



BirdWatchIreland
South Dublin Branch

Branch Trip Report Andalucía: September 2014

Stephen McAvoy



Trip Outline

Sunday 20th September 2014

Our group met in the late afternoon at Dublin Airport and departed for Malaga shortly afterwards. After an uneventful flight, we were met by our guide Godfried and our driver Paco in Malaga Airport. Following a quick dinner, we transferred to the Hotel La Cordoniz ("The Quail") on the outskirts of Tarifa which would be our base for the next few days.



Discussing bird migration at Huerta Grande

Monday 21st September 2014

We started off with a quick visit to the nearby beach of Playa de los Lances, followed by a drive to one of several migration watchpoints located along the coast between Tarifa and Algeciras. In the afternoon, we headed off north to visit the La Brena Natural Park near the town of Vejer de la Frontera.



Castillo de Castellar

Tuesday 22nd September 2014

An earlier start today, with our visit site of the being the centre of Tarifa to look for Common Bulbuls. As on the previous day, we spent an hour or two at one of the nearby migration watchpoints. The lunchtime was spent in the rice plantations of La Janda. We finished the day looking for the re-introduced population of the Critically Endangered Bald Ibis at the Montenmedio Country Club and the Barbate estuary.



View from the Trafico watchpoint across the Straits of Gibraltar towards Morocco

Wednesday 23rd September

With a change of wind direction overnight, we decided to concentrate on the area around Algeciras today to look for more migrant birds of prey, amongst other species. Our first stop was at the Huerta Grande Eco resort to look for migrants such as Western Bonelli's Warbler in the forested



Huerta Grande

areas. From here it was a short drive to the Palmones estuary nature reserve in Algeciras where we spent most of the afternoon. Our last stop was at the Castillo de Castellar with its impressive

views over the Alcornocales National Park and back towards Gibraltar, Algeciras and the Moroccan coast.

Thursday 24th September

Our last full day in Andalucia started early with a drive north to Cadiz Bay, with the first stop being at the Carbonera salinas (“salt lagoons”). This was followed by a short break in the picturesque fishing village of Sancti Petri, before continuing north to the village of Bonanza which lies at the edge Coto Donana National Park. Although covering only a tiny portion of the National Park, the freshwater and saline lagoons provided a good overview of the birdlife of the area.



Tarelo lagoon

Friday 25th of September 2015

Today we started with a second visit to the fields and lagoons of Playa de los Lances, as well as the Trafico migration watchpoint east of Tarifa. All too soon it was time to leave Tarifa and the rest of the day was spent at the Guadalhorce estuary near Malaga Airport. Here we also said goodbye to Godfried and after completing the check-in, had an uneventful journey back to Dublin.



Guadalhorce estuary

Sites Visited



Map 1: Sites in Tarifa: 1-Hotel La Cordoniz, 2-Playa de los Lances, 3-Tarifa, 4-Migration watchpoints

Tarifa

The southernmost town of Spain provides an ideal base for birders looking for migrants in the area and it has also recently become the site of the first breeding pairs of Common Bulbul in Europe. We were lucky enough to see four of the latter, as well as local specialities such as Pallid Swift, Hoopoe, Blue Rock Thrush, as well as Turtle Dove and Yellow-legged Gull.

Playa de los Lances

This sandy beach stretches for almost 7 kilometres along the coast west of Tarifa, with the shallow brackish lagoons and short turf proving ideal for various waders and migrants such as Tawny Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Woodchat Shrike and Wheatear. We enjoyed good views of the endangered Audouin's Gull and Caspian Terns, while Balearic and Cory's Shearwaters were noted passing by offshore.

