



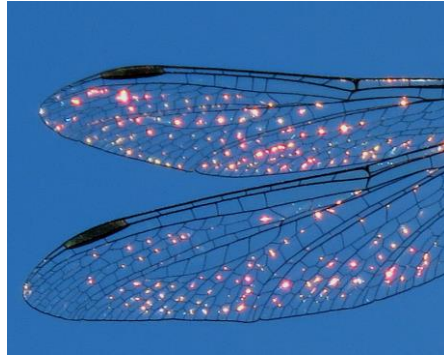
Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Spring in the Camargue

16 – 23 May 2019

Participants

Ron Fitton and Val Appleyard
Nicholas and Michelle Penny
John and Ann Titchmarsh
Howard and Sue Bayliss
Margaret Dixey
Cherry Robertson

David Goode
Geoff and Hazel Woodard
Malcolm and Jane Key
David Nind and Shevaun Mendelsohn
Jenny Loring

Leaders

Robin and Rachel Hamilton, Chris Gibson.

The group stayed at the Hôtel des Granges in Arles www.hoteldesgranges-arles.com/

Report by Chris Gibson.

Photos by Chris Gibson, Val Appleyard, David Goode, Jenny Loring and Shevaun Mendelsohn, all taken during the holiday week.

Cover – Top row: *Cistus albidus*; the wing of a darter catching pearls of sunlight; stripeless tree-frog (CG).

Middle: *Iris spuria* (CG); greater flamingos (DG).

Bottom: *Carrhotus xanthogrammica*, a jumping spider (CG); common swallowtail (VA); beautiful flax (CG).



Above: exploring the Alpilles; Robin and Rachel on the last evening (JL).

Below: Les Baux (CG); steps to the ruined chateau hewn out of fossilised scallop beds (JL).



As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of the holiday was put towards local conservation work, in this case for LPO PACA: La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux covering the area of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. The collaboration also helped with the group's visit to La Crau.

The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. The total was £970, though unusually this was in two parts: £690 was sent in May 2018, but an air traffic control strike in France meant cancellation for most of that group. Happily, nearly all of the 2018 contingent were able to go in 2019 and a further £280 was sent for additional group members in May 2019.

As at July 2019, the total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 is £132,482.

DAILY DIARY

Thursday 16 May: Arrival

A lunchtime flight from Gatwick brought us to Montpellier by mid-afternoon, with thankfully no repeat of last year's traumas. Before the plane had even stopped taxiing, we were seeing greater flamingos – an icon of the Camargue – feeding unconcernedly in the lagoon into which the runway extends.

Minibuses collected and loaded, an hour later we were skirting Arles to reach the Hotel des Granges, where our hosts Pascal and Christine were there to meet us and help us to our rooms. The song of nightingales in the garden is always a welcome accompaniment to the unpacking process, as indeed is the chirruping of house sparrows, now so unfamiliar for too many back home.

Dinner was the first of many delightful meals, 'family food' with strong local twists, and all delivered with a smile despite the vast range of dietary requirements! Conversation flowed freely as most of the group already knew each other from last year, but before long it was off to bed after a long day, via a tour of the lights and the attendant Moorish geckos, boxworm moth and cream-spot tiger.

Friday 17 May: Western Camargue

The day dawned cool and grey with a shower of rain, and so it remained, with barely a glimmer of sunshine, and one especially heavy rainstorm. Yes, this was the south of France, but in one of those increasingly frequent 'odd springs', the weirding associated with climate breakdown. As we gathered at the vans we took time to examine the assemblage of six cream-spot tigers at one of the garden lights, and bathing in the glorious song of two nightingales inside and three just outside the garden. Although I must confess to preferring my nightingale without the accompaniment of heavy traffic on the main road a few metres away....

Today was a safari sort of day, slow driving through the narrow lanes of the western Camargue close to the Étang de Vaccarès, past rice fields, marshes with white horses, lagoons and salt pans, hoping to chance upon birds. When we did, it was all out of the buses to have the best chance of good views. Most numerous especially on rice fields and fresh marshes were glossy ibises, their almost reptilian forms continually flying over in small flocks, while flamingos were restricted to the saltier, larger waters, sometimes no more than a pink smudge in the distance, taking advantage of whatever shelter they could from the strengthening northerly wind. Other long-legged water birds included little and cattle egrets, grey and night herons, a spoonbill, and the always-popular black-winged stilts, with just a few other waders: oystercatcher, ringed and Kentish plovers, again more where the influence of the sea was greatest. Great reed warblers sang gutturally from many a reed-filled ditch, some showing exceptionally well, bending the stems under their weight with the vigour of their singing; nightingales, melodious warblers and cuckoos contributed to the soundscape, along with the liquid trills of bee-eaters, each a clarion call to watch their rainbow aerobatics. One interacting pair of cuckoos along a line of tamarisks also gave exceptional views in flight and at rest, though the same was not true of the cisticolas, zitting and flitting around all the time, but never pausing in view, just plunging straight into cover.



Kentish plover (DG).



White horses and tamarisk (SM).

Some lagoons held large numbers of black-headed gulls, others Mediterraneans, but seemingly rarely together, while a few common and gull-billed terns graced the skies. Ducks, although few and far between, included red-crested pochard and gadwall, while raptors also were sparse, just the occasional black kite and kestrel. A few yellow wagtails flew over and skittered around the horse pastures; all those which were identifiable and identified were the central Mediterranean subspecies, the ashy-headed wagtail. And ever-present, everywhere overhead were hordes of common swifts. Clearly still moving north, our hope was that at least some would be heading for UK shores, given the paucity of arrivals in most places by the time we left home.

One particularly favoured lagoon north of Mas d'Agon late in the day produced the amazing sight of all three marsh terns in the same area, indeed the same binocular view on occasions: lots of whiskered, several white-winged black (unusual this far west, but following a significant spring influx into western Europe, including Britain) and just a couple of black terns. Watching them wheel around together was a masterclass in comparative identification, especially when common and gull-billed terns joined in the action.

With so many birds to watch, and inclement weather, plants really didn't get much of a look in, although the beds of yellow flags were a cheering sight with, in a couple of places, patches of the pale purple *Iris spuria*. Tamarisk bushes turned to pale pink as their red buds opened, and similar salty areas also had flowering patches of the invasive alien false indigo, all deep purple flower spikes with protruding orange anthers. And insects were even fewer, the only butterfly being small white, and the only other species of note the thistle-dwelling longhorn beetle *Agapanthia suturalis*.

Late in the afternoon, the rain really started to fall, but fortunately we were at our final destination and under cover, in the Camargue Ecomuseum, with its fascinating displays of the cultural and social history and significance of the region. A fine and dry way to wrap up our first day!

Saturday 18 May: la Crau

An early breakfast and departure were needed to ensure we could get to our meeting place with LPO representatives. La Crau is a fascinating, vast expanse of cobble-strewn steppe east of the Camargue, formed on the Alpine outwash plain of the River Durance before its course was diverted during the last Ice Age. Rare and fragile, the only true steppe habitat in France, access to the reserve is controlled to protect its vulnerable inhabitants, especially birds, as explained to us by Thomas, and ably translated by his colleague Marine, and Robin.



La Crau (JL).

The entrance to the reserve is marked by a fine example of puddingstone, a hard, impermeable layer underfoot, which can locally impede drainage, but cracks easily, hence the juxtaposition of arid grassland with damper pockets. But for most a more dramatic welcome came from the roller, a vision in electric blue, which entertained us for a few minutes, and the southern grey shrike on a bush, almost liquid in the ferocious heat haze, even without the sun showing. Other steppe birds included tawny pipits, northern wheatears, stone-curlews (including some fine flight views), hoopoes and a few lesser kestrels, aerobically hunting overhead. Several short-toed eagles were just as aerobatic, albeit in a lumbering hovering style, while a pair of pin-tailed sandgrouse sped over, and distant calandra larks were singing among the more-common short-toed larks.

