

# *Honeyguide*

## **WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

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**The Camargue  
20 – 27 May 2011**

## Holiday participants

Suzanne Hunter  
Lesley Scott  
Barbara Hughes  
Melvyn and Brenda Smith

David Nind and  
Shevaun Mendelsohn  
Bob and Pam Harris  
Russell and Sara Gomm

## Leaders

Rachel and Robin Hamilton

Daily diary by Robin and Rachel, plant list by Rachel, other lists by Robin.

All photos in this report were taken during the holiday, those edged green by Rachel and Robin and edged blue by Russell and Sara.

Front cover – bulls and *gardiens*.

Below – on the boardwalk at Scamandre.

Our hosts at the Hotel Robinson in Beaucaire – Monique Leon and her daughter Nadine.

<http://www.hotel-robinson.fr/>



This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person towards lesser kestrel protection was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. It was combined with the contribution from the groups in the Dordogne, the Cévennes and the French Pyrenees, making a total this year of €2630 (£2390) given to La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO, the French Bird Protection League), which was presented to Gwenaëlle Plet from the LPO during the French Pyrenees holiday.

This brings the total given to LPO since 1991 to £16,496 and the total conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays since 1991 to £72,591 as at August 2011.

## Daily Diary

### Day 1: Friday 20 May – Arrival, the Hotel Robinson and its surroundings

We made an early departure from a chilly Luton airport but, only a couple of hours later, we were in the warm sunshine of Nîmes with a new world of wildlife around us. Even at the airport there were black kites, little egrets, a skylark overhead and a black redstart singing on the terminal building. We sorted out minibuses and drove through very Provençal countryside in continuing sunshine for the 40 minutes or so to Beaucaire. On the way we caught snatches of nightingale song, saw a roller on a telegraph wire, clouds of swifts and swallows, and a landscape of tall cypresses and stone pines, vineyards and olive groves.

We had a very warm welcome at the Hotel Robinson from Monique Leon (*née* Blanc) and her daughter Nadine; the hotel has been in the Blanc family for four generations. We were plied with refreshing fresh fruit juice and unwound to the songs of a nightingale and a blackcap and the calls of crested tits in the pine trees above the cliff that rises up behind the hotel. Hotel staff showed us to our rooms where we settled in and then met again for lunch on the terrace: salad, *gigot d'agneau* with *galette de pommes de terre*, fresh cherries, then home-made mango and passion fruit ice cream – what a start.

We were keen to explore after lunch but it was hot and sunny and we had made an early start so a leisurely walk was called for. The hotel is wonderfully situated in extensive grounds, built on the edge of a limestone outcrop. There are endless walks through woods and over open rocky and scrubby habitat. We tried to catch sight of the crested tits again but our attention was quickly drawn to several superb Spanish gatekeepers flying about (*photo on p15*). One posed for photographs on a flowering spike of buckler mustard *Biscutella didyma* growing out of the rock face.

We followed the well-made track up the hill. There were dozens more freshly-emerged Spanish gatekeepers everywhere and the flowers were at their best: an Indian bead tree *Melia azedarach* was covered in flowers and buzzing with insects, and the ground underneath it strewn with its bead-like fruit. The hillside beside the path was full of colour: the pink, tissue-paper flowers of grey leaved cistus *Cistus albidus*, the soft yellow phlomis *Phlomis lychnitis*, the brilliant pink convolvulus *Convolvulus cantabrica*, startling yellow Spanish broom *Spartium junceum* and soft mauve pitch trefoil *Psoralea bituminosa*. We heard a fan-tailed warbler and were accompanied all the way by a Bonelli's warbler from somewhere deep in the bushes.

We arrived at a clearing with a lovely view across the fields to the Rhône. Yellow-legged gulls were flying over the distant river and serins and goldfinches were singing. A little ahead, Brenda and Melvyn reported a long-tailed tit and we then saw two buzzards soaring overhead, who began their magical tumbling display flight. We arrived at a fork in the track and a barn where a pair of common redstarts were busy collecting food.

Robin and Rachel hurried off, leaving the group to take their time on the way back to the hotel; there were more people to collect from the late afternoon Manchester flight to Nîmes. We all reassembled on the terrace where dinner was served under the plane trees beneath a warm Mediterranean night sky. Then we took ourselves off to bed, weary after a long day, to the song of nightingales in all directions.

### Day 2: Saturday 21 May – A first taste: the western Camargue

From Beaucaire, the most attractive way to enter the Camargue is from the north west, through St Gilles, where we cross both the Rhône-Sète Canal and the Petit Rhône. We enjoyed the quiet roads and had a chance to look about us as we drove through the warm southern farmland. We spotted a cuckoo and several cattle egrets and a dead red squirrel as we drove.

Once you have crossed the Petit Rhône you are immediately in another landscape – of reeds and rice fields and great shelterbelts of giant reed *Arundo donax*. As we drove along with the windows open, Cetti's, reed and great reed warblers all shouted from the reeds as we passed. We turned off the main road and headed towards Gimeaux. We stopped where we could look over the reed-filled ditches into a rice paddy where lots of black-winged stilts were courting, feeding, squabbling and nesting. A nightingale was singing, we could hear a distant turtle dove, the soft call of bee-eaters filled the air and we watched the aerial ballet as they fed. Brenda spotted a marsh harrier and there were Mediterranean gulls and cattle egrets flying apparently purposefully in several directions across the sky. In a damp hollow beside where we had parked we found an enormous pyramidal orchid (*right*).





The villages in this part of the Camargue are little affected by the tourism that has taken hold near the coast and the horse- and bull-raising activities are deep-rooted in their traditions. We were seeing fields with groups of bulls or wild horses feeding quietly here and there and then we came upon a large corralled area where young bulls were being rounded up as part of what appeared to be a training exercise for the horsemen, or *gardiens*. It was all very photogenic but refreshingly had certainly not been put on for tourists. We paused and watched for a while, with more bee-eaters calling and hawking for insects around us, and from time to time perching in the sun and showing off their wonderful colours.

Then we headed south along the main road towards les Stes Maries de la Mer. We turned off before we reached the town; there were white storks flying about. We made our way to the shore of the great body of water that is the heart of the Camargue, the Étang de Vaccarès. There is a dirt track along the western shore and the delights of the open water are easily visible. We drove along a little way until we were in sight of a significant flock of flamingos (*below*), then stopped for lunch. What a spread! There were cold meats, pâté and salami, a salad of *cornichons*, radishes, tiny onions, tomatoes and radicchio with vinaigrette and mayonnaise, then cakes, chocolate mousse and fresh grapes. We looked about us at the unfamiliar habitat. Tamarisk bushes gave us a little shade but beyond them the expanse of dry saltmarsh, *sansouire*, dominated by bushes of glasswort *Salicornia* species, sea purslane *Halimione portulacoides*, shrubby seablite *Suaeda vera* and sea lavender *Limonium* ssp. stretched away into the distance, shimmering with heat. More Mediterranean gulls were flying around or standing in their elegant poised way among the glasswort, and we watched a pair of blue-headed wagtails. Among the tamarisk we caught sight of great reed and Sardinian warblers.



We drove northwards along the shore, pausing from time to time to potter and see what was about. The light was behind us and there were some lovely vistas of the water through the tamarisk and several good views of horses and bulls. The tamarisk is clearly very important to the small birds. We were surprised to encounter a spotted flycatcher and, with some difficulty eventually got a very good view of a wood warbler that Brenda had been following, both late migrants passing through. Less surprising were three spectacled warblers that were feeding in the *sansouire*, typical habitat for them; we had an excellent telescope view of one of the birds, a male.

