



May 11 – 23, 2019
Spain: Birding and Nature Tour
With: Christine, Laura, Brad, Cathy, Elizabeth, and Richard

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(I)=introduced

Tour Summary:

What an amazing destination! A journey through Spain is an experience one will never forget. Over the course of this tour, we explored wildlife rich areas from the lofty peaks of the Gredos Mountains to the mudflats of Andalusia, from the cork oak forests of Extremadura to the saline pools of Castilla-La Mancha. We recorded 188 bird species in that time – species such as Great Bustard, Egyptian Vulture, Eurasian Hoopoe, European Roller, Crested Tit, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, and more. In the end, there was no agreement as to the favorite bird of the tour – each person selected three completely different birds! It was just not the birds that captivated our group. It was the richness of Spain's culture, history, architecture, and cuisine interwoven with the natural landscape.

BIRDS (188 species recorded, 3 heard only):

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (10)

Graylag Goose *Anser anser*—the ancestor of the domestic goose and quite common in winter in Spain, but only a small percentage remain to breed – a couple lingering birds at Dehesa Abajo in Andalusia and a family of adults and goslings at Laguna Navaseca in Castille-La Mancha

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*—very handsome shelduck, associated with saline wetlands; our best views were at the various lagoons in Castille-La Mancha, where they were quite common

Northern Shovler *Spatula clypeata*—a few of these familiar dabbling ducks at Dehesa Abajo, Laguna Navaseca, and Laguna de Veguilla

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*—seen almost daily at wetland sites throughout Andalusia and Castille-La Mancha; a common resident in Spain

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*—very numerous and widespread wherever there was water

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*—one lingering bird at Laguna de El Portil near Marismas de Odiel

Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris*—formerly very common across the Mediterranean, this species is in steep decline, with southern Spain being a minor stronghold. We were very fortunate to see a pair at Dehesa Abajo. Listed under IUCN as Vulnerable.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*—these handsome and striking diving ducks were around in good numbers at Dehesa Abajo, Marismas de Odiel, and the many saline wetlands in Castille-La Mancha

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*—very similar to our Redhead in North America; we saw many individuals of this diving duck at the same locations as the previous species

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*—these pretty little ducks were present in good numbers at Laguna Tarelo, Laguna de Veguilla, and Laguna Navaseca (50 or more individuals!); the IUCN lists this species as Endangered due to habitat loss and pollution

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS AND ALLIES: Phasianidae (1)

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*—a medium-sized and strikingly beautiful partridge of open country, particularly favoring rocky terrain and outcrops near grassy areas. Small numbers seen along the roadside throughout our travels, and they seemed especially numerous in the Calatrava Steppes of La Mancha.

FLAMINGOS: Phoenicopteridae (1)

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*—hundreds of these pink beauties in Donana National Park and the saline ponds of Castille-La Mancha

GREBES: Podicipedidae (3)

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*—quite common in wetlands throughout Andalusia and Castilla-La Mancha, where we recorded it daily; an especially large concentration along the Cano del Guadiamar; sometimes known as the dabchick

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*—beautiful and elegant grebe, the largest of its family in the Old World; scattered pairs observed in Dehesa Abajo, Laguna Navaseca, Laguna de la Veguilla, and Laguna de El Portil; in short, present in small numbers wherever there was deeper water

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*—also known as the Black-necked Grebe in Europe; a couple dozen birds at Laguna Navaseca, where we observed several pairs with cute, striped chicks

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (4)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*—seen almost every day of the tour; more habitat specific than elsewhere in the world, preferring dilapidated stone buildings and rocky outcrops for roosting and nesting

Common Wood-Pigeon *Columba palumbus*—the most common pigeon in Spain, occurring in a wide variety of man-made and natural habitats; the largest pigeon species in continental Europe

European Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia turtur*—several of these beautifully patterned birds showed well at the Laguna Mejorada at Los Palacios y Villafranca; this dove is increasingly rare with over 78% population declines since the early 1990s across Europe; listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*—common and widespread, observed daily; a relatively recent arrival in Europe from the Middle East, having colonized the continent since the early 1900s

SANDGROUSE: Pteroclididae (1)

Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata*—seen on the ground and in flight at the Campo de Calatrava in Castilla-La Mancha; a unique Old World bird family that reaches Europe with only two species, only distantly related to the pigeons and doves

BUSTARDS: Otididae (2)

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*—our first views near Trujillo were quite distant, but we had lovely views of several adults on two dates in the Calatrava Steppes; Spain hosts the largest population of this species in the world by far, with about 23,000 individuals; the IUCN lists this species as Vulnerable

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*—a single bird observed in flight on the Calatrava Steppes was our only one

CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: CUCULIDAE (2)

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*—beautiful views of a singing bird at the Calatrava La Nueva Castle one late afternoon; this uncommon cuckoo is a brood parasite on corvids, particularly magpies

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*—the familiar and persistent song of this species ('cu-ckoo') coined the common name for the entire family; although common by voice, we saw it well only at Dehesa Tornero and the stone pine forest of Rocina

NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae (1)

Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis*—great views of a bird circling overhead in the early evening right next to Ardea Purpurea Lodge, with many more heard

SWIFTS: Apodidae (3)

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*—several of these giant swifts observed at close range on the Puente del Cardenal at Monfrague National Park

Common Swift *Apus apus*—abundant, widespread, and a lot of fun to watch!

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*—close studies of these swifts zooming around in the central square of Trujillo

RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (5)

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* (HO)—we heard the pig-like grunting calls for quite some time at Laguna de la Veguilla, but they would just not come out

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*—omnipresent at all wetland sites we visited

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*—widespread and numerous at all wetland sites

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*—a single bird gave us a pleasant surprise at Dehesa Abajo; the small population in southernmost Spain is the only one in Europe

Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*—quite common at wetland sites around Donana National Park, although we also saw single birds at Embalse Arrocampo and Laguna de la Veguilla; this species is a recent split from the recently dismantled Purple Swamphen

THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae (1)

Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oediconemus*—we saw a couple of these mostly nocturnal shorebirds in the dry fields of the Calatrava Steppes

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (2)

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*—present at most wetland sites throughout our journey, as well as the salt pans of the Salinas de Bonanza

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*—these handsome shorebirds were very numerous at the Salinas de Bonanza and Laguna de Navaseca

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (5)

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*—several dozen birds observed in the scope and in flight at the Marismas de Odiel (remember, black underwing 'armpits'!)

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*—singles at the Cano de Guadiamar, Laguna Navaseca, and Tablas de Damiel of this large and charismatic shorebird

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*—small numbers but very good views of this plover at Marismas de Odiel and Salinas de Bonanza

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*—good numbers of this highly migratory plover at Marismas de Odiel and Salinas de Bonanza; very similar in appearance to North America's Semipalmated Plover

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*—a trio of birds showed well in the scope at Laguna de Navaseca; this small plover prefers drier habitats like North America's Killdeer

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (9)

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*—a couple dozen of these migrants at the Marismas de Odiel

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*—four individuals mixed in with flock of Whimbrel at Marismas de Odiel; the word ‘godwit’ is an Old English word from the 1400s

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*—two at the Marismas de Odiel, mixed in with smaller shorebirds

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*—six birds in brilliant red breeding plumage in flooded fields near Donana

Sanderling *Calidris alba*—nice flock of mixed wintering and breeding plumage birds at Marismas de Odiel; a few more at the Salinas de Bonanza

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*—the most numerous shorebird species at the Marismas de Odiel, many in their black-bellied breeding plumage

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*—a few at Laguna de Navaseca and Tablas de Damiel

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*—distant scope views near Donana National Park in the same area as the Red Knots

