

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

36 Thunder Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0PX

Telephone: 01603 300552

www.honeyguide.co.uk E-mail: chris@honeyguide.co.uk



Corsica
16 – 23 May 2023

Participants

Jill Jordan
Graham Harris
Ron Fitton and Val Appleyard
Ann Greenizan
David and Steph Bennett

Ken Leggett
Colin Taylor
Jim Coghlan and Kate Shaw
Dawn Stevens

Leaders

Christopher Hall and Chris Durdin

Report by Chris Durdin. Photos by David Bennett (DB), Christopher Hall (CH) and Chris Durdin unless otherwise noted. Cover: Corsican finch (CH), red cytinus and Corsican heath.

We stayed at [Isola Hôtel](#) in NE Corsica then inland at [Hotel E Caselle](#) near Corte.



Dinosaur eggs, fossils, amethyst and china cows on display at Isola Hotel.



Above: spotted flycatcher (CH) and grey wagtail (DB). Below: the group near Pasciola Fort.



DAILY DIARY

Tuesday 16 May – arrival and Bastia area

It was a smooth flight from dry Gatwick to rainy Bastia. At the compact airport we moved swiftly through passport control, baggage reclaim and the paperwork for Europcar, then a short walk across the car park to where our two minibuses were ready. Having worked out the SatNavs, we were soon on a short road journey, passing a red kite quartering a recently cut field, before stopping at a supermarket for lunch supplies, happily just before the shop was about to shut for lunchtime. Isola Hotel was a very short distance further, where we met Vanina at reception and settled into rooms. Here the group made their own picnic lunches, while keener group members saw quite an impressive range of birds from balconies. These included nesting spotless starlings, a hobby, golden oriole, spotted flycatcher, turtle dove and both tree and Italian sparrows.



A very pale collared dove; male Italian sparrow (CH).

We gathered at 2:30 for a local walk, meeting in the hotel's reception area where, it's worth adding, there is a fine display of framed fossils, gemstones and a nest of fossilised dinosaur eggs, all collected by Vanina's father, and glass cases with large numbers of china cows! Just outside the hotel's main door, Graham was quick to notice blue tits coming and going from a nesting hole in an olive tree. Christopher re-found the turtle dove and especially interesting among ruderal flowers was abundant small-flowered catchfly. Despite the bits of rain, there was a holly blue butterfly on pittosporum flowers. Farther into the hotel's garden there was a male Italian sparrow by a noticeably pale – leucistic – collared dove. From there we walked onto the beach and, looking behind us, watched four honey buzzards moving north up the coast, presumably migrants. The beach had a rich flora, including sea holly, sea medick, sea wormwood, sea rocket, sand galingale and the leaves of sea daffodil. Val pointed out an Adonis ladybird on a sea chamomile. Among all these were scores of nun's farts – balls of matted fibres of seagrass – many of them Mother Superior size.



Nun's fart; sand galingale and Adonis ladybird.

We made our way to a friendly beach café for a cuppa. From here, Christopher trained his telescope on a distant, moored ship, picking out the movement of Cory's shearwaters in front of the ship. Most of us retraced our steps, though Colin and Ken found an alternative route via the road. There was some free time before we met for checklists, then dinner.

Wednesday 17 May – Cap Corse

An early start with a 7am breakfast and 8am departure allowed for the drive north through Bastia, past the port and up the long and winding coast road. We made good progress and after an hour and a quarter stopped for coffee in coastal Macinaggio, parking by yellow horned poppies. A scan out to sea revealed distant shearwaters of two species, with more later in the day, and a common sandpiper flew past and landed on a rock.

We continued to Capo Grosso, on the north-west corner of the peninsula. A draw here, well known to Christopher, is a large osprey nest on a coastal rock, perhaps 10 feet high and clearly built over decades. From a distance we saw an osprey land on the nest and some saw, through a telescope, a young bird in the nest. It was a rich, natural coastal habitat, with some bare patches though mostly low shrubs that included rosemary, French lavender, cistus species, thymelea and juniper. In this area we searched for Marmora's warbler: it took a little time, though well worth the effort as we all enjoyed good views as one sang from the top of small shrubs. There were ravens, a distant peregrine and here, as all day in various places, swallows, swifts and a few house martins were on the move.



Distant osprey nest on a stack (DB); Marmora's warbler (CH).

Open areas had more wild flowers, such as hundreds of rosettes of evax, pale flax, *Dorycnium hirsutum* and pimpernel in blue and red. It was warm enough for some butterflies to appear: Corsican heaths settling briefly on bare ground, a clouded yellow dashed through, as did a swallowtail, which must have been Corsican swallowtail though it was impossible to see its subtly different pattern. There were also a couple of Tyrrhenian wall lizards, including one that seemed unperturbed by being studied and photographed by a group of people. Kate and Graham found the same orchid species, heart-flowered serapias. We moved then a few hundred yards to a spot with better places to sit for an early picnic lunch.



Evax; heart-flowered serapias *Serapias cordigera*.

We'd enjoyed good weather, though it then drizzled for much of the afternoon. We drove to a coastal car park and walked along an official path (some of the *Sentier des Douaniers*, the customs path), taking us along the beach and more coastal scrub. The beach was smothered in dead seagrass, though none in the nun's farts shape from yesterday. A wheatear perched on a rock near the shoreline; flowers included yellow-wort and abundant *Allium subhirsutum*. Over the sea there were many shearwaters, and the further we went, the better we saw them. Mediterranean shearwaters, a low-flying group of about ten, remained distant, though Cory's shearwaters were brilliantly close, near enough to see their bill colour as well as lots of plumage detail. An osprey flew past an offshore islet, though only Christopher with his scope picked up on an Audouin's gull flying past. An immature shag swimming close to the shore was easier to see. We walked far enough to see the coastal fort of Tour di Agnello at which point, having watched a small group of little egrets fly past over the sea, the worsening rain meant returning made sense. Two honey buzzards were moving north, and we found two ringed plovers, before returning for drinks in the café by the car park. Then it was time to drive back to Isola Hotel.

