



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Birding Spain **Trip Report** *25th April to 10th May 2015*



Moussier's Redstart by David Erterius

Trip report compiled by Tour Leader: David Erterius

Tour intro

This year's tour through magical Spain proved to be yet another resounding success, with all the special target species recorded. During our 16-day journey, we explored a wide variety of habitats, including the scenic Sierras, the steppes and oak dehesas of Extremadura, the Ebro River Delta wetlands and marshes on the Mediterranean coast, the dry steppes and plains of the northeastern interior and the high, alpine Pyrenees. Interesting and sought-after species recorded on this tour included Black-winged and Red Kites, Spanish Imperial and Bonelli's Eagles, Bearded Vulture, Iberian Magpie, Great Bustard, White-headed and Marbled Ducks, Bearded Reedling, Moustached Warbler, Audouin's Gull, Red-necked Nightjar, Eurasian Dotterel, Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Dupont's Lark, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Eurasian Penduline Tit, Eurasian Wryneck, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Red-backed Shrike, Wallcreeper, Citril Finch, Ortolan Bunting, Moussier's Redstart and Marmora's Warbler (the latter two being major vagrants to Spain!).

Tour summary

Our tour commenced in Madrid, and the first day was a leisurely journey to the Monfragüe National Park area, which saw us finding many of the special birds before we even arrived at our pleasant hotel for a three-night stay. It didn't take long before we spotted our first White Storks by the road, a species we would see a lot more of further on. Another bird that appeared along the road was Spotless Starling, and this soon turned out to be another characteristic species. As we arrived in a very nice area of Mediterranean woodland, pastureland and cultivations the real birding commenced. Our main goal here was to find the localized Hawfinch, and we soon found ourselves watching a pair foraging in the grass. We had great opportunities to acquaint ourselves with some of the region's commoner species, such as European Serin, Short-toed Treecreeper and Woodchat Shrike. A refueling stop yielded our first Spanish Sparrows nesting in a White Stork's nest up on a pylon. Continuing our drive, we enjoyed great scope views of our first European Bee-eaters, and two European Turtle Doves showed well on a ploughed field by the road. A family group of Southern Grey Shrikes, feeding their newly fledged young, were thoroughly enjoyed, and a little later we found ourselves searching an area for the localized Black-winged Kite. The mission succeeded as we managed to spot two rather distant individuals, although we had reasonable scope views of the birds. A small group of Lesser Kestrels were hovering over the surrounding grassland, and we happened to flush a roadside Long-eared Owl from some small trees as we passed by.



Griffon Vulture by David Erterius

The fabulous Monfragüe National Park, with its wild scrubby hillsides, dramatic cliffs, gorges, holm- and cork-oak forests, also known as "dehesas", and Mediterranean woodland, is a first-class site for watching a wide array of raptors, and the park and its surroundings is Spain's major breeding site for the rare and endemic Spanish Imperial Eagle. Furthermore, the park is a stronghold for both Cinereous and Griffon Vultures. During our time here, we found a nesting pair of Spanish Imperial Eagle and had a great session watching both adults perched as well as performing in flight.



Griffon Vultures were plentiful and offered wonderful close-up looks as they passed by low overhead or swept by just below eye-level at the vantage points! Cinereous Vultures put in an appearance as well, and we spotted our first Egyptian Vulture, Short-toed Snake Eagles and Booted Eagles. A pair of Black Stork at their nest on a rock ledge well below us was thoroughly enjoyed through the scope, and we found our first Red-legged Partridges just by the road. Blue Rock Thrush and Black Redstart were singing from rocks, and Red-rumped Swallows whizzed past overhead. We found Eurasian Jay, several smart Subalpine Warbler males, the dainty Eurasian Wren in full song and a pair of attractive Rock Bunting, while a pair of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker performed well for us in a nearby woodland.

The endless, undulating and grass-and-herb covered Cáceres Plains were our focus for the following day. As we headed to this area, we passed a mix of vast, glorious natural fields and flower-rich pastures and agricultural land, where several Eurasian Hoopoes appeared alongside the



European Roller by David Erterius

countless and ever-present Corn Buntings, singing from roadside fence posts. Arriving on the plains, the characteristic sound of displaying Common Quail was heard from the grass, and Montagu's Harriers were patrolling low over the grasslands. Here, we found our first Great Bustards, a total of four birds, and enjoyed newly arrived European Rollers sitting by their nest boxes, some of which were also occupied by Lesser Kestrels. A visit to the vast steppe outside Belén, which provides a similar habitat as the previous site, produced several Little Bustards

(including males in full display!), numerous Calandra Larks in song-flight, a pair of Little Owl and our first Sardinian Warblers in the form of a cooperative pair that showed well at a small plantation. A highlight in this area was definitely our additional good scope views of a fabulous 14 Great Bustards, all together in a group out on the grassy and flowered plains – a truly impressive sight indeed! We also had time to stop and wander through the wonderful historic walled and fortified hilltop town of Trujillo, a classic Spanish architectural site where Pizarro and Orellana were born and set out to explore South America. While enjoying this historical diversion, we were also able to watch the town's nesting Lesser Kestrels flying overhead as well as White Storks sitting on their nests, and we even had excellent looks, in good light and against good background, of at least one Pallid Swift, whizzing past us on numerous occasions carrying nesting material!

From here we had our longest drive towards Valencia, and we set out across the great open plains of La Mancha, which consists of a vast open landscape of mixed agriculture and pastures. Stopping at some shallow inland lagoons with extensive reedbeds, we found the globally threatened White-headed Duck and localized Black-necked Grebe. Another great bird here was the smart-looking Bearded Reedling, which showed very well in a nearby reedbed. This species is now in its own family, so indeed high on the "want list" for many birders. This wetland also held Red-crested and Common Pochards, Greater Flamingos, a breeding colony with hundreds of Black-headed Gulls,



Whiskered Terns and Great Reed and Eurasian Reed Warblers. Our accommodation for the coming night was a “bodega-hotel” at a wonderful vine estate (“finca”). As we arrived in the early evening, we still had some time for birding around the adjacent cultivations, vineyards and groves, and here we soon located Red Crossbill, European Goldfinch and the funky-looking European Crested Tit. After dark, we decided to try for Eurasian Scops Owl, but despite our very persistent efforts, we only managed to hear two individuals and failed to see any. However, a European Nightjar flew by through the flashlight beam, which was a rather unexpected and nice bonus.

From here we made our way to Valencia and the saline lagoons of Albufera de Valencia on the Mediterranean coast. Our prime target was the rare and localized Marbled Teal, and after some back and forth bustling and scans from various observation points, most of the group eventually got to see one individual of this rare duck. The shallow salines here were literally teeming with birds, and some small nearby islands held hundreds of breeding Sandwich and Common Tern, as well as dozens of Pied Avocets and single pairs of the very attractive Mediterranean Gull. Two confiding Long-tailed Tits were a nice find along the trail to the bird hides. We then headed north, along the Mediterranean coast, to a large coastal marsh, Prat de Cabanes, to search for the localized Moustached Warbler. This is a bird of pristine reedbeds and usually requires some efforts to locate.



Mediterranean Gull by David Erterius

After having walked along the lagoons for a while, constantly scanning the reeds and enjoying other good birds such as Collared Pratincole, Little Tern, Western Yellow Wagtail (of the *iberiae* subspecies) and a stunning male Garganey, we finally hit our target, ending up with a total of six Moustached Warblers!

Our next full day and the morning thereafter were devoted to the world-class Ebro Delta, which is by far a more productive, accessible and easily-observable wetland than the more famous Coto Donana in the far south of Spain. The huge area that is Ebro wetlands produced a wide range of waterfowl, good numbers of various herons and egrets such as Squacco and Grey Heron and Great and Little Egrets, but also a number of migrating passerines making landfall from their northerly journey from Africa. A good example of this was the following episode: As we drove on the outer Ebro Delta, we decided to check out a small isolated patch of scrub on a huge sand spit, which was said to be a hot-spot for migrants and vagrants. And indeed it had attracted some birds! Several Willow Warblers, a Garden Warbler and an elusive male Common Redstart were all hiding in the bushes. As the tour leader tried pointing out the Redstart, all of a sudden an unfamiliar warbler appeared at eye-level at just some 30 ft. away! A rather uniform Sylvia-warbler with a slate-grey plumage, a distinctive red eye, pale bill with a dark tip and orange coloured legs – “A MARMORA’S WARBLER!!!” The bird was seen well by half of the group for a couple of



minutes, and then disappeared, not to be relocated. It soon turned out that this species is a major vagrant to Spain, with just a few accepted records prior to this one!

