Helenafazantje	Estrilda astrild									N	X			2	18.2
PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae																	
Western Yellow Wagtail	Lavandera Boyera	Gele Kwikstaart	Motacilla flava					N	X	X	X	X	X			6	54.5
Grey Wagtail	Lavandera Cascadeña	Grote Gele Kwikstaart	Motacilla cinerea			N	X									2	18.2
White Wagtail	Lavandera Blanca	Witte Kwikstaart	Motacilla alba			N	X	X				X				4	36.4
Meadow Pipit	Bisbita Pratense	Graspieper	Anthus pratensis						N							1	9.1
PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae																	
Common Chaffinch	Pinzón Vulgar	Vink	Fringilla coelebs		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			9	81.8
European Greenfinch	Verderón Común	Groenling	Chloris chloris		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			9	81.8

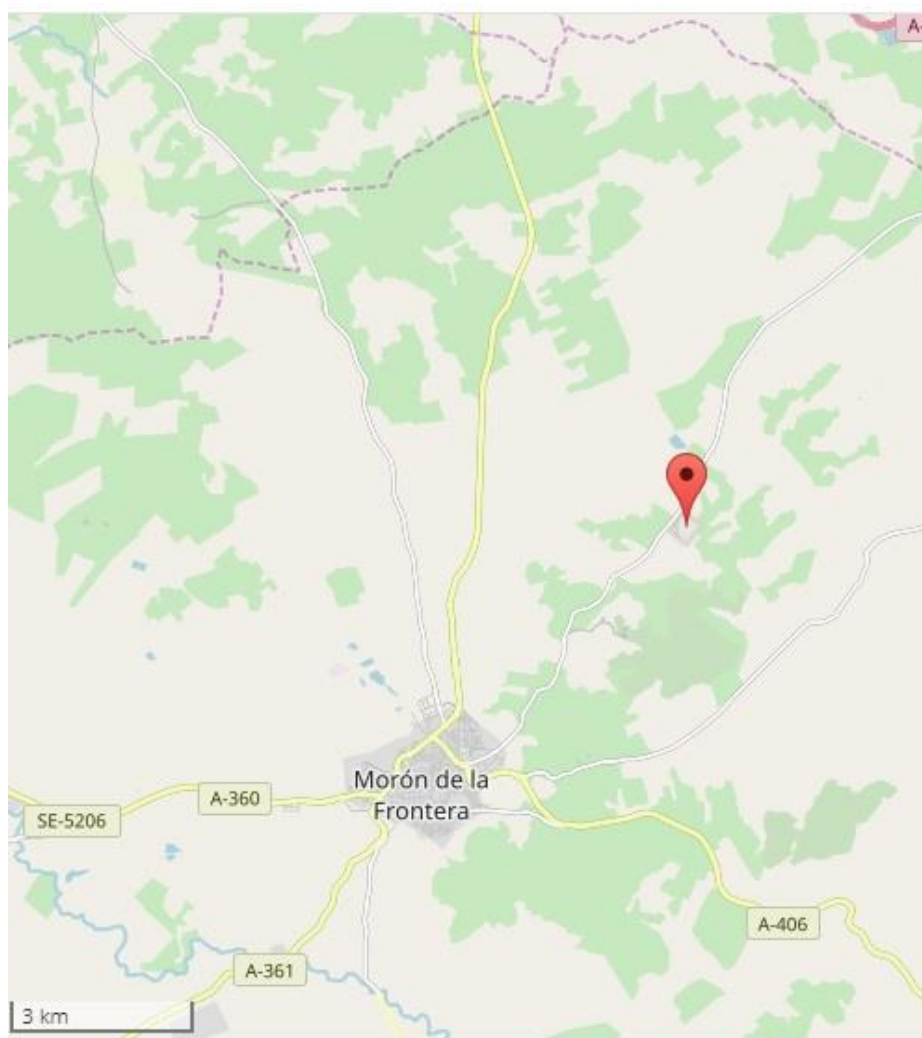
Common Linnet	Pardillo Común	Kneu	Linaria cannabina			N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			8	72.7
European Goldfinch	Jilguero Europeo	Putter	Carduelis carduelis	N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			10	90.9
European Serin	Serín Verdecillo	Europese Kanarie	Serinus serinus		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			9	81.8
PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae																	
Corn Bunting	Escribano Triguero	Grauwe Gors	Emberiza calandra		N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			9	81.8
				Total number of species per day	7	47	59	55	81	72	89	81	95	87	0	On 10 days	67.30
				Of which, first seen species	7	42	22	10	39	9	21	10	12	5	0	On 10 days	17.70
				Cumulative number of species	7	49	71	81	120	129	150	160	172	177	177		
					17-04-19	18-04-19	19-04-19	20-04-19	21-04-19	22-04-19	23-04-19	24-04-19	25-04-19	26-04-19	27-04-19	Total number of species	Average number of species per day
				DATE													

The list, as it was collated over the days. N marks a new, first observation of a species, X marks a subsequent observation at a later date. The number of days that a certain species was observed is shown as well as the percentage of days we saw them. Bearing in mind that the first day together started just before nine PM, and the last day ended just before eight AM, no species made it to a 100%.

A day by day account. Maps taken from Google Maps with the route shown as a thin red line. Sometimes an arrow indicates the way in which a circular route was taken. Letters in red refer to locations discussed in the text. Page indications in black refer to John R. Butler's "Birdwatching on Spain's Southern Coast".

Wednesday April 17th. Sevilla to Moron de la Frontera.

Weather: Warmer than the Netherlands. Clouds: 2/8 Rain: none Temp: 20 going to 15 °C Wind: 2 B from W

