



Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Algarve and Alentejo

31 October – 7 November 2025

Participants

Jill Jordan
Denise Back
Ann Greenizan
Sue and Peter Burge
Tim and Phylida Wright

Philip and Jackie Jenkins
Alison Ward
John and Jan Croft
Dawn Stevens
Tricia Williams

Leaders

Hugo Sampaio from SPEA, Chris Durdin.
Holiday report and lists by Chris Durdin.

We stayed in the Alte Hotel www.altehotel.com



The group at Budens Marsh. Below: mural at Sagres.

Photos by Chris Durdin or as attributed.
Cover: long-eared owl roosting at Castro Verde (JC).



As for all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of the holiday was put towards a conservation project, in Portugal nominated by SPEA / Birdlife Portugal. This year we supported SPEA's current campaign [to create a nationwide network of bird sanctuaries](#) such as the one we visited on our arrival day.

The donation to SPEA from the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust was £5920, the biggest donation we have made as a one-off. This is made up of each group member's conservation contribution supplemented by Gift Aid, an additional donation and a legacy of £5,000 left to the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust by the late John Durdin. Up to the end of 2025, the total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 was £165,317. The total donated to SPEA since 2005 now totals £113,088.

Introduction

Honeyguide's sixth trip in autumn combining the Algarve and part of Alentejo enjoyed lots of warm and sunny weather and some fine wildlife. Previous holidays used two centres, Alte in eastern Algarve followed by two nights in Vila do Bispo in the west, but this year we chose to stay all week at Atle Hotel, which worked well.

Our partnership with SPEA (BirdLife Portugal) continues, this year with a particularly large donation of £5920 (in addition to a guiding fee) as detailed on page 2 of this report. The holiday highlights (page 10) make good reading, with two species proving especially popular: roosting long-eared owls at close quarters in Castro Verde, and chameleons, plural – we were lucky to find two this year.

As ever, a key element of a good holiday is the excellent company of Honeyguiders, helped by everyone knowing some of the ground before the holiday.

Chris Durdin

DAILY DIARY

Friday 31 October – to the Algarve

With four different flights, from Stansted, Gatwick, Leeds-Bradford and Bristol, plus Jackie and Philip who'd come from France and Hugo from Portugal, the group's rendezvous became the Paul café in Faro airport. In the meantime, I had collected the second minibuss key, so once we were all at Faro Airport we took the pedestrian underpass to the Avis/Budget car park, where Hugo also brought his minibus. We had a smooth three-quarters of an hour drive to Alte, arriving at 1:45. There we quickly found our rooms with Josette's help, before gathering for a generous 'light lunch' of soup, chicken & chips (or vegan alternative) and fruit salad.

Our afternoon excursion was to a new place for all of us, including Hugo. We travelled about 20 minutes from the hotel, though still very much in the limestone *Barrocal* area, passing azure-winged magpies (now often called Iberian magpie, to distinguish it from a very similar species in the Far East) as we drove, to visit a rural property in SPEA's very new network of wildlife havens, set up to protect a range of sites and their wildlife throughout Portugal. There we met owners Joaquim and Brigitte, who proudly showed us wildlife information sheets prepared by another NGO and a selection of Joaquim's excellent bird photos, some from here, some from other places in Algarve. At the end of a dry summer and autumn we could mostly see tree and shrub species, including olive, carob, grey-leaved cistus, myrtle, fig and pomegranate, plus some planted trees of interest around the property such as Peruvian pepper-tree, loquat and mulberry. We could hear distant crested tits in some pines, then some long-tailed tits, plus bursts of song from robin and blackcap. Joaquim led us up a steep slope through low scrub, and those who went up the last section peered into a 'mine', a water supply, where there was a single medium-sized bat. At the bottom of the slope a Moorish gecko was hiding within a dry, concrete tank, then another in an outbuilding. Joaquim then showed us a nest of a red-rumped swallow under an overhang on the outside of the house. Remarkably, the birds had built this in late summer 2024 then returned to breed in it in 2025. By the drive into the property, we then overlooked a large pond, with many lily leaves, by which Ann managed to pick out a frog by the water's edge. Some saw groups of cattle egrets flying over.

Skies were grey, it became surprisingly gloomy, and it was time to return to the hotel. There was time to unpack properly before we gathered for a pre-dinner drink then dinner, with omelette the main dish tonight.



Pond at the private 'bird haven'; red-rumped swallow nest at the property.

Saturday 1 November – Benémola Spring

Before breakfast, a few of us looked at the frogs in the pond in the garden and saw a few local birds like blackcap and stonechat. Group members reported hearing little and tawny owl during the night. We had breakfast at 08:00 and left shortly after 09:00.

