

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Picos de Europa

6th – 13th June 2012

Holiday participants

Val Appleyard & Ron Fitton
Elonwy & Peter Crook
Chris Ebdon
Pam & Bob Harris

Diana & David Melzack
Jo & Jim Simons
Marie Watt
David Wilkins

Leaders

Teresa Farino and John Muddeman

Our base for the holiday was Posada El Hoyal, Pesaguero: <http://www.posadaelhoyal.com/>

Teresa and John's blog about Spanish wildlife: <http://www.iberianwildlife.com/blog/>

Report by John Muddeman and Teresa Farino.

Species lists by John Muddeman and Teresa Farino.

All photos in this report were taken during the course of the trip,
those edged grey by Teresa Farino, and edged blue by David and Diana Melzack.

Cover montage: Snowfinch above Fuente Dé; Southern Chamois above Fuente Dé; Marsh Fritillaries at the
Sierra de ****; Elder-flowered Orchid at San Glorio.

Below: the glacial lakes in the central massif above Fuente Dé.



As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of the holiday was put towards a conservation project, in this case the Fundación Oso Pardo (FOP), the Spanish Brown Bear Conservation Foundation, and its work protecting both this species and its habitat in northern Spain. The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust.

During the holiday, Fernando Ballesteros, chief biologist with the FOP, and Elsa Sánchez, a member of the team that patrols the area around Pesaguero, came to El Hoyal to talk to the group, showing an interesting film about Cantabrian brown bears. A lively discussion with members of the group about the biology and behaviour of these last few remaining bears ensued, after which Peter Crook presented Fernando with a cheque for 742€ (£640), which he accepted on behalf of the FOP.

This donation brought the total for conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays to £80,039 by June 2012.

Itinerary

Wednesday 6th June: London Stansted to Santander with Ryanair. After a quick look at the wet meadows close to the airport, we started our journey to Pesaguero by following the coastal motorway westwards to Unquera. We then drove south through the depths of the Desfiladero de La Hermida – where we stopped halfway along for refreshments, in the village of the same name – before emerging into the broad valley of Liébana. We arrived at El Hoyal just in time to set out the moth trap on Teresa's terrace before dinner.

Thursday 7th June: A trip southwards to the Puerto de Piedrasluengas (1355m), after which we headed down to the village of Vañes, on the shores of the Embalse de Requejada, where we had lunch and then spent the afternoon exploring a small isthmus jutting out into the reservoir.

Friday 8th June: A trip to the wet meadows at the Puerto de San Glorio, followed by lunch and an afternoon exploration of the grasslands and river margins at the Arroyo de Mostajal.

Saturday 9th June: We followed the same road out of Potes for a short distance before winding up through some impressive tunnels to the villages of Dobres and Cucayo. Lunch was taken further down the valley in the picturesque village of Tudes, after which we walked down the trail through Mediterranean forest and meadows to Valmeo.

Sunday 10th June: Another examination of Teresa's moth trap followed by a trip to a limestone ridge on the eastern edge of the Picos de Europa National Park, not named here as it is home to a number of threatened butterflies. Late-afternoon visit to a magnificent stand of Lizard Orchids near Frama on the way home.

Monday 11th June: A longer drive southwards to the limestone 'sculpture city' of Las Tuerces, stopping first at Barrio de Santa María, complete with Romanesque chapel and dozens of White Storks' nests. A quick visit to a Bee-eater colony, then morning coffee at the Convento de Santa María de Mave. Lunch by the Pisuerga River at Villaescusa de las Torres, then an afternoon exploration of the karst plateau at the top of Las Tuerces, unfortunately curtailed by rather poor weather.

Tuesday 12th June: Finally, our trip up in the Fuente Dé cable car in search of wallcreepers and other high-altitude animals and plants. A late lunch at the Hostal Nevandi in Espinama, with some of the group stopping for a look round Potes on the way home. Evening presentation by Fernando, from the Fundación Oso Pardo, at our hotel.

Wednesday 13th June: En route back to the airport we stopped again in La Hermida to look for dippers, then had lunch on the shores of the Spanish Ornithological Society's Marismas Blancas wetland reserve near Santander. Back to Santander airport by 15.30, in plenty of time for the return flight to the UK.

6th June – Santander to Pesaguero

No sooner had we loaded our bags into the minibuses than we started with a look at Northern Spain's wildlife in the airport grounds. Just a few metres from the car park, a species-rich damp meadow yielded a fantastic range of flora and fauna under the scrutiny of our inquisitive eyes. Great stands of the impressive Robust Marsh Orchids and Heart-flowered Serapias (right) made a fabulous first impression, with a male Blue Emperor hawking along a stream, a bright male Red-veined Darter sunning itself on the ground, a Silver Y moth, a few Meadow Fritillaries – providing our first foray into the sometimes almost bewildering world of fritillary identification – and colourful Five-spot Burnets being the most notable insects drawn out in the rather warm, though overcast conditions. A colourful carpet of flowers in the wetter patches included huge numbers of the tiny but beautiful Bog Pimpernel plus a delightful pink-purple Grass-poly (*Lythrum*) species. A few birds were noted as well, including passing Common Buzzards, a male Eurasian Sparrowhawk and a singing Cetti's Warbler.



Our journey to the Picos de Europa took us west and parallel to the coast, with spectacular clumps of the same Serapias seen on the verges as we went, plus a few fly-past Black Kites, Yellow-legged Gulls and a Cattle Egret as well. The mountain range – the Sierra de Cuera – lying between the Picos and the coast, loomed up ahead of us, shortly after which we turned south at Unquera. We stopped for refreshments in the impressive limestone gorge of the Desfiladero de La Hermida, where observation of the towering cliffs turned up small numbers of Griffon Vultures plying back and forth, while a good-sized flock of choughs – probably Alpine Choughs – circled out over the top sporadically. And all this while we weren't being distracted by the numerous foraging Common Swifts and House Martins over the village, plus the Grey and White Wagtails also present on the rooftops.

Cheerful and relaxed we arrived quite late at our hotel in Pesaguero to find a pair of Black Redstarts in the car park and a singing Corn Bunting in the meadows behind: a good omen of things to come...

7th June – Puerto de Piedrasluengas (Arroyo Lazán), Vañes & the Requejada Reservoir

The relatively warm night had produced a decent moth catch on Teresa's terrace, and those who assembled after 07:15 am were treated to the sight of such spectacular species as Cream-spot Tiger, Lesser Puss Moth (left), Lunar Double Stripe and Small Elephant and Elephant Hawkmoths, as well as a host of smaller and often less colourful, but nonetheless fascinating species. The Common Redstart singing persistently from Teresa's television aerial was not visible from the balcony, but the Common Raven's nest on a nearby crag was, and we also enjoyed the medley of Blackcap and Song Thrush song reverberating in the wooded river valley.

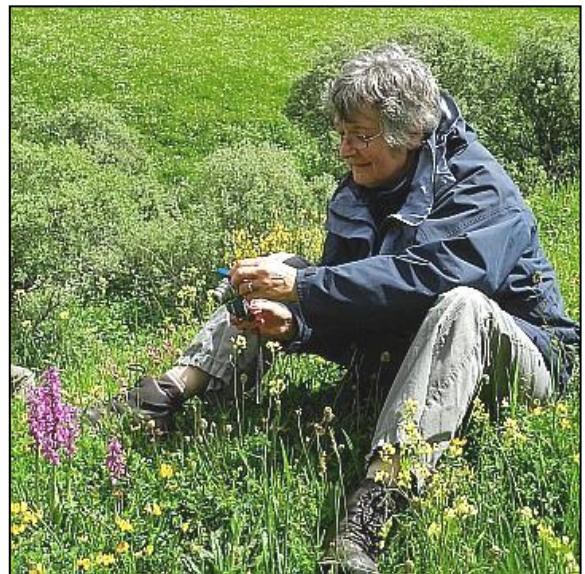


Our first stop after breakfast was at the rather cold and windy viewpoint at the Piedrasluengas Pass, where we could appreciate the cloud-capped eastern and central Picos massifs, and despite singing Garden Warbler and Blackcap in the adjacent beech forest which vied for attention, we soon moved further south, in the search of warmer conditions.

We parked in a small limestone gorge where the extensive rock-garden 'verges' were liberally peppered with patches of beautiful flowering plants, including Fairy Foxglove, Alpine Calamint, Prostrate Toadflax and *Euphorbia flavicoma*, among others, while the grassy roadside verges and a nearby meadow were a treasure trove. The floral interested dominated in the overcast conditions at the start, despite a passing Crag Martin or two amongst some House Martins, with Mountain Currant, Fly Honeysuckle, Gouan's Buttercup and Columbine particularly notable on the edge of the beechwood.

A few very late *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* in the damp and shady bottom of the meadow, and good sized clumps of Irish Spurge, Violet Mountain Pansy, Early Purple Orchids (being photographed by Jo, right) and White Asphodel were particularly appreciated, while along the small stream – Arroyo Lazán – running through the meadow we found luxuriant stands of Aconite-leaved Buttercup, Globeflower, Marsh Marigold, Greater Cuckoo-flower, Water Avenas, Wood Crane's-bill and a mass of Early Marsh Orchids, not quite yet in flower.