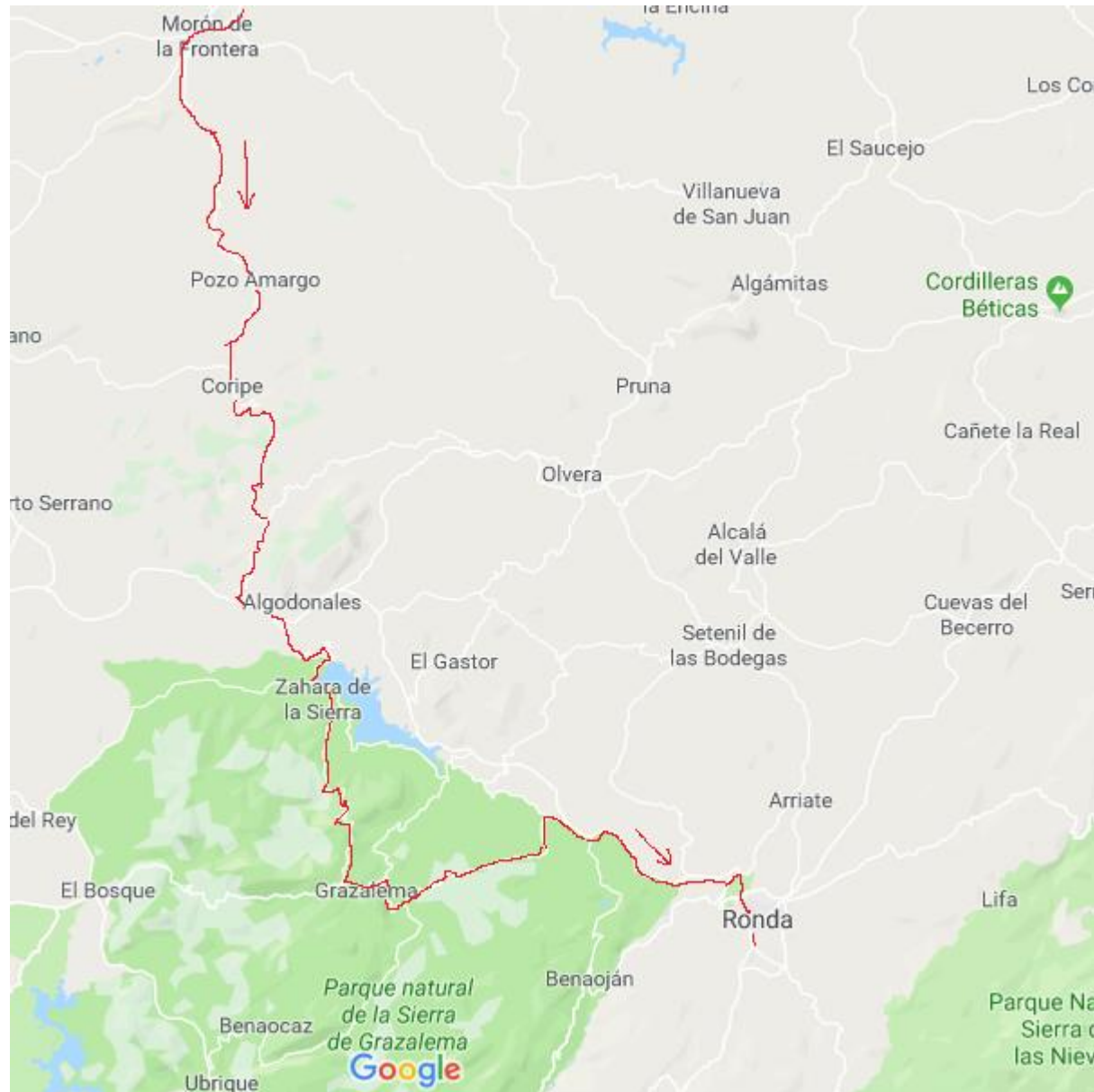


Robert collected the car at the train station, did some shopping for snacks and drinks. After meeting at the Airport we drove to the Cortijo, a rural estate/B&B. Highlight was a Barn Owl, spotted by Stefan. The rule was traditionally that both observers needed to see and identify a species. In a group of five that quickly leads to 'missed' species, so we stuck to two. A Nightjar on the road was European.

With some searching in the dark we found the hotel, took away the barrier chain and phoned the owner. 20 minutes later he arrived with his wife, they opened doors. We took some snacks and drinks and at midnight we switched off the lights.

Thursday April 18th.

Weather: clear, but very fresh. Clouds: 6/8 to 2/8 Rain: a bit of drizzle in the morning and in the late afternoon. Temp: from 14 up to 18°C Wind: 3 B from SW



Waking up found us all contemplating the way the Spanish are reversely longitudinally-challenged. The beds had been too short for at least three of us. As there were many extra blankets, none of us had been cold, even though it was quite fresh that morning. Before a meagre breakfast the first species were seen. Goldfinch, Spanish Sparrow, Meadow Lark in abundance. Convincing Robert that they really were Spanish Sparrows, as in species name, took a while, but eventually he also saw the brown crowns and the wide black bib and side stripes. But someone needs to be the Devil's Advocate. We phoned the owners of the cortijo and said goodbye to them. The way led us to the south and the list of birds became longer. Shortly before Coripe, many Griffon Vultures soared over us, prompting the photographing

fraternity into a frenzy of machine-gun firing. Good views of Woodchat Shrike, Corn Bunting (an ever present bird on this trip) and others.

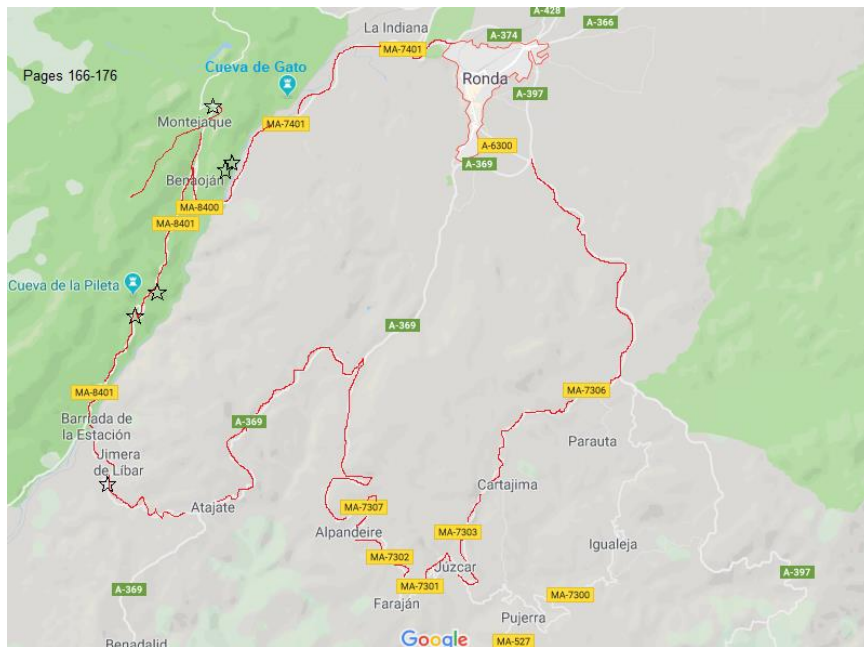


This is probably Zahara de la Sierra, remember that I shot the road sign to help coping with Alzheimer

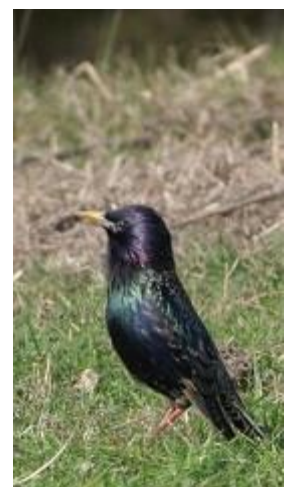
The village of Zahara de la Sierra is very photogenic, sprawled over a hillside. The nearby lake held few birds, something that one notices often on such artificial lakes. The big changes in water level prevent any vegetation to build up and animal life in the soil/bottom is also either drowned or desiccated. Onwards to Grazalema, where it started to drip a little. The place was packed with cars and tourists, so we had to go three quarters around the village to find a parking spot. Walk into town, lunch and back to the car. Shortly after leaving the village we discussed the possibility of Black Wheatear, and literally within seconds we spotted one. We stopped and got out of the car hearing Red-billed Chough. These, and more Black Wheatear, were seen there as well. Crag Martin entering openings in the rock face. After the turnoff onto the A372, we saw two Short-toed Eagles, close by. We had basically stopped for some orchids and broomrape species. The forest there has Cork Oak, with only a little bit of undergrowth. Chaffinch, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker. The last few kilometers before Ronda the valley widened, and in front of the last cliffs more Griffon soared. After checking in, we hoped to go and have a look from the “Puente Nueva”, a centuries old bridge of several tens of meters height. But it poured down, so we delayed.

Friday April 19th.

Weather: fresh but fair Clouds: 1/8 to 8/8 Rain: some early afternoon Temp: up to 16°C Wind: increasing to 3 B from S



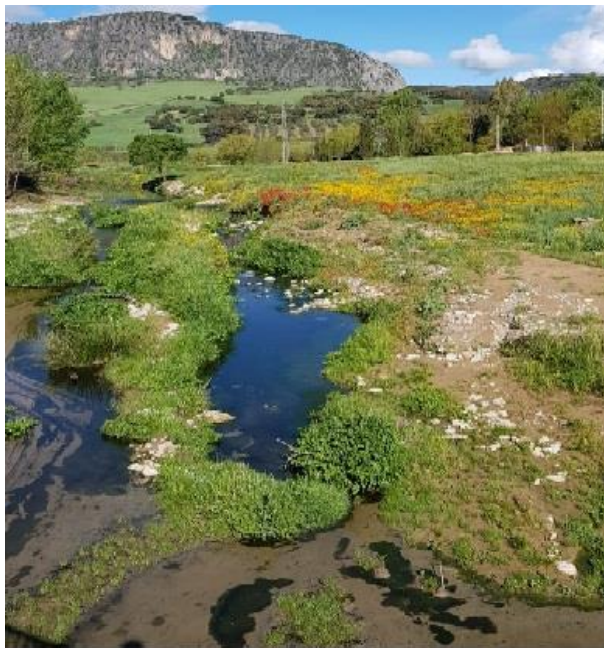
The day started with a sunny, but still cold, visit to the bridge. Red-billed Chough, Rock Sparrow, Blue Rock Thrush (top right), Domestic Pigeon, Greenfinch. Looking down on these birds from the bridge could



give one a bout of vertigo, these birds live like that all the time. We scored some items for breakfast and collected the van from near the train station.