Moving on to another coastal migrant hot-spot, an isolated and rather tall grove on the outer parts of the delta, we found our only Red-necked Nightjar of the trip, and several European Pied Flycatchers on stop-over. Driving past the vast expanses of rice paddies on the inner parts of the delta, we enjoyed good numbers of foraging Glossy Ibises and Purple Swampheens. We also had a good array of shorebirds, predominantly birds on passage but a few breeders as well. These included Eurasian Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Common Ringed and Kentish Plovers, Spotted and Common Redshanks, Common Greenshank, Wood, Common and Curlew Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Little Stint, Dunlin and Ruff. Every now and then, flocks of flamboyant Greater Flamingos flew by, and on two separate occasions we had good open views of the elusive Water Rail. The Ebro Delta is an important site for two globally restricted species of gulls, namely



Dupont's Lark by David Erterius

Slender-billed and Audouin's, both of which can be locally very common. We enjoyed a number of good sightings of these very smart, distinctive and elegant gulls and familiarized with their calls as well. However, one of the absolute highlights of our birding in the Ebro Delta came later on the very same day as the Marmora's Warbler. As we were about to enter an observation tower near the river mouth, in another part of the outer delta, the tour leader heard the song of a Melodious Warbler, another new species for the tour. The group was called together, and as we tried to relocate the warbler, a very striking passerine flew by in perfect light just in front of the whole group. Seconds later, the bird landed in some near tamarisk bushes, and as soon as the bird was sighted with the bins, the ID was clear: an absolutely stunning male MOUSSIER'S REDSTART!!! This was yet another major vagrant to Spain with only a few accepted records prior to this one! Unbelievable!! Thereafter, the bird was very cooperative and showed well in tamarisk scrub and other bushes and on fence posts for the whole group, and it turned out later that several local birders arrived at the actual spot as well to twitch the bird. (See further comments in the list of species below.)

Another complete change of scenery after the Ebro entailed venturing inland for a few days, into the dry, stony steppes of the northeastern interior, to concentrate on finding larks and sandgrouse. En route we passed a riverine area with intact riparian forest and very good reedbeds, which yielded Little Grebe, Purple Heron, Western Marsh Harrier and Common Kingfisher. Arriving in the steppes around the small and quiet town of Lécera by late afternoon, we quickly got to grips with five of the six lark species in the area. The next morning we then set off early to try for one of the star attractions of this desolate area, namely Dupont's Lark. This species has a reputation of being elusive and tricky to find, but this year we got lucky with our first early morning session, as a bird was seen singing and showing well at close range just by the road! Upon our arrival, it took us only a few minutes to spot the bird as it was sitting on top of a small tussock! We then enjoyed very



good scope views for several minutes of this skulking species, confined only to Iberia and small areas of adjacent North Africa. Out on these sparse, herb-rich limestone steppes, we also found Spectacled Warbler and good numbers of Lesser Short-toed Lark, while Greater Short-toed and Calandra Larks were confined to areas of agricultural land. Good opportunities were had to compare the rather dark, greyish-brown and short-billed Thekla Larks with the paler brown and longer-billed Crested Larks. Black-bellied Sandgrouse showed up as well, even though a bit reluctant to give itself up.

A detour to a hilly and rocky area with steep canyons and scrubby slopes with a mixture of broom produced good views of a singing Hartford Warbler, a breeding pair Bonelli's Eagle circling overhead and sitting on cliffs as well as a singing Western Bonelli's Warbler in a nearby wood. In

this odd, semi-arid environment of dry steppe mixed with irrigated agricultural land we were also very lucky to enjoy a flock of Eurasian Dotterels on stop-over. These birds were feeding on a bare ploughed field, and we learnt how to separate the richer-coloured females from the duller males, and a few rather drab second year birds were identified as well. At another semi-arid area with a mixture of



Eurasian Dotterels by David Erterius

steppe habitat and agricultural land, we found Pin-tailed Sandgrouse and Great Spotted Cuckoo and enjoyed even closer looks at a smart male Little Bustard. Visiting a dramatic canyon, with protruding limestone escarpments, we found the localized Black Wheatear alongside the commoner Black-eared Wheatear. Before we left this fabulous region to head north towards the High Pyrenees, we enjoyed a nest-building male Eurasian Penduline Tit by a river and a singing Eurasian Wryneck at the same spot. In this area, we also had our only sighting of Iberian Wild Goat (or Spanish Ibex), a female with its kid showing well in a cavity on a roadside escarpment.

The High Pyrenees is the most scenic area we visit on this tour and another very strong contrast in habitats and birds. We arrived in Siresa by early evening. This idyllic and very pretty medieval stone village, with its rural and picturesque architecture, is wonderfully situated at the bottom of a very scenic valley. This would become our base for the next three nights, and the following two days were devoted to exploring various elevations in the surrounding area. The "big bird" here is the strange and beautiful Wallcreeper, so after some early pre-breakfast birding near our hotel, which yielded good views of the endemic Iberian Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Cirl Bunting, we decided to set off to a site for this little gem. A roadside stop in a mixed forest en route produced great views of an impressive Black Woodpecker as well as singing Marsh Tit. Reaching the end of the road, we had to hike through stunning beech forest with a mixture of pine and fir and past beautiful alpine meadows, and along this track we recorded European Robin, Coal Tit and Goldcrest. We then reached some huge rockfaces where the Wallcreeper was supposed to show up. All of the group helped in craning their necks upwards to scan the vast areas of craggy red and grey limestone cliffs for this amazing bird. Eurasian Crag and Common House Martins were busy building nests on the rock faces, and the first Bearded Vulture of the trip was gliding high up



over a distant ridge. Then all of a sudden, a male and a female Wallcreeper appeared! The birds were remarkably cooperative since they stayed for several minutes and gave excellent scope views as they erratically crept on the rocks to pick small insects with their long, super-thin bill while flicking their wings with “crimson flashes”. An amazing species indeed, with nothing equivalent elsewhere in the avian world!

Back at our vehicles, we then decided to try for another special bird of this montane area, namely Citril Finch. It didn't take long before we found at least five birds, showing very well! The afternoon saw us exploring other parts of the valley, and birding highlights included great scope



High Pyrenees scenery by David Erterius

views of a pair of peculiar White-throated Dippers with a newly fledged young at a fast-flowing stream, as well as several Grey Wagtails. We had our best views so far of the very attractive Common Firecrest, while a rather distant Eurasian Sparrowhawk was soaring over the forest. We eventually reached the upper section of the valley, and this area produced Dunnock and a lovely male Yellowhammer. Several Alpine Marmots and Northern Chamois were also seen here up on the grassy alpine slopes. This was a very scenic valley indeed,

offering stunning views of the surrounding high mountains and verdant alpine meadows with a variety of flowers, including several species of orchids.

The following day was devoted to the highest altitudes of the trip, up to around 1,750 metres. As we crossed the border into the neighboring Navarra region, this meant we also entered Basque Country and got to see a slightly different scenery. Driving down into other valleys, we were struck by the sheer beauty of this land. Passing pastures, grazing sheep and agricultural land, dotted with fields and huts, we enjoyed our best views so far of Red-billed Chough. The road then started to climb rather abruptly, and moments later we found ourselves in an open landscape of steep alpine meadows bisected by small melt-water streams. Here we found a stunning male Common Rock Thrush and several singing Water Pipits, alongside numerous Northern Wheatears. High up into the snowline were Ring Ouzel and Mistle Thrush, and a little higher obligingly tame flocks of Yellow-billed Choughs. Our superb packed lunch was enjoyed at this spot, and we were soon rewarded by finding four very confiding (almost tame!) Alpine Accentors. Several Citril Finches and Mistle Thrushes gave further views as well. This was actually right on the border with France, and after a small detour into this country, we headed back into Spain. As we descended, we found singing Tree Pipit and caught up with better views of Eurasian Nuthatch. A very nice and pristine mixed forest further down the valley yielded great views of the scarce and localized Eurasian Treecreeper.

