

## Birding Extremadura and Casa Rural El Recuerdo

### REPORT ON SPRING HOLIDAY FOR JOHN AND PAM SMALLWOOD

#### Itinerary (10th May - 17th May 2014)

**10th May 2014:** Transfer from Madrid airport to Casa Rural El Recuerdo, with stop at Valdecañas reservoir.

**11th May 2014:** Plains near Campo Lugar, rice fields near Madrigalejo and Alcollarín Reservoir



*Alcollarín Reservoir*

**12th May 2014:** Alcollarín Reservoir, Campo Lugar, Gargáligas River, Puerto Peña, Madrigalejo and Sierra Brava Reservoir.

**13th May 2014:** Monfragüe National Park.

**14th May 2014:** Guadiana River, Villafranca de Los Barros, Alange and Mérida.



*On the Roman Bridge at Mérida*

**15<sup>th</sup> May 2014:** Arrocampo Reservoir, Piornal and the Tornovacas Pass.



*Near Piornal in the Gredos Mountains*

**16<sup>th</sup> May 2014:** Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca and Jaraicejo.

**17<sup>th</sup> May 2014:** Madrigalejo, River Almonte, Valdecañas Dam and reservoir, then return to Madrid airport.

### **Trip Report**

We enjoyed sunshine and clear skies all week with higher than average temperatures, with light to moderate breezes. The birding conditions were therefore generally excellent, albeit the afternoons were becoming quite hot. John and Pam were keen to attempt a high list of species seen, as well as hoping to see the few remaining new species for them, plus some memorable owl sightings. On all fronts, the holiday was a tremendous success. The 170 species seen was an outstanding total. John increased his Extremadura list significantly as well as adding his hoped-for new species. And we had unforgettable views of both a large chick and an adult Eagle Owl, the latter in all kinds of poses, as well as in a short flight- The enchanting sight of four recently fledged Long-eared Owls, just a few minutes' walk from the house, was a real and unexpected bonus.

### **Annotated List of Species Recorded**

1. **Little Grebe:** Seen on several days.
2. **Great Crested Grebe:** Seen on all large bodies of water.
3. **Great Cormorant:** Seen at Arrocampo, Monfragüe, Alcollarín, Valdecañas and Alange.
4. **Little Bittern:** Seen at Arrocampo.
5. **Black-crowned Night Heron:** Several at Arrocampo.
6. **Squacco Heron:** One seen at Arrocampo.
7. **Cattle Egret:** Seen most days with large numbers on rice fields.
8. **Little Egret:** Seen most days.
9. **Great Egret:** Two seen at Alcollarín on 12<sup>th</sup> May.
10. **Grey Heron:** Seen almost every day.
11. **Purple Heron:** Seen at Arrocampo, Alcollarín and Mérida.
12. **Black Stork:** Seen at Puerto Peña, Monfragüe and Jaraicejo.
13. **White Stork:** Seen daily.
14. **Spoonbill:** 13 at Alcollarín Reservoir on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May, 8 at Torremejias lagoons near Alange.
15. **Grey Lag Goose:** Two at Alcollarín Reservoir on 11<sup>th</sup> May.
16. **Egyptian Goose:** Seen on both visits to Alcollarín.
17. **Wigeon:** One on pool near Campo Lugar on 12<sup>th</sup> May.
18. **Gadwall:** Seen on several days.
19. **Mallard:** Seen daily.
20. **Pintail:** Two at Alcollarín on 12<sup>th</sup> May.
21. **Shoveler:** Seen at Alcollarín and Valdecañas.
22. **Tufted Duck:** One at Alcollarín on 12<sup>th</sup> May.
23. **Common Pochard:** Small numbers seen at Alcollarín.
24. **Shelduck:** Three at Alcollarín on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May, six at Valdecañas on 17<sup>th</sup> May.
25. **Black-winged Kite:** Three juveniles near Madrigalejo on 11<sup>th</sup> May and two seen there on 17<sup>th</sup>.



