**Algarve**

30th March – 6th April 2009

**Holiday participants**
George Malcolm and Sonia Donaghy
Pam Muirhead
John Minihane
Julian Lawrence

**Leaders**
Chris Durdin
Deric Brown

Hotel Belavista da Luz: [www.belavistadaluz.com](http://www.belavistadaluz.com)

Report and photos by Chris Durdin
Front cover: bald ibises at Pêra Marsh; below, *Epipactis lusitanica*

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This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed.

The conservation contribution this year of £35 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, leading to a total of £205 (€220) given to the Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA, BirdLife Portugal).

We were very pleased to welcome SPEA volunteer Rui Euphrasia to the Hotel Belavista da Luz to receive the cheque.

This is our fourth donation to SPEA, £1528 to date. The total conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays since 1991 was £56,741 at the end of April 2009.

For coverage of this story in the Algarve Resident (the online version of a newspaper in English) and a group picture follow this link:
Monday 30th March – from the UK to the Algarve

Algarve
30th March – 6th April 2009

The easyJet flight from Stansted was nearly an hour late leaving but only half an hour late arriving in Faro, and we were quickly through baggage reclaim. George and Sonia’s flight from Leeds-Bradford was, by contrast, a little early and they were there to meet us, as planned. We found the man from Luzcar then the minibus, loaded up, bought some diesel and an hour later we were in Luz, by which time it was dark.

‘Culture shock’ is a phrase sometimes linked with travelling abroad, this time to the Hotel Belavista’s evening entertainment. We had missed mum, who sings traditional Portuguese Fado, a son was an Elvis impersonator. If you ever wondered where all the rock and rollers from the 1950s have gone, here’s the answer: they are in the Algarve, still strutting their stuff. The food was, as ever, very good: most people opted for fish.

Tuesday 31st March - walk from Luz to Lagos

Breakfast was at a civilised 8.30 after being a little late last night, and at 10 we were ready for our first day’s walk. Some of the local special wildlife was apparent in moments: azure-winged magpies and Sardinian warblers, and mirror orchids under the hedge in the scrub next the hotel. We walked down into Luz, pausing to sniff the flowers of *Coronilla vincentina* and the leaves of Peruvian pepper tree. Two pallid swifts buzzed past a few times: house martins were plainly here in good numbers then farther down the road by the Forteleza, two common swifts. The showiest of the flowers by the shore were patches of yellow *Astericus maritimus* and we noted many common wayside flowers too, such as crown daisies. There was a nice sprinkling of waders on the shore: a grey plover, a couple of turnstones and two Kentish plovers, the last a little distant. While Julian went fossil hunting I used the butterfly net to catch an Egyptian locust on a palm: we all studied the vertical black and white lines on its eyes.

Pausing briefly to sample some loquats – the first ever scrumping Honeyguiders? – we moved out of Luz and into the more natural hillside vegetation, rich especially with pyramidal orchids and grey-leaved cistus. A flock of house martins and swallows fed over the meadow below, and we had good views of the first of countless fan-tailed warblers. Many flowers were noted: two of the best were the *Centauria pullata* (*left*, with mallow-leaved bindweed) and purple flowered honeywort. It’s quite a hill up to the obelisk so John, supported ably by Julian, had to take it slowly. Three more orchid species were noted on the way up – bumblebee, yellow bee and small-flowered serapias – and we found some of the extraordinary red *Cytinus ruber* that is a parasite on cistus.

At the top, butterflies were beginning to show well: both swallowtail and scarce swallowtail, clouded yellow and Spanish marbled white all being easy to see on the wing, and green-striped white in the bug box. These were as we walked along the clifftop path, accompanied by alpine swifts, eventually meeting Deric. We dropped down into Porto de Mos where he had his minibus and our picnics.

Deric then drove us a kilometre or so beyond the built-up area, resuming the walk through fields of hairy lupins. This took us to the impressive rock stacks of Pont de Piedade, a popular spot for other visitors too, where we found some shags on a rock and a first class view of a bottle-nosed dolphin spotted by George. Collecting John and Pam who’d stopped a little way up the road near the joint-pine bushes, we followed the 15 Stations of the Cross into Lagos. Julian demonstrated why picking a prickly pear fruit is a bad idea, and is probably still picking the spiky hairs out of his hand to this day. There was a pause to watch a red-rumped swallow with some other hirundines, then to study some Judas trees. Lagos had rather too much building work
taking place on the front, so we walked along the edge of the port where there were Sandwich
terns and two white storks flying through, one carrying a stick. Catching the number 4 bus was
the plan but as this meant a wait of more than half an hour we piled into two taxis instead to
return to Luz.

Wednesday 1st April – the west coast
Deric joined us for the day and dropped us to take a delightful walk into Boca do Rio, eventually
meeting us at the other end. The sound of bee-eaters caught our ears and about three came
through, and a southern grey shrike perched on a fig tree. There was a steady trickle of new
flowers, including the showy Iberian milk-vetch in flower (it was already in seed in the scrub
next to the Hotel Belavista) and a patch of champagne orchids. The wind was occasionally chilly
as the river valley – former rice fields – came into view. Deric walking up to meet us. His eyes
were usefully peeled as he found the Portuguese speciality Lusitanian mirror orchid, plus
narrow-leaved helleborine. Cetti’s warblers sang from the wet bits and stonechats perched on
drier bits, and we heard distant chiffchaffs and cuckoo. In the pine trees there was a curious
song, which turned out to be the chaffinch-like splink splink of Iberian chiffchaff. Like the tortoise
and the hare, John in low gear was at the minibus first.

