

BIRDING EXTREMADURA



EARLY AUTUMN IN EXTREMADURA FOR DAVID AND SALLY

Casa Rural El Recuerdo and Birding Extremadura

18th – 23rd September 2025



Itinerary

18th September 2025: Collection from Madrid and drive to Extremadura

19th September 2025: Garcíáz and Alcollarín Reservoir

20th September 2025: Plains east of Cáceres, pools near Malpartida de Cáceres and Los Arenales

21st September 2025: Free day

22nd September 2025: Monfragüe National Park

23rd September 2025: Return to Madrid

TRIP REPORT

18th September 2025: Collection from Madrid and drive to Extremadura with stop at Arrocampo

Martin collected David and Sally at Madrid Airport shortly after 17.30. There was quite busy traffic on the ring-road, but it eased significantly once we were on the motorway heading south-west. It was a very hot late afternoon, with the temperature in the high 30s. However at just over halfway through the journey we passed the edge of a storm, which gave us a little rain, but some high winds too. We arrived at Casa Rural El Recuerdo, arriving just after 20.00

19th September 2025: Garcíáz and Alcollarín Reservoir

The day dawned warm and clear, with very little wind. Cloud built up after midday and in the afternoon there was some rain and windier conditions. We drove toward the village of Garcíáz, at higher altitude, where the dominant oak was the deciduous Pyrenean Oak. We had a lovely walk along a dirt track through open *dehesa* landscape. The place was full of migrant passerines: **Pied** and **Spotted Flycatchers**, **Willow Warblers**, **Common Redstart**, **Common Whitethroat** and **Subalpine Warbler**. We got distant views of a small flock of **Rock Sparrow** and **Hawfinch**. Butterflies included a rather fine **Sooty Copper**.

After coffee in the village, we ascended further to a mixed belt of black pine and Strawberry Tree. Birds here included a **Firecrest**, a calling **Western Bonelli's Warbler** and **Nuthatches**. The butterflies were very interesting, including at least three **Two-tailed Pasha**, a **Tree Grayling**, **Lang's Short-tailed Blue** and **Long-tailed Blue**, amongst others. There was also a very inquisitive Praying Mantis.



Once it had clouded over, we descended to the Alcollarín Reservoir. Here we found about six **African Grass Blue** butterflies and several dragonflies including **Northern Banded Groundling**. There was a good selection of waders including **Ruff**, **Greenshank**, **Spotted Redshank** and **Little Stint**. We enjoyed watching a fine **Iberian Grey Shrike**, a **Kingfisher** and foraging **Spoonbills**.

20th September: Plains east of Cáceres, pools near Malpartida de Cáceres and Los Arenales

It was a day of clear skies and high temperatures. Our foray to the plains took advantage of the first few hours of daylight, before the heat haze would make observations difficult. As we arrived on the plains east of Cáceres, a **Short-toed Eagle** was perched on a pylon and we saw at least seven **Lesser Kestrels**, all appearing to be young birds, perched on wires. Larks are a dominant feature of this habitat and we were not disappointed. We had excellent views of **Thekla**, **Crested**, **Greater Short-toed** and **Calandra Larks**. Migrant **Northern Wheatears**, **Whinchats** and **Willow Warblers** were almost always in view. A few wintering **Lapwing** foraged on the ground. We watched a distant **Black Stork** crossing this vast landscape. During the course of the morning, we had good flight views of both **Black-bellied** and **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse**, the latter spotted by Sally when they were still on the ground.



We repaired to Santa Marta de Magasca for refreshments, to find ourselves in the midst of a flea market, with music and much interest. It was a lovely Saturday atmosphere in the small village square. We explored the plains a little more afterwards, but soon the conditions were getting difficult (although we saw a couple of **Swallowtails**) so we sought the shade of some riverine woodland below the Guadiloba dam wall. Here there were **Pied Flycatchers** and **Reed Warblers**, and butterflies included **Lang's Short-tailed Blue** and **Southern Gatekeeper**.



We then drove west of Cáceres to explore some small pools near Malpartida de Cáceres. This was an excellent place for dragonflies, including **Violet Dropwings** and **Long Skimmer**. We also saw **Spiny-footed Lizard**, an attractive species of such hot and exposed habitats. Our final stop was the nearby Los Arenales pools, which held a few waders such as **Dunlin** and **Ringed Plover**. There were several **Tree Graylings** chasing each other around some isolated holm oaks.



21st September 2025: Free day

David and Sally enjoyed a couple of walks along the lanes from the village.

