



Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Valencia
10 – 17 March 2020

Participants

Sue Miller
Chris Popplewell (Christina in this report)
Sue Goldsmith
Brian Austin and Mary Laurie-Pile
Dawn Stevens
Brennan and Karin Auger
Jill Winwood

Leaders

Pau Lucio and Chris Durdin.
Report and lists by Chris Durdin.

Photos by Chris Durdin unless noted otherwise.
Other photos attributed by initials, all taken on the holiday.

We stayed at Hotel Casa Babel in Villalonga
www.casababel.com/en/



Cover, top: cherry blossom, Vall de Gallinera.
Bottom: Provence hairstreak, hoopoe (PL).
Below: the group, at the butterfly reserve (PL). Above: Pau's vehicle (DS).



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 of £40 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. We gave £390 to the Grupo de Anillamiento Pit-Roig (pit-roig is the robin in the local language) which runs bird ringing stations in Valencia. We met the group at Pego Marsh – see account on pages 5 and 6. As at March 2020, the total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 was £135,232.

Names of places in this report are a mix of Castilian Spanish and Valenciano: signs often have both spellings, such as Calpe = Calp, Alicante = Alacant.

DAILY DIARY

Tuesday 10 March – arrival in Valencia

It was a routine flight from Gatwick, arriving in Valencia at the same time as Karin and Brennan arrived from Germany. Meeting us at the airport were local leader Pau and group member Jillian, who had travelled from her part of Spain and was picked up by Pau a little earlier. Most of us found our way out of the car park in our Europcar minibus then followed Pau's vehicle, with the remainder of the group, south-east towards Valencia's marshes. The paddy fields were poor for birds: draining ahead of rice being planted had started early. Nonetheless, Brian estimated we passed about 300 little egrets, mostly standing around in dry fields.

We parked at the Albufera's visitor centre and climbed the stairs to the elevated viewing area. Lakes with islands held black-winged stilts and shelducks. Turning through 90 degrees, out on the open water were red-crested pochards and Mediterranean gulls mingling with black-headed gulls.

We descended and followed the route that a school group had taken to a large hide, past helpfully labelled trees, such as Aleppo pines, and shrubby vegetation that included phillyrea, sometimes known as false olive though here with the English name of mock privet. We found a chiffchaff and heard several Sardinian warblers. From the hide we were close to the stilts: there was also a little ringed plover and Jill found a ruff. A pale phase booted eagle flew around a few times.

Lunch at Restaurant Mateu was a very large Fideuà (a Valencian dish similar to paella but with pasta rather than rice) and a paella, plus salad and puddings.



Valencian lunch; a stilt tucked in behind a shelduck.

There was a brief stop to look at water pipits on a muddy field followed by an unsuccessful attempt to see a usually reliable daytime roost of night herons. Wren and blackcap in song and a couple of house martins flying over were the best we could do.

Time was moving on, so we set off on the hour's journey to Villalonga. This was the first Honeyguide group at Hotel Casa Babel, so it was good have time to settle in and begin to work out the lie of the land. Pau joined us for a sumptuous dinner: shared starters, quite a choice for main course then a selection of desserts. It was soon time to catch up on sleep after early starts.

Wednesday 11 March – butterfly reserve and micro-reserves for flora

We had a generous breakfast at the hotel at 8am and Pau joined us at nine o'clock to load up picnics, including natty little Casa Babel backpacks, and help to release the minibus from the hotel's parking compound a short distance away.

We drove to the new butterfly reserve that Pau has been instrumental in setting up, a partnership between butterfly conservation NGO Zerynthia and Gandia Council. The person from the council who was supposed to meet us didn't turn up, but it didn't matter very much. Pau's vehicle was allowed in and the rest of us walked up the road alongside botanically rich hillsides. Those hillsides had been hit by serious fires in August 2018, and the charred remains of pines and of damaged buildings were evidence of that, though natural regeneration was in full swing. Bright blue beautiful flax and aphyllantes (sometimes called blue grass-lily) mixed with white sage-leaved cistus, splashes of colour from mallow-leaved bindweed, the unusual yellow pea *Anthyllis cytisoides*, bushes of *Phlomis purpurea* and two species of *Dorycnium*. A wood white butterfly and black redstarts added variety.

At the reserve's sign Pau described the project and its flagship species, two-tailed pasha, and he immediately found a caterpillar of the pasha on a regenerating wild strawberry tree, the larval food plant. For such a distinctive looking larva – bright green with horns – it was surprisingly well-hidden on a leaf of a similar colour, but we still found two more. Long-tailed blue and Lang's short-tailed blue were two additional butterflies.



Two-tailed pasha caterpillar; one of Europe's rarest plants, *Silene diclinis*; *Ophrys lucentina*.

We had a brief stop at a closed natural history interpretation centre, but it was a poor year for orchids here. Pau introduced us to the local special thyme *Thymus piperella*, with a strong scent and spicy taste. We walked a short distance in welcome shade as far as an old lime kiln in the pine wood before driving onto Barx for our coffee and loo stop. We had our packed lunches at the picnic tables by the snow well nearby, where for many some shade was welcome. We found some geckos – three at least – hiding in gaps in the metalwork over the snow well.

