



ORIOLE BIRDING



TOUR REPORT MALLORCA – BALEARIC HOUSE PARTY 28TH APRIL – 5TH MAY 2018

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SATURDAY 28TH APRIL

Following a smooth transition through Palma airport and a fairly easy hire van collection (though we very nearly didn't get one!) we were on our way out of Palma and enjoying the spectacular mountains and small vineyards that typify the north of Mallorca, noting Cattle Egret, Grey Heron and numerous Swallows and Swifts along the way. Once we had arrived at our fantastic villa at the foot of Puig de Maria we took a little time to unload our bags and settle in before taking a leisurely stroll through the grounds and nearby countryside. One of the first birds we noted in the garden was the recently split **Balearic Flycatcher**, an endemic to the Mediterranean islands. Serin, Sardinian Warbler and Greenfinch were common throughout the area, while a pair of Stonechats showed well collecting food for their young. Towards the end of the lane the song of **Nightingale** was coming from various patches of scrub and, with a little persistence we managed some views of a pair in a wild olive tree overlooking a dry torrent, characteristically with tail cocked high above the body. A little further down the lane we were presented by another sought-after species; a **Woodchat Shrike** of the Mediterranean subspecies *badius*. This bird, a very smart male, put on an awesome show, taking insects from the ground and perching prominently along fences and telegraph poles, the near-absent white primary patch distinguishing it from the nominate form. Kestrel and Red Kite were also noted, while a few Chaffinches were also present. Back at the villa, a **Wryneck** was calling loudly from the bottom of the garden and gave a flight view as it flew across to a large carob tree, where it showed briefly and then moved off to sing further down the lane. Amazingly, while listening to this a **Hoopoe** flew right over our heads and into the holm oak forest that the villa backs onto! A fantastic start to the trip. A pale phase **Booted Eagle** and a couple of Ravens were noted before we headed into Pollença to enjoy a sumptuous evening of local mallorcan food. Returning home, we were met by the sounds of calling **Stone Curlew** out in the surrounding countryside; a species we look forward to trying to see over the next few days.



A Woodchat Shrike of the Balearic island race *badius*

SUNDAY 29TH APRIL

Our first full day in Mallorca began with a pre-breakfast walk in the immediate surrounds of our fantastic villa. From the off the air was full of the song of Serin, Nightingale and **Wryneck**, giving the area a typically Mediterranean vibe. Blackcaps were also in evidence here, though only through the sound of their song, the birds themselves proving rather elusive. Following some fleeting but at times good views of Nightingales, we had our breakfast and then made our way out, with our first destination being the Boquer Valley. This famous and impressive limestone valley forms an effective catchment area, both regarding habitat and geography for migrant birds heading north during the

spring and can be an exciting place to visit. Leaving the van, we were quickly met with our first migrant, and it was a good one! A **Western Bonelli's Warbler** was showing very well in the first set of Oak trees above the car park, flycatching and as mobile as ever, but giving good prolonged views for everyone. Following this a check further up towards the finca produced a stonking bright **Wood Warbler** which showed briefly before heading up the hillside and out of view. A great start! A number of Balearic Flycatchers were also noted here, along with a very smart male **Girl Bunting** which perched up nicely for us, while further up towards the valley mouth we noted our first **Crag Martins** of the trip along with a *badius* **Woodchat Shrike**. From here we walked further up the valley, taking in the breathtaking scenery. Despite the strong winds we managed to get good views of a singing male **Blue Rock Thrush** high on a rocky crag and also enjoyed good views of displaying **Booted Eagles**, their wing fluttering and tumbling displays being particularly impressive here. However small birds were thin on the ground. With this in mind we thought we would head over to see whether any migrants might be harboured in the sheltered oaks at the postage stamp wood, or Bosquet de Boquer as its known locally. In truth however, this area was rather quiet, with a calling and briefly showing **Firecrest** here the main bird of note, along with an array of other breeding species, including some more showy Balearic Flycatchers. After lunch here, we then made our way over to the Albufera marshes, where we would spend the rest of the afternoon.

