



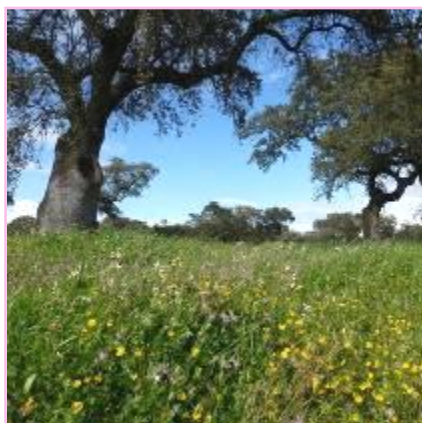
Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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

Telephone: 01603 300552

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



Extremadura
19th – 27th March 2013

Holiday participants

Susan and Francis Jacobs
Diana Tickell
Leo Kinlen
John and Jan Croft
Barbara Wheeler

Tim and Cheryl Hunt
Paul Griffiths
Alison Wilson
Diana Wiles
Alice Lester

Leaders

Martin Kelsey and Chris Durdin

Our base for the holiday was Finca Santa Marta www.fincasantamarta.es
Martin Kelsey's blog about wildlife in Extremadura: <http://birdingextremadura.blogspot.com>

Report by Martin Kelsey with additions by Chris Durdin.

Bird list by Martin, other lists by Chris.

All photos in this report were taken during the holiday week,
those edged green by Chris Durdin (CD), edged blue by John Croft (JC)
and edged orange by Tim & Cheryl Hunt (T&CH).

Cover photos:

Top – white storks at Finca Santa Marta (JC), angel's tears narcissus (CD),
woodchat shrike (T&CH).

Middle – mirror orchid (T&CH), Spanish imperial eagle (JC), amethyst toadflax (JC).

Bottom: lush growth under holm oaks at Moheda Alta (CD),
naked man orchid (CD), Trujillo rooftops (T&CH)

Below – the group.



As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of the holiday was put towards a conservation project, in this case for La Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO), the Spanish Ornithological Society, and its work in Extremadura. The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust.

During the holiday, Marcelino Cardalliaguet, who runs SEO's Extremadura office, came to Finca Santa Marta to talk to the group and receive a total of €725/£645 on behalf of SEO.

This year's donations – including one in the Spanish Pyrenees in April – bring the total given to SEO since the first Honeyguide holiday in Spain in 1991 to £15,285. The total for conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays was £86,302 by the end of April 2013.

Extremadura
19th – 27th March 2013

Itinerary

Day One 19th March 2013: Drive from Madrid to Extremadura.

Day Two 20th March 2013: Walk and lunch in vicinity of Finca Santa Marta (Sierra de los Lagares) and afternoon walk near Madroñera.

Day Three 21st March 2013: Monfragüe National Park

Day Four 22nd March 2013: Plains near Campo Lugar, *dehesa* and rice fields at Moheda Alta and Sierra Brava reservoir.

Day Five 23rd March 2013: Heath and cork oaks near Jaraicejo, lunch at Miravete Pass, Trujillo Bull Ring.

Day Six 24th March 2013: Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca, lunch at River Magasca, walk to drovers' trail, granite outcrop near Trujillo.

Day Seven 25th March 2013: Morning visit to Trujillo, lunch beside River Almonte and afternoon at Cabañas del Castillo in Villuercas mountains.

Day Eight 26th March 2013: Arrocampo Reservoir, lunch near Valdecañas dam, afternoon on Cerro de Almaraz.

Day Nine 27th March 2013: Return to Madrid.



It had been a wet winter and an unusually wet spring at Finca Santa Marta and elsewhere in Extremadura.

Tuesday 19th March: Gatwick to Finca Santa Marta

The flight from Gatwick arrived just ahead of schedule and Martin met the Honeyguiders at the arrivals gate of Terminal One at Madrid shortly after 16.15. After an unusually efficient collection of the minivans we headed off clockwise around the M40 Madrid ring road. Although late afternoon traffic was building up it did not take us very long to reach the A5 motorway: our route south-westwards across to Extremadura.

We stopped for refreshments at the Las Esparteras bar just inside the province of Toledo. It's a typical Spanish bar with Iberian hams hanging over the counter, although uniquely with a collection of very fine and expensive wines! We left at 17.45 and drove non-stop to reach the Finca in just over two hours. Because of the low cloud and steady rain throughout the journey we missed out on spectacular views of the landscape, although the change from the open arable plains of Castille La Mancha to the greener, more wooded Extremadura was marked. En route we saw a few white storks and a red kite. It was dark and raining by the time we reached our base where we were met by the owner Henri and his staff, ably managed by Laura.

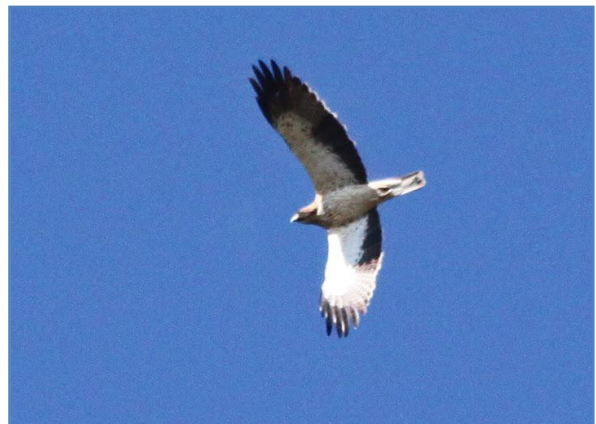
After unloading in the rain, we were joined at a very convivial dinner by Diana, who had driven from Andalucia, and Alice who came a few days early to Spain and arrived with tales of the Roman remains she'd enjoyed at Mérida.

