

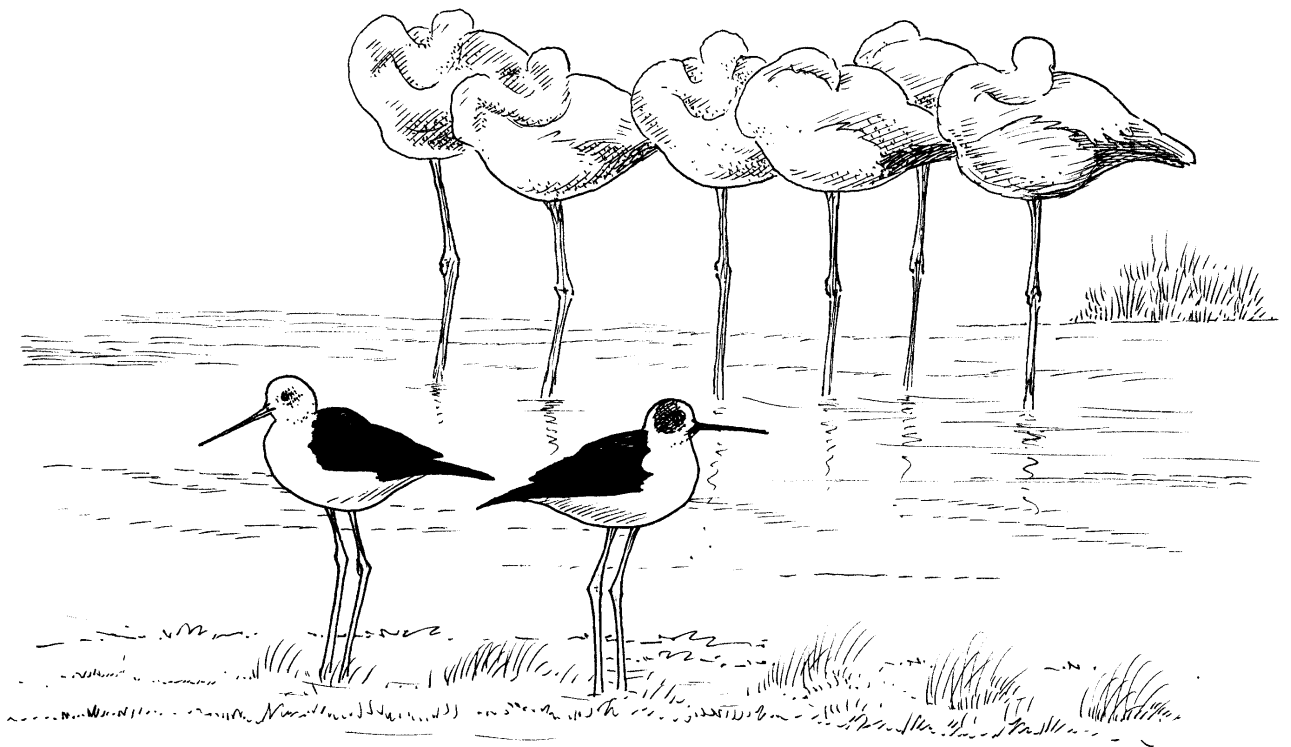
Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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The Camargue
29 April – 6 May 2000

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Harwich
Norwich

*Daily log by Chris Durdin. Bird checklist by Russell Leavett.
Illustrations by Rob Hume. Cover: flamingos and black-winged stilts.*

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 £25 per person in the Camargue was supplemented by the group in the Lot, leading to a total of £625 sent to La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO, the French Bird Protection League). This brings the total given to LPO to £4,700 since 1991, and to various conservation projects in Europe to £20,180. A thank-you letter from LPO is at the end of this report (but not this web version).

