

## Holiday Highlights

### Extremadura

6-13 April 2019

**Guide:** Darren Rees

**Guests:** Carol & Geoff Bailey, Evie Malliris & John Beaty, Michael Pearcey, Adam Moan.

**Day 1:** Half the group meet at London's Gatwick Airport for our short flight to Spain and there is much talk about the week ahead and birds on the wish-list. The flight is delayed at first until they find us a new plane, but once we are on our way it's comfortable and uneventful. There's some snow on the peaks around Madrid as we land, giving us an inkling of the cool spring weather ahead. Once we arrive we meet the rest of the group – Adam has flown in from Manchester and John and Evie from Boston. So united at arrivals, we track down our rental van for the week and with minimum fuss we are on the way. We successfully navigate the Madrid orbital motorway, the M40, before heading south and west to the land-locked province of Extremadura.

Roadside birds include Black Kites, Red Kites, Marsh Harrier and our first White Storks atop large nests on pylons. Past Navalmoral we pause for a comfort-stop checking out those Crested Larks before moving onwards to Trujillo – our first Griffon Vultures are cruising through the skies. South of Trujillo we arrive at our destination and base for the week, Vinas Las Torres and along the approach road there are Hoopoe and Azure-winged Magpies. A flaming Judas tree is in full bloom adding a mass of purple to the welcoming scene and inside we meet our friendly hosts Jesus and Angeles – it's good to arrive and for Darren it's good to be back. We all ease into a relaxed frame of mind, assisted by some fine Extremaduran food and some Spanish wine and beers. We are confident that the week ahead is going to be very comfortable as well as bird-filled.

**Day 2:** We meet at 7.45am to overcast skies, yet a chorus of new sounds. The hollow ringing bells from the small sheep-herd in the adjacent field will prove to be ever present during the week. This is punctuated by the insistent two-tone calling of Great Tits, the fluid song of Blackbirds and the stuttering wheeze of Corn Buntings (or this that jangling keys?). Hoopoes are hooting from the holm oaks but not showing themselves at first. Then we hear the unmistakable windy rasp from European Bee-eaters and spot two circling right overhead zipping around the tower of Vina Las Torres – no wonder Michael takes his time as he can watch them from his window! What a start and we've not even started walking!

The pre-breakfast stroll along the lane reveals some of the birds that we'll see most days, including Blue Tit, Corn Bunting, Spotless Starling, Red-rumped and Barn Swallows and more immaculate Azure-winged Magpies. On a pylon is a smart male Stonechat – we later see a female too - and we get our first looks

at a neat male Sardinian Warbler that is taking food to its nest. The track winds its way past olive groves and through holm oaks towards a couple of fields where our first Woodchat Shrike is sat on look-out and John spots a Hoopoe on the ground. High above, a Woodlark is displaying with its fluting song-flight - all this before breakfast!

We leave the hotel at 10.15am and drive towards Trujillo, noting a smart Southern Grey Shrike and many Corn Buntings that are regularly dotted along the wires and that are destined to be a constant feature of the holiday. We can't resist a stop at the bullring as small falcons are flying around the red-tiled roof – Lesser Kestrels no less. We get telescope views of oily-looking Spotless Starling too.

West of Trujillo we pass through distinctive holm oak *dehesa*, a habitat that covers great swathes of Extremadura. We take the minor road to Santa Marta de Magasca and drive slowly along noting Black Kites perched on pylons, before parking at one corner where the dehesa gives way to scrubby fields and rolling open country. It's always been a good area for birds of the plains and we are not disappointed - the air is thick with the song of Calandra and Crested Lark and Woodchat Shrikes are perched on low bushes, with vultures and kites soaring in the distance.

We take off down a quiet track to further explore the open country, focussing on an area where we have seen bustards before. In the first bush, close to the track on the left is an unusual bird – a Great Spotted Cuckoo - Adam gets a great pic through the window before it flies off. From our next elevated position we can scan the open panorama and bingo! A lone male Great Bustard is strutting around in a flowery field ahead of us – Calandra Larks call and row across the sky around the much larger bird - what a sight!

