

# **EXTREMADURA, SPAIN**

## **Bustards, Sandgrouse and Vultures!**

**5 October 2019 to 11 October 2019**

**Led by David Lindo – The Urban Birder and  
Extremadura-based Martin Kelsey**

**£1,300 per person plus flight**

**Deposit: £260**

**Single supplement £115 per person**

**Free loan of Leica Ultravid binoculars is available for the  
duration of the tour – subject to availability.  
Please ask for details.**

### **Testimonials!!**

*The whole package was just great. Casa rural El Recuerdo was a superb place to stay and we couldn't have been looked after any better. The company was amazing, light hearted birding at its best, just what we wanted! We especially enjoyed the Alpine Swifts and Spanish Imperial Eagles. So pleased we visited AMUS (conservation centre & wildlife Hospital) too and we're now able to support their valuable work.*

#### **Louise & Jim Bentley (Bolton, England)**

*Just to let you know I really enjoyed the week's birding in Extremadura. I felt really welcome since we met at the airport. It was great to benefit from the in depth knowledge both you and Martin had of the birds in the area and it was nice to have the company of other birders in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.*

#### **James Walsh (Leeds, England)**

*Thank you a really enjoyable few days, lots of birds, lots of wine, very nice accommodation really nice group.*

#### **Mike Beer (Cheltenham, England)**

### **About Spain**

Spain is by far the most well known destinations in Europe when it comes to wildlife and it brings in birders from all over the world. Extremadura is perhaps the best region in Spain for birding. Situated inland in the southwest of Spain, the region butts onto the border of Portugal. The nearest airports are Madrid, Lisbon and Seville.

The local currency is the Euro.

## **Tour Overview**

Extremadura, although well known by British birders, is one of the least known regions of Spain – even by the Spaniards. The area is twice the size of Wales and is indeed, Spain's biggest secret.

The region is traditionally known as spring venue for birding and wildlife watching but the autumn is nevertheless a rewarding time to visit. Although most of the summer visitors like the Lesser Kestrels may have left there is large autumn passage underway and early winter visitors are already arriving. Indeed, Extremadura as a whole has the richest winter birdlife of any region in Spain. One of the lasting impressions visitors will have is of the sheer number of birds, everywhere.

Extremadura boasts a wonderful variety of habitats ranging from mixed-farming plains to open managed woodland pasture where the famous Iberian pigs roam free-range, deep rocky valleys, irrigated lands, reservoirs and mountains. Added to this mix are the beautiful towns and villages that are steeped in history and great for wildlife in their own right. During the time of this tour the landscape will be turning green after the summer drought with beautiful autumn flowers in bloom attracting the remaining butterflies and dragonflies that are still present.

Speciality birds like White-rumped Swift should still be around whilst resident steppe species like the Great Bustard, Little Bustard, Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse are findable. Winter flocks of Stone Curlew gather making them much easier to see than during the spring. Everywhere will be migrant Whinchat, Pied Flycatcher and Willow Warbler with also a good chance of Tawny Pipit.

Passage waders and waterfowl will be moving through the rice-fields where the harvest will be starting, inducing feeding frenzies amongst the egrets, storks and gulls that follow the combines and tractors.

Meanwhile, at the world famous Monfragüe National Park Red Deer rut, Griffon and Black Vultures drift and there is a good chance for a local Golden or Iberian Imperial Eagles.

We will visit the charity AMUS to see their amazing work running a bird hospital.

The return to Madrid will include an overnight stay at a hotel in the Gredos Mountains, to experience the charm of autumn birding in the deciduous oak and pine woods.

### **Expected Birds**

Great Egret, Squacco Heron, White Stork, Black Stork, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black Vulture, Griffon Vulture, Black-winged Kite, Golden Eagle, Iberian Imperial Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Purple Swamphen, Stone Curlew, Black-winged Stilt, Great Bustard, Little Bustard, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, White-rumped Swift, Little Owl, Calandra Lark, Crested Lark, Thekla Lark, Red-rumped Swallow, Tawny Pipit, Blue Rock Thrush, Black Wheatear, Cetti's Warbler, Penduline Tit, Southern Grey Shrike, Iberian Magpie, Spanish Sparrow, Rock Sparrow, Spotless Starling

### **Itinerary**

**NB. The sequence of places visited may alter to take into account changes in the weather**

#### **October 5 – Arrive in Madrid Airport**

After an early afternoon arrival we will transfer to Extremadura in a comfortable minibus. Journey time approximately 3 hours.

