

# SPAIN

8/4 – 19/4 2001



Bent Jacobsen, Håkon Meyer, Andreas Winnem and Anders Mæland

## **ITINIRARY**

8/4 Madrid - Trujillo  
9/4 Trujillo - Santa Marta - Monfrague - Trujillo  
10/4 Trujillo - Caceres - Sierra de San Pedro - Huelva  
11/4 Huelva - Donana  
12/4 Donana  
13/4 Donana - Brazo del Este - Lebrija  
14/4 Lebrija - Trebujena Salinas - Bonanza Salinas - Laguna de Medina - Tarifa  
15/4 Tarifa  
16/4 Tarifa - Ronda  
17/4 Ronda - Sierra Nevada - Purullena  
18/4 Purullena - Torremolinos  
19/4 Torremolinos - Malaga Airport

## **INTRODUCTION**

Having visited Spain in August 1999 we all wanted to experience this great birding country again soon. During Easter this year we got the opportunity and booked the flights. We were especially looking forward to the steppes of Extremadura and to see the wetlands in Donana filled with birds. We covered only Andalucia on our last trip, and all wetlands were very dry then. Among the species we had expected to see in Spain the only important one missed was Red-necked Nightjar. This spring had been rather cold by Spanish standards, we were told, and thus the birds had not begun to play yet. A good excuse for us to come back another time!

## **SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE**

We flew from Sandefjord to Madrid with KLM 8/4 and returned from Malaga 19/4. Both ways we changed planes in Amsterdam. All flights were in time except the one from Malaga, which was one hour late. But we did not care too much as we had to wait four hours in Amsterdam anyway.

It was not a problem finding cheap places to stay along the road, we had not booked any accommodation in advance. The prices varied between 1600 pst (1 US\$ = 189 pst) and 3000 pst each per night. Even though passports are not necessary to enter Spain for citizens from most of Western Europe anymore it is still wise to bring at least one. Most places you can not get a room without showing a passport as identification.

We picked out the sites we wanted to visit by using "Where to watch birds in Southern Spain" by Ernest Garcia and Andrew Paterson from 1994 and various trip reports found on the web. We also sent out a request on the EBN for more recent news. Thanks a lot to everyone that answered and especially to Ernest Garcia who gave us a lot of useful information! The guidebook gives good directions to all main birding areas in the region. A few places it is starting to get a bit out of date, but I believe a new and revised edition have been published this spring. Collins Bird Guide by Lars Svensson and Peter J. Grant and Birds of Europe with North Africa and the Middle East by Lars Jonsson were sufficient as identification books.

We used two different roadmaps, Michelin 446 and Kümmerly + Frey 01127, both covering Southern Spain. Michelin was more detailed but did not cover Extremadura, while Kümmerly + Frey covered most of Extremadura but not areas west of Donana. I found Kümmerly + Frey more perspicuous and easier to use, but that is just my opinion. Both were nice to have in

different situations. Road numbers were not the same on the two maps, and in this report I have chosen to follow Kümmerly + Frey and the guidebook.

The weather was very nice and sunny during our entire stay. Early mornings were sometimes quite chilly but it soon became hot enough. Birding in the middle of the day could be exhausting, remember to drink a lot of water!

All photos are taken by Håkon with a Canon EOS 300 camera with a 70-300 mm zoom lens and should not be copied without his permission.

If you are planning a trip to Spain and have questions, feel free to get in touch with us at [hakon.meyer@skatteetaten.no](mailto:hakon.meyer@skatteetaten.no) or [winnem@stud.ntnu.no](mailto:winnem@stud.ntnu.no)!

## **CAR AND DRIVING**

The car we had booked from AVIS turned out to be a SEAT Toledo. It was large enough for the four of us with luggage, and it had air condition but no CD-player. With extra insurance and unlimited mileage this car was supposed to cost us 95000 pst. We were told when we picked it up at the airport that the insurance covered all eventualities that might appear. However, after five days we were unlucky and hit a sudden and just too large pothole in the road. Two seconds later a strange sound appeared, and looking behind us we saw oil leaking from the car. The sump pan had loosened, and we were stuck on a small road in the middle of nowhere, or between Brazo del Este and Trebujena Salinas if you prefer. We called AVIS on their emergency number and got a woman who only spoke poorly English. After a while we managed to explain to her where we were, and after five long hours a truck arrived and took the SEAT along and drove us to the nearest town. Here, luckily, a new rental car was waiting for us, this time a Mitsubishi Galant. This car was a bit smaller than the SEAT, but it also had air condition and was otherwise OK. Back in Norway we received the bill from AVIS charging us nearly twice the amount we had agreed on. They meant we had been driving recklessly (called it “vandalism” on the phone) and thus had to pay for the repair of the car in spite of our insurance. Lots of phone calls and now more than three months later things are still not settled. We will rent our car from a different company next time.

Roads and road signs in Spain vary a lot from place to place. Main roads are maintained very well and have more than sufficient signing. When on smaller roads, as birdwatchers often tend to be, there are not always signs to help you out. Trying to figure out the terrain and compare with the map, looking at the sun for direction and asking locals are the best ways to find the right road. How well the roads are maintained also differ quite a lot between the different provinces. We soon found out that most roads in Spain tend to go through all small towns along its way instead of outside them. Entering on a broad and nice road you all of a sudden find yourself struggling not to get lost on small and narrow streets before you eventually come out on the other side. And again, these routes are often poorly signed. The best way to choose which way to drive when the road forks within a town is simply to take the fork that seems to be the larger one. That works most of the time when signs are missing.

