

Aragón, Spain

22nd - 25th March 2013



Copies to : **Boletas Birdwatching Centre**

Alberto Bueno

Bill Kilby

Chris Storey

Les McCallum

Introduction

For many years, I had been annoying my wife by talking about getting to the Pyrenees one day, in order to see my 'most wanted' species of *Wallcreeper* and *Lammergeier*, as well as some other species such as *Egyptian Vulture* (never seen by me despite various trips to southern Europe & Africa), *Eagle Owl*, *Alpine Accentor*, *Black Woodpecker* and *Snowfinch*. In the end, she could stand it no longer and I was told, in no uncertain terms, to get myself organised and go.

Discussions with old birding companions, Les McCallum and Bill Kilby, revealed that they were both interested and, indeed, that Bill had already had very successful trips to the area, based at the Boletas Birdwatching Centre at Loporzano outside Huesca, run by Josele Saiz and Esther Diago. Boletas required a minimum number of four, so Chris Storey was recruited to make up the party and thus my duties as travel agent began !



In some of the very helpful correspondence with Boletas, we learnt that Josele would not be available as our guide as he was already booked to lead a tour in Morocco. Instead, we would be with Alberto Bueno who, since 1998, has worked as a forest ranger and naturalist for the regional government of Aragón; living in the steppe area of Monegros, he has a particularly deep knowledge of the steppe birds (mainly bustards, sandgrouse and larks) and where to find them. As well as organizing private tours, he is author of numerous articles about the birds of Aragón and several texts for the book "Where to Watch Birds in Spain" edited by SEO-BirdLife.

On most trips, it proves difficult to find someone to write up the notes. In this case, it was not a problem as there were two habitual record keepers involved, although with very different styles ! My diaries, whilst recording the birds, also tend to include **really** essential matters such as what time I had to get up, what we had to eat & drink etc. and are illustrated with photographs (some, in this case, courtesy of Chris Storey).

Bill, on the other hand, is more precise, recording numbers of birds seen, identification notes and the like and uses his own pictures as illustrations. In the end, we decided to include both versions

Friday 17th March 2013

north Norfolk, UK

During the evening, I received a phone call from Bill which I really did not welcome; Les had seen his doctor because he had been feeling tired & breathless recently, had been diagnosed with angina and promptly banned from overseas travel. Our party was back down to three and I now found myself, instead of with nothing to do but looking forward to the trip, trying to help Les get the documentation he would need for his insurance claim. (In this aspect, Boletas would prove very helpful).

Friday 22nd March 2013

UK to NE Spain

UK – grey, cold & windy, with sleet

Spain – Sunny at first. Cloudy with spots of rain later.

I had failed in my attempt to get to bed early the previous evening so, suffering from neck trouble and waking frequently to check my alarm clock, I did not have the best of nights. Eventually, I gave up at 04.16 and departed for a steady drive down to Stansted Airport, arriving in wind-driven sleet. A phone call to Chris told me that he and Bill were already in the terminal so I got on the shuttle bus from the car park into the airport. Here I encountered some difficulties as the plastic bag containing my toiletries was not the regulation size, so I had to go through the whole business of security checks twice over – what a pantomime !



I met the others 'air-side' and we proceeded for a welcome breakfast at Wetherspoons. After what seemed an interminable time, we went to our boarding gate only to find that (unusually for Ryanair) the incoming flight was delayed. After a slightly lumpy flight, we would eventually clear Immigration in Zaragoza about one hour late.

After meeting up with Alberto, we had a quick discussion and, passing *White Stork* nests on almost every pylon, we headed off 40 km south-east of Zaragoza to look for lark species at the Refugio de Fauna Silvestre de la Lomaza de Belchite¹.

(Our transport was a rented Picasso C4 and it would transpire over the next couple of days that Alberto was prepared to take it where I would have hesitated to take a Land Rover !)