Hinting at the lateness of this year's spring, the floristic riches of la Crau were not really apparent. Hollow-stemmed asphodel was flowering, along with steppe and cypress spurges, wild thyme and yellow *Phlomis lychnitis*, but relatively few others. However, butterflies were more obvious, with numerous western marbled white, Bath white, common blue, common and scarce swallowtails, and red-underwing skipper, and western demoiselles in a boundary ditch. Common wall lizards started to appear as the day warmed up, and a couple of Montpellier snakes showed briefly.

After lunch, a short drive took us to the Étang des Aulnes, a wetland on the western edge of la Crau, heading towards the valley of the Rhône. A lovely walk through sandy grassland into contrasting damp riverine woodland, with white poplar, downy oak, narrow-leaved ash and nettle-tree, rang with the sound (and occasional sightings) of golden orioles. A short-toed treecreeper sang from the trees, a hobby scythed overhead, while white storks and a purple heron proved easier to get onto in flight.



Bee orchid (CG); western marbled white (SM), *Tolpis umbellata*, umbrella milkwort (CG).

Butterflies included green-underside blue and brown argus, while other showy insects included hornets visiting a presumed nest hole high in an oak tree. The open grassland provided plenty of botanical interest, with *Urospermum*, bee orchids, blue hound's-tongue and dragon's-teeth...that is until the huge flock of hungry sheep arrived! Finally it was back onto the stony plains at Peau de Meaux car park, and a short walk along the fringing canal. Painted lady, banded demoiselle, scarce blue-tailed damselfly and southern damselfly all showed around the marginal vegetation, and an Iberian water frog tried hard to pretend it wasn't there but couldn't evade the eagle eyes of the group. As we ran out of time, the long-threatened rain started to fall, and in fact continued on and off, sometimes very heavily, throughout the evening.

Sunday 19 May: Eastern Camargue

A cool start after overnight rain, but a couple of flyover hoopoes added to the standard hotel garden fare of nightingale, sparrow and goldfinch. After breakfast we headed back to the Camargue, this time exploring the eastern shores of the Étang de Vaccarès, and beyond. First stop was close to a cormorant breeding colony, all guttural squawks and reptilian contortions. A distant blur of flamingos completed the windswept scene, with a few grey herons and great crested grebes, while an intriguing yellow wagtail poked around the marsh: darkish cap and white throat, but with a partial white eye-stripe, it may have been a variant ashy-headed, or perhaps an intergrade with one of the other races. Rachel then took the opportunity for a grass tutorial, involving hare's-tail, fox-tail and dog's-tail, all of which were in magnificent bloom, naughty bits to the wind, around us.

A little farther around lay the lovely reserve of la Capelière. After a comfort break and chance to look at the informative displays, we headed out on the nature trail, largely by boardwalk, with viewing screens and hides, which cleverly takes in examples of almost all the wild habitats of the Camargue. From the first screen, a great egret was showing magnificently, then a little farther on, a couple of white stork nests in trees, the occupants frequently filling the air with their bill clapping greeting displays. Passing through the damp woodland habitats, we chanced upon a female glow-worm (thanks to eagle-eyed Val) and the birthwort *Aristolochia rotunda*, then out into the saltmarsh scrub (sometimes locally termed 'sansouire'), small copper, Adonis ladybird and asparagus beetle, together with *Urophora stylata*, a picture-winged fly swarming around its thistle host-plant.



Coypu and black-winged stilts (CG).

A reedy ditch held a European pond terrapin as we proceeded into the main hide overlooking an island with a noisy and engaging breeding colony of black-winged stilts, all watching and being watched by a grazing coypu. And then three quarters of the way round the circular trail, we finally saw the luminous jellybean which gives its name to the trail 'le Sentier des Rainettes', a stripeless tree-frog. We had heard them previously, but here was one perched on the handrail of a lookout post, showing so well that for twenty minutes it distracted our attention away from another, almost as close, but on the more camouflaged background of a reed leaf.

After a leisurely picnic outside the visitor centre, we examined a pile of bat droppings below a sign board, behind which presumably bats were roosting, before heading off southwards closer to the sea and the more saline, and in places tidal, lagoons. In the increasingly windy conditions, flamingos were largely a distant smudge, seeking some shelter, while a few ringed and Kentish plovers poked around, and a small flock of dunlins flew past. A male spectacled warbler erupted in song-flight from a patch of shrubby glasswort and sea-blite, but typically gave only the fleetest of views as it settled and then plunged deep into the bushes, never to be seen or heard again. However, a showy crested lark was rather more confiding.

Next stop was essentially birdless, but still dramatic. The industrial salt-pans around Salin-de-Giraud presented a dramatic abiotic landscape, white mountains of salt standing proud from the pink lagoons, hypersaline waters shot through with the essence of flamingo. Then down to the end of the road, the sea, tidal inlets and what should have been sand dunes at Plage d'Arles: sadly the dunes have gone, either bulldozed away or eroded by storms, and whatever the culprit, a sad loss.



Salin-de-Giraud (CG).

But the tidal inlets were still teeming with birds, including numerous Sandwich and little terns, slender-billed gulls and mute swans. Avocets were feeding in the shallows, while a redshank, several dunlins and a few splendid genuinely red knots were challenging to see well in the blustery wind, before heavy rain and the clock brought the day's events to a halt.

Monday 20 May: Pont du Gard, Arles and the Alpilles at dusk

Overnight cloud and rain cleared at breakfast, promising much better weather for our trip to the Pont du Gard, a magnificent Roman aqueduct across the River Gardon. A 'must see' despite its popularity, thankfully tourism is catered for relatively tastefully, and it is surrounded by wildlife. It began with common redstarts and a greenfinch singing in the trees, then a kingfisher in the river, a hoopoe on a building across the river, and alpine swifts and crag martins overhead. Rock sparrows and a common wall-lizard were on the superstructure of the bridge itself, while a black redstart sang from nearby cliffs.



On the bridge at the Pont du Gard: common wall lizard and rock sparrow (CG).

Very different from previous days, the vegetation was strongly Mediterranean, with Montpellier maple, strawberry-tree and laurustinus, providing 'you'll never see me' cover for singing Bonelli's and western orphea warblers and firecrests. Closer to the ground, little-Robin, blue lettuce, tassel hyacinth, white rockrose and *Convolvulus cantabricus* added their splashes of colour, plus a dramatic deep red broomrape *Orobanche gracilis* and enough grass-porn to keep Rachel happy for hours, a large-flowered fescue with all its private parts on show.

After lunch in the car park, with a raven and a hobby overhead, we returned to the hotel in mid-afternoon. Robin and Rachel took those who wanted to explore the Roman delights of Arles, although they were plagued by very heavy rain; the remainder either relaxed or ventured out on foot with me down to the canal a couple of kilometres away after the rain had stopped. The rather unprepossessing agricultural hinterland of the hotel still produced some birds, with several nightingales seen well, and a pair of rollers and a pair of common kestrels feeding from the overhead wires. Taking advantage of the sun after the shower, lots of insects were homing in to the trackside nectar sources, especially milk-thistle: spotted sulphur, four-spotted and six-spot burnet moths; two species of *Agapanthia* longhorn beetle; long-horned bees – everything seemed to be spotted or horned. A patch of *Aristolochia rotunda*, almost malevolent in the sombre hue of its flowers, was being demolished by the dramatic spiky caterpillars of the southern festoon butterfly.



Spotted jewel beetle *Acmaeodera degener* (VA); southern festoon caterpillar on birthwort and *Agapanthia suturalis* (CG).

