

**ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO SPAIN – CANTABRIAN MOUNTAINS**  
*Iberian Wolves, Brown Bears & Wild Cats*

**31 AUGUST - 07 SEPTEMBER 2016**



**Leader: David Walsh**

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### A Personal Diary

Ornitholidays' second late summer tour to the Cantabrian Mountains in northern Spain proved highly successful. We spent the first five nights in Boca de Huérgano, near Riaño. Our hard-working guides ensured that we had several close encounters with Wildcats in meadows not far from our hotel and, on a memorable sunny evening, we watched three Wolves through the scopes as they greeted each other in an open area on the far side of a valley. A day in the Picos de Europa produced a group of Pyrenean Chamois at close range and two Spanish Ibex on the way home. Having headed west to Villablino, we visited Somiedo National Park and saw a Brown Bear on two occasions as it crossed areas of scree. Finding the first one and ensuring all the group had scope views was really thrilling, amongst my most exciting moments ever on tour!

Finding the target mammal species took priority on this holiday, but careful planning meant that we had plenty of time to look for other wildlife too. We saw over 100 species of bird, including Eurasian Griffon and Egyptian Vultures, Golden and Booted Eagles, Alpine Accentor, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Crested Tit, Alpine Chough and Rock Bunting; the passage of European Pied Flycatchers was a particular highlight. Top billing undoubtedly went to Wallcreeper: we were privileged to spend over half an hour with two of them as they fed on rocks only metres away from us in the high mountains. Our tally of 30+ different butterflies included Tree, Rock and Great Banded Graylings, Queen of Spain and High Brown Fritillaries, Southern Gatekeeper, Scarce Copper, Silver-spotted and Oberthür's Grizzled Skippers and numerous blues.

We were fortunate to have unbroken sunshine virtually all week, allowing us to enjoy the stunning scenery at its best; it is widely regarded as some of the most impressive in the whole of mainland Spain. Inevitably we had some early starts and late finishes whilst searching for the mammals, but on most days we had a prolonged siesta, and the group hugely enjoyed the food, and complimentary house wine, throughout the week. I am very much looking forward to leading this tour again next year!

#### **Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August**

Our British Airways flight from Heathrow took just over 90 minutes, landing in Bilbao at 11.40am local time. 40 minutes later we met our driver and boarded a small coach with plenty of room for everyone. First we headed west along the coastal highway bypassing Santander, before turning south onto another motorway with numerous viaducts and tunnels to 'neutralise' the rolling hills, a real feat of engineering. Common Buzzards were regularly seen, other raptors including single Red Kite and Western Marsh Harrier glimpsed by those at the front of the bus. After half an hour on a well-maintained A road we arrived at Cervera de Pisuerga at 2.50pm for a late lunch. We enjoyed a splendid three course meal washed down with the house white and red wines, and this set the tone for the week. Asparagus followed by sea bream then ice cream was a popular choice.

Replete, we set off again at 4.25pm; the journey to our hotel in the picturesque village of Boca de Huérgano, through sunflower and corn fields then rock and maquis covered hillsides, took exactly an hour. We checked in and spent a short time getting sorted before strolling into the village and onwards to the river. Initially the passerines played hard to get, calling Common Crossbills vanishing into a treetop, but eventually all of us managed good views of migrant European Pied Flycatchers; we didn't realise how many we would see over the next few days! A flyover Golden Eagle gave 'best ever' views to some, before, via the ubiquitous Black Redstarts and a surprise in the shape of a Common Nightingale strutting in a garden, we returned to base.

We enjoyed the bargain priced beer whilst doing our bird list in the garden and reflected on a long but productive day. Elena and Juan Luis were attentive to our every need in the restaurant; soup or green beans, beef or hake, then cheesecake, crème caramel or melon sent us to bed in mellow mood but mindful of our early start the following morning.

### **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September**

There was time for coffee and cake in reception before we met our guide Maria and second driver Guillermo outside, with a Tawny Owl hooting behind us and a European Nightjar calling in front of the hotel. At 6.45am we set off, driving for a few minutes along a road before heading onto a rough track. It was still dark as we walked to a ridge overlooking the hillside on the other side of the valley. As the day dawned, the view of the mist below us was magical! It soon lifted, and for a couple of hours we scanned expectantly, but the Wolf present in the area decided not to show itself, so we had to be content with a Red Deer as well as a variety of bird sounds including recognisable ones such as European Nuthatch and less familiar ones such as a calling Black Woodpecker and singing Short-toed Treecreeper.

