



TOUR REPORT



Mallorca and Cabrera

26th April – 3rd May 2022

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Cover image – Balearic Warbler on Dragonera Island

TUESDAY 26TH APRIL – ARRIVAL, PORTOCOLOM

Sunny, light winds, 18C

Day one of our Mallorca and Cabrera tour began with our group arriving at Palma Airport at around 1330, getting in in good time, passing smoothly through to arrivals, where they met Jason. We were soon loading suitcases into the van, and were on our way straight down to Felanitx and on to our base for the week; the fabulous countryside hotel Aumallia. With a warm welcome from the staff and a cold glass of fresh lemon juice, (plus an unexpected fly-over **Golden Oriole!**), we dropped off our bags and took a short walk out around the country lanes, almond groves and vineyards which would be our local patch for the week. We were straight into some of what makes birding in Mallorca so pleasurable at this time of year; singing **Nightingales** and **Hoopoes** all around, flocks of purring **Turtle Doves** (7 seen on this walk), a couple of **Woodchat Shrikes** of the Balearic endemic subspecies *badius* many **Mediterranean Flycatchers**, again being of a Balearic island endemic subspecies, *balearica*. Migrants in the form of a single **Whinchat** and a **Common Whitethroat** were nice to see so far from the coast, while high-flying **Bee-eaters** were heard but not seen as they passed high overhead. A pair of **Booted Eagles** were also noted in the area before we then made our way out to spend the couple of hours before dinner by the coast at Portocolom.



Turtle Dove and Mediterranean Flycatcher from outside the Aumallia Hotel

Our first port of call was the coastal cliffs, looking south east out to sea. We timed our arrival to coincide with the arrival of the Penyal Roig; the only large fishing vessel active in the harbour here. Arriving with its catch, the boat was trailing large numbers of **Yellow-legged Gulls**, and also a small

number of **Scopoli's Shearwaters**. Scanning the sea also produced a couple of **Balearic Shearwaters** here, but views were generally very distant. However as the afternoon wore on we began to see more birds, and often at closer range, as the shearwaters began to come inshore on their way to breeding colonies on the Cabrera archipelago, so we eventually managed to see both species fairly well. **Audouin's Gulls** gave nice fly-bys, as did a few **Mediterranean Shags** (subspecies *desmarestii*, endemic to the Mediterranean), while along the coastal cliffs were a handful of **Northern Wheatears** and a **Common Whitethroat**. A small number of **Pallid Swifts** were flying along the cliff edge along with **Common Swifts**, while **Blue Rock Thrush** and **Hoopoe** were all noted in the vicinity, and a **Wryneck** was heard nearby. We then moved around to an abandoned area of fig groves, overlooking a beautiful sandy beach, where we noted another **Common Whitethroat**, singing **Common Nightingales** and **Hoopoes** and a brief singing **Firecrest**, before we headed back to the van and returned to the hotel Aumallia. Log followed by a delicious meal saw us off to bed, tired after a long travel day.

Wednesday 27th April – Portocolom and Salobrar de Campos

Sunny, light winds, 18C

Our first full day in Mallorca started with a pre-breakfast walk around the lanes surrounding the hotel. A female **Pied Flycatcher** was a nice migrant to see this far inland, while the local fare was certainly the star of the walk, with good numbers of **Turtle Doves** 'purring' and flitting around us, **Balearic Woodchat Shrikes** showing well, fantastic views of **Cirl Buntings**, **Mediterranean Flycatchers** on all sides, and a distant pair of **Stone Curlews** at the bottom of the vineyard. Add to this a soundtrack of **Common Nightingales**, **Wrynecks** and **Hoopoes**, and we were in Mediterranean heaven! Back for a buffet breakfast of traditional foods, we then made to head out to the coast, back to Portocolom in search of migrants.

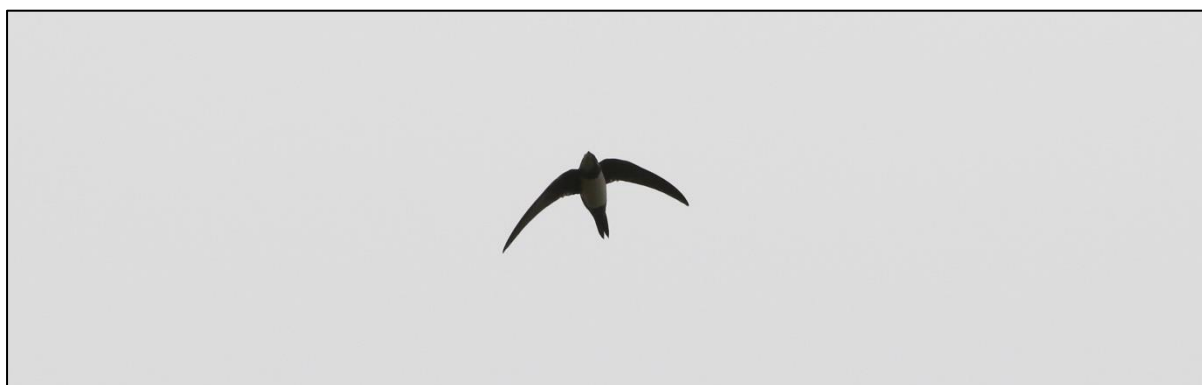


Cirl Bunting during a pre-breakfast walk

Reaching Portocolom, the scenic harbour with its traditional wooden 'llauts' and old 'barracas' or boatsheds which line the water's edge offered a beautiful backdrop for our birding. We parked alongside an area of cultivated fields, where a highlight was an adult **Peregrine Falcon** which was busy tucking into breakfast, Yellow-legged Gulls in close attendance. The fields hosted a few migrants; a female **Common Redstart**, several **Northern Wheatears** and a couple of **Whinchats**, while **Thekla's Larks** and **Hoopoe** were also seen around the fig trees. Further round the corner we enjoyed great views of a single **Woodchat Shrike** of the nominate race *senator*; certainly a migrant here, while the

rocky coastline hosted more **Northern Wheatears**, and **Mediterranean Shags** fishing in the rocky bay of s'Algar. Distantly we could see a number of **Scopoli's Shearwaters** passing offshore. A walk around areas of suitable habitat for Balearic Warbler here surprisingly yielded a blank, both on vocalizations and views; surprising on such a fine day, and put down to them probably being in peak incubation period and so keeping quiet. No matter, as there would be further opportunities later during the week. Finishing our round of the area, we paused for a coffee in a small bar below the old church before heading inland to the Castell de Santuari.