A Wild Cat moving swiftly up the opposite slope was fortunately seen by a few of the group before it disappeared into the broom scrub, while in the warmer sunnier spells, our first Iberian Grizzled Skippers and a Chapman's Ringlet, the latter endemic to the Cordillera Cantábrica, were noted. A roadside channel held enough water for a number of Fire Salamander efts to thrive, while we'd already seen a decent sized Common Frog in the meadow below, along with some of the impressively large daddy long-legs *Tipula maxima*.



We moved on for a late morning coffee stop, finding a lovely Posada in a nearby village where our first White Stork was also seen feeding in the alluvial meadows, though they breed some kilometres further down the valley.

Continuing down to Vañes, a few Great Crested Grebes were seen on the Embalse de Requejada (reservoir) as we passed. Stopping near the village we first took a short walk into a small meadow, where the local Barton's Orchids and a yellow-flowered lousewort *Pedicularis schizocalyx* had basically both finished flowering, but Maiden Pink and *Potentilla montana* provided some compensation. The fritillary ID game started all over again here, this time with Provençal and Queen of Spain in the grassland, while a fine Common Wall lizard decided to run up and pose for photos on John's shoulder, and was avidly snapped by nearby Honeyguiders! (left).

The shrill calls of a Rock Sparrow perched on a nearby roof alerted us, and we were able to admire it through the scope, shortly followed by views of a very obliging male Cirl Bunting and a few Corn Buntings. Lunch was taken back in a small ancient quarry with its 'natural' seating, and once again the abundant flowers and plenty of butterflies attracted attention between the excellent 'picnic' courses produced by Teresa. A variety of insects were present in the hotter, sheltered part of the quarry, including Adonis and Turquoise Blues, Duke of Burgundy Fritillary and a Large Red Damsel. A couple of ringlets, including our second Chapman's Ringlet of the day, were admired, but unfortunately barely paused for the photographers.

After lunch, we ventured out onto a nearby peninsula in the reservoir in increasingly sunny but by now very breezy conditions. En route, a roadside channel produced a couple of male Mercury Bluets (plus a recently emerged female with deformed wings on our return), but the Iberian Water Frogs calling from the edge of the reservoir proper could not be located. A fine male Red-backed Shrike was well seen in the scrub and a fine flora was present on the limestone outcrops, including the pungent stork's-bill *Erodium glandulosum*, False Sainfoin, the lilac stemless 'thistle' *Carduncellus mitissimus*, Star-of-Bethlehem and Grape-hyacinth. A mating pair of pink and greenish *Schinia cardui* moths (Noctuidae) was a treat, with Glanville Fritillaries also present, but most remarkably, a Red Deer fawn (right) almost on the top of the knoll remained completely unnoticed by the scrambling botanists before being spotted by Ron!



We returned almost without pausing, though some again stopped at the pass for a few snaps of the impressive scenery before pitching in for a short break before call-over and dinner.

Other beasts for the day were: Oak-leaf Spider *Aculepeira ceropegia*, Green Huntsman Spider *Micrommata virescens*, Nursery Web Spider *Pisaura mirabilis*, Common Heath, July Belle, Chimney Sweeper, Mother Shipton and the chrysomelid beetle *Exosoma lusitanicum*.

8th June – Puerto de San Glorio and the Arroyo de Mostajal



It was clear that the weather was going to be 'abundant' today around the high tops, so once again Teresa's local knowledge suggested that to get the best out of the day we needed to do a little more travelling. We first headed down past Potes and then wound our way up in a south-westerly direction, without pausing, to an expanse of botanically very diverse grasslands at around 1,500 metres near the Puerto de San Glorio.

In one small, south-facing meadow, we located both red and yellow varieties of the Elder-flowered Orchid (see front cover), plus the intermediate 'raspberries-and-custard' form, as well as a fine display of Early Marsh, Early Purple and Burnt Orchids, and – perhaps more excitingly – the diminutive Iberian endemic vanilla orchid *Nigritella gabasiana* (left). Other plants new to us here included Horned Pansy, Whorled Lousewort – mimicking the nectar-rich Early Marsh Orchids in order to attract pollinators – and a few Spring Gentians.

Plenty of butterflies were observed during the occasional sunny spells: good numbers of Sooty Coppers (including a mating pair, right), Iberian Grizzled Skippers, Small Heaths and Clouded Yellows, with the fast-flying *Erebia* ringlets giving us in trouble once more, although we determined that at least one de Prunner's was present. Similarly, day-flying moths were abundant, particularly Burnet Companions and Common Heaths.

By contrast, birds were not much in evidence, with the singing Dunnocks in the scrub around us simply refusing to show themselves. A singing Common Whitethroat did appear, albeit very briefly, as well as a lovely male Yellowhammer which sang from a broom bush right on the verge as we returned to the minibus, giving us prolonged telescope views.



The rest of the day was spent in a small valley of the Arroyo de Mostajal, requiring a pleasant drive along small winding roads in fantastic landscapes, with a terrific range of geological formations in the changing bedrock admired from the vehicles en route. Despite patchy sun when we arrived, we quickly discovered that only when it was out did it feel warm in the chilly, and often very stiff, breeze.

Our first attempts to find Schreiber's Green Lizards along the streamside failed when, unusually, we were pleasantly asked to leave the meadows by a local farmer. A few passing Griffon Vultures and singing Garden Warblers in the scrub kept us busy as we returned to the vehicles, at which point the farmer then said that we could use the small paths and tracks to explore the higher meadows. As a result, the more intrepid members of the group managed to locate a couple of specimens of the rather robust Pale-flowered Orchid, clumps of Rock Cinquefoil and some fine stands of the white, *cantabrica* subspecies of Alpine Pasque-flower. Other notable flora included Spignel, Spring Squill and clumps of Chives, while a closer look at the day-flying moths and butterflies turned up Small Argent and Sable, a territorial Pearl-bordered Fritillary, more Queen of Spain and Glanville Fritillaries, Green Hairstreak and Red-underwing Skipper.

We returned to the bus to set up lunch, with plenty of butterflies and even a couple of Owl-flies (Ascalaphids) – effectively these are predatory giant lacewings – flying around and past us intermittently, although seeing these dragonfly-like insects well in hot weather is always something of a challenge, and more so with a lunch plate in hand! A noisy Marsh Tit appeared in the willow scrub almost beside us, fortunately near the end of lunch though, allowing the keen birdwatchers to 'down plates' and grab their binoculars to watch it before it departed downstream.

Our afternoon walk was along a track close to a small river, this time upstream, with the most notable plants including hundreds of Early Marsh Orchids and clumps of Large-flowered Butterwort in the wet flushes. Common Wall Lizards and single Viperine and Grass Snakes – the latter spotted by Bob as it swam down the crystal clear stream – were also seen by some members of the group.



The sometimes cold conditions meant it was poorer for butterflies than hoped, although we did see the occasional Dingy Skipper and Mazarine Blue in the more sheltered patches. As the weather refused to improve notably, we spent some time looking hard for the local Schreiber's Green Lizards on our way down. And this time the majority of the group saw the unmistakable blue head and marbled green and black shoulders of a male (left) coming out of a spiny shrub before a female suddenly appeared too, and they both rushed off into cover.

Other invertebrates seen during the day were: an oil-beetle (yet to be identified), a Broad-bodied Chaser larva in a pond on the track, Holly Blue, Small White, Orange-tip, Speckled Wood, a forester moth, Garden Tiger caterpillar, Ground Lackey caterpillar, Lackey caterpillar, a single adult bagworm (probably *Ptilocephala montei*), in a fluffy orange and black livery, as well as lots of the aptly-named, caddis-like caterpillars of this group of moths.

9th June – Dobres viewpoint and Tudes to Valmeo

Given the cool and very still conditions, we headed for the impressive cliffs and tunnels near Dobres. From the viewpoint here we duly admired several Crag Martins, various Griffon Vultures (right), including begging chicks on nests, a few noisy Red-billed Choughs, a pair of brown Black Redstarts trying to bring food to a nearby nest, a fine singing Rock Bunting, a very noisy Blackcap, and an Egyptian Vulture, which passed well below us.

A short walk through two tunnels allowed further views over the delightful landscapes and produced further opportunities for birds and flowers, including our first Common Stonechats and flowering Lizard Orchids, though these spikes were unreachable for photos and with the promise of seeing lots more another day, we didn't risk it! While Teresa first took half of the group to a nearby bar for a very welcome warming drink, the remaining walkers noted a few birds, including our first visible Dunnocks, until we too joined the rest shortly afterwards for a very pleasant break in a lovely setting in a traditional mountain village.



A short transfer took us round to the Tudes meadows where after the customary views and quick snaps of the mountain landscapes from a little viewpoint, we took a short walk on a hillside clothed with stunted Western Holm Oak forest and dry meadows. Huge Common Midwife Toad tadpoles were the focus of attention in a water trough en route, with a few of them turning into tailed toadlets already. A persistently calling Green Woodpecker and singing Wryneck simply refused to show themselves, but a very distant Tree Pipit was located while looking for the latter, though most had a job to even see it, despite the scope! Raptors were notable by their near-absence, but when one did appear at reasonable distance it turned out to be a dark-morph Booted Eagle. Traditionally much less frequent in Spain than the pale form, this year they are remarkably frequent, and it was presumably the same individual that was seen again later on in the afternoon.

