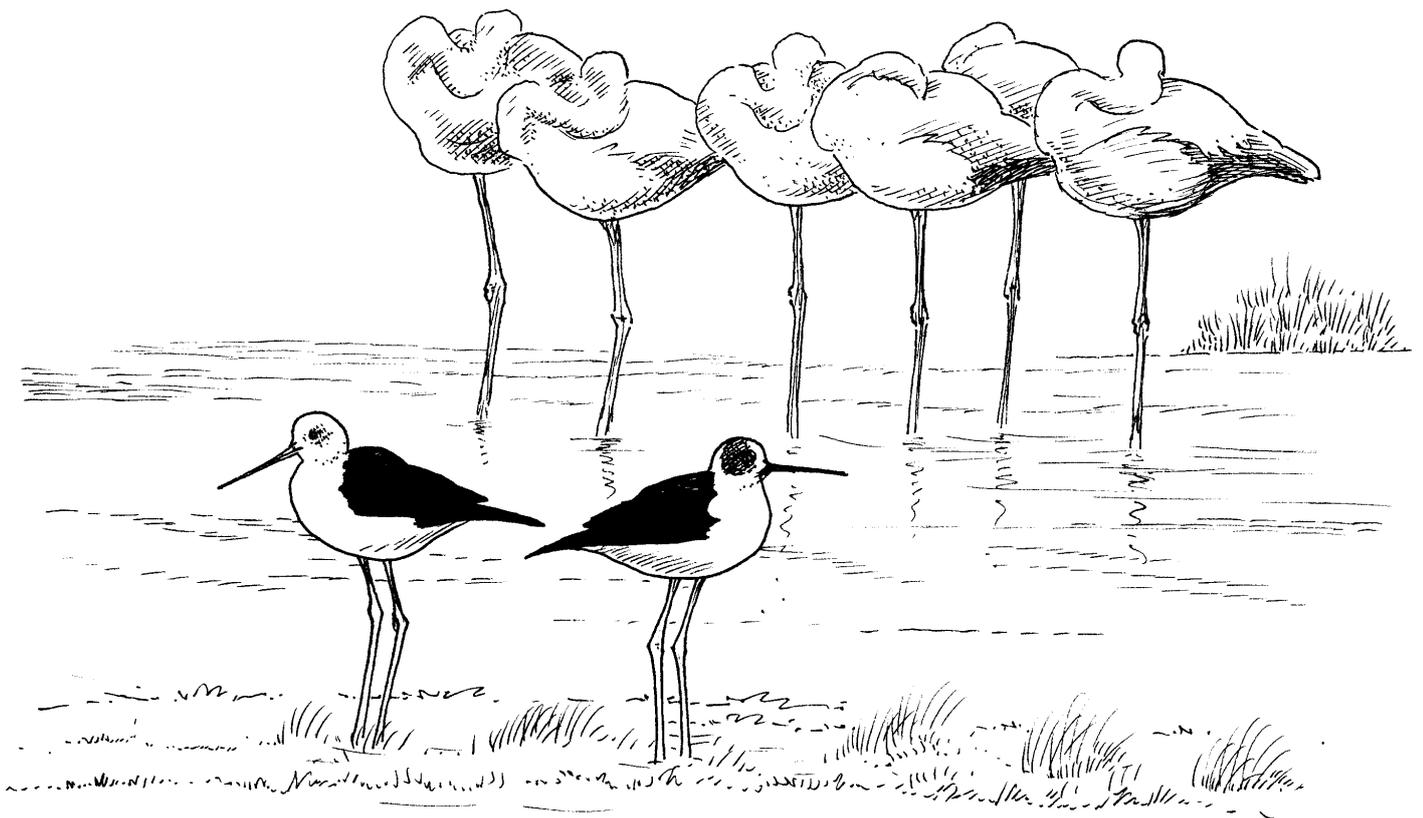


Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

36 Thunder Lane Thorpe St Andrew Norwich NR7 0PX
Telephone and Fax 01603 300552 Evenings and weekends



The Camargue
4 - 11 May 2002

**The Camargue
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Participants

Joy and John Gammon	Chichester
Kath and Gerry Redman	Manchester
Peggy and Jim Ritchie	East Lothian
Pat Rose	Felixstowe
Beth Samphire	Weston-super-Mare

Leader

Russell Leavett	Harwich
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Report by Russell Leavett

Illustrations by Rob Hume, except black-winged stilt flock by Gary Wright. Cover: flamingos and black-winged stilts.