A fantastic change of scenery, we made our way through pine forest and mountains to reach the top, and positioned ourselves below the castle walls. Here we enjoyed a bit of a spectacle, with a good number of **ALPINE SWIFTS** bombing about just in front of us across the cliff and walls of the castle; this being one of only two breeding colonies of the species in Mallorca. Alongside these were a number of **Crag Martins** giving equally fantastic views, with a backdrop of Portocolom and the east coast of Mallorca below. A male **Blue Rock Thrush** was singing and showing well here, while additionally we watched the breeding pair of **Peregrine Falcons** perched up on the cliffs. An ideal spot for lunch, we tucked into our sandwiches here, enjoying the view, before heading back down and onwards to where we would spend the rest of the day; the Salobrar de Campos salt pans and surroundings.



Alpine Swift at the Castell de Santuari

Heading across towards the salt pans, we entered an area of farmland which backs onto the pans, and enjoyed a good hour of birding here. The previous week had seen a group of **LESSER KESTRELS** lingering here, and today, while the heat haze and light made viewing difficult, we managed to pick out 3 individuals, including a single male, amongst numerous Common Kestrels. **Greater Short-toed Larks** were singing throughout the area, and some were seen well on the ground in the recently ploughed fields, while **Corn Buntings**, **Stonechats** and numerous **Common Swifts** were noted throughout. Several **Marsh Harriers** were present over the marshes beyond, so we made our way round to the parking area for the main pans and walked out along the central track which would put us in the middle of these extensive salt pans.



Greater Short-toed Lark in the farmland of Sa Barrala

A **Tree Pipit** was present in a thistly field, while out overlooking the first salt pans we noted a fly-over **Glossy Ibis**; a good bird for this site. **Greater Flamingos** were noted in the distance, and we enjoyed good views of these majestic birds as we crossed the area. **Avocets**, **Black-winged Stilts** and **Kentish Plovers** were present as the most common breeding species, while **Mallard** and **Shelduck** were also breeding, and **Water Rails** heard amongst the saltmarsh vegetation also likely breeding. Breeding passerines included fantastic views of **Spanish Yellow Wagtails**, while **Stonechats** were everywhere and **Zitting Cisticolas** were never far away. But the passage species here were arguably what provided the most entertainment. A highlight was a group of 4 wonderful **Collared Pratincoles** which, after initially noting them hawking for insects over the main track, then went on to settle on one of the closest lagoons, giving fantastic views. Passage waders were here in good number, with water levels dropping to reveal fresh mud and feeding opportunities. At least 14 **Curlew Sandpipers** were in varying levels of summer plumage and looking stunning, while **Ruff**, **Common Ringed Plovers** and **Little Stints** were well represented, many of the latter in superb fiery orange breeding colours. A small number of **Common Greenshank**, **Dunlin**, **Common Sandpipers** and **Wood Sandpipers** were also noted. Towards the far end of the pools a surprise sighting came in the form of 2 **RED-THROATED PIPITS** which flew in calling and obliged us by landing on the dirt track behind us, allowing a quick scope view before they headed off calling again; a stunning summer plumaged male with a female in tow. A pretty rare bird in Mallorca with only a handful of records annually. Setting off back along the track, it was interesting to see how much the birds change over between lagoons at this site; more **Wood Sandpipers** and **Greenshanks** on our return walk, and best of all a group of 5 **GULL-BILLED TERNS** which had pitched up and joined the same lagoon as the **Collared Pratincoles**! Side by side, what was a classy species pairing, and one we enjoyed watching for a good while! The site had so much going on that we lost track of time somewhat, so had to leave this wonderful site behind, getting back to the Aumallia hotel in time for a quick change and sumptuous dinner.



Gull-billed Terns, Collared Pratincoles and 'Spanish' Yellow Wagtail from Salobrar de Campos

Thursday 28th April – Albufera Marshes

Warm and sunny, light winds, 23C

Today took us to the mighty Albufera Marshes near Acudia, an internationally important wetland, and home to a suite of very special birds which are otherwise difficult or impossible to see elsewhere on the island. We headed straight up after breakfast and were soon walking the famous Gran Canal; the wetlands main outflow into the bay of Alcudia. **Cisticolas** and **Cetti's Warbler** calls accompanied us on

