

Extremadura region of Spain

Birding one of Europe's best bird paradises – 22-29th May 2010



Niels Riis
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INTRODUCTION

The Extremadura region of Spain has within the last 20 years earned a reputation amongst Danish ornithologists as one of the very top birding sites in Europe, holding a number of birds that remain abundant here, while they have disappeared or become seldom in the rest of Europe. Here, you will still find Great and Little Bustards, storks, vultures, eagles, sandgrouse, rollers and hoopoes in probably higher numbers than anywhere else in Western and Central Europe. And in winter time most of the European crane population is to be found among the scattered oak trees of the dehesa – the name of the lovely Spanish nature habitat of grass covered plains with scattered cork and stone oaks, and with a vast flowerbed in springtime.

Extremadura is known to be one of the least developed parts of Spain. It is a relief here to find a territory, which is virtually unaffected by the industrialized agriculture, including all its fertilizers and pesticides. This might be a part of the secret recipe of the immense birdlife of Extremadura that hopefully will remain unchanged.

As two widely travelled European ornithologists, we both realized that we had never visited this birding paradise in our own backyard.

After thorough studies and planning we made our first visit in late May 2010. We found our trip so successful that we wish to share our experience with you and show you how easy it is to go birding in the Extremadura. Hereby, we might hopefully inspire you to follow in our footsteps.

Extremadura is easily accessible from the airports of Madrid, Malaga, Sevilla or Lissabon. The infrastructure with roads, viewpoints, bird towers, accommodation and supplies are well developed. We made all our bookings on the internet or by e-mails in English. All worked well and only once we needed a Spanish translator to assist us to understand an answer. Accommodation was reasonable and decent at a price level of 50-60 EUR for twin bed rooms with breakfast. Air-tickets (Iberia), hire of vehicle (AutoEurope), Super Cover CDW insurance (EuropCar), fuel for 1600 km (Seat Ibiza), accommodation, food and beverages amounted to some 600 EUR per person, which we regard as high value for money.

Looking back, if something should have been changed in our itinerary, we would have omitted the visit to the Guadarrama Mountains and instead have spent more time in the Sierra de Gredos Mountains, which deserved a day of more attention. Especially a long trek above La Plataforma de Gredos.

We were lucky that the spring of 2010 had been wet and cold in Central Spain before our arrival. The steppes and the dehesa were still green and the grass not too high, and full of flowers in the last week of May, though slowly drying. The weather was generally sunny and pleasant, and not too hot.

The month of April and the first half of May are recommended as the best birding season of Extremadura, with the ballroom of the Great Bustards. We understand this very well and saw only one Great Bustard displaying among the forty odd males, while the Little Bustards were still in display. On the other hand, we had the luck to see the late arriving species White-rumped Swift and Red-necked Nightjar. In fact, we only missed the Black-shouldered Kite, which is a good reason for us to return to Extremadura some day.

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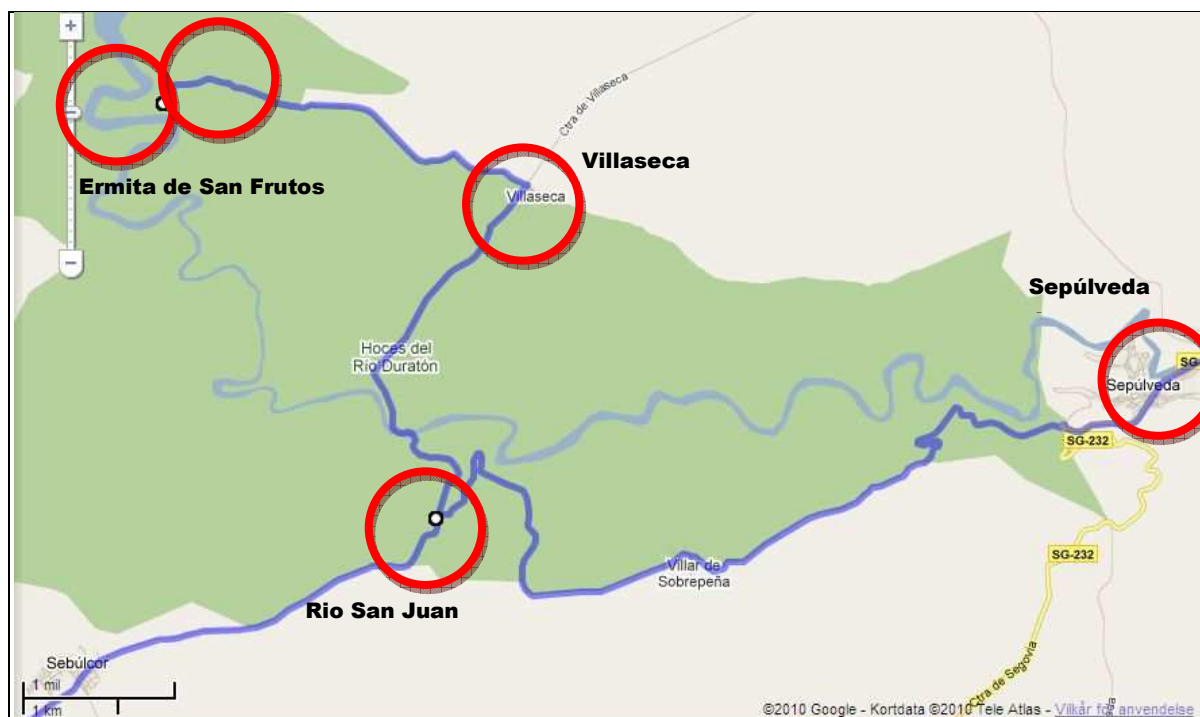
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Steen Søgaard, Jørgen Jensen, Allan Prang, Peter Rodeman, Lars Falck and John Frikke are all thanked for their great help and recommendations for the tour planning. Trip reports by Eric Schaumburg, David Boertmann, Bent Otto Poulsen and Uffe Gjør Sørensen were also very helpful. Thanks to Google Maps © for their excellent maps, which are used on a non-commercial basis.