26. **Black Kite:** Seen daily.
27. **Red Kite:** One seen at Monfragüe on 13<sup>th</sup> May, one seen on 16<sup>th</sup> near Santa Marta de Magasca, one seen near Retamosa on 17<sup>th</sup> May and one near Trujillo on same day.
28. **Egyptian Vulture:** Seen at Monfragüe, Arrocampo, Valdecañas dam and near Santa Marta de Magasca.
29. **Griffon Vulture:** Seen daily.
30. **Black Vulture:** Seen on several days.
31. **Short-toed Eagle:** Seen at Monfragüe, Santa Marta de Magasca and Valdecañas Dam.
32. **Marsh Harrier:** Seen most days.
33. **Montagu's Harrier:** Seen near Santa Marta de Magasca on 16<sup>th</sup> May.
34. **Sparrowhawk:** One seen at Monfragüe on 13<sup>th</sup> May.
35. **Common Buzzard:** Seen daily.
36. **Spanish Imperial Eagle:** Two adults at Monfragüe on 13<sup>th</sup> May, and chick seen at nest.
37. **Booted Eagle:** Seen almost daily.
38. **Bonelli's Eagle:** Two at Puerto Peña on 12<sup>th</sup> May and two at Alange on 14<sup>th</sup> May.
39. **Lesser Kestrel:** Seen almost daily, especially on plains.
40. **Common Kestrel:** Seen on several days.
41. **Peregrine Falcon:** One in Monfragüe on 13<sup>th</sup> May.
42. **Red-legged Partridge:** Seen near Santa Marta de Magasca.
43. **Quail:** Heard on two days.
44. **Moorhen:** Seen on several days.
45. **Purple Swamphen:** Seen at Arrocampo on 15<sup>th</sup> May.
46. **Common Coot:** Seen on several days.



47. **Little Bustard:** Three near Campo Lugar on 11<sup>th</sup> May and one there on 12<sup>th</sup> May.
48. **Great Bustard:** Seen on both visits to plains near Campo Lugar, as well as near Santa Marta de Magasca. Three south of Zorita on 17<sup>th</sup> May.



49. **Black-winged Stilt:** Seen on several days.
50. **Avocet:** Five at Alcollarín on 11<sup>th</sup> May and six there on 12<sup>th</sup> May.
51. **Stone Curlew:** One seen briefly on 11<sup>th</sup> May near Madrigalejo.
52. **Collared Pratincole:** Seen on both visits to the rice fields, with about 20 on 11<sup>th</sup> May.



53. **Ringed Plover:** Seen on both visits to rice fields and 130 seen on 17<sup>th</sup> May at Valdecañas.
54. **Little Ringed Plover:** Seen on several days.
55. **Kentish Plover:** Two or three seen on both early visits to the rice fields, with one seen there on 17<sup>th</sup> May.
56. **Golden Plover:** A summer-plumaged bird near Madrigalejo on 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May.
57. **Grey Plover:** A single bird near Madrigalejo on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May.
58. **Northern Lapwing:** About 25 seen on 11<sup>th</sup> May near Madrigalejo and about 20 there on 12<sup>th</sup>. Four remaining on 17<sup>th</sup> May.
59. **Curlew Sandpiper:** One at Valdecañas reservoir on 17<sup>th</sup> May.
60. **Dunlin:** A single bird on rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> May and one at Valdecañas on 17<sup>th</sup>.
61. **Little Stint:** Two on rice fields near Madrigalejo on 11<sup>th</sup> May.
62. **Ruff:** One at Alcollarín on 12<sup>th</sup> May.
63. **Common Redshank:** Small numbers on rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May. Four present at Torremejia on 14<sup>th</sup> May.
64. **Greenshank:** Two on rice fields on 12<sup>th</sup> May and one at Torremejia on 14<sup>th</sup>.
65. **Wood Sandpiper:** One on 11<sup>th</sup> May near Madrigalejo.
66. **Common Sandpiper:** Six seen on rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> May, four on following day and also seen on 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May.
67. **Whimbrel:** One near Madrigalejo on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May.
68. **Whiskered Tern:** Four present at Alcollarín on 11<sup>th</sup> May and two on 12<sup>th</sup>.
69. **Gull-billed Tern:** Seen at Arrocampo, on rice fields and Alange in good numbers.
70. **Black-headed Gull:** Small numbers on reservoirs and rice fields.
71. **Yellow-legged Gull:** One at Valdecañas on 10<sup>th</sup> May and two at Alcollarín on 12<sup>th</sup>.