Eventually the north-bound dirt track rejoins the road and our next destination was soon after that, the excellent *Écomusée* at Pont de Rousty. After a 'taster' day in the Camargue, the displays at the museum bring vividly to life the extraordinary traditions and history of this unique area. This was the last of the day's activities so, when we had had our fill we returned to the minibuses – some people saw a hoopoe in the car park – and then headed off.

We had to make a detour to St Martin de Crau, to the headquarters of the la Crau reserve. Entry to the reserve is by permit only and as we were to visit on a Sunday when the reserve centre would be closed, we had to collect our permits on Saturday. However, St Martin de Crau is a nice little town and the group spread out to explore it, and to find coffee and ice cream. By the time we returned to the hotel we had completed a circuit round Arles and the northern and western Camargue.

It was another balmy evening and we met for drinks on the terrace to review the day. It was still warm enough for dinner outside under the lime trees: salad with lardons to begin with, chicken with a *gratin* of courgettes, aubergines and potatoes, cheese, and finally a dessert of either a light sponge cake or ice cream.

### Day 3: Sunday 22 May – La Crau

We needed a prompt getaway today in order to reach our destination before the heat-haze made distant views difficult. The nightingales that had serenaded us all night were still singing at breakfast and were now accompanied by the fluty calls of a golden oriole. Brenda and Melvyn reported that they had also heard a girl bunting.

The drive to la Crau involved the main roads circumnavigating Arles, a much less serene drive than yesterday's. A female Montagu's harrier was sweeping a field beside the dual carriageway in the company of a flock of crows and a great spotted woodpecker flew across in front of us as we turned off towards la Crau.

A strange vista opens up as you draw near to the end of the road at the car park for the reserve. Far into the distance stretches a great stony steppe, shimmering and golden in the heat. This is the *coussouls*, the famous desert-like landscape that is the relic of the delta of the river Durance. There are two or three distant stone sheep barns, still in use, and the area is strangely dotted with piles of stones. These are a very curious feature – heaps of stones gathered together by the Nazis during the Second World War in an attempt to prevent the Allies from landing aircraft. The stony soil is home to a myriad of highly specialised plants and animals and is paradise for the naturalist.

However, once we had parked, packed our bags with books and water and covered ourselves with sunscreen, we began with our immediate surroundings. The place to attract our attention first was the dyke filled with briskly flowing water at the edge of the car park, with a towering wall of willows behind it. The air sparkled with damselflies everywhere, some familiar, some not so: blue, green and bronze. Banded demoiselles *Calopteryx splendens*, of both sexes, were abundant, including some with incredibly blue bodies, there were a few beautiful demoiselles *Calopteryx virgo* and a magnificent bronze damselfly, probably a female copper demoiselle *Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis* (photo on p15). Pool frogs splashed about in the water (frog on a log, right), Cetti's warblers and nightingales sang from within the seclusion of the willows and several corn buntings rattled their territorial claims from bramble bushes.



We set off on the marked circuit leading to a distant barn. There were skylarks singing and several black kites in the air; we could hear a short-toed lark to our left, then watched it in song flight and followed it in binoculars when it had dropped back to the ground. Everyone was alert to sights and movement: Shevaun found a marbled white, Brenda spotted an ocellated lizard on a pile of stones, we found a smart orange and black striped beetle *Mylabris polymorpha*. There were tawny pipits and crested larks; Shevaun found us a tawny pipit perched conveniently on top of a bush and we all had good views of it through the telescopes. Russell and Sara were constantly on the look-out for small creatures and evidence of invertebrates; Sara found the ootheca of a praying mantis and a big spurge hawkmoth caterpillar and they took us to the burrows of a tarantula *Lycosa narbonensis*. Bob and Suzanne called us over – they had found a grasshopper *Prionotropis rhodanica*, a bizarre insect, and a Crau endemic.



The vegetation was extraordinary. The plants in evidence now were numerous and diverse, yet had a number of striking characters in common. Everywhere there were prickles and thorns or distasteful fur: Illyrian thistles *Onopordum illyricum*, milk thistles *Galactites tomentosa*, spiny pallenis *Palennis spinosa*, field eryngo *Eryngium campestre*; the juicy parts of a plant are all too tempting on arid soils so being armoured against herbivores is a high priority. For the same reason, there were other plants there that defend themselves by containing strong flavours or toxins: many spurges with their bitter milky latex; strongly scented germanders, thymes and Iberian Jerusalem sage were all abundant. (We use members of this family as culinary herbs but only in minute quantities, not in hungry mouthfuls!) Other plants are fleshy and hold on to what water they can but stay close to the ground to keep out of the way. Lesley's diligent quest found tiny plants of evax *Evax pygmaea* (left), sand spurrey *Spergularia rubra* and tiny geraniums flat on the ground.



We were looking out for another Crau speciality, the lesser kestrel, though the increasing haze as the day wore on was making it more and more difficult to be sure. The first, which almost certainly was a lesser kestrel, was characteristically circling and hawking for insects, but the heat-haze denied us a firm identification. Then another kestrel perched on a fence post, and again we were frustrated by the heat-haze, until it flew up and hovered: just a common kestrel! We walked steadily on, our destination, the *Peau de Meau* barn, getting gradually closer.



We arrived in the welcome cool shade and climbed up the steps to where an observatory has been constructed in the barn loft. Here at last, we had superb views of lesser kestrels, an adult male feeding a young bird on the roof of the attractive dovecote-like purpose-built colonial nest-site (*left*). We could sit and observe at our leisure with excellent views in all directions. David spotted a stone-curlew, looking straight towards us. It moved about a little and everyone was able to see it well in the telescopes. There was a great deal of activity at the lesser kestrel nest-site, with several of the holes occupied. It was a special privilege to be so close to such a special bird. This is one of the LPO projects that the Honeyguide donations support.

We had elected not to carry picnics and everyone had declared that they would be content with a very late lunch. It was already past lunchtime and we were only half way round! We were encouraged that the Cetti's warblers and nightingales in the wood by the dyke were within earshot. Suzanne found us a superb tawny pipit on a post, with the sun behind us, which stayed to be 'scoped by everybody, but on the whole the birds were less in evidence. We found another spurge hawkmoth caterpillar; by then we had seen the whole colour range from green, through orange, to bright red, the colour intensifying with maturity (*photo on p15*).

The last stretch of our round trip was along the dyke. A moorhen was bobbing amongst the weed and the display of damselflies enchanted us again. We were ready to sit down though, so we wasted no time before setting off to find somewhere attractive and shady for lunch. We drove back towards Dynamite and the Étang des Aulnes where we found some welcome shade under kermes and holm oaks and looked out at the lake. A hoopoe had flown ahead of us as we drove along the track and we could hear it, but it didn't reappear. We spread out lunch: a *tortilla* of potato, tomatoes and delicious herbs, terrine, ham, salad, fresh pears, mousse, chocolate waffles and cheese.

The afternoon was well advanced when we had finished lunch so we decided on a slightly early return to the hotel with plenty of time to relax and to prepare for dinner, and in due course, we met again for drinks and the day's records before another dinner under the stars. Tonight we had a vegetable terrine, with a mixed salad. This was followed by a pasta dish of salmon in tomato sauce. After the cheese, the meal finished with a rhubarb tart with vanilla cream.