THE CAMARGUE
29 April – 6 May 2000

Itinerary

Saturday 29 April	Gatwick to Marseille by afternoon flight, proceeded to Hotel des Granges, Arles, via Martigues, Fos-sur-Mer and Crau plain.
Sunday 30 April	Arles to Saliers via Gimeaux, south to Domaine de Méjanès for lunch via Ibaron, west to overlook Étang de Vaccares at Mas de Carrelet. Observation tower by Marais de Basses Méjanès, finally Mas d'Agon and north eastern corner of Étang de Vaccares.
Monday 1 May	La Crau at Aerodrome du Vallon, rubbish dump at Entressen then lunch by Étang d'Entressen. Return to Arles via Raphele. Dusk at Mt. Valence, Les Alpilles.
Tuesday 2 May	East Camargue to Salin de Giraud salines, Étang du Fangassier with lunch at ruins of Tourvieille. Return to Arles via Mas Cameroun, Petit Badon and Tour du Vallat observation platform.
Wednesday 3 May	Les Baux-de-Provence a.m., La Caume, Les Alpilles p.m. after lunch at road end.
Thursday 4 May	Edge of Petite Camargue at Parc Ornithologique, south to La Digue la Mer at Saintes Maries-de-la-Mer for lunch, return to Arles via Cachereil and Mas d'Agon.
Friday 5 May	Morning at Pont du Gard with lunch by Gardon river. Part of group visited La Crau and nearby sites in afternoon, while rest spent time shopping in Arles.
Saturday 6 May	Arles to Marseille via Raphele, Mas de l'Hoste and Mas Thibert. Afternoon flight to Gatwick.

Saturday 29 April – Gatwick to The Camargue

It was a smooth flight into Marseilles. Minibuses were collected and loaded and we were soon away. Russell seemed to have problems with his accelerator but this was soon solved by removing Norman's stick from underneath it. We drove through a classic Mediterranean landscape of rocky scrub and valerian-covered rocks, changing to the stony, sheep-grazed La Crau as we headed north towards Arles. Soon the wetland birds began to appear; herons, a cattle egret flock. There was a nightingale singing as we arrived at the Hotel des Granges where we were greeted by Simone and Marcel the proprietors. Goldfinches and a turtle dove on the nearby telegraph wire were noted plus the local tree sparrows which we saw every day during the week.

We all know that French food is supposed to be good and the Hotel des Granges lived up to the reputation. A choice of slices of duck or omelette for starters was followed by either duck kebabs or salmon. As traditional in France the cheese course followed ending with a choice of desserts. And a little wine, of course.

Sunday 30 April – The Camargue

The nights here are never quiet due to the frogs and nightingales but nonetheless most slept in and just a few joined us for a 7am walk. It was cool and misty but in no time a local turtle dove appeared and black kites quartered the local fields as they were to do throughout the week. There is a little lane that runs from the main road to Tarascon on which the hotel is situated, and we strolled down here past milk thistle, dogwood and the patch-forming dwarf elder, the last not yet in flower. Patches of the strange looking birthwort were found; indeed there are two species here, round-leaved birthwort with brown flowers and the taller, green flowered *Aristolochia clematitis*. Surprisingly, down the lane there are paddyfields with the rice not yet showing through the water.

And so into the Camargue. First stop was by some rice paddyfields where a specially adapted tractor with cogged wheels was planting rice. A feature of these is that they vary as to how many birds they produce, with the most recently flooded the best as the herons and egrets move in to exploit the invertebrates that are flooded out. On this corner the distinctive brown form of a squacco heron was picked up; it's amazing how pale they look when they fly and then they kind of disappear when they land. Little egrets and cattle egrets were compared and we began to get our ear in for the strange yelping call of Mediterranean gulls. For years 'Med' gulls were scarce in the Camargue, surprising in view of their name, but now they are widespread and increasing. A bright green tree frog was found on a twig by the track. Then came a real surprise, a migrant red-footed falcon feeding on a ploughed field.