Wednesday 20th March: Finca Santa Marta and heath at Madroñera

After yesterday's rain the day dawned clear, albeit with a cold start thanks to a fresh westerly wind. The sun was up before 8 am and it was still very cool first thing, but at least the drying process had started. No-one went far before breakfast because of our fairly late arrival the previous evening, but several saw azure-winged magpies and hawfinches around the buildings and the car park. We enjoyed sunshine throughout the day.

Following breakfast, we spent a leisurely morning walking the grounds of the Finca and beyond. As we set off, most of the group saw hawfinches, either in flight, in trees or feeding on the ground between the rows of trees in the almond orchard. There were brief views of a short-toed treecreeper, but much more prolonged ones of a coal tit in the stone pines at the hilltop, an unusual record for this part of Extremadura. The delightful amethyst toadflax was common in the disturbed ground under the olive trees.

From the start of the walk various birds of prey were watched flying overhead: red and black kites, a common kestrel, and distant griffon and black vultures, but pride of place undoubtedly went to a pair of booted eagles. Against a clear blue sky, we stood rewarded by the sight of the male making perhaps ten or more deep dives as it sky-danced overhead in courtship, the female soaring close above it. Just minutes later some calls briefly foxed us, coming as they did apparently from among some cork oaks, but they came not from some bird perched in the foliage but from another low-flying booted eagle, seemingly attracted to the displaying couple.



Displaying booted eagles seen during the walk.

From the top of the property we took a pleasant green track, affording us views of the Sierra de los Lagares, so called because the older houses on the hillsides are all called *lagares*, as each one has a '*lagar*' or structure in which grapes were pressed. Although most of the hill has now been converted to olive groves, the local people still refer to the area as 'Las Viñas'. Beyond these hills lay the open plains near Trujillo and as a backdrop the Gredos mountains, with slopes covered by snow.

Along this track we found Iberian fritillaries just about to flower, angel's tears narcissi and, in an ungrazed olive grove, spikes of champagne and a few conical orchids.

Descending to the Finca, following a sighting of a fine woodchat shrike, we enjoyed a picnic lunch in the grounds, with the air full of barn swallows, charming red-rumped swallows and crag martins.

Following lunch we took an afternoon walk on the heath above Madroñera. Here we quickly got good views of Dartford, Sardinian and fan-tailed warblers, while we enjoyed the sight of a carpet of hoop petticoat narcissus. The wind had freshened again, which made it hard to find butterflies, but did present us with the sight of a good number of griffon vultures drifting across the sky.

We were back at the finca by 17.00 for afternoon tea and the daily checklist of sightings. That evening Henri held a reception with drinks and nibbles while he gave the group an introduction to the property, the farming challenges and how he had come to be here, including the changes since Finca Santa Marta's first guests in 1997.

Thursday 21st March: Monfragüe National Park

A cuckoo was heard before breakfast, as the few early risers explored in different directions, which remained the pattern for the holiday, at least on dry mornings. It was another fine day, becoming quite warm in the afternoon, indeed perfect for our destination of the Monfragüe National Park, brought forward to our second day to take advantage of the good weather. We drove north through seemingly endless *dehesa* landscape before arriving at the rocky ridge announcing the southern boundary of the national park. We drove up through a cork oak grove, finding a place to park before walking up to the small castle. The newly-created walkway took us onto the top of the ridge and then on the upper part of the shady, northern slope, where we could look down on an extensive mixed Mediterranean woodland and outwards to the Gredos mountains to the north. Griffon vultures passed by at eye-level, giving us tremendous views. Along the shady path on the northern side of the ridge, meadow saxifrage grew on the mossy grassy slopes. Beside the castle, from the newly constructed observation platform, we could look across the Tajo River to the enormous Peña Falcon rock where an endless stream of vultures seemed to be coming and going. Among the griffons and occasional black, we saw our first Egyptian vultures of the day. To the south, *dehesa* as far as the eye could see. Tall Spanish seakale was in flower below the platform and as we descended we found wild clary, branched broomrape, tassel hyacinth and lesser snapdragon.



Griffon vulture backed by the Gredos mountains.



Opportunistic azure-winged magpies.

After a coffee stop in the hamlet of Villarreal de San Carlos, we stopped for lunch in a grove of southern elm trees, opposite a cliff with breeding griffon vultures. While there, the alarm calls of ravens were heard, and on looking up we saw a pair of Bonelli's eagles wheeling over us. Short-toed eagles and black kites also made an appearance during our stay, and as we left a flock of azure-winged magpies descended to our picnic tables to finish off the crumbs. We then stopped beside the Tiétar River, with again a cliff face with nesting vultures. From the trees and shrubs beside us, subalpine warblers, blackcaps and Cetti's warblers sang.

Several times we heard the barking call of Spanish imperial eagle, and our patience paid off grandly with superbly prolonged views of the resident pair flying in front of the cliff, landing in trees and on a couple of occasions tussling with griffon vultures, locking talons in one instance. We could not have witnessed better.

There was barely enough time after that to stop briefly again at Villarreal de San Carlos before heading back, albeit with an impromptu stop as a Bonelli's eagle flew low in front of the van and then a planned stop at the viewpoint overlooking the iconic Peña Falcon. Here we watched vultures again, including small griffon vulture chicks, as well as blue rock thrush and black redstart. Finally as we walked back to the vans, we stopped to admire two nettle-tree butterflies.

We were back at the Finca for a late tea and checklist, after which Marcelino from SEO/BirdLife gave us an excellent talk on the birds of Extremadura, the threats they face and the conservation actions underway to tackle these. After dinner Susan, Francis and Chris looked at Jupiter and its moons in the clear sky.

