

**BIRDING EXTREMADURA AND CASA RURAL EL RECUERDO**

**BUTTERFLY AND DRAGONFLY SUMMER TOUR FOR KOOS**

**10<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022**



**ITINERARY**

**10<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Pick-up from Madrid and transfer to Casa Rural El Recuerdo**

**11<sup>th</sup> June 2022: River Ibor, Castañar de Ibor, Ibores and River Almonte**

**12<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Monfragüe National Park, Puerto de Honduras and check-in hotel**

**13<sup>th</sup> June 2022: La Garganta**

**14<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Las Mestas, Alagón River, Candelario**

**15<sup>th</sup> June 2022: El Pitolero, Jerte Valley, Casatejada**

**16<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Garciaz, Rice fields near Madrigalejo, Alcollarín Reservoir, Parque Príncipe at Cáceres**

**17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> June: Koos travelling independently**

**24<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Return to Madrid with stop at Malpartida de Cáceres**

## TRIP REPORT

### 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Pick-up from Madrid and transfer to Casa Rural El Recuerdo

Martin met Koos at Terminal 2 of Madrid Airport just after 1pm and we headed out of Madrid via the ring-road and then onto the A5 motorway, which was quite busy with the Friday afternoon traffic. We stopped halfway on the journey for refreshments and then continued onto Casa Rural El Recuerdo.

### 11<sup>th</sup> June 2022: River Ibor, Castañar de Ibor, Ibores and River Almonte

We headed east to the Ibores, with a stop first at the River Ibor. Here we found an excellent selection of dragonflies, including **Western Demoiselle**, **Western** and **Yellow Clubtails** and both **Large** and **Small Pincertails**. We then took a walk to the east of the small town of Castañar de Ibor, up a small valley dominated by Pyrenean Oak and Sweet Chestnut trees. Here butterflies were coming to feed on nectar sources, including **Cleopatras**, **Amanda's Blue**, **Southern White Admiral**, **Cardinals**, **Spotted Fritillary** and **Iberian Marbled Whites**.



*Spotted Fritillary*

Our picnic spot gave us a superb view across the Ibor valley, across to rocky crags. South of there a road took us across a mountain pass and down to a meadow surrounded by Pyrenean Oak woodland. More butterflies were found here.

We completed the day visiting the River Almonte, near the village of Retamosa, where species such as **Small Bluetail** damselfly was seen.



*Western Demoiselle*

### **12<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Monfragüe National Park, Puerto de Honduras and check-in hotel**