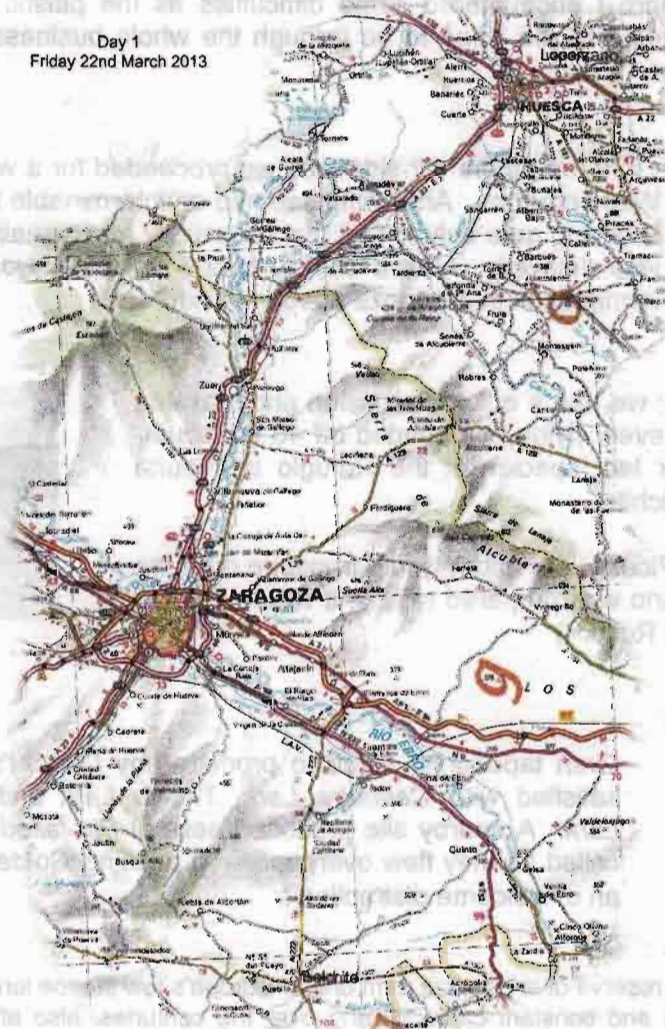
Even tape-luring failed to produce any *Dupont's Lark* but we were satisfied with *Calandra Lark*, *Thekla Lark* and *Lesser Short-toed Lark*. A nearby site produced several *Pin-tailed Sandgrouse*, which called as they flew overhead - a passing *Golden Eagle* was almost an unwelcome distraction !

¹ The 961 hectares of Belchite's reserve of la Lomaza form one of Europe's few steppe landscapes, created as a result of very old de-forestation and constant cattle grazing over the centuries, also affected by the climatic characteristics of the area, with a lack of rain predominating.

Our final birding treat came at a ruined farm building in the middle of nowhere, where we came across a pair of *Black Redstart* and three very smart male *Lesser Kestrel*. Then it was a 1½ hour drive to Loporanzo, where Esther welcomed us to the impressive surroundings of the Boletas Birdwatching Centre; after a very welcome shower, we had an 'evening log' session before a super dinner and a reasonably early night.



Day 1
Friday 22nd March 2013



ME Spain

Saturday 23rd May 2013

Frost overnight but warm by 10.30

Bill's notes :

On Friday morning, the journey to Stansted was initially through rain and, by the time we arrived at the airport, it had turned to snow, although thankfully not heavy. On arrival in Spain, it was to be greeted with sunshine and a pleasant mild temperature and it remained so for the rest of the day.

Chris and I motored up from the London area and David from Norfolk and met at Stansted Airport, as arranged, in plenty of time to complete the check-in and security formalities before having a spot of breakfast before our Ryanair flight to Zaragoza, scheduled to depart just before 10.00 but take-off was delayed by circa forty minutes. Flying time was a little over two hours and, on arrival in Spain, having cleared customs, we were met by Alberto Bueno, our Guide and Driver for the four days. Our accommodation in Spain was the excellent Boletas Birdwatching Centre at Loporanzo owned and run by Josele and Esther Saiz (Josele was absent leading a bird watching trip in Morocco).

On leaving the airport, we motored to the Steppe Country to the north of Belchite to search for lark species, in particular Dupont's Lark. We failed to see this species but did record Thekla, Lesser Short-toed and Calandra Lark. Other species of bird recorded during the afternoon included White Storks, many of them on their nest built by the birds on the electricity pylons! Red-billed Choughs, good numbers of Black Kites, a trio of Rock Sparrows, the first Black Redstart of the weekend and the first Barn Swallow of the Spring.



