



*The superb Iberian Lynx - both the focus and the highlight of our tour! (Pete Morris)*

# IBERIAN LYNX & BIRDS OF SOUTHERN SPAIN

**5 – 11 JANUARY 2020**

**LEADER:** PETE MORRIS & DAVE FARROW

Our first Iberian Lynx and Birds of Southern Spain tour was a stunningly successful trip, and provided a brilliant winter break from the dreary weather in the UK and elsewhere in Northern Europe. We quite literally experienced a solid week of wall to wall sunshine, with cool and often frosty mornings and warm sunny afternoons! There was barely a cloud in sight, and as an added bonus, we saw some fantastic 'sky-scapes' and even the full moon rising! Whilst we cannot guarantee that weather on every trip, I'm confident we can guarantee a brilliant wildlife adventure. Spain really is a favourite country of mine! Great food, superb roads and vast tracts of habitat that are still full of wildlife. Even vultures are still common, and one cannot say that of too many countries. Unusually for a Birdquest tour, our primary objective was a mammal! Fortunately, after drawing a blank the first day, we ended up with five sightings of at least four, possibly six Iberian Lynxes, and were able to watch these impressive felines at length. Also appreciated in the stunning Sierra de Andújar were Mouflon and



*Spanish Imperial Eagle was the avian highlight of our visit (Pete Morris)*

Spanish Ibex. But it was Birdquest, and amongst the 130 or so species recorded, the supporting cast of birds was also impressive. The 'dehesa' held showy Spanish Imperial Eagles, Cinereous Vultures, Iberian Green Woodpeckers, Iberian Grey Shrikes and marauding flocks of Iberian Magpies. The plains held good numbers of Little and Great Bustards, Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse and Calandra Larks, whilst wetlands gave us White-headed and Ferruginous Ducks, Red-crested Pochard, cracking Bluethroats and Penduline Tits and showy Moustached Warblers. We also encountered Black-winged Kite, Black Wheatear and a fantastic Eurasian Eagle Owl, and finished the tour in the high pine forests near Madrid where we feasted our eyes on European Crested Tits, Red Crossbills and fabulous Citril Finches.



*Firecrest - a wonderful little bird that was much appreciated by all! (Pete Morris)*



*We enjoyed a pleasant stop at the Castillo de Calatrava La Nueva (Pete Morris)*

We began the tour at Madrid Airport, from where we quickly made our way south. Our first stop failed to yield the hoped-for Eurasian Eagle Owl, but gave us a quick introduction to some of the commoner species such as Black Redstart and our first of many (real!) Red-legged Partridges. Moving on we stopped for lunch, whilst admiring Red Kites overhead, and then made a sudden stop when we noticed a Black-winged Kite perched by the roadside. Here we also found a fine grey male Hen Harrier, our first flocks of Spanish Sparrows and a Zitting Cisticola. We then made our way to the scenic Castillo de Calatrava la Nueva, a fantastic medieval castle perched on top of a hill. Of course the castle was impressive, but we turned our attention to feathered friends! A familiar call had us looking up, and soon we were watching two most unexpected Alpine Accentors on the castle walls. More expected were the fine pairs of Black Wheatears which showed well, and alongside them on the rocky slopes we found Blue Rock Thrush, Thekla's Lark and smart Rock Buntings. Sardinian Warblers were not uncommon, and we also got our first scope views of impressive Hawfinches. As the sun lowered, we continued on to our rural hotel in the Sierra de Andújar, passing our only Granada Hare as we went.



*Alpine Accentor was a pleasant surprise on our first day! (Pete Morris)*



*Black Wheatear and Thekla's Lark were two early highlights! (Pete Morris)*



We potentially had five days to explore the Sierra de Andújar in our quest to find the elusive lynx, and our first day reminded us why we had time... in perfect conditions there was not a sniff of the cat! We did however have plenty of time to admire the local avifauna as we walked along a quiet section of the road, scanning for mammals. Almost our first bird was a Golden Eagle, and Iberian endemics were prominent, with superb Iberian Green Woodpeckers, Iberian Shrikes and a big flock of Iberian Magpies all showing up. After a while, our first Spanish Imperial Eagle was spotted and as the day warmed up, Griffon and Cinereous Vultures began to soar on the thermals, and were joined by two more fine Spanish Imperial Eagles, and one or two Crag Martins took to the skies. In the shrubbery we saw our first Little Owl, Dartford Warblers showed superbly, and we were also delighted to watch some confiding Firecrests alongside Short-toed Treecreepers, though the European Crested Tits were a little more elusive. Mammals were well represented as numerous Red and Fallow Deers and a few Mouflon were seen well, and plenty of European Rabbits scurried around, tempting those lynxes no doubt, but not enough to pull one into our view!

