

PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

IBERIAN LYNX AND SPRING MIGRATION, SPAIN

7 – 25 April 2017

TOUR REPORT

LEADERS: Chris Doughty and Chris Townend

On this unique and interesting tour to southern Spain, we spent two weeks exploring the sun-baked provinces of Andalucia and Cadiz. The tour had two main areas of focus. The main aim of the first week of the tour was to observe the rarest species of cat in the world, the critically endangered Iberian Lynx. This aim we achieved remarkably well, with a stunning and very close sighting, of an adult female, not more than several metres away from us. This area was also very good for birds in general, and raptors, in particular. We very much enjoyed multiple sightings of the endemic Spanish Imperial Eagle, along with a supporting cast of Black-winged and Black Kites, Eurasian Griffon and Eurasian Black Vultures, Western Marsh and Montagu's Harriers, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Northern Goshawk, Common Buzzard, Golden and Booted Eagles and Common Kestrel. One of the other highlights, during the first half of the tour, was the sighting of a displaying Little Bustard, which behaved splendidly for us. We also found a Eurasian Eagle-Owl, at its daytime roost, enjoyed good looks at a few Woodlarks, several Common Nightingales, a few Blue Rock-Thrushes, the splendid Dartford Warbler showed well, as did a couple of Cetti's Warblers and a couple of very attractive Cirl Buntings. The second week of the tour, was timed to coincide with the peak of the annual spring migration, when large numbers of migrants are heading north from Africa, to breeding grounds in Europe and western Asia. During the first half of the week, there were plenty of migrants around, and we did witness a large passage of raptors, which were made up predominantly of Booted Eagles. Unfortunately, during the second half of the week, huge storms, with winds up to 140 kilometres an hour, blew from the northeast, causing much damage along the south coast of Spain, and stopping all migration dead in its tracks. It was all we could do, to stand upright in the incredibly windy conditions!

Following a couple of long and tiring flights from Australia, we arrived at the airport, in the capital city of Madrid. Here we met up with Chris Townend, an Englishman, who has a great deal of experience, finding Iberian Lynx, and he was to be our guide, during the first half of the tour. From Madrid we drove to our eco-lodge, close to the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, just as it was getting dark, we ate a splendid meal, and then settled in, for a well earned, good nights sleep.

We spent the whole of the following day exploring the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, familiarising ourselves with the area, and in particular, the valleys were we would concentrate our efforts, to try to find the Iberian Lynx. Birds were very much in evidence throughout the day, and we enjoyed great looks at plenty of Eurasian Griffon Vultures, a couple of much rarer Eurasian Black Vultures, a couple of Western Marsh-Harriers, brilliant looks at a few Spanish Imperial Eagles, and several Booted Eagles. Red-legged Partridges proved commonplace, Common Wood-Pigeons were indeed common, as were Eurasian Collared-Doves. We enjoyed the sighting of a close Little Owl, Common Swifts circled overhead, a pair of Eurasian Hoopoes

were greatly admired, the endemic Iberian Green Woodpecker was greatly appreciated, as were the beautiful Great Spotted Woodpeckers. Crested Larks were particularly abundant, along with both Barn and Red-rumped Swallows, we saw a few Common House Martins, both Northern and Black-eared Wheatears, a splendid male Whinchat, in freshly acquired full breeding-plumage, perched on a nearby barbed wire fence, Mistle Thrushes and Common Blackbirds were regularly encountered, and Sardinian and Dartford Warblers sang from the top of small bushes. A family party of Long-tailed Tits, moved rapidly through the trees, Great and European Blue Tits showed very well, a Eurasian Nuthatch put in a brief appearance, the stunningly beautiful Woodchat Shrike was greatly admired and both Iberian and Eurasian Magpies were commonly encountered in the area. A small number of Red-billed Choughs flew around, Spotless Starlings were plentiful, as were House Sparrows, Common Chaffinches, Common Linnets, European Goldfinches and European Serins. Somewhat surprisingly, the uncommon Hawfinch, was breeding in the park, in good numbers, along with both Corn and Rock Buntings. We also saw good numbers of European Rabbits, and both Red and Fallow Deer.

We spent the following morning watching the valleys, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, where we hoped that an Iberian Lynx would reveal itself. But try as we may, our efforts to see a lynx, proved to be in vain. However, all was not in vain, we did find a good number of new birds for the tour. These included a splendid Eurasian Sparrowhawk, a few European Bee-eaters, a particularly confiding Woodlark, a couple of European Robins, a Blackcap, a pair of stunning Crested Tits, an Iberian Grey Shrike and several Common Ravens. We also found some new species of mammals for the tour, they included a Wood Mouse, an Egyptian Mongoose and a few Eurasian Wild Boars. In the afternoon we did some birding at a nearby reservoir, where we added Mallard, Yellow-legged Gull, true Rock Doves, breeding Eurasian Crag-Martins, both White and Grey Wagtails, Eurasian Wren, Blue Rock-Thrush, Short-toed Treecreeper and Common Rock Sparrow.

The following morning we returned to our vantage points in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, and this time our vigilance was rewarded, with splendid close looks, at an adult female Iberian Lynx. It was a thrilling sight, as we watched her walking stealthily through the grassland, we moved along the road hoping to see her head on, but she doubled back out of sight, and crossed the road behind us. There was a lot of high fives and jubilation, we had achieved the main aim of the tour, we had enjoyed good close looks at the stunning Iberian Lynx, the world's most endangered species of cat.

We spent the rest of the day concentrating on finding new birds within the park, these included Great Cormorant, Grey Heron, a splendid male Montagu's Harrier, a soaring Golden Eagle, Common Cuckoo, a Eurasian Eagle-Owl at its daytime roost, a Common Nightingale was observed particularly well, we enjoyed good looks at a rather obliging Cetti's Warbler and several Western Jackdaws. Today we also had prolonged looks at a couple of Iberian Hares and a couple of Spanish Ibex.