Thursday 18 May – Etang de Biguglia

A dry morning – hooray! – and a later start at 9am, first calling at the supermarket to top up lunch supplies. Our walk was a short drive away, a circuit that started on a track through the fringe of reeds by the large

coastal lagoon (Etang) that dominates this part of the coast. A boardwalk took us to a screen overlooking the lake, with plenty of holes for viewing, even if none seemed to be the right height. On the lake were coots, great crested grebes and distant red-crested pochards: later we had much better view of the red-crested pochards as they flew around. We had a very good spell for birds of prey: red kite, marsh harriers, kestrel, a fine view of an osprey and a more distant sighting of a male red-footed falcon. Ravens, hooded crows and our first jackdaws were also flying over at various times. It didn't take too long for the 'zit ... zit ... zit' of a zitting cisticola (fan-tailed warbler) to turn into good views. As a species it has great character, even if in the field it's not a striking-looking bird, unlike the two bee-eaters that flew around us, though David's photos below make a good case for their looks, too. We looked up a watercourse where a dabchick dived and a whinchat perched.



Zitting cisticola collage and distant bee-eater (both DB at Biguglia lagoon).

Flowers – mainly narrow-leaved cistus, corn marigold and Mediterranean field thistles – on the track's edge seem to have any number of insects: flower chafers of two types, thick-legged flower beetles, paper wasp and a cooperative small copper butterfly. There were more flowers once we'd reached the end of the track and moved into a scrubby area: grass poly, yellow bartsia, wild gladiolus and jersey toadflax were some of the most attractive or interesting. The walk continued through scrub of olives, lentisc and false olive before retuning through a different part of the marsh. There were distant flamingos and a brilliant view of a zitting cisticola. We weren't the only people out in nature here: a large school party came past us. The final leg of the circuit was along the footpath/cycle track by the road, from where we could hear a singing nightingale in some eucalyptus scrub, and we found two damselflies with blue tails, here island bluetails *Ishnura genei*. We ate our lunches back on our balconies at Isola Hotel, from where there were, as always, birds to see and hear, or when walking around the grounds after lunch. Ann was especially pleased to see a golden oriole, with Christopher's help, and Kate reported a jay bathing, in all places, in the hotel's swimming pool.



Jay in the pool; black-winged stilt (CH).

The afternoon's outing was to a country park area on the other side of the Etang, again a short drive with a very brief diversion around the outside of FC Bastia – which Google shows as the Accademia Sporting Club di Bastia in Borgo. The first area was a mix of cut grass and less managed areas, the latter holding small heath butterflies, which were interesting to compare with yesterday's Corsican heaths. A great spotted woodpecker called from a grove of cork oaks and again there was a loud nightingale, again staying out of sight. The most charismatic of the many insects on flowers was, perhaps, rose chafer. We found more tongue orchids, this time the common tongue orchid, *Serapias lingua*. Two yellow pea flowers of interest

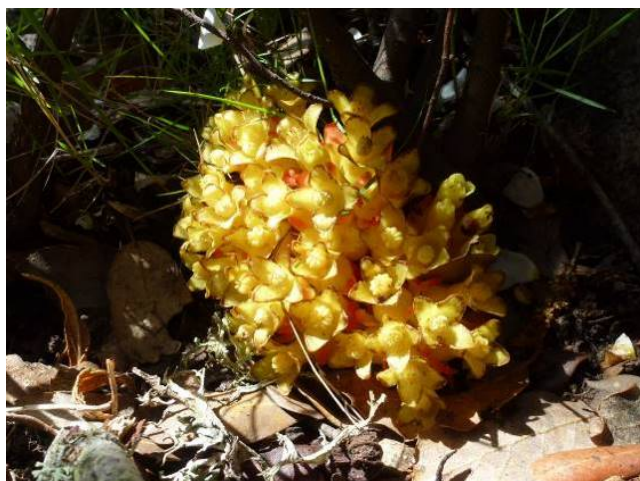
were scorpion vetch, with its spatula-like leaves and odd seed pods, and yellow vetchling with tendrils and big bracts that look like leaves. Ron and others saw two squacco herons fly over.

Moving towards the lagoon area there was the brightest yellow serin you can imagine. Two black-winged stilts were gloriously close, in contrast to the flamingos that seemed to have moved to be far away from us, again. Also distant were a single great white egret and an Audouin's gull on a post. An area of land heavily grazed by cattle proved especially interesting, with common sandpipers and two yellow wagtails feeding on some bare ground, and five cattle egrets on close-grazed turf. A long watercourse had our first moorhen, another stilt, common sandpiper again and what looked like a nesting hole for bee-eaters. A few of these were calling around us all the time and perching on dead trees.

At 9:45 – approaching dusk – we gathered outside the hotel to look and listen for the scops owl that some had heard from rooms on Tuesday night. A nightjar-like churring was a mole cricket. Then a scops owl started to call, and we continued to hear it (or rather them, as we think there were two) in different places in the hotel's grounds and just over the road for the best part of an hour, including fleeting glimpses for some.

Friday 19 May – Asco Valley

Our transfer day, from the coast to the mountains, started with pouring rain. Happily, this eased as we travelled west, and it was dry when we arrived at our morning's walk, in holm oak woods of the Corsica Natural Regional Park. An immediate find was several *Cyclamen repandum*, or spring sowbread. This natural, open forest of holm oak felt like a big improvement on the planted trees at home of the same species, *Quercus ilex*. Here they were of all ages, and especially some obvious veteran individuals. Under these was a rich understorey of cistus and French lavender. Among these were many spotted rockrose flowers, lots of wall pennywort and occasional patches of bright yellow *Cytinus hypocistis*, here parasitic on narrow-leaved cistus. We stopped to look for a firecrest which, with the help of playback, showed well for everyone. Robins and chaffinches were singing, too. As the sun came out so did butterflies, including green hairstreak and wall brown, and lizards, Tyrrhenian wall lizards as on Wednesday.



Cyclamen repandum and *Cytinus hypocistis*,

A French woman with a lopping tool walked past us, saw we were naturalists and stopped to tell us more about where we were, especially their early-stage efforts to understand how the invasive box tree moth can be controlled. The big pruners were to reduce affected box bushes to their strongest growing part and there are pheromone traps. She showed us a tight bundle of box leaves that had a caterpillar within it. We walked past some elegant signs about holm oaks, a millstone, a giant yellow pencil and man hanging pairs of yellow shoes, the last a recent addition to mark a new *sentier*. This alerted us that we had gone off the intended circuit, so we retraced our steps, finding an ascalaphid (owl-fly) on the way back to the minibuses.