Our morning walk was spent at Benémola Spring. From the car park there was a calling Iberian green woodpecker and a great spotted woodpecker in a dead tree. We started by looking at trees and shrubs, such as strawberry tree with both flowers and fruit, though no sign of a two-tailed pasha egg or larva on this, its larval food plant. As well as abundant lentisc (gum mastic) there were several of the closely related turpentine tree. Some of these had impressive galls: later research showed that these are created by an aphid. Smilax – both hanging clusters of berries and in flower – was common, there were rustyback ferns in walls and small white flowers on some plants of *Daphne gnidium*. A group of azure-winged magpies moved around the scrub in the middle distance. Birds were otherwise quiet: singing wintering blackcaps and robins, but little else. Sue was alert to a single, tiny white flower growing from a rocky area: an autumn snowflake. Hugo found us a blue rock thrush perching on a house's chimney. We puzzled about a lone nest box: the hole was too small for an owl, too big for tits, then we put that discussion to one side when Hugo pointed out the Moorish gecko under the box's overhang.



Smilax flowers and berries; chief ringer Antonio with a blackcap ready for release.

Just after we took a left turn towards the spring there was the persistent but gentle sound of a calling bullfinch, then a wave from a familiar face – Antonio, the bird ringer that the group two years ago had met who, with his co-ringer Sophia, was working at what in the UK we'd call a 'constant effort site'. Yes, they really are here every Saturday morning, they explained, and they were only too pleased to spend time with us and to show us the latest birds caught in their mist-net for ringing. The bullfinch wasn't real, by the way: that was a recording of a species they hadn't found today. Their total this morning was 50: the species they mentioned were greenfinch, chaffinch, long-tailed tit (some fine photos of this) plus, especially, the three we saw in the hand: blackcap, chiffchaff and robin. Under careful supervision, some group members were able to either ring or release these. A blue-winged grasshopper gave entertainment as it showed flashes of colour when it jumped.

In the meantime, Dawn and Peter had found and photographed a damselfly, namely a willow emerald (western willow spreadwing). We walked the very short distance to the 'font' and here found willow emerald egg-laying scars on oleander over the water, plus some fine water skaters, probable otter spraint and Mediterranean selaginella (clubmoss). Nearby we looked at King Alfred's cakes fungi on what was probably dead olive wood – in the UK, ash is its most frequent choice of dead timber.

It was time to return to the minibuses and head off to find some coffee and loos. This we did at an unusual location for us: a newish golfing complex called Ombria. Hugo spoke to the man at the entrance who waved us through, past vivid green fairways to a car park near a very smart and welcoming café called Café Central. The coffee was excellent, if expensive by Portuguese standards, and the loos sumptuous. However, all this was somewhat trumped by the bird life. Constantly flying around the buildings were two male blue rock thrushes, evidently in some kind of territorial dispute. There were also crag martins, topped by excellent views of two Bonelli's eagles, one of which was close enough to show not only its white underside but also the white patch on its back. The occasion was somewhat surreal as all this was with a background noise of piped musak.

We drove back to Alte to have our packed lunch on picnic benches by the river, accompanied by a large flock of Muscovy ducks. The plan for an afternoon excursion was a walk at Rocha de Pena, but as we arrived light drizzle turned to rain that was evidently set in, so we soon opted for an early return to Alte Hotel. We caught up with checklists, some of us heard the little owl outside the hotel and we had an earlier (7pm) dinner.

Sunday 2 November – Castro Marim

The breakfast room this morning was shared with a large group from Korea. After yesterday's rain, there was welcome sunshine as we sped eastwards along the motorway, with a stop for loo at some services. As soon as we were out of the minibuses at Castro Marim there was a crested lark and stonechats on view. Most of the other small birds this morning were zitting cisticolas or chiffchaffs. It was obvious that the land to our right under the scattered carob trees had been recently ploughed, which may account for the lack of Bermuda buttercups here and – especially – the absence of the mandrakes seen by the group two years ago. The dryness of the land meant there were almost no flowers and few invertebrates, though several clouded yellows were on the wing, as were many red-veined darters and a couple of swallowtails. On the water channel to our left a small flock of coots also had two great crested grebes with them, and further on, near to a hide on stilts, there were several little grebes. A scan revealed five rather grey immature flamingos and a spoonbill, plus great and little egrets and a grey heron. In the second section there were many gulls, including the occasional lesser black-back with the usual yellow-legged gulls. A bunch of smaller gulls were mostly black-headed and with effort it was possible to see a couple of Sandwich terns and a slender-billed gull, but they were tricky. It was a little easier to make out the odd pale-winged Mediterranean gull when they flew overhead. The area was devoid of waders today, surprising at high tide, so after watching a short-toed eagle above us we retraced our steps to the minibuses.

We had our stop for coffee (and various other drinks) at a nearby café in Castro Marim. There was a barn swallow flying around near the car park as we arrived, and as we left some small and puzzling butterflies on some ornamental flowers that later research pinned down as African grass blues.



African grass blue; autumn daffodil *Narcissus serotinus*; autumn squill *Scilla autumnalis*.

From here we drove to the nature reserve centre, closed today, and we spent the afternoon in this area. The road took us past small lagoons by the road where there were black-winged stilts and large numbers of red-veined darters. It was time for picnics, and tables with shade near the centre were welcome. Three Caspian terns flew over. Near here on what seemed like an unpromising, dry patch of land we found three autumn flowering specialities: dozens of autumn squills, scores of *Narcissus serotinus* in flower plus hundreds more in bud or just emerging, and just a couple of merenderas.

