

## BIRDING REPORT FOR DAVE FOLEY

5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016

### Birdingextremadura & Casa Rural El Recuerdo

#### Itinerary

**5<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Transfer from Madrid Airport to Casa Rural El Recuerdo

**6<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Monfragüe National Park and plains west of Trujillo

**7<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Arrocampo Reservoir and Monfragüe National Park

**8<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Campo Lugar Plains, Madrigalejo and the rice fields near Palazuelo, Alcollarín Reservoir

**9<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Madrigalejo, Vegas Altas, Moheda Alta and Casas del Hitos

**10<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca and River Almonte

**11<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Santa Amalia and Alcollarín Reservoir

**12<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Transfer from Casa Rural El Recuerdo to Madrid airport with stops at the plains west of Trujillo, Arrocampo Reservoir, Charco Salado, Valdecañas Reservoir and Talavera battle monument.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Transfer from Madrid Airport to Casa Rural El Recuerdo**

Martin collected Dave at just after 14.00 and we headed through heavy bank holiday traffic on the Madrid ring road (the Carnival was taking place at the weekend). Once on the motorway for Extremadura the traffic was fine. We made a stop for coffee halfway where we saw **Crested Larks** in service station forecourt. **White Storks** and **Red Kites** were both numerous during the journey. We reached Casa Rural El Recuerdo at about 17.30.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Monfragüe National Park and plains west of Trujillo**

Taking advantage of dry weather, we went to Monfragüe National Park and directly to, to the Portilla del Tiétar. Here we waited for the arrival of **Spanish Imperial Eagle**, which was seen eventually flying into a tree to north. Following a break for coffee, we returned to the site and were duly rewarded with much more action, including one of the **Spanish Imperial Eagles** perched on tree, nest building and with some mobbing interactions with **Griffon Vultures**. Other birds seen there whilst we waited for the eagles to make an appearance included **Hen Harrier**, **Red Kite** and **Crested Tit**.

We then moved to the Tajadilla picnic area where we had lunch. Here **Azure-winged Magpies** and **Hawfinches** gave us excellent views. We then stopped at the Peña Falcon viewpoint, but the weather had deteriorated, although we did have distant views of **Blue Rock Thrush**. As we headed south from the park, a **Sparrowhawk** crossed the road directly in front of us.



En route for home, we made a stop on the plains to the west of Trujillo. Here we found the long-staying **Sociable Lapwing**, as well as two **Great Bustards** and parties of **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Arrocampo Reservoir and Monfragüe National Park**

Hawfinches were present in the garden before we stop off for the Arrocampo Reservoir. Here, despite a rather fresh westerly wind, we managed to get good views of **Bluethroat**, as well as **Zitting Cisticola** and **Water Pipit**. A **Purple Swamphen** and **Marsh Harrier** were also seen. From Arrocampo we drove west to approach the Monfragüe National Park from the north, seeing a **Black-winged Kite** close to our

coffee stop. In Monfragüe we stopped at the Portilla del Tiétar, where we had our picnic. The wait for the appearance of the **Spanish Imperial Eagles** was longer than yesterday, but we were very well rewarded with a sighting of a copulation as well as prolonged periods perched on rocks. Whilst we were waiting a large flock of **Great Cormorants** had us well entertained. At one point the **Griffon** and **Black Vultures** in the sky above us was joined by an early-returning adult **Egyptian Vulture**. From there we made a stop at the Cardinal's Bridge viewpoint, where we were lucky enough to get a good view of an adult **Bonelli's Eagle** soaring with **Griffon** and **Black Vultures**.

### **8<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Campo Lugar Plains, Madrigalejo and the rice fields near Palazuelo, Alcollarín Reservoir**

There was drizzle at the start of the day, but otherwise it was generally dry albeit overcast with fresh westerly wind.