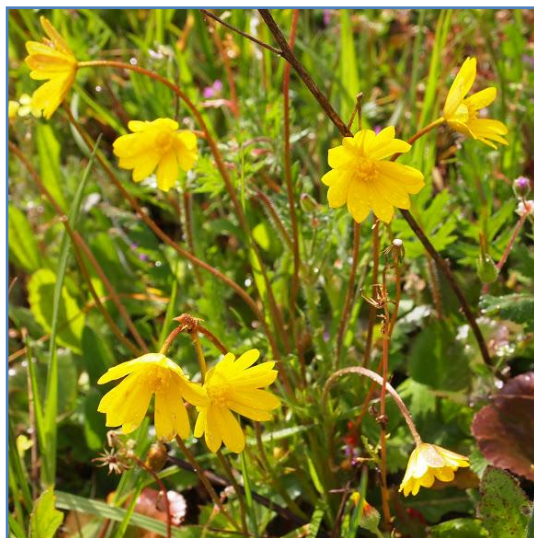
Friday 22nd March: Campo Lugar and Moheda Alta

In contrast to the previous day, the group awoke to heavy rain and leaden skies. By breakfast time we were also shrouded in mist. However, as we headed off south and to lower elevation, it became progressively brighter. Indeed we had the good fortune today of successively escaping and avoiding the heavy showers of rain that passed.

Our first stop was on the open plains of mixed farming near the village of Campo Lugar. Here at our very first stop we found a small group of great bustards and a party of little bustards on one side of the road, while on the other side another group of great bustards included two males which entered partially into display. At the same stop there were also three or four stone-curlews, as well as a couple of lesser kestrels, calandra lark, Spanish sparrows and northern wheatear. Masses of the caterpillars of the winter webworm moth *Ocnogyna boetica* were at our feet in the vegetation, as they were in many open areas this week. What an excellent way to start the day! Farther on along the same stretch of road, we found another group of great bustards.

We then headed south of Madrigalejo, a large rice-growing area. As we drove, a black-shouldered kite was seen hovering over a field. We stopped for coffee at Obando just as a shower of rain arrived. We then dropped in at the crane information centre of Moheda Alta, where we entered the exhibition on cranes as it was raining and left as the sun was shining!

It was picnic-time and we enjoyed lunch in the beautiful *dehesa*, the ground lush with flowering plants. A walk after lunch took us through this habitat, which was positively alive with woodchat shrikes and corn buntings. Reaching the end of the track we spent half an hour in the observation tower overlooking rice stubble fields, over



A patch of *Anemone palmata*, and sawfly orchids at Moheda Alta.

which hunted marsh harriers and common buzzards, though no late cranes. The tower provided perfect shelter from a short but fierce thunderstorm, which left a covering of pearl-like hailstones on the ground. As it passed, a black stork flew low over the trees. Returning along the track in sunshine, Alison discovered a stand of sawfly orchids, including some very fine-looking specimens indeed, along with patches of yellow anemones. Back at where we had parked, dozens of Barbary nut irises had started flowering.

Driving back through the rice fields we came across a small party of black-tailed godwits and black-winged stilts, while some of us saw a merlin flying beside the road. A final stop was had at the reservoir of Sierra Brava. The water itself had little of interest, apart from great crested grebes, but looking south over the mosaic of pasture, *dehesa* and crops, we found at least three stone-curlews, a very obliging great spotted cuckoo, a couple of Iberian hares and some shovelers feeding in a small pool. It was then back in the van as another shower of rain arrived and we returned to the Finca for tea and checklists.

Saturday 23rd March: Jaraicejo and Trujillo

Although at breakfast time there was no rain, and there were glimmers of brighter skies to the north, by mid-morning it had started raining. There were very few respites in the weather during the day and by afternoon the rain had become pretty persistent. At the Finca before we set off we enjoyed very good, prolonged views of hawfinches, while Martin and Francis also found a rock sparrow. Through the low cloud, black and griffon vultures glided past.

We headed north-east, stopping at an area of broom and lavender heathland close to the town of Jaraicejo. A path across the heath led us to a most beautiful cork oak grove. Because of the steady, worsening rain, there was very little bird activity indeed, apart from Thekla lark on the heath. After a coffee stop we drove to the Miravete Pass where, taking advantage of an hour or so with no rain, we walked through the pines high on the ridge before taking our lunch in the small picnic area at the pass. A fine male serin sang near to the car park and in the pines we all had excellent views of crested tits and goldcrest and most of us glimpses of short-toed treecreeper. At lunch, the short break in the weather encouraged a fly-past of vultures, with very close views of passing black and griffons.

We reached our next stop, the River Tozo, in steady rain, and with no improvement imminent we decided to return to Trujillo. Here, during a few minutes of dry weather beside the bull ring, we had excellent views of several lesser kestrels – all but one males – returning from feeding forays to the colony, which numbers almost thirty pairs, under the building's old tiles. A hoopoe also landed on the roof and several spotless starlings were also present.

Back at the Finca we convened in the warm dining room for tea and a viewing of the RSPB DVD 'Born to Fly' on cranes, which features Extremadura as the main wintering area of the population breeding in north-western Europe. Wildlife photographer Steve Fletcher joined us for dinner, which took rather longer than usual to arrive because, as we learned, the new cook had departed rather abruptly. Laura and Vassili coped magnificently in his absence. Steve then showed us a selection of his superb bird photographs, with many of us, Leo excepted, puzzling over IDs before Steve explained what was on screen.

Sunday 24th March: Santa Marta de Magasca

We said goodbye to Diana W who headed back on the long drive south to Andalucia today. Remarkably we escaped rain today, despite heavy dark shower clouds passing us to left and right. There was, however, quite a fresh wind all day.



On the open plains.

We ventured to the west to visit the open plains near the village of Santa Marta de Magasca. Our first stop at the edge of open country afforded us very good views of Thekla lark and masses of Spanish sparrows. Corn buntings were ubiquitous and in full song. Two great bustards were also in view and at our second stop nearby we saw a further group of these stately birds. Calandra larks were the main feature of this landscape of open fields and mixed farming, and we were rewarded by the sound of these large larks at almost every stop during the day. We enjoyed a long walk along a dirt road, accompanied by lark song throughout and further opportunities to see great bustard, Iberian grey shrike and vultures drifting across in the breeze. We also had very distant views of two black-bellied sandgrouse on the ground.