ITINERARY AND BRIEF DIARY

22/5 Afternoon flight Copenhagen-Madrid Barajas with Iberia. A Seat Ibiza was rented in advance at AutoEurope and delivered by Europcar in the airport. Going north by the highway E-5 straight to Sepúlveda to stay overnight at Hotel Puente del Duraton, www.lascasasdelduraton.com, a little cosy family run hotel besides the River Duraton at the entrance to Sepúlveda. Arrival just in time to see



the transmission of the Champions League soccer final from Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid (Inter won deserved over Bayern Munich), while we enjoyed our tortillas and a glass of Spanish red wine in the restaurant.

23/5 Left the hotel in Sepulveda in the early morning at 5 o'clock with our luggage, while listening to a singing Black Redstart on the hotel rooftop in the dead of night. We headed west into the nearby lying Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton to the village of Villaseca and then drove along the gravel road to the west towards the monastery Ermita de San Frutos (see map). We stopped at a lowest point of the road about a kilometre before the parking place to hear and see four Dupont's Larks in the saline steppes at sunrise. Afterwards, we enjoyed the birdlife and especially the griffon vultures on the rock walls of the impressive gorge around the monastery. A very enjoyable first morning during our Spanish adventure.

We headed back and south towards Sebúcor, where we found a lovely river valley along the Rio San Juan. Heading for the mountain range further south, we passed through scenic landscapes and villages by small roads towards Segovia and onwards to the pass of Puerto de Navacerrada in the Guadarrama Mountains for lunch and to look for mountain birds, especially Citril Finch. We continued further up to the ski resorts of Puerto de Menga and the Valdesqui, but were disappointed. Hardly any birds around, but a lot of picnic tourists, and generally young, planted coniferous forest.

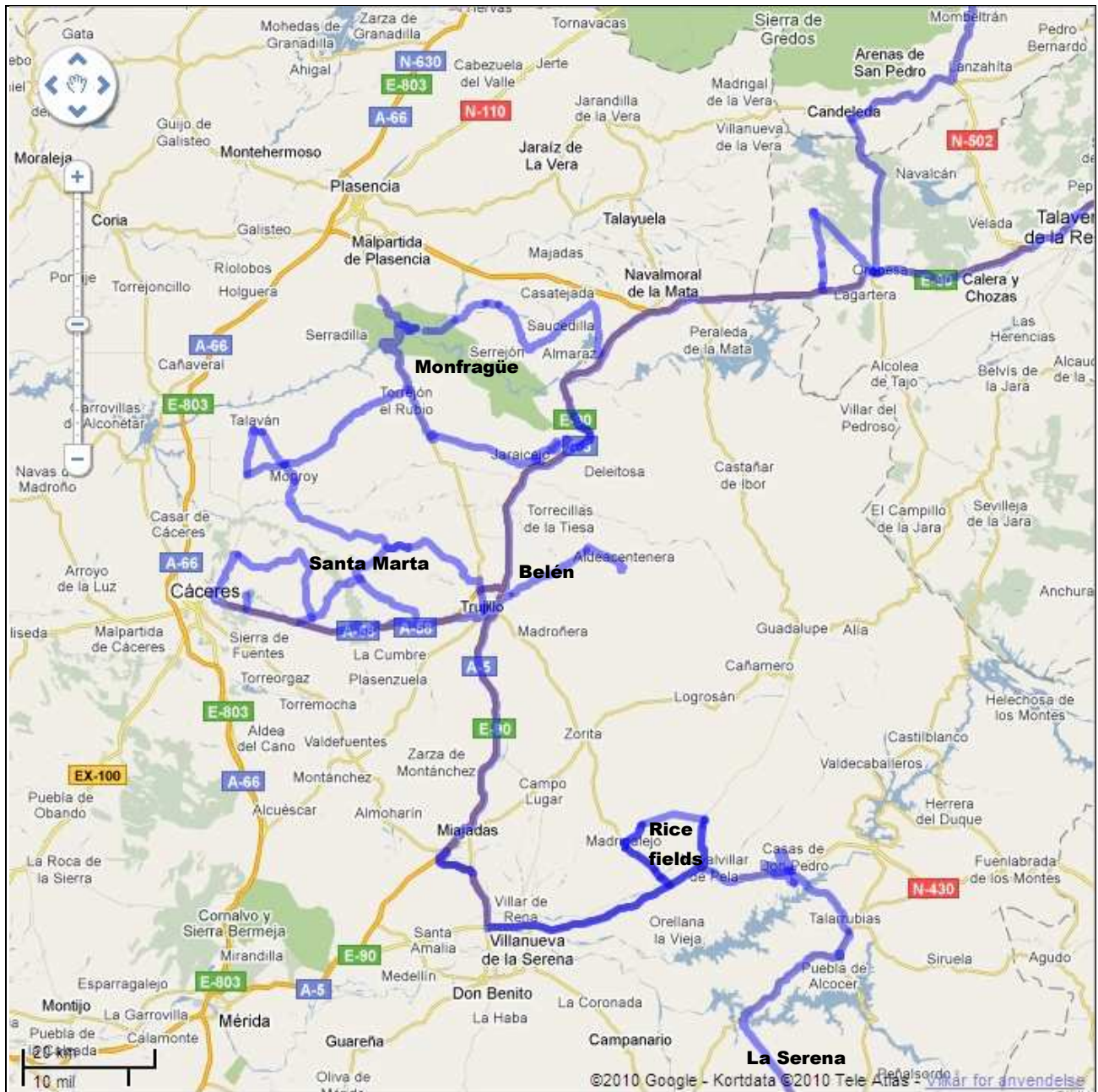
In the afternoon, we continued west to the Sierra de Gredos Mountains for our overnight stay, and to search for the Citril Finch in the parks around Hotel Parador de Gredos and Hostal Almanzor (see photo). A heavy shower had just passed before our arrival, and it had cleared up. No luck with the citrils so instead, we quickly decided to do an evening trek into the high Gredos Mountains at La Plataforma de Gredos, seeing mountain birds and Iberian Ibex. Night at Ms. Conchi's place in Hostal Refugio de Gredos in Barajas near Navarredonda de Gredos (Ávila), www.refugiodegredos.com.



24/5 Early morning trip in Barajas de Gredos, and finally we found the Citril Finches at sunrise in the edge of pine trees along the roadside just east of Hotel Parador de Gredos. Success!