We started on the plains near the village of Campo Lugar where we had sightings of **Great Bustards**, two **Little Bustards** (in flight) as well as two **Little Owls**. There was an abundance of small birds: **Corn Buntings**, wintering **Meadow Pipits**, **Skylarks** and flocks of **Common Starlings**, as well as numerous **Lapwings**. We then dropped from the plains to the lower-lying lands near Madrigalejo where we stopped at the old railway station, a favoured wintering roost site for **Stone Curlew** and we saw about 30.

We then drove along a quiet road through the irrigated lands near the village of Palazuelo. Here we found a **Whimbrel** as well as numerous **Common Crane**, mainly in family groups, as well as elusive parties of **Red Avadavats** and **Common Waxbills**. A male **Hen Harrier** and a **Merlin** were also seen, as well as a selection of waders including **Kentish Plover**. We made a brief stop close to the village of Campo Lugar, where we watched another winter roost of **Stone Curlew**, flocks of **Spanish Sparrow**, as well as **Hoopoe** and **Iberian Grey Shrike**.

We had lunch and spent the afternoon at the Alcollarín Reservoir. Here there were huge numbers of duck, mainly **Shoveler**, but we also found two **Ferruginous Duck** and an interesting **Ferruginous Duck x Pochard** hybrid. At this site, we were alerted by the loud calls of a pair of **Great Spotted Cuckoo**, being chased by **Common Magpies**.



**9<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Madrigalejo, Vegas Altas, Moheda Alta and Casas del Hitos**

It was a windy day with fine drizzle although with slightly finer weather in afternoon.

We explored the rice fields near Vegas Altas, seeing good numbers of **Common Cranes**, as well as rather distant **Great Bustards**. **Lapwings** were everywhere, but we were frustrated in the always too brief views of **Red Avadavats!** **Marsh** and **Hen Harriers** hunted over the stubble fields, and we got a fleeting glimpse of a **Merlin**. Following coffee we visited a bay of the Orellana Reservoir. However, the driving drizzle made the viewing conditions very poor, although there were huge numbers of **Barn Swallows** present. We decided instead to settle into the hide at the Moheda Alta reserve for our picnic. Here we had excellent views of **Black-winged Stilts** and there were hundreds of **Common Cranes** present, both on the maize stubble as well as in the *dehesa* woodland. The flowers were also of interest with a large number of **Yellow Anemone** in bloom.



We drove into an area of smallholdings where we obtained fabulously good views of family groups of **Common Crane**. We then drove through another area of rice fields a Casas del Hitos, where there were vast flocks of **Spanish Sparrow**. We also saw **Stock Dove**, **Hoopoes** and a very smart **Pied Wagtail**. On the way back home, we stopped beside the Sierra Brava Reservoir where there were thousands of roosting **Shoveler** and a group of 28 **Common Shelduck**.

### **10<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Plains near Santa Marta de Magasca and River Almonte**

It was a very blustery day and generally heavily overcast with light rain.

We went first to the plains west of Trujillo where we found again the **Sociable Lapwing**, and also saw **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**, **Thekla Lark** and **Great Bustards**. We then checked an area to the south of Santa Marta de Magasca where we saw **Little Owl** and a female **Hen Harrier**. Following coffee we stopped beside the River Almonte where we watched two **Black Wheatear**, as well as **Rock** and **Cirl Bunting**, which were feeding together. We drove back across the plains to Santa Marta de Magasca and had lunch

beside the River Magasca. Here despite the rather inclement conditions we saw a pair of **Golden Eagles** as well as several **Crag Martins**. We then stopped near the village of Aldea del Obispo, seeing a nice range of open country birds such as male **Hen Harrier** **Calandra Larks** and a distant group of **Little Bustards**. On the granitic landscape near Trujillo we stopped to admire the hundreds of **Hoop Petticoat Narcissus** in flower and watched large flocks of **Spanish Sparrows**. A brief detour onto the Belén plains produced some good views of **Hoopoe**.



### **11<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Santa Amalia and Alcollarín Reservoir**

It was another day of high winds, carrying bands of cloud from the west, although the late afternoon turned out quite sunny.

Dave had views from his bedroom window of **Hawfinch** in the garden as well as a singing **Short-toed Treecreeper**.