Happily, the birdwatching here was much better than this morning. Ten Caspian terns perched on bunds and a flock of about 80 avocets flew around and settled on a lagoon. There was a cluster of about 15 spoonbills in view, though actually they numbered about 25 when seen from a better vantage point later, taking into account those that flew off. From that higher spot we could look down a water channel towards the main river and Spain on the other side, and the estuarine mud here supported several redshanks, greenshank, ringed plovers and a grey plover. As we approached the mound with the closed visitor centre, two crested larks in flight were followed by a hoopoe, which some of the group then saw feeding among bushes and, best of all, Sue watched it dustbathing. We looked down at a lagoon with three species of ducks, namely shoveler, gadwall and mallard, and a single black-tailed godwit that was conspicuously colour-ringed. Then a highlight for many was an invertebrate found by Ann: a cone-headed grasshopper,

much the same colour as dry grass. It was time to head back, pausing briefly for an Iberian hare and some red-legged partridges before our journey towards setting sun as we headed west towards Alte.



View over the saltmarsh at Castro Marim, looking towards Spain beyond the river Guadiana.

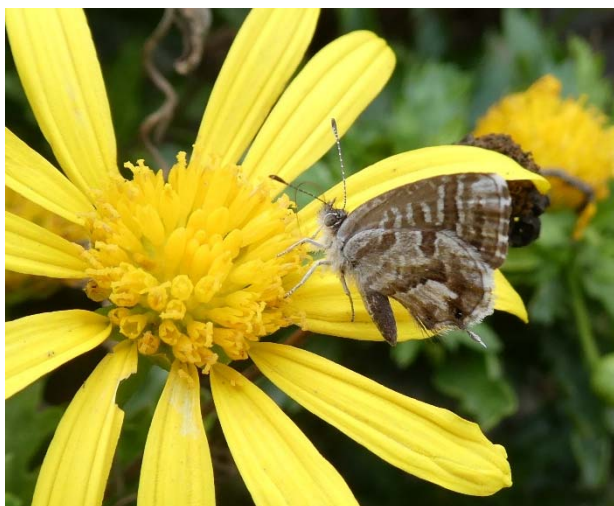
Monday 3 November – Castro Verde

Another warm, clear day, which started with a brief stop for fuel for Hugo's minibus (that had come all the way from Lisbon) before heading north up the motorway to Castro Verde. The supermarket in the centre of Castro Verde was ideal for loos and buying port. A very short distance away in a suburban street lined with Peruvian pepper-trees was a real treat: three roosting long-eared owls. Another group of naturalists was already there watching one owl, and droppings on the pavement led us to the others. The owls peered down at us with a look of disdain and a sense of being unconcerned by their audience.

The first stops to scan over the plains were unproductive, and we moved to our first longer stop with a short stroll. There was a flock of skylarks and, in the sky, an immature Spanish imperial eagle. A water scorpion in a muddy puddle was a surprise. Here as everywhere there were red kites moving around.

At the second stop with a stroll, we looked at a flock of about 60 lapwings in a field and 20 or more griffon vultures flew over. There was also the second of at least three Iberian grey shrikes today though all were a bit distant and heat haze prevented good views.

The village of São Marcos da Ataboeira had all the vital ingredients for a lunchtime stop: loos, picnic benches and a café. Wildlife finds included crag martins, a geranium bronze butterfly and a paper wasp nest.



Geranium bronze (AG); southern emerald (aka migrant spreadwing, digiscoped).

We drove – pausing to admire a 'sun dog' in the sky – to the hilltop church of Senhora de Aracelis, which at 276 metres above sea level provides panoramic views across the plains. It was peaceful and warm, though quiet for wildlife: a singing robin and some too distant ravens was about it. Moving on from there, we had a more productive roadside stop with a little owl perching on a pile of stones and a hovering black-winged kite in the distance, sometimes in the same field of view as a male marsh harrier.

By now we had lovely late afternoon light and the sense that now was a good time for wildlife became real when six great bustards flew across the road, a little later returning. While trying to get telescopes on

bustards in a field a competing wildlife sighting was underway when Denise drew Ann's attention to a damselfly. Ann was alert to bi-coloured wingmark on this spreadwing damselfly, meaning an ID of southern damselfly (aka migrant spreadwing). Happily, it moved to attach itself to a wire fence, allowing easy telescope views for everyone.

Our final stop of the day was at a dam and small freshwater lake. Here there were two kingfishers, lots of cattle egrets with cattle, a common sandpiper and probably much more, only we were looking into the setting sun and it was time to head back to Alte.

Tuesday 4 November – Quinto do Lago

A more local day and we went back to a 09:00 departure, and we arrived at Quinto do Lago's car park, after driving through upmarket coastal development close to Faro, by 10:00. We spent time looking at estuary birds, a close white stork and waders especially, from our arrival point. Those waders were a curlew, whimbrels, grey plovers, redshanks, sanderlings, dunlins, ringed plovers and a single bar-tailed godwit, all helpfully close and cooperative. Further over there was a group of spoonbills with little egrets, a white stork and some partly hidden glossy ibises. In the distance an osprey settled on the mud beyond a large group of mixed gulls. Looking much closer on the mud there was an army of fiddler crabs. We walked across the bridge, which was busy with others out enjoying the good weather, seeing many more waders, including especially good views of a whimbrel. Out at sea a gannet was fishing and we noted a few plants, sea daffodil especially. A large psammodromus ran across the sand. The loos at the café were too good to miss, of course.