22nd September 2025: Monfragüe National Park



It was a fresh start with the temperature only 7 degrees, but with the clear sky and almost windless conditions, the mercury rose to a very comfortable 23 degrees by the end of the day. We drove north of Trujillo, crossing a vast *dehesa* landscape, with a pause at the River Almonte, completely dry at this time of the year, where a flock of **Corn Bunting** were present. We continued onto the Monfragüe National Park. We stopped just below the castle and had an excellent walk up through the mixed woodland of cork oak, holm oak and wild olive to the castle itself. The view was superb, southwards across the *dehesas* and north towards the Gredos Mountains. The views of the passing vultures were also excellent, and we enjoyed eye-level views of both **Black** and **Griffon Vultures**. There was a steady stream of **House Martins** and we saw distant **Short-toed Eagles** and **Peregrine**. **Pied Flycatchers** called around us. From there we made a stop at the emblematic viewpoint, Salto de Gitano, looking across at the imposing cliff of Peña Falcon, where indeed a **Peregrine** was flying.

After a coffee in the hamlet of Villarreal de San Carlos, where a rutting **Red Deer** stag was pursuing his harem within the settlement itself, we continued our exploration of the park, making a stop in a beautiful cork oak *dehesa*, walking onto the viewpoint at the Portilla del Tiétar. Here again we were blessed with good views of vultures, whilst we also saw distant **Bonelli's Eagles**, a **Rock Bunting** and **Black Stork**. We watched a curious behaviour of flying **Great Egrets** as they plunged and then floated in the middle of the river. Onward, we saw an **Egyptian Mongoose** crossing the road.



After lunch at the Tajadilla viewpoint, where Red Deer formed silhouettes on the horizon, we stopped at another viewpoint at Puerto de Serrania. From there we stopped at the Fuente de Frances, where small birds were attracted to a small spring. We saw **Short-toed Treecreeper**, **Pied Flycatcher**, **Garden Warbler** and **Common Whitethroat** there. But most pleasing were several **Two-tailed Pashas**. We made a final visit to the Salto de Gitano, having some lovely views of perched **Griffon Vultures** as well as **Black Stork** and **Sparrowhawk**.

23rd September 2025: Return to Madrid

We set off under a star-filled sky at 07.25 and apart from a small section of resurfacing work on the motorway where a contraflow system was in place, we had a very smooth run to the airport, arriving at 10.20.

BIRDS SEEN

1. **Egyptian Goose**: Seen almost every day, with a huge flock south of Zorita.
2. **Eurasian Teal**: Seen at Alcollarín.
3. **Mallard**: Seen at Alcollarín and near Cáceres.
4. **Northern Shoveler**: Seen at Alcollarín.
5. **Common Pochard**: Seen at Alcollarín.
6. **Common Shelduck**: Seen at Alcollarín.
7. **Red-legged Partridge**: Seen on the plains.
8. **Little Grebe**: Seen at Alcollarín.
9. **Great Crested Grebe**: Seen at Alcollarín.
10. **Great Cormorant**: Seen every day.
11. **Cattle Egret**: Seen on two days.
12. **Little Egret**: Seen on two days, with a large concentration at Alcollarín.
13. **Great Egret**: Seen at Alcollarín and Monfragüe.
14. **Grey Heron**: Seen every day.
15. **Black Stork**: One seen over the plains east of Cáceres, also in Monfragüe.

16. **White Stork:** One seen en route from Madrid.
17. **Spoonbill:** Seen on most water bodies, also flying over the plains.
18. **Griffon Vulture:** Seen every day.
19. **Black Vulture:** Seen almost every day.
20. **Short-toed Eagle:** Seen daily.
21. **Booted Eagle:** Seen near Cáceres.
22. **Red Kite:** Seen on two days.
23. **Marsh Harrier:** Seen at Alcollarín.
24. **Common Buzzard:** Seen on two days.
25. **Sparrowhawk:** Seen in Monfragüe.
26. **Lesser Kestrel:** A group of perhaps eight on the plains.
27. **Common Kestrel:** Seen at Garciá.
28. **Peregrine Falcon:** Two seen at Monfragüe.
29. **Common Coot:** Seen at Alcollarín and near Cáceres.
30. **Black-winged Stilt:** Seen at every large water body.
31. **Little Ringed Plover:** Seen at Alcollarín and Malpartida de Cáceres.
32. **Ringed Plover:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres.
33. **Northern Lapwing:** Seen on two days.
34. **Dunlin:** Seen at Alcollarín and Malpartida de Cáceres.
35. **Little Stint:** Seen at Alcollarín.
36. **Ruff:** Seen at Alcollarín.
37. **Common Snipe:** Seen at Alcollarín.
38. **Black-tailed Godwit:** Seen at Alcollarín.
39. **Common Redshank:** Seen at Alcollarín.
40. **Spotted Redshank:** Seen at Alcollarín.
41. **Greenshank:** Seen at Alcollarín and Malpartida de Cáceres.
42. **Green Sandpiper:** Seen on two days.
43. **Wood Sandpiper:** Seen at Alcollarín.
44. **Common Sandpiper:** Seen on two days.
45. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Seen at Malpartida de Cáceres.
46. **Black-headed Gull:** Seen at Alcollarín and Malpartida de Cáceres.
47. **Black-bellied Sandgrouse:** Seen on plains between Trujillo and Cáceres.
48. **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse:** Seen on plains between Trujillo and Cáceres.
49. **Feral Pigeon:** Seen daily.
50. **Wood Pigeon:** Seen almost daily.
51. **Stock Dove:** Two seen east of Cáceres.
52. **Collared Dove:** Seen daily.
53. **European Turtle Dove:** One at Alcollarín.
54. **Little Owl:** Two seen east of Cáceres.
55. **Kingfisher:** Seen on two days.
56. **Hoopoe:** Seen on two days.
57. **Great Spotted Woodpecker:** Recorded on two days.
58. **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker:** Seen at Pago de San Clemente.
59. **Calandra Lark:** Seen on the plains.
60. **Crested Lark:** Seen on the plains.
61. **Thekla Lark:** Seen every day.
62. **Woodlark:** Recorded on two days.
63. **Greater Short-toed Lark:** Flocks on the plains east of Cáceres.

