



Extremadura Birdwatching Tour 2nd – 9th April

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OVERVIEW OF THE EXTREMADURA TOUR

This will be a great opportunity to see some of Central Spain's special & most sought after birds.

The main emphasis of the tour will be on locating the Extremadura steppe & mountain specialities, but you will see a lot more than just these species! The area is also renowned for it's wonderful & breath-taking scenery in this area.

The speciality birds we will be looking for are Black-winged Kite, Black Vulture, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Lesser Kestrel, Purple Gallinule, Little Bustard, Great Bustard, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Eagle Owl, Scops Owl, Thekla Lark, Blue Rock Thrush, Azure-winged Magpie, Southern Grey Shrike, Spotless Starling, Spanish Sparrow, Rock Sparrow, Red Avadavat & Rock Bunting.

Combine these with a wonderful supporting cast of other birds; White Stork, migrating Black Kite, Red Kite, Booted & Short-toed eagle 100's of Griffon Vulture, Hen Harrier, Golden Eagle, Hoopoe, Bee-eater, Roller, Calandra Lark, Red-rumped Swallow, Black Wheatear, Black-eared Wheatear, Black Redstart, Subalpine Warbler, Dartford warbler, Serin, Hawfinch, Ortolan & Rock Bunting this trip will surely be a memorable one.

I thoroughly researched this tour by looking at the birds, birding sites, accommodation & logistics. I was already familiar with the main sites & general areas, having birded in the region on a previous visit. During the trip I recorded all of the birds listed above, some of them in exceptional numbers!

Most of the areas we will visit are just 45 – 60 minutes away, with a couple of sites a little further. We will expect to record around 130+ Species

ACCOMMODATION

The proposed trip for April 2012 will be based at Casa rural Carvajal in the beautiful mountain village of Cabezabellosa in the province of Caceres. We will be just 30 minutes drive from the famous Monfrague National Park.

The accommodation consists of a beautiful traditional Spanish house, complete with en-suite bedrooms, a beautiful lounge, fully equipped kitchen, an open terrace area with panoramic views across the valley. The house has been restored with great care to retain many original features and charm.

Four rooms have en-suite bathrooms, with shower facilities. The 5th room has a dedicated bathroom close to the room.

The rooms are wonderfully & tastefully renovated retaining their natural aesthetics with modern comfort. There is a spacious lounge and breakfast room. The house is fitted with full central heating for the cooler winter evenings.

It is around 3 - 4 hours drive from Madrid airport. Accommodation details are below. The following pictures were taken during our visit in 2010, the view is from the accommodation & the woodland is just 2 minutes walk away!



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GETTING THERE

Getting to Extremadura Spain is easy & served by a variety of options, departures via the cheaper airlines are available from Gatwick, Luton, Stanstead, East Midlands & Manchester flying to Madrid airport.

Flights usually cost around £120 - £150 inclusive of taxes & the flight is just 2 hours.

You will be collected from Madrid & dropped off for your departure.

TOUR COST

The tour cost is £695.00 per person excluding flights.

There is a single room supplement of £80 per person.

The price includes Bed & breakfast accommodation, guided bird watching & transport throughout the 7 day tour. It excludes lunch & evening meals.

FOOD

Breakfast is a spread of cereals, yoghurts, fresh fruit, cheeses, bread, ham, toast, jam, coffee & tea. Servings are generous & you help yourself to portions.

Everyone has access to a communal refrigerator at the accommodation. So for lunches we will prepare our own sandwiches/snacks for each day, alternatively should you prefer, you can purchase food during the daytime as there will be plenty of opportunity to stop off at passing shops etc.

Evening meals will be taken together as a group, we will visit a mixture of local restaurants & bars each evening with a wide choice of food and drink.

Eating out is similar in cost to the UK. As a guideline in 2011 we spent around £20 - £25 per day on lunch & an evening meal.

BOOKING

If you wish to book please contact us for a booking form. A 25% deposit is required with the completed booking form. The balance is required 14 days prior to departure.



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ITINERARY

The itinerary is approximate and maybe varied to take opportunity of the best conditions for seeing certain target species, however all of the sites & habitats mentioned will be visited during the tour.