From the High Pyrenees, we made our way back south, stopping at a stake-out for Ortolan Bunting in the so called Pre-Pyrenees. We found three of this attractive bunting alongside singing Tawny Pipit in dry and scrubby habitat at the base of a hill. After this, we headed to the remarkable and famous old monastery at San Juan de la Pena. This was one of the most important monasteries in



Aragon in the Middle Ages, and has a two-level church that is partially carved into the stone of the great cliff that overhangs the foundation. We spent some time here, enjoying the extraordinary architectural wonders, but also did a short walk through the surrounding forest, to a spectacular viewpoint ("balcony"). This gave us stunning views of the open plains and farmlands below, all with a fabulous distant Pyrenean backdrop and in perfectly clear and glorious sunny weather.

Lunch was then enjoyed in the small medieval town of Aínsa, right next to its 11th-century castle, where we were also entertained by a couple of Rock Sparrows sitting on the stone wall. After winding up some amazing hairpin bends back into the mountains, we found ourselves, by midafternoon, on the outskirts of the great Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park. Here, we followed a small track for about a kilometer to reach a wonderful viewpoint. During this hike, we enjoyed numerous Western Bonelli's Warblers, singing their hearts out in the sunshine, and had great looks at Common Chiffchaff as well. However, the main attraction was the magnificent Bearded Vulture (or Lammergeier), since it has one of its major European strongholds within the parks boundaries. It was truly a memorable sight watching up to eight of these incredible raptors as they were gliding through the deep verdant river valley, surrounded by high cliffs and steep rocks!

What better place to finish this tour than the delightful accommodation at Lecina? Situated within the sparsely populated Sierra de Guara Natural Park, the tiny, quiet village of Lecina is idyllically situated on a dead-end mountain road, surrounded by glorious mixes of olive groves, tiny terraced fields, stunted oak woodland and box scrub. We arrived in Lecina by early evening and checked-in at our accommodation for the next three nights, a grand old 17th century stone farmhouse that had been marvelously restored! This small, family-run treasure



Bearded Vulture by David Erterius

turned out to produce absolutely delicious food and, as always, it was washed down with plentiful good wine! In addition, we had so much wonderful birding within walking distance of our doorsteps. It was a true pleasure to enjoy a whole morning with a very gentle amble along the quiet track, reinforcing all those sightings of classic Mediterranean birds and adding even more species to our list. Avian highlights during these explorations on foot around the village included perfect open views of a stunning male Eurasian Golden Oriole in lovely morning light, Woodlark, Melodious Warbler, Western Orphean and Subalpine Warblers and Common Nightingale (finally!). Lecina also holds a resident pair of Tawny Owl, and this is an easy after-dinner jaunt just to the front door of the hotel opposite the old church where the birds nest. We enjoyed the adult birds as well as the youngsters both at night and in full daylight. A spectacular canyon just a few minutes' drive away held nesting Griffon Vultures, offering superb additional views in flight and at their nests, while powerful Alpine Swifts whizzed past overhead, giving outstanding airshows. We also explored the western part of the Sierra de Guara Natural Park, where we found Peregrine Falcon and Red-backed



Shrike, and had additional views of a Bearded Vulture gliding by overhead. This day also gave us some time in the afternoon to visit Alquezar, a beautifully intact medieval village with cobblestone streets, arched stone doorways, a hilltop monastery and a fortified church.

On our final travel day back to Barcelona, we still aimed for some birding en route in order to catch up with some species and add some more. Our first stop was at a newly restored reservoir, where we found a good array of waterbirds. Northern Lapwing became the only new bird for the trip here, while we enjoyed additional and even better looks at Great Spotted Cuckoo, Little Ringed Plover and Spotted Redshank. Two groups of Common Ringed Plovers, with two Sanderlings in one of



Long-eared Owl by David Erterius

them, were apparently northern birds on stop-over, and thus belonging to the arctic subspecies *tundrae*. We continued on and headed for some riverside birding at the confluence of the two rivers Cinca and Segres, via a staked-out Western Barn Owl. This site holds various species of breeding herons and egrets, and we managed better looks at Black-crowned Night Heron among others. Mute Swan (a localized species here) and Little Bittern were however the two most wanted birds here. The former was bagged with little effort, while the latter was unfortunately only seen by our local leader. A good bonus though, was that finally (after many attempts!) the entire group had a good sighting of Common Cuckoo, and this was thanks to a very responsive bird that instantly came flying towards us and passed by the crowd as the tour leader imitated the bird's "cuckoo" call!

Heading down to Barcelona meant that we had some time to recap on our amazing adventure through Spain. Great birds, fine and varied scenery, great historical and cultural sites and delightful food and accommodations made the tour a real treat, covering much of very beautiful and rural Spain. I hope you will

remember for a long time to come the landscape of Extremadura, with its endless undulating grass- and herb-covered hills and vast "Dehesa" holm- and cork-oak forests, the numerous ancient fortified hilltop towns and all the small, idyllic rural villages, the fragrant aroma of thyme and *Artemisia*, the countless bright red poppies bordering the country roads, the Don Quixote windmills and expansive vineyards of the La Mancha landscape, the images of Basque Country landscape, with its pastures, grazing sheep and agricultural land, surrounded by bright green beech forest and rugged mountains, the Wallcreeper experience, the extraordinary architectural wonders of San Juan de la Pena, the larger-than-life colonies of White Storks nesting on old churches and power-line pylons, the early morning outing on the steppe, with singing Dupont's Lark, the quest for sandgrouse, the fabulous array of raptors including such gems as Spanish Imperial Eagle and Black-winged Kite and eyeball-to-eyeball views of Eurasian Griffons in Monfragüe NP, the Ordesa hike with its fabulous scenery and magnificent Lammergeiers, the seafood extravaganza in our smart Ebro Delta hotel, the good wine throughout the tour, the excitement of the two unexpected records



in the Ebro Delta, and the pleasure of becoming familiar with and getting repeat views of a good selection of common southern European species.

Thanks to you all for a wonderful tour!



2015 tour group & tour leaders

Annotated List of Birds recorded

Total species recorded: 222 (219 seen and 3 heard)

E = Endemic to Iberian Peninsula, **NE** = Near-endemic, **I** = Introduced

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Gill, F and D Donsker (Eds). 2015. IOC World Bird List (v 5.2).

Note: Number in brackets () indicate number of days on the tour the species was seen.

List powered through the report generator of our partner iGoTerra.

Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl *Anatidae*

Mute Swan

Cygnus olor



(1) 2 adults seen well on the Ebro/Cinca River confluence at Mequinenza.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

(3) Up to 20 on Ebro Delta.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

(6) Particularly common on Ebro Delta.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

(9) Particularly common on Ebro Delta and at San Salvador Reservoir.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

(3) 4 at Albufera de Valencia, 7 on Ebro Delta and 1 at San Salvador Reservoir.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

(2) Good scope views of a male at Prat de Cabanes and a distant male seen by some at San Salvador Reservoir.

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

(1) 1 was seen by most of the group at Albufera de Valencia.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

(4) Up to 300 at Ebro Delta, with several good looks.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

(2) Good scope views of 7 at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan and 10 at Valencia Wetlands.

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

(1) Great views of 10 on a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan.

Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies Phasianidae

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

(6) Up to 7 at Candasnos Steppe. Several good looks roadside.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

(1) 3 calling males at Caceres Plains.

Grebes Podicipedidae

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

(4) Up to 5 in the Belén area and two separate birds on their nests.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

(4) Up to 100+ San Salvador Reservoir.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

(1) Good looks at 7 birds on a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan.

Flamingos Phoenicopteridae

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*



(4) Up to 100+ at Sarinena Lagoon, Ebro Delta.

Storks *Ciconiidae*

Black Stork

Ciconia nigra

(1) Good looks at a pair on their nest plus another single bird at Monfragüe NP.

White Stork

Ciconia ciconia

(9) Common nesting bird in all areas except High Pyrenees and Ebro Delta.

Ibises and Spoonbills *Threskiornithidae*

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

(2) A hundred per day on Ebro Delta.

Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns *Ardeidae*

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

(4) Up to 40 on Ebro Delta.

Squacco Heron

Ardeola ralloides

(4) Up to 15 on Ebro Delta.

Western Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

(8) Up to 200 en route Extremadura – Alcazar de San Juan.

NOTE: *B. Coromandus* (Eastern Cattle Egret) is split from *B. ibis* by IOC but Clements does not accept this split as yet.

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

(9) Up to 10 on Ebro Delta and 10 at Cinca/Ebro Rivers confluence.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

(6) Up to 10 at Flix, Ebro River.