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*—small numbers of these pretty, red-legged shorebirds at Marismas de Odiel and Salinas de Bonanza

PRATINCOLES AND COURSERS: Glareolidae (1)

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*—fantastic views as several birds flew by at close range on the beach near Huelva on our Marismas de Odiel day; these migrant shorebirds feed mostly on the wing like a swallow

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (13)

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*—fantastic views of this primarily Mediterranean gull at the Salinas de Bonanza, where we saw them delicately picking off morsels from the surface

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*—hundreds breeding at Laguna de Navaseca and Laguna de la Vega in Castilla-La Mancha

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*—a single winter plumage individual on a sandbar at Marismas de Odiel did not stay long enough for everyone to get a good view

Audouin’s Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii*—a few birds coming in to bathe at Laguna de El Portil; another gull primarily restricted to the Mediterranean Sea, considered to be one of the world’s rarest gulls in the 1960s

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michaellis*—the most common and widespread large gull in Spain

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*—nice comparison at Laguna de El Portil with the lighter-backed Yellow-legged Gull!

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*—nice sized flock on a sandbar at Marismas de Odiel, very similar to the Least Tern of North America

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*—several birds flying rather distantly at the Embalse de Arrocampo on our way to Trujillo; a few more on our first full day at Donana National Park

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*—one of these terns flying at the Salinas de Bonanza, the world’s largest species of tern

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*—one or two birds patrolling Laguna de Navaseca

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*—the common tern of inland freshwater sites, particularly numerous at Laguna de Navaseca and Laguna de La Vega in Castilla-La Mancha

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*—good views of one at the Marismas de Odiel among the flock of Little Terns; a second bird perched on a pole at the Salinas de Bonanza provided great photo opportunities

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*—at least a dozen or so flying down the beach near Huelva at the Marismas de Odiel

STORKS: Ciconiidae (2)

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*—we had lovely scope views of a couple nesting pairs on the cliffs at Monfrague National Park; a more wary and retiring species than the following one

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*—very numerous and widespread species, seen daily throughout Spain

BOOBIES AND GANNETS: Sulidae (1)

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*—distant scope view of a lone individual flying off the beach near Huelva at Marismas de Odiel

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (1)

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*—good numbers at Embalse de Arrocampo and Tablas de Daimiel (including quite a few birds sitting on nests at the latter site!)

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (8)

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*—these small herons are very active in the spring, and we saw singles flying by at the Arrocampo Reservoir, Dehesa de Abajo, Laguna del Tarelo, and Laguna de Navaseca

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea*—widespread and present in small numbers at nearly all wetland sites, the Old World equivalent of Great Blue Heron

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*—quite a few at the Arrocampo Reservoir and Donana National Park, with a couple singles at Laguna de la Veguilla and Tablas de Daimiel National Park

Great Egret *Ardea alba*—not all that common, with small numbers or singles at the Cano del Guadiamar, Dehesa de Abajo, and Tablas de Daimiel

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*—the most common egret in Spain, widespread and common

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*—rather local in Spain, although we saw a good concentration of them at the Laguna La Mejorada while looking for Western Olivaceous Warbler and European Turtle-Dove

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*—small numbers of these small, colorful herons at Cano del Guadiamar and the Jose Antonio Valverde Visitor Center

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*—a few birds at the Arrocampo Reservoir, La Rocina, and Laguna La Mejorada

IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae (2)

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*—widespread and common in the area around Donana, a relatively recent colonist that has been spreading northward into Europe

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*—these elegant and showy waders were common and numerous around Donana National Park

OSPREY: Pandionidae (1)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*—a few birds, including one sitting on a nest, at Marismas del Odiel

HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (13)

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*—one individual perched in a large olive tree near the Arrocampo Reservoir; also one in the Donana National Park area

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*—great views of these striking raptors at Monfrague National Park, including one sitting on a nest; this species figures prominently in ancient Egyptian religion