Dinner was early this evening so that we could take a trip at dusk out to the western end of the Alpilles, a ridge of limestone hills, only twenty minutes or so from the hotel. In a valley, by a rocky outcrop we settled in for the light to fade. A tawny owl started to call at the same time as nightjars, at first distant but then much closer, giving excellent flight views. Small bats were emerging – common and Savi's pipistrelles from the detector frequencies – and then appeared the largest bat any of us had ever seen, powerful, broad-winged, soaring flight just a few metres above us – a greater mouse-eared bat. The only bat I have ever seen with a touch of the lammergeier about it! Darkness had almost enveloped us, and we were drifting back to the vans, when several of the group independently realised there was a new lump on the cliff top at last, the main object of this visit, eagle owl. Which remained looking at us, ear tufts erect, until stolen from us by the night.

Tuesday 21 May: Les Alpilles and les Baux

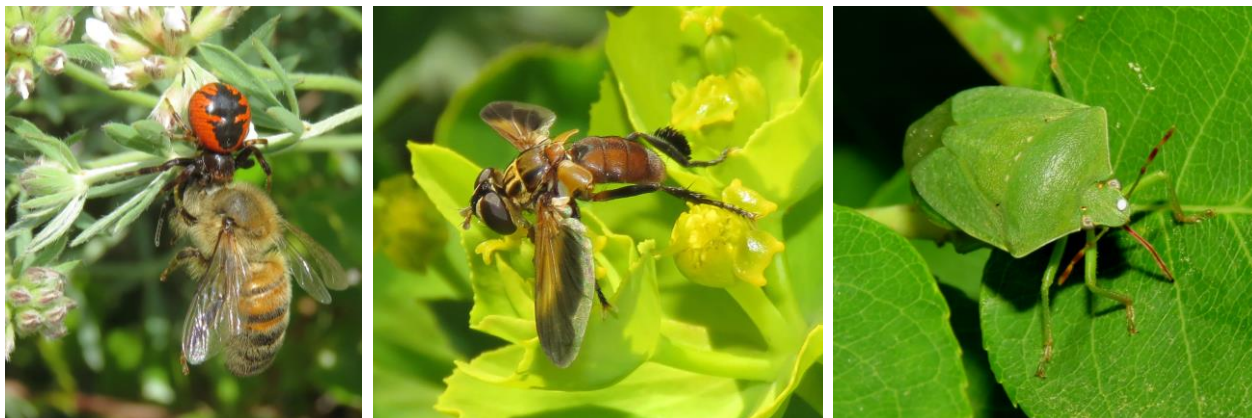
At last, a sunny dawn, promising a hot day, although the wind was still gusty. Things started well in the garden with a pine lappet joining the cream-spot tigers at the lights, and a giant bagworm on a litter bin, before we headed out again inland to the Alpilles above les Baux. Superb views, fascinating wind-eroded limestone geology, and at least where we could find shelter from the by now ferocious wind, wonderful wildlife, with plants including vivid blue beautiful flax and *Aphyllanthes*; shrubby hare's-ear; holm and kermes oaks; yellow and white rock-roses; and crinkled pink *Cistus albidus*.



The Alpilles behind la Crau – limestone, not snow (CG).

The sparse pine woodland harboured serins, crested tits and a ciril bunting, while Michelle managed a brief view of a tree-top pine marten. Cleopatra and baton blue, wall and Lulworth skipper increased our butterfly list for the week, and a range of other insects delighted and astounded everyone. Particularly notable were the stunningly bespangled jewel-beetles nestled in their preferred flowers, but rose chafers and a feathered footman moth were also popular, as was the large, stripy-eyed caterpillar, sadly as-yet unidentified.

Of course where insects abounded, so did the spiders. Time and again, the sight of an uncommonly still bee or fly dangling from a flower on closer inspection proved to be in the jaws of its nemesis, a crab spider, having ambushed the unsuspecting pollinator of 'their' flower. And in a Gothic flourish of sex and death, the sight of a tiny male *Thomisus onustus* precariously mounting a much larger female while she was otherwise occupied in dealing with a paralysed bumblebee was for me one of the sights of the week!



Synaema globosum with prey; *Trichopoda pennipes*, and a doomed green shield bug (CG).

We finished by walking up the road to the summit of the hill, where the wind proved almost too strong to stay upright. But we still managed to take in hoary rockrose and Montpellier milk-vetch underfoot, and a close but brief, windswept honey-buzzard, before we descended back into relative shelter and shade for an idyllic picnic spot.

Rather less idyllic was the afternoon, down at the village we were overlooking, les Baux: historic maybe, but crowded, noisy and dusty, crammed with every sort of shop one could never want, a tourist tat-trap. Such a contrast to the tasteful tourism at Pont du Gard, and not surprisingly, alpine swifts from the viewpoint were just about all the wildlife there was to see. Otherwise, and stretching the definition a bit, there was the original boulder of bauxite, the aluminium ore named after the village, and some of the steps up to the ruined chateau were hewn out of fossilised beds of scallops, almost as if walking in the footsteps of Santiago. Then of course, the old stalwart – the car park. Examination of the flowers around it, including some fine serrated spurges, produced Spanish gatekeeper, and one of the most remarkable flies I have ever seen, the parasitic fly *Trichopoda pennipes*, its drop wings bearing three colours, and huge shield-like halteres. A remarkable looking creature, one that is actually native to north America, but introduced to southern Europe as a biological control agent against the southern green shield bug. Therein lies the answer to a mystery: the identity of the white, egg-shaped spot on the head of a southern green shield-bug we had found yesterday...

After dinner, we were treated to a quiz by David G, the challenge being to identify thirty or so self-generated bird songs and calls. Somewhat reassuringly, at least from the group's (and David's) point of view, the highest scores were achieved by the three leaders!

Wednesday 22: Petite Camargue

Another day of almost unbroken sunshine, with only a light breeze to ameliorate the heat, so at least we would be going home with the external appearance of having been in the south of France for a week! It was back into the wetlands, this time to la Petite Camargue, west of le Petit Rhône. Our first two stops were at storks' nests, one on a platform on a pylon, the other atop an old windmill, both occupied by adults and their downy young.



White storks greeting at the nest; squacco heron (CG).

As is so often the case, the huge nests were shared with sparrows, although only house sparrows on this occasion. We spent several happy minutes watching the interactions between the birds, very appropriate as the news had been released only the day before that white storks were nesting in Britain for the first time in 300 years....

Our main morning visit was to the Scamandre nature reserve, again a reserve centred on a lagoon, with an extensive system of walkways, all the better to enjoy the airport-style procession of glossy ibises; great, little and cattle egrets; grey, purple and night herons overhead, and watch the fearless squacco herons feeding in the shallows. A splendid, huge Caspian tern flew past several times, on one occasion also fishing, and our first (surprisingly) marsh harrier of the week quartered the marshes. Kingfishers were showy and noisy around some of the shallow pools, and the sparrows around the visitor centre proved mainly to be tree sparrows.



Scamandre reserve (CG).

Large carp were spawning in some of the pools, their dorsal fins breaking the water's surface, while Iberian water frogs quacked noisily, and both Montpellier snake and viviparous lizard presented themselves to us on the boardwalk. This site should have been superb for Odonata, especially given the weather, but only three species was a strong indication of what seemed to be a late spring. Most numerous and showy were black-tailed skimmers, with a few blue-tailed damselflies and a freshly-emerged common darter.

After another lovely picnic lunch outside the visitor centre, we headed off again in search of more delights. Unfortunately through a mismatch between the maps and the roads, and absence of a satnav signal, we failed to find the intended lagoons, but we did get to cross le Petit Rhône on a chain-ferry, and see the outskirts of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer and be thankful we were not stopping there! We did also see a fine pair of rollers, and our only red kite of the week.