After breakfast, we drove west on the E-90 towards Trujillo in Extremadura with stop at Oropesa to search for Black-shouldered Kite on the steppes, without luck. Lunch on the central square of the charming, mediaeval town of Trujillo, with Lesser Kestrels and White Storks everywhere on buildings and soaring in the sky. From Trujillo, afternoon drive for steppe birds as bustards etc. along the Belen Road from Bélen to Aldeacentenera and back.

Night at Hostal Trujillo in the old town, www.hostaltrujillo.com and www.booking.com (room OK, but no staff was visible ever. Exit door locked from inside, remember the key).



25/5 Morning drive from Trujillo halfway to Cáceres, shortly towards Santa Marta de Magasca and then on gravel roads through the rolling plains Llanos de Cáceres to Cáceres town. A very rewarding stretch, including rollers, both bustards, sandgrouse and great spotted cuckoo. After breakfast in

Caceres we passed the lake Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres and then took the road from southwest to Santa Marta de Magasca and further back to Trujillo through the steppes.

Afternoon trip southwards to the rice fields south of Madrigalejo and to the beautiful castle Castillo Puebla de Alcocer with magnificent views and breeding Black Wheatear. In the evening, we headed southwest to the vast steppes of La Serena. After sunset, we returned to Hostal Trujillo.

- 26/5** Hotel check out, and early morning drive from Trujillo along the Santa Marta de Magasca road with breakfast at a local bodega in town. Then through the plains to the north to the beautiful town of Monroy and further on for lunch at the bird reserve Embalse de Talavan with a nest of Golden Eagle. Afternoon drive through the dehesa on the road to Torrejon el Rubio with Booted Eagles and Spanish Imperial Eagles at the stork colony in stone pines en route. Arrival to Parque Natural de Monfragüe with afternoon and evening visits to the Salto del Gitano with the Peña Falcon rock and to Portilla del Tietar, with breeding Black Storks. Night at "El Cabrerin" at the park office in Villarreal de San Carlos, www.elcabrerin.com and (in Spanish) www.monfrague.com .
- 27/5** Morning and afternoon in Parque Natural de Monfragüe with visits to Puente del Cardenal, the new Rio Tajo bridge, Salto del Gitano with Peña Falcon, Castillo de Monfragüe, Portilla del Tietar and the Malvecino road to the north of the park. Late afternoon trip eastward to Saucedilla and Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz and back to "El Cabrerin" in Villarreal de San Carlos for the night.
- 28/5** Morning birding in Parque Natural de Monfragüe before and after breakfast. At noon drive to Saucedilla and Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz for Black-shouldered Kite, unsuccessfully. Further, drive to Oropesa for another negative search of Black-shouldered Kite. Return travel to the western outskirts of Madrid to stay overnight at the pleasant Hotel de Villa de Navalcarnero, www.hotelvilladenavalcarnero.es .
- 29/5** After breakfast we drove to Madrid Barajas Airport for the flight with Iberia back home to Copenhagen, Denmark.

SOURCES FOR INFORMATION / LITERATURE

Mammals:

Mammals of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East', by Aulagnier, Haffner, Mitchell-Jones, Moutou & Zima, A&CB, 2008

Present species names from Wikipedia on the internet:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_mammals

Birds:

'A Birdwatching Guide to Extremadura' by John Muddeman, 2000. Still the best guidebook for the area, but it has been unavailable for long time. A new edition is promised by www.wildlifebooks.com to be published in 2011.

The official Danish list of birdnames in Danish, English and Latin:

http://www.dof.dk/sider/images/stories/gu/navnegruppen/dokumenter/fugle_danske_navne_300508.pdf

Reptiles and amphibians:

Reptiles and Amphibians of Britain and Europe (1978) by E. N. Arnold and J. A. Burton supplied with present species names from Wikipedia on the internet:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_reptiles

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_amphibians .



Erling climbing the path to Castillo de Monfragüe



Niels showing a Spanish Terrapin, Saucedilla

LISTS OF OBSERVATIONS

Species names are given in **English / Danish** and *Latin*.

MAMMALS

1. **Pipistrelle sp. / Dværgflagermus sp., *Pipistrellus sp.*** 23/5 one at the road to Ermita de San Frutos.
2. **Stone Marten / Husmår, *Martes foina***. One in the evening of 26/5 in Monfragüe.
3. **Red Deer / Kronndyr, *Cervus elaphus***. One female crossing the road in the evening of 26/5 in Monfragüe.
4. **Western Spanish Ibex / Spansk stenbuk, *Capra pyrenaica victoriae***. 20 specimens in smaller groups in the mountains on the evening of 23/5 at La Plataforma de Gredos.
5. **European Rabbit / Vildkanin, *Oryctolagus cuniculus***. 23/5 one at the road outside Sepulveda. 24/5 2 at the road from La Plataforma de Gredos to Barajas.
6. **Eurasian Red Squirrel / Egern, *Sciurus vulgaris***. 23/5 one at Hotel Parador de Gredos.

BIRDS

1. **Little Grebe / Lille Lappedykker, *Tachybaptus ruficollis***. One 25/5 in a pond just west of Trujillo (which we checked for a Pied-billed Grebe, that had been reported from there a few days before) and 26/5 in the lake Embalse de Talavan.
2. **Great Crested Grebe / Toppet Lappedykker, *Podiceps cristatus***. Pairs 25/5 in the lake Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres and 26/5 in the lake Embalse de Talavan.
3. **Great Cormorant / Skarv, *Phalacrocorax carbo***. 5 28/5 in Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz.

