

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

36 Thunder Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0PX
Tel: 01603 300552 Evenings & weekends Fax: 01603 491586
www.honeyguide.co.uk E-mail: honeyguide@tesco.net



Spring in the Spanish Pyrenees
6 – 15 May 2004

SPRING IN THE SPANISH PYRENEES

6-15 MAY 2004

Thursday 6 May: The journey there...and a local walk

A very early start at Stansted, but the select band of just four Honeyguiders and me met up without any problem. If it was cool and grey at Stansted, though, it was cooler (just 9°C), greyer AND wet at Bilbao. And so it rained for the first couple of hours of our trip – not a promising start, especially as it curtailed bird of prey activity, normally such a feature of this drive. All we saw was a single buzzard and lots of kestrels, groups of low-flying swifts, and a rather disconsolate white stork on its church-top nest near Vitoria.

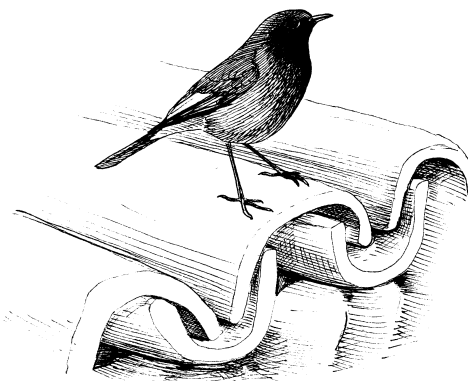
Approaching Pamplona, the weather started to improve and the landscape changed for the better: dramatic mountainscapes accentuated by the legions of wind turbines on the more prominent hills. Mixed feelings there – it's good that renewable energy sources are being tapped and the rotation of the sails has a certain stately beauty, but any one could make mincemeat (literally) out of a vulture. A snack stop at the Hotel Iturrumurri provided much more than a lovely *tortilla* – just outside we encountered our first spotless starlings (nesting in the roof), our first close views of kites, both red and black, a woodchat shrike standing sentinel on a fencepost, and a male peregrine which shot down from the cliffs, before performing a dramatic flypast for the assembled crew. A little worrying though was the sight of a snow plough parked by the Hotel – the mountain tops certainly held more snow than I had seen before.

Pressing on, we soon started to enter the landscape that was to be our constant companion for the week. At last griffon vultures soared overhead. The lower slopes of eroded marl appeared relatively lifeless, apart from the gorse-like *Genista scoparia*. 'Lifeless' was a highly appropriate description of the reservoir at Yesa, its waters an incredible milky-blue on account of the suspended marl, but broken only by a couple of great crested grebes. Then, perched on a distant hilltop lay Berdún, a welcome, dramatic and distinctive sight from any angle.

After carefully manoeuvring the minibus up to the village, we gladly disembarked and were greeted by Viv, our hostess. Time to unpack and settle in for a while, before we embarked on a short orientation perambulation of Berdún, to whet our appetite for the week. By now the sun was out, but it was still cool, especially in the teeth of a fierce north-westerly wind. Not surprisingly, there were relatively few birds showing themselves, apart from a lovely male black redstart singing on the lee side of the town, and platoons of vultures making use of the updraughts. Making for easy comparison, three Egyptian vultures joined the melée, followed by a pale-phase booted eagle, a couple of ravens and another peregrine, this time a female. Wildlife appetites suitably whetted, it was time then to see to more basic needs, as we headed across the square to Emilio's for the first of many delightfully tasty and convivial meals. Afterwards an early night was very much appreciated, and the falling rain put paid to any thoughts of nocturnal ramblings.

Friday 7 May: local walks around Berdún – Río Veral and Río Aragón; Martés tip

It dawned clear over Berdún, though the looming clouds over the hills on either side told a different story. And indeed the pattern for the day was for brief sunny spells interspersed with cool, windy showers, with even some hail involved – the waterproofs were rarely off and shorts were out of the question. Few were about to see the dawn – yesterday's early start had taken its toll, but the early risers were treated to an impressive stack of griffons, eyeball to eyeball, another peregrine, and a couple of high-flying purple herons, as well as the usual nightingales, serins and black redstarts.



After breakfast, we gathered in the churchyard to look again at the local birds, as well as fresh snowfalls on La Peña. Starlings, so often ignored, proved to be spotless, resplendent in their oily blue-black plumage, and distinctive in their more restricted range of calls than our familiar species. Sparrows, however, were not Spanish, just 'ordinary' house, although altogether more smart than many of our grime-encrusted city birds. Or perhaps it was just the light – everything seemed to shine with colour, from goldfinches and greenfinches twittering in the trees to red kites sweeping majestically across the plains. And then there were the black redstarts; the males were particularly handsome as is usual with the more variegated Iberian race, and their distinctive sweet-wrapper

rustle followed by a loud chattering song came from many a rooftop.

Our attentions soon turned to the plants, particularly feral snapdragons and festoons of ivy-leaved toadflax and rustyback fern on the old walls. The wayside ‘weeds’ also held our attention, with borage, henbit dead-nettle, musk stork’s-bill, milk thistle and many others. But as we headed down onto the marl – the aptly-named Badlands – towards the Río Veral, our eyes were again lifted skyward as a couple of griffons, kites and a few Egyptian vultures circled around. Nightingales were in good song, but remained out of sight, given the cool breeze, as did Cetti’s warblers and circler buntings. But then Ann spotted a deer in the valley – a male roe deer that proceeded to nibble leisurely on various shrubs before loping off across the marl.

One thing missing though, apart from a brief glimpse of a whitethroat, was scrub warblers, usually so noticeable here. Maybe they had been hit by recent unusually cold and wet winters, or maybe they were just not showing because of the weather – it is amazing how birds can hide so effectively in the little scrub available in this skeletal, primeval landscape. *Genista*, box and barberry formed the structure, these in turn providing some respite for more palatable species, such as beautiful flax and lady and early spider-orchids (*right*), from the incessant browsing of goats and sheep. Other plants had chemical defences - the poisons of stinking hellebore, for example, and the herby aroma of garden thyme, a dual defence against grazing and heat, and a wonderful addition to the scentscape.

Down in the river, its level surprisingly low, Iberian water frogs were croaking and quacking, and a common sandpiper fluttered downstream, while a great spotted woodpecker showed well in the bankside willows. Denser vegetation across the bridge seemed to be the sort of place birds would congregate in such a breeze, and so it proved. Chiffchaff, spotted and pied flycatchers (at one stage on neighbouring branches), and blackcaps were all in evidence, though the respite from the cold was not sufficient to stir insects into action. But overhead it was rather different: there was clearly significant visible migration taking place, including many hirundines (with surprisingly large numbers of crag martins), a few alpine swifts, and a couple of tree pipits. A wryneck was calling furiously around an old house, but refused to show more than fleeting glimpses. By now it was fast approaching lunchtime, so a quick stroll back up the hill led us to a welcome drink and sustenance at Emilio’s – a filling, hot *paella* – while a heavy shower passed over.



