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**SPRING TOUR FOR DEREK, ZENA, OWEN, PHYLLIS, PETER AND
BARBARA**

By Martin Kelsey

ITINERARY

Day 1: Monday 7th May

Arrival Madrid Terminal 1: 11.10
Coffee stop
Arrocampo
Arrive at Casa Rural El Recuerdo by 17.00

Day 2: Tuesday 8th May

Jaraicejo
Arroyo de la Vid
Rio Almonte
Cabañas del Castillo

Day 3: Friday 11th May

Monfragüe

Day 4: Saturday 12th May

Llanos de Cáceres, Talaván, south of Monroy

Day 5: Sunday 13th May

Zorita Plains and ricefields

Day 6: Tuesday 15th May

Santa Marta de Magasca, Guadiloba, Mérida

Day 7: Wednesday 16th May

Belén, Arrocampo, Valdecañas

Day 8: Thursday 17th May

Santa Marta de Magasca, Madrid

Local walks and visits to Trujillo featured on “free days” on 9th, 10th and 14th May.

TRIP REPORT

Day 1: Monday 7th May

Martin met Derek, Zena, Owen and Phyllis at Madrid airport on a warm and sunny morning. We headed out of Madrid in good time and soon were on the relatively empty A5 motorway heading south-west to Extremadura. We stopped at the reed and great reed mace-fringed reservoir of Arrocampo for a lunch stop and a chance to bird in one of the best wetland habitats in Extremadura. We had good views **Purple Heron** and **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, whilst **Savi's Warblers** and **Great Reed Warblers** sang from the reeds and good views were obtained of a small party of **Common Waxbill**. We saw the beautiful structure of a **Penduline Tit's** nest, from which young had recently fledged. The site is well-known for its population of **Purple Swamphen** and we had excellent views of an adult with two juveniles, as well as a fly-over **Spoonbill**. A single **Lapwing** was an unusually late record for this winter visitor.

After lunch we proceeded to our destination, arriving at Casa Rural El Recuerdo in time for tea in the sitting room.

Day 2: Tuesday 8th May

A hot and sunny day was forecast, as we set off after breakfast for an area of lavender and broom heath land near the town of Jaraicejo, north-east of Trujillo. We walked along a track traversing the heath and then entering an attractive cork oak grove. **Dartford Warblers** were readily found as were **Thekla Lark**, but it required more effort to get reasonable views of **Spectacled Warbler**. At the edge of the woodland we heard **Western Orphean Warbler** singing and we got good views of a bird at the base of isolated tree and then flying into the tree under which we were standing! In the cork oak woodland, there were two passage **Pied Flycatchers**, as well as the sound of singing **Golden Oriole**. We then stopped for coffee in a lay-by beside a small dammed section of the Arroyo de la Vid: a **Nightingale** sang in the bushes beside us and a **Subalpine Warbler** also showed itself well as it sang nearby.

We then drove, via Deleitosa, to the Villuercas mountains stopping for lunch on the higher reaches of the Almonte river, where it cut a gorge through the western ridge of the Vullucercas. We saw, rather distantly, a **Black Wheatear**, as well as a pair of **Red-billed Choughs** and **Grey Wagtails**. In the afternoon we climbed up to the small village of Cabañas del Castillo, where we walked below the rocky crags to a point where we were rewarded with spectacular views of the mountain range. A **Peregrine** wheeled in front of sheer cliffs whilst closer by we watched a **Rock Bunting**. Stopping briefly at the Almonte gorge, we found the Black Wheatear again.

Day 3: Friday 11th May

Now joined by Peter and Barbara as well, we spent the day at Monfragüe National Park. Not too hot and with a light breeze, the conditions were ideal for raptor watching. Our first stop was the old castle perched high on the Monfragüe escarpment. The views of the landscape were outstanding, as were the **Griffon Vultures**, **Alpine Swift** and **Red-rumped Swallows** which passed closely by. An obliging **Rock Bunting** sang from a nearby bare branch. A few of us were lucky enough to get two sightings of **White-rumped Swift**, a local speciality. The woodland of wild olive and cork oak provided excellent habitat for species like **Short-toed Treecreeper**.