Our route then took us through lightly wooded *dehesa* on the way to the village, where woodchat shrikes appeared numerous along the roadside fences. It being Palm Sunday, we arrived in Santa Marta de Magasca just as the procession was ending, so the little village square was quite full of people bearing small olive branches. Our lunch stop was just to the north, beside the Magasca River. Here crag martins hawked prey and short-toed eagles appeared and hung in the sky, sometimes hovering, to scan the terrain for reptiles.

Just as we had started a short walk along the river, a majestic golden eagle appeared, crossing the valley at close range. Spanish terrapins basked on the riverbank rocks, while the valley side was full of the song of great tit and wren.

To the north, we stopped at an area of high ground affording superb panoramic views, and watched two rather distant male Montagu's harriers quartering a cereal field. There were also large flocks of calandra larks and goldfinches. We concluded our visit by walking to a drovers' trail, obtaining brief views of booted and short-toed eagles, but enveloped, as it were, by the evocative song of calandra larks. As we approached Trujillo we stopped in the area of granite outcrops and enjoyed some afternoon sunshine looking at the variety of flowers, a veritable rock garden, with *Ornithogalum concinnum*, an unusual and rather local spiked star-of-Bethlehem, spotted rockrose and the yellow toadflax *Linaria spartea* among those present.



The ancient fortress town of Trujillo seen from the granite outcrops.

Seizing the moment while it was still good weather we ended the day by returning to where we'd started, on the plains, in the hope of seeing sandgrouse. They were there, to start with just distant dots on the ground, but then they flew, a tight flock of pin-tailed sandgrouse flashing white against a dark, threatening sky. (They inspired Cheryl to write a couple of verses – see holiday highlights on p.10.)

In the evening we returned to Trujillo to dine in the typical La Troya restaurant on the wonderful main square of the town, where we enjoyed a full spread of local dishes and wine, and the company of Martin's son Patrick.

Monday 25th March: Trujillo and Cabañas del Castillo

Heavy mist and drizzle smothered the Finca at breakfast, and although it was partly the effect of being high in the hills and sitting in low cloud, the weather remained grey and damp all day, with steadier rain throughout most of the afternoon. We spent the morning exploring the historic centre of Trujillo, starting at the Plaza Mayor (the main square) surrounded by 16th century palaces and churches and then we went back in time as we ascended the narrow medieval streets, past fortified palaces built from the wealth of wool from the *dehesas*, to the Moorish fort which itself was built on earlier Roman and Celtic settlements. White storks were busy at their nests, mating and bill-clacking, and a few lesser kestrels drifted over the tiled rooftops, but because of the cold, wet cloudy weather the group as a whole saw none of the hoped-for swifts.

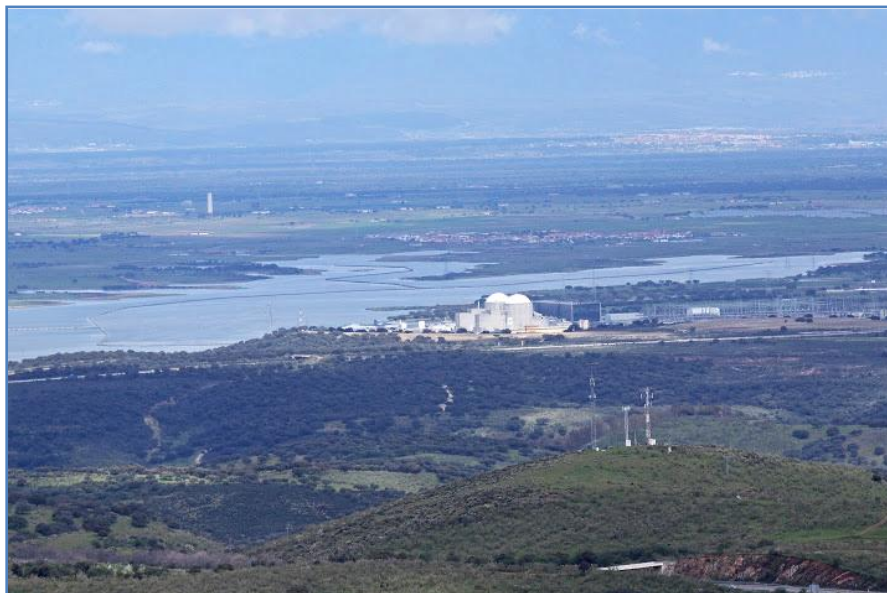
Following coffee and a little shopping we drove eastwards in the rain to the Villuercas mountains, stopping to have lunch in the attractive River Almonte gorge. Despite the rain, a few griffon vultures were on the wing and we saw grey wagtails. At least there was the chance of some plant-finding and we found the attractive little yellow daisy *Prolongoa pectinata* among the Jersey buttercups and tall rocket. From the river we followed the road up to the small village of Cabañas del Castillo where we walked to a gap in the crags to view across the valley to the east. Although the ridge-tops were shrouded in mist, we could get an impression of the spectacular folding that created the system of ridges and valleys, now designated as a Geological Park. At closer quarters we found the charming dwarf sheep's bit and a clump of common jonquils in flower, as well as masses of hoop petticoat narcissus.

We returned to the Finca for tea and checklists, with hawfinches calling in the grounds.

Tuesday 26th March: Arrocampo reservoir and the orchid walk

Despite the forecast of rain throughout the day, we again managed to escape soakings, with the downpours happening during our coffee break and return to base at the end of the afternoon.