Having returned to the vehicles, we headed towards the hotel, but a Wildcat in a roadside meadow gave us cause to stop! It showed well before sloping off into the vegetation on the far side. At 10.30am we met for breakfast, a typically frugal Spanish affair with fresh fruit juice and coffee plus cake and a large slice of toast. We spent the rest of the morning on a lovely walk, finding four White-throated Dippers feeding in the river and an Iberian Chiffchaff singing from the poplars. Butterflies on a path through an area of heathland included Great Banded and Tree Graylings and Southern Gatekeeper, the latter taking some time to identify positively. Brown Hairstreaks flitted around some deciduous trees, but the birds in and around the pines were mainly unco-operative, Willow Warblers the exception, so it seemed sensible to declare. We marvelled at the view towards Riaño as we returned to the hotel. The weather was warm and sunny, as it would be throughout our trip.

We had lunch at 2pm before a much-needed siesta. At 5.15pm we met in the garden to do our checklist in record time prior to meeting up with the guides. After just five minutes along the road we began our 11 kilometre drive up a scenic valley. There was some discussion between the drivers about where the best vantage point would be, but it was obvious to me that it would be the one with least walking! We carefully traversed a rocky slope before making ourselves comfortable, scopes at the ready, eyes peeled on an open area far across the valley. Almost immediately Guillermo announced that there were two Wolves asleep at the front of the clearing. It took a while for us to believe him, then suddenly a third Wolf appeared from the right. The others stood up to greet it, their meeting a wonderful moment to witness even though we were a considerable distance away. Two headed off, one stayed put; Maria indicated to us that all three were this year's cubs.

Inevitably the drive down the valley in the dark took a while, so it wasn't until 10.30pm that we sat down to dinner, later than most of us were used to but, it seemed, totally normal for the locals. We felt very fortunate to have seen two of our three mammal targets on our first full day.

### **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September**

Having an early start after a late finish is never ideal, but we had to trust the experience of our guides so dutifully convened in the lobby for a 6.15am departure. We returned to the spot where we had seen the Wolves the previous evening, Maria being confident we would see them again, and in better light. European Roe Deer were seen by some in the first vehicle on the way up, but there was to be no repeat success at the top; nevertheless, it was wonderful to be out in the mountains on a beautiful morning. After 90 minutes we returned to the vehicles at 9am, pausing to scope a perched Eurasian Griffon Vulture. If morale needed restoring, the birds came to the rescue a little way down the track, with Water Pipit, Northern Wheatear, Whinchat and, best of all, two juvenile Rufous-tailed Rock Thrushes all discovered in one spot. Drifting further down the valley, we found numerous Dunnocks as well as Dartford Warbler, European Stonechat and Cirl Bunting, those in the front landrover at a distinct advantage. We couldn't disembark so as not to disturb the Wolves which were clearly lurking somewhere!

A very late breakfast was quickly followed by what for the Spanish was an early lunch! There was time for another siesta before I decided to investigate the butterflies in the meadow next to the garden. This proved very worthwhile, Long-tailed and Lang's Short-tailed Blues, Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper and Wall Brown all seen well. At 4.30pm some of us strolled to the river, where a Common Sandpiper had joined the Grey Wagtails. A female Common Redstart in the village was our only one of the week as we drifted back to base to do our list, during which we were disturbed by a splendid adult Egyptian Vulture overhead!

We set off again at 6pm. Our evening excursion with Maria and Oscar was a gentle affair; I had been given up to date gen on Rock Buntings at a particular pass, and three birds appeared to order, gratefully received by

everyone but especially those who had missed them earlier in the day. A female Scarce Copper was well-photographed in the car park. We saw two more Wildcats in the valley, but soon realised that to get scope views our disembarkation from the vehicles would need to be a bit more subtle! By chance we met Iñaki, one of the owners of our ground agents, and he gave us excellent advice for the days ahead.

We had the usual hour to freshen up before meeting for dinner at 9.15pm, positively early in comparison with the previous day; having enjoyed more splendid food and continued to make inroads into the house wine, we retired at a sensible hour.