Of special note, in no particular order, was a Golden Eagle (believed to be a female), three Lesser Kestrels, circa nineteen Pin-tailed Sandgrouse and a pair of Stone Curlews.

As evening approached, it was time to motor east to the Birdwatching Centre where, on arrival, we were welcomed by Esther and shown to our respective rooms for a 'wash and brush-up' before sitting down to an excellent evening meal, washed down with a glass or two of the local red wine. A most relaxing way to end the first day, before retiring for a welcomed night's sleep.

The Mallos de Riglos are a set of conglomerate rock formations in Hoya de Huesca, Aragón. Rising to some 300 metres (980 ft) high, they form part of the foothills of the Pyrenees. Because of their relatively vertical sides, the Mallos de Riglos are a popular destination for climbers.

David Brooks - April 2013

David Brooks - April 2013

Saturday 23rd May 2013

NE Spain

Frost overnight but warm by 10.30.

I was wide awake by 06.00, so breakfast at 07.30 and a 08.00 departure were only a minor trauma. We headed first for the Embalse de Vadiello, which was to become the first of many sites where we failed to find *Wallcreeper*. There were, however, many, many *Crag Martin* around and, as the *Wallcreeper* hunt continued, we were all to develop a nervous twitch every time a *Martin* flew across a rock face.



We had been watching *Yellow-legged Gull* so I did not really react when I spotted a white bird out of the corner of my eye until I realised that it had a lot of black in the wings and a yellow head. At long last, my first *Egyptian Vulture*.



The raptor theme continued with lots of *Griffon Vulture* and a very brief view of a distant *Lammergeier*. A *Short-toed Eagle* did, however, give good views as it perched on a pylon and this was followed by two *Golden Eagle* and another *Lammergeier*.



Even as we travelled on to our next stop at the Mallos de Riglos², there seemed to be birds of prey everywhere. We stopped to watch a column of over forty *Griffon Vulture*, with a single *Raven*, soaring in the thermals and also encountered our first *Red Kite* amongst the large numbers of *Black Kite*.



² The Mallos de Riglos are a set of conglomerate rock formations in Hoya de Huesca, Aragon.. Rising to some 300 metres (980 ft) high, they form part of the foothills of the Pyrenees. Because of their relatively vertical sides, the Mallos de Riglos are a popular destination for climbers.



At Riglos, we failed again to find *Wallcreeper* or *Alpine Accentor*, just possibly because of the large number of very loud walkers and climbers. After a pleasant picnic lunch outside the church and a coffee in a local bar, we carried on to the dam outside Santa Maria de la Peña where we 'blanked' once again, although a very dark *Red Squirrel*³ was a bonus...



With Alberto getting more desperate (and more disconsolate) about ever finding *Wallcreeper*, our next destination was the gorge at Foz de Escalate, outside Triste. Our journey was enlivened by the 'road to nowhere' - doubtless EU-funded, this splendid tarmac two-way road spanned the local railway line over a very smart bridge and took you from the back entrance of a farm to a single carriageway dirt track! Thence back to Riglos, again with a continuing lack of success.



Our birding improved significantly when we got back to the scrub below the Castillo de Montearagón, a castle & abbey outside Huesca dating back to the 1090s. It felt a bit worrying walking amongst the targets of a military firing range but Alberto assured us that it was not in use so we concentrated on species such as a *Black Wheatear*, *Dartford Warbler* and, on the drive back, a very confiding *Griffon Vulture*.



Back to Boletas for another very welcome shower before heading to the local bar (run as a village co-operative) to write up our notes. Super dinner of salt cod before heading to bed with a background chorus of *Marsh Frog*.



³ possibly *Sciurus vulgaris alpinus* – small, dark, sometimes even black, squirrels from the North, the Pyrenees and the Northern Sistema Central

Bill's notes :

The first full day in Spain was again mostly sunny and mild although it did cloud over towards evening with one or two spots of light rain but nothing to speak of.

