

HOLIDAY REPORT FOR MARK
Casa Rural El Recuerdo & Birding Extremadura
Butterflies and Dragonflies in early summer
15th – 22nd June 2019



Itinerary

- 15th June 2019: Collection at Madrid airport and stop on southern Gredos slope**
16th June 2019: Monfragüe National Park, Tiétar River and Arrocampo Reservoir
17th June 2019: Las Mestas in Los Hurdes and La Garganta in the Gredos
18th June 2019: The Ibores mountains
19th June 2019: River Guadiana at Don Alvaro and Mérida, Malpartida de Cáceres
20th June 2019: Villuercas Mountains, Palazuelo rice fields and Alcollarín Reservoir
21st June 2019: La Garganta and Arrocampo.
22nd June 2019: Southern slope of Gredos and return to Madrid

TRIP REPORT

All photos by Mark Ferris

Overall, we enjoyed excellent weather with no rain and moderate temperatures. On some days there was a fresh and strong breeze.

15th June 2019: Collection at Madrid airport and stop on southern Gredos slope

Mark arrived on schedule at Madrid with time for an excellent salad lunch at the Las Esparteras bar once we had left Madrid and then time to look at butterflies on the southern slopes of the Gredos Mountains near the village of Cuevas del Valle. Highlights here included **Panoptes Blue**. We then drove onward into Extremadura, arriving in time for a welcome dinner at Casa Rural El Recuerdo.

16th June 2019: Monfragüe National Park, Tiétar River and Arrocampo Reservoir



Green Hooktail

We set off after breakfast north from Trujillo to stop first at the Monfragüe National Park, seeing a male **Black-eared Wheatear** and **Spanish Imperial Eagle**. We then continued to the Tiétar River where we spent most of the day. Here the focus was dragonflies and we succeeded after a good investment of time to get excellent views of **Green Hooktail**, as well as **Long Skimmer** and **Violet Dropwing**. Birds included a singing **Western Olivaceous Warbler**, at a previously unknown site in Extremadura. We completed the day at the Arrocampo Reservoir, finding **Long Skimmer** and seeing numerous **Purple Heron**.

17th June 2019: Las Mestas in Los Hurdes and La Garganta in the Gredos

We had a slightly earlier start because of the driving involved today, travelling first to the extreme north-west of Extremadura where on the River Ladrillar at Las Mestas we very quickly found our target species, the **Splendid Cruiser**. Also present was **Orange-spotted Emerald**, at times feistily chasing the much larger Cruiser off its patch. **Small Pincertails** were also present. As we were leaving, we had excellent views of a pair of **White-rumped Swift**.



Olive Skipper

From there we drove to the northern limits of Extremadura, next to the border with Salamanca, close to the village of La Garganta. Here we spent a couple of hours looking for butterflies, finding amongst other species **Olive Skipper**, **Oberthür's Skipper** and **Pearly Heath**, despite the rather windy conditions. There were also several **Robust Marsh Orchids** present and a superb stand of **Bug Orchid**.

18th June 2019: The Ibores mountains

The Ibores Mountains lie to the east in Extremadura and offered us a nice combination of riverine habitat and a woodland trail. At the first we watched an **Orange-spotted Emerald** and found **Western Clubtail** and **Small** and **Large Pincertails** along the Ibor River. We also had prolonged views of a patrolling **Western Spectre**. After coffee nearby we passed through the town of Castañar del Ibor and walked a trail through sweet chestnut and Pyrenean oak nearby. This was a magical experience for the sheer abundance of butterflies, but we also found a stunning **Southern Skimmer**, just inches from an equally obliging **Keeled Skimmer**, offering us an excellent comparison.



Southern Skimmer

We made a return visit to the River Ibor and watched **Large** and **Small Pincertails**.

19th June 2019: River Guadiana at Don Alvaro and Mérida, Malpartida de Cáceres

As a change from mountain habitats, we spent most of the day beside the lowland Guadiana River, first near the town of Don Alvaro and then close to the Roman Bridge in Mérida. On the way we had a great view of a **Black-winged Kite**. The rather cool conditions perhaps slowed things down for dragonflies, but we did see species like **Northern Banded Groundling**. We then spent the afternoon beside a small pool near Malpartida de Cáceres. Here we found now fewer than three species of **spreadwing**, as well as a **Long Skimmer**.

