

BIRDING EXTREMADURA



MID SPRING IN EXTREMADURA FOR MARK

Casa Rural El Recuerdo and Birding Extremadura

28th March – 4th April 2026



Itinerary

28th March 2026: Collection at Madrid and stop at Almaraz

29th March 2026: Usagre, Alconera and Sierra de Fuentes

30th March 2026: Campo Lugar, rice fields near Madrigalejo, Rivers Pizarro, Ruercas and Gargaligas, Moheda Alta, Alcollarín Reservoir

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4th April 2026: Pond near Belén, Dehesa near Jaraicejo and return to Madrid

TRIP REPORT

28th March 2026: Collection at Madrid and stop at Almaraz

Martin collected Mark at 13.00 and we headed out of Madrid under clear blue skies and warm temperatures. The heavy traffic marking the start of the Easter holidays had eased and we made steady progress towards Extremadura. Snow lay on the peaks of the Gredos, whilst the rest of the landscape looked beautifully green and colourful after the winter rains. After a stop for lunch, we continued into Extremadura and made a stop at the orchid hill of Almaraz. The orchids were sensational, with hundreds of **Naked Man Orchid** looking very proud and some very robust looking **Yellow Bee** and **Mirror Orchids**. A **Cirl Bunting** sang and **Red-rumped Swallows** chortled overhead.



We then moved on to Casa Rural El Recuerdo. There Mark took the opportunity to take a short, but very productive walk, finding **Iberian Painted Frog** and, closer to home, **Turkish** and **Moorish Geckos**.

29th March 2026: Usagre, Alconera and Sierra de Fuentes

It was a sunny day but with a fresh northerly wind pretty much all day. Before we set off we photographed **Turkish Gecko** at the house. It was then a long drive south to Usagre. Here in an old almond orchard, there was a fabulous show of **Pink Butterfly Orchids**, along with **Naked Man Orchids**. We found several **Sombre Orchids** too, as well as **Mirror**, **Yellow Bee**, **Champagne**, **Conical** and **Sawfly Orchids**. A **Provence Hairstreak** was seen early on, but proved to be the only specimen. A female **Black-eyed Blue** was also on the wing. **Bee-eaters** flew overhead calling.

After coffee in Zafra, we moved to the edge of the village of Aconera. Here there were dozens of very fine **Giant Orchids**. We luckily also found a couple of specimens of **Hill Orchid** that were

still looking good, dozens of others had finished flowering. The mirror orchids were also outstanding.

After our picnic, we moved north to the hills at Sierra de Fuentes, near Cáceres. A lovely walk through the limestone dehesa yielded several **Hairy Bee Orchids** in excellent condition, as well as more **Mirror, Woodcock, Naked Man** and **Sawfly Orchids**. There were a multitude of **Small Heaths** and a **Western Dappled White** was also seen.

30th March 2026: Campo Lugar, rice fields near Madrigalejo, Rivers Pizarro, Ruercas and Gargaligas, Moheda Alta, Alcollarín Reservoir

It was a clear but chilly start to the day, with ice on the car windscreen. However, with calm and sunny conditions, it became quite warm later during the day. We started first on the plains near Campo Lugar where we watched a group of **Great Bustards** including two males in full courtship display. The light was superb and so was the wrap-around sound of **Calandra Larks** and **Corn Buntings**. We drove along a quiet dirt track and had the chance to photograph a perched **Marsh Harrier** and a singing **Calandra Lark**. **Lesser Kestrels** were on the cables. As we drove away from the plains we saw a pair of **Rollers**, newly arrived, perched close to the road. We then entered an area of rice fields near the town of Madrigalejo. There were some very fine **Water Pipits** in breeding plumage, as well as **Iberian Yellow Wagtails, Little Stint, Little Ringed Plover** and some flyover **Collared Pratincoles**.

We spent the rest of the morning stopping at three rivers. At the first, the Pizarro, we had superb views of feeding **Penduline Tits**. At the third, the Gargaligas, we found a **Pygmy Marbled Newt**. It was then time for coffee, near the next stop, the dehesa of Moheda Alta. We had a pleasant walk through the dehesa, seeing **Tree Pipits, Short-toed Eagle** and hearing a passage **Willow Warbler** in song. After our picnic, we checked a wetter ground and were delighted to find an **Iberian Tree Frog**.