After lunch, everyone was raring to continue our local explorations, despite the looming clouds. A walk southwards, down the hill, keeping one eye on the weather, past a flowering Judas tree and across the main road took us towards Martés and the Río Aragón. Again small birds were few and far between, apart from a most obliging woodchat shrike, but the floriferous verges more than made up for that, with wild clary, rock narcissus, tassel hyacinth, meadow milk-vetch and many other plants in flower. And there were still the raptors to keep us entertained, including a momentous tussle between a resident red kite and an interloper black.

Descending finally towards the Río Aragón, the enhanced shelter encouraged a few more birds to show themselves including several whitethroats, a melodious warbler, and a frustratingly invisible circler bunting which was singing from close range, while waves of swifts and crag martins came past, trying hard to locate flying insects. The usual raptors were hanging in the skies, and a Bonelli’s eagle drifted low overhead, while at the roots of the riverside poplars, purple toothwort was in full flower. With a little time to spare, I returned to Berdún to collect the minibus and then took an unscheduled trip out to the rubbish tip at Martés. At least 30 Egyptian vultures were in residence, with twice as many ravens, and a few yellow-legged gulls and griffons. Viv spotted a young male golden oriole perching on a distant pine tree, and in the nearby scrub we added woodcock and yellow bee to our orchid tally.

After dinner, the night was clear, and a late session was in order, although without great expectations – it was seriously cold. Not surprisingly, there was no moth, bat or scops owl activity, and even the churchyard barn owl failed to put in an appearance.

Saturday 8 May: San Juan de la Peña, Oroel and Berdún Marsh

The day dawned much as yesterday – perhaps a bit more blue sky, but the north-westerly wind was if anything stronger and certainly colder. So the early morning walk produced little in the way of small birds, apart from rock sparrows at both ends of the village, and a superb view of a firecrest on the northern slopes. Hoopoes were calling in two places, one in the heart of the town, but both remained resolutely out of sight. A few raptors were flying, including another peregrine, but most of the griffons were sitting, looking rather disconsolate, on the tops

of electricity pylons.

Our first destination of the day was the historic village of Santa Cruz de la Serós, at the foot of la Peña. From the village, griffon vulture nests could be picked out on the towering cliffs, some in occupation, but the morning breeze really kept their flying antics to a minimum. Not so though the pair of short-toed eagles that drifted over as we set off up the hill. Large numbers of crag martins were patrolling the village, but their nests on the church were still in a state of disrepair. Perhaps they had arrived as part of the influx we noted yesterday?

A short walk up the hill soon produced some new plants. Cowslips, spurge-laurel, stinking hellebore and hepatica nestled in the hedge bottoms, with bold blue splashes of *Polygala nicaeensis* higher up. The pines here were very heavily infested with mistletoe and there were couple of false morel toadstools by the track. Apart from a couple of bullfinches and a singing Bonelli's warbler, there were almost no birds in evidence as result of the keen wind; we resorted to critical examination of the local robins to note the differences, especially in breast colour, from our birds. But the bird scene was brightened considerably as we set off in the bus, as a couple of bee-eaters perched obligingly by the road.

Our first stop at the old monastery, a little way down from the top, is set dramatically into the conglomerate cliffs, and a short stop here proved interesting. Going down the track, in lush mixed forest, there were firecrests and blackbirds singing, and a fresh flower of Pyrenean fritillary was ideally placed for the photographers. Sadly, though, the fly orchids from previous trips were not to be seen, presumably a victim of the late spring or perhaps rooted out by wild boars whose workings were much in evidence. Coming back along the road provided the sight of numerous Pyrenean saxifrage rosettes, as well as several patches of rock petrocotilis.

Then it was uphill once more to the 'new' monastery at the top. Lunch was a typically English affair, picnics on a bench, in full-layered gear, trying hard to ignore the wind sweeping across the top of the mountain. Helen classified it as the first recorded example of the new sport of 'extreme picnicking'! Not surprisingly, we didn't linger. The grassy surrounds of the monastery and car park were surprisingly rich, with swathes of grape-hyacinth, and patches of green-winged orchids interspersed with a few early purples. Around the pond, field crickets were very vocal, until anyone approached too close that is. Clearly they were not affected by the cold, presumably on account of their grassland habitats being out of the worst of the wind-chill. We even managed to find a couple, one of both sexes for comparison, even if both were missing a hind leg. The area was also clearly much used by wild boar, to judge from the rootings and snufflings which were obvious all over the woodland: a delight to see, as I've long believed our British woodlands are all the poorer for the lack of their dynamic effects.

A walk through the trees produced a variety of woodland birds, including coal tit, jay and firecrest, some fine displays of hepatica, and a couple of flowering alpine daffodils. But a spectacular sight awaited us in the small clearings by the ruined chapel of St Teresa: beautiful, scented drifts of rock daffodils, interspersed with a few elder-flowered orchids. Attractive to us and also to insects – in the space of a few minutes we saw them being visited by both broad-bordered bee and hummingbird hawk moths.

Then it was time to explore new ground, making full use of the minibus. A slow drive east through forests and hills eventually brought us to the *mirador* at Oroel, the partner mountain to St Juan de la Peña. The woodland did not produce the hoped-for black woodpeckers, but the views across the high Pyrenees, now clearing of cloud, and up to the summit of Oroel, clad in pine trees frosted with recent snows, were certainly dramatic. And perhaps because of lower visitor pressure, the displays of hepatica in all three colour forms, mixed with cowslips, were better than we had seen hitherto.

Finally heading homewards, we stopped in at Berdún Marsh. A quail called from somewhere around our feet, but failed to show itself, as might be expected. And then in the Badlands valleys, out of the worst of the wind, we started to find aggregations of songbirds, including wheatears, a female common redstart, a glimpsed nightingale, two woodchat shrikes and a pair of tawny pipits. A fine end to a funny day, rewarding despite the elements.

Sunday 9 May: Riglos

Dawn broke with a continuous cloud cover and still cool, but at least the wind had dropped. And there was a glimmer of light in the western sky which suggested we might be in for some better weather. Before breakfast, it was apparent that the migrant birds had also responded to the change. The slopes were teeming with chiffchaffs, including a sprinkling of very grey, presumably northern, birds, along with a wood warbler, garden warbler, blackcaps and a woodchat shrike. Add to that a couple of hoopoes calling against each other (one seen, perched on a roof), excellent views of nightingale and rock sparrow, and a more distant short-toed lark, the day had

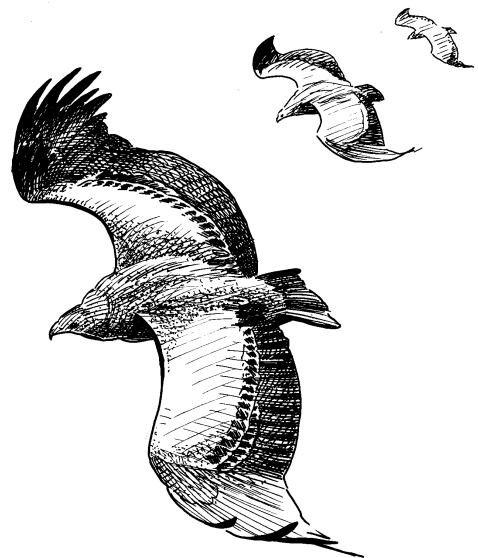
begun well and that set the tone for a feast of highlights. First of all was breakfast of *tortillas* and bread, presumably to compensate for the lack of fresh croissants, it being Sunday.