4. **Little Bittern / Dværghejre**, *Ixobrychus minutus*. Two birds flushed at close hand from reedbeds in ponds at Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz, on the 27 and 28 of May respectively. Both adult males.
5. **Cattle Egret / Kohejre**, *Bubulcus ibis*. Flocks of >30 seen 25/5 west of Trujillo, in Madrigalejo rice fields and at Embalse de Orellana. One seen 24/5 at Belen Road and 2 25/5 in La Serena.
6. **Little Egret / Silkehejre**, *Egretta garzetta*. One 28/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz. Apparently a scarce bird in Extremadura.
7. **Grey Heron / Fiskehejre**, *Ardea cinerea*. 3 24/5 at Belen Road, 1 at Rio Tajo in Monfragüe and 1 28/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz.
8. **Purple Heron / Purpurhejre**, *Ardea purpurea*. 3 27/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz.
9. **Black Stork / Sort Stork**, *Ciconia nigra*. Four pairs on the nest were enjoyed from viewpoints along the Rio Tajo in Monfragüe: Two pairs at Portilla del Tietar and two at Peña Falcon. Three of the pairs had small, downy nestlings. All nests were placed rather low on the cliffs, not far above the water level. In the scope, it was a thrill to follow the family life of this mythical bird at such close hand.
10. **White Stork / Hvid Stork**, *Ciconia ciconia*. Very common and widespread, and to be counted in several hundreds of pairs during the trip. Nests everywhere on farms, churches, ruins, in treetops and even on signposts over the motorways. Also found in the mountain villages of Sierra de Gredos.
11. **Gadwall / Knarand**, *Anas strepera*. A pair 25/5 in the lake Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres and 5 ducks 26/5 in the lake Embalse de Talavan. 1 28/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz.
12. **Mallard / Gråand**, *Anas platyrhynchos*. Common in ponds, lakes and dammed rivers.
13. **Black Kite / Sort Glente**, *Milvus migrans*. Common and seen on most sites with a max of 20.
14. **Red Kite / Rød Glente**, *Milvus milvus*. Common in the mountains of Guadarrama and Gredos, but also seen 27/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz and 28/5 at the Oropesa petrol station.
15. **Egyptian Vulture / Ådselgrib**, *Neophron percnopterus*. Rather scarce. 1 adult 23/5 at Ermita de San Frutos, 24/5 at Belen Road, >6 in 27-28/5 in Monfragüe and 1 27/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz
16. **Griffon Vulture / Gåsegrib**, *Gyps fulvus*. Common and widespread. 14 in breeding colony on rock wall at Rio Duraton opposite Ermita de San Frutos and large breeding colonies in Monfragüe on Portilla del Tietar and at Peña Falcon. A maximum of 120 vultures seen 25/5 near a sheep carcass SE of Santa Marta de Magasca.
17. **Cinereous (Black) Vulture / Munkegrib**, *Aegypius monachus*. 23/5 2 north of Segovia. 24/5 3 north of Trujillo and 15 along the Belen Road. 1 25/5 at a carcass near Santa Marta. 2 27/5 circling around Castillo de Monfragüe at eye level, and a breeding bird seen from Salto del Gitano in Monfragüe, sitting on the nest in a treetop, well north of Peña Falcon – a long distance scope view.
18. **Short-toed Snake-Eagle / Slangeørn**, *Circaetus gallicus*. Scarce. One 24/5 at the Oropesa petrol station. 2 25/5 along the roads between Santa Marta de Magasca and Caceres.
19. **Western Marsh Harrier / Rørhøg**, *Circus aeruginosus*. A breeding pair 28/5 at the reedbeds near Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz. The male was delivering prey to the female in the air, above the nest.

20. **Montagu's Harrier / Hedehøg**, *Circus pygargus*. A total of 23 harriers seen over the steppes along Belen Road, north and west of Santa Marta de Magasca and in the La Serena.
21. **Eurasian Sparrowhawk / Spurvehøg**, *Accipiter nisus*. One 24/5 crossing swiftly over at Hotel Parador de Gredos, Sierra de Gredos Mts.
22. **Common Buzzard / Musvåge**, *Buteo buteo*. Uncommon. One 23/5 north of Segovia, 24/5 south of Gredos Mountains and at Belen Road, 4 26/5 in the area of Santa Marta de Magasca, and 1 27/5 near Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz.
23. **Booted Eagle / Dværgørn**, *Aquila pennata*. 23/5 1 at Rio San Juan, 2 north of Segovia and 1 at Hotel Parador de Gredos. 25/5 1 west of Trujillo, 26/5 1 at the stork colony in stone pines, one third of the way from Monroy to Torrejon el Rubio, and 1 in Monfragüe.
24. **Golden Eagle / Kongeørn**, *Aquila chrysaetos*. A nest with an adult and a juvenile 26/5 in a tree at the river, on the opposite road side of the picnic area and hide at Embalse de Talavan.
25. **Bonelli's Eagle / Høgeørn**, *Aquila fasciata*. Rare. On our last morning in Monfragüe 28/5, we were lucky finally to see a fine, adult bird at close range, crossing a valley in the morning sunshine, near la Serrana rocks at the Malvecino road in northern Monfragüe.
26. **Spanish Imperial Eagle / Spansk Kejserørn**, *Aquila adalberti*. Stunning views at close range of two adult birds 26/5, probably the local breeding pair, presumably making a surprise attack into the stork colony in stone pines on the Monroy Road, one third of the way from Monroy towards Torrejon el Rubio. The nest with one adult seen later in the day 26/5 on a pylon a couple of kilometres NE of the stork colony (maybe same bird).
27. **Lesser Kestrel / Lille Tårnfalk**, *Falco naumanni*. 10+ in a breeding colony, seen 24/5 over the town square of Trujillo. 5 seen 25/5 SE of Puebla de Alcocer en route to La Serena.
28. **Common Kestrel / Tårnfalk**, *Falco tinnunculus*. Widespread and common. Seen in different types of open landscapes with at maximum of 6 on 25/5 in La Serena.
29. **Eurasian Hobby / Lærkefalk**, *Falco subbuteo*. One 23/5 north of Segovia and 1 over Hotel Parador de Gredos.
30. **Peregrine / Vandrefalk**, *Falco peregrinus*. 1 28/5 over Peña Falcon cliff in Monfragüe.
31. **Red-legged Partridge / Rødhøne**, *Alectoris rufa*. Common and seen in most of the landscapes, mostly singly, but 3 seen 23/5 at Ermita de San Frutos near Rio Duraton.
32. **Common Quail / Vagtel**, *Coturnix coturnix*. Heard calling 26/5 at two sites in Monfragüe.
33. **Common Moorhen / Grønbenet Rørhøne**, *Gallinula chloropus*. 4 seen 25/5 in the rice fields of Madrigalejo, 2 26/5 in Embalse de Talavan and 27/5 in Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz.
34. **Purple Gallinule / Sultanhøne**, *Porphyrio porphyrio*. One heard and another shortly seen 28/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz.
35. **Eurasian Coot / Blishøne**, *Fulica atra*. Pullus seen 25/5 in Rio Tamuja at road bridge north of Cáceres. Pairs seen 26/5 in Embalse de Talavan and 28/5 in Embalse de Arrocampo-Almaraz.
36. **Little Bustard / Dværgtrappe**, *Tetrax tetrax*. A total of 17 males seen in display in open steppes, 24/5 along Belen Road, 25-26/5 east, west and north of Santa Marta de Magasca and in La Serena. Obviously, late May is still within the display season of this much sought after species. One of the star birds of Extremadura.