The boardwalk over the estuary at Quinto do Lago; a confiding whimbrel (AG).

We took the boardwalk that runs with a golf course on your left and the estuary on your right. We heard crested tit, saw a couple of swallowtails and there was a lot of limoniastrum in flower, like a bushy sea lavender. Just after a mound of Hottentot fig, over which two clouded yellows flew, we arrived at our destination, a freshwater lake. Here there were many terrapins of two species – the native Spanish (stripe-necked) terrapins outnumbering the alien red-eared slider – alongside many little egrets. Little grebes were numerous and there were many ducks, namely wigeons, gadwalls, mallards, shovelers and two male pochards. A purple swamp-hen was of more interest to the group, in clear view by the lake's edge. Kingfishers today were flying rather than perched, including two that dashed through the umbrella pines on the other side of the path. We stopped here to eat picnics.



Purple swamphen (AG); azure-winged magpies (AG).

After lunch we went into the scrub behind the bigger pines, a mix of mostly lentisc and small, self-seeded umbrella pines. The hunt was on, with 15 pairs of eyes for a chameleon. We found a crimson speckled moth, a darkling beetle and a red-and-black ground bug, and just as it seemed we were going to fail to find a chameleon, one was there on the top of a very low lentisc bush in the sun. Cue photos before it retreated to the bottom of bush. We retraced our steps along the boardwalk, the estuary now full of water at high tide. Back in the car park there were four azure-winged magpies on and around a black Audi, our best views yet.

We went back to Alte Hotel for a break, after which many of us went to Rocha da Pena for a late afternoon walk, postponed from a few days when it was raining. The best find – by an ecstatic Ann, naturally – was a swallowtail caterpillar. Dusk was approaching and we returned to the hotel.



Swallowtail caterpillar on fennel at Rocha da Pena (AG).

Wednesday 5 November – Salgados Lagoons and Foz do Armargem-Trafal

Rain was forecast for the whole morning, so we opted for an eight o'clock breakfast and a departure at 10:00. Squalls of rain at breakfast time eased and it was starting to clear up as we left, heading south-west to Pêra and Salgados Lagoons, a journey of less than an hour. On the way we paused briefly to admire the queue of cars waiting to bring olives to a cooperative processing plant.

It remained dry at Salgados, until a shower had us hurrying towards the minibuses at lunchtime. The lagoon was full of water today, with little 'edge'. A marsh harrier hunted over the large area of retama scrub that dominated this side of the lagoon. On the water there were many ducks, including several pintails with the gadwalls, pochards and many coots. In among the gulls were several Mediterranean gulls. The lack of 'edge' meant no waders, though there were long-legged birds in the shape of white storks, grey heron, little egrets, a spoonbill and two very grey juvenile flamingos, plus small flocks of glossy ibises flying around. Waxbills flew around, though too active for good views; open areas had a crested lark or two, there were stonechats, chiffchaffs and greenfinches. Yesterday we saw a single crimson speckled moth, today there were several, plus three of the darkling beetles we had also seen yesterday. We had good views of a painted lady butterfly that settled on the ground. An Iberian bluetail was a new species of odonata, tiny yet bright on some rushes and very cooperative. Two stone wells both had Iberian water frogs, the latter frog showing a distinct stripe on its back as it floated on a very old plastic bottle. A remarkably tame zitting cisticola was feeding on and near the ground as we returned towards the minibuses.



Iberian water frog on a plastic bottle (AG); Iberian bluetail, both at Salgados.

The brief lunchtime shower came to nothing, though we had picnics either in or sitting on the tailgate of the minibuses. From here we crossed the dunes on a very smart boardwalk to reach the Atlantic, where (as yesterday) there was a gannet out at sea. The dunes had a similar range of dried vegetation as at Quinto do Lago, including many sea daffodils setting seed. Then Hugo found our second chameleon of the holiday, in the big retama bush at the start of the boardwalk, which many passers-by also stopped to appreciate. We then found a very friendly bar for drinks and loos.



Chameleon in a retama bush (PB).

Our afternoon excursion was to a wetland new to Honeyguide, the local natural reserve of Foz do Armargem-Trafal, some way east of Salgados. Like Salgados this is a river blocked by coastal dunes, only here the water had been let out so it was more like a river through low saltmarsh. It was a pleasant walk with the wetland on our right and open umbrella pine woodland to our left. Almost immediately we found many flowers of *Crocus serotinus*, so much so that care was needed about where to stand. There were also birthwort

leaves. Hugo collected a branch with a spike of brown lumps, and he explained that *Acacia longifolia* (golden wattle is one of several English names) was a pest which now had an imported Australian gall wasp controlling it, those lumps being the galls that help to inhibit the acacia's spread. We stopped for fuel just outside Alte on the journey home.

