

**BIRDING EXTREMADURA AND CASA RURAL EL RECUERDO**  
**BUTTERFLIES AND DRAGONFLIES SUMMER HOLIDAY FOR MARK FERRIS**  
**18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021**



*Scarce Copper*

**Itinerary**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2021:** Arrival in Madrid, visit to pools near Casatejada. Check-in at Casa Rural El Recuerdo.

**19<sup>th</sup> July 2021:** Visit to Ibor valley

**20<sup>th</sup> July 2021:** Morning at Pago de San Clemente and afternoon at Badajoz, beside River Guadiana.

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2021:** Morning at pools near Malpartida de Cáceres. Afternoon in meadows and woodland near La Garganta.

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021:** Exploring area near La Garganta.

**23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021:** Exploring woodland and high ground near Candelario.

**24<sup>th</sup> July 2021:** Tormes valley at Hoyos del Espino and high ground near La Plataforma.

**25<sup>th</sup> July 2021:** Tormes valley near Hoyos del Espino, pinewoods near Navarredonda and return to Madrid.

## Trip Report

### 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021: Arrival in Madrid, visit to pools near Casatejada. Check-in at Casa Rural El Recuerdo.

Mark arrived on time at 11.20 and got through the airport protocols very quickly. As we left the car park, we paused to look at the enormous structures of the nests of **Monk Parakeets** on several of the adjacent trees. After lunch at a bar just outside Madrid we headed south-west on the motorway towards Extremadura. Being a summer Sunday, there was a fair amount of traffic returning to the city.

We spent the afternoon at a couple of small gravel pits just north of Casatejada. It was a very hot afternoon (about 40° C) and not a huge number of dragonflies were on the wing. However, we did find a **Green Hooktail**, watched a **Long Skimmer** eating a **Northern Banded Groundling** amongst others. Butterflies included **Southern Gatekeeper** and **Common Blue**.



*Long Skimmer eating Northern Banded Groundling*

We then continued the journey onward to Casa Rural El Recuerdo, arriving there at 17.30, with time to freshen up before dinner.

### 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021: Visit to Ibor valley

Another hot day in store. After breakfast we headed to the Ibor valley. We spent the morning next to the river, focussing on dragonflies with nice sightings of **Large** and



**Small Pincertails**, several **Western Spectres** as well as a good number of **Copper Demoiselles**. Throughout our stay we were accompanied by the sound of **Golden Orioles**. An old **Dipper's** nest was a good find.



*Striped Grayling*

After coffee, we spent the rest of the day along a small valley behind the town of Castañar de Ibor. Butterfly numbers were rather low, although we did find a **Striped Grayling**. A **Winter Damselfly** was also found. However, by far and away the most memorable encounter was with an adult **Lataste's Viper**, one of the hardest to see of the reptiles in Extremadura.



*Lataste's Viper*

**20<sup>th</sup> July 2021: Morning at Pago de San Clemente and afternoon at Badajoz, beside River Guadiana.**

Mark spent the morning walking the lanes at Pago de San Clemente, a welcome opportunity to photograph bees and also **Bee-eaters** feeding on bees! After lunch, we then drove down to the city of Badajoz, close to the Portuguese border. Here we explored an arm of the Guadiana River, looking for dragonflies (we failed to find Black Percher), but saw numerous **Northern Banded Groundlings**, **Long Skimmers**, **Broad Scarlets** and **Violet Dropwings**. Birds included **Purple Herons**, **Black-crowned Night Heron** and **Western Swamphen**.

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2021: Morning at pools near Malpartida de Cáceres. Afternoon in meadows and woodland near La Garganta.**



*Mark photographing a Black Percher*

After seeing some **Hawfinches** in the garden, Mark bade farewell to Casa Rural El Recuerdo, and we set off westwards to Cáceres. On the way we were treated to a bird of prey fest, with two adult **Spanish Imperial Eagles**, numerous **Black Kites** a couple of **Short-toed Eagles** and a **Marsh Harrier**. We spent the morning treating ourselves with more dragonfly encounters at a small pool near Malpartida de Cáceres. Here we eventually found our sought-after **Black Percher**, seeing perhaps four or five and having superb views of them. A total of ten species of Odonata were present.