Walking along the main canal we noted a few Common Sandpipers along the stone bank, while a bit further along we encountered a single adult **Night Heron** sleeping deep within a *pistacia* bush. The Cattle Egret colony further along was typically entertaining, with much activity between these and the Little Egrets. Walking over to Sa Roca, a check of the pools revealed a pair of sleeping **Marbled Duck** on the island in the company of a few Red-crested Pochards and a pair of Common Terns. Black-winged Stilts were also in evidence, while a **Hoopoe** showed well nearby. Walking back towards the canals, a pair of Serin showed very well in the white poplars. Approaching the furthest canal a tiny heron was seen sat right out in the open on a clump of fallen reeds; a **Little Bittern**!. The bird soon skulked back into the reeds as it realised what a crowd it had attracted, though a **Western Swamphen** gave at least more prolonged views. Continuing along, we headed for the lagoons overlooked by the Bishops hides. Here we were met by a fantastic collection of waders, with Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish, Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers making up the numbers, while 15 all-black **Spotted Redshank** and several **Curlew Sandpipers** and Little Stints made the quality! A pair of **Greater Flamingos** were also visible in the far corner of the lagoon. Walking back over the canal bridges a check of the Coots here revealed a single **Red-knobbed Coot**, a speciality of the Albufera, but a species in decline here unfortunately. The walk back to the van resounded with the sounds of **Zitting Cisticolas**, Cetti's and Sardinian Warblers, and returning bac to the villa we reflected on what a great site the Albufera was. More to come from this location later in the trip!



This Bonelli's Warbler was the only one seen during the trip

MONDAY 30TH APRIL 2018

As far as birding days go, today was one to remember, with so many highlights! With a planned trip to Cabrera, today demanded an earlier start than usual, seeing us out of the door at 7 and on the road south. Our journey included a stop in the agricultural surroundings of Vilafranca de Bonany, where farmland species abounded. **Short-toed Larks** and **Thekla Larks** littered the roadsides, **Corn Buntings** sang from every field and **Stone Curlews** were seen particularly well in the bare turned-over fields. **Quail** was heard singing from one cereal field but went, not unexpectedly, unseen, while **Zitting Cisticola** showed well along a field margin and a migrant **Whinchat** had stopped to refuel. The sheer number and close views of **Common Swifts** was also very entertaining, but a distinct lack of cut silage fields meant that our main targets, the **Red-footed Falcons** and **Lesser Kestrels**, looked likely to be missed this year. However, these concerns were short lived as, scanning a small recently cut cereal field (the only one in the whole area) we spotted two dark-looking falcons on the row of cut grass – two **Red-footed Falcons**! Piling out of the van to get scopes out, we enjoyed excellent views of this male and female, while further scanning revealed a total of five birds in this small area, hovering and diving down for insect prey. Four **Lesser Kestrels** also joined the spectacle, making for a rather intense and exciting, though necessarily short period of viewing, as we really had to go and catch our boat to Cabrera!



Is there a more dapper passerine than a male Collared Flycatcher?

We made it to Colonia de Sant Jordi, the departure location for our trip to Cabrera in just enough time, collected our tickets and boarded the Excursions Cabrera catamaran, noting several **Audouin's Gulls** in the harbour. The crossing was excellent for shearwaters, with good views of dozens of **Balearic Shearwaters** and 5 **Scopoli's Shearwaters** had during a rather bumpy 45-minute crossing, along with several Mediterranean Shags. Coming into the picturesque natural harbour mouth of Cabrera, a glance back produced an **Osprey** flying across the bay, gliding from one promontory to another. Landing on the island we received a warm welcome from the fantastic staff, and also were treated to special park permits, allowing us into areas which would otherwise be out of bounds to the public. We paused here for a coffee, but evidence of an arrival of small migrants was already clear, with a couple of female **Pied Flycatchers** flitting around the wooden boats. One small patch of mallow around the corner held single **Garden Warbler**, **Common Whitethroat** and **Chiffchaff**. The number of common migrants was really impressive at times, in places forming carpets of birds flitting amongst the bushes and short grasses. Conservative estimates of the commoner species here include 35 **Pied Flycatchers**, 20 **Common Redstarts**, 20 **Willow Warblers**, 5 **Garden Warblers**, 10 **Common Whitethroats** and 8 **Balearic Flycatchers**. Further to these, scarcer migrants included a really smart male **Whinchat**, 2 **thumbergi Yellow Wagtails** and a **Woodchat Shrike**. While the sheer number of birds in some areas was really entertaining, the prize for rarity value certainly goes to the adult male **Collared Flycatcher** which was holding territory over an area of the picnic area, chasing off any