### **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September**

We met for breakfast at 7.30am before collecting our packed lunches ready for the eagerly anticipated day in the high mountains of the Picos de Europa. Setting off a little after 8am, with a second Maria joining us today, our progress was slowed by numerous cows on the road, but this gave us the opportunity to see a Mastín Leonés dog which, we were told, was to protect the cattle from Wolves! An hour winding along a narrow road heading north-east was followed by 20 minutes on a wider one with the sun behind us as we approached the high peaks; they were bathed in glorious sunshine, how lucky we were once again! We enjoyed a singing Firecrest in the pines before taking a four-minute ride in the cable car across the valley, ascending 750 metres in the process!

We walked slowly up a track with little to distract us until I found a party of Pyrenean Chamois not far from the path; the scope views were frame-filling! Gusty winds made viewing difficult for a while, but perseverance paid off as we obtained good views of several Alpine Accentors; a calling White-winged Snowfinch sadly remained 'heard-only'. Lunch was taken close to an area of caves where Eurasian Crag Martins came and went. We had one very specific target here and, although the first Wallcreeper was 'leader-only' we were soon in luck. The two-way radios came into their own as we headed towards Maria who had our quarry in her sights. For well over half an hour, two or perhaps three Wallcreepers were watched at point blank range, perched both on the low cliffs and adjacent rocks, occasionally flying in and out of the caves, seemingly oblivious to our presence. It was simply breathtaking; this sought-after and magical species is all too often seen at distance, and only briefly. Two Alpine Choughs, one of which was colour-ringed, were equally obliging. We could have stayed much longer, but eventually tore ourselves away and headed down the track. Water Pipits gave scope views along the way; we looked at every raptor but, try as we might, we couldn't turn any of the Eurasian Griffon Vultures into a Lammergeier.

A short wait at the cable car was quickly forgotten as we arrived back at the bottom for our return journey. We located two Spanish Ibex close to a village on the way back to the hotel, arriving just after 7pm. Having done our list in the garden we headed to the restaurant as it opened for dinner at 9pm; we celebrated the once-in-a-lifetime views of Wallcreeper with a traditional menu of cocido and a couple of extra special bottles of wine courtesy of Ornitholidays. The Picos de Europa had certainly lived up to expectations!

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September**

Our visit this year coincided with an upmarket wedding in the village; this meant that, despite the potential for having our longest night's sleep so far, some were rather bleary eyed as we met for our 8am breakfast! Nevertheless, we were soon back on form, Maria and Iñaki finding a Wildcat which was focused on its own hunting and not on us; we were able to disembark carefully and set up the scopes, allowing us to watch and photograph it for ages. Driving on, we added Yellowhammer to our bunting list before strolling down a private road towards Riaño reservoir. With trees on one side, open fields and hedges on the other and the water in front of us there was plenty to see. Goldcrest and Crested Tit were found in the pines, whilst Spotted and European Pied Flycatchers were numerous and making the most of the insects, with European Reed Warbler further evidence of passerine migration. Great Crested Grebes and Yellow-legged Gulls were seen on the water, but we were more interested in the Wolf footprint in the mud.

The guides collected the vehicles and we continued on our circular drive; we had no luck coaxing out Black Woodpecker or Eurasian Wryneck, but whilst trying for the latter we obtained good views of Garden Warbler and several Blackcaps; Chalk-hill Blues were present in numbers along the verges. With the temperature rising we declared and made the short journey back to the hotel, having time to freshen up before meeting for lunch at 1.40pm. Salad, bean soup, succulent beef or cod in tomato sauce and the usual desserts made for a wonderful feast, as good as any we'd had so far.

After a prolonged siesta we did our birdlist before setting off with Maria and Bernardo (the local bird expert) at 5.30pm. We headed north-east then north, arriving at a pass in the hills with spectacular views of the high peaks. It was worth the journey simply for the scenery, but we enjoyed Rock Buntings and Silver-spotted Skippers as well as a superb pale phase Booted Eagle continuing on its journey to Africa. Down the road we stopped by a stream; I failed in my attempts to catch the fritillaries which might have aided their identification, much to the amusement of the group! Photos confirmed that they were High Brown Fritillaries, some in pristine condition. Another of the large 'cattle-protecting' dogs was a welcome distraction before we continued our return journey, an impromptu stop producing Whinchat and Rock Grayling with some seeing White-throated Dippers from the vehicles a little further on. We diverted briefly to look at a butterfly site, with the chance to see the drivers' skills in crossing a ford and a fine Golden-ringed Dragonfly as a bonus.