The second day out, we once again visited La Lancha and the road to the Jándula Reservoir, and set about our task again. For the first couple of hours it was more of the same, but then things changed. A gathering of others along the road was the clue, and we soon joined them, and there, in a firebreak was a stunning Iberian Lynx. It didn't sit for too long, but when it moved it was joined by another, and we ended up watching the two



*Dawn at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar, and an Iberian Lynx surveying the hillside! (Pete Morris)*



of them on and off for most of the rest of the morning. They would often disappear into dead ground and then reappear elsewhere, but ultimately there was plenty of time for everyone to get great looks and watch them at length through the scope. Elated, we headed down to the Jándula Dam. Here it didn't take too long to locate three Spanish Ibex up on the crags, and we explored a tunnel where Daubenton's Bats were present. We took our picnic at the dam and were surprised to see a fine Black Stork circling over us!

Heading to another site for the afternoon, we were again stopped by a crowd in another area, and here, another Iberian Lynx was sleeping on a rock, but well concealed by vegetation. It was quite close, and from time to time we had fantastic views of its face through the scope, before it eventually woke up and sauntered off. At this point we left for another area called Encinarejo, lower down the Jándula River. Here we found Grey Wagtails and Common Kingfishers along the river, a fine Rock Sparrow, and many of the same woodland species. After dark, several Tawny Owls could be heard calling, but proved frustratingly difficult to see.

With our lynx quest now a success, we decided to spend the following day exploring the plains south of Ciudad Real. Daylight hours work in a delightfully civilized way in Spain in the winter, so an early departure (07.00!) saw us arriving on the frosty plains soon after sunrise! Almost immediately we were watching flocks of Pint-tailed Sandgrouse and Little Bustards and before too long we had located our first stately Great Bustards and attractive Black-bellied Sandgrouse as frequent flocks of Calandra Larks also performed. Marsh Harrier patrolled the plains and flocks of Northern Lapwings, Golden Plovers, Spotless Starlings, White Wagtails,



*Top to bottom! Great Bustards, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse and a mixed flock of Pin-tailed Sandgrouse and Little Bustards (Pete Morris)*





*Little Bustards gave us many great views (Pete Morris)*

Spanish Sparrows and various finches fed on the open ground. Through the morning we racked up an impressive 125+ Great Bustards, nearly 100 Little Bustards and several hundred Pin-tailed and a few Black-bellied Sandgrouse, all under perfect blue skies! A good morning indeed. The rest of the day was relatively quiet by comparison. A hoped-for eagle owl was not present (though we hatched a plan!) though we did however see a fine Spanish Imperial Eagle on the drive back. A late afternoon look for lynx was not productive on that front, but did yield more good looks at the commoner birds of the area.

For our last full day in the area, we decided to go back to La Lancha and just soak in the place and its wildlife, once again in glorious sunshine. And we had a great morning. Three Iberian Lynx were seen, including a pair watched at length, frequently scraping and marking the ground, and another that scratched up a tree! We also achieved our best views of Spanish Imperial Eagle with fine scope views of a perched adult and then a close flyover of a different adult. We also found our first Eurasian Hoopoe much to some of the group's delight! In the afternoon we once again visited the attractive Encinarajo. Many common birds were again seen well, a Northern Goshawk flew over, and herptiles were in evidence with Vaucher's Wall Lizard, Horseshoe Whip Snake and Stripeless Tree Frog all being found in the balmy weather!