intruder who dared enter his patch! This bird had been present for a few days, found by an intrepid band of Spanish rarity finders a few days before. Absolutely awesome! While these migrant birds certainly stole part of the limelight, the breeding species on offer also took some beating. Over the course of our wanderings we had views of around 6 of the endemic **Balearic Warblers**, with some males showing extremely well, if a little briefly in the garrigue scrub. Another much-sort after breeding species, the **Eleanora's Falcon** gave itself up here. Only being newly arrived in the last few days, there aren't many around at the minute, so we were pleased to spot one pale phase bird mobbing a Booted Eagle over a high ridge towards the south-east of the island, giving prolonged views and allowing us to familiarise ourselves with its sickle-like wings and slim agile build. The walk back to the boat was as entertaining as the walk up, with such a wealth of birdlife to enjoy. At times it was impossible to know where to look! Reluctantly we boarded our boat back after 5 fantastic hours on the island. However, more was to come. The sailing out of the harbour produced another **Osprey** sighting, with one gliding high over the 14th century Cabrera Castle with fish in talons, while around the corner two **Peregrines** shot into view. Further on still a scan of the impressive cliffs of Illa des Conillera produced another **Eleanora's Falcon** circling high above with Yellow-legged Gulls. The next highlight was a rather special one, with a raft of around 200 **Scopoli's Shearwaters** and about 15 **Balearic Shearwaters** resting close to Na Pobra. The boat skipper expertly manoeuvred us close to the flock, allowing exceptional views of these species both on the water and in flight. What a spectacle! The return journey was much less bumpy, and the return back to Pollença very straight forward, where we enjoyed a late dinner in the main square and looked back at a fantastic day of Mallorca birding.



The incredible views of both Balearic and Scopoli's Shearwaters was one of the highlights of the trip.

TUESDAY 1ST MAY 2018

Following yesterday's exciting but full-on antics, and today's rather iffy weather forecast of frequent heavy rain showers, we chose to take this morning at a more leisurely pace. After an 8am breakfast and a quick top up on shopping essentials, we headed back to the Boquer Valley to see whether the mornings heavy rain might have dropped in any new migrants. Rounding the corner from the car park, a male **Pied Flycatcher** shot around the corner and round a white house; certainly not here the other day! A **Wryneck** was heard calling but not seen, while a couple of Common Whitethroats were also noted, along with a nominate Spotted Flycatcher. Up past the finca, a view across the fields below revealed a few darting **Crag Martins** with the Swifts, along with numerous Greenfinches. A male **Blue Rock Thrush** then flew up and perched atop a small shrub and, while it was rather distant, the light was superb, its contrastingly electric blue head and mantle contrasting with its black wings.

A scan of the lower fence lines then revealed a male **Common Redstart** which we watched for a while as it darted between asphodel stems. Returning to the van we enjoyed another **Pied Flycatcher**, this time a female in the olive trees above the car park, while a group of 6 **Crag Martins** shot overhead.

Our next port of call would be the Cami des Polls, at the far western extreme of the Albufera marsh. Good sightings were quick to come, with one of the highlights of the day being a **Peregrine** which we observed stooping onto a Marsh Harrier, forcing it to drop its prey. The Peregrine then pursued this morsel through the air and caught it in its talons! A second bird, probably the female then followed as they headed off. A good number of Marsh Harriers were seen throughout this area, with the expanse of reedbed rather good for them. The walk through the marsh was alive with the sounds of Cetti's Warblers, with a couple seen fleetingly, while a **Great Reed Warbler** was also heard and briefly scoped as it sang high from the reeds in typical fashion. Eurasian Reed Warbler was also heard singing in a number of spots, but there was a fair breeze by now, and occasional showers, so warbler activity seemed rather inhibited. Several Yellow Wagtails were noted through the area, along with a very large number of Zitting Cisticolas in territorial displays seemingly everywhere. A number of Cattle and Little Egrets were noted, along with a single **Glossy Ibis** which flew through. This bird was in fact noted while we were watching a hunting **Osprey**, flying by as the bird hovered and fished in distant lagoons. The number of Swifts passing through and gathering overhead in the area was impressive, with easily over 1000 noted, along with small numbers of Swallows and **Crag Martins**. Walking back along the main drainage channel a fairly sweet and clear sounding *acrocephalus* song emanated from the reeds, this belonging to the **Moustached Warbler**. In fact, at least 3 individuals were heard along this stretch. However, views were extremely difficult to get, with a brief view gained of the first bird only. A major botanical interest was the carpets of Robust Orchid *Anacamptis robusta*. This is the only European site for this species, and there were exceptional carpets present in this area! Returning to the van, we headed round to Son Bosc and the Depuradora. Driving along the access track a couple of **Bee Eaters** were shooting around over the road, clearly returning to their regular breeding site here. Two **Thekla Larks** were also noted. Quickly parking the van, we scanned the area, noting Red Kite, a **Stone Curlew** which circled the farm land below us and a **Hoopoe** busy collecting food while its partner sat nearby. We managed to see a couple more **Bee Eaters** very distantly, but before long the sky had darkened substantially, threatening heavy rain. With this we dashed back to the van just in time before the rain hit and spent the worst of it parked up near the Depuradora. The rain didn't ease, and while we enjoyed views of a pair of Little Ringed Plovers which joined us in the car park and a single Red-crested Pochard in flight, our wait for the rain to stop was futile. Realising this, we made a dash to the viewing tower, and while we did get rather wet we did find a pair of **Whiskered Terns** sitting out the weather on some railings, several Black-headed Gulls, Common Sandpipers and Black-winged Stilts. Well worth getting wet for! A shame the day ended with such heavy rain, but overall it was a good and varied day.

