

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Extremadura
14 – 21 February 2012

Holiday participants

John and Ann Titchmarsh
Gill Page
Wendy Oakley
Jeannine Hunt

Malcolm and Gillian Podmore
Sue Davy
Margaret Dixey
John Durdin

Leaders

Chris Durdin and Martin Kelsey

Our base for the holiday was Finca Santa Marta: <http://fincasantamarta.es>
Martin Kelsey's blog about wildlife in Extremadura: <http://birdingextremadura.blogspot.com>

Report by Martin Kelsey.

Bird list by Martin, other lists by Chris.

All photos in this report were taken during the holiday week by by Chris Durdin except for the photo of Chris on page 7 which is by John Durdin and the bluethroat on page 8 which is by Steve Fletcher.

Cover montage: cranes over Campo Lugar; oranges at Finca Santa Marta; annual daises by the old station at Madrigalejo; and azure-winged magpies.

Below – white storks in the morning light at Finca Santa Marta.



Short movies from the holiday, of azure-winged magpies, western spadefoot toad and Trujillo, via <http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/wildlife-holidays/extremadura.html>

As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of the holiday was put towards a conservation project, in this case for La Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO), the Spanish Ornithological Society, and its work in Extremadura. The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust.

During the holiday, Marcelino Cardalliaguet, who runs SEO's Extremadura office, came to Finca Santa Marta to talk to the group and receive a total of €570/£500 on behalf of SEO. He opened his talk by saying that Honeyguide is "Currently the best example of sustainable tourism in Extremadura" and praised our "Direct support to local work for the conservation of Extremadura natural values."

This year's donation brings the total given to SEO since the first Honeyguide holiday in Spain in 1991 to £13,629. The total for conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays was £76,434 by March 2012.

Extremadura
14 – 21 February 2012

Itinerary

Tuesday 14th February: Gatwick to Madrid by EasyJet. To Trujillo via A5 autovia with stop for lunch at Las Esparteras bar, just outside Madrid. Arrival at Finca Santa Marta for afternoon tea.

Wednesday 15th February: Exploring plains around Santa Marta de Magasca, coffee in the village of Santa Marta de Magasca and lunch beside the River Magasca. Afternoon walk on old drovers' trail.

Thursday 16th February: Visit to Sierra Brava reservoir, south of Zorita, then Madrigalejo disused railway station, the plains near Vegas Altas and coffee at Obando. Afternoon at the crane reserve of Moheda Alta, with lunch and walk in the dehesa, viewing from observation tower and visit to exhibition centre. Evening talk by Marcelino Cardalliaguet of Spanish Ornithological Society.

Friday 17th February: From Trujillo to Torrejón El Rubio, then to Monfragüe National Park. Stop at castle and then at car park opposite Peña Falcón crag. Coffee at Villareal de San Carlos followed by lunch at the Tajadilla picnic area. Then to Portilla del Tiétar.

Saturday 18th February: Free morning in Trujillo, then north-east across Belén Plains with lunch near a storks' colony. Afternoon walk beside River Tozo towards the Tozo reservoir. Late afternoon stop at Trujillo bullring. Evening slide-show by Steve Fletcher.

Sunday 19th February: South across the plains near Campo Lugar. Coffee in Campo Lugar village and then lunch stop followed by riverside walk near Casar de Miajadas. Afternoon spent at flooded rice fields near Santa Amalia. Dinner in La Troya restaurant in Trujillo.

Monday 20th February: North-east to heathland close to town of Jaraicejo leading to cork oak grove. Coffee at service station beside A5, followed by lunch at Miravete Pass. Afternoon walk beside Arrocampo reservoir.

Tuesday 21st February: Early morning departure from Finca Santa Marta to check-in by 09.30 at Madrid airport for return flight to Gatwick.

14th February: Gatwick to Finca Santa Marta

Martin (along with Malcolm and Gill who had arrived in Madrid the previous day) met Chris and the other Honeyguiders at the Terminal One Arrivals Gate at Madrid airport, the flight from Gatwick having landed a good twenty minutes ahead of schedule. After the usual hire-car collection bureaucracy we loaded up the luggage in the two minivans, got on board and headed off around the southern side of Madrid, before taking the A5 motorway south-west. Just a few minutes after leaving Madrid and entering the Province of Toledo we stopped at the Esparteras bar beside the motorway. Its unprepossessing external appearance – like any number of highway bars and restaurants – belies a lively ambience, good value lunches (the mixed salad is a Honeyguide favourite) and some fascinating details. High quality and valuable Iberian hams hang above the bar, while in an alcove on the way to the restaurant Malcolm discovered a veritable treasure: a collection of wines for sale including some of France's most expensive and exclusive, bottles with price-tags of several thousand euros apiece. This is indeed a rather special motorway service station.

