

ANN AND ROLAND GO BIRDING IN PORTUGAL

APRIL 21ST – MAY 1ST, 2023

TRAVEL

We flew with easyJet from Manchester to Faro and vice versa. No problems at all. It was ages since we had last flown with them and we were impressed with the improved professionalism of the staff and their check-in etc at Manchester.

ACCOMMODATION

We booked an Airbnb just outside Boliqueime and were very pleased with it.

CAR HIRE

We rented a VW through Expedia with Alamo. The confirmation said to go to the Enterprise desk and the final handling was through Guerin! It was easy to find them and only a short walk from the terminal building.

RESOURCES

We read up on various birding sites beforehand and had previously visited Portugal in 2007. We ended up using Dave Gosney's book though and watched his DVD before leaving to refresh our memory. All page and site references are from his booklet. Roland decided the itinerary and planned accordingly.

DIARY

Friday, April 21st.

Travel and overnight at an Ibis hotel close to the airport as we arrived late at night. It was chucking it down!

Saturday, April 22nd

As this was to be a relaxing birding trip we didn't get up and set off before dawn. We reckoned that 7am every day would do!

Blue skies and sunshine as we set off to visit the salt pans and areas around Faro and Vilamoura. We have never seen so many roundabouts in all our lives – puts Milton Keynes to shame! Micro-managed speed limits were a pain too. Definitely an increase in building since our last trip and wall-to-wall golf courses..... Not our cup of tea 😞

Some of the birding spots seemed to have been obliterated or spoilt with all the development and the bird life seemed to be somewhat sparse around the salt pans but we had a lovely walk around the hides near the Water treatment ponds (pgs 22, 23, 3,4,5) where we visited both hides. Plenty of walking, lots of poppies and very happy with the *Masked weavers*. Serenaded by *Nightingales*!

Time to head off to our little house outside of Boliqueime itself – Lovely spot. So quiet.

The only supermarkets in town were Lidl and Lidl so we had to shop there for picnic makings.

Tea at Piri Piri which was expensive and not very good. The Bird's Nest was definitely off the cards – we haven't come to Portugal to eat English food all served with Yorkshire pudding 😞

Barn Swallow

Black-headed Weaver (Introduced)

Cetti's Warbler

Common Blackbird

Common Greenshank

Common House Martin

Common Kestrel

Common Moorhen

Common Nightingale
Common Reed Warbler
Common Sandpiper
Common Wood Pigeon
Corn Bunting
Crested Lark
Eurasian Blue Tit
Eurasian Collared Dove
Eurasian Coot
Eurasian Hoopoe
Eurasian Magpie
Eurasian Spoonbill
European Bee-eater
European Goldfinch
Glossy Ibis
Great Crested Grebe
Grey Heron
Grey Plover
House Sparrow
Iberian Magpie
Little Egret
Little Grebe
Purple Heron
Red-rumped Swallow
Ruddy Turnstone
Sandwich Tern
Sardinian Warbler
Western Marsh Harrier
Western Swamphen
White Stork
Zitting Cisticola

Sunday, April 23rd

Castro Verde pgs.32-35

Bustard day!

Started off in great spirits as we headed towards the LPN (Ligue por Proteccion de Nature) Bustard Reserve. Happy to see that we were on deserted roads and everywhere looked pretty much as it did the last time we were here with beautiful countryside and unspoilt villages Impressed with our hassle-free toll gadget.

I found it frustrating not stopping for any birds but we did want to get to our spot quickly so we could plan out our day. There were lots of *Lesser falcons*, *larks* and other small birds as we approached the centre, which was closed 😞 No option then but to follow Dave's spots without their guidance.

Our first stop was at the *White stork* colony on the Aljustrel Road. Always enjoyable watching storks, especially when they have young and there were plenty of *Spanish sparrows* too! At the nearby bridge, there were *Sand martins*, *Red-rumped swallows*, *Booted eagle*.....

From here we headed off to Entradas – I wish we could have stopped here for a look round but there were no bustards 😊 As we left the village, I spotted a reservoir and car park so we went there for our picnic lunch. Lovely spot on a birding trail. Car park, picnic tables and some new brick built thingies to accommodate a barbeque. Blue skies, sunshine, sparkling water, birdies ... What more could you want? Well, a few more birds would have been nice but we had to be satisfied with

Eurasian coot, Black-winged stilt, Gadwall, European bee-eater, Hoopoe, European goldfinch, Corn bunting and Great crested grebe.

