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SPAIN: Sierras and Strait



Rüppell's Vulture is only a rare vagrant to Europe but was well seen during the tour © Fernando Enrique Navarrete

SPAIN

Sierras and Strait

12-19 September 2023

Leaders: Fernando Enrique Navarrete

Highlights

- Raptor migration across The Strait with thousands of raptors of 20 species!
- Nice selection of vagrants from different continents including Elegant Tern, White-backed Vulture and Rüppell's Vulture.
- White-headed Duck, Marbled Duck, Little Swift, Western Swamphen, Slender-billed Gull and a long list of southern specialities in Doñana.
- Close encounter with a flock of 23 "endangered" Northern Bald Ibis.
- Several species of cetaceans and seabirds during our boat trip off Tarifa.
- The Sierra de Ronda landscape, particularly the Llanos de Libar and Sierra de las Nieves National Park.

Trip Diary

Tuesday 12 September

After an uneventful flight the group arrived right on time and as soon as they landed we headed towards our hotel for the next five nights making a couple of stops along the way.

Our first stop at the Palmones river mouth was very productive with a nice array of gulls, terns and waders including Oystercatcher, Pied Avocet, Curlew Sandpiper, Greenshank, Redshank, Caspian Tern and a couple of Ospreys fishing along the shore.

We hit the road again and after a few miles arrived at one of the best raptor migration lookouts in the Western Palearctic, "Algarrobo". Although it was a bit late, the westerly winds had pushed the raptors to the eastern side of The Strait where they were waiting for the right conditions to cross. This allowed us to find our first raptors of the trip including close encounters with dozens of Booted and Short-toed Eagles, Honey Buzzards, Sparrowhawks, Griffon Vultures and at least 3 different Bonelli's Eagles.

We watched two beautiful adult eagles and a juvenile catch a young Egyptian Vulture in midair and although we initially thought the vulture was dead, it started moving, fought for its life and managed to escape in front of our incredulous eyes. What a start to the trip!

Dozens of Bee-eaters, Alpine Swift and a nice selection of hirundines were also present, diverting our attention from a spectacle monopolised by the raptors.

After a short drive, we arrived at our hotel, where after a lovely dinner, we went to sleep with a promising day ahead of us.

Wednesday 13 September

We awoke to a beautifully calm day, with a smooth sea and perfect visibility, with the Moroccan coast just across the water. The conditions were perfect for a boat trip, so that's what we did !!

While we waited for our boat to be ready, we spent the first couple of hours at Los Lances. This coastal reserve usually holds good numbers of waders and gulls at this time of the year and during our visit, we noted Audouin's Gull, Sandwich Tern, Red Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Kentish Plover and Greenshank. There was also a nice selection of migrating raptors including Black Kite, Booted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle and Eurasian Sparrowhawk.

After a short drive, we reached Tarifa and boarded our boat for a pelagic trip in search of cetaceans and seabirds. It didn't take us long to find our first pod of over 60 Common Dolphins which were accompanied by a few Cory's and Scopoli's Shearwaters. These two species can be difficult to separate unless seen well, but the proximity of the birds allowed us to take good photos and positively identify them. A few Balearic Shearwaters flew by very fast, as they usually do....



Cory's Shearwater © Gareth Rees

We headed a few miles towards the Moroccan coast finding a big group of Long-finned Pilot Whales that showed extremely well, another big pod of Common Dolphins and a few Bottlenose Dolphins. We also noted more Cory's and Scopoli's Shearwaters, Black Tern and Common Tern.

Back ashore and after a fantastic lunch, we paid a visit to La Janda, a huge agricultural area that had once been one of the biggest lakes and wetlands in

Europe with a surface of 3,700 hectares. Unfortunately, a process of drainage which started in the middle of the 19th century has largely destroyed this wetland paradise, although it still retains important natural values and large numbers of birds.