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*—a few of these goliaths at Monfrague National Park; it is one of the largest of the Old World Vultures

Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus*—quite common in Extremadura and Andalusia, which hosts the largest colonies of this species in all of Europe

Short-toed Snake-Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*—nice scope views at the steppes near Trujillo and also on the road to Donana NP; a large and stocky eagle that specializes in eating snakes

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*—widespread in low numbers overhead, recorded almost daily; very similar to the Short-tailed Hawk of the Americas, even coming in both light and dark forms

Spanish Eagle *Aquila adalberti*—gorgeous views of this Iberian Peninsula endemic at la Portilla del Tietar in Donana National Park – wow! Listed as Vulnerable under CITES.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*—after several a couple tries at several places in Monfrague National Park, we finally got excellent (distant) views of a bird soaring near Zorita; Spain is the European stronghold for this species, which feeds mostly on European Rabbit

Eurasian Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*—the most common harrier in Spain, observed at Donana NP, Laguna de la Vega, and the steppes of Calatrava in La Mancha

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*—once a very common species of dry grasslands, this graceful raptor has declined precipitously in Spain; we were fortunate to observe this species at Donana NP, Marismas del Odiel, and the lagoon near Palacios y Villafranca

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*—this graceful raptor is nearly endemic to Europe; observed in small numbers at Navarredonda de Gredos, Monfrague NP, and Donana NP

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*—widespread and numerous, observed almost daily throughout

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*—closely related to the hawks of North America; observed only a couple times in the Andalusia region while driving!

BARN OWLS: Tytonidae (1)

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*—a roosting bird observed through the scope at Donana NP, with a White Stork nesting right above it!

OWLS: Strigidae (3)

Eurasian Scops-Owl *Otus scops* (HO)—heard by some outside their window one night at Navarredonda de Gredos; the European equivalent of a screech-owl

Little Owl *Athene noctua*—singles observed at Dehesa Tornero and the steppes of Calatrava; less nocturnal than the other European owl species and much easier to see; ancient Greek symbol of Athena

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*—several brief glimpses and many heard calling just outside Ardea Purpurea Lodge one night

HOOPOES: Upupidae (1)

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*—we observed this distinctive and beautiful bird every day in Spain; heavily depicted in European and Middle Eastern literature and mythology with symbolism ranging from virtue (Persia) to death (Estonia)

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (1)

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*—brief flyby at Arrocampo Reservoir and another sighting at Donana National Park

BEE-EATERS: Meropidae (1)

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*—classic species of Mediterranean Europe, observed almost daily in the Andalusia region

ROLLERS: Coraciidae (1)

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*—observed on the wires at the steppes near Caceres, but our best views were just outside the restaurant at Tablas de Daimiel NP when one of these crow-sized birds perched only thirty feet away

WOODPECKERS: Picidae (2)

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*—fantastic views from the blind at our hotel at Navarredonda de Gredos – Hotel Almanzor

Eurasian Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*—nice views at Tablas de Daimiel, and we encountered another one just outside the airport in Madrid on our way back – wow! This highly terrestrial woodpecker feeds mostly on ants

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (3)

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*—first observed in the Plaza de Toros in Trujillo; numbers seen elsewhere at Donana NP and the steppes of Calatrava; a colonial kestrel that nests in old buildings in the region

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*—observed on five dates; Castillo de Magacela, Donana NP, Laguna de la Veguilla, and Tablas de Daimiel NP

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*—a bird soaring over the griffon eyrie at Salto del Gitano in Monfrague NP

OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae (1)

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*—often heard but our only really good views were in the woodlands of La Rocina in Donana NP

SHRIKES: Laniidae (2)

Iberian Gray Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*—observed on three days, our first being at the Arrocampo Reservoir while looking for Black-winged Kite

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*—great views at Monfrague National Park of this colorful little shrike

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (7)