Among the swathes of colourful flowers that caught our eye here were Sage-leaved Cistus, Perennial Yellow Woundwort, Wall Germander, Cut-leaved Self-heal, Etruscan Honeysuckle, Musk Mallow, Black Henbane and numerous composites, including yellow *Pallenis spinosa*, Tolpis and Andryala, and pink Galactites.

Butterflies were much in evidence in this nectar-rich community, including our first Small Copper, Marbled White and Spotted Fritillary, as well as more Sooty Coppers. Among the day-flying moths we spotted were geometrids such as Speckled Yellow, Frosted Broom, Yellow Shell and the stunning pink and gold Narrow Rose-banded Wave (right), of which we saw quite a few in dry, Mediterranean habitats during the week.



We transferred the short distance to the beautiful little village of Tudes for lunch, where we picnicked at a convenient table in the main square, beneath shady Walnut and Ash trees, with calling Eurasian Nuthatches and a pair of Common Redstarts literally overhead as good company, and the local chickens vying for attention. A short stroll afterwards produced a couple of excellent amphibians for the list, with a 'pair' of large Marbled Newts being a particular highlight, but a smart male Palmate Newt also vying for a little attention, all in the same small water body.

While John took one couple back to the hotel to relax, the remainder of the group rounded off the rest of the afternoon, in largely very warm and sunny conditions, with a walk down to Valmeo. Passing through the mature Western Holm Oak woodland, it was very hard to spot the birds present, and although Cirl Bunting, Firecrest and Western Bonelli's Warblers were heard by all, only a few saw one of the latter briefly. Unfortunately, there was no sign of the Red-backed Shrikes that usually inhabit the dry meadows around the village; rather worryingly, this is the second consecutive year that these smart little birds have been held up on their spring migration across Europe from east to west, as they normally arrive in the Picos in late May.

The route down to Valmeo provided us with a whole suite of new flowers typical of dry, rather acid soils, including the white-flowered *Cistus psilosepalus*, trailing Dark Swallow-wort, golden *Potentilla recta*, Daisy-leaved Toadflax and Rampion Bellflower, plus a robust Broad-leaved Helleborine and some much daintier Red Helleborines. Among the trees and shrubs we also spotted Cork Oak, Prickly Juniper, Strawberry-tree, Turpentine Tree, Bell Heather and the lovely St Dabeoc's Heath. Insects too provided plenty of distraction in the warm conditions, including Black-veined Whites and both male and female Provençal Fritillaries, moths such as Hummingbird Hawkmoth, White-collared Burnet and The Passenger and the following pollen-feeding chafer beetles: black and white-spotted *Oxythyrea funesta*, bronze-coloured, furry *Tropinota squalida* and the blackish males and stripy black and orange females of *Anopsilia baetica*, a species endemic to the Iberian peninsula.

In addition, one of the reptilian specialities of these Mediterranean habitats – a Large Psammmodromus (right) – 'performed' beautifully for us, although the more numerous and much smaller Iberian Wall Lizards almost invariably scuttled for a safe crevice on our approach. A cool drink at the bottom before we returned was very welcome after another very productive excursion.

Other beasts seen during the day included: Broad-bordered Bee-hawk, Southern Six-spot Burnet, and the following crab-spiders: shiny red or yellow discs of *Synaema globosum*, yellow or white *Misumena vatia* (sometimes known as the Goldenrod Crab-spider) and pink, triangular-bodied *Thomisus onustus*.



10th June – Sierra de **** (name not given to protect sensitive species here)



Another quite warm and productive night for the moth trap on Teresa's terrace, with some of the more eye-catching finds being Blotched Emerald, Lobster Moth, Three-humped Prominent, Spanish Tiger (a beautifully marked Iberian endemic species) and White Satin Moth. Perhaps more memorably, we also found a magnificent male crane-fly of the species *Ctenophora ornata*, which attracted much photographic attention (left).

As cloud was pouring in from the southwest, we chose to explore a lovely limestone sierra on the eastern edge of the Picos. Indeed the views in the gorge as we approached the ridge required a photo stop for the second minibus, and we all met up again just beyond the village where the first group had already looked at the rather OTT Giant and Man Orchids present, interspersed with a number of more modest Bee Orchids.

While Teresa took some of the party up most of the driveable part of the track, the rest of us enjoyed the quite long, but gentle climb as it zigzagged its way up the hillside overlooking the village, contemplating the wildlife and splendid views en route.

With the sun almost out, it was quite warm, and a few passing butterflies included an unidentified ringlet, but also a few Cleopatras and Large Wall Browns too. Our first Fly Orchids (right) made an appearance here, and were in perfect condition, one even having five fresh flowers on it, which is at least one more than usual! Other botanical gems along the way included a couple of Provence Orchids, many delicate Fragrant Orchids, Greater Yellow Rattle, Bloody Crane's-bill, Spreading Bellflower, and pink-flowered clumps of Blue-leaved Petrocoptis and Fairy Foxglove on a damp, shady limestone cliff next to one of the renowned 'cheese caves' of the region; although the door frame was stuffed to rags to maintain constant humidity and keep the flies out, we could all smell the contents!



Among the birds observed en route were singing Western Bonelli's Warbler, Tree Pipit and Common Stonechat, though a yaffling Green Woodpecker and calling Wryneck remained unseen once again. At least a few passing Griffon Vultures, Common Buzzards, and, towards the end, a circling European Honey-buzzard, were rather more obliging! An old cattle trough also came up trumps in the form of several Alpine Newts and a host of tadpoles: 'giant' ones of the Common Midwife Toad and the much smaller 'larvae' of the Common Frog. In addition, an adult Common Toad was discovered by Val in the grass nearby.

Another lovely walk along the top of the ridge, this time in full sun, but partially under the cover of the Sessile Oaks, led us through meadows inhabited by butterflies such as Swallowtail, Short-tailed Blue, superb Marsh Fritillaries (see front cover) and at least five individuals of our target species for the day, Chequered Skipper



(below) in one of its few Cantabrian localities. Having spent some time observing and photographing these exquisite little butterflies, we eventually we reached a stunning colony of the delightful near-black form of the pasque-flower *Pulsatilla rubra* (left). These meadows also turned up Frog, Heath Spotted, Pink Butterfly, Common Tongue, Pyramidal and Woodcock Orchids – undoubtedly our best haul to date in a single location – as well as the lovely pink-flowered Sticky



Flax and enigmatic – and extremely toxic – Swallowwort. An adult Egyptian Vulture circled right overhead as to make sure that we really had seen it well (!), while closer at hand we had good views of a small group of Long-tailed Tits in the oaks, as well as of a Eurasian Nuthatch nest, where the adults were feeding the chicks.

Our return found us scouring a nearby hillside to try and find the noisily calling Red-billed and Alpine Choughs, but literally seconds after John had finally located the latter in the scopes, he thought his eyes were going funny, until he looked up and saw that it was a thick bank of cloud that had rolled in! And it stayed! Although we'd planned to lunch at the top before exploring further, we had no option but to walk down below cloud level, where on a small bridge over the river we ate another sumptuous picnic lunch, now in much cooler conditions.

The clouds cleared as we headed back in a southerly direction, and in the hot afternoon sun another short stop was made near Frama. Fortunately, we were just in time, since a farmer was entering with a tractor and machinery to cut the hay in the meadow we wanted to visit! He had no problem at all about us going in, and he even suggested that we pick and take away some of the numerous Lizard Orchids he was about to make into cattle fodder!!! We didn't take him up on this, as the flowers are widely renowned for smelling like a cross between smelly socks and rank goats, and there was just enough time to take pictures (right) of these extraordinary flowers before they fell. (NB Teresa said that the site is mown at this time every year, which apparently doesn't affect the population of Lizard Orchids here, which was good to know.)



Some of the wealth of other wildlife present included a largely yellow-winged Ascalaphid (probably *L. coecajus*), several Great Green Bush-crickets, Spotted and Knapweed Fritillaries, a Mallow Skipper, Feathered Footman Moths and a Six-spotted Burnet moth coupled to a patently Five-spotted one, which we deduced must also be Six-spot, as some individuals of this species sometimes lack all their markings. Another fine male Cleopatra was noted right beside the bus. This was a fine way to end the day and we returned to a well-earned break before call-over and dinner.

Other butterflies and moths seen during the day were: Speckled Wood, Wall Brown, Clouded Yellow, Green-veined White, Burnet Companion and more Narrow Rose-banded Waves.

11th June – Barrio de Santa María and Las Tuerces

A very mixed bag of weather was forecast for the day, even though it dawned beautifully still, clear and sunny. Indeed the main problem was a forecast for high and sustained winds, and once again we decided to leave the



high tops and hope it would blow through for our final day! One or two people stayed behind to rest and take short walks around Pesaguero, but even this turned out to be more difficult than expected, with some notable showers later on spoiling their fun, although luckily not before a White-breasted Dipper had been seen on the little river just below the hotel. The rest of the group headed south and out of the Picos to visit an area of limestone outcrops called Las Tuerces (left), just south of Aguilar de Campóo: a fair drive, but there was plenty to look for en route. Naturally, the change of habitats meant we suddenly encountered a number of new bird species as a result, including a couple of apparently suicidal Crested Larks on the road, as well as more White Storks (including large chicks on nests) and Black Kites, plus the odd Booted Eagle as well.