We completed the afternoon at the Alcollarín Reservoir, whilst not finding any amphibians or reptiles, it was a great place to spend the time: the landscape was superb, the French lavender in flower amazing, attracting butterflies such as **Western Dappled White**, **Bath White** and **Brown Argus**. **Bee-eaters** were passing overhead.

31st March 2026: Jaraicejo Heath, Arroyo de la Vid, Almonte River, granite areas near Trujillo

A warmer morning and the day turned out hot and sunny. We started first at the heath near Jaraicejo. **Thekla Larks** were in full song and we also saw **Spectacled Warbler** and **Dartford Warbler**. Our quarry here was the **Western Psammodromus** lizard, but despite some fleeting glimpses, we were initially unsuccessful. A **Natterjack Toad**, however, was found under a log. Descending to the Arroyo de la Vid, we had good views of **Western Subalpine Warbler** and several **Moorish Geckos** were on the bridge. We had a quick view of a **Geniez's Wall Lizard**, but too quick to photograph. After coffee we returned to the heath. This time the **Western Psammodromus** were more active and we had prolonged views of one foraging in the open.

Stopping beside the River Almonte, there was a group of **Spanish Terrapins**. **Crag Martins** were resting on the middle of the three bridges there, and a **Cirl Bunting** was singing.

We returned to the Arroyo de la Vid, being a very attractive place to have our picnic. In the afternoon, we devoted our time to checking pools and stones in the granite landscape near Trujillo. We found a couple of **Viperine Snakes**, but sadly no toads of any type.

1st April 2026: Monfragüe National Park, plains north of Trujillo and Trujillo



It was a warm and sunny day, with temperatures rising to the mid-twenties by the afternoon. We visited first the Monfragüe National Park, checking the water troughs at the Fuente de Francés. Wonderfully we found both **Bosca's Newt** and a larval stage of **Fire Salamander**. Well

pleased with this, we then took a walk down to the Arroyo de Malvecino stream. A couple of **Large Psammmodromus** lizards were seen, and bird song included **Nightingale** and **Cirl Bunting**.

After coffee, we moved to the northern side of the park, seeing a high-flying **Spanish Imperial Eagle**, two **Black Stork** and singing **Rock Bunting**. But best of all were superb views of at least three **Chapman's Green Hairstreak**.

We had our picnic at the Puerto de Serrania where there were **Western Subalpine Warblers** and **Egyptian Vultures**. We checked a car park and found a pair of **Black-eared Wheatears**, and **Thekla Lark**. We then left the park and moved to the plains north of Trujillo. On a drivers' trail we found a magnificent colony of ***Serapias vomeracea*** and several **Bug Orchids** in flower. We had great views of **Crested Larks** and **Calandra Larks**. Onward to Trujillo, we found three **Geniez's Wall Lizards** in a small park.



Back at Pago de San Clemente, Mark found a **Horseshoe Whip Snake** in front of the house, but sadly didn't manage to get photos.

2nd April 2026: Valverde de Mérida, Alange, Jabata valley and Malpartida de Cáceres

It was another warm sunny day, with just a slight freshness to the wind in the afternoon. We headed south, making our first stop near Valverde de Mérida. Here there were two species of ***Serapias*** growing closely together and quite a challenge to separate. The more abundant **Common Tongue Orchid** had shorter bracts and more oval lips than the scarcer ***strictiflora***. Our next stop was Alange, where we had an excellent walk on the north side of the castle ridge. Here there were numerous Pink **Butterfly Orchids**, some **Sawfly**, **Champagne**, **Yellow Bee** and **Woodcock**, and we were delighted to find two plants of the tiny **Bumblebee Orchid**. It is a delightful species.



After coffee in Alange we went to the Jabata valley. This very attractive site had cistus in flower and still some **Lusitanian Fritillary** and **Green-veined Orchids**. But coming strongly into flower were some impressive **Heart-flowered Tongue Orchids**.



We stopped to watch and attempt to photograph **Alpine Swifts** from the Alange dam, Spain's largest breeding colony. We then drove north to Malpartida de Cáceres where we spent the rest of the afternoon. On the sandy granite terrain, we found two or three **Spiny-footed Lizards**, as well as several **Geneiz's Wall Lizards**. A **Stripeless Tree Frog** and a **Pygmy Marbled Newt** were found under stones, as were a couple of **Viperine Snakes**. In addition, we saw

several **Western Clubtails** and **Blue-eyed Damselflies**. Birds included **Northern Wheatear** on the plains, **Bee-eaters** overhead and a party of **Spoonbill** on one of the pools. It was a superb end to a very successful day, which was capped by Mark's evening walk where he watched a calling **Stripless Tree Frog**.