Refreshed and feeling that the holiday had truly begun we set off for Extremadura. Scattered cloud over Madrid also hung over the high peaks of the Gredos mountains, but as we approached Extremadura the afternoon skies cleared. The economic woes facing Spain had been coupled with a severe winter drought, with no significant rain in Extremadura since the previous November. That, along with a fortnight of unseasonal cold weather, had left the landscape in a sorry state. The slopes of the Gredos were free of snow, while the plains were looking parched and rather grey. However, as we got closer to our destination, the classic Extremadura scenery of *dehesa* wood pasture was as beautiful as ever, as were the white storks gliding overhead.

We reached Finca Santa Marta at 17.30, with still two hours left of light to unpack and enjoy the tea and coffee that was soon ready for us.

15th February: Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca

The day dawned (at 08.00) with a clear blue sky, hoarfrost on the ground and ice on the windscreens. So settled was the weather throughout the holiday that this was how each morning greeted us and hardly a cloud was seen all week.

The large almond tree in the car park proved to be a favoured haunt of a hawfinch, and most mornings as we assembled, good views were obtained of this species. As we reached the end of the drive leading to the Finca, we spotted over the hill to the east a vast kettle of vultures, probably well over a hundred birds circling slowly on an early thermal. Some broke off and drifted in our direction giving us our first good views of griffon vultures and at least one black vulture too.

Today we headed north-west to the nearby plains around the village of Santa Marta de Magasca. Here, areas of open mixed-farming which form expansive plains of steppe-like appearance are cut by deep, wooded valleys. We made a couple of initial stops to scan the habitat, finding a small winter flock of little bustards, largely concealed in an excellent cover of dead thistles. A female merlin dashed overhead, putting up spotless starlings, meadow pipits, skylarks and corn buntings. We took a walk along a track, finding very little in terms of flowering plants, the thin soil being quite parched, but getting views of a party of great bustards as well as calandra and crested larks.

We stopped for coffee in a little bar in the small square of Santa Marta de Magasca and then found a picnic stop in the sunny valley of the Magasca river. Throngs of wintering common chiffchaffs foraged close to the water's edge, while the wild olive trees held blackcaps and song thrush, also winter visitors. A very distant golden eagle was watched being mobbed by a sparrowhawk, while closer to hand crag martins hawked overhead, briefly joined by a swallow, and a curlew was singing along the valley.

We then spent the afternoon walking to a drovers' trail (a *Cañada Real*), with an expanse of sky above us and plains around us. It was a glorious afternoon. Upon reaching the track we simply stopped and spent time watching and waiting. It was a rewarding strategy. A pair of golden eagles appeared and drifted close by. A sparrowhawk put up hundreds of small birds from what at first appearance seemed an empty stubble field: larks, pipits, goldfinches, spotless starlings. And then from the direction of the eagles came a flock of pin-tailed sandgrouse, calling loudly and flying overhead, their bold contrasting plumage set off well against the clear blue sky.

We made a short stop to view the *Berrocal*, the area of granite outcrops upon which Trujillo is built. There we found a few common storks in flower, vanguard individuals of what we hope will be a pink carpet of flowers in a few weeks time.

After tea at the finca Chris took some members of the group on a walk through the grounds, but very few flowers were found.

16th February: Sierra Brava reservoir, the rice fields near Madrigalejo and Moheda Alta

Each morning there was something of interest seen as we assembled. Today a migrating party of greylag geese flew north, our attention drawn to their calls. Leaving the finca we headed south-east, through the town of Zorita, across open plains and then making a stop at the Sierra Brava reservoir. With the backdrop of the Villuercas mountains, the surface of the reservoir was calm and we could see vast rafts of ducks roosting right out in the middle. Some were luckily a bit closer, including several thousand shovelers, as well as good numbers of wigeon and gadwall. A party of 35 shelducks was an unusual sight. At this stop as well we saw a group of great bustards flying past and our first cranes of the holiday, seen as well as heard. Small parties were feeding in nearby fields or flying over, while the bugling call was indeed a constant accompaniment all day long.