The rice fields along the track were full of White Storks, Glossy Ibises and smaller numbers of herons and waders, including the only Purple Heron of the trip. Noisy flocks of hundreds of Spanish Sparrows were looking for a place to roost along the numerous channels, where we also found our only Western Olivaceous Warbler.

Raptors were very active too. No less than a dozen Lesser Kestrels were hunting on the ploughed fields, as well as a juvenile Montagu's Harrier. Other raptors in the area included Griffon Vulture, Marsh Harrier, Black-winged Kite and Short-toed Eagle.

Thursday 14 September

Our main goal for the day was to enjoy the spectacular migration across The Strait of Gibraltar, where thousands of raptors and other soaring birds use the narrowest point (14 km) to cross to Africa.

We started with an early visit to Los Lances beach. From the hide, we spotted a big group of gulls and terns including Audouin's, Yellow-legged and Black-headed Gulls and a few Sandwich Terns.

A good variety of waders was also present in the area with birds such as Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Kentish Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin and Sanderling, whilst the open fields were teeming with smaller birds like Yellow Wagtail, Northern Wheatear, Greater Short-toed Lark and Zitting Cisticola. There was also a juvenile Montagu's Harrier which was trying to catch any of them which came within range.



The weather conditions today with moderate easterly winds were perfect for a visit to Cazalla, one of the best migration viewpoints in the area, where we spent the rest of the morning watching raptors flying above our heads, with some also below us !!!

We ended up seeing several thousand birds with most being Booted Eagles, Black Kites, Honey Buzzards and Sparrowhawks. It was probably also the best day of the season for Egyptian Vultures.

Black Stork © Fernando Enrique Navarrete

A quick visit to another migration "mirador" closer to the coast provided even better views of the same species, plus a flock of Black Storks that showed incredibly well.

With lunch on our minds, we were about to sit down at a restaurant when a friend texted me with news of a White-backed Vulture on a carcass not very far from Algeciras. We didn't hesitate, postponed lunch and hit the road, arriving 20 minutes later. Luckily for us, the bird was still present, providing excellent scope views and a nice comparison with its much bigger cousin, the Griffon Vulture.



White-backed Vulture with two Griffon Vultures © Fernando Enrique Navarrete

When we left, there were smiles on our faces, as this was a Western Palearctic tick for all of us.

Apparently, the bird left soon after us and was not seen again which meant that the only people who saw it were our group and the guys who found it. We all agreed that the very late lunch was totally worth it !!

Since we were very close to Algarrobo, we decided to spend the rest of the day there enjoying the raptor migration with the bay of Algeciras and the rock of Gibraltar in the background.

We scanned the flocks of Griffon Vultures looking for one of the specialities of the region, the rare Rüppell's Vulture and it didn't take us long to find a first-cycle bird flying directly above our heads giving us some great photo opportunities. Two rare African vultures in one day !!

Honey Buzzard © Fernando Enrique Navarrete

The next few hours were spent surrounded by raptors like Booted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Osprey, Marsh Harrier, Sparrowhawk, Egyptian Vulture and Griffon Vulture.

We left the area reluctantly and arrived at our hotel just in time to enjoy dinner.



Friday 15 September

Today we said goodbye to The Strait for a few hours and headed towards the southern part of the famous Coto Doñana and an area of saltpans, small lagoons, open wetlands, farmland and pine woods, which is home to a diverse number of species.

After a quick look at the tide chart the night before, we decided to visit Montijo beach first thing in the morning and this proved to be the right move. The exposed rocks and mudflats were full of terns, gulls and waders including Slender-billed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Common Tern, Black Tern, Sandwich Tern and a very unexpected Elegant Tern, an American vagrant which has only occasionally been previously seen in this part of Spain and another Western Palearctic tick for most of the group.

Our next stop was the fish market of Chipiona which is home to the only Little Swift colony in Europe.