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*—one of these large, solitary jays came into the feeders at Hotel Almanzor in Navarredonda de Gredos; another seen briefly at the Calatrava la Nueva Castle

Iberian Magpie *Cyanopica cooki*—we observed this lively and charismatic endemic magpie almost daily wherever there were stands of cork oak

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*—these attractive and striking birds were very common in Spain, observed every day in all manner of habitats

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*—observed at the Magacela Castle and Castle of Calatrava la Nueva; it breeds mostly in upland areas and rocky cliffs

Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*—common around Trujillo, including several pairs nesting right in the town square; a few more individuals using nest boxes at Laguna de la Veguilla in Castilla-La Mancha

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*—very common only in the area around Navarredonda de Gredos

Common Raven *Corvus corax*—scattered sightings of this largest of passerines in the Gredos Mountains and Monfrague National Park, associating with rocky cliffs

BEARDED REEDLING: Panuridae (1)

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*—great views of a flock of these incredibly unique birds at Tablas de Daimiel, where they inhabit the vast reed beds; the only bird in its family, not very closely related to any other songbird

LARKS: Alaudidae (7)

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*—singles observed in the steppes of Caceres and Calatrava

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*—quite common in the steppes of Calatrava, where we got to see many birds on the ground and displaying over the fields

Lesser Short-toed Lark *Alaudala rufescens*—a lucky sighting of a single bird on a gravel road en route to Donana National Park

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*—a very cooperative individual gave us walk away views at Valdesacas in the Gredos Mountains

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*—several lively, actively singing birds in the alpine meadows above the Plataforma of the Gredos Mountains

Thekla's Lark *Galerida theklae*—several good sightings of this lark, including Magacela Castle and Calatrava La Nueva; this species looks very similar to the next species but with a different song and different habitat preference

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*—recorded on most days of the tour throughout our route, always in open country

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (5)

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia*—a couple sightings of this species: two at the Arrocampo Reservoir and another couple at the Cano de Guadiamar in Donana NP

Eurasian Crag-Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*—common in highland areas or around old stone buildings, which provide nesting areas; observed in the Gredos Mountains, Monfrague NP, Trujillo, and Calatrava La Nueva Castle

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*—we saw this familiar species every day in good numbers

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*—less common than Barn Swallow but still quite common; especially numerous in the Extremadura segment of the tour

Common House-Martin *Delichon urbicum*—recorded almost daily, including very large numbers nesting under the bridge at Monfrague NP along with Alpine Swift

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (4)

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*—very common woodland bird in the Gredos Mountains, recorded at almost every site while there but nowhere else on the tour

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*—seen only in the Gredos Mountains, in the pine forest and just outside the Hotel Almanzor; this species looks a bit like a Bridled Titmouse

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*—seen sporadically in the lowland areas, such as the Arrocampo Reservoir, Monfrague NP, and Tablas de Daimiel NP

Great Tit *Parus major*—the most common and widespread tit in Spain, observed in woodland areas of all three regions we visited

LONG-TAILED TITS: Aegithalidae (1)

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*—observed only in the Gredos Mountains and Monfrague NP; this species is closely related to the Bushtit of North America

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (1)

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*—observed only in the Gredos Mountains, particularly around the feeders and the grounds of Hotel Almanzor

TREECREEPERS: Certhiidae (1)

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*—our best views were in the Gredos Mountains, while exploring the pine forest

WRENS: Troglodytidae (1)

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*—brief glimpses in the pine area of Navarredonda de Gredos, then much better views at La Rocina in Donana NP; this is the only wren species to occur in the Old World, with the rest of the family occurring in the Americas

DIPPERS: Cinclidae (1)

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*—observed on our first afternoon walk in the Hoyos del Espino area of the Gredos Mountains

KINGLETS: Regulidae (2)

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*—a single bird observed in the pine grove near Hotel Almanzor

Common Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*—observed only a couple of times in the pine groves of the Gredos Mountains; possibly the original “king of the birds” of ancient Greek literature