Farther down the road we paused to look over more marshland where distant pratincoles were flying around against the grain silos in the distance. Here as everywhere on the marshes there were blue-headed yellow wagtails and we picked up a wood sandpiper feeding alongside black-winged stilts. Then just along the road from here, a typical Camargue scene was being enacted. Black Camargue bulls were being rounded up by men and at least one woman on white horses. This seemed to be partly for the benefit of the tourists but some of the cattle were being loaded into a cattle truck so perhaps it was 'real'. Pratincoles continued to perform in the other direction, some 40 or so and probably most of the breeding population of the Camargue. Underfoot we noted hairy buttercup with its reflexed sepals (like bulbous buttercup) and reversed clover; our first swallowtail butterfly drifted past.

Stop-start was the order of the day and the next stop was for a short-toed eagle plus two marsh harriers. And just down the road we all saw a night heron – yes, you can see them in daylight, sometimes.

Lunch was at the picnic site at Méjanes where there were many other French families enjoying the day out. Paper wasps were constructing their nests under ridge tiles of the roof giving some welcome shade to the picnic tables; a carpenter bee buzzed around the wooden uprights looking for a bit of soft wood to burrow into. Postcards were bought.

Today's stop number seven was for 75 black-winged stilts. This elegant, long-legged wader was everywhere in the wetlands; just down the road from an observation platform, lapwings got up to join the stilts to mob a marsh harrier. Great reed warbler and male garganey were both seen well. At this point we discovered that two haversacks had disappeared from the back of one minibus; the Camargue's reputation for theft had become a reality for Mundi and Malcolm. Happily nothing too critical was in the bags and the following day's visit to report this to the police was straightforward.

Final stop was at Mas D'Agon for our first great white egret, a pair of red crested pochards and whiskered terns.

Monday 1 May – La Crau

This former river bed has created one of the most distinctive habitats of the Camargue area. We pulled off the road, parking by a long hedge of oleaster, and scanned the plain. For such a dry area it was surprisingly colourful, dominated by the thistle-like galactites with a fair sprinkling of hollow-leaved asphodel. Other plants noted included the prostrate rosettes of evax, the blue pimpernel *Anagallis foemina* and blue houndstongue.

But we were looking for the special birds of La Crau and in less than a minute two little bustards, with great patches of white on their wings, were seen over the long fence in the distance. Happily they reappeared several times and we were all able to see their black necks pushing up through the vegetation through a slightly hazy telescope view. Stone-curlews live here too; from the way two were moving round us as we explored the path into the stony plain we guessed they were nesting nearby, so we retreated back to the main hedge side track.

Birdwatching isn't all about glamorous locations so we headed for the rubbish dump at Entressen. The usual route here takes us under a low bridge which we found Russell's minibus could get under, just. My slightly taller minibus couldn't make it but easily we found another route to the quiet road leading to the back of the dump. Both buses screamed to a halt as a struggling yellow-legged gull pitched itself from the road into the adjacent buttercup meadow. With Russell taking the lead assisted by Chris and Mundi, armed with penknife we disentangled or cut away lengths of fishing line wrapped around the bird's wings, body

and one ankle. Then Russell, with consummate skill, extracted the fishing hook embedded in its beak. There was a great cheer from the group as the gull successfully flew away and disappeared into the hundreds above us around the dump. There was one red kite among scores of black kites and a male stonechat perched and sang from a bush top.

We had lunch away from the rubbish dump by the Étang d'Entressen. We moved from there to the entrance to a riding school as there was a white stork on its typical platform nest. A slight change of plan now took a five of us – the theft victims Malcolm and Mundi, me in case help with French be needed plus Norman and Maureen as moral support – into Arles to report yesterday's theft at the *gendarmerie*. It was a great day to go to Arles as the festival was on so as we wound our way through the crowded streets past the arena in the opposite direction there were scores of local people in traditional costumes, some on foot some on horseback. We first established by trial and error that we needed the *gendarmerie*, not the *Police National*, and that there wasn't an English-speaking *gendarme* present as Simone thought; they were at the festival, no doubt. After sending me back through Arles to get the vehicle's documents, the duty officer had the sense to summon me from the confusion of five Franglais speakers to a back office from where we called in Mundi and Malcolm; the paperwork was efficiently and cheerfully completed.