*A superb Spanish Imperial Eagle (Pete Morris)*



*The wide open vistas of the plains south of Ciudad Real were superb on a frosty morning (Pete Morris)*

It had been a great stay in the Andújar area, and having thanked our hosts for a very pleasant and relaxing stay, we once again headed north, this time to the town of Daimiel. Here we first explored the excellent Laguna de Navaseca. Wildfowl numbers were impressive, and amongst the hordes of Mallards, Northern Shovelers, Eurasian Teals, Greylag Geese and Common Pochards, we found a few special species, including c40 White-headed Ducks, two Ferruginous Ducks and a Red-crested Pochard, as well as several Black-necked Grebes. A few Black-winged Stilts and Ruff were joined by a Wood Sandpiper, a Green Sandpiper and a few Common Snipe, and a few Greater Flamingos paddled about. The margins of the pools were perhaps more interesting, and here we found a trio of fantastic passerines, namely two fine male Bluethroats, two bandit-like male Eurasian Penduline Tits and some surprisingly showy Moustached Warblers. A few Water Pipits and Western Swamphens skulked around the margins, and some flyover Common Cranes gave us an idea! Once we'd fully circumnavigated the lake and exhausted the birding possibilities, we drove a few kilometres and found a flock of c1,000 Common Cranes which provided quite a sight! We then moved a few kilometres to eat our picnic whilst enjoying a busy colony of displaying White Storks.



*Part of the 1000+ Common Cranes seen in a flock near to Daimiel (Pete Morris)*



*Highlights from Daimiel... Bluethroat, White-headed Duck, Black-necked Grebe and White Stork (Pete Morris)*



Having checked-in to our comfortable hotel and taken the traditional siesta, we went out for the late afternoon, initially traversing the plains once more, where we achieved more views of both species of bustard and both species of sandgrouse as well as Calandra Larks and a female Hen Harrier. We then made our way to a nearby quarry to execute our previously hatched plan... Initially all was quiet, just a few Black Redstarts and a couple of Black Wheatears, and as the spectacular moon began to rise, it looked like we were out of luck. But then a deep hoot ripped through the air, and two large ears protruding from a lump on top of the cliffs signalled the presence of a huge Eurasian Eagle Owl! We watched it in the scope for sometime as it hooted away, and we left as happy bunnies!



*Moon rise was followed by this fine Eagle Owl! The wonders of modern cameras!! (Pete Morris)*



The last day of our adventure was largely a travel day as we made our way back from Ciudad Real to Madrid. We did however make a stop in some gorgeous pine forest northwest of Madrid, known as Pinares de Peguerinos. Even before we had stopped the vehicle we could hear the songs of Red Crossbills cutting through the crisp air. We spent a lovely hour or two, wondering through the pines under brilliant blue skies, and soon found several showy Red Crossbills, and, more importantly several stunning Citril Finches! European Crested Tits were common and easy to see, and we also added Goldcrest and Coal Tit! As we headed back to Madrid, more Red Kites, vultures and ravens drifted over, and we could begin to look back on an action-packed and successful week! A last stop yielded nothing more than a few more Rock Sparrows, but we'd really already achieved our objectives! Spain really is a brilliant country for wildlife, and in the weather we were treated to, who could fail to be impressed?



*The group in the wonderful pine forests northwest of Madrid and the Citril Finches found there (Pete Morris)*





*Another view of the stunning Firecrest from La Lancha (Pete Morris)*

## **SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR**

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Conservation threat categories and are taken from the BirdLife website: <http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/search>

**(EW)** = Extinct in the wild, **(CR)** = Critically Endangered, **(EN)** = Endangered, **(VU)** = Vulnerable, **(NT)** = Near Threatened, **(DD)** = Data Deficient.

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **2019. IOC World Bird List (v 9.2)**. This list is updated twice annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. Please note, this was the current version when the report checklist was created. Some alternative names are given in parentheses.

All of our checklists are powered by our partner iGoTerra ([www.igoterra.com](http://www.igoterra.com)) who provide web and mobile applications for bird and wildlife enthusiasts and businesses. Their suite of services cover observations, rankings, lists, photos and trip management tools.