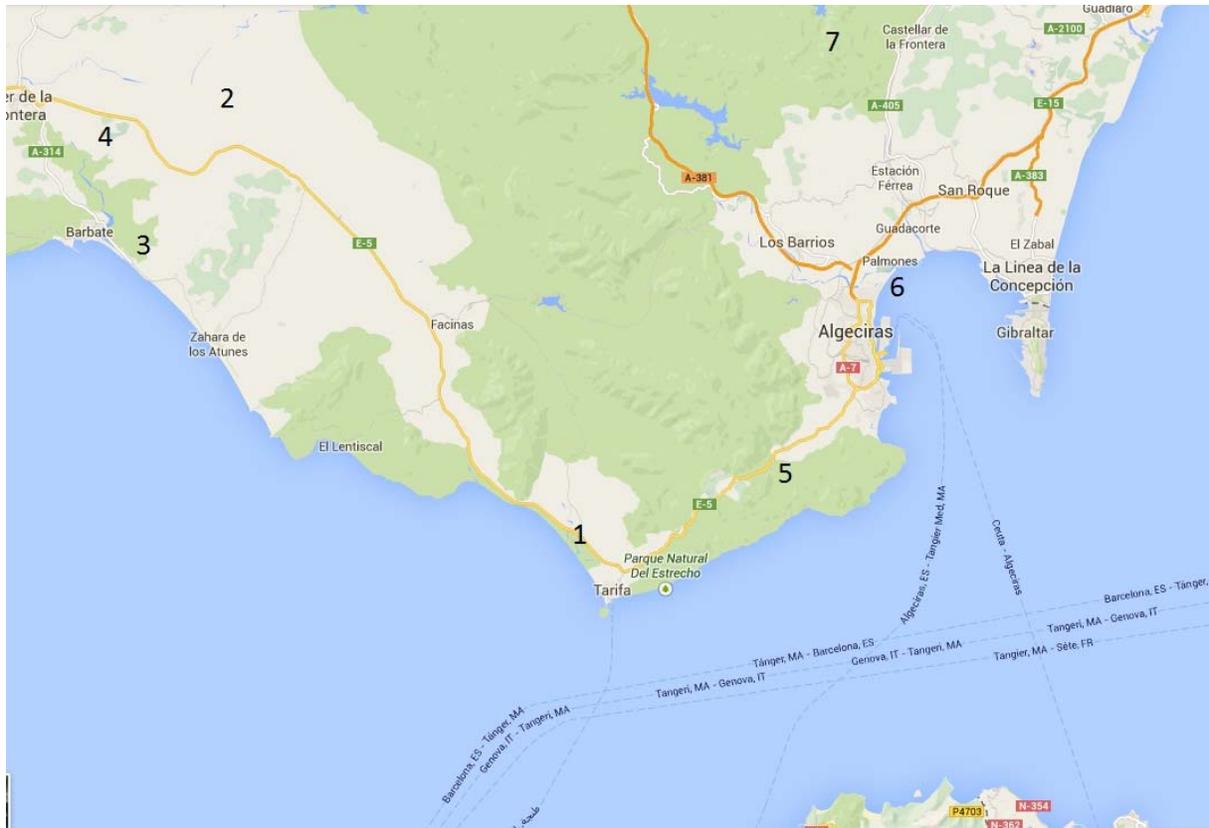
Hotel La Cordoniz

Located about 8 kilometres north of Tarifa, the grounds of the hotel proved to be quite good for birds and other wildlife. The highlight was probably the Tawny Owl heard on one evening, with flocks of migrant Bee-eater, White Stork and birds of prey also noted. The outside lights attracted a variety of colourful moths, which attracted predators such as geckos, tree frogs and even a praying mantis.

Tarifa Migration Watchpoints

Situated along the coast east of Tarifa, the network of watchpoints is used by Spanish ornithologists to monitor the number of birds such as storks and birds of prey migrating across the Straits of Gibraltar in spring and autumn. Much of this migration is highly dependant on favourable winds and we were lucky enough to encounter some good conditions and see some spectacular movements of Black Storks in particular. We also found the rarest species of the trip here in the

form of two Rueppell's Vultures on the final day, as well as an unexpected Harris's Hawk. From the watchpoints we also enjoyed fantastic views across the Straits of Gibraltar to the North African coast and the Rif Mountains.



Map 2: Sites around Tarifa: 1-Tarifa, 2-La Janda, 3-Barbate, 4-Montenmedio, 5-Huerta Grande, 6-Palmones estuary, 7-Castillo de Castellar

Huerta Grande Eco resort

The Huerta Grande Eco resort lies a short distance south-east of Algeciras on the road to Tarifa. One of the main attractions was the densely forested river valley which held resident species such as Grey Wagtail, Wren and the local race of Jay which we did not encounter elsewhere. We also found several migrant warblers such as Isabelline, Melodious and Western Bonelli's, plus good numbers of raptors passing by overhead.

Palmones estuary

This was the small estuary of the Rio de las Canas on the outskirts of Algeciras. As we visited the site with the approaching high tide, we found a good selection of waders, terns and gulls roosting on the remaining sandbanks. At a small nature reserve further upriver, we had good views of hunting Marsh Harrier, roosting Osprey and several Little Terns. A Wryneck was also found amongst the scattered trees and bushes, but proved to be very elusive.

Castillo de Castellar

More than 800 years old, this castle is found within the vast Los Alcornocales National Park north of Algeciras. Used as a retreat by artists since the 1960's, the castle proved to be well worth visiting for its scenic views and interesting architecture. We had some of our best views of raptor migration here, with Short-toed and Booted Eagles flying past at eye-level. A male Blue Rock Thrush sang from a parapet and we also noted several Crag Martins and Alpine Swifts, but did not connect with White-rumped Swift which is regularly seen here. On the way up to the castle from Castellar de la Frontera, we had a brief stop in which we encountered one stunning Monarch butterfly.

La Janda

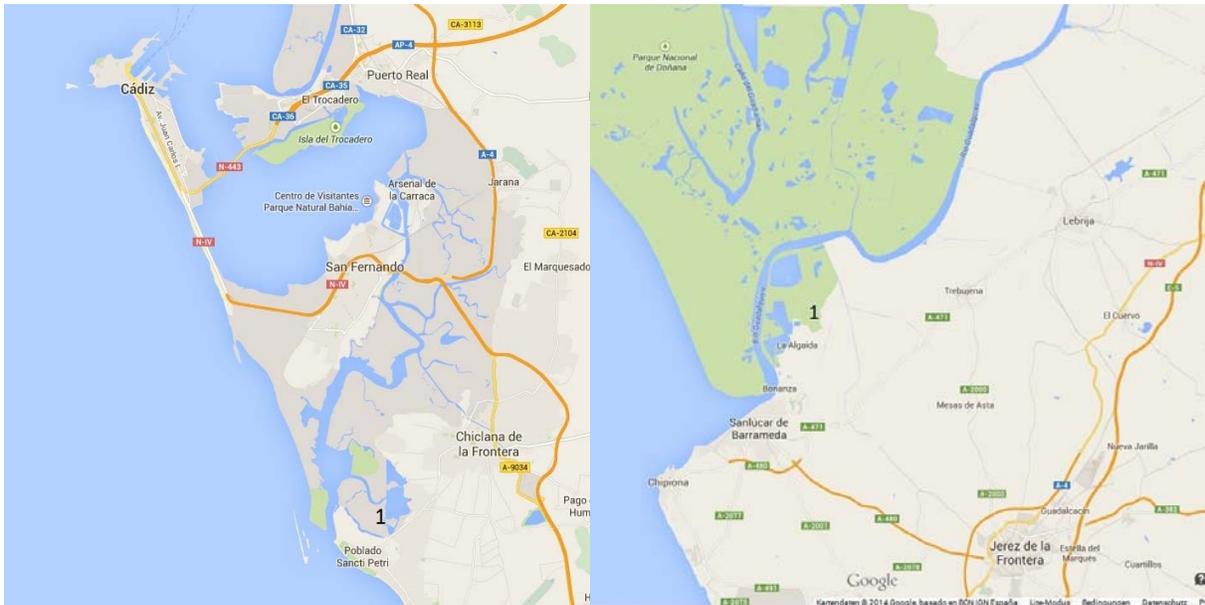
La Janda was once an extensive area of marshland about 30 kilometres north of Tarifa which is currently used for rice production. Despite the loss of many of its former birds, it is still attractive to significant numbers of waterfowl, as well as birds of prey. Some of our highlights here included Black-winged Kite, great views of a Squacco Heron and several Glossy Ibis. Of non-birdy interest were several Zeller's Skippers, a very rare European butterfly.