For lunch we stopped at a café in the mountain village of Asco. A mistake most of us made was not sitting with David, as he gave a convincing description of two bearded vultures coming past. Crag martin and red kite were some compensation.

We continued right to the ski station at the end of this no-through road, which today was rather up in the clouds. We looked over the forest of Corsican pines, noting abundant mistletoe and many 'tents' of pine processionary moth caterpillars. We descended, trying to find the combination of dead, barkless Corsican pines and somewhere to pull off the road. The reason was to look for Corsican nuthatch, though no luck this afternoon. We stopped for supplies for lunches in Ponte Leccia, then continued past Corte and through Venaco to Hotel E Caselle.

Saturday 20 May – E Caselle

The weather forecast proved correct: rain, rain, rain. After breakfast we elected to have some quiet time to see if it might pass over, meeting at 10:30 to catch up on yesterday's checklists and review. Several brave

souls took up my suggestion of a walk in the rain with umbrellas, mostly listening. By the river we twice caught sight of a grey wagtail and a spotted flycatcher and found weasel's snout (lesser snapdragon). Away from the roar of the river we heard goldfinches, great spotted woodpecker, robin and blackcap. With the rain easing, we were by now on the drive into the hotel from where there was a hobby twisting and turning as it tried – and probably failed – to catch a house martin. A singing cirl bunting then flew into a pine tree and we had good views. We wandered across the road to a lovely patch of maquis, mostly cistus, French lavender and tree heather, in areas evidently recovering from fire. Then heavier rain encouraged a retreat to rooms.

We met again at 1:30, having eaten self-prepared picnics, and we reviewed plans while watching spotted flycatchers – more strictly here Mediterranean flycatchers, if you accept the recent taxonomic 'split' for those nesting on Corsica, Sardinia and the Balearics. With the rain easing, we went for a local walk, turning left at the end of the hotel's drive, then left again and over a narrow road bridge crossing the river. This was all with some care: happily not on account of the weather, now improving, but rather being aware of many cyclists coming past. From the bridge you could see scores of stately royal ferns, confirmed by Ron who has one growing in a pot in his garden, and many crag martins. By the road we had heard and glimpsed Moltoni's warbler, the middle-Mediterranean version of subalpine warbler, and in a nice area of scrub went one better with excellent views of this attractive species. Here we also found an intriguing white flower, like a lily, which Kate and Ann recalled seeing yesterday while driving. It was Illyrian sea daffodil *Pancratium illyricum*, in the same genus as the sea daffodil leaves we'd seen on the beach near Isola Hotel. There was also a nice patch of osyris.



Illyrian sea daffodil, Giglio stella in Italian = star lily; royal ferns from the bridge.

On the way back a red-footed falcon dashed through. Ann, in her role as keen invertebrate finder, at last struck the gold she'd been looking for, on giant fennel leaves: a Corsican swallowtail caterpillar, with subtle differences in appearance compared with a 'common' swallowtail. In much the same place a common blue butterfly was perching on a grass stem, another good find on a wet day. A Moltoni's warbler called again, as did a Sardinian, though this one was more elusive for viewing. There was also another tongue orchid. Back in the car park, having passed the cirl bunting singing in the same place as this morning, what at first sight looked like a squashed plastic ball turned out to be a cage fungus (or basket stinkhorn or lattice stinkhorn), and it took seconds to realise there were several examples, including one just emerging from its protective 'volva', like an eggshell.



Corsican swallowtail caterpillar on giant fennel; cage fungus; cirl bunting at Pasciola (DB).

Sunday 21 May – Pasciola Fort, Col de Sorba and Cascade des Anglais

Rain again at breakfast time, though none while we were out today, bar the odd spot. But it was cloudy and cool as we took a short journey to the start of a walk to Pasciola Fort, starting at a large lay-by. The habitat was again scrub of cistus, French lavender, strawberry tree and tree heather, dotted with large rocks and scattered pines. An immediate good find was red cytinus *Cytinus rubra*. There was plenty of sage-leaved and Cretan cistus for the Cytinus to parasitise; later we found more yellow *Cytinus hypocistis*. There were plenty of good birds: an alpine swift, cirl bunting, woodlarks, a woodchat shrike and stonechats in the first area.

Going up the hill towards the fort, pines and scrub were plainly recovering well from a fire last year. We found more Illyrian sea daffodils. On dead-looking pines there was a group of finches, mostly greenfinches though including at least two Corsican finches. Some saw Marmora's warbler. Despite the indifferent weather, there were good butterflies, including a Corsican wall brown, which allowed good views but not photos. We also found a static scarce swallowtail, hunkered down on a French lavender flower on account of the cool weather. There was no reason to linger at the ruins of Pasciola Fort though Kate, who had walked ahead of the main group, saw a blue rock thrush.



Pasciola Fort (DB).

On the descent and then retracing our steps we saw a male wheatear and Christopher somehow managed to re-find the pink butterfly orchid he'd seen here a year ago, though in terms of looks the two small specimens were well past their best. Kate, Jim and I admired *Anthyllis hermanniae* (see photo below). The cuckoo we'd been hearing perched on the top of pine trees. Searching for Moltoni's warbler on the way out hadn't worked; this time there were views, albeit brief. We were back at the minibuses at almost exactly one o'clock, time for lunch on nearby picnic tables, and a good moment for a group photo. Then we drove a very short distance to a bar/café for a welcome drink and access to facilities.



Distant cuckoo (DB). *Anthyllis hermanniae* subsp. *corsica*. This plant in the pea family forms low bushes, its small yellow flowers spotted with orange. The Corsica subspecies is endemic to Corsica and Gorgona.

