

Extremadura and Sierra de Gredos

20th to 30th May 2008

Ian Kinley and Dave Thexton

Introduction

Essentially this was a repeat of a trip we'd made in 2001, with the addition of a few days in the Sierra de Gredos. As on our last visit, everything in Monfrague proved very easy to see and the plains near Caceres proved so productive that we felt no need to travel further afield. However, the Sierra de Gredos in contrast was hugely disappointing, no doubt at least partly due to the inclement weather, but, to us, it was very much a poor man's Pyrenees, often birdless for long periods and with most species difficult to find.

There were many highlights: excellent views of Spanish Imperial and Bonelli's Eagles, Black Storks, Eagle Owls and three species of vulture amid the superb scenery of Monfrague; both bustards and both sandgrouse on the plains and, of course, White-rumped Swift. Short-toed Eagles, Booted Eagles and Red Kites all seemed less numerous than on our last trip and Black-eared Wheatears were absent from several sites where we'd found them in the past but, on the plus side, Black-shouldered Kites were noticeably more widespread. One of the few disappointments was failing to see or even hear Red-necked Nightjar, presumably due to the unexpectedly low temperatures, another by-product of which was to deny us the pleasure of sitting outdoors enjoying our traditional late night Brandy, Cicadas chirruping away in the background, after a leisurely evening meal. A visit to this part of the world in spring is about much more than just the birds, it is the richness of the overall dehesa experience which makes this such a special trip and our good memories from 2001 were in no way diminished by what we found in 2008.

Weather

The weather was a huge contrast to that enjoyed, or perhaps endured, on our last visit when temperatures soared to 40C in cloudless skies making birding quite difficult. On this trip, it was much more unsettled with showers most days, longer spells of heavy rain on occasions and temperatures that rarely merited the donning of shorts: indeed, in the Sierra de Gredos we were freezing even with three or four layers on! Birding light was from about 06.45 to 21.45.

Travel

We flew from Liverpool to Madrid with EasyJet (£72 return, booked over the internet, very efficient and virtually hassle-free), picking up a hired Seat Altea four door diesel (we'd paid £173 for a Seat Ibiza but were offered a choice of four vehicles including this free upgrade) at Madrid airport from Europcar (Spain) booked over the internet with CarDelMar www.cardelmar.com and again very smooth and efficient. The Madrid motorway network proved something of a challenge, particularly after leaving the airport in entirely the wrong direction, but we got there in the end without too much hassle.

Accommodation

Apartment attached to the Hotel Carvajal at Torrejon el Rubio
www.apartamentosruraleslacanada.com/flash/pasesfotosportada.swf email

info@apartamentosruraleslacanada.com Seven nights at 55 euros per night for an apartment that was big enough for 3-4 people, booked over the internet, air-conditioned, nice people, big on atmosphere, very comfortable and ideally situated for birding in Monfrague. We stayed here on our last visit and were more than happy to repeat the experience. Nice restaurant in the hotel with a very good value *menu del dia* if you don't mind a bit of adventure with your cuisine – chilled, cold Trout as a main course came as a bit of a surprise! The apartments and restaurant are run as two separate businesses, hence two separate bills at the end of the week and, as only the restaurant accepted credit cards, be aware that you'll need plenty of cash (there is an ATM in the village). The restaurant was closed on Sunday and Monday night but there was a good alternative a few hundred metres away at the Hostal Monfrague, which, with its earlier opening time than the 9pm at Carvajal, also made it possible to combine an evening meal with a Red-necked Nightjar/Eagle Owl evening.

Casa Rural La Vista de Gredos www.lavistadegredos.com email info@lavistadegredos.com Four nights at 60 euros per night for an apartment for 4-5 people (so very roomy for just two of us). Nicely situated between the very expensive Parador de Gredos and the village of Navarredonda de Gredos, it was the first place we came across that seemed to be open and proved a good choice. We appeared to be the first guests of the spring as we had a short wait while the apartment was prepared and the central heating (yes, it was central heating not air conditioning that was needed!) was switched on. Again, credit cards were not accepted but there are a couple of ATMs in nearby Navarredonda. The grounds were quite productive with Honey Buzzard, Hobby, Crested Tit, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Rock Bunting and Firecrest though not the hoped for Citril Finch. There were several hotels, bars and restaurants in nearby Navarredonda though not all had yet opened for the season.