After an excellent 'Continental style' breakfast, Alberto arrived promptly at 08.00 local time (one hour ahead of UK time) for our first full day of bird watching. First destination was the dams near Vadiello to look for one of our 'target species', Wallcreeper but regrettably a thorough and prolonged search of the area failed to produce the 'hoped for' sighting of our quarry. However, David was successful in seeing one of his 'target species', Egyptian Vulture with excellent views of a pair of these attractive vultures, several impressive Griffon Vultures were also present. Our search of the area for birds continued and included a short walk to a vantage point which gave excellent views of the surrounding mountains in the hope that it would produce the sighting of another of the 'target species', Lammergeier, but regrettably when one was spotted views of this impressive species were far too brief. The only Peregrine of the trip was also seen but views of the falcon were very distant.



During our wanderings, we stopped frequently when something interesting bird-wise was spotted and one particularly noteworthy was when a Golden Eagle was seen which, as we exited the car was joined by a second bird of what we were certain was a pair. Our views of these majestic eagles was outstanding as the pair slowly circled quite low over the hillside and our viewing became even more exciting when an adult Lammergeier appeared, the 'Bearded Vulture' beautifully lit by the sunshine. The Lammergeier was 'shadowed' by one of the eagles until the 'intruder' disappeared over the ridge, meanwhile the other eagle was seen to fly to the opposite side of the valley carrying nesting material.

A second species of eagle was added to the growing 'trip tick list' when we had good views of a low flying Short-toed Eagle, the first Red Kites of the trip were also seen together with more Black Kites to add to those seen yesterday. As late morning approached, the decision was made to motor to the west to Riglos to continue the search for a Wallcreeper. It was also hoped that the area would produce another 'target species', Alpine Accentor. En route, we stopped briefly to enjoy the sight of a flock of circa fifty Red-billed Choughs. On arrival, we commenced our search for a Wallcreeper from the area surrounding the village church. Again, our hopes were to be disappointed so we then walked to another area below the impressive peaks where again our hopes of the sighting of a Wallcreeper drew a blank. It was now time to have some lunch whilst watching the impressive numbers of soaring vultures. Riglos has one of the biggest colonies of Griffon Vulture in Spain with a population in the region of a hundred and twenty pairs, one or two pairs of Egyptian Vultures were also present. We had the good fortune of recording another Lammergeier, this time a second year immature. Lammergeier number three (or was it two ?) for the two sightings earlier in the day could have been the same bird.

On completion of lunch, we continued the search for Wallcreeper during the afternoon in other suitable habitats in an area to the west of Riglos but again our quarry eluded us and, as evening approached, we went back to Riglos for a last search before returning to Loporanzo for dinner. Approaching Loporanzo, we made a short detour to the castle ruins of Montearagon where we enjoyed good views of a superb male Black Wheatear and also brief and somewhat distant views of a Dartford Warbler.

Back at Boletas, after a shower and before dinner, we walked the short distance to the 'local bar' (a Cooperative owned by the villagers) for a couple of bottles of ale each whilst completing the 'trip tick list' for the day. Again, a splendid dinner prepared by Esther was washed down with a couple of glasses of the local wine. Before going to bed, I phoned home during which Gret confirmed what we already knew concerning the grim weather the UK was enduring with snow and freezing temperatures.

Sunday 24th March 2013

NE Spain

Sunny morning, then some rain before becoming sunny again.



With my love (!) of getting up early, the 05.30 alarm, 06.00 breakfast and 06.30 away was all a little harsh. That said, we were heading for Astun⁴, near Canfranc on the French border in the high Pyrenees, so needed to get there before we got swamped by weekend skiers.

It was a good 1½ hour drive, in good weather, with the highlight being a group of *Griffon Vulture* on the corpse of a young *Wild Boar*.



Again, to Alberto's intense frustration, the *Snowfinch*, which he had intended to tempt with bread, were not clustered around the café where they had been a few days previously.

That said, we encountered two good species in particularly picturesque surroundings - *Alpine Chough* on the hotel roofs and *Alpine Accentor* under the hotel rubbish bins !



Onwards (with a little detour over the French border) to a second ski resort at Candanchú⁵. By now, the skiers were out in force and the place was absolute chaos with guys with whistles and flags trying to control the parking. We duly retreated



⁴ The resort has 39 km of marked pistes and is one of the most modern resorts of the Pyrenees; the highest point is *La Raca* peak, 2300 m above sea level, with a vertical drop of 600 m. The base of the resort is a purpose-built town which includes several hotels and apartments and is situated at 1700 m above sea level. From there the main chair lifts provide access for the ski runs which occupy two different high mountain valleys

⁵ Candanchú is a another ski resort situated near the town of Canfranc in the High Aragón of the western Pyrenees. The name of the area is a corruption of "Camp d'Anjou" as this was originally the site of a military camp of the French Angevin dynasty



Our next destination was Castiello de Jaca, where we experienced the delight of identifying a female *Firecrest* through the window of the bar where we were drinking coffee !