## **LOCATIONS VISITED**

### **Plains near Oropresa**

On our way from Madrid to Trujillo we stopped at a gas station south of the exit for Oropresa to buy some water, and the steppes behind the station turned out to hold some good birds. Two Great Bustards were feeding close to the railway line, and one or two Little Bustards were

displaying in the area. When we had admired the Bustards for a while, two Black-bellied Sandgrouses appeared, flying around for a short minute before they landed. Unfortunately the distance was quite far, but we got better views the next day. When we were ready to move on, a terrific Black-shouldered Kite showed up, hovering and showing very well at close range. It hunted the steppes for five minutes before it took off. And then, finally, so did we. This was the third Black-shouldered Kite we saw within just a few kilometres along this road, the two others were seen briefly from the car. I guess this must be a good place to look for this species.



The Black-Shouldered Kite site.

### **Roads between Trujillo and Caceres, north of N-521**

The next morning we drove towards Caceres on the N-521 and then turned northwest towards Santa Marta. After a few hundred metres we stopped and scanned the steppes. Spending an hour here gave at least 6 Great Spotted Cuckoos, 1 Great and more than 30 Little Bustards, 1 Stone Curlew and 6 Black-bellied Sandgrouses. A Black Vulture, that probably had spent the night here, was sitting on the ground not too far away. Further on this road mainly goes through open, undulating woodlands which held lots of Red-legged Partridges and various passerines. In Santa Marta we took the road towards southwest, which led us back to N-521. Shortly after Santa Marta this road crosses a river, and here we had our first Cirl Bunting and Rock Sparrows of the trip.

### **Monfrague**

Monfrague is a spectacular place to visit for a bird-watcher. Coming from Trujillo, Castillo de Monfrague became our first stop. We parked the car at the parking lot by the main road and walked up to the Castillo. This dirt road ended in another smaller parking lot just beneath the Castillo, which means that we could have driven the whole way saving both time and effort. But as soon as we got up the view alone was more than worth the walk. Adding lots of Griffon and Black Vultures, one each of Egyptian Vulture and Black Stork and several Booted Eagles and Black and Red Kites, this was one of the highlights of this eventful day. Some of the raptors got very close soaring both above and beneath us. The scrub had singing Rock Buntings, and we also saw Black Redstart and Blue Rock Thrush here. The walk back down gave lots of Serins and our first Subalpine Warbler but little else.

Many of the raptors you see from Castillo are nesting in the adjacent cliff called Pena Halcon. There is a lookout point by the road which also gives good views of the birds. Especially the Black Storks gave much better views here than from Castillo.



Crag Martins at Castillo de Monfrague.

Next stop was Mirador de la Bascula. We did not see much here, but we did not spend a lot of time here either. A Danish group that we met told us that an Spanish Imperial Eagle had been showing well further north for almost an hour, so we drove on. On our way back we stopped a bit south of Mirador de la Bascula and saw an adult Spanish Imperial Eagle soaring far away. This bird would probably have been visible from the lookout point further north as well. A male Rock Bunting gave excellent views sitting in a tree, looking at us watch the Eagle.

At Portilla de Tietar the much wanted Eagle had disappeared before we arrived, and it did not show again. The cliffs here have a Griffon colony and quite a few other raptors as well. At dusk this is a good place to see Eagle Owls, but we did not stay long enough. Before we left we heard our first Cetti's Warbler in Spain.

### **Roads between Trujillo and Caceres, south of N-521**

The next morning we drove from Trujillo to Caceres via Ruanes and Torremocha stopping at suitable looking places along the road. We did not see too much, three sightings of Great Bustard and two of its smaller relative were the most special ones. Two Stone Curlews, three Little Owls and our first Short-toed Larks and only Kingfisher of the trip were also nice.



Idyllic landscape from Extremadura.

### **Sierra de San Pedro**

From Caceres we followed N-521 further west to Aliseda where we took C-521 heading south and then a smaller road which took us through Sierra de San Pedro. These mountains are not as

wild and high as those in Monfrague. The landscape close to the road consist of pastureland with cork oaks scattered unevenly around, and further away you can see the mountains. This place was quite productive birdwise, with close and very good views of an adult Spanish Imperial Eagle as the definite highlight. Other birds seen here includes a Black Stork, some Rock Sparrows and Wood Larks, and Mistle Thrush was common.

### **Donana**

In Donana we stayed in El Rocio, which is a good base for exploring the park. The big lagoon next to the town held uncountable numbers of birds with waders, ducks and flamingos as the most obvious ones. This is a good place to see Spanish Imperial Eagle, and one morning we saw an adult bird hunting over the southern and partially dry parts of the lagoon. The roof of the SEO information centre makes a good observation platform and is also a good place to meet other birders to chat and hear recent news. 12/4 we had four Marsh Sandpipers and a Temminck's Stint here. Luckily they were all feeding at quite close range. One can just wonder how many rarities and semi-rarities that were hiding among the thousands of waders further away from us...

Drive south from El Rocio over the bridge and then turn right and you come to La Rocina. Here there is another information centre and a footpath which leads you along the marshes and through some nice woods with lots of birds. Our first Glossy Ibis was our favourite bird here, but five Purple Gallinules, a singing Iberian Chiffchaff and very good views of three male Dartford Warblers were also nice. Herons and ducks of various kinds were common, and so were Savi's Warblers, singing their monotonous song.

A few kilometres further south along the road towards Matalascañas you find El Acebuche. This is the main information centre of Donana, and I believe this is where you book the guided tours as well. We did not try one of these, but we met some of their buses close to Cerrado Garrido (see below). They only made small short stops and the passengers did not get out. It seemed like these trips were made for tourists, and birdwatching must have been quite frustrating. It is also possible to hire private guides, which surely must be a much better way to see all your target species. Birding at El Acebuche was not too good, a lot of the same birds as at La Rocina were seen but in smaller numbers. 3 Water Rails were hiding in the reeds here, and the pines surrounding the car park held Azure-winged Magpies and Crested Tit.

Cerrado Garrido information centre is not as easy to find as the former ones. Drive to Villamanrique and then head south, ask other birdwatchers, try not to get lost on the many small roads, and eventually you get there. At least this is how we found it. The centre itself have a large breeding colony of Glossy Ibises, and Squacco and Night Herons breed in smaller numbers. We did not see the latter here, but others did. But equally important you find a café where you can take a break from the birding and get some food. About one kilometre away from the centre there is a large lagoon which holds lots of birds. And there was no doubt which became the star among these in our eyes when a friendly Englishman showed us a Crested Coot! We were told that this bird had been present here for some days. Other good birds included two Marbled Ducks and a White-winged Black Tern during the afternoon. Both Short-toed Larks were common in the area, and this was the only place in Spain we saw Little Gulls. The next morning we headed out here again hoping for Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, which we had missed in Extremadura. Altogether we saw at least 13 birds, spread over several small flocks. The birds were very active, flying around all morning until 11.30, when we had our last sighting. Once three birds landed on the ground fully visible and not too far away from us, and we had great views through the telescopes. This was truly a magnificent bird with colours that almost looked like they were painted on. It was not always easy to locate the flocks in flight in a distance, often we heard the birds long before we saw them.





Cattle Egrets blocking the road in Donana.

### **Brazo del Este**

From Donana we drove to Coria, south of Sevilla, where we took the ferry over the river. This saved us time and we avoided the drive through the city. The crossing cost about 400 pst. The map and the guidebook shows another ferry further south, but this does not operate anymore according to the locals. Well over the river, after having enjoyed a brightly yellow Golden Oriole crossing in the opposite direction, we headed south towards Brazo del Este. The guidebook talks about a “central raised track” which provides the best birding. Arriving into the area from north we somehow got too close to the river and got lost in the maze of dirt roads crisscrossing the area. All we could see around us were dry cultivated fields and not the wetlands we had expected. After driving forth and back here for a while we decided to skip this site and move on. No sooner than we had agreed on that, a small green area appeared on the left side of the road. It did not look marshy at all, just low vegetation with some taller bushes around the edges. At least this looked a bit more promising than the surrounding brown fields. Suddenly a flock of 30 Purple Gallinules came running out from the roadside vegetation, crossed the green area and hid in the bushes on the other side! It was a bizarre sight. We drove further, and several small marshy areas with reeds and small bodies of water appeared, squeezed in between the dry fields. We had found the right road at last! Before we had finished at this site we had seen no less than 400 Purple Gallinules, probably even more! Other good birds here included three Great White Egrets, four Squacco Herons, three Glossy Ibises and five Marbled Ducks. There was also a colony of Gull-billed Terns here, and two late Pintails were still present.

### **Trebujena and Bonanza Salinas**

Driving south from Brazo del Este along the Rio Guadalquivir the road is a real disaster with huge potholes everywhere. It was here our car broke down. This gave us plenty of time to explore the area which turned out to be rich in migrating passerines, mainly Pied Flycatchers, Redstarts and Warblers of different kinds.

Where the road leaves the Rio Guadalquivir we took a right turn onto the track that goes through Trebujena Salinas. This was very narrow all the way out to the hide, and I am very glad we did not meet another car here. We would not have been able to pass each other or turn around. The most obvious birds in the saline were the waders. Most common species were present, and some in quite large numbers. But the best birds were not waders, but gulls. At least seven Slender-billed Gulls flew around and gave good views. Both in flight and on the water they were far more different from Black-headed Gulls in shape and jizz than we had expected them to be. Two Marbled Ducks and two Tawny Pipits are also worth to mention.

Bonanza Salinas was not even close to have the same number of birds as the former site, but there were still lots of birds to see. Nine Slender-billed Gulls and a Caspian Tern were the best ones here. We also had two Turnstones resting next to the road. We did not spend too much time here as it was midday and starting to get very hot. All together we saw 24 species of waders in this area.

### **Laguna de Medina**

Between Jerez and Medina Sidonia you find Laguna de Medina. It lies about 15 km from Jerez on the left side of the road when heading southeast. This is a large, shallow lagoon surrounded by vegetation, mostly reeds. The birds can be viewed from a dirt track along the southern edge. Laguna de Medina is known to be one of the prime sites in Spain for Crested Coot and indeed, we saw at least 12 different birds here, possibly as many as 15. Local birdwatchers told us that 18+ birds were present at the time, and among them 6 known breeding pairs. I do not know if this was normal or if this year was special. Other birds here included 3 White-headed Ducks and 2 Mute Swans. The latter is a rarity in Spain, but we did not know that at the time and did not give them more than a short look. Thus, I do not have a clue whether the birds were escapes or if they might have been pure vagrants. We were here during the afternoon, but a morning visit will most likely be better, especially for passerines.



Crested Coot at Laguna de Medina. The picture is taken through a telescope.

### **Tarifa**

The military base south of Tarifa town is the southernmost point of mainland Europe, not Gibraltar as many people believe. This must surely be one of the best places to watch seabirds in entire Spain, but unfortunately it is closed to the public. In stead we used the shore inside where there were houses that made a good shelter from the wind. A couple of hours in the morning gave 100+ Cory's and 25+ Mediterranean Shearwaters, 20 Gannets, 1 Great Skua, 20 Audouin's Gulls and lots of Terns of different kinds. The next morning the wind had calmed and we tried to watch from the harbour further east. One hour gave only 5 Gannets, 1 Audouin's Gull and 5 Sandwich Terns.