Accompanied today by Martin's twelve year-old son Patrick, we spent the morning visiting the northern side of the Arrocampo reservoir, built to provide cooling water for the Almaraz power station and fringed with reedmace and some reeds, creating an excellent habitat for birds. We had barely left the vehicle when we saw two of the most anticipated species: the extraordinary purple swamphen and an absolutely gorgeous honey-coloured squacco heron. We stood nearby looking along a channel and had a couple of sightings of purple



Arrocampo reservoir and Almaraz power station from the Miravete Pass.

heron and great white egret. Retracing our steps, some of the group managed to see a little bittern fly in and then disappear in the vegetation. We started a walk beside the marsh but as rain started to fall we opted to return to the vans, fortuitously as it turned out because as soon as we did so, a black-shouldered kite appeared and started to hunt over a nearby playing field. We had a magnificent view as it hovered with wings held in a deep stiff 'V' as the bird kept stationary, head facing the strong westerly wind. We watched it drop down, clearly successfully taking an item of prey as it flew off carrying something in its talons.



Left: champagne orchid.

Above: hoop petticoat narcissus.

Right: conical orchid.

We had coffee in a café in the small town square of Saucedilla by the ancient church, which provides nesting sites for several pairs of lesser kestrels. Following this, we stopped at another area of marsh. Here a Savi's warbler was tracked down and we had very good views of it singing, perched on a reed, turning its head from side to side. Across the water a flock of cattle egrets was accompanied by a glossy ibis. Calls alerted us to penduline tit, which we were delighted to find had started building a nest in a willow tree. The nest at this stage looked like an eco-friendly shopping bag which swung to and fro in the strong wind. While we watched, the male returned with some nest material, down from the seed-head of lesser reedmace.

We then headed east over the Tajo river and then up to a small valley for lunch. As griffon vultures passed overhead, we sat among sawfly orchids at the edge of mixed woodland. The orchid theme continued through the afternoon with two forays into a limestone area nearby where a total of seven species of orchid were found: the spectacular naked man, good numbers of conical and sawfly, some mirror, woodcock and champagne and a few yellow bee orchids. The last, which is normally more numerous here, may well have been slowed down by the cold wet weather of the last few weeks. Other species of note included a green-flowered birthwort *Aristolochia paucinervis* and both tassel and grape hyacinths. Finally, at last, a butterfly, a western dappled white that many in the group photographed as it hung onto Chris's finger.

We returned to the Finca in very heavy rain for a final session of tea and checklists. The evening rounded off with the last dinner of the holiday, a farewell to the staff, especially Ines the cook who was retiring in a few days' time after 15 years of service, a collection of our holiday highlights, and songs from the sixties led by Chris!

Wednesday 27th March

There was light rain first thing. After breakfast we bade farewell to Henri, our host, Laura and the team. Following a stop to refuel and take coffee, we arrived at Madrid airport at 12.45, just three hours after our departure from the Finca, in good time to drop bags for the return flight, where Martin said his goodbye to the group.

Highlights of the week, as nominated by group members

Ali: displaying booted eagles, evening sun catching sandgrouse in flight, listening to calandra larks, Laura.

Alice: sitting in her room and eyeballing hawfinches and azure-winged magpies.

Barbara: the dawn chorus.

Francis: calandra lark and woodlark singing in the sky.

Susan: carpets of flowers, ending with orchids; drama of the hailstorm in the hide at Moheda Alta; Steve's photos.

Paul: the Spanish imperial eagle that came around the corner and "kicked the vulture's ass."

Jan: griffon vultures, all there staring at you from the crags.

John: booted eagles displaying; Spanish imperial eagle talon tussling with a vulture; black-shouldered kite; banter round the dinner table.

Leo: seeing griffon and black vultures from below and above.

Diana T: so many birds and flowers, such as the *Prolongoa pectinata*, the delightful company.

Tim: griffon vulture feeding young; great spotted cuckoos; tortilla.

Cheryl: crested tit, penduline tit 'handbag', woodchat shrike and three low-flying great bustards.

Chris: displaying booted eagles, including the upside-down 'Biggles moment' (in the words of one group member), and displaying red-rumped swallows, both on day one.

Martin: the sheer exuberance of the displaying booted eagles.

SANDGROUSE SHUFFLE

by the pin-tailed sandgrouse, with some help from Cheryl

Do you know the sandgrouse shuffle?
One two, one two, feathers ruffle.
Look out chaps – birdwatchers right,
Keep formation, nice and tight.

Dark clouds looming, best side facing,
Raise a wing and give a show.
Have they seen us? Cheers are rising.
One more turn before they go.