3rd April 2026: Malpartida de Cáceres, Trujillo and Madroñera

Yet another warm and sunny day and we travelled west again, this time beyond Malpartida de Cáceres, to the granite landscape of the Los Barruecos. There we stopped at a small pool where there were groups of **Spanish Terrapins** basking on the rocks. Several waders were present: **Jack Snipe**, **Common Snipe**, **Black winged Stilt**, **Spotted Redshank**, **Common Redshank**, **Ruff** and **Common Sandpiper**.

Following coffee, we returned to the area where we had spent a few hours yesterday. It was interesting at the different selection of species active late morning, compared with mid-afternoon. There were more **Large Psammodromus** and **Geneiz's Wall Lizard**. It was not until early afternoon that we saw **Spiny-footed Lizard**, but the views were superb, making the return visit very worthwhile. As we left there were no fewer than seven **Northern Wheatears** together in a loose flock.



In Trujillo we spotted at the small park and again saw **Geneiz's Wall Lizard**, including a gravid female. We then walked along a track above Madroñera, it was not very productive, although we saw **Western Dappled White**, **Small Copper** and **Brown Argus**.

It was then back for a chance to take some final walks in the lanes around Pago de San Clemente.

4th April 2026: Pond near Belén, Dehesa near Jaraicejo and return to Madrid

It was yet another warm and sunny day for the final day of the holiday. We set off at usual time and made a return visit to the pond near Belén, this time not finding any amphibian, just American crayfish under stones. Moving on we entered a beautiful flat dehesa landscape east of Jaraicejo. Here a flash of water was surrounded by water-bourne round stones, testament to an ancient alluvial plain that fanned out from the mountains. Searching hard, we added **Sharp-ribbed Newt** to our herptile list and also found some Iberian Water Frogs and good numbers of **Natterjack Toads**. A **Western Orphean Warbler** sang, a **Black Stork** glided over, we heard **Western Bonelli's Warbler** and **Woodchat Shrikes** sat on top of buses. The damp meadow was full of **Hoop Petticoat Narcissus**. A beautiful place.

It was time, sadly to move on. We stopped for coffee and packed away the camera. It was then a relatively easy run back to Madrid, with just a short stop about halfway on the journey. There was quite heavy traffic returning to Madrid, but it kept flowing, so we experienced no delays. On the way we saw **Booted Eagle**, **Red Kite** and **Black Kite**.

We reached Madrid airport as planned at 14.30, giving Mark ample time for his late afternoon flight back home.

SPECIES LISTS

	28-Mar	29-Mar	30-Mar	31-Mar	01-Apr	02-Apr	03-Apr	04-Apr
Species								
Egyptian Goose			x			x	x	
Gadwall			x					
Mallard			x	x	x	x	x	x
Shoveler			x			x		
Red-legged Partridge	x		x	x			x	
Quail			x	x		x		
Little Grebe			x			x	x	
Great Crested Grebe			x					
Great Cormorant			x		x	x	x	x
Cattle Egret			x			x	x	
Little Egret			x					
Great Egret			x					
Grey Heron			x	x	x	x		
Purple Heron			x					
Black Stork					x			x
White Stork	x		x	x	x		x	x
Glossy Ibis		x						
Spoonbill						x		
Black Kite	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Red Kite	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Egyptian Vulture					x			
Griffon Vulture	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Black Vulture		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Short-toed Eagle		x	x		x			
Marsh Harrier			x			x		

Sparrowhawk					x			
Common Buzzard	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Spanish Imperial Eagle					x			
Booted Eagle	x	x	x	x		x		x
Lesser Kestrel		x	x	x				x
Common Kestrel			x		x		x	
Moorhen			x			x	x	
Common Coot			x			x	x	
Great Bustard			x				x	
Black-winged Stilt							x	
Collared Pratincole			x					
Little Ringed Plover			x	x			x	
Northern Lapwing						x		
Little Stint			x					
Ruff							x	
Jack Snipe							x	
Common Snipe			x				x	
Common Redshank							x	
Spotted Redshank							x	
Green Sandpiper			x					
Common Sandpiper							x	
Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon			x	x	x			x
Wood Pigeon			x	x	x	x		x
Collared Dove	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Common Cuckoo			x	x	x		x	x
Barn Owl					x			
Little Owl				x				
Tawny Owl					x	x		x
Alpine Swift	x				x	x		
Common Swift							x	
Pallid Swift	x						x	
Kingfisher			x		x		x	
Bee-eater		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Roller			x					
Hoopoe		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Calandra Lark			x	x	x	x	x	
Short-toed Lark			x				x	
Crested Lark		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Thekla Lark		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Woodlark		x	x	x				x
Sand Martin			x	x				
Crag Martin	x		x	x	x	x		x
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Red-rumped Swallow	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
House Martin	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tree Pipit			x	x				
Meadow Pipit			x	x	x		x	x
Water Pipit			x					
Yellow Wagtail			x					
White Wagtail			x			x		
Robin					x			
Black Redstart			x	x	x	x	x	x