North of Tarifa there are valleys with woods and pastureland which attracts passerines and also make a good place to watch the migration of larger birds. We visited Jara Valley one day, but I believe the weather was too nice to bring the small migrants down to us. Most, if not all, passerines we saw were probably resident birds. Anyway, 2 Bonelli's Warblers, a Black-eared Wheatear and a Golden Oriole were the best birds here. The only migration we saw were 4 Black Storks and a few Short-toed Eagles flying north.

Tarifa Beach is known to be a good site, especially for Terns and Gulls. One short afternoon visit gave us only an Audouin's Gull and a female Black-eared Wheatear in addition to the common species.



Male Black-eared Wheatear



## Ronda mountains

The mountains of Ronda are a really nice place to bird as there are plenty to see everywhere, and most species are quite easy to find. Our first stop was at a random place along A376 about halfway between Ronda and the coast. This gave 1 Bonelli's Eagle, 1 Black and 1 Black-eared Wheatear as the best birds.

After finding a place to stay in Ronda we drove back south and then turned left towards Sierra de las Nieves. There is a sign marking the entrance to this nature reserve (*parque natural* in Spanish). After about 10 km we parked where the road reached its highest point, which was just a few hundred metres before a campsite called Los Quejigales. Here the road forks, and we walked up the right fork which is chained off and thus impassable with a car. After maybe 3 or 4 kilometres the road ended by an unfinished building. Here we scared off a probable Rock Thrush in the slopes to the left of the track. Unfortunately, the bright sky prevented us from seeing any colours on the bird. Shape and size were just right, and so was the habitat. But we will never know for sure what it was. Eager to find a certain Rock Thrush, which was the main reason we chose to come here in the first place, we spread out starting to search through the terrain. There were plenty to see, Rock Sparrows, Rock Buntings, Common and Black Wheatears, Black Redstarts and others. After a while Anders became the lucky one, finding a male Rock Thrush perched on a rock far away! Unfortunately it disappeared too quickly for the rest of us to see it. Further searching gave only more of the commoner species. A Bonelli's Eagle appeared, circling above us a short while before setting off. Anders was the only one who got to see this one too, as we others still were searching the ground. After having spent about an hour up here it was time to start the walk back to the car. Again we split up to cover a larger area, and again Anders was the one to find a male Rock Thrush, this time it was perching in a small tree. This bird was much closer, but again it managed to disappear before I got to see it. At least we now know that this is a good place for this species, hopefully I will be more lucky another time! At the time we got back to the car it had become dark. 2 Nightjars and 4 Scops Owls were calling in the woods. Although constantly rising, this walk was very nice and gave good views of most of the mountain species that can be expected in this area. In addition to the ones mentioned above we also saw and heard several Nightingales, 10 Subalpine Warblers, 2 Dartford Warblers, 2 Spectacled Warblers, a few Red-billed Choughs and plenty more. About 8 Spanish Ibexes were also very good. We started the walk up early in the afternoon and it turned out to be longer than we expected. A whole day should be permitted in order to cover the area more extensively. Remember to bring food and water!



Spanish Ibexes posturing nicely for the photographer at Sierra de las Nieves.

Ronda town itself is also a good birding site. Pallid Swifts were common, actually far more numerous than Common Swifts within the city. But the place with the most birds here is the deep gorge that divides the city in two. The next morning we had a Peregrine, lots of Alpine Swifts and Red-billed Choughs and some Rock Sparrows and Blue Rock Thrushes here before we moved on.

### **Teba gorge**

East of the village of Teba, northeast of Ronda, the road crosses a river by a large gorge. Here we saw an Egyptian Vulture and one or two Bonelli's Eagles, both species were probably nesting in the cliffs. Other birds seen were 2 Rock Buntings and 4 Grey Wagtails.

### **Sierra Nevada**

Approaching Granada we followed the very obvious signs towards Sierra Nevada and drove up as high as we came, to the Parador. The road continues further up and then down on the other side, but it was still closed because of snow. Just beneath the viewpoint we had 4 Alpine Accentors feeding and giving excellent views. The area was otherwise quite birdless, and especially the lack of raptors was striking compared to other mountain areas. 2 Black Wheatears and a few Rock Sparrows, Rock Buntings and Black Redstarts were the only other interesting birds we saw during four hours of birding.



Alpine Accentor by the Parador.

### **Hoya de Guadix**

North of Guadix, east of Granada, you find Hoya de Guadix, which is known to be the westernmost point in Andalucia where Dupont's Lark breed. We had a try here but did not find it. We did not know exactly where to look, and I am not sure we found the right place. We had expected the area to be covered by steppes, but most of it turned out to be cultivated. Some places the terrain looked suitable for Dupont's Lark but those areas had no roads and was very hilly and difficult to work. The best birds we had were 2 Stone Curlews, 2 Black-eared Wheatears, 2-3 Wrynecks, 2 Rock Sparrows and 3 Cirl Buntings.

### **Rio Guadalhorce river mouth**

Not a very easy place to get to, we needed three tries before we found the right road. I believe some work has been done on the roads in this area lately, and one place it was still going on. We found the right entrance just by driving towards the greenest area we saw. It was on the western side of the westernmost river course, next to a complex of houses with large gardens. Here there was a colony of Monk Parakeets which was very noisy and obvious, flying forth and back between the gardens and the nature reserve. Other birds seen include 200+ Collared Doves, 2 migrating Rollers, 5 Audouin's Gulls and 1 Great Skua offshore. But no Mediterranean Gulls, which are supposed to be quite easy to find here according to an Englishman we met. When we got back home to Norway, we found out that there had been a Cream-coloured Courser present on the beach a few days earlier. A beach which we did not bother to check at all...