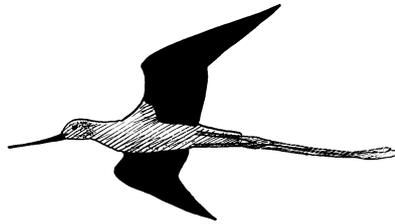
This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The conservation contribution this year of £25 per person in the Camargue was supplemented by the group in the Dordogne, leading to a total of £625 given to La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO, the French Bird Protection League).

This brings the total given to LPO to £5,325 since 1991, and to various conservation projects in Europe to £25,700. A thank-you letter from LPO is at the end of this report. The money contributed through the Camargue holiday has gone towards little bustard conservation, and from the Dordogne towards the 'refuge LPO' campaign. There is news on both in the letter from LPO.

The Camargue 4 - 11 May 2002

Itinerary

Saturday May 4 th	Morning flight to Marseille, then on to Arles via N568, arriving early afternoon, late afternoon walk close to hotel.
Sunday May 5 th	Central Camargue. Étang de Vaccares via Gageron and Villeneuve, Mas d'Agon, lunch at Domaine de Mejanes. After lunch various stopping places overlooking Étang de Vaccares and the marshes of Tour du Vallat.
Monday May 6 th	Full day at Mont Ventoux.
Tuesday May 7 th	La Crau at the old airfield, lunch at Étang d'Entressen. Afternoon in Arles followed by visit to Mt Valence after dinner.
Wednesday May 8 th	East Camargue – salt pans at Salin de Giraud and Plage d'Arles. Lunch at Salin, then through salines to Étang du Fangassier and Beauduc. Return via St Bernard, Salin de Badon and Tour du Vallat.
Thursday May 9 th	Morning at Les Baux, lunch taken among pines en route to Pont du Gard where afternoon spent.
Friday May 10 th	Western Camargue – to Le Paty de la Trinité via Gimeaux and Saliers. South to Parc Ornithologique where lunch taken. Afternoon at Cacharel via Les St Maries de la Mer and return to Arles via observation platform overlooking Étang de Vaccares and Mas d'Agon.
Saturday May 11 th	Part of the group visited Gimeaux before breakfast. Return to Marseille for early afternoon flights.



Saturday May 4th

Everyone assembled in good time at Gatwick for the 09.45 flight to Marseille. Arrival there could be described as 'interesting'; it seemed that a good many of our suitcases had gone missing and it wasn't very encouraging to be told "this happens all the time and we will get them out on the next flight". However a pile of suitcases were spotted lurking up a corner and it turned out that these were ours! With this little local difficulty sorted out we soon had the minibus loaded and were on our way to Arles, enjoying the roadside red valerian as we went.

En route a great spotted cuckoo dashed across the road in front of the bus being chased by a couple of magpies; they lay their eggs in the nests of this species. Soon black kites were seen drifting past, a couple of avocets glimpsed on a distant pool and the first flamingos spotted.

Simone and Marcel greeted us at the hotel with an excellent picnic lunch and after we had sorted out our rooms we were ready for a stroll along the track by the hotel. As always this

produced several noisy nightingales, a couple of Cetti's warblers and yet more black kites. We also saw a common buzzard and a sparrowhawk. Close to the canal a roller delighted everyone as the sun caught its splendid colours. A fitting end to our first day and an excellent 'starter' for the brilliant meal that was to follow.

Sunday May 5th

As always in the Camargue on the first day, it is good to get to grips with a range of typical species of the area and today was to be no exception.

Travelling south from the hotel through the first of the rice fields produced plenty of cattle egrets, a few little egrets and lots of mallards.

Along the northern edge of the Étang de Vaccares a group of ten bee-eaters was 'hawking' out from some dead bushes

over the marshes, always returning to delight us on their favourite perches.



At Mas d'Agon we found both whiskered and black terns in good numbers, along with our first purple and squacco herons. Here too we had nice views of red-crested pochard and Kath spotted a flying bittern; we also heard one booming; perhaps the same bird? Moving to our lunch spot at Domaine de Mejanès took us along side rice fields that held both Mediterranean gulls and gull-billed terns.

After a leisurely lunch we continued around the Étang de Vaccarès, stopping to stand for some time on top of the observation tower overlooking marshland. Here we saw lots of flamingos, marsh harriers were common, and black-winged stilts chased crows or gulls with much noise and persistence. In shallowly flooded marshes we found groups of wood sandpipers but no ruffs, which was surprising. Thousands of swifts were feeding over the marshes and reedbeds, something that we were to see a lot of during the coming week.