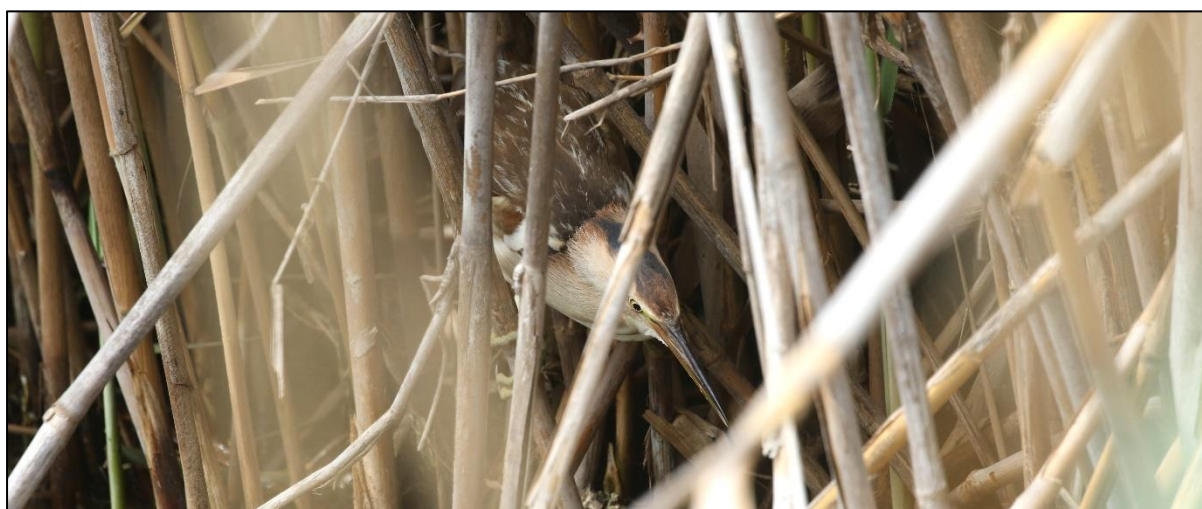
the walk, while several **Common Terns** were heading downstream. A roost of **Black-crowned Night Herons** in the vegetation on the far side of the channel was great to see, while further along the bustling heronry hosted large numbers of **Glossy Ibis**, **Cattle Egrets** and **Little Egrets**. Just around the corner along the Cami de Ses Puntes we enjoyed good views of one of our main targets for the day; the elusive **MOUSTACHED WARBLER**. Not so elusive today, this bird was up and singing high in the reeds, allowing reasonable scope views before it dropped out of view. From the viewing tower we noted a steady passage of **Glossy Ibises** and **Cattle Egrets** making their way to the breeding colony, along with our first **Purple Herons** of the day. A **Sedge Warbler** was singing in the reeds nearby, and showed itself on a couple of occasions; more than what can be said of the abundant **Nightingales** blasting out their songs from every corner!



Black-crowned Night Heron and Moustached Warbler at the Albufera Marsh

Reaching Sa Roca, we worked our way through the central hides overlooking the wet scrapes and rushy margins. Here we noted **Western Swamphen**, a couple of **Marbled Ducks**, a **Great Egret** and further fly-passes of **Purple Heron**, and another **Moustached Warbler** at the back of the area, while **Kentish** and **Little Ringed Plovers** were breeding here. A surprise was a **Golden Eagle** which was circling high out over the marsh! This is a known resident bird which escaped captivity some years back, and now makes its home here. Around the corner we heard a number of **Great Reed Warblers**, but with a bit of a breeze blowing, they were keeping low down in the reeds and out of view. **RED-KNOBBED COOTS** were seen well along the main canal, where we had our lunches overlooking the channels. Our lunch was rudely interrupted by the presence of a female **LITTLE BITTERN** which was hunting amongst the dense waterside reeds, but down to 4 meters of distance, and completely unfazed by our presence, or that of the small crowd which began to form as we watched! A male nearby offered a more brief viewing opportunity. We took a quick look down in the second Es Cibollar

hide, enjoying good views of Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and Kentish Plovers, and also a brief **Osprey** in flight, but not very much else; there was a distinct lack of passage shorebirds here today, in stark contrast with the salt pans yesterday. From here we made our way back towards the visitor centre and out of the reserve, pausing to watch a nest-building **Serin**, and also another nest building **Mediterranean Flycatcher**.



Marbled Ducks and Little Bittern

Departing the main Albufera marsh reserve, we headed into Alcudia for a coffee followed by a visit to Maristany; a small jewel of a wetland surrounded by the touristic developments of Alcudia. We walked in and enjoyed fantastic views of **Red-crested Pochards** at close range, including a family group, a single **Great Crested Grebe** along with many Little Grebes and Coots, a distant **Western Swamphen** and singing **Great Reed Warblers**. Finishing up here we made our way to the Depuradora de Muro; a water treatment works on the southern part of the Albufera. The drive in failed to produce any Bee-eaters; a small colony site is not far from here, but the birds seem late to arrive. Heading in towards the water treatment works, we stopped to watch a couple of **Yellow Wagtails** in a bare field, including a superb male **Grey-headed Wagtail** (subspecies *thumbergi*), with a backdrop of 2 **Stone Curlews** in the same field. At the viewing tower we enjoyed a decent session, noting our first **Sand Martins** of the week, singles of **Curlew Sandpiper** and **Little Stint**, several **Common Sandpipers**, breeding **Common Terns**, **Black-headed Gulls**, **Black-winged Stilts** and **Avocets**. **Spanish Yellow Wagtails** were present along the banks of the pools, while **Marsh Harriers** were up patrolling the distant reedbeds, and **Common Swifts** were abundant overhead. Wildfowl included **Common Pochard**, **Gadwall** and **Shoveler**. Finishing up, we had time for a quick visit to the first part of the Cami

des Polls, just up the road, where we would finish the day enjoying a fantastic showing of the extremely rare **Anacamptis robusta**, the **Robust Orchid**. Only being found in a couple of sites in Mallorca, this its only European population, so it was nice to see it in bloom. We also noted **Purple Heron** and heard **Great Reed Warblers** singing here, before it was time to hit the road and head back the Felanitx.