Our first stop for 'elevenses' near Barrio de Santa María was to take a short walk into a tiny dry valley, where Common Whitethroats, Yellowhammers, Corn Buntings and Eurasian Greenfinches sang from the bushes. A couple of rather flighty Eurasian Tree Sparrows came to sit under their straw-ball nest in the bottom of a White Stork's nest and gave us good views, and near the end of our short walk, as the wind increased and funnelled down towards us, a Tawny pipit on a rock edge 'sang' its boring ditty. More appreciated by most of the group, perhaps, were two passing male Montagu's Harriers!

It certainly wasn't just birds here though, with a wealth of small shrubs, herbaceous perennials and arable 'weeds' including colourful Cornflowers and Corn Poppies, White Flax, Blue Cupidone, the oversized yellow



heads of the viper's-grass *Scorzonera hispanica*, and the bronze and purple goat's-beard *Tragopogon crocifolius* (left). Among the monocots were Blue Aphyllanthes (with rush-like stems), Tassel-hyacinths, the star-of-Bethlehem *Ornithogalum narbonense* and our first Early Spider Ophrys of the trip, as well as spikes of soon-to-flower Bug and Pyramidal Orchids.

As we returned to the vehicles, we took a short walk up to a tiny Romanesque chapel, and from the surroundings heard singing Golden Oriole, Common Nightingale and a Melodious Warbler too, though with the trees and bushes moving in the wind, these remained firmly out of sight. Despite the wind, a few butterflies were seen, notably Duke of Burgundy Fritillary, Safflower and Red-underwing Skippers and Escher's Blue.

Just past Aguilar, we took a drive along a rather rough track to one of Teresa's 'stake-outs' for one of the prettiest birds of the area, and were rewarded with views of two or three perched European Bee-eaters. A fine sight as they sallied out from some bare twigs to snatch insects being blown past! It also took us close to what was undoubtedly the highlight for many during the day, when we stopped for refreshments at a gorgeous convent at Santa María de Mave, which had been converted into a hotel. Apart from being beautifully tended and sheltered in the warm sun, the grounds of the convent were simply teeming with birds, allowing us to get excellent views of the singing Iberian Chiffchaff and Firecrest, for some of us while still seated (!), and we even tracked down the extraordinary dangling nest of the latter, bound with spider's webs to the hanging branches of an exotic spruce and made of bark flakes and pieces of lichen. The Common Wall Lizards running around in the grass and flower borders provided more fun, while a fine male Black Redstart, European Goldfinches, Spotless Starlings, a fast-passing Painted Lady and an even faster Eurasian Hobby all formed part of a delightful experience!

Time was running on so we headed for our final destination. A convenient pull-off with picnic tables – plus panels explaining the complex geology of Las Tuerces – within yards of the River Pisuerga was ideal for our late lunch, even though as the wind rose the adjacent poplars occasionally showered us with tiny bits of debris! The insects over the river were being heavily exploited by a large flock of Common Swifts, Barn Swallows and Crag, Common House and Sand Martins, giving excellent views, while another White-breasted Dipper performed well on the river, even going to rest in one of the tubes passing under the bridge, where enough Water Crowfoot had accumulated for it to stand on easily!

A tiny freshly dead Western Three-toed Skink was also a surprise by the river, as was the hefty longhorn beetle *Lamia textor* (right) walking across a track; the larvae of this species develop in the roots of poplars, sallows and alders, taking four years to reach maturity. Teresa was absolutely delighted by this find, as she's been studying Spanish longhorns – 261 species in the Iberian peninsula and Balears, including 55 endemics! – for several years now, and this was a new species for her! Unfortunately, dead reptiles temporarily became a bit of a theme when a relatively large Lataste's Viper found squashed on a nearby track, and with a chill wind it was basically impossible to find any of the hoped-for lizards out on the nearby rocks. Climbing up to the top of the heavily karstified limestone plateau we were still dodging heavy passing rain showers, but it was simply too much to ask to miss them all, and the last one caught us out, so forming a natural, albeit truncated, end to the excursion. Before that, however, a super Woodlark sat patiently in the scope for all to have good views, a couple of distant Short-toed Eagles were added to the increasing list, and a fine selection of flowers included Yellow Bird's-nest under the pines, with St Bernard's Lilies, Common Asphodels and Wild Gladioli out on the plateau. Other plants of note were the curious stemless, yellow-flowered knapweed *Centaurea lagascana* and its pink relative *Jurinea humilis*, plus stands of profusely blossomed Burnet Rose.



With a long and quite winding return, both minibuses stopped independently to look for 'the' cat again, admittedly without success, but the views over the Picos and mountains as the clouds began to break were quite superb after a terrific day out.

Other invertebrates seen during the day were: Black-veined White, Adonis Blue, Small Tortoiseshell, Hummingbird Hawkmoth, Clouded Buff and hundreds of the orange, lily-eating chrysomelid beetles *Exosoma lusitanicum*.

12th June: Cable car at Fuente Dé

After a week of checking the weather forecast several times a day, in order to go at the first good opportunity, this was actually our very last chance to go up high, despite a less than inspiring weather forecast! Indeed, when we arrived at Fuente Dé, the cloud was swirling over, despite occasionally lifting, and we weren't even sure if the cable car was running!

Fears set aside, we had a coffee while Teresa went to check with the office, and then basically had to leave sharpish once a large coach-load of Spanish OAPs arrived and started pinching the chairs, almost from underneath us! A brief high Egyptian Vulture, another singing Common Redstart – quite a feature of this trip – and a very close Eurasian Jay – a species also very evident throughout the tour – were noted as we waited. 'Lift off' was very gentle and the astonishing 800m vertical ascent was genuinely enjoyed by the great majority of the group, with the last few metres of Europe's longest single-span cable car seemingly impossible as we edged past the limestone cliffs and entered the upper station (right).

We stepped out and went to the observation platform, where a dense white cloud hid the majority of the view and did not bode well, but it didn't feel as cold as feared, nor nearly as breezy as forecast (despite occasional light gusts as we walked the major trails). Indeed, we could clearly hear a Water Pipit singing as it 'parachuted' past, and soon after heard the dull 'trill' of the first of numerous Alpine Accentors seen during the walk. Indeed, we spent some time at one particularly productive spot, with a couple of accentors, plus distant flying White-winged Snowfinches, a singing Northern Wheatear and another singing Water pipit, all of which gave fine views.

Our first group of Alpine Choughs was also noted feeding on the grassy slopes above, while a rather sick-looking Southern/Pyrenean Chamois or Isard (they are all the same thing – *Rupicapra pyrenaica* – although the rather small Picos race is ssp. *parva*) browsed quietly below us. And we all noted how difficult all the grey-backed bird species were to spot on the ground between the limestone fragments and outcrops!



Among the profusion of 'alpine' flowers seen during our rambles were such emblematic Cordillera Cantábrica/Pyrenean endemics as the delicate anemone *Anemone pavoniana*, white-flowered Amplexicaule Buttercups, the stock *Matthiola perennis*, the rock-jasmine *Androsace villosa*, Cone Saxifrage, Pyrenean Spurge and the trumpet gentian *Gentiana angustifolia* ssp. *corbariensis* (left).

More widespread montane species on offer were Chamois-cress, Spring Gentian, Alpine Forget-me-not, Leafless-stemmed Globularia and its matted relative *Globularia repens* and Spring Squill. The distinctly cool weather, however, meant that the only species of butterfly or moth seen all the day was a single male black-and-yellow Crowned Moth, apparently named for its impressively plumed antennae.

Nonetheless, these weather conditions were actually very good for birdwatching, with the odd patch of blue sky occasionally appearing overhead within the ring of cloud that shrouded the circle of peaks towering above us. Being cool, it was good for walking, and the largely very light breeze was perfect for bringing the birds down from the high tops, and also for allowing us to hear them clearly. The next and almost final 'goal' was to look for the ever-tricky Wallcreeper and, amazingly, Dave's jest earlier in the day, of "seeing a flock of them" practically came true!

After three unsatisfactory sightings of single birds flying past, we stopped at a particular area where a jumble of huge boulders was present, and waited. But it wasn't too long before a black-throated bird appeared above us, and then moved down and past to disappear, at a fair distance, into the maze of rocks. Some walked round to watch it, but while there, it came back and over and went up the slope behind. And was followed by another! But while watching these disappear, another was found sitting quietly in the open at the first spot. So there were three! Or were there? Since when this last bird finally moved it went to accompany a presumed (pale-throated) female which was also present, and another black-throated male then joined them...! So at least three black-throated and one pale-throated bird were present, and three together just about constitutes a flock!!!



It was an astonishing series of events, especially when a pair flew straight towards the group – which now also included a Dutch couple who had been walking past and were also revelling in the views – and landed on rocks right in front of us! The male even stayed in view, calling repeatedly, and allowed a few (admittedly very modest) pictures to be taken with the compact cameras (left), then the pair moved off uphill before turning back again and flying off high overhead, their peculiar erratic butterfly-like flight being very obvious against the cloud.

