

BIRDING EXTREMADURA AND CASA RURAL EL RECUERDO

SUMMER TOUR FOR JULIE AND GEOFF

17th – 27th JUNE 2022



Above Candelario

ITINERARY

17th June 2022: Pick-up Madrid and stop at Cuacos de Yuste, then onward to Casa Rural El Recuerdo.

18th June 2022: Garciaz

19th June 2022: Campo Lugar plains and Alcollarín Reservoir

20th June 2022: Trujillo Plains and River Almonte

21st June 2022: Castañar de Ibor

22nd June: Plains west of Trujillo, Don Benito and Vegas Altas

23rd June 2022: Cañamero, Puerto de Hospital, River Ibor

24th June 2022: Free day

25th June 2022: La Garganta

26th June 2022: Las Mestas and Candelario

27th June 2022: Return to Madrid.

TRIP REPORT

17th June 2022: Pick-up Madrid and stop at Cuacos de Yuste, then onward to Casa Rural El Recuerdo.

Martin welcomed Julie and Geoff back to Spain on their arrival at Madrid airport and we headed off immediately from the city to take the A5 motorway to Extremadura. We stopped for lunch near the village of Saucedilla and then visited the lower slopes of the Gredos Mountains in the La Vera region, parking beside the monastery of Yuste. We had an excellent walk along a quite road, surrounded by Pyrenean oak forest. Our first find was a magnificent **Stag Beetle** (sadly just demised), but butterflies such as **Spanish Purple Hairstreak** and **Southern White Admiral** were active. We were in the middle of a heatwave and when we paused near Saucedilla on our way onward to Casa Rural El Recuerdo, the temperature was 40° C.

18th June 2022: Garciaz

We had great views of **Hawfinches** feeding on dry Milk Thistle seed heads as we left the village. We drove the short distance up to the little village of Garciaz and then to the hill to the east. Here we had an excellent walk in the woodland there, surrounded by the scent of pines and seeing many butterflies including some gorgeous **Sooty Coppers** and **Great Banded Graylings** as well as a pretty **Clearwing** sp.



Clearwing sp.

After an excellent coffee in the village we spent a couple of hours watching **Viperine Snakes**, damselflies, **Melodious Warblers** and **Woodchat Shrikes** from an old bridge over the River Garciaz.

Julie and Geoff then spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying watching a tame **Nightingale** in the garden.

19th June 2022: Campo Lugar plains and Alcollarín Reservoir

It was a much cooler and more cloudy day and ideal to start on the plains near campo Lugar. Here we had great views of **Stone Curlew**, **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** and **Collared Pratincoles**, as well as **Rollers** and a full gamut of larks. What was also outstanding were several examples of the antlion ***Palpares hispanis***.



The antlion *Palpares hispanis*

After coffee in Campo Lugar, we repaired to the Alcollarín Reservoir nearby where again we saw parties of **Collared Pratincoles** and hordes of **Northern Banded Groundlings** and several damselflies, including **Migrant** and **Small Spreadwing** and **Iberian Bluetails**.

20th June 2022: Trujillo Plains and River Almonte

Another cool day with a fresh wind, and just at the start of our day out we spotted a **Great Spotted Cuckoo** on the wire and managed to find a safe and legal place to park to watch it. In Trujillo we enjoyed watching **Pallid Swifts** flying to their nests to feed their highly vocal young. A warning light on the car was promptly dealt with at the garage, but gave us enough time to find an adult and recently fledged **Scops Owl** in a small park and to have a coffee.



Juvenile Scops Owl

We then spent time on the plains north of the town, engrossed by two species of bush cricket feeding on thistles. We had our picnic beside the Tozo River, watching a **Bee-eater** colony where the tunnels were barely on any sort of gradient. The devoted the afternoon to a very pleasant walk beside the Almonte River, watching **Cirl Buntings** and families of **Woodchat Shrikes** and finding dragonflies such as **Long Skimmer** and **Violet Dropwing**.



Violet Dropwing

21st June 2022: Castañar de Ibor

The summer solstice and another (or the same) **Great Spotted Cuckoo** seen as we headed off for the day. We made our first stop at the River Ibor where we enjoyed an excellent morning of dragonflies. Julie and Geoff were fortunate enough to see a **Splendid Cruiser** (a great find there) and we found two species of **Clubtail** (**Western** and **Yellow**).



