

Andalucia including Sierra de Andújar – March 2013

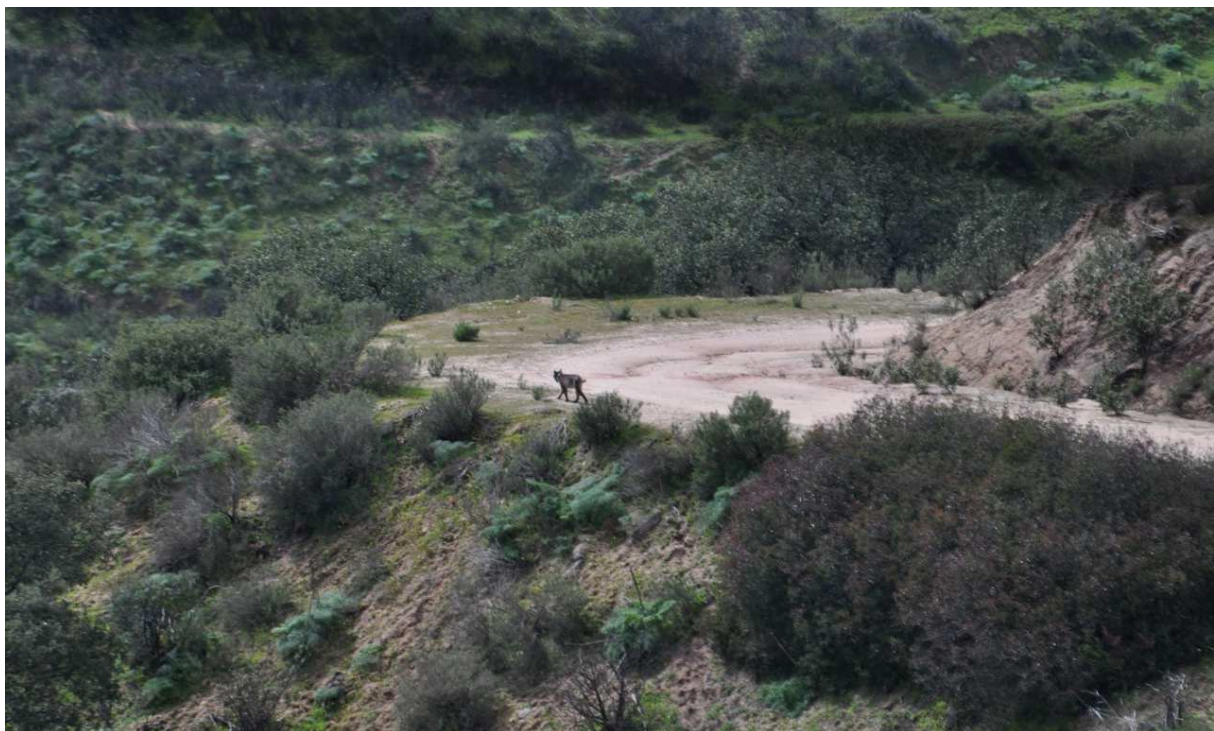
Report by Sjef Öllers

A last-minute trip to southern Spain to see Iberian lynx. The trip was successful with two lynx sightings. Birding highlights were superb views of Spanish imperial eagle, a 500+ flock of glossy ibises and excellent sightings of marbled teal, ferruginous duck and white-headed duck.

Overall, it was a fairly “lazy” trip with few early starts, mainly because we got lucky with the lynx quite quickly and the weather was very unpredictable throughout our stay. I did not do a lot of spotlighting because usually it was very chilly and raining around sunrise and sunset. Birding-wise I mostly focused on a few species that I had not yet seen before (marbled teal and white-headed duck) or not in a long time (e.g., Spanish imperial eagle, black wheatear, black-shouldered kite, etc.). If you want to see the summer visitors as well, early/mid-March is 1-2 weeks too early for most of them. They were just arriving in small numbers in the second half of our stay.