## ANNOTATED SPECIES LIST

Our list stopped on 208 positively identified species, possible escapes not included. Not all figures are exact numbers.

**Great Crested Grebe**, *Podiceps cristatus*  
Seen most days in small numbers.

**Black-necked Grebe**, *Podiceps nigricollis*  
Common in Donana and Laguna de Medina, seen occasionally elsewhere.

**Little Grebe**, *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
Common

**Cory's Shearwater**, *Calonectris diomedea*  
100+ migrated east at Tarifa 15/4.

**Balearic Shearwater**, *Puffinus mauretanicus*  
25+ migrated west at Tarifa 15/4.

**Gannet**, *Morus bassanus*  
20 at Tarifa 15/4 and 5 the same place 16/4.

**Great Cormorant**, *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
Seen most days in small numbers.

**Little Bittern**, *Ixobrychus minutus*  
1f at Huelva 11/4.

**Night Heron**, *Nycticorax nycticorax*  
3 at Rio Guadalquivir 13/4. We had expected this species to be more common, I really do not know why we did not see more of them. Others reported several in the reeds at Cerrado Garrido, Donana.

**Squacco Heron**, *Ardeola ralloides*  
7 in Donana 12/4 and 4 at Brazo del Este 13/4.

**Cattle Egret**, *Bubulcus ibis*  
Common

**Little Egret**, *Egretta garzetta*  
Common

**Great White Egret**, *Egretta alba*  
3 at Brazo del Este 13/4.

**Grey Heron**, *Ardea cinerea*  
Common

**Purple Heron**, *Ardea purpurea*  
Common in Donana, singles seen elsewhere.

**White Stork, *Ciconia ciconia***

Common

**Black Stork, *Ciconia nigra***

6+ in Monfrague 9/4, 1 at Sierra de San Pedro 10/4 and 4 migrating north over Jara Valley 15/4.

**Glossy Ibis, *Plegadis falcinellus***

1 at La Rocina, Donana, 11/4, 80+ at Cerrado Garrido, Donana, 12/4 and 30 here the next day and 3 at Brazo del Este 13/4.

**Spoonbill, *Platalea leucorodia***

Common at El Rocio, Donana, and Huelva.

**Greater Flamingo, *Phoenicopterus ruber***

Common

**Mute Swan, *Cygnus olor***

2, of unknown origin, in Laguna de Medina 14/4.

**Greylag Goose, *Anser anser***

50+ were still present at El Rocio, Donana.

**Common Shelduck, *Tadorna tadorna***

2 at Bonanza Salinas 14/4.

**Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos***

Common

**Gadwall, *Anas strepera***

Common

**Pintail, *Anas acuta***

One pair at Brazo del Este 13/4.

**Shoveler, *Anas clypeata***

Common

**Garganey, *Anas querquedula***

Common in Donana.

**Marbled Duck, *Marmaronetta angustirostris***

2 in the lagoon next to Cerrado Garrido information center in Donana 12/4, 5 at Brazo del Este 13/4 and 2 at Trebujena Salinas 14/4.

**Common Pochard, *Aythya ferina***

Common

**Red-crested Pochard, *Netta rufina***

Common

**Black Scoter, *Melanitta nigra***

10 migrated west at Tarifa 15/4.

**White-headed Duck, *Oxyura leucocephala***

3 in Laguna de Medina 14/4.

**Griffon Vulture, *Gyps fulvus***

Common

**Black Vulture, *Aegypius monachus***

Common in Extremadura.

**Egyptian Vulture, *Neophren percnopterus***

Seen in small numbers in most mountain areas. Common in Monfrague.

**Spanish Imperial Eagle, *Aquila adalberti***

1 at Mirador de la Bascula, Monfrague, 9/4, 1 in Sierra de San Pedro 10/4 and 1 in El Rocio, Donana, 12/4. All were adults.

**Short-toed Eagle, *Circaetus gallicus***

Common

**Booted Eagle, *Hierraaetus pennatus***

Common

**Bonelli's Eagle, *Hierraaetus fasciatus***

1 about 15 km south of Ronda along the A376 and 1 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4, 1-2 at Teba Gorge 17/4.

**Red Kite, *Milvus milvus***

Common in Extremadura, singles seen in Andalucia.

**Black Kite, *Milvus migrans***

Common. 150 came in from the sea at Tarifa 15/4.

**Black-shouldered Kite, *Elanus caeruleus***

3 individuals along the main road between Madrid and Trujillo near the exit for Oropresa 8/4.

**Marsh Harrier, *Circus aeruginosus***

Common in Donana, singles seen at other wetlands. One migrated north high up over Sierra de las Nieves 16/4.

**Montagu's Harrier, *Circus pygargus***

Common, especially in Extremadura.

**Common Buzzard, *Buteo buteo***

Seen in small numbers most days.

**Honey Buzzard, *Pernis apivorus***

1 south of Monfrague 9/4 and 1 east of Granada 18/4.

**Common Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus***

Common

**Lesser Kestrel, *Falco naumanni***

100+ in Trujillo, quite common elsewhere too.



**Peregrine**, *Falco peregrinus*

1 in Monfragüe 9/4, 1 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and 1 in Ronda 17/4.

**Red-legged Partridge**, *Alectoris rufa*

Common, especially in Extremadura.

**Common Quail**, *Coturnix coturnix*

Common

*Common Pheasant*, *Phasianus colchicus*

1 heard in Donana 12/4. The guidebook does not mention this species at all, while the distribution maps in Jonsson and Svensson state that it breeds in Southern Spain.