Barbate

The small town of Barbate is situated beside an extensive area of mudflats some of which was used for salt production. The mixture of habitats attracts a variety of waders, gulls and terns and despite arriving at high tide, we were not disappointed. Probably the most interesting species noted here was the flock of re-introduced Bald Ibis feeding in a cattle pen. Formerly widespread in Europe and North Africa, the wild population is restricted to a handful of sites in Morocco and a remnant in Syria. However, there are ongoing conservation projects in Austria and Spain. Other notable sightings included several Stone Curlews, three Common Terns and Kentish Plover, plus good numbers Yellow Wagtail, Short-toed Lark and Crimson Speckled Moths.

Montenmedio Country Club

The fairways of the Montenmedio Country Club are a regular haunt of the Bald Ibis flock, though we did not manage to see them here. There was consolation in the form of a Little Owl flushed from a roosting spot, as well as Cleopatra and Swallowtail butterflies.



Map 3: Sites in Cadiz: 1-Sancti Petri

Map 4: Sites in Cadiz: 1-Tarelo Lagoon

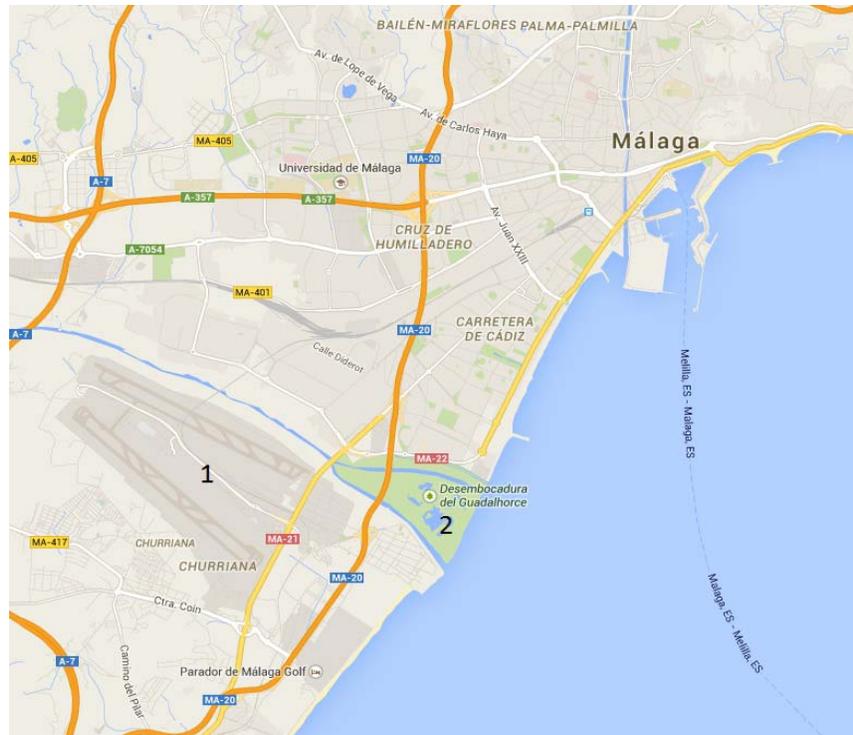
Salinas de Carbonera and Sancti Petri

Located about 15 kilometres south of the major port city of Cadiz, the Salinas de Carbonera are an extensive area of salt pans within the Sancti Petri estuary. We added several wader species to our trip list including an elusive Little Stint, Black and Bar-tailed Godwits, while several Caspian Terns were hunting for fish over the ponds. Unexpectedly, the salt ponds were also good for migrants with several Whinchats found, as well as one stunning adult Bluethroat.

Tarelo Lagoon

This small lagoon is part of the Coto Donana National Park and is one of the best sites for seeing the two most sought after duck species of the region – Marbled and White-headed Ducks. Thankfully, we were not disappointed, noting no less than 19 of the former and 4 of the latter.

Further notable species included Red Kite, hundreds of Greater Flamingos on the nearby salt pans, Night Heron and best of all, several Mediterranean Chamaeleons.



Map 5: Sites in Malaga: 1-Malaga Airport, 2-Guadalhorce estuary

Guadalhorce estuary

Located conveniently close to Malaga Airport, the nature reserve contains several ponds mixed with scrub. On the ponds, we noted two White-headed Ducks, plus a few of the commoner waders and ducks, while several flocks of Monk Parakeet were seen flying over scrub. Offshore, we had very distant views of Gannets and Cory's Shearwaters, while a Mediterranean Gull was a good find amongst the hundreds of Black-headed Gulls resting on the sea.

Species Recorded

In the course of our trip we recorded 154 bird species, including most of the region's specialities such as Marbled and White-headed Ducks, Common Bulbul and Bald Ibis. A full species list is given below, including notes on a few of the more distinctive subspecies.

(1) Little Grebe – *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Several were seen at the Tarelo Lagoon at Bonanza on the 24th of September, as well as in the Guadalhorce wetlands in Malaga the next day.

(2) Black-necked Grebe – *Podiceps nigricollis*

One gave good views close to the beach at Los Barrios near Algeciras on the 23rd. Several were also present at the Tarelo lagoon on the 24th.

(3) Great Crested Grebe – *Podiceps cristatus*

Three were found at the Bonanza salt lagoons on the 24th of September.

(4) Cory's Shearwater – *Calonectris borealis/diomedea*

Several were noted flying in the Straits of Gibraltar from the Trafico watch point and the Playa de los Lances. The species was recently split into two species – Cory's (*Calonectris borealis*) and Scopoli's (*Calonectris diomedea*) Shearwaters. The former breeds in the Atlantic, including Madeira and the Canary Islands, while Scopoli's replaces Cory's in the Mediterranean. Differences between the two species are slight (different patterning on the primary feathers on the underwing) and only noticeable at close range. As both species occur in the Straits of Gibraltar at this time of year, we may have observed both.

