

# SPAIN, FRENCH PYRENEES, & MAJORCA 22/06/2003 - 05/07/2003

## INTRODUCTION

The following report is based around a 13-day trip to the Iberian Peninsula undertaken by Richard Stephenson and myself. Both of us had birded Morocco and the Canary Islands previously, so an itinerary was drawn up which concentrated around species that were new to both of us in the Western Palearctic.

We enjoyed a good, hassle free trip, and succeeded in seeing all of the 22 species, which we had identified.

## GEN

For the majority of our gen we used both the excellent Finding Birds in Northern Spain and Finding Birds in Southern Spain produced by Gostours. Both are recommended and available from [www.birdguides.com](http://www.birdguides.com) priced £5 each.

These were supplemented by additional gen provided by members of eurobirdnet, and the following reports, which were obtained via the internet:

**Spain: 27/06/99 - 05/07/99 by Chris Batty et al**

[www.surfbirds.com/mb/trips/spain-rb-0599.html](http://www.surfbirds.com/mb/trips/spain-rb-0599.html)

**Spain (and a few hours in Portugal): 13-26/05/2001 by Joakim Djerf**

[www.birdtours.co.uk/tripreports/spain/extra8/extre-may-03.htm](http://www.birdtours.co.uk/tripreports/spain/extra8/extre-may-03.htm)

**AVG\_W SPAIN EXPEDITION 2002 B Bas van de Meulengraaf et al**

[www.geocities.com/avgspain/](http://www.geocities.com/avgspain/)

**Central and Western Spain including Extremadura May 2003 by Ben Miller**

[www.birdtours.co.uk/tripreports/spain/tour1/tour2001.htm](http://www.birdtours.co.uk/tripreports/spain/tour1/tour2001.htm)

## LOGISTICS

We flew to Barcelona return, from Newcastle in the UK with Easyjet. The flights were booked on-line at [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com) and cost £61.50 each.

The return flight to Majorca from Barcelona with Iberian airways was also booked online at [www.iberia.com](http://www.iberia.com) at a cost of 65.58 euros (c£45). We took the 06.50 flight to Majorca and returned on the 21.05 to Barcelona. The flight takes 35 minutes and the time on the island was more than adequate.

Car hire on the mainland was arranged through Holiday Autos via the internet at [www.carhire4less.com](http://www.carhire4less.com). We paid £216 for a VW Polo with air conditioning for 13 days including 2 drivers. This was not the cheapest car available, but it was felt at this time of year that the air conditioning was essential. We covered c4100km.

On Majorca we tried each of the operators on arrival and settled with Europcar, paying €45 for a VW Polo for the day. This was a category B car, which was the cheapest available with most operators offering only category E cars. Category A cars were around €30 per day and could be booked from home to save money. We spent €14 on fuel whilst on Majorca and covered c200km.

During our stay we mainly obtained accommodation on an ad-hoc basis, but can recommend Pension Monfrague in Torrejon el Rubio. We paid €25 for a double room with a fan, with air con rooms costing €36 per night. It is situated on the right hand side of the village as you approach from the south and sports a large picture of a Griffon Vulture.

In Los Palacios we stayed in Hotel Soledad, which is on the right hand side of town as you come in from the north. This was also €36 for an air-conditioned room, which seemed to be a fairly standard rate elsewhere in the country.

English is only really spoken in tourist resorts, so a basic knowledge of both Spanish and French is an advantage.

Weather was hot and sunny throughout, with occasional thunderstorms during the night. Early mornings can be quite chilly, especially in the Pyrenees and the steppes.

## ITINERARY

22/06/2003: La Lomanza.

23/06/2003: La Lomanza, Belchite & Hecho Valley.

24/06/2003: Collado de la Pedra S Martin, Col du Tourmalet (France).

25/06/2003: Foret D'Issaux (France), Travelled to Monfrague NP.

26/06/2003: Monfrague NP.

27/06/2003: Monfrague NP, Rio Alimonte, Finca Santa Marta.

28/06/2003: Belen, Rio Gargaligas near Vega Atlas, Laguna de la Mejorada.

29/06/2003: Pinzon, Laguna Medina, Jandia Plains.

30/06/2003: Velega Malaga, Cabo de Gata.

01/07/2003: Cabo de Gata, Pego Marshes.

02/07/2003: El Prate de Cabanes.

03/07/2003: Ebro Delta.

04/07/2003: Fomentor Peninsula, S'Albufera (Majorca).

05/07/2003: Gava Beach.

## **NOTES ON SITES VISITED**

It is not my intention to give full details on all sites visited as I am presuming anyone visiting Spain will already have been on the main sites such as Monfrague NP. I have expanded on any sites not covered by either of the Gosney guides or popular gen.

