

# MALLORCA & ISLAS CÓLUMBRÉTES

## Introduction Mallorca 2-16 July 2008

This was basically a family-holiday, with limited birdwatching. My aim was not to amass as many species as possible, but to concentrate on a few endemic (sub)species, especially Balearic Warbler, *balearica* Crossbill and *balearica* Spotted Flycatcher, both potential splits.

Although the areas in the north-east of the island (Port Pollença and Alcúdia) are traditionally most visited by birdwatchers, the area around Cala d'Or is also good for both target-birds and an opportunity to see them somewhere else than at the classic sites like the Boquer-valley or the Formentor-peninsula. The only downside of staying in Cala d'Or is the long(er) drive (1-1,5 hour) to the S'Albufera-marsh and Tramuntana-mountains. The beaches in Cala d'Or are more beautiful than those in Alcúdia and were especially attractive to our children who wanted to see fish, which were plentiful. All in all I think that Mallorca offers one of the best possible opportunities to combine a family-holiday with birdwatching.

We stayed in an apartment in Esmeralda Park, which was more luxurious (and also more expensive) than any other accommodation we had ever used. The air-conditioned room and pools however were very welcome, especially during the first week of our stay with temperatures above 30<sup>o</sup>C. Also the buffet-style breakfast and dinner made our stay here very convenient. This was our first visit to Mallorca.

We booked a car in advance from Avis for 10 days, which on reflection was a bit too long. I only used it to visit both Porto Colom and Castel de Santueri twice and Cap de Ses Salines and Salobrar de Campos once. I also drove to S'Albufera one morning, with a very early start at 4.30 am in the hope of seeing or hearing some owls en route. It was always possible to park the car near Esmeralda Beach, which was very close to our hotel. Driving on Mallorca is no problem at all, with very good roads and places well indicated, although the possibilities to stop along a road are sometimes limited.

I did not visit the Tramuntana-mountains, the Boquer-valley or the Formentor-peninsula and as a result didn't see birds like Red Kite, Egyptian- and Black Vulture, Booted Eagle, Peregrine, Wryneck, Blue Rock Thrush, Spectacled Warbler, Moltoni's Warbler, Blue Tit and Raven. I have however seen most of these birds already on several visits to Spain, the most recent in May 2008. The claim in Hearl (see below) that all breeding Wryneck are *mauritanicus* is unsubstantiated.

## Information

I used both the rather outdated (but still useful) 'A guide to Bird-watching in Mallorca' by Eddie Watkinson and the more recent and adequate 'A birdwatching guide to Mallorca' by Graham Hearl. On the internet a lot of trip-reports can be found [www.travellingbirder.com](http://www.travellingbirder.com), with the one from Jaap Westra (Birding Mallorca, 2-9 May 2004) and Gonçalo Elias (Mallorca, September 2003) proved the most useful. Of course I also used Birds of the Western Palearctic (BWP). For the bird-sounds I used Bergman, Helb and Baumann 'Die Stimmen der Vögel Europas', which includes recordings of Balearic Warbler. Note that Balearic Warbler, although closely related, does not respond to the song of Marmora's Warbler !

## **Sites visited**

### ***Cala d'Or***

Cala d'Or is a small town and consists of several inlets with beautiful sandy beaches, surrounded by pines. Just south of the Cala Esmeralda beach is a small park and a build-up area with a lot of vegetation which was good for the commoner birds. I did a seawatch on several evenings from one of the headlands close to the hotel.

Birds recorded: Scopoli's Shearwater, Shag, Stone Curlew, Audouin's Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Wood Pigeon, Rock/Feral Dove, Turtle Dove, Collared Dove, Swift, House Martin, Blackbird, Sardinian Warbler, Firecrest, Spotted Flycatcher, Great Tit, House Sparrow, Serin, Greenfinch, Goldfinch and Crossbill.

### ***Porto Colom***

Porto Colom is a short distance from Cala d'Or and the peninsula between the harbour and the sea is easy to find and a well known birdwatching-site. The vegetation consists mostly of garigue-scrub with a few pines and is very good for warblers, especially Sardinian- and Balearic Warbler, Thekla Lark and Pallid Swift. The harbour is a reliable site for Shag and Audouin's Gull.