The poor Alpine Choughs – most of which were colour-ringed from a project several years ago – which had been sitting around on the rocks just feet from us for virtually the entire time, patiently waiting for 'something' to happen, got their just rewards with a few crushed hazelnut bits and were much admired by all. The contrast between their glossy black feathers, red legs and yellow beaks rendered them excellent, albeit often challenging, photographic subjects (below).



It was time to return, since given the weather we'd seen on arrival at Fuente Dé, we'd left lunch in the vehicles, and this seemed providential as the cloud suddenly thickened and the drizzle returned. A second Southern Chamois was spotted examining us quizzically from the top of the screes up to right (see front cover), while a Snow Vole scampering about got the back-markers looking hard for it under the trackside stones, with some getting brief views, (another had been noted by Dave as it raced across the track just after we'd started out).

And to complete the alpine bird 'set', two White-winged Snowfinches were saved until last. One crossed the track close by most of the group when heavy drizzle was falling and thin cloud enveloped us, perhaps helping us to get close, while a second, and even closer one, was photographed well (see front cover) as it fed close to Teresa, Jo and Marie while they did a little bit of last-minute botanising off the main path (being rewarded by the Picos endemic yellow-flowered saxifrage *Saxifraga felineri*, although photographing it required some seriously acrobatic contortions!

We returned in two groups, with the first taking the lunch down to a local restaurant, where the owner, a friend of Teresa's, kindly allowed us to set up the picnic under cover while we happily bought drinks from the bar. The second group, having either done a little botanising or imbibing a little of the local beer in the upper cable car station (!), joined us afterwards to round off a terrific visit.

En route back to Pesaguero, half the group enjoyed a wander around the market town of Potes, while the rest returned direct to the hotel for a little more leisure time.

But the day was certainly not over, with Fernando and Elsa from the Fundación Oso Pardo (Brown Bear Foundation) coming over to give us a short presentation on the Spanish, and particularly Cantabrian, Brown Bear situation, after which Peter kindly acted as the travelling Honeyguide rep., handing over a cheque for 742€ from the Honeyguide Charitable Trust towards conservation work on the species in Spain. Sadly, the continuing intermittent rains had washed out all traces of local bear activity, even though one had been seen by a local close to one of the adjacent villages to where we were staying just the day before! Next time, with luck...

13th June: Liencres sand-dunes and Marismas Blancas wetland reserve

Not a full day, but with a couple of stops en route to the airport making it a productive one again. Once we'd loaded up and looked at a pale European Honey-buzzard circling over a nearby hillside, we left as usual shortly after 9:30 am, and wound our way down through the always-impressive Desfiladero de La Hermida, beside the Río Deva, to a roadside car park. Stepping out of the minibuses revealed several Grey and also White Wagtails along the banks and edges, while Song Thrush songs resounded loudly in the narrow valley, leading us to think of Common Nightingale to begin with. We had to wait a little while before a White-throated Dipper, our main target appeared, but it performed well on the rocky bank and emergent rocks before disappearing rapidly off downstream.



Once down on the coast we headed for the lovely Liencres sand dune nature reserve, for once in warm sunshine. What a treat! The Bay of Biscay waters glittered a beautiful blue, while the dunes, still wet from the recent rains, were covered in a colourful carpet of flowers, including Jersey Pink (left), Yellow-wort, Sea Spurge (with attendant small Spurge Hawkmoth caterpillars (far left)), Coastal Crucianella, Sea Bindweed, *Helichrysum stoechas*, Robust Marsh and Lesser Butterfly Orchids and Small-flowered Serapias, among others not yet in bloom, notably Sea-holly and Sea Daffodils.

The various birds included a passing Lesser Black-backed Gull, calling Yellow Wagtails, a fine singing Tawny Pipit and a rather confusing pair of larks with crests... The only reasonable views suggested Crested, but the calls suggested Thekla: the typical conundrum!

A few final Red-backed Shrikes were noted on wires and fences as we left, but a surprising range of new birds was also seen at our final stop for lunch, at the Marismas Blancas Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO) reserve beside the shipyard at El Astillero. These coastal pools – either tidal and estuarine, or permanent freshwater – were populated by a surprising selection of species, particularly on the freshwater part, below where we set up our last of Teresa's wonderful picnics. Here we were able to observe at close quarters Little Grebe, Common Coot, Gadwall, Red-crested and Common Pochards, Tufted Duck, several Mute Swans (clearly well-established despite being a relatively recent introduction in Spain), and Eurasian Reed Warblers (including a couple of adults busily feeding young below us and showing very well), while a Cetti's Warbler sang and called loudly from the reeds as well. A superb male Western Green Lizard was also found basking quietly on a rock on the edge of the reedbed, simply reinforcing how rich the wildlife of this region of Spain really is.

A serious problem with one minibus's passenger door meant it was two trips to the airport for the good bus, but that the short delay permitted those of the group who'd waited behind to note the mixed flock of Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls, Common Terns and Black-tailed Godwits roosting on the estuarine side, plus a single Little Egret feeding in the receding waters nearby. Our final Black Kite was even noted here, in the few kilometres to the airport terminal, where we all said our final goodbyes and headed our separate ways.

We hope that this report will bring back memories of a rewarding and enjoyable trip, and the huge diversity of wildlife to be found in northern Spain, in particular the Picos de Europa.

SYSTEMATIC LISTS

BIRDS

Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Only heard near Vañes on 7 th .
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Somewhat surprisingly, given that historically it is accidental in winter to Spain, plenty and including cygnets, in the Marismas Blancas area on 13 th .
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	A few at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Try as we might not to, we still saw some! A few at Embalse de Requejada on 7 th , various on 11 th and lots on coast on 13 th .
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	A group of 7–8 was a surprise at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Plenty at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	A pair at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Plenty, including chicks, at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	A few at Embalse de Requejada on 7 th and again on 11 th .
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Several nests with chicks at Vañes on 7 th and various sites on 11 th .
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Just 1 en route on 6 th and a few en route on 13 th .
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Noted in small number at various sites on 6 th , 7 th and again on 13 th .
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Just 1 at the Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	A small flock at Embalse de Requejada on 7 th and plenty Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
European Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	One on the Sierra de **** on 10 th and 1 Pesaguero on 13 th .
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Small numbers noted widely on 6 th , 7 th , 8 th , 11 th and especially along the coast on 13 th .
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Single birds noted at different sites on 8 th and on 9 th and on 10 th and on 12 th .
Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	The most numerous and most widespread raptor, being seen daily in small to moderate number at numerous sites.
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	A distant pair at Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Two males at one site and then a pair, including a melanistic female at another on the plains on 11 th .
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	One at Santander Airport on 6 th and another near Tudes on 9 th .
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Common, widespread and seen even more frequently than Griffon Vulture, but usually only as singles or pairs at numerous sites daily.
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	One or two dark morph birds near Tudes on 9 th and at least single pale and dark morph birds at various sites on the plains on 11 th .
Common/Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Small numbers noted at a few widely scattered sites on 6 th , 7 th and on 9 th and especially on 13 th .
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Just one, which flashed through the Mave convent grounds on 11 th .
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	A couple of birds at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Eurasian/Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Lots along coast, especially at Marismas Blancas area on 13 th .
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	A fine roosting group of 25-30 birds at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Plenty at Marismas Blancas area on 13 th .
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyophaga melanocephalus</i>	5+ roosting at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	Noted widely along the coast on 6 th , plus a few on 7 th , an immature over the Embalse de Requejada on 11 th and lots along the coast again on 13 th .
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	An adult flying along the shore at Liencres on 13 th .

Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	3-4 roosting at Marismas Blancas on 13 th , where they have one of their few breeding stations on the Cantabrian coast.
Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	A few feral pigeons noted on most days at a few sites.
[Common] Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Common, widespread and seen daily at various sites.
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Quite common, widespread and noted daily except on 8 th and 9 th .
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	One or two heard daily at different sites, plus a single hepatic morph female seen on 11 th .
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	Heard nightly from the hotel on 8 th – 10 th .
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	Noted in good numbers on 6 th , 7 th , 8 th , 11 th , 12 th and 13 th .
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Three birds noted near Mave on 11 th .
Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	Single birds heard well near Tudes on 9 th and the Sierra de **** on 10 th .
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Just one seen briefly from the bus as it perched on roadside rocks (!) on 7 th .
[European] Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	Various birds heard at different sites on 9 th , 10 th and 11 th .
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	A pair near Vañes on 7 th , a few en route and near Las Tuerces on 11 th , a few en route on the coast on 13 th .
Iberian Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	Originally described as a separate species, then lumped into the Great Grey Shrike complex, then included in the smaller Southern Grey Shrike complex, the Iberian birds have recently been reinstated to full species status following genetic evidence which shows it is actually the most ancient and distinct grey shrike lineage in the Western Palearctic! So it was great to see a pair and a begging fledgling near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
[Eurasian] Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	A singing male near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Remarkably common, widespread and visible and noted daily in small - moderate numbers on 6 th , 7 th , 8 th and 9 th .
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	A species of the lower areas, so only noted on 6 th , 7 th , commonly on the plains on 11 th and commonly again along the coast on 13 th .
Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	Quite common, widespread and noted in variable number on 7 th , 9 th , 10 th and above Fuente Dé on 12 th .
Alpine Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	Heard at the Sierra de **** on 10 th , but lots seen and very close, above Fuente Dé on 12 th .
Western Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Just one noted in flight en route to plains on 11 th .
Carriion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Common, widespread and noted daily.
Northern/Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Widespread in small number and seen daily from 7 th , though a large flock was present above Potes on 8 th .
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	Though common in the area, only noted at the Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>	Widespread, but also only heard on 7 th and again on 10 th .
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Common, widespread and noted daily from on 7 th , 8 th and 9 th .
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Common, widespread and noted daily from on 7 th , 8 th and 9 th .
Sand Martin/Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	A few in a large mixed swift and hirundine flock at Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Small numbers noted widely daily.
Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	Small numbers noted widely in the mountains and mountain villages daily.
[Common] House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Small - moderate numbers noted widely daily, especially in towns and villages.
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	A few noted on 9 th and again on the Sierra de **** on 10 th .

Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	Not part of the true Picos avifauna (at least yet). A seemingly suicidal pair was almost run over near Aguilar de Campóo on 11 th and another pair was heard and seen collecting food in the Liencres dunes on 13 th . Their presence at Liencres raised the question as to whether they were Thekla Larks or not, though the latter do not pass the N Spanish mountains at any point and Crested Larks are only known from a very small number of coastal sites along the Cantabrian coast (such as Liencres) and still do not figure on range maps for the species.
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	2-3 seen excellently at Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Heard Santander on 6 th and along the river near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
[Eurasian] Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	A pair feeding fledglings at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Melodious Warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	Just one or two heard rather briefly in the windy conditions near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Small numbers heard in the woods on 9 th and on 10 th .
Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>	Only present down near Las Tuerces, but a couple heard singing and a superb bird was watched feeding in the convent grounds on 11 th .
Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	One or two seen briefly on the walk down from Tudes on 9 th , then heard singing on 10 th and again on the plains on 11 th .
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	One of the principal components of the local woodland avifauna judging by the abundant and rather peculiar song variant of the local birds and noted widely and daily, though only seen from 9 th onwards.
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	Good numbers were present and still singing in the mountain areas, providing an excellent comparison with the local Blackcaps. Noted on 7 th , 8 th , 9 th and heard on 10 th .
Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	One seen on 7 th , heard singing at the Puerto de San Glorio on 8 th , heard singing again on 9 th and seen near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	Heard singing near Tudes on 9 th , heard singing again on 10 th and then a singing male watched in the convent grounds on 11 th , where we also tracked down its remarkable nest.
[Winter] Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Despite plenty singing, just ones and twos noted on 9 th , again on 10 th and again on 11 th .
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	A pair feeding chicks at a nest on the Sierra de **** on 10 th and 1 heard Fuente Dé on 12 th .
Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	Probably the 'bird of trip', with a minimum of four (three presumed males and a female) and probably five or more in one small area above Fuente Dé on 12 th .
Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	Good numbers in various lower areas visited on the plains on 11 th .
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Common, widespread and noted daily.
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Also very common and widespread, with their song a large component of the birdsong chorus heard daily. Rather secretive though, with only one or two seen briefly during the week.
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Ones and twos noted on 7 th , 8 th and on 9 th .
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Heard on 7 th , and ones and twos seen on 9 th , 10 th and on 11 th .
Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	Only noted on the south side of the Cordillera Cantábrica, with one singing and seen briefly at Vañes on 7 th and heard near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Quite common, widespread and seen daily at numerous sites.
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Two singing males in Pesaguero, seen and heard daily there from 7 th , plus at a couple of other sites during the week.

European/Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Present quite widely but in small number and noted near Vañes on 7 th , heard on 9 th , seen on 10 th , again on the plains on 11 th and along the coast on 13 th .
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	One noted from the bus near Aguilar de Campóo on 11 th and several, including displaying males, present above Fuente Dé on 12 th .
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	A pair or two around the hotel (including one nesting on Teresa's house, with at least 3 young!); noted there most days from on 7 th , including on 9 th , 10 th , again on 11 th and 13 th .
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	Singles noted in the river at Pesaguero on 8 th and on 9 th , plus one seen well near Las Tuerces on 11 th and our final one in the Desfiladero de La Hermida on the 13 th .
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Common, widespread and noted daily.
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	A few around a white stork nest at Barrio de Santa María on 11 th .
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	One calling and two in flight near Vañes on 7 th .
White-winged Snowfinch	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>	A few singles watched in flight and two separate birds perched above Fuente Dé on 12 th .
Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>	Plenty of foraging birds above Fuente Dé, giving excellent close views and also heard calling and singing on 12 th .
Dunnock/Hedge Accentor	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Small numbers heard at various sites, starting on 8 th , one or two seen on 9 th , heard again on 10 th and a few seen on the plains on 11 th .
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Lovely views from the vehicles of a few displaying males of the <i>iberiae</i> subspecies in arable fields near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Common, widespread and noted daily, especially along rivers and in small villages.
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Common, widespread and daily at numerous sites, including plenty of juveniles.
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	A singing bird seen briefly near Las Tuerces on 11 th , but 1-2 others in the Liencre dunes were watched well on 13 th .
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Small numbers watched and/or heard at a few sites on 9 th , 10 th and 11 th , especially on the Sierra de ****.
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	Only noted on the high tops, with several seen and heard in display flight above Fuente Dé on 12 th .
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Common, widespread and noted daily in woodland areas from on 7 th , 8 th and 9 th .
European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	Quite common, widespread and small numbers noted daily from on 7 th , 8 th and 9 th .
European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	A few in lower areas near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Common, widespread and seen daily at various sites.
Common Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Widespread in small number and seen daily from 7 th , except for on 8 th .
Common/Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Two in flight over the Las Tuerces pinewoods on 11 th .
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	One or two noted close to the hotel on 8 th .
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Quite common and widespread, but with a singing male behind the hotel, noted daily from 6 th , except for 9 th . Also noted in lower areas on plains on 11 th and along the coast on 13 th .
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	A couple of birds, including a confiding male, at the Puerto de San Glorio on 8 th and several in lower areas near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	Widespread in small number and noted on 7 th , again on 8 th and on 9 th and heard singing on 10 th .
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	A fine male at Vañes on 7 th , another in Tudes on 9 th and heard singing on 10 th .

MAMMALS

Wildcat	<i>Felis silvestris</i>	One seen briefly at Arroyo Lazán on 7 th .
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	A fawn by the Embalse de Requejada was a great find on 7 th .
[Western] Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	Noted by the hotel on 8 th , again on 11 th and on 12 th .
Southern/Pyrenean Chamois/Isard	<i>Rupicapra pyrenaica parva</i>	A couple of individuals above Fuente Dé on 12 th .
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Just one noted running along a roadside wire (!) on 9 th .
Snow Vole	<i>Chionomys nivalis</i>	A couple seen briefly at the top of the cable car on 12 th .

REPTILES

Western Three-toed Skink	<i>Chalcides striatus</i>	A freshly dead individual near Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Schreiber's Green Lizard	<i>Lacerta schreiberi</i>	A few rather retiring individuals at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Western Green Lizard	<i>Lacerta bilineata</i>	A fine male at Marismas Blancas on 13 th .
Iberian Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis hispanica</i>	A few in Mediterranean habitats near Tudes on 9 th , again on the plains on 11 th and near the coast on 13 th .
Common Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis muralis</i>	Quite common and widespread and noted on 7 th , 8 th , 10 th and again on 11 th .
Large Psammodromus	<i>Psammodromus algirus</i>	One fine adult near Tudes on 9 th .
Viperine Snake	<i>Natrix maura</i>	A very large individual disappearing into rocks by the Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	One swimming across the Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Lataste's Viper	<i>Vipera latasti</i>	A quite large dead individual on a track at Las Tuerces on 11 th .

AMPHIBIANS

Fire Salamander	<i>Salamandra salamandra</i>	Several efts in a roadside trickle near Piedrasluengas on 7 th .
Marbled Newt	<i>Triturus marmoratus</i>	A fabulous pair near Tudes on 9 th .
Alpine Newt	<i>Mesotriton [=Triturus] alpestris</i>	A male in a cattle trough (!) on 10 th .
Palmate Newt	<i>Lissotriton [=Triturus] helveticus</i>	A fine male with the Marbled Newts near Tudes on 9 th .
Common Midwife Toad	<i>Alytes obstetricans</i>	Large numbers of tadpoles in cattle troughs on 9 th and again on 10 th .
Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	One on the Sierra de **** on 10 th .
Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	Small numbers noted in wet meadows on 7 th and on 8 th .

BUTTERFLIES

Despite the cold weather, a reasonable haul of butterflies over the week; 43 species in total.