Following the success of yesterday, we decided to go birding in one or two different areas of the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park. New birds in these areas included Common Buzzard, Common Kestrel, Little Ringed Plover, European Turtle-Dove, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, European Greenfinch and the attractive Cirl Bunting.

A further full days birding in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, added Black Stork, Green Sandpiper and the very attractive Greater Spotted Cuckoo.

The following morning we went birding in an area of farmland, outside the park, close to Los Lentiscars, and we were rewarded with tremendous looks at a displaying Little Bustard, which was without doubt, one of the great highlights of the tour. There was also a supporting cast of other new birds for the tour, which included Western Cattle Egret, Black-winged and Black Kites, Black-winged Stilt, Common Sandpiper, Western Yellow Wagtail, Black Redstart, the diminutive Zitting Cisticola and both Garden and Willow Warblers. In the afternoon we returned to the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, where we added Thekla Lark and Eurasian Jay.

On our last full day in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, we enjoyed adding a Northern Goshawk, a Common Kingfisher and the delightful Eurasian Golden Oriole, to our ever growing trip list.

The next morning, we drove to the south coast of Spain, and with great reluctance, we dropped off our guide Chris Townend, at Malaga Airport. Chris had done a wonderful job for us, he was great company, and we were very sad to part company with him. As we were saying our fond farewells at the airport, a Peregrine Falcon was observed flying around the airport buildings. We then drove the short distance to the Rio Guadalhorce Natural Park, where we birded a large area of coastal lagoons. Large numbers of wetland birds inhabited the lagoons, and new birds for us included lots of Little Egrets, a few Eurasian Spoonbills, a solitary Greater Flamingo, several Gadwalls, both Common and Red-crested Pochards, the very uncommon White-headed Duck, Eurasian Moorhen, Pied Avocet, Kentish Plover, a solitary Marsh Sandpiper, a rare bird in this part of the world, both Black-headed and Slender-billed Gulls, the introduced Monk Parakeet, Pallid Swift and both European and Great Reed-Warblers. We then headed west along the coast, towards Barbate, which would be our base for the next seven nights. At a lunch stop in the town of Marbella, we added the Common Stonechat, before continuing on to our eco-lodge at Barbate. Where we found White Storks feeding in the fields and a colony of Lesser Kestrels, nesting in the older part of the building. After settling into our lodge, which was situated in the middle of an extensive pine forest, a little birding in the woodland produced Western Orphean Warbler, and Pied Flycatcher.

We started off the day the following morning, at the Barbate Estuary. Close to the bridge which crosses the estuary, we found a number of migrants sitting on a sandbank, they included a Grey Plover, a few Sanderling, a couple of Ruddy Turnstone, a Dunlin, a Common Redshank and a Whimbrel. We also watched a small flock of Gull-billed Terns in flight, the day was off to a good start. We then spent most of the day birding on 'The Rock' that is Gibraltar. Apart from the 6,000 pairs of Yellow-legged Gulls, that breed on the rock, there was very little else. There was little or no migration throughout the day, with the exception of one pale morph, Booted Eagle. However, there was one consolation, we did see a great many Barbary Apes, some of them, a little too close for comfort! In the late afternoon we drove to Barbate Reservoir, high in the mountains, where we observed a small number of attractive Great Crested Grebes. During the drive back to our lodge, we came to a screeching halt, close to Los Barrios, when we found a pair of Short-toed Eagles, soaring overhead.

The following morning, we once again began the day at the Barbate Estuary, where new birds for the tour included a pair of Eurasian Oystercatchers and a couple of Common Ringed Plovers. We then drove to nearby Tarifa Beach, where a walk along the beach, produced good numbers of Scopoli's Shearwaters, flying just offshore. We spent some time in the bird hide, where new birds for the tour included both Little and Sandwich Terns. The afternoon was spent birding in farmland, at La Janda. New birds here came thick and fast, and included a very fine Purple Heron, flight views of a dashing Eurasian Hobby, a couple of Common Pheasants, a handsome

Collared Pratincole, a single Northern Lapwing, a Common Greenshank, a pair of Common Skylarks, a dozen or more Calandra Larks, a few Tawny Pipits and a Common Whitethroat.

The whole of the following day, was spent birding in Donana National Park, where most of our time, was spent birding in and around the Bonanza Salt pans. New birds for the tour here included Little Grebe, Squacco Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Common Shelduck, a very large flock of migrating Curlew Sandpipers, many of which, were in splendid full breeding-plumage, we also saw good numbers of Little Stints, an Audouin's Gull, and a pair of attractive European Rollers. However, the highlight of the day, and the highlight of the second week of the tour, was the endless numbers of Booted Eagles and smaller numbers of Black Kites, that were battling their way northwards, against very heavy headwinds. Although it was an incredible spectacle, it was not good for the raptors, many of whom, were in a very exhausted state, they were perilously close to the coast and were in very real danger of being blown out into the Atlantic Ocean.

The following morning we awoke to find 140 kilometre an hour winds blowing from the northeast, and out into the Mediterranean Sea. All migration from Africa was stopped dead in its tracks, we could barely stand upright, and any birdlife in the area, was keeping a very low profile. Although we did go birding, by mid-day, we had found no new birds, we were exhausted from being buffeted by the very strong winds, and we decided to return to our lodge, and hope for better weather the following day.

The following morning, the winds had dropped a little, but they were still gale force winds, but undaunted, we spent the morning birding inland, at Laguna de Medina. New birds here included a pair of Black-necked Grebes, a pair of Northern Shovelers, a few Eurasian Coots, a single Lesser Black-backed Gull, a small flock of Alpine Swifts, a single Common Sand-Martin, a Savi's Warbler, an Isabelline Warbler and a Common Redstart. Quite a haul, for this late in the tour. In the afternoon we visited Cape Trafalgar; the site of Lord Nelson's famous sea battle victory, against a joint force of French and Spanish ships, and here we saw several Northern Gannets flying just offshore, and a single European Honey-buzzard, which flew in off the ocean and continued flying northwards, despite horrendous headwinds.