Birds recorded: Shag, Kestrel, Red-legged Partridge, Stone Curlew, Common Sandpiper, Swift, Pallid Swift, Hoopoe, Audouin's Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Wood Pigeon, Turtle Dove, Rock/Feral Dove, Tawny Pipit, Thekla Lark, Wren, Stonechat, Blackbird, Balearic Warbler, Sardinian Warbler, Blackcap, Firecrest, Spotted Flycatcher, Woodchat Shrike, House Sparrow, Linnet, Goldfinch, Crossbill and Corn Bunting.

### ***Cap de Ses Salines***

This is the most southerly point of Mallorca and only shortly visited on a very hot afternoon. The archipelago of the Islas de Cabrera can be seen really well from here, but birds were few and parking was a problem (in a weekend). In the early morning or evening probably much better for birds.

Birds recorded: Kestrel, Swift, Wood Pigeon, Rock/Feral Dove, Audouin's Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Thekla Lark, Stonechat, Blackbird, Sardinian Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, House Sparrow and Goldfinch.

### ***Salobrar de Campos***

A series of salt pans, well described in Hearl. Access is difficult during weekends.

Birds recorded: Shelduck, Mallard, Kestrel, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish Plover, Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Swift, Stonechat, Fan-tailed Warbler, Sardinian Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, House Sparrow, Linnet, Serin, Goldfinch and Corn Bunting.

### ***S'Albufera***

A fabulous reserve, well worth a visit, but perhaps not the best place to see Moustached Warbler in summer (see species account). Lots of birds to be seen and very orderly with a reception, hides, etc. You can easily spend a whole day here.

Birds recorded: Little Grebe, Night Heron, Squacco Heron, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Purple Heron, Mallard, Eleonor's Falcon, Kestrel, Water Rail, Moorhen, Purple Gallinule (introduced) Coot, Crested Coot (introduced), Black-winged Stilt, Stone Curlew, Kentish Plover, Black-headed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Common Tern, Wood Pigeon, Rock/Feral Dove, Turtle Dove, Collared Dove, Swift, Hoopoe, Bee-eater, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Spanish Wagtail, Wren, Nightingale, Blackbird, Cetti's Warbler, Fan-tailed Warbler, Moustached Warbler, Reed Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Sardinian Warbler, Blackcap, Firecrest, Spotted Flycatcher, House Sparrow, Serin, Greenfinch and Goldfinch.

### ***Castel de Santueri***

This site is mentioned in Hearl and fairly close to Cala d'Or. Although only the walls of this castle are still erect well worth a visit for the views of the east-coast alone.

Birds recorded: Kestrel, Alpine Swift, Hoopoe, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Rock/Feral Dove, Turtle Dove, Crag Martin, House Martin, Wren, Nightingale, Blackbird, Sardinian Warbler, Blackcap, Firecrest, Spotted Flycatcher, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Serin, Greenfinch, Goldfinch and Cirl Bunting.

## **Species account**

Records of birds on this trip that are more or less endemic to the Balearic Islands are covered here. (Sub)species new to me are marked with (\*).

### **Scopoli's Shearwater**    *Calonectris diomedea*

Birds were seen on every seawatch from one of the headlands near the hotel. Evenings were best with typically 20-40 birds/hour, all flying south (probably to their main breeding-colony on the Islas de Cabrera). The birds were not flying close enough to exclude Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*, but on geographical grounds Scopoli's Shearwater is very likely.

It is remarkable that despite some 8 hours of seawatching on different evenings, not a single Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus* was seen. It is known that, immediately after the breeding season, this bird leaves the Mediterranean basin from May onwards. I had however expected that an odd bird would linger into July.

This species has been split from both Cory's Shearwater and Cape Verde Shearwater *Calonectris edwardsii* and is now a monotypic species.

### **Shag**                      *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*

Most days several Shags were seen in one of the bays of Cala d'Or and birds were also seen during seawatches. This bird was more common in Porto Colom with about 10 on every visit to the harbour. This subspecies is very distinct from the nominate race, both adults and juveniles, and could be a separate species: Mediterranean Shag.