We drove on to another botanical micro-reserve called Pla de Mora set up for one of Europe's scarcest plants, the pink *Silene diclinis*. We found these easily enough: it took more effort to put a name to blue dyer's alkanet growing here. A Cleopatra butterfly flew round as did a Moroccan orange-tip – now called Provence orange-tip. A green hairstreak showed very well. Attempts to watch a short-toed treecreeper soon stopped when an adult Bonelli's eagle came overhead.

A little farther on we stopped for a group of some 20 sawfly orchids, already fading with recent heat, and in among these were three examples of the very local *Ophrys lucentina*¹. The final stop on this afternoon's circuit was to look at a Thekla lark on a wire over an attractive area of open scrub. Distant telescope views were improved on as it sang overhead. Several serins and stonechats added to the late afternoon scene.

We caught up with two days of wildlife checklists before a delicious dinner: Casa Babel's food impressed us all week.

Thursday 12 March – Mediterranean garden and Calpe

We had a relaxed departure as our first destination wasn't open until 10 o'clock. The L'Albarda garden, not far from Dénia, is a rich man's project: an Italianate garden that failed when originally planted but which now has been developed with Mediterranean species adapted to survive in the local climate. Our guide, Àngel, showed us around and tolerated the wildlife digressions with patience. These started as soon as we arrived with singing firecrest, blackcap and chiffchaff and displaying serins. The clipped hedges of myrtle, trained wisteria and bougainvillea and the other features were elegant, though there was more formal garden than I'd prefer to see. However, Àngel's assertion of the wildlife-friendly, pesticide-free management was fair. Highlights included a geranium argus around a pot of pelargoniums, Cleopatra butterflies and Iberian water frog, though these were topped by the horseshoe whip-snake that slithered through a shrubbery, evaded Àngel's attempt to catch it and disappeared behind a shutter on the main building. A dark booted eagle flew over, showing well its 'landing lights' on the leading edges of its wings.

Another area was natural-looking with native species, even though it was actually constructed with local rocks, with flowers such as narrow-leaved cistus, large Mediterranean spurge and houndstongue, over which flew our first swallowtail butterfly of the holiday. A shrub of particular note was *Medicago citrina*, a bush medick that is endemic to islands off this part of the Spanish coast. With a naturally small range this species is listed by IUCN as endangered, so growing it here could offer a lifeline should there be threats in its natural range.

On a pond near the entrance we looked at the egg-laying scars of willow emerald damselfly on oleander. To find these on oleander is unfamiliar from a UK perspective, though it is a previously documented 'host' according to Adrian Parr from the British Dragonfly Society.

We had coffee and cake, and here some in the group saw a red squirrel.

¹ *Ophrys lucentina* (this is the name given in the orchid 'bible' by Delforge, which notes that the name is from Alicante, ancient Lucentum of the Romans) is also known as *Ophrys dianica*. It's one of a group of *Ophrys* orchids midway in appearance between sombre bee orchids *Ophrys fusca* and yellow bee orchid *Ophrys lutea*.



Formal part of the L'Abarda garden; willow emerald damselfly egg-laying scars on oleander.

We drove to the coastal resort of Calpe, parked below the Natural Park and between us took our packed lunches to the picnic area up the hill. Yellow-legged gulls were numerous and tame. Flowers by the ascent included giant fennel, white mignonette, a big patch of paronychia, *Fagonia cretica* and the very local pink *Silene secundiflora*, with bold stripes on its calyx. As we picnicked there was a tame Sardinian warbler in the bushes by the shelter. Nearby was a giant orchid, past its best; much showier were big yellow patches of *Asteriscus* (or *Pallenis*) *maritimus* as we looked around an open area by viewpoints over the sea. On the rocks below were shags, of the Mediterranean race of course, a generally scarce sub-species but not so here today as there were 13 of them.



Asteriscus maritimus and *Silene secundiflora* at Calpe.

We descended and drove the short distance to yet another pocket nature reserve, some open scrub well used by people and, from the rootings, by wild boars. At last there were some galactites – Mediterranean field thistles – in flower and Pau located some mirror orchids. Wild gladiolus was obvious and there was a nice-looking giant orchid by the boardwalk. A report of pignuts (an English umbellifer) was a puzzle: it was a name half-remembered correctly as they were Barbary nuts, a pretty blue iris. The boardwalk took us to a platform overlooking a lagoon, once upon a time saltpans for the Romans but now a landscape feature in front of the high rise hotels beyond. Flamingos were present in good numbers, plus a few shelducks and a common sandpiper.

Sue G found an intense red flower on the return walk and later solved the puzzle: scarlet flax from Algeria, though known to occur as a casual in Mediterranean Europe.

Friday 13 March – Pego Marsh and Gandia

A slightly earlier (8:45) start to meet members of Pau's ringing group, Pit Roig, at Pego Marsh, as they'd set up the mist net before dawn. Driving there through dry paddy fields there were several glossy ibises with the expected little egrets, plus Audouin's gulls standing on a dry field. Juan from Pit Roig had four birds in bags, and Brian, a qualified 'C' ringer, was invited to 'process' them: check rings, measure and weigh. He started with two re-traps, a chiffchaff, released by Dawn, and a Cetti's warbler. The next bird was a new one for Brian: a female bluethroat. Another grade A bird followed: moustached warbler, a generally resident species with an important population added to by wintering birds from the Camargue.