### **LA LOMANZA RESERVE**

This SEO reserve is a well-known locality for Dupont's Lark. It is situated 11km north of Belchite on the C222. Park in the obvious car park (which is on the right hand side of the road if approaching from Belchite), and follow the track from the back left hand corner of the car park into the steppe. We had no luck with Dupont's here on our first afternoon, though it was incredibly hot, so stayed overnight in the car park. We walked about 400 yards up the track prior to dawn (with another party of British birders) and managed to get probably 2 different birds to sing in response to tape playback. However despite much effort none of us could see them! We then split up and began to widen our search. At around 10:30am we bumped into our UK friends; and a member of their team had just seen one! Remarkably after a few minutes the bird began to sing quite close by, and was picked up singing from a low tuft of grass. NB: Although sounding close, it would appear that this species is ventriloquial and actually sings further away than it seems. Other species seen in this area included Lesser Short-toed, Short-toed, Thekla and Calandra Larks, as well as Black Wheatear (in the gorge) and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse.

With this species in the bag, we decided to explore the extensive olive grove, which crosses the road between the reserve and Belchite for Western Orphean Warbler. Olive groves are apparently the preferred habitat for this species, and this grove is clearly visible from the reserve. We found a parking space off the road here and began exploring the grove on the right hand side of the road as you head to Belchite from the reserve. We soon located Western Orphean Warbler, seeing at least 3 birds.

### **HECHO VALLEY (REFUGIO GABARDITO)**

We were given this "new" Wallcreeper site by our UK friends, and succeeded in getting excellent views of the male after around an hours wait. The birds at the usual tunnel site north of Siresa have only been seen very infrequently this year; though one was seen a couple of days before our arrival. They could in fact be the same birds.

From Hecho drive north and continue through the town of Siresa. Pass through the tunnel north of here, then after around a mile turn right at a white sign with "Refugio Gabardito" on it. Turn off here and follow this road until you reach the end. Park in the lower car park (by the house), and turn back on yourself to see an obvious wide sandy track (this runs parallel to the gorge). Walk along this track, without taking any detours (Do not follow the blue trail signs), until you come to a gate across the track, which is made of pallets or something. Pass through this gate and after a couple of hundred yards you will notice some scree falling away to the left. Just beyond here the path rises, stop at the top of this rise and turn 180 degrees on yourself to view the rock face to your left. There is an obvious pinnacle of rock which some have likened to The Old Man of Hoy, with a small cave about 2/3 the way up on the left hand side. The Wallcreeper was apparently breeding in this cave. As mentioned previously we had to wait around an hour for ten minutes of views, and the birds did not show in the subsequent hour. Griffon Vulture is abundant here giving spectacular views, and we had a pair of Lammergeiers over whilst waiting for the Wallcreeper to appear.

### **COLLADO DE LA PEDRA S MARTIN**

We saw Citril Finch easily here. Head west from Jaca on the N240, then take the C137 towards Roncal, & on to the French border. Beyond Isaba the road climbs steeply and then levels out at the top. After a few Km's you will see a large wooden ski hut, & piste map on the right hand side of the road, just after a sharp right hand bend. Park on the large area of tarmac on the opposite side of the road and explore the immediate surroundings. Citril Finch was common here, feeding in small groups on the side of the road. This was also the only place we saw Alpine Chough,

### **COL DU TOURMALET**

This locality is perhaps better known for the Tour De France, but is also an excellent place to find Snow Finch with minimum effort. It is situated on the D918 between the towns of Luz-St-Sauveur and La Mongie, south east of Lourdes and is shown on all road maps. Park in the large car park at the top and explore the area around the cafe. We had seen our first before we had even parked the car and they seemed quite common. A track runs from the back of the car park to a ski station, where we had a pair of Snow Finch nesting in one of the pylons.

This is a great area where we also recorded Rock Thrush and other alpine species, but perhaps surprisingly no Alpine Accentors.

### **FORET D' ISSAUX**

This well-known White-backed Woodpecker site is covered in Gosney, though we travelled in via a different route, which obviates the need to get lost in Bedous! From Bedous head north for 4km and take the left turn signposted to Lourdios-Ichere. Continue along this road to Lourdios and take the left turn signed to Foret D'Issaux shortly before leaving the village. (NB: the small green sign is very hard to see as it is on the side of a house and not easily visible when travelling in this direction. The best option would be to pass through the village then turn back on yourselves back into the village. The sign then becomes obvious half way up the side wall of a house). Follow this road through a gorge and upwards until you reach a T-junction (shown on Gosney) where you should park. The woodpeckers are normally to be found in the by walking right long the main road from here and exploring the forest track. White-backed Woodpecker was calling from dawn here; though did not respond to tape playback and we only managed two brief views in about 4 hours.

### **MONFRAGUE**

This well-known site is covered in detail in Gosney and many other reports. All the specialties could be seen in a single day, though you would need to include at least one evening in your visit for Eagle Owl & Red-necked Nightjar.