BUSH WARBLERS: Scotocercidae (1)

Cetti’s Warbler *Cettia cetti*—very common in taller willows and dense thickets by water throughout our route; very distinctive, explosive song but not always easy to see

LEAF WARBLERS: Phylloscopidae (1)

Western Bonelli’s Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*—this tiny leaf warbler was relatively common on the grounds of Hotel Almanzor and elsewhere in the Gredos Mountains

REED WARBLERS: Acrocephalidae (4)

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna opaca*—several seen in the tamarisks lining Laguna La Mejorada at Palacios y Villafranca

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*—one collecting nesting material at Laguna de la Veguilla

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*—quite numerous and vocal in Donana NP and ponds of Castilla-La Mancha

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*—larger and even more numerous than the preceding species in Donana NP and ponds of Castilla-La Mancha

GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: Locustellidae (1)

Savi’s Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*—our best views were at Tablas de Daimiel NP and La Rocina in Donana NP; a very plain brown bird with a distinctive, monotonous trill

CISTICOLAS: Cisticolidae (1)

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*—quite numerous and active, zitting over our heads at Donana NP and wetland areas of Castilla-La Mancha

SYLVIID WARBLERS: Sylviidae (6)

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*—a couple pairs in the Gredos Mountains and another on our walk through the citrus grove at Donana NP

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*—one very plain individual singing its heart out near Hotel Almanzor, near the southern edge of its range

Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*—great views from one of the viewpoints at Monfrague NP

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*—the most numerous and widespread *Sylvia* warbler, seen at Monfrague, Donana NP, and Calatrava la Nueva Castle

Greater Whitethroat *Sylvia melanocephala (HO)*—*sadly, we only heard this species a couple times while hiking on one of the Gredos Mountains trails, near the southern edge of its breeding range here*

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*—brief glimpses of a single bird at Magacela Castle

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS AND CHATS: Muscicapidae (11)

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*—observed at La Rocina in Donana NP and again in Tablas de Daimiel NP; this understated bird is quite scarce in southern Spain

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*—we saw the ‘original robin’ quite often (even at feeders!) around Navarredonda de Gredos; this little bird features prominently in European literature, as well as being the unofficial national bird of Britain by popular vote (2015)

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*—frequently heard but not easy to see, we had great scope views at Monfrague NP of a bird singing on a semi-prominent perch and even better views at Tablas de Daimiel of a cooperative bird right by the trail

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*—a scarce breeder in the Gredos Mountains, where we saw it only a couple times near Hotel Almanzor; the subspecies that breeds in the Gredos Mountains is the endemic *iberiae* subspecies which is sometimes considered its own species

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*—quite common in the Gredos Mountains, often perching on top of buildings and stone walls, also seen at Monfrague NP in the little tourist village

Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*—we saw this gorgeous species near the Plataforma of the Gredos Mountains, right from the parking lot!

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius*—much more common than the preceding species; we saw this handsome bird around cliffs and stone outcrops at Monfrague NP, Magacela Castle, and Calatrava La Nueva Castle

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*—a bird of open habitats and scrubby fields; quite common but never numerous, we saw singles at the Plataforma de Gredos, Monfrague NP, Salinas de Bonanza, Dehesa Tornero, and Tablas de Daimiel NP

Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucura*—this uncommon species specializes in rocky habitats; nice views of a nesting pair at Magacela Castle and another at Calatrava La Nueva Castle

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*—beautiful views in the alpine meadows of the Plataforma de Gredos

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*—a female in the fields below Magacela Castle was our only one

THRUSHES: Turdidae (2)

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*—nice scope views of this bulky, spotted thrush at the top of a pine in the Gredos Mountains

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*—we saw this thrush every day of the tour in a variety of habitats; sings and behaves much like the American Robin

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (1)

Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor*—observed daily in good numbers; much like a European Starling dipped in oily black paint