There was also a moustached warbler singing, like a slow, relaxed sedge warbler. A pale phase booted eagle flew over, a marsh harrier drifted by and the zip zip zip sound of a fan-tailed warbler preceded its tiny form flying past. Farther away a flock of some 150 glossy ibises was moving around. There was a big patch of a white labiate by where we'd parked, which later study revealed to be *Stachys ocymastrum*.



Brian rings and releases a moustached warbler.

We drove a short distance to a circular walk through part of the marshes and around a small hill, pausing on the drive for hoopoes on the ground (picture on cover). Sue G saw a snake dash through, but despite some peering into waterside vegetation we didn't see it again. Everyone played hunt the mosquito fish: searching by eye for a tiny fish introduced here in 1921. In the end we saw lots in several places. Our first red admiral, a blue-tailed damselfly, more Iberian water frogs and a red-eared terrapin were other finds. We drove to Pego town for our usual coffee stop, then returned for a picnic on the tables under mulberry trees.



Gulls follow a fishing boat into Gandía harbour.

We spent the afternoon at the resort/port of Gandía, parking by the café on the quay, where three stopped for a hot drink, soon catching up with the rest of the group who had walked to the end of the harbour wall. Sandwich terns flew over, but numbers were low compared with Honeyguide's previous visit. Scanning the sea and sky revealed several gannets and cormorants, then a surprise as a great skua flew past. It looked like a quiet day generally and I had thoughts of leaving early, but then a trawler appeared in the distance, followed by a cloud of seabirds. Those birds included several gannets and many Audouin's gulls, all getting steadily closer. As the trawler came into harbour the group of gulls broke up, with a couple of lesser black-backed gulls and a Mediterranean gull settling on the sea.

There was much conversation back at the minibus and at the hotel later about the developing coronavirus situation, with news of a further spread at home and in Spain.

Saturday 14 March – El Fondo Natural Park

Jillian left for home this morning, partly as El Fondo is a place she visits from home and on account of wider coronavirus developments. All cafes and restaurants were shut today and until further notice, a reaction to growing fears about the spread of Covid-19.

We had an early start, eight o'clock, for a longer journey today, south on the motorway past Alicante and the skyscrapers of Benidorm. Part of El Fondo that previous Honeyguide groups had visited was not open, a coronavirus casualty, so the first stop was to another new wetland called Paratje Natural Municipal del Clot de Galvany, adjacent to a typical coastal collection of apartments and houses. Winter rains meant a rich mix of ruderal plants, including dark-centred tolpis, *Fagonia cretica*, joint pine and bright patches of purple vipers bugloss. The first hide overlooked a lagoon that seemed to be under restoration, though it still had three cattle egrets and half a dozen wintering black redstarts. From the second hide there were red-crested pochards and little grebes. The third and final hide had the best selection, especially at least three penduline tits feeding acrobatically on a tamarisk. An Iberian green woodpecker called loudly and landed briefly. A snipe and a kingfisher were both close but quite tough to find until lined up in a telescope.



View from the final hide at Clot de Galvany, from where we saw penduline tits (SM).

Our usual routine of finding a café was replaced by a stop at a service station, which combined re-fuelling and a loo stop. The shop there was shut, and I paid the lady who was wearing surgical gloves through an after-hours kind of partition.



Santa Pola; slender-billed gull (PL).

We moved on to the salt pans of Santa Pola, viewed from a layby by a square tower erected to keep watch for Arab pirates. Flamingos were immediately obvious and there was a single great white egret. A small lagoon over of the road had an excellent selection of waders, including spotted redshanks, redshanks, black-tailed godwits, ruff and black-winged stilts, plus a yellow wagtail. Our second Santa Pola stop had screened lagoons, with suitable viewing slots. The many avocets were somewhat outshone by elegant slender-billed gulls, upending as they sought food. Two Kentish plovers showed well on a shingle island.



El Fondo Natural Park; purple swamp-hen (SM).

We arrived at El Fondo at lunchtime, no coincidence as it has lots of picnic tables in the shade. We ate picnics and drank coffee brought by Pau. Two red-knobbed coots and marbled ducks swam on the lagoon by the tables, both species part of a reintroduction/re-stocking programme.

There was plenty to see and we spent the afternoon here. There were many Iberian water frogs on the edge of a stone-lipped pond. On the first lagoon were two purple swamp-hens, feeding in the open. From the boardwalk over the lagoon was a very close red-knobbed coot: its blue-grey beak was a lovely feature seen close to. On the walkway's uprights were three shed larval skins of dragonflies, probably from the red-veined darters that occasionally showed over the water. There was a very good view of a glossy ibis, and also of Pau's hat that was caught by a gust of wind and floated away.



Glossy ibis (SM); red-knobbed coot (PL).

Moving on from a small hide – too small for all of us at once – were two black-necked grebes in fine plumage. A duck nesting box on stilts had a marbled duck inside, two on top and about ten around the base. By the final hide and lagoon there were two very close black-winged stilts, by which a wood sandpiper appeared for a time. A pair of garganeys flew in to join the many shovelers, though didn't stay long on show. We paused to watch a tiny butterfly as we headed back, an African grass blue.