Next, we stop where we can scan a pool rimmed with white flowers – one of the few sources for water for livestock on the plain. A Gadwall is with some Mallard and in the far corner are some shorebirds – two Black-winged Stilt and a Redshank. More Red Kites are soaring beyond and a group of vultures are drifting overhead and we can separate Griffons and darker Black Vultures. Geoff points to a Calandra Lark perched on stones looking just like a Ringed Plover! Then a large black raptor enters to the right, flying above some isolated trees – it's bigger than the kites and as it banks we can see its shocking white leading edges to the wings – wow! A Spanish Imperial Eagle!

It soon disappears out of sight, but we move closer where we can better see the stand of trees. Soon the eagle appears again and we get wonderful looks at the rarest eagle in the world. It lands in one of the trees and starts flapping around, then settles with its white epaulettes showing.

Then a superb male Montagu's Harrier starts drifting across the fields to the right. It passes across the perched eagle and we get both in the same view – that's a first in over twenty tours of Extremadura!

The next site we visit (being careful not to drive over two Red-legged Partridges in the road) is the narrow ravine at the Rio Magasca, a good place for lunch with some shelter from the cool wind. We enjoy our *bocadillos* along with Crag Martins and Red-rumped Swallows that are darting across the water and around the bridge. We get great looks at our first Serin in a tree and get looks at Cirl Bunting, Chaffinch, Wren and Common Sandpiper, as well as hearing an explosive Cetti's Warbler.

Leaving the sheltered valley we reach the impressive open steppe land further north with stony fields that are again covered with small white and yellow flowers. At one corner where some green cereal fields break up the vista we stop to scan – an Egyptian Vulture makes it a three-vulture day! A Zitting Cisticola displays too and Adam even manages a flight shot!

North of Monroy we stop for coffee at a stand of umbrella pines set amongst a mixture of farmland and dehesa. The pine trees hold a small colony of White Storks and many are attending nests. When one partner arrives it starts bouts of bill clapping and mating - they are delightful to watch. Below them, in the tangle of nest material, are Spanish Sparrows – just like the text book!

We walk down the path to explore the mixed habitat here, knowing that Black-shouldered Kites frequent the area. We see lots of Azure-winged Magpies darting to and fro and listen to Thekla Larks singing overhead. A Northern Wheatear and group of Linnets are new for the list. Sadly, the weather takes a turn for the worse and the drizzle sets in – time to call it a day, but what a great first day in the field.

**Day 3:** There's another overcast day forecasted with the chance of rain, indeed there was quite a lot overnight, so we opt to head south for the open country of La Serena and some of the relic steppe land that used to cover huge areas of Spain. Lying to the south of two main rivers, the Guadiana and Zujar, that dissect a large natural basin rimmed by mountains, this is a traditional stronghold for bustards, sandgrouse, and birds of the rolling plains.

We drive through the town of Zorita and after a short distance further south we can't help but have a quick stop to scan the fields – this a traditional site for Great Bustards and as we park we can see a group with our first look around. Amongst the jagged rocks a collection of eight males are strutting around and posturing. Fabulous! Behind us is a beautiful male Montagu's Harrier and a Hoopoe is calling from a tall eucalyptus tree – all the while the air is full of Crested and Calandra Lark song. Another classic Extremadura selection.

Next, we drive to the Rio Gargaligas where we look over the river and associated reeds and bushes. White Storks are nesting on pylons and one nest hosts some Spanish and House Sparrows along with a Hoopoe! On the bridge we can look down into the reeds and water channel. Cetti's Warblers are in fine voice and Geoff manages to get one calling in his scope. Great Reed Warblers are also in full

song and we track one of them down sitting in the top of a tree – it's a bit obscured but we get some looks through the scopes. A Chiffchaff skulks in another tree but we can't manage a glimpse of one of the Nightingales that are singing from within the trees. Also, Michael spots a Water Rail crossing the channel – so a good haul of new species.

After crossing the birdless Guadiana Reservoir, we do see a small group of Great Crested Grebes and a Black-headed Gulls as we pass the Zujar Reservoir. The road then climbs from the water's edge to the dry raised land typified by scrubby bushes and rocky outcrops. Stony fields are carpeted in small flowers at this time of year and we slow down as two Great Spotted Cuckoos and a Montagu's Harrier passes along the roadside. We stop a little further to check an area close to the road for a first full scan and find one of our target birds – a male Little Bustard is throwing its head back and blowing raspberries! Another male Monty's is perched on a boulder and then we are attracted to a flock of birds flying fast across the sky. With white pot-bellies and pointed wings Pin-tailed Sandgrouse are charging this way and that. Eventually they land beyond the dip and the chase is on!