*Real wild Red-legged Partridges were frequently seen (Pete Morris)*

- Red-legged Partridge** ◊ *Alectoris rufa* Fairly common, with many great views, the first around Toledo [*intercedens*].
- Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* Good numbers seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel [nominate].
- Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* A few seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata* Good numbers seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Gadwall** *Mareca strepera* A few seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel [nominate].
- Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* Biggest numbers were at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel [nominate].
- Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* Quite a few seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* A female seen well at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* (VU) Plenty seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* Two females seen well at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala* (EN) Good numbers (40+) seen well at the Laguna de Navaseca.
- Great Bustard** ◊ *Otis tarda* (VU) Seen on both visits to the plains south of Ciudad Real, with 125+ noted; great views.
- Little Bustard** ◊ *Tetrax tetrax* (NT) Seen on both visits to the plains south of Ciudad Real, with 90+ noted; great views.
- Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** *Pterocles alchata* 100s seen on both visits to the plains south of Ciudad Real [nominate].
- Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles orientalis* A few seen on both visits to the plains south of Ciudad Real [nominate].
- Rock Dove (Feral)** *Columba livia 'feral'* All birds seen appeared to be feral types.
- Stock Dove** *Columba oenas* (NL) Seen distantly at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].
- Common Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus* Very common and widespread [nominate].
- Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* Small numbers, especially around the towns [nominate].
- European Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus* (H) Several heard at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel [nominate].
- Western Swamphen** ◊ *Porphyrio porphyrio* c6 seen very well at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* One at Encinarejo, Andújar, and plenty at the Laguna de Navaseca [nominate].
- Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* A few at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel [nominate].
- Common Crane** *Grus grus* Most impressive was the 1000+ near to the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Plenty at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel [nominate].
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* One distantly on the Encinarejo reservoir, in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].
- Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* Good views of 10 or more at the Laguna de Navaseca, near Daimiel [nominate].
- Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* Six, mostly scruffy youngsters, at the Laguna de Navaseca.
- Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* A pair or two seen well at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* (NT) Good numbers on the plains south of Ciudad Real.
- European Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* Small numbers seen well on the plains south of Ciudad Real.
- Ruff** *Calidris pugnax* A small flock seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* A few seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel [nominate].



*Western Swamphens and Greater Flamingo from the Laguna de Navaseca (Pete Morris)*

- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* (NL) One seen by some at the Jándula River in the Sierra de Andújar.
- Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* One at Laguna de Navaseca, and two at the Tablas de Daimiel NP near to Daimiel.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Singles at the Laguna de Navaseca and Tablas de Daimiel NP near to Daimiel.
- Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Only seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* Some flyovers and a few at the Laguna de Navaseca [*graellsii/intermedius*].
- Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* Great views of a flyover at the Jándula Reservoir in the Sierra de Andújar.
- White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* A few on journeys, but best was the active colony at the Tablas de Daimiel NP [nominate].
- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Fairly common and widespread.
- Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* (NL) One for some near to Ciudad Real.
- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Small numbers seen at various wetlands [nominate].
- Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Great views of one just north of Aldea del Rey [nominate].



*Black Stork and Black-winged Kite were both write-ins for the tour! (Pete Morris)*



Griffon Vulture (left), Cinereous Vulture, Marsh Harrier (composite image) and, inset, female Hen Harrier (Pete Morris)



- Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* Good numbers most days; up to 40 seen at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].
- Cinereous Vulture** ♦ *Aegypius monachus* (NT) Small numbers most days with up to 6 seen in the Sierra de Andújar.
- Spanish Imperial Eagle** *Aquila adalberti* (VU) Adults on 3 dates, including close flyovers and brilliant scope views perched.
- Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* An immature bird seen well at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [*homeyeri*].
- Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* Seen a couple of times in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].
- Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* An adult (probably a male) seen flying over at Encinarejo [nominate].
- Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* Common in the Ciudad Real and Daimiel areas [nominate].
- Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* An adult male north of Aldea del Rey and a female in the plains south of Ciudad Real.
- Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* (NT) Good numbers seen well, especially west and southwest of Madrid [nominate].
- Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* Small numbers seen on four days [nominate].
- Eurasian Eagle-Owl** *Bubo bubo* Brilliant views of a calling male at dusk, near to Ciudad Real [*hispanus*].
- Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco* Heard and glimpsed at Encinarejo in the Sierra de Andújar [*sylvatica*].
- Little Owl** *Athene noctua* Frequently heard and a few seen well in the Sierra de Andújar [*vidalii*].