Our slow drive around the Étang took us past pools with their coot, ditches where a few fan-tailed warblers were heard and in places close to the water of the lake itself. Here several great crested grebes were found and common terns seen alongside the numerous yellow-legged gulls.

An area of scrub by the roadside turned up a superb woodchat shrike, spotted by Kath, and Pat in turn found a couple of stonechats perching on a fence. We seldom see much of woodchat shrikes so this was a real treat and everyone had very good views of it.

Moving on to Tour du Vallat brought the horror of finding that vandals had burned down the wooden observation platform there. This seriously reduced our vision over this particular marsh but we still managed to find spotted redshanks, more wood sandpipers and had yet more sightings of egrets and flamingos, all accompanied by the ever-present marsh harrier! Beth found a number of giant orchids nearby but unfortunately they were well past their best.

All in all an excellent introductory day to the delights of the Camargue.

Monday May 6th

Today was to be a very different day, with reasonable weather promised the decision was taken to go to the heights of Mont Ventoux. This involved quite a longish journey through farmland, around the edge of Avignon and through several busy towns. Nevertheless this provided everyone with the opportunity to get a feel for the countryside of Provence, see what crops were being grown (ripe cherries being picked!) and enjoy the irises that adorned so many gardens, no wonder Van Gogh delighted in painting them so!

We arrived at our first stop to find the road to the actual summit still closed by the winter snows, much as expected and soon found out why when we emerged from the minibus: temperatures weren't far above freezing and snow lay round about!

A walk contouring the hillside soon produced the first of the attractive little citril finches, one of the species that we particularly wanted to see here. Gradually all members of the group got to grips with this bird and some good views were had. Further wandering amongst the pines eventually gave us all excellent views of crossbills, including a 'good' adult male. Here too we found two crested tits and some coal tits, the latter nesting in part of the superstructure of the ski-lift! There were lots of cowslips in the meadows below us but most still had to flower. Other flowers included Stinking hellebore, *Aphyllanthes* and *Anemone appenina*.

After lunch, taken in the minibus, we made our way slightly lower down and wandered amongst the chalets, here a few black redstarts were seen and blackbirds and mistle thrushes added to our list. Chaffinches were numerous in places, especially around habitation. We failed miserably to find the elusive black woodpecker, so had to leave that for next year's group!

As everyone was thoroughly cold by now, we made to make our way slowly back to Arles. On the way we stopped at a couple of roadside parking areas and at one had decent views of two Bonelli's eagles. We also saw the only jay of the trip fly in front of the vehicle.

Tuesday May 7th

Today was to be our day for La Crau - warm but cloudy conditions were ideal as the last thing you need at La Crau is a heat haze. Soon after our arrival at the old airfield the first of the stone-curlews were located, these eventually performing well, unlike the little bustards, that kept their distance - however several were seen in flight and some first impressions formed. Ultimately we were to see and hear them well, including displaying birds that jumped into the air making their distinctive rattling noise. By the time we left everyone had seen them well, all accompanied by the wonderful smells of the herbs of Provence.

Other birds seen here included a hobby, which proved to be the only one of the trip and several red-legged partridges. The much more exciting pin-tailed sandgrouse showed themselves but only a few members of the group managed to see the couple fly over high and rather distantly. Par for the course for this species here I am afraid!

Most unexpected was a single red-rumped swallow among the numerous swallows and swifts - in many years of leading trips, the first I had seen in the Camargue! Beth spotted a hoopoe, which was soon joined by another, then both pleased us with their antics for some while.

Lunch was taken by the Étang d'Entressen and once again we were entertained by whiskered terns, great crested grebes and the spectacle of the distant rubbish dump with its tens of thousands of gulls and hundreds of black kites. By popular demand we didn't go closer!!!



Other birds for the day included whinchat, our first woodpigeons, never common here, two turtle doves, and a golden oriole that was heard briefly in woodland at the lunch site.

The afternoon was spent savouring the delights of the interesting old town of Arles.

red-rumped swallow

After an early dinner we set off for the short drive to Mt Valence in the hope of finding the resident eagle owl. The evening proved to be ideal and at dusk we saw a few crag martins flying by the cliffs and as it got darker heard a distant nightjar. Suddenly John yelled and there it was, a large dark owl flapping ponderously around the corner of a crag. Although a very brief view everyone got a feel of the birds size and, after a while, saw it for a split second yet again. A splendid way to end the day.