(5) Balearic Shearwater – *Puffinus mauretanicus*

As with the previous species, noted from the Trafico watch point on the 22nd and from Playa de los Lances on the 25th. Several very distant birds were also seen from the beach of the Guadalhorce wetlands in Malaga. This Critically Endangered species breeds on a handful of islands in the Balearic Islands, but birds disperse widely through the Straits of Gibraltar into the eastern Atlantic, with a few observed from coastal headlands in Ireland every year.

(6) Gannet – *Morus bassanus*

Several seen in the Straits of Gibraltar from Trafico, as well as from the beach at the Guadalhorce wetlands.

(7) Great Cormorant – *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Noted at several wetland sites during the trip.

(8) Night Heron – *Nycticorax nycticorax*

About 10 to 15 Night Herons of various ages were seen perched in trees at the Tarelo lagoon on the 24th of September.

(9) Squacco Heron – *Ardeola ralloides*

One was seen feeding in a small channel at the La Janda rice fields, flying very close past the group at one stage.

(10) Cattle Egret – *Bubulcus ibis*

Widespread and noted on all days of the trip.

(11) Little Egret – *Egretta garzetta*

As with the previous species, noted on all days at various wetland sites.

(12) Great Egret – *Egretta alba*

Our first sighting was of one seen briefly in flight at the Sanct Petri estuary on the 24th, but several more gave much better views at the Bonanza salt lagoons later that day.

(13) Grey Heron – *Ardea cinerea*

Widespread and noted on all days of the trip.

(14) White Stork – *Ciconia ciconia*

Several large flocks were seen resting at wetland sites such as the La Janda rice fields, with two flocks of 50 to 60 birds each seen flying south towards Morocco over Playa de los Lances on the 25th. One of the birds seen at La Janda had been fitted with a transmitter to track its migration.

(15) Black Stork – *Ciconia nigra*

Noted on four days of the trip. The first sighting was of a group of around 150 migrants heading out towards North Africa near Tarifa on the 21st. We had further sightings of 36 flying over Huerta Grande on the 23rd and of two at the Bonanza salt lagoons, as well as several more near Tarifa on our final day.

(16) Glossy Ibis – *Plegadis falcinellus*

Several gave good but distant views at our lunch stop in the La Janda rice fields.

(17) Bald Ibis – *Geronticus eremita*

We found one flock of 21 Bald Ibis feeding in a dry field amongst cattle at the Barbate estuary on the 22nd. All of these birds are part of a local re-introduction programme to preserve this endangered species. Once widespread throughout Europe, the only wild population is now found in south-western Morocco, numbering around 60 pairs. The small population discovered in Syria as recently as 2002 may also still survive, but the precise status remains unknown due to the ongoing local conflict. The causes for the marked historic and recent declines are not fully known.

(18) Spoonbill – *Platalea leucorodia*

Several noted at wetland sites such as the Barbate estuary, Palmones river estuary and at the Bonanza salt lagoons.



Spoonbills in flight

(19) Greater Flamingo – *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Very common in the salt pans around Cadiz Bay, with good views also of this unusual-looking species at the Bonanza salt lagoons.

(20) Mallard – *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common at the various wetland sites around Cadiz Bay on the 24th of September, with a few present at the Guadalhorce wetlands the next day.

(21) Gadwall – *Anas strepera*

Fairly common at the Tarelo lagoon and at the Guadalhorce estuary.

(22) Pintail – *Anas acuta*

One was seen at the Tarelo lagoon.

(23) Shoveler – *Anas clypeata*

Common at the Tarelo lagoon. Also observed on one of the ponds at the Guadalhorce estuary.

(24) Marbled Duck – *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

A total of 19 Marbled Ducks was present at the Tarelo lagoon on the 24th of September. Formerly much more widespread, the European breeding population is now confined to Iberia and is estimated to fluctuate between 30 and 200 pairs annually. Also known as Marbled Teal, it shows behavioural and physical characters of both dabbling (such as Mallard) and diving (e.g. Tufted Duck) ducks.

(25) Common Teal – *Anas crecca*

At least one Common Teal was seen at the Tarelo lagoon, with three present at the Guadalhorce estuary.

(26) Garganey – *Anas querquedula*

One female or juvenile was well hidden amongst other ducks at the Tarelo lagoon on the 24th.

(27) Pochard – *Aythya ferina*

Several were noted at the Tarelo lagoon, as well as at the Guadalhorce wetlands.

(28) White-headed Duck – *Oxyura leucocephala*

We had good views of three females and an drake at the Tarelo lagoon, as well as of two females at the Guadalhorce estuary. As with Marbled Duck, the entire European population is restricted to southern and eastern Spain numbering around 250 to 500 pairs. The White-headed Duck is closely related to the much more numerous Ruddy Duck found in North America, and introduced populations of the latter have interbred with White-headed Ducks, but conservation measures have recently been taken to reduce Ruddy Duck numbers in Europe.

(29) Rueppell's Vulture – *Gyps rueppellii*

Two immature birds were seen with a group of 50 to 60 Griffon Vultures from the Trafico watch point on our last day in Tarifa. Found in sub-Saharan Africa, one or two Rueppell's Vultures have been seen annually around Tarifa, both in spring and autumn. With several recent records of birds visiting Griffon Vulture colonies throughout Spain, there is a chance this species may begin breeding in Europe in the near future.

(30) Egyptian Vulture – *Neophron percnopterus*

Several mainly immature birds were noted from the Tarifa migration watch point on the first day, as

well as at Huerta Grande on the 23rd.

(31) Osprey – *Pandion haliaetus*

Seen on all days of the trip. Our best views were saved for the last day, when we watched a juvenile trying to catch fish at a lagoon at Playa de los Lances, though remaining unsuccessful after nine or ten attempts.

(32) Short-toed Eagle – *Circaetus gallicus*

Migrant Short-toed Eagles were seen on all days of our trip, with the majority along the coast between Tarifa and Algeciras. One was seen with a recently caught snake at the La Janda ricefields.