*Black Percher*

Birds offered a strong supporting cast, including a group of **Spoonbills**, and waders such as **Lapwing** and **Black-tailed Godwit**, as well as numerous **Woodchat Shrikes** on the wires.

We stopped for a coffee north of Cáceres and then proceeded to the woodland and meadows near La Garganta, in the Sierra der Bejar. We had an excellent afternoon enjoying the butterflies there, including a **Meadow Fritillary**, **Knapweed Fritillary** and **Rosy-Grizzled Skipper**. A **Schreiber's Green Lizard** was also seen.

We then checked in at the hotel in Baños de Montemayor and whilst going through the day's checklists, watched a **Hobby** heading out across the valley, causing great alarm to the swallows and martins.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021: Exploring area near La Garganta.**

We devoted the full day to the La Garganta area. During the morning we focused on meadows and small tracks. We found family parties of **Ortolan Bunting** and **Red-backed Shrikes**. **Honey Buzzards** drifted overhead. **Great Banded Graylings** were everywhere, moving across open ground. We had excellent views of a **Large Wall**, as well as **Sooty Coppers**.



*Large Wall*

After lunch, we worked an area of lower altitude, through Pyrenean Oak and Sweet Chestnut. Here on bramble patches we found **Silver-washed Fritillaries** and **Southern White Admirals**.



*Silver-washed Fritillaries*

A **Purple Hairstreak** was perched on alder leaves. We were pleased to find a **Lesser Spotted Fritillary** and Mark had a view of a **Wild Boar** crossing a small clearing.

**23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021: Exploring woodland and high ground near Candelario.**

Checking out of the hotel, we left Extremadura and entered the province of Salamanca to explore the woodland and higher ground south of the small town of Candelario. The birding was very productive with a close view of a **Honey Buzzard**, the ubiquitous **Western Bonelli's Warblers**, **Crested Tits** and **Firecrest**. At higher altitude, once out of the wind, we found a roadside verge of Santolina in flower which was attracting a throng of butterflies, including **Scarce Copper**, **Piedmont Ringlet**, gorgeous **Blue-spot Hairstreaks** and one of the target species: a **Black Satyr**.

A little further downhill, we found **Schreiber's Green Lizard**, groups of **Crossbills** and more butterflies including several **Lesser Spotted Fritillaries**.



*Lesser Spotted Fritillary*

At the end of the afternoon, we proceeded to Barco de Avila and then through the Tormes Valley with the impressive Gredos Mountains to the south. We reached our hotel, Al Manzor, with **Iberian Green Woodpecker**, **Honey Buzzard** and **Crossbills** all seen from the hotel terrace.

**24<sup>th</sup> July 2021: Tormes valley at Hoyos del Espino and high ground near La Plataforma.**

It was another superb day. Before breakfast we found an **Iberian Chiffchaff** giving some subsong in front of the hotel. **Western Bonelli's Warblers** were everywhere. We parked beside the Tormes river near Hoyos del Espino and had an excellent walk. A young **Schreibers Green Lizard** was found and parties of **Crossbills** were frequently



encountered. We were delighted to find a **Yellow-winged Darter** (and then a few minutes later another) and butterflies included a nice selection of **Fritillaries**.



*Yellow-winged Darter*

We then drove up to the high altitude car park (the Plataforma), where we saw **Spanish Ibex**. Along the stream were **Dippers**, and other birds included **Water Pipit**, numerous **Western Yellow Wagtails**, **Northern Wheatear** and **Ortolan Buntings**.





Down the road from the car park, butterflies coming to Santolina included **Black Satyr** and **Chestnut Heath**.