We spent some time trying to photograph this acrobatic and localised species, which wasn't an easy task despite the close views and the numerous birds which were coming in and out of their nests.



Little Swift © Fernando Enrique Navarrete

Relatively satisfied with our results, we boarded our vehicle again and drove through some agricultural fields to our next destination, the Bonanza lagoons. These three small lakes are probably the best place in Spain to get really close views of two of the most endangered ducks in Europe, Marbled Duck and White-headed Duck.

We had unbeatable views of at least ten Marbled Ducks and half a dozen White-headed Ducks, while the reedbeds and exposed shores of the lagoons held good numbers of Glossy Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Western Swamphen, three Temminck's Stints, Little Ringed Plover and a couple of introduced species, the spectacular Black-headed Weaver and noisy Common Waxbill.

After a lunch break, we visited a completely different habitat, the saltpans along the Guadalquivir River which are a vitally important stopover site for many birds, especially waders.

We scanned the flocks of hundreds of Greater Flamingos looking for a Lesser Flamingo but to no avail, however, we managed to see an astonishing variety of waders including Kentish Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Little Stint, Redshank, Greenshank and huge numbers of Black-winged Stilts and Avocets. Other birds present in the

area included many Slender-billed Gulls, Osprey, Eurasian Spoonbill and numerous egrets and herons fishing along the channels.

After another very productive day with a significant number of new species added to our list, we decided to call it a day and drove back to the hotel for a well-deserved rest.

Saturday 16 September

Our main destination for the morning was the Barbate marshes and when we arrived, we were welcomed by a group of 23 Northern Bald Ibis, one of the rarest birds on Earth.

After a successful reintroduction programme, these strange-looking birds are breeding again in southern Spain and act as a backup population should something happen to the birds in Morocco. They were quite tame allowing us some amazing photographic opportunities.



Northern Bald Ibis © Gareth Rees

The salt pans had good numbers of Audouin's Gulls, Greater Flamingos, Eurasian Spoonbills and waders and the nearby tamarisk trees and open fields held a few migrants such as Eurasian Hoopoe, Woodchat Shrike, Willow Warbler, Northern Wheatear and the best views so far of Greater Short-toed Lark.

We bought some sandwiches and had lunch at Los Tornos, a picnic area surrounded by old Cork Oaks and located at the edge of Los Alcornocales Natural Park. This is usually a great place for forest birds and migrants and this visit was no exception. There were no less than a dozen Pied Flycatchers calling everywhere and flying around us, joined by a few Spotted Flycatchers plus Firecrest, Willow Warbler, Iberian Chiffchaff and Short-toed Treecreper.

Needless to say, the sandwiches went down very fast and were replaced by binoculars and cameras in a matter of minutes.

We spent the rest of the day at Sierra de La Plata, on the northern edge of El Estrecho Natural Park. This area offers some of the most beautiful and varied scenery in the Strait with sand dunes, pine forest and limestone cliffs, the African coast in the background and amazing views of the Roman town of Baelo Claudia which was founded during the 1st century BC.

The cliffs are home to a healthy colony of Griffon Vultures and we saw dozens of birds resting and then suddenly a slightly different bird flew above us. It was a second-cycle Rüppell's Vulture, which showed extremely well before disappearing behind the cliff.

We also noted Peregrine, Blue Rock Thrush, Crested Tit, Sardinian Warbler, Rock Bunting and a migrating Osprey, which headed directly towards the Moroccan coast, although an Iberian Green Woodpecker was, unfortunately, a 'heard only'.

One last stop at La Zarga rewarded us with excellent views of two juveniles Bonelli's Eagles chasing each other and landing on the cliffs surrounded by Griffon Vultures, while the local pair of Ravens didn't seem very happy.

We all agreed that it was a perfect way to end our time in The Strait before leaving for the mountains the following day.

Sunday 17 September

We awoke to the only rainy day of the trip, although luckily for us, our timing was perfect once again, since this was mostly a transfer day and the rain didn't affect the birding.