From there, we proceeded on to some nearby poplar woodland which produced some expected species such as *Nuthatch* but failed to find the hoped-for *Black Woodpecker*.

The conifer woods behind the monastery of San Juan de la Peña⁶ were more successful with views of *Crested Tit* and with *Black Woodpecker* responding to a tape, although not seen. This was also a good (if rather windy) site for our picnic lunch.



Having given up looking for *Wallcreeper* where they **should** be, we started looking in areas where they **just might** be if they were already in transition towards the high Pyrenees. For this reason, we went up the Valle de Hecho where the greatest points of interest proved to be some brief but heavy rain, a pair of *Egyptian Vulture* on a nest and the rather frightening experience of facing four horses and a pony coming round the bend towards us, chased by a dog; the leading horse actually skidded on the road as, like Alberto, it attempted an emergency stop.

Things did not really improve as we found that a possible site for *Citril Finch* was still under snow and another visit to Embalse de la Peña proved to be our final abortive attempt to find *Wallcreeper*. After that, matters did start to look up somewhat as a roadside stop produced *Black-eared Wheatear*, *Northern Wheatear* and *Girl Bunting*.



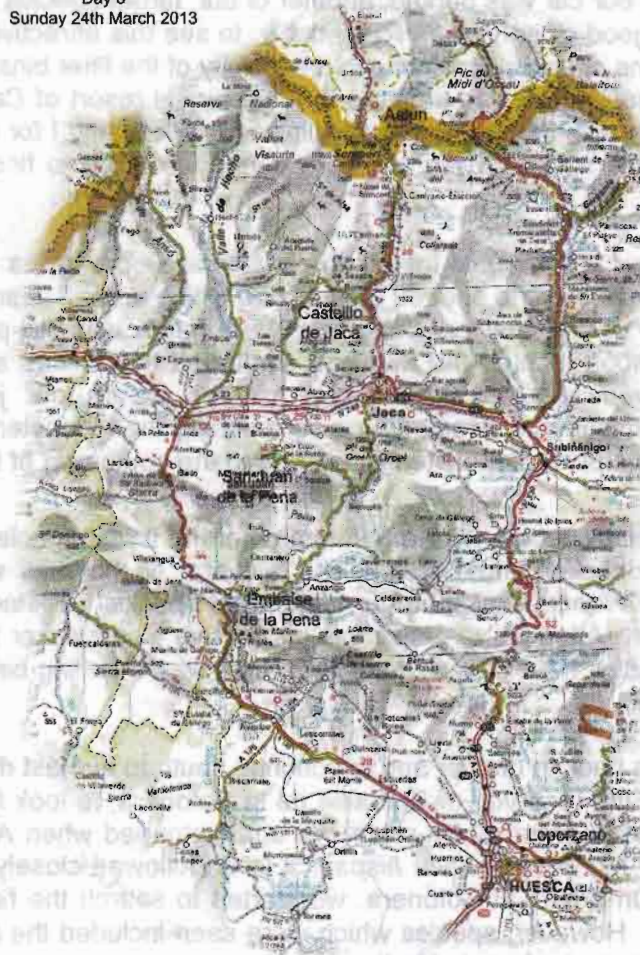
⁶ The monastery of San Juan de la Peña (St. John of the Cliff) is a religious complex near the town of Santa Cruz de la Serós, at the south-west of Jaca in the province of Huesca; it was one of the most important monasteries in Aragón in the Middle Ages. Its two-level church is partially carved in the stone of the great cliff that overhangs the foundation. The lower monastery church (built in 920) was declared a National Monument on 13 July 1889, and the new monastery (built after a fire in 1675) in 1923.



