ORIOLE BIRDING



# TOUR REPORT
# Mallorca
# 17th – 23rd September 2025

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**16th September:**

It was an interesting journey to Mallorca. We boarded swiftly and on time before they announced to stay seated with seat belts on while they 'jacked us up to change a wheel'. It was stinky hot when we arrived and eventually we were on the road and wending our way east to the Hotel Aumallia set a way off the main roads down narrow lanes in the rural Mallorcan countryside.

We had seen little on the drive with just many Wood Pigeons, Collared Doves and Kestrels and a couple of Red Kites and Cattle Egrets. Our delays meant that we did not arrive till 6pm and I chose not to go straight out for a walk as everyone needed some down time to freshen up but a little before dinner time I ventured out and found a couple of the crew investigating. Thekla's Larks sung and were joined by Sardinian and Cetti's Warblers while Tree Pipits came up from the garden where Spotted Flycatchers flicked and Blackbirds clucked and on the rough areas there was calling Zitting Cisticolas, Stonechats and four common finches.

Gangs of Corn Buntings streamed through plipping as they went off to roost and an adult 'badius' Woodchat was a little surprising as I thought I may be only trying to identify youngsters. There were more Wood Pigeons and a couple of distant Spotless Starling while at our feet we were putting up Crimson Speckled and Vestal moths. A pleasant first dinner was accompanied by calling Stone-Curlews, nectaring Hummingbird Hawk-moths and a medium sized Moorish Gecko and a post coffee a Scops Owl was calling as we got back to the rooms.

So all in all a pleasant start to set us up for a proper look round before breakfast in the morning.

**17th September:**
Up with the Lark – well the Stone-Curlew in fact and we all stood in the half light of pre-dawn and watched and listened to the countryside wake up around us. Thekla's Larks were calling avidly – a more liquid 'DVD!' that the familiar Crested Larks of my travels and all around Red-legged Partridges were making sure they all knew where each other were out in the stony fields and we found three head bobbing their way across the closest one.
Sardinian Warblers rattled, Cetti's Warblers shouted and Zitting Cisticolas, well, you know. Corn Buntings were dispersing and several Tree Pipits had obviously been roosting in the gardens and actually sat up in some dead branches for us.


**Balearic Woodchat Shrike**

The adult 'Balearic' Woodchat of last night was replaced by an equally distinctive 1st winter bird and Stonechats were perched up on several prominent spots. A Hoopoe flopped over glowing orange in the first sun rays.
Yellow Wagtails and the expected common finches moved over and a female Sparrowhawk was sat up in some distant Olives before breakfast called us back inside where Spotted Flycatchers were dashing out from the very bizarre looking White Silk Floss Tree (Ceiba insignis) with its lily-like flowers and spiky but swollen Baobab like trunk.
As we reconvened to head out a Wryneck stared vociferously calling outside but moved off and further away before we could get around to where it was near the van! Hopefully we would find another.

Off out into the lanes on our way to Salobrar de Campo – some salt workings with access paths. There were a few bits along the way with a single Spotless Starling and some closer Thekla's Larks and a single Northern Wheatear while Sardinian Warblers seemed to be everywhere. It was already very hot by the time we headed out for our walk and although it was quite hard work in the shimmering air, the group got very good views of a fair wader selection with Avocets, stretchy legged Black-winged Stilts, Ruff, Green Sandpipers, Green, Red and Spotted Redshanks, Curlew, Black- tailed Godwit, Dunlin and both Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers.


**Greater Flamingos**

There were about 60 Greater Flamingos including several fresh small youngsters and we were treated to some great flight views when a German cyclist spectacularly came off his bike in the mud in front of us!
Scanning around gave us a spiral of Ravens and two Kestrels mobbing a juvenile female Peregrine while Red Kites and Marsh Harriers hunted lower down.
There were little birds too with the same three Warblers seen over breakfast along with Stonechats and quite a few Greenfinches and a couple of Serins.
Lesser Emperors and a Migrant Hawkers represented the bigger Dragons while there were also Red-veined and Scarlet Darters over one of the still wet lagoons.

It was a slow walk back to the van where the temperature in the shade was reading 38c! I opted to return to Aumallia so that he could freshen up and we could all cool down and have lunch in the shade before heading out again at 2.30.

The Thekla's Larks were on the waste ground by the car park and the adult Balearic Woodchat reappeared but I could not find the Cirl Buntings that were calling. Some Heliotrope was attracting Brown Argus butterflies and at least three moth species with more Crimson Speckleds, Vestals and Aporodes florialis which looked a bit like Pyrausta despicata. Cleopatras were the commonest butterfly but we also saw Swallowtail, Clouded Yellow, Geranium Bronze, Small White sp and Red Admiral along with Hummingbird Hawkmoth once again.


Thekla's Lark


Crimson Speckled

The crew had literally just got in the van when I heard Bee-eaters and it was a quick exit as a group of six bounced low over the hotel! I know we may see more but passing up the first ones would have been foolish and they turned out to be the only ones of the trip!