A very vocal and skittish Iberian Chiffchaff in front of Reception delayed our departure but soon thereafter, we were back on the road and made one last stop at Algarrobo. Even though it was too early and the weather wasn't great for raptor migration, we still saw a few Booted Eagles, Honey Buzzards and Short-toed Eagles before we moved on to the Palmones river mouth.

We were hoping to find a Lesser Crested Tern, a scarce but regular visitor to this reserve but all we could find was an Arctic Skua chasing some Sandwich and Common Terns that were fishing along the shore. The tide was low, and we noted a nice selection of waders including Grey Plover, Common Ringed Plover, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin and Common Sandpiper.

It was time to head to the mountains and after some driving and a delicious lunch at a local restaurant, we arrived at the charming mountain village of Montejaque, gateway to the Llanos de Libar, one of the best birding spots in this part of Andalucía. The presence of different habitats like karst, cultivated areas, open dehesa-like forest and wetter Portuguese oak forest attracts a high diversity of bird to a relatively small area.

We only had time to cover the first mile or so of this famous track and this place never disappoints. In the first few minutes and just by the side of the path, we found birds such as Blue Rock Thrush, Black Wheatear, a beautiful male Western Black-eared Wheatear, Rock Sparrow, Rock Bunting and Cirl Bunting.



There were also good numbers of raptors including no less than 40 Griffon Vultures, a migrating flock of Black Kites and smaller numbers of Booted Eagles and Short-toed Eagles.

Griffon Vulture © Fernando Enrique Navarrete

This was just a short introduction to the birds of the Sierra, and we couldn't wait to be back the following day to explore the whole area more thoroughly. We had to cover the last few miles to our hotel, so we left with high expectations for the following day.

We were welcomed to the hotel by a couple of Red Deer, followed by a quick check-in and a delicious dinner.

Monday 18 September

We left the hotel slightly earlier than usual and had breakfast at a local bar in order to be in the field at first light. Leaving the vehicle at the beginning of the trail, we walked along the base of the cliffs until we reached an area of bushes and open fields where the bird activity was very obvious. Here, we had even better views of several Black Wheatears, Blue Rock Thrush, Black Redstart, Thekla's Lark, Rock Sparrow, Rock Bunting, Cirl Bunting and Red-billed Chough.

Short-toed Eagle © Gareth Rees

Continuing uphill along the increasingly rocky track, we made another stop before reaching the forest, where we had fantastic views of a Little Owl, a couple of Black Wheatears, a few more Rock Buntings, Dartford Warbler and a big flock of Linnets.

It was warming up and the vultures were leaving the cliffs and flying above us, a flock of Black Kites headed south along the valley and a

Short-toed Eagle was seen on top of the rocks, probably looking for some of the abundant snakes in the area. There were also a couple of the endemic Spanish Ibex.

The next section of the track took us through a beautiful Holm Oak woodland on the southern slope and we then entered a cooler and wetter Portuguese Oak forest along the northern slope. Here, we found a nice array of forest birds such as Firecrest, Iberian Chiffchaff, Crested Tit, Nuthatch, Short-toed Treecreeper, Common Redstart and Woodlark. Unfortunately, a Hawfinch was seen too briefly to be included on the list.

Once we reached the end of the route, we just enjoyed the views for a while, surrounded by several Black Wheatears and a very cooperative Woodlark before heading back for lunch and a visit to the beautiful town of Ronda.



Woodlark © Gareth Rees

Very few cities in Spain are built in such a wonderful location as this historic town and we spend some time along the famous “Tajo”, a 100m deep gorge that splits Ronda in two. This is spanned by several bridges from where we had great views of numerous Red-billed Choughs, Blue Rock Thrush and Black Redstart. The 18th century Puente Nuevo, the famous bull ring and the Parador were also part of our route. A nice way to end the day after some very productive birding.