Wednesday May 8th

Today we returned to the Camargue, this time to look at the vast complex of saline lagoons along the eastern edge of the Étang de Vaccares. We journeyed down through Salin de Giraud as far as the Plage d'Arles, calling in on a series of salt pans of varying salinities as we went. Several contained good gatherings of coastal waders, including some lovely curlew sandpipers and lively little stints and dunlin. This was also a good place to catch up with terns more associated with the sea, such as Sandwich and little terns. Here too we found a superb Caspian tern, and two French birders showed us a grey phalarope that was so distant that none of us put it on our lists but we took their word for it and hoped we might see it closer later that day – we didn't!

One lagoon held three slender-billed gulls including one adult in splendid pink livery! Others held avocets and kentish plovers along with a few grey and ringed plovers. Both pied and spotted flycatchers were located in scrub by the edges of the salt pans, the spotted flycatcher eventually ending up feeding on the edge of a lagoon along with a wheatear. All in all a nice mix of typical and not so typical species of this habitat.

By now the weather had become decidedly wet so we drove back to Salin de Giraud in the hope of finding a suitable place for lunch. As we unsuccessfully drove out of the town a large white opened-sided but empty marquee appeared on our left, perfect, so lunch was taken therein! While having lunch a lovely male black redstart entertained us by perching on the guy ropes!

With continuing rather mixed weather we moved on through the salines to the flamingo colony at the Étang du Fangassier. Here we were shocked to find that the Visitor Centre had been burnt to the ground and graffiti everywhere stating that the Camargue was for the hunters not the tourists! Clearly the destroyed observation platform that we had seen at Tour du Vallat earlier in the week was part of a concerted campaign to discourage green tourism in the area.

Despite these problems the flamingo colony seemed to be intact and very active, so we hope at least the birds haven't suffered too badly, but it remains to be seen what other activities the hunters have up their sleeves.

We returned to Arles via a number of roadside marshes, seeing a couple more purple herons, a few cormorants, lots of black-winged stilts, some redshanks and a roller perching on roadside wires.

Thursday May 9th

First stop today was the eagle owl site at Mt Valence, in the faint hope that it might just be perching out in full view on a crag somewhere – it wasn't! However, we had really close views of short-toed eagles, amazingly the first of this trip and a Sardinian warbler showed itself well, it made a change from only hearing them. But what was that 'wild' boar doing

wandering up a track by the roadside – was it the genuine article or one that had escaped from a farm? – it certainly took us all by surprise!

We then moved on to Les Baux, scanning the hillside across the valley before spending some time in the town. Several crag martins performed well for us but the blue rock thrush remained rather distant, and another bird was heard. Once again we had views of a soaring short-toed eagle. A surprise was a red squirrel, working its way up and down the cliffs opposite, what could it be after? Blackcaps were in song everywhere.

Lunch was taken among pines at the start of the road up to the summit of La Caume, which we hoped to visit but in view of the by now very windy weather we decided to visit Pont du Gard instead, a much more sheltered site. Over lunch chaffinches surrounded us and two buzzards flew over, a very pleasant place to have lunch despite the strong wind.

After lunch we drove on Pont du Gard via Tarascon and Beaucaire, admiring the two opposing chateaux across the Rhone. Pont du Gard was very busy with large numbers of tourists in every direction, so after wondering at this magnificent structure we went on to seek out some birds away from the crowds.

Gerry spotted two alpine swifts overhead, the only ones were to see this trip – normally they are frequent here. A walk through the various wooded areas produced a very attractive male cirl bunting, a few serins, several singing blackcaps and a lone blue tit – the only one of the trip! The banks of the Gardon river proved most productive with several common sandpipers, two little ringed plovers, half a dozen white wagtails and a couple of grey wagtails. A kingfisher performed well, perching in full view on riverside vegetation and dead trees. Just before leaving John pointed out a final short-toed eagle for the day – four in all.

Friday May 10th

This, our last full day in the Camargue, was to be largely given over to visiting the western side of the marshes. But we started off along the northern edge, following the Gimeaux road through to Salières, as this has always proved productive in the past. An area of roadside set-aside gave us excellent views of two Montagu's harriers, a female and a sub-adult male. We then moved on to look over a series of marshy areas, in the hope that we might find some pratincoles. These proved very elusive but a single bird was seen poorly and then only by the leader! John, however, found a superb great-spotted cuckoo right by the roadside, so we quickly forgot the pratincoles and concentrated on that instead. Equally enjoyable was the male pied flycatcher that flitted out from the bushes to feed on the host of insects buzzing around at this point; these insects also kept eight bee-eaters very happy!

One roadside ditch gave us fine views of a great reed warbler, the only one we were to see. This species seemingly hadn't arrived from its winter quarters yet.

Moving along through rice fields, areas of flooded marsh and pools confirmed just how rich this area remains for birds, a fact borne out especially by the marshes of Paty de la Trinité.

Bitterns were heard frequently here and one was seen, purple and grey herons were flushed from several places and a goodly collection of gulls and terns included sixty whiskered terns. Once again many black-winged stilts were seen, often along with wood sandpipers, and in one rice field with fifteen greenshanks. Add to this the constant calls of Mediterranean gull, the ever-present marsh harriers and flamingos and you have the essence of the Camargue.

Lunch was taken at the Parc Ornithologique, where two wood warblers delighted us from nearby bushes as we fed. We were also reminded that the area holds lots of nightingales and Cetti's warblers, their calls and song seemingly everywhere!

After lunch we moved on to the old town of St Maries de la Mer, only to find it clogged solid with holiday folk. A short drive around town soon found us making our way north along the edge of the Étang dit l'Imperial with its saline lagoons, expanses of mud and islands etc. Once again we found some slender-billed gulls to admire, the more familiar redshank and yet more Sandwich and little terns.

Some time was spent walking along the track at Cacharel that winds its way through marshes and lagoons. After much searching we got to grips with spectacled warbler, a species we particularly wanted to see here. Trakside bushes produced several more pied flycatchers including a very close female that Peggy located. There were also a few whinchats and a single common redstart. A lone tawny pipit ran across bare mud.

With time pressing, we set off for a final hour's birding from the Étang de Vaccares observation platform and at Mas d'Agon. The latter proved to be particularly productive with five white-winged black terns now amongst the black and whiskered terns. Several more squacco herons were seen and yet another bittern. Once again we found some red-crested pochards and a single short-toed eagle was seen high above us. And still the thousands of swifts hunted over the marshes and blue-headed wagtails called from the tops of *Salicornia*.

Sadly this idyllic scene was soon to be shattered. As we watched this wonderful array of birds with the international gathering of birders that had assembled, a group of hunters sent their dogs out into the marshes to deliberately disturb as many birds as possible, thus the air was soon full of flamingos, egrets and herons. We left speechless.

As always at the end of the trip we had a quick vote on the most 'enjoyed' bird of the week. As always much was on offer, eagle owl, bee-eaters, red-rumped swallow, roller etc but most of all people were impressed by the variety and numbers of birds that we found within the marshy areas, rice fields and coastal lagoons.

Saturday May 11th

A small but select part of the group, Pat and Beth, met at first light for a final look at the Camargue before setting off for Marseille later in the morning. We drove to Gimeaux in the hope that we might get better views of pratincoles than yesterday and this proved to be the case - twenty-five birds were seen hawking over the marshes for insects, albeit not very close. Never the less it was good to know that this bird was still present in good numbers, always a scarce bird in this part of Europe.

Two night herons were seen flying over, the first we had seen on this trip, presumably birds returning to their breeding colony after a night time feeding expedition? Once again bitterns were heard, great flocks of flamingos flew over and a few crested larks were disturbed by the roadside. With all this on view, time had come to wind our way back to the hotel and then on to Marseille.

With our grateful thanks said to Simone and Marcel, for once again the Hotel Des Granges had served us very well indeed, we departed but not before Gerry had said those famous last words "But I'll be glad to get back to me Ovaltine!"

Russell Leavett



Butterflies

In a week when the weather wasn't very favourable for butterflies, the following species were recorded:

Red admiral	Orange-tip
Speckled wood	Brown argus
Wall brown	Scarce swallowtail
Green-veined white	
Small heath	
Common blue	

Birds

Combined list for all members of the group.

Little Grebe	A single bird was heard calling at Mas d'Agon.
Great crested grebe	Small numbers on open water at Étang du Vaccares and a few other sites, including on the Rhone close to the sea.
Cormorant	Occasional at Étang du Vaccares and near by.
Bittern	Seen at Mas d'Agon and over marshes at Le Paty de la Trinité, more often heard.
Night heron	Rather scarce with only two, soon after dawn at Gimeaux on the last day, these birds returning from night time feeding to their breeding colonies.
Squacco heron	Occasional in rice fields and marsh edges in the central Camargue in particular, especially at Mas d'Agon.
Cattle egret	Very common and well distributed amongst rice fields and marshes, generally well out numbering little egrets.
Little egret	Common in marshes, saline pools and rice fields.
Great white heron	A single very briefly only.
Grey heron	The commonest of the large herons, frequent in all marshes and some rice fields.
Purple heron	Superb views of this handsome heron confirmed its place as one of the most attractive members of this family.
Greater flamingo	As always one of the real pleasures of the Camargue with many sightings on all days spent in coastal situations. The huge breeding colony at Étang du Fangassier was thought to hold around 20-25,000 pairs!
Mute swan	Small numbers only.
Shelduck	Frequent in coastal situations.
Mallard lagoons.	The common duck of rice fields, marshes and coastal lagoons.

Red-crested pochard	Eight at Mas d'Agon and five at Le Paty de la Trinité were the only sightings of this always scarce duck.
Black kite	The most numerous raptor of agricultural land, marsh edges and hill country.
Short-toed eagle	Some splendid sightings of this distinctive raptor, especially at Mt Valence.
Marsh harrier	The common raptor of marshes and rice field edges.
Montagu's harrier	Two birds, a female and a sub-adult male delighted us by the Gimeaux road.
Sparrowhawk	Occasional singletons.
Common buzzard	1 - 3 birds on five days, usually where marshes meet farmland, especially in wooded situations.
Bonelli' eagle Ventoux.	Two birds were seen over the road on our way down from Mont
Common kestrel	Widespread and common.
Hobby	A single on one day only in a poor year for this species.
Red-legged partridge	Five seen on the old airfield La Crau.
Pheasant	Heard once only, odd birds dead on roadsides.
Moorhen	Frequent in marshes.
Coot	Common on the larger water bodies and in marshes.
Little bustard	Up to ten birds 'rushing around' at La Crau, frequent calls were heard from displaying birds and towards the end of our visit to the old airfield good views were obtained.
Oystercatcher	Occasional in coastal lagoons.
Black-winged stilt	Often frequent in shallowly flooded marshes and rice fields, one of the stars of the Camargue.
Avocet	Apart from a few from the bus near Martigues, largely confined to the western saline lagoons.
Stone-curlew	Good sightings of up to six at the old airfield on La Crau.
Collared pratincole	Hard to see this year, thanks to their breeding location seeming to be far from the road but up to 25 in the air on the last morning by the road to Gimeaux.
Little ringed plover	Two on river shingles at Pont du Gard, including some display.
Ringed plover	Occasional in coastal lagoons along both the east and west sides of the Camargue.
Kentish plover	Frequent in similar situations to the last species.

Grey plover	Two seen in coastal lagoons along the eastern edge of the Camargue.
Lapwing	Never common but a few with breeding collared pratincoles and black-winged stilts to the north of Mas d'Agon.
Sanderling	Up to 30 in saline lagoons close to Salin de Giraud.
Little stint	A total of 25 or more in similar situations, and often with the last species.
Curlew sandpiper	Up to 30, of which some were in summer plumage, with stints and other coastal waders.
Dunlin	Only seen in coastal pools along the eastern edge of the Camargue, up to 200 birds involved.
Whimbrel	A single bird only.
Redshank	Surprisingly scarce, with a few sightings only.
Spotted redshank	Very scarce this year with only two sightings.
Greenshank	Up to fifteen in a flooded rice field with wood sandpipers.
Wood sandpiper	Good sized groups in shallow marshes and flooded rice fields.
Common sandpiper	Up to five by the river at Pont du Gard.
Mediterranean gull	Common in flooded rice fields and coastal lagoons, their calls a distinctive sound of the Camargue.
Black-headed gull	Very common and widespread, especially in coastal situations.
Slender-billed gull	Some excellent sightings of this delightful gull including some in full adult summer plumage that were almost as pink as the flamingos!
Yellow-legged (herring) gull	Widespread and abundant, including tens of thousands at the rubbish tip at Entressen!
Gull-billed tern	Small groups of this distinctive tern were seen in flooded rice fields and coastal lagoons.
Caspian tern	A single bird was seen well in a saline lagoon near Salin de Giraud.
Sandwich tern	Very much a tern of coastal situations, so seen on the two days that we ventured near to the sea.
Common tern	In similar situations to the last species.
Little tern	Once again a coastal tern but rather scarce this year.
Black tern	Up to fifty birds seen at Mas d'Agon.
White-winged black tern	Excellent views of up to five birds at Mas d'Agon.