Great Egret

Ardea alba

(4) Up to 10 on Ebro Delta.

NOTE: The nominate Old World Great Egret may be split from the New World *A. a. egretta* which would become American Egret. This potential split is as yet not recognized by Clements.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

(5) Up to 50 on Ebro Delta.

NOTE: Clements lumps Little, Western Reef (*E. gularis*) and Madagascar's Dimorphic (*E. dimorpha*) Egret into a single species. This treatment is not widely accepted as IOC accepts all three splits.

Cormorants and Shags *Phalacrocoracidae*

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

(5) Up to 10 en route Barajas – Monfragüe, 10 at Prat de Cabanes and 10 on Ebro Delta.

NOTE: The white-breasted African subspecies of the widely distributed Great Cormorant *P. carbo* is sometimes considered a different species: *P. lucidus*. This split is recognized by IOC.

Hawks, Eagles, and Kites *Accipitridae*

Black-winged Kite

Elanus caeruleus

(2) A pair near Saucedilla of this localized species and another bird was seen briefly by the road en route Extremadura – Alcazar de San Juan.



NOTE: Clements has split the two species Black-shouldered Kite (*E. caeruleus*) of the Old World and White-tailed Kite (*E. leucurus*) of the New World. This split is not universally accepted. IOC splits it into three species.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*
(9) Up to 10 Sierra de Guara Natural Park.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*
(3) 5 near Candanos, 1 Lecina – Betorz and 1 Vadiello Reservoir. All were migrating northwards.

Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*
(12) Common throughout except none on the coast. Superb close views of flying birds from above and below and good scope views on nests.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*
(3) 3 en route Barajas – Monfragüe, 15 Monfragüe NP and 1 Belén Plains. Good scope views of perched and flying birds.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*
(10) 1-3 per day in a wide range of locations, but none on the coast. Up to 5 en route Siresa – Belagua Valley.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*
(11) 1-4 per day in a wide range of locations, but none on the coast. Up to 10 Cáceres Plains – Trujillo – Belén Plains.

Spanish Imperial Eagle (E) *Aquila adalberti*
(2) We had fabulous views of a pair at their nest in Monfragüe NP. 1 very distant individual en route Barajas – Monfragüe was only seen by the tour leader.
NOTE: This species was formerly treated as conspecific with *A. heliaca* (Eastern Imperial Eagle) of SE Europe to C Siberia.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
(2) Good scope views of 1 perched on a power-line pylon at Lécera Plains and 1 rather distant in flight at Tosos Reservoir. A further 2 were seen on the Candanos Steppe.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*
(1) Good prolonged flight views of a pair at Tosos Reservoir.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
(1) 1 rather distant soaring at Hecho Valley.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*
(1) 1 in flight by the road en route Lécera – Huesca.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
(9) Single individuals at widely located wetlands. Up to 7 in a day at Embalse de Arrocampo/Alcazar de San Juan wetlands.
NOTE: IOC splits *C. aeruginosus* into two species, Western Marsh Harrier (*C. aeruginosus*) of Arica and India and Eastern Marsh Harrier (*C. spilonotus*) of E Asia.



Montagu's Harrier*Circus pygargus*

(5) Up to 15 in one day over the Cacères and Belén Plains.

Red Kite*Milvus milvus*

(10) 1-5 per day Extremadura, in the High Pyrenees and at Sierra de Guara. Up to 20 en route Siresa – Lecina. Numerous good looks at this elegant raptor.

Black Kite*Milvus migrans*

(13) Small numbers in a wide range of locations, but none on the coast. Up to a 100 Monfragüe NP – Belén Plains.

*NOTE: This species is split by some authorities as two species, M. migrans and M. lineatus, the latter is known as Black-eared Kite of Central Asia to Japan, Indochina and India. This split is not recognized by either Clements or IOC.***Common Buzzard***Buteo buteo*

(10) Small numbers in a wide range of locations, but none on the coast. Up to 10 en route Barajas – Monfragüe.

*NOTE: Buteo buteo has been split and separated into four additional species: B. japonicus (Eastern Buzzard) of C and S Siberia, Mongolia, NE China and Japan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005, Lerner et al. 2008), B. burmanicus (Himalayan Buzzard) of the Himalayas and W China (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005, Lerner et al. 2008), B. bannermani (Cape Verde Buzzard) of Cape Verde Is. (Clouet & Wink 2000, Clements 2011) and B. socotraensis (Socotra Buzzard) of Socotra Is. (Porter & Kirwan 2010).***Bustards Otididae****Great Bustard***Otis tarda*

(1) Three separate sightings (1 + 2 + 1) on the Cacères Plains and a fabulous group of 14 birds on the Belén Plains. Most birds seen well through the scope.

Little Bustard*Tetrax tetrax*

(3) Up to 6 on Belén Plains and 5 on Cáceres Plains, with a further sighting on the Candasnos Steppe. Good views of males and females on the ground and in flight, including scope views of males in full display!

Rails, Gallinules, and Coots Rallidae**Water Rail***Rallus aquaticus*

(3) Several heard and 2 seen briefly at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan and 2 separate sightings on Ebro Delta, one of which was perfectly in the open for several minutes!

Purple Swamphen*Porphyrio porphyrio*

(3) 3 at a wetland near Saucedilla and up to 20 in one day on the Ebro Delta. This was formerly a scarce bird in northern Spain.

*NOTE: This cosmopolitan species is currently in taxonomic review and several forms are expected to be recognized as distinct species. The form we recorded would then become Gray-headed Swamphen (P. poliocephalus). Other forms to be recognized may include African Swamphen (P. madagascariensis), Philippine Swamphen (P. pulverulentus) and Eastern Swamphen (P. melanotus).***Common Moorhen***Gallinula chloropus*

(6) Particularly common on the coast, with up to 30 in one day on Ebro Delta.

Eurasian Coot*Fulica atra*

(5) Particularly common on the coast, with up to 400 in one day on Ebro Delta. Also 100+ on a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.



Thick-knees *Burhinidae***Eurasian Stone-curlew***Burhinus oedicnemus*

(4) 4 Saucedilla area, 3 Lécera Plains, 4 on the Candanos Steppe and 1 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

NOTE: *B. indicus* (Indian Stone-curlew) is split from *B. oedicnemus* by both IOC and Clements.

Oystercatchers *Haematopodidae***Eurasian Oystercatcher***Haematopus ostralegus*

(1) Rather distant views of 1 on the outer Ebro Delta.

Stilts and Avocets *Recurvirostridae***Black-winged Stilt***Himantopus himantopus*

(6) Particularly common at Albufera de Valencia and on the Ebro Delta.

Pied Avocet*Recurvirostra avosetta*

(2) 50 Albufera de Valencia and locally common on the Ebro Delta.

Plovers and Lapwings *Charadriidae***Northern Lapwing***Vanellus vanellus*

(1) 3 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Grey Plover*Pluvialis squatarola*

(2) 4 Albufera de Valencia and 15 on the Ebro Delta.

Common Ringed Plover*Charadrius hiaticula*

(3) 2 Albufera de Valencia, 10 on the Ebro Delta and a total of 40 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Little Ringed Plover*Charadrius dubius*

(3) 1 Belén Plains and 3 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Kentish Plover*Charadrius alexandrinus*

(3) 1 Albufera de Valencia, 7 on the Ebro Delta and 1 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

NOTE: IOC splits *C. alexandrinus* into two species, Kentish Plover (*C. alexandrinus*) widespread in the Old World, and Snowy Plover (*C. nivosus*) of the New World.

Eurasian Dotterel*Charadrius morinellus*

(1) A group of 23 at stop-over on a ploughed bare field in the Lécera area. Lovely close scope views in good light! This is a seldom recorded species on this tour.

Sandpipers and Allies *Scolopacidae***Spotted Redshank***Tringa erythropus*

(2) 6 on the Ebro Delta and great scope views of a bird in nearly full breeding plumage at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Common Redshank*Tringa totanus*

(4) 1 Belén Plains, 3 Albufera de Valencia, 20 on the Ebro Delta and 20 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.



Common Greenshank*Tringa nebularia*

(3) 1 Albufera de Valencia, 5 on the Ebro Delta and 15 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Wood Sandpiper*Tringa glareola*

(2) 1 Albufera de Valencia, 10 Prat de Cabanes and 3 on the Ebro Delta.

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

(3) 2 Albufera de Valencia, 15 en route Ebro Delta – Lécera and 25 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Ruddy Turnstone*Arenaria interpres*

(1) 7 at salt marshes on the Ebro Delta.