We ascended the Col de Sorba road, though immediately entered low cloud. This seemed to thicken as we tried to find a Corsican nuthatch where Christopher has seen it last year. A couple of stops on the descent were also unproductive. So somewhere lower was needed, out of the cloud, and we drove to the old station at Vizzavona to start the well-signed route to the Cascade des Anglais. We didn't reach the waterfall, though we twice crossed (on bridges) a dramatic, rocky river, very much in spate after recent rain. The walk was mostly through beech woods, with very different flora to what we'd previously seen such as a wild garlic, polypody ferns, and walls supported maidenhair and black spleenworts.

On the way home we had a brief photo-stop at Venaco and arrived back at Hotel E Caselle in a burst of bright sunshine, where there was a thermal of birds of prey over the car park. Counts varied slightly: one was 22 raptors, namely four buzzards and 18 red kites.



Venaco; part of the red kite fly-past (DB).

Monday 22 May – Restonica Gorge

Our route took us past the edge of Corte then past the Les Jardins de la Glacière hotel where we were originally booked until they let us down and we swapped to E Caselle. It was at the third nuthatch stop that, at last, we found what we'd hoped for: two Corsican nuthatches in and out of a nest hole in a long dead Corsican pine.



Corsican nuthatch at a nesting hole on a Corsican pine (CH).

The road narrowed from then on, single track with passing places, until we arrived where a parking attendant directed us where to back our minibuses. From here we walked up the road, admiring the scenery and dramatic river, and noting a patch of barberry: in France, Etna barberry *Berberis aetnensis* is found only in Corsica. We stopped by a weedy field – low vegetation, chickweed or similar – where cattle must have been held at some point. Here was the second local speciality, several Corsican finches, feeding away and easy to see. Most of us then found a café, with an engaging hostess who chatted to us, as best we could manage with our limited French, Kate the best of us at helping the *entente cordiale*. Naturally we had drinks, and played pass-the-key for the single loo.

Most ate picnics near the upper (and full) car park, which also has a café, the one that Christopher had had in mind to visit. Here there were two excellent birds. The first was a bearded vulture that flew around a distant pinnacle a few times before disappearing. The second was an alpine chough. We had already seen a high-flying flock: this one was being hand-fed by a couple at the café. You couldn't have asked for a better view.

From here the main trail starts, with a steady trickle of people coming and going. It's not the easiest of paths with rocks to scramble through and – perhaps this year especially – wet patches on the path and rivulets to cross on stepping-stones. A few elected to go for about three-quarters of an hour onwards and upwards, finding patches of Corsican butterwort along the way. Others potted down below and/or went to a café,

also finding a blue rock thrush on the rocky slopes. Other nice flowers to note included white rock cinquefoil, pink rock campion, amelanchier and Corsican alder.



Alpine chough (CH); Corsican butterwort.

Back at Hotel E Caselle, the weather was what you'd hope for on a Mediterranean island in May, at last! Hey ho. At dinner tonight there was an extra dessert with a candle to mark Dawn's birthday. Outside, by or in the pond by the hotel's entrance, as well as the usual pool frogs there were at least four Tyrrhenian tree frogs.



Restonica valley.

Tuesday 23 May – departure

Breakfast at 7:30 and departure shortly after at 8:30 all worked well, with a distant wryneck calling somewhere nearby. Including a stop for fuel it was a journey of about an hour and quarter to the airport, where Ken was reunited with some shirts he'd left at Isola Hotel, kindly dropped off at the Europcar desk. Then a smooth flight back to the UK.

Holiday highlights

David	Incredible scenery, being able to birdwatch from a balcony from both hotels.
Steph	Bee-eaters at the lagoons; hard work rewarded when we found the Corsican nuthatches..
Jim	The swarm of red kites after the rain stopped; osprey nest.
Kate	Black-winged stilt; osprey nest; cuckoo.
Ann	Corsican swallowtail caterpillars, instars 3, 4 & 5; scarce swallowtail.
Graham	Cory's shearwaters; Corsican finch; leader on his knees writing holiday highlights!
Jill	Beautiful views of osprey; Tyrrhenian wall lizard; scenery, especially the beech wood.
Ken	The fort day with wonderful flowers and Corsican finch; reuniting with my shirts!
Colin	Walk round the lagoon with bee-eaters etc; Marmora's warbler; Corsican finch and nuthatch.
Dawn	Osprey on the stack with a chick; celebrating my birthday with the group.
Val	The landscape; crab spiders; red kite flock.
Ron	Huge swirl of raptors; the obliging cuckoo.
Christopher	Cory's shearwater & Marmora's warbler at Cap Corse: finding the nuthatch on the last day.
Chris	Corsican finch & Corsican nuthatch, seeing the two endemic birds; Corsican heath; Corsican tree frog.