**SPANISH IMPERIAL EAGLE** – The well-known nest site at Mirador de la Bascula was in use again this year and we saw the pair quite easily around 10am on our first day. We also had a different pair between Torrejon el Rubio and the bridge first bridge over the Rio Tajo the following morning, which showed well before drifting off.

**EURASIAN EAGLE OWL** – Again birds still in residence on the rock face at Tietar (No9 in Gosney). The first bird (a well grown juvenile) appeared around 9.55pm, and we had good views of 4 birds in total, including both adults.

**RED-NECKED NIGHTJAR** – Quite easy at Mirador de la Bascula. Park in the car park and look into the low plantation on the opposite side of the road. We had good views of 2+ birds (including a single on the ground), shortly after seeing the Eagle Owls.

**WHITE-RUMPED SWIFT** – Apparently they have been quite easy at Santuario de Monfrague this year. We had several sightings from the monastery, with probably the same pair appearing around every 10-15 minutes to give great close views. We also had another pair for around 5 minutes by the first bridge over the Rio Tajo north of Torrejon el Rubio, which we managed to capture on video.

**AZURE-WINGED MAGPIE** – Common within the park, favouring areas of cork oak.

A walk along the green trail, which runs opposite the visitor centre at Villareal de San Carlos, produced many Subalpine Warbler and other common passerines. Western Orphean Warbler was singing along this trail in April, though we failed to record this species here. Other interesting species seen were Black Vulture (common), Bonelli's Eagle (single pairs at Mirador de la Bascula & Tietar) and Black Stork (Tietar).

### **RIO ALIMONTE**

Not really a site as such though we pulled off the road here to sleep in the shade of the bridge and found some interesting species. From the main E90 pull off onto the minor road to Jaraicejo and park under the old bridge. We had lots of Azure-winged Magpies and Spanish Sparrows here, as well as Black Stork, Black Wheatear and Hawfinch.

### **FINCA SANTA MARTA**

This hotel, which used to be an olive and grape farm is popular with tour groups and situated 14km south of Trujillo on the C524 towards Zorita. We decided to visit this area as Ben Miller had seen Common Waxbill here in May this year, which we knew could sometimes be difficult elsewhere. Park in the hotel car park, go out the front gate and turn right down the lane. After a short while the track turns sharply left, go straight ahead here towards an obvious White Storks nest. We had a pair of Waxbills in the low vegetation on the right hand side of the track between where the track forks and the storks nest after c40 minutes searching. They were very unobtrusive however and only flushed right at the last minute, so I would recommend that you walk through all the deep grassy areas close to the path.

### **BELEN PLAINS**

We spent a couple of hours here one morning, exploring the area described in Gosney, behind the village of Gosney. We recorded 3 separate groups of Great Bustard, including a party of 7, though failed to find any Little Bustards. Little Bustard is common here though, and I suspect that the grass was just too high.

### **RIO GARGALIGAS NEAR VEGA ATLAS**

This is probably one of the easiest sites in Spain to see Red Avadavat. Head south from Zorita on the CC702/CC701 towards Vega Atlas (not depicted on large scale maps), and c1 mile after the left turn to Vega Atlas you will cross the Rio Gargaligas. It is possible to turn right onto the old bridge here (where the Rio Gargaligas sign is), where you can park. Red Avadavat is common in the reeds here; we saw 20+. Common Waxbill also occurs in small numbers here, though we know of no one who has seen them here this year.

### **LAGUNA DE LA MEJORADA AREA**

Following information received via eurobirdnet we visited this area for Rufous Bushchat and Western Olivaceous Warbler. To reach this area head south towards Los Palacios y Villafranca on the N-IV and a couple of km before Los Palacios you will cross an obvious canal. Turn right just before this canal and follow the bank until the road turns sharply left and crosses the canal after c1km. Cross this bridge and park just beyond. We had a very confiding pair of Rufous Bushchats here in the low vineyard on the opposite side of the road. We actually picked them up from the car whilst, wandering around lost trying to find the lake!

To find Laguna de la Mejorada (known to the locals as "Lago de Diego Puerta" if you get lost), retrace your steps back to the main road, turn right to cross the canal, then immediately left onto the opposite bank of the canal. Follow this track and turn first right down a sandy track after c1km to reach the lake. Western Olivaceous Warbler is common in the tamarisks around the lake and responds well to tape. We also had a single Rufous Bushchat on the fence by the small pumping station here. They are said to occur in the low vineyards around the lake, which is exactly the same habitat as where we saw ours.

### **DONANA (PINZON AREA)**

We visited this area, on the advice of friends, who had birded the Donana about a week prior to our visit and recommended this area as holding the most birds. Directions are covered in Gosney, though somewhat difficult to follow. We stayed at Hotel Soledad, which is on the right hand side of the road as you come into Los Palacios. From here head north back out of town and turn left at the second roundabout. Follow this road until you come to a right turn onto an obvious wide flyover, situated near a football ground and follow this road for c9km until you come to the grain silos shown in Gosney. Turn right here and follow the road to view the extensive marshes. During the course of our visit they were literally teeming with water birds, including at least 6 Marbled Duck.