After dinner – a very good seafood risotto – Josette from Hotel Alte came in with waiter / barman João to say that neither of them would be at the hotel tomorrow, to thank us for coming and to present us all with a glass of almond liqueur.

Thursday 6 November – Sagres

We journeyed south-west today. Our first stop in the Sagres area was at a Lidl, for loos, near which there were dozens of crag martins over a low hill. The last part of the journey was along a dirt road through the protected west coast, through fields that were bare apart from sheets of Hottentot fig. There were large numbers of small birds, skylarks especially, some red-legged partridges and lapwings, though no sightings of any of more sought after birds, such as choughs. This brought us to a viewpoint over the windy Atlantic, where hundreds of gannets were flying past, all heading south. Two ravens flew past.



A yellow-legged gull takes a drink from a puddle; coast at Sagres (AG).



Our next stop was at the main Sagres viewpoint, where a steady stream of other tourists were taking in the scenery and ocean air. There were more gannets, some very tame yellow-legged gulls and an opportunity for 'retail therapy' – buying souvenirs such as tiled coasters, fridge magnets and a cosy-looking woollen jumper for Philip. Nearby we stopped at some high-class loos, a euro per visit. Adjacent to the facilities was some interesting coastal vegetation including our first apple-of-Sodom, sweet alison (always nice to see when there's an Alison in the group) and a Thekla lark.

We moved on to our main stop, the regular raptor viewpoint, where bird of prey passage is monitored to alert the management of the nearby windfarm if there is a concentration of birds on the move. No risk of that today: apparently there was a large flow of griffon vultures two days ago, but nothing today. We ate our sandwiches here and searched the scores of apple-of-Sodom bushes for moth caterpillars, as observed by the group two years ago, but no luck. However, there was our only Egyptian grasshopper of the week here. We overlooked the small pond and bird feeding station to admire the many plump Iberian water frogs. The commonest bird, as in so many places, was chiffchaff.

We had coffee in Sagres, near bird murals that remained on show from SPEA bird festival in a previous year. John found a wasp spider near the car park; Ann photographed a white-banded mining bee.

Our afternoon walk was at Budens Marsh. Looking over the river, there were hunting blue emperor dragonflies, and it was a good location for a group photo. Nearby, Hugo found a swallowtail caterpillar and, a little later, he appeared (after some rock-turning) with a Scolopendra centipede in the bug box. Our walk took us alongside the river valley, today flooded in places, those floods with white wagtails, chiffchaffs and grey wagtails. There were cattle egrets with some cattle. One area had many flowers of *Crocus serotinus*. As we returned to the minibuses, we paused under a heavy-laden wild olive, a fine food source for wintering blackcaps and thrushes, then went to look for a group of calling waxbills. By the bridge were flowers of the scabious mournful widow, the ID confirmed by Sue and her PictureThis app as for many plants this week.

Friday 7 November – home

Tim and Phylida left early in a taxi for their flight to Gatwick, and the rest of us had breakfast shortly after 07:00 and left at 08:00. It was a smooth journey to the airport, dropping everyone outside the terminal. I went to return the minibus to Budget/Avis and Hugo took Philip and Jackie to the bus station to speed their journey to Spain. The wait in the airport seemed to pass quickly and soon we were all heading home.



Stonechat, white storks (JC).

Holiday highlights

Denise	Owls: long-eared and vocal little & tawny owls at Alte Hotel.
Tricia	Long-eared owls, Bonelli's eagles, chameleons.
Phylida	Egg scars of willow emerald damselflies; <i>Narcissus serotinus</i> ; chameleon (but not long-eared owl as she'd seen one in her Orkney garden!).
Peter	Very close whimbrel; Iberian bluetail.
Sue	<i>Acis autumnale</i> ; long-eared owls, chameleon.
Alison	Long-eared owls; listening to little owls; chameleons; glossy ibises.
Jill	Long-eared owls; purple swamp-hen; chameleons.
Tim	Griffon vultures; great bustards; long-eared owls.
Jackie	Chameleons.
Philip	Chameleons; fiddler crabs; Egyptian locust.
John	Chris's relief at finding the chameleon; Hugo's art of capturing the chameleon.
Jan	Long-eared owls; waxbills; gannets.
Dawn	Spanish imperial eagle; chameleons; autumn narcissus.
Ann	Reptiles and amphibians; long-eared owls; swallowtail butterflies and larvae; nice group and an enjoyable week; hotel's vegan food.
Hugo	2 Bonelli's eagles, including very good views (with music playing behind us); long-eared owls, chameleons.
Chris	Long-eared owls, chameleons; full set of autumn flowers.