We went to all Dave's bustard spots but drew a blank at all of them. As we were about to head back, Roland suddenly realised he hadn't looked on Ebird – nothing at those spots either.

At Mertola, he used the satnav to find the bridge where we would hopefully see nesting *Lesser kestrels* – it took us straight there but we didn't get to see the interesting old bits of the town up by the castle etc. 😞 No kestrels at the bridge, just *feral pigeons* 😞 There were *Crag martins* though 😊

Something of a wild goose chase sort of day but we enjoyed going to lots of different spots.

Barn Swallow

Black Kite

Black-winged Stilt

Booted Eagle

Carrion Crow

Common Blackbird

Common House Martin

Common Kestrel

Corn Bunting

Crested Lark

Eurasian Blue Tit

Eurasian Collared Dove

Eurasian Coot

Eurasian Crag Martin

Eurasian Hoopoe

Eurasian Magpie

European Bee-eater

European Goldfinch

European Stonechat

Gadwall

Great Crested Grebe

House Sparrow

Iberian Grey Shrike - VU

Iberian Magpie

Little Grebe

Northern Raven

Red-rumped Swallow

Sand Martin

Spanish Sparrow

Spotless Starling

Tawny Pipit

Thekla's Lark

Western Cattle Egret

White Stork

White Wagtail

Monday, April 24th

Castro Marim (p.31) and some of the lower Algarve Hills (pgs. 38-40) area were our destination today.

Good to see that these roads were also just as quiet as in 2007 once you were away from the coastal strip. There was only one other car on the car park when we arrived at around 9. The interpretation centre was open but the lady there didn't speak English. She did her best to be helpful though. The

salt pans were virtually deserted. Just a few odds and sods and a walk up the hill was similarly disappointing. We tried the river next and added to our short list. Nothing at so we headed off for the Algarve Hills.

The salt pans to the west of Castro Marim were a waste of time. Same for the creek between Castro Marim and Vila Real (30.2&3)

A change of scene was called for so our next stop was up past Odeleite where we drove down a track into a nice little valley (38.6) where we had our picnic lunch and a walk but it was very quiet though we did startle a *Red-legged partridge* scratting about amongst the fruit trees. Grape vines, figs and orange trees were the main crops here. We had fun trying out the Merlin Sound ID app here.

From here we drove up the road following the Ria Guadiana (38.7) checking under the bridges where we could. We also waled round the Roman villa ruins at Laranjeiras. 31 degrees in the shade. No wonder there were so few birds! Bit of a recurrent theme and we were beginning to get disheartened....

Nothing to speak of round Alcoutim (40.7).

I wanted to go a short way up the road to Mertola next looking for *Black wheatear* but that didn't happen and we went to Pereira Reservoir 940.8)as it wasn't that far. Not much water and not many birds but a *Little ringed plover* joined the list. There's an RV park there though why anyone would want to stay there is beyond me!

Back down to Castro Marim but the wind had got up by then so we decided it wasn't worth staying and this time ours was the only car there! Roland had picked up a leaflet about some woods at Monte Gordo in the morning so we headed off there but couldn't find anywhere to park. We did, however, find a car park which led to the beach. No gulls. Petrol nearby was cheap so we filled up and headed back "home" stopping off at Le Retiro for our evening meal. Expensive but excellent meat.

The Portuguese oranges we bought were absolutely delicious – probably the best ever! 😊

Barn Swallow

Black-winged Stilt

Booted Eagle

Common Blackbird

Common House Martin

Common Redshank

Common Shelduck

Corn Bunting

Dunlin

Eurasian Blue Tit

Eurasian Collared Dove

Eurasian Crag Martin

Eurasian Hoopoe

Eurasian Magpie

Eurasian Spoonbill

European Stonechat

Gadwall

Great Cormorant

Great Egret

Great Tit

Greater Flamingo

House Sparrow

Iberian Magpie

Kentish Plover

Little Ringed Plover

Little Stint

Little Tern
Long-tailed Tit
Pallid Swift
Pied Avocet
Red-legged Partridge
Red-rumped Swallow
Short-toed Treecreeper
Spanish Sparrow
Spectacled Warbler
Spotless Starling
Thekla's Lark
Western Cattle Egret
Western Yellow Wagtail
White Stork
Yellow-legged Gull
Zitting Cisticola

Tuesday, April 25th. (Bank Holiday)

Off to Monchique and Mount Foia (pgs 38-39) the highest point in the Algarve today – a new destination for us and apparently usually cold and damp. Not today though with temperatures rising steadily, blue skies and wall-to-wall sunshine..