From there we headed to a farm shop to stock up with regional produce – salt, rice, oil etc – to take home (along with the odd ice-cream) before a last look at the lagoon which so entranced us with its trio of marsh terns at the start of the week. The white-winged blacks and most of the black-terns had moved on, but half a dozen great egrets and a purple heron made up for that. And the skies were empty of swifts, such a contrast to six days previously they, like us tomorrow, perhaps heading to UK shores.

As we had missed our listing sessions for the last two days, an early start to the final evening celebrations led naturally to another fine meal, rounded off with a glass of something special, a herby local liqueur, and a few words from David G to mark the occasion of Robin and Rachel's retirement from Honeyguiding.

Thursday 23 May: Homeward bound....

Despite the leisurely planned departure in mid-morning, we had to be up and about early as the hotel had decided we must be packed and out of our rooms by 9am. Still, that did allow us time to assemble our picnics, for Robin and Geoff to head back to les Baux to retrieve a missing rucksack, and for some a last potter down the lane to see the rollers.

Away at 10.30, we headed west back towards Montpellier, stopping off at Étang de l'Or, the lagoon just east of, and within sight and easy reach of, the airport for lunch. Flamingos galore, breeding Sandwich, common and little terns, along with avocets, black-winged stilts and half a dozen roosting Caspian terns made for a fitting finale, spiced up with a stripy-eyed Egyptian locust and a shocking-red scarlet darter. A diverse end to a diverse week.

Well almost the end.... Jenny, whose flight to Amsterdam left a few minutes after ours, texted on our arrival at Gatwick that she had had the good fortune to spot a pair of little bustards on the edge of the runway: a last-gasp addition to the holiday list!

The best bits

As is traditional, after our final evening meal together we asked everyone to regale us with their highlights from the holiday. In their own words:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Geoff | This afternoon, Nick asked me to look at the blue sky, and straight away I saw a short-toed eagle, invisible to the naked eye. Then more and more, about ten species, in an apparently clear blue sky. |
| Hazel | Every day different and every day something new. My favourite bird was the bee-eater, so close as to see all the colours. |
| Malcolm | Bringing to life the contrasting landscapes; limestone uplands, freshwater rice fields and saline lagoons, presented to us by a threesome of leaders. |
| Jane | I loved la Capelière – so natural. The naturalness of the way the nature trail brought the habitats to life |
| Shevaun | It's difficult, with such varied habitats. The limestone Alpilles with their flowers and butterflies; the white Camargue horses in the tamarisk. |
| David G | The eagle owl. Last time it was a wonderful evening but we missed it. This time it we saw the owl, and that wonderful mouse-eared bat. |
| Cherry | I loved the black-winged stilts completely at home on their island; the ringed and Kentish plovers. The catchfly at Pont du Gard; in the day it's pathetic, but at evening it's gorgeous. |
| Ann | I like things I can really see without binoculars: the geckos and the little green tree-frog. |
| John | As ever, many highlights. The most iconic were the flamingos: really good views of them flying. The wonderful flowers and insects in the Alpilles. |
| Michelle | That giant bat – magical – so different from our bats at home; the stone curlew, such an unusual looking bird but how good to see it clearly. A new bird for me. |
| Nick | Enjoying learning bits about the plants, insects and birds; flying birds with long necks: flamingos, storks, purple and night herons, egrets and ibises. |
| David N | Scamandre – the place; the beautiful flax under the trees in the Alpilles; the common redstart singing outside reception at the Pont du Gard. |
| Jenny | Seeing us all on my arrival at Montpellier after my extraordinary experience last year – and enjoying the sights in company; the amazing diversity of everything in the Alpilles. |
| Val | Difficult choices – the giant bat, the geckoes at the hotel, the diversity of habitats that we had visited over the week, the night sounds at the eagle owl site. |
| Ron | Flying flamingos; the greater mouse-eared bat – I have never seen anything that big outside a horror movie! |
| Margaret | Seeing the three marsh terns together at the Mas d'Agon – with such clear views; la Crau – what an extraordinary place; wonderfully atmospheric short-toed eagle. |
| Howard | The constant nightingales wherever we went – heard but not seen. |
| Sue | The flamingos – and principally, the company of the group. |
| Rachel | Delightful, harmonious group – despite worries about its size. An appropriate swansong – after spending our honeymoon here nearly 50 years ago! Fabulous brief image of a bee-eater perched in a sea of iris; <i>Aphyllanthes</i> is a favourite flower; Scamandre at its hectic best with birds constantly coming and going across the sky; all-night song of nightingales. |
| Robin | The three marsh terns together at Mas d'Agon; wonderful views of the eagle owl – at last. |
| Chris | The greater mouse-eared bat soaring around in the night sky like a lammergeier; in the Alpilles, after lunch – sex and violence and death: the saga of the crab spiders and the bumblebee. |

A blog with more photos can be found on my website at <https://www.chrisgibsonwildlife.co.uk/spring-in-the-camargue/>

LISTS

BIRDS

Little grebe	Scamandre
Great crested grebe	Étang de Vaccarès; Étang des Aulnes; Scamandre
Cormorant	All larger water bodies; breeding colony near la Capelière
Night heron	Occasional; most frequent at Scamandre
Squacco heron	Seen only in and around Scamandre; several confiding birds feeding in the reserve
Cattle egret	Small groups throughout the wetland sites
Little egret	Throughout the wetland areas
Great egret	La Capelière; Scamandre; Mas d'Agon
Grey heron	Small numbers throughout the wetlands; a couple of nests in the cormorant colony
Purple heron	Étang des Aulnes; Scamandre; Mas d'Agon
White stork	Nesting at la Capelière and near Scamandre; seen in flight elsewhere
Glossy ibis	One of the commoner long-legged birds in the rice fields and other more freshwater habitats
Spoonbill	Occasional birds in flight over the main wetlands
Greater flamingo	Large numbers in the more saline wetlands
Mute swan	On the larger and more saline lagoons especially, some large aggregations
Shelduck	Small numbers, especially on the larger, more salty lagoons
Mallard	Seen daily but only low numbers
Gadwall	Pairs on several of the smaller lagoons
Red-crested pochard	Three at la Capelière and Scamandre; Étang de l'Or
Red kite	One in la Petite Camargue
Black kite	The most abundant large raptor, seen every day
Short-toed eagle	Several over la Crau; occasional birds/pairs elsewhere
Marsh harrier	Just one seen, at Scamandre
Common buzzard	Seen each day, but rather sparse
Honey-buzzard	Alpilles
Sparrowhawk	Singles over the hotel and Étang des Aulnes
Lesser kestrel	Five birds flying and feeding high over la Crau
Common kestrel	Occasional birds seen most days
Hobby	Singles seen most days, often fleetingly, apart from one at Étang des Aulnes, watched feeding for several minutes
Pheasant	A few birds in farmland and marshes
Red-legged partridge	One near the hotel
Little bustard	Two on Montpellier airport
Moorhen	In most reedy pools
Coot	Quite numerous on larger water bodies
Oystercatcher	A few seen around the tidal lagoons
Black-winged stilt	Widespread, from rice fields to tidal lagoons; breeding colony at la Capelière
Avocet	A few around the outer, tidal lagoons
Stone-curlew	Several seen and heard at la Crau; some good flight views
Ringed plover	Parties of up to 20 around the outer, tidal lagoons
Kentish plover	Groups of up to three, often associating with ringed plovers
Redshank	One or two on the saltmarsh inland of Plage d'Arles
Greenshank	One inland of Plage d'Arles
Knot	Three on the lagoons inland of Plage d'Arles
Dunlin	Small groups around the larger lagoons, especially inland of Plage d'Arles
Mediterranean gull	Widespread; often seen, or heard, over the hotel
Black-headed gull	Widespread and locally numerous in wetlands
Slender-billed gull	Up to ten birds in the lagoons between Salin-de-Giraud and Plage d'Arles
Yellow-legged gull	Frequent
Lesser black-backed gull	A couple of birds on Étang de Vaccarès
Black tern	Two or three at Mas d'Agon, on both visits
White-winged black tern	Five or six birds at Mas d'Agon on our first visit
Whiskered tern	Locally numerous, especially at Mas d'Agon
Caspian tern	One at Scamandre; six roosting on Étang d'Or
Gull-billed tern	Pairs and small groups seen throughout the wetlands, although fewer on the more seaward pools
Sandwich tern	Lagoons inland of Plage d'Arles; Étang d'Or (breeding)
Common tern	Widespread around most wetland habitats, but in low numbers
Little tern	Lagoons inland of Plage d'Arles; Étang d'Or (breeding)
Pin-tailed sandgrouse	Two in flight over la Crau
Rock dove/feral pigeon	Widespread and numerous in all settlements; pure-looking rock doves at Pont du Gard
Woodpigeon	Widespread, though never common
Collared dove	Common around settlements
Turtle dove	A few singles and pairs, mostly 'fly-throughs'
Cuckoo	Widespread; mostly just heard, but a couple seen around Étang de Vaccarès