Immediately to the south of the reservoir lies the rice-growing zone of central Extremadura. As we entered the area we stopped at the old railway station of Madrigalejo. Here a funfair was getting set up for the forthcoming carnival weekend, complete with bouncy castle and stalls with loud music. This was not the purpose of our visit, however, for seemingly oblivious to the hullabaloo were roosting stone-curlews, standing or sitting in a stony field where holm oaks had been planted. We saw perhaps six birds and doubtless there were more.

South of Madrigalejo, on arable plains, we saw more small groups of cranes, at one stage flying together with great bustards. After coffee in the village of Obando we had lunch in the picnic area of the reserve of Moheda Alta, at the edge of a *dehesa* of mature holm oak trees and surrounded by the



sound of cranes. As we ate, an excursion of primary school children arrived having completed their visit to the reserve. After lunch we walked the mile or so through the open woodland, watching woodlark and groups of cranes, until we reached the edge of rice stubble fields where there was an observation tower (left). From there we watched perhaps 2,000 cranes feeding in the fields and the arrival of over 600 pintails, creating a wonderful spectacle as they landed in the flooded fields in front of us. Eight glossy ibises were an added bonus and a group of four curlews also appeared. Smaller birds were not overlooked, with Spanish and tree sparrows in the bushes in front of us too.

We returned to the visitors' centre where we enjoyed an exhibition on cranes and the *dehesa*. Back at the finca, Marcelino Cardalliaguet of SEO was ready to meet us and give us an illustrated talk on the conservation of birds in Extremadura and the work that he is responsible for. After the talk, Chris presented him with the Honeyguiders' donation this year.

17th February: Monfragüe National Park

This morning's star at the car park assembly point was another fine view of a male hawfinch. Today we headed north, across the granite *berrocal* of Trujillo and descending to cross the expanse of *dehesa* en route to the Monfragüe National Park. Along the way we spotted family groups of cranes among the trees. Our first port of call in Monfragüe was the ancient castle standing atop the ridge. We did not stay long there, partly because there was a stiff and chilly northerly breeze and also because of building work underway to improve access. Griffon vultures cruised past, and to the north there was a magnificent view of the Gredos Mountains, much clearer than they had been on our journey from Madrid.



Peña Falcón crag, overlooking the river Tiétar which flows into the Tagus at Monfragüe;
and griffon vultures at Portilla del Tiétar.

We descended and drove to the viewpoint of Peña Falcón, facing the impressive cliff bearing the same name. As we got out of the vans a Spanish imperial eagle appeared briefly among the circling vultures near the cliff top, and barely seconds later an Egyptian vulture, a newly arrived summer visitor, had also made an appearance. Shortly afterwards an Egyptian vulture was watched being mobbed by a peregrine. An obliging male blue rock thrush gave us superb views, perched on a

nearby outcrop. But it was the griffon vultures that made the place so special: gliding in formation, coming to land, carrying nesting material, and the bird on the nest so close to the lay-by that its image nearly filled the field of view of the telescope.

After coffee in the little hamlet of Villareal de San Carlos, we had lunch in a picnic area overlooking imposing cliffs. The elms were just coming into flower and attracting bees. While we sat, inquisitive azure-winged magpies arrived, and thanks to breadcrumbs placed on one of the tables were enticed to join us for lunch – perhaps 30 or 40 were present.



We spent the afternoon at the wonderful Portilla del Tiétar, like Peña Falcón a cliff face cut by a large river but here much more secluded and quiet. As we arrived a juvenile golden eagle glided along the top of the ridge. Folded rock strata looked like huge ripples close to the water's edge. At the entrance of a small cave on the hillside opposite an eagle owl sat incubating her clutch, her face and 'ear tufts' clearly visible, and sometimes blinking her eyes. On a sheltered bank, angel's tears narcissus was starting to come into flower (left). Griffon vultures came and went and groups of cormorants hung out on boulders. Just as we were about to leave we heard the barking call of the Spanish imperial eagle and a bird suddenly appeared, arching upwards in the sky and diving down, a display called the sky dance. It was magnificent.

Back at the finca, Henri hosted a welcoming cocktail party for the group.