Sanderling*Calidris alba*

(2) 10 at salt marshes on the Ebro Delta and 2 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Little Stint*Calidris minuta*

(1) 30 at salt marshes on the Ebro Delta.

Curlew Sandpiper*Calidris ferruginea*

(2) 3 Albufera de Valencia and 4 at salt marshes on the Ebro Delta.

Dunlin*Calidris alpina*

(1) 4 at salt marshes on the Ebro Delta.

Ruff*Philomachus pugnax*

(1) 2 distant birds on the Ebro Delta.

Pratincoles and Coursers *Glareolidae***Collared Pratincole***Glareola pratincola*

(1) 5 seen in flight at Prat de Cabanes.

Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers *Laridae***Slender-billed Gull***Chroicocephalus genei*

(2) 5 Albufera de Valencia and at least 75 at salt marshes on the Ebro Delta.

Black-headed Gull*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

(6) Localized at brackish water/freshwater-sites. Up to 400 at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan.

Audouin's Gull*Ichthyaetus audouinii*

(3) Common on the Ebro Delta. We had numerous good looks at sitting and flying individuals.

Mediterranean Gull*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

(3) 30 Albufera de Valencia and a total of 4 on the Ebro Delta.

Yellow-legged Gull*Larus michahellis*

(5) Common at the coast with up to an estimated 2000 on the Ebro Delta. Also 1 at a river en route Siresa – Lecina and 300 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.



Lesser Black-backed Gull*Larus fuscus*

(1) 30 at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan.

Gull-billed Tern*Gelochelidon nilotica*

(4) 2 near Albufera de Valencia, up to 15 on the Ebro Delta and 1 at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Caspian Tern*Hydroprogne caspia*

(1) 4 on the Ebro Delta.

Sandwich Tern*Thalasseus sandvicensis*

(2) 200 Albufera de Valencia and 200 on the Ebro Delta, were both of birds at their breeding colonies.

Little Tern*Sternula albifrons*

(2) 2 at Prat de Cabanes and 20 on the Ebro Delta.

Common Tern*Sterna hirundo*

(3) 350 at Albufera de Valencia and up to 50 on the Ebro Delta.

Whiskered Tern*Chlidonias hybrida*

(3) 20 at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan and up to 200 on the Ebro Delta.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae**Pin-tailed Sandgrouse***Pterocles alchata*

(1) Good scope views of a male on the Candasnos Steppe and seen in flight as well.

Black-bellied Sandgrouse*Pterocles orientalis*

(1) Three separate sightings (4 + 2 + 4) at the Lécera Plains. Reasonable views on the ground and in flight.

Pigeons and Doves Columbidae**Rock Dove***Columba livia*

(14) Feral birds were common in all areas.

Common Wood Pigeon*Columba palumbus*

(13) Commonly seen except at outer Ebro Delta and in the highest part of the Pyrenees.

European Turtle Dove*Streptopelia turtur*

(8) 2 birds seen well near Saucedilla and small numbers thereafter recorded at various location, with up to 10 in one day in Lécera area. Not recorded in the High Pyrenees.

Eurasian Collared Dove*Streptopelia decaocto*

(12) Common in all areas except the High Pyrenees. A “recent” colonist since the 1960-70s

Cuckoos Cuculidae**Great Spotted Cuckoo***Clamator glandarius*

(3) 1 distant flying bird on the Cáceres Plains, 2 seen well through the scope on the Candasnos



Steppe and a further 2 seen even better at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Common Cuckoo*Cuculus canorus*

(9) This species played “hard to get”, but finally we managed good views of a responsive individual at the Cinca/Segre rivers confluence.

Barn Owls *Tytonidae***Western Barn Owl***Tyto alba*

(1) Fantastic flight views of a bird in full daylight!

Owls *Strigidae***Eurasian Scops Owl***Otus scops*

(1) 2 near Venta del Moro were unfortunately only heard calling in the dark, despite our hard efforts trying to see it.

Tawny Owl*Strix aluco*

(4) Very good repeat views of a pair and 2 young that were breeding in the village of Lecina.

Little Owl*Athene noctua*

(4) 1 near Saucedilla, 2 at Belén Plains, 2 Lécera Plains and 3 on the Candanos Steppe. Also heard near Monfragüe.

Long-eared Owl*Asio otus*

(2) 1 near Saucedilla and good views of 2 adult and 4 juvenile birds in the Lécera area.

Nightjars and Allies *Caprimulgidae***Red-necked Nightjar***Caprimulgus ruficollis*

(1) 1 flushed in full daylight, and seen well in flight at a number of occasions, in an isolated grove on the outer Ebro Delta.

European Nightjar*Caprimulgus europaeus*

(1) 1 seen briefly as it passed through the flashlight beam during a night walk near Venta del Moro.

Swifts *Apodidae***Alpine Swift***Tachymarptis melba*

(2) Up to 12 over two consecutive days at a huge canyon near Lecina.

Common Swift*Apus apus apus*

(14) Commonly seen per day, with up to 75 in one day over Monfragüe NP – Trujillo-Belén area.

Pallid Swift*Apus pallidus*

(2) 1 at Trujillo and 1 at Embalse de Arrocampo, both giving perfect views in good light alongside Common Swift!

Rollers *Coraciidae***European Roller***Coracias garrulus*

(2) A total of 18 at nest boxes on the Cáceres Plains with a further sighting of 1 on the Candanos



Steppe.

Kingfishers *Alcedinidae*

Common Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

(1) Excellent views of 2 at the Ebro River near Flix.

Bee-eaters *Meropidae*

European Bee-eater

Merops apiaster

(11) Good numbers of this flashy species seen in most areas other than the High Pyrenees, with up to 100 in one day en route Lecina – Barcelona.

Hoopoes *Upupidae*

Eurasian Hoopoe

Upupa epops

(9) 1-5 per day with up to 10 in one day at the Cáceres/Belén Plains.

NOTE: The Hoopoe complex has had a confusing taxonomic history, with one to four species being recognized by various authorities. Clements splits the group into two forms, Madagascar (*U. marginalis*) and Eurasian (*U. epops*) as does IOC. The white-winged African form is often split by other authorities as West African Hoopoe (*U. senegalensis*) with the fourth species being African Hoopoe (*U. africana*). However, the most generally accepted treatment is that of three species, Madagascar, Eurasian and African.

Woodpeckers *Picidae*

Eurasian Wryneck

Jynx torquilla

(4) 1 by the Alcanadre River, 1 Siresa and at least 3 at Lecina–Betorz.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos minor

(2) 1 briefly in flight by the road en route Barajas – Monfragüe, only seen by the tour leader. Then great views of a foraging pair in Monfragüe NP.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major

(2) 1 at Siresa and better views of 1 at Lecina.

Black Woodpecker

Dryocopus martius

(1) Good views of 1 in mixed forest en route Siresa – Gabardito.

Iberian Green Woodpecker (E)

Picus sharpei

(4) Rather distant views of 1 on the Candasnos Steppe, good views of 1 at Siresa and 1 heard at Ordesa.

NOTE: *Picus sharpei* and *P. vaillantii* (Levaillant's Woodpecker) of the Atlas Mountains are split from *P. viridis* (European Green Woodpecker) (Pons et al. 2011, Perktas et al. 2011).

Falcons and Caracaras *Falconidae*

Lesser Kestrel

Falco naumanni

(5) 7 near Saucedilla, 10 Belén plains, 25 Cáceres Plains–Trujillo–Belén Plains and 10 Candasnos Steppe.

Common Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

(11) 5 en route Barajas – Monfragüe and then 1-3 per day.

NOTE: *F. tinnunculus* is split into two species by IOC, Common Kestrel (*F. tinnunculus*) and Rock Kestrel (*F. rupicolus*) in S Africa.



Eurasian Hobby*Falco subbuteo*

(1) 1 distant bird seen briefly by the tour leader on the Candasnos Steppe.

Peregrine Falcon*Falco peregrinus*

(1) 1 high overhead at Vadiello Reservoir, Sierra de Guara.

Shrikes Laniidae**Red-backed Shrike***Lanius collurio*

(1) Great views of a pair at Vadiello Reservoir, Sierra de Guara.

Southern Grey Shrike*Lanius meridionalis*

(4) Great scope views of a pair with 4 newly fledged young near Saucedilla, 3 Belén Plains, 2 Cáceres Plains and 1 Lécera Plains.