Yellow Clubtail

In the garden of hotel where we had coffee, a **Geranium Bronze** was present. We had a picnic at a wonderful viewpoint affording a panorama across the Ibor valley on to the rocky crags to the west.

The afternoon was devoted to walking on our favourite track up a small valley close to the town, surrounded by Sweet Chestnut and Pyrenean Oak where we found no fewer than 40 species of butterfly, including a gorgeous **Southern Scarce Swallowtail** and watched a pair of **Short-toed Eagles** in an apparent dispute with an immature bird.

22nd June: Plains west of Trujillo, Don Benito and Vegas Altas

It was a colder day and rather overcast and we started the day on the plains west of Trujillo where we saw both **Pin-tailed** and **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**, as well as a pair of **Stone Curlew** with chicks, **Montagu's Harrier** and **Spanish Imperial Eagle**. Hundreds of **Calandra Larks** were in flocks.

We then headed south, stopping to watch **Spoonbill** chicks in a heronry near Campo Lugar and then having coffee in the village. We stopped beside the Guadiana River near Don Benito where we obtained views of **Western Olivaceous Warbler**, **Little**

Bittern and **Purple Heron**, as well as dragonflies like **Violet Dropwing**. After lunch there, we spent the afternoon on the rice fields near Vegas Altas, seeing returning **Green Sandpipers** and **Northern Lapwing**, **Collared Pratincoles** and **Epaulet Skimmers**.

23rd June 2022: Cañamero, Puerto de Hospital, River Ibor



River Ruercas

We spent most of the day in the southern end of the Villuercas Mountains, starting at a gorge along the River Ruercas where we had spectacular views of a family of **Bonelli's Eagles**, with **Golden Orioles** as an attractive supporting actor. Following coffee, we took the road into the Ibores Mountains, beyond the Puerto de Hospital to explore an area of Pyrenean oak woodland. This was full of **Western Bonelli's Warblers** and large number of **Iberian Marbled Whites**, which appeared as soon as the sun came out, all in magnificent scenery. On a quick check of the River Ibor afterwards, we found little dragonfly activity, it being a rather cool day.

24th June 2022: Free day

25th June 2022: La Garganta

We bade farewell to Casa Rural El Recuerdo and drove north to the border with Castille y Leon and above the little village of La Garganta, into a beautiful habitat of small meadows and woodland. Although it was rather cool and cloudy, it was brilliant for butterflies, the highlight being at least two of the mega-rare **Yellow-banded Skipper**, which we were not expecting to see. There were also a great selection of fritillaries and masses of **Iberian Marbled Whites**. Birds included a very fine male **Red-**

backed Shrike. All of this and we were surrounded by some incredible mountain scenery.



Yellow-banded Skipper

At the afternoon we checked into our hotel at the edge of the spa town of Baños de Montemayor.

26th June 2022: Las Mestas and Candelario

We drove an hour or so to the Hurdes region of Extremadura, to the Ladrillar valley, stopping first in the village of Las Mestas. We had hoped for a full morning of dragonflies, but perhaps because of the low temperatures first thing (6°C), there was very little activity, although we did see a **Western Spectre**. We checked another site further upstream, but apart from a **Large Pincertail**, there likewise was it fairly quiet, although we did see a **Dipper**. After our picnic we drove into the Sierra de Bejar, to stop on the mountainside above Candelario. This was superb for butterflies with numerous **Piedmont Ringlets** and **Chestnut Heaths** in the wing.



Piedmont Ringlet

Birdwise too, we had brilliant views of several **Bluethroat**, as well as **Iberian Dunnock** and **Ortolan Bunting**.



Bluethroat

Back at the hotel, a **Hobby** flew over as we enjoyed a pre-lunch dinner drink.

27th June 2022: Return to Madrid.

We checked out of the hotel and returned via Plasencia to the motorway to head back to Madrid. Plans for a final birding stop were thwarted by a damaged tyre, which was quickly replaced at nearby Navalmoral de la Mata. From there, we stopped for a bite to eat about halfway to Madrid and then despite a couple of hold-ups, got to the airport as planned.