Spotless Starling (bottom right), Blackbird were taken in while walking. A bird on an antenna looked like Bulbul, but flew off before real ID was determined, the one that got away. Then we drove off.



Today's loop was done in an anticlockwise direction.

First real stop was a few kilometers before Cueva de Gato. On a bridge over a small river. Grey Heron sunning itself, a chorus of Nightingales, a fly-by done by a Booted Eagle, Little Spotted Woodpecker and its Greater cousin. Some drivers in Spain still think that they are Kings of the Road, and honk everyone out of the way, the b....ds.

The next stop, at Cueva de Gato, had a good parking next to it, complete with a uniformed official. The Cueva (Cave) can be seen from the parking and as the bridge had been washed away recently, we used the immediate vicinity of that parking as our base of observations for about one hour. Alpine Swifts entered and left the cave continuously, Griffon soared overhead.



Not a Cactus Wren, but a female Stonechat, he is on the right



By that time we considered Stonechat an omnipresent species, not causing any

excitement. Still, of course it is a beautiful bird. We then drove to Montejaque, where we first went to an old dam, but that could not be approached easily. We then turned and entered a separate valley, to the west of our original route. Very stony at first, widening and grassy further on. We ticked some passerines there: Warblers as Common and Lesser Whitethroat, Dartford. Greenfinch, Goldfinches and Serins added. A little drizzle started and because we had reached the far end we decided to turn and go for lunch. That was eaten in Benaiojan. Then we continued, only having done one quarter of the loop. The road to Atajate leads through well vegetated land, after that village it becomes more open, with stony slopes. Apparently, the hunters here are using rifles, so do not enter the areas off the road. Corn Bunting, more Stonechats, an unidentified wader at a drinking pond. Woodchat Shrike. For a while we drove back in the direction of Ronda, only to leave to the right onto MA-7302. The weather started to close in a little, but some views were stunning, we could even spot Gibraltar in the distance. Had it been warmer, we might still be on that road, but now it was a bit windy and chilly.

A foursome of Iberian Boar (Cerdo Iberico) had left their pen and were foraging alongside the road. The life cycle of these porcines normally leads to the production of air-dried ham, an expensive delicacy.



Iberian pigs, going for prayers, next to the signpost, indicating a hunting area. These are not wild animals, they belong to a farmer.

Shortly after we passed through Juzcar, the village of the Smurfen, Schtrumpfs, Smurfs; the little blue cartoon characters. The producers of a movie, that none of us fortunately had seen, had convinced the villagers to paint every house blue. But then, after shooting the movie, their lawyers pointed out the fact that all the depictions in the village were infringements on the trademarked copyright. Legal sharks

always devour everything, blue however is not trademarked. So the whole village is still painted blue. From there we continued searching at about 18.30 hrs, but some stomachs needed to be filled so we went back. We tried to find a place under the "New Bridge", to look up to the birds there, but small roads, one direction only prevented that. Parked the car at the station and went for dinner at the Chinese/Japanese restaurant downstairs. Already open from 19.00 hrs. We entered at 20.30 and, being the only customers, we found food on the floor, children asleep on the sofa, the cook absent and a young waitress looking more at her telephone than at potential clients. We were so dazed and hungry that, against better judgment, we sat down. Two other people came in and left within a minute, still we hung on. The buffet was slowly increasing in items, but we basically should have left.

Saturday April 20th.

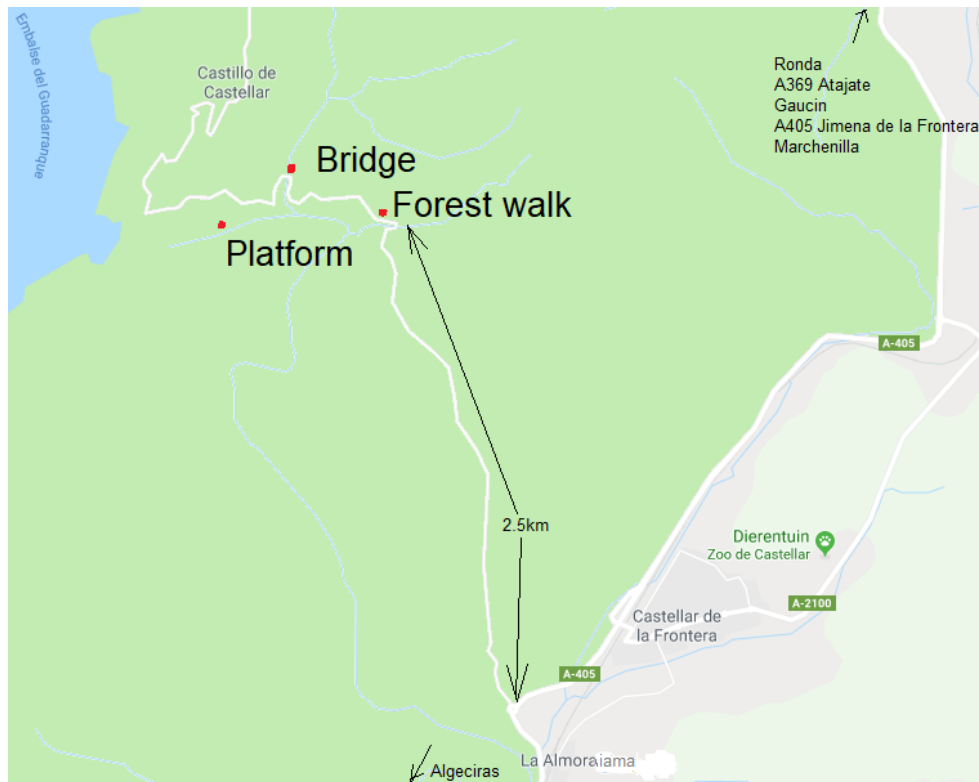
Weather: fresh to moderate, because of wind. Clouds: 4/8 to 1/8
16°C Wind: 3 B from SW

Rain: none Temp: from 12 up to



Leaving Ronda, going south we passed Atejar again but we did not turn off the A369. We had breakfast at Gaucín, and warmed ourselves a bit. Another view of Gibraltar. Many motorbikes on the road, the suicidal hobby of many Spanish riders is to go as fast as possible. So beware of crossing the road. Fortunately they also do something to the exhaust, so one hears them coming from hundreds of meters away, plenty of time left to duck for cover. We saw our first Buzzard, strangely absent so far. The number of Buzzards never was very high this trip, in fact we saw more Short-toed Eagles, more Black Kites, and even more Booted Eagles than COMMON Buzzard. Making a stop near Jimena de la Frontera on a bridge many Crag Martin were seen. Great Spotted Woodpecker in the riverine vegetation (mainly gum tree, Eucalyptus). A nearby field had Greenfinch, Woodchat Shrike and also another Booted Eagle flew past. I was today that we did the longest distance in one day. But we took the turnoff to Castillo de Castellar as well. Did not go all the way towards the touristy castle but stopped near the dam and bridge (see map below). There is a population of Monarch butterfly over there and the photographers went on a

rampage. Not clear how the butterfly made it here, it migrates north-south v.v. in the US and Mexico. It must have been an introduced species to the area. The nearby restaurant was adequate for food, but over the top for noise. Why do the Spanish construct rooms to savour food with walls that reflect every sound, including that of screaming kids, garrulous wives and boasting husbands? "Can I have the steak with ruptured eardrums please?".