WILDLIFE LISTS

BIRDS

Little grebe	Good numbers at Castro Marim, Quinto do Lago and Salgados.
Great crested grebe	Four at Castro Marim.
Gannet	Hundreds passing at sea at Cape St Vincent, also offshore on other days.
Cormorant	Lots of Castro Marim and at Quinto do Lago, also at Salgados.
Cattle egret	Seen on three days, often with livestock.
Little egret	Seen on five days.
Great egret	Two at Castro Marim.
Grey heron	Recorded on six days including on the pond at Alte Hotel, after which there were no goldfish or frogs.
Glossy ibis	Three at Quinto do Lago, small flocks (20+) at Salgados.
White stork	Seen on three days in small numbers, including intertidal areas and standing on a nest.
Spoonbill	Peak count was 25 at Castro Marim. Also at Quinto do Lago and Salgados.
Greater flamingo	C.20 at Castro Marim, also 2, at Salgados, 1 at Foz do Armargem-Trafal.
<i>Muscovy duck</i>	C.20 at Alte as we ate picnics. Noted as domestic birds can become a feral population.
Wigeon	Quinto do Lago.
Gadwall	Three freshwater wetlands.
Mallard	Four freshwater wetlands.
Pintail	Small group at Salgados Lagoons.
Shoveler	C.50 at Castro Marim, also at Quinto do Lago.
Teal	10 flew past at Castro Marim.
Pochard	2 males at Quinto do Lago, several at Salgados
Black-winged kite	Single at Castro Verde
Red kite	Numerous at Castro Verde.
Griffon vulture	Castro Verde.
Osprey	1 at Castro Marim.
Buzzard	Recorded on three days.
Short-toed eagle	1 at Castro Marim.
Marsh harrier	Record on three days, two at wetlands, also Castro Verde.
Hen harrier	Male at Castro Verde.
Booted eagle	Single dark phase birds on days 1 and 3.
Bonelli's eagle	Two over the golf resort Ombria on 1 November.
Spanish imperial eagle	One at Castro Verde.
Common kestrel	Recorded on 5 days.
Merlin	One hunting birds dashed through the open land at Sagres.
Red-legged partridge	Three days, including at Castro Verde and the west coast.
Moorhen	Quinto do Lago.
Purple swamp-hen	Just one at Quinto do Lago.
Coot	Castro Marim, Quinto do Lago and Salgados.
Great bustard	8 + 2 + 2 at Castro Verde.
Black-winged stilt	10 at Castro Marim.
Avocet	60 at Castro Marim.
Ringed plover	Castro Marim and Quinto do Lago.
Grey plover	Castro Marim & many at Quinto do Lago.
Lapwing	Seen on four days; a flock of 62 at Castro Verde.
Turnstone	Quinto do Lago.
Sanderling	Quinto do Lago.
Dunlin	Quinto do Lago.
Snipe	1, Salgados Lagoons.
Black-tailed godwit	1, Castro Marim.
Bar-tailed godwit	1, Quinto do Lago.
Whimbrel	Heard at Castro Marim, scattered over the mudflats at Quinto do Lago.
Curlew	Quinto do Lago
Redshank	Castro Marim and Quinto do Lago.
Greenshank	5, Castro Marim; 1, Quinto do Lago.
Green sandpiper	1, Castro Marim.
Common sandpiper	Singles on 4 days.
Mediterranean gull	Castro Marim and Salgados.
Black-headed gull	Widespread & common at coastal sites.
Slender-billed gull	At Castro Marim, but hidden in a gull flock.
Audouin's gull	A few at Quinto do Lago, rather hidden in a gull flock.
Yellow-legged gull	Widespread & common.
Lesser black-backed gull	Three coastal days.
Sandwich tern	A few at Castro Marim.
Caspian tern	At least 10 at Castro Marim.
Feral pigeon	Widespread & common, often in big flocks.
Woodpigeon	Seen on four days.
Collared dove	Widespread.
Little owl	One or two calling most evenings at Alte Hotel.
Tawny owl	Heard two nights by group members at Alte Hotel.

Long-eared owl	A daytime roost of three birds in the town of Castro Verde.
Kingfisher	2, Quinto do Lago, 2 by the dam in Castro Verde.
Hoopoe	Castro Marim only.
Great spotted woodpecker	Benémola Spring.
Iberian green woodpecker	Heard at Benémola Spring.
Calandra lark	Castro Verde, though not showing well.
Crested lark	Seen on three days.
Thekla lark	Common at Castro Verde & Sagres.
Skylark	Winter flocks at Castro Verde and Sagres.
Woodlark	Singing at Alte Hotel on 6/11.
Crag martin	Six days, often in medium-sized groups.
Barn swallow	One at Castro Marim.
Meadow pipit	Recorded on four days.
Grey wagtail	Budens Marsh, 6/11
White wagtail	Seen on four days in a range of habitats.
Robin	Heard or seen on six days.
Black redstart	Seen on six days, including at Alte Hotel.
Stonechat	Widespread and reasonably common.
Northern wheatear	Castro Marim
Blue rock thrush	On 1/11, a single male, then 2 males flying around at golf resort Ombria.
Blackbird	Recorded daily.
Cetti's warbler	Heard at Castro Verde and Salgados.
Zitting cisticola (Fan-tailed warbler)	Seen on three days, especially good views at Salgados.
Sardinian warbler	Widespread & common.
Blackcap	Seen or heard every day.
Chiffchaff	Widespread & common.
Blue tit	Recorded on two days.
Great tit	Recorded on three days.
Crested tit	Heard at SPEA 'haven', Benémola Spring and Quinto do Lago.
Long-tailed tit	At SPEA 'haven'.
Iberian grey shrike	1, Castro Marim; 3, Castro Verde.
Jay	1/11 only.
Magpie	Widespread and common.
Azure-winged magpie	Widespread and common, often small flocks in flight. Seen well at Quinto do Lago.
Carrion crow	Castro Verde.
Raven	Castro Verde and Sagres.
Spotless starling	Widespread & common.
House sparrow	Widespread & common.
Common waxbill	Mobile groups at Salgados, Foz do Armargem-Trafal (5/11) and Budens (6/11)
Serin	reported on 4/11.
Greenfinch	Recorded on three days, small numbers.
Goldfinch	Widespread & common, seen on five days.
Linnet	Recorded on four days; flocks in some areas.
Corn bunting	Three days, including Castro Verde.