We spent the whole of the following day birding, but the only new bird we added, was the endangered Northern Bald Ibis. A small colony of 20 or so birds have been reintroduced to coastal Spain, and are nesting on a small cliff, on the outskirts of Verjer.

On the last day of the tour, we left the south coast of Spain, while it was still dark, and headed northwards towards Madrid airport. While driving close to the township of Jerez, a Tawny Owl flew across the road, in front of the vehicle, and as we neared Madrid airport, a Ruddy Shelduck, flew across the freeway, in front of our vehicle.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

GREBES

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* A locally common resident, we observed a pair of birds, along the edge of Laguna de Medina.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A common resident of reed-fringed lakes. Somewhat surprisingly, we only observed this species on one occasion, at a small lake, in Donana National Park.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* A common breeding resident, we observed small numbers on Barbate Reservoir, and on Laguna de Medina.

PETRELS and SHEARWATERS

Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* A common breeding resident, which we saw well, just offshore, on several occasions. **Johannes Antonius Scopoli** (1723-1788) was an Italian-Austrian, who studied medicine and became Professor of Mineralogy and Metallurgy in Schemnitz, now Branska Stiavnica, in Slovakia. He then became Professor of Chemistry and Botany, at the University of Pavia. His most famous publication was *Flora Carniolica* (1760). He corresponded with **Linnaeus**, and adopted his system of bird classification. The drug scopolamine, an alkaloid of henbane, is both a sedative and one of the so-called 'truth drugs', is named after him. This product is now often used by birders, as a sea-sick preventative medication!

GANNETS and BOOBIES

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* This species is predominately a winter visitor to coastal Spain, only a few non-breeding birds remain during the summer months. We observed small numbers off Cape Trafalgar, the scene of Lord Nelsons famous victory, and offshore from the Barbate Estuary.

CORMORANTS

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* This species is a numerous winter visitor to Spain, in recent years small breeding colonies have been established in Extremadura and in Andalucia. We saw this species very well on many occasions.

HERONS, EGRETS and BITTERNs

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* This large species of heron is numerous and widespread on passage, and especially throughout the winter months. It is also becoming increasingly common as a breeding species, in both Extremadura and Andalucia. We observed small numbers on many occasions throughout the tour.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* This species is a common passage migrant and a locally common breeding species in Andalucia and in the Guadalquivir Valley. We observed a couple of birds at La Janda, and in Donana National Park.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* A common breeding species and winter visitor, which was present in all the wetlands we visited.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* This attractive species, is a highly localised and scarce breeding visitor, mainly in the Guadalquivir Basin. We observed a few birds at one of their breeding sites, in Donana National Park.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* One of the most common residents of southern Spain, omnipresent with herds of cattle, throughout all the areas we visited.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* An inconspicuous and highly localised summer breeding visitor, which we saw well on one occasion, at one of its breeding sites, in Donana National Park.

STORKS

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* A locally common summer breeding visitor to Spain. A single bird was observed on migration, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* An abundant, mainly summer breeding visitor, throughout much of Spain. We observed it on most days, during the second half of the tour.

IBIS and SPOONBILLS

Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* A small breeding colony of this endangered species has been introduced to a cliff site, at Verjer, where we saw a few birds, very well indeed. This species is classified as 'Critically Endangered' by Birdlife International. The Northern Bald Ibis has undergone a long-term decline and now has an extremely small population, with over 95% of truly wild birds concentrated in one population in Morocco. Numbers are currently increasing owing to management actions and consequent improved breeding success. However, this gradual improvement in its status in Morocco has not yet led to an increase in the number of colonies. In Syria its population has declined dramatically in the past 30 years and is probably now extinct as a breeding population. It is estimated that the total population is between 200-249 individuals, and unfortunately decreasing. The main threats to this species are destruction of habitat, hunting, and human disturbance at nesting sites.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* An uncommon species in Spain, where numbers are slowly increasing. We enjoyed good sightings of this species on a few occasions, during the latter half of the tour.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* This species is an uncommon summer breeding visitor to Spain. We enjoyed good sightings of this attractive species, during the latter half of the tour.

FLAMINGOS

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* Another uncommon breeding species in Spain, with up to 10,000 pairs nesting in most years. We observed a single bird in the Guadelhorce Natural Park, and then we saw much larger numbers in Donana National Park.

SWANS, GEESE and DUCKS

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* This species is a rare vagrant to Spain, predominantly during the winter months, from breeding grounds in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Just south of Madrid airport, one of these birds flew across the freeway, within a few metres of our vehicle, this species is unmistakable.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* This attractive species winters in small numbers, mainly in Donana National Park and in the Guadalquivir Estuary. We observed a pair of birds, at close quarters, in Donana National Park.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* A widespread and common resident, which we observed on most days of the tour.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* This species is predominantly a winter visitor to Spain, where thousands gather on suitable lakes. Small numbers stay to breed during the summer months, we saw small numbers at the Rio Guadelhorce Natural Park, and at the Laguna de Medina.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* A common and locally numerous winter visitor and passage migrant in Spain. We observed a single pair, while birding at the Laguna de Medina.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* Once again, this attractive species is predominantly a winter visitor to Spain. However, up to 5,000 pairs breed annual in Donana National Park, and small numbers breed elsewhere. We observed a small number of birds at a number of the wetlands we visited.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* An uncommon resident in Spain. The vast majority of birds breed on suitable lagoons in Donana National Park. We observed a single individual in the Rio Guadalhorce Natural Park, and then we saw, up to a dozen or so birds, in Donana National Park.