After lunch, a bit further south, another stop near a bridge produced a Little Egret, standing on a big trunk in the river, with nice lighting. A Grey Wagtail on the shore and a small number of Tortoises as well. A blue and orange flash meant Kingfisher, not easily spotted when they sit quietly looking for little fry. By that time it was getting a bit warmer and that meant that the driver was the one most awake, densest



traffic near Algeciras, with even a bit of traffic jamming. The road from there to Tarifa is wide and quick, and the turnoffs to several observation points are not safe to use. The

observation points are meant mainly for the migration periods in earlier spring and in autumn.



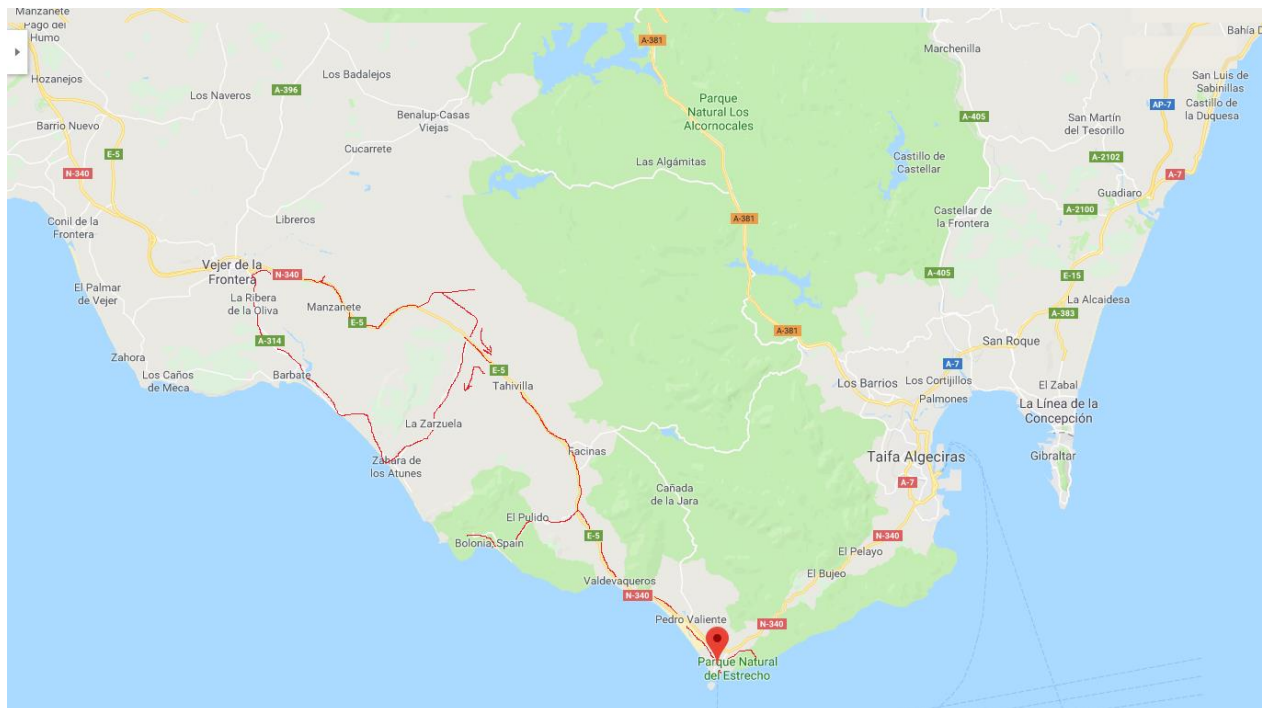
The van at Gibraltar Strait, no migration

We visited two, bypassing the very touristic one of 'Mirador del Estrecho'. There was no clear migration happening, so we enjoyed the sun for some time, but did not add any land based birds to the list apart from a Hobby.

A couple of terns remained unidentified. The number of wind generators is staggering, and they were all producing merrily. We went shopping in Tarifa and then on to the hotel in Valdevaqueros. We then checked into our hotel in Valdevaqueros. An evening walk on the beach got us Kentish Plover. (These birds are without any geographical knowledge, they should be nesting much further north, on the beaches near Folkestone, Sheerness and Sandwich!). Dinner in the hotel.

Sunday April 21st.

Weather: fair, getting better. Clouds: 4/8 Rain: nope Temp: up to 16°C Wind: 3 B from W



A top day, everyone scored a lifer this day. But let's start at the beginning. Driving north from Valdevaqueros we took the turnoff to Zahara de Atunes. This is a wide valley with grassy fields. The weather was a bit chilly, but a stop next to Zahara produced the first new species for this trip: Common Sandpiper, a prelude to many more waders to come. The terrains on both sides of the road from Zahara



Collared Pratincole, notice the number of insects in this picture

to Barbate are occupied by the military as reserves. What these have to do with the many cattle that graze the area is to say at least: enigmatic. Moving targets, additional food supply for the hungry soldiers, NCO's and Officers, lawnmowers to decrease cover for the invading enemy?

Before reaching Barbate, there are the first houses on the right, we turned off here onto the dirt. The salt pans

are being turned into fish/shrimp farms. But, according to a local guide we met, part is kept as water purification ponds. The pink spots were Flamingoes, of course. Waders were plentiful: Curlew- and Common Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Greater Ringed- and Kentish Plover and an astonishing number of Collared Pratincoles. A Stone Curlew tried to remain undiscovered, but failed to the sharp eyes of Stefan. Stilts were plentiful, Spoonbill and Glossy Ibis abundant.

Still, it was not the highlight of the day, by far. We passed Barbate, picked up a Little Owl close to the Barbate marshes to the east of the town. Peter had proved to be eagle-eyed again.



Later that day he found another one at 100 m distance in a quarry.



Anyhow, some Ibisses passed by, having a bit strange silhouette. Taking a wrong turn we neared Vejer de

la Frontera, which was not our destination. We turned and continued again, going just a few kilometers further north. The village of Barca de Vejer is not a place you choose to settle. Loads of traffic on two main roads, a huge parking with several restaurants and a busstop. Still, Bald Ibis, also sporting the slightly Germanic sounding name of Waldrapp, had decided to make the most of its reintroduction here; a small nesting colony being proof of success. Their silhouette in flight was what we had seen earlier. Jackdaws and Rock Pigeon even cohabitated on the cliffs.



After this second highlight we proceeded towards La Janda. A short stop at a quarry got us discussing Kestrels. Spots, blue on upperwing, shape of tail, number of individuals, all characteristics with their own merit. In the end we decided on Common Kestrel, the tinninculus. A Little Owl is much easier, even at 100 meters. At the turnoff to La Janda, at km.47, we entered on a dirt road, next to a channel. Reed Warbler sang here, an Iberian subspecies. A bit further a small raptor caught our attention. Its

triangular wings, held quite at an angle identified it as a Black-shouldered Kite. A second bird flew close by, sometimes soaring up higher, sometimes they landed in trees. Could it get any better?



Yes, next to a road in that area was a breeding colony of Cattle Egret and Glossy Ibis. About 600 meters long and hundreds of nests were sometimes within three meters of the road. Stopping meant making the birds nervous and leaving their nests. It frankly is a pity that the authorities do not close down that road during the breeding season. On the other hand, the pictures were very beautiful.