Turning left past the headland was a lucky choice as we straightaway ran into a flock of 10 or so
bee-eaters settling on a fig tree and giving super views. Below on the floodplain was a nice
mixed flock of cattle and little egrets. After some pottering on a headland, we drove to a hillside
near Vila do Bispo for lunch. Here there were many of the large blue Scilla peruviana, many of
which were almost stemless in the windswept conditions. A quail called as we ate, and with the
squills were both tassel and common grape hyacinths.

Pam had been to Sagres Port in her boat 27 years before, which was as good a reason as any
to take a look. It’s little changed in that time – unlike Lagos. A whimbrel flew up from a corner, a
shag fished in the harbour, Sandwich terns settled on buoys and we studied the gulls, prompted
by two lesser black-backs with the usual yellow-legged gulls.

Sagres Fort makes great stop even if the history of Henry the Navigator’s School of Navigation
doesn’t grab you. There was a black-eared wheatear outside and numerous black redstarts.
Inside we found blue rock thrush and a red-billed chough zapped past, while out at sea there
was a steady trickle of gannets, a reminder that this is the Atlantic and not the Mediterranean.
It’s like a coastal limestone pavement with super flowers: patches of bright blue shrubby
pimpernel (below, right), spiny hedgehog pea Anthyllis echinatus, pink antirrhinums (below, left),
the unusual wild carrot Daucus halophilus. Oh – plus loos and an ice cream shop!

Thursday 2nd April – Alvor estuary, Pêra Marsh and inland
Just east of Lagos lies the Alvor estuary, and our drive took us through Lagos where we noted
four white stork nests, two of which were on tall industrial chimneys. Deric dropped us and
continued up the track with John while the rest of the group did a walk round of three sides of a
lagoon. Immediately there were waders: greenshank, redshank, common sandpipers and
Kentish plovers, while the saltmarsh vegetation was studded with bright yellow spikes of
Cistanche. We looked at the sea, compared the yellow peas of Medicago marina and Lotus
creticus and found two stag beetles. There was a nice – if slightly tricky to ID – group of
immature Mediterranean gulls, dwarfed by the huge Caspian tern that then floated past us, with its magnificent bright red beak shiny in the sun. About 10 Sandwich terns came past, showing again just how big the Caspian tern really is. There were five sanderlings in their winter colours of grey, tame as usual on the lagoon edge, leading us to the embankment to complete this short circuit. Two woodchat shrikes on a wire were our first, by which a hoopoe flew past and azure-winged magpies moved between the pines. We then continued alongside the estuary, past oyster lays, cottage-industry sized shellfish processing and fish ponds of various sizes by which there were bee-eaters and many black-winged stilts.

We popped into the motorway services to use the loos before arriving at Pêra Marsh – strictly the Lagoa dos Salgados – to eat our picnic lunches by some pink *Cistus crispus* and yellow buttonweed. At best, this is one of the best birdwatching spots in Algarve, yet the most problematic in terms of management: periodically it gets drained by the neighbouring golf course and there is a long-running challenge to get it managed properly, involving SPEA, the RSPB and various Portuguese bodies and landowners. Deric had called in after dark on Monday evening and seen it had been drained; Domingos from the main SPEA office said much the same, so the visit was as much as anything to see the controversial site ahead of the visit by Rui from SPEA on Saturday. So it was a pleasant surprise to find it half-filled with water with many avocets and black-winged stilts, a little group of sanderlings and some distant purple gallinules.

Then four large, dark birds appeared in the distance over the marsh – plus a marsh harrier. “Glossy ibises” I called out: then they circled and landed on the edge of the water close to us. Deric, alerted by word on the local birding grapevine, was quick to see that they were, in fact, bald ibises: one of the world’s rarest birds. We studied them carefully, puzzled over their lack of baldness – due to not being adult birds - and noted the colour-rings on both legs on all birds. Two then landed on the sign right by us, and all four came even closer on the dry land, one turning over bits of paper. An internet search later confirmed suspicions: they have often been seen here in recent months and come from a reintroduction project near Cadiz, evidently now preferring Portugal to Spain.

We headed inland in search of cork oak. Above Silves there was a sprinkling of cork oaks, which had survived a large bush-fire two years ago, explaining the rather uniform stands of gum cistus blanketing hillsides for mile after mile. It became a magical mystery tour, feeling extraordinarily remote so close to the built-up coastal areas. We ended up doing a long drive on tracks through this wilderness between two *barragens* – reservoirs – from one of which fishermen were pulling out large numbers of largemouth bass, we learnt, introduced from the USA. It was mostly rather birdless, though we did hear the distinctive Iberian subspecies of green woodpecker and see strawberry trees and *Cistus populifolius*.

By tradition we always have one night in a fish restaurant in Lagos. Tonight we were at Os Lambertos and very good it was too.
Friday 3rd April – Alentejo

Full steam ahead up the motorway and it really was just one hour from the hotel to the motorway’s end, where the action started in a way that the following list of sightings hardly captures. First to catch the eye was a pale, hovering bird of prey: a black-shouldered kite, that we saw drop into vegetation and fly in front of the minibus. Just down the road another pale bird of prey, this time a super-limn, elegantly-floating male Montagu’s harrier.