Species Lists

Butterflies

1. **Scarce Swallowtail**: Seen on 21st and 25th June.
2. **Large White**: Seen on 21st June.
3. **Small White**: Seen daily.
4. **Green-veined White**: Seen at castañar de Ibor on 21st June.
5. **Bath White**: Seen on five days.
6. **Clouded Yellow**: Seen almost daily.
7. **Brimstone**: Seen twice, at Yuste and at Castañar de Ibor.
8. **Cleopatra**: Seen in Ibores.
9. **Spanish Purple Hairstreak**: Seen on four days.
10. **Ilex Hairstreak**: Seen at Yuste.
11. **False Ilex Hairstreak**: Seen in the Ibores.
12. **Small Copper**: Seen most days.
13. **Sooty Copper**: Seen almost daily.
14. **Purple-shot Copper**: Seen on four days.
15. **Long-tailed Blue**: Seen on four days.
16. **Geranium Bronze**: Seen at castañar de Ibor, las Mestas and Baños de Montemayor.
17. **Lang's Short-tailed Blue**: Seen on most days.
18. **African Grass Blue**: Seen at Alcollarín.
19. **Holly Blue**: Seen on two days.
20. **Green-underside Blue**: Seen at La Garganta.
21. **Black-eyed Blue**: Seen at Alcollarín and at La Garganta.
22. **Brown Argus**: Seen daily.
23. **Common Blue**: Seen almost daily.
24. **Nettle-tree Butterfly**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
25. **Two-tailed Pasha**: Seen at Garciaz.
26. **Southern White Admiral**: Seen on three days.
27. **Large Tortoiseshell**: Seen at Garciaz.
28. **Peacock**: Seen at La Garganta and Candelario.
29. **Red Admiral**: Seen on two days.
30. **Painted Lady**: Seen on most days.
31. **Small Tortoiseshell**: Seen in mountains.
32. **Comma**: Seen on two days.
33. **Cardinal**: Seen on four days.
34. **Silver-washed Fritillary**: Seen at Yuste.
35. **Dark Green Fritillary**: Seen on 25th and 26th June.

36. **Niobe Fritillary:** Seen on 25th and 26th June.
37. **Queen of Spain Fritillary:** Seen almost daily.
38. **Marbled Fritillary:** Seen at Candelario.
39. **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary:** Seen at Candelario.
40. **Knapweed Fritillary:** Seen at La Garganta.
41. **Heath Fritillary:** Seen most days.
42. **Meadow Fritillary:** Seen at La Garganta.
43. **Marsh Fritillary:** Seen at La Garganta.
44. **Iberian Marbled White:** Seen on most days.
45. **Esper's Marbled White:** Seen at Candelario.
46. **Rock Grayling:** Seen on four days.
47. **Grayling:** Seen on 25th and 26th June.
48. **Great Banded Grayling:** Seen on most days.
49. **Piedmont Ringlet:** Seen at Candelario.
50. **Meadow Brown:** Seen almost daily.
51. **Oriental Meadow Brown:** Seen at Garciaz and Alcollarín.
52. **Gatekeeper:** Seen on two days.
53. **Southern Gatekeeper:** Seen almost every day.
54. **Spanish Gatekeeper:** Seen on four days.
55. **Small Heath:** Seen on four days.
56. **Pearly Heath:** Seen at La Garganta and Candelario.
57. **Chestnut Heath:** Seen at Candelario.
58. **Speckled Wood:** Seen on four days.
59. **Wall Brown:** Seen on most days.
60. **Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper:** Seen at Garciaz.
61. **Yellow-banded Skipper:** Seen at La Garganta on 25th June.
62. **Red-underwing Skipper:** Seen at Garciaz, River Almonte and Candelario.
63. **Mallow Skipper:** Seen on two days.
64. **Lulworth Skipper:** Seen on three days.
65. **Essex Skipper:** Seen on three days.
66. **Small Skipper:** Seen most days.
67. **Large Skipper:** Seen at La Garganta.

Odonata

1. **Western Demoiselle:** Seen at Ibor River and Ruercas River.
2. **Beautiful Demoiselle:** Seen at Yuste.
3. **Copper Demoiselle:** Seen at Ibor River.
4. **Migrant Spreadwing:** Seen at Garciaz, Alcollarín and Ibor River.
5. **Small Spreadwing:** Seen at Alcollarín.
6. **Blue-eye:** Seen at Garciaz, River Ibor,
7. **Small Red-eye:** Seen at Garciaz.
8. **Iberian Blue-tail:** Seen at Alcollarín and River Almonte.
9. **Blue Emperor:** Seen at Garciaz and Ibor River.
10. **Western Spectre:** Seen at Ibor River and Ladrillar River
11. **Western Clubtail:** Seen at Ibor River.
12. **Yellow Clubtail:** Seen at Ibor River.
13. **Large Pincertail:** Seen at Ibor River and Ladrillar River
14. **Splendid Cruiser:** One at River Ibor.
15. **Common Goldenring:** Seen at Yuste and Castañar de Ibor.