Itinerary

March 4: Flight Eindhoven – Malaga; El Torcal - Posada HumbleBee
March 5: El Chorro – Lago Dulce – Laguna Fuente de Piedra – El Chorro
March 6: Transfer to Villa Matilde/Sierra de Andújar
March 7-9: Sierra de Andújar
March 10: Transfer to Doñana National Park
March 11: Doñana National Park
March 12: Brazo del Este: Pinzon Marshes/Trebujena Marshes
March 13: Tarifa – Hikes around Jimena de la Frontera
March 14: P. N. Grazalama (Montejaque) – P. N. Los Alcornocales
March 15: Return Flight to Holland



Our second lynx sighting at La Lancha

Accommodation and Practicalities

Flights and car could be booked easily about ten days before departure. Hiring a car at Malaga airport is trivial, just pick one of the companies at the airport. Book online for a good deal, but note that a lot of them have a so-called full/empty fuel tank policy, which means that you get a very low daily rental rate for the car but you have to pay something like 100-125 Euro for the service of having a full fuel tank when you drive off. Nevertheless, this is usually still a good deal with daily rental rates between 5 and 10 Euro a day. The “advantage” of this policy is that you can return the car with an empty tank. We picked Gold Car and they were fine.

The first two nights we stayed in Posada HumbleBee (www.humblebeehome.com) south of Antequera near the village Valle de Abdalajis. Friendly place, but the tiny room was a little chilly and humid but there is an electric heater in the room. A bit too expensive for what it is in my opinion. However, the dreary weather probably didn't help to bring out the charm the place must have in warm sunny weather. Despite the poor weather there were always lots of common birds (stonechat, blackcap, crested lark, serin, spotless starling, blackbird, goldfinch, etc.) and even red-rumped swallows around the house.

In Sierra de Andújar we stayed in the excellent Villa Matilde (www.villamatilde.org). This place comes highly recommended. Friendly and knowledgeable owners, good food and a nice atmosphere overall. We took the full board option; you can lunch at the villa but we opted for taking along a picnic lunch. The picnic lunches were excellent and allow you to be flexible during the day.



Short-toed Eagle

In the Doñana area we stayed in El Rocio at Hotel Doñana Rural (website: <http://www.donana-rural.com/index.php>), which is actually a Bed & Breakfast. Self-catering guests can use the large clean kitchen (including fridge). There is a large communal area with free WiFi. Rooms are a bit small, but overall excellent value for money and normally you would not spend much time in your room anyway. Price was 39 Euro for a double room. Excellent location on the southwest edge of El Rocio; it is on Camino Moguer. Some travel guides claim that it is difficult to find. It is not, it is actually very easy to find; just take the turn off for El Rocio on the main highway between Almonte and Matalascañas, and after a couple of roundabouts, continue for maybe 1 km along the paved main drag until you see the lagoon (about 150-200 meters before the paved road ends, which is marked by red/white blocks). On the left you will see the main plaza and the famous church, but take the unpaved road on the opposite side (i.e., the right), this is Camino Moguer (check Google Earth, the place is tagged). The B&B is on the left on Camino Moguer after about 150 meters from the paved road. The friendly owner gave us a map of Doñana that was much more useful than the ones we got from both national park offices.



Spoonbills and Little Egret

The last three nights we stayed in La Vina de Linan (<http://www.lavinadelinan.com/>) in Jimena de la Frontera in the foothills of Parque Natural Los Alcornocales. Ask the owners for directions because the bed&breakfast is tucked away on the far side of the village and requires a very steep descent on a dead end road. Tarifa, Grazalema, and several other good birding sites are all relatively close by. There is an excellent restaurant in Jimena called El Ventorrillero near the main square, which easily outshines all the others. There are several nice and birdy walks around the village. The owners can help with this (they have a good walking guide for the region), but one good walk for birds is this one: <http://www.topwalks.net/en/alcornocales/asomadilla.htm>. Lots of other good walks on this website. The B&B itself has great views and pretty good birding (I had griffon vulture, booted and short-toed eagle from the balcony).

Sites Visited

El Chorro/El Torcal

We arrived in El Torcal in the afternoon of our first day. Thick fog enveloped the strange rock shapes, which kind of worked and added a bit of mystery. It was freezing cold though. We left our gloves in our B&B, a mistake. There was little bird activity, but two encounters with Iberian ibexes (first two males, then about 4-5 females) were the highlight of the walk, but the foggy drizzle unfortunately prevented getting decent pictures.



Record shots of the ibexes at El Torcal

The next day we went to El Chorro (heavy rain again when we left our B&B). En route we had our first blue rock thrush and hoopoe. As so often in Spain, beautiful landscape and lots of birds (despite the rain) but almost nowhere to stop conveniently or to get out of the car and walk, because everything is fenced. We first stopped at the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes gorge and birded a bit along the road. We saw our first griffon vultures, crag martins, and a grey wagtail. Thick cloud and frequent showers were the norm on the southern flanks of the El Chorro area, but luckily it was drier on the western side. There we walked the Sendero del Gaitanejo, which is okay and had decent birdwatching. Cetti's warbler, a few griffon vultures, firecrest, crested tit, and the Iberian forms of green woodpecker and long-tailed tit were the most interesting sightings.