18th February: Trujillo, Belén Plains and River Tozo

This morning was an opportunity to visit the gem which is the medieval town of Trujillo, starting at the main square (one of finest in Spain) and exploring the narrow streets of the old quarter before arriving at the Moorish castle, built on the highest point of the granite batholith. The palaces and churches, whose grandeur was based on the wealth acquired from merino wool from flocks grazing in the *dehesas*, and subsequently the spoils of conquest from the Americas, provided nest sites for white storks. Their castanet-like bill clacking echoed across the square. A red-rumped swallow and several crag martins were also seen, as well as our first lesser kestrels. In more sheltered corners by the castle there were a few flowers, including white henbane, a violet carpenter bee and hummingbird hawkmoth buzzing round a rosemary bush.

The visit ended with some shopping and refreshments in a pavement café. The main square was enlivened by a growing carnival crowd, especially small boys chasing, dodging and weaving round a man wheeling a model of a bull's head on a cycle wheel, some holding and moving their coats in the style of a matador.



Fun in Trujillo's *plaza mayor*, and vultures with a carcass on Belén Plains.

We then drove to the nearby Belén Plains, which looked rather bleak because of the drought, but nevertheless home to birds like little owl, which afforded us quite gorgeous views. After a short walk, seeing small coppers on the wing, we had a picnic overlooking a storks' colony and close-by watched a group of griffon and black vultures finishing the remains of a carcass.

The rest of the afternoon was spent walking beside the river Tozo to reach a small reservoir. About 15 cranes were present there, as well as great white egret, two black storks, some waders and ducks. As we returned through Trujillo we stopped at the bullring to watch a pair of lesser kestrels, the male in particular giving us excellent views.

Local bird photographer Steve Fletcher and his wife Karen joined us for dinner, and Steve shared some of his slides with us afterwards.

19th February: Plains near Campo Lugar and rice fields to Santa Amalia

This morning's car park showpiece was a male green woodpecker calling from the top of a dead branch, although he spent most of the time hiding out of view!

Today we headed south again, this time veering south-west across the plains to the village of Campo Lugar. The landscape seemed somewhat less barren than the Belén Plains and we had magnificent views westward towards the Villuercas mountains. A little owl sat on a pile of stones in a field and nearby at a stop we had good views of black-bellied sandgrouse in flight as well as a few on the ground, shuffling around on their short legs. Lapwings and golden plovers were scattered across the pastures and we enjoyed excellent views of two male calandra larks chasing each other in circles close-by.

Passing a cattle-grid, Martin suggested it would be worthwhile checking for amphibians and we were delighted to find three western spadefoot toads lurking in the dark waters under the grid. Never passing by a photo opportunity, Chris lay beside the grid, arms stretched between the girders, camera held perilously close to the water, and was rewarded by footage of a toad swimming. As Malcolm was later to remark, it was a real "toad-in-the-hole" moment.



Little owl on Belén Plains; and Chris filming western spadefoot toads (photo on page 12).

Further along we reached an area of higher ground, providing panoramic views. We stopped because a small group of great bustards was visible on the field to the south. Within minutes we had found a larger group to the north of the road. The sun was shining and it was calm and a few butterflies appeared, first a western dappled white, followed in the same patch just minutes later by a green-striped white.

As we watched the butterflies our attention was drawn to the sound of cranes, just to the west of us above the road, where a party of perhaps 80 birds was wheeling around against a clear blue sky. It was a lovely sight as they seemed to organise themselves, regroup and then head north again in a loose, drawn-out skein. Looking back to the south-west we became aware that another line of cranes was approaching. As they reached the same spot their formation too broke up and they spent several minutes circling and gaining a little height before regrouping and moving on.

We were standing close to a developing thermal and, as we gazed south-west again, we could see another line of cranes coming towards us, followed by another and yet another. We started to scan generally in that direction, and far in the distance we could see groups of cranes heading our way. We were witnessing the very start of the northward migration. The pattern was repeated and repeated: a line approached, broke up amidst a glorious sound of bugling from the birds as they circled, regrouped and then disappeared northwards. It was a moving experience and we all stood in silence and wonder as we took in this very special spectacle. It was a privilege.



Cranes in the distance at Campo Lugar, heading north on migration and passing overhead.

Gradually, fewer groups of cranes were passing and the wave of migration was coming to an end. A couple of skeins of greylag geese had also passed over, in more defined 'V's and on a slightly different route-bearing. We climbed back into the vans and continued to Campo Lugar for coffee, all of us feeling that we had shared a moment of magic.