Passing the Aragón, we decided to stop near Puente la Reina and have a look. As soon as we disembarked, 11 bee-eaters flew over and a confiding male pied flycatcher made an excellent start. A woodlark was in beautiful song from the far hillside, and the black poplar riverine forest was alive with flycatchers, warblers, black redstarts and calling wrynecks. A great reed warbler struck its guttural song, and several common sandpipers flitted around the river itself. Overhead, among more familiar species, a Bonelli's eagle circled around, and as we got back to the bus an osprey flew past carrying a fish in its talons. And by now, as if to celebrate our good fortune, the sun had come out and it was warming up nicely.

Heading southwards, passing several more groups of bee-eaters, Peña reservoir was typically lifeless, apart from one great crested grebe and a yellow-legged gull, but a short walk over the dam brought us to a veritable rock garden, covered in saxifrages and other plants. Unfortunately though, its two specialities, Pyrenean saxifrage and *Ramonda*, were still some days short of flowering.

And so we continued on for the last few miles of our journey, breaching the massive conglomerate cliffs of Riglos, the final outpost of the Pre-Pyrenean range. A photostop near Murillo turned into much more than that, as the Mediterranean-like habitat was better advanced than around Berdún, and we admired beautiful flax living up to its name, shrubby rest-harrow, and a superb flowering thicket of grey-leaved (but pink-flowered) cistus. And with the rising temperature, insects were becoming active, with for example wall, scarce swallowtail, dingy skipper, common blue and wood white butterflies, green tiger beetle, paper wasp at nest, violet carpenter bee and a small praying mantis.

Our unscheduled stops had thrown my timing, so by the time we reached Riglos railway station, it was lunchtime. A greater contrast from yesterday's picnic can hardly be believed. Here the surroundings were warm, and filled with life – clouded yellows, chequered blues, and woodlark – and out came the shorts at long last! Then off to Riglos village. Unfortunately, the climbers had beaten us to it, so there were only a few griffons on nest and a few noisy choughs around the cliff. But overhead, vulture numbers grew as the afternoon progressed, reaching a maximum of 55 in the air at once. A dislodged stone from above fell pretty close to Malcolm, so we felt it prudent to descend to a lower level away from such dangers.



Sadly it seemed that black wheatears had not yet returned from their wintering haunts, but we managed a satisfactory view of a male Sardinian warbler, and several others were heard calling from the low scrub, a delicious, aromatic mix of box, rosemary and *Genista*. But rather typically, some of the best bird moments came from familiar species doing unfamiliar things – a kestrel in a long aerial tussle with a marauding raven, and a black redstart taking several goes to strip the guts out of a grub before it would eat it. Several more butterflies appeared, including painted lady and Bath white, and an Egyptian locust allowed me to take it in hand, for all to see its distinctively vertically-striped eyes. And in the heart of the village, a real surprise for me, a new butterfly – the nettle-tree butterfly, laying eggs on a cultivated nettle-tree.

By now, my planned finale at Agüero was out of the question time-wise, so it was back on the bus and home. The group must have enjoyed the day as there were few open eyes for much of the journey back. Dinner tonight was exceptional: fish soup followed by rabbit stew. And suitably fortified, we decided that an owl hunt was in order, despite the rain that was now pretty insistent. No luck with the barn, nor the scops, but a tour of the lights produced an interesting looking moth. Unfortunately, it was on the light, about three metres up. So Malcolm gave me a leg up, Ann provided a stick and then it was dislodged. On the way down, my tender parts met a knobble on the lamp post, but was it worth it? Yes! A male puss moth, with velcro feet and intricate markings for all to appreciate.

Monday 10 May: Biniés gorge

Dawn broke (just) under overcast leaden skies, with drizzle falling on those who ventured out early. All were rewarded with magnificent views of mist rolling up the valleys, and large groups of swallows and swifts

overhead, clearly recent migrants. There were many fewer warblers than yesterday, but a pied flycatcher and a great spotted woodpecker drumming on a dead pine tree were some compensation.

Then a short trip in the minibus brought us to the start of the Foz de Biniés. Through the 'entrance gates' – vertical walls of rock, cleft by the river, and covered in many as yet non-flowering rosettes of Pyrenean saxifrage and the delicate pink flowers of *Petrocoptis*, and it was into the gorge proper, increasingly humid as the morning progressed.

Walking up the gorge produced many botanical delights and specialities: Pyrenean hyacinth in particularly fetching displays, St Lucie's cherry, purple toothwort and more *Petrocoptis*, to name but a few. As the temperature lifted, so insects became more active, including orange tip and the southern, dark form of speckled wood. So too the vultures became active, lifting off the rocks, and rising on the thermals until almost sixty were in the air together. A party of seven honey buzzards drifted past, gaining height to cross the Pyrenees, a golden oriole called well, but out of sight, and most surprisingly, a black woodpecker was seen flying across gorge top. And as we potted back down the gorge to rendezvous with Viv for lunch, several caught up with good views of a dipper in flight and a few grey wagtails.

Lunch was taken in a lovely hilltop holm oak wood pasture, across the valley from Biniés village. Viv produced tablecloth, wine, water, salads and warm *tortillas* from Emilio. A more pleasant setting could hardly be imagined despite the continued drizzle, and three more honey buzzards, one performing a wonderful aerobic stouping display, kept our eyes skyward. Afterwards, we went down to the orchid meadow on the banks of the Veral, shrinking by the year, as the river erodes its own banks. Just three species were flowering, but these included a new one for the trip, sombre bee orchid, while a violet fritillary butterfly was also a new sighting.

Our final destination of the day was a little farther down the Veral, near its confluence with the Aragón, another of Viv's special places – her tulip field. As we got out of the bus, a couple of bee-eaters flew over, and a little later a short-toed eagle, which put on a classic display of hovering at height. Crossing a cornfield, we were surprised to disturb large numbers of blue-winged grasshoppers, and a rather dark red squirrel ran through the treetops. The wild tulips certainly performed well, making one of the botanical highlights of the trip, but for me even they were surpassed by nodding drifts of Pyrenean fritillaries covering the grassy marl slope. And amongst them were also burnt-tip orchids and a lumbering, shiny oil beetle, while overlooking the wooded river valley, the song of several Iberian chiffchaffs drifted up. A superb end to a day that could have been ruined by the weather, but wasn't.