We made our way down to the coast to Portocolom and the turquoise bay at S'Algar we hoped to locate Balearic Warbler in the low coastal scrub of Juniper and Mastic. Sardinian Warblers were everywhere and even showed very well but although they and Stonechats were very active there was not a sound and glimpse of any other warblers which was disappointing but there were some excellent birds to be seen with a stunning adult Audouin's Gull on the rocky mini cliffs and at least two male Blue Rock Thrushes testing out the limits of their winter territories across the rugged limestone landscape. There was another Northern Wheatear and two very smart looking Rock Doves whizzed along the cliffs but I am unsure of their true status here while a group of five Pallid Swifts moved over us.


Blue Rock Thrush

There were more of the same day flying moths with the addition of Small Marbled and Wall Brown joined the Butterflies. Big fat Red-winged Grasshoppers flew off in front of us too as we walked back to the van where as I went to pull away, Anne picked up the first Booted Eagle of the trip with a fine pale adult circling alongside us before diving into the scrub!

Time was getting on but I thought we could squeeze in the Castell de Santueri and although it was a bit of a wiggly climb it was certainly worth the effort as the views down to the coast and Portocolom and even to the exact headland we had just walked round were spectacular.

A pair of Booted Eagles were noisily on show the whole time and one perched up and gave excellent scope views especially as it was nearly 6pm and the haze had dissipated. An adult female Peregrine spooked all the hirundines that were made up of hawking House and Crag Martins the latter of which always top out as my favourite bird of any day.

Supersonic Alpine Swifts hove into view and joined them and just before we left a large party was wheeling around chittering wildly. Firecrest, Blackcap, Great Tit and both Sardinian and Cetti's Warblers were heard below us but we never saw a bird!

With dinner somewhat beckoning we wiggled back through some tiny side streets in Felanitx and only stopped near the hotel when a 'Spotted' Flycatcher caught my eye as being odd and I reversed up for a look. We had seen quite a few roadside normal ones during the day and those in the hotel garden earlier but this one was strikingly white underneath with neat crown streaks on and almost white head, obvious pale bill base and strangely warm primary margins and rump. I am not getting into a taxonomy debate about the validity of Mediterranean/Balearic Flycatcher but I am pretty confident that this was one. An education nonetheless.


Med Flycatcher

A quick freshen up and dinner (with Willow Warbler on the way back to the room!) and a Scops Owl that interrupted dessert from the palms although all we could see was a bit of occasional eyeshine as it never came out to say hello! The Moorish Geckos watched us from the walls as we headed back to our rooms after a productive first full day on the island.

**18th September:**

The day began once again with a us outside at 7am waiting for the worlds to wake up. It was an almost mirror repeat of yesterday to begin with - Stone-Curlews, Partridges, Larks but as we walked back towards the road we could hear the gentle 'tsipp' of Cirl Buntings and one even gave a little bit of weak song but all we got were glimpses. The narrow pine belt held several Firecrests which all sounded very odd indeed with none of that hard 'peep' quality that we get with British birds. Excellent close views were had of this sometimes tricky to see little gem. Chaffinches and Great Tits were found and a Dunnock called a couple of times before breakfast called us back.



We were soon on the road and drove north to Can Picafort and the famous s'Albufera Park and started the walk down. I had only been here once before – on a short break with the Jacksons way back in February 2018 and it was as I remembered although it was already very warm indeed.
The Grand Canal was full of very energetic Mullet which were throwing themselves out of the water with aplomb and Kingfishers could be heard but seeing them proved frustratingly difficult and the sounds always seemed to be going the other way!
A Dutch couple told us that they had seen a Little Bittern and Bonnie quickly picked it up as it crept along the canal bank under the overhanging trees. It was a young bird and heavily streaked and was already an adept fisherman and it would take each catch away from the water's edge to swallow before returning to hunt again.



Little Egrets were dotted in the trees and a full adult Night Heron was still in the sunshine with its eyes closed but would soon shuffle back into the shade. Careful scanning revealed three others deeper into cover.
An adult Audouin's Gull flew slowly passed on its way back toward the sea and Glossy Ibis and Great Cormorant were added to the tally along with Coots. Every single Coot was checked all day but we never did find the elusive Red-knobbed one. A Ranger told us

that they had been confined to one spot but they had not seen on for several weeks. Three more Little Bitterns were seen and heard including a close fly by from a male with gleaming cream sing panels.


Little Bittern

A casual scan of the mountains surprisingly added both Black and Griffon Vultures but at the very best they could be described as distant views but it was a start! An opening into the vast reedbeds on the other side f the track was checked and I immediately picked up a Moustached Warbler clambering on a reedy island but it was very tricky and only Geoff saw it when it briefly reappeared creeping low down. Unfortunately we did not hear one sing but I think it was just too hot. Even the Cetti's and Sardinian Warblers were somewhat subdued. A Booted Eagle circled and a Slender-billed Gull headed south on long wings cutting a distinctive shape.