Tuesday 19 September

It was our final day, and having loaded the luggage into the minibus, we headed off to spend the morning birding at the entrance of the Sierra de las Nieves National Park, the latest addition to Spain’s national parks system. Here, we were hoping to see Iberian Grey Shrike, a bird that had eluded us on the previous days and we walked for less than 100 metres when we found a bird vocalising on top of a tree, which was soon joined by a second individual.

The whole area was very birdy and we had great views of a nice selection of species including Woodlark, Crested Tit, Cirl Bunting, Rock Bunting, Dartford Warbler, Iberian Chiffchaff and the first Melodious Warbler of the trip.

With limited time, we made one last stop at Laguna de Fuente de Piedra, the most important Greater Flamingo colony in Spain. Due to the severe drought which had affected the area for the last couple of years, the main lagoon was mostly dry except for one corner where we saw a big flock of flamingos and some waders.

The small lagoon near the visitor centre was more productive and we noted a flock of 30+ White-headed Ducks, a single Ferruginous Duck and bigger numbers of other ducks like Shoveler and Common Pochard.

The tamarisks and bushes near the visitor centre were teeming with migrants including several Reed Warblers, numerous Yellow Wagtails, Common Redstart, Common Whitethroat, Melodious Warbler, Willow Warbler and the only Western Bonelli's Warbler of the trip, plus a few resident birds such as Zitting Cisticola and Sardinian Warbler.

It was a perfect ending to a very successful trip and with this image in our minds, we arrived at Malaga airport in plenty of time for the group to take their flight back to London.

Thanks to all party members for such a good trip, made even more enjoyable by the great birds, your company and enthusiasm. We look forward to seeing you all again on another Limosa tour very soon.



Iberian Grey Shrike © Gareth Rees

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Seen on several wetlands.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common and widespread. Seen on most days.



Marbled Ducks © Gareth Rees

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

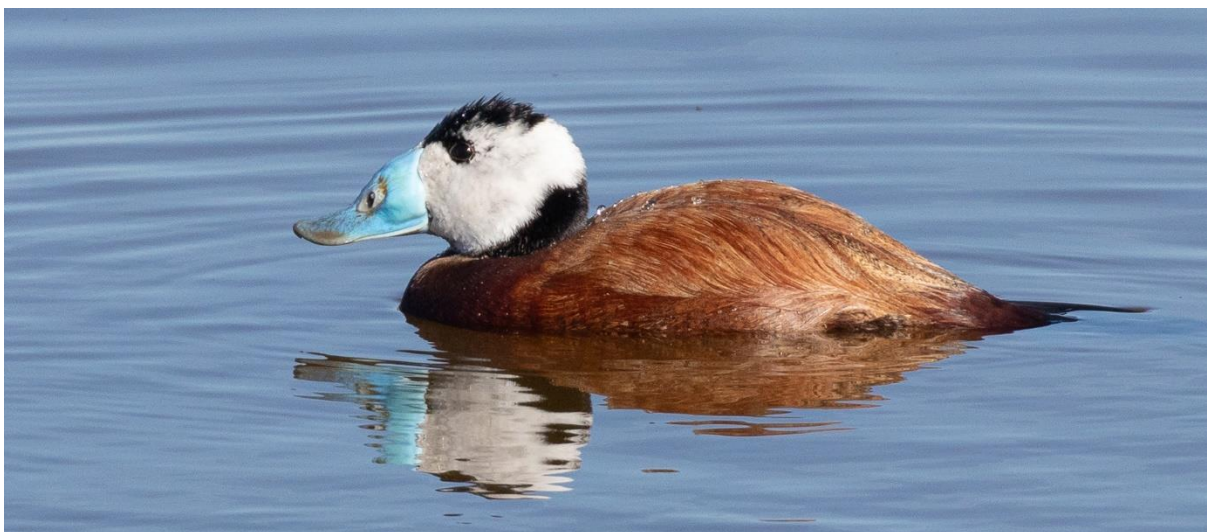
Twelve birds at Bonanza.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Several birds at Fuente de Piedra.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

One bird seen at Fuente de Piedra.