**Water Rail**, *Rallus aquaticus*

3 heard at El Acebuche, Donana, 11/4.

**Moorhen**, *Gallinula chloropus*

Common

**Common Coot**, *Fulica atra*

Common

**Crested Coot**, *Fulica cristata*

1 in the lagoon next to Cerrado Garrido information center in Donana 12/4 and probably the same bird here the next day. 12+ in Laguna de Medina 14/4. None of the birds we saw wore neck-bands.

**Purple Gallinule**, *Porphyrio porphyrio*

5 ad and 1 pull at El Rocina in Donana 12/4 and 400+ at Brazo del Este 13/4.

**Great Bustard**, *Otis tarda*

2 f between Madrid and Trujillo 8/4, 1 m between Trujillo and Santa Marta 9/4, 5 between Trujillo and Caceres along small roads south of N-521 10/4.

**Little Bustard**, *Tetrax tetrax*

1-2 between Madrid and Trujillo 8/4, 30-40 between Trujillo and Santa Marta 9/4, 2 between Trujillo and Caceres 10/4.

**Oystercatcher**, *Haematopus ostralegus*

10 at Huelva 11/4, 10 at Tarifa 14/4 and 15/4.

**Avocet**, *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Common in suitable wetlands.

**Black-winged Stilt**, *Himantopus himantopus*

Common

**Stone Curlew**, *Burhinus oediconemus*

1 heard between Trujillo and Santa Marta 9/4, 2 seen just southwest of Trujillo 10/4, 2 seen in Donana 13/4 and 2 heard north of Guadix 17/4.

**Collared Pratincole**, *Glareola pratincola*

Common in Donana and the surrounding areas and 1 at Laguna de Medina 14/4. Not seen elsewhere.

**Ringed Plover**, *Charadrius hiaticula*

Common

**Little Ringed Plover**, *Charadrius dubius*

Common

**Kentish Plover**, *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Common

**Grey Plover**, *Pluvialis squatarola*

50 at Trebujena Salinas 14/4, also seen elsewhere.

**Lapwing**, *Vanellus vanellus*

Several seen in Donana and at Trebujena Salinas.

**Knot**, *Calidris canutus*

1 at El Rocio 11/4.

**Sanderling**, *Calidris alba*

Common

**Dunlin**, *Calidris alpina*

Common

**Curlew Sandpiper**, *Calidris ferruginea*

A few seen at various wetlands.

**Little Stint**, *Calidris minuta*

Common

**Temminck's Stint**, *Calidris temminckii*

1 at El Rocio 12/4.

**Common Sandpiper**, *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common

**Turnstone**, *Arenaria interpres*

2 at Bonanza Salinas 14/4, 2 at Tarifa 14/4 and 7 here the next day.

**Ruff**, *Philomachus pugnax*

Common

**Wood Sandpiper**, *Tringa glareola*

Common

**Green Sandpiper**, *Tringa ochropus*

A few seen in Donana and at Trebujena Salinas.

**Greenshank**, *Tringa nebularia*  
Several seen at various wetlands.

**Redshank**, *Tringa totanus*  
Common

**Spotted Redshank**, *Tringa erythropus*  
A few seen in Donana.

**Marsh Sandpiper**, *Tringa stagnatilis*  
4 at El Rocio 12/4 and 1 somewhere between Villamanrique and Cerrado Garrido, Donana, 13/4.

**Black-tailed Godwit**, *Limosa limosa*  
Common

**Bar-tailed Godwit**, *Limosa lapponica*  
1 at Trebujena Salinas 14/4.

**Curlew**, *Numenius arquata*  
1 at Trebujena Salinas 14/4.

**Whimbrel**, *Numenius phaeopus*  
20 at El Rocio 11/4 and 1 at Trebujena Salinas 14/4.

**Common Snipe**, *Gallinago gallinago*  
1 at El Rocio 12/4.

**Great Skua**, *Catharacta skua*  
1 migrated east at Tarifa 15/4 and 1 was feeding outside Rio Guadalhorce river mouth, Malaga 18/4.

**Black-headed Gull**, *Larus ridibundus*  
Common

**Slender-billed Gull**, *Larus genei*  
7 at Trebujena Salinas and 9 at Bonanza Salinas 14/4.

**Yellow-legged Gull**, *Larus cachinnans*  
Common along the coast, a few birds also seen inland.

**Audouin's Gull**, *Larus audouinii*  
20 at Tarifa 15/4 and 1 here 16/4, 5 at Rio Guadalhorce river mouth 18/4.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**, *Larus fuscus graellsii*  
Common

**Great Black-backed Gull**, *Larus marinus*  
1 ad in Huelva Harbour 11/4.

**Little Gull**, *Larus minutus*  
15 in the lagoon next to Cerrado Garrido information center in Donana 12/4 and 13/4.

**Little Tern, *Sterna albifrons***

1 at Huelva 11/4 and 150 migrating east at Tarifa 15/4.

**Sandwich Tern, *Sterna sandvicensis***

Common along the coast.

**Gull-billed Tern, *Sterna nilotica***

Common in Donana and the surrounding areas.

**Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo***

75 at Tarifa 15/4

**Caspian Tern, *Sterna caspia***

1 at Bonanza Salinas 14/4.

**Black Tern, *Chlidonias niger***

50 in the lagoon next to Cerrado Garrido information center in Donana 12/4 and 13/4, 50 at Tarifa 15/4 migrating east.

**White-winged Black Tern, *Chlidonias leucopterus***

1 2y bird in the lagoon next to Cerrado Garrido, Donana, 12/4 feeding with Black and Whiskered Terns.