Ten minutes later and we were at a supermarket on the edge of Castro Verde for a coffee, snack and loos. Leaving there on the Beja road there was our third pale bird of prey, this time the palest of pale-phase booted eagles that I have ever seen. We turned off the road to head across the steppes and immediately ran into several calling, flying calandra larks, and an Iberian hare for good measure. We paused briefly at the LPN’s information centre, learning that the odd roller had arrived: we were lucky enough to catch a view of one later, after a few false starts from ravens and crows. Driving out from there we passed a large tower built especially for nesting lesser kestrels, but it was the calling great spotted cuckoos that really caught the eye. Then some sandgrouse flew past, then more; not the best of views but a late winter flock of black-bellied sandgrouse, perhaps 20 birds or more. Better still, two little bustards flew past, the male doing its wing-quivering display flight, then another and a fourth also in display flight. Then the first of many great bustards started to appear, first in flight, then on the ground: we must have seen 100 during the day. Along the road were spotted rockroses.

Passing through a farm, a little owl could be seen on a tiled rooftop, but it moved off rather too quickly. Then close to a watercourse, white with water crowfoot, a stone-curlew walked slowly into a low patch of gum cistus. A singing woodlark was located on a dead eucalyptus branch.

Lunch was on the wide open plains near another purpose-built lesser kestrel nesting structure, that is once we’d settled down after a black vulture and several griffons drifted past, plus a red kite for good measure. Pam and Julian tried to re-find the little owls that had shot off from a rock pile as we had arrived, though without success. Here there were some yellow toadflaxes *Linaria spartea* and black-centred *Tolpis*, but the best flowers through the day were really the masses of white mayweed, brick-red dock and yellow hawkweeds that dominated so many fields.

Back through the gates of another part of the LPN reserve and we moved towards a stack of vultures we’d seen in the distance. Two more booted eagles came past, then in the same bit of sky a pure white short-toed eagle. A late wintering lapwing stood by a pond, along with gadwalls. Elsewhere, flocks of cattle egrets were moving around to feed in the grassland, sometimes with sheep, sometimes without.

Back on the Castro Verde - Mertola road we stopped to take photos of the long line of white storks’ nests on specially adapted old concrete pylons (above). Our final pause was by a bridge farther along this road, where bee-eaters and hoopoes called and we found a Cetti’s warbler in
some oleander. There was a delightful clump of yellow common jonquils by the water’s edge, and Spanish terrapins had hauled out onto rocks to bask in the afternoon sun. Sadly it was 4.30, time to leave, and we were back at the hotel at 6 pm on the dot. All in all quite a day, and a great introduction to the delights of the Alentejo.

A little gentle dance music tonight with Rene and George, both now 84, on the dance floor as for every Friday night here, a great lesson in how to stay fit and elegant.

Saturday 4th April – Silves
A slightly later 9:30 departure to drive to Portimao for a river trip up the Arade estuary. The boat Cegonha (stork) was away promptly at 10:30 and took exactly an hour to reach Silves, the ancient Moorish capital of Algarve. In Portimao, every chimney of the old sardine factories had a white stork nest. With the tide up, there were no mudflats but still there were some 10 common sandpipers along the way, plus a greenshank and a good sprinkling of egrets, herons, cormorants and Sandwich terns. Hundreds of yellow cistanches lit up the saltmarsh edge. Some brilliant bee-eaters caught the eye as we neared Silves; Spanish terrapins were hauled out on muddy edges and there was a shoal of grey mullet by the steps as we landed.

After a coffee or ice cream and some impromptu juggling with satsumas, we walked though the covered market, past Indian bead trees about to burst into purple flower and into the town square where we found our first violet carpenter bee buzzing round the jacarandas. Just outside the town, past an orchard, we arrived at the Recanto dos Mouros, our restaurant for lunch, within sight of the impressive castle of Silves (below) — and the odd passing monarch butterfly as we ate outside, albeit under welcome shade this hot day. A tasty selection of appetizers, starters and main courses followed, if a little OTT for quantity, including wild boar stew and black pig. Sonia and I left the diners with their coffee to stroll the few yards up the hill to the core monarch area. Here bristle-fruited silkweed, the food plant of this striking looking butterfly, is well established, and after a little searching we’d found at least 11 black and yellow caterpillars to show the others who soon followed on (there are pictures in the wildlife checklists on page 12 of this report).

The final stop of the day was at a restored tide mill on the outskirts of Silves, which seems to be reassuringly popular as a place to visit with a combination of heritage and countryside. Julian found a blue-headed yellow wagtail, there was an attractive mix of Mediterranean scrub species and a tiny yellow gromwell in the car park.

We had a guest tonight, Rui Euphrasia, a volunteer ‘caretaker’ for SPEA who keeps an eye on the Pêra Marsh Important Bird Area. He confirmed the Spanish release scheme origin for the bald ibises and told us about some of his monitoring work on the marsh and the complexities of moving towards a management agreement with landowners, government agencies, local authorities, SPEA and the RSPB involved. The hope remains quite strong that a sluice will be installed so that the periodic flushing out of the lagoon can be done in a less damaging and ad hoc style. Rui was optimistic that a second golf course – one already abuts the marsh, which is where the ibises spend much of their time – will be a valuable buffer for the wetland. He left with our best wishes and our usual cheque to support SPEA’s work. We exercised our minds by debating the future of nature tourism in the Algarve in general and for the Hotel Belavista in particular.
**Sunday 5th April – west coast and local walk**

With a late departure the following day, this was like our bonus day in Algarve. The morning was spent in open maritime pine woodland in the west coast Natural Reserve. It was a gentle potter looking at a rich range of flowers, including many small-flowered and heart-flowered serapias orchids (the latter, right), blue *Scilla odorata* in a damp area well dug over by wild boar and several helleborines with small leaves, which after later study can be named as *Epipactis lusitanica* (or *Epipactis tremolsii* Ssp. *lusitanica* if you’re a lumpmer rather than a splitter). The botanising reminded us very emphatically that the Mediterranean flora, wonderful though it is, has its limitations in the western Algarve: several identifications were puzzled out later with a selection of other books. A woodlark sang from a tree top and our first nightingale was heard in the valley below.