We drove to the rice fields near Santa Amalia, where the thousands of **Black-tailed Godwits** were the highlight, as well as large numbers of gulls and egrets following

tractors, these included a **Mediterranean Gull** and a **Common Gull**. A female **Hen Harrier** was also seen. We then stopped at the rice fields near Puebla de Alcollarín where there were mixed parties of waders (including **Little Stint**, **Ringed** and **Kentish Plovers**) and surprisingly a **Great Spotted Woodpecker**. At Alcollarín Reservoir the windy conditions meant that many of the duck sought the shelter of the banks: there was as before many hundreds of **Shoveler** and we also saw a **Ferruginous Duck**.



**12<sup>th</sup> February 2016: Transfer from Casa Rural El Recuerdo to Madrid airport with stops at the plains west of Trujillo, Arrocampo Reservoir, Charco Salado, Valdecañas Reservoir and Talavera battle monument.**

The unsettled weather continued with high winds. It was dry most of the morning but heavy rain in the afternoon.

We left casa Rural El Recuerdo at 09.00 and visited first the plains west of Trujillo. Here we saw again the **Sociable Lapwing**, as well as distant **Pin-tailed** and **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**, but best of all was a group of **Great Bustard**, sheltering from the wind in

the leeward side of a slope. We then drove to Arrocampo, but the high winds made it difficult to see anything in the reeds, however our efforts were rewarded by a fine male **Penduline Tit**. **Purple Swamphen** and large numbers of **Common Snipe** were also seen. We explored the area to the north-west of Saucedilla, seeing a **Black-winged Kite** and at Charca Salado, where we stopped for lunch, there was an amazing throng of four species of **hirundines** as well as **Pallid Swift** facing the head wind and finding food above the water's surface.

We then dropped in to Valdecañas Reservoir, where there were **Common Shelduck**, **Wigeon** and **Gadwall**. Finally, we stopped at the monument to the Battle of Talavera, where as well as admiring the impressive structure, we saw an **Iberian Green Woodpecker** flying past. We arrived ahead of schedule at Madrid airport for Dave's check-in.

## **Annotated checklist**

### **Birds**

- 1) **Grey Lag Goose**: Seen on rice fields near Casas del Hitos on 9<sup>th</sup> February.
- 2) **Egyptian Goose**: Seen at Alcollarín and near Saucedilla on 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- 3) **Common Shelduck**: Seen at Alcollarín and Valdecañas Reservoirs, and a total of 28 present at Sierra Brava Reservoir on 9<sup>th</sup> February.
- 4) **Wigeon**: Large numbers at Alcollarín and Valdecañas.
- 5) **Gadwall**: Seen on all large water bodies.
- 6) **Teal**: Seen on all large water bodies.
- 7) **Mallard**: Seen almost daily.
- 8) **Shoveler**: Seen on all large water bodies, and in large numbers at Alcollarín and Sierra Brava.
- 9) **Pochard**: Seen at Alcollarín and Orellana Reservoirs.
- 10) **Tufted Duck**: Seen at Alcollarín and Orellana Reservoirs.
- 11) **Ferruginous Duck**: Two at Alcollarín on 9<sup>th</sup> February and one there on 11<sup>th</sup>.
- 12) **Red-legged Partridge**: Seen on several days.
- 13) **Little Grebe**: Seen at Alcollarín and Orellana Reservoirs.
- 14) **Great Crested Grebe**: Seen at Alcollarín and Orellana Reservoirs.
- 15) **Black-necked Grebe**: Seen at Alcollarín and Orellana Reservoirs.
- 16) **Great Cormorant**: Seen daily.
- 17) **Cattle Egret**: Seen daily.
- 18) **Little Egret**: Seen almost daily.
- 19) **Great White Egret**: Seen at Alcollarín, at Arrocampo and on rice fields.
- 20) **Grey Heron**: Seen daily.
- 21) **White Stork**: Seen daily.
- 22) **Spoonbill**: Seen flying over the rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 23) **Egyptian Vulture**: An adult at Monfragüe on 7<sup>th</sup> February.