SPECIES LISTS

BIRDS

Little Grebe	Singles on pool near Trujillo, 24 th March and at Arrocampo reservoir on 26 th .
Great Crested Grebe	Several on Sierra Brava reservoir on 22 nd March.
Cormorant	Seen most days along large rivers and reservoirs.
Little Bittern	One at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Squacco Heron	One at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Cattle Egret	Seen on several days.
Little Egret	Seen on rice fields on 22 nd March and at Arrocampo on 26 th .
Great White Egret	One in pool on way to Monfragüe on 21 st March, two at Arrocampo on 26 th .
Grey Heron	Singles seen on several days.
Purple Heron	Three of four at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Black Stork	One at Moheda Alta on 22 nd March and near Jaraicejo on 23 rd .
White Stork	Seen every day
Glossy Ibis	One among Cattle Egrets at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Mallard	Seen almost every day.
Shoveler	Two on pool near Sierra Brava on 22 nd March.
Black-shouldered Kite	One seen from road near Obando on 22 nd March and excellent views of one hunting at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Black Kite	Seen every day.
Red Kite	Seen on all but one day.
Egyptian Vulture	Seen at Monfragüe, Miravete, near Santa Marta de Magasca and the Villuercas mountains.
Griffon Vulture	Seen on all but one day with young on nests in Monfragüe.
Black Vulture	Seen on most days.
Short-toed Eagle	Seen on several days.
Marsh Harrier	Seen on rice fields, over Miravete and at Arrocampo.
Montagu's Harrier	A female and two males near Santa Marta de Magasca on 24 th March.
Sparrowhawk	One at Monfragüe on 21 st March.
Common Buzzard	Seen most days.
Spanish Imperial Eagle	Magnificent views of a pair in Monfragüe on 21 st March.
Golden Eagle	One over Finca Santa Marta on 20 th March and excellent views at River Magasca on 24 th March.
Bonelli's Eagle	Two good sightings of pairs in Monfragüe on 21 st March.
Booted Eagle	Seen on several days and a pair displaying at the Finca on 20 th March.
Lesser Kestrel	Seen almost every day.
Common Kestrel	Seen almost every day.
Merlin	One seen from road near Obando on 22 nd March.
Red-legged Partridge	Seen on several days.
Moorhen	One at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Purple Swampphen	Several seen at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Little Bustard	A group of nine on Campo Lugar plains on 22 nd March.
Great Bustard	About 20 in total seen on Campo Lugar plains on 22 nd March and at least 30 near Santa Marta de Magasca on 24 th .
Stone-curlew	Five seen on Campo Lugar plains and near Sierra Brava on 22 nd March.
Black-winged Stilt	Seen on pool near Trujillo on 21 st March and near Moheda Alta on 22 nd .
Little Ringed Plover	One at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Lapwing	About ten at Moheda Alta on 22 nd March.
Snipe	One at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Black-tailed Godwit	Party of about 12 near Moheda Alta on 22 nd March.
Green Sandpiper	One near Madrigalejo on 22 nd March.
Black-headed Gull	Seen on rice fields on 22 nd March.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Seen on several days including migrating flocks on 20 th and 22 nd March.
Black-bellied Sandgrouse	Two near Santa Marta de Magasca on 24 th March.
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	A flock of about 50 near Santa Marta de Magasca on 24 th March.
Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	Seen daily.
Woodpigeon	Seen almost every day.
Collared Dove	Seen almost every day.
Great Spotted Cuckoo	One seen near Sierra Brava on 22 nd March and one heard on 24 th .
Cuckoo	Seen and/or heard on several days.
Scops Owl	Heard at the Finca on 23 rd and 25 th March.
Common/Pallid Swift	One seen in poor light at Finca on 26 th March.
Kingfisher	One on Magasca River on 24 th March.
Hoopoe	Seen every day.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	One calling in Monfragüe on 21 st March.

Calandra Lark	On plains of Campo Lugar on 22 nd March and Santa Marta de Magasca on 24 th .
Crested Lark	Seen every day.
Thekla Lark	Seen on several days on plains and heathland.
Woodlark	Singing on several days at the Finca.
Sand Martin	Several at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Crag Martin	Seen at the Finca, in Monfragüe and along Magasca River.
Swallow	Seen every day.
Red-rumped Swallow	Seen almost every day, especially at the Finca.
House Martin	Seen almost every day.
Meadow Pipit	Seen on several days.
Grey Wagtail	Seen in Monfragüe on 21 st March and at River Almonte on 25 th .
White Wagtail	Seen on most days.
Wren	Heard and/or seen most days.
Robin	Seen almost every day.
Black Redstart	Seen on several days at the Finca, Monfragüe and elsewhere.
Stonechat	Seen on most days.
Northern Wheatear	Seen on plains near Campo Lugar on 22 nd March and near Santa Marta de Magasca on 24 th .
Black-eared Wheatear	One seen from vehicle in Monfragüe on 21 st March.
Blue Rock Thrush	Seen in Monfragüe on 21 st March and in Villueras mountains on 25 th .
Blackbird	Seen every day.
Song Thrush	Seen on several days at the Finca.
Mistle Thrush	Seen on several days.
Cetti's Warbler	Heard at Monfragüe, on the rice fields and at Arrocampo.
Zitting Cisticola	Seen and heard on several days.
Savi's Warbler	Good views of singing birds in Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Dartford Warbler	Seen well on heath near Madroñera on 20 th March.
Subalpine Warbler	One singing in Monfragüe on 21 st March.
Sardinian Warbler	Seen and heard on several days.
Blackcap	Seen almost every day.
Willow Warbler	Seen at Monfragüe and Santa Marta de Magasca.
Chiffchaff	Seen on several days.
Goldcrest	One at Miravete Pass on 23 rd March.
Long-tailed Tit	Seen on several days.
Crested Tit	One at Miravete Pass on 23 rd March.
Coal Tit	One in pines at Finca Santa Marta on 20 th March.
Blue Tit	Seen every day.
Great Tit	Seen every day.
Penduline Tit	A male nest-building at Arrocampo on 26 th March.
Short-toed Treecreeper	Seen and/or heard almost every day.
Iberian Grey Shrike	Seen almost every day.
Woodchat Shrike	Seen almost every day, especially common on visit to Moheda Alta on 22 nd March.
Jay	One on 23 rd March near Jaraicejo.
Azure-winged Magpie	Seen every day.
Magpie	Seen every day.
Jackdaw	Seen on several days.
Raven	Seen almost every day.
Spotless Starling	Seen every day.
House Sparrow	Seen every day.
Spanish Sparrow	Seen on plains near Campo Lugar, Santa Marta de Magasca and at Finca Santa Marta.
Tree Sparrow	Recorded at Moheda Alta on 22 nd March.
Rock Sparrow	Seen at Finca Santa Marta on 23 rd March.
Red Avadavat	Seen at Moheda Alta on 22 nd March.
Chaffinch	Seen every day.
Serin	Seen every day.
Greenfinch	Seen most days.
Goldfinch	Seen every day.
Linnet	Seen almost every day.
Hawfinch	Seen at the Finca every day.
Cirl Bunting	One at Miravete on 23 rd March.
Rock Bunting	Seen at Monfragüe on 21 st March and Cabañas del Castillo on 25 th .
Corn Bunting	Seen almost every day.