El Chorro around sunset

Desfiladero de los Gaitanes

After a visit to Laguna Fuente de Piedra (see below) we returned to El Chorro in the afternoon. In El Chorro village, we followed the signs for the Sendero Haza del Rio, which – typically – had ambiguous signposts on the outskirts of the village. We just continued on a trail that probably was not the marked trail, but seemed nice enough and was quite birdy (siskin, black wheatear, linnet, alpine chough, griffon vulture, and rock bunting).

Laguna Fuente de Piedra/Laguna Dulce

We noticed that the weather in the plains north of El Chorro was much better, so we crossed the Embalse del Gaudaltea and Guadalhorce. A quiet country road southeast of Campillos (MA452 on Google Earth) with a mix of grasslands, shrub, and several lakes/ponds had some excellent birds such as lesser kestrel, common crane, ferruginous duck, and greater flamingo plus a lot of common species.

The best birding in *Laguna Fuente de Piedra* was around the visitor centre, but conditions were probably better than average due to the recent rain. Large numbers of ducks and waders. Some of the more interesting birds were little owl, yellow wagtail, black-shouldered kite, ruff, common snipe, a variety of Tringa sandpipers, black-tailed godwit, purple swamphen, and common crane. Rabbits were the only mammals seen. We didn't see white-headed duck here, but others did. The viewpoints elsewhere around the lake are ridiculously far away. Pretty lame birding in my opinion and I couldn't be bothered to go through all the flamingos to check for Lesser Flamingo.

On the way back we stopped at *Laguna Dulce* (2 km east of Campillos). It didn't look very promising from the main road, but pretty much the first birds I had in my bins were a couple of white-headed ducks. I rushed out to get the scope and then noticed that there were at least 25-30 of them. Excellent. Lots of other ducks including red-crested pochard.



Record shot of the White-headed Ducks at Laguna Dulce

Sierra de Andújar

The two main lynx watching areas (Encinarejo Trail and La Lancha) are well described by others and in particular in the excellent report by Lee Dingain. Nevertheless, there are a few more areas that might be worth checking out. At Los Escoriales, a farm complex, where you turn left to drive to La Lancha, you can also continue straight on for another 20-30 meters and then take a track to the right (just after the last farm building on the right side of the road). This is the JV5041 in direction Banos de la Encina (but there is no signpost). The first 8-10 kilometres of this quiet road lead through excellent terrain with several good viewpoints to scan for mammals and birds. At some point you descend to a large farm and a few kilometres beyond the first olive groves start to appear (and the road becomes very potholed). This is where we decided to turn around. Unfortunately, the day that we explored the JV5041 was the worst day (i.e., terrible

weather) of the tour. It rained buckets almost non-stop for most of the day. We only saw red deer, fallow deer and rabbit, but the habitat is excellent and it looks like anything (including a lynx) could turn up here. We also did some spotlighting on this road at the end of that same day, when it was sort of dry (but very chilly). We didn't see much but encountered our only Iberian hare of the trip.

Another area worth checking out is the following: if you look at Lee Dingain's map (Encinarejo Trail), the trail splits at the end. The right branch goes across the bridge to some buildings. The left branch follows the left bank of the the Embalse de Encinarejo for about 1.5-2 km. This track to the left along the embalse initially goes uphill and passes various picnic areas until you are finally stopped by a gate of a private Coto de Caza after maybe something like 1.5 kilometres. On the right side of this track there are eucalyptus trees, picnic sites and the Embalse de Encinarejo. Left of the road is a fenced-off area with open forest with little undergrowth. This area does not look very promising, but this is actually the place where we saw our first lynx. We almost literally stumbled on this animal on foot on a late afternoon walk. The lynx stood a few meters behind the fence, so only about 15-20 meters away from the road/us. We saw the lynx about 400-500 metres from the start (i.e., from the bridge/dam area). Initially we couldn't believe our luck so we both kept our bins focused on the lynx assuming she would run off any second, but she just casually stared back at us for at least a minute. Then with a sudden jump she walked to an area with denser undergrowth and watched us for another minute or so. The animal then started moving again and worked her way up the slope until we lost sight of her.