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* This species is an uncommon and localised breeding species, in Spain. We enjoyed very good, close looks, at a good number of birds, in the Rio Guadalhorce Natural Park, with smaller numbers observed in the Donana National Park. This species is classified as 'Endangered' by Birdlife International. Unfortunately, the global population of this species has undergone a very rapid decline. The Spanish population has now stabilised, and it is projected that the global rate of decline will be lower in the next ten years. It is estimated that the total population is between 5,300-8,700 individuals, and unfortunately decreasing. The main threats to this species are drainage of wetlands, hybridisation with the introduced Ruddy Duck, and hunting and ingestion of lead shot.

KITES, HAWKS and EAGLES

European Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus* In Spain, this species is mainly an abundant passage migrant. As many as 100,000 migrate through Spain between late April, and early June. This was the main spectacle we were hoping to see, during the second half of the tour. Unfortunately, the severe weather we experienced during the last few days of the tour, stopped all migration from Africa. However, it was not all doom and gloom, we did enjoy the wonderful spectacle of large numbers of Booted Eagles, streaming northwards, on their annual migration to their breeding grounds. We had to make do, with a single European Honey-buzzard, which flew northwards, off the Mediterranean Sea, while we were birding at Cape Trafalgar.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Only a few hundred pairs of this species breed in Spain. We observed a single bird, hunting over farmland, at Los Lentiscales, close to Bailen.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* A common and abundant summer visitor to Spain, which we saw very well on several occasions.

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* This is a very common breeding species in Spain, which we observed on almost every day of the tour.

Eurasian Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus* This species is an uncommon bird in Spain, and elsewhere in the world for that matter. The two main breeding areas in Spain, are in Extremadura and in the Sierra Morena, in Andalucia. During our time in Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, which is a part of the Sierra Morena, we observed small numbers, extremely well, on a daily basis. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International. This species has a moderately small population which appears to be suffering an ongoing decline in its Asiatic strongholds, despite the fact that in parts of Europe numbers are now increasing. The population size is estimated to be between 15,600-21,000 individuals, and unfortunately, decreasing.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* The Short-toed Eagle is an uncommon summer breeding visitor to Spain. We observed a pair at Los Barrios, and this was followed by a second sighting, also of a single pair, in Donana National Park.

Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* This species is an uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant, in Spain. We observed a breeding pair in farmland at Los Lentiscales, and we also saw migrating birds on several occasions throughout the tour.

- Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* This species is a fairly common summer breeding visitor to Spain. Our first sighting, was of an adult male, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, and our second sighting, also of a single male, occurred in farmland at La Janda. **Colonel George Montagu** (1751-1815) was a soldier and natural history writer and served as a lieutenant-colonel in the English army during the American revolution. He was later court-martialled for what was referred to as '*provocative marital skirmishing*'! He then devoted his life to ornithology and following a long and distinguished career in the south of England, at the age of 64, he unfortunately died of lockjaw (tetanus), after stepping on a rusty nail.
- Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* A widespread but fairly scarce resident of forested areas. We saw a single bird in flight, while birding in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.
- Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* A scarce but widespread resident of forested areas; we saw a bird in flight on one occasion, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.
- Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* This large raptor is a widespread and common breeding resident, and even commoner, winter visitor. We enjoyed many sightings of this species, at scattered locations throughout the tour.
- Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* A resident breeding species, throughout all the mountain ranges of Spain. It is particularly common in the mountains of Andalucia, where we spent the first week of the tour, 300 pairs breed in the mountains of this province. We enjoyed a couple of sightings of this species, flying above the mountains, in Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.
- Spanish Imperial Eagle** *Aquila adalberti* We enjoyed many good sightings of this very impressive species, which was voted 'Bird of the Tour' by tour participants, during the first week of the tour, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park; one of only two strongholds, for this very scarce species. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. The world population was only 131 pairs in 1999, fortunately, the population is now estimated to be between 370-380 pairs and increasing, due to on-going intensive management measures. The main threats to this species, are deliberate poisoning by private land owners, electrocution from power-lines, and insufficient numbers of rabbits, its main source of food.
- Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* This is a widespread and common summer breeding species, throughout Spain. A few thousand birds migrate across the Mediterranean each spring and autumn. We were very fortunate to observe this spectacle, on the 19th April, in Donana National Park, when literally hundreds of birds were streaming north, to breeding grounds, elsewhere in Europe. We also observed smaller numbers, on most days of the tour.

CARACARAS and FALCONS

- Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* A widespread and common resident, throughout Spain. Numbers increase during the winter months and during both the spring and autumn migration. We observed small numbers on most days of the tour.
- Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* The Lesser Kestrel is a locally common summer breeding visitor to Spain. This species is recovering well from the catastrophic decline in numbers suffered during the 1980's and 1990's. This species nests colonially on cliffs and older buildings, notably on church towers and castles. We were fortunate that a colony of a dozen or so pairs, were nesting in the old dove cote, at our eco-lodge in Barbate, so we were able to watch them on a daily basis.
- Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* This beautiful species is a highly localised breeding bird in Spain, and an uncommon passage migrant. Therefore, we were fortunate, to observe a single bird fly directly in front of our vehicle, while we were birding in farmland, at La Janda.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* This attractive species is an uncommon breeding resident, which nests mainly on coastal cliffs, with smaller numbers nesting on inland cliffs and locally, on tall buildings. In the Donana area, where there are no cliffs, Peregrines in this area nest on the abandoned Arab watch-towers, which are dotted along the coast. Our first sighting, was of a single bird at Malaga Airport, this was followed by a second sighting, also of a single bird, in Donana National Park. However, by far our best sighting, was of a nesting pair along the coastal cliffs, at Barbate; where they put on a very impressive display of aerial manoeuvres for us, they were even practising stooping on gulls in flight, pulling up just above the gulls, without doing them any harm. It was one of the most magical moments of the tour.