16. **Broad Scarlet:** Seen at Garciaz, River Almonte and Don Benito.
17. **Broad-bodied Chaser:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
18. **Black-tailed Skimmer:** Seen at Garciaz, Alcollarín, River Almonte, River Ibor, La Garganta and Las Mestas.
19. **Long Skimmer:** Seen at River Almonte.
20. **Epaulet Skimmer:** Seen at Vegas Altas.
21. **Common Darter:** Seen at Garciaz, River Almonte, River Ibor and River Ruercas
22. **Red-veined Darter:** Seen at River Almonte and Don Benito.
23. **Violet Dropwing:** Seen at River Almonte and Don Benito.
24. **Northern banded Groundling:** Seen at Alcollarín.

Birds

1. **Egyptian Goose:** Seen at Alcollarín.
2. **Mallard:** Seen on four days.
3. **Red-legged Partridge:** Seen west of Trujillo.
4. **Quail:** Heard calling on four days.
5. **Little Grebe:** Seen on three days.
6. **Great Crested Grebe:** Seen at Alcollarín.
7. **Great Cormorant:** Seen on one day.
8. **Little Bittern:** Seen at Don Benito.
9. **Cattle Egret:** Seen on three days.
10. **Little Egret:** Seen at Alcollarín.
11. **Grey Heron:** Seen on several days.
12. **Purple Heron:** Seen on two days.
13. **White Stork:** Seen daily.
14. **Spoonbill:** Seen at Alcollarín and Campo Lugar.
15. **Egyptian Vulture:** Seen on 25th June.
16. **Griffon Vulture:** Seen daily.
17. **Black Vulture:** Seen on four days.
18. **Spanish Imperial Eagle:** Seen on plains west of Trujillo.
19. **Short-toed Eagle:** Seen most days.
20. **Booted Eagle:** Seen on most days.
21. **Bonelli's Eagle:** Two adults and a juvenile seen at Cañamero.
22. **Black Kite:** Seen daily.
23. **Red Kite:** Seen on four days.
24. **Marsh harrier:** Seen on four days.
25. **Montagu's Harrier:** Seen on plains west of Trujillo.
26. **Common Buzzard:** Seen on most days.
27. **Sparrowhawk:** Seen on two days.
28. **Lesser Kestrel:** Seen near Trujillo, Campo Lugar and at Candelario.
29. **Common Kestrel:** Seen in the mountains.
30. **Hobby:** Seen at Baños de Monetmayor.
31. **Moorhen:** Seen on three days.
32. **Purple Swamphen:** Seen at Don Benito.
33. **Common Coot:** Seen at Alcollarín.
34. **Black-winged Stilt:** Seen on two days.
35. **Stone Curlew:** Seen at campo Lugar and plains west of Trujillo.