#### **Day 4: Monday 23 May – The eastern Camargue**

It was fine and sunny again as we set off for our early walk. We left the hotel drive and walked along above the road to the point where a footpath crosses to follow the bank of the Rhône back towards Beaucaire. A short-toed treecreeper was creeping up a Robinia tree in the drive, and a chaffinch and a blackcap were singing in the trees in the grounds. Across the road, we could hear a melodious warbler singing in a large isolated thorn tree, but there seemed to be no angle from which he was visible. A Cetti's warbler sang as we passed some bushes on the way to the riverbank and we could hear a fan-tailed warbler calling in flight from the meadow beside the Rhône. Long-tailed tits were calling by the riverbank and greenfinches were feeding on thistle seeds. We spotted a blue tit in the drive on the way back for breakfast and a white wagtail flew overhead, calling.

This morning, we were off to explore the eastern Camargue. Again, this entailed using the main road round Arles but there was some interest in the pools around the town: a lesser black-backed gull, a little grebe and two coots were swimming about and a pair of mallard were standing about companionably in a field.

We made haste to the viewpoint by the Étang de Vaccarès where a flock of over fifty great crested grebes were swimming in the bay, close to the shore. From here, one can appreciate the vastness of the Étang de Vaccarès. Looking across towards where we had been on Saturday, only the tops of the trees were visible in places. There were some trees to our right too and a grey heron was on its nest with a young bird visible beside it, and not far away a little egret too was sitting on its nest. Barbara pointed us in the opposite direction where there was a nightingale singing in full view on top of a dead tree trunk, and while we were listening to it we heard and then managed to see a Sardinian warbler, flitting about in the tamarisk.

Tamarisk dominates the landscape along the shore but between, there are expanses of saltmarsh, bushes of glasswort and sea purslane and sheets of sea lavender: *sansouire* again. The brackish water floods these areas for much of the year but now they were dry with the mud cracking and only isolated pools for feeding water birds.

We made another stop opposite la Capelière. Here there were lots of flamingos, black-winged stilts and avocets wading in the shallows and feeding in their very different ways. Common terns were flying over and diving for food too and there was another flock of great crested grebes. In the middle of this activity, several coots were sitting calmly on nests and, in the other direction, a large tree contained a white storks' nest where the adult bird was sitting with three well-grown and demanding young. Sara had walked a little way down the road and triumphantly returned carrying a dead grass snake for us all to look at. It is common enough to find their sloughed skins but it was very interesting to see the whole animal and have a chance to look at its field characters; the yellow marks on the neck showed well.

At la Capelière the *Réserve Nationale de Camargue* has its administrative centre where permits are issued. It also has very interesting and informative displays about the Camargue habitats and wildlife, and, of course, you can buy books and other useful items. Leading from there are a series of nature trails of different lengths, guiding the visitor through the whole range of Camargue habitats in microcosm. We followed the *Sentier des rainettes*. 'The Path of the Tree-frogs'. The first part of this walk took us through mature carr woodland of willow, tamarisk and false olive and we could actually hear the tree-frogs. A tower hide overlooked a lagoon where mallard and a few stilts were feeding. We continued along the path to a second hide, again overlooking open water. Swallows were nesting right inside the hide, their nests attached in the angle between the roof and the central beam. They hesitated to come in while we were there but soon gained confidence and two nests had lively young in them, creating a great deal of work for their anxious parents. Just outside the hide we noticed a potter wasps' nests and at that moment we witnessed an ichneumon wasp in the act of laying eggs in their larvae. Further on the woodland cover became less dense; a blackcap was singing and we saw a speckled wood sunning itself in some dappled light.

The next phase of the trail led us through an open brackish grassy meadow, a *pelouse*, with tussocks of sea rush and tall grasses. David spotted a pair of red-backed shrikes away to our left on a tamarisk bush. We got the 'scopes trained on them and watched them flying down after prey and back up to their perches. An Egyptian locust clattered in front of us and settled on the tamarisk to our right, close enough for people to see it with the naked eye. The trail wound round and alongside a ditch where two coypus appeared, apparently oblivious to our presence, and swam along together in full view. A wooden platform had been erected for a viewpoint overlooking a large lagoon from where we could see two shelducks and two common terns on their nests as well as yet more argumentative black-winged stilts. When we got back to the centre we were ready for lunch so we laid it out on the table in the picnic area there, in the pleasant shade of some light reed thatch (*below; and looking for flamingo feathers at the edge of the lagoon*).



After lunch we headed south again, drawing ever nearer to the sea. A male marsh harrier showed itself briefly and then dropped away out of sight. The influence of the salt and water on the vegetation increased markedly; tamarisk was more or less the only shrub and first *sansouire* took over from *pelouse* and then true saltmarsh from *sansouire*. Eventually we arrived in a vast expanse of salt lagoons divided by low, barren causeways and fringed with shrubby seablite, glasswort and sea purslane. We drove on to where two outfalls meet and there is a substantial pumping station. The dirt road carries on to the lighthouse but after that only walkers and cyclists can continue round.

We parked at the pumping station and surveyed our surroundings. A pair of blue-headed wagtails fed on the track. Down on the edge of the lagoon several Kentish plovers, two ringed plovers, a couple of little stints and a spotted redshank were all feeding on the dry salt-caked mud or in the shallow water. The spotted redshank was just moulting into breeding plumage. Further on, we found a small party of little stints. We walked at the edge of the lagoon amongst the seabirds and found moulted flamingo feathers, caked with salt – white, pink, pink and white and – one tends to forget – black. The salt can easily be washed off so they make a very simple and evocative souvenir. We trained our telescopes and peered through the heat haze at a line of solid pink at the far end of the Étang du Fangassier: the flamingos on their breeding ground.

From the pumping station we could see a white 'mountain' in the distance and so we returned to the road and then turned right towards Salin de Giraud. Here is a town devoted entirely to the manufacture of salt. It is very small but it has a utilitarian air about it, terraces of workmanlike houses and simple shops. Beyond the town lie the salt works. Salt is prepared by allowing it to evaporate in a series of interconnected lagoons or *salins* where the water levels can be very precisely regulated. Eventually it evaporates and salt is left, and the bulldozers take over. Salt is heaped up into piles during the summer and from there it is packaged and distributed. One old salty spoil heap is left for visitors to climb up and admire the view across the complex of *salins* and at the foot is a little café and kiosk selling all sorts of things but in particular, salt from the Camargue. From the viewpoint we looked at the various stages in the salt production and we puzzled for a while about what turned out to be a distant black-winged stilt in one of the ditches.

There was just about time for one more stop so we carried straight on to the sea. The wall of caravans and camper vans parked in the dunes was a bit off-putting so we turned our attention instead to a lagoon behind the beach. There was quite a feast of water birds and we were spellbound for some time: several little terns, a few gull-billed, Sandwich and common terns, a few Kentish plovers, some yellow-legged gulls and a single slender-billed gull. What a collection, and all within a few metres of a large ramshackle beach café, 'Chez Paulette'!

Now time really was tight so there was no stopping on the way home and only just time to tidy ourselves up for dinner. Again, it was warm enough to be outside and we gathered at our table on the terrace for dinner. Today, we started with slices of homemade pizza, followed by steak, which they called '*gardien de toreau*', cheese came next and after the cheese we had a wonderful delicate and light chocolate mousse.