37. **Great Bustard / Stortrappe**, *Otis tarda*. A total of 39 males seen 24-26/5 on the open steppes. One displayed 25/5 in La Serena, and the only female bird during the trip was also seen here. 6 males seen at Belen Road, 12 at the Santa Marta-Caceres road, 4 between Trujillo and Santa Marta, 2 north of Santa Marta and 16 in La Serena. In late May, the display season is over, and the males congregate in flocks, while the females are hiding at nests or with small chicks. However, we were lucky to find a number of male flocks rather easily and got excellent scope views of this stately, icon species. It is certainly best to find and see them in the early morning or late afternoon.
38. **Black-winged Stilt / Stylteløber**, *Himantopus himantopus*. 2 24/5 in pond at Belen Road. 12 and pullus seen 25/5 on two small islands in Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres and 2 in pond just west of Trujillo.
39. **Eurasian Stone-curlew / Triel**, *Burhinus oediconemus*. 4 seen 25/5 in the open steppes of La Serena and 2 seen 26/5 in dehesa SE of Santa Marta de Magasca.
40. **Collared Pratincole / Rødvinget Braksvale**, *Glareola pratincola*. 3 pairs and 2 pullus seen 25/5 on island in Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres. A total of 36 seen 25/5 at ponds in La Serena.
41. **Little Ringed Plover / Lille Præstekrave**, *Charadrius dubius*. One 24/5 at Oropesa. 2 pairs and pullus 25/5 on island in Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres.
42. **Common Ringed Plover / Stor Præstekrave**, *Charadrius hiaticula*. A flock of 25 seen 25/5 in the Madrigalejo rice fields.
43. **Little Stint / Dværgryle**, *Calidris minuta*. 1 25/5 in the Madrigalejo rice fields.
44. **Little Tern / Dværgerterne**, *Sternula albifrons*. 5 breeding pairs 25/5 on island in Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres. Also seen 26/5 at Embalse de Talavan.
45. **Black-bellied Sandgrouse / Sortbuget Sandhøne**, *Pterocles orientalis*. A total of 23 seen 25-26/5 on the steppes around Santa Marta de Magasca at roads towards Cáceres, Trujillo and Monroy.
46. **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse / Spidshalet Sandhøne**, *Pterocles alchata*. A rather distant flock of 7 seen flying and landing 25/5 in La Serena.
47. **Rock Dove / Klippedue**, *Columba livia*. Seen 23/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos, 25/5 4 at Castillo Puebla de Alcocer and 26/5 north of Santa Marta (could be domestic birds).
48. **Woodpigeon / Ringdue**, *Columba palumbus*. Seems to be rather scarce. One 25/5 at Rio Tamuja north of Cáceres and 4 seen 27/5 in forest areas of Monfragüe.
49. **Eurasian Collared Dove / Tyrkerdue**, *Streptopelia decaocto*. Found near human settlements at Villaseca, Los Molinos, Oropesa, Trujillo, south of Madrigalejo (>10), Puebla de Alcocer, Santa Marta de Magasca.
50. **European Turtle Dove / Turteldue**, *Streptopelia turtur*. One seen 24/5 south of Gredos Mountains and 7 seen during the 27/5 in Monfragüe in a pine forest area. Apparently a rather scarce bird.
51. **Great Spotted Cuckoo / Skadegøg**, *Clamator glandarius*. Scarce. Singletons seen 24/5 at Belen Road, 25/5 north of Cáceres and 27/5 in dehesa south of Santa Marta de Magasca. A total of four birds, spotted incidentally flying through olive groves etc. Probably easy to miss.
52. **Common Cuckoo / Gøg**, *Cuculus canorus*. Found in the highlands. Heard 23/5 at Sepulveda and 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos. Seen 24/5 south of Gredos Mountains en route to Oropesa.