- 24) **Griffon Vulture:** Seen most days.
- 25) **Black Vulture:** Seen most days.
- 26) **Spanish Imperial Eagle:** A pair seen in Monfragüe on 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> February.
- 27) **Golden Eagle:** A pair seen beside River Magasca on 10<sup>th</sup> February.
- 28) **Bonelli's Eagle:** A pair seen in Monfragüe on 7<sup>th</sup> February.
- 29) **Red Kite:** Numerous and seen daily.
- 30) **Marsh Harrier:** Seen almost daily.
- 31) **Hen Harrier:** Seen almost daily.
- 32) **Common Buzzard:** Seen daily.
- 33) **Sparrowhawk:** Seen on three occasions.
- 34) **Black-winged Kite:** One north of Monfragüe on 7<sup>th</sup> February and one near Saucedilla on 12<sup>th</sup>.
- 35) **Common Kestrel:** Seen daily.
- 36) **Merlin:** Seen on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February.
- 37) **Water Rail:** Heard at Arrocampo and Alcollarín.
- 38) **Moorhen:** Seen at Arrocampo, Alcollarín and rice fields.
- 39) **Purple Swamphen:** Seen at Arrocampo on 7<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- 40) **Common Coot:** Seen on all large water bodies.
- 41) **Common Crane:** Seen almost daily in large numbers.
- 42) **Little Bustard:** Two seen near Campo Lugar on 8<sup>th</sup> February and about 15 seen near Aldea del Obispo on 10<sup>th</sup> February.
- 43) **Great Bustard:** Seen on plains west of Trujillo on 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February with 24 seen on 10<sup>th</sup>, also near Campo Lugar on 8<sup>th</sup> and 40 seen near Vegas Altas on 9<sup>th</sup>.
- 44) **Black-winged Stilt:** Seen at Moheda Alta and Santa Amalia.
- 45) **Stone Curlew:** Seen at roosts near Madrigalejo and Campo Lugar on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February.
- 46) **Little Ringed Plover:** Seen on rice fields near Palazuelo on 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 47) **Ringed Plover:** Seen on rice fields near Palazuelo on 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 48) **Kentish Plover:** Seen on rice fields near Palazuelo on 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 49) **Golden Plover:** Seen almost daily.
- 50) **Lapwing:** Seen daily.
- 51) **Sociable Lapwing:** One on plains west of Trujillo on 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- 52) **Dunlin:** Seen on rice fields near Palazuelo on 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 53) **Little Stint:** Seen on rice fields near Palazuelo on 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 54) **Common Snipe:** Seen almost daily.
- 55) **Whimbrel:** One near Palazuelo on 8<sup>th</sup> February.
- 56) **Black-tailed Godwit:** One near Palazuelo on 8<sup>th</sup> February and over 4000 at Santa Amalia on 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 57) **Greenshank:** Seen on rice fields near Palazuelo on 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 58) **Green Sandpiper:** Seen almost daily.
- 59) **Common Sandpiper:** Seen at Arrocampo.
- 60) **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Seen almost daily.

