

HOLIDAY REPORT FOR FRANCISCO AND CLAUDIA

Short photography birding break

Casa Rural El Recuerdo & Birding Extremadura

22nd – 26th May 2018

Itinerary

22nd May 2018: Transfer from Salamanca to Casa Rural El Recuerdo, with stop at Tornovacas Pass.

23rd May 2018: Monfragüe National Park and Trujillo

24th May 2018: Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca, heath and cork oak groves of Jaraicejo

25th May 2018: Palazuelo rice fields, Alange Reservoir, Guadiana River and Roman Bridge Mérida

26th May 2018: Arrocampo Reservoir, Almaráz Orchydarium and return to Madrid.



TOUR REPORT

22nd May 2018: Transfer from Salamanca to Casa Rural El Recuerdo, with stop at Tornovacas Pass.

Martin met Francisco and Claudia at Salamanca at 16.00 and we took the A66 southwards towards Extremadura. Reaching Bejar we took the road to Barcos de Ávila and then rose to the Tornavacas Pass, on the border between Castille y Leon and Extremadura. Here we had our picnic, looking westward down the Jerte Valley and spent an hour so birding in the broom scrub there. Amongst species seen were **Red-backed Shrike**, **Dunnock**, **Common Whitethroat** and **Ortolan Bunting**. Early Purple Orchids were in flower here.



We then descended the Jerte valley, stopping to buy early cherries and then reaching Casa Rural El Recuerdo at about 22.00.

23rd May 2018: Monfragüe National Park and Trujillo

We spent the day in the Monfragüe National Park, stopping first at the Portilla del Tiétar, where we enjoyed great views of **Spanish Imperial Eagle**. Nearby we saw an **Egyptian Vulture** at its nest. We visited several of the viewpoints, such as the Tajadilla, the area near Villarreal de San Carlos, where we saw **Black-eared Wheatear** and the Portilla del Tiétar, a massive rock face where there were **Black Stork**, **Blue Rock Thrush** and **Black Redstart**. We ended our visit with a walk to the Monfragüe Castle, providing us with magnificent views, as well as the opportunity of seeing vultures flying past below us.

We stopped in Trujillo on our return, for a chance to visit this historic town and purchase local gastronomic products.



24th May 2018: Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca, heath and cork oak groves of Jaraicejo

We spent the first part of the day on the plains west of Trujillo, near the village of Santa Marta de Magasca. Here we had views of both **Great** and **Little Bustard**, as well as a late passage **Whinchat** and **Thekla Lark**. Proceeding to similar habitat to the south-

west of the village, we had another excellent view of **Great Bustard**, a **Montagu's Harrier**, **Short-toed Eagle** and **Short-toed Lark**, as well as **Rollers**, **Little Owls** and **Lesser Kestrel**.

We had our picnic beside the Magasca River, where **Crag Martins** were nesting below the bridge. After driving eastward on the plains, we proceeded to a beautiful area near Jaraicejo of French Lavender and broom heathland where we found both **Spectacled** and **Dartford Warblers**. We made a brief visit to an enchanting Cork Oak grove. We made a final stop beside the Arroyo de la Vid. There was a fine colony of **Common Tongue Orchids** and birds included **Rock Sparrow** and a brief sighting of **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**.



25th May 2018: Palazuelo rice fields, Alange Reservoir, Guadiana River and Roman Bridge Mérida (and Cáceres)

We started the day exploring the rice fields and riverine woodland near Palazuelo, not far from the town of Madrigalejo. Here we found a large flock of **Red Avadavats**, as well as a very obliging **Melodious Warbler**. Two **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** were seen in flight. A **Marsh Harrier** was present in the reeds along the Ruerкас River. We came

across a rice fields with a selection of birds including **Collared Pratincole** and **Ringed Plover**. **Yellow Wagtails** were also present.

We then drove south-west to the town of Alange, where we had good views of a male **Black Wheatear**. **Thekla Larks** were also present. We had a picnic close to the River Guadiana, listening to a **Great Reed Warbler** singing continuously.

The afternoon concluded on the superb Roman Bridge in the centre of Mérida, where we saw **Purple Swamphen**, **Little Bittern**, **Kingfisher**, **Purple Heron** and, as a surprise, a **Great Spotted Cuckoo**.



26th May 2018: Arrocampo Reservoir, Almaráz Orchydarium and return to Madrid.

Heading onwards to Madrid, we made our first stop beside the marsh at the Arrocampo Reservoir near the town of Saucedilla. We saw more **Purple Swamphen**, rather distant **Savi's Warblers**, **Reed Warblers** and **Little Bittern**. The early morning mist there cleared just in time to enable us to have good views of a **Red Kite** passing overhead.

We then had just enough time to pay a visit to the Orchydarium information centre at Almaráz before continuing to Madrid, reaching the airport by 13.45.

List of species photographed

- 1. Red-legged Partridge**
- 2. Little Bittern**
- 3. Black Stork**
- 4. White Stork**
- 5. Eurasian Spoonbill**
- 6. Egyptian Vulture**
- 7. Griffon Vulture**
- 8. Black Vulture**
- 9. Spanish Imperial Eagle**
- 10. Short-toed Eagle**
- 11. Booted Eagle**
- 12. Black Kite**
- 13. Red Kite**
- 14. Marsh Harrier**
- 15. Montagu's Harrier**
- 16. Lesser Kestrel**
- 17. Purple Swamphen**
- 18. Little Bustard**
- 19. Great Bustard**
- 20. Black-winged Stilt**
- 21. Collared Pratincole**
- 22. Common Ringed Plover**
- 23. Turtle Dove**
- 24. Great Spotted Cuckoo**
- 25. Little Owl**
- 26. Common Kingfisher**
- 27. European Bee-eater**
- 28. European Roller**
- 29. Eurasian Hoopoe**
- 30. Calandra Lark**
- 31. Greater Short-toed Lark**
- 32. Crested Lark**
- 33. Thekla Lark**
- 34. Crag Martin**
- 35. Red-rumped Swallow**
- 36. Yellow Wagtail**
- 37. Wren**
- 38. Dunnock**
- 39. Robin**
- 40. Nightingale**
- 41. Black Redstart**
- 42. Stonechat**

- 43. Whinchat
- 44. Black-eared Wheatear
- 45. Black Wheatear
- 46. Blue Rock Thrush
- 47. Cetti's Warbler
- 48. Zitting Cisticola
- 49. Reed Warbler
- 50. Great Reed Warbler
- 51. Melodious Warbler
- 52. Dartford Warbler
- 53. Spectacled Warbler
- 54. Subalpine Warbler
- 55. Sardinian Warbler
- 56. Greater Whitethroat
- 57. Eurasian Blackcap
- 58. Long-tailed Tit
- 59. Blue Tit
- 60. Great Tit
- 61. Short-toed Treecreeper
- 62. Penduline Tit
- 63. Iberian Grey Shrike
- 64. Woodchat Shrike
- 65. Red-backed Shrike
- 66. Iberian Magpie
- 67. Jackdaw
- 68. Spotless Starling
- 69. Spanish Sparrow
- 70. Tree Sparrow
- 71. Red Avadavat
- 72. Common Chaffinch
- 73. Serin
- 74. Greenfinch
- 75. Goldfinch
- 76. Linnet
- 77. Rock Bunting
- 78. Ortolan Bunting
- 79. Corn Bunting