Stonechat		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Northern Wheatear		x	x			x	x	x
Black-eared Wheatear					x	x		
Blue Rock Thrush	x				x	x		
Blackbird	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Song Thrush			x				x	
Mistle Thrush			x	x			x	x
Cetti's Warbler			x		x		x	
Zitting Cisticola	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Sedge Warbler			x				x	
Reed Warbler			x					
Dartford Warbler				x	x	x	x	
Subalpine Warbler				x	x		x	
Spectacled Warbler				x				
Western Orphean Warbler								x
Sardinian Warbler	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Blackcap	x		x	x				
Chiffchaff			x		x	x	x	
Western Bonelli's Warbler			x			x		x
Willow Warbler			x			x		
Wren				x				
Long-tailed Tit				x	x			
Blue Tit	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Great Tit	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Short-toed Treecreeper				x				
Penduline Tit			x					
Iberian Grey Shrike			x	x	x	x	x	
Woodchat Shrike			x	x	x	x	x	x
Iberian Magpie	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Magpie		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Raven		x	x	x	x			
Common Starling								
Spotless Starling	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
House Sparrow	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Spanish Sparrow		x	x	x		x	x	x
Tree Sparrow			x					
Rock Sparrow					x			
Red Avadavat			x					
Chaffinch	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Serin	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Greenfinch	x		x	x				
Goldfinch	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Linnet		x	x	x		x	x	
Hawfinch					x			
Cirl Bunting	x			x	x			
Rock Bunting					x			
Corn Bunting	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Butterflies								
Cleopatra	x	x						
Small White	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Western Dappled White		x	x	x			x	
Green-striped White					x			

Brown Argus		x	x		x	x	x	
Holly blue		x						
Black-eyed Blue		x			x			
Small heath		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Clouded yellow		x	x		x	x	x	
Provence Hairstreak		x						
Chapman's Green Hairstreak					x			
Spanish Festoon			x		x	x		
Bath White			x					
Small Copper			x				x	
Wall Brown			x					
Orange Tip				x		x	x	
Comma				x				
Red Admiral			x					
Mallow Skipper				x				
Speckled Wood				x	x			
Orchids								
Yellow bee	x	x				x		
Sawfly	x	x	x		x	x		
Early spider	x					x		
Mirror	x	x						
Woodcock	x	x				x		
Bumblebee						x		
Hairy bee		x						
Sombre		x						
Green-winged						x		
Champagne	x	x				x		
Conical	x	x				x		
Naked man	x	x						
Giant		x						
Hill		x						
Bug					x			
Pink Butterfly		x				x		
Long-lipped Serapias					x			
Common Serapias						x		
Striciflora						x		
Heart-flowered Serapias						x		
Herptiles								
Moorish Gecko	x	x	x	x				
Turkish Gecko	x		x					
Large Psammodromus		x	x		x		x	x
Western Psammodromus				x	x		x	
Spiny-footed Lizard						x	x	
Geneiz's Wall Lizard				x	x	x	x	
Bedriaga's Skink?						x		
Viperine Snake				x		x	x	
Horseshoe Whip Snake					x			
Spanish Terrapin				x			x	
Natterjack Toad	x			x				x
Iberian Painted Frog	x							
Iberian Water Frog		x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Pygmy Marbled Newt			x			x		
Bosca's Newt					x			
Sharp-ribbed Newt								x
Fire Salamander					x			
Iberian Tree Frog			x					
Stripeless Tree frog						x	x	
Dragonflies								
Iberian Bluetail			x					
Small Bluetail			x					
Blue-eye						x	x	
Red-veined Darter			x					
Western Clubtail						x	x	