(33) Booted Eagle – *Aquila pennata*

This was probably the most common raptor species seen on our trip, with large numbers noted daily: mainly in coastal areas, but also further inland at the Castillo de Castellar in the Alcornocales National Park.



Osprey

(34) Red Kite – *Milvus milvus*

Our only Red Kite of the trip was one seen distantly at the Bonanza salt lagoons on the 24th.

(35) Black Kite – *Milvus migrans*

Small flocks of migrants were noted on three days of the trip, all along the coast between Tarifa and Algeciras.

(36) Marsh Harrier – *Circus aeruginosus*

Several were seen at the La Janda rice fields and at the Palmones estuary near Algeciras.

(37) Montagu's Harrier – *Circus pygargus*

One or two were seen at the La Janda rice fields on the 22nd of September.

(38) Common Buzzard – *Buteo buteo*

One was seen from the bus in the agricultural area between Jerez de la Frontera and Bonanza on the 24th, with another one or two seen from the bus the next day.

(39) Honey Buzzard – *Pernis apivorus*

Small flocks noted at several migration watch points on all but one day of our trip.

(40) Sparrowhawk – *Accipiter nisus*

Five or six seen around the Trafico watch point on the 21st, with further sightings of single birds at Huerta Grande amongst other sites.

(41) Goshawk – *Accipiter gentilis*

One was seen very briefly flying inland at the Trafico watch point on our first visit to the site. Goshawk is only a scarce passage migrant around the headlands of the Straits of Gibraltar in spring and autumn.

(42) Black-winged Kite – *Elanus caeruleus*

A single adult Black-winged Kite gave good views flying over the La Janda rice fields on the 22nd of September.

(43) Lesser Kestrel – *Falco naumanni*

Several small flocks were noted at one of the migration watch points on the first day, with another group of five or six seen from the bus a few kilometres north of our hotel on the 22nd.

(44) Common Kestrel – *Falco tinnunculus*

There were several sightings of single birds on all days of our trip.

(45) Peregrine – *Falco peregrinus brookei*

One was seen flying over the Huerta Grande migration watch point on the 23rd of September, with another seen flying over the Trafico migration watchpoint on the final day. Peregrines breeding in the Mediterranean basin are slightly darker and smaller than those breeding in western and northern Europe and are grouped in a different subspecies (*brookei*).

(46) Harris's Hawk – *Parabuteo unicinctus*

One escaped Harris's Hawk with jesses was seen flying over the Trafico watchpoint on the last day of the trip. The species is popular with falconers and escaped individuals are occasionally seen outside of its native range in the Americas.

(47) Pheasant – *Phasianus colchius*

One was seen from the bus on the drive between Tarifa and Barbate on the 22nd.

(48) Red-legged Partridge – *Alectoris rufa*

Surprisingly, our only sighting during the trip was of a single bird seen flying away from the group in the La Janda rice fields.

(49) Water Rail – *Rallus aquaticus*

A single Water Rail was heard calling in the La Janda rice fields.

(50) Moorhen – *Gallinula chloropus*

Several were noted in the La Janda rice fields, the Tarelo lagoon in Cadiz and the Guadalhorce wetlands.

(51) Common Coot – *Fulica atra*

As with Moorhen, Coots were noted at several wetland sites during our trip.

(52) Purple Swamphen – *Porphyrio porphyrio*

One was seen from the bus near the village of Bonanza on the 24th.

(53) Avocet – *Recurvirostra avosetta*

About 10 to 15 of these elegant waders were seen at the Bonanza salt lagoons, albeit rather distantly and in strong heat haze.

(54) Black-winged Stilt – *Himantopus himantopus*

Fairly common to common at most wetland sites visited during our trip.

(55) Stone Curlew – *Burhinus oedichnismus*

Seven Stone Curlews gave excellent views at one salt lagoon at the Barbate estuary on the 22nd, with one or two seen at the Trafico watchpoint on the last day of the trip.

(56) Common Ringed Plover – *Charadrius hiaticula*

Noted on all days of the trip at wetland sites visited.

(57) Little Ringed Plover – *Charadrius dubius*

Two or three were present amongst other waders at the Tarelo lagoon on the 24th and at the Guadalhorce estuary the next day.

(58) Kentish Plover – *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Several of these charismatic waders were seen at the Barbate estuary, Playa de los Lances and the Tarelo lagoon amongst other sites.

(59) Grey Plover – *Pluvialis squaterola*

Several summer plumaged birds gave good views at the Sancti Petri lagoons, with further sightings at several other coastal sites.

(60) Sanderling – *Calidris alba*

Noted at several coastal estuaries, such as Playa de los Lances.

(61) Knot – *Calidris canutus*

Several were present at the Palmones river estuary, including one bird moulting out of summer plumage. One was also seen at the Sancti Petri lagoons and at Playa de los Lances.

(62) Turnstone – *Arenaria interpres*

Noted at Playa de los Lances and on the mudflats at our lunch stop in Sancti Petri on the 24th.

(63) Dunlin – *Calidris alpina*

Common at the Palmones river estuary, as well as at the various wetland sites around Cadiz.

(64) Curlew Sandpiper – *Calidris ferruginea*

Noted at several wetland sites, for example the Sancti Petri lagoons and Palmones river estuary.

(65) Little Stint – *Calidris minuta*

Two or three gave frustratingly brief views feeding with Dunlin and other small waders in the Sancti Petri lagoons.

(66) Green Sandpiper – *Tringa ochropus*

Our first Green Sandpiper was one seen flying over the La Janda rice fields on the 22nd, with several also giving good views at the Tarelo lagoon.

(67) Redshank – *Tringa totanus*

Noted on all days of the trip at several wetland sites.

(68) Greenshank – *Tringa nebularia*

As with Redshank, noted at several estuaries.

(69) Black-tailed Godwit – *Limosa limosa*

Small flocks were seen at the Sancti Petri lagoons, as well as at the Guadalhorce estuary in Malaga.

(70) Bar-tailed Godwit – *Limosa lapponica*

Several Bar-tailed Godwits were noted roosting with other waders at the Palmones river estuary on the 23rd, with several more seen at the Sancti Petri lagoons.