From the village we descended from the plateau to the rice fields and arable lands. We stopped beside a river near Casar de Miajadas for lunch, followed by a walk along its banks. Its reed-mace-filled course was a haunt for water rail, Cetti's warbler and penduline tit, while parties of common waxbills were found at the edge of the adjoining fields. We then headed further west towards the town of Santa Amalia. Here, wetter fields thronged with waders, including black-tailed godwit coming into fine breeding plumage, a couple of wood sandpipers, little stint and black-winged stilt. Among the waders were good numbers of passage water pipits as well as wintering meadow pipits and white wagtails. We met Steve and Karen beside one of the fields and they described the place nearby where they had seen and photographed a male bluethroat (right) Time was short by now, but following their instructions we found the area. Walking beside a wide ditch we tracked the bird down, with most of the group getting views of it in flight.



In the evening we returned to the main square in Trujillo to enjoy a meal in La Troya restaurant.

20th February: Jaraicejo heath and cork oak, Arrocampo reservoir.

Our final full day in the field took us first to an area north-east of Trujillo, near the town of Jaraicejo. It was a heath-like habitat dominated by lavender and broom, with some gorse as well. Thekla larks were common and we obtained several good views of this tricky species. The heath also supported a good population of Dartford warblers and we had superb views of singing males. Being close to Monfragüe National Park we were under a vulture flight-path, and several griffon vultures glided low overhead, but most memorably some very close black vultures.

Our path took us down into an attractive cork oak woodland where we appreciated the relative shelter as the rather stiff northerly breeze was decidedly chilly. Several short-toed treecreepers were present, as well as nuthatch and a rock bunting at the woodland's edge.

After coffee we drove to the Miravete Pass which rewarded us with panoramic views both north and south, but the wind was cold and apart from a black redstart there was not much to be seen. We then descended northwards to the town of Almaráz and thence to the reservoir of Arrocampo. Here it was much milder. Parking at the Information Office, we walked towards one hide and then across to a second. The walks themselves proved most rewarding and we enjoyed a very full afternoon. First of all we had very good views of several purple swampheens, including one which appeared to be nest-building. The fringing vegetation of lesser reedmace and some common reeds was thronging with common chiffchaffs. We watched two squacco herons fly in and just a few minutes later three glossy ibises flew past us. A thin, high-pitched call caught our attention and we quickly found first one and then another penduline tit feeding on the lesser reedmace flowers. The views were unusually prolonged. We found a black-winged kite perched on a small pylon and were thrilled when it took off and came to glide very close to us, and as it moved away it started to hunt for food, hovering in the wind. As we returned to the van some movement caught our attention, proving to be male little bittern. What a selection of birds on such a short walk!

We returned to the finca for our final afternoon tea and checklist. Following dinner everyone had the opportunity to elect their most memorable sighting of the trip. Most people ended up choosing three or four special memories and these are listed below.

21st February: Return to Madrid

With the vans packed, we set off shortly after 06.00 under a beautiful starry sky, with Mars shining brightly to the west. It was milder, indeed the first morning when ice-scraping the windscreen had not been necessary. The journey back was smooth and traffic not too heavy on the M40 ring-road, so that we reached the airport in good time for the check-in. Thus ended what had been a very rewarding and enjoyable holiday for all.

Highlights of the week, as nominated by group members

Sue	"Aah" for the eagle owl; "wow" for the cranes; pin-tailed sandgrouse and their sound.
Gill Podmore	A for azure-winged magpies, B for the "butterfly ballet" (Chris's chase), C clacking castanets of storks – and the cranes. Plus the angel's tears narcissi.
Malcolm	The wine collection at Las Esparteras, great and little bustards, migrating cranes, Dartford warbler, rock bunting, penduline tits, black-winged kite, little bittern, butterfly Chris, the toad-in-the-hole.
Jeannine	Migrating cranes; vultures in Monfragüe; stone-curlews by all that noise at the old railway station.
John D	Migrating cranes; crowd of children with the bull's head on a cycle wheel in the main square in Trujillo; penduline tits (and how the chaps in the pub will react to hearing that); Martin as leader.
Margaret	Migrating cranes; Portillo de Tiétar with eagles, vultures and eagle owl.
Gill Page	Migrating cranes; griffon on a nest; Dartford warbler; yet another friendly Honeyguide group.
John T	Migrating cranes; cranes flying with bustards; Spanish imperial eagle displaying.
Ann	Migrating cranes; vulture dropping a twig onto its mate.
Wendy	Cranes, hoopoe and little owl.
Martin	Close to tears watching the migrating cranes.
Chris	Migrating cranes; western spadefoot toad; azure-winged magpies on the picnic table.