36. **Collared Pratincole:** Seen at Campo Lugar, Alcollarín and Vegas Altas.
37. **Little Ringed Plover:** Seen on three days.
38. **Northern Lapwing:** Seen at Vegas Altas.
39. **Green Sandpiper:** Seen at Vegas Altas.
40. **Gull-billed Tern:** Seen at Campo Lugar.
41. **Black-bellied Sandgrouse:** Seen west of Trujillo and at Campo Lugar.
42. **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse:** Seen west of Trujillo.
43. **Feral Pigeon:** Seen most days.
44. **Wood Pigeon:** Seen daily.
45. **Collared Dove:** Seen most days.
46. **Turtle Dove:** Seen at River Almonte.
47. **Great Spotted Cuckoo:** Seen near Trujillo.
48. **Scops Owl:** Seen in Trujillo and heard at Castañar de Ibor.
49. **Little Owl:** Seen on plains and at Pago de San Clemente.
50. **Alpine Swift:** One seen at Baños de Monetmayor.
51. **Common Swift:** Seen daily.
52. **Pallid Swift:** Seen regularly.
53. **Kingfisher:** Seen on most days.
54. **Bee-eater:** Seen daily.
55. **Roller:** Seen at Campo Lugar on two days.
56. **Hoopoe:** Seen most days.
57. **Monk Parakeet:** Seen in Madrid.
58. **Iberian Green Woodpecker:** Recorded in the mountains.
59. **Great Spotted Woodpecker:** Recorded most days.
60. **Calandra Lark:** Seen on the plains.
61. **Short-toed Lark:** Seen on plains and rice fields.
62. **Crested Lark:** Seen on several days.
63. **Thekla Lark:** Seen on several days, especially on the plains.
64. **Woodlark:** Singing at Garciaz.
65. **Skylark:** Present near Candelario.
66. **Crag Martin:** Seen almost daily.
67. **Barn Swallow:** Seen daily.
68. **Red-rumped Swallow:** Seen most days.
69. **House Martin:** Seen most days.
70. **Iberian Yellow wagtail:** Seen on rice fields.
71. **Grey Wagtail:** Seen most days.
72. **White Wagtail:** Seen most days.
73. **Wren:** Seen almost daily.
74. **White-breasted Dipper:** Seen on Ladrillar River.
75. **Iberian Dunnock:** Seen near Candelario.
76. **Robin:** Seen almost daily.
77. **Nightingale:** Seen daily.
78. **Bluethroat:** Seen near Candelario.
79. **Black Redstart:** Seen daily.
80. **Stonechat:** Seen most days.
81. **Blue Rock Thrush:** Seen near Cañamero.
82. **Blackbird:** Seen daily.
83. **Mistle Thrush:** Seen in the Ibores.
84. **Song Thrush:** Seen near Castañar de Ibor.
85. **Cetti's Warbler:** Seen most days.
86. **Zitting Cisticola:** Seen most days.

87. **Reed Warbler:** Seen at Don Benito.
88. **Great Reed Warbler:** Seen at Alcollarín and Don Benito.
89. **Western Olivaceous Warbler:** Seen at Don Benito.
90. **Melodious Warbler:** Seen on five days.
91. **Dartford Warbler:** Seen at Garciaz.
92. **Subalpine Warbler:** Seen in the Ibores.
93. **Sardinian Warbler:** Seen most days.
94. **Common Whitethroat:** Seen in mountains.
95. **Blackcap:** seen daily.
96. **Western Bonelli's Warbler:** Seen in Ibores and the mountains.
97. **Common Chiffchaff:** Seen in Ibores and the mountains.
98. **Firecrest:** Seen at Garciaz, the Ibores and in the mountains.
99. **Long-tailed Tit:** Seen most days.
100. **Crested Tit:** Seen in Ibores and the mountains.
101. **Coal Tit:** Seen in the mountains.
102. **Blue Tit:** Seen daily.
103. **Great Tit:** Seen daily.
104. **Nuthatch:** Recorded most days.
105. **Short-toed Treecreeper:** Seen most days.
106. **Golden Oriole:** Seen almost daily.
107. **Iberian Grey Shrike:** Seen most days.
108. **Woodchat Shrike:** Seen almost daily.
109. **Red-backed Shrike:** Seen at La Garganta.
110. **Jay:** Seen almost daily.
111. **Iberian Magpie:** Seen daily.
112. **Magpie:** Seen daily.
113. **Jackdaw:** Seen on two days.
114. **Carrion Crow:** Seen at La Garganta.
115. **Raven:** Seen almost daily.
116. **Spotless Starling:** Seen daily.
117. **House Sparrow:** Seen daily.
118. **Spanish Sparrow:** Seen on three days.
119. **Rock Sparrow:** Seen on plains west of Trujillo.
120. **Common Waxbill:** Seen on rice fields.
121. **Red Avadavat:** Seen on rice fields.
122. **Chaffinch:** Seen almost daily.
123. **Serin:** Seen almost daily.
124. **Greenfinch:** Seen almost daily.
125. **Goldfinch:** Seen daily.
126. **Linnet:** Seen almost daily.
127. **Crossbill:** Seen at Candelario.
128. **Hawfinch:** Seen on most days.
129. **Cirl Bunting:** Seen on five days.
130. **Rock Bunting:** Seen most days.
131. **Ortolan Bunting:** Seen near Candelario.
132. **Corn Bunting:** Seen most days.