Turning on our 'Twitcher Mode', we ended up at a reservoir outside Huesca, following up reports of a *Sociable Plover* (a rarity in anyone's terms) amongst the local *Lapwing* flock. This proved to be another failure, although we had a really good run of new species for the trip, including c. 200 *Common Crane*, *Marsh Harrier*, *Hen Harrier*, *Merlin*, *Great White Egret* and two distant *Black-backed Gull* sp.

As we were driving away, a 'male *Hen Harrier*' was spotted but, as it flew towards us and across in front of the car, it was obvious that this identification was wrong. Seen from underneath, there was no difference in colour between the head and the belly, there was no darkening on the trailing edge of the wing and the black in the wing-tip formed a crisp wedge-shape - a male *Pallid Harrier*. We did not quite realise the significance of this bird until Alberto started giving us 'high-fives' and told us there had been very few records from Aragón and that he would have to go home and submit a rarity report!

Day 3
Sunday 24th March 2013



Bill's notes :

The third day again dawned sunny but cold early one for our 06.30 start to the drive to the mountains. On arrival, it was sunny and dry although we did have a little light rain during our travels through the mountains but later, as we descended to lower levels, it turned sunny for the remainder of the day.

We were up early this morning for a 06.30 start to the journey to the high tops to search for the Alpine specialities we were hoping to see. En route, almost the first bird we saw was a Grey Heron followed by a Common Buzzard, both 'new ticks' for the weekend. We made a 'crash stop' when ten or so Griffon Vultures were spotted close to the road feeding on the remains of a wild boar. Our first destination was the ski resort of Astun which was almost deserted when we arrived and the first of our 'target species' was seen, Alpine Chough, with several birds perched on the roofs of the buildings. A week or so earlier, Alberto had seen several Snow Finches and had brought along some 'bait' to entice the birds down but regrettably not a single bird was to be seen this morning ! As we were making our way back to where our car was parked, another of our 'target species' was spotted when a lone Alpine Accentor allowed good close views. Regrettably, to see this attractive little bird searching along the road alongside dozens of parked cars and in the vicinity of the litter bins, was somewhat of a distraction ! By the time we had decided to travel to the nearby ski resort of Candanchu, where we hoped the finches might be present, the resort was bustling with skiers and I for one was not sorry to be leaving; this other resort was also 'heaving' with skiers and we failed to find any Snow Finches regrettably.



On our way back to the south we stopped for a cuppa and, whilst seated in the café, Alberto spotted a small bird flitting around in some pine trees at the edge of the small car park, which fortunately was still present when we left. We soon located the bird and confirmed that it was a Firecrest which we enjoyed watching for several minutes before our journey to our next destination, the forested area surrounding the Monasterio de San Juan de la Pena, approximately ten kilometres to the southwest of the town of Jaca.

On arrival, before having our picnic lunch, we went in search of the forest species we were hoping to see, in particular Black Woodpecker and Crested Tit. Several Nuthatches were seen or heard followed by a Greater Spotted Woodpecker then our first 'target species' Crested Tit shortly followed by a calling Black Woodpecker. Attempts to entice this impressive woodpecker to show by playing a tape of its calls were unsuccessful, the bird would not show so it was a 'calling bird only' record for the species, pity !

After an enjoyable lunch, it was back to the car and to continue south to our last destination of the day, the farmlands in the vicinity of the reservoir of Embalse de la Sotonera, to look for a Sociable Plover reported present with a flock of Lapwings. En route, we again stopped when Alberto spotted a fine cock Black-eared Wheatear of the western race *hispanica* to be followed closely by the sighting of a female Northern Wheatear. On arrival at Sotonera, we started to search the fields but not a single Lapwing was to be seen, pity. However, species which were seen included the first Marsh Harrier of the trip, a ring-tailed Hen Harrier and a female Merlin.

We then motored a short distance to a spot nearer the reservoir and soon located a flock of Common Cranes at rest, numbering in excess of a hundred. Also seen was a Great Egret and what was believed to be two Great Black-backed Gulls but the gulls were distant and our i.d. was based on their flight 'jizz'. However, subsequent reading of the available literature on gull movements on the European Mainland indicated that they were much more likely to have been Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Two 'cracking' cock Yellow Wagtails amongst a small flock of White Wagtails appeared to be of the race *flavissima*, and not *iberica* as was expected.