Whiskered tern	Especially at Mas d'Agon and Paty de la Trinité, where there were at least 60 birds.
Pin-tailed sandgrouse	Briefly two in flight at the old airfield at La Crau.
Rock dove/feral pigeon	Frequent in farmland and around habitation.
Woodpigeon	Occasional away from the wetter areas.
Collared dove	Widespread and common, especially around habitation.
Turtle dove	Rather scarce with a few on some days.
Great spotted cuckoo	Sightings of two singles, one providing excellent views.
Cuckoo	Decidedly scarce with singles only but on most days, mostly heard.
Eagle owl	Brief sightings of this impressive owl at Mt Valence gave a good impression of its size.
Nightjar	A single bird was heard churring at the eagle owl site.
Swift	Thousands were seen on most days, either hunting over marshes or steadily moving north.
Alpine swift	Two at Pont du Gard only.
Kingfisher	Excellent views of a single bird by the river at Pont du Gard.
Bee-eater	Excellent views of ten birds by the Étang de Vaccares and a few elsewhere.
Roller	A single bird by the hotel on all days plus occasional singles elsewhere.
Hoopoe	Never common, this species was only seen on two days and as in previous years mainly in the west of the Camargue.
Green woodpecker	A single was heard once.
Great-spotted woodpecker	A single on one day.
Crested lark	A few scattered individuals, more often heard than seen.
Skylark	Frequent and widespread.
Sand martin	Never numerous but good numbers over some of the marshes of the central Camargue.
Crag martin	Frequent around the cliffs and town at Les Baux, as well as at Pont du Gard.
Swallow	Widespread and often very common indeed, hundreds on some days.
House martin	Few sightings with a maximum of only five.
Tawny pipit	A single only, in the Petit Camargue.

Yellow wagtail	The common wagtail of the marsh edges, most were of the 'blue-headed' form.
Grey wagtail	A pair on river shingles at Pont du Gard.
White wagtail	Like the grey wagtail only noted at Pont du Gard, where up to six birds were present on river shingles and in adjacent grassland.
Robin	Always elusive on this trip, birds were heard on a couple of occasions plus one brief sighting.
Nightingale	Along with Cetti's warbler, this species was heard very frequently from the vehicles. A numerous bird of farmland, marsh and roadside edges.
Black redstart	A few at Mont Ventoux and elsewhere including a superb male while we ate lunch at Salin de Giraud.
Common redstart	A single only in a poor year for this species..
Whinchat	Occasional sightings, usually on fences amongst animals.
Stonechat	In similar numbers and locations to the last species.
Northern wheatear	Occasional sightings of single birds.
Blue rock thrush	Both seen and heard briefly at Les Baux..
Blackbird	Several at Mont Ventoux, rare elsewhere.
Mistle thrush	Five at Mont Ventoux.
Cetti's warbler	A commonly heard bird of ditches, marsh edges and roadsides but seldom seen.
Fan-tailed warbler	Surprisingly scarce this year for some reason with only a few seen or heard. Usually a very numerous bird at this time.
Reed warbler	A few in song only.
Great reed warbler	Like the last species this bird proved very scarce, presumably because they hadn't arrived by this time.
Spectacled warbler	A single bird in scrub on along the edge of a saline lagoon at Cacherel.
Sardinian warbler	Largely heard, rarely seen, a characteristic bird of dense scrub.
Blackcap	The rich song of this species was heard on most days.
Wood warbler	Two in Tamarix bushes at the Parc Ornithologique.
Pied flycatcher	Occasional in coastal bushes, especially at Cacherel.
Spotted Flycatcher	In similar situations to the last species.
Crested tit	Two in pines at Mont Ventoux..

Blue tit	A single only, at Pont du Gard..
Great tit	Several at Mont Ventoux and Pont du Gard.
Golden oriole	A calling bird in woodland by Étang du Entressen was the only evidence of this species being present this year.
Woodchat shrike	Excellent views of a single bird at Tour du Valat.
Jay	A single bird only, in woodland on the lower slopes of Mont Ventoux.
Magpie	A very common bird throughout the area, hundreds daily.
Jackdaw	Equally as common as magpie.
Carrion crow	Widespread but in small numbers only.
Starling	Widespread and very common.
House sparrow	Widespread and abundant.
Tree sparrow	Frequent around habitation and where animals are found.
Chaffinch	Frequent at Mont Ventoux, close to Les Baux and at Pont du Gard.
Serin	Rather a thin year for this species but seen at Les Baux and Pont du Gard.
Citril finch	Excellent sightings of up to 25 birds at Mont Ventoux.
Greenfinch	Very scarce with only a single by the hotel.
Goldfinch	The common finch of this trip with good numbers around farmland, where animals occur and close to habitation.
Linnet	Scarce, the odd sighting only.
Crossbill	Good views of up to fifteen birds at Mont Ventoux.
Cirl bunting	Excellent views of a male at Pont du Gard.
Corn bunting	Occasional singles on most days.
132 species	