Passing the Puente del Cardenal, we spotted an adult **Bonelli's Eagle** drifting close-by, and we stopped to watch this powerful raptor at close range as it soared a few times above us. We then continued to the Portilla del Tietár, at the north of the park, where we watched a large **Eagle Owl** chick on its nesting ledge, surely just a few days from fledging. From the same spot we had good views of **Spanish Imperial Eagle**, its white leading edge to the wing showing well when the sunshine caught it. **Black Storks** also obliged by gliding in front of the cliffs and soaring with the Griffon and **Black Vultures**. Beyond the viewpoint is a belt of Cork Oak woodland, where we had good views of **Rock Sparrow**.

We had lunch in a hide overlooking a Black Stork nest, with a Griffon Vulture nest as a neighbour. Returning through the park, we had close views of a party of **Azure-winged Magpies** at a picnic area and saw a **Black Kite's** nest at the Mirador de Tajadilla, as well as good views of **Egyptian Vulture**.

Our final stop was the famous Peña Falcón cliff in the south of the park, close to the castle. Here Alpine Swifts wheeled over the cliff top, along with sometimes tens of Griffon Vultures. During our stay a Bonelli's Eagle appeared, as well as a juvenile Spanish Imperial Eagle, whilst smaller birds were certainly not out done with excellent views of Rock Bunting and **Blue Rock Thrush**, the latter often with food in its bill.

Day 4: Saturday 12th May

A cloudy start to the day, with a shower en route and cool breeze as we visited the plains north of Cáceres. The vegetation on the plains was yellowing as the grass stems started to dry. The show of grassland flowers however, remained breathtaking in places. Driving along a quiet country road, we stopped to watch at close quarters a displaying male **Little Bustard**, calling from a slightly raised patch amongst the grasses and flowers. We had excellent views of **Southern Grey Shrike** as well. Nearby, in a more closely grazed field, we found a group of **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** feeding on a slope facing us, as well as **Stone Curlew** and two distant **Great Bustard**. Four **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** were also seen in flight. Around us larks sang: **Calandra** with their highly mimetic song, the simpler song of **Short-toed Lark**, as well as **Crested Lark**.

We then visited a small reservoir at Talaván, where a pair of **Golden Eagle** breeds and we watched an adult sitting near the nest, which contained a large eaglet, preening. At one point it flew off, collected a leafy branch and flew back with it to the nest. We hoped to see the eagle in flight again, but it quietly slipped from the perch, flying away from us, seen only by Phyllis. The nearby rush beds in the reservoir provided nesting cover for **Great-crested** and **Little Grebe**, as well as **Great Reed Warbler**.

As we left the area, we passed a open ploughed field where there was a fine **Black-eared Wheatear**. We stopped for lunch beside the River Almonte, south of the village of Monroy. The weather brightening up, this provided a good spot for dragonflies as well as passing **Egyptian**, **Griffon** and **Black Vulture**, as well as a **Booted Eagle**. The afternoon was spent on the plains north of Santa Marta de Magasca, a stronghold for **Montagu's Harrier**, of which wonderful views of this buoyant slim harrier were obtained.

Day 5: Sunday 13th May

As yesterday, it was cool in the morning, with a fresh breeze, but brightening up in the afternoon. We explored the rice-growing areas south of Zorita, around the town of Madrigalejo. In an area known as Casas del Hito, we had our first good views of **Roller**, followed by a **Black-winged Kite**, which sat high in a tree, before launching itself into the air and gliding off, with its wings held upwards in a stiff "V". **Gull-billed Terns** passed over the fields, and were watched following the plough, along with **Cattle Egrets**. On a pool, a male **Red-crested Pochard** was present along with **Mallard**, whilst along the ditches beside the fields were small parties of **Red Avadavat**, all in non-breeding plumage. **Marsh Harriers** quartered the banks. **Zitting Cisticolas** were common as were **Southern Grey Shrikes** and we also found passage **Northern Wheatear**. There was not much to be found at the Sierra Brava reservoir, so we proceeded to the rice fields around Vegas Altas, where we had good views of **Montagu's Harrier**. We stopped for lunch beside the Ruercas river, near Palazuelo. A lovely spot, absolutely alive with singing **Nightingales**, **Cetti's Warblers** and **Great Reed Warbler**. We were lucky enough to get close views of a passing **Honey Buzzard**. Exploring the local rice fields, we had superb views of **Roller**, as well as finding an area favoured by feeding **Gull-billed Terns**, among which were four breeding plumage **Whiskered Terns**. **Black-winged Stilts** also fed in the margins. We completed the day by crossing the Zorita plains where we saw further **Rollers** and **Montagu's Harriers**. In the evening we went out to find **Red-necked Nightjars**, which we heard but did not see, probably because of the prevailing windy conditions.