It was a lovely drive on a deserted motorway then good roads which were quiet early on. Some fantastic views and when we arrived at the top, there were breath taking views down to the coast and across the valleys.

We hadn't intended to stay long but wanted to have a good look round, take photos, have a coffee, visit the shops (briefly), find some birds And we suddenly realised it was about 12. Despite our very best efforts, the only birds we saw were a *Blue rock thrush* singing its little heart out for at least an hour way up a control tower, *Corn bunting*, *Goldfinch*, *Red-rumped swallow*, *Wren*, *Stonechat*, *Blackbird* and a *Northern wheatear* seen by Roland. It was very busy by the time we left and the roads were busier too due to the Bank Holiday traffic.

Next stop – a woody area just outside Monchique (38.2) where we soon picked up *Green woodpecker*, 4 *Great tits*, Iberian chaff and some *Barn swallows*. We heard, but did not see, *European Robin*. Not at all confiding like ours – we didn't see a single one during our trip!
38.5degrees by now 😊

Barranco de Velho next (p38.4) – allegedly easy to see *Bonelli's eagle* here. Not today! We had a bit of a walk round – very pleasant walking along reading the interpretation boards. No birds though! From here we followed the road to the “fantastic” viewpoint at Cabeza de Velho which was a little underwhelming. Driving back and stopping here and there did not produce the hoped for birds though we enjoyed excellent views of a confiding *Rock bunting* in some bushes 😊 What a beauty!. Too late to go on the walk to Menta (38.5) and at this point Roland suddenly remembered to look at Ebird and we set off in haste to Parizes where three *Woodlarks* had been since yesterday. Lovely little hamlet with an old public washing place which had been and was still in use by the looks of it. No woodlarks but we had a flighty *Golden oriole*.

Our last stop was at Benemola, an attractive, lush valley. It was too late to do the full walk but we decided we would definitely return.

Back home via El Retiro where we ordered Cataplana which was very tasty but didn't have as much seafood as we had expected.

Black Kite
Blue Rock Thrush
Common Blackbird
Common House Martin

Common Kestrel
Common Linnet
Corn Bunting
Eurasian Blackcap
Eurasian Collared Dove
Eurasian Golden Oriole
Eurasian Wren
European Goldfinch
European Serin
European Stonechat
House Sparrow
Iberian Chiffchaff
Iberian Green Woodpecker
Iberian Magpie
Northern Wheatear
Red-rumped Swallow
Rock Bunting
Spanish Sparrow
White Stork

Wednesday, April 26th

Hot and sunny again but didn't get past 30 today.

Off to the Alvor Estuary and Lago de Salgado (Pera marsh) today (pgs 18-21)

18.1 The ringing station run by A.Rocha. Closed. Only open on Thursdays from 10-12.30. Had a quick shuffty round the gardens which were unsurprisingly very quiet! We couldn't find the trail or anyone to ask so walked down the road outside where there was a noisy but elusive *Red-legged partridge*. We did eventually spot him but at a distance! Otherwise just the usual suspects – Zitting cisticola,, *Collared dove*, *Corn bunting*, *Blue tit*, *Sardinian warbler*

18.2 Didn't go

18.3 We parked up near the estuary and walked out along one of the digues. Quiet but pleasant. We could see *Greater Flamingoes* from here so went off (by car) for a better view. There was only a handful of them but I do so enjoy watching them, especially when they fly 😊

18.4 Didn't go

18.5 Didn't go

18.6 We drove through Alvor and parked near the harbour before following the boardwalk furthest inland across the dunes. All very pleasant but yes, you've guessed it, very quiet! Not even a lot of gulls and certainly no variety! The Hermit crabs were definitely the main attraction!

Quick picnic lunch and off to Salgado which was also a disappointment, bird wise.