Overnight stay for the duration of the tour at Casa Rural El Recuerdo, our tranquil and rural base near Trujillo, in the province of Cáceres, Extremadura. <http://www.casaruralelrecuerdo.com>

#### **October 6 – the plains of Trujillo**

We will visit the plains and river valleys west of Trujillo to get a good introduction to landscape and scenery. We will be on the lookout for Great and Little Bustards, Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Griffon and Black Vultures, hopefully eagle species like Booted, Spanish Imperial and Short-toed, Calandra, Crested and Thekla Larks, flocks of Corn Bunting and Spanish Sparrow plus hopefully Rock Sparrow.

Dinner at Casa Rural El Recuerdo

Overnight stay at Casa Rural El Recuerdo

#### **October 7 – Monfragüe National Park**

This will be a day spent in the iconic Monfragüe National Park: a superb site for raptors and White-rumped Swift, rock dwellers like Rock Bunting and Blue Rock Thrush, woodland species such as

Hawfinch, Firecrest and Crested Tit as well as **rutting** Red Deer. We will stay out until dusk for the chance of Eagle Owl.

Dinner at Casa Rural El Recuerdo

Overnight stay at Casa Rural El Recuerdo

### **October 8 – Reservoirs and rice-fields**

This will be a day of **exploring** reservoirs and rice-fields and we will see how modern landscapes have become great resources for birds. We will see large numbers of egrets and **White Storks**, as well as passage waders and duck. We will also look for Stone Curlew roosts.

Dinner at Casa Rural El Recuerdo

Overnight stay at Casa Rural El Recuerdo

### **October 9 – Trujillo Plains, Alange and Mérida**

We will start the day visiting the plains south of Trujillo for more bustards and other steppe birds, before heading south of Mérida at Alange where we will scout for Black Wheatear and hopefully find Bonelli's Eagle. We will visit the bird hospital run by the charity AMUS. Finally, we will spend an afternoon in Mérida, the capital city of Extremadura, focusing on birding from the Roman Bridge to spot egrets and Penduline Tit. At 790 metres, the Roman Bridge is longest surviving Roman bridge in the world. It straddles the Guadiana River in the heart of the city and is also probably the best place in Extremadura to see Purple Swamphen.

Dinner at Casa Rural El Recuerdo

Overnight stay at Casa Rural El Recuerdo

### **October 10 – Arrocampo Reservoir and Gredos Mountains**

Check out from Casa Rural El Recuerdo. We will pay a visit to the Arrocampo Reservoir for more Purple Swamphen with chances for Penduline Tit and Bluethroat. We then drive up to the Gredos Mountains to spend the afternoon exploring the high altitude woodland for birds like Citril Finch, Crossbill and Crested Tit. The hotel Hostel Almanzor has a hide where there will be further opportunities to watch and photograph small birds.

Dinner at Hostel Almanzor

Overnight stay at Hostel Almanzor

## **October 11 – back to Madrid and home..**

After breakfast we will transfer to Madrid for the flight home.

### **Price**

#### **£1,300 per person plus flights**

Single supplement: £115

**Deposit:** £260 per person

Remaining balance due 60 days before travel start date

#### **Price includes:**

Full board accommodation

Drinks and meals

Transport in a comfortable minibus

The services of your guides David Lindo (The Urban Birder) and Martin Kelsey.

#### **Price does not include:**

Airline tickets and airport taxes

Personal travel insurance

Entry fees to monuments and museums (if desired)

Incidental refreshments at cafes and bars, plus all additional drinks

#### **For further details**

Email: [info@birdingextremadura.com](mailto:info@birdingextremadura.com)

#### **Special trip notes**

The tour will depart from Madrid Terminal 1 at 1400hrs so it is imperative that participants arrange to arrive at the airport before that time. Indeed, you should aim to book flights that arrive at the airport by 1300hrs.

For the return flight, clients should book flights departing after 1500hrs on the final day.

This trip is suitable for all ages and abilities.

The pace of this tour will be gentle. We will let the wildlife come to us

In Extremadura most of the region's rain falls during the spring and autumn. The temperature will be warm and we can anticipate a

chance of rain, but we should also be able to enjoy some sunshine as well. In the Gredos Mountains it may be chilly at night.

### **Recommended literature**

Collins Bird Guide

Crossbill Guide for Extremadura

Martin Kelsey's blog: <http://birdingextremadura.blogspot.com.es/>