Black-necked grebes (SM); marbled ducks on a nesting box (one inside, too); African grass blue (SM).

Sunday 15 March – hills above Pego

It was a day of various pottering stops or special wildlife highlights, with sites for particular orchid species often prompting the locations. The first of these, in an open area after driving up through woods, was for conical orchid *Orchis conica*. The orchids were rather underwhelming, though the general area was so nice it hardly mattered. The supporting cast of flowers, outshining the orchid, included the silver-leafed pea argyrolobium, star-of-Bethlehem and a red-flowered houndstongue. A broomrape didn't seem to fit any in the book and Pau checked with a friend who confirmed it as *Orobanche lastiquama*, parasitic on rosemary, and not in the book. A trilling sound revealed at least two crested tits that fed for a while in an open tree. Beyond them, Christina picked up on two distant raptors which, nearing us, proved to be short-toed eagles.



Cynoglossum cheirifolium, *Orobanche lastiquama* and *Sideritis romana*.

We moved on to Vall de Gallinera where orchards of cherries in blossom were a delight and prompted many photos.



A hidden pond and a red-veined darter (PL).

Moving on again, we stopped at the Mirador del Xap (pronounced 'chap'). We looked down onto manna ash and a bright blue-grey male blue rock thrush. A prostrate tiny white labiate – I called it *Teuchrium alpestre* at the time, but later study showed it was *Sideritis romana* – and white rock-rose were new flowers. The seriousness of the Spanish government's state of emergency in response to coronavirus was brought home by a Guardia Civil vehicle questioning what we were doing out and about rather than being confined indoors.

Our next stop included our picnic lunch in the countryside somewhere in the Vall d'Ebo. Pau caught a Provence hairstreak which after release then settled on the ground, and there were many flowers of *Centaurea pullata*. We'd paused here as there's a pond tucked out of sight, well off-road. The pond was alive with frogs and the buzz of many bees landing alongside white-flowered water crowfoot. We couldn't find the hoped-for winter damselfly, though recently-emerged red-veined darters perched helpfully still in the warm sunshine.



Italian man orchid *Orchis italica*; *Antirrhinum controversum*; *Ophrys dyris*.

Next was a roadside stop where Pau knew there would be Italian man orchids, more typical than the single undersized specimen at Xap, and large numbers of the yellow-edged *Ophrys lucentina*. Grass-leaved buttercup *Ranunculus gramineus* was a nice find here. Then there was a brief photo-stop for a large, deep pink pea: *Lathyrus pulcher* (= *L. tremolsianus*).

At the next roadside stop unusual seed pods were noted, twisted on Scorpiurus and a spiral on large disc medick. A pristine swallowtail fed on a bloom of pitch trefoil. A very large pink snapdragon was later identified as *Antirrhinum controversum* (also called *A. barrellieri*) and a tiny yellow one as *Linaria oblongifolia* subsp. *aragonensis* – the photos on florasilvestre.es/ for the latter were taken here at Vall de Gallinera. Under some dense rosemary, we looked at the scarce and local *Ophrys dyris*²

Our final stop was by a hillside that looked like any other, where Pau knew we could find *Orchis olbiensis*, the Iberian version of early purple orchid. They were in a range of shades of pink plus one that was almost pure white.

² Dyris is the name given by Roman naturalist Pliny to the mountains of the Moroccan Atlas.

Monday 16 March – at Hotel Casa Babel

The curfew for everyone to stay inside really kicked in today. Dawn and I fetched belongings left in the minibus in the hotel's secure car park a couple of small streets away, and even for that Gemma on reception was cautious, though the remote control for the car park at least established a good reason to be out. We heard a loudspeaker announcement in Spanish, and I could make out enough to hear that it was stressing the need to stay inside. So that's what we did all day, though I did walk to the nearby supermarket for essential supplies, namely chocolate. Some did a little birdwatching from the hotel's roof or took the air in the hotel's courtyard, until blue sky turned to clouds and it started to rain. At least we'd missed the worst day, weather-wise. Pau joined us for dinner – essential work for him, of course.

Tuesday 17 March – return

We had an early breakfast at 7:15 to allow a departure at 8:15. Traffic was light as we returned to the airport, having first topped up the minibus with fuel. The airport was relatively quiet, with many people wearing face masks despite the widespread advice that they are ineffective. Karin and Brennan safely returned to Germany. The rest of us were on the same flight as we expected to be on, though now called an easyJet 'rescue' flight with a new flight number and new boarding passes. We returned to Gatwick and to self-isolation and social distancing as measures to tackle coronavirus were tightened back in the UK.

The best bits

Towards the end of our final evening meal at Hotel Casa Babel we shared our holiday highlights, some of the best memories of the holiday, to which can be added the food and the hotel by popular acclaim.