We intended to head for dinner at 9pm when the restaurant opened, but the weather was so lovely and warm we sat for a while enjoying beers in the garden beforehand. As a contrast to searching for target species, we had thoroughly enjoyed a local day watching whatever was on offer.

### **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September**

We met for breakfast at 8am before spending around three hours exploring the lower reaches of the valley through which we had driven en route to our Wolf site, making four productive stops. It was chilly as we scoped Tree Pipit alongside a European Serin before, keeping the sun behind us, we drifted down to a stream, where Red Admiral and another Scarce Copper were signs that it was warming up. A section of deciduous trees allowed us to watch a party of Long-tailed Tits and a Eurasian Nuthatch, trumped by super looks at an inquisitive pair of Crested Tits. Our final stop was an area of large poplars by the river. A Eurasian Sparrowhawk whizzed through, a calling 'Iberian' Green Woodpecker tantalised, a Eurasian Treecreeper was seen well by some and a Marsh Tit showed to all of us. There was time for the butterfly watchers to scrutinise Small Heath and Brown Argus before we drove back to the hotel.

Final packing, a stroll in the village and goodbyes to the friendly hotel staff who had made our stay so pleasant occupied half an hour or so; shortly after noon we headed west for phase two of our tour. A stop for fuel in Riaño doubled as a photo opportunity as we were right by the water, with the mountain reflections on the still reservoir simply perfect. The journey took somewhat longer than we had anticipated, which meant that we were very relieved to finally arrive in Villablino at our comfortable hotel in the town. Check-in was speedy and, having placed our luggage in the rooms, we walked down the road to a restaurant where chicken was on the menu for the first time on the tour! We were very well looked-after by Nerea and the wine flowed freely once again!

There was time to get sorted, if not for a proper siesta, before we met again for our bird list in the spacious lounge. 6pm was our intended time of departure, but the vehicle of our bear guide Luis was smaller than expected. As always, our ground agents dealt with this hiccup very quickly so some had the luxury of a taxi ride as we made the half hour journey to a roadside viewpoint in three vehicles. We spent a couple of hours scanning a wooded hillside; there was evidence of bear activity in terms of broken branches, and we got better at finding the right trees, but there were no bears. Nevertheless, we had other chances, and it was good to get to know a little of their habits. Having been told that bears had been seen at a different location that evening, I for one retired to bed in a state of high excitement!

### **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September**

Breakfast in our second hotel was rather different from that in the first, with cereals, croissants, cold meat and cheese amongst the fare on offer. So we were well set as we boarded our vehicles at 7.15am for the half hour journey into the hills. We had an unexpectedly steep walk up a road through a village before we reached the vantage point; having sensibly taken our time, we were soon in position. We were not alone, with around 20 others also present. Two rocky areas of scree on the far hills were deemed to be the best places to scan, and at 8.39am we hit the jackpot. I suddenly realised a Brown Bear was right in the middle of my telescope! I managed to get a second scope on the right spot and the group's efficiency meant that everyone was able to see it as it lumbered down the slope. Personally, this rated as one of the most exciting moments ever on a tour!

We continued looking for an hour or so, in my case gradually coming back down to earth, seeing a Red Fox and a fly-over Yellow Wagtail, before exploring a track up the valley until midday. There really was something for everyone here, with Eurasian Griffon Vultures and Booted Eagle over the ridges and various passerines on

bushes and fence-posts. It was the best site for butterflies of the entire week, and with minimum effort we found Marbled White, Berger's Clouded Yellow, Adonis Blue and Queen of Spain Fritillary. Some were fortunate enough to spot a Hummingbird Hawk-moth as they strolled back.

A Short-toed Eagle was seen by a lucky few as we drove back to the hotel for lunch; pasta salad was followed by some succulent pork and an even greater range of desserts than the day before! After a prolonged siesta and a chance to do our checklist we met up again for a return visit to the same spot. We were astonished to find no fewer than 80 people looking for bears! Initially our attention was on raptors, with a superb pair of Golden Eagles giving extended views, as well as Red-billed Choughs. As the sun dipped below the hillside we were able to scan the same areas as in the morning, and it wasn't long before some animated conversations between a couple of observers indicated that a bear had been spotted. The light wasn't as good as it had been in the morning, but those who concentrated on using their binoculars to watch it move across the rocks were very pleased with their views.