The first lynx sneaking away at Encinarejo

There also is a walking trail from the El Jabali picnic site (which is located along the A6178, the road continues to Sanctuario Vigen de la Cabeza) down to the dam at Encinarejo. In true Spanish fashion it is oddly marked at both trail ends. Only the lower part is interesting (i.e., the part that ends at the dam end of the Encinarejo trail). The following description may sound confusing, but it is a little confusing, but should be no problem “on site”. Only about hundred meters before the Encinarejo Trail ends and branches left (to the picnic sites along the Embalse) and right (to the bridge/dam), you will see that the fence that runs parallel to the Encinarejo Trail/track stops and the fencing continues up the slope of the hill. Where the fence ends along the road and goes uphill, there should be a signpost that says Fin de Sendero (or something similar), this is the end of the trail that comes down from El Jabali. Along the fence uphill, there is an indistinct track. Check with you bins for trail markers or better just walk uphill along the fence until you see a gate (by then you must have seen trail markers). Open and close the gate to follow a steep trail uphill. After a couple of hundred meters look back. From this area you have a wider view over the surrounding area (than from the low hill just above the dam that Lee Dingain describes). The spot where you are right under the power lines is very good to scan the surrounding area.



Hiking Trail Encinarejo-El Jabali close to the Encinarejo end of the trail

A few hundred meters further on, the trail levels off into a lovely valley. On the right you pass several rocky areas that are worth checking for birds and mammals. For about one kilometre you walk up through a fairly pleasant landscape that could be good for lynx (check for “spoor”) and other wildlife. After about 1-1.5 kilometres you reach a fire break and the trail continues left (i.e, you walk along a fence on a track that forms the fire break). Eventually you reach the main road and then there is a very boring stretch

along the main road to the El Jabali picnic site. I think it is only worth walking up in the valley up to the fire break. But the little valley is a nice place to walk, to have a picnic lunch and to scan the area from the point where the power lines cross the trail.



View from the mirador near the La Lancha hamlet

Every birder should put the Sierra de Andújar on their itinerary. La Lancha is in my opinion a much better place to see Spanish Imperial Eagle and Black Vulture than, for example, Monfrague (which is of course fantastic too). Both species were seen several times daily in the La Lancha area and often at very close range! Golden Eagle sightings also seem almost guaranteed if you stay a few days in the area.



Black vulture: poor picture taken in heavy rain at La Lancha and brutally overexposed to get some colour on the bird, but I liked the battle-scarred warrior look on this moulting bird.

Doñana National Park

This place had been on my wish list since the late eighties, but somehow I only got there this time. Expectations were probably too high and almost inevitably I found it the most disappointing part of our visit. The park itself is probably great, but access is very restricted and we didn't take one of the tours into the core areas of the park. The buffer zones can offer good birding, but Acebuche and La Rocina were just too busy and touristy for my tastes. Even on a Monday in March there were tour buses with pensioners, noisy hordes of school kids, etc. Most surprising, however, were the ugly surroundings just outside the nature reserve areas (chemical factories, agriculture fuelled by heavy pesticide use right up to the border of the reserves, the awful tourist resort Matalascañas, etc.).

When we were there, the birding at Acebuche and La Rocina was underwhelming. The birding at Palacio del Acebrón was okay (and less tourists). Best birding was at Jose Valverde visitor centre, which required a lengthy detour via Villamanrique de la Condesa. The unpaved roads between El Rocio and Jose Valverde were definitely off-limits for a normal 2WD after the non-stop rain of the preceding weeks. I even almost got stuck on the water-saturated sandy road on the edge of La Rocio that leads to the old bridge in the direction of La Rocina. After the disappointing birding around El Rocio, the Jose Valverde area finally gave a glimpse of what Doñana must be at its best. Large congregations of flamingos, herons, ducks, cormorants, and waders were seen. Highlight was a 500+ flock of glossy ibises. A family group of lesser kestrels hunting at close range was very nice as well. As I only managed to get there late in the afternoon, I didn't have time to explore this area fully. My after-dark drive back to El Rocio produced absolutely nothing apart from some rabbits. Not even deer were seen.

We also explored the area west of Matalascañas. Take the road to Mazagón and at regular intervals there are parking areas from which hiking trails into the dunes start. They were nice for the scenery, but the birding wasn't that exciting. More interesting was the access road that leads inland to Sendero Ribetehilo. The good-quality unpaved access road is a marked turn off on the road between Matalascañas and Mazagón (and could be excellent for spotlighting, unfortunately did not have time for this). Don't be put off by the gate at the turn-off, it is open in daytime (and no indication that it is closed at night, but might be worth checking before you go spotlighting). The access road produced a red fox and peregrine around midday. The trail itself was okay, but nothing exceptional was seen but an early morning visit is probably more productive.



