

**HOLIDAY REPORT FOR CLAIRE AND HARRIET**  
**Casa Rural El Recuerdo & Birding Extremadura**  
**16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022**



**Itinerary**

**16<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Transfer from Madrid.**

**17<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Campo Lugar Plains, rice fields near Madrigalejo, Alcollarín Reservoir**

**18<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Monfragüe National Park**

**19<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca.**

**20<sup>th</sup> May 2022 Walk near Pago de San Clemente, woods near Garciaz**

**21<sup>st</sup> May 2022: Transfer to Madrid airport**

## HOLIDAY REPORT

### **16<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Transfer from Madrid.**

The flight from Gatwick was delayed so it was late afternoon when Claire and Harriet arrived to be met by Martin at Terminal One, Madrid airport. There was not a great deal of traffic on the ring-road. Soon we were leaving the city behind us, crossing the open landscape of Castille La Mancha on our way to Extremadura. We stopped about halfway for a meal and enjoyed seeing a brood of young Barn Swallows in the porch of the cafe.

Then it was a clear run through to Casa Rural El Recuerdo.

### **17<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Campo Lugar Plains, rice fields near Madrigalejo, Alcollarín Reservoir**

Our first stop was the plains of Campo Lugar, a vast landscape with the grasses blonded by the onset of summer. We had great views of two Stone Curlew and a buoyant female Montagu's Harrier glided over the fields. Constantly, at every stop, was the song of Calandra Larks and Corn Buntings.

Our next stop took us to the edge of rice fields, where there was also rough pasture and scattered trees. An ideal habitat for the Black-winged Kite and we saw a pair perched in the top of a holm oak. There was an active Bee-eater colony and we also got excellent views of an Iberian Grey Shrike.

At a nearby river, Great Reed Warblers and Nightingales were singing, as well as a Melodious Warbler. Golden Orioles teased us from the poplars and Common Waxbills obliged us with good sightings in the reeds.

After coffee in the village of Campo Lugar, we spent the rest of the day beside the Alcollarín Reservoir. Amongst Great-crested Grebes there was a very fine, Black-necked Grebe in full breeding plumage. The Bee-eater colony at the entrance of the site was one of the most memorable parts of the whole holiday. We had a picnic next to a small pool, where there were Purple Heron and Great Reed warbler. During the afternoon, we enjoyed several good views of Woodchat Shrike and studied both Thekla and Crested Larks. As we left the area, we had the opportunity to watch at length a Rock Sparrow.

### **18<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Trujillo and Monfragüe National Park**

We stopped first thing in Trujillo, beside the old grain silos to watch several Lesser Kestrels at their colony there. This was also a chance to see and compare Pallid and Common Swifts. From there we headed north, across the landscape of *dehesa* wood pasture, stretching to the horizon, broken only

eventually by our arrival at the rocky escarpments of Monfragüe National Park. Stopping at the viewpoint that looks across to the massive Peña Falcón rock, we had a very productive hour there.

All three species of vulture were present (Black, Griffon and Egyptian). Griffon Vultures had chicks on their nests, as did a pair of Black Storks. This gave us a wonderful view into their homelife. A pair of Peregrine soared over the cliff top. Much closer to us was a superb array of smaller birds: Blue Rock Thrush, Black Redstart, Rock Bunting and Cirl Bunting. We also managed to get good views of two White-rumped Swifts.

From there we drove to the far end of the park for a coffee at a small hotel set amongst a cork oak grove. Here we saw Turtle Dove and Common Cuckoo, as well as Golden Oriole and heard Western Orphean Warbler singing.

After our picnic, we stopped briefly at a small lookout on the road that heads for Plasencia, where again we saw White-rumped Swift and Griffon Vultures with chicks in their nests. A wonderful view of a Thekla lark was granted to us at our next stop. We then walked in the shade beside the River Tagus, admiring the vast House martin colony on the road bridge, where there were also a few Alpine Swifts. In the wood, we had a brief view of a Two-tailed Pasha.



### **19<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca.**

Onto the plains west of Trujillo first thing where we were rewarded by the amazing sight of a Great Bustard in full display, a perched adult Spanish Imperial Eagle, two or three Montagu's Harriers and some Pin-tailed and Black-

bellied Sandgrouse in flight. Again, it was perhaps the medley of larks and Corn Buntings which left the biggest impression. Further on, towards Cáceres, we saw several beautiful Rollers perched next to their nest boxes, as well as in flight, when the electric blue of their wings was revealed. We enjoyed watching Lesser Kestrels there too, as well as Short-toed Eagles, Griffon and Black Vultures. Next to the River Tamuja, Crag Martins and Red-rumped Swallows hawked insects.