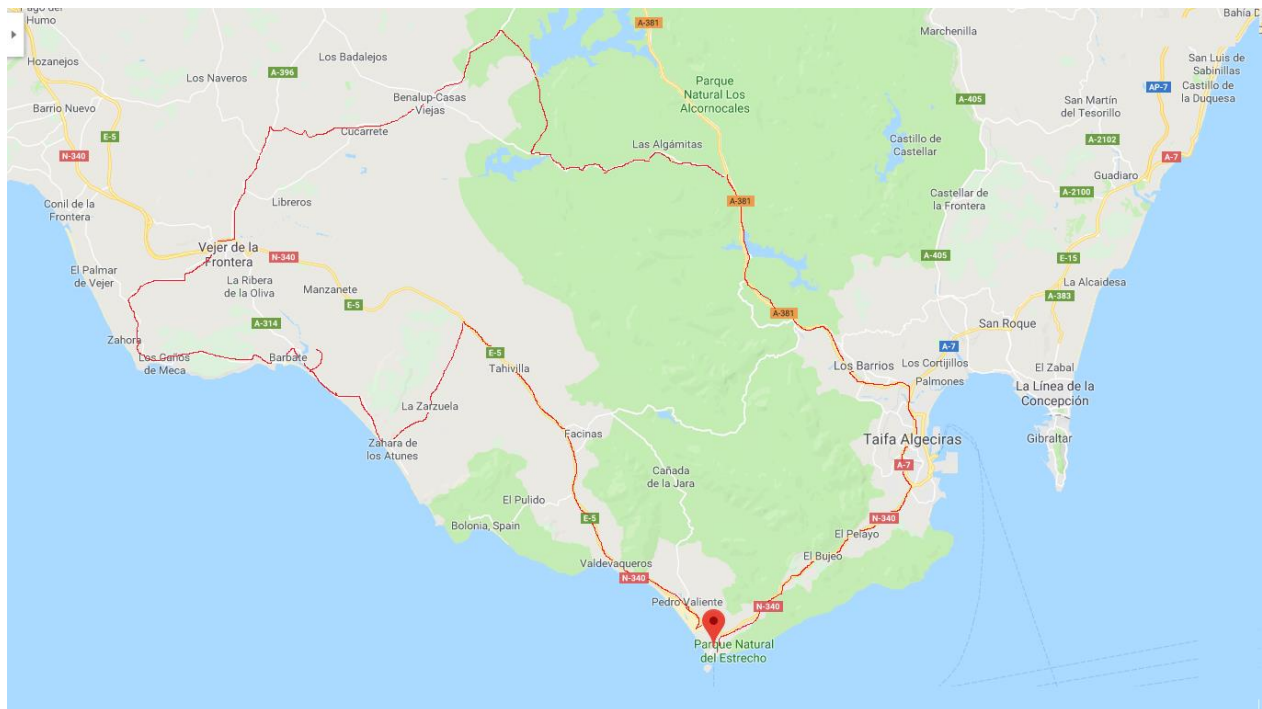
We had to return over the same road and limited one stop to just enough time to do a panoramic shot. Overwhelming. By then it was about 6PM, and we decided to go to Bolonia. A location where Little- and White-rumped Swifts occur. These were not found, (early season, maybe?) but we saw an Osprey with a huge fish. The surfing crowd was omnipresent, probably explaining the scarcity of swifts. Passing the hotel we went to parking lot in the eastern part of Tarifa town. Paid parking, but



with the added bonus of a chance of Common Bulbul, at least three years ago. We came, we looked and we dipped. The deception must have been visible on our faces, the park warden charged us only 25 cents. A foray to another observation point slightly to the east confirmed nothing but Yellow-legged Gull. Just snacks in the hotel, quite late.

Monday April 22nd.

Weather: Fine, warming up to t-shirt temperatures. Clouds: 0/8 to 4/8 Rain: none. Temp: up to 16°C
Wind: 2 B from varying.



We started in the same direction as yesterday, ticked many species that were alike, near Barbate. With the addition of Meadow Pipit, Shelduck and a Subalpine Warbler, which led to some debate about a possible Moltoni's.

An Italian family drove up, while we were next to the salt pans and asked some directions. They were watching birds and their list was much like ours. A little bit closer to Barbate there is a small bar/restaurant where we had breakfast again, just like yesterday. Again, there were people digging for lugworms, ragworms and other fishing bait; hard work, too cold in the mud now, and too hot in a few

weeks' time. But Barbate had the highest unemployment figures of Spain recently, and this was at least more decent work than car theft, for which the guidebook warned us.

At the western end of Barbate is a big fishing harbor, where we had hoped to get onto the pier. That proved impossible, so after spotting ten cats being fed with fish entrails, we decided to go to more fragrant places. The forest, even further west, got us Treecreeper, the Short-toed version. Lunch in Canos de Meca, in view of the lighthouse at Cape Trafalgar. We continued and then made a right-hand turn towards Vejer, to refuel. Having driven about 800 km, having to pay about 90 euro, not bad on fuel consumption. Going northward we found ourselves in an area of lower hill ridges, sloping gently and used for growing wheat. Enough trees and hedges were left to please birds, although nothing new was added until we arrived at a dam with a big lake, Embalse de Barbate. Great Crested Grebe, the first of this trip and the indisputable "kwek,kwek-kwit" of Quail. The bird was not seen, evidently, but cannot be confused. For those that still have questions: We saw nobody there that could have been playing recordings to us, like *"The top-20 songs of Common Quail, an anthology of repetition"*. We continued over the dam and passed a road sign, meant to be blocking further progress. As other cars came from the opposite direction, the decision was taken to try to continue, cautiously. And yes, actually, the road showed an enormous dip, but that could be circumvented. So, we made it to the shallow end of another



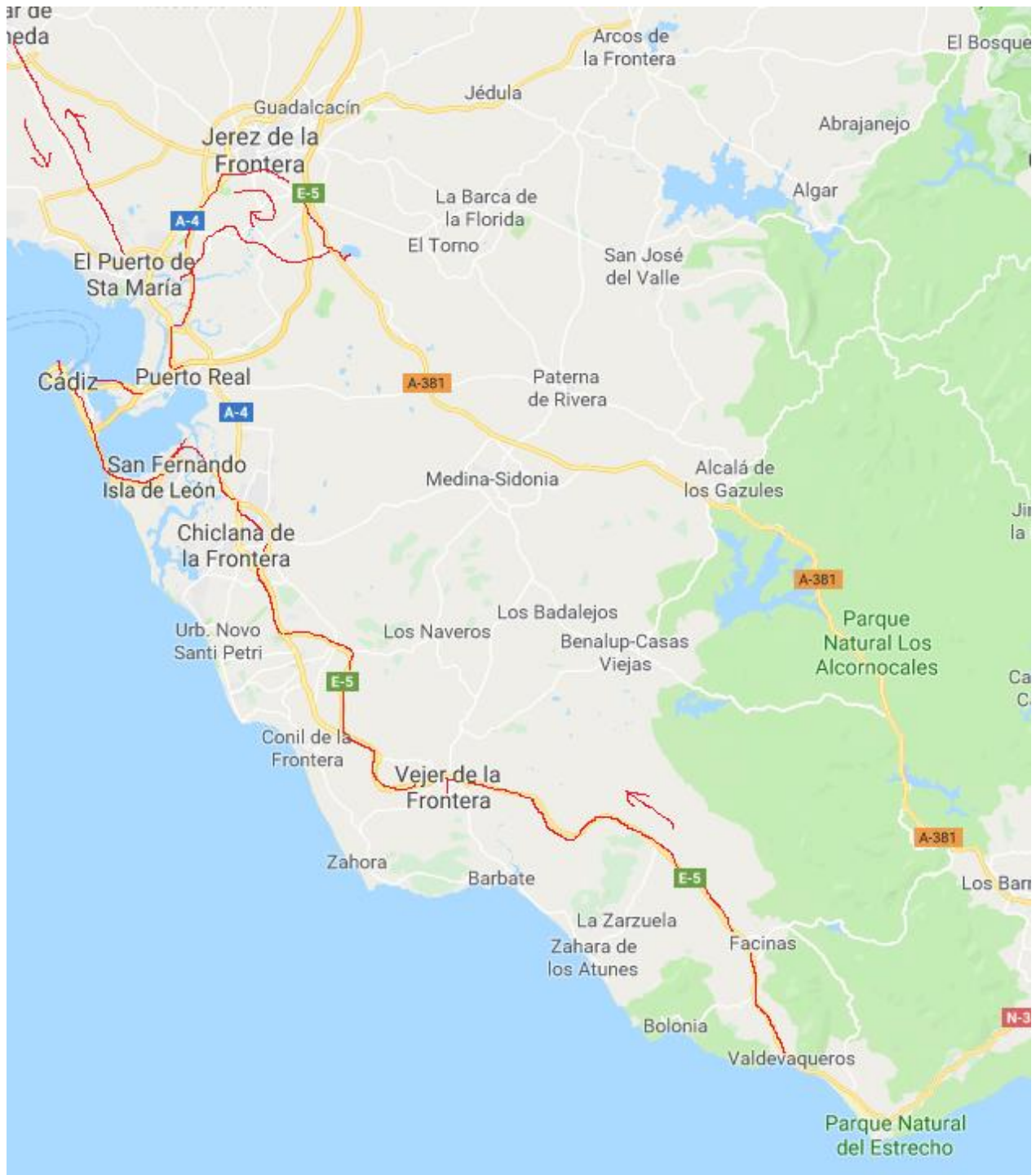
lake, Embalse de Celemin. Glossy Ibis here, as well as Mallard, the ones that did not get shot in trigger happy Spain.