At the marsh, we parked near the "photo blind" which was a wooden screen with viewing slots cut into it. You could only see a small section of the Lagoa de Salgado from there but could see other bits if you walked about. Up to the car park nearest the beach next where we climbed the steps to the observation deck (20.2) and followed the boardwalk through the dunes. It was very hot and the breeze from the sea was very welcome. *Crested lark* was having a good time in the dunes as we retraced our steps. Nothing in the bushes (20.3) but maybe we would have more luck round Carlos's Beach Bar, a popular spot but mainly for the beach by the looks of it. We sauntered along the boardwalk towards the open water and marsh - the ghastly new developments on the other side did not fill our hearts with joy but we were delighted to add *Red-crested pochard*, *Common ringed plover* and *Sanderling* to our list.

Where to next? Ludo Farm, having persuaded Roland to ignore the No entry signs. Very little on the salt pans and only *Greenfinch* seen whilst walking to the Quinta do Lago though I spotted a *Chaffinch* just outside the two level hide. We couldn't stay as long as I might have liked but we did see *Grey-*

headed swamphen, pochard, Little grebe, Moorhen and a turtle on the fairway on the other side of the lake! Walking back to the car we had *Cetti's warbler* and *Hoopoe* and paused at the ruins for another bit of culture! We had a quick look at the "reed fringed lake" 25.3 before leaving but there was only the ubiquitous *Sardinian warbler, Shelduck* and *Black-crowned night heron* to be seen.

Quite a lot of species seen today but all in single or very low numbers.

Being on holiday and visiting the seaside I relaxed into a pair of sandals rather than boots today plus cropped trousers. With disastrous results – I won't forget to put sun tan lotion on my feet in a hurry.

Super ouch 😞

Barn Swallow

Black-crowned Night Heron

Black-headed Gull

Black-headed Weaver (Introduced)

Black-winged Stilt

Cetti's Warbler

Common Blackbird

Common Chaffinch

Common House Martin

Common Linnet

Common Moorhen

Common Pochard - VU

Common Ringed Plover

Common Shelduck

Common Swift

Common Wood Pigeon

Corn Bunting

Crested Lark

Dunlin

Eurasian Blue Tit

Eurasian Collared Dove

Eurasian Coot

Eurasian Hoopoe

Eurasian Magpie

Eurasian Spoonbill

European Goldfinch

European Greenfinch

European Serin

European Stonechat

Gadwall

Great Cormorant

Greater Flamingo

Grey Heron

House Sparrow

Iberian Magpie

Little Egret

Little Grebe

Mallard

Pied Avocet

Red-crested Pochard

Red-rumped Swallow

Sanderling

Sardinian Warbler

Spanish Sparrow
Spotless Starling
Thekla's Lark
Western Cattle Egret
Western Swamphen
White Stork

Thursday, April 27th.

There was a bit of cloud this morning keeping the temperature down but it soon blew over. My very sore feet were safely encased in socks and boots today as we set off for the Fonte de Benemola (38.4) We were greeted by *Lesser spotted woodpecker* again 😊 It was a lovely walk through the valley with lots of informative notice boards along the way. We hadn't looked at the route on the car park board before setting off because Roland had it on his phone Unfortunately it was wrong and when we had crossed over the stream, the path petered out so we retraced our steps to the car. We should have crossed over sooner, following the path back to the road on the other side. Not to worry, it was a lovely walk though rather warm (31.5 in the shade) by now. We collected our picnic and went to sit on a low wall near the car park hoping to see more woodpeckers but a Spanish group with an incredibly loud-voiced woman came to picnic near us with one of the men sitting smoking not far away from Roland 😊 We left as soon as we had finished and went off to Menta. The track was very exposed and it was really hot and we eventually decided to leave as there was so little about., apart from the *Nightingales*!

We decided to go back to Vilamoura and try the Parc Ambiental area (p.22, sites 1&2). Roland saw a *Common Kingfisher* fishing in the water tank and there were *Spotless starlings* on the wires. We walked for about 1km before retracing our steps and driving to the hide (22.4). Empty apart from the rubbish and cool. Very pleasant – stunning views of *Masked weaver* perched right in front of us but less about than on our previous visit. Two *Ferruginous ducks* flew in before we left and we had seen a *Marsh harrier* quartering when we arrived.

Before leaving the area, we went to check the water treatment ponds but could hardly see anything because of vegetation, buildings etc. There seemed to be a variety of gulls but the heat haze made identification impossible. Certainly not Dave's hundreds of gulls but definitely quite a few.