20th June 2019: Villuercas Mountains, Palazuelo rice fields and Alcollarín Reservoir



Orange Featherleg

Close to the Ibores range are the Villuercas Mountains. We travelled first to the highest peak (at 1600 metres) where we saw **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** and **Red-billed Chough**. **Owflies** (*Libelloides baeticus*) were seen in the pasture beside Pyrenean oak woodland. We stopped beside the Ruercas River where we had excellent views of **Copper Demoiselle** and **Orange Featherleg**. From there we crossed the rice fields near Palazuelo, where the first signs of return passage were visible with small flocks of **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Northern Lapwing** and some **Green Sandpiper**. There were several hundred **Black-winged Stilts** and good numbers of **Collared Pratincole** and **Gull-billed Tern**. At the nearby Alcollarín Reservoir, we found some female **Northern Banded Groundlings**.

21st June 2019: La Garganta and Arrocampo.

We returned to the wonderful mountain pastures at La Garganta. Giving ourselves plenty of time, we had an opportunity to see some great birds: **Honey Buzzard**, **Red-backed Shrike** and **Crossbill**, interesting moths (**Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth**) and butterflies, including again **Olive Skipper** and the highlight being a **Black-veined White**.



High Brown Fritillary

A brief stop at Arrocampo gave us the chance to catch up finally with a male **Northern Banded Groundling**.

22nd June 2019: Southern slope of Gredos and return to Madrid

After bidding farewell to Casa Rural El Recuerdo. We planned to stop at a mountain pass on the southern Gredos but our visit coincided with an amazing transhumance, the moving of hundreds of cattle, organised by men on horseback. Many spectators were present to watch the cattle reach the pass. We therefore stopped at the same place

near Cuevas de Valle where we had made our first stop a week earlier. Amongst the species seen was a **Lulworth Skipper**.

Butterflies



Pearly Heath

1. **Southern Scarce Swallowtail**: Seen on three days
2. **Spanish Festoon**: Near Cuevas de Valle on 15th June.
3. **Black-veined White**: One at La Garganta on 21st June.
4. **Large White**: Seen at Castañar del Ibor on 18th June.
5. **Small White**: Seen almost daily.
6. **Green-veined White**: Seen at Castañar del Ibor on 18th June.
7. **Bath White**: Possible at Tiétar River.
8. **Clouded Yellow**: Almost daily.
9. **Brimstone**: Seen in Monfrgaüe and La Garganta.
10. **Cleopatra**: Seen on four days.
11. **Wood White**: Seen at Castañar del Ibor on 18th June.
12. **Spanish Purple Hairstreak**: Seen at Castañar del Ibor on 18th June.
13. **Ilex Hairstreak**: Seen at Las Mestas on 17th June.
14. **False Ilex Hairstreak**: Seen at Castañar del Ibor on 18th June.
15. **Small Copper**: Seen almost daily.

16. **Purple-shot Copper:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle, Castañar del Ibor and La Garganta.
17. **Long-tailed Blue:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle and Tiétar River.
18. **Lang's Short-tailed Blue:** Seen daily.
19. **African Grass Blue:** Seen at Mérida and Alcollarín.
20. **Geranium Bronze:** Seen at Pago de San Clemente and Mérida.
21. **Holly Blue:** Seen on three days.
22. **Green-underside Blue:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle and La Garganta.
23. **Black-eyed Blue:** Seen on both visits to La Garganta.
24. **Panoptes Blue:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle on 15th June.
25. **Southern Brown Argus:** Seen daily.
26. **Amanda's Blue:** Seen at La Garganta and Castañar del Ibor.
27. **Common Blue:** Seen at Castañar del Ibor on 18th June and at Mérida.
28. **Nettle-Tree Butterfly:** Seen at Las Mestas on 17th and Castañar del Ibor on 18th June.
29. **Two-tailed Pasha:** Seen at Las Mestas on 17th and Castañar del Ibor on 18th
30. **Southern White Admiral:** Seen at Las Mestas on 17th, Castañar del Ibor on 18th and in las Villuercas on 19th June.
31. **Large Tortoiseshell:** Seen at La Garganta on 21st June.
32. **Painted Lady:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle and Castañar del Ibor.
33. **Small Tortoiseshell:** Seen at La Garganta.
34. **Cardinal:** Seen most days.
35. **High Brown Fritillary:** Seen at La Garganta, Castañar del Ibor and the Villuercas.
36. **Niobe Fritillary:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle, La Garganta, Castañar de Ibor and the Villuercas.
37. **Queen of Spain Fritillary:** Seen almost daily.
38. **Knapweed Fritillary:** Seen at La Garganta on 17th and Cuevas de Valle on 21st June.
39. **Heath Fritillary:** Seen at La Garganta and Castañar del Ibor.
40. **Provençal Fritillary:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle and the Villuercas.
41. **Marsh Fritillary:** Seen at La Garganta.
42. **Iberian Marbled White:** Seen most days.
43. **Rock Grayling:** Seen at La Garganta, Castañar del Ibor and the Villuercas.
44. **Grayling:** seen at Castañar de Ibor.
45. **Great Banded Grayling:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle, La Garganta and the Villuercas.
46. **Meadow Brown:** Seen at La Garganta, Castañar de Ibor and the Villuercas.
47. **Oriental Meadow Brown:** Seen at Pago de San Clemente, La Garganta, Castañar de Ibor and the Villuercas.
48. **Southern Gatekeeper:** Seen at Don Alvaro, Cuevas de Valle and the Villuercas.
49. **Spanish Gatekeeper:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle, Castañar de Ibor and the Villuercas.