#### **Day 5: Tuesday 24 May – Les Baux and the Alpilles**

Another fine and sunny morning greeted the early risers! We set off up the hill behind the hotel. A couple of the regular serins were arguing in flight, tumbling together noisily; was it rivalry or a lovers' tiff? Further up the hill we heard a brief snatch of song that was almost certainly a subalpine warbler. We waited to hear more for confirmation but it was silent. We walked as far as the barn where the redstarts were still about and there were two rival male chaffinches singing in the valley.

After breakfast we set off through Beaucaire and Tarascon and then turned towards the chain of hills in the east. These are the Alpilles, a limestone outcrop that rises surprisingly and dramatically out of the Provençal plateau to a height of nearly 500 metres!

Limestone is always rich in flowers. Here, in the warmth of the Mediterranean basin, the dramatic rocky confusion of cliffs, valleys and gentle slopes provides an almost limitless variety of habitats and microclimates so the diversity of wildlife is extraordinary, not to mention the wonderful scenery.

We made our way to the fortified mountain town of les Baux, a significant tourist attraction. We would return to explore that later. But first we drove on past strange stone quarries where vast smooth cliffs testify to the very even-textured limestone and its importance as a building stone. We parked where a forest road turns off to the right among scattered pines, with a sunny hillside inviting us upwards. The air was warm and fragrant with pine resin, juniper and rosemary and the flowers and butterflies were abundant. We walked along the forest track. A Bath white was nectaring on a clump of blue *aphyllanthes*; several large whites were flying strongly but refused to settle; Sara found what appeared to be an *illex* hairstreak, and then we noticed them everywhere, flying fast and buffeted by the breeze. A chaffinch and a chaffinch were singing and a group of alpine swifts flew overhead with a single common swift looking very small in comparison.

The hillsides were covered in a rich collection of flowers: small tufty bushes of shrubby hare's-ear *Bupleurum fruticosum*, tiny, cowering bushes of the sweet scented Mediterranean mezereon *Daphne gnidium*, papery pink-flowered grey-leaved *cistus* *Cistus albidus*, assorted brooms and germanders, and the smell of the wild thyme was everywhere. But the butterflies really stole the show. There were common blue, small copper, chalkhill blue, wall brown and meadow brown. We had superb views of a large tortoiseshell on a rock and Russell found and photographed a brown argus. Shevaun found and photographed a scarce swallowtail and then a western marbled white, and got a perfect photo to confirm the identification. We eventually managed to get a good look at the hairstreaks and identified them positively as false *illex* hairstreaks (*photos on p15*).



There was a tiny fast-moving blue butterfly and Sara persevered and was able to identify it as a baton blue. At the foot of the cliff, on a sheltered south-facing bank, there were felty germander plants with a dozen or so butterflies on each, roughly equal numbers of false ilex hairstreaks and chalkhill blues, quite a spectacle.

There were plenty of other invertebrates to entertain us too. Bob and Pam called us over to where they had found and identified an iridescent bluish green beetle as *Anthaxia hungarica* and the little chafer *Oxythyrea funesta* was turning up in a lot of the larger flowers. Ascalaphids were hunting all around us – there was plenty for them to eat. Lesley's sharp eyes spotted a small, bright green praying mantis nymph, which was duly caught and photographed, and identified as a cone-head mantis *Empusa pennata* and we found a mauve crab spider, well camouflaged on a scabious flower, devouring a chalkhill blue.

As we climbed up to the viewpoint on the hilltop, a raven flew over croaking, and we watched a strange conflict between butterflies: a common swallowtail being attacked by a scarce swallowtail. The view at the top was certainly worth the effort – a panorama to the south where we could pick out all the landmarks we had visited over the last few days, and in the foreground the fortified village of les Baux nestling picturesquely in the midst of its protective, rocky stronghold.

We were ready for lunch which we ate sitting in the shade under the pines and evergreen oaks, being visited occasionally by butterflies and by a large longhorn beetle *Monochamus galloprovincialis*.

We spent the afternoon visiting les Baux. Everyone went their separate ways but there were inevitable points where we would meet. Up at the castle there is another wonderful view down onto an intimate scene of vineyards and olive groves (*below*), and the last traces of the reddish bauxite ore that takes its name from the town. There was a scarce swallowtail and a hummingbird hawkmoth on the valerian there, alpine swifts and crag martins wheeled through the air above and jackdaws and black redstarts visited their nest holes in the old walls of the castle. In the town there is an assortment of shops for souvenirs and refreshments to suit all tastes and exploring the cool, shady lanes is a pleasant way to spend the hottest part of the day.



We drove home to a dinner of soup – fish or vegetable according to preference, steak with sautéed potatoes, cheese and then baked custard and chocolate waffle, and after dinner we relaxed and watched the Moorish geckos busy on the terrace walls (*photo on p15*).

#### **Day 6: Wednesday 25 May – The Pont du Gard and some sightseeing**

The steep path up behind the hotel had become our favourite morning walk – it had so much variety to offer and always produced some interest. Today it was a fine adult praying mantis well camouflaged on a plant of rue *Ruta angustifolia*. There were cirl buntings and blackcaps singing as usual and the redstarts were again busy by the barn.

It was fine and sunny as we set off, but with a stiff breeze. Today's destination was in a new direction. Two rivers have their confluence just north of the hotel: the Rhône and the Gardon. Upstream of the confluence, the Gardon is bridged by what must be one of the most famous bridges in Europe, the astonishing Roman aqueduct – Pont du Gard.

We had arrived before the crowds, so we rapidly got our bearings and walked the short distance from the car park to the Pont du Gard. The valley sides were wooded with elm, Montpellier maple, false acacia and holm oak and the approaches to the bridge on both sides of the river had been fairly sensitively landscaped and planted. The major information and commercial complex is discreetly hidden on the east side, on the other side from where we started.

Approaching the Pont du Gard (*right*), we encountered an abundance of the likely birds: blackbird, blackcap, jay, collared dove, white wagtail. A black redstart sang from the roof of the little shop and a black kite soared above the wood on our left. The awe-inspiring majesty of the aqueduct was completely compelling and we watched for a long time as it was evident that the structure itself was important to many other species too. Every hole in the masonry was occupied by something! We could identify plants growing out of the crevices: ivy, valerian. Large holes were occupied either by feral pigeons or jackdaws. Crag martins in abundance had nests under the arches and little faces peered down at us from the heights. The air was full of crag martins and alpine swifts and occasionally one or two little egrets flew leisurely along the river and over the bridge.



We were just crossing the bridge when we had a distant view of a big raptor carrying a snake. We could not get a good enough view to confirm its identity though it was almost certainly a short-toed eagle, but shortly afterwards a Bonelli's eagle appeared and gave us some excellent views. Then, as we set off towards the information centre, Bob looked back and excitedly drew our attention to yet another large raptor in the distance up the valley – this time a golden eagle. It gradually came closer and finally flew right over the aqueduct above our heads.

A blackcap and a golden oriole were singing beside the path to the information centre, where we separated to explore for a while according to whim. Some people were after postcards and souvenirs, some were more interested in coffee and some took advantage of a video theatre where they were showing a film about the restoration of the aqueduct. The most energetic climbed the steps to the top, level with the top of the aqueduct.

As we made our way back to the vehicles, Russell and Sara spotted a fine Cleopatra on a clump of viper's bugloss among rocks by the river – a new record for the week.