Eagle owl	One at dusk, Alpilles
Tawny owl	One calling at dusk, Alpilles
Scops owl	Heard on two evenings close to the hotel
Nightjar	Several seen and heard at dusk, Alpilles
Swift	Very numerous, especially during the first half of the week
Alpine swift	Pont du Gard; les Baux
Kingfisher	Pont du Gard; Scamandre
Bee-eater	Widespread but rather thinly scattered; over the hotel on occasions
Roller	La Crau, & occasional pairs around the drier parts of the Camargue; pair near the hotel
Hoopoe	Seen well at la Crau and Pont du Gard; occasional around the hotel; regularly seen on journeys
Green woodpecker	Étang des Aulnes
Calandra lark	La Crau; heard only, and rather distant
Short-toed lark	La Crau
Crested lark	Occasional in agricultural areas and salt scrub
Skylark	A few singing around la Crau and the western Camargue
Crag martin	Pont du Gard and les Baux
Swallow	Common
House martin	Often with swallows but fewer in number
Sand martin	Mas d'Agon; Petite Rhône ferry
Tawny pipit	La Crau; western Camargue
Yellow wagtail	Occasional: of the males seen well, most were ashy-headed and one was blue-headed
White wagtail	Pont du Gard; occasional in the Camargue
Northern wheatear	La Crau
Nightingale	Common and vocal
Black redstart	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
Redstart	Pont du Gard
Blackbird	Occasional, especially inland
Blue rock thrush	Alpilles and les Baux
Cetti's warbler	Common in wetlands
Zitting cisticola	Common in wetlands
Savi's warbler	Heard at Mas d'Agon
Grasshopper warbler	Heard at la Capelière
Reed warbler	Common in wetlands
Great reed warbler	Wetlands, though rather local, mostly western Camargue
Melodious warbler	Common throughout
Spectacled warbler	One male displaying, not far from Salin-de-Giraud
Sardinian warbler	Widespread in all scrubby habitats
Western orphean warbler	Pont du Gard
Blackcap	Occasional
Subalpine warbler	La Crau; Salin-de-Giraud
Western Bonelli's warbler	Pont du Gard
Firecrest	Pont du Gard
Bearded tit	Heard on a couple of occasions in reedy areas
Crested tit	Alpilles
Blue tit	Pont du Gard
Great tit	La Capelière; Alpilles
Long-tailed tit	Pont du Gard; Alpilles; Scamandre
Short-toed treecreeper	Pont du Gard; Étang des Aulnes
Golden oriole	Étang des Aulnes; Pont du Gard
Red-backed shrike	Fields close to the hotel
Southern grey shrike	La Crau
Jay	Alpilles
Magpie	Widespread
Jackdaw	Widespread
Rook	A small flock seen several times on the outskirts of Arles
Carrion crow	Widespread
Raven	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
Starling	Widespread
Rock sparrow	Pont du Gard
House sparrow	Widespread in suitable habitat
Tree sparrow	Scamandre
Chaffinch	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
Serin	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
Greenfinch	Pont du Gard, and in hotel grounds
Goldfinch	Widespread
Cirl bunting	Alpilles
Reed bunting	Occasional in reedy areas
Corn bunting	Camargue; la Crau

FISH	REPTILES
Carp: Spawning in the shallows at Scamandre	European pond terrapin: La Capelière
	Viviparous lizard: Scamandre
AMPHIBIANS	Wall lizard: La Crau, Pont du Gard and the Alpilles
Stripeless tree frog: Seen and heard at la Capelière; heard near hotel	Green lizard: One in the hotel grounds
Iberian water frog: Common in all lowland wetlands	Moorish gecko: Common at the hotel
	Montpellier snake: La Crau and Scamandre

MAMMALS
Rabbit: Close to the hotel; road casualties elsewhere
Wild boar: Rootlings seen in many places, especially Étang des Aulnes
Coypu: Widespread on fresh waters of the Camargue
Mole: Hills in drier grassland
Pine marten: One briefly in the Alpilles
Common pipistrelle: Alpilles, and in the hotel grounds
Badger: A run found close to the hotel
Savi's pipistrelle: Alpilles
Red fox: Occasionally seen while travelling, alive & dead
Greater mouse-eared bat: Alpilles

BUTTERFLIES				
Scarce swallowtail	Clouded yellow	Chalkhill blue	Red admiral	Spanish gatekeeper
Common swallowtail	Cleopatra	Green-underside blue	Painted lady	Southern speckled wood
Southern festoon (larvae)	Brimstone	Brown argus	Western marbled white	Red-underwing skipper
Bath white				
Large white	Small copper	Baton blue	Wall brown	Large skipper
Small white	Long-tailed blue	Common blue	Meadow brown	Lulworth skipper

MOTHS	
<i>Acontia lucida</i> Pale shoulder	<i>Idaea seriata</i> Small dusty wave
<i>Acontia trabealis</i> Spotted sulphur	<i>Idaea serpentata</i> Ochraceous wave
<i>Alcis repandata</i> Mottled beauty	<i>Luffia ferchaultella</i> Virgin bagworm
<i>Arctia villica</i> Cream-spot tiger	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i> Willow beauty
<i>Canephora hirsuta</i> Giant Bagworm	<i>Psyche casta</i> A bagworm
<i>Chiasmia aestimaria</i> Tamarisk peacock	<i>Pterophorus pentadactylus</i> Large white plume-moth
<i>Coscinia striata</i> Feathered footman	<i>Scopula decorata</i> Middle lace border
<i>Cydalima perspectalis</i> Boxworm	<i>Synaphe bombycalis provincialis</i> A large micro-moth
<i>Dendrolimus pini</i> Pine lappet	<i>Tethea ocularis</i> Figure-of-80
<i>Eilema complana</i> Scarce footman	<i>Thyris fenestrella</i> Pygmy
<i>Ematurga atomaria</i> Common heath	<i>Tyta luctuosa</i> Four-spotted
<i>Emmelinea monodactyla</i> Common plume-moth	<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i> Six-spot burnet
<i>Hecatera dysodea</i> Small ranunculus	



Boxworm; cream-spot tiger; *Synaphe bombycalis provincialis*, a large micro-moth (CG).



Mercury bluet, *Coenagrion mercurial* (CG).

DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES	
Southern hawker <i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Blue-tailed damselfly <i>Ischnura elegans</i>
Banded demoiselle <i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	Scarce blue-tailed damselfly <i>Ischnura pumilio</i>
Western demoiselle <i>Calopteryx xanthostoma</i>	Black-tailed skimmer <i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>
Mercury bluet <i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>	Common darter <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>
Scarlet darter <i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>	

GRASSHOPPERS & BUSH-CRICKETS	
Egyptian locust <i>Anacridium aegyptiacum</i>	A large green bush-cricket <i>Isophya pyrenaee</i>
Field cricket <i>Gryllus campestris</i>	Great green bush-cricket <i>Tettigonia vitidissima</i>

MAYFLIES	
<i>Ephemera danica</i> A large mayfly	

BEETLES	
<i>Acmaeodera degener</i> A spotted jewel-beetle	<i>Hippodamia variegata</i> Adonis ladybird
<i>Agapanthia suturalis</i> A longhorn beetle	<i>Lachnaia pubescens</i> Six-spotted leaf-beetle
<i>Agapanthia villosoviridescens</i> A longhorn beetle	<i>Lampyrus noctiluca</i> Glow-worm
<i>Anthaxia hungarica</i> A jewel-beetle	<i>Larinus carlinae</i> A weevil
<i>Anthaxia millefolii polychloros</i> A jewel-beetle	<i>Lixus pulverulentus</i> A giant weevil
<i>Attagenus trifasciatus</i> A larder-beetle	<i>Oedemera nobilis</i> Thick-thighed beetle
<i>Cassida viridis</i> Green tortoise-beetle	<i>Oenopia lyncea</i> A small ladybird
<i>Cetonia aurata</i> Rose chafer	<i>Oxythyrea funesta</i> Spotted flower chafer
<i>Chrysolina americana</i> Rosemary beetle	<i>Phyllopertha horticola</i> Garden chafer
<i>Cicindela campestris</i> A tiger-beetle	<i>Pseudovadonia livida</i> Fairy-ring longhorn
<i>Clytra quadripunctata</i> A spotted leaf-beetle	<i>Rhagonycha fulva</i> Hogweed bonking beetle
<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i> Seven-spot ladybird	<i>Stenurella bifasciata</i> A longhorn beetle
<i>Copris hispanus</i> A rhinoceros beetle	<i>Trichodes leucopsides</i> A chequered-beetle
<i>Crioceris asparagi</i> Asparagus beetle	<i>Tropinota hirta</i> Hairy flower chafer
<i>Cryptocephalus ruginellus</i> A flower beetle	<i>Valgus hemipterus</i> A black and white scarab
<i>Exosoma lusitanicum</i> A flower beetle	

TRUE BUGS	
<i>Closterotomus norvegicus</i> Potato capsid	<i>Megalodactylus macularubra</i> A mirid on tamarisk
<i>Coreus marginatus</i> Dock bug	<i>Nezara viridula</i> Southern green shield-bug
<i>Eurydema ornata</i> A red and black shield-bug	<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i> Fire-bug
<i>Graphosoma italicum</i> Milwall bug	<i>Sciocoris sideritidis</i> A tiny shield-bug
<i>Hyalopterus pruni</i> Reed aphid	<i>Spilostethus pandurus</i> A red and black bug
<i>Lygaeus equestris</i> A red and black bug	

FLIES	
<i>Anthomyia pluvialis</i> A flower-fly	<i>Nephrotoma crocata</i> A crane-fly
<i>Bombylius cruciatus</i> A bee-fly	<i>Oestrus ovis</i> Sheep nostril-fly
<i>Chloromyia formosa</i> A soldier-fly	<i>Sarcophaga carnaria</i> Flesh fly
<i>Chrysotoxum cautum</i> A hoverfly	<i>Spaerophoria</i> sp. A hoverfly
<i>Dasypogon diadema</i> A large black robber-fly	<i>Tachina fera</i> A parasitic fly
<i>Dorycera grandis</i> A picture-wing	<i>Tephritis formosa</i> A picture-winged fly
<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i> Marmalade hoverfly	<i>Terellia serratulae</i> A picture-wing
<i>Eristalis pertinax</i> Drone-fly	<i>Thaumatomyia notata</i> A grass-fly
<i>Helophilus pendulus</i> A hoverfly	<i>Trichopoda pennipes</i> A parasitic fly
<i>Helophilus trivittatus</i> A hoverfly	<i>Urophora stylata</i> A picture-winged fly
<i>Hemipenthes morio</i> A bee-fly	<i>Villa abbadon</i> A bee-fly

BEES, WASPS & ANTS	
<i>Andrena hattorfiana</i> Large scabious mining-bee	<i>Polistes</i> sp. A paper-wasp
<i>Apis mellifera</i> Honeybee	<i>Vespa crabro</i> Hornet
<i>Eucera longicornis</i> Long-horned bee	<i>Xylocopa violacea</i> Violet carpenter-bee
<i>Plagiotrochus quercusilicis</i> Wasp gall on kermes oak	

SPIDERS	
<i>Aphantaulax</i> sp. A ground spider	<i>Pisaura mirabilis</i> Nursery-web spider
<i>Carrhotus xanthogrammica</i> A jumping spider	<i>Runcinia grammica</i> A crab-spider
<i>Evarcha arcuate</i> A jumping spider	<i>Synaema globosum</i> A crab-spider
<i>Heliophanus</i> sp. A jumping spider	<i>Thomisus onustus</i> A crab-spider
<i>Misumena vatia</i> A crab-spider	

OTHER INVERTEBRATES		
<i>Tachypodiulus cf niger</i> A large, black millipede	<i>Eobania vermiculata</i> A snail	<i>Cornu aspersa</i> Garden snail

PLANTS OF THE CAMARGUE AND SURROUNDING AREA, MAY 2019

To minimise confusion, the plant names and classification below are consistent with the checklist prepared and circulated for the aborted 2018 holiday. Some changes have recently been made to the officially accepted names and family alignments and these came widely into use in the spring of 2019. It does not seem appropriate to introduce those changes here.

* = definite or probable introduction

LOWER PLANTS		
Characeae: Stoneworts		
<i>Chara</i> spp.	Stoneworts	Slow-moving water bodies
Pteridophyta: Ferns etc		
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair spleenwort	Pont du Gard
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rustyback fern	Pont du Gard
<i>Equisetum ramosissimum</i>	Branched horsetail	la Capelière
CONIFERS		
Cupressaceae: Cypresses and Junipers		
<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> var. <i>pyramidalis</i>	Italian cypress	Conspicuous; scattered near habitations
<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> var. <i>horizontalis</i>	(Spreading) cypress	Alpilles
<i>Ephedra fragilis</i>	Joint-pine	Alpilles
<i>Juniperus oxycedrus</i>	Prickly juniper	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i>	Phoenicean juniper	Alpilles
<i>Pinus halepensis</i>	Aleppo pine	Alpilles
<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Austrian pine	Alpilles
<i>Pinus pinaster</i>	Maritime pine	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Pinus pinea</i>	Umbrella pine	Widespread in suitable habitat
FLOWERING PLANTS - DICOTYLEDONS		
Aceraceae: Maples		
<i>Acer monspessulanum</i>	Montpellier maple	Pont du Gard
Anacardiaceae: Pistacio Family		
<i>Pistachia terebinthus</i>	Turpentine tree	Alpilles
Apiaceae (Umbelliferae): Umbellifers		
<i>Bupleurum fruticosum</i>	Shrubby hare's-ear	Alpilles
<i>Conium maculatum</i>	Hemlock	Waste places, roadsides
<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Field eryngo	la Crau ; Alpilles ; Pont du Gard
<i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant fennel	Roadside near St Gilles
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel	Pont du Gard
<i>Oenanthe silaifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved water-dropwort	la Capelière
<i>Torilis nodosa</i>	Knotted hedge-parsley	Hotel grounds
Apocynaceae: Periwinkle Family		
* <i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander	Hotel grounds
Araliaceae: Ivy Family		
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	Étang des Aulnes; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
Aristolochiaceae: Birthwort Family		
<i>Aristolochia rotunda</i>	A birthwort	E Camargue; hotel area
Asteraceae (Compositae): Composites		
<i>Aster tripolium</i>	Sea aster	Camargue sansouire; Scamandre
<i>Bellis annua</i>	Annual daisy	Widespread on damp, light soils
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	Trampled grassland
<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>	Southern daisy	la Crau
<i>Carduus pycnocephalus</i>	A purple thistle	Alpilles
<i>Centaurea aspera</i>	Rough star-thistle	Alpilles
<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	Yellow star-thistle	la Crau
<i>Dittrichia graveolens</i>	Stink aster	Scamandre; Camargue
<i>Evax pygmaea</i>	Dwarf evax	la Crau
<i>Galactites tomentosa</i>	A milk thistle	Alpilles
<i>Helichrysum stoechas</i>	Curry helichrysum	Alpilles; Salin-de-Giraud
<i>Lactuca perennis</i>	Blue lettuce	Pont du Gard
<i>Leuzia conifera</i>	Leuzia	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
<i>Onopordum illyricum</i>	Illyrian thistle	la Crau
<i>Pallenis spinosa</i>	Spiny pallenis	la Crau
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel	Camargue arable
<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk thistle	la Crau
<i>Taraxacum</i> sp.	Dandelion	la Crau
<i>Tolpis umbellata</i>	Umbrella milkwort	La Crau
<i>Tragopogon porrifolius</i>	Salsify	Alpilles
<i>Urospermum dalechampii</i>	Urospermum	Widespread in suitable habitat