We had intended to leave at 8.30pm but Maria persuaded us to stay for an extra half an hour. On this occasion we had no further rewards, but two bear sightings in one day meant that we were, once again, in celebratory mood as we enjoyed our noodle soup, salad and trout, not forgetting the à la carte white wine!

### **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

We enjoyed a relaxing breakfast at 8am and I was able to pay a proper tribute to Maria in the lounge before our coach arrived at around 9.15am. In the event we had to wait until 10am to depart, in order to allow the driver the required rest (and some breakfast); we occupied ourselves enjoying a birdy area below the hotel. A European Honey Buzzard flying alongside the coach was the avian highlight as we made excellent progress east, soon picking up a motorway towards Oviedo and another towards Santander. We made a planned pit stop before continuing east.

Iñaki and Maria had carefully planned for us to have lunch in a town close to a birding spot. Santoña wasn't easy to drive into, with narrow streets and pedestrian areas, but we eventually found our restaurant, clearly popular with locals and visitors alike. At 3.30pm we made the five-minute journey to a hide overlooking an estuary, with the display boards showing us pictures of the wide range of birds available at the site. We had a very productive hour. A Mute Swan flew across, Mediterranean, Lesser and Greater Black-backed Gulls and Sandwich Terns were scoped, Whimbrels and Eurasian Curlews were noted side by side for comparison, a Bar-tailed Godwit was found at close range, a Common Kingfisher flashed past and a Green Sandpiper called in typical fashion. A Eurasian Spoonbill was enjoyed as always but was trumped as *Bird of the Day* by a Slavonian Grebe, a real surprise. I discovered later that this site is its only regular wintering area in the whole of Spain.

The driver had, from somewhere, found English pop music to entertain us for the 50-minute ride to the airport! The rest of the day went much as expected with the flight time to Heathrow less than 90 minutes. We said the usual farewells at baggage reclaim, some of us heading home direct, others pausing in local hotels, with photos to share and tales to tell!

### **Acknowledgements**

I am very grateful to the group for your company and good humour throughout the tour and for your fortitude in adjusting to meal timings which were different from those you are used to at home! Special thanks to our ground agents and their guides, especially Maria who was helpful, hard-working, friendly and keen to learn about the birds. We were very well looked after in the hotels and restaurants at all times which meant that the splendid meals became a real feature of the tour. Thanks as always to Ed Keeble for his assistance in preparing the photographs and to Bob Burgess and Maria Bueno Gomez for allowing me to use some of their images in this report.

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## Itinerary and Weather

- 31 August** Morning flight from London Heathrow to Bilbao. Transfer via Cervera de Pisuerga (lunch) to Boca de Huérgano (altitude 1,110m) for a five night stay. Late afternoon birding around the village.  
Mainly sunny, max. 25°C.
- 01 September** Morning looking for wolves/wildcats along the valley south of Boca de Huérgano; late breakfast at hotel, then walk from village across the river to an area of heath/woodland. Lunch and siesta, then evening looking for wolves in the hills east of Barniedo de la Reina.  
Early mist, then sunny, 8-23°C.
- 02 September** Morning looking for wolves and birding in the hills east of Barniedo de la Reina followed by late breakfast at hotel. Lunch and siesta, then evening south-west of Boca de Huérgano, birding along the circular drive via Puerto de Montevejo (1,430m) before looking for wildcats along the valley.  
Sunny, 10-24°C.
- 03 September** Full day's birding in Picos de Europa, driving via Potes to Fuente Dé (altitude 1,070m), taking cable car to 1,820m and exploring from track into the mountains (reaching c1,900m) with picnic lunch. Short stop in Llánaves de la Reina on return journey.  
Sunny, gusty winds, 12-31°C.
- 04 September** Morning looking for wildcats and birding south-west of Boca de Huérgano near Riaño lake, at Puerto de Montevejo and near Besande village. Lunch and siesta, then early evening birding north of Portilla de la Reina at Puerto de Pandetrave (1,560m).  
Sunny, 12-27°C.
- 05 September** Morning birding along Valpenguero valley east of Barniedo de la Reina. Early afternoon drive to Villablino (1,010m) for a two-night stay. Lunch and short siesta, then evening looking for bears near Degaña (830m).  
Sunny, 8-26°C.
- 06 September** Morning looking for bears and birding at La Peral (1,380m) in Somiedo National Park. Lunch and siesta, then return trip to La Peral early evening.  
Sunny, 12-26°C.
- 07 September** Transfer from Villablino to Bilbao for evening flight to London Heathrow, with lunch and early afternoon birding at Santoña en route.  
Sunny, 14-26°C

## CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING THE TOUR

### No of days recorded

1 2h means seen on 1 day  
and heard on 2 other days

### Locations

A = Boca de Huérgano and Fuente Dé  
B = Villablino and Somiedo  
C = Journeys to and from Bilbao  
D = Santoña estuary

### Abundance scale

Maximum seen (on one day)

1 = 1-4  
2 = 5-9  
3 = 10-99  
4 = 100-999  
5 = 1,000+

Species	No of days recorded	Locations				Abundance Scale	Scientific Name
Mute Swan	1				D	1	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Mallard	2	A				1	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Slavonian Grebe	1				D	1	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>
Great Crested Grebe	2	A				3	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Great Cormorant	2	A			D	2	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Cattle Egret	2				C	3	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Little Egret	2				D	3	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Grey Heron	6	A			C D	3	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Eurasian Spoonbill	1				D	1	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Eurasian Griffon Vulture	6	A	B	C		3	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
Egyptian Vulture	3	A	B	C		1	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
Golden Eagle	2	A	B			1	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
Short-toed Eagle	1		B			1	<i>Circus gallicus</i>
Booted Eagle	2	A	B			1	<i>Aquila pennata</i>
Red Kite	1				C	1	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
Western Marsh Harrier	1				C	1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Common Buzzard	8	A	B	C		3	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
European Honey Buzzard	1				C	1	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	3	A		C		1	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Common Kestrel	4	A	B	C		1	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Common Sandpiper	1	A				1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Green Sandpiper	-	1h			D	1	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
Bar-tailed Godwit	1				D	1	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Eurasian Curlew	1				D	2	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Whimbrel	1				D	3	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Black-headed Gull	2				D	4	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Mediterranean Gull	1				D	1	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>
Yellow-legged Gull	4	A			D	4	<i>Larus michahellis</i>
Great Black-backed Gull	1				D	1	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1				D	2	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Sandwich Tern	1				D	2	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>
Feral Pigeon (Rock Dove)	2				C	3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Common Wood Pigeon	8	A	B	C		3	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	2		B			1	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Tawny Owl	-	2h	A			1	<i>Strix aluco</i>
European Nightjar	-	1h	A			1	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>
Common Kingfisher	1				D	1	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Black Woodpecker	-	1h	A			1	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>
European (Iberian) Green Woodpecker*	-	1h	A			1	<i>Picus (viridis) sharpei</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	2	1h	A			1	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Eurasian Wryneck	1	A				1	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
Eurasian Crag Martin	4	A	B			3	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
Barn Swallow	8	A	B	C		3	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Common House Martin	6	A	B	C		3	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Water Pipit	3	A	B			2	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>
Tree Pipit	4	A	B			1	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
White Wagtail	8	A	B	C		2	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>
Yellow Wagtail	1		B			1	<i>Motacilla flava iberiae</i>
Grey Wagtail	5	A				1	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>



White-throated Dipper	3		A			1	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
Dunnock	4		A	B		3	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Alpine Accentor	1		A			3	<i>Prunella collaris</i>
European Robin	5	1h	A	B		1	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Common Nightingale	1	1h	A			1	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
Common Redstart	1		A			1	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
Black Redstart	8		A	B	C	3	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Northern Wheatear	2		A			1	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Whinchat	3		A	B		1	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
European Stonechat	3		A	B		1	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
Mistle Thrush	4		A		C	3	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Common Blackbird	7		A	B	C	2	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush	3		A	B		1	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>
Garden Warbler	2		A			1	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
Blackcap	3	1h	A	B		2	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Common Whitethroat	1		A			1	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Dartford Warbler	3		A			1	<i>Sylvia undata</i>
European Reed Warbler	1		A			1	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Willow Warbler	4		A	B		1	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Common Chiffchaff	4		A	B		1	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Iberian Chiffchaff	-	1h	A			1	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>
Goldcrest	1		A			1	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
Firecrest	1		A			1	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>
Winter Wren	2	1h	A			1	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	1		A			3	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Pied Flycatcher	5		A			3	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>
Great Tit	6		A			1	<i>Parus major</i>
Coal Tit	3		A			1	<i>Pariparus ater</i>
European Blue Tit	1		A			1	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Crested Tit	4		A			1	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>
Marsh Tit	1		A			1	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
Long-tailed Tit	2	1h	A			2	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Eurasian Nuthatch	2	1h	A			1	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Wallcreeper	1		A			1	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>
Eurasian Treecreeper	1		A			1	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Short-toed Treecreeper	-	1h	A			1	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
Common Magpie	4		A	B	C	1	<i>Pica pica</i>
Eurasian Jay	5		A	B		1	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Red-billed Chough	2		A	B		3	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
Alpine Chough	1		A			3	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>
Carrion Crow	8		A	B	C	3	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Common Raven	4	2h	A	B	C	1	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Common Starling	2				C	3	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
House Sparrow	8		A	B	C	3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
White-winged Snowfinch	-	1h	A			1	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>
Common Chaffinch	7		A	B		2	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Common Linnet	6		A	B	C	3	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
European Goldfinch	4		A			2	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
European Serin	6		A	B		2	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
Common Crossbill	1		A			1	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
Yellowhammer	2		A			1	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
Cirl Bunting	2		A			1	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>
Rock Bunting	2		A			2	<i>Emberiza cia</i>