Sue M	Seeing Brian ringing, especially the moustached warbler and bluethroat; penduline tits; rest of the day at El Fondo e.g. the black-necked grebes; yesterday in the mountains with 'pockets of orchids'.
Christina	Sensory experiences; scents of orange blossom, rosemary, pine, the frog chorus.
Sue G	Enjoyed 'fossicking' (searching for stuff); reptiles and amphibians.
Brennan	Bonelli's eagle; the garden, decent thing for a millionaire to do.
Karin	Marbled duck; bluethroat; yesterday's orchids.
Brian	Ringing, a huge highlight; Bonelli's eagle over the <i>Silene diclinis</i> .
Mary	Pego Marsh circular walk; cherry blossom.
Dawn	Pleased to have chosen this holiday rather than the likely to be cancelled Menorca holiday; El Fondo. Time to spend ages looking at a dragonfly; best sighting of a swallowtail.
Jill (emailed later)	Jardin L'Albarda, two-tailed pasha caterpillars and seeing so many glossy ibises.
Chris	Two-tailed pasha caterpillars; slender-billed gulls, colourful waysides and roadsides with a mix of wild flowers.
Pau	Botanic reserve of <i>Silene diclinis</i> ; yesterday's valleys, a great place to recharge batteries.



Iberian water frog (El Fondo); giant orchid (Calpe); black-winged stilt (digiscoped at El Fondo).

WILDLIFE LISTS

BIRDS NP = Natural Park

Little grebe	Heard or seen in wetlands on the El Fondo day
Great crested grebe	El Fondo NP
Black-necked grebe	Good views of two at El Fondo NP
Gannet	Many at sea at Gandía
Cormorant	At all wetlands
Shag	13 on a rock off Penyal D'Ifac NP at Calpe
Little bittern	Pau saw one at El Fondo
Cattle egret	Scarce, with dry conditions: seen best at Clot de Galvany
Little egret	Often large numbers in wetlands
Great white egret	1 at salt pans of Santa Pola
Grey heron	Seen on four days at various wetlands
White stork	A single bird over El Fondo
Glossy ibis	A flock of c.150 over Pego Marsh; El Fondo.
Greater flamingo	Seen in good numbers at Calpe, Santa Pola and El Fondo
Shelduck	Seen on 3 days, often plentiful
Marbled duck	At least 20 at El Fondo
Teal	Valencia's albufera and at El Fondo
Garganey	A pair at El Fondo
Mallard	Seen on 5 days
Shoveler	Large flocks at El Fondo
Red-crested pochard	El Fondo, Clot de Galvany and Valencia's albufera
Pochard	El Fondo and Valencia's albufera, but fewer than red-crested pochard
Short-toed eagle	A pair on 15/3
Marsh harrier	At all main wetlands
Buzzard	Recorded on only 1 day
Bonelli's eagle	1 over the <i>Silene diclinis</i> reserve
Booted eagle	Seen on 3 days, a mix of light and dark phase birds
Kestrel	Seen almost daily
Red-legged partridge	Seen on 2 days
Moorhen	Seen on 3 days
Purple swamp-hen	Heard or seen on two days
Coot	Large numbers at El Fondo
Red-knobbed coot	6 close birds El Fondo NP
Avocet	Lots at El Fondo, also at Santa Pola and Valencia's albufera
Black-winged stilt	On 2 days, large numbers and close views at El Fondo
Little ringed plover	Valencia's albufera and El Fondo
Kentish plover	Santa Pola
Little stint	Santa Pola
Ruff	Valencia's albufera and Santa Pola
Snipe	Clot de Galvany
Black-tailed godwit	Santa Pola
Spotted redshank	Santa Pola, c.10
Redshank	Santa Pola
Black-tailed godwit	Santa Pola
Green sandpiper	2 at least flying from ditches at Pego Marsh
Wood sandpiper	1 at El Fondo
Common sandpiper	Singles at Calpe and El Fondo
Great skua	At sea at Gandía
Black-headed gull	Common at most wetlands
Lesser black-backed gull	2 offshore at Gandía
Yellow-legged gull	On territory at Penyal D'Ifac NP and numerous elsewhere
Mediterranean gull	Valencia's albufera and Gandía harbour
Audouin's gull	Many offshore at Gandía
Sandwich tern	Several in Gandía harbour
Feral pigeon	Recorded daily, often racing pigeons in Villalonga
Woodpigeon	Recorded on most days
Collared dove	Recorded on most days
Little owl	Brennan saw one while we were driving, not far from Villalonga
Kingfisher	From one minibus at Pego Marsh; perched at Clot de Galvany
Hoopoe	Two on the ground at Pego Marsh; heard near the hotel
Iberian green woodpecker	Head at Clot de Galvany
Crested lark	Surprisingly recorded only at El Fondo
Thekla lark	Two days, scrub near the <i>Silene diclinis</i> reserve and on the last day out
Barn swallow	Seen almost daily
Red-rumped swallow	Seen on 2 days
House martin	Seen most days, nesting in Villalonga
Water pipit	Many on fields near Valencia; fly past pipits on other days probably this species
Yellow wagtail	Iberian race at Santa Pola
White wagtail	Seen almost every day
Wren	Heard on two days
Robin	Seen on four days
Bluethroat	1 female in the hand at Pego Marsh
Black redstart	Seen almost daily