### **LAGUNA MEDINA**

This well-known site, situated by the C440 10km south of Jerez. It is just beyond a large cement works and signposted to Laguna de Medina. Park in the car park and walk along the track to view the lake through gaps in the reeds. We had at least 30 White-headed Ducks here and a single pair of Crested Coot. The lake is literally teeming

with Coot, though Crested Coot is said to prefer the reedy fringes, close to the shore. Our pair were amongst some of the closest Coot, though this could have course been pure luck!

#### **VELEZ MALAGA**

We visited this site in search of Black-rumped Waxbill, which is rumoured to be a future addition to Category C of the Spanish list. It also holds good numbers of Red Avadavat. From Malaga head towards Torre del Mar on the N340b coast road. At km269 you will see a stone water tower on the right hand side of the road. Turn right down here and continue until you reach the buildings for a nudist camp. Turn around here and head back the way you came, but turn right onto the first track into the allotments. We parked our car at the first greenhouses (at the first sharp right hand bend in the track) and explored the immediate area. We had several Red Avadavats in the large tomato plantation adjacent to the greenhouses and a single Black-rumped Waxbill on the fence between here and the extensive artichoke field to the left. Both species are said to prefer the weedy edges of the artichoke fields.

#### **CABO DE GATA**

We only visited this site as somewhere to stay for the night, as it was a convenient stop found in Gosney. The site is signposted from the N332 just west of Almeria. The salt pans produced large numbers of Greater Flamingoes, as well as Slender-billed and Audouin's Gulls, and an evening sea watch from the point produced several Balearic and Cory's Shearwaters. The area around the lighthouse produced several Black & Black-eared Wheatears, though we failed to find any Trumpeter Finches. The water trough mentioned in Gosney was dry.

#### **EL PRAT DE CABANES**

We visited this site solely to see Moustached Warbler, which we found to be fairly common in suitable habitat. Head north on the E15 for c110km to the town of Torrealblanca. At the town of Torrealblanca, take the road to Torrenostro and the coast, which passes under a railway bridge. Take the second right after the bridge (ignore the one immediately after the bridge), when you come to a t-junction turn right. Head along here for c1-2km until a wide gravelled nature trail goes off to the left into the pools. If I remember correctly the correct turn off the coast road had a white sign with blue and orange writing on it to a campsite. Moustached Warbler was reasonably common in the short reeds/ juncus around the various pools.

#### **EBRO DELTA**

We visited the southern portion shown in Gosney, L'Encanyissada Lagoon, La Tancada Lagoon and the adjacent salt pans. The Ebro Delta is signposted from the main coast road. We most of the expected species with our best records being a single Great White Egret at La Tancada and 2 Caspian Terns on the salt pans here.

#### **MAJORCA**

We only included Majorca at the last minute of the basis of how cheap the flights were from Barcelona and the lure of a Balearic endemic! After gathering much gen from eurobirdnet, we came to the conclusion that the best place to see Balearic Warbler and Eleonora's Falcon easily was the Formentor Peninsula. We tried the scrub close to the watch point at 15km to no avail, so began walking up the road towards the lighthouse looking for more suitable areas. At c16km we noticed a small bare earth field off to our right down a slope, which was being grazed by goats. This had quite a bit of scrubby vegetation in and around it, which looked good for Dartford Warbler, so we followed an obvious stony track down to this field. We quickly found around 5 Balearic Warblers in this area, as well as 2 fly over Eleonora's Falcon. (It would appear that on chatting to a friend this is the exact same spot where he saw Balearic Warbler over 10 years ago so it looks a good bet). We also had further Eleonora's Falcons at km17 and around the lighthouse. The pines around Hotel Formentor hold Firecrest and the endemic race of Crossbill.

#### **GAVA BEACH**

Not really a site this, purely somewhere we tried sea watching on the final morning as it was close to the airport. We were keen to see Levantine Shearwater and had been advised that they are reasonably common (c50/50 with Balearic) from any headland north of Barcelona, and with that in mind we decided to visit the nearest piece of coastline to the airport. Basically we parked at the beach and set our scopes up. Within a couple of hours we had seen numerous Cory's and Balearic Shearwaters, as well as a single Levantine. Gava beach is signposted from the main coast road just south of the airport, though I suspect any piece of coast around here would do.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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If anyone would like any further information on any aspects of this report please do not hesitate to contact me at [bellchris76@btopenworld.com](mailto:bellchris76@btopenworld.com)

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## **SYSTEMATIC LIST**

### **Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)**

Common in wetland areas.

### **Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)**

Small numbers noted at Pinzon, El Prat de Cabanes and the Ebro Delta.

### **Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*)**

Common at Laguna Medina.

### **Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*)**

10 past Cabo de Gata.

