

BIRDING EXTREMADURA



LATE SPRING IN EXTREMADURA FOR DELIA

Casa Rural El Recuerdo and Birding Extremadura

3rd May – 10th May 2026



Itinerary

3rd May 2026: Pick up from Madrid

4th May 2026: Rice fields near Madrigalejo, Acedera and Alcollarín

5th May 2026: River Tamuja, plains near Santa Marta de Magasca, Cáceres and return to Santa Marta de Magasca

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10th May 2026: Return to Madrid

TRIP REPORT

3rd May 2026: Pick up from Madrid

The incoming flight arrived about half an hour late, so it was about 18.15 that we left the airport. It was the end of the May Day holiday weekend. The ring road was fairly busy but as we entered the motorway for Extremadura we could see the very heavy traffic entering the city as we left. However., because of the 100 km contra-flow system in place to ensure the traffic flow, our progress was dictated by the speed of the slowest vehicle in front of us. Once we had passed the halfway point, normal traffic flow was in place, and we could catch up on our journey time. We reached Casa Rural El Recuerdo shortly after 21.00, with Claudia welcoming us with an evening meal.

4th May 2026: Rice fields near Madrigalejo, Acedera and Alcollarín

It was a cool day for early May, with a fresh westerly wind and a fair amount of cloud cover at times. We started on the arable land near Madrigalejo, watching **Collared Pratincoles** in flight and settling on the ground in a crop of growing sunflowers. The activity levels were slow so we moved on to check other areas for Pratincoles. This proved unsuccessful, although we did see a **Whimbrel** in one wet field. We moved on to the village of Acedera, where on a ruined church there was a wonderful mixture of nesting species: **White Stork**, **Lesser Kestrel**, **Spotless Starling** and **House Sparrows**. Their comings and goings kept us busy for the whole stay there.



After coffee nearby, we drove back to the rice fields, seeing some distant small waders on passage in manoeuvres in flight. We had lunch beside a small reiver where **Golden Orioles** were singing. The pratincole area was nearby so we returned there. This time, the birds were

far more active and eventually we managed to get some images of them in low flight close to where we stood.



We then drove up to cross the plains, seeing **Calandra Lark**, and then to the Alcollarín Reservoir where we finished the visit. Here some pratincoles were also present, and we watched two **Black Kites** sharing a meal, which appeared to be a pigeon.

5th May 2026: River Tamuja, plains near Santa Marta de Magasca, Cáceres and return to Santa Marta de Magasca



It was a generally sunny day with some cloud developing in the afternoon. The temperature was very comfortable all day. We started at the bridge over the River Tamuja, south of the village of Santa Marta de Magasca. Here the target was **Crag Martins**. There were at least eight present, along with **House Martins** and **Red-rumped Swallows**. We watched and photographed them flying over and below the bridge as well as basking in the sun on a warm rock-face. We then drove slowly down the road towards the motorway. Along here we saw perhaps five **Rollers**, including a pair together which were courtship-feeding.

It was then time for coffee and then onward to the Parque del Príncipe in the city of Cáceres. Here we spent a very interesting couple of hours, watching numerous **Iberian Magpies**, as well as **Common Magpies**, singing **Nightingales**, glimpses of **Golden Orioles** and a nice, prolonged view of a **Great Spotted Woodpecker**.



Our picnic was back at the River Tamuja, but this time on a higher vantage point which was perfect for surveying the landscape and sky above us. The view was superb, with the valley sides full of flowers. During our stay we saw three species of eagle: a very close **Booted Eagle** and a **Spanish Imperial** and **Short-toed Eagles** which were involved in some dispute. We completed the afternoon beside the Magasca River to the north of the village, where again **Crag Martins** were flying.

6th May 2026: Arrocampo Reservoir, Almonte River at Jaraicejo and Trujillo

The weather continued, like yesterday, sunny with clear skies in the morning and scattered cloud cover in the afternoon. Given the weather conditions, we decided that our best bet for photography would be the Arrocampo marsh with a focus on **Purple Herons**. We spent an hour or so positioned in front of a colony of herons and had a steady progression of birds flying in and then out from their hidden nests. During a prolonged lull in activity, we moved on to try another section of the marsh. We saw a couple of **Little Bitterns** in flight, but the views were brief. We paid a short visit to the church at Saucedilla, but the **Lesser Kestrel** activity was also rather slow. Feeling like a walk, we moved to the southern edge of the marsh and walked

through attractive *dehesa* woodland. From the shore we watched **Gull-billed Terns** and several **Great White Egrets** and **Purple Herons**. An interesting camel spider was also found. **Northern Banded Groundlings** were hovering around our feet. We also saw **Violet Dropwings**.