We drive further along to a slightly raised position to scan and we soon locate the birds on the ground – through the telescopes we can see the rich orange colouring and white breasts of Pin-tailed Sandgrouse as they scuttle about – superb!

After a lunch break by a stand of eucalyptus trees we set about exploring the landscape further, taking off down a track to the left and scanning the huge panorama of fields. Meadow Pipits are added to the list, then we stop and scan another weedy rock field – we can hear raspberry blowing and its close by! The hunt is on and John comes up with the culprit. Along the skyline is the black and white head of a male Little Bustard. Further along the road we see two males chasing each other in dashing flight – it's that time of year!

We drive further, stopping and scanning from an elevated point that looks over a stony field marked with rocky cairns. On one is a smart Little Owl, while closer to us is a group of delightful Yellow Wagtails with assorted head markings – we see Iberian and nominate Blue-headed forms then Adam photographs a smart yellow-headed British bird. A Hoopoe makes an appearance and all the while we are entertained by a sheepdog taking care of its merino flock.

We head back checking pools alongside the road and one has some elegant Black-winged Stilts – checkout the white-headed male. We are starting to flag a bit so opt to stop in Orellana for muchas helados! Refreshed, we feel there's still time for a quick circuit around the rice fields of Vegas Altas. We get looks at several Eurasian Tree Sparrows along the road then stop in vain at a couple of places to listen for Black-bellied Sandgrouse – it's now very windy but we do see more Meadow Pipits and hear a Quail. Star birds are four Great Bustard males - our closest views yet, in brilliant light.

It's time to retrace our steps and head back to the hotel via a quick stop at Zorita – two distant bustards but no pom-pom display! Finally, we arrive at Vina Las Torres and prepare for our big night in Trujillo. Time for a walk around the charming Plaza Major and narrow streets towards the castle, before a meal at La Troya restaurant.

**Day 4:** A day with less driving is planned after the rigours of the previous day at La Serena. After breakfast at 8am we drive towards Zorita but have to stop soon after leaving, as there are vultures on the ground to the right of the road. Luckily the stretch of the road has zero traffic and we can pull over and get wonderful looks at a group of Griffons, with one Black Vulture, attending to the carcass of a sheep. What views!

South of Zorita, where the landscape opens out to rolling steppe, we stop at the same spot as yesterday – we can't resist another scan for bustards. A large bird lands relatively close by and starts walking in the open – with no heat haze and overcast skies we get wonderful looks at its finely barred plumage and rich red base of the neck – probably a young male Great Bustard. Further to the right, we can see several large stately looking birds walking through a herd of sheep and cows. Their tails and necks are up and they seem like galleons sailing in a sea of grass!

At the Embalse de Sierra Brava we check the water for any lingering winter duck – only a few Mallard and Great Crested Grebes dot the surface. Adam spots a pale pipit on the track – we wander over to check it out and get good looks at a smart Tawny pipit. Evie spots something more spectacular – overhead is a handsomely-marked pale form of Booted Eagle – our best looks so far!

Continuing down a less travelled route towards Campo Lugar we can stop and check the fields both sides of the road. To one side is a beautiful male Marsh Harrier and on the other side is another group of Great Bustards - this time the sunlight is on them revealing their rich colouring. We set up scopes and the views just get better and better – we can see the male's fine whiskers and rich plumage which he uses to great effect when he turns himself inside out and transforms into a huge white pom-pom on the plain! There is a lot of soliciting action for the benefit of the ladies and more males strut their stuff too.

Further along we stop near a line of pylons and exchange notes with two German birders – they've seen a Roller only minutes before, as it was prospecting around a nest box high on one of the metal towers. Common Kestrels also use the nest boxes and one is perched for us to see. We wait a while and are rewarded by brief looks at a Roller but it soon flies below and into a dip never to be seen again – maybe the strong wind is putting it off perching on the wires like it's supposed to do - we'll try again.