50+ past Gava Beach.

All were presumed to be of the smaller nominate race *C. d. diomedea*, known as Scopoli's Shearwater.

### **Balearic Shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*)**

12 past Cabo de Gata.

30+ past Gava Beach.

### **Levantine Shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*)**

1 north past Gava Beach.

### **Northern Gannet (*Sula bassana*)**

1 past Cabo de Gata.

3 past Gava Beach.

### **Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)**

Common in suitable habitat.

### **Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)**

Noted on the Rio Tietar and Rio Alimonte in the Monfrague area, and at Pinzon, Pego and the Ebro Delta.

### **Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*)**

Common in suitable habitat, with a huge colony of around 300 at Pinzon alone.

### **Great White Egret (*Casmerodius albus*)**

1 at La Tancada Lagoon, Ebro Delta.

### **Cattle Egret (*Bulbulcus ibis*)**

Common in southern Spain, as well as S'Albufera in Majorca.

### **Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*)**

Fairly common at wetland sites, noted at Laguna de la Mejorada, Pinzon, Pego, the Ebro Delta, past Gava beach, & at S'Albufera on Majorca.

### **Black-crowned Night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)**

Fairly common at Pinzon, and the Ebro Delta, with largest count being c30 at Laguna de la Mejorada. Also noted at S'Albufera on Majorca.

### **Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*)**

Commonly encountered in reedbed habitat, and flooded rice fields at Laguna de la Mejorada, near Vega Atlas, Pinzon, Laguna Medina, Pego and the Ebro Delta.

### **Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*)**

A single bird around the cliffs at Tietar in Monfrague NP & another single seen from the bridge over the Rio Alimonte.

### **White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)**

Common and widespread in France and Spain.

### **Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*)**

At least 500 at Cabo de Gata salt pans, and up to 50 at the Ebro Delta.

**White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)**

At least 30 counted at Laguna Medina.

**Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)**

11 past Cabo de Gata.

**Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)**

Quite common at Pinzon and Laguna Medina, as well as S'Albufera on Majorca.

**Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)**

Common and widespread.

**Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)**

A single at Laguna Medina was perhaps surprisingly the only record.

**Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*)**

At least 6 around the Pinzon Marshes.

**Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*)**

Small numbers noted at Pinzon and El Prat de Cabanes, with the largest concentration being around 30 at L'Encanyissada lagoon in the Ebro Delta.

**Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)**

3 at Pinzon Marshes, and a single at S'Albufera on Majorca were the only ones noted.

**Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)**

3 at L'Encanyissada Lagoon in the Ebro Delta.

**Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*)**

Quite common in the Pyrenees, and also noted on the plains near Belen.

**Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*)**

Common throughout.

**Lammergeier (*Gypaetus barbatus*)**

2 adults over the Wallcreeper site at Gabardito in the Hecho Valley.

**Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*)**

Quite scarce with a single in the Hecho Valley, 2 near Collado de la Pedra S Martin, 2 near the Col Du Somport and up to 4 in Monfrague NP.

**Eurasian Griffon-vulture (*Gyps fulvus*)**

Very common throughout the Pyrenees, as well as being common in Monfrague National NP.

**Eurasian Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*)**

Fairly common in Monfrague NP, seen around Torrejon el Rubio, Mirador de la Bascula and the monastery.

**Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*)**

Quite common in Monfrague NP, with at least 6 birds seen. Also a pair near Tarifa, with singles noted over the Rio Alimonte, and near Gargaligas.

**Western Marsh-harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)**

Up to 3 at Pinzon, with a single female at S'Albufera on Majorca.

**Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*)**

Fairly common in suitable habitat with up to 3 birds noted at La Lomanza, around Vega Atlas and near Belen. The largest number recorded was 6 in the air together at El Prat de Cabanes.

**Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)**

Quite scarce, but noted at the Col du Tourmalet in France, near Vega Atlas and on the plains near Belen.

**Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti [heliaca]*)**

Only seen in Monfrague NP, with separate pairs being noted at Mirador de la Bascula, and by the road near Torrejon el Rubio.

**Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*)**

Two pairs seen in Monfrague NP; one from Mirador de la Bascula and another pair at Tietar, which spent some time perched on the cliff.

**Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*)**

Surprisingly only two seen; single pale phase adults over the Rio Alimonte bridge and just south of Trujillo.

**Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*)**

Fantastic views of up to 20 birds breeding in the roof of the bullring at Trujillo, with other birds seen on route.

**Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)**

Fairly common.

**Eleonora's Falcon (*Falco eleonora*)**

Up to 4 birds seen on the Formentor Peninsula, Majorca. A pair (one light phase and one dark phase) over Km16, a single light phase at Km18 and another light phase bird over the lighthouse.

**Northern Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)**

A single near Bedous, France was the only bird of the trip.

**Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)**

A single around Formentor Beach, Majorca was presumably of the race "brookei".

**Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)**

Fairly common.

**Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)**

Singles heard calling high in the Pyrenees at Collado de la Pedra S Martin and near Vega Atlas, with a single bird flushed in the vineyards near Los Palacios.

**Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)**

Up to 100 birds noted around the Pinzon Marshes, and 4 (introduced) birds, including fledged young at S'Albufera, Majorca.

**Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)**

Common in wetland areas.

**Red-knobbed Coot (*Fulica cristata*)**

A single pair amongst the seemingly infinite Coots at Laguna Medina on 29/06/2003.

**Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*)**

Common in wetland areas, with huge numbers at Laguna Medina

**Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)**

A total of 11 around the Belen Plains, including a single party of 7.

**Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)**

2 at the Ebro Delta.

**Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)**

Common in wetland areas in southern and eastern Spain, as well as S'Albufera on Majorca.

**Pied Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)**

At least 500 on the salt pans Cabo de Gata and up to 100 around the Ebro Delta.

**Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedipnemus*)**

At least 4 birds on the plains around Belen.

**Collared Pratincole (*Gareola pratincola*)**

Common at Pinzon, with smaller numbers noted at El Prat de Cabanes, Jandia and near Gargaligas.

**Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)**

6 at the Ebro Delta.

**Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)**

Up to 15 birds around Pego Marshes, with singles noted at Pinzon and S'Albufera on Majorca.

**Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)**

Common in coastal areas, with over 200 on the salt pans at Cabo de Gata alone.

**Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)**

A single near Belen, and 3 at El Prat de Cabanes.

**Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)**

A single bird at Cabo de Gata.

**Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)**

Up to 50 on the salt pans at Cabo de Gata, and a single bird over Pinzon.

**Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)**

Small numbers noted at Pinzon and Cabo de Gata

**Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)**

Singles noted at Pinzon, Pego and the bridge over the Rio Alimonte.

**Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)**

A party of 7 at Pego Marshes.

**Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*)**

A single in rice paddies near Jandia.

**Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*)**

The largest numbers noted were at El Prat de Cabanes and the Ebro Delta with up to 50 at each. Small numbers at Cabo de Gata and Denia, with a single bird at Porto Pollenca being the only bird seen on Majorca.

**Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*)**

Common in coastal areas.

**Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)**

Fairly common around the Ebro Delta, Cabo de Gata and S'Albufera on Majorca.

**Slender-billed Gull (*Larus genei*)**

Up to 30 around the Ebro Delta, with similar numbers around the salt pans at Cabo de Gata.

**Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilotica*)**

2 at the Ebro Delta and a single over fields near Vega Atlas.

**Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*)**

2 on the salt pans by La Tancada lagoon, Ebro Delta on 03/07/2003.

**Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)**

Fairly common at Cabo de Gata and the Ebro Delta.

**Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)**

Common at Cabo de Gata and the Ebro Delta, as well as S'Albufera on Majorca.

**Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*)**

Fairly common at Cabo de Gata, with smaller numbers at Pinzon and around the Ebro Delta.

**Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybridus*)**

Common at Pinzon, Pego, El Prat de Cabanes and the Ebro Delta.

**Pin-tailed Sandgrouse (*Pterocles alchata*)**

Several small parties seen both days at La Lomanza totalling around 15 birds.

**Rock Dove(Feral Pigeon) (*Columba livia*)**

Common and widespread.

**Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*)**

Common and widespread especially in the northern part of Spain.

**European Turtle-dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)**

At least 100 on wires near Jandia was the largest single count.

**Eurasian Collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)**

Abundant.

**Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)**

A single at Pinzon Marshes.

**Common Scops-owl (*Otus scops*)**

1 heard near Bedous, France.

**Eurasian Eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*)**

4, comprising of 2 adults and 2 well grown young, on the cliffs at Tietar in Monfrague NP. They emerged around 9.55pm and gave good scope views on the cliffs.

**Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)**

1 heard near Bedous, France.

**Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)**

A single bird on wires close to the village of Retamar in Cabo de Gata NP.

**Red-necked Nightjar (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*)**

At least 3 birds seen, including one on the ground at Mirador de la Bascula, in Monfrague NP.

**Alpine Swift (*Tachymarptis melba*)**

30+ birds around the bridge over the Rio Tajo, south of Villareal de San Carlos in Monfrague were the only ones seen.

**Common Swift (*Apus apus*)**

Common and widespread particularly in the north.

**Pallid Swift (*Apus pallidus*)**

Seemed the commonest Swift sp in the south, though not all Swifts were studied, with a large westward passage of over 500 birds noted past Cabo de Gata.

**White-rumped Swift (*Apus caffer*)**

4 birds seen at Monfrague. A pair seen easily at Sanctuario de Monfrague monastery site, were present on and off for the whole duration of our 2 hour visit, though often drifting off for 10-15 minutes at a time. However when present they gave excellent close views over the monastery. We also had great views of a pair that spent about 5 minutes around the bridge north of Torrejon el Rubio.

**Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)**

A single bird at Pego Marshes.

**European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)**

Common in Extramadura and the south, also small numbers noted on Majorca.

**European Roller (*Coracias garrulus*)**

3 separate birds seen on roadside telegraph wires between Zorita and Vega Atlas.

**Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)**

Common and widespread with at least 15 seen on the plains around Belen.

**White-backed Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*)**

Two sightings of probably the same bird at the Foret D'Issaux.

The birds here are of the race "lilfordi" sometimes known as Lilford's Woodpecker.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)**

Fairly common in wooded areas.

**Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)**

Single birds in the Hecho Valley, & at the Forêt D'Issuax in France.

Both birds were of the race "sharpei" which lacks the black surround at the base of the bill.

**Calandra Lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*)**

Common at La Lomanza, and the plains around Belen, with 2 birds noted at Pinzon.

**Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla [cinerea]*)**

Fairly common at Lomanza with odd birds elsewhere.

**Lesser Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella rufescens*)**

Only seen at La Lomanza where common.

**Dupont's Lark (*Chersophilus duponti*)**

At least 3 birds singing at La Lomanza, with a single bird seen briefly singing from a tussock at around 10.30am.

**Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*)**

Common and widespread, particularly in cultivated areas.

**Thekla Lark (*Galerida theklae*)**

Common at La Lomanza, and on the plains around Belen, seeming to prefer steppe habitat.

**Eurasian Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)**

Heard at the Col Du Tourmalet, France.

**Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)**

Large numbers around Pinzon.

**Eurasian Crag-martin (*Hirundo rupestris*)**

Fairly common in the vicinity of suitable nesting sites and noted in the Hecho Valley, Monfrague NP, Rio Alimonte bridge, and Formentor on Majorca.

**Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)**

Common and widespread.

**Red-rumped Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*)**

Fairly common in Monfrague NP, & up to 10 at Finca Santa Marta.

**House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)**

Very common throughout, with huge colonies nesting under the bridges in Monfrague NP.

**Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)**

Two birds around the Col du Tourmalet.

**Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)**

Common in the high peaks of the Pyrenees at Collado de la Pedra S Martin, and the Col du Tourmalet in France.

**White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)**

Fairly common.

**Yellow-wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)**

Common in damp marshy areas.

All birds studied showed the white throat, supercilium and greyish blue head consistent with the race "iberiae"

**Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)**

2 near Bedous, France.

**White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus gularis*)**

A single immature at the Col du Tourmalet.

**Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes troglodytes*)**

Common in wooded areas.

**Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)**

A pair heard at Collado de la Pedra S Martin.

**Rufous Bushchat (*Cercotrichas galactotes*)**

3 birds in vineyards in the vicinity of Laguna de la Mejorada, near Los Palacios.  
Birds here are of the more rufous toned nominate race "galactotes.

**European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)**

Fairly common in wooded areas.

**Common Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*)**

At least 2 in the olive groves just north of Belchite, and 2 in Monfrague NP.

**Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)**

Fairly common in the Pyrenees.

**Common Stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*)**

Fairly common, though all records were in the southern half of the country.

**Black Wheatear (*Oenanthe leucura*)**

Up to 3 birds around the gorge at La Lomanza, a male at the Rio Alimonte bridge, and up to 5 in the vicinity of the lighthouse at Cabo de Gata.

**Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)**

A single male at La Lomanza, and single pairs in the Pyrenees at Collado de la Pedra S Martin and the Col du Tourmalet in France.

**Black-eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*)**

A single pair at La Lomanza, and several around Collado de La Pedra S Martin. Fairly common around Monfrague NP and Cabo de Gata. Interestingly the black-throated morph seemed to predominate in the south.

**Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*)**

A single male at the Col du Tourmalet, France.

**Blue Rock-thrush (*Monticola solitarius*)**

At least three birds in the vicinity of Tietar cliffs, Monfrague NP, and a single bird close to Km20 on the Formentor peninsula, Majorca.

**Eurasian Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)**

Common.

**Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)**

Fairly common.

**Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)**

Fairly common.

**Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*)**

Heard at Laguna de la Mejorada, Vega Atlas and at S'Albufera on Majorca, though none seen.

**Zitting Cisticola (*Cisticola juncidis*)**

Abundant in the south and Majorca.

**Savi's Warbler (*Locustella luscinioides*)**

Excellent views of a single "reeling" bird at Pinzon, with another heard at the Ebro Delta.

**Moustached Warbler (*Acrocephalus melanopogon*)**

At least 10 at El Prat de Cabanes.

**Eurasian Reed-warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)**

Fairly common, noted at Pinzon, Pego and the Ebro Delta.

**Great Reed-warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)**

Common in reedbed habitat, with the largest numbers noted at Pinzon.

**Western Olivaceous Warbler (*Hippolais opaca*)**

At least 6 in tamarisks around Laguna de la Mejorada

**Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglotta*)**

A single bird at Finca Santa Marta.

**Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)**

4+ at both Monfrague NP, and the Foret D'Issaux in France.

**Western Orphean Warbler (*Sylvia hortensis*)**

At least three in the extensive olive groves just north of Belchite village.

**Sardinian Warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*)**

Common and widespread.

**Subalpine Warbler (*Sylvia cantillans*)**

At least 5 seen in Monfrague NP.

All were of the nominate race "cantillans".

**Spectacled Warbler (*Sylvia conspicillata*)**

Up to 4 birds seen at La Lomanza.

**Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*)**

A single bird briefly near Tietar in Monfrague NP.

**Balearic Warbler (*Sylvia balearica*)**

5 on the Formentor Peninsula close to the 16km post

**Common Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)**

Singles at the Foret D'Issaux, France and Formentor, Majorca.

**Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*)**

A single at the Foret D'Issaux, France and at least 3 around Formentor, Majorca.

Birds on Majorca were of the greyer race "balearicus".

**Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)**

2 in the olive groves at Belchite, and at least 5 around the Formentor Peninsular.

Birds on Majorca are smaller and greyer than our birds and of the race "balearica".

**Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)**

A party of 6 in Monfrague were the only ones seen.

**Marsh Tit (*Parus palustris*)**

A single at the Foret D'Issaux, France.

**Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)**

Fairly common around the Gabardito refuge area in the Hecho Valley.

**Crested Tit (*Parus cristatus*)**

2+ in the woods around the Gabardito refuge in the Hecho Valley, 2 at the Foret D'Issaux, France, and a single bird at Km19 on the Formentor peninsula, Majorca.

**Great Tit (*Parus major*)**

Common and widespread.

**Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)**

Common and widespread.

**Eurasian Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)**

A single bird at Foret D'Issaux, France.

**Wallcreeper (*Tichodroma muraria*)**

A single male at the nest site close to the Gabardito refuge in Hecho Valle.

**Short-toed Treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*)**

3 birds in Monfrague NP, and a single bird at Finca Santa Marta.

**Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)**

Two males at Finca Santa Marta.

**Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio [cristatus]*)**

A single male close to the Foret D'Issaux, France.

**Southern Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*)**

Quite scarce but noted at Monfrague, near Belen and Cabo de Gata.

All birds being of the nominate race "meridionalis".

**Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*)**

Common in Extremadura, particularly Monfrague NP.

**Eurasian Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)**

At least 5 in the Hecho Valley, and several in Monfrague NP.

**Azure-winged Magpie (*Cyanopica cyana*)**

Common in Extremadura, and easily seen in Monfrague NP.

**Eurasian Magpie (*Pica pica*)**

Common and widespread.

**Red-billed Chough (*Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax*)**

2 at La Lomanza, and a large flock of 100+ in the Hecho Valley.

**Alpine Chough (*Pyrrhonorax graculus*)**

10 in the high Pyrenees at Collado de la Pedra S Martin.

**Eurasian Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)**

Common and widespread.

**Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)**

Common in the Pyrenees, as well as a pair at Cabo de Gata.

**Spotless Starling (*Sturnus unicolor*)**

Common and widespread.

**House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)**

Abundant.

**Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis [domesticus]*)**

A pair in Monfrague by the first bridge north of Torrejon el Rubio, and a large breeding colony by the bridge over the Rio Alimonte.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)**

4 in the artichoke fields at Velez Malaga.

**White-winged Snowfinch (*Montifringilla nivalis*)**

At least 10 around the car Park at the summit of the Col du Tourmalet. Birds were nesting in the ski-lift pylons.

**(Black-rumped Waxbill) (*Estrilda troglodytes*)**

A single bird in the artichoke fields at Velez Malaga.

This species is rumoured to be an addition to category C of the Spanish list in the near future.

**Common Waxbill (*Estrilda astrild*)**

A single pair at Finca Santa Marta.

**Red Avadavat (*Amandava amandava*)**

At least 20 in the reeds by the bridge over the Rio Gargaligas close to Vega Atlas, as well as 10+ birds in the artichoke fields at Velez Malaga.

**Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)**

Common and widespread.

**European Serin (*Serinus serinus*)**

Common and widespread, even in the high Pyrenees.

**Citril Finch (*Serinus citrinella*)**

At least 30 at Collado de la Pedra S Martin.

**European Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)**

Common and widespread.

**European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)**

Common and widespread.

**Eurasian Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)**

Common and widespread.

**Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)**

A single over the Gabardito refuge, Hecho Valley, and at least 4 birds at Formentor, Majorca.

Birds on Majorca being of the smaller, paler race "balearica".

**Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)**

A single bird in Monfrague NP and a family party of 6 by the bridge over the Rio Alimonte.

**Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)**

A single male, close to the Foret D'Issaux, France.

**Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*)**

3 in Monfrague NP were the only birds seen.

**Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*)**

At least 4 at Santuario de Monfrague monastery, in Monfrague NP.

**Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*)**

Abundant in suitable habitat.