Little Owl

Azure-winged Magpie

Red-legged Partridge

Brazo del Este: Pinzon Marshes/Trebujena Marshes

For both Doñana and the Pinzon Marshes, get the *Finding Birds in Southern Spain* guide by Dave Gosney. Even my 1996 copy was still very useful. An excellent addition to this for the Pinzon Marshes and Trebujena Marshes (but not Doñana) is *Birding Cadiz Province*, which is a free online “where to find birds in...”-type guide by John Cantelo, which describes both the Pinzon Marshes and Trebujena Marshes very well. Go here: <http://birdingcadizprovince.weebly.com/> and follow the instructions to download the guide. You have to register first to get the PDF, but it is straightforward. Also well worth taking is *Where to Watch Birds in Southern & Western Spain* by Ernest Garcia and Andrew Paterson. My copy was from the early 90s and despite being outdated here and there, it was still accurate and very useful for most sites visited, so the most recent version must be excellent.

It was raining all the time when we visited Pinzon Marshes (located southwest of Los Palacios y Villafranca). Nevertheless, we found a group of 42 purple swamphens feeding together on a grassy field on the edge of the reeds. Quite amazing. Here, we also encountered glossy ibis, the only purple heron of the trip, a squacco heron, and a variety of commoner wetland birds. It would have been nice to spend more time here but the persistent rain and the condition of several roads prevented that. We then wanted to follow the road along the Guadalquivir down south to Trebujena Marshes. Our old Garcia/Paterson mentioned that the road is badly potholed and twenty years later this is still the case. We unfortunately had to make a small detour to Lebrija for fuel and then went to the marshes via the small town of Trebujena (see John Cantelo’s guide for directions). If you enter Trebujena from the north on the main highway, the description can be a little confusing, but take the first roundabout in town and go uphill (to the right), then continue for another 1.5 kilometres or so (passing a bar on the right-hand side) on what is the most likely candidate for the main road. You exit the town on the northwest side and follow a minor country road (hoopoe) that leads directly to the marshes. If you reach the river after about 7-8 kilometres, turn left to reach the Bonanza pools/Salinas de Monte Algaida area (and various other excellent birding sites, see Gosney or Cantelo). Cantelo gives excellent tips to find marbled teal and we found four of them at a reliable site described by him (Codo de la Esparraguerra). The birding here was excellent in general with another squacco heron posing for a while and good numbers of waders, herons, spoonbills, flamingos and glossy ibises. Lesser Short-toed lark, zitting cisticola, purple swamphen, Tringa sandpipers, pied avocet, and reed bunting were some of the other species seen.

Tarifa

This was more or less as annoying as I expected it to be (busy road, much of the birding viewpoints not marked with sometimes dangerous turn-offs/exits), but with the added disappointment that there were little migration movements on the day we were there. The weather forecast that day indicated that there was no prevailing wind direction, which initially seemed weird, but seemed correct when we got there. We were there from about 9.15 to 12.30, but we got little more than several common gull species and black kites. We missed the turn off for El Algorobbo, but we did stop at Mirador del Estrecho, Trafico, Cazalla and Trebujo, where we also hiked one of the trails. From the trail we saw a few griffon vultures and lots of common warblers (black redstart, greenfinch, robin, serin, etc.), but nothing of note.

Montejaque area in the Grazalema Nature Park

For site descriptions, check the *Birding Cadiz Province* guide (Site E4.2) by John Cantelo mentioned under the Pinzon Marshes/Trebujena Marshes entry. A site with great scenery and excellent birding. It was too early for black-eared wheatear and other summer visitors, but we did find blue rock thrush, black wheatear, Bonelli's eagle, short-toed eagle, griffon vulture, chough and rock bunting. Black redstart and stonechat were everywhere. Impressive was a group of at least fifty short-toed eagles migrating north.

Parque Natural Los Alcornocales

We only had time to drive through this area and make a few stops en route (site E3.4 in Cantelo's guide). We also made a stop at the vulture feeding station north of Cortes de la Frontera, but there were no birds around. The road passes through good habitat, but the birding was a bit underwhelming when we were there.



Montejaque – Llanos de Libar

Trip List Index

DNP = Doñana National Park and the buffer zones areas

SdA = Sierra de Andújar

LFP = Laguna Fuente de Piedra

Mammal List

Schreiber's Bat *Miniopterus schreibersii* – A few at their roost at La Lancha dam in SdA
[Greater Mouse-eared Bat *Myotis myotis* and Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii* – these species also occur at La Lancha but not seen well enough to tick]

[Pipistrelle sp?? – the smalls bats seen in DNP may have been this genus]

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* – one in DNP on the road to Sendero Ribetehilo, a possible one at Encinarejo (flushed and barely seen).