72. **Black-bellied Sandgrouse:** Six on fields near Madriaglejo on 11<sup>th</sup> May, also seen near Campo Lugar and Torremejia.
73. **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse:** Seen on plains near Santa Marta de Magasca on 16<sup>th</sup> May.
74. **Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon:** Seen daily.
75. **Wood Pigeon:** Seen daily.
76. **Collared Dove:** Seen daily.
77. **Turtle Dove:** Heard in Monfragüe, but the sight of about 15 near Madrigalejo on 17<sup>th</sup> May was one of the highlights of the trip.
78. **Great Spotted Cuckoo:** Two seen on Campo Lugar road on 11<sup>th</sup> May.
79. **Common Cuckoo:** Seen or heard almost daily.
80. **Scops Owl:** Heard on one evening at Pago de San Clemente.
81. **Eagle Owl:** Magnificent views of a chick and adult at Monfragüe on 13<sup>th</sup> May.
82. **Little Owl:** One seen near Campo Lugar on 11<sup>th</sup> May.
83. **Long-eared Owl:** Superb views of four fledged young at Pago de San Clemente on 15<sup>th</sup> May.
84. **Red-necked Nightjar:** One seen in flight at Pago de San Clemente on 11<sup>th</sup> May.
85. **Alpine Swift:** Seen at Puerto Peña, Monfragüe, Alange and Mérida.
86. **Common Swift:** Seen almost daily.
87. **Pallid Swift:** Seen at Alange, Mérida and at Piornal.
88. **White-rumped Swift:** One seen at Monfragüe on 13<sup>th</sup> May.
89. **Kingfisher.** Seen on several days.
90. **Bee-eater:** Seen daily.
91. **Roller:** Seen on several days.
92. **Hoopoe:** Seen almost daily.
93. **Great Spotted Woodpecker:** Seen south of Mérida and near Piornal.
94. **Calandra Lark:** Seen on the plains.
95. **Short-toed Lark:** Seen on plains and in ploughed areas on rice fields.
96. **Crested Lark:** Seen almost daily.



97. **Thekla Lark:** Seen almost daily.