For lunch, we searched out an attractive spot beside the river Gardon, just upstream of the confluence with the Rhône. It was rather unnerving to have the Rhône so close and the water level so much higher than we were, held up by enormous weirs and dams associated with an important hydroelectric scheme.

Nothing was scheduled for the afternoon and most people elected to return to the hotel to catch up with domestic matters and write postcards, or explore the grounds. A small group elected to take the advertised option of visiting the local town, Beaucaire, for an hour or two.

Our rendezvous for recording and reviewing of the day was an early one this evening and Mme Leon had ordered a speedy meal for us. After supper, we set off again to the Alpilles in the hope of finding eagle owls. This little population of eagle owls is well known and the viewing point for the nest site is part of ornithological folklore. We were not the only people watching for eagle owls on that perfect June evening. When we arrived an eagle owl was in full view high on a ledge, and while we all enjoyed good telescope views, another one flew past it and disappeared behind the cliff. The first bird watched it fly by, but stayed for some time before finally flying away to hunt for its supper. The other party left but we stayed on for a little while to enjoy the night sounds. We heard a nightjar churring and saw several glow-worms. Bats flew around us and a chorus of frogs began to call as we headed back to the minibuses, extremely satisfied with our evening's 'work'.



## Day 7: Thursday 26 May – Petite Camargue

We hurried up the hill behind the hotel in order to have time to explore a little further along the path. The two rival ciril buntings were singing and a family of young black redstarts were playing hide-and-seek in the bushes, demanding food. We walked up the path beyond the barn, through the resinous-smelling cistus and Spanish broom. We heard a Bonelli's warbler and saw a Sardinian warbler and watched a family of long-tailed tits before retracing our tracks in time for breakfast. It was such a lovely morning that breakfast had been set for us on the terrace.

For our final day we decided to return to the western part of the Camargue, this time to the area west even of the Petit Rhône, known as the Petite Camargue. Our first destination was a relatively new reserve, the Étang de Scamandre.



On the drive we managed to see all three of the colourful, exotic-seeming birds so strongly associated with southern Europe – a bee-eater, a roller and a hoopoe – and we stopped to watch what was going on in some flooded rice paddies: where a glossy ibis, a squacco heron and a black-winged stilt were all feeding peacefully. Just before we reached the reserve there was a small tower housing an electricity substation and on top was a white storks' nest. There was a good place to stop the minibuses so we all piled out, cameras at the ready. The birds were quite unconcerned as we approached very close beneath the tower and took photographs (left). Two glossy ibises flew by, followed by a purple heron, low overhead, giving us an excellent view, and then a great egret, the first of the week, flew past and settled in a field nearby.

We parked the minibuses in the shade under some shelters and went in to the visitor centre, a magnificent building built with traditional local materials in a traditional style. The staff were extremely knowledgeable and rather interested in a visit from a group of British birdwatchers, and they were able to explain to us some changes that had taken place since our last visit regarding the whereabouts of some of the nesting colonies. Several trails in different directions begin from the back of the building, and we headed off to the northeast, out along a path flanked with young tamarisk. We heard a cuckoo repeatedly calling 'cuck-cuckoo', a little early in the year to 'change its tune' but perhaps the timing is different in the south! Brenda and Melvyn called our attention to a great spotted woodpecker on some stark dead trees on the reserve boundary.

The path led us on and turned into an attractive causeway, comfortably shaded by the tamarisk which was sparse enough to give us beautiful views out in all directions. We were beginning to encounter open water as well as expanses of reed beds. There were glossy ibises flying around: ones, twos and small groups; a night heron flew by; a purple heron flew across and then dropped in to a reedbed; three spoonbills flew low overhead. Melvyn got a brief glimpse of a little bittern flying out of the reeds, but it had dropped out of sight before he could call out. The feast of large marsh birds continued unabated: several grey, purple and night herons, glossy ibises, a few squacco herons, cattle and little egrets and the occasional great egret.

The path continued along a boardwalk across the open water, where there were a few common terns flying elegantly about and diving for food. We held our breath as we watched a coypu beside the path, swimming through the rushes and oblivious of the eyes – and cameras – trained upon it. We heard, and eventually saw, a moustached warbler, and watched it through the telescopes and binoculars for a while as it sang. Then we got a very smart great reed warbler in the 'scope, singing from the top of a tamarisk bush. As we approached a small bridge, a night heron was perched there, and stayed long enough for a telescope view and some photographs. A moorhen pattered about in the edge of the reeds and we could hear another moustached warbler beyond it but we couldn't track it down. A new sound caused us to look up and there were two gull-billed terns flying over, calling to each other as they flew by. Brenda's swift shout won us all a fine view of another great egret as it flew low over our heads. We were treated to a typically fleeting sight of a kingfisher as it flew by over the reeds.

The boardwalk divided into four. We could turn to the right and continue the great circuit round the edge of the reserve; we could turn to the left for a more direct walk back to the main buildings; or we could follow the path ahead, which led out to a hide in the middle of the open water. Some of the group elected to take a leisurely stroll through the heat of the day, back to the buildings, while the rest set off towards the hide. A



dabchick called nearby. From the hide at the end of the boardwalk we watched a pair of tree sparrows on a branch by the water's edge, then through the telescope we had good views of two drake red-crested pochards, one perched on a post and one swimming about beside it. As we left, a marsh harrier flew by and we had an excellent view of it.

By the time we had had our fill, lunch was seriously overdue so we headed back. It was impossible to hurry though as there was so much to see: there were constant calls to look out for glossy ibis, egrets, herons..... A pair of common blue-tailed damselflies *Ischnura elegans* were mating, clutching a reed (*photo on p15*), and an Essex skipper delighted us briefly. The early returners had laid out lunch on picnic tables under the shade of some great willow trees and we tucked in with pleasure and at leisure to the last picnic of the holiday.

After lunch we drove south, across the expanse of the Petite Camargue. We stopped briefly from time to time but nothing detained us for long – small groups of little egrets, corn buntings singing from wires, groups of horses. We did stop though at a substantial wayside stall selling local produce. We stocked up on fresh cherries, salt, olive oil, *pâté de toreau*, *herbes de Provence*, Camargue rice, before turning north, to return to the hotel in good time before dinner. We had to be ready for an early departure the next day.