*NOTE: There is a possible split of this species into two species, Southern Grey Shrike (L. meridionalis) of SW Europe, N Africa, Middle East, Pakistan and India and Steppe Grey Shrike (L. pallidirostris) of C Asia. This split is not yet recognized by IOC.***Woodchat Shrike***Lanius senator*

(11) A pair in mediterranean woodland en route Barajas – Monfragüe and thereafter 1-3 per day.

Old World Orioles Oriolidae**Eurasian Golden Oriole***Oriolus oriolus*

(9) Mostly heard. First recorded in Monfragüe and then seen briefly at Siresa and up to 4 seen over three days at Lecina-Betorz, one of which showed really well!

Crows, Jays, and Magpies Corvidae**Eurasian Jay***Garrulus glandarius*

(4) 2 en route Barajas – Monfragüe (only seen by the tour leader), good perched views of 1 at Monfragüe, 1 Hecho Valley and 2 at San Juan de la Pena.

Iberian Magpie (E)*Cyanopica cooki*

(4) Common in the dehesa of Extremadura, and seen well at numerous occasions on the first four days of the tour, with up to 60 in one day. This species has recently been split from the Asian Azure-winged Magpie and is now considered a fully Iberian endemic.

*NOTE: Cyanopica cooki has been split from C. Cyanus (Azure-winged Magpie) of C and East Asia and is now treated as a full species by both IOC and Clements.***Eurasian Magpie***Pica pica*

(13) Common and widespread, with up to 30 in one day.

Red-billed Chough*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

(5) First encountered on the Lécera Plains, with further sightings on the Candasnos Steppe, at Alquezar and in the High Pyrenees, with up to 20 in one day in the latter area.

Alpine Chough*Pyrrhocorax graculus*

(2) 3 very distant birds in flight high over a ridge and a total of 75 at Belagua Valley, on the border with France on the following day. Views down to just a few metres at our lunch spot!

Western Jackdaw*Coloeus monedula*

(5) Fairly common in the Trujillo/Monfragüe area, in the Candasnos area and en route Lecina –



Barcelona.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

(6) Small numbers recorded from inland Ebro River to Aínsa–Ordesa area, with up to 20 daily in the High Pyrenees.

Northern Raven *Corvus corax*

(10) More widespread than other black corvids, up to 5 daily in the High Pyrenees and at Sierra de Guara.

Chickadees and Tits *Paridae*

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

(3) 4 at Gabardito and a nesting pair at Belagua Valley. Several good looks.

European Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

(3) 2 seen briefly in mediterranean woodland en route Barajas – Monfragüe and much better looks at 3 near Venta del Moro and 2 in the High Pyrenees.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

(2) 1 seen well in song en route Siresa – Gabardito and further good looks at 1 near Upper Ansó Valley.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

(7) Small numbers, predominantly in the High Pyrenees, Pre-Pyrenees and Sierra de Guara area. Up to 10 in one day Monfragüe NP.

Great Tit *Parus major*

(11) Small numbers at scattered locations, with up to 5 en route Barajas – Monfragüe.

NOTE: IOC splits Parus major into three species, Great Tit (P. major), Cinereous Tit (P. cinereous) and Japanese Tit (P. minor).

Penduline Tits *Remizidae*

Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*

(4) 2 at outer Ebro Delta, 1 at Ebro River near Flix and great views of a male building a nest by the Alcanadre River. Also heard at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan.

Bearded Reedling *Panuridae*

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*

(1) Excellent views of 5 at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan.

Larks *Alaudidae*

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

(3) 2 and one of which seen in song flight only en route Huesca – Siresa and up to 6 at Lecina-Betorz, several of which offering great views. Also heard near Venta del Moro.

Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae*

(4) 6 Lécera Plains, 7 Candasnos Steppe and 1 Montearagón Castle. Great looks at several.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*



(13) Commonly recorded in all areas except the High Pyrenees.

Greater Short-toed Lark*Calandrella brachydactyla*

(3) 4 Cáceres Plains and common on Lécera Plains with up to 30 in one day. Usually found at or near cultivated land.

Calandra Lark*Melanocorypha calandra*

(6) Common in the vast grasslands of Cáceres Plains and Belén Plains as well as on the Lécera Plains and on the Candanos Steppe, with a further sighting at a reservoir en route Lecina – Barcelona. Up to 60 recorded in one day at Lécera Plains.

Dupont's Lark*Chersophilus duponti*

(1) Fabulous prolonged views of a bird in full song on top of a tussock, on the Lécera Plains. Another bird was seen briefly by some people from one of the vehicles, as it appeared for a few seconds just by the road, before creeping back into the steppe vegetation. This species is known to be very elusive, even as it's singing!

Lesser Short-toed Lark*Alaudala rufescens*

(3) Poor views of 2 seen briefly at salt marshes in the outer Ebro Delta, but then we had many on the Lécera Plains, with up to 75 on the second day. Best views were had at the Dupont's Lark spot, where we could enjoy good open scope views of males singing from the ground. Contrary Greater Short-toed, this species is more confined to areas of untouched steppe vegetation.

Swallows *Hirundinidae***Sand Martin***Riparia riparia*

(4) Up to 200 at a lake en route Ebro Delta – Lécera.

Barn Swallow*Hirundo rustica*

(13) Commonly recorded in a wide range of localities, except the High Pyrenees.

Eurasian Crag Martin*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

(11) Small numbers at Monfragüe NP and in Trujillo and thereafter daily sightings from the Lécera area to Sierra de Guara area, with up to 75 in the High Pyrenees at Hecho Valley.

Common House Martin*Delichon urbicum*

(14) Good numbers commonly recorded in a wide range of localities, including up the High Pyrenees.

Red-rumped Swallow*Cecropis daurica*

(5) Up to 20 en route Barajas – Monfragüe and small numbers thereafter recorded in Monfragüe NP and Cáceres–Belén area, with further sightings in the Sierra de Guara area and at the Cinca/Segre Rivers confluence.

NOTE: IOC splits *H. daurica* into three species, Red-rumped Swallow (*H. daurica*), Sri Lanka Swallow (*H. hyperythra*) of Sri Lanka and West African Swallow (*H. domicella*) of W Africa. Clements does not yet recognize these splits.

Bush Warblers and Allies *Cettiidae***Cetti's Warbler***Cettia cetti*

(7) Mostly heard but good open scope views were had of a bird in full song at Embalse de Arrocampo, near Saucedilla and some people had brief views of 1 at Ebro River near Flix.



Long-tailed Tits *Aegithalidae***Long-tailed Tit***Aegithalos caudatus*

(3) Great views of 2 at Albufera de Valencia, with further sightings of 3 at Ordesa and 4 at Lecina–Betorz.

Leaf Warblers *Phylloscopidae***Willow Warbler***Phylloscopus trochilus*

(4) 15 on the outer Ebro Delta and 2 on the Lécera Plains, all of which were north migrating birds at stop-over.

Common Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita*

(4) 1 near Venta del Moro was only seen by the tour leader. Good views of a singing individual at Siresa and another bird in full song was seen very well at Ordesa.

Western Bonelli's Warbler*Phylloscopus bonelli*

(7) Our first sighting was of a singing and calling bird that was seen very well at Tosos Reservoir, with further good looks at a number of singing birds at other locations. Up to 30 at Ordesa and 20 Lecina–Betorz. Distant singing birds also heard by the tour leader in mediterranean woodland en route Barajas – Monfragüe, at Albufera de Valencia and at Siresa.

NOTE: *Phylloscopus orientalis* (Eastern Bonelli's Warbler) of SE Europe and Turkey is split from *P. bonelli* and recognized as a separate species by both IOC and Clements.

Reed Warblers and Allies *Acrocephalidae***Great Reed Warbler***Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

(7) 3 seen at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan and up to 10 seen on Ebro Delta, several of which showed well in the scope. Apart from this, mostly heard.

Moustached Warbler*Acrocephalus melanopogon*

(1) 6 Prat de Cabanes. Good if somewhat brief views of a few.

Sedge Warbler*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

(1) 1 heard singing from a nearby scrub in Saucedilla area, was only heard by the tour leader.

Eurasian Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

(5) First heard and seen at a wetland near Alcazar de San Juan, with up to 5 seen and several heard on the Ebro Delta, several of which giving good views through the scope.