53. **Eurasian Scops Owl / Dværghornugle**, *Otus scops*. Heard calling in the evening of 23/5 in Barajas de Gredos.
54. **Eurasian Eagle-Owl / Stor Hornugle**, *Bubo bubo*. One seen flying over Rio Tajo at Portilla del Tiétar, Monfragüe in the evening of 26/5.
55. **Little Owl / Kirkeugle**, *Athene noctua*. Common at cattle farms on the steppes. 24/5 1 seen at Belen Road, 25/5 3 seen along road between Santa Marta de Magasca and Caceres and 3 in La Serena, 26/5 1 seen SE of and 1 N of Santa Marta de Magasca.
56. **Red-necked Nightjar / Rødhalsset Natravn**, *Caprimulgus ruficollis*. Heard calling 25/5 in the evening at forest patch just north of La Serena, during the drive back to Trujillo. Heard and seen in evening of 26/5 near Portilla del Tiétar in Monfragüe.
57. **Common Swift / Mursejler**, *Apus apus*. Very common in all landscapes and seen daily over villages as well as steppes. A maximum of more than 100 seen 24/5 at Belen Road.
58. **Pallid Swift / Gråsejler**, *Apus pallidus*. Two seen 23/5 over Rio Duraton at Ermita de San Frutos.
59. **White-rumped Swift / Kaffersejler**, *Apus caffer*. A minimum of 6 seen 27-28/5 from viewpoint at Salto del Gitano flying among Common House Martins, but without Common Swifts, to/from a breeding place in a ravine on the south side of Peña Falcon just above the horizon on the southern side of the rock (see photo).
60. **Alpine Swift / Alpesejler**, *Apus melba*. A few seen 27/5 at the new Puente del Cardenal bridge crossing Rio Tajo in Monfragüe.
61. **Common Kingfisher / Isfugl**, *Alcedo atthis*. Excellent views of two birds 25/5 at a riverside in the Madrigalejo rice fields.
62. **European Bee-eater / Biæder**, *Merops apiaster*. A total of 42 birds seen in different types of open landscapes from Puerto de Menga in the Guadarrama Mountains and to the steppes in the south, with at maximum of 12 24/5 along the Belen Road at Trujillo.
63. **European Roller / Ellekrage**, *Coracias garrulus*. 15 seen 25/5 along the road from Santa Marta de Magasca to Caceres, mostly near nesting boxes on poles. 2 seen 25/5 at La Serena.
64. **Eurasian Hoopoe / Hærfugl**, *Upupa epops*. Common and widespread. 35 hoopoes seen in different types of open landscapes, including the mountains, with at maximum of 7 on 25/5 in La Serena.
65. **European Green Woodpecker / Grønspætte**, *Picus viridis*. Heard calling in the evening of 23/5 in Barajas de Gredos.
66. **Great Spotted Woodpecker / Stor Flagspætte**, *Dendrocopos major*. Seen 27/5 in Monfragüe.
67. **Calandra Lark / Kalanderlærke**, *Melanocorypha calandra*. Very common on the steppes around Trujillo and Santa Marta de Magasca and in La Serena. 2 seen 26/5 at Embalse de Talavan.
68. **Greater Short-toed Lark / Korttået Lærke**, *Calandrella brachydactyla*. 2 seen 23/5 in the saltsteppes in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton west of Villaseca.
69. **Crested Lark / Toplærke**, *Galerida cristata*. Common on the steppes around Oropesa, Trujillo, Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres and in La Serena. 1 seen 23/5 north of Segovia.



70. **Thekla Lark / Theklalærke**, *Galerida theklae*. 2 seen 23/5 in the saltsteppes in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton west of Villaseca. Common in the steppes at Belen Road, in La Serena and between Trujillo and Santa Marta de Masgasca. 1 seen 26/5 in Monfragüe.
71. **Wood Lark / Hedelærke**, *Lullula arborea*. 23/5 2 seen/heard in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton west of Villaseca and 1 in Barajas de Gredos.
72. **Eurasian Skylark / Sanglærke**, *Alauda arvensis*. Common 23/5 in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton west of Villaseca.
73. **Duponts's Lark / Duponts Lærke**, *Chersophilus duponti*. 4 seen and heard 23/5 in the saltsteppes in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton west of Villaseca. We arrived to the place at dawn, and according to a german birder we met there, the larks had been singing for approximately one hour. The song activity continued until 9 a.m. Stays close to the ground, and it is hard to find. However, sometimes the songpost is from the top of stones or small bushes near the road. The song is a very loud, melodious whistle, and is very characteristic.
Be patient. Please notice, that you are not allowed to leave the road in this protected area.
74. **Eurasian Crag Martin / Klippesvale**, *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*. Common 23/5 at the rock walls of Ermita de San Frutos and 25/5 at Castillo Puebla de Alcocer. Seen 25/5 at the road Santa Marta-Caceres, 26/5 at the road Santa Marta-Monroy and 27/5 in Monfragüe.
75. **Barn Swallow / Landsvale**, *Hirundo rustica*. Common in villages and near farms, in Villaseca, at the road to Segovia, de Gredos, Belen, Madrigalejo rice fields, Puebla de Alcocer, Santa Marta, Monroy and at Embalse de Talavan, in Monfragüe and at Embalse de Arrocampo.
76. **Common House Martin / Bysvale**, *Delichon urbica*. Common at the road to Segovia, in de Gredos and in Monfragüe. Seen at Ermita de San Frutos, in La Serena and Santa Marta.
77. **Red-rumped Swallow / Rødrygget Svale**, *Cecropis daurica*. Common 25/5 at Castillo Puebla de Alcocer. 2-3 seen south of Gredos Mountains, north of Trujillo, east of Caceres and in the rice fields of Madrigalejo.
78. **Tawny Pipit / Markpiber**, *Anthus campestris*. 3 territorial birds in song display 23/5 on the salt steppes in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton west of Villaseca.
79. **Water Pipit / Bjergpiber**, *Anthus spinoletta*. 3 heard and seen 23/5 in mountain meadows and along streams above La Plataforma, Gredos Mountains.
80. **Yellow Wagtail / Gul Vipstjert**, *Motacilla flava*. 1 male 23/5 in mountain meadow above La Plataforma. Sierra Gredos Mountains. Probably a breeding bird. Subspecies *iberiae*
81. **Grey Wagtail / Bjergvipstjert**, *Motacilla cinerea*. A breeding pair 24/5 at Rio Pelayo in Gredos Mountains.
82. **Pied Wagtail / Hvid Vipstjert**, *Motacilla alba*. 2 24/5 in Barajas de Gredos and 1 24/5 at Oropesa and 26/5 between Santa Marta and Monroy. Uncommon.
83. **Winter Wren / Gærdesmutte**, *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Heard 26/5 north of Santa Marta de Masgasca and 4 seen in Monfragüe 27-28/5.
84. **Dunnock / Jernspurv**, *Prunella modularis*. 3 seen 23/5 in Gredos Mountains at La Plataforma.
85. **European Robin / Rødhals**, *Erithacus rubecula*. 1 seen 23/5 in village Barajas de Gredos.