After coffee in the charming little village of Santa Marta de Magasca, we headed to the River Almonte neat Jaraicejo for a picnic lunch, in the shade offered by a viewing point to contemplate the three bridges dating from 1450 to 1992 built at that point. Spanish Sparrows were busy nest-building on the oldest bridge.



On an evening walk, Claire and Harriet heard a Barn Owl in the olive groves, as well as a Tawny Owl.

### **20<sup>th</sup> May 2022 Walk near Pago de San Clemente, woods near Garciaz**

Claire and Harriet enjoyed a walk around the village and surrounding lanes in the morning, with sightings of Hawfinch and Short-toed Treecreeper.



After lunch we escaped the heat by repairing to the hills above Garciaz. Here with the heady scent of pine and Gum Cistus, we found Broad-leaved Helleborine in flower and saw Dainty Damselflies and butterflies including Spanish Gatekeeper and Scarce Swallowtail.



## 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022: Transfer to Madrid airport

We bade farewell to Casa Rural El Recuerdo at 09.15 and with a stop for coffee halfway, arrived at Terminal 1 at precisely the planned for time at 12.20.

### Species lists

#### Birds

1. **Egyptian Goose**: Seen at Alcollarín.
2. **Gadwall**: Seen on pool in the plains and at Alcollarín.
3. **Mallard**: Seen on pool in the plains and at Alcollarín.
4. **Red-legged Partridge**: Seen at Pago de San Clemente
5. **Little Grebe**: Seen on pool in the plains and at Alcollarín.
6. **Great Crested Grebe**: Seen at Alcollarín.
7. **Black-necked Grebe**: Seen at Alcollarín.
8. **Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon**: Seen daily.
9. **Common Woodpigeon**: Seen almost daily.
10. **European Turtle Dove**: Seen at Monfragüe.
11. **Collared Dove**: Seen daily.
12. **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse**: Seen on the plains west of Trujillo.
13. **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**: Seen on the plains west of Trujillo.
14. **Great Bustard**: Seen on plains west of Trujillo and near Campo Lugar.
15. **Common Cuckoo**: Seen or heard almost daily.
16. **Alpine Swift**: Seen in Monfragüe.
17. **Common Swift**: Seen almost daily.
18. **Pallid Swift**: Seen at Trujillo.
19. **White-rumped Swift**: Seen at Monfragüe.
20. **Common Moorhen**: Seen on one day.
21. **Eurasian Coot**: Seen at Alcollarín.
22. **Stone-curlew**: Seen on plains near Campo Lugar.
23. **Black-winged Stilt**: Seen at Alcollarín.
24. **Little Ringed Plover**: Seen at Alcollarín.
25. **Common Sandpiper**: Seen at Alcollarín.
26. **Common Redshank**: Seen at Alcollarín.
27. **Black Stork**: Seen at Monfragüe.
28. **White Stork**: Seen daily.
29. **Great Cormorant**: Seen at Alcollarín.
30. **Grey Heron**: Seen at Alcollarín.
31. **Purple Heron**: Seen at Alcollarín
32. **Great White Egret**: Seen at Alcollarín.
33. **Little Egret**: Seen at Alcollarín.
34. **Black-winged Kite**: Seen near Casas del Hitos.
35. **Egyptian Vulture**: Seen on plains and in Monfragüe.
36. **Black Vulture**: Seen daily.
37. **Griffon Vulture**: Seen daily.
38. **Short-toed Eagle**: Seen on plains.
39. **Booted Eagle**: Seen in Monfragüe.
40. **Spanish Eagle**: Seen on plains.
41. **Western Marsh Harrier**: Seen on two days.
42. **Montagu's Harrier**: Seen on the plains west of Trujillo.
43. **Red Kite**: Seen a couple of times.