We moved a short distance to another open area in the wood, with even more orchids in profusion. We heard our first skylark, saw our first sparrowhawk and Iberian chiffchaff sang here too. A dung beetle (below) doing what dung beetles do best made for a popular cameo role.

After a lunch of Caesar salad back at the Belavista, we took a siesta before reconvening at 4:30 for a late afternoon visit just the other side of the main road to a golf course that’s been under construction north of Espiche for some years. It’s set in a rich and undisturbed area so made for a delightful potter. The lake had terrapins, but the bad news is that they were escaped red-eared ones. In among the scrub, of at least three types of cistus, we found last lingering blooms of yellow anemones, green-winged and woodcock orchids. Bee-eaters came over as we left, as if to wish us farewell, there was a good view of a southern grey shrike on a fence and two late wintering song thrushes were a surprise.

**Sunday 6th April – Pêra Marsh, Quinta do Marim and home**

An earlier discussion about the week’s itinerary had thrown up the sensible idea that our visit to the Ria Formosa Natural Park, close to Faro, would be ideal for the final day ahead of our early evening flights. But we started by returning to Pêra Marsh, where a group of 23 greater flamingos was immediately obvious as we arrived. They weren’t the only new arrivals: five spoonbills were loafing among the hundreds of bustling black-winged stilts. Scanning a row of gulls we picked up two collared pratincoles, albeit rather distant and, as on our previous visit, a Caspian tern. Our friends the four bald ibises then returned, again perched on the signboard and settled on the ground next to us, though didn’t go for the bread that Deric thoughtfully provided for them.

The area was encouragingly busy with naturalists, including a large group of students on the viewing platform. The local purple gallinules didn’t wish to show well today but the Caspian tern flew past. We ducked under the rather over-sized wooden walkway across the dunes to find some pretty three-leaved snowflakes. Here we heard, but couldn’t find, a short-toed lark, and another was singing but equally invisible as we returned to the minibuses.
After loosing at Loulé service station, we drove to Quinta do Lago. The approach past upmarket housing, golf courses and fancy roundabouts is all rather manicured but this all abuts the large Ria Formosa Natural Reserve, the estuary, lagoon and sand dune complex we had seen from the air as we landed at Faro airport a week earlier. After eating picnics, all those with full energies walked east along the edge of a golf fairway – the tide was right in, so keeping us off the shore – to a hide overlooking a lake with reedmace islands and fringes. There were some 10 pairs of red-crested pochards, other ducks including shoveler, pochard and gadwall and both little and great crested grebes. However it was soon the coots we were scanning, as word of a crested (or red-knobbed) coot had reached us. We found it, and its small red knobs above the white face were just visible, though much more obvious was a white neck collar so the bird could be traced: like the ibises a visitor from Spain, this time the Coto Doñana. Talk then turned to whether there might be a little bittern here so we scanned all the distant reedbed fringes, only for one to fly up right under our noses in front of the hide, landing in the open on a small platform of dead reedmace below us.

Returning along the shore, the tide having dropped, we found a woodchat shrike (right), fiddler crabs on the edge of their holes on the exposed mud, plus a sprinkling of grey plovers and other waders roosting on islands or moving around. Some of us then walked east to the other lagoon, though the water level there was unusually high and it was almost devoid of birds.

Then it was time to drive to Faro airport, return the minibus, for Deric to head back to the Belavista while both the Leeds-Bradford and Stansted contingents queued side by side for the return flights home.

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**Checklists**

**Birds**

**Little grebe**  
Recorded on four days, including Pêra Marsh and Quinta do Lago.

**Great crested grebe**  
Two on the lagoon at Quinta do Lago.

**Gannet**  
About 20 offshore at Sagres. A reminder that this is the Atlantic and not the Mediterranean.

**Shag**  
Five on the rocks or the sea around Pont de Piedade, one in the harbour at Sagres Port.

**Cormorant**  
Seen on four days, in estuaries or marshes rather than the open sea.

**Little bittern**  
Superb view of one from the hide at Quinta do Lago, 6th April.

**Cattle egret**  
Seen almost daily as we travelled, especially where there were livestock.

**Little egret**  
Seen on five days.

**Great white egret**  
Deric and John saw one on the Alvor estuary on 2nd April.

**Grey heron**  
Seen on six days.

**White stork**  
Seen on five days, including nests in Lagos, by the Arade estuary and large numbers in Alentejo.

**Bald ibis**  
Four at Pêra Marsh on both visits 2nd & 6th April. Immatures from the captive breeding scheme in Cadiz, all with three rings and radio transmitters [see, for example, www.iagnbi.org/projects/pe].

**Spoonbill**  
Five at Pêra Marsh on 6th April.

**Greater flamingo**  
23 at Pêra Marsh on 6th April.
**Gadwall**
Several pairs at Pêra Marsh, three pairs at Quinta do Lago on 6th April, several in display flight in the Alentejo on 3rd April.