A short walk around did not produce anything "new" but we did see a *European jay*. Plenty of *Masked weavers* too.

We made it to Albufeira for tea tonight – a pity we didn't try Adega TiCosta earlier because we had the best and cheapest Portuguese food so far.

Barn Swallow
Black-headed Weaver (Introduced)
Cetti's Warbler
Common Blackbird
Common House Martin
Common Kingfisher
Common Pochard - VU
Common Wood Pigeon
Corn Bunting
Eurasian Blackcap
Eurasian Blue Tit
Eurasian Collared Dove
Eurasian Coot
Eurasian Hoopoe
Eurasian Jay
European Goldfinch
Ferruginous Duck

Gadwall
Glossy Ibis
Great Crested Grebe
Grey Heron
Grey Wagtail
House Sparrow
Iberian Chiffchaff
Iberian Magpie
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Little Grebe
Mallard
Red-rumped Swallow
Rock Bunting
Spanish Sparrow
Spotless Starling
Western Cattle Egret
Western Marsh Harrier
White Stork
Zitting Cisticola

Friday, April 28th

Bustard day today. Off to the LPN reserve because it would be open today. *Black-shouldered kite* and *Booted eagle* were spotted en-route. We could only assume that the lack of raptors was down to the scarcity of food as the weather conditions were perfect for them.

There were less birds around today as we drove along the track to the centre – no *Lesser kestrels* and they didn't appear to be breeding at the water tower any more. They seem to have been ousted by *Jackdaws* or *House crows*.

Siskins were heard at the centre and *Black-eared wheatear* was spotted.

The lady at the centre said the bustards had stopped displaying and that the strange weather this year had messed everything up – very little rain and March was more like April and that April's high temperatures were more like May throwing Nature into confusion. We had already guessed that this was the reason why there were so few birds about plus we weren't going out at dawn of course! She told us where to look for bustards but thought we would only have a chance of seeing females near their nests and that the males were scattered all over. The areas she suggested we could go to were the ones we already knew about. Plan B then. Mmmm we didn't have one.

I suggested going back to the nearby reservoir at Entradas for lunch. It's a pleasant spot and there was a greater variety of birds today: *White wagtail*, *Black kite*, *Eurasian magpie*, *Lesser kestrel*, *House martin*, *Great crested grebe*, *Little grebe*, *Gadwall*, *Stonechat*, *Barn swallow*, *Little egret*, *Egyptian goose*, *Spoonbill*, *Black-winged stilt*, *Grey heron*, *Mallard*, *Common coot*, *Corn bunting* and a *Greater flamingo* flew over. There were also some big turtles on the rocks!

We met a gentleman birder from Hull here and it was good to have a chat and share sightings and birding spots etc .

Fully refreshed we head off to find some *European rollers* at Aparisa but when we got to the spot, there were signs saying we couldn't drive down that stretch of road ☹️ There was, however, a Birding Trail display board (we had already several here and there) and decided to follow the suggested trail which took us to some really interesting spots 😊 I think my favourite one was by the Rio Oeid where there were nesting *Iberian magpies*, a *Golden oriole*, *Red-legged partridge* and *Swallows* nesting under the bridge. There might have been a *Corn bunting* too 😊

The Iberian Lynx Interpretation and Observation Center, in São João dos Caldeireiros was the last point but it was closed by the time we got there and surprisingly we couldn't see any lynx.

Back to Albufeira now only stopping for the many kami-kaze *Red-legged partridge*! A trip to Intermarche after another delicious meal yielded the best and biggest prawns ever!

Barn Swallow

Black Kite

Black-winged Kite

Booted Eagle

Calandra Lark

Carrion Crow

Common Blackbird

Common Buzzard

Common House Martin

Common Kestrel

Common Wood Pigeon

Corn Bunting

Egyptian Goose (Introduced)

Eurasian Collared Dove

Eurasian Coot

Eurasian Hoopoe

Eurasian Magpie

Eurasian Spoonbill

European Bee-eater

European Goldfinch

European Stonechat

Gadwall

Great Crested Grebe

Greater Flamingo

Grey Heron

House Sparrow

Iberian Grey Shrike - VU

Iberian Magpie

Lesser Kestrel

Little Egret

Little Grebe

Little Ringed Plover

Mallard

Northern Raven

Red-legged Partridge

Red-rumped Swallow

Sand Martin

Spanish Sparrow

Spotless Starling

Thekla's Lark

Western Black-eared Wheatear

Western Jackdaw

White Stork

White Wagtail

Woodchat Shrike

Zitting Cisticola

Saturday, April 29th

The Centre d'Education Environnementale de Marim and a boat trip were today's planned activities. It was a respectable 19.5 degrees as we set off.