A fly-over Purple Heron

Friday 29th April – Tramuntana

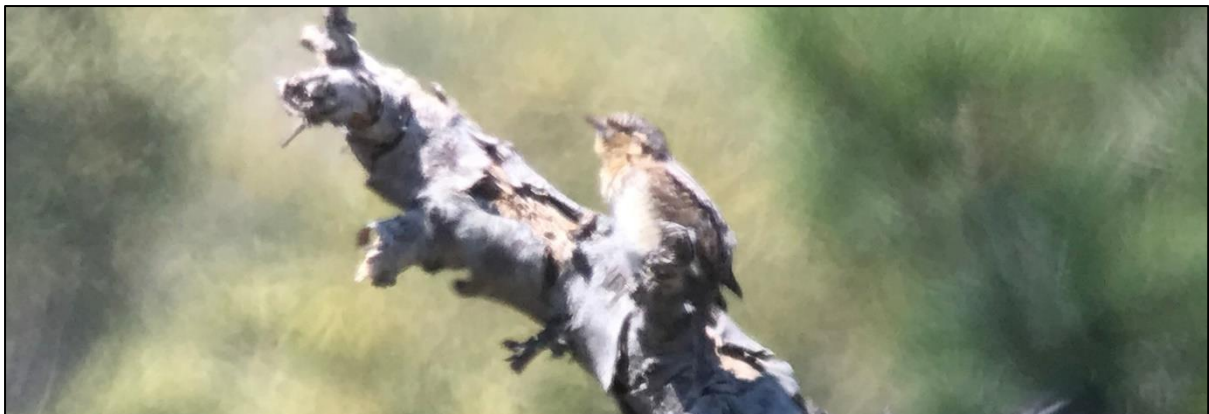
More fine weather, light winds, 24C

Today, following a hearty breakfast, we headed up north into the fantastic Tramuntana mountain range; a rugged area of Mallorca with some special birds on offer. The drive took us through the heart of the Mallorcan farming districts, noting **Thekla's Larks**, **Corn Buntings**, **Red Kites** and **Booted Eagles** as we drove, while a **Cinereous Vulture** seen as we arrived to Inca was a nice pre-mountain bonus! After Inca and into Selva, we found ourselves entering the World Heritage Site, and its characteristic dramatic scenery, winding mountain roads and extensive forests alongside ancient olive groves and terrasses. We stopped at Lluc; the town at the heart of the mountains, for a quick loo stop, noting **Booted Eagles** and **Griffon Vultures** over the surrounding high ridges, while **Mediterranean Flycatchers** were all over. From here we headed straight to Cuber reservoir, where we would walk the banks while the morning was still young. Our visit here was a somewhat noisy one, as we coincided with fire brigade helicopter exercises, training to pick up and drop water in the reservoir in preparation for forest fires in the summer. Consequently we spent much of the time here not hearing an thing! However we still did pretty well, with the starts of the area being 5 different individuals of **MOLTONI'S WARBLERS** noted feeding, singing and calling from Elm trees and low thorny bushes. The views were fantastic at times! The young pines here also hosted 3 elusive **Common Crossbills**, while an **Osprey** was also a highlight, carrying a fish recently caught in the reservoir and carrying it off. The reservoir hosted **Great Crested Grebe** and a few Mallards and bathing Yellow-legged Gulls, while **Little Ringed plover** was displaying on the banks. Three different vocal **Wrynecks** proved frustratingly elusive, while **Blue Tits** and **Wren** were also heard, fighting for the airwaves with the constant song of **Common Nightingale**. A small number of **Pallid Swifts** were also noted over the dam with many **Common Swifts**, while both **CINEREOUS** and **GRIFFON VULTURES** provided aerial entertainment high over the ridges, with a backdrop of Puig Major, the highest mountain in Mallorca at around 1440m.



Moltoni's Warbler in an elm tree on the bank of the Cuber Reservoir

Finishing up here, we moved on to Menut; a small botanical centre with picnic areas and gardens, to have our lunch. A short wander around the site offered fantastic views of territorial **Firecrests** singing from around the picnic area, a calling **Wryneck** and also **Booted Eagle** and **Griffon Vulture** overhead. Finishing the loop we had our lunch in the shade, before moving a short way down the road to the Mortitx valley and vineyards; our last site of the day. This valley has to be one of the most scenic and easily accessible that the Tramuntana has to offer, and certainly one of our favorites. The walk started through Holm Oak forests opening up into vineyards, and we noted small number of **Cirl Buntings**, **Serins** and **Firecrests**; the latter giving superb views in the oak trees. A **Whinchat** was foraging amongst the vines as we reached the edge of the vineyard, and crossed into the ancient olive groves and more rugged mountain terrain towards the end of the valley. A couple of gentle sloping bends stook us up to a good vantage point overlooking the coastal cliffs and peaks at the mouth of the valley, with a **Wryneck** stopping us in our tracks as it showed superbly and for a prolonged period in an old olive tree; our best view of the trip, and a highlight for today! A female Pheasant was more unexpected here. However the grand finale came shortly after as, from our vantage point, we enjoyed the most fantastic show from the resident **BONELLI'S EAGLES**, with 3 birds; a 2nd year immature and two adults, all up in the air for virtually all of our stay, as well as perching on prominent outcrops, squabbling and flying right overhead on several occasions. Just stunning. A small number of **Crag Martins** were seen distantly, and Common Kestrel also featured here. We left the viewpoint with the eagles still on show; not something we would usually do, as views are often brief here! But we needed to get going as the day was wearing on. A **Blue Rock Thrush** was heard singing and **Common Crossbills** calling as we departed, returning back along the track, through the vineyards and back to the van, noting 3 **Common Redstarts** and a **Pied Flycatcher** on the way. On from here, we made our way back out of the mountains, Puig de Santa Maria guiding us out of what is the scenic highlight of the tour. Via Pollença, we headed south to Felanitx and on to Aumallia.