**Mallard**
Recorded on six days.

**Shoveler**
One male from the hide at Quinta do Lago, 6th April.

**Pochard**
About 10 loafing on the edge of the golf course at Quinta do Lago, 6th April.

**Red-crested pochard**
20 from the hide at Quinta do Lago, 6th April.

**Black-shouldered kite**
Super views in Alentejo, 3rd April.

**Black kite**
Several in Alentejo, 3rd April.

**Red kite**
Several in Alentejo, 3rd April.

**Griffon vulture**
Lots in Alentejo, 3rd April.

**Black vulture**
One in Alentejo, 3rd April.

**Buzzard**
Seen on three days.

**Short-toed eagle**
One in the Alentejo on 3rd April.

**Marsh harrier**
At Pêra Marsh on 2nd April.

**Hen harrier**
An immature male in the Alentejo on 3rd April.

**Montagu’s harrier**
A superb male in the Alentejo on 3rd April.

**Sparrowhawk**
One at Espiche, 5th April.

**Booted eagle**
Three in the Alentejo on 3rd April, all pale-phase birds including one that was remarkably pale.

**Lesser kestrel**
Scores around LPN’s artificial nesting blocks and over the plains of Alentejo on 3rd April.

**Kestrel**
Seen almost daily, except in Alentejo where they may have been overlooked due to so many lesser kestrels.

**Red-legged partridge**
Seen on three days, including in Alentejo.

**Quail**
Calling on 1st April.

**Moorhen**
Seen on four days.

**Purple gallinule**
Rather elusive at Pêra Marsh but seen well at Quinta do Lago on 6th April.

**Coot**
Seen on four days.

**Red-knobbed (or crested) coot**
We had been alerted about one at Quinta do Lago, 6th April. Fairly distinctive mostly due to its white neck collar rather than the tiny red knobs. From a reintroduction project in Spain [see for example http://www.terra.es/personal7/jidies/fulica.htm].