PARTRIDGES and PHEASANTS

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* This particularly attractive species, is a widespread and abundant resident. Thousands of captive-bred birds are released annually, in order to hunt them. We observed this species on most days of the tour.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* A small feral population, has recently been established in southern Cadiz Province. Captive bred birds maybe encountered in small numbers elsewhere, but no other breeding populations exist in Spain. We were fortunate to observe a single male, while birding in farmland, at La Janda, in Cadiz Province.

RAILS, GALLINULES and COOTS

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* A common and widespread breeding species; we saw small numbers in the Rio Guadalupe Natural Park, and in Donana National Park.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* A common and widespread breeding species, somewhat surprisingly, we only observed a handful of birds, at the Laguna de Medina.

BUSTARDS

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax* Mainly a breeding resident, thousands of this very attractive species inhabit the steppes of Extremadura, and it is locally common, in the province of Andalucia, where we observed a single bird, displaying, at Los Lentiscars, near Bailen.

OYSTERCATCHERS

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* Yet another attractive species, this one does not breed in Spain, where it is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, of coastal areas. We saw a few birds on two separate occasions, at Barbate Estuary.

STILTS and AVOCETS

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* A widespread and locally numerous breeding summer visitor, which we saw on many occasions throughout the tour.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* This species is mainly a winter visitor to Spain, in excess of 5,000 birds, winter in Donana National Park alone. It is also a common passage migrant, but only small numbers stay to breed. We enjoyed good looks at a small number of birds, at a number of the wetlands we visited.

PRATINCOLES and COURSERS

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* An uncommon summer breeding visitor to Spain, we observed small numbers, on a number of occasions throughout the tour. We particularly enjoyed watching a few birds along Tarifa Beach, during the severe wind storm, on the 20th April.

LAPWINGS and PLOVERS

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* This species is predominantly a common winter visitor to Spain, with only very small numbers staying on to breed. We observed a single bird, in non-breeding plumage, in a flooded field, in farmland, at La Janda.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* This species is predominantly a common winter visitor and passage migrant, throughout coastal areas of Spain. Exactly the habitat where we observed small numbers, throughout the tour.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* This species is also predominantly a common winter visitor and passage migrant, to coastal areas of Spain. We observed small numbers on several occasions, along the coast.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Small numbers breed during the summer months in Spain, and small numbers also spend the winter months there. This species is predominately a passage migrant, which we observed on many occasions throughout the tour.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* A widespread and common breeding species in Spain, nesting mainly on sandy coasts and in salt pans. The resident breeding population, increases dramatically during spring and autumn passage, and during the winter months. We observed small numbers frequently, throughout the tour.

SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* This species is predominantly a passage migrant in Spain. We observed a single bird on two separate occasions, at the Barbate Estuary.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* This species is also predominantly a passage migrant in Spain. We observed small numbers at scattered localities throughout the tour.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* A widespread and common passage migrant, observed mainly at areas of freshwater, small numbers stay throughout the winter months. We observed a single bird along a small stream, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, and this was followed by a second sighting, of three birds in a flooded field, in farmland, at La Janda.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* This species is also a widespread and common passage migrant, throughout Spain, and up to 6,000 birds winter along the Atlantic Coast. We observed a single bird in the same flooded field, where we saw the three Green Sandpipers, at La Janda.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* This species is a very scarce, but regular passage migrant, usually observed singly, and at freshwater. We observed a single bird very well, at a freshwater pond in the Rio Guadalhorce Natural Park.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* A fairly common breeding resident, whose numbers are greatly increased during the winter months and during spring and autumn migration. We observed small numbers at Barbate Estuary, from the hide at Terifa Beach and at the same flooded field, that we saw the three Green Sandpipers, and the Common Greenshank, at La Janda.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* This attractive species, is predominantly a winter visitor and passage migrant to coastal areas of Spain; where we observed it well on many occasions.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* Once again, this species is predominantly a winter visitor and passage migrant to coastal areas of Spain; where we observed it well on many occasions.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* This small species of sandpiper is predominantly a passage migrant in Spain. We observed a good numbers of birds at the Bonanza Salt pans, in Donana National Park.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* This species is also predominantly a common passage migrant in Spain. We observed a very large flock of birds at the Bonanza Salt pans, in Donana National Park. Many of which, were in full breeding-plumage, and were a delight to see.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* This species is predominantly an abundant passage migrant in Spain. We observed a good number of birds, all in full breeding-plumage, at coastal sites, along the south coast.

GULLS

Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii* This species is a common passage migrant in Spain. We observed a single bird in flight, at the Bonanza Salt pans, in Donana National Park. **Jean Victoire Audouin** (1797-1841) was a French naturalist, born in Paris, where he studied medicine, natural history and pharmacy. He was appointed assistant at the Musee National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris in 1825, and in 1833 he became professor of entomology there.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* This species is a common winter visitor and passage migrant in Spain. Somewhat surprisingly, we only observed a single bird in flight, while birding at the Laguna de Medina.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* Locally abundant, with large nesting colonies on rocky coasts, including approximately 6,000 pairs at Gibraltar. We observed large numbers along the coast, on every day of the tour.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Small breeding colonies of this species occur locally in Spain, where this species is predominantly a widespread and abundant winter visitor, both inland and on the coast. We observed small numbers throughout our time, along the coast.

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei* Small numbers of this delightful species, breed locally in Spain, notably in Donana National Park, where approximately 20 pairs breed. We observed a single bird in flight at the Rio Guadalupe Natural Park, and then we found, what probably amounted to the entire breeding population, in Donana National Park.

TERNs

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Small numbers breed locally in Spain, both along the coast, and inland. It is a much more numerous bird during spring and autumn migration. We observed small numbers along the coast at Tarifa Beach, Donana National Park and Barbate Estuary.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Small numbers nest at scattered locations throughout the summer months in Spain. We found small numbers present at most wetland areas we visited, in Cadiz Province

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* This species is a common winter visitor and passage migrant, along the coast of Spain. We observed small numbers at scattered locations along the coast, in Cadiz Province.