86. **Nightingale / Sydlig Nattergal**, *Luscinia megarhynchos*. Heard 23/5 in Sepulveda, at road north of Segovia and 25/5 at Embalse de Gaudiloba Cáceres. Heard/seen in Monfragüe 27/5. Widespread. Its lovely song is often heard from dense thickets in river valleys and gorges.
87. **Black Redstart / Husrødstjert**, *Phoenicurus ochruros*. 23/5 heard in Sepulveda and at Puerto de Navacerrada, male seen at La Plataforma de Gredos and 24/5 female at Hotel Parador in Gredos.
88. **Eurasian Stonechat / Sortstrubet Bynkefugl**, *Saxicola torquatus*. Seen 23/5 north of Segovia and at Valdesqui. 4 seen 24/5 at Belen Road, 1 26/5 at Santa Marta and 27/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo.
89. **Northern Wheatear / Stenpikker**, *Oenanthe oenanthe*. Seen 23/5 at Valdesqui and La Plataforma de Gredos. One 24/5 at Hotel Parador near Navarredonda de Gredos.
90. **Black-eared Wheatear / Middelhavsstenpikker**, *Oenanthe hispanica*. 3 23/5 in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton near Ermita de San Frutos. A male seen 27/5 in Monfragüe.
91. **Black Wheatear / Sørgestenpikker**, *Oenanthe leucura*. A breeding pair 25/5 on the rock wall in front of the balcony of the restaurant at Castillo Puebla de Alcocer. A very scarce bird in Extremadura. The impressive site at the old castle on top of the mountain is a “stake out” for the species. Enjoy it with a cup of coffee in your hand!
92. **Blue Rock Thrush / Blådrossel**, *Monticola solitarius*. 4 23/5 in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton near Ermita de San Frutos and 1 at Puerto de Menga and at La Plataforma de Gredos. 6 at Castillo Puebla de Alcocer and also seen 27-28/5 in Monfragüe.
93. **Common Blackbird / Solsort**, *Turdus merula*. Uncommon, 5 seen 23/5 at Ermita de San Frutos and 1 heard at Rio San Juan. 1 24/5 at Hotel Parador, 3 26/5 in Santa Marta and 1 26/5 in Monfragüe.
94. **Mistle Thrush / Misteldrossel**, *Turdus viscivorus*. 2 seen 26/5 in the dehesa near Torrejon del Rubio, 1 27/5 and 1 28/5 in Monfragüe.
95. **Savi's Warbler / Savisanger**, *Locustella luscinioides*. 1 heard singing 27/5 from reedbed at lake south of Saucedilla.
96. **Cetti's Warbler / Cettisanger**, *Cettia cetti*. Heard/seen 23/5 at Rio San Juan and 27/5 at the outlet from the lake Embalse de Arrocampo.
97. **Eurasian Reed Warbler / Rørsanger**, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. 1 heard/seen 27/5 in reeds at the outlet from the lake Embalse de Arrocampo.
98. **Great Reed Warbler / Drosselrørsanger**, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. 5 seen/heard 25/5 in reeds at channels in rice fields of Madrigalejo. 2 seen/heard 26/5 in reeds at Embalse de Talavan. 2 seen/heard 27/5 in reeds at Embalse de Arrocampo.
99. **Melodious Warbler / Spottesanger**, *Hippolais polyglotta*. Breeding pair heard/seen 28/5 in a bushy gorge at the roadside, near la Serrana rocks in Monfragüe.
100. **Subalpine Warbler / Hvidskægget Sanger**, *Sylvia cantillans*. 3 juv. seen 27/5 in Monfragüe. A breeding pair 28/5 in a bushy gorge at the roadside, near la Serrana rocks in Monfragüe.
101. **Sardinian Warbler / Sorthovedet Sanger**, *Sylvia melanocephala*. Seen/heard 27/5 in Monfragüe.
102. **Eurasian Blackcap / Munk**, *Sylvia atricapilla*. One female 23/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos. Heard 24/5 at Rio Pelayo in southern Gredos Mountains. Heard 28/5 in Monfragüe.

103. **Western Bonelli's Warbler / Bjergløvsanger**, *Phylloscopus bonelli*. Heard/seen in trees in mountain lowlands 23/5 at Rio San Juan, 2 23/5 at Hostal Almanzor in Navarredonda de Gredos, 2 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos and 28/5 in Monfragüe.
104. **Firecrest / Rødtoppet Fuglekonge**, *Regulus ignicapilla*. Excellent views of a singleton 23/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos
105. **Spotted Flycatcher / Grå Fluesnapper**, *Muscicapa striata*. One 23/5 in riverine forest at Rio San Juan.
106. **Eurasian Pied Flycatcher / Broget Fluesnapper**, *Ficedula hypoleuca*. Males 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos and 26/5 in Monfragüe. Subspecies *iberiae*.
107. **Long-tailed Bushtit / Halemejse**, *Aegithalos caudatus*. A small flock 27/5 in Monfragüe.
108. **Blue Tit / Blåmejse**, *Cyanistes caeruleus*. Uncommon in mountain forests, seen 24/5 at Rio Pelayo in southern Gredos Mountains and 27/5 and 28/5 in Monfragüe.
109. **Great Tit / Musvit**, *Parus major*. Seen in highland villages and forests 23/5 north of Segovia, at Puerto de Navacerrada, in de Gredos and 2 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos.
110. **European Crested Tit / Topmejse**, *Lophophanes cristatus*. One 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos.
111. **Coal Tit / Sortmejse**, *Periparus ater*. Seen in open mountain forests 23/5 at Puerto de Navacerrada, de Gredos and Hotel Parador de Gredos. 12 seen 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos.
112. **Eurasian Nuthatch / Spætmejse**, *Sitta europaea*. Seen in mountain forest 23/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos.
113. **Eurasian Golden Oriole / Pirol**, *Oriolus oriolus*. Heard 23/5 at Ermita de San Frutos and 24/5 at Oropesa. Seen 23/5 at Rio San Juan, 2 25/5 at Madrigalejo rice fields and 27-28/5 in Monfragüe.
114. **Southern Grey Shrike / Sydlig Stor Tornskade**, *Lanius meridionalis*. One 24/5 at Belen Road, 4 25/5 at the rice fields of Madrigalejo and 6 26/5 along the road from Santa Marta to Monroy.
115. **Woodchat Shrike / Rødhovedet Tornskade**, *Lanius senator*. Common in bushes on the steppes and in the dehesa around Rio Duraton, Santa Marta, Madrigalejo, Talavan and Monfragüe.
116. **Azure-winged Magpie / Blåskade**, *Cyanopica cyanus*. Delightfully common in trees and bushes on the steppes and in the dehesa south of Gredos Mountains around Oropesa, Trujillo, Caceres, Santa Marta, Madrigalejo rice fields, Talavan, Monfragüe and Embalse de Arrocampo.
117. **Eurasian Jay / Skovskade**, *Garrulus glandarius*. Seen in mountain forests 23/5 north of Segovia, 2 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos and 4 27/5 in Monfragüe.
118. **Eurasian Magpie / Husskade**, *Pica pica*. Common near houses and in farmland of the lowlands.
119. **Chough / Alpekrage**, *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*. 4 seen 23/5 on grasslands in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton and 1 nearby at Ermita de San Frutos.
120. **Western Jackdaw / Allike**, *Corvus monedula*. Found on or near ruins 23/5 at Ermita de San Frutos, 8 25/5 at Castillo Puebla de Alcocer, in La Serena, 27/5 at Embalse de Arrocampo.
121. **Carrion Crow / Sortkrage**, *Corvus corone*. Scattered occurrence. 20 23/5 on grasslands in Parque Natural de las Hoces del Rio Duraton. Seen north of Segovia, in Navarredonda de Gredos, south of Gredos Mountains, at Belen Road and 2 near Madrigalejo.