We continue to the Embalse de Alcollarin – one of the many new dams in the region that has backed-up a new and welcome wetland. As we approach it starts to rain so we head for a lunch spot underneath the holm oaks so we can get some cover while we eat. After bocadillos the rain stops and the sun shines so we walk to where we can scan a second body of water and we see birds along the shore: Gadwall, Shoveler, Little Grebe, Moorhen and Great Cormorant amongst others, then Adam shouts out 'Otter!' Sure enough, there's one swimming across the lake and diving. We watch it for a while as it fishes busily– a very lucky sighting! Elsewhere we see a group of Spoonbills, Little Egret, Common Sandpipers and Geoff spots a Common Kingfisher perched on the far side of the water.

We drive a little further, then park for a stroll through the dehesa towards the shore – the low water level has exposed the features of old olive trees and stone walls. We can see some birds along the muddy edge so walk further so we can scope them – we see Gull-billed Terns, Black-headed Gulls, Black-winged Stilt, Greenshank, Spotted Redshank, Snipe, Little Ringed Plover, Common and Wood Sandpiper, as well as resting Shelducks. Nice additions to the species list!

We start to retrace our path but are halted by two large Short-toed Eagles that are soaring around - one does a bout of hovering before giving us a fly past close overhead – Adams photos are amazing! We carry on the reverse circuit stopping where we had lunch as Darren heard a Bonelli's Warbler singing there. After a little coaxing one makes an appearance above our heads in the canopy of the holm oaks – nice!

We leave Alcollarin, choosing to take the quiet backroad to Campo Lugar and it is a lucky decision – along the pothole marked road we come to a halt when the fence wire ahead is lit up by a group of vivid Bee-eaters – just breath-taking! We can set up the scopes and drool – is there a more colourful bird in the world?

We retrace our route from the morning, hoping to re-locate the Roller that we glimpsed – sadly this doesn't happen, though we do get more bustards and an obliging Southern Grey Shrike. We also take a last look at the site south of Zorita and find some new birds as well as checking out the distant bustards – close in front of us are two Short-toed Larks in the stony field. A new bird to end another great day.

**Day 5:** After breakfast at 8am we head north for our destination for the day, the world renowned Monfrague National Park that lies north of Trujillo. Within its boundaries are areas of deep gorges, forest scrub and wooded slopes that provide ideal territory for a large number of birds of prey, and indeed, it has the highest density of breeding raptors in Europe. The rivers Tietar and Tajo carve through a series of wooded ridges and at three or four points have produced breath-taking cliff formations and soon we can see the rocky ridge that marks the boundary of the Reserve. As we approach Pena Falcon Rock, at the southern entrance to the Park, we notice the squadrons of Griffon Vultures in the air.

We park and set up telescopes at the base of the cliff and watch the scores of birds that wheel around the rock, noting many sat on the skyline like groups of elderly men. Some birds can be seen on nesting ledges, sitting tight on eggs or protecting chicks from the cool wind that is blowing. Other large birds of prey catch the eye and amongst the milling Griffons are lots of Black Kite, Black Vultures, a Short-toed Eagle and a pale Booted Eagle. Star birds are a wonderful pair of Peregrine – one wheels around above and Geoff finds one perched on a bush on the skyline.

After nearly an hour, we walk the short distance to view the rock at a different angle. From here we can see an active Black Stork nest with a bird sitting tight in a shady recess, while another catches the sun on a more obvious rock – its plumage is a glossy purple, green and blue – anything but black. Below us, on rocks, we get great shows from some singing male birds – a cracking Blue Rock Thrush, a sweet Rock Bunting and a smart Black Redstart.

For a change of pace, we drive to the Rio Tajo for coffee and nibbles where we can find shelter in the trees. We walk to look beneath the bridge over the river where hundreds of Crag and House Martins are going in and out of their nest sites. An Alpine Swift makes a brief appearance and on the far hillside we can spot the head of a Black Vulture on its nest in a tree.

At Punta de la Cardenal we can view the crumbling old bridge and stroll along the track, getting good shows from Griffons perched behind us on the rocky skyline. The small birds are singing and one catches our attention – the hurdy-gurdy notes of an Orphean Warbler singing from a treetop – what about that piercing eye. Michael spots a pair of handsome Woodchat Shrikes and Carol spots a difficult-to-see Black-eared Wheatear – a cracking black-throated male on top of an old building.