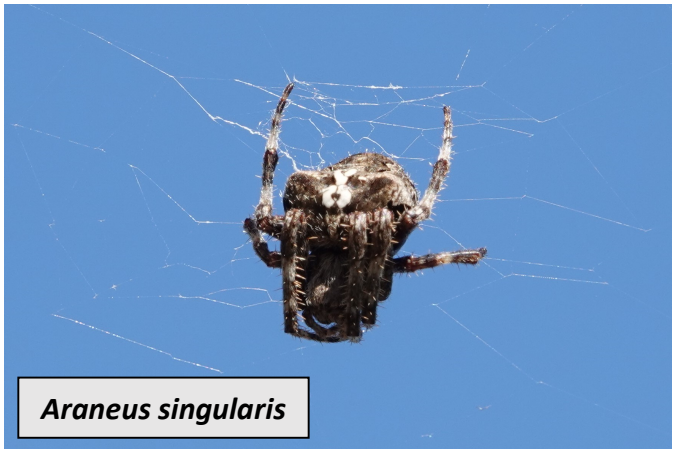
Back on the canal we had reached the Cattle and Little Egret colony although I think only the former still had young which were noisily harassing parents for foods. Most had fledged and were loafing around the nesting trees looking as grumpy as the young of this species seem to always do. A glance down the channel added a brief Gull-billed Tern that crossed over and was lost behind the trees.

Birds could be seen on a pool and we veered to the hide. We called it a hide but it was actually a communal sweat box and we did our very best to stay a while before we were driven back outside. There were however, birds with a good flock of Shoveler, quite a few Egrets, a single Flamingo, nine Glossy Ibis and one very much appreciated Purple Swamphen which was rooting around in the cut margins with those huge feet and scissor-like bill. Getting one of these mega-Moorhens in the open was a real treat and the only other one seen on the walk was disappearing back into cover. A Northern Wheatear and several Zitting Cisticolas were found but the need for some air pushed us back outside.


Glossy Ibis

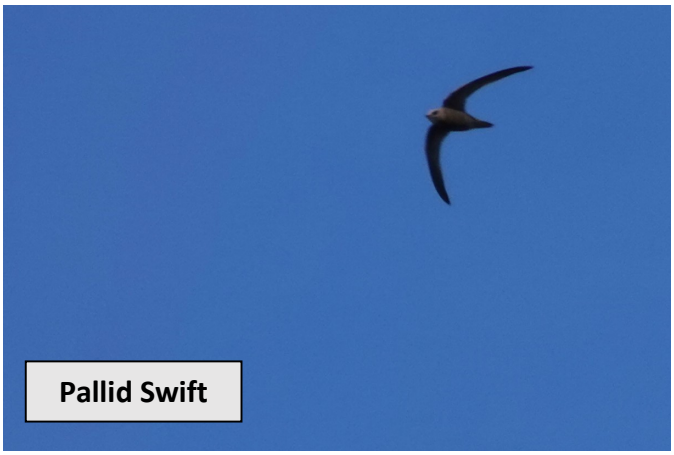
A water top up and then across the Grand Canal where we added Gadwall and Pochard and more Coots were checked. Down at the next two hides we overlooked the Salinas where a good selection of waders were found. There were many Plovers, with Kentish, Little Ringed and Ringed with the former being the commonest. It was good to be able to compare all three species. Common and Green Sandpipers were noted along with Stilts, Avocets, Greenshank, Dunlin and four scaly peachy juvenile Curlew Sandpipers while a juvenile White-winged Black Tern was sat amongst some Black-headed Gulls on a dead tree in the mud.
Four shimmering Great Egrets and a Grey Heron were found and apparently the count of Greats was notable for the time of year and went on the board at the centre! All about perspective. There was a single juvenile Shelduck and a red eyed Black-necked Grebe too but no other waterbirds to check through. I was just about to point out the Osprey nest platform but had completely missed the actual Osprey sat on a pole in the other direction. It even snuck off and caught a fish without us noticing and one of those Mullet suddenly had a better view of the world than a mere leap from the water!

The shaded Mastic tunnel gave us orange and brown Mallorcan Speckled Woods and plump *Araneus singularis* Orb Weavers were strung high over the path. There were plenty of Dragons too with Lesser and Vagrant Emperors, Migrant Hawkers, Red-veined darters and an Iberian (I assume) Blue-tailed Damselfly. Lunch time had been and gone but everyone was ok and staying hydrated as we began the slow walk back and as we crossed back over the canal two Pied Flycatchers were calling from the Wild Olives and even allowed scope views.


***Araneus singularis***

It was gone 2pm by the time we reached the van but did not fancy being alongside the main road and so we drove to another part of the reserve that overlooked some settling beds and sat in the silence while Sand Martins and Swallows zipped between us and glorious coffee coloured Pallid Swifts came down to drink. Glossy Ibises dotted the edges along with Green, Common and our first Wood Sandpipers and three Little Grebes were also new. Two Two-tailed Pashas played chase around the Strawberry Trees on the drive in but I could not stop!

