

**BIRDING EXTREMADURA AND CASA RURAL EL RECUERDO**

**BUTTERFLY AND HERPETOFAUNA SUMMER TOUR FOR MARK**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022**



*Mark at Peña de Francia*

**3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022: Pick-up Madrid and stop at Jaraiz de la Vera, then onward to Casa Rural El Recuerdo.**

**4<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Trujillo, River Ibor and Castañar de Ibor**

**5<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Trujillo, Puerto del Hospital (Ibor Mountains)**

**6<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Monfragüe National Park, Peña Francia and La Garganta**

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

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2022: La Plataforma Gredos and Hoyos de Espino**

**9<sup>th</sup> June 2022: La Plataforma Gredos, Tormes River**

**10<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Southern slope of Gredos and return to Madrid.**

## TRIP REPORT

### 3rd June 2022: Pick-up Madrid and stop at Jaraiz de la Vera, then onward to Casa Rural El Recuerdo.

Mark arrived on time and we had a smooth run from the airport and onwards on the motorway heading south-west to Extremadura, with a stop for lunch at the half-way point. En route, we made a short detour to visit the Pyrenean oak woodland near Jaraiz de la Vera on the lower slopes of the Gredos Mountains to start our butterfly odyssey, with species such as **Ilex Hairstreak**, **Purple-shot Copper** and **Southern White Admiral** found. We then continued to Casa Rural El Recuerdo, arriving in time for dinner.

### 4<sup>th</sup> June 2022: River Ibor and Castañar de Ibor

A **Striped Hawkmoth** was feeding on honeysuckle close to the entrance of El Recuerdo as we left. We made a first stop at a pond near Trujillo to find **Western Spadefoot** toad (adults and many large tadpoles) and several medicinal leeches. We spent the day exploring the northern Ibor region, visiting first the River Ibor for dragonflies, seeing **Western Clubtail**, **Western Spectre** and **Orange-spotted Emerald**, as well as an **Otter**.

After a picnic with a fine view across to the mountains to the west, where we had a brief glimpse of a **Scarce Copper**, we spent an excellent afternoon in the small valley to the east of Castañar de Ibor. Here we were kept busy with butterflies, including **Amanda's Blue**, **Nettle-Tree Butterfly** and **Heath** and **Niobe Fritillary**.



*Amanda's Blue (Martin Kelsey)*

### 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Puerto del Hospital (Ibor Mountains)

We returned to the Trujillo pond and added a group of **Sharp-ribbed Salamanders** to the list. Then onward again to the Ibores region, this time a little further south, to take the road over the Puerto de Hospital and then to a wonderful meadow, surrounded by Pyrenean oak and rocky crags.



*Meadow in the Ibores (Martin Kelsey)*

Here we found a **Fiery Clearwing**, watched **Black-veined Whites** all to the sound of **Golden Orioles** and **Western Bonelli's Warblers**. A **Two-tailed Pasha** was found further along the road in an area of scrub dominated by Strawberry Trees.

### 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Monfragüe National Park, Peña Francia and La Garganta

We bade farewell to Casa Rural El Recuerdo and took the road north with a stop initially in the Monfragüe National Park to look for herpetofauna beside the River Tajo. We were rewarded by a huge female **Spiny Toad**. A great find! Onward then to the mountains and we briefly left Extremadura to ascend the park of Peña de Francia in Salamanca. Boasting a high monument and church, the peak not only offers superb views but also hosts an endemic rock lizard. After some searching, we obtained superb views of the **Peña de Francia Rock Lizard**, as well as a number of **Guadarrama Wall Lizards**. Birds included a colony of **Pallid Swifts** and **Common Rock Thrush**. **Spanish Ibex** were also present. **Honey Buzzards** were seen on the journey there.

From there we returned to Extremadura, checked-in to our hotel in Baños de Montemayor and then spent the evening above the village of La Garganta doing a reccy for the following day and staying on to dusk to enjoy the sound of churring **Eurasian Nightjars**.



*Female Spiny Toad (Mark Ferris)*



*Peña de Francia Rock Lizard (Mark Ferris)*

7th June 2022: La Garganta



*Mark photographing Yellow-banded Skippers (Martin Kelsey)*

We dedicated the whole day to the montane meadows between La Garganta and Candelario, focusing on butterflies and on one species in particular: the near mythical **Yellow-banded Skipper**. This had been our target since 2019 and now armed with new intelligence on specific sites and spreading our search to drier parts of the meadows, where the food plant *Potentilla recta* was in flower, we encountered our first individual after just two hours of looking. It was unforgettable, seeing an unfamiliar silvery-grey butterfly flying over a metre above the vegetation in a direct flight. As soon as it settled, revealing itself as a large skipper with well-marked upper surface, we knew we had found the species. During the day we found it at two sites, seeing perhaps eight individuals and enjoying not just views of the gorgeous underwing, but also had time to watch territorial behaviour and what appeared to be pairs together.

We found other skippers too during our sojourn there including **Large Grizzled**, **Olive** and **Safflower**. Overall an amazing 41 species of butterfly were seen in an area of little more than two square kilometres.

We encountered as well a whole suite of birds not found at lower and drier altitudes in Extremadura, such as **Honey Buzzard**, **Red-backed Shrike**, **Firecrest**, **Coal Tit**, **Common Chiffchaff**, **Western Bonelli's Warblers** and **Common Whitethroats**.

We returned, elated, to the hotel to celebrate.



*Yellow-banded Skipper (Martin Kelsey)*

#### **8th June 2022: La Plataforma Gredos and Hoyos de Espino**

The day dawned misty with low cloud over the peaks, so we headed straight into the Gredos Mountains and drove up to the Plataforma near Hoyos del Espino. From there it was a twenty-minute walk across the beautiful moorland with singing **Ortolan Buntings**, **Eurasian Skylarks**, **Common Rock Thrush** and **Northern Wheatears** to a stream where we found **Iberian Stream Frog**. A family of **Black Redstarts** were also present there.

We then descended to the pines near Hoyos de Espino for a walk near the Tormes River. The weather meant that few butterflies were on the wing, but we did see two **Hobby** and later **Citril Finches** were seen near Navarredonda.



*Mark in the Gredos (Martin Kelsey)*



*Iberian Stream Frog (Mark Ferris)*

### 9th June 2022: La Plataforma Gredos, Tormes River

We were treated with wonderful weather so we returned to the Plataforma and found, on the way up, a **Lataste's Viper** on the edge of the road. At the Plataforma carpark we quickly located the sought-after **Cyren's Rock Lizard** and had excellent views.



*Cyren's Rock Lizard (Mark Ferris)*

Returning to the Tormes River we spent the rest of the day on several walks at various places in the valley, seeing a very satisfying range of butterflies, including **Glanville Fritillary**, **Provençal Orange-tip**, and **Mazarine Blues**, as well as **Common Wall Lizard**, **Guadarrama Wall Lizard** and both **Ocellated** and **Schreiber's Green Lizards**.



*Mazarine Blue (Mark Ferris)*

## **10th June 2022: Southern slope of Gredos and return to Madrid.**

We checked out of the hotel and stopped initially at the Puerto de Pico to admire the colony of **Spanish Argus** on the *Erodium* there. Just down the hill, we made a short walk to find **Panoptes Blue**, the final butterfly of the trip. From there it was a couple of hours drive to the airport, which we reached by 13.00.

### **Species Lists**

The tour was designed for butterflies and herpetofauna with specific focus on certain species, rather than aiming for a large species list. Dragonflies, birds and other wildlife were incidental.

#### **Butterflies**

1. **Swallowtail**: Seen on 4<sup>th</sup> June at Castañar de Ibor.
2. **Scarce Swallowtail**: Seen on three days.
3. **Spanish Festoon**: One seen on 9<sup>th</sup> June in Tormes valley.
4. **Black-veined White**: Seen on three days.
5. **Large White**: Seen almost daily.
6. **Small White**: Seen daily.
7. **Bath White**: Seen on four days.
8. **Orange Tip**: Seen on 9<sup>th</sup> June in Tormes Valley.
9. **Provençal Orange Tip**: Seen on 9<sup>th</sup> June in Tormes Valley.
10. **Clouded Yellow**: Seen daily.
11. **Brimstone**: Seen twice, at Jaraiz and in Tormes Valley.
12. **Cleopatra**: Seen in Ibores.
13. **Spanish Purple Hairstreak**: Seen on 5<sup>th</sup> June in the Ibores.
14. **Ilex Hairstreak**: Seen at Jaraiz.
15. **False Ilex Hairstreak**: Seen in the Ibores.
16. **Small Copper**: Seen most days.
17. **Scarce Copper**: One seen briefly near Castañar de Ibor.
18. **Sooty Copper**: Seen on three days in mountains.
19. **Purple-shot Copper**: Seen most days.
20. **Long-tailed Blue**: Seen most days.
21. **Lang's Short-tailed Blue**: Seen on four days.
22. **African Grass Blue**: Seen beside River Ibor.
23. **Holly Blue**: Seen on three days.
24. **Green-underside Blue**: Seen on three days in the mountains.
25. **Black-eyed Blue**: Seen at La Garganta.
26. **Panoptes Blue**: Seen on 10<sup>th</sup> June.
27. **Brown Argus**: Seen on four days.
28. **Spanish Argus**: Seen in Tormes Valley and at Puerto de Pico.
29. **Mazarine Blue**: Seen in Tormes Valley.
30. **Amanda's Blue**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
31. **Common Blue**: Seen almost daily.
32. **Nettle-tree Butterfly**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor and La Garganta.
33. **Two-tailed Pasha**: Seen in Ibores.
34. **Southern White Admiral**: Seen at Jaraiz and in the Ibores.
35. **Large Tortoiseshell**: Seen on three days.
36. **Red Admiral**: Seen on two days.
37. **Painted Lady**: Seen on four days.
38. **Small Tortoiseshell**: Seen in mountains.

39. **Comma**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
40. **Cardinal**: Seen almost everyday.
41. **High Brown Fritillary**: Seen at La Garganta.
42. **Niobe Fritillary**: Seen on four days.
43. **Queen of Spain Fritillary**: Seen almost daily.
44. **Marbled Fritillary**: Seen at Jaraiz.
45. **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**: Seen at La Garganta.
46. **Glanville Fritillary**: Seen in Tormes Valley.
47. **Knapweed Fritillary**: Seen in mountains.
48. **Lesser Spotted Fritillary**: Seen at La Garganta and in Tormes valley.
49. **Heath Fritillary**: Seen most days.
50. **Provençal Fritillary**: Seen in Tormes valley.
51. **Marsh Fritillary**: Seen on four days.
52. **Iberian Marbled White**: Seen on two days.
53. **Grayling**: Seen in Ibores.
54. **Great Banded Grayling**: Seen in Ibores.
55. **Meadow Brown**: Seen almost daily.
56. **Gatekeeper**: Seen at La Garganta.
57. **Spanish Gatekeeper**: Seen on four days.
58. **Small Heath**: Seen on four days.
59. **Pearly Heath**: Seen in Tormes Valley.
60. **Speckled Wood**: Seen most days.
61. **Wall Brown**: Seen in mountains.
62. **Southern Grizzled Skipper**: Seen in Tormes valley.
63. **Large Grizzled Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta and Tormes Valley.
64. **Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta and Tormes Valley.
65. **Olive Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta and Tormes Valley.
66. **Rosy Grizzled Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta.
67. **Safflower Skipper**: Seen at La Garganta and Tormes Valley.
68. **Yellow-banded Skipper**: At least eight seen at La Garganta on 7<sup>th</sup> June.
69. **Red-underwing Skipper**: Seen in Ibores and at La Garganta and Tormes Valley.
70. **Mallow Skipper**: Seen at Peña de Francia and Tormes Valley.
71. **Lulworth Skipper**: Seen at Jaraiz.
72. **Small Skipper**: Seen most days.