But here, a no entry sign was supported by a red and white barrier, that meant we had to travel back via Algeciras. The decision was taken to try again for Common Bulbul. Stefan had found out on the web that the species had been reported a few times over in the previous week. And Peter had found a 50 cents coin, so there was money for, at least, two quick visits. We got out of the car

in the parking, and Common Bulbul was the loudest singing bird, even louder than some Nightingales and Blackbirds. We parted with 50 cents without a second thought. The beach, Playa de Lances, just northwest of Tarifa was good for spotting birds but only the two-legged, surfing types. Dinner in the hotel.

Tuesday April 23rd.

Weather: overcast, windy but also with sunny spells. Clouds: 6/8 to 8/8 Rain: a bit. Temp: up to 16°C
Wind: up to 5B from W



We took the main road to Vejer, bypassing all turnoffs but the one leading to Barca de Vejer. Needed windscreenwipers most of the time. The Waldrapp were still on the nests, and some researchers were taking notes on number of nests, birds and nestlings. Some nests had even two young. Quick breakfast,

and then into the van again, turning heating and airco on, to get rid of excess humidity. By the time we reached the saltworks just south of Cadiz it was even sunny at times. The rain made driving the muddy dikes a bit tricky, but birds compensated quite well. Slender-billed Gull, about 20, Red-legged Partridge, same number approx. We had a game going by that time: Who first guesses the next species to be added to the trip list? Ellen scored her Avocet. We searched on, seeing Flamingoes quite close by, It took some time to get on the main road again, but then we reached Cadiz quite quickly. The northern point of the peninsula proved to be a bit difficult to reach, because of parking, obstacles on the pedestrian walks and a long promenade to the very tip, so, we decided to continue. Left the peninsula over a huge bridge, and via a stop at a Jerez hypermarket we reached the Laguna de Medina.



In the hide at the SE side of the lake we had a picknick lunch.

Meanwhile we feasted our eyes and cameras on Little Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, White-headed Duck, a single Tufted Duck, Common Pochard, Coots and Western Swamphen (which should still be named Purple Gallinule).

The vegetation around the lake stops you from inspecting it in many places, the viewpoint on the western end is the only other option. A telescope is a necessity and a few more

hides/screens at the end of secondary walkways would add tremendously to the attraction of this lake. We then went to check in at the hotel in El Puerto de Santa Maria.

After having checked in at the hotel, we decided to go for the area north of Sanlucar de Barrameda. The Crossbill guide to Andalusia West read like an ice cream advertisement on a hot day.



The saltpans here (K, on the map below) held waders: Temminck's-, Curlew- and Little Sandpiper, yes; Stilts as well as Dunlin, Yellow Wagtail, Kentish and Greater Ringed Plover. Still not satisfied we went even further to Algaida (It remains a mystery that the US military, so filled with people that can not pronounce a foreign name correctly, has not invaded, razed, clusterbombed or Daisy-cut this place, so reminiscent of Al Quaida). At the northern end of it, where the tarmac ends at a parking and 200 m to the west is an old sand quarry, now fully flooded and 'land'scaped'. (Indicated L) We ticked Squacco Heron, Night Heron, Spoonbill, Bar-headed Goose, Booted Eagle,



among others. Considering the geese to be introduced/kept/escaped, it does not appear in the list. Pallid Swifts, a Hobby and all that against the light and with a strong wind in our eyes. So, we decided to return the next morning, as to get views with the light in our back. We drove even a bit further north and then turned sharp to our right. A long bumpy road that became a tarmac road after some kilometers and that linked to the Sanlucar to Trebujena. Just before we reached that junction (at P) a Montagu's Harrier was spotted. A second bird of that species was seen just before El Puerto de Santa Maria. We had Indian food in a local restaurant. The taste of food and drinks was good, the blaring Indian Bollywood music and videos could have been a bit less loud. We slept like logs.



Map indicates routes on two days, 23rd and 24th. On Tuesday we visited the saltworks (K) just north of Bonanza, and also the pond north of La Algaida (L). Then we returned to Puerto de Santa Maria. On Wednesday we only did the pond (L) and passed N and P again.

Wednesday April 24th.

Weather: What the Scots call 'heavy dew' and the rest of the world call 'atrocious' at times, but also with short sunny spells (Scottish heatwaves?). Clouds: 6/8 to 8/8 Rain: too much. Temp: up to 16°C Wind: up to 5B from W



True to our intentions we left for Algaida (A and L on maps above). again. And, yes, the sun did not shine into our faces, it did not shine at all. The wind however had not changed and was fiercely blowing tears into our eyes. We saw basically the same species here as we did yesterday. It did not keep us for long. Turning back through the village we saw a lot of garbage, neglect and poor working conditions in the horticultural industry there. Along the long tarmac road (B and N), where we had seen Montagu's yesterday, we now found three new tern species above one field: Black-, Whiskered- and Gull-billed-. The latter often forages above pastures and meadows, but the other two are more bound to hunt over water. The amount of insect prey might have been the trigger. It then started dripping a bit. In Trebujena we had breakfast. After devouring *Jamon y queso bocadillos* and drinking coffee and tea we took a wrong path. The rain of the previous days had made it quite slippery, but the path did run to a dead end. Turn and slither back, the mud caking everywhere. A Woodchat Shrike was no consolation. Shortly before Lebrija we took a better road. A Purple Heron meant a score for Robert in the prediction game. The road

we followed ran along the Guadalquivir river, and plastic was everywhere. Rubber tires were dumped next to the road as well, environmental consciousness is lacking here completely. Storks were the dominant part of the avifauna here. The rice paddies had not yet been flooded, and the land looked desolate in such weather. As the clouds thickened and the rain got more, we decided to speed on, and have lunch on the right bank of the river. That meant driving almost to Sevilla and back. We forfeited on the Brazo del Este, which remains a destination for a next trip. The restaurant that we hoped for, next to a bird sanctuary, was closed. Over the fence we looked in to the sanctuary and saw Marbled Teal, Red-knobbed Coot, Stork, Glossy Ibis, etc. The Red-knobbed do have a slightly peaked head, better visible than the color of the knobs. Some of these coots were having collars around the neck and some not, the Marbled Teal were able to fly away, so these were added to the list. Bar-headed Geese were not included. Still hungry however, a few kilometers further we found a restaurant that was open. Another menu where not all the items were available. So, we chose from the small selection left. For two of us it lasted quite a while before their food arrived. The amount of meat on the plate looked as if a cow each had been slaughtered, explaining the wait. Still, it was pouring when we left the eatery. The next stop was at Dehesa de Abajo. We left the car, started walking towards a hide and after 50 meters turned back, too wet. Taking the route towards El Rocio brought better weather, and nearer to our destinations a long straight road got views of Beeeaters, Woodchats and Iberian Jays (better like the old name: Azure-winged Magpie).