Boraginaceae: Borage Family		
<i>Anchusa arvensis</i>	Bugloss	la Crau
<i>Cynoglossum creticum</i>	Blue hound's-tongue	Pont du Gard; la Crau
<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>	Hound's-tongue	la Crau
<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	Purple viper's-bugloss	Alpilles
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Common Viper's-bugloss	la Crau; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
Brassicaceae (Cruciferae): Crucifers		
<i>Biscutella didyma</i>	Buckler mustard	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
<i>Cakile maritima</i>	Sea rocket	Sansouire
<i>Cardaria draba</i>	Hoary cress	Scamandre
<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>	Dittander	Scamandre
<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	Sweet Alison	la Crau; Pont du Gard
Buxaceae: Box Family		
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
Cannabaceae: Hop Family		
<i>Celtis australis</i>	Nettle-tree	Étang des Aulnes, Pont du Gard
Caprifoliaceae: Honeysuckle Family		
<i>Lonicera implexa</i>	A honeysuckle	Alpilles
<i>Sambucus ebulus</i>	Danewort	Widespread in roadside ditches
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	la Crau
<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Laurustinus	Pont du Gard
Caryophyllaceae: Chickweeds, Pinks and Campions		
<i>Kohlrauschia prolifera</i>	A kohlrauschia	la Crau
<i>Kohlrauschia velutina</i>	Kohlrauschia	Alpilles
<i>Silene alba</i>	White campion	Pont du Gard
<i>Silene italica</i>	Italian catchfly	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
<i>Silene nutans</i>	Nottingham catchfly	Alpilles
<i>Spergularia media</i>	Greater sea-spurrey	E Camargue sansouire
<i>Spergularia rubra</i>	Sand spurrey	la Crau
Chenopodiaceae: Goosefoot Family		
<i>Atriplex halimus</i>	Shrubby orache	Camargue sansouire
<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>	Sea purslane,	Camargue sansouire
<i>Salicornia europaea</i>	Common glasswort	Camargue sansouire
<i>Salsola kali</i>	Prickly saltwort	Camargue sansouire
<i>Sarcocornia fruticosa</i>	Shrubby glasswort	Camargue sansouire
<i>Sarcocornia perennis</i>	Perennial glasswort	Camargue sansouire
<i>Suaeda maritima</i>	Herbaceous seablite	Camargue sansouire
<i>Suaeda vera</i>	Shrubby seablite	Camargue sansouire
Cistaceae: Cistuses and Rockroses		
<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey-leaved sun-rose	Alpilles
<i>Fumana ericoides</i>	Fumana	Alpilles
<i>Helianthemum appeninum</i>	White rockrose	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Helianthemum canum</i>	Hoary rockrose	Alpilles
Convolvulaceae: Bindweeds		
<i>Convolvulus cantabrica</i>	Pink convolvulus	la Crau; Alpilles
Cornaceae: Dogwoods		
<i>Cornus mas</i>	Cornelian cherry	E Camargue
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	la Crau; Étang des Aulnes; E Camargue
Crassulaceae: Stonecrop Family		
<i>Crassula tillaea</i>	Mossy stonecrop	la Crau
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting stonecrop	Alpilles
<i>Sedum dasyphyllum</i>	Thick-leaved stonecrop	Pont du Gard
<i>Sedum sediforme</i>	Pale stonecrop	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
Dipsacaceae: Scabious Family		
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Small scabious	la Crau; Alpilles
Elaeagnaceae: Oleaster Family		
* <i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	Oleaster	E Camargue
Euphorbiaceae: Spurge Family		
<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Large Mediterranean spurge	Alpilles
<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>	Cypress spurge	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Euphorbia sequeiriana</i>	Steppe spurge	W/N Camargue; la Crau
<i>Euphorbia serrata</i>	Saw spurge	Alpilles
<i>Euphorbia villosa</i>	Hairy spurge	la Capelière
Fabaceae (Leguminosae): Pea Family		
* <i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	False indigo	Camargue ditch sides; Scamandre (invasive)
<i>Astragalus monspeliensis</i>	Montpellier milk-vetch	Alpilles
<i>Coronilla emerus</i>	Scorpion senna	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Coronilla glauca</i>	A scorpion-vetch	Pont du Gard
<i>Coronilla luncea</i>	A scorpion-vetch	Alpilles
<i>Dorycnium pentaphyllum</i>	Five-leaved dorycnium	Alpilles

<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common bird's-foot-trefoil	Pont du Gard
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater bird's-foot-trefoil	Camargue
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black medick	Alpilles
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Lucerne	Alpilles
<i>Psoralea bituminosa</i>	Pitch trefoil	E Camargue; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Robinia pseudacacia</i>	False acacia	Pont du Gard
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish broom	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Tetragonolobus maritimus</i>	Dragon's-teeth	Étang des Aulnes
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover	Camargue pasture
<i>Trifolium resupinatum</i>	Reversed clover	Damp grassland Camargue
<i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Star clover	la Crau
<i>Trifolium tomentosum</i>	Woolly clover	la Crau
Fagaceae: Oaks, Beech and Chestnut		
<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes oak	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm oak	W/N Camargue; la Crau; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Downy oak	Étang des Aulnes; Pont du Gard
Fumariaceae: Fumitory Family		
<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	White ramping-fumitory	Pont du Gard
Gentianaceae: Gentian Family		
<i>Centaurium pulchellum</i>	Lesser centaury	Étang des Aulnes
Geraniaceae: Crane's-bills and Stork's-bills		
<i>Erodium ciconium</i>	A stork's-bill	E Camargue
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common stork's-bill	la Crau; Pont du Gard
<i>Erodium malacoides</i>	Mallow-Leaved stork's-bill	N/W Camargue; la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Geranium columbinum</i>	Long-stalked crane's-bill	Pont du Gard
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved crane's-bill	Camargue
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot crane's-bill	la Crau
<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little Robin	Pont du Gard
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	Pont du Gard
<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved crane's-bill	Pont du Gard
Globulariaceae: Globularias		
<i>Globularia alypum</i>	Shrubby globularia	Alpilles
Lamiaceae (Labiatae): Deadnettle Family		
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Common lavender	la Crau
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>	Gipsywort	Scamandre
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	White horehound	Étang des Aulnes
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water mint	la Crau (ditch)
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Marjoram	la Crau
<i>Phlomis lychnitis</i>	Iberian Jerusalem sage	la Crau
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary	Alpilles
<i>Salvia verbeneca</i>	Wild clary	la Crau
<i>Sideritis romana</i>	Simplebeak ironwort	la Crau; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	Wall germander	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Teucrium polium</i>	Felty germander	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Common thyme	la Crau; Alpilles
Lauraceae: Laurel Family		
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	Bay	Le Capelière ; Pont du Gard
Linaceae: Flaxes		
<i>Linum bienne</i>	Pale flax	Alpilles
<i>Linum narbonense</i>	Beautiful flax	Alpilles
Lythraceae: Loosestrifes		
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple loosestrife	la Crau (ditch)
Malvaceae: Mallows		
<i>Althaea officinalis</i>	Marsh mallow	Scamandre; E Camargue
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common mallow	la Crau; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
Moraceae: Mulberries and Fig		
<i>Ficus carica</i>	Fig	Widespread in suitable habitat
* <i>Morus</i> sp.	A mulberry	Hotel grounds; Pont du Gard
Oleaceae: Olive Family		
<i>Fraxinus angustifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved ash	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Fraxinus ornus</i>	Manna ash	Pont du Gard
<i>Jasminum fruticans</i>	Wild jasmine	Pont du Gard
* <i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	Privet	E Camargue
<i>Olea europea</i>	Olive	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>	False olive	la Crau; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
Onagraceae: Willowherb Family		
* <i>Ludwigia peploides</i>	Creeping water-primrose	Widespread in shallow water and on drying mud; (invasive)