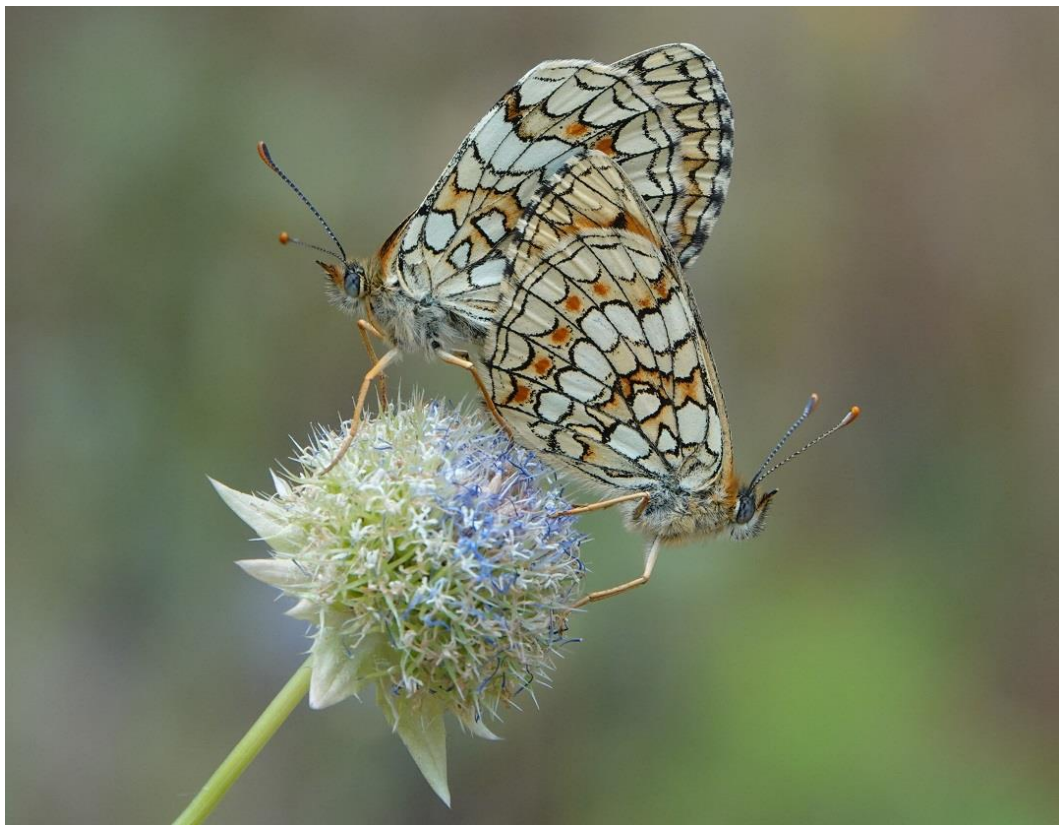
We headed north from Trujillo, crossing the vast expanse of *dehesa* landscape dominated by evergreen Holm Oaks, to reach the Monfragüe National Park. We stopped at the magnificent viewpoint overlooking the vast cliff of Peña Falcón. Here there is a large colony of **Griffon Vultures**, as well as nesting **Black Stork**, **Peregrine** and **Egyptian Vulture**. Smaller birds like **Blue Rock Thrush** and **Rock Bunting** were also present. We had a short walk beside the Tajo River, watching birds such as **Hawfinches** coming to drink at small pools and butterflies such as **Spanish Purple Hairstreak**.

We continued our journey northwards, passing through Hervás and ascending to the Puerto de Honduras where we had our picnic. There was a nice selection of butterflies here, including **Pearly Heath**, **Niobe** and **Queen of Spain Fritillary**. On our descent through beautiful woodland we made a stop for more butterflies, including **Bath White** and a **Panoptes Blue**.



*Niobe Fritillaries*

We checked into our hotel in Baños de Montemayor and whilst enjoying a beer on the terrace, watched a **Honey Buzzard** pass overhead.



*Heath Fritillaries*

### 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022: La Garganta

Koos had a very productive pre-breakfast walk, returning with a fine photo of a male **Golden Oriole**. After breakfast we made the short journey up to La Garganta, the second highest village in Extremadura, and onward to some beautiful small meadows at the border between Extremadura and Castille y Leon. It was a glorious morning and we were surrounded by butterflies most of the time. These included the extremely rare **Yellow-banded Skipper**, other skippers such as **Olive**, **Large Grizzled** and **Oberthür's Grizzled**, also **Niobe Fritillary**, **Knapweed Fritillary**, numerous **Marsh Fritillaries** and **Mazarine Blue**.



We had our picnic in the shade of pine trees and then walked into more open ground, but the temperature was now hitting 36°C, so we devoted the afternoon to looking for butterflies in shade, in a wooded valley to the south. Here there were species like **Southern White Admiral** and **Silver-washed Fritillaries**.

Back at the hotel, we found a **Geranium Bronze** in the geraniums growing at the entrance.

### 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Las Mestas, Alagón River, Candelario

After breakfast we drove north and then west to visit the remote village of Las Mestas. Although lying in Extremadura, it was best reached by heading through the southern edge of Salamanca province, through areas of woodland, small fields and old granite villages. At Las Mestas, we sat beside the Ladillar River and watched several dragonfly species, including **Splendid Cruisers**, **Orange-spotted Emeralds** and **Epaulet Skimmers**. A **Two-tailed Pasha** gave us fantastic views as it came to drink in a small patch of water close to us.



We then stopped beside the Alagón River where we saw **Great Banded Grayling** butterfly and a **White Featherleg** damselfly.