WEDNESDAY 2ND MAY 2018

Another cracking day in Mallorca, though the weather dictated some reshuffling of the days plan. With low cloud evident over the mountains visible from our villa and a forecast of strong wind and rain for the morning, we swapped our intended morning sojourn to the Tramuntana for an afternoon visit instead. However, first we enjoyed a pre-breakfast walk around the villa, which proved to be very productive. Walking out into the back garden a beautiful fluty song was coming from the oak forest; a **Golden Oriole**. We stood listening until it went quiet, unfortunately without a sighting, but very pleased to hear it. A scan of the distant mountain ridge revealed two large birds of prey which proved to be **Black Vultures** over the Tramuntana foothills; our first of the trip. Down at the lane, **Nightingales** were again evident by their beautiful song, and we managed a couple of views, including one good one of a singing bird on top of a telegraph pole. After breakfast we headed out, making our way to the Albufera marshes. Arriving on site, Zitting Cisticolas and Sardinian Warblers were much in evidence, in part due to the presence of an unwelcome cat! A watch from the observation tower here was productive, with a highlight of a hunting **Osprey** which gave great views and a **Western Swamphen** which was similarly obliging. The marsh here also held around 8 **Greater**

Flamingos, a Common Pochard, numerous Swallows and a couple of Yellow Wagtails. A singing Corn Bunting was seen well on the way to the next hide, while the following lagoon provided great views of two Common Terns, 4 Common Redshanks, single summer plumaged Greenshank and Ruff and several breeding Kentish Plovers and Black-winged Stilts. Our next stop was the further northern part of the Albufereta marsh. Walking out to the viewing platform three egrets flew off the islands, two Little Egrets and a Squacco Heron! Unfortunately, the Squacco landed out of view and wasn't seen by any of the group. However, compensation was provided by five **Curlew Sandpipers** including one particularly stunning summer plumaged bird, a Greenshank, a female Pintail with the Gadwall, several Kentish Plovers and Common Sandpipers and, finally, a drake **Garganey** which flew in just as we were about to leave. A very productive little bit of marsh! Finishing up here, it was time to think about heading for the mountains for the afternoon.



While Bonelli's Eagles were the stars of the show, this Booted Eagle did attempt to upstage them!

Following a coffee stop in a very friendly café, we wound our way onto the mountain road through Pollença, where the views were typically breath-taking. Our first stop was the spectacular walk through the finca of Mortitx. Parking up, we quickly noted several Balearic Flycatchers and a single Blackcap, while Nightingale was heard singing. A spectacular sight was to follow, as a trio of falcons over the winery here turned out to be a single dark phase and two pale phase **Eleanora's Falcons**! These birds put on a mesmerising show overhead, sitting in the wind, stalling and stooping, and eating presumably insect prey on the wing in Hobby-like fashion. We could barely drag ourselves away! Whilst watching these we noted our first three **Griffon Vultures** soaring overhead, with **Black Vultures** soon to follow. In total we saw around 10 **Black Vultures** and six **Griffon Vultures** in the area, along with a couple of **Booted Eagles** and several Kestrels. A couple of Blue Tits were also noted; a mountain specialist on Mallorca. After a short walk we reached a beautiful spot overlooking a fantastic vista, noting a number of **Crag Martins** on route. Here we sat down to have our lunch, taking the opportunity to scan the horizon for more raptors. A **Blue Rock Thrush** was enjoyed here as it sang across the valley, while a sudden 'prrrt' call was heard overhead, giving away the presence of a flock of 20 **Bee Eaters** soaring and circling overhead, clearly migrating through the mountains, as was a single Marsh Harrier. More Black Vultures were also enjoyed here, and a couple of groups of **Common Crossbills** of the endemic subspecies *balearica* shot though, but the stars of the show waited till just before we packed up to leave. Scanning the opposite crag, a pair of large birds of prey appeared out of nowhere. Long tailed, distinctively shaped wings and very pale streaked bodies revealed them to be a pair of adult **Bonelli's Eagles**! These two beasts put on a great show, circling across the valley and drifting across to the far ridge, where they were mobbed by a very distant Kestrel. Just amazing. A final lunch-time treat was an **Eleanora's Falcon** which flew across the far ridge, its extremely distinctive shape evident even at great distance. Another surprise was in store as we walked back as, walking through some ancient olive groves a flash of black and white revealed a male flycatcher whisking through the trees. It initially proved elusive, but with some persistence we worked out its circuit, revealing itself to be an absolutely stonking **Collared Flycatcher**! A rarity on the island, one of my favourite birds and our second this week! Just amazing. A female **Pied**