It was an early supper tonight so we could get swiftly away into a secret site in Les Alpilles north of Arles to see eagle owl. These performed exactly as Russell had commanded, including one bird perched high on the rock silhouetted against the sky showing ear tufts and twice eagle owls flew over the group to a rock on the other side of the small valley. There was the odd comment about having to miss out on the cheese course to arrive here by dusk but I don't think anyone doubted that it was well worth it.

Tuesday 2 May – East Camargue

Russell worked in the Camargue many years ago and was able to arrange the company of an old colleague of his today, John Walmsley. John's house seemed an idyllic location; we all peered into his colossal old sheep barn which dwarfed his VW Golf. Just down the road a wood warbler sang which most saw. John is quite an authority on the Camargue and its salt pans in particular and he first took us to a viewing platform over one of the largest areas of *salines* – there are 12,000 hectares in the Camargue. These salt pans produce a declared 1,000,000 tonnes of salt per annum and the real figure is probably 2 or 3 times that amount. There were various stops for various wading birds as we moved through the saltier areas of the Camargue, not least many little stints and scores of black-bellied dunlins in their breeding season plumage. John took us to a sluice where in still water we could make out the brine shrimps that are vital feeding for flamingos, stilts and other birds of the salt pans. Other stops along the way were for bee-eaters and a woodchat shrike from the Mediterranean islands' subspecies *badius*. The road turned into a rough track as we headed into the Étang du Fangassier where the main flamingo colony is located. There is a small information point here and John outlined the life history and conservation efforts for the flamingo. The good news is that the Camargue continues to be a successful population with increasing numbers that are spreading out into other areas of the Mediterranean.

Heading back north we paused at the observation platform at the Tour du Valat reserve where there was a nightingale in full view in the scope and a fan-tailed warbler zipped overhead. John joined us for supper this evening before heading off to the Aegean on the following day.

Wednesday 3 May – Les Baux and La Caume

Below the village of Les Baux there is a convenient place to pull off the road and watch over the valley below and to the crags beyond. We very quickly picked up alpine swifts and crag martins here; two short-toed eagles drifted through and a blue rock thrush sang from a rock. There was a great view of a bright yellow serin singing from some dead twigs out in the open and down the lane a blackcap was also caught in the telescope. We then climbed the steps into Les Baux and dispersed around this beautiful, though touristy, village where we enjoyed a coffee, ice creams, the old church, winding streets and singing black redstarts.

Simone's packed lunches are really something else with salads, French bread, cheese, fruit and other goodies and today's was enjoyed under pine trees a couple of kilometres further on. All round us were the bright blue flowers of aphallantes or blue-grass lily, though even these were later outshone by the intense blue of beautiful flax. We also found an early spider orchid under the pines. During the course of this

extravagant lunch a bus from Ring Ousel Tours arrived; various wildlife notes were exchanged and they set off up the hill to build their bird list. The Honeyguiders left the minibuses, Winifred and Mundi here for the long upward walk towards the radio mast on top of La Caume. It was a good time to be there for the wild flowers with grey-leaved cistus coming into flower, clumps of globularia, *Antirrhinum latifolium* and white and hoary rockroses along the way. The group was quite strung out along this road but some saw crested tits and heard firecrests. The group with the butterfly net and book caught a black-eyed blue, saw southern white admiral and everyone saw Moroccan orange tip.

Approaching the summit of La Caume there were many bushes of the white-flowered amelanchier shrub in flower – curiously not in the Mediterranean flower book. Higher still there were asphodels and the last few yellow flowers of *Iris lutescens* but these were just the supporting cast for the star of the show up here: Bonelli's eagle. Russell's reliable spot produced the most stunning view of this scarce bird of prey. Maureen handed out tootsie rolls to celebrate. Then coming back across the low scrub in the late afternoon sun there was this burst of activity from the local Dartford warblers. At least six and probably eight or 10 buzzed around us disputing territory, establishing pair bonds. Then just around the corner the Bonelli's eagle landed and we saw it perched on a crag. Meanwhile, back at the bus, Winifred and Mundi proved that sometimes you do well to let the wildlife come to you as they had enjoyed good views of crested tits.

