



Birding Two Continents

2nd - 9th October 2019

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Day 1 - Wednesday 2nd October

The group met in Gibraltar and we were soon on our way to our accommodation at Huerta Grande Eco-lodge, where we were provided with a delicious light lunch. Simon gave a brief introduction to the geography and climate of the area, and its huge influences on migration. The group relaxed while the “bag fairies” ensured bags were deposited in the rooms!

After a relaxing break we headed to the nearby watchpoint of El Algarrobo where we met with our friends, colleagues and partner organisation Fundacion Migres. We joined them observing Booted Eagles, Short-toed Eagles, Honey Buzzards and Griffon Vultures, and watched as bands of Black Storks set out to cross the Straits, only to be thwarted by the crosswind and turn back inland. We picked out three Egyptian Vultures one of which gave us a nice close fly-by!

Following our introduction to raptor-watching, we headed for our introduction to ice cream breaks! Happily raptor-watching never really stops in The Straits and we carried on viewing more raptors including Booted Eagles in both dark and the commoner light morph and a few Short-toed Eagles.



Day 2 - Thursday 3rd October

We moved out to the west, away from the wind, to the Salinas de Barbate. Here we were surrounded by buzzing Calandra Larks, Crested Larks and Corn Buntings as we watched Greater Flamingoes, Black-winged Stilts, Kentish and Common Ringed Plovers wade the shallows.

Among the vegetated islands we were able to find eight Stone-Curlew looking perplexed and worried all at the same-time!

Taking our picnic lunch among the birds of freshly baked bread, local cheeses and organic vegetables and fruits we watched as a Western-Osprey caught its own fishy lunch!

After lunch we searched among nearby cattle fields and were thrilled to find an ultra-rare Northern Bald Ibis! Travelling onwards in fields near the village of Manzanete we found seven more! We felt super-privileged to have such good views of a bird whose wild population numbers just 1000.

Next we journeyed to the arable area of La Janda. Among the rice fields here Zitting Cisticolas abounded as Marsh Harriers cruised the waterways. We stopped at a useful vantage point and found our first Spanish Sparrows, as Green Sandpiper and Common Kingfisher

zipped through the ditches. We found a small but fearsome Black-winged Kite! The bird was distant at first but we got much closer for good but moderately distant scope views.

As we moved on we stopped at an area and quietly we scanned the undergrowth - here we found a day-roosting Red-necked Nightjar. Carefully and quietly we observed the Western Palearctic's biggest Nightjar. We watched in awe as we realised what a special experience we had watching this bird and how we were able to see every detail. Leaving a happy Nightjar we were a happy group!

Onwards we found another Black-winged Kite which afforded us much closer views as it hunted the rice fields. A Montagu's Harrier zipped beneath it, closely followed by a Marsh Harrier. We drove on through the rice fields greeting a small group of White Storks, then took refreshments in Enrique's Bar before heading back to Huerta Grande for our evening meal and relaxation.

Day 3 - Friday 4th October



bring.

Today we went out on our private boat tour into The Straits in a small but comfortable boat. It allowed us extraordinary close-up views of Bottle-nosed Dolphins and Long-finned Pilot Whales which came and swam right alongside the boat - so close in fact one of the Bottle-nosed Dolphins blew into Simon's mouth!!

We could hear them calling and watch them watching us! This was a truly intimate, personal and moving experience, a boat trip of epic proportions!

We were also rewarded with close views of hundreds of Cory's Shearwaters, a few Balearic Shearwaters, Arctic Skua and Northern Gannet.

We stopped off to see Patty at Bar Gecko and we took a refreshing beverage of choice and discussed the mornings events.

We journeyed the short distance to Punta Camorro where we took our picnic of local, sustainably-produced food, of award-winning extensively-produced cheese and tasty croquettes which Patty had prepared for us. The key thing about today's picnic and our dinner was that this was our day on the trip that was meat-free. In doing so we demonstrated that reducing meat is easy and tasty, and we discussed the huge environmental and biodiversity benefits this change in consumption can

After lunch we headed to Niki's watchpoint where we found an obliging Thekla's Lark enabling us to go through the salient identification points. Booted Eagles, Honey Buzzards and Griffon Vultures migrated overhead.



Day 4 - Saturday 5th October

Today saw us awake relatively early to catch our ferry in Algeciras at 8am. We boarded and carried out passport formalities, and we were soon away and able to watch Cory's Shearwaters and find Striped and Common Dolphins.

Soon we off the ferry and passed the customs formalities and on our way to Oued Marza a local truck stop which is also good for watching migrating raptors. Today however, the Spanish coast was shrouded in cloud, blocking many birds from leaving. The area didn't disappoint though, as it brought us views of African Blue Tit and African Chaffinch. Here we also took our second breakfast which was a Moroccan delight of eggs, olive oil, freshly baked rounds of bread, local goats cheese and goats cheese and honey pastries!