50. **Small Heath:** Seen on several days.
51. **Pearly Heath:** Seen on both visits to La Garganta.
52. **Speckled Wood:** Seen on four days.
53. **Wall Brown:** Seen on several days.
54. **Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper:** Seen at La Garganta on 17th June.
55. **Olive Skipper:** Seen at La Garganta on both visits.
56. **Rosy Grizzled Skipper:** Seen at River Ibor on 18th June.
57. **Red-underwing Skipper:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle on 15th June.
58. **Mallow Skipper:** Seen at River Tiétar and at Castañar de Ibor on 18th June.
59. **Southern Marbled Skipper:** Seen at La Garganta on 21st June.
60. **Lulworth Skipper:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle on 22nd June.
61. **Essex Skipper:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle and Castañar de Ibor.
62. **Small Skipper:** Seen on several days.
63. **Large Skipper:** Seen at Cuevas de Valle on 22nd June.

Dragonflies

1. **Copper Demoiselle:** Seen at River Ibor on 18th and River Ruercas on 20th June.
2. **Beautiful Demoiselle:** Seen at River Ibor on 18th and River Ruercas on 20th June.
3. **Western Demoiselle:** Seen on four days.
4. **Migrant Spreadwing:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres on 19th June.
5. **Robust Spreadwing:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres on 19th June.
6. **Small Spreadwing:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres on 19th June.
7. **Dainty Bluet:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres on 19th June.
8. **Blue-eye:** Seen on three days.
9. **Small Red-eye:** Seen at Mérida.
10. **Iberian Bluetail:** Seen on four days.
11. **Large Red Damselfly:** Seen at River Ruercas on 20th June.
12. **Orange Featherleg:** Seen at Las Mestas on 17th and River Ruercas on 20th June.
13. **White Featherleg:** Seen at River Tiétar and Guadiana.
14. **Blue Emperor:** Seen on three days.
15. **Lesser Emperor:** Seen on River Tiétar and Mérida.
16. **Western Spectre:** Seen at River Ibor.
17. **Western Clubtail:** Sightings at River Ibor, Guadiana at Don Alvaro and River Ruercas.
18. **Small Pincertail:** Seen at las Mestas and River Ibor.
19. **Large Pincertail:** Seen at River Ibor and Ruercas.
20. **Green Hooktail:** Seen at River Tiétar.
21. **Common Goldenring:** Seen at River Ibor, Castañar de Ibor and River Ruercas.
22. **Splendid Cruiser:** Seen at Las Mestas.