**SYSTEMATIC LISTS
BIRDS**

A summary of sightings contributed by the whole group at the daily 'call-over'.

Little Grebe	Seen at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Great Crested Grebe	Seen at Sierra Brava and Tozo reservoirs.
Cormorant	Seen almost daily.
Little Bittern	One at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Squacco Heron	Two at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Cattle Egret	Seen almost daily.
Little Egret	Seen almost daily.
Great White Egret	One seen in rice fields on 16 th and one at River Tozo on 18 th February.
Grey Heron	Seen almost daily.
Black Stork	Two at Tozo reservoir on 18 th February.
White Stork	Seen every day.
Glossy Ibis	Eight at Moheda Alta on 16 th February and three at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Greylag Goose	A skein over the Finca on 16 th , two skeins over Campo Lugar Plains on 19 th and 18 at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Shelduck	35 on Sierra Brava on 16 th February.
Wigeon	Present at Sierra Brava and Tozo reservoirs.
Gadwall	Seen at Sierra Brava, Tozo and Arrocampo.
Teal	Seen at Sierra Brava, on rice fields and Tozo reservoir.
Mallard	Seen almost daily.
Pintail	Seen on rice fields and Sierra Brava, with 650 present at Moheda Alta on 16 th February.
Shoveler	Seen almost daily with large numbers on Sierra Brava.
Black-shouldered Kite	One on drive from Madrid on 14 th and excellent views of one at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Red Kite	Seen almost daily.
Egyptian Vulture	Two seen at Monfragüe on 17 th February.
Griffon Vulture	Seen every day.
Black Vulture	Seen almost daily.
Marsh Harrier	Seen on rice fields and at Arrocampo.
Sparrowhawk	Two seen on 15 th February near Santa Marta de Magasca.
Common Buzzard	Seen every day.
Spanish Imperial Eagle	Two seen at Monfragüe on 17 th February.
Golden Eagle	Three seen near Santa Marta de Magasca on 15 th and one in Monfragüe on 17 th February.
Lesser Kestrel	Seen in main square of Trujillo and at bullring on 18 th and at Campo Lugar on 19 th February.
Common Kestrel	Seen every day.
Merlin	One near Santa Marta de Magasca on 15 th and one on Belén Plains on 18 th February.
Peregrine	One at Monfragüe on 17 th February.
Red-legged Partridge	Seen almost daily.
Water Rail	Seen near Casar de Miajadas on 19 th and heard at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Moorhen	Seen at Arrocampo.
Purple Swamphen	Several seen at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Coot	Seen on rice fields on 19 th and Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Crane	Seen almost daily with a spectacular migration witnessed near Campo Lugar on 19 th February.
Little Bustard	About ten near Santa Marta de Magasca on 15 th February.
Great Bustard	About 12 near Santa Marta de Magasca on 15 th , similar number near Sierra Brava on 16 th , two at Vegas Altas on 16 th and about 30 near Campo Lugar on 19 th February.
Stone-curlew	About six near Madrigalejo on 16 th February.