However it was the distinctive shape of an Eleonora's Falcon that drew the most appreciative noises as it languidly cruised across the pools making flying look like no effort whatsoever. Several flocks of mostly juvenile Spotless Starlings were on the wing and trying not to get noticed by the falcon. There were Red Kites, Marsh Harriers, Kestrels and another Booted Eagle while we munched our smoked salmon and avocado sandwiches.


**Pallid Swift**

Back near the van there were to floppy Hoopoes and as we drove out at least four moved on ahead if us down the track affording incredible views from inside the van. I think most people nodded on the hour journey back to the hotel where after a ten minute refresh most of us headed out for a walk around the lanes.

The Cirl Buntings were playing hard to get once again but the adult Balearic Shrike showed very well and I am not sure if it is a feature but the bill on the ones we have seen seems heavier and deeper than those that I am used to encountering. There were still Firecrests in the pines and the vineyard gave us Turtle Doves and Red-legged Partridges as well as a host of Sparrows.

It was the golden hour and everything glowed with amber light. A couple of Willow Warblers were found and Sardinians popped up on fences while the four flycatchers we found all looked very good for Mediterranean. Graham picked up a young Cuckoo foraging on the ground where it seemed quite happy and sky scanning revealed a large black bird of prey that resolved itself, albeit in a distant way to be a juvenile Egyptian Vulture. I am not sure of the status on the island but I do not remember one on my previous visit.

We walked back with Hummingbird Hawk-moths looking for night time roost spots on the walls and the Heliotrope was still alive with insects with many Crimson Speckled and other smaller moths, Small Heath, Common Blue and Southern Brown Argus and a flurry of rather tatty but still feisty Painted Ladies.

The first Stone-Curlews were calling but as yet I have not found one but there is still time.

**19th September:**

There was no time for an early walk pre-breakfast and by 7.30 we were on the road and heading west back towards Palma and St Elm beyond. Apart from a small diversion to begin with the journey was uneventful unlike some of the rush hour traffic around the city but eventually we were wiggling through pine clad hills and down to the small picturesque town overlooking the island of Dragonera. We had arrived in good time and found a shady parking spot complete with metallic sounding Crossbills in the pines above which typically were only seen as they flew off.



It was a short walk to the harbour and we quickly picked up Audouin's and Yellow-legged Gulls and out to sea single Scopoli's Shearwaters cruised slowly by. The Eleonora's Falcons on the southern cliffs of the island could already be seen swooping around. The sea here was as clear as glass and there were many fish three of which I think I have identified.

The boat soon came back and we were on our way for the short journey across but the two and a half hours we had had did not feel long enough before we even started on the walk towards those falcons and their vertical homes!



**Dragonera Lilford's Wall Lizards**

We were greeted by a host of Lilford's Wall Lizards which have become somewhat habituated to humans and despite the clear signs in many languages are clearly fed. The track south was good and pretty smooth with a gentle climb most of the way and Geoff and Graham yomped on ahead to try and get to the very end and back while most of us pottered knowing that it was not going to happen! It was once again incredibly hot and it was very much eyes to the skies rather than the bushes and we quickly found Osprey, a dark Booted Eagle (looking like a mini Golden Eagle), Ravens, Peregrine, Common Kestrel and of course several Eleonora's.



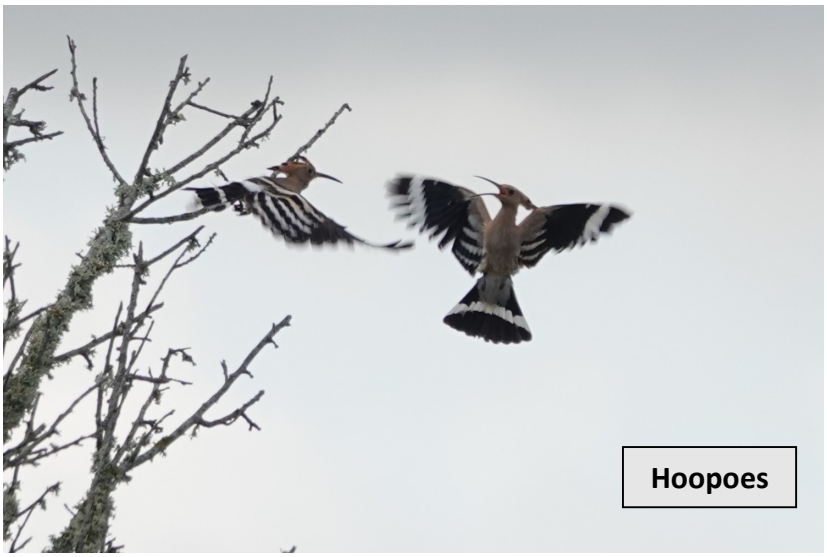
**Balearic Warbler**

As expected there were very few small birds and all ears were trained on finding Balearic Warbler and a brief scratchy rattle was heard up slope and after a few minutes a presumed family party of five made their way down to where we were and afforded some excellent views as the fossicked on almost glowing tangerine coloured legs (thanks Graham). I think I only saw a male last time I visited so it was good to get such good prolonged views. Much paler that I remember underneath but still with that beady red eye so typical of these Sylvias.