We returned to the east and the Sierra de Bejar, ascending to the viewpoint above the town of Candelario. Here we found several **Piedmont Ringlelet** butterflies and watched a **Honey Buzzard** at close range. We went back to the hotel via La Garganta, stopping for a short while and finding a **Yellow-banded Skipper** on the roadside verge.

#### **15th June 2022: El Pitolero, Jerte Valley, Casatejada**

We checked-out of the hotel and headed south to the village of Cabezabellosa where we took a minor road to reach the summit of the mountain there, called El Pitolero. Here we had superb views of **Common Rock Thrush** and **Northern Wheatears**. From there we descended into the Jerte valley, the biggest cherry-producing region in Spain and duly bought two kilos of beautiful ripe cherries. We stopped in woodland near the Garganta de los Infiernos for a walk, finding a fine male **Copper Demoiselle**.

We had time for a final stop in the afternoon, near the village of Casatejada where we found **Violet Dropwings** beside a small pool. However, given the temperature was now 41°C we reckoned it was time to get back to Casa Rural El Recuerdo to enjoy a cold beer.

#### **16th June 2022: Garciaz, Rice fields near Madrigalejo, Alcollarín Reservoir, Parque Principe at Cáceres**

Today we focused on areas to the south and east of base. Our first stop was in the pine woods above Garciaz where we found **Sooty Coppers** and three species of gatekeepers. The view eastwards across to the Villuercas Mountains was superb. To the south we drove through barren fields which normally would be flooded and growing rice at this time, but because of the severe drought, all agricultural activity there had been suspended. We did find the *helice* form of **Clouded Yellow**.

At the nearby Alcollarín Reservoir we fared much better, with fantastic views of **Green Hooktails**, including a copulating pair, **Violet Dropwings** and enchanting groups of **Northern Banded Groundlings** which showed great curiosity as they approached us from patches of shade.



*Green Hooktails*

We then drove to Cáceres and paid a visit to the city park, Parque del Principe. This was superb. Obliging good views of birds like **Iberian Magpies**, **Spotless Starlings** and **Hoopoes** and several of the newly arrived **Orange-winged Dropwings**. A very productive visit.



*Orange-winged Dropwing*

We then went to the car hire office for Koos to collect his car for use during his independent week.

## **24<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Return to Madrid with stop at Malpartida de Cáceres**

After returning the car to Cáceres, we made a visit to small pools near Malpartida de Cáceres to check them for dragonflies. The cool weather made activity slow, but we did find several **Small Spreadwings**, which were new for the holiday. From there it was onward to Madrid, arriving as planned shortly after 14.00.

## **Species Lists**

The tour was designed for butterflies and dragonflies, with the emphasis on good opportunities for photography, rather than achieving the biggest possible list of species.

### **Butterflies**

1. **Swallowtail**: Seen on 16<sup>th</sup> June.
2. **Scarce Swallowtail**: Seen on three days.
3. **Black-veined White**: Seen at La Garganta.
4. **Large White**: Seen on two days.
5. **Small White**: Seen daily.
6. **Green-veined White**: Seen at La Garganta.
7. **Bath White**: Seen daily.
8. **Clouded Yellow**: Seen daily.
9. **Brimstone**: Seen on four days.
10. **Cleopatra**: Seen in Ibores.
11. **Wood White**: Seen in the Ibores and Puerto de Honduras.
12. **Spanish Purple Hairstreak**: Seen in the Ibores and La Garganta.
13. **Ilex Hairstreak**: Seen at Puerto de Honduras.
14. **False Ilex Hairstreak**: Seen in the Ibores.
15. **Small Copper**: Seen most days.
16. **Sooty Copper**: Seen at Garciaz.
17. **Purple-shot Copper**: Seen on three days.
18. **Long-tailed Blue**: Seen on two days.
19. **Geranium Bronze**: Seen at Baños de Montemayor.
20. **Lang's Short-tailed Blue**: Seen on five days.
21. **Holly Blue**: Seen in the Ibores.
22. **Black-eyed Blue**: Seen on three days in the mountains.
23. **Panoptes Blue**: Seen at Puerto de Honduras.
24. **Brown Argus**: Seen most days.
25. **Mazarine Blue**: Seen at La Garganta.
26. **Amanda's Blue**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
27. **Common Blue**: Seen daily.
28. **Two-tailed Pasha**: Seen at Las Mestas.
29. **Southern White Admiral**: Seen most days.
30. **Large Tortoiseshell**: Seen on three days.
31. **Peacock**: Seen in the Ibores.
32. **Red Admiral**: Seen on one day.
33. **Painted Lady**: Seen daily.
34. **Small Tortoiseshell**: Seen on 12<sup>th</sup> June.
35. **Comma**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor.