Flycatcher was also present in these trees, along with a nearby singing Nightingale and a rather tatty Green Hairstreak butterfly. Finally, as if Mortitx hadn't provided enough entertainment, a distant harrier noted high and moving purposefully north revealed itself to be a ringtail **Montagu's Harrier**! Elated, we returned to the van, and made our way further into the mountains to the Cuber Reservoir. Our main target was the near-endemic **Moltoni's Warbler**, but further **Griffon** and **Black Vultures** and a Booted Eagle provided further amusement. Walking along towards the dam we eventually caught the distinctive 'trrrt' call of our target bird. This one, a female, showed very briefly in flight, but couldn't be relocated. Similarly elusive, another call revealed a male **Moltoni's Warbler** which showed itself briefly in some low scrub, flew across the track into a pine tree, was seen for a few seconds more and was the also lost. A bit disappointing not to see the species well, but at least we saw some! A Balearic rescue helicopter doing rescue and firefighting training over the reservoir meant that hearing any more warblers was going to be unlikely, so we made our way back and wound our way through the spectacular Tramuntana mountain range back to base. One final treat was had later after dinner, as a check of the garden at the villa revealed the presence of three different calling **Scop's Owls**, one of which we were able to see well in a tall oak tree. A great end to a superb day!



The Eleanora's Falcons really put on quite a performance today

THURSDAY 3RD MAY 2018

Day five of our Mallorca tour took us to the southern half of the island, where a variety of habitats would be investigated in what proved to be a very pleasant day. Leaving the villa at 8, we were at our first destination by just gone nine. This first site was the Salobrar de Campos salt pans; arguably the islands premier sight for waders. Taking the route towards Es Trenc, we stopped on a number of occasions to scan the pans, and in doing so encountered our first purring **Turtle Doves** of the trip, a pair of vocal **Tree Pipits**, four Hoopoes in a line on a telephone wire and a couple of Willow Warblers in the waterside vegetation. However, the pans here themselves were a bit quiet, holding good numbers of Kentish Plovers, Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and Shelduck but little else. Several Marsh Harriers and a couple of Red Kites were seen drifting around the back of the pans, while careful scanning of a large flock of Common Swifts produced our first **Pallid Swift** of the week. Whilst observing these swifts a flock of seven **Night Herons** flew into view from the south, possibly having only arrived this morning on migration. A mixed flock of about 25 waders then flew into view and, with a close fly-past and then by landing, revealed themselves to be a mix of Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Little Stints and **Curlew Sandpipers**, some of the latter three being in superb summer plumage. A couple of distant **Booted Eagles** were also noted here. Moving on, we made our way to view the main part of the saltpan complex, walking Eddie's Track. Stonechats and Sardinian Warblers were much

in evidence throughout, as were Swifts. A scan of the muddy margin of one of the first pans revealed a **Greenshank** and Little Stint, but these first pans were quite full of water and therefore rather quiet. However, a little further along we came to a particular pool which was alive with birds. Dominated by Kentish Plovers, Avocets and about 20 Redshank. In addition, there were a few highlights here. The first was a **Collared Pratincole**, which was spotted sat on the edge of the water before giving an excellent fly-past and landing on an adjacent pool, showing off its long tail streamers and, in flight, its rufous underwings. Also here were a group of five very smart summer plumaged **Little Stints**, two **Temmink's Stints**, a **Wood Sandpiper** and three Bar-tailed Godwits, including one in summer plumage. A real wader fest! Walking further on we enjoyed excellent views of *iberiae* Yellow Wagtails and also found another **Wood Sandpiper**, while shortly after a flock of 20 **Greater Flamingos** took flight and flew past, landing in another lagoon, their number growing to over 60 birds soon after; spectacular! Whilst walking back a sharp and loud 'spzzeee' call caught the ear, and a small pipit flew into view; a **Red-throated Pipit**! Unfortunately, the bird flew a fair distance and landed in a completely inaccessible area and, despite searching, we couldn't relocate it to get definitive views. Still, a fantastic visit!