Mallow Skipper	<i>Carcharodus alceae</i>	Seen on 9 th .
Chequered Skipper	<i>Carterocephalus palaemon</i>	At least 5 individuals seen on 10 th .
Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>	Seen on 7 th , 8 th and 9 th .
Iberian Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus malvoides</i>	Several noted on 7 th , 8 th and again on 10 th .
Red Underwing Skipper	<i>Spialia sertorius</i>	A few on 8 th and again on 11 th .
Green Hairstreak	<i>Callophrys rubi</i>	Two at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	At least two at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Short-tailed Blue	<i>Everes argiades</i>	One male on 10 th .
Small Blue/Little Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>	Singles on 8 th and 10 th .
Mazarine Blue	<i>Cyaniris semiargus</i>	Singles at Puerto de San Glorio and Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Black-eyed Blue	<i>Glaucopteryx melanops</i>	One on 9 th .
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	Noted on 8 th and 9 th .
Sooty Copper	<i>Lycaena tityrus</i>	One on 7 th and noted again on 8 th and 9 th .
Adonis Blue	<i>Lysandra bellargus</i>	A few on 7 th , again on 9 th and 11 th .
Turquoise Blue	<i>Polyommatus dorylas</i>	A fine male on 7 th .
Escher's Blue	<i>Polyommatus escheri</i>	A male on 10 th and several on 11 th .
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	Noted at a few sites on 7 th , 8 th , 9 th , 10 th and again on 13 th .
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	A few at various sites on 7 th , 9 th , 10 th and 11 th .
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>	One at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	Quite common and noted in small number on 6 th -9 th and 13 th .
Chapman's Ringlet	<i>Erebia palarica</i>	A few individuals at different sites on the 7 th and 8 th .
Marsh Fritillary	<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	Some lovely bright fresh specimens on 10 th , including a mating pair.
Queen of Spain Fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>	A few individuals on 7 th , 8 th and also on 11 th .
Large Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata maera</i>	A few at Sierra de **** on 10 th .
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Moderate numbers on 7 th , 9 th , 10 th and again on 11 th .
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	A few noted widely on 6 th , 9 th , 11 th and again on 13 th .
Marbled White	<i>Melanargia galathea</i>	A few near Tudes on 9 th .
Glanville Fritillary	<i>Melitaea cinxia</i>	Recorded on 7 th , 8 th and 9 th .
Provençal Fritillary	<i>Melitaea dejone</i>	Noted on 7 th and 9 th .
Spotted Fritillary	<i>Melitaea didyma</i>	Seen on 9 th and 10 th .
Meadow Fritillary	<i>Melicta parthenoides</i>	A few on 6 th , 7 th , 9 th and 11 th .
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	One of the most widespread butterflies and noted on 7 th -11 th and in the Liencres dunes on 13 th .
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	Remarkably, just one briefly on 11 th .
[Common] Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>	Singles on 8 th and on 10 th .
Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	Widespread and noted on 7 th , 8 th , 9 th , 10 th , 11 th and 13 th .
Black-veined White	<i>Aporia crataegi</i>	Only noted on 8 th and 10 th .
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>	Common, widespread and recorded on 6 th , 7 th , 8 th , 9 th , 10 th and 13 th .
Cleopatra	<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	Noted on 9 th , 10 th and 11 th .
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	Recorded on 7 th , 9 th and 10 th .
Wood White	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>	Seen on 9 th , 10 th and 11 th .
Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>	Around, but only actively recorded on 11 th .
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	Seen on 8 th , 9 th and on 10 th .
Duke of Burgundy Fritillary	<i>Hamearis lucina</i>	Only recorded on 7 th .

MACROMOTHS

It was a shame that the weather during the trip was so poor that we only managed to set the moth trap out on Teresa's terrace twice, but on those occasions we caught some truly stunning beasts...

White-collared Burnet Moth	<i>Zygaena lavandulae</i>	Several seen en route to Valmeo from Tudes on 9 th .
Southern Six-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena transalpina</i>	One seen below Tudes on 9 th .
Six-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>	One seen near Frama on 10 th .
Five-spot Burnet/ Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena trifolii/Ionicerae</i>	Seen at Santander airport on 6 th and again on 10 th ; these two species are all but impossible to separate without dissecting the genitalia.
Forester Moth	<i>Adscita</i> sp.	Arroyo Lazán on 7 th and at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Scorched Carpet	<i>Ligdia adustata</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th , plus one on 9 th .
Frosted Broom	<i>Isturgia famula</i>	One seen near Tudes on 9 th .
Sharp-angled Peacock	<i>Macaria alternata</i>	Two in the trap on the night of 6 th , and 7 on 9 th .
Banded Grey	<i>Rhoptria aspersaria</i>	8 in the trap on the night of 6 th and 2 on 9 th .
Brown Silver-line	<i>Petrophora chlorosata</i>	One in the trap on the night of 6 th and two on 9 th .
Brimstone Moth	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Speckled Yellow	<i>Pseudopanthera maculata</i>	One seen near Tudes on 9 th .
Peppered Moth	<i>Biston betularius</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Crowned Moth	<i>Eurranthia plummistaria</i>	A male seen at the top of the cable car on 12 th .
Willow Beauty	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidarius</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th , and two on 9 th .
Ringed Carpet	<i>Cleora cinctaria</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Mottled Beauty	<i>Alcis repandatus</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Pale Oak Beauty	<i>Hypomecis punctinalis</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Brussels Lace	<i>Cleorodes lichenarius</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Common Heath	<i>Ematurga atomaria</i>	Seen on 7 th both at Arroyo Lazán and Vañes, then again near San Glorio on 8 th .
Black-veined Moth	<i>Siona lineata</i>	Seen only by those who stayed behind in Pesaguero on 8 th .
Blotched Emerald	<i>Comibaena bajularia</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Coral-bordered Wave	<i>Idaea ostrinaria</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Portland Ribbon Wave	<i>Idaea aversata</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 6 th , and five on 9 th .
Small Blood-vein-	<i>Scopula imitaria</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Narrow Rose-banded Wave	<i>Rhodostrophia calabra</i>	One seen near Tudes on 9 th , then several on the descent to Valmeo the same afternoon, and again near Frama on 10 th .
Blood-vein	<i>Timandra comae</i>	One of this UK BAP species caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
The Mocha	<i>Cyclophora annularia</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Dark Herringbone	<i>Cataclysmis uniformata</i>	One of this non-British species caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
July Belle	<i>Scotopteryx luridata</i>	Seen at Vañes on 7 th , and one caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Garden Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Ruddy Carpet	<i>Catarhoe rubidata</i>	Singles in the trap on the nights of 6 th and 9 th .
Small Argent & Sable	<i>Epirrhoe tristata</i>	One at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Common Carpet	<i>Epirrhoe alternata</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Yellow Shell	<i>Camptogramma bilineata</i>	One seen near Tudes on 9 th .
Green Carpet	<i>Colostygia pectinataria</i>	Singles in the trap on the nights of 6 th and 9 th .
Dark Fern	<i>Horisme radicularia</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
The V-pug	<i>Chloroclystis v-ata</i>	Singles in the trap on the nights of 6 th and 9 th .
Isabelle's Chevalier	<i>Chesias isabella</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Chimney Sweeper	<i>Odezia atrata</i>	At Vañes on 7 th .
Chinese Character	<i>Cilix glaucata</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
The Lackey	<i>Malacosoma neustria</i>	Caterpillars near San Glorio on 8 th .
Spurge Hawkmoth	<i>Hyles euphorbiae</i>	Several small caterpillars on sea spurge at Liencres on 13 th .