Melodious Warbler*Hippolais polyglotta*

(7) 2 showed rather briefly to some on the outer Ebro Delta, 1 briefly on Lécera Plains, 1 in song showing well to some Ontinena area and great views of 2 in song plus several heard at Lecina–Betorz.

Grassbirds and Allies *Locustellidae***Savi's Warbler***Locustella luscinioides*

(3) Great scope views of 4 in full song at Embalse de Arrocampo wetlands near Saucedilla, with further looks at a singing bird and several only heard on the Ebro Delta.

Cisticolas and Allies *Cisticolidae*

Zitting Cisticola*Cisticola juncidis*

(7) First recorded en route Barajas – Monfragüe, near Saucedilla, with further good scope views of a singing bird on the Cáceres Plains. Up to 40 Prat de Cabanes, and not recorded after the Ebro Delta.

Old World Warblers *Sylviidae***Eurasian Blackcap***Sylvia atricapilla*

(8) Fair views of 2 (male and female) en route Barajas – Monfragüe, then recorded daily from Ontinena by Alcanadre River to Sierra de Guara area. Good looks at 2 singing males at San Juan de la Pena.

Garden Warbler*Sylvia borin*

(1) One bird seen fairly well if somewhat briefly in an isolated small scrub on the outer Ebro Delta.

Western Orphean Warbler*Sylvia hortensis*

(5) More often heard than seen. 1 distant singing bird showed up very briefly on Candasnos Steppe, and another elusive individual in song en route Huesca – Siresa, was only seen by some people. We then managed great views of a singing male between Lecina and Betorz. A distant singing bird in mediterranean woodland en route Barajas – Monfragüe and 1 seen at our accomodation in Lécera, were both only recorded by the tour leader.

NOTE: Sylvia crassirostris (Eastern Orphean Warbler) of SE Europe to C Asia is split from S. hortensis (Shirihai et al. 2001) and recognized as a separate species by both IOC and Clements.

Common Whitethroat*Sylvia communis*

(1) 2 birds on the outer Ebro Delta, with one seen briefly at salt marshes by the road and another one unfortunately only seen by the tour leader.

Dartford Warbler*Sylvia undata*

(2) A male in full song showed well at Tosos Reservoir. 1 Candasnos–Ontinena area was only seen briefly by the tour leader.

Marmora's Warbler*Sylvia sarda*

1 Barra del Trabucador, outer Ebro Delta. The bird appeared as the tour leader tried to give directions for a Common Redstart and was seen well for at least a couple of minutes by half of the group, before it disappeared not to be relocated. Marmora's Warbler is a European breeding endemic, confined to Corsica, Sardinia and a few other adjacent smaller islands. It's partially migratory with some birds wintering in N Algeria, Tunisia and NW Libya. However, vagrants have reached as far as the British Isles and northernmost Denmark! If accepted, our bird would constitute only the 5th national record for Spain of this species!

NOTE: Sylvia balearica of the Balearic Islands except Menorca is split from S. sarda (Bairlein et al. 2006, Sangster et al. 2012, AERC-TAC) on the basis of size, shape (structure), coloration, song, calls, migratory behaviour and mitochondrial DNA. This split has now been accepted by both IOC and Clements.

Spectacled Warbler*Sylvia conspicillata*

(1) 3 birds seen well on Lécera Plains.

Subalpine Warbler*Sylvia cantillans*

(3) Good looks at 3 different males in Monfragüe NP, 2 at our accomodation near Venta del Moro and 10 Lecina–Betzorz area several of which gave good views.

NOTE: Sylvia subalpina (Moltoni's Warbler) of west Mediterranean Islands and NW Italy is split from S. cantillans



(Brambilla et al. 2008, Svensson 2013) and accepted as a separate species by both IOC and Clements. Furthermore *S. cantillans* is separated into two species (Svensson 2013) and thus becoming *S. inornata* (Western Subalpine Warbler) of Iberia to Italy and NW Africa and *S. cantillans* (Eastern Subalpine Warbler) of Italy to Balkan Peninsula, Bulgaria and W Turkey. However this split is not yet accepted by neither IOC nor Clements.

Sardinian Warbler*Sylvia melanocephala*

(4) A male and female seen well near Belén Plains, 10 at Albufera de Valencia and fairly good views of 3 at Alquezar.

Kinglets Regulidae**Common Firecrest***Regulus ignicapilla*

(6) 1 at Gabardito and fabulous views of 2 Hecho Valley. Thereafter recorded daily to Lecina area.

Goldcrest*Regulus regulus*

(1) One bird seen fairly well at Gabardito.

Wrens Troglodytidae**Eurasian Wren***Troglodytes troglodytes*

(5) Lovely views of a singing bird in Monfragüe NP and thereafter heard daily from the High Pyrenees to Sierra de Guara area.

Nuthatches Sittidae**Eurasian Nuthatch***Sitta europaea*

(4) 3 in mediterranean woodland en route Barajas – Monfragüe and later we had great views of a responsive male in the Belagua Valley, the High Pyrenees among others.

Wallcreeper Tichodromidae**Wallcreeper***Tichodroma muraria*

(1) Absolutely fabulous prolonged scope views of a male and female foraging together on a huge rockface at Gabardito in the High Pyrenees.

Treecreepers Certhiidae**Eurasian Treecreeper***Certhia familiaris*

(1) Good views of a responsive male in mixed forest at Upper Ansó Valley in the High Pyrenees.

Short-toed Treecreeper*Certhia brachydactyla*

(8) Mostly heard but good looks were had in mediterranean woodland en route Barajas – Monfragüe and in the surrounding forest at San Juan de la Pena.

Starlings Sturnidae**Common Starling***Sturnus vulgaris*

(1) One bird seen well on the Ebro Delta.

Spotless Starling*Sturnus unicolor*

(14) Common in all areas. A very range restricted species of Iberia and parts of N. Africa

Thrushes and Allies Turdidae**Ring Ouzel***Turdus torquatus*

(1) One male seen very well high into the late winter snowline in the High Pyrenees at Belagua and



a further 3 individuals in the surrounding area.

Common Blackbird*Turdus merula*

(12) Small numbers at scattered locations and several good looks.

Song Thrush*Turdus philomelos*

(2) Brief views of a roadside individual en route Siresa – Gabardito and a further sighting (unfortunately brief views as well) at Lecina.

Mistle Thrush*Turdus viscivorus*

(6) Small numbers in the mediterranean woodland en route Barajas – Monfragüe, in Monfragüe NP and in the High Pyrenees. Also recorded in Sierra de Guara area and en route Lecina – Barcelona. Good scope views of a bird in song in Belagua Valley, the High Pyrenees.

Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae***Spotted Flycatcher***Muscicapa striata*

(1) 1 seen briefly by some en route Huesca – Siresa.

European Robin*Erithacus rubecula*

(4) Mostly heard and locally very common in the temperate forests of the High Pyrenees. We enjoyed great views of at least 3 in full song at Gabardito, with further looks of 2 at San Juan de la Pena.

Common Nightingale*Luscinia megarhynchos*

(11) Mostly heard and recorded at scattered locations and locally very common in suitable habitat. Seen well at Ebro River near Flix and several good looks at Lecina.

European Pied Flycatcher*Ficedula hypoleuca*

(4) 1 at our accommodation near Venta del Moro, 2 Albufera de Valencia, 4 on the outer Ebro Delta and 1 in the garden at our accommodation in Lécerca.

Black Redstart*Phoenicurus ochruros*

(9) Fairly widespread and common and recorded in small numbers on cliffs, crags and rooftops etc. Good scope views in Monfragüe NP and in the High Pyrenees, with up to 5 in one day.

Common Redstart*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

(1) A rather elusive male was seen in a small isolated scrub on the outer Ebro Delta.

Moussier's Redstart*Phoenicurus moussieri*

1 male La Alfacada, outer Ebro Delta. The bird appeared as the tour leader tried to relocate a Melodious Warbler and showed well for at least half an hour, seen by the entire group. Moussier's Redstart is an endemic resident of the Atlas Mountains in NW Africa, where it breeds in C Morocco, N Algeria and N Tunisia, and winters in adjacent areas. If accepted, this would constitute only the 9th national record for Spain of this species!

Common Rock Thrush*Monticola saxatilis*

(1) A male of this stunning species was seen well through the scope on alpine slopes in Belagua Valley, the High Pyrenees.



Blue Rock Thrush*Monticola solitarius*

(2) Two separate good sightings of singing males in Monfragüe NP and 1 was seen crossing the road at rocks en route Ebro Delta – Lécera.