23. **Orange-spotted Emerald:** Seen at Las Mestas and River Ibor.
24. **Northern banded Groundling:** Seen at Mérida, Alcollarín and Arrocampo.
25. **Broad Scarlet:** Seen at River Tiétar, Ibor and Guadiana.
26. **Broad-bodied Chaser:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
27. **Southern Skimmer:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
28. **Black-tailed Skimmer:** Seen at Tiétar and Ibor rivers, and Castañar de Ibor.
29. **Epaulet Skimmer:** Seen at Tiétar, Ibor and Ruercas Rivers.
30. **Keeled Skimmer:** Seen on several days.
31. **Long Skimmer:** Seen at Tiétar River, Arrocampo and Malpartida de Cáceres.
32. **Red-veined Darter:** Seen at Alcollarín.
33. **Common Darter:** Seen at Don Alvaro.
34. **Southern Darter:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres.
35. **Violet Dropwing:** Seen at River Tiétar and Guadiana.

Birds

1. **Egyptian Goose:** Seen en route to Las Hurdes on 17th June and at Alcollarín.
2. **Mallard:** Seen most days.
3. **Shoveler:** A pair at Alcollarín on 20th June.
4. **Red-legged Partridge:** Seen on two days.
5. **Quail:** Heard near Don Alvaro.
6. **Little Grebe:** Seen on several days.
7. **Great Crested Grebe:** Seen at Alcollarín.
8. **Great Cormorant:** Seen at Alcollarín and Arrocampo.
9. **Little Bittern:** Seen at Mérida on 19th June.
10. **Black-crowned Night Heron:** Seen at Mérida and Arrocampo.
11. **Squacco Heron:** Seen at Arrocampo on 20th June.
12. **Cattle Egret:** Seen on several days.
13. **Little Egret:** Seen on several days.
14. **Great Egret:** Seen at Alcollarín and Arrocampo.
15. **Grey Heron:** Seen on most days.
16. **Purple Heron:** Seen at Mérida, Don Alvaro and Arrocampo.
17. **Black Stork:** Seen at River Tiétar and Monfragüe.
18. **White Stork:** Seen daily.
19. **Glossy Ibis:** Seen at Arrocampo and Mérida.
20. **Spoonbill:** Seen at Mérida and Alcollarín.
21. **Egyptian Vulture:** Seen in Monfragüe.
22. **Griffon Vulture:** Seen daily.
23. **Black Vulture:** Seen on most days.
24. **Spanish Imperial Eagle:** Seen in Monfragüe.
25. **Short-toed Eagle:** Seen on two days.
26. **Booted Eagle:** Seen on three days
27. **Black Kite:** Seen daily.
28. **Red Kite:** Seen on several days.

29. **Marsh Harrier:** Seen on rice fields, Don Alvaro and Arrocampo.
30. **Common Buzzard:** Seen most days.
31. **Honey Buzzard:** Two seen La Garganta on 20th June.
32. **Sparrowhawk:** Seen on two days.
33. **Black-winged Kite:** One near Valverde de Mérida on 19th June.
34. **Lesser Kestrel:** Seen on several days, including one at La Garganta on 20th June.
35. **Common Kestrel:** Seen on two days.
36. **Moorhen:** Seen on three days.
37. **Purple Swamphen:** Seen at Arrocampo.
38. **Black-winged Stilt:** Seen most days, with almost 300 on rice fields.
39. **Collared Pratincole:** Seen on the rice fields and near River Guadiana.
40. **Little Ringed Plover:** Seen on several days.
41. **Northern Lapwing:** Seen on the rice fields.
42. **Black-tailed Godwit:** Seen on rice fields, perhaps 25 birds.
43. **Green Sandpiper:** Seen on rice fields.
44. **Common Sandpiper:** One at River Tiétar on 16th June.
45. **Gull-billed Tern:** Seen at River Guadiana, the rice fields and Alcollarín.
46. **Black-headed Gull:** Seen at Alcollarín.
47. **Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon:** Seen daily.
48. **Wood Pigeon:** Seen daily.
49. **Collared Dove:** Seen daily.
50. **Turtle Dove:** Seen at Monfragüe and at Las Mestas.
51. **Scops Owl:** Calling at La Garganta on 17th June.
52. **Alpine Swift:** Seen at River Tiétar.
53. **Common Swift:** Seen daily.
54. **Pallid Swift:** Seen on several days.
55. **White-rumped Swift:** Seen at Las Mestas on 17th June.
56. **Monk Parakeet:** Seen in Madrid.
57. **Kingfisher:** Seen on several days.
58. **Bee-eater:** Seen almost every day.
59. **Roller:** Seen near Talavera and Cáceres.
60. **Hoopoe:** Seen every day.
61. **Iberian Green Woodpecker:** Heard at Las Mestas on 21st June.
62. **Great Spotted Woodpecker:** Seen in Monfragüe.
63. **Short-toed Lark:** Seen west of Cáceres.
64. **Crested Lark:** Seen almost daily.
65. **Thekla Lark:** Seen in Monfragüe.
66. **Woodlark:** Singing in the Ibores Mountains and La Garganta.
67. **Sand Martin:** Seen at Don Alvaro.
68. **Crag Martin:** Seen on several days, including Pago de San Clemente.
69. **Barn Swallow:** Seen daily.
70. **Red-rumped Swallow:** Seen daily.