**Little bustard**
At least four, including two males in flight display in the Alentejo on 3rd April.

**Great bustard**
Lost count in the Alentejo on 3rd April: estimated in the region of 200 seen.

**Oystercatcher**
One, Alvor estuary, 2nd April.

**Black-winged stilt**
Lots but not counted at Pêra Marsh on both visits.

**Avocet**
Lots, though fewer than stilts, at Pêra Marsh on both visits.

**Stone-curlew**
A pair and one other in the Alentejo on 3rd April; one at Pêra Marsh on 6th April.

**Collared pratincole**
Two at Pêra Marsh, 6th April, sadly on the ground and a bit distant.

**Ringed plover**
At both Alvor estuary and the estuary at Quinta do Lago.

**Kentish plover**
Good views at Alvor estuary, 2nd April; two distant birds on the foreshore at Luz on 31st March.

**Golden plover**
A small group seen by Deric and John on the Alvor estuary on 2nd April.

**Grey plover**
At Quinta do Lago and on the foreshore at Luz on 31st March.

**Lapwing**
A late wintering bird in the Alentejo.

**Turnstone**
On the foreshore at Luz, Alvor estuary and at Quinta do Lago.

**Sanderling**
Groups still in winter plumage on the Alvor estuary and at Pêra Marsh (both visits).

**Dunlin**
Groups gaining summer plumage at both Quinta do Lago and Pêra Marsh on 6th April.

**Snipe**
One dropped into the reedmace at Quinta do Lago on 6th April.

**Bar-tailed godwit**
Singles at Alvor estuary and Quinta do Lago.

**Whimbrel**
Recorded on three days.

**Redshank**
Alvor estuary, 2nd April.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bird</th>
<th>Location and Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenshank</td>
<td>Alvor estuary, 2nd April, Arade estuary and Quinta do Lago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common sandpiper</td>
<td>Recorded on five days, including about 10 during the boat trip up the Arade estuary on 4th April.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mediterranean gull</td>
<td>Four immatures on the lagoon at the Alvor estuary 2nd April; two immatures at Pêra Marsh on 6th April.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-headed gull</td>
<td>Five at Pêra Marsh on 6th April.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow-legged gull</td>
<td>Common and seen daily.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesser black-backed gull</td>
<td>Recorded on three days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandwich tern</td>
<td>Recorded on five days, abundant (c200) on the Alvor estuary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caspian tern</td>
<td>One adult gave fine views at the Alvor estuary on 2nd April; seen on both visits to Pêra Marsh.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-bellied sandgrouse</td>
<td>Big flocks in Alentejo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock dove/feral pigeon</td>
<td>None seen this year that looked like real rock doves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collared dove</td>
<td>Seen daily.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great spotted cuckoo</td>
<td>Four in the Alentejo on 3rd April.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuckoo</td>
<td>Heard on both visits to the protected west coast NP, but away from the coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift</td>
<td>Seen on five days, including in Luz and at Faro airport as we left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pallid swift</td>
<td>Two in Luz on 31st March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine swift</td>
<td>About 20 during our coastal walk on 31st March; also seen north of Silves on 2nd April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little owl</td>
<td>Three in the Alentejo on 3rd April, one on 4th April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee-eater</td>
<td>Seen on six days, with especially good views at Boca do Rio on 1st April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roller</td>
<td>One in the Alentejo on 3rd April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoopoe</td>
<td>Seen or heard on six days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green woodpecker</td>
<td>Heard only on three days. The Iberian subspecies is sharpei, which sounds different and lacks the black mask.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-toed lark</td>
<td>Two heard at Pêra Marsh on 6th April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calandra lark</td>
<td>Common in the Alentejo on 3rd April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crested lark</td>
<td>Seen almost daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlark</td>
<td>On two days, both in wooded areas in the protected west coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skylark</td>
<td>Singing in an open area next to pine woods in the protected west coast, 5th April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand martin</td>
<td>Recorded two days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swallow</td>
<td>Seen daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-rumped swallow</td>
<td>Seen on four days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House martin</td>
<td>Seen almost daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow pipit</td>
<td>This winter visitor was recorded on four days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White wagtail</td>
<td>Only recorded at Sagres on 1st April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow wagtail</td>
<td>A blue-headed wagtail at the Silves Tide Mill on 4th April; also at Pêra Marsh on 6th April but not identified by subspecies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wren</td>
<td>Heard on three days; two of these in the protected west coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightingale</td>
<td>Heard while we were in pine wood areas in the protected west coast, 5th April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black redstart</td>
<td>Several singing at Sagres fort on 1st April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonechat</td>
<td>First seen just east of Luz; recorded on six days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>John saw one in a town garden as we drove towards Quinta do Lago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-eared wheatear</td>
<td>A male at Sagres on 1st April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue rock thrush</td>
<td>Two pairs at Sagres fort on 1st April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackbird</td>
<td>Recorded every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song thrush</td>
<td>Two late winter birds at Espiche on 5th April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cetti’s warbler</td>
<td>Heard on five days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan-tailed warbler</td>
<td>Seen or heard daily; roughly 20 between Luz and Lagos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardinian warbler</td>
<td>Seen daily, especially outside the hotel in Luz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackcap</td>
<td>Heard most days at Luz and seen twice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiffchaff</td>
<td>Singing at Boca do Rio on 1st April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iberian chiffchaff</td>
<td>Two singing at Boca do Rio on 1st April and on our return to the west coast wood on 5th April.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Great tit
Nuthatch
Short-toed treecreeper
Southern grey shrike
Woodchat shrike
Jay
Azure-winged magpie
Chough
Jackdaw
Raven
Spotless starling
House sparrow
Spanish sparrow
Tree sparrow
Serin
Greenfinch
Goldfinch
Linnet
Corn bunting

Great tit
Seen on four days.

Nuthatch
In the protected west coast wood, 5th April.

Short-toed treecreeper
One at Boca do Rio on 1st April, heard from one minibus at Quinta do Lago.

Southern grey shrike
Seen on four days including in Alentejo and at Espiche on 5th April.

Woodchat shrike
Seen on four days, first recorded by the Alvor estuary on 2nd April.

Jay
On our return to the west coast wood on 5th April.

Azure-winged magpie
Seen daily, including in the scrub, gardens and old orchards by the hotel.

Chough
One at Sagres fort on 1st April.

Jackdaw
Recorded on two days.

Raven
Two birds on the Lagos walk on 31st March; in Alentejo on 3rd April.

Spotless starling
Recorded on all bar one day, including in Luz.

House sparrow
Seen daily, especially at the hotel, where they made a lively dawn chorus.

Spanish sparrow
A flock by a farm in Alentejo on 3rd April.

Tree sparrow
One by the Alvor estuary on 2nd April.

Serin
Seen on all bar one day.

Greenfinch
Seen on all bar one day.

Goldfinch
Seen daily.

Linnet
Seen daily.

Corn bunting
Seen daily; abundant in Alentejo.

Total: 125 species

Reptiles and amphibians
Spanish (stripe-necked) terrapin: river in Alentejo; river Arade; Ria Formosa.
Red-eared terrapin: (escape) golf course under construction at Espiche.
Large psammomorus: several places, but generally not seen well.
Iberian water frog: several places.

Mammals
Bottle-nose dolphin
Rabbit
Iberian hare

Fish
Widemouth bass
Grey mullet

Butterflies
Swallowtail
Scarce swallowtail
Large white
Small white
Green-striped white
Cloued yellow
Cleopatra
Painted lady
Monarch (right, and caterpillar, far right)
Common blue
Small copper
Green hairstreak
Spanish marbled white
Meadow brown
Wall
Small heath
Speckled wood
Other notable invertebrates
Fiddler crab
Egyptian locust
An armoured beetle *Sepidium elongatum* (right)
Violet carpenter bee
Paper wasp *Polistes* sp
Pine processional moth (tents)
Dung beetle
Fire bug *Pyrrhocis apterus*

Algarve flowers 2009

P = planted   NIF = not in flower

SPERMATOPHYTA  Conifers
Araucariaceae
*Araucaria heterophylla*  Norfolk island pine

Cupressaceae - Cypress family
*Cupressus sempervirens*  maritime pine
*Juniperus phoenicea*  Phoenician juniper

Ephedraceae - Joint pine family
*Ephedra fragilis*

Pinaceae - Pine family
*Pinus pinaster*  maritime pine
*Pinus pinea*  umbrella pine

ANGIOSPERMS
Aizoaceae - Aizoon family
*Carpobrotus edulis*  Hottentot fig

Alismataceae - Water-plantain family
*Alisma plantago-aquatica*  water-plantain

Anacardiaceae - Pistachio family
*Pistacia lentiscus*  mastic tree or lentisc
*Schinus molle*  P Peruvian pepper tree