White-headed Duck © Fernando Enrique Navarrete

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

Five birds in the Bonanza area and at least 30 at Fuente de Piedra.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Small numbers seen on two dates.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

Common on migration around The Strait.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Small numbers seen on most days.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

Small numbers seen around Tarifa.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Great views of 50+ birds around the colony in Chipiona.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Wild birds seen near Tarifa.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Common throughout the trip.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Seen daily.

Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Seen in the southern part of Doñana.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Seen on most wetlands.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Small numbers on most wetlands.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Common on most wetlands.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

A few seen in the southern part of Doñana.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Very common on coastal wetlands, especially in the southern part of Doñana.

Eurasian Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

Small numbers noted on four dates.

Black-winged Stilt © Gareth Rees

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus*

himantopus

Very common and seen in most wetlands.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Several birds on the Barbate marshes and southern Doñana.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Small numbers noted in most coastal wetlands.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Very common and seen in most wetlands.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Four birds in southern Doñana.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Seen in most coastal wetlands and beaches.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Seen at Los Lances beach and southern Doñana.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Seen at the Barbate marshes and southern Doñana.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Common along the coast.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Noted on two dates along the coast.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Three different birds on two dates at Los Lances.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Good numbers in southern Doñana.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

One at Palmones river mouth and dozens in southern Doñana.



Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Three birds at Lagunas del Colorado.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Seen on most wetlands.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Good numbers in southern Doñana and the Barbate marshes.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Small numbers noted on four dates.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Small numbers on most wetlands.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One to four individuals noted on three dates.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Seen almost daily.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Common in southern Doñana.

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*

Common in southern Doñana.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Common along the coast.

Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii*

Five to seven birds at Los Lances and 50+ at the Barbate marshes.

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephala*

Seen only in southern Doñana where it was relatively common.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Very common and seen daily.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Common along the coast.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Two birds near Algeciras on the first day.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Common along the coast.

Elegant Tern *Thalasseus elegans*

Good planning allowed us to arrive at the perfect time to enjoy great views of this American vagrant, which disappeared a few minutes later.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Small numbers seen on the boat trip, near Chipiona and Palmones.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Two flocks seen during the boat trip.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

One bird chasing terns at the Palmones river mouth.

Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

Numerous in The Strait from shore and from the boat.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*

Some birds were seen close enough from our boat to be identified as *borealis*.

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Three birds seen from the boat.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Several flocks were seen from the migration viewpoints around Tarifa.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Very common and seen on most days.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Small numbers in southern Doñana.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Very common.

Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*

A very cooperative flock of 23 birds near Barbate was one of the highlights of the day.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Good numbers in southern Doñana.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

A few birds seen roosting in southern Doñana.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Very common and seen daily.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Common in most wetlands.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

One juvenile at La Janda.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Common. Seen in most wetlands.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

One to three birds seen on four dates.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