Iberian Lynx *Lynx pardinus* – one with a dark blue collar at Encinarejo, a male with an off-white collar was seen at La Lancha

[European Otter *Lutra lutra* – not seen, the dam gates were fully open when we were there, with the result that the water just below the dam was very high and murky. And I was told that the otters have a large territory along the river and are not always in the area around the dam]

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* – one very close (less than 15 meters) in the La Lancha area. Others had seen larger groups and females with piglets both at La Lancha and Encinarejo during our stay.



Wild Boar

Fallow Deer *Dama dama* – males and females seen on all days in SdA, about 5-25 daily

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* – very common in SdA, males and females seen on all days

European Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus* – one near Alcala de los Gazules

Mouflon *Ovis orientalis musimon* – only one female seen, but males were seen by a number of people in the La Lancha area while we were there

Iberian Ibex *Capra pyreneica* – two males and at least five female-type animals in El Torcal. They can also be seen in the rocky areas at the dam at La Lancha, but we didn't see them there.

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* – about five in LFP, 2-20 seen daily in SdA, small numbers in DNP.

Iberian Hare *Lepus granatensis* – one at dusk in SdA on the road between Los Escoriales and to Banos de la Encina

Wood Mouse *Apodemus Sylvatics* – one animal was seen well when it crossed the road (between Los Escoriales and La Lancha) and was stopped by a roadside stream.



Red Deer

Bird List

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – common in most wetland areas, 10-25 daily in DNP, also seen on the water reservoirs near El Chorro and in the Trebujena Marshes

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* - common in most wetland areas, 10-20 daily in DNP, also seen at on the water reservoirs at El Chorro, and Pinzon and Trebujena Marshes

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* – at least three at the J.A. Valverde visitor centre in DNP

Gadwall *Anas strepera* – small numbers (3-5) at LFP, El Rocio lagoon, La Rocina, Pinzon and Trebujena Marshes

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* – a few daily in SdA, small numbers at LFP, a few dozens at Laguna Dulce, common in DNP and Brazo del Este

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* – at least 50 in LFP, dozens at Laguna Dulce, about a dozen at La Rocina and Acebuche, >100 at J.A. Valverde visitor centre, 50+ both at Pinzon and Trebujena Marshes

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* – at least 15-20 in LFP, about 8-10 at Pinzon Marshes

Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* – four seen well at Codo de la Esparraguerra in the Trebujena Marshes.



Marbled Teal

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* – four at Laguna Dulce, about 10-15 in the Trebujena Marshes

Common Pochard *Aythya farina* – several dozens at LFP and Laguna Dulce, >100 at J.A. Valverde visitor centre, regular in small number in other areas of DNP

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* – a male on a small lake along the MA452, southeast of Campillos

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* – at least 25 (including at least 12 males) at Lago Dulce

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* – a few en route to SdA, common in SdA (5-10 daily)

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* – about 20-30 on a small lake along the MA452 near Campillos, large numbers at LFP, also several dozens in (what looked like temporary) wetlands along the A2000 between Trebujena and Jerez de la Frontera, and

dozens if not hundreds in the wetlands along A4 highway between Jerez de la Frontera and Chiclana de la Frontera, a few dozens at J.A. Valverde visitor centre.



Greater Flamingo

[Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* – a potential one in SdA (a second-long glimpse of a large black bird disappearing over a ridge was probably this species, definitely not a black vulture)]

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* – a few around Cordoba, very common in DNP

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* – two between Malaga and Antequera, very common around the J.A. Valverde visitor centre (and the access route) in DNP, common at Pinzon and Trebujena Marshes, between 5 and 40 around El Rocio/La Rocina and Acebuche, and occasionally seen en route

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea* – scarcer than expected, a few only in the Acebuche/La Rocina/El Rocio area, good numbers at the J.A. Valverde visitor centre, occasional sightings en route/elsewhere

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* – one in the Pinzon marshes

Great Egret *Ardea alba* – about 15-20 around the J.A. Valverde visitor centre and surrounding area, about five in the Trebujena marshes

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* – about 5-10 in the Acebuche/La Rocina/El Rocio area, a few dozens around the J.A. Valverde visitor centre and surrounding area, about 35-40 in the Trebujena marshes

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* – seen on most days, often en route

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* – one in the Pinzon marshes, one at close range in the Trebujena marshes

