



DRAGONFLIES IN EXTREMADURA FOR JOHN AND MARGARET

Casa Rural El Recuerdo and Birding Extremadura

16th June – 21st June 2025



Itinerary

16th June 2025: Collection from Madrid, pool near Casatejada and drive to Casa Rural El Recuerdo

17th June 2025: Castañar de Ibor

18th June 2025: Alcollarín Reservoir and Zorita

19th June 2025: Castañar de Ibor and River Almonte

20th June 2025: Pools near Malpartida de Cáceres and Parque del Principé, Cáceres

21st June 2025: Pool near Casatejada and return to Madrid.

TRIP REPORT

16th June 2025: Collection from Madrid and drive to Casa Rural El Recuerdo

Martin met John and Margaret at 10.00 at Madrid airport, and we were quickly heading out around the southern ring-road and then onto the motorway leading to Extremadura. The traffic was light throughout. We stopped for a quick lunch once we had entered Extremadura. Nearby we spent a productive hour at a small shallow pool near Casatejada. Dragonflies were very active, with a good number of **Violet Dropwings** especially.



Violet Dropwing

We were delighted to find several **Black Pennants**, the first documented records for Extremadura. Other species present included **Northern Banded Groundling**, **Long Skimmer**, **Epaulet Skimmer** and **Black-tailed Skimmer**. It was then onward to Casa Rural El Recuerdo, arriving shortly before 16.00.



Black Pennant

17th June 2025: Castañar de Ibor

It was a hot and sunny day and we headed to the Ibores Mountains, stopping at Castañar de Ibor for a morning walk through sweet chestnut groves and orchards. The butterflies were amazing, a constant flow beside us, almost overwhelming at times. There were dozens of **Painted Ladies**. Other species included **Iberian Marbled White**, **Great Banded Grayling**, **Cleopatra** and fritillaries such as **Queen of Spain** and **Cardinal**. We quickly found our target species, the **Golden-ringed Dragonfly** and we had a chance to photograph one obliging specimen perched. **Copper** and **Beautiful Demoiselles** were also present.



Common Goldenring

After coffee in the town, we drove to the Ibor River for a walk beside the natural swimming pool. **Large Pincertails** and **Small Pincertails** were numerous, as were **Western Demoiselles**. We watched a **Western Spectre**, which gave us a superb show of their distinctive bank-hugging flight.



Large Pincertail



Small Pincertail

Further upstream, where we had our picnic in the shade, we had a very productive visit. the afternoon. As well as **Small Pincertails**, we found several **Orange Featherlegs**. But best of all, we found a perched **Western Spectre**, demonstrating its remarkable camouflage on a tree trunk. We had a view of a perched **Western Clubtail** too.



Western Spectre

18th June 2025: Alcollarín Reservoir and Zorita

It was a very hot and sunny day with just a light wind. We headed south-eastwards, dropping to the town of Zorita where we filled the tank and then onto the nearby village of Alcollarín, behind which is a reservoir bearing the same name. We visited first the western shore, walking down to the water's edge. There were a group of **Spoonbills**. Beside a small pool, we found a **Violet Dropwing**, whilst an **Epaulet Skimmer** and **Broad Scarlet** were seen briefly.



Northern Banded Groundling

We then moved to the eastern side, seeing hundreds of egrets roosting on the islands. At a small subsidiary dam, the water level was much higher and dragonfly activity was excellent. There were large numbers of **Northern Banded Groundlings** present, both on the ground as well as over the water. **Epaulet Skimmers** and **Scarlet Darters** were chasing each other.



Long Skimmer

A couple of **Green Hooktails** appeared, but they were extremely active and we never found one perched. After a pause for refreshments we returned to the same area. The story was repeated, lots of activity and plenty of sightings of the **Green Hooktails**, but none came to land. We decided to call it quits and moved to a small fishing pond near Zorita. Here too there was a lot of activity. Of special interest were **Long Skimmers**, at least two males and a female, which posed well for us.

19th June 2025: Castañar de Ibor and River Almonte

It was a cloudier day today, although the sun did emerge in the afternoon and the temperature remained high. We returned to the River Ibor at Castañar de Ibor. The area beside the natural swimming pool seemed rather quiet in term of activity at the start, but as it warmed up so more dragonflies appeared. Both **Large** and **Small Pincertails** were much in evidence as well as **Epaulet Skimmers** and **Western Demoiselles**. The **Western Spectre** that had intrigued us with its constant movement close to the bank two days ago was still performing as such. We did manage to find a **Yellow Clubtail**, seen well but briefly.



Yellow Clubtail

After refreshments we moved to the Rio de Viejas, where we had our picnic, at the same spot as on 17th June. **Keeled Skimmers** were mating and just as we returned to the car to leave, we had a fabulous view at last of a **Western Clubtail** – excellent. It was a very satisfactory day.