Black-winged Stilt	Seen at Tozo reservoir and near Santa Amalia.
Little Ringed Plover	Seen near Santa Amalia.
Golden Plover	Seen almost daily.
Lapwing	Seen every day.
Little Stint	Two near Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Dunlin	About fifty present at Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Ruff	About ten seen at Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Snipe	Good numbers on the rice fields and seen also on River Tozo and Arrocampo.
Black-tailed Godwit	About 50 near Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Curlew	Four at Moheda Alta on 16 th February.
Greenshank	Recorded at Tozo and Arrocampo.
Green Sandpiper	Seen on rice fields and Tozo reservoir.
Wood Sandpiper	Two at Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Black-headed Gull	Seen every day.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Seen on rice fields and on plains.
Yellow-legged Gull	One seen at Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Black-bellied Sandgrouse	Two seen near Sierra Brava reservoir on 16 th February and several near Campo Lugar on 19 th February.
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	About 50 seen near Santa Marta de Magasca on 15 th February.
Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	Seen every day.
Woodpigeon	Seen almost daily.
Collared Dove	Seen daily.
Great Spotted Cuckoo	One seen on Belén Plains on 18 th February.
Eagle Owl	Incubating bird seen at Monfragüe on 17 th February.
Little Owl	Seen near Sierra Brava, Belén Plains and Campo Lugar road.
Kingfisher	Seen on River Magasca, Monfragüe and Arrocampo.
Hoopoe	Seen daily.
Green Woodpecker	Seen and heard on two mornings at Finca Santa Marta.
Calandra Lark	Seen on each visit to the plains.
Crested Lark	Seen daily.
Thekla Lark	Seen almost daily.
Woodlark	Seen daily.
Skylark	Seen almost daily.
Crag Martin	Seen almost daily.
Swallow	Seen daily.
Red-rumped Swallow	One in Trujillo on 18 th February.
Meadow Pipit	Seen almost daily.
Water Pipit	Seen at Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Grey Wagtail	Two at River Tozo on 18 th February.
White Wagtail	Seen daily.
Wren	Recorded twice.
Dunnock	Heard at Jaraicejo on 20 th February.
Robin	Seen daily.
Bluethroat	One seen at Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Black Redstart	Seen almost daily.
Stonechat	Seen almost daily.
Blue Rock Thrush	Seen in Monfragüe.
Blackbird	Seen daily.
Song Thrush	Seen daily.
Mistle Thrush	Seen near Santa Marta de Magasca.
Cetti's Warbler	Recorded on rice fields on 19 th and at Arrocampo on 20 th February
Zitting Cisticola (fan-tailed warbler)	Recorded on rice fields, near Campo Lugar and at Arrocampo.
Dartford Warbler	Three or four seen at Jaraicejo on 20 th February.
Sardinian Warbler	Seen almost daily.
Blackcap	Seen daily.

Chiffchaff	Abundant, seen daily.
Long-tailed Tit	Seen almost daily.
Blue Tit	Seen almost daily.
Great Tit	Seen almost daily.
Penduline Tit	Seen near Casar de Miajadas on 19 th and at Arrocampo on 20 th February.
Short-toed Treecreeper	Seen almost daily.
Nuthatch	Seen at Jaraicejo on 20 th February.
Iberian Grey Shrike	Seen almost daily.
Jay	Seen at Monfragüe and Jaraicejo.
Azure-winged Magpie	Seen daily.
Magpie	Seen daily.
Jackdaw	Seen almost daily.
Raven	Seen almost daily.
Spotless Starling	Seen daily.
Common Starling	Several in mixed starling flock near Campo Lugar on 19 th February.
House Sparrow	Seen daily.
Spanish Sparrow	Seen almost daily.
Tree Sparrow	Seen at Moheda Alta on 16 th February.
Common Waxbill	Seen near Casar de Miajadas on 19 th February.
Red Avadavat	Seen near Santa Amalia on 19 th February.
Chaffinch	Seen daily.
Serin	Seen daily.
Greenfinch	Seen in Trujillo on 18 th February.
Goldfinch	Seen almost daily.
Linnet	Seen almost daily.
Hawfinch	Seen almost daily, especially at Finca Santa Marta.
Cirl Bunting	One singing at River Magasca on 15 th February.
Rock Bunting	One at Jaraicejo on 20 th February.
Corn Bunting	Seen almost daily.

TOTAL = 126 species

MAMMALS

Wild boar *Sus scrofa* – rootings (the one on the right was in the coffee-stop bar on 20th February)

Red deer *Cervus elaphus hispanicus*

Western hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*

Iberian hare *Lepus granatensis*

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Iberian mole *Talpa occidentales* – hills



REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Terrapin sp

Iberian wall lizard *Podarcis hispanica*

Moorish gecko *Tarentola mauretanica*

Western spadefoot toad *Pelobates cultripes* (right)



BUTTERFLIES

Small White
Green-striped White

Western Dappled White
Clouded Yellow

Large Tortoiseshell
Red Admiral

Small Copper
Holly Blue

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Hummingbird hawkmoth *Macroglossum stellatarum*
Pine processionary moth *Thaumetopoea pityocampa*
Caterpillars of the tiger moth *Ocnognyna boetica*
Violet carpenter bee *Xylocopa violacea*
Great centipede *Scolopendra cingulatus*
(right – found on the River Tozo walk)



PLANTS

Numbers on the right refer to Blamey & Grey-Wilson, *Mediterranean Wild Flowers*.