## MAMMALS

Wolf  
Red Fox  
Brown Bear  
Wildcat  
Red Deer  
European Roe Deer  
Pyrenean Chamois  
Spanish Ibex

*Canis lupus*  
*Vulpes vulpes*  
*Ursus arctos*  
*Felis silvestris*  
*Cervus elaphus*  
*Capreolus capreolus*  
*Rupicapra pyrenaica parva*  
*Capra pyrenaica*

## BUTTERFLIES

Large White  
Small White  
Green-veined White  
Clouded Yellow  
Berger's Clouded Yellow  
Brimstone  
Brown Hairstreak  
Small Copper  
Scarce Copper  
Long-tailed Blue  
Lang's Long-tailed Blue  
Brown Argus  
Chalk-hill Blue  
Adonis Blue  
Common Blue  
Camberwell Beauty  
Red Admiral  
Small Tortoiseshell  
Comma Butterfly  
High Brown Fritillary  
Queen of Spain Fritillary  
Marbled White  
Rock Grayling  
Tree Grayling  
Great Banded Grayling  
Meadow Brown  
Southern Gatekeeper  
Small Heath  
Speckled Wood  
Wall Brown  
Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper  
Silver-spotted Skipper

*Pieris brassicae*  
*Artogeia rapa*  
*Artogeia napi*  
*Colias crocea*  
*Colias alfacariensis*  
*Gonepteryx rhamni*  
*Thecla betulae*  
*Lycaena phlaeas*  
*Lycaena virgaureae*  
*Lampides boeticus*  
*Leptoptes piriethous*  
*Aricia agestis*  
*Lysandra coridon*  
*Lysandra bellargus*  
*Polyommatus icarus*  
*Nymphalis antiopa*  
*Vanessa atalanta*  
*Agrias urticae*  
*Polygonia c-album*  
*Argynnis adippe*  
*Issoria lathonia*  
*Melanargia galathea*  
*Hipparchia alcyone*  
*Neohipparchia statilinus*  
*Kanetisa circe*  
*Maniola jurtina*  
*Pyronia cecilia*  
*Ceononympha pamphilus*  
*Parare aegeria aegeria*  
*Lassiommata megera*  
*Pyrgus armoricanus*  
*Hesperia comma*

## Notes on the checklists

The bird list broadly follows the order, nomenclature and taxonomy of the Collins Bird Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Svensson et al, 2009) which we used throughout the week. The guide was reprinted in 2015, and the new version contains a small number of significant changes. In the checklist, birds with the same genus are listed together, even if this means the order is slightly different from that in Collins.

One interesting taxonomic note:

The World Bird List of the International Ornithological Congress splits Iberian Green Woodpecker *Picus sharpei* from European Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*.

The mammal list follows the Mammals of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East (Aulagnier et al, 2009).

The butterfly list follows the Collins Butterfly Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Tolman and Lewington, 2008).

These lists represent the birds, mammals and butterflies recorded by the group members on this tour.

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**Wildcat**



**Pyrenean Chamois**



**Wolf**



**Wallcreeper**



**Long-tailed Blue**



**Marbled White**



**Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper**



**Valpunguero valley**

**Front cover: Riaño Reservoir**

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