As we were leaving to make our way back along the tracks through the farmland for the return journey to Boletas, what was 'called' as 'male Hen Harrier' was quickly changed to 'male Pallid Harrier', a most unexpected and exciting sighting and a new species for Alberto who said that this was probably only the fifth or sixth record of the species for the region.

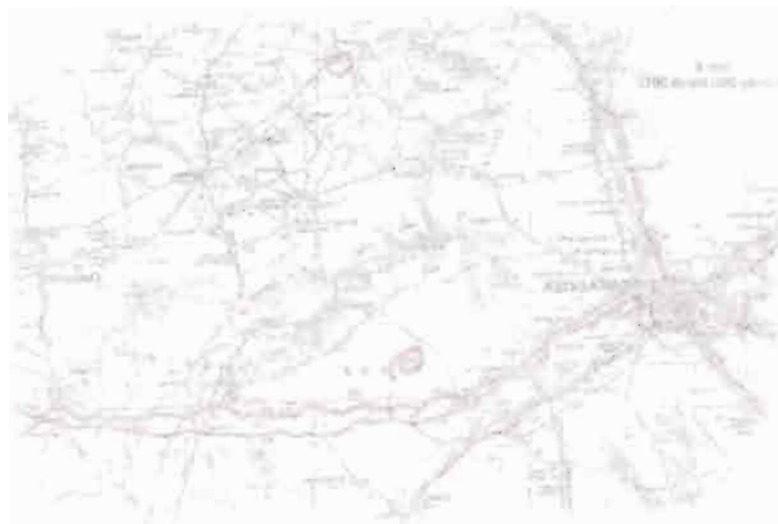
As we were leaving up to three Hoopoes were seen and a Little Owl was spotted perched on the roof of one of the farm buildings. An excellent end to a day of birdwatching.

Again, back at Boletas, after a 'wash and brush up', we enjoyed a couple of beers in the local bar before another excellent dinner, washed down with a couple of glasses of wine.



Note of Pallid Harrier *circus macrourus*

Breeds in eastern Europe and western and central Asia. Almost entirely migratory, wintering chiefly in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia. Some winter in West Africa, apparently reached by diagonal flight across the Sahara. Return migration in mid March to mid April when some take more direct route across the Mediterranean through Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, when vagrants reach western Mediterranean countries i.e. Spain and Morocco.



Monday 25th March 2013

NE Spain to UK

Sunny but very windy

Got up, packed, had breakfast and were away by soon after 08.00. Went for one last despairing look for *Wallcreeper* at the Embalse de Vadiello and ended up by consoling ourselves with the thought that with only 400 – 700 pairs in the whole of the Pyrenees, they would obviously be hard to find. (had some personal consolation later to find out that some friends, in a different part of the Pyrenees, also failed to find them).



We headed south

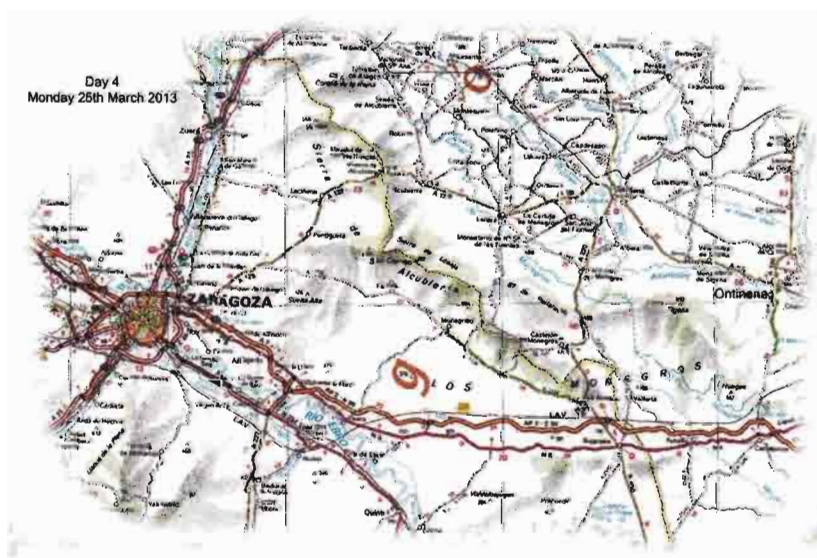


We were aiming for Alberto's 'home patch' in the very arid comarca (region) called Monegros. He led us unerringly to a weird rock amphitheatre in the middle of farmland and there, in the shade of a hole in the rock, an *Eagle Owl* slept on its nest. (Brilliant though the sighting was, we all had a pang of regret for Les who had particularly wanted to see this species.)