## Odonata

1. **Western Demoiselle**: Seen at Ibor River.
2. **Beautiful Demoiselle**: Seen in Tormes River.
3. **Migrant Spreadwing**: Seen at Ibor River.
4. **Blue-eye**: Seen at Ibor River.
5. **Blue Emperor**: Seen at Ibor River.
6. **Western Spectre**: Seen at Ibor River.
7. **Western Clubtail**: Seen at Ibor River.
8. **Large Pincertail**: Seen at Ibor River.
9. **Common Goldenring**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
10. **Orange-spotted Emerald**: Seen at River Ibor.
11. **Broad Scarlet**: Seen at River Ibor.
12. **Broad-bodied Chaser**: Seen at Castañar de Ibor and in Tormes Valley.

13. **Four-spotted Chaser:** Seen in Gredos.
14. **Black-tailed Skimmer:** Seen at La Garganta and in Gredos.
15. **Common Darter:** Seen at River Ibor and in the Gredos.

### Herpetofauna

1. **Sharp-ribbed Salamander:** Seen near Trujillo.
2. **Western Spadefoot:** Seen near Trujillo.
3. **Spiny Toad:** Seen at Monfragüe.
4. **Iberian Water Frog:** Widespread.
5. **Iberian Stream Frog:** Seen near La Plataforma.
6. **Spanish Terrapin:** Widespread.
7. **Turkish Gecko:** Seen at Casa Rural El Recuerdo.
8. **Moorish Gecko:** Seen at Casa Rural El Recuerdo.
9. **Cyren's Rock Lizard:** Seen at La Plataforma.
10. **Peña de Francia Rock Lizard:** Seen at Peña de Francia.
11. **Schreiber's Green Lizard:** several seen.
12. **Guadarrama Wall Lizard:** Seen at Peña de Francia and Gredos.
13. **Common Wall Lizard:** Seen in Tormes Valley.
14. **Spanish Psammmodromus:** Several seen.
15. **Ocellated Lizard:** Several seen.
16. **Iberian False Smooth Snake:** One seen at Pago de San Clemente.
17. **Viperine Snake:** Seen in Tormes River.
18. **Western Montpellier Snake:** Seen in Ibores.
19. **Lataste's Viper:** One near La Plataforma.

### Birds

1. **Mallard:** Seen on 4th June.
2. **Red-legged Partridge:** Seen in Gredos.
3. **Quail:** Calling the Gredos.
4. **Cattle Egret:** Seen on journey from Madrid.
5. **Grey Heron:** Seen on several days.
6. **White Stork:** Seen daily.
7. **Griffon Vulture:** Seen daily-
8. **Black Vulture:** Seen on three days.
9. **Short-toed Eagle:** Seen on two days.
10. **Booted Eagle:** Seen on three days.
11. **Black Kite:** Seen almost daily.
12. **Red Kite:** Seen on three days.
13. **Common Buzzard:** Seen on one day.
14. **Honey Buzzard:** Seen on three days (in Ibores and northern mountains).
15. **Sparrowhawk:** Seen on one day.
16. **Lesser Kestrel:** Seen near Trujillo.
17. **Common Kestrel:** Seen in the mountains.
18. **Hobby:** Seen in Tormes Valley.
19. **Little Ringed Plover:** Seen near Trujillo.
20. **Feral Pigeon:** Seen most days.
21. **Wood Pigeon:** Seen daily.
22. **Collared Dove:** Seen most days.