Thursday 4 May – Petite Camargue

Somehow we hadn't seen a hoopoe all week but we did this morning along with crested larks which had been surprisingly thin on the ground so far. We also stopped at the Camargue information centre where a large green lizard clambered down a tree and disappeared into the grass. From the centre there were two ruffs along with the usual stilts, egrets and flamingos. We then moved through Saintes Maries de la Mer and down to the beach. New birds here were Kentish plovers, oystercatchers, a whimbrel swallowing a crab and a sprinkling of migrants. The most surprising of these was found when Russell went into the tamarisk bushes for a natural break: we are not sure who was the more surprised but he disturbed a nightjar that must have settled there having crossed the Med and it flew round in full view of the group. Then lunch, including strawberries, was enjoyed sitting by the beach.



Russell and I then moved the minibuses a little way down the beach and we walked back towards the approaching group with the migrant birds in the tamarisk being moved in between the pincer movement of the advancing parties. These included redstart, willow warbler and spotted flycatcher.

We drove back through Saintes Maries de la Mer and stopped at some wonderful lagoons that are part of the nature reserve. In one little group there were five whiskered terns, a little tern and a little gull. This lagoon also held several spotted redshanks and gull-billed terns. Further along we eventually found a spectacled warbler seen well in a tamarisk though a female rather than the chestnut-winged male. Purple herons by the reeds were much admired.

The final stop on the way back was for some shopping at one of these places that sell big pots that you could never get in your hand baggage but we bought oil, organic rice, herbs or ice creams. There were a few spots of rain – up to now we had had the most perfect sunny weather.

Friday 5 May – Pont du Gard

The Pont du Gard is the most fabulous piece of architecture, a three storey Roman aqueduct over the Gard (or Gardon) river and worth seeing irrespective of any natural history bonuses. From the car park it was a short walk to the stones by the river where we immediately heard the flutey song of golden orioles. Kate has been on several Honeyguide holidays and somehow always misses the golden orioles. They flew over us,

perched in the poplars on the other side of the river and everyone, even Kate, saw them well. Also on the river were little ringed plovers doing their butterfly-like display flight plus white wagtails, black redstarts and for some a bird that dashed away and was probably a kingfisher. Margaret Houke found she had lost a spectacle arm so we lined up and walked across the shingle in the style of a police team searching for a murder weapon, but didn't find the arm. Happily that afternoon a kind optician in Arles replaced it free of charge. As we got nearer to the aqueduct itself there were many alpine swifts and crag martins but no sign of the rock sparrows which, perhaps, had moved on due to maintenance work on the arches. Designs of mouflon and a cockerel were picked out on the stonework. Under the trees were Italian arums with their distinctive yellow spadix. In the poplars a thin, high-pitched song alerted us to a short-toed treecreeper which, untypically for a treecreeper, kindly sat on the right side of the trunk so we were all able to see it well in the telescope.

For the afternoon we split into two groups. The Arles contingent, as well as shopping and seeing the sights, found nine black terns on the Rhône. The birdwatchers headed in the direction of La Crau to a bee-eater colony some 40 or so strong.

Saturday 6 May – Marseilles and return

We were loaded in good time so Norman took the opportunity to read the limericks he had composed in honour of the group. Here they are:

Russell a leader renowned
Was quite inconvenienced when he found
A nightjar in daylight
Which took quite a long flight
But finally flew down to ground

With a Honeyguide leader named Chris
Bird sightings you never do miss
When you gaze without hope
He whips out a scope
Says, "OK, it's there, looks like this".

We dropped Jay at the roundabout outside Arles as he was staying on for a few days. There was a little time in hand so yesterday's birdwatchers were kind enough to take the shoppers to see what they missed yesterday. A green woodpecker caused us to stop by a stony field where we then saw two stone-curlews escort a cat away from where, no doubt, their nest was on the ground. We then visited the bee-eater colony, a fine conclusion to any holiday, before heading for Marseilles.