Western Clubtail

We concluded the day beside the River Almonte where both **Copper** and **Beautiful Demoiselles** were present, as well as another **Western Clubtail** and the usual supporting cast of **Pincertails** and **Western Spectres**. A very successful day.



Copper Demoiselle

20th June 2025: Pools near Malpartida de Cáceres and Parque del Principé, Cáceres

A hot and sunny day with gentle and light winds: it was perfect for the plans. Passing the outskirts of Cáceres, we stopped at a series of shallow pools in a dry, grassy terrain. It was a paradise for dragonflies. Within a minute we had found a **Black Percher**, our target species and by the end of the morning we had seen several.



Male Black Percher

The vegetation was full of **Small** and **Migrant Spreadwings**, as well as **Blue-eyes**. **Violet Dropwings**, **Red-veined** and **Common Darters**, and **Broad Scarlet** were common. A **Spiny-footed Lizard** was a nice find.



Female Black Percher

We had a coffee at a luxurious spa hotel and then moved to the centre of the city. Parque del Principe is a beautiful urban park and provided shade for our picnic whilst **Iberian Magpies** and **Hawfinch** were in the trees around us.



Orange-winged Dropwing

Our target here was the **Orange-winged Dropwing** and we found one around the system of fountains and water courses in the park. **Epaulet Skimmer** and **Broad Scarlet** were also present. We also saw several **Viperine Snakes** which were busy hunting under the dead leaves under the water in the channels, sometimes raising their heads above water to take in air.



Epaulet Skimmer

21st June 2025: Pool near Casatejada and return to Madrid.

Another hot and sunny day in store, and after bidding farewell to Claudia and Casa Rural El Recuerdo, we set off in the direction of Madrid. We made a stop at the pool near Casatejada where we had paid a visit on the first day. We were keen to be there in morning sunshine and with slightly cooler temperatures than our first visit, but pretty quickly it became hot, and we made several return visits to the car to drink water before venturing out again. It was quite quiet when we first arrived but quickly things livened up. **Violet Dropwings** were abundant and we found a female nicely perched up as well. **Long Skimmers** were also present and, in the vegetation, numerous **White Featherlegs**. There were clusters of **Northern Banded Groundlings** on patches of bare ground. Gradually we started to notice **Black Pennants** on the move, like last time hardly ever perching and being very aggressive towards other species. There were at least two pairs in tandem.

A **Lesser Emperor** was found perched. However, we had failed to find even a flying **Green Hooktail** and had almost given-up hope when we spotted one flying above the vegetation and then land in a small oak tree in front of us. It obliged us by staying perched, affording us an excellent view. It was a dearly sought after species and left us waiting until right to the end!



Green Hooktail

It was then time to continue our journey. We had a coffee stop nearby and then as we got closer to Madrid we stopped for lunch. We reached the airport ahead of schedule at 15.15. It was the end of an enormously successful holiday.

Species List

1. **Copper Demoiselle:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor and River Almonte.
2. **Beautiful Demoiselle:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor and River Almonte.
3. **Western Demoiselle:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
4. **Migrant Spreadwing:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres.
5. **Small Spreadwing:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres.
6. **Western Willow Spreadwing:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor and Parque de Principé.
7. **Blue-eye:** Seen almost daily.
8. **Small Red-eye:** Seen at Alcollarín and Zorita.
9. **Iberian Blue-tail:** Seen at Casatejada and Malpartida de Cáceres.
10. **Orange Featherleg:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
11. **White Featherleg:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor and Casatejada.
12. **Blue Emperor:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor and Malpartida de Cáceres.
13. **Lesser Emperor:** Seen at Casatejada.
14. **Western Spectre:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
15. **Western Clubtail:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor and River Almonte.
16. **Yellow Clubtail:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
17. **Small Pincertail:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
18. **Large Pincertail:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
19. **Green Hooktail:** Seen at Alcollarín and Casatejada.
20. **Common Goldenring:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
21. **Northern Banded Groundling:** Seen at Casatejada and Alcollarín.
22. **Broad Scarlet:** Seen almost daily.
23. **Black Percher:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres.
24. **Broad-bodied Chaser:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
25. **Black-tailed Skimmer:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor and Alcollarín.
26. **Epaulet Skimmer:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor, Alcollarín, Zorita and Cáceres.
27. **Keeled Skimmer:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor.
28. **Long Skimmer:** Seen at Casatejada, Zorita and Malpartida de Cáceres.
29. **Black Pennant:** Seen at Casatejada.
30. **Red-veined Darter:** Seen at Casatejada, Alcollarín and Malpartida de Cáceres.
31. **Common Darter:** Seen at Castañar de Ibor and Malpartida de Cáceres.
32. **Violet Dropwing:** Seen at Casatejada, Alcollarín, Zorita and Malpartida de Cáceres.
33. **Orange-winged Dropwing:** Parque de Principé.