As always, we were keen to hear what people had enjoyed most and what memories they would cherish. So after dinner we went round the table for the Highlights. Below, the group is listed in alphabetical order:

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Barbara | Scamandre – the excellent access from boardwalk with everything to be seen, including a coypu; flamingos; the nightingale on the treetop; the dragonfly with its bronze body and bronze veins in its wings, like a piece of jewellery.  |
| Bob     | Pont du Gard: fantastic, not just because of the eagles – and the cool breeze; gull-billed terns; the silver-leaved lime.   |
| Brenda  | Scamandre, with all the herons and egrets flying over constantly; the praying mantids; the Cleopatra; flamingos flying against the intense blue sky.  |
| David   | The Pont du Gard with the Cleopatra on the bugloss; nightingales, especially the one singing from the treetop; flamingos; the eagle owls; the tawny pipit; the pink tamarisk in flower; the coypu; the dinner table under the lime trees.   |
| Lesley  | So many spectacular things – the whole place is so dramatic and different. One special highlight: the watery ditch at la Crau with the little pool frog on the log and the beautiful damselflies.   |
| Melvyn  | The intense experience of seeing so many birds at Scamandre; the eagle owls; renewing acquaintance with squacco herons; the praying mantids.  |
| Pam     | Scamandre – a lovely reserve with access making it possible to see so much; bee-eaters; the 'wild' white horses.  |
| Rachel  | The eagle owls – that they performed so well for us; and Scamandre was pretty good too!   |
| Robin   | Eagle owls; moustached warblers.  |
| Russell | La Crau – the habitat was a completely new experience; spurge hawkmoth caterpillars; Scamandre – wonderful – that's what the Somerset levels will look like one day!  |
| Sara    | La Crau, with the spurge hawkmoth caterpillars; Scamandre and all the herons, especially the purple.  |
| Shevaun | The Pont du Gard, with the Cleopatra on the viper's bugloss; flamingos, and gathering their feathers; the stream by the car park at la Crau with all its damselflies.   |
| Suzanne | Today on the Petite Camargue, at Scamandre which would have been an Air Traffic Controller's nightmare: " <i>Grey heron on the left, great white egret below on the left, grey heron from the right, purple heron coming in – no, lost him! Flamingo – no, it wasn't! Glossy ibis straight above, night heron zooming straight at us! Oh help!! ....."</i> "; the Pont du Gard. |

## Day 8: Friday 27 May – Return

We had to make an early start to catch the homeward flight from Nîmes. It was bright sunshine yet again. We piled our luggage into the minibuses and said our goodbyes, not just to the hotel staff, who had given us such a comfortable and happy week, but also to Russell and Sara and to David and Shevaun whose flight back to Manchester was not until after lunch. So we left them to have a relaxed morning and another excellent Hotel Robinson meal and we drove away. There was another farewell at Nîmes because Robin and Rachel were moving on to the Cévennes to prepare for another Honeyguide holiday. We waved goodbye to a happy band trudging through to security at Nîmes after a thoroughly delightful week in their company.

## Species Lists

### Birds

<b>Little grebe</b>	One near Arles; one at Scamandre
<b>Great crested grebe</b>	A flock of 50 or more on the Étang de Vaccarès
<b>Little bittern</b>	One at Scamandre
<b>Night heron</b>	Several at Scamandre
<b>Squacco heron</b>	A few at Scamandre
<b>Cattle egret</b>	Common on farmland, especially rice fields
<b>Little egret</b>	Seen almost every day in wet habitats
<b>Great white egret</b>	Several at Scamandre
<b>Grey heron</b>	Seen every day in wet habitats
<b>Purple heron</b>	Several at Scamandre; one at the Étang des Aulnes
<b>White stork</b>	Several nests in the northern half of the Camargue
<b>Glossy ibis</b>	Several in and around the Scamandre reserve
<b>Spoonbill</b>	Several at Scamandre
<b>Greater flamingo</b>	Abundant around the Étang de Vaccarès and Fangassier
<b>Mute swan</b>	Occasional ones and twos on open fresh water areas
<b>Shelduck</b>	Widespread on fresh and brackish water
<b>Mallard</b>	Seen almost daily by fresh water
<b>Red-crested pochard</b>	Two drakes at Scamandre
<b>Golden eagle</b>	One seen well at the Pont du Gard
<b>Black kite</b>	Several seen every day
<b>Short-toed eagle</b>	One near Beaucaire; a probable sighting at the Pont du Gard
<b>Marsh harrier</b>	Seen on most days in wet habitats
<b>Montagu's harrier</b>	One near Arles
<b>Common buzzard</b>	A displaying pair near Beaucaire; several odd individuals
<b>Bonelli's eagle</b>	One at the Pont du Gard
<b>Lesser kestrel</b>	Several on la Crau
<b>Common kestrel</b>	Widespread. Seen every day
<b>Pheasant</b>	Occasionally seen or heard throughout the region
<b>Moorhen</b>	Often heard and seen in fresh water habitats
<b>Coot</b>	Frequent on larger fresh water bodies
<b>Oystercatcher</b>	A few in the south-eastern Camargue
<b>Black-winged stilt</b>	Common in flooded rice fields and other shallow water
<b>Avocet</b>	A few near la Capelière
<b>Stone-curlew</b>	One seen well on la Crau
<b>Ringed plover</b>	A few around Étang de Fangassier
<b>Kentish plover</b>	Several seen around Étang de Fangassier
<b>Lapwing</b>	Occasional near fresh water
<b>Little stint</b>	Several around the Étang de Fangassier
<b>Spotted redshank</b>	One at the Étang de Fangassier
<b>Mediterranean gull</b>	Frequently seen, especially in rice fields
<b>Black-headed gull</b>	Common and widespread
<b>Slender-billed gull</b>	One near Plage d'Arles
<b>Yellow-legged gull</b>	Common and widespread
<b>Lesser black-backed gull</b>	One at the Étang de Fangassier
<b>Gull-billed tern</b>	A few at Plage d'Arles; two at Scamandre
<b>Sandwich tern</b>	A few at Plage d'Arles
<b>Common tern</b>	Widespread by fresh and salt water habitats
<b>Little tern</b>	Several seen by brackish and salt water habitats
<b>Rock dove/feral pigeon</b>	Common in towns and villages
<b>Woodpigeon</b>	Seen every day
<b>Collared dove</b>	Seen every day
<b>Turtle dove</b>	Seen almost every day
<b>Cuckoo</b>	Seen or heard on most days
<b>Eagle owl</b>	Two near les Baux
<b>Tawny owl</b>	One heard near Beaucaire
<b>Nightjar</b>	One heard near les Baux
<b>Swift</b>	Seen every day throughout the area
<b>Alpine swift</b>	Several at les Baux and the Pont du Gard
<b>Kingfisher</b>	One at Scamandre
<b>Bee-eater</b>	Frequently seen throughout the drier parts of the Camargue
<b>Roller</b>	Occasional individuals seen on most days