SYSTEMATIC LIST - BIRDS - CAMARGUE 2000

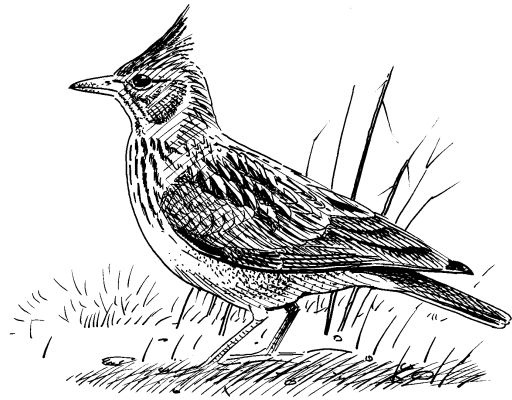
Little grebe	A single in marshes on the east side of Étang De Vaccares was surprisingly the only record.
Great crested grebe	A number at both Mas D'Agon and Étang de Entressen.
Night heron	Two at Mas D'Agon and a single close to the hotel. This species is most easily seen at dawn and dusk, when moving from and to feeding marshes.
Squacco heron	Seen well at Mas d'Agon, in its favoured feeding areas of flooded rice fields close to marshes. Maximum six.
Cattle heron	Very numerous in flooded rice fields, among cattle and in marshes. It is interesting to reflect that the entire Camargue only held two breeding pairs in 1969 when Russell worked there!
Little egret	Common in many marshes and especially in the salines.
Great white egret	Individuals seen well, especially at Mas d'Agon. The odd pair may now breed. This species is a recent colonist.
Grey heron	A common breeding bird in reedbeds, especially those with some scrub.
Purple heron	Excellent sightings at a number of sites, especially frequent at Mas d'Agon, where it breeds nearby in some numbers.
White stork	A single in flight at Parc Ornithologique and an obliging adult on a nest at Raphele. Only a very few pairs nest in the entire Camargue.
Greater flamingo	Impressive views of the vast breeding colony at Étang du Fangassier, with many elsewhere.
Mute Swan	Singles at a few sites only.
Shelduck	Frequent in saline places, especially around the edge of Étang de Vaccares.
Garganey	A single male seen from the observation tower at Marais de Basses Méjanes.
Gadwall	A pair in the eastern Camargue was the only sighting of this always scarce breeding bird. In winter many thousands occur.
Mallard	A very numerous duck of rice fields, marshes and water bodies.
Red-crested pochard	Several birds seen including some handsome males.
Honey buzzard	Six rather distant birds at Pont du Gard perhaps heralded the start of this bird's migration through the area.
Black kite	A very numerous bird of cultivation, around the edges of many marshes and especially at the infamous rubbish dump at Entressen and on La Crau.
Red kite	A single at the rubbish dump at Entressen was the only sighting.
Short-toed eagle	Singles on several days with up to three in the Les Baux/ La Caume area.
Marsh harrier	Common in all marshes and on the edges of cultivation.
Sparrowhawk	A single by the road to La Caume was the only sighting.