Common Kingfisher, Iberian Grey Shrike, Crag Martin, Eurasian Magpie and Iberian Magpie (Pete Morris)



- Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* Several seen, the first along the road to La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].
- Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* A couple seen well along the river at Encinarejo in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].
- Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major* A few seen, the first at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [*hispanus*].
- Iberian Green Woodpecker** ◊ *Picus sharpei* (NT) Plenty of excellent views of this smart species, the first at La Lancha.
- Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* Many seen, especially on our journeys [nominate].
- Iberian Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis* (VU) Small numbers seen well at several sites, the first at La Lancha.
- Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* A few seen, with best views along the river at Encinarejo [*fasciatus*].
- Iberian Magpie** ◊ *Cyanopica cooki* Plenty seen, including some big flocks of 50+, the first at La Lancha. Smart birds.
- Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica* Very common and widespread [*melanotos*].
- Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* A few seen, especially on the plains near to Ciudad Real [*erythroramphos*].
- Western Jackdaw** *Coloemus monedula* A few flocks seen during the week [*spermologus*].
- Rook** *Corvus frugilegus* Two seen in flight over the road near to Toledo. A scarce species in Spain [nominate]!
- Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone* Just one seen in flight near to Madrid [nominate].
- Northern Raven** *Corvus corax* A few in the Sierra de Andújar and in the mountains northwest of Madrid [*hispanus*].
- Coal Tit** *Periparus ater* Several seen at Pinares de Peguerinos, northwest of Madrid [*vieirae*].
- European Crested Tit** *Lophophanes cristatus* Seen briefly at La Lancha and much better at Pinares de Peguerinos [*weigoldi*].
- Eurasian Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus* A few seen, the first at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [*ogliastrae*].
- Great Tit** *Parus major* A few seen, the first at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].
- Eurasian Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus* Brilliant views of two fine males at the Laguna de Navaseca [nominate].
- Bearded Reedling** *Panurus biarmicus* (LO) Two briefly in flight at the Laguna de Navaseca, near Damiel [nominate].
- Woodlark** *Lullula arborea* A few seen with best views at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [*pallida*].
- Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* A few seen on the plains south of Ciudad Real.
- Thekla's Lark** ◊ *Galerida theklae* Best views were on our first day at Castillo de Calatrava La Nueva [nominate].
- Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* Common in open country with many seen well [*pallida*].



A fine Dartford Warbler, one of many Black Redstarts and a smart European Crested Tit (Pete Morris)



- Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra* Very common on the plains south of Ciudad Real; some big flocks seen [nominate].
- Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* A couple seen at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar.
- Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti* Many heard and a few seen at the Laguna de Navaseca, near to Daimiel [nominate].
- Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus* See note.
- Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* Common, especially along the river at Encinarejo [**collybita-group**].
- Moustached Warbler** *Acrocephalus melanopogon* Brilliant views of 2-3 at the Laguna de Navaseca [nominate].
- Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* Seen briefly just north of Aldea del Rey on our first day [*cisticola*].
- Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* Plenty seen, the first on our first day at Castillo de Calatrava La Nueva.
- Dartford Warbler** ◊ *Sylvia undata* (NT) Great views at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [*undata*].
- Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala* Plenty seen, the first on our first day at Castillo de Calatrava La Nueva [nominate].
- Common Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla* Great views at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar; little beauties [nominate]!
- Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus* A couple seen at Pinares de Peguerinos, northwest of Madrid [nominate].
- Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* (H) Just heard a couple of times, first at Encinarejo in the Sierra de Andújar.
- Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea* A few seen, the first at Encinarejo in the Sierra de Andújar [*hispaniensis*].
- Short-toed Treecreeper** *Certhia brachydactyla* Best views were at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].
- Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* Seen a few times with a flock scoped at Tablas de Daimiel NP [nominate]!!
- Spotless Starling** ◊ *Sturnus unicolor* Plenty seen well on a daily basis. Great calls too!
- Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula* Fairly common and widespread in small numbers [nominate].

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* Plenty seen, the first on our first day at Castillo de Calatrava La Nueva [nominate].

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* Several seen, the first hopping about near the road to La Lancha [nominate].

**Continental Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* Common and widespread [nominate].

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* Brilliant views of a couple of smart males at the Laguna de Navaseca [azuricollis].

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* Common and widespread, with many seen well [gibraltariensis].