Orobanchaceae: Broomrapes		
<i>Orobanche gracilis</i>	A broomrape	Pont du Gard
<i>Orobanche minor</i>	Common broomrape	Alpilles
Papaveraceae: Poppy Family		
<i>Glaucium flavum</i>	Yellow horned-poppy	Alpilles
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common poppy	Widespread arable weed
Pittosporaceae: Pittosporums		
* <i>Pittosporum tobira</i>	Pittosporum	Scamandre (planted)
Plantaginaceae: Plantains		
<i>Plantago bellardii</i>	A woolly plantain	la Crau
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buck's-horn plantain	la Crau; Scamandre; Pont du Gard; E Camargue
<i>Plantago lagopus</i>	Hare's-foot plantain	la Crau
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain	Pont du Gard
<i>Plantago sempervirens</i>	Shrubby plantain	la Crau; Alpilles
Platanaceae: Plane		
* <i>Platanus</i> sp.	A plane	Widespread as street trees
Plumbaginaceae: Plumbago, Sea Lavender and Thrifts		
<i>Limonium narbonense</i>	Narbonne sea-lavender	Camargue sansouire
Primulaceae: Primrose Family		
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet pimpernel (blue form)	la Crau
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet pimpernel (scarlet form)	Scamandre
<i>Coris monspeliensis</i>	Coris	Alpilles; E Camargue
Ranunculaceae: Buttercup Family		
<i>Clematis flammula</i>	Fragrant clematis	Alpilles
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Old man's beard	Widespread in suitable habitat
Resedaceae: Mignonettes		
<i>Reseda phyteuma</i>	Corn mignonette	la Crau
Rhamnaceae: Buckthorn Family		
<i>Rhamnus alaternus</i>	Mediterranean buckthorn	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
Rosaceae: Rose Family		
<i>Amelanchier ovalis</i>	Snowy mespilus	Alpilles
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Étang des Aulnes; E Camargue
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping cinquefoil	Scamandre
<i>Poterium verrucosum</i>	Mediterranean salad-burnet	Pont du Gard
<i>Prunus</i> sp.	A wild plum	E Camargue
<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i>	Scarlet firethorn	Pont du Gard
<i>Rosa sempervirens</i>	A rose	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Rubus sanctus</i>	Bramble	Scamandre
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	A bramble	Widespread in suitable habitat
Rubiaceae: Bedstraws		
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild madder	Alpilles; E Camargue
<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>	Field madder	la Crau; Alpilles
Rutaceae: Rues		
<i>Ruta chalepensis</i>	Fringed rue	la Crau; Alpilles
Salicaceae: Willows and Poplars		
<i>Populus alba</i>	White poplar	Widespread especially near rivers
<i>Salix alba</i>	White willow	Widespread especially near waterways
Santalaceae: Bastard Toadflax and Sandalwood Family		
<i>Osyris alba</i>	Osyris	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Thesium humifusum</i>	Bastard-toadflax	Alpilles
Scrophulariaceae: Foxgloves, Toadflaxes and Speedwells		
<i>Verbascum sinuatum</i>	Wavy mullein	la Crau; Alpilles; E Camargue
Solanaceae: Nightshade Family		
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet	Scamandre; E Camargue
Tamaricaceae: Tamarisk Family		
<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	French tamarisk	Camargue; la Crau; Scamandre
Ulmaceae: Elm Family		
<i>Ulmus</i> spp.	Elms	Widespread in suitable habitat
Urticaceae: Nettle Family		
<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Pellitory-of-the-wall	Pont du Gard
Valerianaceae: Valerian Family		
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red valerian (Red and white forms)	Pont du Gard
Vitaceae: Grape family		
<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	Grape vine	La Capelière
MONOCOTYLEDONS		
Cyperaceae: Sedge Family		
<i>Carex otrubae</i>	False fox sedge	Scamandre
<i>Cladium mariscus</i>	Saw sedge	la Crau (ditch); Scamandre
<i>Cyperus difformis</i>	Small-flowered umbrella-sedge	la Crau (ditch)

Iridaceae: Iris Family		
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow flag	Camargue
<i>Iris spuria</i> ssp. <i>maritima</i>	Sea iris	W Camargue sansouire
Juncaceae: Rush Family		
<i>Juncus acutus</i>	Sharp rush	Camargue; la Crau (ditch); Scamandre
<i>Juncus gerardii</i>	Gerard's rush	E Camargue; Scamandre
<i>Juncus maritimus</i>	Sea rush	Camargue
Liliaceae: Lily Family		
<i>Aphyllanthes monspeliensis</i>	Blue aphyllanthes	Pont du Gard; Alpilles
<i>Asparagus acutifolius</i>	Spiny asparagus	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	Asparagus	la Capelière
<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i> (<i>ayardii</i>)	Hollow-stemmed asphodel	la Crau
<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Tassel hyacinth	Pont du Gard
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's-broom	Pont du Gard
<i>Smilax aspera</i>	Smilax	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
Orchidaceae: Orchids		
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal orchid	Étang des Aulnes
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee orchid	Étang des Aulnes; la Capelière
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early purple orchid	Alpilles
Poaceae (Gramineae): Grasses		
<i>Aegilops geniculata</i>	Aegilops	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping bent-grass	E Camargue; Scamandre
<i>Aira cupaniana</i>	A hair-grass	la Crau
<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant reed	Widespread, frequently planted
<i>Avena</i> sp.	A wild oat	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Bromus madritensis</i>	Compact brome	Alpilles; Pont du Gard; E Camargue
<i>Bromus rubens</i>	Fox-tail brome	la Crau
<i>Catapodium rigidum</i>	Fern grass	Hotel grounds; la Crau
<i>Cynosurus echinatus</i>	Rough dog's-tail	Pont du Gard
<i>Dactylis glomeratum</i>	Cock's-foot	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Hordeum marinum</i>	Sea barley	E Camargue sansouire
<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Wall barley	Pont du Gard
<i>Hordeum secalinum</i>	Meadow barley	Étang des Aulnes
<i>Lagurus ovatus</i>	Hare's-tail	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Parapholis filiformis</i>	A hard-grass	Road margins, E Camargue
<i>Parapholis incurva</i>	Curved hard-grass	E Camargue sansouire
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common reed	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Stipa capensis</i>	Mediterranean needle-grass	la Crau
<i>Stipa pennata</i>	Angel hair	Alpilles
Typhaceae: Reedmaces		
<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	Lesser reedmace	E Camargue
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Great reedmace	Camargue



Greater flamingos in flight (JL).