Always a fantastic species to see, this Collared Pratincole gave excellent flight views

From Salobrar, we made our way across to Campos, then Felanitx, and finally up the winding hillside road to Castell de Santuari. Here we took our lunch whilst watching **Alpine Swifts** bombing around the castle top where they breed. An added bonus was the sight and sound of around 20 **Bee Eaters** which came in from the south, flew low over head, and then cruised away to the north, giving awesome views! From here we made our way down to Portocolom. Driving through this extremely attractive port town, we parked up by the coast at S'Algar. Walking through the garrigue we encountered numerous Stonechats, and it wasn't long before the song of a **Tawny Pipit** was heard, emanating from a bird perched prominently on top of a bush, giving excellent and prolonged scope views. The bird then flew and gave a full song flight before being lost. A second **Tawny Pipit** was also noted singing in the area, along with a couple of **Thekla Larks** and a **Balearic Warbler** which we picked up on call. It showed briefly before giving a good long flight view and diving deep into cover, not to be seen again. Pushing on, we drove round and parked up on the shore and took a walk through some abandoned fig plantations and mixed pine/scrub habitat. This area produced a few migrants, including a **Melodious Warbler** which was seen well but briefly and a couple of Willow Warblers, as well as at least two more vocal **Balearic Warblers**. Finally, we made our way to the coastal cliffs. Here we arrived just in time to watch the local fishing vessel, the Penyal Roig coming into port with its catch. The sea was already alive with both **Scopoli's** and **Balearic Shearwaters**, but the number of birds trailing the boat was really spectacular! **Scopoli's** numbers during our watch can't have been far short of 1000 in total, and **Balearic Shearwaters** numbered nearly 100 birds. Absolutely awesome. Add to this singing **Blue Rock Thrush** and Mediterranean Shag and it wasn't a bad place to sit in the sun either! Afterwards we headed back to the van to make our way home. Our final act, after dinner, was to have another look for the villas garden **Scops Owls**, which duly obliged

with three again calling, and following some fleeting views, one allowed all to see it perched up in an olive tree.

FRIDAY 4TH MAY 2018

Our final full day of the Mallorca trip was forecast to be a washout, and it dawned looking like it might be, with heavy rain bouncing off the tiles first thing. However, while it was wet at times, it proved to be more than manageable, and actually very pleasant for the most part. Our first port of call was a return to the main part of the Albufera Marshes. Walking the main entrance track we noted a group of 8 Common Sandpipers along the main canal, while the canal heronry was busy, with very showy **Night Herons** performing along with Little and Cattle Egrets. Rounding the corner, we took a walk along the Cami de Ses Puntes, and gained the best views of **Western Swamphe**n of the trip, with a bird feeding just off the path in plain view, snatching roots from the marsh and eating them grasped in its enormous feet. Following this we soon caught a snatch of **Moustached Warbler** song, which led us to achieve excellent and prolonged views of this sought-after bird high in the marshland reeds. In fact, we noted four birds in this area, and got good views of three of them; very unusual for this species! Whilst watching these, a **Great Reed Warbler** fired up in song, and a scan of the reed flower heads revealed this bird singing high up in typical fashion, providing very satisfying scope views for all. As if the marshland warbler fest hadn't already reached its climax, a distant reeling song reached us from a distant patch of reedbed and, on scanning this area, revealed itself to emanate from a **Savi's Warbler** singing from high up on another reed stem. Amazing, and unexpected as the wet weather had led us to all but rule out these warbler sightings for today. In addition to this, an impressive 22 **Greenshank** flew overhead, while Shoveler was also noted for the first time this trip. Walking towards the visitor centre, another **Savi's Warbler** was heard singing, while **Nightingales** seemed to be throwing themselves at our feet, with excellent treetop views had of about four different birds. Cetti's Warblers were also particularly confiding today. A look out of the hide behind the Sa Roca area revealed a single **Marbled Duck** roosting in the middle of the pool but apparently little else initially. However, after a wait another **Great Reed Warbler** gave good views, while a **Purple Heron** came into view in flight over the reedbed. Onwards we spent a while watching the Grand Canal, which proved productive as a pair of **Little Bitterns** flew out of the margins, the male crossing the bridge and giving excellent flight views before settling in the reeds, continuing to show and actually proceeding to give its barking song! Amazing. Walking along the track towards the Cibollar lagoon and Bishops hides we enjoyed observing the busy heronry, with particularly good views of adult and juvenile **Night Herons** and three nesting **Glossy Ibises**, while the Little Egrets were appreciated for their subtle but beautiful purple lores; a feature of their breeding condition. A quick nip into the Bishop 2 hide revealed a good selection of breeding Common Tern, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt and Kentish Plover, but little else, so we made our way to Bishop 1. Here we were confronted by a wealth of species, including some Mallorcan scarcities. Two summer plumaged **Sanderling** and a stonking summer plumaged **Knot** were both noted, while a **Little Tern** flew in during our vigil, which caused a small local twitch after we put the news out of this scarcity! In addition to this a mixture of **Curlew Sandpipers**, Little Stints, summer plumaged Spotted Redshank, three Ruff, a fly-by **Purple Heron** and a single **Whiskered Tern**, along with the usual breeding species made for an extremely entertaining period of viewing which was very difficult to drag ourselves from! However, move on we had to, with other sites to visit while the weather was relatively fair.