These are not the Costas so don't expect any of the hotel or restaurant staff to speak English.

Sites Visited



Monfrague, Dave Thexton

Monfrague (especially the Castillo, Penafalcon, Miradors at Tajadilla and Bascula and Portilla del Tietar). Little more needs to be said about this well-known and

increasingly well-visited area. Not much had changed since our last trip apart from the addition of a hide at Portillo del Tietar that proved useful in the rain, the tarmac surfacing of the road right up to the last parking area below the Castillo and a bit of 'tarting' up around the parking area at Penafalcon.



Caceres Plains, Dave Thexton

Plains between Santa Marta de Magasca and N521 (Caceres to Trujillo)

This had provided all the typical plains species on our last trip and produced the goods on both our visits again this time. The minor road heading east from the CC912 (between 8 and 9 km north of Caceres) to Santa Marta de Magasca was as rough and potholed as ever but, with little traffic, there was ample opportunity for stopping and scanning. The first five or six kilometres (from the Caceres direction) were the most productive for bustards, sandgrouse and Great Spotted Cuckoos whilst the end nearest Santa Marta had Rollers and Lesser Kestrels thanks to the provision of nestboxes on the telegraph poles.

North Caceres Plains Area of plains north of Caceres accessed from the CC912 and CC67 roads largely between the villages of Santiago del Campo, Hinojal and Talavan and including the Embalse de Talavan. Though we only spent a few hours in this area, it proved rewarding, with an unexpected colony of Collared Pratincoles, two groups of vultures on carcasses, Little Bustard and a Golden Eagle nest.



Embalse de Arrocampo, Ian Kinley

Embalse de Arrocampo (Lakes at Almaraz) Since our last trip, this site has changed considerably and is now a nature reserve with five hides connected by a trail that can be driven or walked. A key to the hides can be obtained free of charge from the information centre on the outskirts of Saucedilla though you do need to supply your passport number. An ideal wet weather venue with a good range of wetland species as well as Black-shouldered Kites. Nearby Saucedilla still hosts a Lesser Kestrel colony in the old church.



Sierra de Gredos, Ian Kinley

Sierra de Gredos Admittedly the inclement weather did not help but we were generally unimpressed. Birding the area around the Parador and the road from Hoyos del Espino up to La Plataforma proved hard work. With the exception of Bonelli's Warblers, Rock and Ortolan Buntings (plus Spanish Ibex) almost everything, especially Rock Thrush and Citril Finch took a lot of finding. We never did find Bluethroat but perhaps our failure was due to the fact that the poor

weather prevented us walking much further than the car park at La Plataforma. If we do go to the Gredos again one day will be enough!

Calera y Chozas area (track north of CM4101, starting 3km west of the village). A terrific area to bird en route to and from Madrid, compact, easily accessible and providing most of the typical plains species such as bustards, sandgrouse, Montagu's Harrier and Stone Curlew plus Rollers and Black-shouldered Kites (these two frequenting the area of dead trees after 8.2km where another track joins). The morning we spent here was one of the most enjoyable of the whole trip.



Embalse de Azutan, Ian Kinley

Embalse de Azutan As with the above site, this provides some super birding en route to and from Madrid. We had time for just an hour or so and were able to cover just one small corner but were still rewarded with a nice range of wetland species that provided a pleasant contrast to the birding of the previous few days.

Whilst en route from Torrejon to Arrocampo, we also made a couple of brief stops at Jaraicejo where the bridge over river on the old NIV road was given as a White-rumped Swift site in one recent trip report but the best bird yielded by our two visits was a Black Stork.