Broad-bordered Bee Hawkmoth	<i>Hemaris fuciformis</i>	One seen fleetingly near Tudes on 9 th .
Hummingbird Hawkmoth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	One seen en route to Valmeo on 9 th , plus several on top of Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Elephant Hawkmoth	<i>Deilephila elpenor</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Small Elephant Hawkmoth	<i>Deilephila porcellus</i>	Two in the trap on the night of 6 th and one on 9 th .
Buff-tip	<i>Phalera bucephala</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Three-humped Prominent	<i>Notodonta tritophus</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Lobster Moth	<i>Stauropus fagi</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Lesser Puss-moth	<i>Cerura erminea</i>	3 caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Pale Tussock	<i>Calliteara pudibunda</i>	Two males caught in the trap on the night of 6 th , plus one male and one female on 9 th .
White Satin Moth	<i>Leucoma salicis</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Four-dotted Footman	<i>Cybosia mesomella</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Orange Footman	<i>Eilema sororcula</i>	Two in the trap on the nights of 6 th and 9 th .
Feathered Footman	<i>Spiris striata</i>	Seen near Frama on 10 th .
Spanish Tiger	<i>Hyphoraia dejeani</i>	One individual of this Iberian endemic caught in the trap on 9 th .
Garden Tiger	<i>Arctia caja</i>	A caterpillar of this UK BAP species found near San Glorio on 8 th .
Cream-spot Tiger	<i>Epicalia villica</i>	5 in the trap on the night of 6 th , and 3 on 9 th .
Ruby Tiger	<i>Phragmatobia fuliginosa</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th , plus two on 9 th .
Clouded Buff	<i>Diacrisia sannio</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th , and several males seen during the day on top of Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Buff Ermine	<i>Spilosoma luteum</i>	Two of this UK BAP species caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Least Black Arches	<i>Nola confusalis</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Lunar Double-stripe	<i>Minucia lunaris</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
The Passenger	<i>Dysgonia algira</i>	One seen on the descent to Valmeo on 9 th .
Mother Shipton	<i>Euclidia mi</i>	One seen at Vañes on 7 th .
Burnet Companion	<i>Euclidia glyphica</i>	Meadows near San Glorio and Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th , and again on 10 th .
Straw Dot	<i>Rivula sericealis</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
The Spectacle	<i>Abrostola tripartita</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Burnished Brass	<i>Diachrysia chrysis</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Seen at Santander airport on 6 th , at Vañes on 7 th and at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th ; one caught in the trap on the night of 6 th and two on 9 th .
Pale Shoulder	<i>Acontia lucida</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Knot Grass	<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
The Coronet	<i>Craniophora ligustri</i>	Two caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
(a noctuid)	<i>Schinia cardui</i>	A gorgeous mating pair on the isthmus near Vañes on 7 th .
Bordered Straw	<i>Heliothis peltigera</i>	Singles in the trap on the nights of 6 th and 9 th .
Vine's Rustic	<i>Hoplodrina ambigua</i>	3 in the trap on the night of 6 th , plus one on 9 th .
Treble Lines	<i>Charanyca trigrammica</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Brown Rustic	<i>Charanyca ferruginea</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Angle Shades	<i>Phlogophora meticulosa</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Light Brocade	<i>Lacanobia w-latinum</i>	Singles in the trap on the nights of 6 th and 9 th .
The Champion	<i>Sideridis rivularis</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
The Delicate	<i>Mythimna vitellina</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
White Point	<i>Mythimna albipuncta</i>	4 in the trap on the night of 6 th and 7 on 9 th .
L-album Wainscot	<i>Mythimna l-album</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 6 th .
Flame Shoulder	<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>	3 in the trap on the night of 6 th and two on 9 th .
Large Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Setaceous Hebrew Character	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	3 caught in the trap on the night of 6 th , plus two on 9 th .
Pearly Underwing	<i>Peridroma saucia</i>	One caught in the trap on the night of 9 th .
Heart and Dart	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	At least 17 of this common noctuid caught in the trap on the night of 6 th , plus 22 on 9 th .

DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES

Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo meridionalis</i>	Photographed Pesaguero on 11 th .
Mercury Bluet/Southern Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>	Two males and a deformed female near Vañes on 7 th .
Iberian Bluetail	<i>Ischnura graellsii</i>	A male near Vañes on 7 th .
Large Red Damsel	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	Just one near Vañes on 7 th .
Blue Emperor [Dragonfly]	<i>Anax imperator</i>	A fine male at the airport on 6 th .
Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	A larva watched well at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	A couple noted at the airport on 6 th .

OTHER INSECTS

Field-cricket	<i>Gryllus campestris</i>	One seen well on 8 th .
Great Green Bush-cricket	<i>Tettigonia viridis</i>	One watched near Frama on 10 th .
(a chafer)	<i>Oxythyrea funesta</i>	Several seen en route to Valmeo on 9 th , also a copulating pair on 10 th .
(a chafer)	<i>Tropinota squalida</i>	Mating pair of this chafer seen below Tudes on 9 th .
(a chafer)	<i>Anisoplia baetica</i>	Males and stripy females of this chafer seen below Tudes on 9 th .
(a longhorn beetle)	<i>Lamia textor</i>	Chunky longhorn beetle by river on 11 th .
(a longhorn beetle)	<i>Clytus rhamni</i>	'Wasp beetle', below Tudes on the 9 th .
(a longhorn beetle)	<i>Anoploclera sexguttata</i>	Mating pair on the 10 th .
(a leaf beetle)	<i>Exosoma lusitanicum</i>	Seen in some quantity on the plains on 7 th and 11 th .
(an oil-beetle)	<i>Meloe sp.</i>	A single, large individual of a species not yet identified was seen at Arroyo de Mostajal on 8 th .
(a scarab beetle)	<i>Copris lunaris</i>	A male of this 'horned', dung-eating species at the moth trap on the night of 10 th .
(a crane-fly)	<i>Tipula maxima</i>	Several at Arroyo Lazán on 7 th .
(a crane-fly)	<i>Ctenophora ornata</i>	A fabulous male came to the light of the moth trap on the morning of 10 th .

SPIDERS

Oak-leaf Spider	<i>Aculepeira ceropegia</i>	At Arroyo Lazán on 7 th .
Green Huntsman Spider	<i>Micrommata virescens</i>	Seen near Vañes on 7 th .
Nursery-web Spider	<i>Pisaura mirabilis</i>	Several at Vañes on 7 th .
(a crab spider)	<i>Synaema globosum</i>	Both males and females seen below Tudes on 9 th .
(a crab spider)	<i>Thomisus onustus</i>	Seen near Tudes on 9 th .
Goldenrod Crab Spider	<i>Misumena vatia</i>	Observed en route to Valmeo on 9 th .

FLORA

The catalogue of plants seen during the trip is simply too vast to reproduce here, so we have limited ourselves to listing the lilies, narcissi and orchids, with 28 species of orchids.

LILIACEAE – Lilies

Rosy Garlic	<i>Allium roseum</i>	Seen in more Mediterranean habitats, such as Tudes on 9 th .
Chives	<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	Seen in wet meadows at Mostajal on 8 th only.
St Bernard's Lily	<i>Anthericum liliago</i>	Only seen on the top of Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Blue Aphyllanthes	<i>Aphyllanthes monspeliensis</i>	Seen on 11 th at Barrio de Santa María and Las Tuerces.
White Asphodel	<i>Asphodelus albus</i>	Seen in most Picos meadow and open forest habitats.
Common Asphodel	<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>	Only seen on top of Las Tuerces on 11 th .
Tassel Hyacinth	<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Only seen on 11 th at Barrio de Santa María.
Grape-hyacinth	<i>Muscari neglectum</i>	Seen on 7 th , at Vañes.
(a star-of-Bethlehem)	<i>Ornithogalum narbonense</i>	Seen on 11 th at Barrio de Santa María.
Star-of-Bethlehem	<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i>	Seen in the drier grasslands at Mostajal on 8 th .
Pyrenean Squill	<i>Scilla lilio-hyacinthus</i>	A last few flowers in the beechwood at Arroyo Lazán on 7 th .
Spring Squill	<i>Scilla verna</i>	Seen on 8 th and again at the top of the cable car on 12 th .

AMARYLLIDACEAE– Narcissi

Wild Daffodil	<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i> <i>ssp. nobilis</i>	The last few flowers hanging on in wet meadows at Arroyo Lazán on 7 th .
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ORCHIDACEAE– Orchids

Broad-leaved Helleborine	<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>	Seen only on 9 th , below Tudes.
Red Helleborine	<i>Cephalanthera rubra</i>	A few small spikes just above Valmeo on 9 th ,
Lesser Butterfly Orchid	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>	Only found at Liencre on 13 th .
Fragrant Orchid (a vanilla orchid)	<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	Seen on 10 th only.
Frog Orchid	<i>Nigritella gabasiana</i>	Seen on 8 th only, at San Glorio.
Elder-flowered Orchid	<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Seen on 10 th only.
Early Marsh Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza sambucina</i>	Seen on 8 th (both colour forms), at San Glorio and Arroyo de Mostajal.
Robust March Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>	Seen in wet meadows on 7 th and 8 th .
Heath Spotted-orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza elata</i>	Seen on 6 th and 13 th , in coastal habitats.
Pink Butterfly Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>	Seen on 7 th and 10 th , on more acid soils.
Green-winged Orchid	<i>Orchis papilionacea</i>	Seen on 7 th and 10 th , in drier meadows.
Bug Orchid (NIF)	<i>Orchis morio</i>	Seen on 7 th only
Burnt Orchid	<i>Orchis coriophora</i>	Seen in bud on 11 th at Barrio de Santa María.
Provence Orchid	<i>Orchis ustulata</i>	Common in Picos meadows, and seen on 7 th , 8 th and 10 th .
Pale-flowered Orchid	<i>Orchis provincialis</i>	Seen on 10 th only; just two spikes.
Early Purple Orchid	<i>Orchis pallens</i>	Only seen on 8 th , at Arroyo de Mostajal.
Man Orchid	<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Extremely abundant in Picos meadows, and seen on 7 th , 8 th and 10 th .
Lizard Orchid	<i>Aceras anthropophorum</i>	Seen on 10 th only, despite being a widespread species in the Picos.
Giant Orchid (NIF)	<i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>	Seen on 9 th and 10 th , the latter a huge stand near Framá.
Pyramidal Orchid	<i>Barlia robertiana</i>	Seen on 10 th only, but this early species was well over by now.
Small-flowered Serapias	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Seen on 9 th and 10 th in flower, on 11 th in bud.
Tongue Orchid	<i>Serapias parviflora</i>	Only found at Liencre on 13 th .
Heart-flowered Serapias	<i>Serapias lingua</i>	Seen on 10 th only, although generally common in the Picos.
Fly Orchid	<i>Serapias cordigera</i>	Seen on 6 th and 10 th .
Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	Seen on 10 th only.
Woodcock Ophrys	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Seen on 6 th , 10 th and 11 th .
Early Spider Ophrys	<i>Ophrys scolopax</i>	Seen on 10 th only.
	<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>	Seen on 11 th at Barrio de Santa María.