WILDLIFE LISTS – BIRDS

Little grebe	1 in a channel at Etang de Biguglia, 18/5
Great crested grebe	Etang de Biguglia, 16/5 and 18/5
Cory's shearwater	Offshore on 16/5 and 17/5, with close views from the <i>Sentier des Douaniers</i> .
Mediterranean shearwater	Offshore on 17/5, more distant than the Cory's shearwaters.
Cormorant	16/5 and 18/5, Etang de Biguglia
Shag	Single bird on 17/5.
Squacco heron	2 seen by some group members 18/5 near the Etang.
Cattle egret	5 feeding with sheep, 18/5 near the Etang.
Little egret	17/5 and 18/5, again in the coastal area.
Great white egret	1, 18/5.
Grey heron	3, 18/5 near the lagoon; inland overflying birds on 21/5 & 22/5.
Great flamingo	17/5 & 18/5, Etang de Biguglia, though distant.
Mallard	2, 18/5, Etang de Biguglia.
Red-crested pochard	5, 18/5, Etang de Biguglia
Red-legged partridge	Seen from Isola Hotel, 17/5.
Bearded vulture	Described perfectly by one group member on 19/5; 1, 22/5, Restonica.
Osprey	On nest stack at Cap Corse, 17/5, and in flight on 17/5 and 18/5, again coastal.
Red kite	Daily, including an astonishing 'stack' in a thermal on Hotel E Caselle, 21/5/
Marsh harrier	On 2 days in coastal area.
Common buzzard	19/5 & 21/5, fewer than perhaps expected.
Honey buzzard	Migrants moving north: 4, 16/5, 2, 17/5 and 1, 18/5.
Sparrowhawk	1, 22/5.
Kestrel	Small numbers seen on five days, daily by the coast.
Red-footed falcon	Singles on 18/5 and 20/5, presumably migrants.
Hobby	Singles on 16/5 (from Isola Hotel) and 20/5 (chasing a house martin).
Peregrine	2, 17/5, Cap Corse.
Moorhen	18/5, Etang de Biguglia.
Coot	16/5 and 18/5, Etang de Biguglia.
Black-winged stilt	Good views at Etang de Biguglia. 18/5.
Ringed plover	2, 17/5, by the coast.
Common sandpiper	Seen on the first 3 days by the coast.
Black-headed gull	1, 18/5, Etang de Biguglia
Yellow-legged gull	Common near the coast.
Audouin's gull	1, 18/5, Etang de Biguglia.
Woodpigeon	19/5 only.
Collared dove	Seen daily for the first 4 days.
Turtle dove	Seen and heard at Isola Hotel, 16/5 and 18/5.
Cuckoo	Good views of a calling male on 21/5 at Pasciola Fort.
Scops owl	At Isola Hotel, heard well on 18/5, and fleeting glimpses.
Common swift	Seen almost daily
Alpine swift	21/5 at Pasciola Fort
Hoopoe	Heard and seen by some group members at Isola Hotel.
Bee-eater	A high-flocking flock heard at Cap Corse, 17/5; seen well 18/5 at Etang de Biguglia.
Great spotted woodpecker	Heard or seen on 6 days.
Woodlark	Singing at Pasciola Fort, 21/5.
Crag martin	Daily in the mountains, 19/5 – 22/5.
Swallow	Daily in the lowlands, 16/5 – 19/5.
House martin	Seen on 5 days, daily in the mountains.
Yellow wagtail	2, 18/5, with livestock
Grey wagtail	Daily on and around rivers in the mountains, 19/5 – 22/5.
Robin	Heard or seen daily for the last four days of the holiday.
Nightingale	Heard in scrub at and near Isola Hotel.
Northern wheatear	Female on 17/5, the Cap Corse day; male 21/5, Pasciola Fort.
Stonechat	21/5, Pasciola Fort
Whinchat	Female 18/5, Etang de Biguglia.
Blackbird	Seen daily.
Blue rock thrush	21/5, Pasciola Fort and 22/5, Restonica.
Blackcap	Heard or seen daily.
Sardinian warbler	Heard or seen on 5 days.
Subalpine (Moltoni's) warbler	21/5, near E Caselle, and 22/5, Pasciola Fort.
Marmora's warbler	Good views near Cap Corse, 17/5; also 21/5.
Zitting cisticola	Good views, 18/5, Etang de Biguglia.
Cetti's warbler	Heard or seen on two coastal days, 17/5 & 18/5.
Reed warbler	Heard on 18/5, Etang de Biguglia
Firecrest	Seen 19/5 in Asco Valley and heard on the following two days.

Wren	Recorded on 20/5 only.
Spotted flycatcher	Strictly the Mediterranean flycatcher, if you accept a recent 'split', seen on seven days including at both hotels. Nesting outside a group member's room at Hotel E Caselle.
Great tit	Seen daily.
Blue tit	Seen daily.
Coal tit	Heard or seen on three days, all the inland part of the holiday.
Long-tailed tit	Hotel E Caselle, 20/5.
Corsican nuthatch	After much searching, good view of two visiting a nesting hole, Restonica, 22/5.
Woodchat shrike	21/5, Pasciola Fort.
Jay	Seen daily.
Jackdaw	18/5 only.
Alpine chough	22/5 Restonica Valley, a large flock in flight and a tame bird at a café.
Hooded crow	Almost daily.
Raven	Almost daily, both coastal and mountain areas.
Spotless starling	Seen on four days, nesting in buildings close to Isola Hotel.
Golden oriole	Seen or heard around Isola Hotel on three days.
Italian sparrow	Daily by the coast, including at Isola Hotel, also day 7.
Tree sparrow	Two days, at Isola Hotel.
Chaffinch	Heard on day 2, then daily in the Corte area.
Goldfinch	Seen on six days.
Greenfinch	Heard or seen on all six full days.
Corsican finch	Pasciola Fort, 21/5 and Restonica Valley, 22/5.
Serin	Heard or seen on four days, especially around E Caselle.
Girl bunting	20/5, 21/5 and 22/5, at E Caselle and Pasciola Fort.
Corn bunting	21/5 only.

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES *

Pool frog *Pelophylax lessonae* ssp *bergeri*

Tyrrhenian wall lizard *Podarcis tiliguerta*

Tyrrhenian tree frog *Hyla sarda*

Italian wall lizard *Podarcis siculus*

* Names from *Field Guide to the Amphibians of Britain and Europe* by J Speybroeck et al.



Tyrrhenian wall lizard (CH).



Tyrrhenian tree frog; pool frog.

BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Corsican swallowtail
Scarce swallowtail
Brimstone
Clouded yellow
Large white
Green-veined white
Small white
Wood white
Green hairstreak

Small copper
Brown argus
Holly blue
Common blue
Painted lady
Peacock (caterpillar)
Corsican wall brown
Meadow brown
Corsican heath

Small heath

Moths

Pine processionary moth (tents/caterpillars)
Mullein moth (caterpillars)
Box tree moth (caterpillars)
Cream spotted tiger

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

With thanks to Ron & Val for many IDs, especially beetles, bugs and orthoptera

Odonata

Island bluetail damselfly *Ishnura genei* (Tyrrhenian endemic)

Bees, wasps etc

Paper wasp *Polistes gallicus*
Pompalid spider wasp, actual species unidentified as over 5000
Paper wasp
Mammoth wasp
Violet carpenter bee *Xylocopa violacea*
Red-tailed bumblebee
Buff-tailed bumblebee

Beetles

7-spot ladybird *Coccinella 7-punctata*
Adonis ladybird *Hippodamia variegata*
Oxythyrea funesta a pollen chafer
A hairy chafer *Tropinota hirta*
Rose chafer *Cetonia aurata*
Trichodes alvearius a soldier or bee-hive beetle
Thick-legged flower beetle *Oedemera nobilis*
Tiger beetle *Cicindela littoralis*
Cryptocephalus bipunctatus
Great diving beetle *Dytiscus marginalis*
Hycleus polymorphus a blister beetle
Stictoleptura fulva a longhorn beetle
Stictoleptura cordigera a longhorn beetle
Stenocorus meridianus (not 100% sure as there are many forms of this longhorn beetle.)
Morbella aculeata tumbling flower beetle