### **Eleonora's Falcon**        *Falco eleonora*

Two birds were seen hunting near S'Albufera. Probably more common near the north-coast.

### **Quail**                      *Coturnix coturnix coturnix*

About 12 singing birds were heard in corn-fields between Felanitx and Petra in the very early morning of July 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Stone Curlew**            *Burhinus oedipnemus saharae*

This bird was commonly heard in the very early morning of July 9<sup>th</sup> with many dozens, perhaps even over a hundred, on the drive from Cala d'Or to S'Albufera. Also a flock of about 14 birds was seen in front of the CIM-hide at S'Albufera and at least one on the outskirts of Cala d'Or. This subspecies is supposed to be slightly paler and more pinkish, but this was not obvious in the field.

**Audouin's Gull**      *Larus audouinii*

Most days several Audouin's Gulls were seen in one of the bays of Cala d'Or and birds were also seen during seawatches. Also recorded in the harbour of Porto Colom and at the Cap de Ses Salines. Once a rare bird, now quite common and can probably be seen at any coastal site.

**Yellow-legged Gull**      *Larus michahellis michahellis*

This gull was common at all coastal areas and also seen in large numbers at Salobrar de Campos. This species has for a long time been split from Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* and consists of three subspecies: *michahellis* (recorded here), *atlantis* (Azores) and *lusitanus* (N-Portugal and NW-Spain).

**Turtle Dove**      *Streptopelia turtur arenicola*

Quite common in the country-side as well as in suburban areas. This subspecies occurs also in north-west Africa and (parts of) the Middle East. Gives an impression of a slightly paler and even smaller bird compared to the nominate.

**Scops Owl**      *Opus scops mallorcae* (\*)

One bird was heard between Felanitx and Petra in the very early morning of July 9<sup>th</sup>. This subspecies differs only slightly from the nominate, but is mainly non-migratory.

**Pallid Swift**      *Apus pallidus brehmorum*

About 40 birds were seen at the Porto Colom-peninsula and identified without any problem. At other sites only Swift *Apus apus* was seen, often quite numerous (and noisy).

**Thekla Lark**      *Galerida theklae theklae*

Several birds were seen at Porto Colom, at Cap de Ses Salines and while driving around the country-side. Because Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* does not occur in Mallorca, all *Galerida*-larks are Thekla Larks. Although belonging to the nominate race please note that the lower part of the bill of these birds is less convex than usual and in this respect more resembling Crested Lark !

**House Martin**      *Delichon urbica meridionalis* (\*)

This subspecies is not recognized by BWP, but regarded by several other authorities to be a valid subspecies, although only differing slightly (being smaller) from the nominate. Besides the Balearic Islands it is also known from southern Spain and north-west Africa. A small breeding colony of about 20 nests was present in the hotel-complex and birds were seen hawking over the pool all day.

**Spanish Wagtail**      *Motacilla iberiae*

This now monotypic species is also known as Iberian Wagtail and has for some time been split from other (former) races like Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava* and Ashy-headed Wagtail *Motacilla cinereocapilla cinereocapilla*. Was only recorded at S'Albufera where several birds were seen and the characteristic call was heard (somewhat similar of Reed Bunting).

**Wren**      *Troglodytes troglodytes kabylorum*

This subspecies also occurs in southern Spain and north-west Africa. A few birds were only heard (not seen) at different sites. According to the literature does not differ much from the nominate.

**Fan-tailed Warbler**      *Cisticola juncidis cisticola*

Apart from the Balearic Islands this subspecies also occurs in western France, Iberia and north-west Africa. According to BWP the birds from Mallorca are however not typical *cisticola* because they are slightly brighter, more rufous and more contrastingly patterned and therefore sometimes separated as '*intermedia*'. Also the song of Mallorcan birds seems to be intermediate between *cisticola* and the nominate. Fan-tailed warblers were common at Salobrar de Campos and especially at S'Albufera and the song was a very characteristic sound there, whatever subspecies.