Stonechat	Seen on 2 days
Blackbird	Almost daily
Blue rock thrush	Bright males at Xap
Cetti's warbler	Heard on 3 days at various wetlands; in the hand at Pego Marsh
Zitting cisticola	Heard or seen on 2 days, including Pego
Moustached warbler	Heard and in the hand at Pego Marsh
Sardinian warbler	Seen or heard daily
Blackcap	Seen or heard almost daily
Chiffchaff	Seen or heard on 4 days
Firecrest	Jardin L'Albarda
Crested tit	2-3 seen on day 6
Great tit	Almost daily
Penduline tit	Good views at Clot de Galvany
Short-toed treecreeper	Seen or heard on 2 days
Iberian grey shrike	2, Sana Pola
Magpie	Sighting while travelling
Jackdaw	4 at Pego Marsh
Carrion crow	1 reported on the first day
Spotless starling	Daily
House sparrow	Daily
Chaffinch	Almost daily
Serin	Heard or seen daily
Greenfinch	Seen on almost every day
Siskin	Seen or heard on 2 days
Goldfinch	Seen daily
Linnet	Birds flying over on two days

MAMMALS			
Red squirrel <i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Wild boar <i>Sus scrofa</i> – rootings	Rabbit <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> droppings	
AMPHIBIANS, REPTILES AND FISH			
Iberian water frog <i>Pelophylax perezi</i>	Iberian wall lizard <i>Podarcis hispanica</i>		
Horseshoe whip-snake <i>Hierophis viridflavus</i>	Moorish gecko <i>Tarentola mauritanica</i>		
Red-eared terrapin <i>Trachemys scripta</i> (feral)	Mosquito fish <i>Gambusia</i> sp. (non-native)		
Flathead grey mullet <i>Mugil cephalus</i>	Dorado (gilt-head bream) <i>Sparus aurata</i>		
BUTTERFLIES			
Swallowtail	Large white	Small white	Provence (Moroccan) orange-tip
Brimstone	Cleopatra	Clouded yellow	Wood white
Two-tailed pasha (larvae)	Red admiral	Painted lady	Southern speckled wood
Wall brown	Large wall brown	Provence hairstreak	Green hairstreak
Long-tailed blue	Lang's short-tailed blue	Geranium bronze	African grass blue Common blue
OTHER INVERTEBRATES			
Blue-tailed damselfly <i>Ischnura elegans</i>	Willow emerald (western willow spreadwing) <i>Chalcolestes viridis</i> egg-laying scars		
Red-veined darter <i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	Blue emperor <i>Anax imperator</i>		
Lesser emperor <i>Anax parthenope</i>	Pond skater, probably <i>Aquarius najas</i>		
Egyptian grasshopper/locust <i>Anacridium aegyptium</i>	Saddle bushcricket <i>Pycnogaster</i> sp.		
Mediterranean field cricket <i>Gryllus bimaculatus</i>	Pollen chafer, <i>Oxythyrea funesta</i>		
Pine processionary moth <i>Thaumetopoea pityocampa</i> tents	Violet carpenter bee <i>Xylocopa violacea</i>		
Paper wasp <i>Polistes</i> sp.	Green huntsman spider <i>Micrommata virescens</i> female		



Left: Mediterranean field cricket *Gryllus bimaculatus*. Honeyguide leader Chris Gibson says: "The spread bits are the forewings, with the characteristic spot at the base, though I don't have any idea why they are splayed like that. Some trauma perhaps? The long stringy bits are the hind wings, longer than the body, and that which identifies it. Field cricket *Gryllus campestris* has no membranous hind wings."

Right: dragonfly exuvia (shed larval skin) at El Fondo, probably red-veined darter.

PLANTS		
Numbers on the right refer to Blamey & Grey-Wilson, <i>Mediterranean Wild Flowers</i> . Those without numbers are a mix of species widespread in Europe and local specialities. Some are planted, marked P. NiF = not in flower. Common northern European plants are not noted; planted trees are noted when of special interest.		
Pinaceae		
<i>Pinus halepensis</i>	Aleppo pine	1
<i>Pinus pinea</i> P	Stone / umbrella pine	3
<i>Pinus pinaster</i>	Maritime pine	5
<i>Araucaria araucana</i> P	Norfolk Island pine	
Cupressaceae		
<i>Juniperus oxycedrus</i>	Prickly juniper	15
Ephedraceae		
<i>Ephedra fragilis</i>	Joint-pine	20
Fagaceae		
<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes oak	24
<i>Quercus rotundifolia</i>	Holm oak	26
<i>Quercus suber</i> P	Cork oak	27
Moraceae		
<i>Ficus carica</i>	Fig	42
Urticaceae		
<i>Urtica membranacea</i>	Membranous nettle	49
<i>Urtica urens</i>	Annual nettle	
<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Pellitory-of-the-wall	50
Caryophyllaceae		
<i>Arenaria valentina</i>	a sandwort endemic to Valencia	
<i>Dianthus hispanicus</i> ssp <i>fontqueri</i>	aka <i>Dianthus saetabensis</i> ssp. <i>saetabensis</i>	
<i>Paronychia capita</i>	Paronychia	134
<i>Spergularia purpurea</i>	Purple sand-spurrey	148
<i>Silene alba</i>	White campion	158
<i>Silene diclinis</i>	(endemic to Spain)	
<i>Silene secundiflora</i>		
Papaveraceae		
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common poppy	283
Ranunculaceae		
<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.	Water crowfoot sp.	
<i>Ranunculus gramineus</i>	Grass-leaved buttercup	
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	Celery-leaved buttercup	251
Fumariaceae		
<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	White ramping-fumitory	303
Cruciferae		
<i>Alyssum alyssoides</i>	Small alison	
<i>Biscutella</i> sp (<i>didyma</i> ?)	Buckler mustard	c.341
<i>Diptotaxis eruroides</i>	White wall rocket	
<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	Sweet alison	338
<i>Cardaria draba</i>	Hoary cress	353
<i>Cakile maritima</i>	Sea rocket	363
Resedaceae		
<i>Reseda barrelieri</i>		
<i>Reseda alba</i>	White mignonette	375
<i>Reseda phyteuma</i>	Corn mignonette	378
Crassulaceae		
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting stonecrop	385
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i> NiF	Navelwort	396
<i>Bryophyllum (=Kalanchoe) daigremontianum</i> P	Devil's backbone, mother of thousands, alligator plant, Mexican hat plant	Native to Madagascar
Rosaceae		
<i>Prunus dulcis</i>	Almond	421
<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i> P	Loquat	
Fabaceae / Leguminosae		
<i>Acacia dealbata</i> P	'Mimosa' or Silver wattle	432
<i>Anthyllis cytisoides</i>	a shrub kidney-vetch	688
<i>Anthyllis tetraphylla</i>	Bladder vetch	688
<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i> P	Judas tree	430
<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i>	Carob	431
<i>Coronilla valentina</i> P	a crown/scorpion vetch	695