Fantastic views of Wryneck and Bonelli's Warbler in the Mortitx valley

SATURDAY 30TH APRIL – CAP SES SALINES AND CABRERA

Sunny with light variable winds, 25C

Today saw us covering more of the south of Mallorca, including the highly anticipated visit to the Cabrera archipelago; Mallorca's version of Fair Isle situated 13km offshore, and one of the most important migration hotspots of Spain. While our original intention was to stay overnight on the island, this was made impossible due to various issues regarding pre-booking the hostel etc, but the day trip on the island is equally enticing, and we were excited to head over for the afternoon. Our morning was spent, via a fine **Balearic Woodchat Shrike** on tree tops as we left the hotel, at the Cap de Ses Salines; the islands most southerly point. Our first stop was at Passage 5, just inland with its almond and carob orchards often attracting migrant birds. We enjoyed song flights of **Greater Short-toed Larks** here, and brief views of one on a stone wall. A **Black Kite** with 2 Red Kites was our first this week, while 3 **Pied Flycatchers**, 2 **Balearic Woodchat Shrikes** and numerous **Mediterranean Flycatchers** offered the passerine interest. A single **Pallid Swift** was also noted. Driving on to the headland we noted 2 **Common Redstarts** as they darted into cover, along with further **Woodchat Shrikes**, before parking up just before the lighthouse. At the head itself the sea was littered with rafts of both **Balearic** and **Scopoli's Shearwaters**, though with calm conditions they were fairly distant and not very active. **Stonechats** were vocal in song flight as we waked the coastal stretch to the east, as was a single **TAWNY PIPIT** which was in frequent song flight and offered scope views perched from prominent bushes, though always distant. From here we walked back to the lighthouse and the van, making our way to Colonia de Sant Jordi in preparation for our boat over to Cabrera.

Our boat to Cabrera sailed just before midday, and before long we were out on a superbly flat sea, enjoying the cool breeze as we passed the large **Audouin's Gull** colony on Na Guardis. Out into open water we enjoyed close fly-passes of both **Balearic** and **Scopoli's Shearwaters** on many occasions, allowing some nice photos, whole a single **Bottlenose Dolphin** surfaced a couple of times. As we neared the archipelago of Cabrera, with its rugged chain of islands (18 in all) hosting roosting **Mediterranean Shags**, we were treated to a full sailing around the whole island group, affording us views of a handful of **ELEONORA'S FALCONS** swooping across their breeding cliffs on both Sa Conillera and l'Imperial island. We also noted up to 4 different **Peregrine Falcons** from the boat. Another rare treat was seeing an adult **Osprey** incubating eggs on a huge nest on the back of Cabrera island. As we completed the sea tour, we entered the harbour, overlooked by Cabrera Castle, and disembarked onto

the island. After a visit to the loos and a quick change of clothing (after the cool crossing, it was going to be pretty warm on the island), we set off past the park offices and small bar, heading towards the top of the bay. **Lilford's Wall Lizards** were everywhere, the black and metallic blue of the males very striking in this endemic reptile, with the few individuals on the main Cabrera island being of the endemic subspecies *Podarcis lilfordi kuligae*, found nowhere else but here. Our first migrant birds were **Common Redstarts** noted as we walked, while it appeared that **Willow Warblers** were in almost every pine tree. It wasn't long before we heard our first **Moltoni's Warbler** calling from cover, but we were unable to see it. We soon arrived at the open area of grassland by the picnic area, and we were blown away by what we saw. The area was carpeted with common migrants of many species, including **Whinchats**, **Willow Warblers (40)**, **Pied Flycatchers (20)** and **Common Redstarts (40)** were numerous, while **Tree Pipit**, **Western Yellow Wagtails** and several **Common Whitethroats** were also noted. A male **Black Redstart**, a couple of **White Wagtails** and **Robins** were late migrants, while a single **Wood Warbler** foraging in a pine was a highlight on the way back. We heard a few more **MOLTONI'S WARBLERS** nearer the museum, but they remained elusive, while **European Bee-eaters** and **Pallid Swifts** were noted high overhead. Our walk back to the harbour was punctuated by a couple of calling **BALEARIC WARBLERS** which didn't really play ball; activity was low in the early afternoon sun. Back in the harbour, we had time for a drink at Sa Cantina, reflecting on what had been an amazing spectacle of migration; it was just awesome to see so many common migrants in one place! It was soon time to board our boat back to Colonia de Sant Jordi, via more amazing views of **Scopoli's** and **Balearic Shearwaters**, another **Eleonora's Falcon** perched on clifftops and also picking up a Mallorca scarcity in the form of an **Oystercatcher** on the shoreline of Na Guardis!





Many highlights from the Cabrera visit; Black Redstart, Pied Flycatcher, Eleonora's Falcon, Scopoli's Shearwater and Oystercatcher

We got back to the hotel early today, did the checklist in the sun over a cold beer and managed to add a new species for the day whilst doing so, in the form of a pale morph **Common Buzzard** which circled over the hotel grounds! This was followed by some chill time and another superb dinner provided by the Aumallia team.

SUNDAY 1ST MAY -VILAFRANCA, MARIA, DE SALUD, S'ALBUFERETA

Sunny, light winds, 23C

Today started with a pre-breakfast walk around the surrounding countryside of the hotel, with 4 singing **Wrynecks**, several **Nightingales**, purring **Turtle Doves** and nesting **Stonechats** all entertaining; a great way to lead us into breakfast!