122. **Northern Raven / Ravn**, *Corvus corax*. Seen 23/5 at Rio San Juan and 2 at Puerto de Navacerrada, 2 24/5 at Belen Road and 1 25 and 26/5 near Santa Marta and at least 6 26-28/5 in Monfragüe.
123. **Spotless Starling / Ensfarvet Stær**, *Sturnus unicolor*. Widespread and very common around villages and farms.
124. **Red Avadavat, Strawberry Finch / Tigerfinke, Jordbærfinke, Amandava amandava**. A pair in full breeding plumage flushed at the roadside 25/5 in the eastern part of the Madrigalejo rice fields, east of Vegas Altas.
125. **House Sparrow / Gråspurv**, *Passer domesticus*. Very common in the villages. Often makes colonies at the bottom of the nests of White Stork.
126. **Spanish Sparrow / Spansk Spurv**, *Passer hispaniolensis*. 2 25/5 and 26/5 near Santa Marta, a colony found 26/5 at Embalse de Talavan and 1 in Monfragüe 28/5. Rather scarce.
126. **Eurasian Tree Sparrow / Skovspurv**, *Passer montanus*. Uncommon, 4 25/5 in Madrigalejo rice fields.
128. **Rock Sparrow / Stenspurv**, *Petronia petronia*. Seen 23/5 in villages north of Segovia and one singing 24/5 at the church of Barajas de Gredos.
129. **Common Chaffinch / Bogfinke**, *Fringilla coelebs*. Seen 23/5 at Rio de San Juan, 23-24/5 up to 6 at Hotel Parador de Gredos, 26/5 at Santa Marta and 28/5 in Monfragüe.
130. **European Serin / Gulirisk**, *Serinus serinus*. Common at trees in the mountains and on the steppes.
131. **Citril Finch / Citronsiken**, *Serinus citronella*. Excellent views of a pair in pine trees early morning 24/5 at the playground of Hotel Parador de Gredos and another pair in edge of pinewood at roadside east of the hotel. A scarce bird, and often hard to find. Hotel Parador still seems to be a good spot for this much sought after bird.
Erling's only tick during the trip, and his last breeding bird in continental Europe. So, the relief was clearly visible, when the tick was in the belt!
132. **European Greenfinch / Grønirisk**, *Carduelis chloris*. Uncommon. Seen 23/5 at Ermita de San Frutos and 25/5 near Madrigalejo.
133. **European Goldfinch / Stillits**, *Carduelis carduelis*. 23/5 6 at Ermita de San Frutos and 1 north of Segovia, 1 24/5 Belen Road, 4 25/5 Madrigalejo, 2 26/5 Embalse de Talavan and 28/5 Monfragüe.
134. **Common Linnet / Tornirisk**, *Carduelis cannabina*. Only found 23/5 in the highlands at Ermita de San Frutos and 2 at Valdesqui.
135. **Red Crossbill / Lille Korsnæb**, *Loxia curvirostra*. 10 seen 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos.
136. **Hawfinch / Kernebider**, *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. A singleton 28/5 in Monfragüe.
137. **Rock Bunting / Klippeværbling**, *Emberiza cia*. Common at rocky grounds 23/5 in Puerto de Navacerrada, at Hostal Almanzor in Navarredonda de Gredos and La Plataforma de Gredos, 4 24/5 at Hotel Parador de Gredos, 25/5 at Castillo Puebla de Alcocer and 27/5 in Monfragüe.
138. **Ortolan Bunting / Hortulan**, *Emberiza hortulana*. 1 male seen/heard 23/5 at La Plataforma de Gredos.

139. **Corn Bunting / Bomlærke**, *Miliaria calandra*. Common at the steppes from las Hoces del Rio Duraton and south to around Oropesa, Trujillo, Santa Marta and also found 28/5 in Monfragüe.

REPTILES

1. **Spanish Terrapin / Maurisk Flodskildpadde**, *Mauremys leprosa*. 8 seen 25/5 in Rio Tamuja at the road crossing on road EX-390 north of Cáceres. One in Rio Almonte 26/5 at the bridge south of Monroy. One caught 27/5 at roadside near a pond west of Saucedilla village.
2. **Ocellated Lizard / Perlefirben**, *Timon lepidus (Lacerta lepida)*. One seen 23/5 from the road to Ermita de San Frutos and one near Hotel Parador de Gredos. One photographed 27/5 at Castillo de Monfragüe.
3. **Iberian Wall Lizard / Spansk Murfirben**, *Podarcis hispanica*. One 23/5 at Puerto de Navacerrada.
4. **Ladder Snake / Trappesnog**, *Rhinechis scalaris (Elaphe scalaris)*. Seen along roadsides on the 25/5 at Madrigalejo and on the 26/5 in Monfragüe.

AMPHIBIANS

1. **Pool Frog / Kortbenet Grøn Frø**, *Rana lessonae*. Calls heard the 24/5 from the Belen Road.
2. **European Tree Frog / Almindelig Løvfro**, *Hyla arborea*. Calls heard in the evening of 23/5 in Barajas de Gredos.