36. **Cardinal**: Seen almost every day.
37. **Silver-washed Fritillary**: Seen on two days.
38. **High Brown Fritillary**: Seen at La Garganta.
39. **Niobe Fritillary**: Seen on four days.
40. **Queen of Spain Fritillary**: Seen daily.
41. **Knapweed Fritillary**: Seen in mountains.
42. **Spotted Fritillary**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
43. **Heath Fritillary**: Seen most days.
44. **Marsh Fritillary**: Seen on two days.
45. **Iberian Marbled White**: Seen daily.
46. **Grayling**: Seen in Ibores.
47. **Great Banded Grayling**: Seen on two days.
48. **Piedmont Ringlet**: Seen near Candelario.
49. **Meadow Brown**: Seen almost daily.
50. **Oriental Meadow Brown**: Seen at Garciaz.
51. **Gatekeeper**: Seen at Garciaz.
52. **Southern Gatekeeper**: Seen at Garciaz.
53. **Spanish Gatekeeper**: Seen on four days.
54. **Small Heath**: Seen at Garciaz.
55. **Pearly Heath**: Seen in the mountains.
56. **Speckled Wood**: Seen daily.
57. **Wall Brown**: Seen daily
58. **Large Grizzled Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta.
59. **Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta.
60. **Olive Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta.
61. **Yellow-banded Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta.
62. **Red-underwing Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta.
63. **Mallow Skipper**: Seen in two days.
64. **Lulworth Skipper**: Seen at Puerto de Honduras.
65. **Essex Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta.
66. **Small Skipper**: Seen most days.

## Odonata

1. **Copper Demoiselle**: Seen at Garganta de los Infiernos.
2. **Western Demoiselle**: Seen at Ibor River.
3. **Beautiful Demoiselle**: Seen at La Garganta.
4. **Migrant Spreadwing**: Seen at Alcollarín Reservoir.
5. **Small Spreadwing**: Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres.
6. **Mercury Bluet**: Seen at Ibor River.
7. **Blue-eye**: Seen at Ibor River and Alagón.
8. **Iberian Bluetail**: Seen at Alcollarín Reservoir.
9. **Small Bluetail**: Seen at Almonte River.
10. **White Featherleg**: Seen at River Alagón.
11. **Blue Emperor**: Seen on three days.
12. **Yellow Clubtail**: Seen at River Ibor.
13. **Western Clubtail**: Seen at River Ibor.
14. **Small Pincertail**: Seen at Rivers Ibor, Alagón and Garganta de los Infiernos.
15. **Large Pincertail**: Seen at Rivers Ibor, Ladilla and Garganta de los Infiernos.
16. **Green Hooktail**: Seen Alcollarín Reservoir.

17. **Common Goldenring:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
18. **Splendid Cruiser:** Seen at River Ladrillar at Las Mestas.
19. **Orange-spotted Emerald:** Seen at Las Mestas.
20. **Northern Banded Groundling:** Seen at Arrocampo and Alcollarín.
21. **Broad Scarlet:** Seen at Casatejada, Alcollarín Reservoir, Parque de Principe and Malpartida de Cáceres.
22. **Broad-bodied Chaser:** Seen Puerto de Honduras.
23. **Black-tailed Skimmer:** Seen almost daily.
24. **Epaulet Skimmer:** Seen at Las Mestas.
25. **Long Skimmer:** Seen at Arrocampo.
26. **Common Darter:** Seen at Garciaz.
27. **Violet Dropwing:** Seen at Casatejada, Alcollarín, Parque de Principe and Malpartida de Cáceres.
28. **Orange-winged Dropwing:** Seen at Parque de Principe.