We opted to not actually walk any further but hung around with these endemic Warblers and their Sardinian cousins until Geoff got back to us and we treated to a full on display flight! The walk back begun but I stayed to wait for Graham just in case he had not been successful but when he caught me up he thankfully had and we continued back to the harbour below where the still attentive Lizards were waiting

for us. A Pale Clouded Yellow was almost the only insect seen.
Back in St Elm we took up the offer of a free drink at a local taverna courtesy of the boat company and followed it up with a much enjoyed local ice-cream before wiggling out of the now bustling town to find a roadside stop for lunch where two pale Booted Eagles circled with some Common Swifts. It was still way too hot so we went and joined the terrible Palma traffic to make our way 'home' where the Thekla's Larks were spiralling and the Stonechats were clinking away.

**20th September:**
The morning walk around Aumallia produced the now expected species but Stone-curlews were annoyingly close and all around us but still we could not find one of the eerily calling birds while Cirl Buntings continued to 'tsip' quietly from the wrong sides of trees! A male was singing again but remained hidden. A Nightingale croaked in the dense pine cover belt where the Firecrests were active. Breakfast and then on the road once again and north to the mountains.


Hoopoes

The slow drive out through the lanes was excellent with Thekla's Larks in the fields and Med-type Flycatchers on the wires while we ignored the calling Cirl Buntings that were out to taunt us. I reversed a few yards for a Kestrel in a bare Almond that was being mobbed by a Hoopoe. The Kestrel departed when five more Hoopoe arrived in the tree and then suddenly they were coming in from all directions and I stopped at 18 before the chances of duplication got too high. I have never seen anything like that before and frustratingly we were on the narrowest part of the lane where you could not even open the doors let along pull over and get out! I suspect that there were even more gathered there and I wonder if they had communally roosted close by?

Onwards and north although the drive was typically quiet bird wise with just the odd Red Kite and Cattle Egret before we started to climb into the Tramuntana Mountains. We wiggled up past cyclists and found our pull in at the entrance to the Mortitx Winery and set off for a walk through the vineyards and rugged rocky, Evergreen Oak and Olive landscape.



The walled vines held parties of Gold, Green and Chaffinch and Cirl Buntings were calling all around and at last we had scope views of several birds including a couple of males during the course of the walk. 'Normal' Spotted Flycatchers, two Redstarts and a Pied Flycatcher were on the fences too and there were Blackcaps and very showy Firecrests in the Oaks.

Some of the Olives were positively ancient with vast almost empty hollow trunks from which fresh growth still sprung. I thought that some of the impressive ones on Lesvos had great age (about 800 years) but I had never seen anything that looked like these veterans.

We found shady spots and scanning the rugged skyline and soon picked up both Black and Griffon Vultures as they cruised effortlessly across the landscape. Both species drifted over our heads and the Blacks gave particularly close views. There was the odd Red Kite and Kestrel but no Bonelli's Eagles and we could see Crag Martins higher up too.


Black Vultures

We wandered back and had some Crossbills fly over and even males singing in the pines but we could not find them before they flew while Wren and Blue Tit were new for the trip and the Firecrests gave even closer views. A Wryneck called from some very tall shrubs and flew over and away which was unfortunate.

The temperature was back in the mid-thirties again and the van was like an oven so we opted to drive and find somewhere to have lunch which after some serious wiggling we did with a huge view back down the steep valley to the plains below. More annoying Crossbills kept us company and Ravens and Griffons were passing over. A dark Booted Eagle was surveying the view too from a dead tree opposite and a male Blue Rock Thrush sallied around a pinnacle.

From here we retraced slightly and passed through the Aqueduc d'Escorca (where an ice-cream was precured) and ending up at the view down the Panta de Gorg Blau. The water level was very low but there were still two Cormorants! We watched several death defying Feral Goats way up on the crags while another mumped scraps in the car park and we did well for raptors with both Vultures, Booted Eagle, Red Kite, Eleonora's Falcons and Kestrels. There were so may Crag Martins along the highest ridge line.

From here we came back to the lunch spot adding calling Robin on the way and began the descent with a final stop to stretch our legs in a wooded car park where Sardinians, Tits and Firecrest were seen and another Wryneck heard.

Once back on the plain we even managed to add a singing Black Redstart as we came through a town centre! It had been a long and winding day with some great encounters but the flock of Hoopoes half a mile from the hotel still proved to be the most popular moment of the day.