(71) Curlew – *Numenius arquata*

A handful seen at the Sancti Petri lagoons proved to be the only Curlews to be seen on our trip.

(72) Whimbrel – *Numenius phaeopus*

Noted on all days of our trip, with a few seen at various coastal sites such as the Trafico watch point and Playa de los Lances.

(73) Snipe – *Gallinago gallinago*

Two or three gave good views feeding in one of the lagoons at the Guadalhorce estuary on the final day of the trip.

(74) Black-headed Gull – *Larus ridibundus*

Widespread and seen at most coastal sites visited, with several hundred present at the beach of the Guadalhorce estuary.

(75) Slender-billed Gull – *Larus genei*

Several were seen distantly at the salt pans beside the Tarelo lagoon on the 24th.

(76) Mediterranean Gull – *Larus melanocephalus*

A group of at least 21 birds was noted roosting at the Palmones river estuary on the 23rd, of which one was ringed. We had further sightings of this species at the Barbate and Guadalhorce estuaries.

(77) Audouin's Gull – *Larus audouinii*

We had good views of Audouin's Gulls at the Playa de los Lances and at one of the salt lagoons at the Barbate estuary. Entirely confined to the Mediterranean as a breeding species, it has recovered from a low of just 1,000 pairs in the 1960's to a population of around 20,000 in the last few years.

(78) Lesser Black-backed Gull – *Larus fuscus (graelisii/intermedius)*

Several Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen at the Barbate estuary and at the Sancti Petri lagoons. The western Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts are one of the main migration routes of

Lesser Black-backed Gulls breeding in Ireland (subspecies *graelsii*) and western Europe (both subspecies *graelsii* and *intermedius*).

(79) Yellow-legged Gull – *Larus michahellis*

Very common along the coast around Tarifa. Similar in appearance to the Herring Gull found in Ireland, Yellow-legged Gull replaces this species in southern and eastern Europe.

(80) Little Tern – *Sternula albifrons*

One or two were seen distantly at the Barbate estuary on the 22nd, though we had slightly better views the next day at the Palmones river estuary.

(81) Sandwich Tern – *Sterna sandvicensis*

Several noted at most coastal sites visited, including a roosting flock of around 30 birds at the Palmones river estuary.

(82) Common Tern – *Sterna hirundo*

Three Common Terns were seen roosting with other terns and gulls at the Barbate estuary.

(83) Caspian Tern – *Sterna caspia*

Several of these over sized terns were seen at Playa de los Lances, the Sancti Petri lagoons and at the Bonanza salt lagoons.

(84) Feral Pigeon – *Columba livia domestica*

Common and seen daily.

(85) Woodpigeon – *Columba palumbus*

Several were noted in more wooded inland areas around Tarifa.

(86) Collared Dove – *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common and seen daily.

(87) Turtle Dove – *Streptopelia turtur*

Noted at a few sites, for example the central park in Tarifa and the Trafico migration watch point, but in all cases the birds disappeared out of view very quickly. The species is declining rapidly in Europe through a combination of overhunting during migration and habitat loss.

(88) Tawny Owl – *Strix aluco*

One was heard calling several times at our hotel on the 23rd, but unfortunately there was no repeat performance the following night.

(89) Little Owl – *Athene noctua vidallii*

One was flushed from a day time roost in the Montenmedio Country Club and seen by only three fortunate observers.

(90) Monk Parakeet – *Nandayus nenday*

Native to South America, we saw several small flocks of Monk Parakeet flying over the Guadalhorce estuary.

(91) Common Swift – *Apus apus*

A few were seen on almost all days of the trip.

(92) Pallid Swift – *Apus pallidus*

The first Pallid Swift of the trip was noted flying over Tarifa on the 22nd. We had further sightings of Pallid Swifts at the Trafico and Huerta Grande watch points.

(93) Alpine Swift – *Apus melba*

On the 22nd and 24th, we had several flocks of more than 50 Alpine Swifts flying over the Trafico migration watch point.

(94) Kingfisher – *Alcedo atthis*

A single Kingfisher flew past the group at our first stop in the La Janda rice fields, and we had further sightings of this colourful species at the Tarelo lagoon and the Guadalhorce estuary.

(95) Bee-eater – *Merops apiaster*

We saw small flocks of migrating Bee-eaters flying over the Tarifa watch point on the first day, with further sightings at our hotel in Tarifa as well as in the la Janda rice fields.

(96) Hoopoe – *Upupa epops*

Single Hoopoes were noted flying over Tarifa, at the Barbate estuary and at Sancti Petri.

(97) Great Spotted Woodpecker – *Dendrocopus major hispanus*

One was heard calling at the Castillo de Castellar in the Alcornocales Natural Park on the 23rd. The subspecies *hispanus* is found only in Portugal and mainland Spain.

(98) Wryneck – *Jynx torquilla*

We got typically brief views of this elusive species at the nature reserve beside the Palmones river estuary. Thankfully, with some patience, most of us managed to get some views of the bird.

(99) Crested Lark – *Galerida cristata pallida*

Common in the open countryside around Tarifa, especially in the pastures around the Playa de los Lances. The subspecies *pallida* is restricted to Iberia.

(100) Short-toed Lark – *Calandrella brachydactyla*

One was heard flying over the Trafico migration watch point on the 22nd. The same day we had better views of one at the salt pans at the Barbate estuary, with a few more seen at Playa de los Lances on the first and the last days of the trip.

(101) Calandra Lark – *Melanocorypha calandra*

One was seen briefly on the first day of the trip in the grassland beside Playa de los Lances.

(102) Sand Martin – *Riparia riparia*

Noted in small numbers migrating with other swallows and martins on all days of the trip.

(103) Crag Martin – *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Several were seen around the Castillo de Castellar in the Alcornocales Natural Park while looking for White-rumped Swifts, with a few also seen on the first day.

(104) Barn Swallow – *Hirundo rustica*

Migrants were commonly seen at most sites visited during our trip.