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – at least eight roosting, seen from one of the lake viewpoints along the trail at Palacio de Acebron

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* – about 15-25 were always present around the El Rocio bridge/first hide in La Rocina, also seen at Pinzon and Trebujena Marshes and around J.A. Valverde visitor centre

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* – small numbers (<10) at La Rocina, 500+ at J.A. Valverde visitor centre, at least 200 in the Trebujena marshes



Glossy Ibis

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – one seen along the river from the Encinarejo Trail in SdA

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* – one scoped at LFP

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* – one near Alcala de los Gazules

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* – at least five different individuals at SdA daily

Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus* – common in SdA, Grazalema and Los Alcornocales, large groups also around Alcala de los Gazules and Jimena de la Frontera, regular sightings of singles and small groups en route

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* – 1-3 around Jimena de la Frontera, three different birds at Montejaque, also seen around Alcala de los Gazules, a group of at least 50 birds was migrating north near Montejaque

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* – one in SdA, several seen around Jimena de la Frontera

Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti* – at least three different birds seen daily at La Lancha

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* – one adult on March 8 and one immature on March 9 at La Lancha

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata* – rather distant views of an adult high up in the sky at Montejaque

Eurasian Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* – at least five in the area around J. A. Valverde visitor centre, 2-3 in the Pinzon and Trebujena Marshes

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* – a total of three sightings in SdA, one at Palacio del Acebron on March 11

Red Kite *Milvus milvus* – one seen on two days at the La Rocina hides

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* – migrating groups of 5-200 birds were a common sight throughout, the birds in DNP were probably resident, 1-3 at Pinzon and Trebujena Marshes

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* – two en route to SdA, about 1-2 daily in SdA, one at LFP, one at Laguna Dulce, one near Alcala de los Gazules

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* – one at LFP, about 2-6 at La Rocina and Acebuche in DNP, an amazing 42 feeding together in the Pinzon marshes (several other large gatherings were seen in the same area), also good numbers in the Trebujena marshes and the J.A. Valverde visitor centre in DNP



Purple Swamphen (and Gadwall)

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* – 1-5 in LFP and the various areas (Acebuche, La Rocina, etc.) in DNP, also about 3-5 in Pinzon and Trebujena Marshes

[Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata* – not seen, had seen this species in the past, did not really try this time]

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* – common in wetlands

Common Crane *Grus grus* – a group of twenty along the MA452 southeast of Campillos and a total of eight around LFP

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* – a few en route

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* - about 5 at Trebujena Marshes

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* - about 4-5 at LFP

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* – about 20 along the MA452 southeast of Campillos, about 15-20 in LFP (visitor centre area) and another couple of dozens around the lake elsewhere, 300+ in the J.A. Valverde visitor centre in DNP.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* – about 10 along the MA452 southeast of Campillos, four in LFP (visitor centre area), about ten at J.A. Valverde visitor centre, about 10-15 in the Trebujena Marshes

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* – singles seen in LFP, Pinzon and Trebujena marshes, and DNP

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* – two in the Trebujena marshes, two at J.A. Valverde

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* – one in Trebujena marshes
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* – one at LFP, two in the Trebujena marshes
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* – two in the Trebujena marshes
Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus* – two at LFP, 5-6 in the Trebujena marshes
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* – about 10 at LFP (visitor centre) and 40-50 at El Rocio lagoon
Little/Temminck's Stint *Calidris minuta/temminckii* – several distant groups in the Trebujena Marshes were one of or both these species, Little Stint is more likely
Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* – about 20 at LFP
Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* – one at LFP
Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* – several dozens at LFP, >100 at Laguna Dulce, dozens along the A4 highway between Jerez de la Frontera and Chiclana de la Frontera.
Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyophaga melanocephalus* – regular sightings along the coast
Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* – a few at LFP, common along the coast, dozens along A4 highway between Jerez de la Frontera and Chiclana de la Frontera, small numbers (5-10) at Pinzon Marshes, Trebujena Marshes and J.A. Valverde visitor centre.
Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* – a few at LFP, small numbers (5-10) at Pinzon Marshes, Trebujena Marshes and J.A. Valverde visitor centre.
Rock/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* – common
Stock Dove *Columba oenas* – fairly common
Common Wood-Pigeon *Columba palumbus* – common
Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* – common
Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* – one en route between Cordoba and Sevilla [Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* – heard only at Palacio del Acebron]
Little Owl *Athene Noctua* – one at LFP
Alpine Swift *Apus melba* – small numbers (5-10) in the El Chorro area, about 5-6 around the lakes southeast of Campillos
Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* – seen in the Malaga area, El Chorro, and around Jimena de la Frontera and Alcala de los Gazules
[European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* – not seen by us, but we heard from other birders that the first birds had arrived]
Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* – two at Acebuche, four different birds at Palacio del Acebron, one on the walking trails around Jimena de la Frontera, one near Alcala de los Gazules, one near Trebujena village
Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* – one in the morning along the entrance road to Palacio del Acebron
Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* – at least two along the trail at Palacio del Acebron, heard a few times in SdA
Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* – fairly common (but easy to miss if you are looking for it), 1-2 seen on most days but almost always flight views
Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* – a group of about 7-8 birds along the MA452, a group of seven birds hunting near the J. A. Valverde visitor centre.
Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – 1-3 seen on most days
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* – one on its nest (electricity pylon) in DNP was a bit of a surprise
Southern Gray Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* – one en route to SdA, two in the La Lancha area in SdA, one along the road to Palacio del Acebron
Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* – one near the Acebuche visitor centre