**Moustached Warbler**      *Acrocephalus melanopogon melanopogon* (\*)

Although at least a thousand pairs of Moustached Warbler are said to breed at S'Albufera (Birdlife International IBA Factsheet), birds are often difficult to see here because of the dense vegetation within the reserve and the lack of suitable vantage-points. I therefore decided to try for this bird at an alternative site on July 9<sup>th</sup>, first described in the trip-report from Gonçalo Elias. This site is located on the minor road from Sa Pobla to Port d'Alcudia (the MA 3433), this is also the road that leads along the power-plant on the north-side of S'Albufera. About halfway this road, there is a sharp turn and an obvious bridge where the road crosses a canal (further east this becomes the Canal Gran, see Google Earth). There is plenty of space to park a car at the south-side of this bridge.

Although this bridge is small and sometimes quite busy with traffic it is possible to stand on it and watch the canal and reeds for birds moving right below you. After waiting for a short while two birds were seen, foraging in the open, in reeds close to the water-surface, and giving the best views possible for over half an hour. Just by chance I also saw a Moustached Warbler in the reeds next to the entrance-road of S'Albufera, but not in the (centre of) the reserve itself, so the decision to search for it at an alternative site really paid off. I was especially glad with the wonderful views I had of this bird, which is very different from Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*.

This makes the 'set' of Moustached Warblers complete after seeing the *mimica* subspecies in Armenia (also a potential split: Eastern Moustached Warbler), that much more resembles Sedge Warbler.

**Balearic Warbler**      *Sylvia balearica* (\*)

The main reason for me to go to Mallorca was Balearic Warbler, the only real endemic. This bird occurs on all Balearic Islands with the exception of Menorca and was split from Marmora's Warbler *Sylvia sarda* some years ago with the publication of 'Sylvia Warblers'.

I tried for this bird on July 5<sup>th</sup> at the well known site at Porto Colom, accurately described in the trip-report from Jaap Westra. I parked the car near the beach and walked the unpaved road back to where a small track starts to the south (near point 2 in the book of Graham Hearl), opposite a lay-by and a blue bar and sign 'coto privado de caza'. I walked this track for about 200 meters and before I reached some pine-trees I already found my first pair of Balearic Warblers, who were calling, but did not show long enough for a positive visual identification. Just beyond these pine-trees was another somewhat open area with several larger bushes (with a power line on the right - looking south), where there was another pair of Balearic Warblers. This time the male was seen in the open, both singing and foraging in the near bushes. I also had superb views of the female, who came to investigate what was going on, and came very close for several minutes. The next morning I came back and the whole show started all over again, with both the male and female performing very well for over an hour, giving incredible views.

After I had seen this bird so well at Porto Colom, I did not try for it at other known sites like Cap de Ses Salines or Cap Blanc (described in Hearl), although the habitat of the former site also looked very good for this species. Please note that Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata undata* also occurs as a rare but regular breeding-bird in Mallorca and needs to be safely excluded when seeing a small, dark and long-tailed *Sylvia*, especially in the north-eastern part of the island !

**Blackcap**                      *Sylvia atricapilla paulucci*

Males were actively singing at different sites. This subspecies is slightly greyer compared to the nominate and occurs in Corsica, Sardinia, central and southern Italy and parts of north-Africa.

**Firecrest**                      *Regulus ignicapillus balearicus*

Heard and seen at different sites and seemed to be common in the appropriate habitat. This subspecies is confined to the Balearic Islands and north-west Africa and the plumage is only slightly greyer.

**Spotted Flycatcher**        *Musicapa striata balearica* (\*)

One of the most common birds seen and recorded in all places visited. The grounds of our hotel alone held about 12-14 breeding pairs and many birds were seen including fledglings. This subspecies is strikingly different from the nominate with paler brown upperparts and less streaking on the breast. This subspecies occurs only in the Balearic Islands and is a potential split: Balearic (Spotted) Flycatcher.

**Great Tit**                      *Parus major mallorcae* (\*)

This is an endemic subspecies in the Balearic Islands and quite distinct from the nominate. The whole impression is of a paler bird with a much less yellow belly. I recorded several birds at Cala d'Or itself, mostly in family-groups.