Little Tern with Greenshanks for company. The former is a scarcity in Mallorca

After coffee and lunch in Can Picafort, we made our way to the Depuradora where, despite a bit of rain, we noted a pair of **Marbled Ducks** dabbling along the vegetated bank, three **Whiskered Terns** dip-feeding in the further lagoons and a Whinchat in the fields behind us, along with three fly-over Snipe. The rain had begun to fall more steadily by now, so we made our way back to the van and took a drive a bit further along to Cami S'Amarador. This site, along with its viewing tower overlooks the vast reedbeds of the eastern part of the reserve. Climbing the tower, we note two **Purple Herons**, a brief **Squacco Heron**, numerous Marsh Harriers, a Peregrine, another singing **Great Reed Warbler** and an enormous number of hawking Swallows, the flock containing a few House and Sand Martins in addition. A walk further along the track was interrupted a couple of times, first by a flock of 9 **Wood Sandpipers** which flew in calling, and then by a very showy and vocal **Great Reed Warbler** which we enjoyed watching for about 5 minutes. Walking back, we enjoyed being surrounded by feeding Swallows, while the marshes held White Wagtail and two showy Yellow Wagtails. The park had been kind today despite the weather, and really showed how you only scratch the surface with one visit, this second visit revealing many species we hadn't seen on the previous visit! Very pleased, we headed back to the villa to enjoy a few drinks and a chilled out BBQ of local fish and snacks, savouring our last night in the villa.

SATURDAY 5TH MAY 2018

Our final morning before heading to the airport dawned as forecast, with unseasonal heavy rain! This was by far the heaviest we had encountered during our week, though it did break on occasion to allow us out and about. After packing our first good bird of the day was heard whilst leaving the villa. Parking the van, we heard the distinctive 'spinning coin' song of a **Wood Warbler** coming from the back of the garden which showed itself briefly, though we particularly enjoyed hearing the song, this in combination with the rain almost transporting us to some Welsh valley! Once we were all packed and loaded into the van, we headed out, hoping for a break in the weather, which fortunately we did get, though things were still a little damp. We headed first to Can Cuarassa, where we took a walk out onto the low-lying marsh. One of the first birds we encountered here was a distant Starling on the wires which, on getting the scope on it, revealed itself to be a single **Spotless Starling**. This area is one of very few breeding sites in Mallorca, and we ended up seeing a couple more. In addition, here we found a pair of **Northern Wheatears**, a new species for our week. The area was alive with Swifts and Swallows, while *iberiae* Yellow Wagtails were feeding young. The rain started to fall heavier now, so we made our way to the Boquer Valley to ride out some of the rain and also to see if any migrants might have been grounded in the weather. In reality, apart from a **Pied Flycatcher** noted from the van and a Common Whitethroat above the car park, the site was very quiet, and we mostly just got a bit wet! Admitting defeat, we started contemplating heading for a café to while away the last hour before heading for the airport. However instead we decided that we should be optimistic of

a break in the weather, so headed to the Albufereta, where we sat in the van for 10 minutes close to a viewing platform, ready to pounce if the conditions became birdable! Fortunately, they soon did, and we all bundled out of the van to take a look at the pools. These were rather busy, with some nice waders to enjoy including 7 **Wood Sandpipers**, several **Curlew Sandpipers**, 3 Little Stints and a variety of other species. Well worth the wait. Now however it was time to make tracks and head to the airport. It had been a fantastic weeks birding, with many highlights and superb general birding and variety. We can't wait to return!