**21st September:**

Our early morning walk saw the group now comfortable with the local bird song that washed over us in successional waves as the day arrived. Firstly the Stone-curlews sounded out the night and then the grouchy Red-legged Partridges and the early Thekla's Larks, shouty Cetti's Warbler and invisible Stonechats and Cirl Buntings joined in before you became aware of the soft background thrum of Wood Pigeons and the slightly melancholy Blackbird. Sardinian Warblers started to scold and Collared Doves joined the chorus while Tree Pipits, Finches and Corn Bunting left their roost. The tardy House Sparrows were always late getting up and would go from zero to a querulous mass as they chatted about where to go for the day while still in their roost palms and probably argued over who was going to use the bathroom first. By now it was approaching 8am (and our breakfast) and several Hoopoes added their voices to the general

ornithological hubbub. This perfect start to any day was completed by a watchful Iberian Hare in a field. We headed north to s'Albufereta Marsh and were soon parked up and walking down onto the saltmarsh trail where a zillion hungry mosquitos seemed intent on creating some sort of artistic pointillism installation on my legs.


Kentish Plover

A scan from the first platform gave us a juvenile Purple Heron sneaking its serpentine neck out of the grasses while checking of the 12 Coots revealed, well, 12 Coots. A flock of Ruff took off and left after being spooked by a Marsh Harrier and a cloud of Cattle Egrets were milling around. There were a couple of Mallard but the only other wildfowl was a rather incongruous Black Swan… We walked down through the pines where Serins jingle jangled and Cetti's Warblers played chase before cramming ourselves into the little wooden sweat box. Once the door was propped open it was bearable and we were quite happy watching a selection of waders with Greenshank, Greem Wood and Common Sandpipers and a couple of Kentish Plovers that included a colour ringed one that I shall chase up. A couple of the Flamingos had Blue Darvics but the water was too deep to read them.

Kestrels, Marsh Harriers and Booted Eagle soared overhead and on the walk back we found a fishing Osprey that had what looked like a white tracking box on its back and two Eleonora's Falcons. We have done very well for this species away from its breeding cliffs. The Serins also now put on a show with at least 12 on the almond orchard with some Linnets and a couple of Spotted Flycatchers and Stonechats. Lunch was taken nearby but every other pool on the marshes seemed to be bone dry so we opted to drive back south to s'Albufera and walk to the visitors centre and back in the hope of finding some more marshy birds. A Long-tailed Blue greeted us by the van as we set out but it was incredibly hot and I doubted the wisdom of my choice.

The Grand Canal was very quiet this time with no Little Bitterns but we did find 12 Night Herons lurking including a spotty juvenile but even most of the Cattle Egrets had at last completely fledged and the trees were almost empty. Kingfishers once again taunted us.
The hideous sauna hide was our destination (no one fancied walking to the other side again) and as I opened the door I could see a Swamphen just outside! It was a young bird and put on quite a show just below us but unlike the first visit it was not the only one and we counted 18 across the pool with one full blue-purple adult appearing from the top pf a sedge clump out front too. There were the best views I have ever had of the species.


Western Swamphen

Ibis and Stilts kept dropping in and the Shoveler flock was no longer just of that species, with 20 Teal and three very stripy Garganey amongst them too. Some Flamingos also gracefully arrived and a couple had full immersive baths where they simply laid down in the water and soaked it up with occasional flaps to make sure they reached every nook and cranny!
Greenshanks appeared and seven Snipe were the first of the trip along with the two small ducks and there were smiles all round that we had managed to rescue a challenging day. With Father B and Patsy on the van we soon began the walk back before the drive to Aumallia which gave us our first Honey Buzzard too to round up the day. A different route back in still did not give us the much desired Stone-Curlews!

**22nd September:**
Last night there was a deluge and a vivid thunderstorm but by morning it had passed us by. A lazy start was planned so most of us managed something of a short lay in before a post-breakfast walk around the lanes. A Wryneck sang and a Tawny Pipit called which thankfully found its way onto the list as Graham saw it sat up on the mound round the back.

By mid-morning we were ready to hit the road and head to Colonia de Sant Jordi on the south coast to catch our slightly later boat to the island of Cabrera that lies ten miles offshore and is renowned as a migrant hot spot. The drive added a Hobby but nothing else out of the ordinary but while we were waiting on the quay for the boat we picked up three Honey Buzzard, Marsh Harrier, two Booted Eagles and at least ten Red Kites which was the most concentrated group of raptors all week. A fine adult Audouin's Gull was sat on the breakwater with an adult Med Shag not too far away.


Audouin's Gull

Soon we were off and bouncing over the ways and largely into the sun but about half way across we picked up the first Scopoli's Shearwater scything into view alongside the boat while several distant Balearic Shearwaters were also seen but it was difficult to communicate sightings between the crew and at this stage most of the group had seen nothing! Part of the tour was a circuit of the island and it took us past several spots where Eleonora's Falcons were nesting in the crushed, crumpled and folded butter coloured cliffs although raising a pair of bins was at best risky! Occasionally one would appear from out at sea on its return to the nest and I suspect they were hirundine hunting as we saw several small parties skimming low over the waves.