Details and directions to all the sites can be found in *A Birdwatching Guide to Extremadura* by John Muddeman. We also used the Michelin map no.444 Central Spain. Some extra information was gleaned from trip reports on the internet and Mike Hodgson kindly provided some up to date directions (see his report at <http://www.birdtours.co.uk/tripreports/spain/tour17/spain-may-07.htm>)

Daily Itinerary

20th May - Travelled from Liverpool to Madrid and on to Torrejon el Rubio. No birding other than what was seen en route. Overnight at Torrejon el Rubio.

21st May – Birding at Monfrague. Highlights Black Stork, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Black Vulture, White-rumped Swift, Alpine Swift, Orphean Warbler. Daily total 56 species. Overnight at Torrejon el Rubio.



Great Spotted Cuckoo, Dave Thexton

22nd May – Birding on the plains between Santa Marta de Magasca and N521; Monroy and Torrejon el Rubio. Highlights Spanish Imperial Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Black Vulture, Black-shouldered Kite, Lesser Kestrel, Great Bustard, Little Bustard, Quail, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Stone Curlew, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Roller. Daily total 63 species. Overnight at Torrejon el Rubio.



Roller, Dave Thexton

23rd May – Birding at Jaraicejo, Embalse de Arrocampo and Monfrague. Highlights Little Bittern Purple Heron, Night Heron, Black Stork, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Black Vulture, Lesser Kestrel, Hobby, Eagle Owl, Purple Gallinule, Collared Pratincole, Whiskered Tern, Savi's Warbler, Great Reed Warbler. Daily total 71 species. Overnight at Torrejon el Rubio.



Black Vulture, Dave Thexton

24th May – Birding at Monfrague. Highlights Black Stork, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Black Vulture, White-rumped Swift, Alpine Swift, Short-toed Treecreeper, Chough. Daily total 63 species. Overnight at Torrejon el Rubio.



Southern Grey Shrike, Ian Kinley

25th May – Birding on the plains between Santa Marta de Magasca and N521 and North Caceres, Monroy and Torrejon el Rubio. Highlights Black Stork, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Golden Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Booted Eagle, Black Vulture, Black-shouldered Kite, Eagle Owl, Great Bustard, Little Bustard, Quail, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Stone Curlew, Collared Pratincole, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Roller, Western Olivaceous Warbler, Great Reed Warbler. Daily total 82 species. Overnight at Torrejon el Rubio.



Vultures at a carcass, Dave Thexton

26th May – Birding at Monfrague and Torrejon el Rubio. Highlights Black Stork, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Black Vulture, Eagle Owl, Spectacled Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Dartford Warbler, Rock Sparrow. Daily total 53 species. Overnight at Torrejon el Rubio.



Griffon Vulture, Ian Kinley

27th May – Birding at Torrejon el Rubio, Jaraicejo, Embalse de Arrocampo and Sierra de Gredos. Highlights Great White Egret, Little Bittern, Purple Heron, Black Stork, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Booted Eagle, Black-shouldered Kite, Hobby, Quail, Purple Gallinule, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Savi's Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Firecrest, Crested Tit, Crossbill, Red Avadavat. Daily total 87 species. Overnight at Navarredonda de Gredos.



Azure-winged Magpies, Dave Thexton

28th May – Birding at Sierra de Gredos. Highlights Black Vulture, Booted Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Water Pipit, Wryneck, Short-toed Treecreeper, Dartford Warbler, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Firecrest, Ortolan Bunting. Daily total 57 species. Overnight at Navarredonda de Gredos.



Thekla Lark, Dave Thexton

29th May – Birding at Sierra de Gredos. Highlights Black Vulture, Water Pipit, Wryneck, Short-toed Treecreeper, Dartford Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Firecrest, Crested Tit, Rock Thrush, Citril Finch, Ortolan Bunting. Daily total 57 species. Overnight at Navarredonda de Gredos.



Rock Bunting, Dave Thexton

30th May – Birding at Sierra de Gredos, Calera y Chozas and Embalse de Azutan before travelling to Madrid and on to Liverpool. Highlights Great White Egret, Little Bittern, Purple Heron, Night Heron, Short-toed Eagle, Black-shouldered Kite, Hen Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, Great Bustard, Little Bustard, Quail, Purple Gallinule, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Stone Curlew, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Roller, Savi's Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Penduline Tit. Daily total not counted.