98. **Woodlark:** Seen near Tozo Reservoir.
99. **Sand Martin:** Seen at Arrocampo.
100. **Crag Martin:** Seen most days.
101. **Barn Swallow:** Seen daily.
102. **Red-rumped Swallow:** Seen daily.
103. **House Martin:** Seen daily.
104. **Tawny Pipit:** One at Jaraicejo on 16<sup>th</sup> May.
105. **Yellow Wagtail:** Seen on both visits to the rice fields, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May.
106. **Grey Wagtail:** Seen in Gredos Mountains and beside River Almonte.
107. **White Wagtail:** Seen almost daily.
108. **Wren:** Seen or heard most days.
109. **Dunnock:** Seen on Gredos mountains on 15<sup>th</sup> May.
110. **Rufous Bush Robin:** Two at Villafranca de los Barros on 15<sup>th</sup> May.
111. **Robin:** Seen in Monfragüe, on slopes of Gredos Mountains and near Valdecañas dam.
112. **Nightingale:** Seen or heard daily.
113. **Black Redstart:** Seen in Monfragüe.
114. **Stonechat:** Seen almost daily.
115. **Whinchat:** One on plains north of Santa Marta de Magasca on 16<sup>th</sup> May.
116. **Northern Wheatear:** Seen on both visits to rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May.
117. **Black-eared Wheatear:** Seen on Campo Lugar plains, Sierra Brava reservoir and near Villafranca de los Barros.
118. **Black Wheatear:** Three seen at Alange on 14<sup>th</sup> May.
119. **Blue Rock Thrush:** Seen in Monfragüe and at Alange.
120. **Blackbird:** Seen daily.
121. **Mistle Thrush:** Seen on two days.
122. **Cetti's Warbler:** Seen or heard daily.
123. **Zitting Cisticola:** Seen almost daily.
124. **Savi's Warbler:** Seen at Arrocampo on 15<sup>th</sup> May.
125. **Reed Warbler:** Seen on rice fields, at Arrocampo and in Mérida.
126. **Great Reed Warbler:** Recorded at Arrocampo, on rivers in the rice fields and at Mérida.
127. **Melodious Warbler:** Seen on several days.
128. **Dartford Warbler:** Seen on Gredos Mountains on 15<sup>th</sup> May and at Jaraicejo on 16<sup>th</sup>.
129. **Spectacled Warbler:** Seen near Jaraicejo on 16<sup>th</sup> May.
130. **Subalpine Warbler:** Seen on several days.
131. **Sardinian Warbler:** Seen or heard on several days.
132. **Western Orphean Warbler:** One seen near Jaraicejo on 16<sup>th</sup> May.
133. **Common Whitethroat:** Seen on Gredos Mountains.
134. **Garden Warbler:** One singing south of Mérida on 14<sup>th</sup> May.
135. **Blackcap:** Seen on several days.
136. **Western Bonelli's Warbler:** Seen on Gredos Mountains on 15<sup>th</sup> May.
137. **Long-tailed Tit:** Seen on several days.
138. **Crested Tit:** Heard or seen at Monfragüe, Gredos Mountains and Jaraicejo.
139. **Coal Tit:** Seen near Piornal on 15<sup>th</sup> May.
140. **Blue Tit:** Seen almost daily.
141. **Great Tit:** Seen almost daily.
142. **Nuthatch:** Seen in Monfragüe.
143. **Short-toed Treecreeper:** Seen on several days.
144. **Penduline Tit:** Seen on rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> May and at Mérida.
145. **Golden Oriole:** Seen and or heard on several days.
146. **Iberian Grey Shrike:** Seen almost daily.



- 147. **Woodchat Shrike:** Seen almost daily.
- 148. **Jay:** Seen on Gredos Mountains.
- 149. **Azure-winged Magpie:** Seen daily.
- 150. **Magpie:** Seen daily.
- 151. **Red-billed Chough:** Seen at Puerto Peña.
- 152. **Jackdaw:** Seen almost daily.
- 153. **Raven:** Seen almost daily.
- 154. **Spotless Starling:** Seen daily.
- 155. **House Sparrow:** Seen daily.
- 156. **Spanish Sparrow:** Seen on rice fields and plains.
- 157. **Tree Sparrow:** Seen on rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> May.
- 158. **Rock Sparrow:** Seen in Monfragüe.
- 159. **Common Waxbill:** Seen on rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> May.
- 160. **Red Avadavat:** Seen on rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May.
- 161. **Chaffinch:** Seen most days.
- 162. **Serin.** Seen most days.
- 163. **Greenfinch.** Seen on several days.
- 164. **Goldfinch:** Seen almost every day.
- 165. **Linnet:** Seen on several days.
- 166. **Hawfinch:** Seen at Monfragüe.
- 167. **Cirl Bunting:** Seen in Gredos and beside River Almonte.
- 168. **Rock Bunting:** Seen in Monfragüe.
- 169. **Ortolan Bunting:** Seen in Gredos Mountains.
- 170. **Corn Bunting:** Seen daily.



*Picnic near Santa Marta de Magasca*