23. **Great Spotted Cuckoo:** Seen near Trujillo.
24. **Common Cuckoo:** Seen most days.
25. **Scops Owl:** Calling in Gredos.
26. **Tawny Owl:** Heard at Pago de San Clemente.
27. **European Nightjar:** Singing at la Garganta.
28. **Alpine Swift:** Seen at Monfragüe.
29. **Common Swift:** Seen daily.
30. **Pallid Swift:** Seen regularly, big colony at Peña de Francia.
31. **Kingfisher:** Seen at River Ibor.
32. **Bee-eater:** Seen most days.
33. **Hoopoe:** Seen most days.
34. **Monk Parakeet:** Seen in Madrid.
35. **Iberian Green Woodpecker:** Recorded most days.
36. **Great Spotted Woodpecker:** Recorded most days.
37. **Crested Lark:** Seen on several days.
38. **Woodlark:** Seen most days.
39. **Skylark:** Present in the Gredos.
40. **Crag Martin:** Seen daily.
41. **Barn Swallow:** Seen daily.
42. **Red-rumped Swallow:** Seen most days.
43. **House Martin:** Seen most days.
44. **Iberian Yellow wagtail:** Seen in the Gredos.
45. **Grey Wagtail:** Seen most days.
46. **White wagtail:** Seen most days.
47. **Wren:** Seen daily.
48. **White-breasted Dipper:** Seen in Gredos.
49. **Iberian Dunnock:** Seen in Gredos.
50. **Robin:** seen daily.
51. **Nightingale:** seen daily.
52. **Black Redstart:** Seen daily.
53. **Stonechat:** Seen most days.
54. **Northern Wheatear:** Seen in the Gredos.
55. **Blue Rock Thrush:** Seen at Peña de Francia.
56. **Common Rock Thrush:** Seen at Peña de Francia and in Gredos.
57. **Blackbird:** Seen daily.
58. **Mistle Thrush:** Seen most days.
59. **Zitting Cisticola:** seen most days.
60. **Melodious Warbler:** Seen on three days.
61. **Dartford Warbler:** Seen at Peña de Francia.
62. **Subalpine Warbler:** Seen in Ibores and La Garganta.
63. **Sardinian Warbler:** Seen most days.
64. **Common Whitethroat:** Seen in mountains.
65. **Blackcap:** seen daily.
66. **Western Bonelli's Warbler:** Seen most days.
67. **Common Chiffchaff:** Seen in Ibores and Gredos.
68. **Pied Flycatcher:** Seen in Gredos.
69. **Long-tailed Tit:** Seen most days.
70. **Crested Tit:** Seen in Ibores and Gredos.
71. **Coal Tit:** Seen in Gredos.
72. **Blue Tit:** Seen daily.
73. **Great Tit:** Seen daily.

74. **Nuthatch**: Recorded most days.
75. **Short-toed Treecreeper**: Seen most days.
76. **Golden Oriole**: Seen almost daily.
77. **Iberian Grey Shrike**: Seen north of Trujillo.
78. **Woodchat Shrike**: Seen on three days.
79. **Red-backed Shrike**: Seen at La Garganta and the Gredos.
80. **Jay**: Seen daily.
81. **Iberian Magpie**: Seen most days.
82. **Magpie**: Seen daily.
83. **Jackdaw**: Seen on three days.
84. **Carrion Crow**: Seen in Gredos.
85. **Raven**: Seen on three days.
86. **Spotless Starling**: Seen daily.
87. **House Sparrow**: Seen daily.
88. **Rock Sparrow**: Seen en route to Peña de Francia.
89. **Chaffinch**: seen daily.
90. **Serin**: Seen daily.
91. **Greenfinch**: Seen on three days.
92. **Citril Finch**: Seen in Gredos on one day.
93. **Goldfinch**: Seen almost daily.
94. **Linnet**: Seen daily.
95. **Crossbill**: Seen at La Garganta.
96. **Hawfinch**: Seen on most days.
97. **Cirl Bunting**: Seen on three days.
98. **Rock Bunting**: Seen most days.
99. **Ortolan Bunting**: Seen in Gredos and La Garganta.
100. **Corn Bunting**: Seen most days.

## **Other Wildlife**

Hummingbird Hawkmoth

Striped Hawkmoth

Fiery Clear-wing

Medicinal Leech

Otter

Rabbit

Roe deer

Iberian Ibex