Polunin refers to Polunin & Smythies, *Flowers of south-west Europe*.

Where there is no number, usually these are plants in floras from northern Europe, e.g. *Wild Flowers of Britain & Europe* by Fitter, Fitter & Blamey.

Some are planted, marked P. NiF = not in flower.

Common northern European plants e.g. shepherd's purse, groundsel, are not usually noted; planted trees are only noted when of special interest.

It's a short list, with the cold and dry weather restricting the number of flowers.

Pinaceae		
<i>Pinus pinea</i>	Stone / umbrella pine	(3)
Fagaceae		
<i>Quercus rotundifolia</i>	Holm oak	(26)
<i>Quercus suber</i>	Cork oak	(27)
Ulmaceae		
<i>Ulmus minor</i>	Elm sp.	(c. 38)
Urticaceae		
<i>Urtica membranacea</i>	Membranous nettle	(49)
<i>U. urens</i>	Annual nettle	
Caryophyllaceae		
<i>Corrigiola litoralis</i>	Strapwort	
<i>Paronychia capita</i>	Paronychia	(134)
<i>Spergularia arvensis</i>	Corn spurrey	
Fumariaceae		
<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	Ramping fumitory	(303)
Cruciferae		
<i>Matthiola lunata</i>	A stock (photo in Polunin) NiF	
<i>Sinapsis arvensis</i>	Charlock	
<i>Sisymbrium altissimum</i>	Tall rocket	
<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>	Wild radish	(369)
Crassulaceae		
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort (NiF)	(396)
Leguminosae		
<i>Cytisus multiflorus</i>	White broom	
<i>Onobrychis humilis</i>	A sainfoin type. Not in Blamey or Polunin	
Oxalidaceae		
<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Bermuda buttercup	(735)

Geraniaceae		
<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	Shining cranesbill (NiF)	(749)
<i>Erodium cicutarum</i>	Common storksbill	(761)
Meliaceae		
<i>Melia azedarach</i> P	Indian bead tree or Persian lilac (NiF)	(843)
Thymelaeaceae		
<i>Daphne gnidium</i>	Daphne (NiF)	(936)
Cistaceae		
<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey-leaved cistus (NiF)	(961)
<i>Cistus salviifolius</i>	Sage-leaved cistus (NiF)	(965)
<i>Cistus ladanifer</i>	Gum cistus (NiF)	(971)
Cactaceae		
<i>Opuntia maxima</i> (=ficus-indica)	Prickly pear	(1040)
Umbelliferae		
<i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant fennel (NiF)	(1141)
<i>Smyrniolum olustatum</i>	Alexanders (NiF)	(1087)
Rubiaceae		
<i>Galium verticillatum</i>	A tiny bedstraw	(1299)
Oleaceae		
<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>		(1246)
<i>Olea europaea</i>	Olive	(1248)
<i>Olea europaea</i> spp <i>oleaster</i>	Wild olive	(1248a)
Boraginaceae		
<i>Anchusa undulata</i>	Undulate anchusa	(1406)
Labiatae		
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	White horehound (NiF)	(1445)
<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit deadnettle	(1478)
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary	(1526)
Solanaceae		
<i>Hyoscyamus albus</i>	White henbane	(1555)
Scrophulariaceae		
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved toadflax	(1632)
Compositae		
<i>Anthemis</i> sp <i>arvensis</i> ?	A mayweed	
<i>Bellis annua</i>	Annual daisy	(1791)
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Perennial daisy	(1792)
<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Field marigold	(1908)
<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk Thistle (NiF)	(1982)
Liliaceae		
<i>Urginea maritima</i>	Sea squill (leaves & dead flower spikes)	(2163)
<i>Narcissus triandrus papyraceus</i>	Angel's tears	(Polunin)
Iridaceae		
<i>Arisarum simorrhinum</i>	A friar's cowl	(2378)
Gramineae		
<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	Lesser reedmace	
<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant reed	(2494)
FERNS (PTERIDOPHYTA)		
<i>Cheilanthes pteridoides</i> .	Scented cheilanthes	(2517)
<i>Polypodium</i> sp	A polypody	