DAY ONE – ARRIVAL & COLLECTION FROM AIRPORT

Once settled into the accommodation, we will if time allows have a short exploration of a nearby river valley, this area should our first sight of **Azure-winged Magpie, plus Hoopoe, Griffon Vulture, Red Kite, Black Redstart, Serin & Siskin** in this area.

DAY TWO – MONFRAGUE NP

A slightly lazy start for our first morning with breakfast & coffee commencing around 830am.

We will then head off out to explore the beautiful Monfrague NP, we will visit this vast reserve several times during the trip, but today we will focus on exploring the area around the visitor centre in the morning, with a visit to the famous Salto del Gitano in the afternoon – this is a famous cliff face with Europe's largest vulture colony.

These areas normally hold, **Black, Vulture, Griffon Vulture, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Golden Eagle, Hoopoe, Southern Grey Shrike, Black Redstart, Rock Sparrow, Hawfinch, Woodlark, Crested Lark, Dartford Warbler, Sardinian warbler, Blue Rock Thrush & Firecrest.**

In the early evening we will then head for an **Eagle Owl** site, I was very fortunate here in 2011, with no less than 3 birds located at dusk.

We will finish the day with an evening meal in the town of Plasencia before heading back to our accommodation.



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DAY THREE

We will have breakfast around 7.30am before heading off for the Arroyocampo wetland area, we will spend most of the morning birdwatching in this area.

Last year we located an excellent mixture of birds including some of the sort after species; **Black-winged Kite, Purple Swamphen, Hoopoe, Bluethroat, Black Vulture, White Stork, Common Crane, Black Redstart, Southern Grey Shrike, flocks of Spanish Sparrow, Serin. Also Great White Egret & wildfowl.** We also had good views of **Otter** here on our last trip.

From here we will drive for around one hour before taking our first opportunity to search some true Spanish steppe habitat. These vast plains are home to several of the real gems of the trip, truly enigmatic species such as; **Great Bustard, Little Bustard, Black-bellied Sandgrouse & Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** all of these species are present in good numbers during the winter time. However, the vast areas of habitat means we will need to search carefully & patiently on several occasions to locate them. In Dec 2010, I saw both **Bustards** in double figures & over **100 Pin-tailed Sandgrouse**. The plains also support vast numbers of wintering larks, with **Calandra Larks** often reaching flocks of over 100. **Crested & Thekla lark** are both present in good numbers. We also find good flocks of **Spanish Sparrow, Corn Bunting, Goldfinch, Linnet & Lapwing, Hoopoes** are regular, adding a lovely splash of colour.

We will finish the day with an evening meal in a local town before heading back to our accommodation.

DAY FOUR

Today we will breakfast early, before continuing our quest with the steppe species, searching another area slightly west of yesterday – again hoping to locate **Great Bustard, Little Bustard, Black-bellied Sandgrouse & Pin-tailed Sandgrouse.**

If we are successful with all of the target species by late morning we will head back to Monfrague NP where we will visit one of the circular walks from the visitor centre with a mixture of species to look for - **Black, Vulture, Griffon Vulture, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Golden Eagle, Hoopoe, Azure-winged Magpie, Southern Grey Shrike, Black Redstart, Rock Sparrow, Hawfinch, Woodlark, Crested Lark, Dartford Warbler, Sardinian warbler, Firecrest, Blue Rock Thrush Rock Sparrow, Rock Bunting & Cirl Bunting.** If we have been unable to locate all the specialist steppe birds then we may continue to search the area, until late afternoon.

Evening meal before retiring to our accommodation



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DAY FIVE

This morning we will visit a series of gravel pits, some rice fields & a reservoir area, before visiting another mountain raptor watchpoint.

The main target species during the visit to the wetland sites in the morning is the recently established African species – **Red Avadavat & Common Waxbill** which now holds a sustainable population in the area. We should also see **Gadwall, Pochard, Shoveler, Marsh Harrier, Red Kite, White Stork, Snipe, Golden Plover, Green Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Hoopoe & Penduline Tit.**

In the afternoon we will see **100+ Griffon Vulture, Golden Eagle, possibly Spanish Imperial Eagle & Bonelli's Eagle, plus Crag Martin.** Nearby woodland should provide further **Azure-winged Magpie & with the chance of Short-toed Treecreeper & several warblers & possible Black & Black-eared Wheatear.**

Evening meal before retiring to our accommodation

DAY SIX

This morning we will leave around 8.00 & head up to an alpine area to explore for some of the higher altitude species. Then heading from here into the Rio Jerte we will also look for the Iberian forms of **Jay & Green Woodpecker** (both potentially splits as new species in the future!). We will also look for **Hawfinch & Siskin** in these areas. This area also hosts **Rock Bunting & Black Wheatear.** Our local guide will advise of any **Black Wheatear** or **Alpine Accentors** that may be accessible, if present then we will head off to look for these in the afternoon

Alternatively, in the afternoon we will make a return journey to Arroyocampo to revisit the wetland area, where there will always be the chance of adding some additional species.