**Whiskered Tern, *Chlidonias hybridus***

Common

*Alcidae sp*

10 migrated west at Tarifa 15/4.

**Black-bellied Sandgrouse, *Pterocles orientalis***

2 between Madrid and Trujillo 8/4 and 6, in two flocks, between Trujillo and Santa Marta 9/4.

**Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, *Pterocles alchata***

13, in three flocks, between Villamanrique and Cerrado Garrido information center in Donana 13/4.

**Rock/Feral Pigeon, *Columba livia***

Common, both in cities and in cliffs. Good candidates for “pure” Rock Doves only seen in Teba Gorge 17/4.

**Wood Pigeon, *Columba palumbus***

Common

**Collared Dove, *Streptopelia dacocto***

Common

**Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia turtur***

10 between Guadix and Malaga 18/4, only few birds seen the previous days. Probably a bit early in the spring.

**Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus***

Common in Extremadura, singles seen and heard elsewhere.

**Great Spotted Cuckoo, *Clamator glandarius***

2 between Madrid and Trujillo 8/4 and 6 between Trujillo and Santa Marta 9/4.

**Barn Owl, *Tyto alba***

1 seen in the evening at the old castle ruins in Trujillo 8/4 and 1 seen briefly in El Rocio 11/4.

**Tawny Owl, *Strix aluco***

1 heard outside El Rocio 11/4.

**Little Owl, *Athene noctua***

4 birds seen in Extremadura

**Scops Owl, *Otus scops***

4 birds heard calling after dark between Sierra de las Nieves and the C-339 road southeast of Ronda 16/4.

**European Nightjar, *Caprimulgus europaeus***

2 heard between between Sierra de las Nieves and the C-339 road 16/4.

**Common Swift, *Apus apus***

Common

**Pallid Swift, *Apus pallidus***

Common in Tarifa and Ronda, also seen elsewhere.

**Alpine Swift, *Apus melba***

Common in Ronda.

**Hoopoe, *Upupa epops***

Common

**Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis***

Only one seen, between Trujillo and Caceres 10/4.

**Bee-eter, *Merops apiaster***

Common

**Roller, *Coracias garrulus***

2 at Rio Guadalhorce river mouth, Malaga, 18/4 were the only ones we saw. A trip a week or two later would probably have given more birds?

**Munk Parakeet, *Myiopsitta monachus***

10 at Rio Guadalhorce river mouth 18/4.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker, *Dendrocopus major***

1 in Donana 11/4 and 2 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4.

**Wryneck, *Jynx torquilla***

2-3 north of Guadix 18/4.

**Skylark, *Alauda arvensis***

3 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and 2 in Sierra Nevada 17/4.



**Wood Lark**, *Lullula arborea*

5 south of Sierra de San Pedro 10/4, 4 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and singles heard in Donana several days.

**Crested Lark**, *Gallerida cristata*

Common

**Thekla Lark**, *Gallerida theklae*

Common

**Short-toed Lark**, *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Common in Donana and the surrounding areas, also seen elsewhere.

**Lesser Short-toed Lark**, *Calandrella rufescens*

Common in Donana and the surrounding areas.

**Calandra Lark**, *Melanocorypha calandra*

Common in steppe areas.

**Barn Swallow**, *Hirundo rustica*

Common

**Red-rumped Swallow**, *Hirundo daurica*

Common, especially in Extremadura.

**House Martin**, *Delichon urbica*

Common

**Sand Martin**, *Riparia riparia*

Common at wetlands.

**Crag Martin**, *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Common in mountain areas.

**Tawny Pipit**, *Anthus campestris*

2 at Trebujena Salinas 14/4 and 1 at Tarifa 15/4.

**Meadow Pipit**, *Anthus pratensis*

Common in Extremadura.

**Tree Pipit**, *Anthus trivialis*

2 in Jara Valley north of Tarifa 15/4.

**White Wagtail**, *Motacilla alba alba*

Seen in small numbers most days.

**Yellow Wagtail**, *Motacilla flava iberiae*

Common

**Grey Wagtail**, *Motacilla cinerea*

6 in the Ronda mountains 17/4.

**Wren**, *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Common

**Alpine Accentor**, *Prunella collaris*

4 in Sierra Nevada 17/4.

**Robin**, *Erythacus rubecola*

1 heard at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and 2 heard in Sierra Nevada 17/4.

**Nightingale**, *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Common

**Common Redstart**, *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Many along the eastern side of Rio Guadalquivir 13/4.

**Black Redstart**, *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Common in the mountains.

**Northern Wheatear**, *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Commonly nesting in high mountain areas, also common on migration in the lowlands.

**Black-eared Wheatear**, *Oenanthe hispanica hispanica*

1 in Monfrague 9/4, 1 in Donana 13/4, 3 in Jara Valley 15/4, 1 behind Tarifa beach 16/4 and 2 north of Guadix 18/4.

**Black Wheatear**, *Oenanthe leucura*

1 about 15 km south of Ronda along the A376 and 4 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4, 2 in Sierra Nevada 17/4.

**Whinchat**, *Saxicola rubetra*

1 in Donana 12/4 and 13/4.

**Stonechat**, *Saxicola torquata*

Common

**Blue Rock Thrush**, *Monticola solitarius*

Common in lower mountain areas.

**Rock Thrush**, *Monticola saxatilis*

1-2 males at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4.

**Mistle Thrush**, *Turdus viscivorus*

Common in the Cork Oak woods in Extremadura and especially in Sierra de San Pedro.

**Blackbird**, *Turdus merula*

Common

**Garden Warbler**, *Sylvia borin*

5 heard along the east side of Rio Guadalquivir 13/4.