*Chestnut Heath*

Back at the hotel, we took a walk through the pines, seeing **Common Goldenring** and then enjoyed sitting on the terrace with an early evening drink to complete our checklists.

**25<sup>th</sup> July 2021: Tormes valley near Hoyos del Espino, pinewoods near Navarredonda and return to Madrid.**

Before breakfast there was time for some final birding around the hotel, with good views obtained of **Iberian Green Woodpecker**, **Western Bonelli's Warblers** and **Crested Tits**. The **Iberian Chiffchaff** was heard singing again. After checking out, we returned to the Tormes valley and had an excellent walk upstream. The birding was yet again very good, with sightings of **Dipper**, **Tree Pipit**, **Garden Warbler** and Western **Bonelli's Warblers**. Pride of place was a fine **Ocellated Lizard**, basking in the morning sunshine.



*Ocellated Lizard*

We briefly returned to a patch of thistles which had proved productive yesterday and were not disappointed, with species such as **High Brown Fritillary** and **Grayling** present. More **Ocellated Lizards** were seen along a section of dry-stone walling. We then had just enough time to stop at a clearing near Navarredonda, where we are lucky enough to find a **Spanish Argus** and **Large Grizzled Skipper** – what a way to complete the trip!

It was then onward to Madrid. It was a smooth return journey, marked by several **Red Kite** sightings after we had passed the city of Ávila. We arrived at the airport exactly on schedule.

It had been an extremely enjoyable and productive trip. We certainly did not set out to maximise lists, instead focusing on looking for particular species. Late July is really late summer in Extremadura, so we were very pleased with the totals achieved: 65 species of butterfly, 30 species of dragonfly and damselfly, 120 species of birds (which really took third place in terms of our efforts), and some very classy other wildlife too.



## Species seen

### Butterflies

		19-jul	20-jul	21-jul	22-jul	23-jul	24-jul	25-jul
Scarce Swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podalirius feisthameli</i>	x			x			
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Small White	<i>Artogeia rapae</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Green-veined White	<i>Artogeia napi</i>	x		x				
Bath White	<i>Pontia daplidice</i>	x			x	x		
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>				x	x	x	x
Purple Hairstreak	<i>Quercusia quercus</i>				x	x		
Spanish Purple Hairstreak	<i>Laeosopis roboris</i>					x		
Blue-spot Hairstreak	<i>Satyrrium spini</i>					x	x	
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x
Scarce Copper	<i>Lycaena virgaureae miegii</i>					x	x	x
Sooty Copper	<i>Lycaena tityrus bleusei</i>				x			
Purple-shot Copper	<i>Lycaena alciphron gordius</i>					x	x	
Long-tailed Blue	<i>Lampides boeticus</i>			x		x	x	x
Lang's Short-tailed Blue	<i>Leptotes pirithous</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	x			x	x	x	
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis cramera</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Spanish Argus	<i>Aricia morronensis</i>							x
Amanda's Blue	<i>Agrodiaetus amanda</i>	x						
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Southern White Admiral	<i>Limenitis reducta</i>	x			x		x	
Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>						x	
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>				x		x	x
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>					x	x	x
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>						x	
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>			x	x		x	
Cardinal	<i>Argynnis pandora</i>	x		x	x		x	x
Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>				x	x	x	x
Dark Green Fritillary	<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>						x	
High Brown Fritillary	<i>Argynnis adippe</i>				x		x	x
Niobe Fritillary	<i>Argynnis niobe</i>			x	x	x	x	
Queen of Spain Fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x
Knapweed Fritillary	<i>Melitaea phoebe</i>			x				
Lesser Spotted Fritillary	<i>Melitaea trivia ignasiti</i>				x	x		
Heath Fritillary	<i>Mellicta athalia celadussa</i>					x	x	
Provençal Fritillary	<i>Mellicta deione</i>			x	x	x	x	
Meadow Fritillary	<i>Mellicta parthenoides</i>			x				
Iberian Marbled White	<i>Melanargia lachesis</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x
Rock Grayling	<i>Hipparchia alcyone</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x
Grayling	<i>Hipparchia semele</i>						x	x
Striped Grayling	<i>Pseudotergumia fidia</i>	x						
Black Satyr	<i>Satyrus actaea</i>					x	x	
Great Banded Grayling	<i>Kanetisa circe</i>			x	x	x	x	x
Piedmont Ringlet	<i>Erebia meolans</i>					x		
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Dusky Meadow Brown	<i>Hyponephele lycaon</i>					x	x	x
Oriental Meadow Brown	<i>Hyponephele lupina</i>	x		x	x	x		



Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>			x	x	x	x	x
Southern Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia cecilia</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Spanish Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia bathseba</i>			x	x	x	x	x
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>				x			
Pearly Heath	<i>Coenonympha arcania</i>				x	x	x	x
Chestnut Heath	<i>Coenonympha glycerion iphioides</i>					x	x	
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	x		x	x	x	x	
Large Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata maera</i>				x			
Rosy Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus onorordi</i>			x				
Red-underwing Skipper	<i>Spialia sertorius</i>					x		
Large Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus alveus</i>							x
Mallow Skipper	<i>Carcharodus alceae</i>	x			x			
Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>			x	x			
Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>			x	x	x	x	
Silver-spotted Skipper	<i>Hesperia comma</i>					x		
Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes venatus</i>			x	x	x		

## Dragonflies

		18-jul	19-jul	20-jul	21-jul	22-jul	23-jul	24-jul	25-jul
Copper Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis</i>		x						
Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo meridionalis</i>				x			x	
Western Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx xanthostoma</i>		x						

Migrant Spreadwing	<i>Lestes barbarus</i>		x		x				
Robust Spreadwing	<i>Lestes dryas</i>				x				
Western Willow Spreadwing	<i>Lestes viridis</i>		x						
Winter Damsel	<i>Sympecma fusca</i>		x			x			
Blue-eye	<i>Erythromma lindenii</i>	x		x	x				
Small Red-eye	<i>Erythromma viridulum</i>			x					
Iberian Bluetail	<i>Ischnura graellsii</i>	x		x					
Large Red Damsel	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>					x			
White Featherleg	<i>Platycnemis latipes</i>		x	x					
Blue Emperor	<i>Anax imperator</i>		x		x				
Lesser Emperor	<i>Anax parthenope</i>	x			x				
Western Spectre	<i>Boyeria irene</i>		x						
Small Pincertail	<i>Onychogomphus forcipatus</i>		x						
Large Pincertail	<i>Onychogomphus uncatus</i>		x						
Green Hooktail	<i>Paragomphus genei</i>	x							
Common Goldenring	<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>		x				x	x	
Northern Banded Groundling	<i>Brachythemis impartita</i>	x		x					
Broad Scarlet	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>			x	x				
Black Percher	<i>Diplacodes lefebvrii</i>				x				
Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>					x			
Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>			x		x	x		
Keeled Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>		x			x	x	x	x
Long Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum trinacria</i>	x		x	x				
Yellow-winged Darter	<i>Sympetrum flaveolum</i>							x	
Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>			x	x				
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>		x			x			
Violet Dropwing	<i>Trithemis annulata</i>	x		x					



## Birds

	18-jul	19-jul	20-jul	21-jul	22-jul	23-jul	24-jul	25-jul
Mallard		x	x	x				
Quail					x			
Little Grebe		x		x				
Little Bittern			x					
Black-crowned Night Heron			x	x				
Cattle Egret		x						
Little Egret			x					
Great Egret			x					
Grey Heron			x	x				
Purple Heron			x					
Black Stork							x	
White Stork			x	x			x	x
Glossy Ibis			x					
Spoonbill				x				
Egyptian Vulture				x				
Griffon Vulture	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Black Vulture			x	x			x	
Spanish Imperial Eagle				x				
Golden Eagle					x			
Short-toed Eagle		x		x				
Booted Eagle	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Bonelli's Eagle	x							
Black Kite		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Red Kite						x	x	x