Tuesday 11 May: High Pyrenees - Portalet to Formigal

As a break from the usual routine, the pre-breakfast session was a short trip by minibus down to Berdún Marsh. It was again overcast, but still, and mist hung unpredictably around the Canal de Berdún, one minute clear, the next billowing around the town. But the high mountains were almost clear of cloud, a hopeful sign for our day up there. Near the marsh, a short-toed lark was singing on territory and a male black-eared wheatear perched on a roadside bush. The marsh itself resounded to the song of Cetti's warblers (at least three) and numerous nightingales, and a couple of golden orioles were calling in the poplar wood.

Breakfast again lacked croissants, but Emilio made up for it with bacon and eggs – a new tick for me! Then into the churchyard to examine a female fox moth I had trapped last night, and off to the east. As we struck into the mountains, the cloud was still present, but high, and so it remained all day, producing only a few spots of rain.



Higher and ever higher, towards Formigal, then Portalet, was like going back in time: early summer in the lowlands, to the first inkling of spring at five thousand feet. Here, extensive snow beds lay around the border crossing, and evidently the complete blanket of snow had receded only a few days ago. Indeed, from the condition of many of the brave flowers showing themselves, it would seem that, as we suspected, new snow had fallen only very recently. After a coffee stop, we explored the local rocky grassland, a natural alpine garden. Flowers were relatively few, but we were able to find yellow whitlow-grass, wild daffodil, oxlip, green hellebore, *Primula hirsuta* and cushions of that earliest of alpiners, purple mountain saxifrage. Gentians, both spring and trumpet, were opening their first flowers, a tantalising glimpse of the riches to come lower down.

Both red- and yellow-billed choughs (hundreds of the latter) were flying noisily around the pastures and rocky outcrops, and meadow pipit, yellowhammers, and many wheatears made the birdlife briefly reminiscent of home. The first of many water pipits, in subtle shades of blue and pink about as 'pretty' as any pipit can ever be, was feeding along the edge of melting snows, and spring migration was evidently in full flow. Swallows and swifts were moving through constantly, turtle dove and red-backed shrike were pausing for breath, and high overhead, a total of eight honey buzzards circled to gain height and make the crossing (while being mobbed by a peregrine). A couple of alpine marmots sat atop their rocky mounds, which presumably formed their winter hibernation homes; although not particularly vocal, several more were heard giving their strange wader-like piping cries.

And then it was back into the bus, dropping downhill into spring (although perversely it was getting colder), stopping every few hundred metres to see what we could find. At one stop, it was a total of ten ibex (southern chamois), grazing the montane pastures; at another it was rock thrushes, two males resplendent in blue, orange and white, accompanied by a rather more dowdy female; at a third it was two foxes, both with much sandier fur than we have come to expect in the UK. They were roaming over the mountain slopes, one carrying a dead chough, presumably back to its den. And at every step lower the flowers got better, culminating in a wonderful display of yellow rock-jasmine cushions as we drew near to Formigal. A most rewarding day all round, apart from insects, which were completely absent.

Heading back into the lowlands, it seems we made the right decision to go high today. Roads were wet, the clouds threatening, and we seem to have had the best of the weather on the high tops.

Although a breeze had sprung up over dinner, we thought a night's batting may be productive. And so it proved – serotine, pipistrelle and European free-tailed bat were all detected, the last being particularly noticeable on account of its audible calls, and seen making several powerful hunting forays under the western lookout. But where were all the scops owls?

Wednesday 12 May: Arbayún and Lumbier gorges, and Roncal and Ansó Valleys

Today westwards, out of the semi-sunny surrounds of Berdún, into the looming cloud and rain. As we left the town, we saw a hoopoe calling from a rooftop, giving everyone the best views of the holiday. And then past Yesa to the vulture restaurant near Lumbier. There were a few vultures hanging around, but as we watched a carcass was deposited and straight away they started to arrive *en masse*. Egyptians arrived first, then kites and griffons, but it was a full ten minutes before one of the latter plucked up the courage to start feeding. And then the scrum commenced, with more than 150 birds, mostly griffons, pecking bloodily at the remains. But, even when the *melée* subsided, no sign of the hoped-for lammergeier. A grey heron and a white stork both winged their way over, no doubt picked out as we were hoping for something a bit more special to arrive. Anyway, it was a worthwhile and well-timed visit.

On arriving at Arbayún, the skies were empty – the coincidence of the previous stop no doubt to blame – apart from a couple of passing pairs of alpine swifts. But the highlight had to be the 'tame' fox, a litter-bin scavenger, which almost mugged us on our arrival. And proceeded to do so to two *Guardia Civil* who were also in the car park. Heading back to Lumbier, a lovely male Montagu's harrier flew over the road, in just about the same location as our bus broke down last year. At Lumbier Gorge, our plans were rather curtailed by track works, which had closed the entire gorge between the tunnels.

And so to plan B. By popular demand an exploratory return journey was in order, so we headed back uphill to Navasqués, over to Burgui, stopping to lunch in a picnic site overlooking the heavily wooded Roncal Valley, in which the river was very swollen and carrying a huge sediment load. The Río Bellagua was nothing of the sort! A short-toed eagle flew past, and was later seen at rest in a tree, but otherwise it was all rather quiet on the wildlife front. Despite the threatening cloud, we decided to head up the Roncal, right up to the French border. So up we went, passing through a magnificent landscape of open black pine forest, shrouded in cloud and heavy rain, and eventually covered in huge drifts of snow. The typical high mountain birds were here – water pipit and alpine chough – and by the ski station, we found a pair of ring ouzels. We did continue on to the border, but due to the lack of any border control it was not until we were a kilometre into France that we realised – the road signs had all changed language, and the road surface had much improved.

So about turn, back down in somewhat clearer conditions so we could appreciate the views we then struck over the hills to Zuriza at the top of the Ansó valley. Then all the way down, starting in alpine pastures, getting into lovely beechwood, the new green leaves just emerging, through dramatic gorge scenery, past rushing rivers, with

dippers, right down to the still summery conditions in Biniés Gorge and Berdún. A long drive, but hugely worthwhile in landscape terms, giving us a strong appreciation of the differences between adjacent valleys, and a real sense of four seasons in one day.

After dinner, Viv gave us a fascinating talk of the history, architecture and culture of Berdún and its area, much appreciated by all, and another strand to the magic of Berdún which had now taken root in our hearts and minds.

Thursday 13 May: Gabardito and Hecho

At last! A bright dawn, with clear blue skies. Sadly, the wind was still cold, strong and gusty, coming straight off the snow-clad high mountains to the north. But at least it was possible to watch the sun rise over the mountains.