**Blackcap**, *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common

**Sardinian Warbler**, *Sylvia melanocephala*

Common

**Whitethroat**, *Sylvia communis*

1 at El Mirador northwest of Tarifa 16/4 and 1 north of Guadix 18/4.

**Spectacled Warbler**, *Sylvia conspicillata*

1 in Donana 11/4, 12/4 and 13/4, 4 along the east side of Rio Guadalquivir 13/4, 2 at Laguna de Medina 14/4, 2 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and 1 in a park in Torremolinos 18/4.

**Subalpine Warbler**, *Sylvia cantillans*

1 at Castillo de Monfrague 9/4, 5 along the east side of Rio Guadalquivir 13/4, 10 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4, 1 east of Ronda 17/4 and 1 in Torremolinos 18/4.

**Dartford Warbler**, *Sylvia undata*

3 at El Rocina in Donana 11/4 and 3 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4.

**Savi's Warbler**, *Locustella luscinioides*

15 heard in Donana 11/4, mainly at El Acebuche and El Rocina.

**Fan-tailed Warbler**, *Cisticola juncidis*

Common

**Cetti's Warbler**, *Cettia cetti*

1 heard 9/4 at Portilla de Tietar, Monfrague, common in Andalucia.

**Reed Warbler**, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Common in Donana, 2 at Laguna de Medina 14/4.

**Great Reed Warbler**, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

1 in Donana 12/4, 1 in Donana and 4 at Brazo del Este 13/4, 5 at Laguna de Medina 14/4 and 1 at Sotogrande 15/4.

**Sedge Warbler**, *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

1 in Donana 12/4 and 13/4.

**Melodious Warbler**, *Hippolais polyglotta*

2 along the east side of Rio Guadalquivir 13/4.

**Willow Warbler**, *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common

**Bonelli's Warbler**, *Phylloscopus bonellii*

2 in Jara Valley 15/4, 1 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and 1 somewhere between Guadix and Malaga 18/4.

**Iberian Chiffchaff**, *Phylloscopus brehmii*

1 heard at El Rocina in Donana 11/4 and 1 heard in Jara Valley 16/4. Also several unidentified Chiffchaffs seen in Donana.

**Pied Flycatcher**, *Ficedula hypuleuca*

10-15 individuals seen, none of subspecies *iberiae*.

**Great Tit, *Parus major***

Common

**Blue Tit, *Parus caeruleus***

Common

**Coal Tit, *Parus ater***

Several seen at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and in Sierra Nevada 17/4.

**Crested Tit, *Parus cristatus***

2 by the parking lot at El Acebuche in Donana 11/4.

**Long-tailed Tit, *Aegithalos caudatus***

5 at Castillo de Monfrague 9/4, 2 at El Rocina 11/4,

**Nuthatch, *Siita europea***

1 at Castillo de Monfrague 9/4, 2 at Sierra de San Pedro 10/4 and 2 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4.

**Short-toed Treecreeper, *Certhia brachydactyla***

1 at Castillo de Monfrague 9/4, 5 at Sierra de San Pedro 10/4, 5 at El Rocina 11/4 and 1 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4.

**Woodchat Shrike, *Lanius senator***

Common

**Southern Grey Shrike, *Lanius meridionalis***

Common in dry areas.

**Magpie, *Pica pica***

Common

**Azure-winged Magpie, *Cyanopica cyanus***

Common in Extremadura and Donana.

**Jay, *Garrulus glandarius***

1 in Monfrague 9/4 and 2 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4.

**Jackdaw, *Corvus monedula***

Common

**Red-billed Chough, *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax***

Common in mountain areas.

**Carrion Crow, *Corvus corone corone***

1 between Trujillo and Monfrague 9/4.

**Raven, *Corvus corax***

Common

**Spotless Starling, *Sturnus unicolor***

Common

**Golden Oriole**, *Oriolus oriolus*

1 at Sierra de San Pedro and 1 between Sierra de San Pedro and Huelva 10/4, 1 at Coria del Rio 13/4 and 1 in Jara Valley 15/4.

**House Sparrow**, *Passer domesticus*

Common

**Spanish Sparrow**, *Passer hispaniolensis*

Common in Extremadura

**Tree sparrow**, *Passer montanus*

2 at El Rocina 11/4.

**Rock Sparrow**, *Petronia petronia*

2 west of Santa Marta 9/4, 5 at Sierra de San Pedro 10/4, 2 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and 15 in Ronda, at Teba gorge and in Sierra Nevada 17/4.

**Chaffinch**, *Fringilla coelebs*

Common

**Linnet**, *Carduelis cannabina*

Common

**Goldfinch**, *Carduelis carduelis*

Common

**Greenfinch**, *Carduelis chloris*

Common

**Hawfinch**, *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

1 between Sierra de San Pedro and Huelva 10/4.

**Reed Bunting**, *Emberiza schoeniclus*

1 in Donana 13/4

**Cirl Bunting**, *Emberiza cirlus*

1 west of Santa Marta 9/4, 1 at El Mirador northeast of Tarifa 16/4 and 3 north of Guadix 18/4.

**Rock Bunting**, *Emberiza cia*

3 in Monfrague 9/4, 25 at Sierra de las Nieves 16/4 and 4 in Sierra Nevada 17/4.

**Corn Bunting**, *Miliaria calandra*

Common



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

All people that have helped us to prepare for this trip are listed below. Thanks a lot to them all!

Graham Catley  
Christian Dromeau  
Ernest Garcia  
Richard Gutierrez  
Geir Klaveness  
David Mark  
Magne Myklebust  
Gunnar Numme  
Claire Spottiswood  
Jerry Warne