PIGEONS and DOVES

Rock Dove *Columba livia* Feral birds of this species are common and widespread throughout Spain. However, wild Rock Doves are locally resident on rocky coasts and on inland cliffs, particularly along river gorges. We observed wild Rock Doves at a rocky river gorge, in Sierra de Andujar Natural Park. We saw feral birds, on most days of the tour.

Common Wood-Pigeon *Columba palumbus* A widespread and common resident of Spain. Migrants from northern Europe greatly increase the numbers during the winter months, when large flocks can be encountered. Several million winter in the province of Extremadura. We observed good numbers on almost every day of the tour.

European Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia turtur* This species is a widespread and common summer visitor to Spain. In recent decades the number of birds has decreased by over 50%. We observed a few birds in Sierra de Andujar Natural Park and at Laguna de Medina.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* In Spain this is a widespread and locally common species, which completed its colonisation of the entire country in the mid-1990's, and is still increasing in numbers. It is predominantly a bird of urban environments and farms, particularly favouring city parks. We saw it on every single day of the tour.

PARROTS

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus* This introduced species, is native to South America. It is now a common bird along the south coast of Spain. We saw large numbers in and around Rio Guadalhorce Natural Park, close to Malaga. We even saw the large communal nest that they build.

CUCKOOS

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* This very attractive species is an uncommon summer breeding visitor. Its main host is the Eurasian Magpie. We enjoyed good looks at a pair of birds, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* A common and widespread summer breeding visitor, and it is also common on passage, in spring and autumn. We enjoyed several good sightings of this beautiful cuckoo, during our time in Sierra de Andujar Natural Park. This is the only species of cuckoo in the world, who actually says 'cuck-oo'.

OWLS

Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo* A widespread and locally common resident, especially in rocky, hilly, or mountainous terrain. We enjoyed scope views of a distant bird sat on a rocky escarpment, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* A widespread and locally common resident of wooded areas. On the last day of the tour, we set off for Madrid airport while it was still dark, and while we were driving close to Jerez, a Tawny Owl flew across the road, in front of our vehicle.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* A widespread and common resident, which is often active in the daytime. We saw it very well, on several occasions.

SWIFTS

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* A widespread and locally common summer visitor. Some members of the group observed a small flock, flying above Laguna de Medina.

Common Swift *Apus apus* An abundant summer breeding visitor and passage migrant. We saw large numbers, on every day of the tour.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* A locally abundant summer breeding visitor, to coastal towns and coastal cliffs. We saw a small number in the Rio Guadalhorce Natural Park, and then we also saw small numbers at Gibraltar.

KINGFISHERS

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* In Spain this species is a fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant. Only small numbers stay to breed, along some of the larger rivers of Spain. Therefore, we were very fortunate to observe a pair of breeding birds, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

BEE-EATERS

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* This incredibly beautiful species, is a common summer breeding visitor, which we saw well on most days of the tour.

ROLLERS

European Roller *Coracias garrulus* An uncommon summer breeding visitor to Spain, which is more common on passage, in spring and autumn. We were fortunate to find a pair sitting on telegraph wires, during the huge storm, while we were birding in Donana National Park.

HOOPOES

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* A widespread and common, mainly summer breeding species, although small numbers do winter along the south coast. We observed this attractive species, on most days of the tour.

WOODPECKERS

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* A common and widespread resident, which we saw well on several occasions, during our time in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Iberian Green Woodpecker *Picus sharpei* A recent split from the Green Woodpecker, of the rest of Europe. This is an uncommon and highly localised and endemic resident. The main stronghold for this species is the Sierra Morena. The Sierra de Andujar Natural Park occurs within this area, and we saw it very well, on several occasions within the park.

LARKS

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra* A locally abundant resident of cereal crops and steppe habitats. We saw a good number of birds very well at La Janda, and again, in the Donana National Park.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* A widespread and common resident of cultivated areas and disturbed areas along roadsides. We observed it very well, on almost every day of the tour.

Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae* An uncommon resident of lightly wooded, hilly terrain. We observed this species very well, on one occasion, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park. **Thekla Brehm** (1832-1858) was the daughter of the German ornithologist Christian Ludwig Brehm. Brehm wrote the description of the lark in 1858, the year in which his daughter died of heart disease, and he named the bird in her honour.

Common Skylark *Alauda arvensis* This species is an abundant winter visitor and passage migrant. We observed a single bird, which was on migration, in farmland, at La Janda.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea* An uncommon bird of open woodland; breeding birds are probably resident, while birds from elsewhere are winter visitors, and also occur on passage. We saw a few of these birds very well, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

SWALLOWS

Common Sand-Martin *Riparia riparia* An uncommon summer breeding visitor, which is far more widespread and common on passage, in spring and autumn. It occasionally winters in Spain. We observed a single bird, as it flew above the Laguna de Medina.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* An abundant summer breeding visitor, and abundant passage migrant. We observed large numbers, on every day of the tour.

Eurasian Crag-Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* A common and widespread breeding species, wherever there are cliffs and rocky areas. Numbers are greatly increased in winter, by migrants from further north in Europe. We enjoyed super close looks at this species, at the reservoir, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Common House-Martin *Delichon urbicum* An abundant summer breeding visitor, and passage migrant. Which we observed on almost every day of the tour.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* This attractive species, is predominantly a locally common summer breeding visitor, where it nests under bridges, or in roadside culverts. Small numbers winter in Spain. We enjoyed many good looks at this species, throughout the tour.