Apiaceae - Carrot family
*Daucus carota*  wild carrot
*Daucus halophilus*
*Eryngium maritimum*  sea holly
*Foeniculum vulgare*  fennel
*Scandix pecten-veneris*  shepherd’s needles
*Smyrnium olusatrum*  alexanders
*Thapsia sp* (either *T. garganica* or *T. villosa*)  a large-flowered yellow umbellifer

Apocynaceae - Oleander family
*Nerium oleander*  oleander
*Vinca difformis*  periwinkle

Araliaceae - Ivy family
*Hedera helix*  ivy
**Asclepiadaceae** - Milkweed family
*Gomphocarpus fruticosus* bristle-fruited silkweed

**Asteraceae** (was Compositae) - Daisy family
*Arctotheca calendula* Cape daisy
*Arctotheca calendula* yellow sea aster
*Bellis annua* annual daisy
*Bellis sylvestris* southern daisy
*Calendula arvensis* field marigold
*Chrysanthemum coronarium* crown daisy, entirely yellow
*Chrysanthemum coronarium* yellow and white
*Galactites tomentosa* Mediterranean field thistle
*Inula (or Dittrichia) graveolens* stink aster/stinking inula
*Pallenis spinosa* spiny golden star
*Sonchus oleraceus* common sow thistle

**Boraginaceae** - Borage family
*Anchusa azurea* large blue alkanet (below)
*Anchusa undulata* undulate alkanet
*Borago officinalis* borage
*Cerinthe major var. purpurascens* honeywort
*Cynoglossum creticum* blue hound’s tongue
*Echium plantagineum* purple viper’s bugloss
*Lithodora diffusa* scrambling gromwell

**Brassicaceae** (Cruciferae) - Cabbage family
*Lobularia maritima* sweet alison
*Malcolmia littorea* sand stock
*Nasturtium officinale* nasturtium
*Raphanus raphanistrum* wild radish
*Sinapis arvensis* charlock

**Cactaceae** - Cactus family
*Opuntia ficus-indica* prickly pear

**Caprifoliaceae** - Honeysuckle family
*Lonicera implexa*

**Caryophyllaceae** - Pink family
*Paronychia argentea* Mediterranean catchfly
*Silene colorata* small-flowered catchfly
*Silene gallica* Italian catchfly
*Silene italica* bladder campion
*Silene vulgaris* corn spurrey
*Spergularia arvensis* purple sand-spurrey
*Spergularia purpurea*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Genus</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenopodiaceae</td>
<td>Beta vulgaris ssp. Maritime</td>
<td>sea beet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Halimus halimus</td>
<td>shrubby orache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cistaceae - Rockrose family</td>
<td>Cistus albidus</td>
<td>grey-leaved cistus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cistus crispus</td>
<td>gum cistus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cistus ladanifer</td>
<td>narrow-leaved cistus</td>
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<td>Cistus monspeliensis</td>
<td>sage-leaved cistus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cistus populifolius (right)</td>
<td>yellow rock rose</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Halimium calycinum</td>
<td>spotted rock rose</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tuberaria guttata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convolvulaceae - Bindweed</td>
<td>Convolvulus althaeoides</td>
<td>mallow-leaved bindweed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Convolvulus tricolor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crassulaceae</td>
<td>Umbilicus rupestris</td>
<td>navelwort</td>
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<td>Cucurbitaceae</td>
<td>Ecballium elaterium</td>
<td>squirting cucumber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dipsacaceae</td>
<td>Scabiosa crenata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ericaceae - Heath family</td>
<td>Erica australis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Euphorbiaceae - Spurge family</td>
<td>Euphorbia helioscopia</td>
<td>sun spurge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mercurialis annua</td>
<td>annual mercury</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ricinus communis</td>
<td>castor oil plant</td>
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<td>Fabiaceae was Leguminosae -</td>
<td>Anthyllis tetraphylla</td>
<td>bladder vetch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pea family</td>
<td>Anthyllis vulnaria ssp. praepropera</td>
<td>Mediterranean kidney vetch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Astragalus echinatus</td>
<td>carob</td>
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<td>Astragalus lusitanicus</td>
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<td>Ceratonia siliqua</td>
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<td>Cercis siliquastra</td>
<td>P Judas tree</td>
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<td>Coronilla valentina ssp. glauca</td>
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<td>Dorycnium hirsutum</td>
<td>dorycnium</td>
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<td>Genista hirsuta</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lathyrus ochrus</td>
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<td>Lotus creticus</td>
<td>southern birds foot trefoil</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lupinus angustifolius</td>
<td>narrow-leaved lupin</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lupinus luteus</td>
<td>yellow lupin</td>
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<td>Lupinus micranthus</td>
<td>hairy lupin</td>
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<td>Medicago polymorpha</td>
<td>toothed medick</td>
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<td>Mellilot indicus</td>
<td>small melilot</td>
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<td>Ononis natrix</td>
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<td>Ornithopus compressus</td>
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<td>Psoralea bituminosa</td>
<td>pitch trefoil</td>
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<td>Scorpiurus muricatus</td>
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<td>Spartium junceum</td>
<td>Spanish broom</td>
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<td>Trifolium angustifolium</td>
<td>narrow-leaved clover</td>
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<td>Trifolium campestre</td>
<td>hop trefoil</td>
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<td>Botanical Family</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Common Name</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trifolium</strong></td>
<td>resupinatum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tomentosum</td>
<td>woolly trefoil (right)</td>
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<td>laxillora</td>
<td>slender tare</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coccifera</td>
<td>holly/prickly/kermes oak</td>
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<td>cork oak</td>
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<td><strong>Geraniaceae</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>malacoides</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dissectum</td>
<td>cut-leaved cranesbill</td>
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<td>molle</td>
<td>dovesfoot cranesbill</td>
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<td></td>
<td>purpureum</td>
<td>little robin</td>
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<td>rotundifolium</td>
<td>round-leaved cranesbill</td>
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<td><strong>Lamiaceae</strong></td>
<td>(Labiatae) - Mint family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stoechas</td>
<td>French lavender</td>
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<td><strong>Malvaceae</strong></td>
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<td>P Persian/Indian bead tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moraceae</strong></td>
<td>- Mulberry family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>carica</td>
<td>fig</td>
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<td><strong>Myoporaceae</strong></td>
<td>- Myoporum family</td>
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<td>tenuifolium</td>
<td>P ngaio</td>
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<td><strong>Oleaceae</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>fruticans</td>
<td>wild jasmine</td>
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<td>europaea</td>
<td>P olive</td>
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<td><strong>Orobanchaceae</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Oxalidaceae</strong></td>
<td>- Sorrel family</td>
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<td>pes-caprae</td>
<td>Bermuda buttercup</td>
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<td><strong>Papaveraceae</strong></td>
<td>- Poppy family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>capreolata</td>
<td>ramping fumitory</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dubium</td>
<td>long-headed poppy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rhoeas</td>
<td>common poppy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*P* indicates the species are native to New Zealand.
Plantaginaceae - Plantain family
Plantago arenaria  branched plantain
Plantago coronopus  buck’s horn plantain
Plantago lagopus  sea plantain
Plantago maritima  sea plantain