ACCENTORS: Prunellidae (1)

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*—a few of these sparrow-sized birds in the broom hedges above the Plataforma de Gredos

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS: Motacillidae (3)

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*—a pair of these handsome birds were working the stream right by the parking lot of the Plataforma de Gredos

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*—this wagtail is quite happy in desolate, dry habitats; we saw it well on the mudflats of Marismas de Odiel and the Salinas de Bonanza

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*—quite common around buildings and rocky areas, particularly in the tourist village of Monfrague NP and the central plaza of Trujillo

FINCHES: Fringillidae (8)

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*—quite common in the Gredos Mountains and rocky structures of Monfrague NP; this is only one of two finches that feeds its nestlings with an insect-based diet (the other is the Brambling, also from Europe)

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*—Christine spotted this one at the Calatrava La Nueva Castle, but this normally shy finch just would not show for the whole group

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*—quite common (we even saw one perched on top of one of the famous windmills on our last morning), but our best views were at the feeders of Hotel Almanzor

Eurasian Linnet *Linaria cannabina*—great views at Dehesa Tornero, Tablas de Daimiel NP, and the Calatrava steppes, usually in large flocks; observed feeding on seeding thistles

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*—a single bird in a grove of pine trees in the Valdeascas of the Gredos

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*—a beautiful and common finch in Spain, observed daily in a variety of habitats; loves to feed on thistles seeding on the roadsides!

Citril Finch *Carduelis citrinella*—brief views of an uncooperative flock in the forest clearing below Hotel Almanzor in the Gredos Mountains; this uncommon finch is endemic to western Europe

European Serin *Serinus serinus*—observed almost daily in Extremadura and Andalusia, reminiscent of a heavily streaked canary

BUNTINGS: Emberizidae (4)

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calanra*—common songster of the steppes around Caceres and Donana NP; they seemed to be almost everywhere in Tablas de Daimiel NP!

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*—we saw this handsome sparrow at the Plataforma de Gredos and Calatrava La Nueva Castle

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza ciris*—nice sighting and scope views of this bunting singing from a big boulder at Calatrava La Nueva Castle

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*—seen only in the alpine meadows and rocky scree near Plataforma de Gredos; this pretty little bird is declining due to hunting

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (4)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*—abundant, one of the most common birds in Spain

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*—nice views of this highly colonial sparrow in the steppes of Caceres and nesting in the wader rookery near Donana NP; unlike the previous species, this one prefers wilder areas

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*—small numbers observed collecting nesting material at Tablas de Daimiel NP – a nice find!

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*—two of these very large sparrows were attending the feeders at Hotel Almanzor

WAXBILLS: Estrildidae (1)

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild (1)*—seen near the lagoon of Palacios y Villafranca while looking for European Turtle-Dove and Western Olivaceous Warbler; an introduced species from Africa

MAMMALS (7 species recorded):

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Iberian Hare *Lepus granatensis*

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*—one coming to the feeders at Hotel Almanzor was our only one!

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

Western Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*

Fallow Deer *Dama dama*

Iberian Ibex *Capra pyrenaica*—great views of several herds around the Plataforma de Gredos

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES (7 species recorded):

Iberian Green Frog *Pelophylax perezi*—seen in the pond on our walk through the orange grove at Monfrague NP

Ocellated Lizard *Timon lepidus*—we saw these large and beautiful lizards near the Parador in the Gredos Mountains

Iberian Emerald Lizard *Lacerta schreiberi*—another large and handsome lizard of the Gredos Mountains, this time with a green body and blue head!

Guadarrama Wall Lizard *Podarcis guadarramae*

Green Iberian Wall Lizard *Podarcis virescens*

Viperine Snake *Natrix maura*—seen in the pond on our walk through the orange grove at Monfrague NP

Mediterranean Turtle *Mauremys leprosa*—seen in the pond at Monfrague NP, a young near-hatchling