Lunch is at Villarreal, the only village in the Park and it is busy with visitors, including school groups - this is the unofficial centre of Monfrague National Park where there are picnic tables and loos, so a good place to have our bocadillos. Afterwards, we drive deeper into the Park stopping at one bend where two Short-toed Eagles are soaring. We get out of the van to enjoy wonderful looks at displaying birds with exaggerated wing flaps and calling. Just fab! Further on at La Tajadilla, another viewpoint looks across to another large cliff face. Griffons are on ledges and two Egyptian Vultures land on rocks – nice to see these yellow-faced punks perched. In the distance are two large eagles with pale bodies and dark wings – Bonelli's Eagles, but boy are they far away – better luck another day. Other birds include a neat female Subalpine Warbler nest building in a small bush low to the ground.

The furthest viewpoint is the cliff at Portilla Del Tietar where another steep rock-face provides another ideal site for a group of Griffons and it has also been home for a pair of Spanish Imperial Eagles for a number of years. It's a species high on everyone's wish-list, so we park, noting the rich song of a Nightingale and then

we walk to where we can scan some tall trees close to the rock face. We can see a large tree with grey dead sticks that formed a nest platform last year but no-one is home, still we enjoy a stroll around the cork oaks admiring a noisy Nuthatch and catching up with Spanish Festoon butterflies. As we leave we also get wonderful looks at a Short-toed Treecreeper on one of the cork trees.

We retrace our route through the Park and out of the north east entrance to Campground Monfrague where we have an early evening meal – and very nice it is too, with friendly and prompt service. This gives us plenty of time for an evening session back at Portilla Del Tietar hoping for some eagle and owl action, we arrive and set up scopes admiring the groups of griffons on the rocky skyline. Lots of ledges and nests are now filled with birds as they settle in for the evening. We check out lots of nooks and crannies where we've seen Eagle Owls before, but to no avail – maybe later. We also enjoy watching some Griffon antics but while we look one way Michael is looking behind, 'What's this eagle?' he asks.. It's a Spanish Imperial, that's what! High above us, riding the wind and staying in the same position twisting its head this way and that, is a black eagle with a pale nape. Then John spots another moving across – a larger female eagle glides across and then lands on the skyline – wow! What looks through the scope! The rarest eagle in the world and we've two on show.

Eventually the female takes off and soars, joined by the male and then the two land in trees for the night. Useful to know where they roost. Sadly, there is no appearance from any owl but what a day it has been in magical Monfrague National Park.

**Day 6:** After a lazy breakfast at 9am we drive to the north of Jaraicejo where we can walk into open country with small holm trees dotted here and there and wide expanses of broom. It can be a productive spot for Sylvia warblers and we see Dartford Warblers as soon as we walk down the track – nice birds. We also see Sardinian Warbler but we get no joy from any Spectacled Warblers that sometimes occur here. Still, the Woodlarks and Thekla Larks put on a fine show with both singing from the air and wires. There are also Southern Grey Shrike, Great Tit and our first Rock Sparrow. The vultures pass over in their squadrons for a day over the dehesa.

We continue to the rocky ridge near Deleitosa, where we stop for coffee and a scan. Bingo! There on the skyline is an adult Golden Eagle surveying its territory – we get wonderful looks at a top raptor. Then it's onwards to the upper reaches of Rio Almonte in the Sierra de Villuercas where the river carves a narrow gorge through cliffs. We park and notice a Great Spotted Woodpecker calling, then we watch it land on a wooden telegraph pole and it starts to drum! From the bridge across the river we see Grey Wagtail and Stripe-necked Terrapins in water and hear Nightingale, Cetti's and Subalpine Warbler. Griffons are above and perched on the cliff and large Alpine Swifts fly rapidly around the sky above.



Lunch is higher up, where we can scan the rocky ridges and wooded slopes for any raptor action – we've seen Bonelli's Eagles here on many occasions. We eat our filled rolls and watch the vultures pass over noting a Short-toed Eagle and an unusual Goshawk. We add a Robin ticking and John tracks down a Blackcap, but no sign of the Bonelli's Eagles.