Daily bird list – Camargue 2002

	04.05.2002	05.05.2002	06.05.2002	07.05.2002	08.05.2002	09.05.2002	10.05.2002	11
Little grebe		h						
Great crested grebe		15			15		15	
Cormorant		1			2			
Bittern		1					2h	
Night heron								
Squacco heron		2					3	
Cattle egret	5	100s		10s	100s	5	100s	
Little egret		10s		5	10s	1		
Great white egret					1			
Grey heron	1	15		2	15		10s	
Purple heron		1			2		10	
Greater Flamingo		100s		10	10,000s		1000s	
Mute swan		8			3		6	
Shelduck		10			10s		10s	
Mallard	10s	10s			10s	10s	100s	
Red-crested pochard		8					5	
Black kite	8	10s	5	100s	10s	15	10s	
Short-toed eagle						4	1	
Marsh harrier		10s		5	5	1	10s	
Montagu's harrier							2	
Sparrowhawk	1			1		1		
Common buzzard	1			2	2	3	1	
Bonelli's eagle			2					
Common kestrel	3	10	5	15	8	5	10	
Hobby				1				
Red-legged partridge				5				
Pheasant					h			
Moorhen	2	5			10		5	
Coot		10s			100s		100s	
Little bustard				10				
Oystercatcher							2	
Black-winged stilt		80			25		150	
Avocet	5				50			
Stone-curlew				6			1	
Pratincole							1	
Little ringed plover						2		
Ringed plover					3			
Kentish plover					6			
Grey plover					2			
Lapwing		3					1	
Sanderling					30			
Little stint					25			
Curlew sandpiper					30			
Dunlin					200			
Whimbrel					1			
Redshank					4		5	
Spotted redshank		2						
Greenshank							15	
Wood sandpiper		20					60	
Common sandpiper						5	1	
Mediterranean gull		100			10s		100s	

Black-headed gull		10s		10s	10s		100s
Slender-billed gull					3		2
Yellow-legged gull	10s	10s	5	1000s	100s	5	100s
Gull-billed tern		40		5	10s		10s
Caspian tern					1		
Sandwich tern					10s		h
Common tern		2			10s		
Little tern					10s		h
Black tern		50					25
White-winged black tern							5
Whiskered tern		20		12			60
Pin-tailed sandgrouse				2			
Rock dove/feral pigeon	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s
Woodpigeon				2		1	
Collared dove	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s
Turtle dove				2		2	5
Great spotted cuckoo	1						2
Cuckoo		3	h	h	h	h	h
Eagle owl				1			
Nightjar				1h			
Swift	100s	1000s	10s	1000s	100s	1000s	10,000s
Alpine swift						2	
Kingfisher						1	
Bee-eater		10					8
Roller	1	1		1	1		
Hoopoe				3			1
Green woodpecker		1					
Great-spotted w'pecker			h				
Crested lark							5
Skylark		5		5	5		10
Sand martin		10s					10
Crag martin				3		10	
Swallow	10s	100s	5	100s	100s	100s	100s
Red-rumped swallow				1			
House martin	1	5				5	3
Tawny pipit							1
Blue-headed wagtail		5			10s		10s
Grey wagtail						2	
White wagtail						6	
Robin			1			h	
Nightingale	5h	20h	5h	h	10sh	10sh	10sh
Black redstart			3		1	2	
Common redstart							1
Whinchat				1	1		4
Stonechat		2		3			
Northern wheatear			1		1		1
Blue rock thrush						h + 1	
Blackbird			5				1
Mistle thrush			5				
Cetti's warbler	3h	h	h	h	h	h	h
Fan-tailed warbler		5					1h
Reed warbler		3					1
Great reed warbler							1
Spectacled warbler							1
Sardinian warbler		h		h		l	h

Blackcap	h	h		h	h	12	h
Wood warbler							2
Pied flycatcher					1		4
Spotted flycatcher					1		1
Crested tit			2				
Blue Tit						1	
Coal tit			5				
Great tit			10			3	
Golden oriole				1h			
Woodchat shrike		1					
Jay			1				
Magpie	10s	100s	10s	100s	100s	100s	10s
Jackdaw		100s		100s	100s	100s	10s
Carrion crow	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s
Starling	5	10	10	10	10s	10s	10s
House sparrow	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s
Tree sparrow		2		5	5		5
Chaffinch			10s		10		
Serin					2		
Citrl finch			25				
Greenfinch				1			
Goldfinch	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s
Linnet		1					
Crossbill			15				
Cirl bunting						1	
Corn bunting	1	1		1	2		1

h = heard