Common buzzard	A single bird in the eastern Camargue was the only sighting.
Bonelli's eagle	A pair at La Caume performed splendidly, including talon grappling and perching in full view on a rock.
Common kestrel	A common bird in most localities.
Red-footed falcon	A handsome adult male picking insects from the surface of a bare field on the Sunday got the week off to an excellent start.
Hobby	A single bird soon after the red-footed falcon was the only sighting.
Red-legged partridge	Three at the Aerodrome du Vallon and a few on the last day were the only sightings.
Pheasant	A single only - a rather secretive species here and never common.
Moorhen	Thinly scattered in most marshes.
Coot	Numerous on some of the larger water bodies.
Little bustard	Seen well on many occasions at the Aerodrome du Vallon with at least ten birds involved.
Oystercatcher	Up to five birds seen from the Digue la Mer.
Black-winged stilt	A common bird of shallow marshes, rice fields and coastal lagoons.
Avocet	Not uncommon in saline areas, especially on the west side of the Camargue.
Stone-curlew	Several at Aerodrome du Vallon and a pair in a field near Mas Thibert .
Pratincole	Up to 35 hawking insects over marshes between Gimeaux and Saliers. Probably a major part of the entire breeding population of the Camargue!
Little ringed plover	Three on river shingles at Pont du Gard the only sightings.
Ringed plover	A few in coastal lagoons along the edge of the Digue la Mer.
Kentish plover	Not uncommon in saline areas along the southern edge of the delta.
Grey plover	Sixty in a saline lagoon close to the Digue la Mer.
Lapwing	Up to three birds seen from the observation tower at Méjanès.
Sanderling	A few in coastal salines at Salin de Giraud.
Little stint	Frequent in saline areas on both the eastern and western flanks of the Camargue, maximum c100.
Temminck's stint	One or two of this difficult to identify species with little stints.
Curlew sandpiper	20-25 birds seen on two days in coastal lagoons, including some handsome adults in full summer plumage.
Dunlin	Not uncommon in saline areas - best flock c 300.
Ruff	Three at Parc Ornithologique the only sighting.

Whimbrel	A single seen close to the Digue la Mer the only sighting.
Curlew	A single in coastal salines the only sighting.
Redshank	A few in coastal lagoons near Cacharel.
Spotted redshank	Several in full summer plumage near Cacharel.
Greenshank	Occurred in very small numbers in some rice fields.
Wood sandpiper	Small groups in shallowly flooded rice fields and some marshes.
Common sandpiper	A few birds in coastal lagoons.
Mediterranean gull	The distinct calls of this species filled the air at many sites throughout the Camargue - some excellent sightings of adult birds in rice fields.
Little gull	A single near Cacharel the only sighting.
Black-headed gull	Common and widespread.
Slender-billed gull	Some superb views of adults complete with a rosy flush to their breasts, both in salines to the east and to the west of the delta.
Yellow-legged gull	An abundant species with exceptional numbers at the rubbish dump at Entressen, where we saw only too well the kind of hazards that feeding among rubbish can bring!
Gull-billed tern	Not uncommon in shallowly flooded rice fields.
Sandwich tern	Very much birds of coastal lagoons, never numerous.
Common tern	Occasional over marshes and water bodies.
Little tern	Scattered in coastal lagoons, where they will breed.
Black tern	Nine flying along the Rhône at Arles the only sighting.
Whiskered tern	Occasional in small numbers in flooded rice fields.
Woodpigeon	Never common, occasional among cultivation.
Collared dove	Frequent by the hotel and around other habitation.
Turtle dove	Daily evidence of passage - most often seen sitting on wires.
Cuckoo	Very scarce, being heard on only one day!
Eagle owl	Voted by many 'the bird of the trip' - excellent views at Mt Valence. At least forty pairs of eagle owls are thought to breed in Les Alpilles.
Nightjar	A single 'flushed' by Russell while 'watering the greens' provided all with excellent views at the Digue la Mer!
Swift	Widespread and common.
Alpine swift	Frequent at Les Baux, La Caume and Pont du Gard.