71. **House Martin:** Seen daily.
72. **Yellow Wagtail:** Seen on rice fields.
73. **Grey Wagtail:** Seen almost daily.
74. **White Wagtail:** Seen almost daily.
75. **Wren:** Seen on two days.
76. **Robin:** Seen on several days.
77. **Nightingale:** Recorded almost daily.
78. **Black Redstart:** Seen most days.
79. **Common Redstart:** A male at Las Mestas on 17th June.
80. **Stonechat:** Seen daily.
81. **Black-eared Wheatear:** Seen at Monfragüe and near Campo Lugar.
82. **Blue Rock Thrush:** Seen at Monfragüe.
83. **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush:** Seen in Villuercas Mountains on 20th June.
84. **Blackbird:** Seen daily.
85. **Mistle Thrush:** Seen on two days.
86. **Cetti's Warbler:** Seen on two days.
87. **Zitting Cisticola:** Seen on three days.
88. **Savi's Warbler:** Singing at Arrocampo.
89. **Reed Warbler:** Seen on several days.
90. **Great Reed Warbler:** Seen on several days.
91. **Melodious Warbler:** Seen in Ibores, las Mestas and La Garganta.
92. **Western Olivaceous Warbler:** Seen on River Tiétar on 16th June.
93. **Dartford Warbler:** Seen in Villuercas Mountains on 20th June.
94. **Subalpine Warbler:** Seen on three days (15th, 16th and 21st June).
95. **Sardinian Warbler:** Seen most days.
96. **Common Whitethroat:** Seen at La Garganta.
97. **Blackcap:** Seen daily.
98. **Western Bonelli's Warbler:** Seen at Lar Garganta and the Villuercas.
99. **Firecrest:** Singing at Las Mestas on 17th June.
100. **Long-tailed Tit:** Seen on two days.
101. **Crested Tit:** Seen in La Garganta and the Villuercas.
102. **Blue Tit:** Seen daily.
103. **Great Tit:** Seen most days.
104. **Nuthatch:** Seen at Monfragüe and the Villuercas.
105. **Short-toed Treecreeper:** Seen in Monfragüe and La Garganta.
106. **Penduline Tit:** Seen at Don Alvaro and heard at Mérida and Arrocampo.
107. **Golden Oriole:** Seen on several days.
108. **Iberian Grey Shrike:** Seen most days.
109. **Woodchat Shrike:** Seen most days.
110. **Red-backed Shrike:** Seen at la Garganta on 21st June.
111. **Jay:** Seen on several days.
112. **Azure-winged Magpie:** Seen daily.
113. **Magpie:** Seen daily.

114. **Red-billed Chough:** Two at Las Villuercas on 20th June.
115. **Jackdaw:** Seen most days.
116. **Raven:** Seen most days.
117. **Spotless Starling:** Seen daily.
118. **House Sparrow:** Seen daily.
119. **Spanish Sparrow:** Seen most days.
120. **Tree Sparrow:** Seen on rice fields.
121. **Common Waxbill:** Seen near Guadiana River and rice fields.
122. **Red Avadavat:** Seen on rice fields.
123. **Chaffinch:** Seen most days.
124. **Serin:** Seen daily.
125. **Greenfinch:** Seen on several days.
126. **Goldfinch:** Seen daily.
127. **Linnet:** Seen almost daily.
128. **Common Crossbill:** Seen on both visits to La Garganta.
129. **Hawfinch:** Seen most days, especially at Casa Rural El Recuerdo.
130. **Girl Bunting:** Heard on four days.
131. **Rock Bunting:** Seen on three days.
132. **Ortolan Bunting:** Singing at La Garganta on 21st June.
133. **Corn Bunting:** Seen on two days