We had our picnic beside the River Almonte near Jaraicejo. On a walk beside the river afterwards, we came across several newly emerged **Common Darters**. Onward to Trujillo we checked first the Bull Ring and then the old silo for **Lesser Kestrel** activity. A few birds were around, but our best views were at the silo with sometime seven or eight birds above us at one time and a male perched on a ledge giving us a very good view.

7th May 2026: Monfragüe National Park

It was a mixed day weatherwise, with sunny periods, some overcast spells and even the sound of thunder at one point in the afternoon. We spent the whole day in the Monfragüe National Park, very productively as it turned out! Starting at the castle, we enjoyed the spectacular views onwards to distant sierras, thanks to the clean, fresh skies. Birdwise it was rather quiet, possibly because of the fresh north-easterly breeze. We then descended to spend some time waiting at the drinking pools at the Fuente del Francés for birds to come to bathe. **Chaffinches**, **Great** and **Blue Tits** arrived, but the hoped for Hawfinches made just fleeting visits. The throngs of **House Martins** nesting under the bridge were spectacular. However, most memorably was a wonderfully fresh, immaculate **Two-tailed Pashas** which settled on a perfect branch and slowly opened its wings.



To celebrate, we stopped for a coffee at Villareal de San Carlos before moving on to the Tajadilla picnic site. Here we were distracted from our picnic by the presence of **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** feeding chicks in their nest. It was a delight to watch the parents arrive with beak fulls of insects every few minutes.

Onward, we stopped to admire an **Egyptian Vulture** sitting on its nest and then went to the Portilla del Tiétar viewpoint where another **Egyptian Vulture** was perched with the **Griffon**

Vultures. Returning to the start of the park, we stopped opposite the huge rock face of Peña Falcon, but we had a nagging feeling that the action would be back at the castle. So up we went again, with indeed much more activity than there was in the morning. A dark-morph **Booted Eagle** glided overhead and made a dramatic stoop, **Griffon Vultures** passed by and we had several sightings of **White-rumped Swifts**. But again, it was a **Two-tailed Pasha** which stole the show.

8th May 2026: Mérida, Acedera and the rice fields



The day started rather cloudy, but as the afternoon progressed the clouds broke and it was generally sunny. We devoted the morning to the Roman Bridge in Mérida and the surrounding riverside parks. The conditions were excellent for watching and photographing birds, especially the **Pallid** and **Alpine Swifts** that were present around the bridge, greatly outnumbering **Common Swifts**. From the bridge too we watched **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Glossy Ibis** and a progression of **Cattle Egrets**. We had glimpses of a **Penduline Tit** which was collecting either material or prey in an island on one side of the bridge and then flying over us to a nest, presumably, on the other side. However much more prolonged views of a **Penduline Tit** were had as we walked in the park. We had the privilege of watching a male coming to the wonderful nest, high in a eucalyptus tree, appearing to be finishing or modifying the drooping entrance tube.

This path took us to a spot where we could look across to a busy colony of herons and egrets along with **Spoonbills** and **Glossy Ibis**.

We then drove east to Acedera where we had our picnic beside the old church with its colony of **Lesser Kestrel** and **White Stork**. There were periods of little activity followed by the arrival of several kestrels all at once. As the day was seeming to become more sunny, we started our return home through the rice fields. Many of the fields that had been wet appeared to have dried-up somewhat, but we found one with a party of tundra/bound **Common Ringed Plovers**.

9th May 2026: Arrocampo Reservoir

It was a very unsettled day weatherwise, with quite a strong south-westerly breeze, cloud, sunny periods and showers, with some very heavy rain in the late afternoon. We spent the day very productively at Arrocampo. Starting at the edge of the marsh near the Information Centre, we were fortunate to have some excellent views of **Little Bittern** in flight and next to the water. A **Western Swampphen** also made an appearance, whilst **Purple Herons** flew over. We walked to the second hide and beyond, seeing more **Little Bitterns** and many **Purple Herons**. Small birds were also a focus of interest: **Iberian Grey Shrike**, **Zitting Cisticola** and **Reed Warblers**.

Following a tea break, we then took a drive around the western side of the lake. Birds seen there included a **Ferruginous Duck** with a brood of ducklings. We had lunch on the vantage point at Hide 3, where we could see **Gull-billed Terns** flying rather distantly. Vultures drifted overhead. We completed the day with a lovely walk in the *dehesa* at the southern end of the reservoir. Here we had several flybys of **Gull-billed Terns**, a couple of **Spoonbills**, more **Purple Herons** and groups of **Black Kites**. Dark clouds and rolls of thunder threatened an incoming storm, so we made our way back to the car and headed back to base, passing through a couple of deluges, including with hailstones on the way.



10th May 2026: Return to Madrid

We bade farewell to Casa Rural El Recuerdo at 08.00 and made our way back to Madrid. We had a pause just over the halfway point for coffee, and then continued through to the airport, arriving there shortly before 11.00, with ample time for check-in.