PIPITS and WAGTAILS

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* This large species of pipit is widespread on passage, but only breeds in small numbers, predominantly on sheep-grazed mountain pastures, in southern Cadiz Province. Robert pointed out a bird in a ploughed paddock, in farmland, at La Janda.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* A common passage migrant and an abundant winter visitor. Large communal winter roosts of over 100,000 birds have been counted in the city of Sevilla alone. There is a relatively small breeding population, which favours stony river beds. We observed good numbers throughout the tour.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* A common summer breeding visitor and passage migrant. We enjoyed several good sightings, throughout the tour.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* This species is a common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. It is confined mainly to rocky watercourses, in the mountains. We saw it well on many occasions throughout the tour.

WRENS

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* A widespread and common resident throughout Spain. We saw it well in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park and in the pine woodlands, at Barbate.

THRUSHES and ALLIES

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* A widespread and common resident; which inhabits coastal and inland cliffs, castles, churches, ruins, and other buildings. We saw it well on a few occasions, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* An abundant and widespread resident species. Migrants from northern Europe increase the population in winter. We observed this species on every single day of the tour.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* A widespread and common resident of the southern mountains. We saw it every day, during our time in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

CISTICOLAS and ALLIES

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A common resident of open, grassy areas. The population in Spain is occasionally greatly reduced, by prolonged periods of sub-zero temperatures, as occurred in February of 2005. We enjoyed regular encounters with this very small species of warbler.

OLD WORLD WARBLERS

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* A widespread and common resident, which is a denizen of dense vegetation along watercourses, and larger reedbeds. We saw it surprisingly well, on a few occasions. **Father Francesco Cetti** (1726-1778) was an Italian Jesuit priest, zoologist and mathematician, who wrote the *Storia Naturale di Sardegna*. The second volume (1776) deals with birds in Sardinia.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* A very local and uncommon summer breeding visitor, to wetlands in southern Spain. A single bird was observed briefly, while birding at the Laguna de Medina. **Paolo Savi** (1798-1871) was an Italian naturalist, zoologist, palaeontologist and geologist. He studied physics and natural science at Pisa University, becoming Professor of Natural History there, and also director of the museum. He became an Italian senator in 1862. His greatest work was *Ornitologia Italiana*, which was published posthumously between 1873 and 1876.

European Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* An uncommon and highly localised summer breeding visitor, it is more widespread and common during the spring and autumn migration. As the name would suggest, this species breeds in reedbeds. We saw a couple of birds very well in a reedbed, in the Rio Guadelhorce Natural Park.

Great Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* This large species of reed-warbler, is a very uncommon summer breeding visitor. It is more common and widespread during the spring and autumn migration. We observed a single bird very well, in the Rio Guadelhorce Natural Park.

Isabelline Warbler *Iduna opaca* A very scarce summer breeding visitor to areas of dry scrub and bushes, especially tamarisks, along watercourses. Diane observed one of these birds very well, at the Laguna de Medina. **Isabelline** - The name refers to a dirty yellowish buff colour and is probably referable to Queen Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504) whose armies laid siege to Granada. Isabella who expected a quick victory vowed not to change her underwear until the city was won. This would have all been well and good, if the siege had not lasted for eight months!

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* The Willow Warbler is only a passage migrant in Spain; we observed a couple of birds in vegetation along a river at Los Lentiscare, near Bailen.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* An uncommon summer breeding visitor, which nests in the mountains of southern Spain. It is also a fairly common passage migrant. We observed breeding birds, on a few occasions, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Franco Andrea Bonelli (1784-1830) was an ornithologist and collector. In 1811 he was appointed curator of the Turin Museum, and it was during this time he officially described both the Bonelli's Eagle and Bonelli's Warbler.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* A widespread and common resident, it nests in scrub, gardens, and open broadleaved woodlands. The local breeding birds are joined by large numbers of migrants in winter, when the species becomes abundant in olive groves, its preferred habitat during the winter months. We enjoyed several good sightings throughout the tour.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* This species is a common passage migrant in Spain, from wintering grounds in Africa, but rarely stays to breed. We were fortunate to enjoy good looks at this species, at Los Lentiscare, near Bailen and again, at the Laguna de Medina.

Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* This species is a very uncommon summer breeding visitor to Spain, where it favours areas of low scrub, in open woodland. We observed a single bird, in the pine woodlands, at Barbate. **Orpheus** was the son of the Muse Callipe. His father was either the god Apollo or Oeagrus, King of Thrace, depending on which version of the myth you prefer. He was presented with a lyre and taught to play upon it to such perfection, that nothing could withstand the charm of his music.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* This species is a very uncommon summer breeding visitor to the mountains of southern Spain. It is much more common on passage, in spring and autumn. We observed a single, adult male, in farmland at La Janda. This bird, would have been on migration.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* A widespread and common resident, which we saw well on numerous occasions, while birding in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* A widespread and abundant resident of open scrub and dry woodland. It was particularly common in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, and we also saw it occasionally, on the south coast.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* This species is predominantly a common passage migrant in Spain. Only small numbers stay to breed, in the highest mountains. We saw a few birds along the south coast, which were all on migration.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* This species is an abundant winter visitor, a common passage migrant, and a common resident. Somewhat surprisingly, we only observed this species on two occasions, both of them, in the grounds of our eco-lodge, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* A common and widespread summer breeding visitor, which nests in dense vegetation, unusually along watercourses. We saw this rather secretive species, very well, on several occasions throughout the tour.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* This is an uncommon breeding species in Spain, but an abundant passage migrant and winter visitor. Somewhat surprisingly, we only glimpsed a single bird, while birding in farmland, at Los Lentiscales, near Bailen.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* In Spain, this species is an uncommon breeding bird, but a widespread and common passage migrant. Once again, it was very surprising, that we only saw a single bird, fortunately, it was an adult male, in full breeding-plumage. This observation took place at the Laguna de Medina.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* This species is a common passage migrant in Spain, it does not winter, or breed there. We observed stunningly plumaged males, on several occasions throughout the tour.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* This species is a very common breeding resident, and its numbers are greatly increased in winter, by migrants from northern Europe. We observed several birds, at scattered localities throughout the tour.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* This species is predominantly a common passage migrant, in Spain. It breeds in very small numbers in the highest mountains and is only a very occasional, winter visitor. We enjoyed many sightings of migrating birds, at regular intervals throughout the tour.