Mammals

Bat (species unknown)
Iberian hare
Brown rat
Wild boar (rootings)

Fish Grey mullet

Reptiles

Spanish (stripe-necked) terrapin
Red-eared slider (escape)
Moorish gecko

Large psammodromus

Iberian wall lizard
European chameleon
Amphibian
Iberian water frog



Clouded yellow (AG); wasp spider *Argiope bruennichi* (JC); darkling beetle; Ground bug *Spilostethus pandurus*

Butterflies

Swallowtail (and caterpillar)
Large white
Clouded yellow
Painted lady
African grass blue

Geranium bronze

Moths Crimson speckled
Pyrallid (mint) moth *Pyrausta purpuralis*
Odonata
Western willow spreadwing

Southern emerald (Migrant spreadwing)

Iberian bluetail
Red-veined darter
Blue emperor
Lesser emperor

Other notable invertebrates

Fiddler crab
Mediterranean banded centipede
Scolopendra cingulata
Portuguese millipede
Ommatoiulus cf. *moreleti*
Egyptian locust
Blue-winged grasshopper
Red-winged grasshopper

Cone headed grasshopper
White-banded mining-bee
Amegilla quadrifasciata
Paper wasp *Polistes* sp
Honey bee
White-banded mining bee *Amegilla quadrifasciata*
Hornet
Beetle *Chrysolina banksii*

Darkling beetle *Pimelia cf costata*
Ground bug *Spilostethus pandurus*
'Millwall' bug *Graphosoma italicum*
Pond skater
Water scorpion
Wasp spider
Cage web spider (web)

PLANTS

Numbers on the right refer to Blamey & Grey-Wilson, *Mediterranean Wild Flowers*. Nif – not in flower. FR = in fruit
The other main reference is *Wild Flowers of the Algarve* – Thorogood & Hiscock. A few planted trees [P] are included when of special interest.

SPERMATOPHYTA Conifers**Araucariaceae**

Araucaria heterophylla P

Norfolk island pine

Pinaceae – Pine family

Pinus pinea

stone / umbrella pine

3

Cupressaceae – Cypress family

Juniperus phoenicea

Phoenician juniper

17

ANGIOSPERMS**Fagaceae – Oaks**

Quercus rotundifolia

Holm oak

26

Quercus suber

Cork oak

27

Moraceae - Mulberry family

Ficus carica

fig

42

Santalaceae – sandalwood family

Osyris quadripartita FR

45

Aristolochiaceae – Birthwort family

Aristolochia baetica NiF

58

Chenopodiaceae – Goosefoot family

Arthrocnemum macrostachya

a perennial glasswort

84

Halimione vulgaris

sea purslane

100

Aizoaceae – Aizoon family

Carpobrotus edulis

Hottentot fig

115

Caryophyllaceae – Pink family

Paronychia capita/argentea

paronychia

134/136

Spergularia media

greater sea-spurrey

144

Brassicaceae (Cruciferae) – Cabbage family

Malcolmia littorea

sand stock

313

Lobularia maritima

sweet Alison

336

Crassulaceae

Umbilicus rupestris

navelwort

396

Rosaceae – Rose family

Pyrus bourgaeana FR

a wild pear

Eriobotrya japonica

Japanese loquat

429

Fabiaceae was Leguminosae – Pea family

Ceratonia siliqua

carob

431

Ulex parviflorus

small-flowered gorse

473

Lotis criticus

southern birdsfoot trefoil

632

Oxalidaceae

Oxalis pes-caprae

Bermuda buttercup

735

Anacardiaceae – Pistacio family

Pistacia terebinthus

turpentine tree, terebinth

861

Pistacia lentiscus

mastic tree or lentisc

865

Thymelaeaceae – Daphne family

Daphne gnidium

daphne

936

Cistaceae – Rockrose family

Cistus crispus NiF

grey-leaved cistus

960

Cistus albidus NiF

grey-leaved cistus

961

Cistus salvifolius NiF

sage-leaved cistus

965

Cistus ladanifer NiF

gum cistus

971

Tamaricaceae - Tamarix

Tamarix africana

tamarix

1016

Frankeniaceae – Sea heaths

Frankenia leavis

sea heath

1027

Cactaceae – Cactus family

Opuntia maxima (= *ficus-indica*)