We park in the nearby village of Cabanas del Castillo that nestles beneath two huge rock pinnacles, one of which has the ruins of an old castle at the top. We walk through the pretty streets then up to the saddle between the rocks where we can admire the superb views all around. On the rock buttress to the right is a pair of Peregrines calling, with one circling in the air and another perched on a rock. One chases off a Griffon! Blue Rock Thrushes are singing from rocky perches and we get good looks at male Black Redstarts too. More Alpine Swifts charge across the sky and we see a Short-toed Eagle hovering, but sadly there is no sign of our target Bonelli's Eagle. Just as we leave, something catches the eye on the rocks – two Ring Ouzels are chasing around the stony slope – a nice look at migrant birds passing through.

We start the journey back pausing to check if the Golden Eagle is still on its rocky perch – there's no sign of it, so we drop to the Rio Almonte south of Jaraicejo – here a picturesque bridge dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> century is a nice backdrop for a stroll. White Wagtails flit along the river that is fringed with small white flowers. At the far end is a group of Little Egrets and a larger Great Egret. Above the sound of Serins we can hear the windy calls from Bee-eaters and a small group are hawking for insects overhead – in due course they land on wires giving us more good looks. John and Michael spot a Little Ringed Plover flying along before we walk to the wooded slope where we can hear both Nightingale and Orphean Warbler. We glimpse both, but they are reluctant to show themselves fully – another time perhaps.

Our last session is back at Trujillo, where the afternoon light is perfect for a Lesser Kestrel show at the bullring – we get lots of fab looks at them going in and out of their specially designed roof tiles. We can even see their pale claws! A short distance further is a small lagoon and municipal park where we get wonderful looks at Black-winged Stilts, Little Grebe, Coot, Moorhen, and Mallard, all in perfect light, then Carol finds two Little Ringed Plovers. We get close views for the photographers, so a nice way to end the day.

**Day 7:** We have a big day planned for this our last full day in Extremadura. There are some gaps in our species list and we aim to fill'em! We start at the early hour of 7.30am for a pre-breakfast outing south. We have some information on the whereabouts of an Eagle Owl family.

After breakfast we climb aboard the vans and head for the Embalse de Arrocampo at Almaraz for some wetland birding. This large body of water primarily serves as a cooling facility for the nearby nuclear power station, yet new

habitats have been formed around the water with extensive reedbeds that has attracted many species.

Parking on the causeway at the edge of the water, we have views across the water to the nearest reedbed and we can see our first Purple Swamp-hen picking along the edge. There are also Little Egrets and our first Purple Herons flying across – one lands nearby and looks great in the scope. Great Egrets are flying back and forth too and we get a fly over from a bright Spoonbill. There are also Coots, Great Crested Grebes, Mallard and a Gull-billed Tern, then we get a flyby from a brilliant Kingfisher – it perches on the far side and John comments that he's never seen such a bright blue! Scanning the reeds further, we see a Little Bittern sunning itself, albeit at a distance.

We can hear the distinctive trilling from Savi's Warblers so walk across the road to scan the reedbed behind us. There, at the top of the reeds is a male in full voice. We watch from different angles and also catch a Reed Warbler in full voice. Cetti's Warblers are exploding into voice but these are more furtive and only show glimpses as they dash into bushes. More obliging are two Penduline Tits in tops of bushes – smart birds.

Next to the Visitor Centre we can park and look over another channel in the reeds. Another Savi's Warbler is singing and this time it's in full view and a good deal closer. A marvellous Little Bittern flies across and lands in the open on some flat reeds – our best views. A second Little Bittern flies in the reeds nearby the first and we suspect they may be a pair. We get good looks again and again as they fly back and forth. There is a strange looking Purple Swamp-hen at the base of some reeds, and this time we can watch it feed holding the reeds with its long pink toes – great to watch.