Today was the 'free day', but everyone chose to make the most of our time and head out once again into the high gorges. But we did have a late start, at ten o'clock, so that the group could visit the bakery, the source of our wonderful breakfast croissants. We headed up the Hecho valley, off the normal Honeyguide itinerary, and up the forest road to the refuge at Gabardito. Set amidst incredible scenery and open, mixed scots pine and beech wood, it would have been ideal if not for the fierce wind. We trekked out to the main reason for visiting, a large rock which has overtaken the Boca de lo Inferno as a prime site for wallcreeper. We failed – it was a large rock and the birds are small, and the wind made watching uncomfortable. But we did have superb views of crested tits and choughs, fleeting glimpses of citril finches at the car park, and a distant lammergeier as it flew into a high chasm, never to reappear. I was somewhat confused by the call of a 'green' woodpecker coming up from the valley: its ringing nature and habit of falling away at the end was reminiscent of grey-headed, but these are not supposed to occur in these parts. It must remain a mystery.

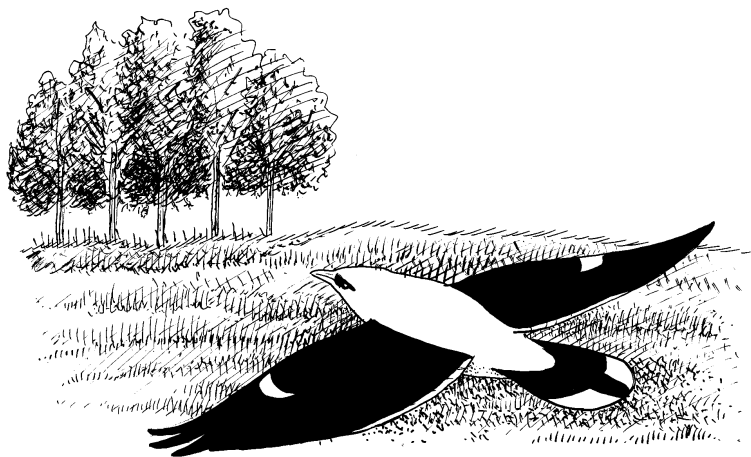
We then intended to go to the Boca for lunch, but again found our way blocked by road works. So we stopped in the valley below Gabardito, overlooking a rushing river, and rocks with flowering clumps of rock soapwort. Out of the wind, the sun was encouraging several butterflies into flight, including brimstone and orange-tip, both of which became almost abundant as we headed home, down to Hecho (negotiating our way carefully past several large lorries heading uphill), across to Ansó, and back down through Biniés Gorge once again. But the highlight of the day came just as we came into the Ansó valley: we stopped sharply to watch a short-toed eagle hanging in the wind above, when two lammergeiers hove into sight, one adult and one sub-adult, circling gently high over us before drifting off south. A relatively distant view maybe, but very special nonetheless.

And so back to Berdún, leaving a couple of hours for private wandering, giving views of the usual griffon vultures over (and under) the northern slopes (it is impossible to tire of the sight of these flying barn doors!), and a couple of performing pale phase booted eagles.

Friday 14 May: Aísa

A beautiful, clear dawn again – and today, for the first time, there was no wind at all. Our explorations began in the churchyard, where I displayed a lovely female emperor moth that I had found sheltering from the wind the night before. OK, so it wasn't the even-more-impressive moths I had hoped for, like giant peacock or Spanish moon moth, but it was still wonderful to see and photograph.

For our last full day, we headed east again, and turned into the hills at Jaca. And even on the journey up to Aísa, it was clear that this was to be a very special day. Birds seemed to be seeking us out: in the space of a few kilometres we had seen several golden orioles (*right*) and red-backed shrikes, a hoopoe, a feeding great spotted woodpecker, a pair of whinchats, a male rock bunting, and a flock of eight bee-eaters – all from the minibus windows! And at the bridge over the Río Lubierre, a short stop produced a rock sparrow, a male grey wagtail performing song-flights, a formation fly-past of three short-toed eagles, still more orioles, and a noisy 'quacking' chorus of Iberian water frogs.



Once up at the Aisa car park, it was still very warm, despite the altitude, and before we had even closed the van doors, a scan of the skies produced a cry of ‘lammergeier!’ Not one but two, both immatures, one probably a year old, the other two years or so, to judge from the coloration and the wing breadth. One was even carrying food, which it proceeded to drop on some scree across the valley, upon which they both went to ground to eat. And we were able to watch it all through ‘scopes, in spite of the heat haze, a real privilege to witness.

So then we headed up into the hanging valley, a place of incredible scenic beauty and relatively undisturbed, so a haven for mountain wildlife. The lower, box-covered slopes were alive with the signs of summer – basking Iberian wall lizards, numerous brimstones and cleopatras, and even a single Moroccan orange tip – while the meadows above were simply stunning in the trappings of spring – intensely blue patches of spring gentians, and bold yellow splashes of yellow rock-jasmine to name just two. Higher up the valley, the daffodils were in full flower, *Narcissus minor*, a local speciality was blooming in drifts, while even closer to the melting snows, there were wild crocuses, the traditional sign of winter’s end.

With so much underfoot, it was hard to look elsewhere. But when we did, a near-adult lammergeier (*right*) drifted along the mountain tops, a rock thrush was seen in song flight and display, and a noisy gaggle of almost a hundred alpine choughs circled over. And then as we turned for home, a final scan of the screes produced the sight of about 15 izard, several with young calves, living up to their babycham image as they gambolled around. A final delightful cameo, to cap a wonderful day, in the sort of place that makes one thankful that such places remain in this troubled world.



Back at Berdún, our last meal at Emilio’s was rather special, a brace of quail (farmed, we were assured) followed by a creamy cake and champagne. And then we tried, yet again, to add an owl or two to the holiday list. But no luck, neither barn nor scops played ball (were they even there?), but we did at least have a good sounding of a passing noctule bat.

Saturday 15 May: Río Aragón and the journey home

Another settled start, and as a result relatively few birds – clearly, the poor weather we had experienced earlier in the trip had done wonders for our bird list! After breakfast, an hour for packing, and then it was down to the Aragón, past a confiding roadside red-backed shrike, for a final few hours along the river. A little ringed plover was found on a gravel island, and other new birds for the holiday included a pair of short-toed treecreepers provisioning their nest, and at least two singing male Spanish wagtails. Two woodchat shrikes were hunting for insects in the low scrub, and then as a final delight, a distant bubbling began to resolve itself into the calls of bee-eaters. Entering a clearing, we were suddenly surrounded by them, at least thirty, resting, feeding, flying, calling and mating, a riot of multicoloured activity from these most delightful of birds. All too soon though we were back in the van, up to the town, finishing packing, squeezing in a spot of lunch, and a final walk round to see the newly emerged scarce swallowtails and meadow browns. Then after loading our luggage onto the bus, we bade farewell to Berdún.

Two male Montagu’s harriers and three white storks on three nests provided the bird interest on the way back, until the final approach to Bilbao airport, when the unmistakable sound of a fan-tailed warbler drifted through the open windows: a last bird ‘tick’ bringing our final tally to 115 species, a very respectable total under the circumstances, and just one small measure of a very successful and enjoyable holiday.