MAMMALS

Wild boar *Sus scrofa* – rootings
Red deer *Cervus elaphus hispanicus*

Iberian hare *Lepus granatensis*
Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Spanish (stripe-necked) terrapin *Mauremys leprosa* (below left)
Large psammodromus *Psammodromus algirus* (right)
Moorish gecko *Tarentola mauretanica*
Natterjack toad *Bufo calamita* (below right)
Stripeless tree frog *Hyla meridionalis* heard
Iberian water frog *Rana perezi*



BUTTERFLIES

Western dappled white (right)
Brimstone
Clouded yellow
Cleopatra
Comma
Nettle-tree butterfly
Red admiral
Small heath
Small copper
Holly blue



OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Pine processionary moth *Thaumetopoea pityocampa*
Caterpillars of the tiger moth or winter webworm *Ocnognyna boetica*

A bee-fly sp. *Bombyliidae*
Large ant, possibly *Camponotus vagus*

PLANTS

Numbers on the right refer to Blamey & Grey-Wilson, *Mediterranean Wild Flowers*.

Polunin refers to Polunin & Smythies, *Flowers of south-west Europe*.

Where there is no number, usually these are plants in floras from northern Europe

e.g. *Wild Flowers of Britain & Europe* by Fitter, Fitter & Blamey.

Some are planted, marked P. NiF = not in flower.

Common northern European plants e.g. shepherd's purse, groundsel, are not usually noted; planted trees are only noted when of special interest.

Pinaceae	<i>Pinus pinea</i>	Stone/umbrella pine	3
	<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Black pine	4
Cupressaceae	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Common juniper	13
Fagaceae	<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes oak	24
	<i>Quercus rotundifolia</i>	Holm oak	26
	<i>Quercus suber</i>	Cork oak	27
Ulmaceae	<i>Ulmus minor</i>	Elm sp.	c. 38
	<i>Celtis australis</i> P	Southern nettle-tree	39
Urticaceae	<i>Urtica membranacea</i>	Membranous nettle	49
	<i>U. urens</i>	Annual nettle	
Polygonaceae	<i>Rumex bucephalophorus</i>	Horned dock, often in brick red sheets on dry ground	
	<i>Rumex scutatus</i>	Rubble dock or French sorrel	Illustrated in Blamey/Grey-Wilson's Alpine flowers
Aristolochiaceae	<i>Aristolochia paucinervis</i>	Green-flowered birthwort	Not in Blamey or Polunin
Caryophyllaceae	<i>Paronychia capita</i>	Paronychia	134
	<i>Corrigiola litoralis</i>	Strapwort	
	<i>Spergularia arvensis</i>	Corn spurrey	
	<i>Spergularia purpurea</i>	Purple sand-spurrey	148
	<i>Silene colorata</i>	Mediterranean campion sp.	180
Ranunculaceae	<i>Anemone palmata</i>	Yellow anemone	218
	<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.	Water crowfoot sp.	
	<i>Ranunculus paludosus</i>	Jersey buttercup	249
Fumariaceae	<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	Ramping fumitory	303
Cruciferae	<i>Alyssum alyssoides</i>	Small Alison	
	<i>Crambe hispanica</i>	Spanish seakale	364
	<i>Matthiola lunata</i>	A stock	Photo in Polunin
	<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>	Wild radish	369
	<i>Sinapsis arvensis</i>	Charlock	
	<i>Sisymbrium altissimum</i>	Tall rocket, the abundant yellow crucifer of disturbed ground & fields everywhere	
	<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>	Wild radish	369
	<i>Teesdalia nudicaulis</i>	Shepherd's cress	
Resedaceae	<i>Sesamoides canescens</i>	Sesamoides	Polunin 375a
	<i>Reseda phyteuma</i>	Corn mignonette	378
Crassulaceae	<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort	396
Saxifragaceae	<i>Saxifraga tridactyla</i>	Rue-leaved saxifrage	
	<i>Saxifraga granulata</i>	Meadow saxifrage	
Leguminosae	<i>Acacia dealbata</i> P	'Mimosa' or Silver wattle	432
	<i>Adenocarpus argyrophyllus</i>	Spanish adenocarpus (endemic to Extremadura)	In neither book
	<i>Anthyllis lotoides</i>		Polunin 623a
	<i>Astragalus lusitanicus</i>	Iberian milk-vetch	504
	<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i> P	Judas tree	430
	<i>Cytisus multiflorus</i>	White broom	
	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Broom	456
	<i>Onobrychis humilis</i>		Not in Blamey or Polunin

	<i>Lathyrus cicera</i>	A vetchling of cultivated fields	545
	<i>Lupinus angustifolius</i>	Narrow-leaved lupin	486
	<i>Medicago arabica</i>	Spotted medick	623
	<i>Ornithopus compressus</i>	Compressed birdsfoot	639
	<i>Psoralea bituminosa</i>	Pitch trefoil	508
	<i>Scorpiurus muricatus</i>	Scorpiurus, a scorpion vetch	684
	<i>Vicia lutea</i>	Yellow vetch	525
	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common vetch	531
	<i>Vicia villosa</i>	Fodder vetch	510



Two-low-growing members of the pea family on the plains of Santa Marta de Magasca and elsewhere.
Left: the sainfoin *Onobrychis humilis*.
Right: *Anthyllis lotoides*, identified after the holiday.