44. **Black Kite**: Seen daily.
45. **Common Buzzard**: Seen on plains and Alcollarín.
46. **Little Owl**: Seen on plains.
47. **Barn Owl**: Heard at Pago de San Clemente.
48. **Tawny Owl**: Heard at Pago de San Clemente.
49. **Eurasian Hoopoe**: Seen daily.
50. **European Bee-eater**: Seen daily. Colony at Alcollarín.
51. **European Roller**: Seen on plains west of Trujillo.
52. **Lesser Kestrel**: Seen on the plains and Trujillo.
53. **Common Kestrel**: Seen on the plains.
54. **Peregrine Falcon**: Seen in Monfragüe.
55. **Eurasian Golden Oriole**: Seen or heard on two days.
56. **Iberian Grey Shrike**: Seen at Casas del Hitos and Alcollarín.
57. **Woodchat Shrike**: Seen daily.
58. **Eurasian Jay**: Seen at Garciaz.
59. **Iberian Magpie**: Seen daily.
60. **Common Magpie**: Seen most days.
61. **Eurasian Jackdaw**: Seen most days.
62. **Common Raven**: Seen most days.
63. **Crested Tit**: Seen near Garciaz.
64. **Eurasian Blue Tit**: Seen on several days.
65. **Great Tit**: Seen on several days.
66. **Greater Short-toed Lark**: Seen on the plains.
67. **Calandra Lark**: Abundant on the plains.
68. **Woodlark**: Seen at Garciaz and also heard at Pago de San Clemente.
69. **Thekla's Lark**: Seen on several days.
70. **Crested Lark**: Seen daily.
71. **Zitting Cisticola**: Seen on several days.
72. **Melodious Warbler**: Seen at River Ruercas.
73. **Eurasian Reed Warbler**: Seen at Alcollarín.
74. **Great Reed Warbler**: Seen at River Ruercas and Alcollarín.
75. **Eurasian Crag Martin**: Seen at Monfragüe and beside rivers.
76. **Barn Swallow**: Seen daily.
77. **Red-rumped Swallow**: Seen on three days.
78. **Common House Martin**: Seen daily.
79. **Cetti's Warbler**: Seen (or heard) almost daily.
80. **Long-tailed Tit**: Seen on two days.
81. **Eurasian Blackcap**: Seen or heard on two days.
82. **Western Orphean Warbler**: Heard at Monfragüe.
83. **Sardinian Warbler**: Seen daily.
84. **Western Subalpine Warbler**: Seen in Monfragüe.
85. **Short-toed Treecreeper**: Seen on several days.
86. **Eurasian Wren**: Seen or heard daily.
87. **Spotless Starling**: Seen daily.
88. **Mistle Thrush**: Seen in Monfragüe.
89. **Eurasian Blackbird**: Seen daily.
90. **European Robin**: Seen in Monfragüe and Garciaz.
91. **Common Nightingale**: Seen daily.
92. **Black Redstart**: Seen daily.
93. **Blue Rock Thrush**: Seen in Monfragüe.
94. **European Stonechat**: Seen daily.

95. **Common Waxbill:** Seen at River Ruercas.
96. **House Sparrow:** Seen daily.
97. **Spanish Sparrow:** Seen on three days.
98. **Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Seen on rice fields.
99. **Rock Sparrow:** Seen at Alcollarín and Monfragüe.
100. **Grey Wagtail:** Seen at River Tamuja.
101. **White Wagtail:** Seen on two days.
102. **Common Chaffinch:** Seen daily.
103. **Hawfinch:** Seen at Pago de San Clemente.
104. **Common Linnet:** Seen on several days.
105. **European Goldfinch:** Seen daily.
106. **European Serin:** Seen daily.
107. **Corn Bunting:** Seen daily.
108. **Rock Bunting:** Seen at Monfragüe.
109. **Cirl Bunting:** Seen at Monfragüe.

### **Butterflies**

1. Scarce Swallowtail
2. Small White
3. Bath White
4. Clouded Yellow
5. Small Copper
6. Sooty Copper
7. Holly Blue
8. Brown Argus
9. Two-tailed Pasha
10. Queen of Spain Fritillary
11. Meadow Brown
12. Spanish Gatekeeper
13. Small Heath
14. Speckled Wood
15. Wall Brown
16. Small Skipper
17. Essex Skipper

### **Miscellaneous Plants**

Broad-leaved Helleborine

Asphodel Lily

Bath Asparagus

Reseda

Gum Cistus

Crinkly-leaved Cistus

Narrow-veaved Cistus

*Malva tournefortiana*: sparsely foliaged pale pink mallow

*Andryala integrifolia*: soft plant with flat daisy-like yellow flowers