**Woodchat Shrike**      *Lanius senator badius*

I expected this bird to be common on roadside wires (as mentioned in most trip-reports from spring) but during the summer-months they apparently behave much more secretively. In fact I only found a single bird (a female) outside Porto Colom at a random stop in the countryside. Like Balearic Shearwater, the summer-months are definitely not the best time to see this bird in Mallorca. This subspecies is a potential split: Balearic (Woodchat) Shrike and also occurs on the other Balearic Islands, the Isola Capraia (Italy), Sardinia and Corsica.

**Chaffinch**      *Fringilla coelebs balearica*

This is a rare bird in the south-east corner of this island, with only a few birds seen near the Castel de Santuari. This subspecies also occurs in Portugal and mainland Spain and differs only slightly from the nominate.

**Crossbill**      *Loxia curvirostra balearica* (\*)

This turned out to be a common bird. I saw and heard birds almost every day in the pines surrounding the pool of our hotel and the Cala Esmeralda beach and was also seen in the nearby park and lanes with pines. Most of the birds were juveniles (some still being fed) and females, but also a few males were seen who stood out because of the orange-grey colour (instead of red). This subspecies is surely a good split: Balearic Crossbill.

The following birds that are more or less endemic to the Balears were missed on this trip to Mallorca: Balearic Shearwater, the recently split Mediterranean Storm Petrel *Hydrobates melitensis*, Moltoni's Warbler *Sylvia subalpina* (formerly *Sylvia cantillans moltonii*), Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus balearicus* and Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus witherbyi*. I also tried to see the nominate race of Barn Owl *Tyto alba alba* by driving around in the evenings in the countryside but did not record it despite several attempts.

## **Trip to Islas Cólumbrétes, 2 & 3 August 2008**

To catch up with some of the birds I had missed on Mallorca I decided to look for another short bird-watching trip. Fortunately the company Audouin Birding Tours ([www.audouinbirding.com](http://www.audouinbirding.com)) offered a private tour in August including a pelagic trip to the uninhabited archipelago of the Islas Cólumbrétes (39°54' N, 0°41' E ; about 80 km south-east from the Ebro Delta) for Mediterranean Storm Petrel, Balearic- and Scopoli's Shearwater and Eleonora's Falcon. I also booked an afternoon- and evening-excursion to the Ebro Delta to see Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis ruficollis* and the local subspecies of Reed Bunting (*witherbyi*) and Barn Owl (*alba*).

I flew to Barcelona on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> August and caught a train to L'Ampolla, where I stayed three nights in the pre-booked hotel "La Roca Plana" on the waterfront. Saturday-morning 2<sup>nd</sup> I was picked up by Cristian and Iben and we drove to Peñíscola for the pelagic and were back again in L'Ampolla around 9 p.m. The next day (Sunday 3<sup>th</sup>) we visited the Ebro Delta and Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August I flew back (via Paris) to the Netherlands.

The main target-bird on this short trip for me was the '*melitensis*' Storm Petrel, that was recently split as a separate species: Mediterranean Storm Petrel. No field-characters are (yet) known to separate Mediterranean Storm Petrel from British Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*, except sound and DNA and perhaps a slightly thicker bill and the more advanced primary-moult in August. The only safe way to 'tick' a Mediterranean Storm Petrel is either to see birds (at night) in a breeding colony or do a pelagic at the right place, at the right time. This pelagic to the archipelago of the Islas C olumbr etes seemed the perfect opportunity because these islands are a well known breeding-site for this bird and no British Storm Petrels are known to breed in the Mediterranean basin. Secondly, at the beginning of August most if not all adult British Storm Petrels are still in their breeding colonies in the North Atlantic, incubating eggs or hatching young (egg-laying takes place late June and July, Mediterranean Storm Petrel breeds about one month earlier). Of course it much depends on the time of year and place to record a 'certain' Mediterranean Storm Petrel. I would for instance not be sure enough to count a 'Storm Petrel' seen in May on the same pelagic or from the east-coast of Spain as a MSP. On the other hand, as proven by at least 2 ringing-recoveries, not all 'Storm Petrels' in the Atlantic and North Sea are British Storm Petrels but could also involve Mediterranean Storm Petrel.