(105) Red-rumped Swallow – *Hirundo daurica*

Not as common as Barn Swallow, but a few were still noted at sites such as Playa de los Lances and the Trafico watch point.

(106) House Martin – *Delichon urbicum*

A few seen with other swallow species.

(107) Tawny Pipit – *Anthus campestris*

We had good views of several migrants at the Trafico watch point and at the Playa de los Lances and we recorded this species on all days of the trip.

(108) Tree Pipit – *Anthus trivialis*

Several Tree Pipits were heard flying over at the Trafico watch point amongst other sites.

(109) White Wagtail – *Motacilla alba*

Surprisingly few seen during our trip. The only sightings were at Playa de los Lances on the first and last days of the trip, as well as at the Tarelo lagoon.

(110) Yellow Wagtail – *Motacilla flava*

Yellow Wagtails were encountered on four out of five days of the trip. We saw large numbers at Playa de los Lances and the Barbate estuary. Yellow Wagtail has many different subspecies within Europe, as well as intergrades between these, which further complicates identification to subspecific level. However, we did record a few individuals which belonged to the Blue-headed (*Motacilla flava flava*) population found throughout central Europe and the Iberian (*Motacilla flava iberiae*) population.

(111) Grey Wagtail – *Motacilla cinerea*

One was heard at the Trafico migration watch point on the 22nd with further sightings in Huerta Grande and at Sancti Petri.

(112) Wren – *Troglodytes troglodytes kabyloorum*

One was heard at the Trafico watch point on the 22nd. Several more were noted in the woodland of Huerta Grande the next day. The subspecies *kabyloorum* is found throughout southern Spain, north Africa and the Balearic Islands.

(113) Robin – *Erithacus rubecula*

Several were seen in the wooded grounds of Huerta Grande, as well as in the woodlands around Castillo de Castellar.

(114) Bluethroat – *Luscinia svecica*

One adult male gave only occasionally brief views in the vegetation along one of the salt pans at Sancti Petri, but was eventually seen well by most participants.

(115) Common Redstart – *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Two sightings of single birds. The first was in central Tarifa while looking for the Common Bulbuls, with another giving good views at Playa de los Lances on our final morning.

(116) Northern Wheatear – *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Migrants were noted at several sites, including the Trafico migration watch point, Barbate estuary and Playa de los Lances.

(117) Stonechat – *Saxicola torquatus*

Fairly common in farmland areas, such as around Playa de los Lances and Barbate estuary.

(118) Whinchat – *Saxicola rubetra*

Several single birds were seen during the trip, for example at the Trafico migration watch point on the 22nd and at Sancti Petri on the 24th.

(119) Blue Rock Thrush – *Monticola solitarius*

One was seen briefly at the last sited visited on the 22nd, but we had much better views of a male in the ramparts of the Castillo de Castellar the next day.

(120) Blackbird – *Turdus merula*

Recorded on all days of the trip in small, for example in central Tarifa on the 22nd and at Huerta Grande.

(121) Cetti's Warbler – *Cettia cetti*

Singing Cetti's Warblers were heard on all days of the trip, and glimpsed briefly in flight.

(122) Blackcap – *Sylvia atricapilla*

During the trip, Blackcaps were noted at Tarifa, the Trafico migration watch point and Huerta Grande, amongst other sites.

(123) Common Whitethroat – *Sylvia communis*

One unfortunate juvenile was seen being caught by a cat in central Tarifa on the 22nd. Although not pleasant to witness, it did highlight the dangers that migrating birds face on their journey to and from their breeding grounds. The next day, one gave good views perched in a hedgerow in Huerta Grande.

(124) Sardinian Warbler – *Sylvia melanocephala*

Common and heard on all days of the trip. Three birds gave good views in scrub at the Trafico migration watch point.

(125) Zitting Cisticola – *Cisticola juncidis cisticola*

Very common in the La Janda rice fields, as well as at the Sancti Petri salt pans and Playa de los Lances. The subspecies *cisticola* is found throughout the Iberian peninsula and North Africa.

(126) Melodious Warbler – *Hippolais polyglotta*

One gave brief views in the woodland of Huerta Grande.

(127) Isabelline Warbler – *Iduna opaca*

We had brief views of one foraging in a tree in Huerta Grande on the 23rd. This species was recently separated from Eastern Olivaceous Warbler and renamed from Western Olivaceous Warbler to Isabelline Warbler; both species were also moved from the genus *Hippolais* to the genus *Iduna*.

(128) Willow Warbler – *Phylloscopus trochilus*

One or two were present at Huerta Grande, with a few more seen at other sites.

(129) Iberian Chiffchaff – *Phylloscopus ibericus*

As with the previous three species, our only sighting of Iberian Chiffchaff was in the woodlands of

Huerta Grande. Very similar to our (Common) Chiffchaff in appearance, but peak migration is earlier for Iberian Chiffchaff (September) than Common Chiffchaff (October- November).

(130) Western Bonelli's Warbler – *Phylloscopus bonellii*

A single Bonelli's Warbler was noted at Huerta Grande, and the only warbler species to give good, prolonged views to all at this site.

(131) Firecrest – *Regulus ignicapillus*

Several gave good close views in the woodland of Huerta Grande in a mixed flock with Crested Tits. One or two were also heard in the woodland surrounding Castillo de Castellar.

(132) Spotted Flycatcher – *Musciapa striata*

Migrant Spotted Flycatchers were noted in the woodland beside our hotel, as well as at Tarifa and the Palmones river estuary.

(133) Pied Flycatcher – *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Pied Flycatchers were noted on four days of the trip, including one giving good views in the woodland close to the hotel.

(134) Great Tit – *Parus major corsus*

One or two were noted in the woodlands of Huerta Grande. The subspecies “*corsus*” is found in Portugal, southern Spain and Corsica.

(135) Blue Tit – *Cyanistes caeruleus ogliastrae*

Seen on four days of the trip, including at Huerta Grande. The subspecies “*ogliastrae*” is found throughout southern Spain and on Corsica and Sardinia.