Oxalidaceae	<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Bermuda buttercup	735
Geraniaceae	<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dovesfoot cranesbill	741
	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved cranesbill	745
	<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little robin	748
	<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	Shining cranesbill	749
	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common storksbill	761
Linaceae	<i>Linum bienne</i>	Pale flax	777
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun spurge	799
	<i>Mercurialis annua</i>	Annual mercury	820
Meliaceae	<i>Melia azedarach</i> P	Indian bead tree or Persian lilac	843
Anacardiaceae	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Mastic tree or lentisc	865
Violaceae	<i>Viola (arvensis) kitaibeliana</i>	Dwarf pansy	931
	<i>Viola tricolor</i>	Wild pansy	
Thymelaeaceae	<i>Daphne gnidium</i>	Daphne	936
Cistaceae	<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey-leaved cistus (big pink fls)	961
	<i>Cistus salviifolius</i>	Sage-leaved cistus (small white fls)	965
	<i>Cistus ladanifer</i>	Gum cistus (big white fls)	971
	<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	Common rockrose	996
	<i>Tuberaria guttata</i>	Spotted rockrose	985
Cactaceae	<i>Opuntia maxima</i> (=ficus-indica)	Prickly pear	1040
Umbelliferae	<i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant fennel	1141
	<i>Smyrniolum olustatum</i>	Alexanders	1087
	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Shepherd's needle	1097
Ericaceae	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	Strawberry tree	1176
	<i>Erica arborea</i>	Tree heath (white fls)	1178
	<i>Erica australis</i>	Spanish heath (pink fls)	1181
Primulaceae	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet pimpernel	1198
Rubiaceae	<i>Galium verticillatum</i>	A tiny bedstraw	1299
	<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>	Field madder	



Galium verticillatum, a rather obscure, tiny plant related to cleavers, pictured left with leaves of friar's cowl *Arisarum simorhinum*. Worth looking at, though, for its globose fruit-lobes (right).



Oleaceae	<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>		1246
	<i>Olea europaea</i>	Olive	1248
	<i>Olea europaea</i> spp. <i>oleaster</i>	Wild olive	1248a
Boraginaceae	<i>Nonea vesicaria</i>	A nonea, at Finca Santa Marta	1375
	<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	Purple viper's bugloss	1383
	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage	1395
	<i>Anchusa undulata</i>	Undulate anchusa	1406
	<i>Cynoglossum cherifolium</i>	A houndstongue	1409
	<i>Myosotis ramosissima</i>	Early forget-me-not	
Labiatae	<i>Lamium bifidum</i>	A white-flowered deadnettle with white stripes on the leaves	Not in Blamey or Polunin!
	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	White horehound	1445
	<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit deadnettle	1478
	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary	1526
	<i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	French lavender	1528
	<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	Wild clary	1545
	<i>Stachys arvensis</i>	Field woundwort	
	<i>Thymus camphoratus</i>	Camphor thyme NiF, based on scent	Polunin 1162e
Solanaceae	<i>Hyosciamus albus</i>	White henbane	1555
Scrophularicaea	<i>Misopates orontium</i>	Lesser snapdragon/weasel's snout	1611
	<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved toadflax	1632
	<i>Parentucellia latifolia</i>	A tiny, red bartsia	1652
	<i>Linaria amethystea</i>	'Amethyst' toadflax	Polunin
	<i>Linaria spartea</i>	A yellow-flowered toadflax	Polunin
Orobanchaceae	<i>Orobancha ramosa</i>	Branched broorape	1655
Plantaginaceae	<i>Plantago lagopus</i>		1702
Caprifoliaceae	<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Laurestinus	1711
Valerianaceae	<i>Valerianella</i> sp.	Unidentified cornsalad	
Campanulaceae	<i>Jasione crispa</i>	Dwarf sheep's bit (Polunin 1355c, but illustrated in Blamey/Grey-Wilson's Alpine flowers)	
Compositae	<i>Anthemis</i> sp. <i>arvensis</i> ?	An abundant white (corn?) mayweed	
	<i>Bellis annua</i>	Annual daisy	1791
	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Perennial daisy	1792
	<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>	Southern daisy	1793
	<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Field marigold	1908
	<i>Chrysanthemum segetum</i>	Corn marigold	1894
	<i>Cirsium eriophorum</i>	Woolly thistle NiF	1956
	<i>Evax pygmaea</i>	Evax	1805
	<i>Galactites tomentosa</i>	Galactites	1971
	<i>Prolongoa pectinata</i>	A yellow daisy	Polunin 1428e

	<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk thistle NiF	1982
Liliaceae	<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>	Common asphodel	2089
	<i>Gagea</i> sp. <i>pratensis</i> ?	Yellow star-of-Bethlehem sp.	c. 2106
	<i>Fritillaria lusitanica</i>	Iberian fritillary	2152
	<i>Ornithogalum concinnum</i>	A spiked star-of-Bethlehem	Polunin
	<i>Ornithogalum ? narbonense</i>	Star-of-Bethlehem sp.	2171
	<i>Urginea maritima</i>	Sea squill (leaves & dead flower spikes)	2163
	<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i>	Spanish bluebell	2191
	<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Tassel hyacinth	2201
	<i>Muscari neglectum</i>	Grape hyacinth	2206
	<i>Asparagus acutiflorus</i> ?	A shrubby asparagus	c. 2212
	<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's broom	2219
	<i>Narcissus triandrus papyraceus</i>	Angel's tears	Polunin
	<i>Narcissus jonquilla</i>	Common jonquil	2279
	<i>Narcissus bulbocodium</i>	Hoop-petticoat narcissus	2281
Iridaceae	<i>Gynandris sisyrinchium</i>	Barbary nut iris	2305
	<i>Romulea columnae</i>	Sand crocus	2320
	<i>Arisarum simorrhinum</i>	Friar's cowl NiF	2378
Orchidaceae	<i>Orchis (morio) champagneuxii</i>	Champagne orchid	2403
	<i>Orchis conica</i>	Conical orchid	
	<i>Orchis italica</i>	Naked man orchid	2409
	<i>Ophrys tenthredinifera</i>	Sawfly orchid	2442
	<i>Ophrys lutea</i>	Yellow bee orchid	2423
	<i>Ophrys scolopax</i>	Woodcock orchid	2436
	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>	Mirror orchid	2436
Gramineae	<i>Lamarckia aurea</i>	Golden dog's-tail	2459
	<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	Lesser reedmace	
	<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant reed	2494
FERNS (Pteridophyta)	<i>Cheilanthes hispanica</i>	Spanish cheilanthes	2521
	<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair spleenwort.	2525
	<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rustyback fern	2532
	<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Polypody	