Finishing up, we then headed north into the expansive farmland areas near Vilafranca. Our main targets here were Red-footed Falcon, but unfortunately the birds have not arrived in Mallorca yet; rather late compared to recent years when good numbers have been present in the last week of April. **Short-toed Larks** in song all over the place, several singing **Quail** and some great views of **Spotless Starlings** nesting in large palm trees made for some nice birding highlights. **Spanish Yellow Wagtails** were singing and breeding in good number, while **Corn Buntings** and **Zitting Cisticolas** were ever-present. Moving north from here, a brief visit to Maria de Salut and its associated farmland also yielded no falcons other than Common Kestrels, so we continued on north, towards the marshes of s'Albufereta.

On route we paused along the road towards the Depuradora de Muro for a second attempt to check if the Bee-eaters might have been back at their colony site by now. The answer was no on this occasion also! But we did come away with the added bonus of the Albufera resident **Golden Eagle** which was floating around towards the pines of Ses Puntetes. Heading on towards s'Albufereta, our first stop was at Sa Barcassa; a lagoon with a couple of good viewing points to check from. A pair of **Gull-billed Terns** were a clear highlight, offering fantastic views, while **Common Terns**, 6 **Ruff**, a **Common Sandpiper**, single **Greenshank**, nesting **Kentish Plovers**, **Black-winged Stilts** and **Avocets** and, bizarrely, a single fence-hopping Coscoroba Swan provided other avian entertainment. **Common Redstart** in the pines of the 'Bosquet de s'Albufereta' along with a number of Serins, before we took lunch from the viewing tower overlooking the expanse of wetland that is s'Albufereta. From here we noted 2 **Purple Herons** in flight, a party of 11 **European Bee-eaters** which gave us our best views of the week so far as they headed north, good numbers of **Greater Flamingoes** bout on the water, **Shoveler**, **Gadwall** and a number of Marsh Harriers. Finishing lunch here we moved on to another small platform which overlooks a small pool and nesting islands. Here we saw a **Common Sandpiper**, displaying **Common Terns** and another **Purple Heron** in flight, along with a number of **Zitting Cisticolas** and Stonechats. Our next port of call was the Can Cuarassa track where, with the birding being a little quiet, we did enjoy watching a female **Swallowtail** butterfly laying its eggs on several Wild Fennel plants. Some birding interest did come in the form of a couple of **Spotless Starlings** on overhead wires, **Zitting Cisticolas**, singing **Nightingales** and **Cetti's Warblers** and the many Stonechats. This basically took us through to the end of the day, so we headed back homeward, getting back to the hotel in time for a chill and cold beer by the pool, or for some of the group a short raptor watch looking out towards the hillsides of Sa Mola to the north-east. In half an hour we managed to log 6 **Red Kites**, 2 **Booted Eagles**, 11 **Ravens** and a surprise **CINEREOUS VULTURE** which drifted north off in the direction of Arta.

After a delicious dinner, the calls of **EUROPEAN SCOPS OWL** emanating from nearby lured us out after dark in search for these delightful owls. Equipped with a head torch, we set out for where they were calling from; a stand of tall pines just down the road. The birds were playing hide and seek high in the trees, the eyeshine in a headtorch being as much as we could see, until one flew overhead and off into the finca behind. The bird was duetting with another not so far away, and it was lovely to stand in the dark just listening to this common sound in the Mallorcan countryside, along with the wailing **Stone Curlews**. Finishing up, we walked back to the hotel and off to bed.

Monday 2nd May – Sa Dragonera

Sunny with cloudy spells, rain forecast but never transpired, 23C

Last full day on Mallorca saw our itinerary being a pretty simple one; visit the fantastic island of Sa Dragonera! With a boat to catch at 10:15, we had a slightly earlier breakfast to give us leeway for any

potential traffic on route to the farthest western point of Mallorca. Thankfully our route was fairly free of traffic as we headed through Palma, then on through Andratx and finally on to Sant Elm, ready for our crossing with time to spare. The very scenic harbour, guarded by the islet of Es Pantaleu, was home to a number of **Audouin's Gulls** and **Mediterranean Shags** on water. Our boat, the Margarita, was soon moored up alongside the jetty and we were on our way, crossing slowly on a calm blue sea on this traditional wooden 'llaut' fishing boat. During the crossing we watched as 2 **Ospreys** flew back and forth between Dragonera and the Tramuntana Mountains, mobbed by Yellow-legged Gulls. Before long we were landing in the harbour at Cala Lladó, where we were immediately struck by the quantity of **Lilford's Wall Lizards** everywhere, poking their heads out of walls and dashing across the paths. As with the individuals on Cabrera, Sa Dragonera hosts its own subspecies; ***Podarcis lilfordi giglioli*** this endemic species. After heading to the loos, we then set off to complete the walk out to the Tramuntana Lighthouse at the far north-east of the island, via the circular walk through the terrasses and olive groves above Cala Lladó and Na Miranda. We soon noted the presence of **Common Redstarts** and **Pied Flycatchers** throughout the area; both proving to have arrived overnight in decent numbers, along with **Willow Warblers**. A single **Robin** was a late migrant, while the skies hosted dark morph **Booted Eagle** and our first **ELEONORA'S FALCON** of the day. The pines hosted many **Mediterranean Flycatchers** and, working through the scattering of **Willow Warblers**, yielded a single **MELODIOUS WARBLER**; never an abundant migrant here in Mallorca, so very pleasing to catch up with. Up out of the terraces and pines, the rest of the walk was through the open garrigue habitat which dominates this well protected island, and on towards the Tramuntana Lighthouse. Here we enjoyed fantastic views of a good number of **BAEARIC WARBLERS** singing from the tops of the shrubs, occasionally in full song flight, and generally showing off! Great to see so well after struggling for good views this week. A dark morph **ELEONORA'S FALCON** circling overhead was a forerunner of more to come, though it was only dark morph of the visit. A short walk on, the views of **ELEONORA'S FALCONS** from the clifftop viewpoint were absolutely spectacular! All pale morphs, it was fantastic to see these elegant and agile falcons at such close range, dogfighting and calling over their dramatic nesting cliffs. This must be the best place in Mallorca to watch these birds, and worth the visit to Dragonera alone!