Most of these were pretty easily scared, to the detriment of the photographers. We tried several times, but each time only few pixels depicted birds. This road, having 28 speed bumps, leads through more strawberry farms. Plastic waste, poor non-Spanish workers, it looked like a third-world country. Birds were few in number and species. Blackbird. In El Rocio we checked in into the hotel and left again to look at the nearby lagoon. There is an information centre, which was closed at that



late time. Still, next to it we could stand on a bit sheltered spot. A heronry with nesting Glossy Ibis as well some 30 meters to the east. Cattle Egret and Little Egret were using it. We scanned as many Coots as possible on the lake for Red-knobbed but failed. Stilts were found nearer the main road, but the weather was not nice. So we fled into a restaurant and had some dinner.

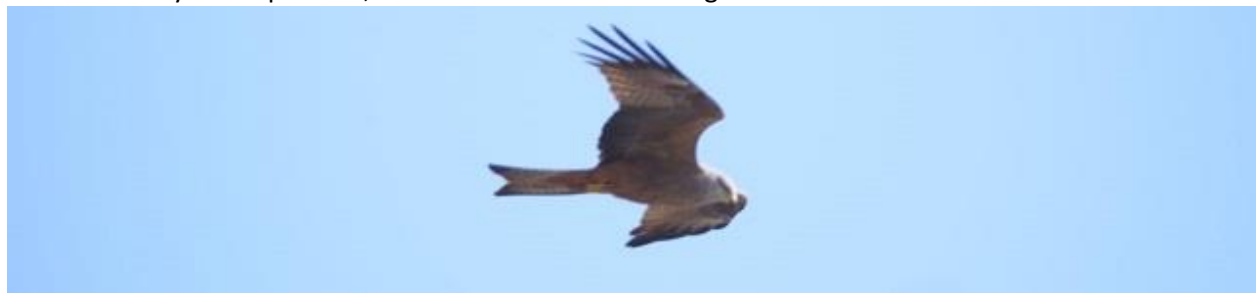
Thursday April 25th.

Weather: Changed for the better. Clouds: 0/8 to 6/8 Rain: none Temp: up to 16°C Wind: 2B from S



We started with breakfast and then went to the information centre (J on map). This time we could enter and climb up. Slightly better views on the heronry, and much better views of a Booted Eagle. Flying past at 10 meters high, this white phase was a beauty. We also went to the hides at the western end of the lagoon. Black-tailed Godwit, Azure-winged Magpie, Greylag Goose came into view, Hoopoe was heard and Stefan picked up Common Waxbill. That was not seen by all. Still by enough persons to make it onto the list. We then left for Palacio de Acebron. The small road to this place led over quite open terrain. An Iberian Grey Shrike was present, but took some time to be photographed, as it was cunningly hiding itself. Nightingale singing in a well vegetated shallow valley. A big parking at the end of the road. The buses had unloaded their passengers. These could be heard near the Palacio, so we took the other path.

On a circular route we were doomed to be deafened by meeting these passengers head-on. For a while it remained quiet. The Nightingales were noisier. Wren, Short-toed Treecreeper, Long-tailed Tit were observed and entered in the day list. A bit further the path crosses the 'river', it is a small, quite muddy, stream fringed by a lot of vegetation. A calling Golden Oriole meant another tick on the list. A Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin showed itself for a short moment. It made it onto the list. Then the hordes became audible again, so we quickly left the path. Passing the Palacio we notice a whole ridge on the façade that was hung with nests of House Martin. One next to the other, for about 30 meters. An artificial cliff, with still too little room for all. The lawn or garden, as one might call it produced Woodchat Shrike, and we heard Green Woodpecker and Great Spotted Woodpecker. We then continued our exploration towards Acebuche, indicated on the map above as G. This is at the end of another narrow road, from which an even smaller road leads to the Iberian Lynx breeding centre (F). This we did not visit. The Centre had to release Lynxes last year, because a forest fire threatened to burn down the whole Centre. Fortunately the Centre was saved, but an unexpected number of these cats, rarer than Snow Leopard, are now roaming the Donana. We did not see any. The Acebuche Visitors Centre is busy, several green 4-wheel-drive buses were loading and unloading passengers and even though there are long walkways and many hides, it felt crowded. The green buses are conducting tours into the closed part of the reserve as well, their number makes one feel ambivalent to how much protection this reserve offers. The Iberian Jays, to remain correct, were plentiful and much tamer. Better pictures. From the hides we spotted many Western Swamphens, Great Reed Warbler, one Golden Oriole, Purple Herons, Little Grebes, Stonechats. A young Great Tit sat in the grass next to a walkway. But as the parent birds were noisily flying around, we left it in situ. Still, the place was a bit too busy, therefor we decided to try the beach at Matalascanas. Because of the hotels we could not easily reach it and we turned around immediately. Lunch in El Rocio. And then we decided to go back towards Dehesa de Abajo, as the weather was much better now. That proved a good decision. We found Lesser Kestrel, Black-winged Kite, Buzzard and both Kites. Red Kite showed clearly in the pictures, we had overlooked it among its black brethren.



On the dam that withholds the lake in the reserve there, we spent quite some time. A Zitting Cisticola posed as a moviestar, the picture below is a still.



Found Red-knobbed Coot, in total freedom of movement, so this could now be entered without any discussion on its 'wild' status. Peter came back, from a short sanitary intermezzo, with several pictures of a yellow bird on his camera. Not a Black-headed Bunting as was the first impression, but a Black-headed Weaver. It must have been an introduced species as this normally is not a long-distance migratory bird from sub-Saharan Africa. We searched in vain but, on the evidence posed by the pictures, we entered it on the list.

Especially after Peter had sworn that the pictures were not a sneaky download from the internet. Savi's Warbler and Melodious Warbler could be put on the list. All the time of course Flamingoes, Spoonbills, Egrets, Pratincoles, even Raven were in view or could be heard. The way back still included those 28 bumps.



A 'wee' little bird

Friday April 26th.

Weather: Fair, and sunny Clouds: 0/8 to 4/8 Rain: none Temp: up to 21°C Wind: 2 B from SW



We checked for the Common Waxbill again and found them, less skittish than yesterday. The same Italian family that we had seen near Barbate arrived and were excited about the waxbills as well.