KEY TO LOCALITIES

Main sites

B - Berdún, including the banks of the Veral and Aragón, Martés tip, and Viv's tulip meadow
Bi - Biniés gorge
J - San Juan de la Peña and Santa Cruz de la Seros
R - Riglos and the 'Ramonda rock'
P - Portalet and Formigal
A - Aísa

Other sites, lists much less complete

O - Oroel
L - Lumbier and Arbayún Gorges
RV - Roncal valley (and Bellagua)
G - Gabardito, and Upper Hecho valley
AV - Ansó Valley

PTERIDOPHYTES (Ferns)

Asplenium adiantum-nigrum Black Spleenwort Bi
A. fontanum Bi
A. ruta-muraria Wall-rue B Bi
A. trichomanes Maidenhair Spleenwort Bi J P
Ceterach officinarum Rustyback Fern B Bi
Polypodium interjectum Intermediate Polypody Bi
P. vulgare Common Polypody Bi P L
Pteridium aquilinum Bracken J

GYMNOSPERMS (Conifers)

Abies alba Silver Fir Bi
Cupressus sempervirens Cypress B R
Juniperus communis Juniper B Bi J R
J. communis ssp. *nana* P A
J. sabina Savin P
J. phoenicia Phoenician Juniper R
Pinus halepensis Aleppo Pine R
P. nigra Black Pine B Bi J R P A RV G
P. sylvestris Scots Pine B Bi J R P A O G AV
Taxus baccata Yew Bi

DICOTYLEDONS

The list concentrates on those seen in flower, with just a few more distinctive non-flowering species

Aceraceae

Acer campestre Field Maple B Bi
A. monspessulanum Montpellier Maple Bi
A. opalus Bi

Anacardiaceae

Pistachia lentiscus Lentisc Bi R
P. terebinthus Turpentine Tree Bi R

Apiaceae

Bupleurum rigidum B Bi
Daucus carota Wild Carrot B
Eryngium campestre Field Eryngo B Bi R
Foeniculum vulgare Fennel B R
Scandix pecten-veneris Shepherd's-needle B
Selinum pyrenaicum B Bi

Aquifoliaceae

Ilex aquifolium Holly J

Araliaceae

Hedera helix Ivy B Bi J R L
H. hibernica Irish Ivy Bi

Asclepiadaceae

Vincetoxicum hirundinaria Swallow-wort Bi

Asteraceae

Achillea millefolium Yarrow J P

Arctium minus Lesser Burdock Bi

Artemisia absinthium Wormwood B R

A. campestre Field Southernwood B

Bellis perennis Daisy B J P

B. sylvestris B

Calendula arvensis Field Marigold B

C. officinalis B

Carduus acanthoides Welled Thistle B

C. tenuiflorus Slender Thistle B

Carlina acanthifolia P

C. acaulis Stemless Carline-thistle P

Filago pyramidata Broad-leaved Cudweed B J

Helichrysum stoechas B R

Lactuca perennis Blue Lettuce Bi

Santolina chamaecyparissus Lavender Cotton B Bi R

Silybum marianum Milk Thistle B

Taraxacum sp. Dandelion B R P

Tussilago farfara Colt's-foot J P A

Berberidaceae

Berberis vulgaris Barberry B Bi R

Betulaceae

Betula pendula Silver Birch B J P

Boraginaceae

Borago officinalis Borage B

Buglossoides purpureo-caerulea Purple Gromwell B Bi

Echium plantagineum Purple Viper's-bugloss B

Lithodora fruticosum Shrubby Gromwell B Bi

Lithospermum arvense Corn Gromwell B

Myosotis alpina Alpine Forget-me-not P A

Symphytum officinale Comfrey B

Brassicaceae

Aethionema saxatile Burnt Candytuft J O

Alliaria petiolata Garlic Mustard Bi J

Alyssum alyssoides Small Alison B

Arabis alpina Alpine Rock-cress P

A. hirsuta Hairy Rock-cress Bi

A. turrita Towercress Bi P

Barbarea vulgaris Winter-cress B J

Cardamine heptaphylla AV

Draba aizoides Yellow Whitlow-grass P A

Lepidium heterophyllum Smith's Pepperwort B

Thlaspi alpestre Alpine Pennycress P A

Buxaceae

Buxus sempervirens Box B Bi J R L

Caprifoliaceae

Lonicera etrusca Perfoliate Honeysuckle Bi

L. periclymenum Honeysuckle B

L. xylosteum Fly Honeysuckle B

Sambucus ebulus Dwarf Elder B J

Sambucus nigra Elder Bi

Viburnum lantana Wayfaring Tree B Bi J

V. opulus Guelder-rose J

Caryophyllaceae

Paronychia argentea B

P. capitata R

Petrocoptis pyrenaica Bi J

Saponaria ocymoides Rock Soapwort G

Silene alba White Campion Bi J
S. viridiflora Bi
S. vulgaris Bladder Campion B R

Cistaceae

Cistus albidus Grey-leaved Cistus R
Helianthemum apenninum White Rock-rose B Bi J R L
H. canum Hoary Rock-rose R L
H. nummularium Common Rock-rose B

Convolvulaceae

Cuscuta epithymum Dodder R

Cornaceae

Cornus sanguinea Dogwood B

Corylaceae

Corylus avellana Hazel B Bi J

Crassulaceae

Sedum dasyphyllum Thick-leaved Stonecrop B Bi R
S. reflexum Rock Stonecrop Bi J

Sempervivum montanum P

Umbilicus rupestris Navelwort Bi J R

Cucurbitaceae

Bryonia dioica White Bryony B Bi R L

Dipsacaceae

Dipsacus fullonum Teasel B

Ericaceae

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi Bearberry J

Vaccinium myrtillus Bilberry J

Euphorbiaceae

Euphorbia amygdaloides Wood Spurge B Bi J
E. chamaebuxus Pyrenean Spurge B L
E. characias B Bi R
E. flavicomis P
E. helioscopia Sun Spurge B
E. serrata B Bi R L

Fabaceae

Anthyllis vulneraria ssp. *forondae* Kidney Vetch P

A. vulneraria ssp. *pyrenaica* J L

Astragalus monspessulanus B Bi R L

Cercis siliquastrum Judas Tree B

Colutea arborescens Bladder Senna B Bi

Coronilla emerus Scorpion Vetch B Bi

C. scorpioides Annual Scorpion-vetch R

Dorycnium pentaphyllum R

Echinopartium horridum J

Genista hispanica Spanish Gorse B J R

G. scorpius B Bi J R L

Hippocrepis comosa Horseshoe Vetch B

Laburnum anagyroides Laburnum B

Lathyrus aphaca Yellow Vetchling B

L. setifolius B R L

Onobrychis supina B

O. viciifolia Sainfoin B R

Ononis fruticosa Shrubby Rest-harrow R

Psoralea bituminosa Pitch Trefoil R

Robinia pseudoacacia False Acacia B R

Spartium junceum Spanish Broom R

Vicia cracca Tufted Vetch B R

V. sativa Common Vetch B R

V. sepium Bush Vetch J

V. villosa Fodder Vetch B

Fagaceae

Fagus sylvatica Beech J R V G AV

Quercus coccifera Kermes Oak B Bi J R L
Q. ilex Holm Oak B Bi J L
Q. petraea Sessile Oak J
Q. pyrenaica Pyrenean Oak J