Eleonora's Falcon on Dragonera

On towards the lighthouse, a scattering of migrants had congregated, including a **Northern Wheatear**, 2 **Common Redstarts**, a brief **Subalpine Warbler** and 2 **Willow Warblers**; a busy spot! We had lunch here, looking north-east along the dramatic cliffs of the Tramuntana mountains, with **ELEONORA'S FALCONS** on show and some fly-over **Bee-eaters**. Our walk back was punctuated by a very flighty **WOODLARK** which we managed to see twice only in flight and without calling, but a strong supercilium, very small size and extremely short tail gave it away, along with the lack of red tones in the tail which would be evident in Thekla's Lark. Back into the first pines on the way back to Cala Lladó, 3 **WESTERN BONELLI'S WARBLERS** were a fantastic discovery, feeding daintily in the pines and showing pretty well; another new species for the trip, and showing Dragonera's value as a migration

hotspot. Our walk back the rest of the way was fairly uneventful in the now warm early afternoon sun, so we chilled out back at the harbour and waited for the return of the Margarita at 3pm. Before long we were boarding the boat, enjoying the cool sea breeze as we crossed, before disembarking and heading to a bar overlooking the harbour of Sant Elm for a much needed Coffee. The journey back through the winding mountain road to Andratx was held up slightly by a huge coach that could barely get round the many hairpin turns along this strait, making for some entertaining watching from our perspective! Once we were on the highway, we traversed Palma with ease, and on our way back stopped at a site called Bassa de Can Guidet; a large reservoir which feeds water to Palma. Here we noted **Common Pochards**, 2 **Shovelers**, many **Little Grebes**, a couple of **Common Sandpipers** and a single **Little Ringed Plover**. The most interesting sighting here was a group of 18 **Glossy Ibis** which drifted in high over the airport, circling and disappearing off; presumably recently arrived migrants. After this short pause, we then continued back to base.



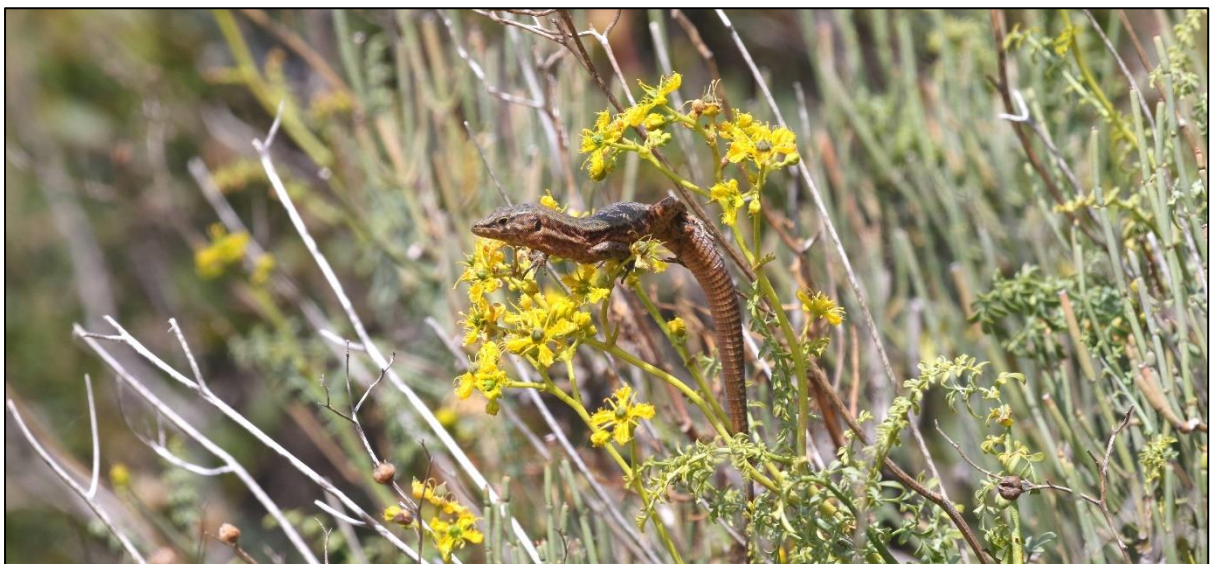
Western Bonelli's Warbler on Dragonera

Tuesday 3rd April – Ses Covetes, Salobrar de Campos and Son Navata

Rain showers, heavier as the day wore on, 16C

Cooler and more changeable today, with rain showers much of the time; what a change from the fantastic weather we have had all week! A pre-breakfast walk for some of the group provided a good view of a **Wryneck** in an olive tree outside of the hotel, from where we departed with bags packed and left safe, ready to pick up in time for the groups flight home later this evening. We had most of the day to play with, so we visited some new sites here in the south, starting with the small village of Ses Covetes on the south coast. Both **Balearic** and **Scopoli's Shearwaters** were present offshore towards Cabrera, looking dramatic against a grey choppy sea. Our walk along the coast yielded 5 **Turnstones** and a **White Wagtail** on the sandy beach, along with **Audouin's Gulls**, plus **Common Sandpiper** further along the coast. **Stonechats** were nesting here, while a brief **Willow warbler** was the only grounded migrant, along with many **Swifts** zooming around overhead. As it started to rain, we headed for a small bar in the village for a coffee, before heading for the Es Trenc road behind the saltpans, hoping to evade the worst of what was now heavy rain. On our way we stopped for a superb flock of around 50 **Spotless Starlings** which were foraging amongst hay bales and perching in fig trees. We had to resort of having lunch from inside the van overlooking the saltpans from the vehicle as it was still raining. Some nice things were noted from here however, including a brief **ELEONORA'S FALCON** which dashed overhead, a summer plumaged **Sanderling** on the mud, **Kentish Plovers** with newly hatched young and good views of **Black-winged Stilts**, **Avocets** and **Marsh Harriers**. Just behind us we enjoyed fantastic views of **Turtle Doves**, with over 10 seen and many purring, while a male and female **Balearic Woodchat Shrike** also showed superbly along a fence line. From here we took a look