An Osprey cruised over and we went past two occupied nests too. It got pretty choppy on the west side but calmed as we entered the horseshoe shaped bay where a myriad of posh catamarans and other craft were moored in the gleaming blue waters. We were soon on land and had the best past of four hours to explore and following advice from Andrew Kinghorn we hugged the bay to the right to get to a covered picnic area. There were no birds at all to start with but plenty of the local island subspecies of Lilford's Wall Lizard which are even darker – almost black above and the most vibrant cobalt blue to violet underparts.

As we neared the elusive picnic area a Balearic Warbler briefly called and popped up and then several flava Wagtails were on the path having obviously just found a fresh water source. They were soaked but looked very happy for it! Just around the corner, a rough area between the Mastic scrub and a line of pines on the beach was hopping with birds and we quickly retreated to the shade of the picnic canopy to eat lunch in comfort while a smorgasbord of migrants littered the clearing which had a good patch of flowering Heliotrope (complete with Crimson Speckleds) and some dead thistles. Over the next 90 minutes we

counted at least ten Redstarts, four Pied Flycatchers, Spotted Flycatchers, five Northern Wheatear, three Whinchat, two Common Whitethroat, Sardinian Warblers, Blackcap, two Garden Warbler, 20 Willow Warbler, two Chiffchaff, three Tree Pipit, two Hoopoe and Song Thrush while flava Wagtails that resembled Yellow, Iberian and even Ashy-headed forms scurried around the patch. Spme of the first-winters were cold grey with lemon vents just like birds I see in Lesvos in the autumn. Graham also had a very spotty Starling.


Migrants

It was a truly wondrous experience for all of us. A field of dreams where a small fall of tired and hungry migrants had become concentrated by the overnight rain. Most of these species were constantly on view and a scan would picked up many of them on any one sweep. I would love to find a field like this at home. A lovely Dutch couple joined us and we realised that they were the ones who told us about the s'Albufera Little Bittern. I do like Dutch birders – they are always so friendly and happy to share.


Cabrera Lilford's Wall Lizard

The urge to wander onwards had waned so we slowly ambled back trying not to trip over the Lizards! The taverna beckoned and beers and ice-creams in the shade consumed the last hour which I spent almost dozing, with the sun on my back and my feet dangling in the clear warm water off the quay where Marbled Rock Crabs clambered.

By just after five we were on our way back and it was quite a lively journey but a large gathering if Scopoli's Shearwaters could be seen way off in the distance. Thankfully it did not take long for some to come closer and we were all treated to point blank views as they veered into the boat before banking and sweeping away to appreciative sounds form most people on the boat. A couple of Balearics barrelled through but did not stop and Eleonora's and Peregrine were both seen out over the waves.


Scopoli's Shearwater

There were smiles all round as we disembarked and everyone's insides had remained where they should have been which was good too! There was largely contented silence as we headed back for a late dinner at Aumallia and the lanes once again failed to give us Stone-curlews but there were many Red-legged Partridges and timid Rabbits were starting to emerge around the edges. Everyone agreed that it had been a fabulous day.

**23rd September:**

Our final day was a relaxed affair and we opted not to race around trying to squeezing in birding here and then and instead chose to stay around the hotel Aumallia. Stone-Curlews and the Scops Owl welcomed in the day but we did not go for a proper walk till after breakfast. I took us through the lanes beyond our previous furthest point and we soaked up the landscape and the wildlife in it. There had obviously been a small fall of passerines and most field fences held Spotted and Med-type Flycatchers – the latter gleaming white and looking striking pale all over from a distance, Northern Wheatears, Whinchats, Stonechats and a few Willow Warblers. Once at a pine belt we picked up scolding Blackcap, Sardinian Warblers, Firecrests and three calling Chiffchaffs while a flock of initially hidden Serins in the canopy fizzed and jingled creating a curious background sound that you had to listen for to actually hear if that makes sense.



Cirl Bunting



Striped Grayling

Cirl Buntings were singing well and once male put on a good show in the top of a palm tree and Red Kites were constantly patrolling. Five Black Vultures dropped out of the same thermal but it was difficult to tell if they were coming or going and they soon dropped out of sight, presumably homing in on a carcass somewhere.

There were a few butterflies on the wing although there were very few blooms for them to nectar on and we saw Clouded Yellow, Painted Lady, Wall Brown, Small Copper, Cleopatra and a single Striped Grayling – a new species for me too.

All too soon it was time for our final lunch and then some chill time before the airport but even this was interrupted by two Crossbills dropping into the gardens were one sat up long enough for a look.