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* A few, the first male seen well on our first day at the castle [nominate].

**European Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola* A good number seen at various sites [nominate].

**Black Wheatear** ◊ *Oenanthe leucura* Great views of two pairs on our first day at the castle and seen near Poblete [nominate].

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Common and widespread [balearoibericus].

**Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis* Flocks seen well on several occasions, the first near Aldea del Rey [nominate].

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* (LO) One briefly at our first lunch stop.

**Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia* One seen well on the bridge at Encinarejo. Also seen less well near Madrid [nominate].

**Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris* Great views of 2 on our first day at Castillo de Calatrava La Nueva. A surprise [nominate]!

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis* (H) Heard a few times [mabbotti].

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* A few seen, the first on the river at Encinarejo in the Sierra de Andújar [nominate].

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* Common and widespread; some big flocks on the plains south of Ciudad Real [nominate].

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* (NT) Widespread in small numbers.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta* Brilliant views at the Laguna de Navaseca, and Tablas de Daimiel NP [nominate].

**Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* Fairly common and widespread [nominate].

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Several seen well, the first at Castillo de Calatrava La Nueva [nominate].

**European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris* Small numbers on most days [aurantiiventris].

**Common Linnet** *Linaria cannabina* Biggest numbers were around Ciudad Real [mediterranea].

**Red Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra* Several, including some fine males at Pinares de Peguerinos, nw of Madrid [nominate].

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* Some big flocks seen at various sites, especially in the plains [parva].

**Citril Finch** ◊ *Carduelis citrinella* c10 seen at Pinares de Peguerinos, nw of Madrid, with great views of several.

**European Serin** *Serinus serinus* A few noted, the first at our first lunch stop. Many were flyovers.

**Eurasian Siskin** *Spinus spinus* Many flyovers, the first at La Lancha in the Sierra de Andújar.

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra* Quite common, especially out in the plains [nominate].

**Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia* A couple seen well on our first day at Castillo de Calatrava La Nueva [nominate].

**Common Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus* A few seen at the Laguna de Navaseca near to Daimiel [witherbyi].



Another view of our surprise Alpine Accentor from the first afternoon (Pete Morris)



*Our charming base for our lynx hunt, and a classic view over the dehesa in the Sierra de Andújar (Pete Morris)*





*The amazing Iberian Lynx! (Pete Morris)*

## MAMMALS

**Granada Hare** *Lepus granatensis* Just one seen as we approached Andújar.

**European Rabbit** *Oryctolagus cuniculus* Plenty of lynx fodder around!

**Iberian Lynx** *Lynx pardinus* Sensational!!! Five sightings of between four and six individuals and watched at length!

