



Lesser Kestrels – Trujillo – April 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn

Extremadura –Land of the Conquistadors
9TH April to 15TH April 2026
written by Andrew Kinghorn, April.2026.

www.oriolobirding.com

info@oriolobirding.com



INTRODUCTION

April in Extremadura offers some of the best early spring birding in southern Europe, the weather is largely settled, and whilst you can get showery days and strong winds, the prevailing weather tends to be mild calm days with sunny skies. The following account is a summary of key highlights of events and birds seen during the tour. Please note that the day narratives are by no means intended to be exhaustive, instead they outline highlights for each day. For the sake of consistency all species below possess names as defined by IOC World Bird List version 15.1, and to this author's best knowledge are correct as of April 2026. The tour was led by Andrew Kinghorn.

THURSDAY 9TH APRIL

The day was primarily devoted to travel, arriving in Madrid mid-late afternoon, we then had a drive westward to our accommodation for the entirety of the tour, staying close to Trujillo. There was time for some brief birding when we made a comfort stop on the way, this yielded our first **Red-rumped Swallows** and **White Storks** of the trip. There were even some excellent birds seen from the vehicle on the way, with both **Black** and **Griffon Vultures**, and surprises came in the form of both **Great Spotted Cuckoo** and **Iberian Green Woodpecker**.

FRIDAY 10TH APRIL

For our first full in day in Extremadura a decision was made to head south, our first stop of the day was Campo Lugar. Upon exiting the vehicle, we were greeted with great views of **Zitting Cisticola** and a flyby **Great Bustard** was a brilliant start, a flyover **Yellow Wagtail** was well received but distant **Rollers** were a little frustrating. It was a short drive for the next target, but with a little patience we did see our first **Black-winged Kite** of the trip, whilst we waited there was plenty to keep us occupied, with our first **European Bee-Eaters** of the trip and nest building **White Storks** are always well received. A stop by a water area close by gave us good views of **Common Waxbills** and a surprise **Common Kingfisher** flew over, **Common Nightingale** sang from the undergrowth and both **Whinchat** and **Common Stonechat** showed well. The real reason we stopped was for the **Iberian Magpies**, they are typically elusive but with patience you can get some good views.

A stop at the river crossing over the Río Gargáligas was fantastic, it produced our only **Pied Flycatcher** of the trip, and we got visuals of both **Great Reed Warbler** and **Common Nightingale**. The wires here were alive with **European Bee-Eaters** and some additional **Common Waxbills** flitted round the bushes. We then headed to Benquerencia de la Serena for a walk up to the ruined castle, here we had good views of our main target; **Black Wheatear** but the real star of the show was a showy adult **Egyptian Vulture** which came over ridiculously low. On the top of the castle itself we had further views of both **Black** and **Griffon Vultures** low overhead, some even at eyelevel. Another star here was our best views on the tour of **Alpine Swifts**, once again whizzing past us at eyelevel. An all too brief and slightly distant **Bonelli's Eagle** was frustrating, as was an immature **Spanish Imperial Eagle** that by the time it had turned was out over the plains.

We spent the remainder of the afternoon out on the plains at La Serena, this area has been touted by many to be the best area in Europe for steppe birding. The stop lived up to its name, within minutes of arriving we were enjoying our first **Collared Pratincoles** of the trip, as well as **Calandra Larks** almost quite literally all over the place. A recently ploughed field held **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** that were being helpfully flushed by a female **Montagu's Harrier**. Scanning produced male **Montagu's Harrier** and not long after our first **Little Bustard** of the trip. The standout highlight here though were a small part of **Great Bustards** which put on a superb flyby, close enough to allow for some photos. There was just enough time to call in for the **Black-winged Kite** on the way back to the hotel, and thankfully the bird performed well on this visit and allows for prolonged scope views both in flight and perched.

SATURDAY 11TH APRIL

Today centred on Monfragüe National Park, a place that, in the author's opinion, provides everything needed for one of the best birding days in Europe. Our first stop was at the viewpoint known as Salto del Gitano/Peña Falcon, here we had superb views of **European Serin** just below the viewpoint on

arrival, it was chased off by a zealous **Western Subalpine Warbler**, all this of course to the typical backdrop of nesting **Black Stork**, soaring **Griffon Vultures**, and a screeching **Peregrine Falcon** overhead. One tree below the viewpoint we named 'the magic tree' as in the space of a few minutes we had seen **Rock Bunting**, **European Serin**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, and **Cirl Bunting** within its branches. It was time for a quick toilet stop at Villarreal de San Carlos, where we had some of our only **Little Ringed Plover** of the trip, and **Thekla Larks** can be easy to encounter here.