DAY SEVEN

Today we will leave early with a final visit in the morning to a Steppe habitat to search for any species that we have omitted to see, during our stay. With a visit to Monfrague in the afternoon with a similar intention. If we have failed to see **Eagle Owl** on our previous visit then we will also make a 2nd evening attempt to see this species.

DAY EIGHT

Depart the accommodation, & transport to the airport for flights back to the UK



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Birds recorded on April Tour

Little Grebe	Green Sandpiper	Sardinian Warbler
Great Crested Grebe	Black-headed Gull	Blackcap
Cormorant	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Long-tailed Tit
Little Bittern	Yellow-legged Gull	Blue Tit
Cattle Egret	Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	Great Tit
Little Egret	Black-bellied Sandgrouse	Bearded Tit
Great Egret	Feral Rock Dove	Nuthatch
Grey Heron	Woodpigeon	Short-toed Treecreeper
Purple Heron	Collared Dove	Southern Grey Shrike
Squacco Heron	Great Spotted Cuckoo	Woodchat Shrike
Spoonbill	Cuckoo	Jay
Black Stork	Scops Owl (heard)	Azure-winged Magpie
White Stork	Barn Owl (heard)	Magpie
Gadwall	Eagle Owl	Chough
Teal	Little Owl	Jackdaw
Mallard	Common Swift	Raven
Shoveler	Alpine Swift	Spotless Starling
Garganey	Common Kingfisher	House Sparrow
Black-shouldered Kite	Hoopoe	Spanish Sparrow
Black Kite	Calandra Lark	Tree Sparrow
Red Kite	Crested Lark	Rock Sparrow
Egyptian Vulture	Thekla Lark	Chaffinch
Griffon Vulture	Woodlark	Serin
Black Vulture	Short-toed Lark	Greenfinch
Marsh Harrier	Crag Martin	Goldfinch
Montagu's Harrier	Swallow	Siskin
Sparrowhawk	Red-rumped Swallow	Linnet
Common Buzzard	House Martin	Hawfinch
Spanish Imperial Eagle	Meadow Pipit	Cirl Bunting
Booted Eagle	Grey Wagtail	Rock Bunting
Bonelli's Eagle	White Wagtail	Corn Bunting
Short-toed Eagle	Wren	
Lesser Kestrel	Black Redstart	
Common Kestrel	Stonechat	
Peregrine	Northern Wheatear	
Merlin	Black Wheatear	
Red-legged Partridge	Black-eared Wheatear	
Moorhen	Blue Rock Thrush	
Purple Swamp Hen	Blackbird	
Coot	Song Thrush	
Little Bustard	Mistle Thrush	
Great Bustard	Cetti's Warbler	
Black-winged Stilt	Fan-tailed Warbler	
Stone Curlew	Savi's Warbler	
Little Ringed Plover	Reed Warbler	
Snipe	Great Reed Warbler	
Greenshank	Dartford Warbler	
Common Sandpiper	Subalpine Warbler	



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Terrain & walking

Easy & moderate terrain & medium intensity walking, with maximum distance in one walk around 3-4 miles. Some uphill walking is required.

Clothing & Footwear etc

Some warmer clothing with fleece for morning & evening, waterproofs, loose cool clothing for daytime, ideally avoid bright colours. Walking shoes & boots.

Equipment

Please ensure as a minimum you have a pair of binoculars. A telescope is most useful with a tripod. People with cameras & photography of birds are most welcome, with plenty of opportunities to take pictures of birds & scenery

Checklists

Species check-lists will be provided for clients by Norfolk Birding

Booking

To book this tour please request a booking form & return with your 25% deposit of the total amount. Booking forms are available via email or by post.

Correspondence

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