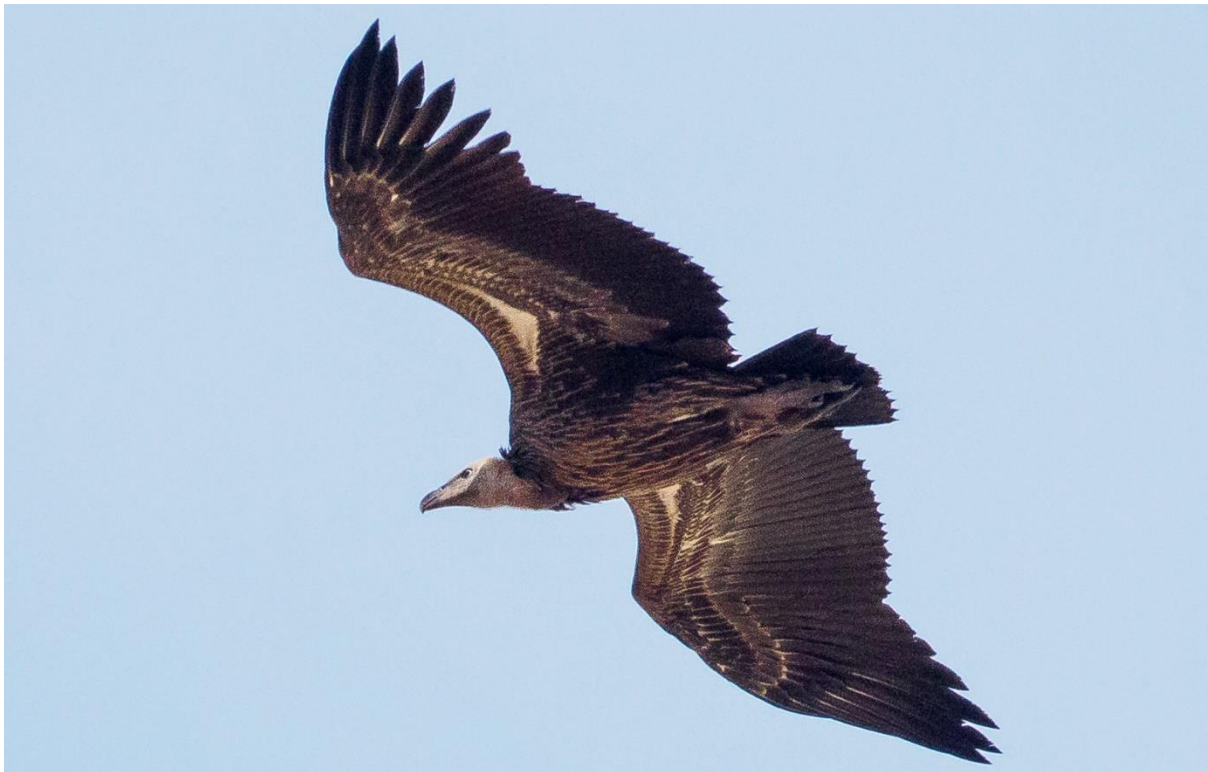
Several hundred birds on migration in The Strait.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Two birds at La Janda.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

We had some spectacular days of Egyptian Vulture migration, seeing more than 100 birds on one morning.



Rüppell's Vulture © Gareth Rees

Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppellii*

One of the highlights of the trip, with different birds at Algarrobo and Sierra de la Plata.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*

Arguably the best bird of the trip and a Western Palearctic tick for all of us. Fantastic views of one individual on a carcass near Algarrobo.

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*

Common. Seen daily.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

One of the most abundant migrating raptors with dozens or hundreds seen daily.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*

Arguably the most common raptor during our visit with more than 1,000 seen.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*

Two adults and a juvenile at Algarrobo, one bird at La Janda and two juveniles at La Zarga.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Good numbers of migrating birds around The Strait.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Small numbers seen on three dates.



Montagu's Harrier © Gareth Rees

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Two juvenile birds on two dates.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Good numbers of migrating birds around The Strait.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

A single bird on route near Fuente de Piedra.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Common on migration.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

A few birds on three dates.



Little Owl © Gareth Rees

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Two birds in Tahivilla and another one at Los Llanos de Libar.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Noted on three dates.

Eurasian Hoopoe © Gareth Rees

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

One or two birds seen on three dates.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

A total of 60+ on the first day and smaller numbers on two further dates.



Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Seen daily in the Sierra.

Iberian Green Woodpecker *Picus sharpei*

Heard several times during our time in the mountains.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

No less than 12 birds hunting over a field at La Janda.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Common. Seen daily.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

A single bird at Cueva del Moro.