prickly pear

1040

Myrtaceae – Myrtle family

<i>Myrtus communis</i>	common myrtle	1052
Punicaceae - Pomegranate family		
<i>Punica granatum</i>	pomegranate	1064
Umbelliferae/ Apiaceae – Carrot family		
<i>Eryngium maritimum</i> NiF	sea holly	1073
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> NiF	fennel	1108
<i>Daucus carota</i> NiF	wild carrot	1168
Ericaceae – Heath family		
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	strawberry tree	1176
Araliaceae – Ivy family		
<i>Hedera helix</i>	ivy	
Plumbaginaceae – Thrift family		
<i>Armeria pungens</i> NiF		1218
<i>Limoniastrum monopetalum</i>	limoniastrum	1234
Oleaceae		
<i>Olea europaea</i>	olive	1248
<i>Olea europaea</i> spp <i>oleaster</i>	wild olive	1248a
Apocynaceae - Oleander family		
<i>Nerium oleander</i>	oleander	1256
Rubiaceae – bedstraw family		
<i>Crucianella maritima</i> NiF	coastal crucianella	1276
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	wild madder	1305
Convulvulaceae – bindweed family		
<i>Calystegia soldanella</i> NiF	sea bindweed	1315
<i>Ipomoea purpurea</i>	common morning glory	1319
<i>Convolvulus althaeoides</i> NiF	mallow-leaved bindweed	1331
Boraginaceae – Borage family		
<i>Heliotropium europaeum</i>	heliotrope	1341
<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	purple viper's bugloss	1383
Lamiaceae (Labiatae) – Mint family		
<i>Thymus capitatus</i> NiF		1514
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	rosemary	1526
<i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	French lavender	1528
<i>Calamintha nepeta</i>	lesser calamint	1499
Solanaceae – Potato family		
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Black nightshade	1563
<i>Solanum sodomium</i>	Apple of Sodom	1565
Scrophulariaceae		
<i>Verbascum sinuatum</i> NiF		1601
Caprifoliaceae / Dipsacaceae – Honeysuckle and teasel families		
<i>Lonicera implexa</i> NiF	A honeysuckle	1713
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i> NiF	wild teasel	1732
<i>Scabiosa atropurpurea</i> (<i>S maritima</i>)	mournful widow	1749
Asteraceae (was Compositae) – Daisy family		
<i>Artemisia campestris</i> ssp <i>maritima</i> NiF	field wormwood, coastal subspecies	
<i>Helichrysum stoechas</i> ¹ NiF	curry plant	1824
<i>Dittrichia viscosa</i>	stink aster	1842



Merendera; autumn snowflake; autumn crocus.

MONOCOTYLEDONS

Liliaceae		
<i>Merendera filifolia</i>	merendera	2132
<i>Urginea maritima</i>	sea squill	2163

¹ This is the slightly aromatic curry plant. A noticeboard mentioned *Helichrysum italicum* ssp *picardis*. References say both are common on fixed sand dunes.

<i>Scilla autumnalis</i> NiF	autumn squill	2189
<i>Asparagus albus</i>	asparagus	2214
<i>Smilax aspera</i>	common smilax, sarsaparilla	2222
<i>Crocus serotinus</i>		2325
Agavaceae		
<i>Agave americana</i> P	agave, century plant	2253
Amaryllidaceae		
<i>Leucojum</i> (or <i>Acis</i>) <i>autumnale</i>	autumn snowflake	2263
<i>Pancratium maritimum</i> FR	sea daffodil	2270
<i>Narcissus serotinus</i>		2272
Palmae – Palm family		
<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>	dwarf fan palm	2357
Gramineae etc		
<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	lesser reedmace	
<i>Arundo donax</i>	giant reed	2494
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	common reed	
<i>Bolboschoenus</i> (<i>Scirpus</i>) <i>maritimus</i>	sea club-rush	
Selaginellaceae – club-mosses		
<i>Selaginella denticulata</i>	Mediterranean selaginella/club-moss	2510
FERNS (PTERIDOPHYTA)		
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	rustyback fern	2532

Fungi King Alfred's cakes *Daldinia concentrica*

A chicken of the woods *Laetiporus gilbertsonii*, best guess for a mass of fungi on a eucalyptus at the hilltop church of Senhora de Aracelis in Castro Verde.

Lichen Sunburst lichen *Xanthoria parietina*

Galls Terebinth tree: aphid *Forda formicaria*

Lentisc: aphid *Aploneura lentisci* Mealy grass root aphid

Holm oak: common spangle gall caused by gall wasp *Neuroterus quercusbaccarum*

Acacia: *Trichilogaster signiventris*, commonly known as the golden wattle bud-galling wasp.

The Spanish name for terebinth is cornicabra (cabra means goat), referring to the goat's-horn-shaped galls that form on the leaves. Terebinto is also used, particularly for the plant and its resin.



Clockwise from top left: galls on acacia, aphid galls on lentisc and terebinth, spangle galls on holm oak (AG).