Platanaceae - Plane tree family
Platanus orientalis  oriental plane

Plumbaginaceae - Thrift family
Armeria pungens  limoniastrum
Limoniastrum monopetalum  limoniastrum

Primulaceae - Primula family
Anagallis arvensis  scarlet pimpernel
Anagallis minima  chaffweed
Anagallis monelli  shrubbery pimpernel

Rafflesiaceae - Rafflesia family
Cytinus ruber

Ranunculaceae - Buttercup family
Anemone palmata  yellow anemone
Ranunculus peltatus  pond water crowfoot

Resedaceae - Mignonette family
Reseda lutea  wild mignonette
Sesamoides canescens  Sesamoides (Polunin 375a)

Rosaceae - Rose family
Eriobotrya japonica  loquat
Prunus dulcis  almond
Rosa canina agg  dog rose
Rubus ulmifolius (R. sanctus)  bramble
Sanguisorba minor Ssp. magnolii  Mediterranean salad burnet

Rubiaceae - Bedstraw family
Galium aparine  goosegrass
Sheradia arvensis  field madder

Rutaceae - Rue family
Ruta chalepensis  fringed rue

Scrophulariaceae - Figwort family
Antirrhinum majus Ssp. cirrhergerum  large snapdragon
Bellardia trixago  bellardia
Linaria algarviana  spotted/purple and white (Algarve)
Linaria amethystea  ’Amethyst’ toadflax, tiny purple and white (Alentejo)
Linaria spartea  yellow
Misopates orontium  lesser snapdragon/weasel’s snout

Tamaricaceae - Tamarix
Tamarix africana  tamarisk

Urticaceae - Nettle family
Parietaria judaica  pellitory of the wall
Urtica membranacea  membranous nettle
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valerianaceae - Valerian family</th>
<th>Fedia cornucopiae</th>
<th>fedia (below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Verbenaceae - Verbena family            | Lantana camara            | P lantana    |

**MONOCOTYLEDONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agavaceae - Agave family</th>
<th>Agave americana</th>
<th>American agave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Amaryllidaceae - Daffodil family       | Leucojum tricophyllum     | three-leaved snowflake |
|                                        | Narcissus jonquilla       | common jonquil (Alentejo) |
|                                        | Pancratium maritimum      | sea daffodil (leaves) |

| Araceae - Arum family                  | Arum italicum             | large cuckoo pint |

| Dioscoreaceae - Yam family             | Tamis communis            | black bryony |

| Iridaceae - Iris family                | Gladiolus italicus        | cornflag |
|                                        | Gynandriris sisyrinchium  | barbary nut |
|                                        | Iris albicans             | P        |

| Liliaceae - Lily family                | Allium roseum             | rosy garlic |
|                                        | Anthericum ramosum        |             |
|                                        | Asparagus albus           |             |
|                                        | Asphodelus fistulosus     | hollow-leaved asphodel |
|                                        | Asphodelus ramosus        |             |
|                                        | Fritillaria lusitanica (leaves only) |          |
|                                        | Muscari comosum           | tassel hyacinth |
|                                        | Muscari neglectum         | grape hyacinth |
|                                        | Ornithogalum spicatum (Polunin 1639a) |      |
|                                        | Scilla odorata            | Jacinto-do-Algarve |
|                                        | Scilla peruviana          |             |
|                                        | Smilax aspera             | rough bindweed |
|                                        | Urginea maritima (=Drimia maritima) | NIF sea squill |
Orchidaceae - Orchid family

- *Orchis champagneuxii*
- *Orchis italica*
- *Orchis morio*
- *Serapis cordigera*
- *Serapis parviflora*

Poaceae - Grass family

- *Arundo donax*
- *Briza maxima*
- *Briza minima*
- *Lagurus ovate*
- *Lamarckia aurea*
- *Stipa gigantea*

Palmae - Palm family

- *Chamaerops humilis*

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