Day 6: Tuesday 15th May

With a fine, warm settled day ahead we visited plains east of Santa Marta de Magasca. We had flight views of **Little Bustard**, as well as distant views of **Great Bustard** on the ground and in flight. A party of three **Woodlark** gave us a close opportunity to watch them beside the road. **Corn Buntings** and **Calandra**

Lark perched on roadside posts, often at very close range. We left the plains and drove through a zone of *dehesa* woodland, passing the village of Santa Marta de Magasca to stop in the deep valley of the Tamuja, just south of the village. **Crag Martins** were nesting under the bridge, whilst we recorded no fewer than seven species of raptor, including a **Hobby** which gliding above us close-by for several minutes, an adult **Spanish Imperial Eagle**, which drifted high overhead, a stooping **Bonelli's Eagle** and two **Short-toed Eagles**. **Black Kite**, **Griffon** and **Black Vulture** made up the list. The site was memorable also for the chorus of frogs which was non-stop throughout our stay.

Climbing back to the high plateau, the vast biomass of grasshoppers was attracting feeding parties of **White Stork**, **Black Kite** and even **Spanish Sparrow**. We took a quiet road westwards, stopping in open grassland where we could admire the wonderful show of flowers, including the attractive Topis. As we walked here, we flushed a **Quail**. Driving back we found a male **Black-eared Wheatear** (this time the black-throated form) and **Roller**.

We had lunch beside the Guadiloba reservoir, watching a party of **Collared Pratincole**, a pair of **Little Ringed Plover** and an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. We were fooled more than once by the superb mimicry of a **Crested Lark** which produced faithful renditions of Greenshank and Common Sandpiper.

After lunch we drove south to Mérida, to walk along the fine Roman bridge. There, against the backdrop of the city, we were treated by superb views of **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Little Bittern**, **Purple Heron**, as well as **Alpine Swift** and **Pallid Swift**, breeding along with **Common Swift** under the bridge. For all of us, it was one of the highlights of the whole week.

Day 7: Wednesday 16th May

The temperature continued to rise and today was the hottest day so far. We visited first of all the plains near the village of Belén, hoping to see more Great Bustards. For this we were unsuccessful, but we saw at least six **Stone Curlew** and two **Little Bustard**, as well as good views of larks and **Little Owl**. We then drove up to Arrocampo, where good views were obtained of **Purple Swamphen**, as well as **Great Reed Warbler**, **Little Bittern** and **Purple Heron**.

The afternoon was dedicated to butterflies on the hills of Valdecañas. We stopped for lunch in a belt of pines, where dozens of Spanish Gatekeepers were in flight. **Golden Oriole** and **Crested Tit** were present and we also got distant views of a pair of **Spanish Imperial Eagle**, the male being seen engaged in an aerial combat with a **Griffon Vulture**. **Cirl Bunting** sang and at one point a pair of **Black Stork** glided overhead. It was a productive afternoon for butterflies, the weather conditions were ideal and the route took us through a useful range of different habitat types.

In the evening, good views were enjoyed of a pair of wing-clapping **Red-necked Nightjar** near the village.

Day 8: Thursday 17th May

Straight after breakfast, we made a sortie once again to the plains east of Santa Marta de Magasca. In the *dehesa* woodland at the edge of the plains, we were rewarded with good views of a pair of **Great Spotted Cuckoo**. Great Bustards were present, but as before, rather distant, but we had close views of a perched **Booted Eagle**. Following a walk around the village mid-morning, we set off midday to Madrid stopping briefly at a motorway service station which boasts an impressive **House Martin** colony in its porch, attracting the interest of even the most jaded traveller!

SPECIES RECORDED

The objective of the tour was to see birds and landscapes typical of the diversity of Extremadura as well as dedicating time for butterflies and dragonflies, whilst maintaining a gentle pace and avoiding difficult walks. Though a long list was not the priority, a very satisfying overall list of 141 bird species were recorded, as well as about 30 butterflies and 13 dragonflies.

BIRDS

Species recorded on free days when local walks were taken are also noted.