At Mirador de la Portilla del Tietar we decided to take our lunch and dig in for a long watch, it was worth it; **Egyptian Vulture** floated by and our only **Osprey** of the trip flew over too, alongside the ever-present **Griffon** and **Black Vultures** it reinforced just how small this species is by comparison. Our first eagle of the day put in an appearance, and to the amazement of most it was a **Golden Eagle**! We had to wait a little longer but then finally the real prize appeared with **Spanish Imperial Eagle** overhead, this viewpoint is arguably the most reliable place in Extremadura in which to encounter this species. After this excitement we explored more of the park where we saw both **Thekla** and **Wood Lark**, after this stop we had brief views of a **Dartford Warbler**, and with patience more views of both **Western Subalpine Warbler** and **Western Black-eared Wheatear**. Back towards Peña Falcon we had more views of what I presume was the same **Golden Eagle**, just at the opposite end of the national park, as well as a cracking singing **Black Redstart**. Our final passerine highlight of the day in the park came in the form of **Western Orphean Warbler** which showed well, this can be a tricky passerine in which to catch up with once males stop singing. We finished off the day at back at Portilla del Tietar, where once again we got excellent views of both **Black** and **Griffon Vultures** and then once again **Spanish Imperial Eagle** put in an appearance, this time showing slightly better. Content with another fantastic day's birding in Extremadura we retreated back to our accommodation for the evening.



Black (Cinereous) Vulture – Trujillo – April 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn

SUNDAY 12TH APRIL

It was up and out back to the steppe after breakfast, first stop of the day was to Cordel de Los Cerralbos. On arrival we had our only **Tawny Pipit** of the trip; it helpfully perched itself up on the fence allowing for really brilliant views. As is typical for steppe the **Calandra Larks** were in good voice and were showing well too. On the steppe itself a displaying male **Little Bustard** made its presence known, and behind it **Great Bustards** strutted their stuff proudly, with both sexes showing

well allowing for a comparison of plumage variations. Flyover sandgrouse here came in the form of **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse**, they flew overhead and landed in a distant cattle field, doubtless where a water was present for thirsty cattle to drink. Another standout highlight here was an adult **Spanish Imperial Eagle** that showed very well, allowing for that blonde head and white shoulder patches to be observed, a quintessential species of the region. From here we headed a short distance towards Llanos de Cáceres, sadly the wind was picking up considerably and the steppe here was very quiet, with nothing particularly of note on this visit. With the wind increasing, we moved into a sheltered valley near Santa Marta de Magasca, this was productive in the sense we got great views of bathing **European Serins**, as well as nesting **Spanish Sparrows**, the ever-present **European Bee-Eaters** were of course well received here too. Coming out the valley a **Red-legged Partridge** in the middle of the road allowed all participants for their best views on the trip of this beautifully marked species, which is of course, native to the region.

The afternoon was spent on the plains to the north-east of Santa Marta, sadly this area appears to have somewhat fallen out of favour with bustards, but we did get fabulous views of **Lesser Kestrel** and a roadside female **Montagu's Harrier** right by the side of the vehicle. A slow drive south-west produced excellent views of a few species, but most notable was the sheer volume of **White Storks**, which were seemingly everywhere, including a nesting colony which also contained **Grey Heron**. We had good views here of both **Woodchat Shrike** and **Iberian Grey Shrike** as well as **Booted Eagle** and **Spanish Sparrows**. From here we headed to the bullring at Trujillo, I am happy to report that bull fighting here is very much a thing of the past, instead the whole site has been repurposed as a nesting colony of **Lesser Kestrels**, we watched multiple pairs go about their business, including males bringing in reptiles and running under the custom installed tiles for nesting. One last look on the plains was brief, whilst **Great Bustard** was still present the wind had gotten up considerably and the dust clouds from the roads were making viewing largely unpleasant, with this in mind we decided it was time to call it a day.



Montagu's Harrier – Santa Marta – April 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn

MONDAY 13TH APRIL

We headed to look for Spectacled Warbler after breakfast, but despite considerable effort we drew a blank in slightly windy weather. However, we did manage some great views of **Dartford Warbler**

and we had **Crested** and **Thekla Larks** were abundant, and of course both **Black** and **Griffon Vultures** were represented. After this we headed to the nature reserve known as Arrocampo, this is a very large extensive area with multiple observation towers within its complex. With it being our first proper wetland visited on the trip, the new birds to the trip list came thick and fast. Our very first stop produced fantastic views of **Little Bittern**, whilst **Western Swamphen** called from the reedbed, another star here was undoubtedly the reeling **Savi's Warbler**. Upon returning to the vehicle a skilfully picked out **Great Spotted Cuckoo** was well received, if not somewhat briefer than hoped. Exploring the other observation areas was well worth the effort with great views of **Gull-billed Tern** (with patience) and **Purple Herons** performed well, a flyby **Eurasian Spoonbill** was nice and close and it was a pretty good vista for our lunch stop. After lunch we added multiple **Great Egrets** to the day tally, extremely good views of **Black-winged Kite** were very well received and **Common Sandpiper** was new for the trip list, the **Iberian Magpies** continued to tease us by showing only briefly, too clever!