Whinchat*Saxicola rubetra*

(3) Good views of 3 on Lécera Plains and even better views of a female at Siresa.

European Stonechat*Saxicola rubicola*

(5) A total of 7 on two consecutive days in the Cáceres–Belén area. 4 en route Siresa – San Juan de la Pena and up to 5 Lecina area. Good looks through the scope at several.

NOTE: Both IOC and Clements split *S. torquatus* into three species, African Stonechat (*S. torquatus*), European Stonechat (*S. rubicola*) and Siberian Stonechat (*S. maurus*).

Northern Wheatear*Oenanthe oenanthe*

(5) Small numbers on the coast, Lécera Plains, High Pyrenees and Montearagón Castle, with up to 10 Belagua Valley, the High Pyrenees.

Black-eared Wheatear*Oenanthe hispanica*

(4) 1 on the outer Ebro Delta, 2 Lécera Plains, 3 Ontinena area and 5 Montearagón Castle. We recorded both white-throated and black-throated males.

Black Wheatear*Oenanthe leucura*

(2) 4 birds at two different sites in the Ontinena area and 2 Montearagón Castle, with great scope views on most birds.

Dippers Cinclidae**White-throated Dipper***Cinclus cinclus*

(2) Outstanding looks at a pair feeding a newly fledged youngster at a fast-flowing stream in the Huesca Valley, and at least 2 more birds along the same stream, seen by some as they whizzed past low over the water.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae**House Sparrow***Passer domesticus*

(15) Common and widespread around villages, farms and cultivations etc.

Spanish Sparrow*Passer hispaniolensis*

(2) Our first sighting was en route Barajas – Monfragüe, as we stopped at a gas station and found 7 birds breeding in an active nest of White Stork up on a pylon. 1 roadside in Saucedilla area and 10 by the road on Cáceres Plains. A poorly named bird that is much more widespread further east in Europe and into central Asia.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow*Passer montanus*

(2) 1 at Ebro River near Flix and 1 on Candanos Steppe were the only sightings.

Rock Sparrow*Petronia petronia*

(5) 4 en route Barajas – Monfragüe, 5 Monfragüe NP, 4 at our accommodation near Venta del Moro, 2 at lunch, Aínsa and 4 at Montearagón Castle.

Accentors Prunellidae**Alpine Accentor***Prunella collaris*

(1) Outstanding close-up looks down to just a few metres in Belagua Valley, at around 1750 metres, right on the border with France!

Dunnock*Prunella modularis*

(2) 1 at Gabardito and good views of 2 in Upper Hecho Valley, with a further 3 in Belagua Valley.

Wagtails and Pipits *Motacillidae***Western Yellow Wagtail***Motacilla flava*

(5) Small numbers at various wetlands, with up to 7 at Prat de Cabanes.

NOTE: *M. tschutschensis* (Eastern Yellow Wagtail) of E Russia, NE China and Alaska is split from *M. flava* and has been recognized as a separate species by both IOC and Clements.

Grey Wagtail*Motacilla cinerea*

(4) 1 Monfragüe NP, up to 7 along a fast-flowing stream in Hecho Valley and 1 San Juan de la Pena.

White Wagtail*Motacilla alba*

(14) Common with 1-5 daily in most areas.

Tawny Pipit*Anthus campestris*

(4) 1 Candanos Steppe, 1 seen well en route Siresa – San Juan de la Pena, 2 seen very well Lecina area and 1 Montearagón Castle.

Tree Pipit*Anthus trivialis*

(1) 1 singing bird seen well in Belagua Valley, the High Pyrenees.

Water Pipit*Anthus spinoletta*

(1) 5 Belagua Valley, the High Pyrenees, several of which singing and seen well.

Finches, Euphonias *Fringillidae***Common Chaffinch***Fringilla coelebs*

(12) Commonly recorded throughout, except on the Ebro Delta.

Hawfinch*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

(1) Wonderful views of a pair in mediterranean woodland en route Barajas – Monfragüe and a few more flying by at the same site.

Eurasian Bullfinch*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

(2) 1 female spotted by the road en route Siresa – Belagua Valley, and a further brief sighting of a male at Ordesa by only the tour leader.

European Greenfinch*Chloris chloris*

(8) Recorded at various locations except Extremadura and the High Pyrenees. 1 seen well at our accomodation near Venta del Moro, great scope views of a singing male on outer Ebro Delta and seen well at Lecina-Betorz.

Common Linnet*Linaria cannabina*

(7) 15 with several good looks at our accomodation near Venta del Moro. Thereafter rather localized and confined to the drier areas from Upper Ebro to Lécera Plains and Candanos–



Ontinena area, the Pre-Pyrenees and Sierra de Guara area.

Red Crossbill*Loxia curvirostra*

(2) 20 at our accommodation near Venta del Moro, with good looks at several and a further 5 in the High Pyrenees.

European Goldfinch*Carduelis carduelis*

(12) Common and widespread except on the Ebro Delta. Several good looks.

Citril Finch*Carduelis citrinella*

(2) We had great views of 5 at Gabardito and a further 5 in the Belagua Valley, the High Pyrenees.

NOTE: C. Corsicana (Corsican Finch) of Sardinia and Corsica is split from C. Citrinella and accepted as a separate species by both IOC and Clements.

European Serin*Serinus serinus*

(14) Small numbers common throughout except on the Ebro Delta. Several good looks of lovely males in full song.

Buntings, Sparrows and Allies *Emberizidae***Corn Bunting***Emberiza calandra*

(12) Commonly recorded throughout except on the Ebro Delta and in the High Pyrenees.

Yellowhammer*Emberiza citrinella*

(2) Good looks at a lovely male in the Upper Hecho Valley, with 5 more further along the road and another male was seen on the following day.

Rock Bunting*Emberiza cia*

(1) A pair in Monfragüe NP was our only sighting. Good views though.

Ortolan Bunting*Emberiza hortulana*

(2) We found a total of 3 birds at dry, scrubby slopes with a mixture of broom en route Siresa – San Juan de la Pena. Good scope views of a male and a female as they were feeding at close range in good light. A distant bird was also heard on the following day at another location and in similar habitat.

Cirl Bunting*Emberiza cirlus*

(5) A male was seen well on two consecutive mornings at Siresa. At least 2 singing males en route Siresa – San Juan de la Pena and 1 singing male at Lecina over two days.

Annotated List of mammal species recorded

Total species recorded: 9



Note: Number in brackets () indicate number of days on the tour the species was seen.

List powered through the report generator of our partner iGoTerra.

Wolves, Coyote, Foxes, Jackals *Canidae*

Red Fox

Vulpes vulpes

(4) Four separate sightings with 1 at our lunch spot in Monfragüe NP being the closest one.

Weasels, Skunks, Otters *Mustelidae*

Stone Marten

Martes foina

(1) 1 seen well if somewhat briefly during a night walk near Lecina.

Cattle, Antelope, Sheep, Goats *Bovidae*

Northern Chamois

Rupicapra rupicapra

(2) An estimated total of 35 at various locations in the High Pyrenees with several great looks.

Iberian Wild Goat (Spanish Ibex)

Capra pyrenaica

(1) We enjoyed great views of a female with her kid in a cavity on a small roadside escarpment.

Deer *Cervidae*

Red Deer

Cervus elaphus

(1) Good views of 2 roadside individuals in Monfragüe NP.

Rabbits, Hares *Leporidae*

European Rabbit

Oryctolagus cuniculus

(5) Good looks at one near our accommodation at Venta del Moro. Particularly common in the drier areas around Candasnos–Ontinena.

Granada Hare

Lepus granatensis

(1) 2 at Cáceres Plains.

Squirrels *Sciuridae*

Alpine Marmot

Marmota marmota

(1) Around 7 seen fairly well on alpine slopes in the Upper Hecho Valley, the High Pyrenees.

Eurasian Red Squirrel

Sciurus vulgaris

(2) Brief views of a roadside individual by the tour leader en route in the High Pyrenees and 2 on the following day en route Siresa – Belagua.



Rockjumper Birding Ltd
C/o Summit Trust Mtius Ltd
Suite 3 Grand Baie Business Park
Grand Baie
Mauritius
Tel (USA & Canada) toll free: 1-888-990-5552
Email: info@rockjumperbirding.com
Alternative email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com
Website: www.rockjumperbirding.com