**Day 8:** It's a beautiful morning and a few folk enjoy a stroll in the early morning sun before breakfast – what a delightful place. After coffee and breakfast we load our luggage into the vans then assemble for a group photo, saying our goodbyes to Jesus and Angeles and the wonderful Vina Las Torres. The drive to the Madrid airport is largely uneventful along the autovia with glimpses of raptors as we drive by the sunny Spanish countryside and snow-capped Sierra de Gredos. We arrive on time at 12.30 pm and bid our farewells as John and Evie are heading off to continue their own Spanish vacation while the rest of us are heading on flights to the UK. It has been another great Extremadura trip with so many highlights for us to recall.

The votes are cast and the 'Bird of the Week' vote goes to the incomparable Spanish Imperial Eagle, with a surprise Ferruginous Duck joint second place. Rainbow Bee-eaters, Griffons, Great Bustards and White Storks are honourable third place!

'Place of the Trip' votes go to Monfrague National Park, particularly the awesome spectacle of Pena Falcon rock with vultures wheeling overhead. Second place was the fabulous Cabanos del Castillo.

Everyone has their own personal 'Magic Moment' but our time at Penafalcon Rock at Monfrague is the most popular choice!

## BIRD

Egyptian Goose  
Shelduck  
Gadwall  
Mallard  
Northern Shoveler  
Ferruginous Duck  
Red-legged Partridge  
Quail  
Little Grebe  
Great Crested Grebe  
Great Cormorant  
Little Bittern  
Cattle Egret  
Little Egret  
Great Egret  
Grey Heron  
Purple Heron  
White Stork  
Black Stork  
Spoonbill  
Griffon Vulture  
Black Vulture  
Egyptian Vulture  
Spanish Imperial Eagle  
Golden Eagle  
Short-toed Eagle  
Booted Eagle  
Bonelli's Eagle  
Red Kite  
Black Kite  
Marsh Harrier  
Montagu's Harrier  
Common Buzzard  
Goshawk  
Sparrowhawk  
Lesser Kestrel  
Common Kestrel  
Peregrine Falcon  
Water Rail  
Common Moorhen  
Eurasian Coot  
Purple Swamp-hen  
Great Bustard  
Little Bustard  
Black-winged Stilt

Little Ringed Plover  
Common Sandpiper  
Green Sandpiper  
Wood Sandpiper  
Greenshank  
Redshank  
Spotted Redshank  
Black-headed Gull  
Yellow-legged Gull  
Gull-billed Tern  
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse  
Feral Pigeon  
Woodpigeon  
Collared Dove  
Great Spotted Cuckoo  
Common Cuckoo  
Little Owl  
Scops Owl (h)  
Common Swift  
Pallid Swift  
Alpine Swift  
Common Kingfisher  
Hoopoe  
European Bee-eater  
European Roller  
Great Spotted Woodpecker  
Crested Lark  
Thekla Lark  
Woodlark  
Short-toed Lark  
Calandra Lark  
Sand Martin  
House Martin  
Crag Martin  
Barn Swallow  
Red-rumped Swallow  
Tawny Pipit  
Meadow Pipit  
White Wagtail  
Yellow Wagtail  
Grey Wagtail  
Robin  
Black Redstart  
Northern Wheatear  
Black-eared Wheatear  
Stonechat  
Song Thrush

Mistle Thrush  
Blackbird  
Ring Ouzel  
Blue Rock Thrush  
Blackcap  
Orphean Warbler  
Sardinian Warbler  
Spectacled Warbler  
Subalpine Warbler  
Dartford Warbler  
Fan-tailed Warbler (Zitting Cisticola)  
Savi's Warbler  
Cetti's Warbler  
Reed Warbler  
Great Reed Warbler  
Bonelli's Warbler  
Willow Warbler  
Chiff-chaff  
Wren  
Great Tit  
Blue Tit  
Long-tailed Tit  
Penduline Tit  
Nuthatch  
Short-toed Treecreeper  
Southern Grey (Iberian) Shrike  
Woodchat Shrike  
Azure-winged Magpie  
Magpie  
Jay  
Jackdaw  
Raven  
Spotless Starling  
Common Starling  
House Sparrow  
Spanish Sparrow  
Tree Sparrow  
Chaffinch  
Linnet  
Goldfinch  
Greenfinch  
Serin  
Hawfinch  
Cirl Bunting  
Corn Bunting  
Rock Bunting

## MAMMALS

Rabbit  
Iberian Hare  
Red Deer  
Eurasian Otter