But to be short: this year the pelagic to the Islas C olumbr etes was a big deception and NOT A SINGLE Mediterranean Storm Petrel was seen ! This was very remarkable because on exactly the same pelagic in 2006 and 2007 far more seabirds were seen including several hundred Mediterranean Storm Petrels in 2006 and still about 10-15 in 2007. Also very few shearwaters were seen on this pelagic with only about 15 Scopoli's Shearwaters and NO Balearic Shearwaters ! The only good thing was that some Scopoli's Shearwaters came close enough to be identified as such. Some desperate attempts to attract other or more tube-noses by throwing fish from the boat on the return-journey failed utterly (only a few gulls were attracted) although I suspect the boat moved too fast to have any result. Chumming and staying put for a while might have been more effective.

At the moment it is not known what the reason is for this obvious absence of sea-birds on this pelagic. I can only speculate that breeding might have failed this year and birds have moved on. It is also possible that a lack of food has forced these birds to look for other feeding-grounds. The unusually large number of jellyfish in the western Mediterranean in the summer of 2008 (including Mallorca) could indicate there was indeed something wrong and the natural balance was disturbed. Anyhow, the fact that I missed my main target-bird on this specially designed trip was off course very depressing. It took me some time to recover, although the question what (the \*\*\*\*) went wrong still haunts my mind sometimes.

Also note that there are at least 4 proven cases of Cory's Shearwater (inter)breeding at the Islas C olumbr etes (see: <http://www.imedea.uib.es/natural/goi/seabirds/docs/Corys%20MA%202002.pdf>). These four birds were all originally ringed as chicks on the Selvagem Grande (near Madeira). This proves that all *Calonectris*-shearwaters need to be checked carefully to be sure of the determination.

On the afternoon- and evening-excursion with Cristian and Iben to the Ebro-delta the next day we recorded a lot of common birds like Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Glossy Ibis, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Great White Egret, Little Egret, Cattle Egret, Squacco Heron, Little Bittern, Night Heron, Greater Flamingo, Mallard, Gadwall, Red-crested Pochard, Kestrel, Water Rail, Moorhen, Coot, Purple Gallinule, Black-winged Stilt, Lapwing, Collared Pratincole, Little Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Ruff, Redshank, Wood Sandpiper, Little Stint, Temminck's Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Whimbrel, Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Audouin's Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Common Tern, Sandwich Tern, Little Tern, Black Tern, Whiskered Tern, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Little Owl, Common Swift, Kingfisher, Bee-eater, Lesser Short-toed Lark, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Sand Martin, White Wagtail, Spanish // Ashy-headed Wagtail (hybrids), Fan-tailed Warbler, Reed Warbler, Crested Tit (in L'Ampolla), Magpie, Spotless Starling, House Sparrow and Goldfinch.

The promised Red-necked Nightjar however showed only very briefly and was not seen on the ground. The day was saved by sightings of the local subspecies of Barn Owl and Reed Bunting (see below), both new to me.

**Barn Owl**                      *Tyto alba alba* (\*)

We saw 3 Barn Owls (male, female and young) very well near an abandoned house in the Ebro-delta. This is a very pale subspecies that occurs in large areas of west- and south Europe (but only as a vagrant in the Netherlands) and also the Balearic- and western Canary Islands. I was told that this is a common bird in the Ebro-delta, but we saw no other birds while driving around in the dark for several hours, looking for nightjars.

**Reed Bunting**                      *Emberiza schoeniclus witherbyi* (\*)

In the evening first a female and then a male Reed Bunting of this subspecies was seen from one of the hides in the south-eastern part of the Ebro-delta. This subspecies belongs to the group of 'thick-billed reed buntings' and this is indeed very obvious in the field. This is a rare and decreasing taxon which only occurs in Iberia, the Balearic Islands, the Mediterranean coast of France and probably north-west Africa. The birds belonging to the 'Pyrrhuloides-group' could in the near future be split as a separate species: Thick-billed Reed Bunting. In the Western Palearctic the 'Pyrrhuloides-group' consists of the subspecies *korejewi*, *tshusii* (seen in Bulgaria), *reiseri*, *othmari*, *caspia* (seen in Armenia), *reiseri*, *intermedia*, *witherbyi*, *pyrrhuloides* and *incognita*.

For any questions, remarks, et cetera, don't hesitate to contact:

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