We were soon on the road again and down the Atlantic coast of Morocco. Our next stop was at the town of Moulay Boussehham, where we looked over the ornithologically-famed Merja Zerga lagoon. After taking refreshments we boarded our boat 'The Ibis' and journeyed out into the lagoon.

Views of the myriad of ornithological life here came quickly. Many waders included Common Ringed, Kentish and Grey Plovers, Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits and Eurasian Curlew, Dunlin, and a single Little Stint. Little Egrets fished the incoming tideline while overhead Whiskered and Sandwich Terns drifted alongside the boat. We stopped on a small island where we found Caspian Terns and two hunting Western Ospreys.

After our boat trip and taking our picnic we moved to the farmed area of the lagoon and the fresh marsh. Sadly this area is being ravaged by intensive agriculture of berry production which is eating up the area of grazing marsh. As we searched the remaining and fragmented areas of marsh we waited patiently as dusk approached. Soon enough a Moroccan Marsh Owl rose up and landed on the edge of the rushes and we silently observed it but later we lamented just how threatened this species is due to agricultural expansion.

We arrived in Larache and after time to settle into our rooms we took a short walk around the town to see the hubbub of Larache life and also the colony of Little Swifts who despite the commotion were settling down for the evening.

Day 5 - Sunday 6th October

Today we headed out to the nearby Loukkos Wetlands, where we got views of *Algerensis* Grey Shrike, Spanish Yellow Wagtail and a juvenile Montagu's Harrier which successfully caught an Ocellated Lizard!

We then found an airborne ball of feeding hirundines which were also joined by Little Swifts. Among this crowd we found Brown-throated Martins, a scarce bird in the region. On the shallow lagoons we found Green and Wood Sandpipers, Ruff, Black-winged Stilts and Little Ringed Plovers whilst nearby White Storks and Glossy Ibis rested in the shade.

Soon we were on the road through the plains of the Rif. We stopped at the village of Beni Arouss, the gateway to the mountains. Here we ate in our favourite local eatery and we were pleased to offer this unique experience for the group, enjoying chick peas, lentils and beans in beautifully-seasoned sauces and locally baked bread.



We travelled up into the Rif Mountains and into the Bouachem Forest. Here we stopped and listened as Short-toed Treecreepers were abundant along with Firecrests, African Blue Tits, and African Chaffinch. A single Atlas Long-legged Buzzard swept the tree tops.

We also heard and saw Great-spotted Woodpecker briefly and as we silently walked through the forest a Levaillant's Green Woodpecker called. We honed in on it and saw a brief view of it and latterly heard its mournful yaffles.

As we continued through the forest, suddenly Barbara spotted a Barbary Macaque and we enjoyed the antics of several this wild endemic Macaque species.

We headed through the forest and out across semi-subsistent farming lands and terraced fields of ancient agroforestry and soon we reached Auberge Dardara, where we settled into the beautiful, traditional rooms and our glorious evening meal of salads, tagines and soups.

Day 6 - Monday 7th October

Today we headed up into the Talassemtane National park with our 4x4 driver Ibrahim. We journeyed up the mountain slowly, taking in the magnificent scenery and intently listening for calls and songs. We soon heard Blue Rock Thrush, later getting stomping views of it. A distant Moussier's Redstart sang but wasn't located. However, after extensively searching this glorious habitat we came across a female Moussier's Redstart and knew the male couldn't be too far away from his Mrs! He soon bounded into sight to give us the most brilliant view!

A little rock clambering by Simon allowed us to locate two Black Wheatears, of which everybody got great scope views.

We walked on further, getting crippling views of the pair of Moussier's Redstarts before meeting again with Ibrahim and travelling to his mother's house for lunch. It was a special experience for many to eat alongside these semi-subsistent farmers and herders and share time with these people linked to the elements and nature.

The afternoon was spent exploring the town of Chefchouen and its narrow blue streets and shops before heading back for Dardara and relaxing time!

Day 7 - Tuesday 8th October

Today we awoke early for a pre breakfast walk around the surrounding countryside of Dardara - here we found several early morning delights including a close Black-winged Kite that alighted on trees around us. We heard a single Common Nightingale call.

Further on we watched Common Bulbuls in the tree tops, Grey Wagtails and *algerensis* Grey Shrike. We checked the scrub and found Spanish Sparrow and a single Common Nightingale picked up in flight which we soon located sunning itself in the early rays. In the nearby dry riverbed, we watched two Grey Wagtails and a Moroccan White Wagtail. Two Cirl Buntings squabbled next to us as a flocks of Serins drank at the pools.

We heard for breakfast and relaxed before packing and making our way onto the road north to the coast to take our ferry. During the ferry crossing we enjoyed views of both Common and Striped Dolphins. Big rafts of Cory's Shearwaters seemed to cruise with us.