Ortolan Bunting, Ian Kinley

Species List

We recorded a total of 152 species. The figures in brackets represent the number of days each species was recorded (e.g. 4/10 means that a species was seen on four days during our 10 day trip – disregarding the first day when no real birding was done) and gives a crude indication of how easy each species was to see. More details are given of the rarer or more interesting species.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (2/10)

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* (4/10)

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (3/10)

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* (2/10) Frequent sightings at Embalse de Arrocampo, mostly of birds in flight with the notable exception of a juvenile standing in the middle of the track right in front of the car on 27th, pointing its bill skyward in the mistaken belief that it was invisible.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (2/10) Small numbers at Embalse de Arrocampo and Embalse de Azutan

Cattle Egret *Bulbulcus ibis* (5/10) Rather scarce with just a few on the plains (largest flock 20 west of Santa Marta de Magasca on 25th) and small numbers at Embalse de Arrocampo. More frequent at Embalse de Azutan due to presence of breeding colony.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* (4/10) Moderate numbers at Embalse de Arrocampo but more numerous at Embalse de Azutan

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* (2/10) Singles at Embalse de Arrocampo on 27th and Embalse de Azutan on 30th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* (3/10)

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* (3/10) Present in good numbers at Embalse de Arrocampo and Embalse de Azutan plus a single near Calera y Chozas on 30th

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* (6/10) Frequent sightings and super views in Monfrague with two occupied nests at Penafalcon, up to five birds often present at Portilla del Tietar, two at Mirador de Tajadilla and two at an unnamed Mirador overlooking the Tajo; other sightings included a single at Jaraicejo on 23rd and 27th.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* (10/10) Common away from Monfrague and the Sierra de Gredos

Gadwall *Anas strepera* (4/10)

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (4/10)

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* (1/10) Two from the balcony of Casa Rural La Vista de Gredos on 28th.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* (4/10) Much more widespread than on our last trip with sightings consisting of a single at Monroy on 22nd and 25th; four juvs (at times perched in the same tree and in the scope at the same time as a Great Spotted Cuckoo) at Embalse de Arrocampo on 27th; one by the side of the N502 just north of Valada on 30th; at least five near Calera y Chozas on 30th, including four displaying and being harried by Rollers in the 'dead trees'.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* (10/10) Very common

Red Kite *Milvus milvus* (7/10) Present in just small numbers at Monfrague, Embalse de Arrocampo and the Sierra de Gredos, having apparently declined in recent years.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (4/10) Seen in small numbers, especially in Monfrague

Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* (9/10) Very common with several nesting colonies in Monfrague (particularly close views at Penafalcon and the Castillo early and late in the day) and birds also widespread on the plains, where seen on carcasses in company with other vultures on several occasions. Also up to 10 in the Sierra de Gredos.

Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus* (9/10) Common in Monfrague and on the Caceres plains, where seen on carcasses in company with other vultures on several occasions, plus up to three in the Sierra de Gredos.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* (6/10) Seen in small numbers at most sites.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* (2/10) Several present at Embalse de Arrocampo, Embalse de Azutan and near Calera y Chozas

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* (1/10) A male near Calera y Chozas on 30th

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* (3/10) Quite common on the Caceres plains and near Calera y Chozas. Adult males were surprisingly scarce though a 'black' individual was seen on North Caceres plains on 25th.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* (5/10)

Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti* (7/10) Frequent sightings and some excellent views around Monfrague, with pairs present near Penafalcon and Portillo del Tietar. In addition, a traditional nest site on a pylon held two young and both adults were usually in attendance.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* (1/10) A tree nest on the North Caceres plains held two young and an adult was seen both in flight and perched nearby.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* (5/10) Seen at most sites but in just small numbers, having apparently declined in recent years.

Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* (2/10) Several sightings of one or two adults at Penafalcon.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* (4/10) Widespread in small numbers with particularly good views at the small colony on the old church in Saucedilla.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (9/10)

Hobby *Falco subbuteo* (3/10) Singles at Saucedilla on 23rd, near Torrejon el Rubio on 27th and in the Sierra de Gredos on 28th.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* (10/10)

Quail *Coturnix coturnix* (5/10) Heard on the Caceres plains, near Monroy, at Embalse de Arrocampo and near Calera y Chozas

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* (1/10) Heard at Embalse de Talavan.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* (5/10)

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio porphyrio porphyrio* (3/10) Numerous and easy to see at Embalse de Arrocampo and smaller numbers at Embalse de Azutan

Coot *Fulica atra* (5/10)

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax* (3/10) Four on the plains west of Santa Marta on 22nd and five (plus two more heard) there on 25th; one on North Caceres plains on 25th; one flew over the N502 just north of Valada on 30th; three seen and two more heard near Calera y Chozas on 30th

Great Bustard *Otis tarda* (3/10) Five on the plains west of Santa Marta on 22nd and nine there on 25th; six (including a male indulging in full blown spectacular display) near Calera y Chozas on 30th.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (4/10) Small numbers at wetland sites.

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oediconemus* (2/10) Small numbers on the plains west of Santa Marta, the North Caceres Plains and near Calera y Chozas

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (2/10) A single at Embalse de Arrocampo on 23rd and at least 11 birds giving stunning views by the roadside south of Hinojal on the North Caceres plains on 25th

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* (2/10)

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* (1/10)

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans* (1/10)

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* (3/10) Common at Embalse de Arrocampo.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* (1/10) Three at Embalse de Arrocampo on 23rd

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (1/10) One at Embalse de Arrocampo on 23rd

Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis* (3/10) A total of 14 seen (all in flight) plus others heard on the plains west of Santa Marta on 22nd and four seen in flight there on 25th; four Calera y Chozas on 30th.

Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata* (3/10) Four seen (including two on the ground) plus more heard on the plains west of Santa Marta on 22nd and a total of eight there on 25th. Heard near Calera Y Chozas on 30th.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* (10/10)

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* (10/10)

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (8/10)

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* (6/10)

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* (4/10) At least three on the plains west of Santa Marta on 22nd and two juvs there on 25th, all giving stunning views; singles at Embalse de Arrocampo on 27th and near Calera y Chozas on 30th.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* (6/10)

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* (1/10) Two perched at entrance to nest hole at Saucedilla on 23rd.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* (3/10) At Portilla del Tietar, the resident pair had two fledged young and our sightings consisted of two juveniles, mostly perched but with the odd short flight, in late afternoon on 23rd, two perched juveniles and an adult flying from the crag at dusk on 25th and a perched juvenile in mid-afternoon on 26th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* (2/10)

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* (1/10) Heard at night at Torrejon el Rubio.

Swift *Apus apus* (10/10) All the 'Swifts' that gave us good enough views for a positive ID proved to be Common

Alpine Swift *Apus melba* (2/10) Widespread in small numbers

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* (2/10) Several sightings of at least two birds around Penafalcon including entering and leaving a cave on 21st and 24th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* (4/10)

Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* (8/10) Relatively small numbers seen.

Roller *Coracias garrulus* (3/10) Seen at a few sites on the plains west of Santa Marta, especially where nestboxes erected on telegraph poles. Some super views of at least six birds in the 'dead trees' near Calera y Chozas on 30th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops* (7/10) Common

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* (2/10) Heard in the Sierra de Gredos on 28th and 29th.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis sharpei* (3/10) Several heard in the Sierra de Gredos.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* (5/10)

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra* (2/10) very common on the plains.

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* (2/10) Relatively small numbers seen on the plains.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* (6/10) Common in suitable habitat.

Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae* (6/10) Common in suitable habitat.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea* (6/10) Common in suitable habitat.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (2/10) Fairly common in the Sierra de Gredos.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* (2/10)

Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris* (10/10) Common wherever nest sites available

Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (10/10)

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* (7/10) Common.