<b>Hoopoe</b>	Occasional individuals seen or heard on most days
<b>Green woodpecker</b>	One near the Étang des Aulnes
<b>Great spotted woodpecker</b>	Seen occasionally in wooded habitats
<b>Short-toed lark</b>	Several on la Crau
<b>Crested lark</b>	Several on la Crau; occasional elsewhere
<b>Skylark</b>	Widespread but not abundant
<b>Crag martin</b>	Frequently seen in the Alpilles
<b>Swallow</b>	Common and widespread
<b>House martin</b>	Seen on most days
<b>Tawny pipit</b>	A few seen well on la Crau
<b>Yellow wagtail</b>	(Blue-headed form) occasionally seen in damp meadows
<b>White wagtail</b>	Seen almost daily in wet habitats
<b>Robin</b>	Occasional in wooded areas
<b>Nightingale</b>	Seen or heard every day in wooded areas
<b>Black redstart</b>	Frequent in towns and villages
<b>Redstart</b>	A pair feeding young near the Hotel Robinson
<b>Blackbird</b>	Often seen in woodland and gardens
<b>Cetti's warbler</b>	Heard and occasionally seen in damp places
<b>Fan-tailed warbler</b>	Seen on most days in dry places
<b>Moustached warbler</b>	Two singing males at Scamandre
<b>Reed warbler</b>	Often seen or heard in reed beds
<b>Great reed warbler</b>	Often seen or heard in reed beds
<b>Melodious warbler</b>	One holding territory near the Hotel Robinson
<b>Spectacled warbler</b>	Three near the Étang de Vaccarès
<b>Sardinian warbler</b>	A few by the Étang de Vaccarès; one near Hotel Robinson
<b>Blackcap</b>	Common and widespread in wooded habitats
<b>Bonelli's warbler</b>	Heard in the Alpilles and near Hotel Robinson
<b>Wood warbler</b>	A late migrant by the Étang de Vaccarès
<b>Spotted flycatcher</b>	A late migrant by the Étang de Vaccarès
<b>Crested tit</b>	In pine woods by the Hotel Robinson
<b>Blue tit</b>	Occasionally seen by the Hotel Robinson
<b>Great tit</b>	Commonly seen by the Hotel Robinson
<b>Long-tailed tit</b>	Seen once near the Hotel Robinson
<b>Short-toed treecreeper</b>	Occasionally seen by the Hotel Robinson
<b>Golden oriole</b>	Heard on several days in wooded areas
<b>Red-backed shrike</b>	A few in the eastern Camargue
<b>Jay</b>	A few in the Alpilles and other wooded areas
<b>Magpie</b>	Widespread and abundant
<b>Jackdaw</b>	Common: seen every day
<b>Carrion crow</b>	Seen every day
<b>Raven</b>	One above les Baux
<b>Starling</b>	Common and widespread
<b>House sparrow</b>	Common around buildings
<b>Tree sparrow</b>	A pair at Scamandre
<b>Chaffinch</b>	Common and widespread in suitable habitats
<b>Serin</b>	Commonly seen around towns and villages
<b>Greenfinch</b>	Fairly common in suitable habitats
<b>Goldfinch</b>	Commonly seen in suitable habitats
<b>Cirl bunting</b>	Two or more pairs near Hotel Robinson; one at les Baux
<b>Reed bunting</b>	Occasional in marshy areas
<b>Corn bunting</b>	Common in farmland throughout the area

**113 species**



## Mammals

Millet's shrew

Coypu

Red squirrel

Brown rat

## Reptiles

Ocellated lizard

Green lizard

Viviparous lizard

Moorish gecko (*right*)

Grass snake



## Amphibians

Stripeless tree frog

Pool frog

Common toad

## Butterflies

Scarce Swallowtail

Common Swallowtail

Bath White

Large White

Small White

Green-veined White

Clouded Yellow

Cleopatra

False Ilex Hairstreak (*below middle*)

Small Copper

Chalkhill Blue

Holly Blue

Brown Argus

Baton Blue

Common Blue

Red Admiral

Large Tortoiseshell

Western Marbled White (*below right*)

Wall Brown

Meadow Brown

Spanish Gatekeeper (*below left*)

Small Skipper



## Other insects and invertebrates

Beautiful demoiselle

Banded demoiselle

Copper demoiselle

(*below left*)

Blue-tailed damselfly

(*below middle*)

Emperor dragonfly

Scarlet darter

Crau grasshopper *Prionotropis hystrix*

Great green bush-cricket

Red-winged grasshopper

Blue-winged grasshopper

Spurge hawkmoth (*caterpillar, below right*)

Pine lappet moth

Glow-worm beetle

Cone-head mantis

Ichneumon wasp



## A Record of the Plants of the Camargue and Surrounding Area

General locations are given according to where the species were recorded during the Honeyguide holiday  
20 – 27 May 2011. It is not a record of distribution.

Hotel = Hotel Robinson, Beaucaire      W, N, E = west, north, east

CONIFERS		
<i>Cupressaceae</i> : Cypresses and Junipers		
<i>Juniperus oxycedrus</i>	Prickly Juniper	Hotel grounds
<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i>	Phoenicean Juniper	Alpilles
<i>Pinus halepensis</i>	Aleppo Pine	Alpilles
<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Austrian Pine	Hotel grounds
<i>Pinus pinaster</i>	Maritime Pine	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Pinus pinea</i>	Umbrella Pine	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots Pine	Hotel grounds
FLOWERING PLANTS - DICOTYLEDONS		
<i>Aceraceae</i> : Maples		
<i>Acer monspessulanum</i>	Montpellier Maple	Pont du Gard
<i>Anacardiaceae</i> : Pistacio Family		
<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Lentisc	Hotel grounds; Alpilles
<i>Apiaceae (Umbelliferae)</i> : Umbellifers		
<i>Bupleurum fruticosum</i>	Shrubby Hare's Ear	Alpilles
<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Field Eryngo	Hotel grounds; la Crau; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel	Pont du Gard
<i>Orlaya grandiflora</i>	Orlaya	Pont du Gard
<i>Asclepiadaceae</i> : Milkweeds		
<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>	Swallow-wort	Hotel grounds; Pont du Gard
<i>Asteraceae (Compositae)</i> : Composites		
<i>Bellis annua</i>	Annual Daisy	la Crau
<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	Yellow Star Thistle	la Crau
<i>Centaurea diffusa</i>	A Knapweed	Hotel grounds
<i>Evax pygmaea</i>	Dwarf Evax	la Crau
<i>Galactites tomentosa</i>	Galactites	la Crau
<i>Helichrysum stoechas</i>	Curry Helichrysum	Hotel grounds
<i>Leuzia conifera</i>	Leuzia	Pont du Gard
<i>Onopordum illyricum</i>	Illyrian Thistle	la Crau
<i>Pallenis spinosa</i>	Spiny Pallenis	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk Thistle	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Tragopogon hybridum</i>	A Salsify	Hotel grounds; W/N Camargue
<i>Urospermum dalechampii</i>	Urospermum	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Boraginaceae</i> : Borage Family		
<i>Cynoglossum creticum</i>	Blue Hound's Tongue	Pont du Gard
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Common Viper's Bugloss	Hotel grounds; la Crau
<i>Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)</i> : Crucifers		
<i>Biscutella didyma</i>	Biscutella, Buckler Mustard	Hotel grounds
<i>Buxaceae</i> : Box Family		
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	Hotel grounds
<i>Caprifoliaceae</i> : Honeysuckle Family		
<i>Lonicera etrusca</i>	Etruscan Honeysuckle	Alpilles
<i>Sambucus ebulus</i>	Danewort	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Caryophyllaceae</i> : Chickweeds, Pinks and Campions		
<i>Dianthus</i> sp.	A Pink	Alpilles
<i>Kohlruschia velutina</i>	Kohlruschia	Alpilles
<i>Silene alba</i>	White Campion	Pont du Gard
<i>Spergularia rubra</i>	Sand Spurrey	la Crau
<i>Chenopodiaceae</i> : Goosefoot Family		
<i>Arthrocnemum perenne</i>	Perennial Glasswort	Camargue
<i>Atriplex halimus</i>	Shrubby Orache	Camargue
<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>	Sea Purslane	Camargue
<i>Salicornia europaea</i>	Glasswort, Samphire	Camargue
<i>Suaeda maritima</i>	Herbaceous Seablite	Camargue
<i>Suaeda vera</i>	Shrubby Seablite	Camargue
<i>Cistaceae</i> : Cistuses and Rockroses		
<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey-leaved Cistus	Hotel grounds; Alpilles
<i>Fumana ericoides</i>	Fumana	Alpilles

<b>Convolvulaceae: Bindweeds</b>		
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Great Bindweed	W/N Camargue; la Crau
<i>Convolvulus cantabrica</i>	Pink Convolvulus	Hotel grounds; la Crau; Alpilles
<b>Crassulaceae: Stonecrop Family</b>		
<i>Sedum sediforme</i>	Pale Stonecrop	Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<b>Dipsacaceae: Scabious Family</b>		
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Wild Teasel	Camargue; la Crau
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	Field Scabious	W/N Camargue
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Small Scabious	Alpilles
<b>Euphorbiaceae: Spurge Family</b>		
<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Large Mediterranean Spurge	Hotel grounds; Alpilles
<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>	Cypress Spurge	la Crau
<i>Euphorbia segueirana</i>	Steppe Spurge	W/N Camargue; la Crau
<b>Fabaceae (Leguminosae): Pea Family, Legumes</b>		
<i>Dorycnium pentaphyllum</i>	Five-Leaved Dorycnium	Alpilles
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot Trefoil	Pont du Gard
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil	Petite Camargue
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Alfalfa, Lucerne	Pont du Gard
<i>Psoralea bituminosa</i>	Pitch Trefoil	Hotel grounds; E Camargue; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Robinia pseudacacia</i>	False Acacia	Pont du Gard
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish Broom	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Star Clover	Hotel grounds; la Crau
<b>Fagaceae: Oaks, Beech and Chestnut</b>		
<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes Oak	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm Oak	Hotel grounds; W/N Camargue; la Crau; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Downy Oak	Pont du Gard
<b>Geraniaceae: Crane's-bills and Stork's-bills</b>		
<i>Erodium ciconium</i>	A Stork's-bill	E Camargue
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-bill	la Crau; Pont du Gard
<b>Lamiaceae (Labiatae): Deadnettle Family, Labiates</b>		
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Common Marjoram	la Crau
<i>Phlomis lychnitis</i>	Iberian Jerusalem Sage	Hotel grounds; la Crau
<i>Salvia verbeneca</i>	Wild Clary	la Crau
<i>Sideritis romana</i>	Simplebeak Ironwort	Pont du Gard
<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	Wall Germander	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Teucrium polium</i>	Felty Germander	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Thyme	Hotel grounds; la Crau; Alpilles
<b>Linaceae: Flaxes</b>		
<i>Linum narbonense</i>	Beautiful Flax	Alpilles
<b>Lythraceae: Loosestrifes</b>		
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple Loosestrife	la Crau
<b>Malvaceae: Mallows</b>		
<i>Lavatera arborea</i>	Tree Mallow	Alpilles
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow	Hotel grounds; la Crau; Alpilles; Pont du Gard
<b>Moraceae: Mulberries and Fig</b>		
<i>Ficus carica</i>	Fig	Hotel grounds; Widespread in suitable habitat
<b>Oleaceae: Olive Family</b>		
<i>Fraxinus angustifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved Ash	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Olea europea</i>	Olive	la Crau
<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>	False Olive	Hotel grounds; la Crau; Alpilles
<b>Orobanchaceae: Orobanches</b>		
<i>Ludwigia peploides</i>	Ludwigia	Petite Camargue
<i>Orobanche</i> sp.	Broomrape	Alpilles
<b>Papaveraceae: Poppy Family</b>		
<i>Glaucium flavum</i>	Yellow Horned-Poppy	Alpilles
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	Widespread in suitable habitat
<b>Plantaginaceae: Plantains</b>		
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buck's-horn Plantain	Pont du Gard
<i>Plantago lagopus</i>	Hare's-foot Plantain	la Crau
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	Pont du Gard
<b>Platanaceae: Plane</b>		
<i>Platanus</i> sp.	Plane	Widespread in suitable habitat



<b>Plumbaginaceae: Plumbago, Sea Lavender and Thrifts</b>		
<i>Limonium narbonense</i>	Narbonne Sea-lavender	Camargue
<b>Ranunculaceae: Buttercup Family</b>		
<i>Clematis flammula</i>	Fragrant Clematis	Alpilles
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Old Man's Beard	Widespread in suitable habitat
<b>Resedaceae: Mignonettes</b>		
<i>Reseda alba</i>	White Mignonette	E Camargue
<b>Rosaceae: Rose Family</b>		
<i>Amelanchier ovalis</i>	Snowy Mespilus	Alpilles
<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Japanese Loquat	Hotel grounds
<i>Rosa sempervirens</i>	A Rose	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	A Bramble	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad Burnet	E Camargue
<b>Rubiaceae: Bedstraws</b>		
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild Madder	Hotel grounds
<b>Rutaceae: Rues</b>		
<i>Ruta chalepensis</i>	Fringed Rue	Hotel grounds
<b>Salicaceae: Willows and Poplars</b>		
<i>Populus alba</i>	White Poplar	Widespread in suitable habitat
<b>Scrophulariaceae: Foxgloves, Toadflaxes and Speedwells</b>		
<i>Verbascum sinuatum</i>	Mullein	la Crau; E Camargue
<b>Solanaceae: Nightshade Family</b>		
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet, Woody Nightshade	E Camargue
<b>Tamaricaceae: Tamarisk Family</b>		
<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	French Tamarisk	W/N Camargue; la Crau
<i>Tamarix tetragyna</i>	A Tamarisk	
<b>Thymeliaceae: Daphne Family</b>		
<i>Daphne gnidium</i>	Mediterranean Mezereon	Alpilles
<b>Ulmaceae: Elm Family</b>		
<i>Ulmus</i> sp.	Elm	Widespread in suitable habitat
<b>Valerianaceae: Valerian Family</b>		
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red Valerian	Alpilles Pont du Gard
<b>MONOCOTYLEDONS</b>		
<b>Araceae: Arum Family</b>		
<i>Arum italicum</i>	Large Cuckoo-pint	E Camargue; Alpilles
<b>Cyperaceae: Sedge Family</b>		
<i>Cladium mariscus</i>	Great Fen-sedge	la Crau
<i>Cyperus difformis</i>	Small-flowered Umbrella Sedge	la Crau
<b>Iridaceae: Iris Family</b>		
<i>Iris foetidus</i>	Stinking Iris	E Camargue
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Flag	W/N Camargue
<b>Juncaceae: Rush Family</b>		
<i>Juncus acutus</i>	Sharp Rush	la Crau
<i>Juncus maritimus</i>	Sea Rush	Camargue
<b>Liliaceae: Lily Family</b>		
<i>Aphyllanthes monspeliensis</i>	Blue Aphyllanthes	Alpilles
<i>Asparagus acutifolius</i>	Spiny Asparagus	Hotel grounds
<i>Asphodelus albus</i>	White Asphodel	Hotel grounds; la Crau
<i>Smilax aspera</i>	Smilax	Hotel grounds; Alpilles
<b>Orchidaceae: Orchids</b>		
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Orchid	W/N Camargue
<i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>	Lizard Orchid	E Camargue
<b>Poaceae (Gramineae): Grasses</b>		
<i>Aegilops geniculata</i>	Aegilops	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant Reed	Camargue; la Crau
<i>Bromus madritensis</i>	Compact Brome	Alpilles
<i>Hordeum murinus</i>	Wall Barley	Pont du Gard
<i>Lagurus ovatus</i>	Hare's-tail	la Crau; Alpilles
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed	Widespread in suitable habitat
<i>Stipa capensis</i>	Mediterranean Needle-grass	la Crau
<b>Typhaceae: Bulrushes</b>		
<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	Lesser Reedmace	E Camargue
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Great Reedmace; Bulrush	Camargue