**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes* (NL) One for some on the plains south of Ciudad Real

**Red Deer (Maral)** *Cervus elaphus* Common in the Sierra de Andújar.

**Fallow Deer (introduced)** *Dama dama* Several seen well in the Sierra de Andújar.

**Iberian Wild Goat (Spanish Ibex)** *Capra pyrenaica* Good scope views of 3 above the Jándula in the Sierra de Andújar.

**Mouflon (introduced)** *Ovis orientalis* Several seen well in the Sierra de Andújar. Smart animals!

**Daubenton's Myotis** *Myotis daubentonii* A few seen in the tunnel at the Jándula Dam.



*A Mouflon surveys the hillsides! (Pete Morris)*



*Red Deer and Daubenton's Myotis (Pete Morris)*





*Vaucher's Wall Lizard (Pete Morris)*

#### AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

**Stripeless Tree Frog *Hyla meridionalis*** One seen at Encinarejo in the Sierra de Andújar.

**Horseshoe Whip Snake *Hemorrhois hippocrepis*** One at Encinarejo disappeared in a crack in the wall.

**Vaucher's Wall Lizard *Podarcis vaucheri*** Seen at a few sites in the Sierra de Andújar.



*Stripeless Tree Frog and the Horseshoe Whipsnake from Encinarejo (Pete Morris)*



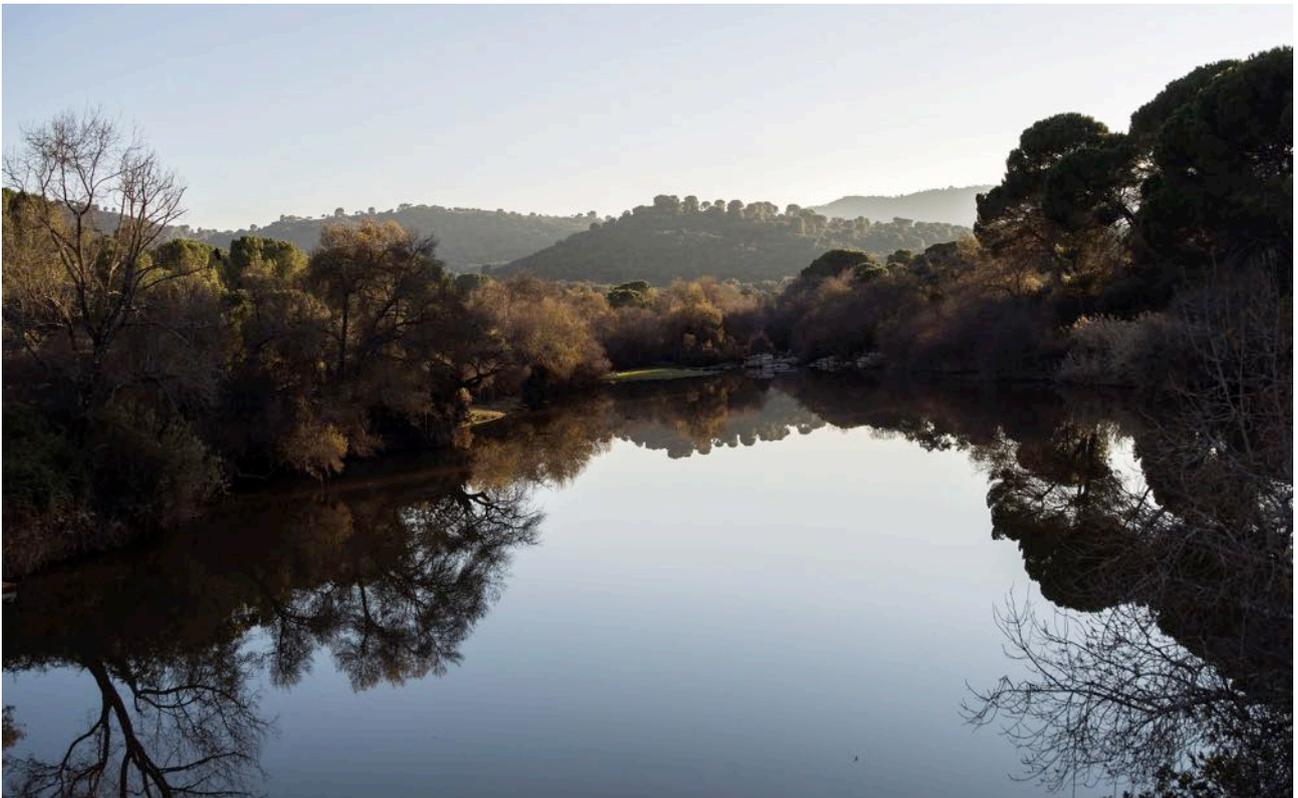
*Long-tailed Tit of the form irbil (Pete Morris)*

#### NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. (Gill, F and Donsker, D Eds). 2019. IOC World Bird Names v9.2. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

#### **Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Plenty seen well, especially in the Sierra de Andújar. The form concerned, *irbil*, is very different to the Long-tailed Tits in the UK, and is part of the 'Southern Long-tailed Tit' species group.



*The attractive pools at Encinarejo (Pete Morris)*



#### TOP VERTEBRATES OF THE TOUR

- 1<sup>st</sup> IBERIAN LYNX
- 2<sup>nd</sup> SPANISH IMPERIAL EAGLE (above)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> EURASIAN EAGLE OWL
- 4<sup>th</sup> Great Bustard
- 5<sup>th</sup> Firecrest (below)





*Wild thyme and a flowering narcissus (Pete Morris), and the atmospheric Sierra de Andujar (Dave Farrow).*





*A lynx on the skyline, Bluethroat, Red Crossbill (Pete Morris) and the beautiful La Lancha (Dave Farrow)*