<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Broom	456
<i>Dorycnium hirsutum</i>	Dorycnium	676
<i>Dorycnium pentaphyllum</i>		677
<i>Lygos monosperma</i>	Retama	480
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish broom	481
<i>Medicago citrina</i> P	A bush medick, in Mediterranean garden	
<i>Medicago orbicularis</i>	Large disc medick	599
<i>Psoralea bituminosa</i>	Pitch trefoil	508
<i>Scorpiurus muricatus</i>	Scorpiurus, a scorpion vetch	684
<i>Ulex parviflorus</i>	Small flowered gorse	473
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common vetch	531
Oxalidaceae		
<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Bermuda buttercup	735
Geraniaceae		
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dovesfoot cranesbill	741
<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved cranesbill	743
<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little robin	748
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common storksbill	761
Zygophyllaceae		
<i>Fagona cretica</i>		766
Linaceae		
<i>Linum narborensis</i>	Beautiful flax	775
<i>Linum grandiflorum</i>	Crimson flax	
Euphorbiaceae		
<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun spurge	799
<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Large Mediterranean spurge	799
<i>Euphorbia serrata</i>	Saw-leaved spurge	817
<i>Euphorbia squamigera</i>		
<i>Mercurialis annua</i>	Annual mercury	820
<i>Mercurialis tomentosa</i> NiF		
<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Castor oil plant	824
Rutaceae		
<i>Ruta chalepensis</i>	Fringed rue	827
Meliaceae		
<i>Melia azedarach</i> P	Indian bead tree or Persian lilac	843
Polygalaceae		
<i>Polygala rupestris</i>	Rock milkwort	845
Anacardiaceae		
<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Mastic tree or lentisc	865
Rhamnaceae		
<i>Rhamnus alaternus</i>	Mediterranean buckthorn	885
Malvaceae		
<i>Lavatera cretica</i>	Cretan mallow	910
Thymelaeaceae		
<i>Daphne gnidium</i>	Daphne	936
<i>Thymelea hirsuta</i>		942
Cistaceae		
<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey-leaved cistus	961
<i>Cistus salvifolius</i> NiF	Sage-leaved cistus	965
<i>Cistus monspeliensis</i>	Narrow-leaved cistus	966
<i>Halimium halifolium</i>		975
<i>Helianthemum canum</i>	Hoary rockrose	1005
<i>Fumana ericoides</i>		
Cactaceae		
<i>Opuntia maxima</i> = <i>ficus-indica</i>	Prickly pear	1040
Araliaceae		
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	
Myrtaceae		
<i>Myrtus communis</i> P	Myrtle	1052
Punicaceae		
<i>Punica granatum</i> P	Pomegranate	1064
Umbelliferae/Apiaceae		
<i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant fennel	1141
Ericaceae		
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	Strawberry tree	1176
<i>Erica multiflora</i>		1186