Marsh Harrier				x				
Common Buzzard			x		x	x	x	x
Honey Buzzard					x	x		
Lesser Kestrel				x		x		
Common Kestrel							x	
Hobby				x				
Moorhen			x	x				
Western Swamphen			x					
Common Coot			x					
Black-winged Stilt				x				
Stone Curlew		x						
Little Ringed Plover				x				
Northern Lapwing				x				
Black-tailed Godwit				x				
Green Sandpiper				x				
Common Sandpiper				x				
Black-headed Gull			x					
Wood Pigeon		x		x	x	x	x	x
Collared Dove		x	x	x			x	x
Little Owl				x				
Common Swift		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Pallid Swift		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kingfisher			x	x				
Bee-eater		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hoopoe			x	x		x	x	
Iberian Green Woodpecker						x	x	x
Great Spotted Woodpecker		x			x	x	x	x
Monk Parakeet	x							
Crested Lark		x	x	x				
Woodlark				x			x	
Sand Martin				x		x		
Crag Martin		x	x			x	x	

Barn Swallow		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Red-rumped Swallow		x	x		x	x		
House Martin		x	x	x	x	x		
Water Pipit							x	
Tree Pipit								x
Yellow Wagtail							x	
Grey Wagtail		x				x	x	x
White Wagtail		x		x		x	x	x
Wren					x	x	x	x
Dipper							x	x
Robin		x		x	x	x	x	x
Nightingale		x		x	x			
Black Redstart			x	x		x	x	x
Stonechat				x	x	x	x	
Northern Wheatear							x	
Blackbird		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Song Thrush				x			x	
Mistle Thrush					x	x	x	x
Cetti's Warbler				x				
Zitting Cisticola		x	x	x	x			
Reed Warbler			x					
Melodious Warbler		x			x	x	x	x
Sardinian Warbler		x	x	x				
Common Whitethroat				x	x	x	x	x
Garden Warbler								x
Blackcap		x		x	x	x	x	x
Western Bonelli's Warbler				x	x	x	x	x
Iberian Chiffchaff							x	x
Firecrest						x	x	x
Pied Flycatcher								x
Long-tailed Tit			x	x		x	x	x
Crested Tit						x	x	x

Coal Tit				x	x	x	x	x
Blue Tit		x	x		x	x	x	x
Great Tit		x	x			x	x	x
Nuthatch		x				x	x	x
Short-toed Treecreeper					x	x	x	x
Golden Oriole		x		x	x	x	x	x
Iberian Grey Shrike	x		x	x	x			
Woodchat Shrike		x	x	x	x		x	
Red-backed Shrike				x	x		x	
Jay				x	x	x	x	x
Iberian Magpie		x	x	x		x		
Carrion Crow					x	x	x	x
Raven				x	x		x	
Spotless Starling		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dunnock							x	
House Sparrow		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Spanish Sparrow			x					
Common Waxbill			x					
Chaffinch		x			x	x	x	x
Serin		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Greenfinch		x	x		x	x	x	
Citril Finch								x
Goldfinch		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Linnet		x		x			x	
Crossbill				x	x	x	x	x
Hawfinch				x				
Cirl Bunting					x			
Rock Bunting			x		x	x	x	x
Ortolan Bunting					x		x	
Corn Bunting					x			



## **Other Wildlife**

### **Reptiles and Amphibians**

Ocellated Lizard

Schreiber's Green Lizard

Geniez's Wall Lizard

Guadarrama Wall Lizard

Large Psammodromus

Moorish Gecko

Lataste's Viper

Viperine Snake

Iberian Water Frog

### **Mammals**

Wild Boar

Spanish Ibex