Common Crossbill



With varied and convoluted leaving times we said goodbye to Father B and Patsy and at 3pm the rest of us loaded up and headed for the Palma airport where delays and cancellations awaited.

| Birds | | |
|---|---|---|
| Shelduck | Stone-Curlew | Tawny Pipit |
| Mallard | Little Riged Plover | Western Yellow Wagtail |
| Gadwall | Ringed Plover | Wren |
| Shoveler | Kentish Plover | Dunnock |
| Teal | Ruff | Song Thrush |
| Garganey | Dunlin | Blackbird |
| Pochard | Curlew Sandpiper | Blue Rock Thrush |
| Red-legged Partridge | Temminck's Stint* | Robin |
| Black-necked Grebe | Wood Sandpiper | Nightingale* |
| Little Grebe | Green Sandpiper | Redstart |
| Scopoli's Shearwater | Redshank | Black Redstart |
| Balearic Shearwater | Greenshank | Whinchat |
| Cormorant | Spotted Redshank | Stonechat |
| Shag | Common Sandpiper | Northern Wheatear |
| Little Bittern | Black-tailed Godwit | Garden Warbler |
| Night Heron | Curlew Sandpiper | Blackcap |
| Cattle Egret | Snipe | Whitethroat |
| Little Egret | Black-headed Gull | Balearic Warbler |
| Great Egret | Slender-billed Gull | Sardinan Warbler |
| Grey Heron | Audouin's Gull | Moustached Warbler |
| Purple Heron | Yellow-legged Gull | Willow Warbler |
| Glossy Ibis | Gull-billed Tern | Chiffchaff |
| Greate Flamingo | White-winged Black Tern | Zitting Cistocola |
| Griffon Vulture | Rock Dove | Firecrest |
| Egyptian Vulture | Wood Pigeon | Spotted Flycatcher |
| Black Vulture | Collared Dove | Mediterranean Flycatcher |
| Booted Eagle | Turtle Dove | Pied Flycatcher |
| Red Kite | Cuckoo | Great Tit |
| Marsh Harrier | Scops Owl | Blue Tit |
| Honey-Buzzard | Common Swift | Balearic Woodchat Shrike |
| Sparrowhawk | Pallid Swift | Raven |
| Kestrel | Alpine Swift | Starling |
| Hobby | Kingfisher | Spotless Starling |
| Peregrine | Hoopoe | House Sparrow |
| Eleonora's Falcon | Bee-eater | Chaffinch |
| Osprey | Wryneck | Linnet |
| Water Rail | Thekla's Lark | Goldfinch |
| Coot | Sand Martin | Greenfinch |
| Moorhen | House Martin | Serin |
| Western Swamphen | Swallow | Crossbill |
| Avocet | Crag Martin | Corn Bunting |
| Black-winged Stilt | Tree Pipit | Cirl Bunting |
| | | Total: 126 |

| Butterflies | | Dragonflies |
|---|---|---|
| Striped Grayling | | Iberain Blue Tailed Damselfly |
| Wall Brown | | Migrant Hawker |
| Speckled Wood | | Vagrant Emperor |
| Red Admiral | | Lesser Emperor |
| Painted Lady | | Red-veined Darter |
| Clouded Yellow | | Scarlet Darter |
| Pale Clouded Yellow | | |
| Cleopatra | | Mammals |
| Small White sp | | Rabbit |
| Lang's Short-tailed Blue | | Iberian Brown Hare |
| Long Tailed Blue | | Brown Rat |
| Common Blue | | Feral Goat |
| Geranium Bronze | | |
| Southern Brown Argus | | Reptiles |
| Small Heath | | Dragonera Lilford's Wall Lizard |
| Swallowtail | | Carbrera Lilford's Wall Lizard |
| Two-tailed Pasha | | Moorish Gecko |
| | | |
| Moths | | Spiders |
| Crimson Speckled | | Araneus angulatus |
| Small Marbled | | |
| Shuttle Shaped Dart | | Grasshoppers |
| Hummingbird Hawk-moth | | Lamenting Grasshopper |
| Old World Web Worm | | Red Winged Grasshopper |
| Rush Veneer | | Egyptian Grasshopper |
| Vestal | | |
| Aporodes florialis | | Mantids |
| | | European Praying Mantis |
| Moths | | |
| Atlantic Blue Crab | | Fish |
| Marbled Rock Crab | | Thick-lipped Mullet |
| | | Med Damsel Fish |
| Flora | | Ornate Wrasse |
| Lesser Narcissus | | White Sea Bream |
| Heliotrope | | Mastic |
| Chicory | | |
| Lesser Aspargus | | Other Inverts |
| Wild Asparagus | | Dor Beetle sp |
| Cardoon | | Round Millipede sp |
| Autumn Squill | | *Carpocoris fuscispinus Shieldbug* |
| Red Squill | | Striped Shieldbug |
| Woody Fleabane | | |
| Strawberry Tree | | |
| Golden Samphire | | |
| Rock Samphire | | |
| Mediterranean Palm | | |
| Woody Spurge | | |
| Carob | | |
| *Artemesia caerulescens* | | |