Primulaceae		
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet pimpernel	1198
Oleaceae		
<i>Fraxinus ornus</i>	Manna ash	1245
<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>	Phillyrea, false olive or mock privet	1246
<i>Olea europaea</i> P	Olive	1248
Apocynaceae		
<i>Araujia sericifera</i> F	Moth plant or cruel vine (scrambling over fences)	Native to South America
Rubiaceae		
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild madder	1305
<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>	Field madder	
Convolvulaceae		
<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	Dodder	1311
<i>Ipomoea purpurea</i>	Morning glory	1319
<i>Convolvulus altheiodes</i>	Mallow-leaved bindweed	1331
Boraginaceae		
<i>Cerintho major</i>	Honeywort	1367
<i>Alkanna lehmanii</i>	Dyer's alkanet	1373
<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	Purple viper's bugloss	1383
<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage	1395
<i>Lithodora fruticosa</i>	Shrubby gromwell	1355
<i>Cynoglossum creticum</i>	Blue houndstongue	1402
<i>Cynoglossum cherifolium</i>	a houndstongue	1404
Verbenaceae		
<i>Lantana camara</i>	Lantana	1417
Labiatae		
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i> NiF	White horehound	1445
<i>Phlomis purpurea</i>		1465
<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit deadnettle	1478
<i>Mentha rotundifolia</i>	Apple mint	1523
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary	1526
<i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	French lavender	1528
<i>Lavandula dentata</i>	Toothed lavender	1530
<i>Lavandula multifida</i>	Cut-leaved lavender	1531
<i>Salvia verbeneca</i>	Wild clary	1545
<i>Stachys ocymastrum</i>		
<i>Satureja obovata</i> NiF	Savory	
<i>Thymus piperella</i> NiF	<i>Pebrella</i>	
<i>Sideritis romana</i>		
<i>Teucrium capitatum</i>		
<i>Teucrium fruticans</i>	Tree germander, probably planted in most cases	1429
<i>Teucrium pseudo-chamaepestis</i>		
Solanaceae		
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Black nightshade	1563
<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	Shrub tobacco	1582
Scrophulariaceae/Antirrhinaceae		
<i>Verbascum sinuatum</i> NiF		1601
<i>Misopates orontium</i>	Lesser snapdragon / weasel's snout	1611
<i>Antirrhinum controversum</i>		
<i>Linaria oblongifolia</i> subsp. <i>aragonensis</i>		
Orobanchaceae		
<i>Orobanche lastiquama</i>	parasitic on rosemary	
Globulariaceae		
<i>Globularia alypum</i>	Shrubby globularia	1677
Plantaginaceae		
<i>Plantago lagopus</i>		1702
Caprifoliaceae		
<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Laurestinus	1711
Valerianaceae/ Dipsacaceae		
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red valerian	1723
<i>Scabiosa atropurpurea</i>	Mournful widow	1749
Compositae / Asteracea		
<i>Anthemis arvensis</i>	Corn mayweed	1858
<i>Asteriscus maritimus</i>		1848

<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Field marigold	1908
<i>Chrysanthemum coronarium</i>	Crown daisy	1895
<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Chicory	2023
<i>Dittricia (Inula) viscosa</i>	Stink aster	1842
<i>Galactites tomentosa</i>	Galactites	1971
<i>Helichrysum stoechas</i>	Curry plant	1824
<i>Pallenis spinosa</i>		1847
<i>Phagnalon saxatile</i>		1833
<i>Silybum marianum</i> NiF	Milk thistle	1982
<i>Sonchus tenerrimus</i>	a sow-thistle	2073
<i>Tolpis barbata</i>	Tolpis	2030
Liliaceae		
<i>Aphyllanthes ramosus</i>		
<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>	Hollow-leaved asphodel	2087
<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>	Asphodel	2089
<i>Urginea maritima</i>	Sea squill, leaves/bulbs	2163
<i>Smilax aspera</i>	berries	2222
<i>Muscari neglectum</i>	Grape hyacinth	2206
<i>Asparagus horridus</i>		
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's broom, berries	2219
<i>Allium roseum</i>	Rosy garlic	2224
Amaryllidaceae		
<i>Pancratium maritimum</i> NiF	Sea daffodil	2270
Iridaceae		
<i>Gynandris sisyrrinchium</i>	Barbary nut iris	2305
<i>Gladiolus italicus</i>	Field gladiolus	2307
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow flag	2290
<i>Arisarum vulgare</i>	Friar's cowl	2377
Palmae		
<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>	Dwarf fan palm	2357
Gramineae/Poaceae		
<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant reed	2494
<i>Avena</i> sp.	Wild oats	
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Reed	
Potamogetonaceae/Haloragaceae		
<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>	Parrot's feather (non-native)	
FERNS PTERIDOPHYTA		
<i>Adiantum capitis-veneris</i>	Maidenhair fern	2522
ORCHIDS		
<i>Orchis conica</i>		
<i>Orchis italica</i>	Italian man orchid	2409
<i>Orchis (mascula) olbiensis</i>		
<i>Ophrys dianica</i> (= <i>O. lucentina</i>)		
<i>Ophrys speculum</i>	Mirror orchid	2422
<i>Ophrys fusca</i>	Sombre bee orchid	2424
<i>Ophrys (fusca) dyris</i>		
<i>Ophrys tenthredinifera</i>	Sawfly orchid	2442
<i>Himantoglossum</i> (or <i>Barlia</i>) <i>robertianum</i>	Giant orchid	2446



Two rather local wild flowers with changing names, and neither species is in field guides. Left is probably *Dianthus hispanicus* ssp. *fontqueri*: this seems to match pictures with this label on the internet. A botanist friend of Pau says it's variable and is now *Dianthus saetabensis* ssp. *saetabensis*. Right: like a sweet pea, *Lathyrus pulcher*, formerly *L. tremolsianus*.