Leaf beetle *Tituboea sexmaculata* (best fit, though Brock shows not on Corsica)
Scarab dung beetle *Scarabaeus laticollis*
Valgus hemiciterus a small scarab beetle

Bugs

Camptopus lateralis
Lygaeus equestris
Spilostethus saxatilis
Spilostethus pandurus
Melanocoryphus albomaculatus
Pyrrhocoris apterus fire bug
Rhynocoris rubricus
Coreus marginatus dock bug
Rhynocoris erythropus assassin bug

Orthoptera

Mole cricket, heard
Dark bush cricket *Pholidoptera griseocaptera* nymph
Speckled bush Cricket *Leptophyes puntatissima*
Grasshopper *Sphigdonotus rubescens*
Grasshopper *Sphingonotus corsicus*
Locust *Sphingonotus uvarovi* (endemic to Corsica/Sardinia, coastal.)

Spider

Napoleon spider *Synema globosum*

Others

Ascalaphid (owl-fly) sp
Bee fly sp



Rose chafer; Napoleon spider, so called as the pattern recalls Napoleon's hat (RFVA); island bluetail (DS).

PLANTS

(• = endemic to Corsica or nearby region; ‡ = cultivated or naturalised)

Latin name

Common name

Notes

FERNS

<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black spleenwort
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair spleenwort
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	Royal fern
<i>Polypodium cambricum</i>	Southern polypody
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Common polypody

GYMNOSPERMS

<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> ‡	Italian cypress
<i>Juniperus communis</i> var. <i>saxatilis</i>	Juniper
<i>Juniperus oxycedrus</i> subsp. <i>oxycedrus</i>	Prickly juniper

CONIFERS

Cultivated

Juniperus phoenicea subsp. *turbinata*
Larix decidua ‡
Pinus halepensis ‡
Pinus nigra subsp. *laricio* •
Pinus pinaster subsp. *escarena*
Pinus pinea ‡

Coastal Phoenician juniper
 Larch
 Aleppo pine
 Corsican pine
 Maritime pine
 Umbrella pine

Planted near coasts

ANGIOSPERMS DICOTYLEDONS

Aizoaceae

Carpobrotus edulis ‡

Amaranthaceae

Atriplex portulacoides
Chenopodium album
Chenopodium murale
Sarcocornia fruticosa

Anacardiaceae

Pistacia lentiscus

Apiaceae

Crithmum maritimum
Daucus carota
Eryngium maritimum
Ferula communis
Sanicula europaea
Scandix pecten-veneris
Smyrniolus olusatrum

Aquifoliaceae

Ilex aquifolium

Araliaceae

Hedera helix

Asteraceae

Anthemis arvensis
Anthemis maritimus
Artemisia maritima
Calendula arvensis
Carduus tenuiflorus
Centaurea sphaerocephala
Cichorium intybus
Cirsium vulgare
Crupina crupinastrum
Dittrichia viscosa
Filago (Evax) pygmaea
Galactites tomentosa
Glebionis segetum
Helichrysum italicum subsp. *italicum*
Silybum marianum
Solidago virgaurea
Sonchus asper
Urospermum dalechampii

Berberidaceae

Berberis aetnensis •

Betulaceae

Alnus alnobetula subsp. *suaveolens* •
Alnus glutinosa
Betula pendula

Boraginaceae

Borago officinalis
Echium italicum
Echium plantagineum
Heliotropium europaeum
Myosotis sp

Brassicaceae

Cakile maritima
Lepidium draba
Lobularia maritima
Lunaria annua ‡
Matthiola sinuata
Nasturtium officinale

Buxaceae

Buxus sempervirens

Cactaceae

Opuntia ficus-indica ‡

Campanulaceae

Campanula erinus
Campanula rapunculus

Yellow Hottentot-fig

Sea purslane
 Fat-hen
 Nettle-leaved goosefoot
 A perennial glasswort

Lentisc / mastic tree

Rock samphire
 Wild carrot
 Sea holly
 Giant fennel
 Sanicle
 Shepherd's-needle
 Alexanders

Holly Family

Holly

Ivy Family

Ivy

Daisy Family

Corn chamomile
 Sea chamomile
 Sea wormwood
 Field marigold
 Slender thistle
 A knapweed with spines
 Chicory
 Spear thistle
 Crupina or false saw-wort
 Stink aster
 Evax / pygmy cudweed
 Galactites
 Corn marigold
 A curry plant
 Milk thistle
 Goldenrod
 Prickly Sow-thistle
 Urospermum

Etna barberry

Corsican alder
 Common alder
 Silver birch

Borage
 Italian viper's-bugloss
 Purple viper's-bugloss
 Heliotrope
 Forget-me-not

Sea rocket
 Hoary cress
 Sweet Alison
 Honesty
 Sea stock
 Water-cress

Box Family

Box

Cactus Family

Prickly pear

Bellflower Family

Annual bellflower
 Rampion bellflower

FLOWERING PLANTS

Dewplant Family

Coastal alien

Goosefoot Family

Beaches
 Occasional weed
 Occasional weed
 Salt marsh.