- 61) **Common Gull**: A first-winter bird with other gulls at Santa Amalia on 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 62) **Black-headed Gull**: Seen almost daily.
- 63) **Mediterranean Gull**: A second-year bird present with other gulls at Santa Amalia on 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 64) **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**: Seen on plains west of Trujillo, Campo Lugar and near Vegas Altas.
- 65) **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse**: About 10 seen on plains west of Trujillo on 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- 66) **Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon**: Seen daily.
- 67) **Stock Dove**: 12 seen at Casas del Hitos on 9<sup>th</sup> February.
- 68) **Wood Pigeon**: Seen daily.
- 69) **Collared Dove**: Seen daily.
- 70) **Great Spotted Cuckoo**: A pair at Alcollarín on 8<sup>th</sup> February.
- 71) **Little Owl**: Seen on Campo Lugar plains and near Santa Marta de Magasca.
- 72) **Pallid Swift**: Several with hirundines at Charca Salado on 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- 73) **Kingfisher**: Seen on several days.
- 74) **Hoopoe**: Seen daily.
- 75) **Iberian Green Woodpecker**: One at Talavera on 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- 76) **Great Spotted Woodpecker**: One seen near Puebla de Alcollarín on 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 77) **Calandra Lark**: Seen on the plains near Trujillo and Campo Lugar.
- 78) **Crested Lark**: Seen daily.
- 79) **Thekla Lark**: Seen on plains and close to Orellana and Alcollarín Reservoirs.
- 80) **Woodlark**: Seen on several days.
- 81) **Skylark**: Seen on plains near Trujillo and Campo Lugar.
- 82) **Sand Martin**: At least three with hirundines at Charca Salado on 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- 83) **Crag Martin**: Seen on most days.
- 84) **Barn Swallow**: Seen daily.
- 85) **House Martin**: Seen daily.
- 86) **Meadow Pipit**: Seen daily.
- 87) **Water Pipit**: Seen on rice fields.
- 88) **Grey Wagtail**: Seen on two days.
- 89) **White Wagtail**: Seen daily and including Pied Wagtails on 9<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 90) **Wren**: Recorded most days.
- 91) **Robin**: Seen almost daily.
- 92) **Bluethroat**: seen at Arrocampo and on rice fields.
- 93) **Black Redstart**: Seen daily.
- 94) **Stonechat**: Seen daily.
- 95) **Black Wheatear**: Two at River Almonte on 10<sup>th</sup> February.
- 96) **Blue Rock Thrush**: Seen in Monfragüe.
- 97) **Blackbird**: Seen daily.
- 98) **Song Thrush**: Seen daily.

- 99) **Mistle Thrush**: Seen on 8<sup>th</sup> February.
- 100) **Cetti's Warbler**: Recorded most days.
- 101) **Zitting Cisticola**: Seen most days.
- 102) **Dartford Warbler**: Seen on 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 103) **Sardinian Warbler**: Seen most days.
- 104) **Blackcap**: Seen most days.
- 105) **Common Chiffchaff**: Seen daily.
- 106) **Long-tailed Tit**: Seen in Monfragüe and River Almonte.
- 107) **Crested Tit**: Seen in Monfragüe on 6<sup>th</sup> February.
- 108) **Blue Tit**: Seen almost daily.
- 109) **Great Tit**: Seen daily.
- 110) **Nuthatch**: Seen in Monfragüe.
- 111) **Short-toed Treecreeper**: Seen at Pago de San Clemente.
- 112) **Penduline Tit**: Seen at Arrocampo on 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- 113) **Iberian Grey Shrike**: Seen daily.
- 114) **Jay**: Seen in Monfragüe.
- 115) **Azure-winged Magpie**: Seen daily.
- 116) **Magpie**: Seen daily.
- 117) **Jackdaw**: Seen most days.
- 118) **Raven**: Seen daily.
- 119) **Common Starling**: Seen on Campo Lugar plains and Santa Amalia.
- 120) **Spotless Starling**: Seen daily.
- 121) **House Sparrow**: Seen daily.
- 122) **Spanish Sparrow**: Seen almost daily, in large flocks.
- 123) **Tree Sparrow**: Seen on rice fields on 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- 124) **Red Avadavat**: Seen on rice fields.
- 125) **Common Waxbill**: Seen on rice fields.
- 126) **Chaffinch**: Seen daily.
- 127) **Serin**: Seen almost daily.
- 128) **Greenfinch**: Seen on two days.
- 129) **Goldfinch**: Seen daily.
- 130) **Siskin**: Seen at Monfragüe.
- 131) **Linnet**: Seen on two days.
- 132) **Hawfinch**: Seen in Monfragüe and at Pago de San Clemente.
- 133) **Cirl Bunting**: Seen by River Almonte on 10<sup>th</sup> February.
- 134) **Rock Bunting**: Seen by River Almonte on 10<sup>th</sup> February.
- 135) **Reed Bunting**: Seen on rice fields and at Arrocampo.
- 136) **Corn Bunting**: Seen daily.