Onwards towards Ontiñena, passing vast areas where the wonderful steppe was disappearing rapidly under EU-funded irrigation schemes - the habitat of the *Little Bustard* and *Black-bellied Sandgrouse* we were seeking was dwindling fast. As it happened, we missed out on the *Bustard* but did encounter a nice flock of *Sandgrouse*.

From there, we followed a lorry-filled main road back to the airport at Zaragoza where we ate our picnic lunch, proceeded through security, waited in two queues all the usual excitements of air travel.



Had a good flight back, although it came as something of a shock when, having left Zaragoza at about 17° C, we landed at Stansted at -1° C - ouch. I had a good journey from the airport until, only a few miles from home, a *Muntjac* charged out of a hedge, committing suicide and wrecking my car's front bumper and wheel arch. Welcome home !

Bill's notes :

The morning of the last day was sunny in Spain and remained so for the rest of our time in Spain. On arrival in the UK it was to be greeted with cold, cloudy weather with large amounts of snow (although not deep) covering the surrounding countryside but the snow cleared as we approached the London area.

This morning, our last in Spain, was a somewhat later start than yesterday, in fact Alberto arrived some twenty minutes later than arranged. After packing our bags into the car and said our thanks and farewells to Esther, we set off for a morning's birdwatching before catching the flight back to the UK.

First stop was the dam at Vadiello to look for Wallcreeper but again we drew a blank sadly. We did have good views of a Red Squirrel, an example of the continental form being of a dark chocolate colour, and also saw two Grey Wagtails to add to a calling bird heard during our travels yesterday. It was then time to drive west. By mid-morning, we had arrived in the vicinity of the town of Ontinena where Alberto took us to the site of a pair of Eagle Owls. We stopped by the side of a track across the farmland, where Alberto pointed out a fissure in the cliff face with an incubating (and sleeping) adult owl. We quietly made our way closer to the owl and enjoyed good views of the slumbering bird where the two ear tufts, which are a feature of this species, could be clearly seen, we then quietly left.

We then went in search of sandgrouse and Alberto soon spotted our quarry, up to eleven Black-bellied Sandgrouse. David thought he spotted a Little Bustard but a detailed search of the area through the telescope failed to re-find the bird.



As we were leaving, we had excellent close views of a beautiful Hoopoe feeding at the side of the track.

On arrival at Zaragoza, we said our farewells to Alberto and thanked him for his efforts in finding the birds and made our way into the Terminal building to find a seat to eat our picnic lunch which Esther had prepared for us. It was then time to face the usual security checks to await the call to our flight which took off more or less at the scheduled time of 15.15 local time.

Had a good flight back, although it came as something of a shock when having left Zaragoza at about 17°C we landed at Glasgow at -7°C -ouch. I had a good journey from the airport with only a few miles from home, a Manticor charged out of a hedge, committing suicide and wrecking my car's front bumper and wheel arch. Welcome home!



...the morning of the 17th it was a fine day with some light rain in the evening. The morning was fine with some light rain in the evening. We did not see any birds. It was a very nice day. We did not see any birds. It was a very nice day. We did not see any birds. It was a very nice day.

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...the telescope failed to re-find the bird.
...a little bird but a detailed search of the area

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Systematic list of species recorded

Aragón, Spain : 22nd – 25th March 2013

BIRDS

Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>
Lammergeier	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Crested Tit	<i>Panurus cristatus</i>
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Martin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Alpine Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oediacnemus</i>	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>
Lesser Black-backed Gull ?	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Black-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles orientalis</i>	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles alchata</i>	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirius</i>
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Com Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>
Green Woodpecker (heard)	<i>Picus viridis</i>		
Black Woodpecker (heard)	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>		
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>	<u>88 species</u>	
Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>		
Lesser Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>	MAMMALS	
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>		
Thekla Lark	<i>Garelda theklae</i>	Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris (alpinus ?)</i>
Sky Lark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		
Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	BUTTERFLIES	
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>		
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flavissima</i>		
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		
Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		
Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>		
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		