Sumach Family

Common in maquis

Carrot Family

Coastal rocks
 Common
 Coast
 Frequent
 Woodland

Ruderal
 Sand dunes. East coast
 Coast

Coast
 Sand dunes, east coast
 Roadsides
 Grassy and waste places

Roadsides, common
 Cap Corse places
 Waste places

Rocky places
 Disturbed ground
 Mountains
 Waste places
 Locally common

Barberry Family

Restonica

Birch Family

Restonica
 By rivers
 Forests to treeline

Borage Family

Roadsides

Cabbage Family

Coasts
 Roadsides
 Coastal sands
 Near habitation
 Coastal
 Wet ditches

Widely planted

Rocks and walls

<i>Jasione montana</i>	Sheep's-bit	E Caselle
Caprifoliaceae	Honeysuckle Family	
<i>Lonicera implexa</i>	A honeysuckle	Maquis
Caryophyllaceae	Pink Family	
<i>Paronychia argentea</i>	Silvery paronychia	Roadside, coast
<i>Petrorhagia velutina</i>	Kohlrauschia	Rocky places
<i>Saponaria ocymoides</i> subsp. <i>alsinoides</i> •	Rock soapwort	Restonica
<i>Silene colorata</i>	Mediterranean catchfly	Coastal
<i>Silene gallica</i>	Small-flowered catchfly	Common, Isola Hotel
<i>Silene latifolia</i>	White campion	Occasional
<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder campion	Frequent
<i>Spergularia salina</i>	Lesser sea spurrey	Coastal
Cistaceae	Rockrose Family	
<i>Cistus creticus</i>	Cretan cistus	maquis
<i>Cistus monspeliensis</i>	Narrow-leaved cistus	maquis
<i>Cistus salvifolius</i>	Sage-leaved cistus	maquis
<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	Common rockrose	
<i>Tuberaria guttata</i>	Spotted rockrose	
Convolvulaceae	Bindweed Family	
<i>Convolvulus altheoides</i>	Mallow-leaved bindweed	Frequent
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field bindweed	Occasional weed
<i>Convolvulus cantabrica</i>	Southern bindweed	Occasional
<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i> subsp. <i>corsicana</i> •	A dodder	
Crassulaceae	Stonecrop family	
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Wall pennywort	Rocks, common
Cytinaceae	Cytinus Family	
<i>Cytinus hypocistis</i>	Cytinus (yellow flowers)	Maquis, with <i>Cistus</i>
<i>Cytinus rubra</i>	Cytinus (red flowers)	Maquis, with <i>Cistus</i>
Dipsacaceae	Teasel Family	
<i>Knautia integrifolia</i>	Entire-leaved scabious	
Ericaceae	Heather Family	
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	Strawberry tree	Maquis
<i>Erica arborea</i>	Tree heather	Maquis
Euphorbiaceae	Spurge Family	
<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Large Mediterranean spurge	Widespread
<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun spurge	Waste ground
<i>Euphorbia paralias</i>	Sea spurge	Sand dunes
<i>Euphorbia peplus</i>	Petty spurge	Ruderal
<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Castor-oil-plant	Occasional
Fabaceae	Pea Family	
<i>Anthyllis hermanniae</i> ssp. <i>corsica</i>	Herman's kidney vetch	Common, maquis
<i>Bituminaria bituminosa</i>	Pitch trefoil	Common
<i>Calycotome</i> sp	Thorny broom	Maquis
<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i> ‡	Judas tree	Frequent
<i>Ervilia hirsuta</i>	Hairy tare	Waste places
<i>Laburnum anagyroides</i> ‡	Laburnum	
<i>Lathyrus latifolius</i>	Broad-leaved everlasting-pea	Open ground
<i>Lathyrus setifolius</i>	Brown vetch	
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot trefoil	
<i>Lotus dorycnium</i> (<i>Dorycnium pentaphyllum</i>)	Five-leaved dorycnium	
<i>Lotus hirsutus</i> (<i>Dorycnium hirsutum</i>)	Dorycnium	Locally common
<i>Lotus uliginosus</i>	Great birdsfoot trefoil	Wet places
<i>Lupinus angustifolius</i>	Narrow-leaved lupin	Occasional
<i>Medicago arabica</i>	Spotted medick	
<i>Medicago marina</i>	Sea medick	Sand dunes
<i>Medicago sativa</i> ‡	Lucerne	Roaside
<i>Melilotus indicus</i>	Small melilot	Ruderal
<i>Onobrychis viciifolia</i> ‡	Sainfoin	
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> ‡	False-acacia	Cultivated
<i>Scoparius muricatus</i>	Scorpion-vetch	
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish broom	Roadsides
<i>Trifolium angustifolium</i>	Narrow-leaved crimson clover	
<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Hop trefoil	
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red clover	
<i>Trifolium resupinatum</i>	Reversed clover	Bare ground
<i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Star clover	
<i>Vicia cracca</i> subsp. <i>tenuifolia</i>	Fine-leaved vetch	
<i>Vicia villosa</i>	Fodder vetch	
Frankeniaceae	Sea heath Family	
<i>Frankenia laevis</i>	Sea heath	Coastal
Fagaceae	Oak Family	
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	Forests to tree-line
<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes oak	Maquis