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* This species is a common and widespread summer breeding visitor. We saw it well on many occasions, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

LONG-TAILED TITS

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* A locally common resident of mixed and oak woodlands. One of the strongholds for this species, is the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, where we saw small family parties, on several occasions.

CHICKADEES and TITS

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* This species is an uncommon resident in Spain, and once again, the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, is a stronghold for this species. We only observed this delightful species on one occasion, in the grounds of our eco-lodge, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Great Tit *Parus major* A widespread and common resident, which we saw well on many occasions throughout the tour.

European Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* Another widespread and common resident, which we saw well on many occasions throughout the tour.

NUTHATCHES

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* An uncommon and highly localised resident, and once again, the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, is a stronghold for this species; where we saw it very well, on several occasions.

CREEPERS

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* Another common and widespread resident, which we saw well on several occasions.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES

European Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* A fairly common summer breeding visitor, and even commoner passage migrant. We only observed this bird on one occasion, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

SHRIKES

Iberian Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* A recent split from Southern Grey Shrike. It is a widespread and common resident of open woodland. We saw it well on a few occasions, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* A common and widespread summer breeding visitor, which breeds in forested mountains above 1,500 metres in altitude. We saw this very beautiful species, very well, on many occasions throughout the tour.

CROWS, JAYS and MAGPIES

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* A widespread and common resident, mainly of oak woodlands. We saw this species in flight, on a couple of occasions, while birding in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Iberian Magpie *Cyanopica cooki* A characteristic and locally common resident. One of the strongholds for this species is the open pine woods, in and around the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, where we saw it very well, on a daily basis.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* A common and widespread resident, one of the strongholds for this species, is the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, where we saw it on a daily basis.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* An uncommon and highly localised resident, once again, the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, is a stronghold for this species; we saw it here, very well, on many occasions.

Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* A widespread and locally common resident, which we observed well, on most days of the tour.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* This resident species is surprisingly common in Spain, and is the common crow of the country. We observed it well, on most days of the tour.

STARLINGS

Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor* A widespread and common resident, which we saw on every single day of the tour.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Another widespread and common resident, which we saw on every single day of the tour.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* A widespread and locally common resident, which we saw well, on several occasions.

Common Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* A highly localised and uncommon resident, once again, the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, is a stronghold for this species; and we observed a small colony of this species, at the reservoir, within the park.

SISKINS, CROSSBILLS and ALLIES

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* A widespread and common resident, in all types of woodland. We saw it well on many occasions.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* A widespread and common resident, which we again, saw well on many occasions.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* A widespread and common resident, which we saw on almost every day of the tour.

Eurasian Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* Another widespread and common resident, which we saw very well, on many occasions.

European Serin *Serinus serinus* A widespread and common resident, which we saw on almost every day of the tour.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* An uncommon and highly localised resident, once again, the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, is a stronghold for this species, where we saw it well, on several occasions.

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS, SEEDEATERS and ALLIES

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* A fairly common but localised resident, of open bushy country. Once again, the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, is a stronghold for this species, and we saw it well, on a few occasions.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* A widespread and common resident of the highest mountains of Spain. We observed it on a daily basis, during our time in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* An abundant resident species, of open country and farmland. We saw it very well, on almost every day of the tour.

MAMMALS

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* The Iberian Peninsula is where the European Rabbit originates. We observed small numbers, on a daily basis.

Iberian Hare *Lepus granatensis* As the name would suggest, this species is endemic to the Iberian Peninsula. We observed small numbers in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Wood Mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus* The common woodland mouse of Spain. One ran across the road in front of our vehicle, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Iberian Lynx *Felis pardina* The Iberian Lynx is the world's rarest species of cat, and is endemic to the Iberian Peninsula, in southwestern Europe. It is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List. Its main prey is almost exclusively the European Rabbit. In the 20th century, the Iberian Lynx population declined because of sharp declines in rabbit populations, caused by myxomatosis, rabbit haemorrhagic disease, over hunting, and the fragmentation of grassland and forest habitats. By the turn of the 21st century, the Iberian Lynx was on the verge of extinction, only about 100 individuals survived, in two isolated populations. Conservation measures were implemented in 2002, these measures have been very successful, and today the population has increased to 326 individuals. We enjoyed superb, very close looks, at an adult female, on the third morning of the tour.

Egyptian Mongoose *Herpestes ichneumon* This introduced species, was glimpsed on one occasion by myself, as we were driving in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Barbary Ape *Macaca sylvanus* The Barbary Ape population in Gibraltar is the only wild monkey population in the European continent. Most African populations of Barbary Apes are experiencing a steady decline in numbers, due mainly to hunting and deforestation. This is in stark contrast to the population in Gibraltar, which is growing steadily. At present, some 300 individuals, in five distinct troops, occupy the Upper Rock area, of the Gibraltar Nature Reserve. The apes have been present on the Rock of Gibraltar long before Gibraltar was captured by the British in 1704. The original introduction of the macaques was most likely orchestrated by the Moors, who occupied southern Iberia, including Spain and Portugal, between 711 and 1492, and kept Barbary Apes as pets. We saw a great many apes, during our visit to The Rock.

Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* We observed several of these creatures, during our time in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Red Deer *Servus elaphus* There were large numbers of this species present, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.

Fallow Deer *Dama dama* Smaller numbers of this species, were also present in the park.

Spanish Ibex *Capra pyrenaica* A pair of Spanish Ibex, were observed on a rocky and very steep mountainside, in the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park.