Arriving in Spain we travelled the short journey to Huerta Grande, where our evening meal awaited. We enjoyed our food as we reminisced and shared tales of two continents and new friends, new initiatives and new ways of thinking.

Day 8 - Wednesday 9th October

Sadly our tour had to come to an end but not before six Hawfinches alighted in the trees outside reception to bid us farewell. We made the short drive to Gibraltar and the group crossed the border into the UK, saying farewell to the magic of The Straits - until next time!

Hasta luego! ...arakum lahiqaan asdiqayiy

			Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	Species	Scientific Name								
1	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>			400	50			500	
2	Balearic Shearwater	<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>			10				3	
3	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		1						
4	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>			4	2			2	
5	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		2	3		20			
6	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		2						
7	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>			3					
8	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>					1			
9	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
10	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		20		5	10			
11	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>								
12	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>								
13	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		8		10	4	1		
14	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	30							
15	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	10	5		20	100		20	5
16	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>				13	2			
17	Northern Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>		8						
18	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		20						
19	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>		200		100				
20	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		9						
21	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		6		2				
22	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		2		2				
23	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	4	2	3					
24	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>		2		1	1	1	1	
25	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	5	2	3					
26	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	3							
27	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	20	10	60					
28	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	30	3	10					
29	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>		1			1			

30	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1	10	2	4	15		4	
31	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	4	2	10	2	3	1	2	
32	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>			2					
33	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>			1		1			
34	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	50	10	30	4			10	
35	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>		20	5		2			
36	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1	1	2	1				
37	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		1			2			
38	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>				1,000				
39	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>				10				
40	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		15			20			
41	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		10						
42	Eurasian Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus oediconemus</i>		10						
43	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>					10			
44	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		30		150				
45	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>		20		50				
46	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		5		80				
47	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					2			
48	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>				20				
49	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		✓		10				
50	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>				1				
51	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		2		100				
52	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		4			2			
53	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>					1			
54	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		7		1				
55	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>				20				
56	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>					4			
57	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>				30				
58	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>					1			
59	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		✓		20				
60	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		2	2	30	10			
61	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		3			5			

93	Levaillant's Woodpecker	<i>Picus vaillantii</i>					1	1		
94	Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>		50						
95	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
96	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>			1					
97	Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>					8			
98	Common Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		1					✓	
99	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	20	10	30	5	10	5	✓	
100	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>					2	5		
101	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
102	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓				2		✓	
103	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	10	✓		✓	✓			
104	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	
105	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>								
106	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>		1						
107	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>			1	10	5	5		
108	Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓				3	1
109	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5	2
110	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>							2	
111	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			1					
112	Moussier's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>						4		
113	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
114	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>							1	
115	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>						2		
116	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		1						
117	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>					1	3		
118	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>							2	1
119	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
120	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	1
121	Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>		2						
122	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
123	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

124	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>						1		
125	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	2	3	2	2	5	2	1	2
126	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	1	3		10	5		2	
127	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		2						
128	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>		1	4					
129	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		2	3
130	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>								
131	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓
132	African Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes teneriffae</i>				3	10	5	5	
133	Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>								
134	Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	2	2	2					3
135	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	2	3	12		20		2	3
136	Desert Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius algeriensis</i>				2	5		2	
137	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	2	2		2	2	12	4	
138	Western Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>		✓		✓			✓	
139	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			1		4	2		2
140	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
141	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
142	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>		✓			3			
143	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	4					✓
144	North African Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs africana</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
145	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	2	1	1			1	4	
146	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>		✓		✓			2	
147	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
148	Common Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>		1	3			10	5	
149	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>			1					6
150	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>						3		
151	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>				2			2	
152	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	✓	✓		10	20		✓	

Marine Life			
Common Name	Scientific name	Spain	Morocco
Bottle-nose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	c.75	
Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>		✓
Striped Dolphin	<i>Stenella Coeruleoalba</i>		✓
Long-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala melas</i>	50	
Scalloped Hammerhead Shark	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	1	
Yellow-finned Tuna	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>	20	✓
Butterflies			
Common Name	Scientific name	Spain	Morocco
Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	✓	
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	✓	✓
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	✓	
Common Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>	✓	✓
Cleopatra	<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>		✓
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	✓	
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	✓	✓
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		✓
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>	✓	
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>		✓
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		✓

Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>		✓
Crimson Speckled Footman	<i>Utetheisa pulchella</i>		✓
Reptiles and Amphibians			
Common Name	<i>Scientific name</i>	Spain	Morocco
Horse-shoe Whip Snake	<i>Hemorrhois hippocrepsis</i>		
Moorish Gecko	<i>Tarentola mauritanica</i>	✓	✓
Iberian Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis hispanicus</i>	✓	✓
Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	✓	
Other Species and taxa			
Egyptian Mongoose	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>	✓	
Blue-winged Grasshopper	<i>Oedipoda caerulescens</i>	✓	✓
Barbary Macaques	<i>Macaca sylvanus</i>		c.20