Getting through Faro was a bit of a nightmare – we wanted to check out the Marina for later on.

I can't remember how much it cost to go into the Centren but it wasn't a lot and it was open until 20h00 or 22h00 at the weekend and on Public Holidays. Sensible hours! Just as we had parked and were setting off, Roland realised he had left his camera bag back at Bouliqueme. I had my camera but no spare memory card and only one spare battery. We decided that the best plan would be to have our walk round then nip back "home" before going on our boat trip. As luck would have it, Roland didn't see anything he would have wanted to photograph as we walked round. It was a lovely walk, with lots of different habitats and we thoroughly enjoyed it. There is a picnic area there but no toilets anywhere! We saw quite a variety of birds including a flock of *Common plover* opposite the hide.

When we parked up at the Marina, Roland went to pay for parking, put the ticket on the dashboard and it promptly slipped down the gap by the windscreen. Take two ... the same thing happened again. Take three ... he succeeded in keeping it in place with the help of a coin.

We were 7 on our boat – us, another English couple and 3 French people. Paulo, our boatman spoke excellent French and English but was more inclined to speak at great length in French! Pas de probleme pour moi! 😊 On Dave's recommendation, we had booked our sailing for low-tide. Not good advice though as we couldn't get close to the birds or get out of the boat or even complete the trip without getting stuck on a sandbank. It was also really windy. There weren't vast numbers of birds around but as he hardly shut up, he missed a lot of them and couldn't ID gulls! As a birding trip it was pretty rubbish but it's always nice to have a bit of a sail plus the oyster beds were interesting because they are brought there from Arcachon as they grow better here and then sold as French oysters! Did Roland take any photos after our emergency dash? None to mention...

We were late back to the Marina and our parking had run out but we seem to have got away with that.

We were also late for our restaurant booking but they still had a table for us. We were disappointed to learn that they would be closed for the next 2 nights so we would have to eat elsewhere 😞

Barn Swallow

Bar-tailed Godwit

Black-tailed Godwit

Black-winged Stilt

Common Blackbird

Common House Martin

Common Pochard - VU

Common Redshank

Common Ringed Plover

Common Sandpiper

Common Shelduck

Common Swift

Common Wood Pigeon

Dunlin

Eurasian Collared Dove

Eurasian Magpie

Eurasian Oystercatcher

Eurasian Spoonbill

Eurasian Whimbrel

European Goldfinch

European Greenfinch

European Serin

Great Cormorant
Greater Flamingo
Grey Heron
Grey Plover
House Sparrow
Iberian Magpie
Little Egret
Little Grebe
Little Tern
Mallard
Pallid Swift
Red Knot
Ruddy Turnstone
Sanderling
Sandwich Tern
Sardinian Warbler
Spotless Starling
Western Cattle Egret
White Stork
Yellow-legged Gull

Sunday, April 30th

Cloudy, windy and only 19 degrees as we headed off to Tavira and the Hotel Albacora where we parked and headed off for a short walk to the river which mutated into a long walk taking in the beach, dunes, ruins and saltpans! The usual disappointment with not so much as a *Corn bunting*. In fact, we didn't see or hear one all day. Had they all emigrated overnight??? Sardinian warbler more than made up for their absence though along with a very cheeky *House sparrow* who was keen to join us for lunch 😊

After lunch, we explored the salt pans a little more and drove to those near the shopping centre area Dave suggests but it has got very touristy round there with expensive parking so we didn't linger and went back to Castro Marim. Fewer birds than on our previous visit but we could see about 100 mingoos far away through the heat haze.

Rio Formoso next – even deader than yesterday and the flock of plovers had gone. Had a great time watching the *Cattle egrets* and their young from a better spot than in the hide!