SYSTEMATIC LIST

- 1 Common Shelduck
- 2 Garganey
- 3 Northern Shoveler
- 4 Gadwall
- 5 Mallard
- 6 Northern Pintail
- 7 Eurasian Teal
- 8 Marbled Duck
- 9 Red-crested Pochard
- 10 Common Pochard
- 11 Common Quail
- 12 Red-legged Partridge
- 13 Greater Flamingo
- 14 Cory's Shearwater
- 15 Balearic Shearwater
- 16 Great Cormorant
- 17 European Shag
- 18 Little Bittern
- 19 Grey Heron
- 20 Purple Heron
- 21 Little Egret
- 22 Cattle Egret
- 23 Black-crowned Night-Heron
- 24 Glossy Ibis
- 25 Osprey
- 26 Black Vulture
- 27 Griffon Vulture
- 28 Booted Eagle
- 29 Bonelli's Eagle
- 30 Western Marsh Harrier
- 31 Montagu's Harrier
- 32 Red Kite
- 33 Water Rail
- 34 Western Swamphen
- 35 Common Moorhen
- 36 Red-knobbed Coot
- 37 Eurasian Coot
- 38 Stone-curlew
- 39 Black-winged Stilt
- 40 Pied Avocet
- 41 Kentish Plover
- 42 Common Ringed Plover
- 43 Little Ringed Plover
- 44 Bar-tailed Godwit

45	Ruff
46	Curlew Sandpiper
47	Temminck's Stint
48	Sanderling
49	Dunlin
50	Little Stint
51	Common Snipe
52	Common Sandpiper
53	Spotted Redshank
54	Common Greenshank
55	Wood Sandpiper
56	Common Redshank
57	Collared Pratincole
58	Black-headed Gull
59	Mediterranean Gull
60	Audouin's Gull
61	Yellow-legged Gull
62	Little Tern
63	Whiskered Tern
64	Common Tern
65	Rock Dove
66	Common Woodpigeon
67	European Turtle Dove
68	Collared Dove
69	European Scops Owl
70	Alpine Swift
71	Common Swift
72	Pallid Swift
73	Eurasian Hoopoe
74	Common Kingfisher
75	European Bee-eater
76	Eurasian Wryneck
77	Lesser Kestrel
78	Common Kestrel
79	Red-footed Falcon
80	Eleonora's Falcon
81	Peregrine Falcon
82	Woodchat Shrike
83	Eurasian Golden Oriole
84	Common Raven
85	Greater Short-toed Lark
86	Thekla's Lark
87	Sand Martin
88	Eurasian Crag Martin
89	Barn Swallow
90	Common House Martin
91	Eurasian Blue Tit
92	Great Tit
93	Eurasian Wren
94	Firecrest
95	Cetti's Warbler
96	Willow Warbler
97	Common Chiffchaff
98	Western Bonelli's Warbler
99	Wood Warbler

- 100 Melodious Warbler
- 101 Moustached Warbler
- 102 Eurasian Reed Warbler
- 103 Great Reed Warbler
- 104 Savi's Warbler
- 105 Zitting Cisticola
- 106 Eurasian Blackcap
- 107 Garden Warbler
- 108 Moltoni's Warbler
- 109 Sardinian Warbler
- 110 Common Whitethroat
- 111 Spotted Flycatcher
- 112 Balearic Flycatcher
- 113 Common Nightingale
- 114 European Pied Flycatcher
- 115 Collared Flycatcher
- 116 Common Redstart
- 117 Blue Rock Thrush
- 118 Whinchat
- 119 European Stonechat
- 120 Northern Wheatear
- 121 Eurasian Blackbird
- 122 Spotless Starling
- 123 Western Yellow Wagtail
- 124 White Wagtail
- 125 Tawny Pipit
- 126 Tree Pipit
- 127 Cirl Bunting
- 128 Common Reed Bunting
- 129 Corn Bunting
- 130 Common Chaffinch
- 131 European Greenfinch
- 132 Common Linnet
- 133 Common Crossbill
- 134 European Goldfinch
- 135 European Serin
- 136 House Sparrow

LEPIDOPTERA

- 1 Swallowtail
- 2 Cleopatra
- 3 Clouded Yellow
- 4 Small White
- 5 Speckled Wood
- 6 Wall
- 7 Red Admiral
- 8 Common Blue
- 9 Green Hairstreak

ODONATA

- 1 Norfolk Hawker
- 2 Lesser Emperor
- 3 Black-tailed Skimmer
- 4 Red-veined Darter
- 5 Blue-tailed Damselfly

OTHER ANIMALS

1. Liliford's Wall Lizard
2. Iberian Water Frog
3. Florida Terrapin
4. Granada Hare

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