1. **Little Grebe**: Adults with young at Talaván reservoir on 12th May.
2. **Great Crested Grebe**: pairs present at Arrocampo, and the reservoirs of Sierra Brava and Guadiloba.
3. **Great Cormorant**: One at Arrocampo on 7th May and three at Mérida on 15th May .
4. **Little Bittern**: At least two males and a female at Mérida on 15th May and at least two at Arrocampo on 16th May.
5. **Black-crowned Night Heron**: One at Arrocampo on 7th May, at least ten at Mérida on 15th May and two at Arrocampo on 16th May.
6. **Cattle Egret**: Seen almost daily, with colony on Belen Plains.
7. **Little Egret**: Seen at Arrocampo, the ricefields and Mérida.
8. **Grey Heron**: Seen almost daily.
9. **Purple Heron**: Seen at Arrocampo (over five on 7th May and at least two on 16th May) and at Mérida (about six on 15th May).
10. **Black Stork**: Three or four at Jaraicejo on 8th May, over ten (including three nests) at Monfragüe on 11th May and two over Valdecañas on 16th May.

11. **White Stork:** A common bird seen daily.
12. **Spoonbill:** One at Arrocampo on 7th May.
13. **Gadwall:** About five at Talaván on 12th May.
14. **Mallard:** Seen almost daily.
15. **Red-crested Pochard:** One male at Casas del Hito on 13th May.
16. **Honey Buzzard:** One near Palazuelos on 13th May.
17. **Black-winged Kite:** One seen at Casas del Hito on 13th May and one along motorway on 10th May.
18. **Black Kite:** Very common and seen every day, often in double figures. Groups feeding on grasshoppers on plains on 15th May.
19. **Red Kite:** Seen daily but much less common than previous species.
20. **Egyptian Vulture:** Seen at Monfragüe (about ten birds), Villuercas mountains, near Santa Marta de Magasca and Valdecañas.
21. **Griffon Vulture:** Seen every day, in treble figures in Monfragüe.
22. **Black Vulture:** Seen almost daily.
23. **Short-toed Eagle:** Seen almost every day with about six seen on 8th and 15th May.
24. **Marsh Harrier:** Seen at Arrocampo and the rice fields. Almost all individuals seen were males.
25. **Montagu's Harrier:** Seen on plains north of Santa Marta de Magasca, the rice fields around Vegas Altas, the Zorita plains and near Belén Plains.
26. **Sparrowhawk:** One briefly seen whilst driving in Monfragüe.
27. **Common Buzzard:** Seen daily in single figures.
28. **Spanish Imperial Eagle:** An adult bird soaring over Portilla del Tietár in Monfragüe and a juvenile at Peña Falcón on 11th May. An adult over the Tamuja river on 15th May and a pair over Valdecañas on 16th May.
29. **Golden Eagle:** One adult and chick at Talaván on 12th May.

30. **Booted Eagle:** Seen almost daily. Pale phase greatly outnumbering dark phase.
31. **Bonelli's Eagle:** Three sightings at Monfragüe on 11th May (adults at Puente del Cardenal and Peña Falcón and a juvenile at Portilla del Tietár). An adult over Tamuja river on 15th May.
32. **Lesser Kestrel:** Seen every day, often as small parties hunting over the plains.
33. **Common Kestrel:** Seen twice during the week.
34. **Hobby:** Fine views of one over Tamuja river on 15th May.
35. **Peregrine Falcon:** Good views of a single at Cabañas del Castillo on 8th May.
36. **Red-legged Partridge:** Seen most days.
37. **Quail:** One flushed on plains north of Cáceres on 15th May and heard on rice fields.
38. **Moorhen:** Seen almost daily.
39. **Purple Swamphen:** Good views, including an adult with two chicks at Arrocampo.
40. **Common Coot:** Recorded at Arrocampo and Talaván.
41. **Little Bustard:** Excellent views of a calling male north of Cáceres on 12th May, with another male calling nearby. Otherwise more distant views of males calling or in flight near Santa Marta de Magasca and Belén. Numbers seen were small (two or three) as display period coming to an end and vegetation very long.
42. **Great Bustard:** Distant views only of two birds north of Cáceres, and four birds near Santa Marta de Magasca (on both 15th and 17th May).
43. **Black-winged Stilt:** At least eight birds seen on the rice fields, otherwise two or three seen at Guadiloba and roadside pools.
44. **Stone Curlew:** Two seen north of Cáceres on 12th May, a total of six on Belén Plains on 16th May and two near Santa Marta de Magasca on 17th May. Seen in pairs.
45. **Collared Pratincole:** Apart from a few seen briefly in flight near Talaván on 12th May, about 6 seen on the rice fields near Palazuelo on 13th May and about 20 at Guadiloba on 15th May.

- 46. Little Ringed Plover:** One pair on the rice fields on 13th May and a pair at Guadiloba on 15th May.
- 47. Lapwing:** One flying over Arrocampo on 7th May..
- 48. Common Sandpiper:** One heard at Arroyo de la Vid on 8th May.
- 49. Black-headed Gull:** About ten seen on the rice fields on 13th May.
- 50. Lesser Black-backed Gull:** One adult at Guadiloba on 15th May.
- 51. Gull-billed Tern:** Two at Arrocampo on 7th May and between 50 and 60 on the rice fields, especially near Palazuelo on 13th May.
- 52. Whiskered Tern:** Four in breeding plumage with Gull-billed Terns near Palazuelo on 13th May.
- 53. Black-bellied Sandgrouse:** About 20 north of Cáceres on 12th May.
- 54. Pin-tailed Sandgrouse:** Four north of Cáceres on 12th May.
- 55. Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon:** Seen daily.
- 56. Wood Pigeon:** Seen almost daily.
- 57. Collared Dove:** Seen daily.
- 58. Turtle Dove:** Seen and heard at Monfragüe and also north of Cáceres.
- 59. Great Spotted Cuckoo:** Two seen flying across the road south of Zorita on 13th May. One distantly on Belén plains on 16th May and two seen well near Santa Marta de Magasca on 17th May.
- 60. Common Cuckoo:** Heard and sometimes seen almost daily. Probably a total of eight birds recorded on 8th May.
- 61. Scops Owl:** Heard on evenings of 12th and 15th May at Pago de San Clemente.
- 62. Eagle Owl:** Excellent views of nearly fledged chick in Monfragüe on 11th May.
- 63. Little Owl:** Heard most evenings and seen on visits to plains near Santa Marta de Magasca, north of Cáceres and Belén.
- 64. Red-necked Nightjar:** Heard most evenings and two birds seen on 11th and 16th May at Pago de San Clemente.

65. **Alpine Swift:** Seen at Cabañas del Castillo, Monfragüe and Mérida.
66. **Common Swift:** Seen daily.
67. **Pallid Swift:** Seen in Trujillo and from the Roman bridge in Mérida.
68. **Kingfisher:** One at Arrocampo on 16th May.
69. **Bee-eater:** Seen daily.
70. **Roller:** One at Jaraicejo on 8th May, two north of Cáceres on 12th May, about ten seen on rice fields on 13th May and one near Santa Marta de Magasca on 15th May.
71. **Hoopoe:** Common and seen daily.
72. **Great Spotted Woodpecker:** Heard at Jaraicejo and Valdecañas.
73. **Calandra Lark:** Common on open plains.
74. **Short-toed Lark:** Common on open plains on ploughed ground.
75. **Crested Lark:** Common and seen daily.
76. **Thekla Lark:** Seen at Jaraicejo, Sierra Brava and Belén.
77. **Woodlark:** Seen and heard at Jaraicejo and near Santa Marta de Magasca.
78. **Sand Martin:** One heard at Arrocampo and one seen from the Roman bridge in Mérida.
79. **Crag Martin:** Seen almost daily.
80. **Barn Swallow:** Common and seen daily.
81. **Red-rumped Swallow:** Seen almost daily.
82. **House Martin:** Common and seen daily.
83. **Grey Wagtail:** Two on Rio Almonte near Cabañas del Castillo on 8th May.
84. **White Wagtail:** Seen almost daily.
85. **Wren:** Singing almost daily at Casa Rural El Recuerdo and elsewhere such as Monfragüe.
86. **Robin:** Singing at Monfragüe and Valdecañas.
87. **Nightingale:** Heard and sometimes seen every day.

88. **Black Redstart:** Seen at Cabañas del Castillo and Monfragüe.
89. **Stonechat:** Common and seen daily.
90. **Whinchat:** One passage bird at Jaraicejo on 8th May.
91. **Northern Wheatear:** One passage bird at Casas del Hito on 13th May
92. **Black-eared Wheatear:** Three seen near Talaván on 12th May and one near Santa Marta de Magasca on 15th May
93. **Black Wheatear:** One at Almonte gorge near Cabañas del Castillo on 8th May.
94. **Blue Rock Thrush:** Seen at Monfragüe and Cabañas del Castillo.
95. **Blackbird:** Seen daily.
96. **Mistle Thrush:** One at Jaraicejo on 8th May.
97. **Cetti's Warbler:** Recorded at the rice fields, Mérida, Pago de San Clemente and Arrocampo.
98. **Zitting Cisticola:** Recorded on plains near Santa Marta de Magasca, the rice fields, Belén and Arrocampo.
99. **Savi's Warbler:** One or two singing at Arrocampo on 8th and 16th May.
100. **Reed Warbler:** Recorded at Arrocampo and on the Jaraicejo heath.
101. **Great Reed Warbler:** Singing birds at Arrocampo, Palazuelo, Talaván and Mérida.
102. **Melodious Warbler:** Singing birds at Cabañas del Castillo, Palazuelo, Valedcañas and Pago de San Clemente.
103. **Dartford Warbler:** Three or four seen on the heath at Jaraicejo on 8th May and one at Monfragüe on 11th May.
104. **Spectacled Warbler:** Two seen on the heath at Jaraicejo on 8th May.
105. **Subalpine Warbler:** Males seen at Arroyo de la Vid on 8th May and Monfragüe on 11th May.
106. **Sardinian Warbler:** Seen almost daily.
107. **Western Orphean Warbler:** Three or four seen at Jaraicejo on 8th May.
108. **Blackcap:** Singing at Monfragüe and Valdecañas.

109. **Spotted Flycatcher:** One in Pago de San Clemente on 9th May.
110. **Pied Flycatcher:** Two at Jaraicejo on 8th May.
111. **Long-tailed Tit:** Seen on several days.
112. **Crested Tit:** Heard at Valdecañas.
113. **Blue Tit:** Seen daily.
114. **Great Tit:** Seen daily.
115. **Nuthatch:** Recorded at Jaraicejo.
116. **Short-toed Treecreeper:** Recorded at Jaraicejo, Monfragüe, Valdecañas and Pago de San Clemente
117. **Golden Oriole:** Heard at Jaraicejo, Monfragüe, Palazuelo (one seen), Valdecañas (one seen) and seen and heard at Pago de San Clemente.
118. **Southern Grey Shrike:** Over 12 seen on rice fields, also present on plains north of Cáceres and near Santa Marta de Magasca.
119. **Woodchat Shrike:** Seen daily.
120. **Jay:** Seen at Jaraicejo and Valdecañas.
121. **Azure-winged Magpie:** Common and seen daily.
122. **Magpie:** Common and seen daily.
123. **Red-billed Chough:** Two at Almonte gorge on 8th May.
124. **Jackdaw:** Common and seen daily.
125. **Carrion Crow:** Two seen near Pago de San Clemente.
126. **Raven:** Common and seen daily.
127. **Spotless Starling:** Common and seen daily.
128. **House Sparrow:** Common and seen daily.
129. **Spanish Sparrow:** Seen almost every day.
130. **Tree Sparrow:** Seen in the rice fields.
131. **Rock Sparrow:** Heard near Cabañas del Castillo and at least one seen at Monfragüe.

- 132. Common Waxbill:** Two at Arrocampo on 7th May.
- 133. Red Avadavat:** Common in reed-filled ditches in rice fields.
- 134. Chaffinch:** Seen almost daily.
- 135. Serin:** Common and seen daily.
- 136. Greenfinch:** Seen in Almonte valley south of Monroy, Mérida as well as around Pago de San Clemente.
- 137. Goldfinch:** Common and seen daily.
- 138. Linnet:** Recorded Cabañas del Castillo, Jaraicejo, Casas del Hito and Guadiloba.
- 139. Cirl Bunting:** Heard south of Monroy, seen at Valdecañas and around Pago de San Clemente.
- 140. Rock Bunting:** Seen at Monfragüe and Cabañas del Castillo.
- 141. Corn Bunting:** Common and seen daily.

BUTTERFLIES

1. Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*

A skipper 1 found on the 8th on heathland near Jaraicejo was considered to be this species.

2. Sage Skipper *Syrichthus proto*

Individuals found on the 15th and 16th.

3. Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*

One or two noted on 15th and 16th.

4. Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*

Just 1 – on 16th in the hills near Valdecañas.

5. Spanish Festoon *Zerynthia rumina*

Individuals seen on 8th, 9th and 12th in at least three locations.

6. Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Just 1 – on 15th.

7. Small White *Pieris rapae*

“Small” whites were seen quite frequently (perhaps only being missed on 2 days) but because individuals rarely settled for more than a fraction of a second it was usually impossible to be certain of the species concerned. The confusion

species, Southern Small White *Pieris mannii*, may have accounted for some sightings.

8. Bath White *Pontia daplidice*

Found in a variety of habitats on 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th, 13th and 15th.

9. Orange-tip *Anthocaris cardamines*

Individual males seen on 8th, 9th, 10th.

10. Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

A few seen on 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th and 17th.

11. Berger's Clouded Yellow *Colias australis*

A few were flying in the hills near Valdecañas on the 16th.

12. Cleopatra *Gonepteryx cleopatra*

1 in the hills near Valdecañas on the 16th.

13. Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*

1 on the 10th in the area of San Clemente.

14. Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

Individuals on 8th, 9th, 13th and 14th.

15. Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*

2 or more in the hills near Valdecañas on the 16th.

16. Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

Noted on 7th, 8th and 16th.

17. Geranium Bronze *Cacyreus marshalli*

1 found along a track close to San Clemente on the 10th.

18. Nettle Tree Butterfly *Libythea celtis*

2 on a nettle tree in the hills near Valdecañas on the 16th.

19. Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Individuals on 9th, 10th, 16th.

20. Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*

Singles on 8th, 9th, 16th, 17th.

21. Cardinal *Pandoriana pandora*

Singles on 8th and 16th.

22. Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia*

A few seen to advantage on 8th, 9th and 10th.

23. Marsh Fritillary *Eurodryas aurinia*

A few seen on at least 9th, 10th and 16th. It is possible that **Spanish Fritillary** *Eurodryas desfontainii* was also seen as this species can be closely similar to *lathonia*.

24. “Marbled” Whites

Noted on 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th. It seems that two species were most likely involved – **Western Marbled White** *Melanargia occitanica* and **Spanish Marbled White**. *M. ines*.

25. Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

Noted on 9th, 12th and 17th. The closely similar Dusky Meadow Brown *Hyponephele lycaon* may have been included in some of these sightings.

26. Southern Gatekeeper *Pyronia cecilia*

A male seen on the 12th.

27. Spanish Gatekeeper *Pyronia bathseba*

Excellent views of several in the hills near Valdecañas on the 16th.

28. Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Noted on 8th, 5th, 16th.

29. Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*

A few on 9th and 10th at San Clemente.

30. Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera*

Noted on 11th and 15th.

DRAGONFLIES

| | | | MAY | Location |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Common Winter Damselfly | <i>Sympecma fusca</i> | 1 1 | 12th River Almonte 17th Plains. |
| 2 | Blue-tailed Damselfly/ Iberian Bluetail | <i>Ischnura elegans/l. Graellsii</i> | c.4 noted | 7th Arrocampo 16th Belén Plains |
| 3 | Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly (Small Bluetail) | <i>Ischnura pumilio</i> | 1 female | 7th Arrocampo |
| 4 | Azure Damselfly (Azure Bluet) | <i>Coenagrion puella</i> | pair 1 | 12th River Almonte 15th Guadiloba |
| 5 | Orange Featherleg | <i>Platycnemis acutipennis</i> | pair | 12th River Almonte |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| 6 | Emperor Dragonfly (Blue Emperor) | <i>Anax imperator</i> | 1 male | 12th | River Almonte |
| 7 | Lesser Emperor | <i>Anax parthenope</i> | 1 male | 7th | Arrocampo |
| 8 | Black-tailed Skimmer | <i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i> | 1 female 1 male | 15th 16th | Guadiloba Belén Plains |
| 9 | Long Skimmer | <i>Orthetrum trinacria</i> | 1 female | 16th | Arrocampo |
| 10 | Ruddy Darter | <i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i> | 1 male | 15th | Guadiloba |
| 11 | Common Darter | <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i> | 1 female | 15th | Guadiloba |
| 12 | Scarlet Darter (Broad Scarlet) | <i>Crocothemis erythraea</i> | 1 male 3 | 7th 12th | Arrocampo River Almonte |
| 13 | Banded Groundling | <i>Brachythemis leucosticta</i> | 1 | 16th | Arrocampo |