Home via Continente at last! Good to shop in a Portuguese supermarket than Lidl or Aldi. Very impressive too 😊

Our hostess had told us about their resident owl when we arrived but tonight was the first we heard it – we rushed outside and there was a beautiful *Tawny owl* sitting in a tree! 😊

Barn Swallow
Black Kite
Black-winged Stilt
Common Blackbird
Common House Martin
Common Moorhen
Common Pochard - VU
Common Ringed Plover
Common Shelduck
Common Swift
Crested Lark
Dunlin
Eurasian Collared Dove

Eurasian Magpie
Eurasian Whimbrel
European Bee-eater
European Serin
European Stonechat
Great Cormorant
Greater Flamingo
Grey Heron
House Sparrow
Iberian Magpie
Kentish Plover
Little Egret
Little Grebe
Little Tern
Mallard
Pied Avocet
Red Knot
Red-rumped Swallow
Ruddy Turnstone
Sanderling
Sardinian Warbler
Spotless Starling
Tawny Owl
Western Cattle Egret
White Stork
Yellow-legged Gull
Zitting Cisticola

Monday, May 1st.

We didn't go birding today. We just packed and stayed round our little house relaxing before heading off to the airport for our flight home. All went according to plan apart from Roland making a right mess of his head when he stood on a wall and hit the air-conditioning unit on the way up. Ouch!

CONCLUSION

We loved the Portuguese countryside, the fantastic jams, ham, prawns and oranges! We would go back for a long weekend just to stock up! Alternatively, we would try birding in a different area, maybe round Faro for a spot of winter birding. When we read Dave's book again and watched the accompanying DVD we were hopeful of seeing as many birds as he had but there was no comparison. It was very frustrating – you can get fed up with *Collared doves*, *Corn buntings*, *Sardinian warblers*, *Zitting cisticolas* and *European stonechat*. We weren't expecting to see many lifers and indeed had only the one – *Iberian green woodpecker*.

COMPLETE BIRD LIST

Barn Swallow
Bar-tailed Godwit
Black Kite
Black-crowned Night Heron
Black-headed Gull

Black-headed Weaver (Introduced)
Black-tailed Godwit
Black-winged Kite
Black-winged Stilt
Blue Rock Thrush
Booted Eagle
Calandra Lark
Carrion Crow
Cetti's Warbler
Common Blackbird
Common Buzzard
Common Chaffinch
Common Greenshank
Common House Martin
Common Kestrel
Common Kingfisher
Common Linnet
Common Moorhen
Common Nightingale
Common Pochard - VU
Common Redshank
Common Reed Warbler
Common Ringed Plover
Common Sandpiper
Common Shelduck
Common Swift
Common Wood Pigeon
Corn Bunting
Crested Lark
Dunlin
Egyptian Goose (Introduced)
Eurasian Blackcap
Eurasian Blue Tit
Eurasian Collared Dove
Eurasian Coot
Eurasian Crag Martin
Eurasian Golden Oriole
Eurasian Hoopoe
Eurasian Jay
Eurasian Magpie
Eurasian Oystercatcher
Eurasian Spoonbill
Eurasian Whimbrel
Eurasian Wren
European Bee-eater
European Goldfinch
European Greenfinch
European Serin
European Stonechat
Ferruginous Duck
Gadwall

Glossy Ibis
Great Cormorant
Great Crested Grebe
Great Egret
Great Tit
Greater Flamingo
Grey Heron
Grey Plover
Grey Wagtail
House Sparrow
Iberian Chiffchaff
Iberian Green Woodpecker
Iberian Grey Shrike - VU
Iberian Magpie
Kentish Plover
Lesser Kestrel
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Little Egret
Little Grebe
Little Ringed Plover
Little Stint
Little Tern
Long-tailed Tit
Mallard
Northern Raven
Northern Wheatear
Pallid Swift
Pied Avocet
Purple Heron
Red Knot
Red-crested Pochard
Red-legged Partridge
Red-rumped Swallow
Rock Bunting
Ruddy Turnstone
Sand Martin
Sanderling
Sandwich Tern
Sardinian Warbler
Short-toed Treecreeper
Spanish Sparrow
Spectacled Warbler
Spotless Starling
Tawny Owl
Tawny Pipit
Thekla's Lark
Western Black-eared Wheatear
Western Cattle Egret
Western Jackdaw
Western Marsh Harrier
Western Swamphen

Western Yellow Wagtail

White Stork

White Wagtail

Woodchat Shrike

Yellow-legged Gull

Zitting Cisticola

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