Bee-eater	Excellent views of a thriving colony of forty or more birds at Mas de l'Hoste and several heard and seen elsewhere.
Hoopoe	Only seen along the edge of the Petite Camargue where often associated with habitation or horses.
Green woodpecker	Scattered sightings only, mostly heard.
Great spotted woodpecker	A single by Étang de Entressen was the only record.
Crested lark	More often heard than seen but scattered throughout the area.
Skylark	Never common but in small numbers throughout the area.
Sand martin	Frequent over marshes in mixed flocks of hirundines.
Crag martin	In small numbers at Les Baux, La Caume and Pont du Gard.
Swallow	Widespread and common.
House martin	Frequent over marshes etc.
Yellow wagtail	Several races including the blue- and grey-headed sub-species. Very much birds of wet sansouires and brackish lagoons.
Grey wagtail	Only seen at Pont du Gard, where a single by the river.
White wagtail	A few on river shingles at Pont du Gard.
Robin	A single at Les Baux only.
Nightingale	The songster of Camargue ditches, scrub and woodland. Very numerous in places.
Black redstart	Some at Les Baux, others at Pont du Gard and Arles.
Redstart	A single close to the Digue la Mer was the only sighting.
Whinchat	Several perched on bushes along the eastern edge of the Étang de Vaccares.
Stonechat	Scattered sightings at a number of sites including La Crau.
Northern wheatear	Frequent on banks in the salines, and at La Crau.
Blue rock thrush	At least three birds performed well at Les Baux.
Blackbird	A single at Pont du Gard the only sighting.
Cetti's warbler	The explosive song of this bird will remain with us all for a very long time - a common bird of ditches, marshes and roadsides.
Fan-tailed warbler	The common warbler of rice fields and marsh edges with its distinctive 'zitting' call.
Reed warbler	Frequent in larger stands of reed.



Great reed warbler	The harsh song of this large warbler was heard from a few reedbeds.
Dartford warbler	Frequent in bushes close to the summit of La Caume.
Spectacled warbler	A poor sighting of a single bird at Cacharel.
Subalpine warbler	A single en route to the summit of La Caume was the only record.
Sardinian warbler	Scattered individuals, often reluctant to show themselves well.
Blackcap	Several in song at both Les Baux and Pont du Gard.
Bonelli's warbler	A single in song at Pont du Gard.
Willow warbler	Only recorded along the Digue la Mer, where several in Tamarix.
Wood warbler	Three in roadside bushes at Petit Badon.
Firecrest	Heard between Les Baux and La Caume.
Pied flycatcher	Several in bushes along the eastern edge of Étang de Vacarres.
Spotted flycatcher	A few in similar situations to the last species.
Bearded tit	Heard near Cacharel only.
Crested tit	Several in pines at the road end to La Caume.
Blue tit	A single at Pont du Gard only.
Great tit	Scattered birds close to habitation.
Short-toed treecreeper	A single bird at Pont du Gard.
Golden oriole	Excellent views of a number of birds at Pont du Gard, including fine males.

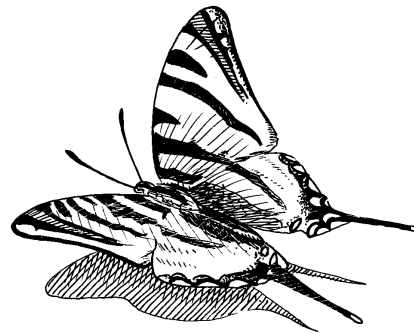


Woodchat shrike	A single bird in bushes by the eastern edge of Étang de Vaccares. John Walmsley considered this to be of the Mediterranean islands race <i>badius</i> .
Jay	Two at Les Baux were the only sightings.

Magpie	A very common species, especially on La Crau.
Jackdaw	Widespread and common.
Carrion crow	Widespread and common.
Starling	Widespread but never numerous.
House sparrow	Widespread and common.
Tree sparrow	Frequent by the hotel and at a number of other places, very different to in Britain where it is now very scarce or even rare species.
Chaffinch	Frequent in the Les Baux / La Caume area and at Pont du Gard.
Serin	Much as for chaffinch.
Greenfinch	Occasional by the hotel and elsewhere.
Goldfinch	Widespread and often quite common.
Linnet	Three on one day only.
Reed bunting	Two near Cacharel were the only sightings.

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail
Scarce swallowtail
Large white
Orange tip
Moroccan orange tip
Clouded yellow
Southern white admiral
Painted lady
Red admiral
A large unidentified fritillary
Marbled white
Small heath
Black-eyed blue
Adonis blue



Other notable invertebrates

Paper wasp
Carpenter bee
Bee hawk-moth
Ascalaphid (something between an ant-lion and a lacewing) *Libelloides longicornis*

Mammals

Rabbit
Coypu

Reptiles & amphibians

Tree frog
Marsh frog
Wall lizard
Green lizard