More Godwits, a Hoopoe again, and then past the strawberries (P) and along the long straight road (Q), spotting more Iberian Jays. At the roundabout we turned right, just like yesterday evening. A bit further on, another turn to the right, signposted to the Valverde Info Centre. A long murram road, with a canal at one side. Over the canal was a water storage basin, with many birds above them. He we saw a Bittern, a very rare observation. The swamp Terns were there, but we did not find a White-winged Tern. By that time Western Swampheens numbered in the hundreds. Squacco Heron, Purple Heron and Stilts were plentiful. Found an electricity station where about a dozen Lesser Kestrels flew off. Admitted, the bluish spot on the

wings is not that easily visible, it is more the different Jizz, and the group size that help in ID-ing them. The stretch near (R), Caño de Guadamar, took a lot of time and attention. It got us talking to several Swedish birdwatchers, we exchanged info and they sped on to the Valverde Centre (S). They missed a Red Fox at that site. We arrived there a bit later for views, coffee and tea. And while we sat down a

Marbled Teal landed in front of the windows. We alerted some other people to its presence, it did not stay long but swam out of view quickly. The remaining nesting Glossy Ibis did not keep our attention for very long. We ticked Shoveler and saw Penduline tit. Its nest was clearly a delicate structure, hanging in the Tamarisks.



Following the murrum road towards the NW, we passed a bridge, over the southern end of the Caño de Guadamar. Savi's Warbler in full view, as well as Great Reed Warbler singing (picture left).

A Water Rail flew past and kept on calling for a while. More Black terns and Whiskered Terns, and a plethora of herons. Further west, we found two Wheatear species, Northern- and Black-eared. These had been strangely absent from the list so far. A few Short-toed Eagles kept our attention, as they seemed to be very big, when spotted at first. The chance of a Spanish Imperial Eagle was present but in reality, we never saw that. We drove back to the main road and towards Dehesa de Abajo. No Black-shouldered Kite today. At the dam we searched again, using info from observado.es. We identified two islands that were mentioned in recent observations of Black-headed Weaver. That helped a lot and all of us saw the Weaver, males and females. At the Visitors Centre we had a late lunch, at 16.00 hrs. It was on the first day of the Doñana Bird Fair, and a number of stands were erected and even though it was not weekend yet, there were visitors.



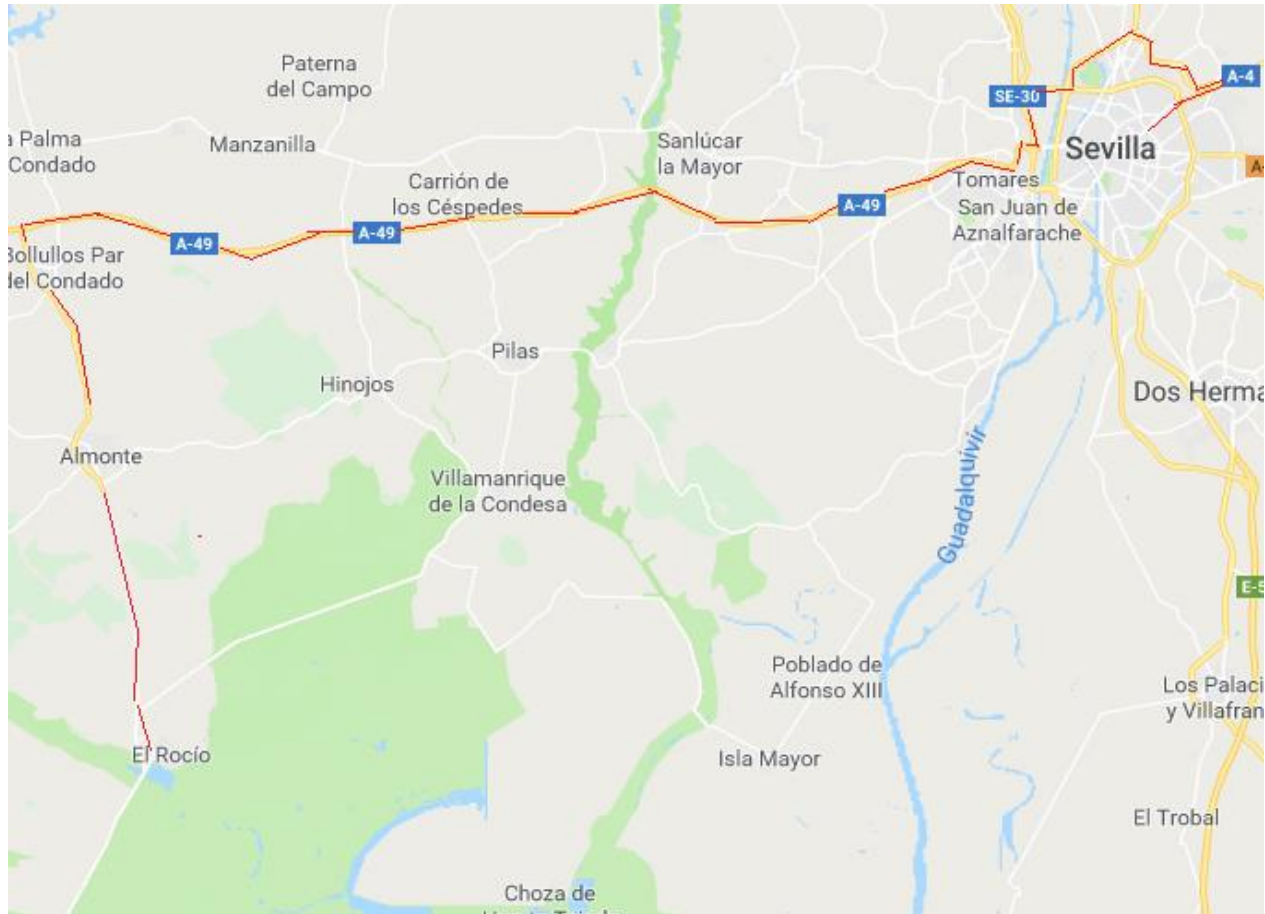
We walked down to the hide, reaching it in glorious sunshine (as opposed to what happened two days earlier). Nothing really extra was seen for the lists. On the way back there were many Beeeaters to pose for the cameras, so two of us walked back to the car and we collected the others from the road. Back to El Rocio and to final

administration, packing and a meal. It was to become a short night.

Saturday April 27th.

Weather: Nice, staying sunny until we separated. Clouds: 1/8 Rain: none Temp: up to 16°C

Wind: max 1B from varying



Leaving early, we drove towards Almonte and Bollullos, far below the maximum allowed speed. The traffic from the other side was very dense, and one car in front of us seemed to be a bit impressed by all the bright head lights. After Almonte the road becomes a motorway and at 120 plus per hour we reached the airport in time. Robert took the car back to the Railway Station in Sevilla and got on the fast train to Zaragoza. Everyone arrived at their destination in proper order.

It had been a good trip. There will definitely be a Catara 2020, next year. Where? That is still to be decided. Any ideas about that are greatly appreciated.

Participants this time, all have contributed photos for this report:

Peter Zweedijk, Ellen Somhorst, Ab Winkelman, Stefan van de Swaluw, all members of Vogelwerkgroep IJsselstreek, near Deventer, the Netherlands and Robert de Groot owner of Rafiki-Birdwatching.eu, based in Arens de Lledo, Spain

Books used:

- Crossbill Guide to Western Andalucia Huelva to Malaga, 2017, ISBN 978-94-91648-09-0 Covers a smaller area than the next book and more details on non-bird subjects.
- Ernest Garcia and Andrew Patterson, 2008, Where to watch birds in Southern & Western Spain, ISBN 978-0-7136-8315-8, More dedicated to birds, but over a bigger area.
- John R. Butler, 2001, Birdwatching on Spain's southern coast ISBN 84-89954-20-8 Covers mainly the same area as the Crossbill. Maps more schematic. Sometimes needs referral to Google Maps to orient oneself.

Trip reports used:

<http://www.fssbirding.org.uk/costadelaluz2017trip.htm>

<https://birdingcadizprovince.weebly.com/cadiz-birding-blog-page/bald-ibis-re-introduction>

www.observado.es

<http://www.rarebirdspain.net/arbsr000.htm>

Notice: It seems that a lot of the roads have been given new numbers, so check in advance.



Solutions for bad marriages? House Martins in separate nests.