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* – few sightings, twice seen in the La Lancha area
 Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus* – abundant in SdA
 Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* – common in SdA, fairly common in DNP
 Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* – two at El Torcal, a few daily in SdA, four around Montejaque
 Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* – a group of about 20 along the Encinarejo River in SdA
 Common Raven *Corvus corax* – a few daily in SdA, also seen in DNP and Montejaque
 Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens* – about 10-15 seen in the Trebujena marshes and a few in LFP
 Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* – very common
 Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae* – a few in mountainous areas seemed to be this species (Grazalema area, Montejaque)
 Eurasian Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis* – a few sightings only
 Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* – common in El Chorro, also seen around Jimena de la Frontera and Montejaque, and en route.
 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – regular sightings throughout, seen daily
 Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* – fairly regular, seen on about 5-6 days
 Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* – regular sightings throughout, seen daily
 Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* – two at Sendero del Gaitanejo
 Great Tit *Parus major* – common
 Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* – fairly common
 Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* – fairly common (Iberian race *irbii* here).
 Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* – one en route between Malaga and Valle de Abdalajis
 Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* – a few sightings only
 Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* – a few sightings only (El Chorro, SdA)
 Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* – common on the Sendero del Gaitanejo in El Chorro
 Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* – one seen well on the Sendero del Gaitanejo in El Chorro, heard quite regularly
 Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* – fairly common, seen/heard on most days in SDA, difficult to distinguish from Iberian Chiffchaff when the light is not optimal and the bird is not singing
 Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* – fairly common, several seen well on the Sendero del Gaitanejo in El Chorro, the Iberian form is also common in Los Alcornocales
 [Great Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* – one heard at La Rocina]
 [Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* – one heard in the Pinzon Marshes, seems a little early but definitely a *Locustella* warbler]
 Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* – several in the Trebujena and Pinzon marshes, one seen well on the Ribetehilo Trail in DNP
 Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* – common to abundant
 Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata* – two in the Trebujena marshes
 Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* – several daily in the La Lancha area in SdA, occasionally heard elsewhere
 Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* – common in SdA, also seen at LFP, Laguna Dulce, DNP, and Jimena de la Frontera
 European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* – common to abundant (especially in SdA)
 Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* – common to abundant, especially at Montejaque
 Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* – poor views of a male in El Chorro, a female and three males in Montejaque, a female near Jimena de la Frontera on the walk

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* – one male at La Rocina

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* – common to abundant (Montejaque)

Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucura* – one female at El Chorro, at least 3 males and one female at Montejaque



Female Stonechat



Male Black Wheatear

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula* – common to abundant

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* – did not seem that common, only a few seen but possibly overlooked/ignored

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* – common in SdA

Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor* – common to abundant throughout

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* – one in SdA

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* – a few at LFP and Trebujena Marshes

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* – one at El Chorro

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* – common, several large migrating groups were seen

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* – common

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* – seemed less common than other finches, a few along the entrance road to Palacio de Acebron, heard only around El Chorro, also seen at the Trebujo migration watchpoint.

Eurasian Siskin *Spinus spinus* – one pair seen well near El Chorro village

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* – common

Eurasian Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* – regular sightings in more hilly/mountainous areas

European Serin *Serinus serinus* – common

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* – 1-2 daily in SdA

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* – common

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* – a family group including a nice male at the start of the El Jabali/Encinarejo trail in SdA

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* – fairly common at El Chorro/Sendero del Gaitanejo and El Torcal, only a few at Montejaque, also seen around Trebujena

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* – about ten in LFP, and about five in the Trebujena marshes

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* – common