Fumariaceae

Fumaria capreolata Ramping-fumitory L
F. officinalis Fumitory B R

Gentianaceae

Gentiana acaulis Trumpet Gentian P A
G. verna Spring Gentian P A G

Geraniaceae

Erodium cicutarium Common Stork's-bill B R
E. malacoides B
Geranium molle Dove's-foot Crane's-bill B
G. purpureum Little-Robin B Bi
G. robertianum Herb-Robert B Bi J
G. rotundifolium Round-leaved Crane's-bill B

Gesneriaceae

Ramonda myconi Bi R

Globulariaceae

Globularia cordifolia B
G. punctata J
G. repens A

Lamiaceae

Ajuga chamaepitys Ground-pine B
Lamium amplexicaule Henbit Dead-nettle B R
Lavandula angustifolia B J R
Marrubium vulgare White Horehound B R L
Phlomis lychnitis B R
Rosmarinus officinalis Rosemary R
Salvia verbenaca Wild Clary B R L
Thymus vulgaris Garden Thyme B Bi R L

Lentibulariaceae

Pinguicula vulgaris Butterwort P

Linaceae

Linum bienne Pale Flax B
L. narbonense Beautiful Flax B Bi R
L. suffruticosum Pyrenean Flax B

Loranthaceae

Viscum album ssp. *album* Mistletoe B Bi
V. album ssp. *austriacum* Bi J R

Malvaceae

Althaea hirsuta Hairy mallow B

Moraceae

Ficus carica Fig B R L

Oleaceae

Fraxinus excelsior Ash B Bi
Olea europaea Olive R

Orobanchaceae

Lathraea clandestina Purple Toothwort B

Papaveraceae

Chelidonium majus Greater Celandine Bi
Papaver rhoeas Common Poppy B

Plantaginaceae

Plantago sempeervirens Shrubby Plantain B

Polygalaceae

Polygala nicaeensis B Bi J
P. vulgaris Common Milkwort B

Primulaceae

Anagallis arvensis Scarlet Pimpernel B R L
Androsace villosa A

Primula elatior Oxlip P A G
P. farinosa Bird's-eye Primrose P A
P. hirsuta P
P. veris Cowslip Bi J P A O
P. veris x elatior P
P. veris I vulgaris B

Vitaliana primuliflora Yellow Rock-jasmine P A

Ranunculaceae

Adonis annua Pheasant's-eye B
Aquilegia vulgaris Columbine Bi J
Caltha palustris Marsh-marigold P A
Clematis vitalba Traveller's-joy B Bi J
Helleborus foetidus Stinking Hellebore B Bi J R L
H. viridis Green Hellebore P A G
Hepatica nobilis J A O
Ranunculus arvensis Corn Buttercup B
R. bulbosus Bulbous Buttercup Bi
R. gouanii P
R. gramineus B
R. pyrenaicus P

Thalictrum tuberosum B Bi R

Resedaceae

Reseda lutea Mignonette B Bi J
R. phyteuma Corn Mignonette R

Rhamnaceae

Rhamnus alaternus Mediterranean Buckthorn L
R. pumilus Rock Buckthorn P

Rosaceae

Alchemilla alpina Alpine Lady's-mantle P A
Amelanchier ovalis Snowy Mespilus B Bi J R
Crataegus monogyna Hawthorn B Bi J
Fragaria vesca Wild Strawberry Bi J
Geum montanum Alpine Avens J
Malus sylvestris Crab Apple Bi
Potentilla micrantha Pink Barren-strawberry P
P. repens Creeping Cinquefoil B
P. tabernaemontani Spring Cinquefoil B Bi J P A
Prunus avium Wild Cherry J
P. mahaleb St Lucie's Cherry Bi J
Rosa canina Dog Rose B Bi P
Rubus fruticosus Bramble B Bi J R
Sanguisorba minor Salad Burnet B Bi J R P A
Sorbus aria Whitebeam Bi J
Spiraea hypericifolia R

Rubiaceae

Cruciata laevipes Crosswort J
Galium mollugo Hedge Bedstraw Bi L
G. verum Lady's Bedstraw Bi L
Sherardia arvensis Field Madder B

Salicaceae

Populus nigra Black Poplar B Bi
P. tremula Aspen B
Salix alba White Willow B Bi
S. eleagnos B
S. purpurea Purple Willow B

Saxifragaceae

Saxifraga corbariensis J R
S. granulata Meadow Saxifrage J P A
S. longifolia Pyrenean Saxifrage Bi J R
S. tridactylites Rue-leaved Saxifrage L

Scrophulariaceae

- Antirrhinum majus* Snapdragon B Bi R L
Chaenorhinum origanifolium Bi
Cymbalaria muralis Ivy-leaved Toadflax B
Linaria alpina Alpine Toadflax A
 L. supina Prostrate Toadflax L
Pedicularis sylvatica Lousewort P

Thymelaeaceae

- Daphne laureola* Spurge-laurel J

Tiliaceae

- Tilia cordata* Small-leaved Lime Bi J

Ulmaceae

- Ulmus minor* Elm B Bi

Urticaceae

- Parietaria judaica* Pellitory-of-the-wall R L

Valerianaceae

- Centranthus ruber* Red Valerian B
Valeriana dioica Marsh Valerian L
 V. globularifolia J A O

Violaceae

- Viola odorata* Sweet Violet J
 V. pyrenaica Pyrenean Violet P A
 V. riviniana Common Dog-violet J O

MONOCOTYLEDONS**Amaryllidaceae**

- Narcissus minor* Least Daffodil A
 N. pseudonarcissus ssp. *alpestris* J
 N. pseudonarcissus ssp. *pseudonarcissus* Wild Daffodil P
 N. rupicola Rock Daffodil B J A

Dioscoreaceae

- Tamus communis* Black Bryony Bi

Iridaceae

- Crocus albiflorus* Wild Crocus A
Iris germanica Purple Iris R
 I. pseudacorus Yellow Flag B

Juncaceae

- Luzula campestris* Field Woodrush J P
 L. sylvatica Greater Woodrush J

Liliaceae

- Allium moly* Bi
 A. roseum Rose Garlic R
Aphyllanthes monspeliensis B Bi R
Asphodelus albus White Asphodel Bi J P
Fritillaria pyrenaica Pyrenean Fritillary B J
Gagea fistulosa Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem P
Hyacinthus amethystinus Bi AV
Muscari comosum Tassel Hyacinth B R
 M. neglectum Grape-hyacinth B J L
Ruscus aculeatus Butcher's-broom J L
Tulipa sylvestris Wild Tulip B