<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm oak	Maquis
<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Downy oak	Venaco
<i>Quercus suber</i>	Cork oak	Lowland maquis
Gentianaceae	Gentian Family	
<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>	Yellow-wort	
<i>Centaurium pulchellum</i>	Lesser centaury	
Geraniaceae	Crane's-bill Family	
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common stork's-bill	
<i>Geranium columbinum</i>	Long-stalked crane's-bill	
<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	Shining crane's-bill	
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot crane's-bill	
<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little robin	
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	
<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved crane's-bill	
Hypericaceae	St John's-wort Family	
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St John's-wort	Frequent
Lamiaceae	Dead-nettle Family	
<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit dead-nettle	Ruderal
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water mint	Wet places
<i>Salvia rosmarinus</i>	Rosemary	Hot rocky places
<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	Wild clary	Frequent
<i>Stachys arvensis</i>	Field woundwort	
Lentibulariaceae	Butterwort Family	
<i>Pinguicula corsica</i> •	Corsican butterwort	Wet flushes, Restonica
Linaceae	Flax Family	
<i>Linum bienne</i>	Pale flax	Locally common
<i>Linum strictum</i>	Upright yellow flax	
Malvaceae	Mallow Family	
<i>Malva neglecta</i>	Dwarf mallow	Animal pens. Ruderal
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common mallow	Roadsides
Moraceae	Fig Family	
<i>Morus alba</i> ‡	White mulberry	Cultivated
<i>Morus nigra</i> ‡	Black mulberry	Cultivated
Myrtaceae	Myrtle Family	
<i>Myrtus communis</i>	Common myrtle	Maquis
Oleaceae	Olive Family	
<i>Fraxinus ornus</i>	Manna ash	
<i>Olea europaea</i> subsp. <i>oleaster</i>	Wild olive	Maquis
<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>	False olive	Maquis
Orobanchaceae	Broomrape Family	
<i>Bartsia trixago</i>	Bellardia	Occasional
<i>Parentucellia latifolia</i>	Southern red bartsia	
<i>Parentucellia viscosa</i>	Yellow bartsia	
Oxalidaceae	Wood-sorrel Family	
<i>Oxalis articulata</i> ‡	Pink oxalis	Garden escape
Papaveraceae	Poppy Family	
<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	White ramping fumitory	Ruderal
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common poppy	Fields
Plantaginaceae	Plantain Family	
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buck's-horn plantain	Coastal
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain	Widespread
Platanaceae	Plane Family	
<i>Platanus x hispanica</i> ‡	London plane	Cultivated
Plumbaginaceae	Thrift Family	
Polygalaceae	Milkwort Family	
<i>Polygala nicaeensis</i> subsp. <i>corsica</i> •	Corsican milkwort	Frequent
Polygonaceae	Dock Family	
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled dock	
Primulaceae	Primrose Family	
<i>Cyclamen repandum</i>	Spring sowbread	Shady places. Locally common
<i>Lysimachia arvensis</i>	Scarlet pimpernel	Red & blue forms
Ranunculaceae	Buttercup Family	
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	Celery-leaved Buttercup	Damp places
<i>Ranunculus velutinus</i>		
Rosaceae	Rose Family	
<i>Amelanchier ovalis</i> var. <i>ramnoides</i> •	A Juneberry	Restonica
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Common
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	Mountain pasture
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping cinquefoil	Common. Waste places
<i>Potentilla rupestris</i> var. <i>pygmaea</i> •	Rock cinquefoil	Mountains
<i>Pyrus spinosa</i>	Almond-leaved Pear	Frequent. Maquis
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose	Roadsides
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family	
<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	Crosswort	Frequent
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild madder	Forests and maquis

Sherardia arvensis
Salicaceae
Populus tremula
Santalaceae
Osyris alba
Viscum album subsp. *austriacum*
Sapindaceae
Acer monspessulanum
Simaroubaceae
Ailanthus altissima ‡
Solanaceae
Nicotiana glauca ‡
Tamaricaceae
Tamarix sp
Thymelaeaceae
Thymelea hirsuta
Urticaceae
Parietaria judaica
Urtica dioica
Urtica membranacea
Urtica urens
Valerianaceae
Centranthus calcitrapa
Verbenaceae
Lantana camara ‡
Veronicaceae
Linaria pelisseriana
Misopates orontium
Violaceae
Viola riviniana

Field madder		Common
	Willow Family	
Aspen		Occasional
	Sandalwood Family	
Osyris		Maquis
Mistletoe		Common on pine r
	Maple Family	
Montpellier maple		Spelunca
	Tree-of-heaven Family	
Tree-of-heaven		Widespread
	Nightshade Family	
Shrub tobacco		Roadsides. Alien
	Tamarisk Family	
Tamarisk		
	Daphne Family	
Thymelea		Maquis / ruderal
	Nettle Family	
Pellitory-of-the-wall		Walls and rocks
Common nettle		Waste places
Membranous nettle		Ruderal
Annual (or small) nettle		Ruderal
	Valerian Family	
Small red valerian		Common
	Vervain Family	
Lantana		Cultivated
	Speedwell Family	
Jersey toadflax		Dry places
Weasel's snout		Occasional
	Violet Family	
Common dog-violet		Frequent



Mostly coastal/lowlands: a scabious *Knautia integrifolia*; spiny golden star *Pallenis spinosa*; a knapweed with spiny bracts *Centaurea sphaerocephala*; yellow bartsia.



Mountains: rock soapwort *Saponaria ocymoides* subsp. *alsinoides* (this subspecies is a Tyrrhenian endemic); rock cinquefoil *Potentilla rupestris*

Amaryllidaceae
Allium roseum
Allium subhirsutum
Allium triquetrum
Allium ursinum
Pancratium illyricum
Pancratium maritimum
Asparagaceae
Agave americana ‡
Leopoldia (Muscari) comosa

MONOCOTYLEDONS
Daffodil Family
Rosy garlic Occasional

Three-cornered leek Frequent
Ramsons
Illyrian sea daffodil Local. Shaded damp places
Sea daffodil Sand dunes

Asparagus Family
Century plant Cultivated
Tassel hyacinth Common

Aphodelaceae	Asphodel Family	
<i>Asphodelus ramosus</i>	Branched asphodel	Common
Cyperaceae	Sedge Family	
<i>Cyperus capitatus</i>	Sand galingale	Coastal sands
Iridaceae	Iris Family	
<i>Gladiolus italicus</i>	Field gladiolus	Occasional
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow flag	Liamone
Juncaceae	Rush Family	
<i>Juncus acutus</i>	Sharp rush	
Orchidaceae	Orchid Family	
<i>Anacamptis papilionacea</i>	Pink butterfly-orchid	Maquis
<i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>	Sword-leaved helleborine	Woodland edge
<i>Orchis mascula</i> subsp. <i>mascula</i>	Early-purple orchid	Woodland
<i>Serapias cordigera</i>	Heart-lipped tongue-orchid	Cap Corse
<i>Serapias lingua</i>	Common tongue-orchid	
Poaceae	Grass Family	
<i>Aeglops geniculata</i>		
<i>Arundo donax</i> ‡	Giant reed	Wet places. Lowland
<i>Briza maxima</i>	Greater quaking-grass	Sandy places
<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Wall barley	
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common reed	Wet areas
Posidoniaceae	Neptune Grass Family	
<i>Posidonia oceanica</i>	Neptune grass	Sub-marine, remains on beaches
Smilacaceae	Smilax Family	
<i>Smilax aspera</i>	Common smilax	Maquis
	FUNGI	
<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	Fly agaric	
<i>Clathrus ruber</i>	Cage fungus or basket stinkhorn	E Caselle



Two shrubs from Restonica Valley: Etna barberry *Berberis aetnensis* and Corsican alder *Alnus alnobetula* subsp. *suaveolens*.