House Martin *Delichon urbica* (10/10)

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* (2/10) Singles in the Sierra de Gredos on 28th and 29th.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava iberiae* (2/10) Two in the Sierra de Gredos on 28th and one on 29th.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* (2/10)

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba* (8/10)

Dipper (Black-bellied) *Cinclus cinclus* (2/10) Singles in the Sierra de Gredos on 28th and 29th.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* (6/10)

Duncock *Prunella modularis* (2/10)

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* (5/10)

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* (8/10) Common in suitable habitat.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* (7/10) Common in Monfrague and the Sierra de Gredos.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* (10/10)

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (2/10) Small numbers in the Sierra de Gredos.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* (4/10) Common in Monfrague.

Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* (1/10) After much scouring, we eventually managed distant views of a singing male at La Plataforma in the Sierra de Gredos on 29th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula* (10/10)

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* (2/10)

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* (4/10)

Fan-tailed Warbler *Cisticola juncidis* (5/10)

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* (3/10) Common at Embalse de Arrocampo and Embalse de Azutan

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* (3/10)

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (4/10) Common at Embalse de Arrocampo and Embalse de Azutan

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais opaca* (1/10) A singing male at Monroy on 25th.

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta* (2/10) Three singing birds near the Parador in the Sierra de Gredos on 27th and one on 29th.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* (3/10) Small numbers in Monfrague and the Sierra de Gredos

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata* (1/10) Good views of a singing male near Villareal de San Carlos in Monfrague on 26th.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* (3/10) Common in Monfrague, present in all suitable habitat, but proved difficult to see most of the time.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* (6/10) Quite scarce.

Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* (1/10) A singing male at Arroyo de la Vid, Monfrague on 21st.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* (3/10)

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* (6/10)

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* (4/10) Quite common in the Sierra de Gredos, mostly around the Parador.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* (1/10)

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapellus* (3/10) Quite common in the Sierra de Gredos.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* (2/10) Several of the distinctive Spanish race in the Sierra de Gredos

Crested Tit *Parus cristatus* (3/10) Small numbers in the Sierra de Gredos, mostly around the Parador

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* (4/10)

Coal Tit *Parus ater* (4/10)

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus* (2/10)

Great Tit *Parus major* (8/10)

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* (4/10)

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* (3/10) Small numbers in Monfrague and the Sierra de Gredos

Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* (1/10) One at Embalse de Azutan on 30th.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* (7/10) Present in small numbers in suitable habitat.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* (5/10) Common.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* Common. (8/10)

Jay *Garrulus glandarius* (3/10)

Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyana* (8/10) Very common in most areas apart from the plains and the Sierra de Gredos. Especially numerous and confiding in Monfrague where they were easily attracted to crumbs at any of the picnic sites, at times hardly waiting for you to put the bread down.

Magpie *Pica pica* (9/10)

Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* (2/10) Two at Penafalcon on 24th and two in the Sierra de Gredos on 29th.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* (5/10)

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone corone* (4/10)

Raven *Corvus corax* (9/10)

Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor* (10/10) Common.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (10/10)

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* (5/10) Locally numerous

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* (1/10) Surprisingly, distant views of several birds at Portillo del Tietar on 26th provided our only sighting.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (10/10)

Serin *Serinus serinus* (10/10) Very common in suitable habitat.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* (2/10)

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* (9/10)

Citril Finch *Serinus citrinella* (1/10) Much searching eventually produced fleeting views of two birds behind the Parador in the Sierra de Gredos on 29th.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* (5/10)

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* (1/10) Two near the Parador in the Sierra de Gredos on 27th.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* (1/10)

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* (6/10) Small numbers seen and heard at several sites in Monfrague.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* (7/10) Numerous and very confiding in Monfrague (particularly at Penafalcon and Portilla del Tietar) and in the Sierra de Gredos.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* (2/10) Common in the Sierra de Gredos.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra* (8/10) Abundant on the plains

Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava* (1/10) At least one at Embalse de Arrocampo on 27th.

Mammals We recorded Spanish Ibex, Beech Marten, Wild Boar, Red Deer, Red Squirrel, Fox, Hare and Rabbit.