at the Salinas de Colonia de Sant Jordi, which proved quiet, with only a small number of distant **Kentish Plovers** in the rain. The area did give excellent views of 2 **Stone Curlew** however, stood in a small field and probably not far from recently hatched young, given their behaviour. We then headed back on to overlook the central salt pans of the Salobrar de Campos. The main track was extremely muddy, so heading through the middle was a no go, but we were able to view the first lagoon, which fortunately hosted some nice birds. A **Water Rail** dashed past in front of us, while waders included 18 superb **Curlew Sandpipers** in varying levels of summer plumage. In addition there were 6 **Little Stints** and 5 **Ringed Plovers** present; a nice tally of migrant waders for this often quiet first lagoon! **Marsh Harriers** were noted in the distance, while a **Peregrine Falcon** was upsetting all the **Avocets**, **Black-winged Stilts** and over 50 **Curlew Sandpipers** flying over distant lagoons. By now it was time to start heading back to Aumallia, but not before a very brief stop at Son Navata, the Felanitx water treatment works. It was raining heavily, but didn't stop us enjoying superb views of 2 **Western Swamphens** in overgrown waterside vegetation, and also a fantastic adult **Glossy Ibis** feeding alongside Mallards. An interesting little wetland site with lots of potential! Back to the hotel, we had time for a cuppa and a shuffle of suitcases and change of clothes in preparation for heading to the airport; all very civilized! We had a last look over the vineyard opposite the hotel, with singing **Wrynecks** and displaying **Turtle Doves** to see us off, before we headed on to Palma Airport, where the group were waved off at arrivals. Their transit back to the UK went smoothly, after what had been a superb Mallorca tour.





A selection of fauna from the trip; Lilford's Wall Lizard, Hornet Clearwing moth and Small Heath



ORIOLE BIRDING
MALLORCA AND CABRERA SPRING MIGRATION
APRIL - MAY 2022

Species order, names and taxonomy follows - Gill, F and D Donsker (Eds). 2018. IOC World Bird List (v 8.1). <http://www.worldbirdnames.org/>

[illegible]

#	Common Name	Scientific name		26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3		Comments
Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)													
16	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>				2							
17	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>				1			x	1			
18	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>				x			2				
19	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>				1							
20	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>			x	x			x	x	x		
21	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>				x		x	x	x	x		
22	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>				x							
Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)													
23	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>			1	x				18	1		
Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)													
24	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>				1	1	2		2			
25	Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>					x		1				
26	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>					x						
27	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>		2	x	1	x	x	2	x			
28	Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>					3						
29	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>			x	x	x		x	x	x		
30	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
31	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>						1					
32	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>						1					
Rallidae and Gruidae (Rails, Coots and Cranes)													
33	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			H	H					1		
34	Western Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>				1					2		
35	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>				x			x				
36	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>				x							
37	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>				x			x				
Burhinidae (Thick-knees)													
38	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>			4	x	x	H	x		x		

#	Common Name	Scientific name		26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3		Comments
62	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
63	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
<i>Tytonidae and Strigidae (Owls)</i>													
64	European Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>			x	H	H	H	2				<i>Endemic ssp. mallorcae</i>
<i>Apodidae (Swifts)</i>													
65	Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>			x								
66	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
67	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>		x				x		x			
<i>Upupidae (Hoopoes)</i>													
68	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		1	x	1		1	x	x	x		
<i>Alcedinidae and Meropidae (Kingfishers and Bee-eaters)</i>													
69	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>		H				x	11	x			
<i>Picidae (Woodpeckers)</i>													
70	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>		H	H	H	4	H	x	H	x		
<i>Falconidae (Falcons)</i>													
71	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>			3								
72	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
73	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>						4		x	1		
74	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			3			4			1		
<i>Laniidae (Shrikes)</i>													
75	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>		2	5	x		4			2		
<i>a</i>		<i>L.s.senator</i>			1								
<i>b</i>	Balearic Woodchat Shrike	<i>L.s.badius</i>		2	4	x		4			2		<i>Endemic ssp. badius</i>
<i>Oriolidae and Corvidae (Orioles, Crows, Jays, and Magpies)</i>													
76	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>		1									
77	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		x	x		x	x	x	x	1		
<i>Alaudidae (Larks)</i>													
78	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>			5			x	x				

#	Common Name	Scientific name		26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3		Comments
79	Thekla's Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Hirundinidae (Swallows)													
80	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>			2	x							
81	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>			x		x	x		x			
82	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
83	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>				x	x		x		x		
Paridae (Tits)													
84	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>					x						Endemic ssp. balearicus
85	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		H	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Endemic ssp. mallorcae
Troglodytidae (Wrens)													
86	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			H		H				H		
Regulidae (Kinglets)													
87	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>					x						Near-endemic ssp. balearicus
Scotocercidae and Phylloscopidae (Bush and Leaf Warblers)													
88	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			H	x		H	x	H	H		
89	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				1		30		10			
90	Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>								3			
91	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>						1					
Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)													
92	Melodious Warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>								1			
93	Moustached Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>				2							
94	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>				1							
95	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>				H							
96	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>				H							
97	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>			x	x	x		x		x		
98	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
99	Western Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia inornata</i>								1			
100	Moltoni's Warbler	<i>Sylvia subalpina</i>					5	H					