(136) Crested Tit – *Lophophanes cristatus weigoldi*

We had good views of a pair of feeding birds along the trails in Huerta Grande. The subspecies “*weigoldi*” is found in Portugal, southern and central Spain.

(137) Long-tailed Tit – *Aegithalos caudatus irbii*

One was heard calling in the woodland of Huerta Grande, but could not be relocated. The subspecies *irbii* is found in Portugal, central and southern Spain, as well as on Corsica.

(138) Short-toed Treecreeper – *Certhia brachydactyla*

Widespread and noted on all days of the trip. Heard on several days in the woodland around our hotel in Tarifa, as well as at sites such as Huerta Grande and Sancti Petri.

(139) Woodchat Shrike – *Lanius senator*

Single juveniles were seen on our visits to Playa de los Lances on the first and last days of the trip.

(140) Common Bulbul – *Pycnonotus barbatus*

Although it took a while, we eventually had fantastic views of four birds in central Tarifa. First noted in 2012, one pair of Common Bulebuls bred in 2013 and two in 2014, the first time the species has done so in Europe. The species is common just across the Straits in northern Morocco and this looks the most likely origin for the recent arrivals which may possibly colonise further parts of southern Spain.

(141) Magpie – *Pica pica melanotos*

Our only Magpie of the trip was seen from the bus near Sancti Petri on the 24th. The subspecies

melanotos is endemic to Iberia.

(142) Jay – *Garrulus glandarius fasciatus*

Several were heard in the woodlands of Huerta Grande. The subspecies *fasciatus* is restricted to southern Spain and Portugal.

(143) Jackdaw – *Corvus monedula*

Seen at La Janda, around the Barbate estuary, as well as from the bus near the hotel.

(144) Raven – *Corvus corax hispanus*

Observed on three days of the trip, for example two flying over the La Janda rice fields on the 22nd. The subspecies *hispanus* is endemic to Iberia.

(145) Spotless Starling – *Sturnus unicolor*

Common and seen each day. Several gave good views every morning on wires outside our hotel.

(146) House Sparrow – *Passer domesticus balearoibericus*

Common and seen on all days of the trip. The subspecies *balearoibericus* is found around the northern coast of the Mediterranean.

(147) Spanish Sparrow – *Passer hispaniolensis*

Several large flocks were present in the rice fields of La Janda.

(148) Common Waxbill – *Estrilda astrild*

Common in the fields around the Tarelo lagoon at Bonanza. Native to central and southern Africa, Common Waxbills have been breeding in southern Spain since the 1970's following escapes from collections and/or deliberate introductions.

(149) Chaffinch – *Fringilla coelebs balearica*

Common in the woodland of Huerta Grande. The subspecies *balearica* is present throughout Iberia and on the Balearic Islands.

(150) Greenfinch – *Carduelis chloris aurantiiventris*

Observed on four days of the trip, such as at Huerta Grande and the Trafico watchpoint on the last day. The subspecies *aurantiiventris* is found around the coasts of the Mediterranean.

(151) Goldfinch – *Carduelis carduelis parva*

The commonest finch species noted during our trip and seen on all five days. The subspecies *parva* occurs in the western Mediterranean basin.

(152) Linnet – *Carduelis cannabina*

One or two were noted at the La Janda rice fields on the 22nd, with more seen at Sancti Petri.

(153) Serin – *Serinus serinus*

One flock of five or six birds gave good views perched in a tree in Huerta Grande, and we had further sightings of this species at the Tarelo lagoon and at our hotel.

(154) Corn Bunting – *Miliaria calandra*

Several were present in the La Janda rice fields, and we also found several large flocks at the Playa de los Lances.

Other Wildlife

Unlike our previous trips to Spain, mammals were in short supply and the only native species seen was Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and the only other species was the introduced American Mink (*Neovison vison*), noted by several participants. Butterflies were much more in evidence and we noted a total of 18 species, including such spectacular species as Swallowtail (*Papilio machao*), Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) and Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jasius*). See the table below for the full species list:

Swallowtail (<i>Papilio machao</i>)	Monarch (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)
Green-veined White (<i>Pieris napi</i>)	Two-tailed Pasha (<i>Charaxes jasius</i>)
Clouded Yellow (<i>Colias hyale</i>)	Red Admiral (<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>)
Berger's Clouded Yellow (<i>Colias sareptensis</i>)	Meadow Brown (<i>Maniola jurtina</i>)
Cleopatra (<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>)	Speckled Wood (<i>Pararge aegeria</i>)
Wood White (<i>Leptidea sinapsis</i>)	Wall Brown (<i>Lasiommata megera</i>)
Lang's Short-tailed Blue (<i>Leptotes pirithous</i>)	Zeller's Skipper (<i>Borbonica borbon</i>)
Geranium Bronze (<i>Cacyreus marshallii</i>)	
Common Blue (<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>)	

Other interesting insects included brief views of a Hummingbird Hawkmoth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*) at Castillo de Castellar and several Crimson Speckled Moths (*Utetheesia pulchella*), as well as a large praying mantis at our hotel. Dragonflies were present at most sites, notable sightings involving Northern Banded Groundlings (*Brachythermis impartita*) whirring around like small helicopters around the banks of the canals in the La Janda rice fields.

In terms of Reptiles, we saw an unidentified snake at the Trafico watch point on the 22nd, and enjoyed good views of several Mediterranean Chamaeleons (*Chamaeleo chamaeleon*) at the Tarelo lagoon. Geckos were a common sight around the hotel, often seen chasing after insects attracted by the outdoor lights. A Fringe-fingered Lizard (*Acanthodactylus erythururus*) was also seen at the Tarelo lagoon and a Mediterranean Tree Frog (*Hyla meridionalis*) was seen at the hotel.

Several interesting Plants were also found during the trip, the highlight of which was the spectacular Sea Daffodil (*Pancratium maritimum*) and the odd Squinting Cucumber (*Ecballium elaterium*).



Zeller's Skipper



Sea Daffodil



Egyptian Grasshopper



Spurge Hawkmoth caterpillar



Drimia maritima



Tamarisk Peacock moth



Sceliodes laisalis moth