Orchidaceae

- Dactylorhiza sambucina* Elder-flowered Orchid J P A O
Ophrys fusca Sombre Bee-orchid B
 O. lutea Yellow Bee-orchid B
 O. scolopax Woodcock Orchid B Bi J
 O. sphegodes Early Spider-orchid B Bi L
Orchis mascula Early Purple-orchid J P
 O. morio var. *picta* Green-winged Orchid J
 O. purpurea Lady Orchid B Bi L
 O. ustulata Burnt Orchid B

Poaceae (very incomplete)

Anthoxanthum odoratum Sweet Vernal-grass B
Arundo donax Giant Reed B R
Catapodium rigidum Fern-grass B
Dactylis glomerata Cock's-foot B
Deschampsia cespitosa Tufted Hair-grass B
Hordeum murinum Wall Barley B
Melica uniflora Wood Melick Bi J
Phragmites australis Common Reed B
Poa annua Annual Meadow-grass B
P. bulbosa Bulbous Meadow-grass B

Typhaceae

Typha latifolia Greater Reedmace B

LICHENS

Cladonia foliacea B J
Ramalina sp. Bi
Rhizocarpon geographicum P
Usnea sp. J

MAMMALS

Northern Mole J P A (molehills only)
European Free-tailed Bat B
Noctule B
Serotine B
Pipistrelle B
Red Squirrel B J
Alpine Marmot P
Wild Boar B J A (rootings only)
Roe Deer B
Izard P A
Fox B P A L RV

FISH

Brown Trout Bi

AMPHIBIANS

Iberian Water Frog (Marsh Frog) B A

REPTILES

Iberian Wall Lizard B R A
Viperine Snake Bi (dead)

BUTTERFLIES

Dingy Skipper R
Scarce Swallowtail B A
Large White
Small White
Wood White R
Bath White R
Orange-tip Bi A
Moroccan Orange-tip A
Clouded Yellow R
Brimstone A AV G
Cleopatra J R
Red Admiral B
Small Tortoiseshell A
Painted Lady B R

Violet Fritillary Bi J
Nettle-tree Butterfly R
Meadow Brown B
Wall R
Speckled Wood B Bi R
Common Blue R
Black-eyed Blue R
Chequered Blue B R
Brown Argus R

MOTHS

Emperor Moth B
Fox Moth B
Hummingbird Hawk-moth J
Broad-bordered Bee-hawk-moth J
Pine Processionary Moth - caterpillars everywhere
where there were pine trees
Puss Moth B
Shuttle-shaped Dart B
Silver-y B R

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Arion ater a large black slug J P
Gryllus campestris Field Cricket B J
Oedipoda coerulescens Blue-winged Grasshopper
B
Anacridium aegyptiacum Egyptian Locust R
Mantis religiosa Praying Mantis R
Coccus ilicis a gall insect on kermes oak R
Aquarius najas a large pond skater Bi
Bombylius major Bee-fly J
Cicindela campestris a tiger beetle R
Meloe proscarabaeus Oil-beetle B
Blaps mucronatus Churchyard Beetle B
Timarcha tenebricosa Bloody-nosed Beetle G
Xylocopa violacea Violet Carpenter-bee B R
Formica rufa Wood Ant J
Polistes sp. a paper wasp R

BIRDS

Great crested grebe – Yesa and Peña Reservoirs
Little egret - Puente la Reina
Grey heron – Yesa and Aragón valley
Purple heron – two migrants over B (7th)
White stork – journeys to and from Bilbao; over Lumbier
Mallard
Honey buzzard – Bi(10 north on 10th) P(8 on 11th)
Black kite
Red kite
Lammergeier – A(3) G AV(2)
Egyptian vulture
Griffon vulture
Short-toed eagle – B J AV Ai
Montagu’s harrier – L + journeys
Sparrowhawk – Yesa
Common buzzard
Bonelli’s eagle – B(two records, different birds, in the Aragón Valley)
Booted eagle
Osprey – Aragón valley
Kestrel
Peregrine – B P Iturimurri
Red-legged partridge – A
Quail – B
Little ringed plover – B
Common sandpiper
Yellow-legged gull – B Yesa
Rock dove – J R L / Feral Pigeon
Woodpigeon
Collared dove
Turtle dove – B and journeys
Cuckoo
Swift
Alpine swift – B L
Bee-eater – B J R A
Hoopoe – B A
Great spotted woodpecker
Green woodpecker – B
Black woodpecker – Bi
Wryneck – B
Crested lark
Woodlark – B R
Skylark – B P A
Sand martin – Aragón
Crag martin
Swallow
House martin
Tawny pipit – B
Tree pipit – B
Water pipit – P
Meadow pipit – P
Spanish wagtail – B
Grey wagtail
White wagtail
Dipper – Bi AV
Wren
Dunnock – B P A
Robin
Nightingale
Black redstart
Redstart – B Aragón
Whinchat – A
Stonechat
Northern wheatear
Black-eared wheatear – B
Rock thrush – P A
Blackbird
Ring ouzel - RV
Mistle thrush – A G
Cetti’s warbler
Fan-tailed warbler – Bilbao
Great reed warbler – B
Melodious warbler
Dartford warbler – B
Subalpine warbler – R
Sardinian warbler – R
Whitethroat – B A
Garden warbler – B
Blackcap
Bonelli’s warbler
Chiffchaff
Iberian chiffchaff – B
Goldcrest – A G
Firecrest
Spotted flycatcher
Pied flycatcher
Long-tailed tit
Crested tit – J G
Coal tit – J RV G
Blue tit
Great tit
Nuthatch – J
Golden oriole
Red-backed shrike – B P A
Woodchat shrike – B Iturrimurri
Jay
Magpie
Alpine chough – P A
Red-billed chough – Bi R P A G
Jackdaw – L
Carrion crow
Raven
Spotless starling
House sparrow
Rock sparrow – B A
Chaffinch
Serin
Greenfinch
Citril finch – G
Goldfinch
Linnet
Bullfinch – J
Yellowhammer – P
Cirl bunting
Rock bunting – A
Corn bunting

Total – 115 species



Chris Durdin
HONEYGUIDE
36, Thunder Lane
Thorpe St. Andrew
Norwich, NR7 OPX
INGLATERRA

Zaragoza, 7th July, 2004

Dear Chris:

Once again I want to thank you for contributing with your donation of £100 to our Conservation Project in the steppes of Belchite (Zaragoza - Spain). With this money, Honeyguide has already given to this project £8.720 since 1991, what is a valuable support to conservation of Spanish steppic birds. Thanks to you and people and groups like yours the Ornithological Reserve of "El Planerón", in Belchite, can go a head succesfully.

Please, extend my thanks to your spring '2004 group in Berdún and all the others groups from Honeyguide that have contributed with SEO during last years. All of you are invited to visit our natural reserves whenever you have the chance.

I hope see you again soon.

Best wishes:

Juan Carlos Cirera Martínez
SEO/BirdLife officer in Aragón.