After engaging in the Spanish tradition of a Siesta, we headed out for some later afternoon birding into the evening. The Belen Plains proved to be Bustard-less for us, but some close roadside **Black** and **Griffon Vultures** were fantastic as they fed on an unknown carcass. From here we headed back to Peña Falcon for more spectacle, it was fantastic to see low flying **Griffon Vultures** and a high-flying **Black Vulture** was mobbed by a **Peregrine Falcon** which looked comically small by comparison. Both **Blue Rock Thrush** and **Rock Bunting** were accounted for and the former showed very well. Finishing off the day at Portilla del Tietar produced a brief flyover **Eurasian Eagle Owl** – target secured. With **Griffon Vultures** all grounded for the night and the day getting on, it was decided to call it a day and we retreated back to the hotel for a well-deserved late evening meal before bed.



Little Bittern – Arrocampo – April 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn

TUESDAY 14TH APRIL

Our final day's birding was ahead. The early morning mist was not helpful to begin with, but did add atmosphere as the **Great Bustards** appeared from the gloom, and a **Little Bustard** walked into view allowing for both bustard species to be seen in the same scope view at the same time. Once again

Spanish Imperial Eagle put in an appearance and once the mist had lifted the sandgrouse started to move, we saw multiple good-sized flocks of **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** and singles of **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**, the latter had been a tricky species to connect with on this particular trip. We took a scenic route and it paid dividends when a dark morph **Montagu's Harrier** put in appearance and a more typically plumaged male sat in the middle of the road! Stopping along the road allowed for stunning views of **Short-toed** and **Booted Eagles**. A roadside pool held two trip ticks; **Gadwall** and **Northern Shoveler**.

We took a short drive to La Serena, on the way we checked some agricultural land and had some flyover **Collared Pratincoles**, we then checked the road bridge area we visited on the first day, we added **Red Avadavat** to the trip list, both **European Bee-Eater** and **Great Reed Warbler** were both well represented once again. Our final few hours birding were some of the best of the trip, once again we were serenaded by **Calandra Larks**, more views of male **Montagu's Harriers** and the best of all came from a flyover immature **Spanish Imperial Eagle** and roadside **Great Bustards**. A charming **Little Owl** showed well too. It was a fantastic way to close out the tour, a truly memorable final afternoons birding in Extremadura.



Spanish Imperial Eagle – La Serena – April 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn

WEDNESDAY 15TH APRIL

The day was devoted entirely to travel, after breakfast we headed back eastwards towards Madrid where the tour concluded, we then took our flights in the afternoon back to London.

Systematic List

LIST KEY:

Green = Expect to see regularly on a typical tour to Extremadura during this time period.

Amber = Less likely to see on a typical tour to Extremadura, but with effort likely to be encountered during this time period.

Red = Difficult to see on a typical tour to Extremadura during this time period, likely to require targeted effort.

No.	Species List	Scientific name
1	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
2	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
3	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>
4	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
5	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
6	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>
7	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
8	Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>
9	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
10	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
11	Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles alchata</i>
12	Black-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles orientalis</i>
13	Great Bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>
14	Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>
15	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
16	Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>
17	Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>
18	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
19	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>
20	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
21	Eurasian Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
22	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
23	Western Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
24	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>
25	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
26	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
27	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
28	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
29	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>
30	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
31	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
32	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
33	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
34	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>
35	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
36	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
37	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
38	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
39	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
40	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
41	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>

42	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
43	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
44	Black (Cinereous) Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>
45	Eurasian Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
46	Short-toed Snake-Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
47	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
48	Spanish Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>
49	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
50	Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>
51	Eurasian Marsh-Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
52	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
53	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
54	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
55	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
56	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
57	Eurasian Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>
58	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>
59	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
60	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
61	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
62	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>
63	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
64	Iberian Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus sharpei</i>
65	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>
66	Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
67	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
68	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
69	Iberian Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>
70	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>
71	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
72	Iberian Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cooki</i>
73	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
74	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
75	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
76	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
77	Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>
78	Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
79	Thekla's Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>
80	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
81	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
82	Eurasian Crag-Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
83	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
84	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
85	Common House-Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
86	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
87	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
88	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
89	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
90	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
91	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
92	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
93	Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>
94	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>

95	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
96	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
97	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
98	Western Orphean Warbler	<i>Curruca hortensis</i>
99	Western Subalpine Warbler	<i>Curruca iberiae</i>
100	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>
101	Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>
102	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
103	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>
104	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
105	Blue Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
106	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
107	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
108	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>
109	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
110	Western Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>
111	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
112	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>
113	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
114	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
115	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>
116	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
117	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
118	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
119	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
120	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>
121	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>
122	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>
123	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
124	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>
125	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
126	Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
127	Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>



Spanish Imperial Eagle – La Serena – April 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn