



Birdwatching Holidays in Spain, Morocco & more...

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SUMMARY OF OUR LONG WEEKEND AT BOLETAS BIRDWATCHING CENTRE **20th – 25th MARCH 2008**

Participants: - Barrie, Anita and Elliott Staley, Tony Davison and William Soar

We had a great time once more at Boletas, in spite of the almost gale force winds that we encountered during most of our stay. The only real break from them was when we were at the Llobregat Delta Reserve and on our last morning at El Planeron.

On Friday morning we saw two Wallcreepers at Riglos really well, right behind the church in exactly the spot you had told us to look last year. These somewhat overshadowed three Alpine Accentors we had found just moments before. Also that day we saw three Lammergeiers, Griffon and Egyptian Vs and lots of kites, ST Treecreeper, but alas no Black Woodpeckers at Oroel as it was very busy with day trippers.

On Saturday we saw 2 Bonellis Eagles really well at San Julian, plus ST Eagle and several Egyptian Vultures, lots of Griffons, kites and a nice flock of 8 Rock Buntings nearby. We then went to Vadiello where we saw 3 more Lammergeiers, ST Eagles, more vultures, a stunning Blue Rock Thrush, but no Wallcreepers, either in the quarries or at the dam. We tried Monte Aragon for Black Wheatear but failed (we failed again two days later too). Perhaps we are the only group ever to have failed there, but we really did cover it well – the wind is our excuse. We also made a brief visit to Piraces in search of Eagle Owl but we could not find one. Some of us visited the Loporzano 'Social Club' before dinner and had a very one-sided 'conversation' with a gentleman call Sebastian (Esther gave us the details). We did not have a clue what he was saying as our Spanish does not go beyond the basics such as beer, wine, sandwich, coffee and *Coca Cola!!!*

On Sunday we had a day out with Alberto – the wind was still blowing strong! Within 15 mins of being on Los Monergos though, we had seen both sandgrouse and 20 Little Bustards on the ground. There were lots of larks, another 20 Little Bustards, Lesser Kestrel, Golden Eagle, ST Eagle, Merlin, but very few migrants. A Black-eared Wheatear was a stunning consolation. After lunch Alberto took us to a spot near Bujaraloz where we found 9 Great Bustards – but viewing them out of the car was almost impossible. We drove up quite close to them to get good views. We then went to Candasnos Lake where amongst the wildfowl we (ME) found a Mega!! A Mediterranean Gull, which Alberto excitedly informed us was only the third ever record for Aragon. What a star I felt on being told that. Alberto was in another car Tony, at the time of the find and well out of sight. So we phoned them and Tony told us he had never seen anyone reverse a car as quickly as Alberto did when they got the news – almost Alonso like!!!! Our fantastic day with Alberto finished at a Lesser Kestrel colony right by the N11, near Candasnos. Here we were able to watch the barn from the cars as the birds flew into the colony.

On Monday we spent the morning around Loporzano and Monte Aragon. It was very good for common birds including S T Treecreepers and Rock Bunting, but despite intensive searching no

Black Wheatears. After lunch we made our way to Quinto and suffered badly in the Zaragoza road system. By good fortune rather than skill we found ourselves on the N11 and going in the right direction! From there we were able to cross the Ebro and get to Quinto. We checked into the hotel and found our rooms before heading off to El Planeron for a late afternoon recede. On the way we saw Hen Harrier and a Golden Eagle which flew alongside and in front of the car - our best views ever! Unfortunately the gale was still blowing at El P and we weren't quite in the correct spot so we heard nothing. Just before we left we discovered the correct car park and immediately heard a Dupont's squeak above the howling wind - but with no chance of seeing one.

Next morning we were there in the Car Park at 6-20, the wind had dropped and Dupont's were singing. Straight away we saw one and in the next 2 hours we had fantastic views of 4 birds without leaving the car park. There were lots of LST Larks, Calandras and a handful of ST Larks all singing - it was a magical spell. We were quite impressed with the food served to us at Quinto, a good dinner and breakfast and a nice picnic, though the rooms were a bit on the cold side and we very luckily saw a Barn Owl as we walked back to the hotel after dinner.

Leaving Quinto after breakfast we headed back to Barcelona via Sastago and Bujaraloz. We searched the cliffs at Sastago for Black Wheatear, but failed again, although we saw two Great White Egrets on the river, two S-T Eagles and another B-E Wheatear. At the road junction just south of Bujaraloz we again saw the group of Great Bustards from the road.

We made visits to the Llobregat Delta on arriving in Spain and again before departing. What a fantastic reserve with lots of good birds: - 16 Flamingos, Glossy Ibis, Purple Gallinule, Pallid Swifts, a few herons, a good selection of waders and ducks, Audouin's Gull offshore and on the reserve. We had a butterfly 'tick' here too - a Mallow Skipper.

In total we saw 139 species during our short stay and as usual our visit left us all wanting to return to Boletas Birdwatching Centre in the near future.

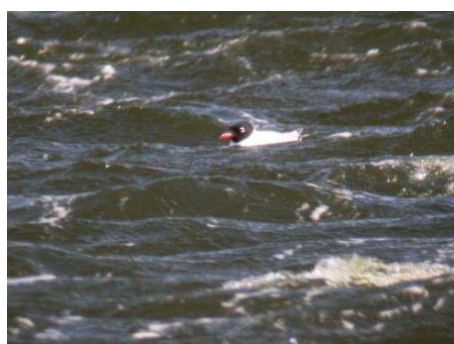
Barrie Staley



Wallcreeper at Riglos - by Elliott Staley



Dupont's Lark



Med Gull in Candanos

BIRD HIGHLIGHTS



Dates: **20th – 25th March 2008**

Tour: **Easter Long Weekend**

Sites: **Loporzano area, Riglos, Oroel, San Juan de la Peña, San Julian, Vadiello, Bujaraloz, Los Monergros, Candanos, El Planeron, Llobregat Delta**

Tour Party: **Barrie, Anita and Elliott Staley, Tony Davison, William Soar**

Number of Species: **139**

	SQUACCO HERON		EAGLE OWL		RED-BACKED SHRIKE
	LITTLE BITTERN	1	LITTLE OWL		LESSER GREY SHRIKE
	NIGHT HERON		LONG-EARED OWL		SOUTHERN GREY SHRIKE
2	GREAT WHITE EGRET		SHORT-EARED OWL		WOODCHAT SHRIKE
+	LITTLE EGRET		TENGMALM'S OWL		ALPINE CHOUGH
	PURPLE HERON		RED-NECKED NIGHTJAR	++	RED BILLED CHOUGH
++	WHITE STORK		ALPINE SWIFT	+++	SPOTLESS STARLING
	COMMON SHELDUCK		BEE-EATER	5	ROCK SPARROW
20	RED-CRESTED POCHARD		ROLLER		SNOWFINCH
++	RED KITE	4	HOOPOE	++	SERIN
6	LAMMERGEIER		EURASIAN WRYNECK		CITRIL FINCH
10	EGYPTIAN VULTURE		BLACK WOODPECKER	+	CIRL BUNTING
++	GRIFFON VULTURE		WHITE-BACKED WOODPECKER	9	ROCK BUNTING
8	SHORT-TOED EAGLE		LESSER –S WOODPECKER		ORTOLAN BUNTING
	MONTAGU'S HARRIER	4 + 8h	DUPONT'S LARK	+	CORN BUNTING
	GOSHAWK	600+	CALANDRA LARK		
4	GOLDEN EAGLE	3	SHORT-TOED LARK		
	BOOTED EAGLE	++	LESSER SHORT-TOED LARK		
2	BONELLI'S EAGLE	++	CRESTED LARK		LLOBREGAT DELTA
	OSPREY	++	THEKLA LARK	1	GANNET
10+	LESSER KESTREL	++	CRAG MARTIN	+	LITTLE EGRET
1	MERLIN		TAWNY PIPIT	5	NIGHT HERON
	HOBBY	2	WATER PIPIT	2	GLOSSY IBIS
	PEREGRINE FALCON	3	ALPINE ACCENTOR	16	GREATER FLAMINGO
	ROCK PTARMIGAN	2	BLACK-ÉARED WHEATEAR	1	GARGENEY
	CAPERCAILLIE		BLACK WHEATEAR	1	SHORT-TOED EAGLE
++	RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE		ROCK THRUSH	2	AUDOUIN'S GULL
	QUAIL	3	BLUE ROCK THRUSH	4	PALLID SWIFT

	SPOTTED CRAKE		RING OUZEL	+	CRAG MARTIN
	COMMON CRANE	++	CETTI'S WARBLER	++	CETTI'S WARBLER
40	LITTLE BUSTARD		FAN-TAILED WARBLER	2	SUBALPINE WARBLER
9	GREAT BUSTARD		GREAT REED WARBLER	+	FIRECREST
	BLACK-WINGED STILT		OLIVACEUS WARBLER	+	CRESTED TIT
	PIED AVOCET		MELODIOUS WARBLER	+	SARDINIAN WARBLER
8	STONE CURLEW	2	DARTFORD WARBLER	++	COMMON SHELDUCK
	KENTISH PLOVER		SPECTACLED WARBLER	1	RED-CRESTED POCHARD
	DOTTEREL		SUBALPINE WARBLER		
1	MEDITERRANEAN GULL	++	SARDINIAN WARBLER		
	WHISKERED TERN		ORPHEAN WARBLER		
	BLACK TERN		BONELLI'S WARBLER		
	BLACK-BELLIED SANDGROUSE		IBERIAN CHIFF-CHAFF		
	PIN-TAILED SANDGROUSE	+	FIRECREST		
++	ROCK DOVE	++	CRESTED TIT		
	STOCK DOVE	2	WALLCREEPER		
	TURTLE DOVE	3	SHORT-TOED TREECREEPER		
	GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO		PENDULINE TIT		
	SCOPS OWL		GOLDEN ORIOLE		

h/Heard */ Seeing ad/ Adult juv/ Juvenile f/ Female m/Male ++ / Common (?) possible

LIST OF BIRDS SEEN IN NORTH EAST SPAIN - 20th -25th March

LITTLE GREBE
 GREAT CRESTED GREBE
 BLACK-NECKED GREBE
 CORMORANT
 GANNET
 NIGHT HERON *
 LITTLE EGRET
 GREAT WHITE EGRET *
 GREY HERON
 WHITE STORK *
 GLOSSY IBIS *
 GREATER FLAMINGO *
 SHELDUCK
 WIGEON
 GARGENEY
 GADWALL
 TEAL
 MALLARD
 SHOVELER
 RED-CRESTED POCHARD *
 POCHARD

BLACK KITE *
 RED KITE
 LAMMERGEIER *
 EGYPTIAN VULTURE *
 GRIFFON VULTURE *
 SHORT-TOED EAGLE *
 MARSH HARRIER
 HEN HARRIER
 SPARROWHAWK
 COMMON BUZZARD
 GOLDEN EAGLE
 BONELLI'S EAGLE *
 LESSER KESTREL *
 KESTREL
 MERLIN
RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE
PHEASANT
 MOORHEN
 PURPLE GALLINULE *
 COOT
 GREAT BUSTARD *

LITTLE BUSTARD *
 BLACK-WINGED STILT *
 AVOCET
 STONE CURLEW
 LITTLE RINGED PLOVER
 RINGED PLOVER
 LAPWING
 RUFF
 SNIPE
 DUNLIN
 SPOTTED REDSHANK
 REDSHANK
 GREEN SANDPIPER
 WOOD SANDPIPER
 COMMON SANDPIPER
 MEDITERRANEAN GULL *
 BLACK-HEADED GULL
 LESSER BLACK-BACK'D GULL
 YELLOW-LEGGED GULL
 AUDOUIN'S GULL *
 SANDWICH TERN

PIN-TAILED SANDGROUSE *
BLACK-BELLIED SANDGR'E *
ROCK DOVE
FERAL PIGEON
STOCK DOVE
WOODPIGEON
COLLARED DOVE
MONK PARAKEET *
BARN OWL
LITTLE OWL
PALLID SWIFT *
HOOPOE *
GREEN WOODPECKER
GREAT SPOTTED WOODP'KER
CALANDRA LARK *
SHORT-TOED LARK *
LESSER SHORT-TOED LARK *
DUPONT'S LARK *
CRESTED LARK *
THEKLA LARK *
WOOD LARK
SKYLARK
SAND MARTIN
CRAG MARTIN *
SWALLOW
HOUSE MARTIN
MEADOW PIPIT

WATER PIPIT *
SPANISH YELLOW WAGTAIL *
WHITE WAGTAIL *
WREN
DUNNOCK
ALPINE ACCENTOR *
ROBIN
BLACK REDSTART
STONECHAT
WHEATEAR
BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR *
BLUE ROCK THRUSH *
BLACKBIRD
SONG THRUSH
MISTLE THRUSH
CETTI'S WARBLER
DARTFORD WARBLER
SUBALPINE WARBLER *
SARDINIAN WARBLER *
BLACKCAP
COMMON CHIFFCHAFF
WILLOW WARBLER
FIRECREST
LONG-TAILED TIT
CRESTED TIT
COAL TIT
BLUE TIT

GREAT TIT
NUTHATCH
WALLCREEPER *
SHORT-TOED TREECREEPER *
MAGPIE
RED-BILLED CHOUGH
JACKDAW
CARRION CROW
RAVEN
STARLING
SPOTLESS STARLING *
HOUSE SPARROW
TREE SPARROW
ROCK SPARROW *
CHAFFINCH
SERIN *
GREENFINCH
GOLDFINCH
LINNET
CIRL BUNTING
ROCK BUNTING *
CORN BUNTING