64. **Crag Martin**: Seen on two days.
65. **Red-rumped Swallow**: Seen daily.
66. **House Martin**: Seen every day.
67. **Tawny Pipit**: Seen on the plains.
68. **Tree Pipit**: Two seen at Valdecañas and one in Garcíáz.
69. **White Wagtail**: Seen on two days.
70. **Wren**: Seen on two days.
71. **Robin**: Seen on two days.
72. **Black Redstart**: Seen on two days.
73. **Common Redstart**: Seen at Garciaz.
74. **Stonechat**: Seen daily.
75. **Whinchat**: Seen on the plains.
76. **Northern Wheatear**: Seen on the plains.
77. **Blue Rock Thrush**: Seen in Monfragüe and River Almonte.
78. **Blackbird**: Seen daily.
79. **Cetti's Warbler**: Recorded daily.
80. **Zitting Cisticola**: Seen most days.
81. **Reed Warbler**: Seen on two days.
82. **Subalpine Warbler**: Seen at Garciaz.
83. **Sardinian Warbler**: Seen every day.
84. **Common Whitethroat**: Seen on two days.
85. **Garden Warbler**: Seen in Monfragüe.
86. **Blackcap**: Seen on two days.
87. **Western Bonelli's Warbler**: Heard at Garciaz.
88. **Willow Warbler**: Seen every day.
89. **Firecrest**: One at Garciaz.
90. **Spotted Flycatcher**: Seen almost day.
91. **Pied Flycatcher**: The abundance and ubiquity of this bird was a highlight of the trip.
92. **Long-tailed Tit**: Seen on two days.
93. **Blue Tit**: Seen daily.
94. **Great Tit**: Seen most days.
95. **Nuthatch**: Heard at Garciaz.
96. **Short-toed Treecreeper**: Recorded at Garciaz and Monfragüe.
97. **Iberian Grey Shrike**: Seen almost daily.
98. **Jay**: Seen in Monfragüe.
99. **Iberian Magpie**: Seen daily.
100. **Magpie**: Seen almost daily.
101. **Jackdaw**: Seen on the plains.
102. **Raven**: Seen on two days.
103. **Spotless Starling**: Seen daily.
104. **House Sparrow**: Seen daily.
105. **Spanish Sparrow**: Seen on the plains.
106. **Rock Sparrow**: Seen at Garcíáz.
107. **Chaffinch**: Seen almost daily.
108. **Serin**: Seen on two days.
109. **Greenfinch**: Seen on two days.
110. **Goldfinch**: Seen daily.
111. **Hawfinch**: Seen at Garcíáz.

- 112. **Cirl Bunting:** Seen at Garciaz.
- 113. **Rock Bunting:** Seen in Monfragüe.
- 114. **Corn Bunting:** Seen daily.

MAMMALS SEEN

Red Deer

Egyptian Mongoose

REPTILES/AMPHIBIANS

Spanish Terrapin

Spiny-footed Lizard

Large Psammodromus

Iberian Water Frog

Stripeless Tree Frog

ODONATA

Iberian Bluetail

Migrant Spreadwing

Long Skimmer

Common Darter

Red-veined Darter

Broad Scarlet

Violet Dropwing

Northern Banded Groundling

BUTTERFLIES

Small Copper

Sooty Copper

Holly Blue

Brown Argus

African Grass Blue

Lang's Short-tailed Blue

Long-tailed Blue

Small White

Bath White

Common Swallowtail

Scarce Swallowtail

Two-tailed Pasha

Cardinal

Small Heath

Meadow Brown

Wall Brown

Southern Gatekeeper

Tree Grayling