Iberian Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*

Two birds on the last day at Sierra de las Nieves NP.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

Three juveniles seen on two dates.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Seen daily in the Ronda area.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

Only present during our time in southern Doñana.

Red-billed Chough *Phyrrhocorax phyrrhacorax*

At least 30 birds at Llanos de Libar and also at Ronda.

Western Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Common.

Northern Raven *Corvus corax*

Fairly common and seen on five dates.

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

Three birds at Cueva del Moro and fairly common in the Ronda area.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Common.

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*

Several birds posed really well at Llanos del Libar and Sierra de las Nieves.

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

A flock at La Janda on 13 September.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Common.

Thekla's Lark *Galerida theklae*

Seen well near Bolonia and Llanos de Libar.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Fantastic views of several birds feeding around the Barbate marshes, plus a few more in flight.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Migrating birds were seen on three dates.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Several birds at Llanos de Libar.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Very common. Seen daily.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Common.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Small numbers seen on three dates.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Heard often but only seen well once on 17 September.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*

One bird seen really well at Fuente de Piedra.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Common migrant.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*

Heard on three dates. We finally managed to see one bird during our last full day.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Several birds at Fuente de Piedra.

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*

Fantastic views of one migrating bird at Sierra de las Nieves and at least three individuals at Fuente de Piedra.

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna opaca*

One bird at La Janda on our second day.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Common and seen on most days.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Heard on a daily basis and seen a few times.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Several birds at Fuente de Piedra.

Dartford Warbler *Sylva undata*

A couple of birds at Llanos de Libar.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*

The most common warbler of the trip and seen daily.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Common. Seen daily.

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Heard quite often and seen a couple of times.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Abundant in the Ronda area.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*

Small numbers seen on four dates.

Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor*

Very common and seen daily.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Seen daily.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

One to three birds on three dates.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Common.

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*
Surprisingly scarce this year with only a few birds seen.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Common in the Sierra.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
Small numbers of migrating birds seen on three dates.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*
Quite common in the right habitat and noted on four dates.

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*
Very common. Seen daily.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Migrating birds seen on three dates.

Western Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*
A beautiful male seen at Llanos de Libar.

Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucura*
Great views of five birds at Llanos de Libar.

Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus*
Several birds seen in southern Doñana.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*
A few noisy flocks of this introduced species were seen in southern Doñana.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Very common.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*
Good numbers around La Janda.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*
Several birds at Llanos de Libar.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Common migrant and seen almost daily.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
Present around our hotel in Ronda.



Rock Sparrow © Gareth Rees

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
Only seen in southern Doñana.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*
A couple of birds near Tahivilla. One bird seen in the Algerian Oak forest.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
Common in forested areas.

European Serin *Serinus serinus*
Common in the Ronda area.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*
Seen daily.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*
Seen daily.

Common Linnet *Linaria cannabina*
Common.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*
Common and seen daily.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*
Small numbers seen daily in the Ronda area.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*
Small numbers seen daily in the Ronda area.

BUTTERFLIES

Small White *Artogeia rapae*
Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*
Monarch *Danaus plexippus*
Two-tailed Pasha *Charaxes jasius*
Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*
Cardinal *Argynnis pandora*
Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*
Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*
Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*

DRAGONFLIES

Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*
Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*
Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope*
Long Skimmer *Orthetrum trinacria*
Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*
Broad Scarlet *Crocothemis erythraea*
Violet Dropwing *Trithemis annulata*
Banded Groundling *Brachythemis leucosticta*

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Spanish Terrapin *Mauremys leprosa*
Moorish Gecko *Tarentola mauritanica*
Andalusian Wall Lizard *Podarcis vaucheri*

MAMMALS

Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*
Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*
Long-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala melas*
Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*
Iberian Ibex *Capra pyrenaica*
Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*
Egyptian Mongoose *Herpestes ichneumon*