

100+ Birds Malaga Bird Watching Challenge (2016.08.17)
by BIRDAYTRIP
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107 species observed! Waders and the Mouth of the Guadalhorce have been key in this August 100+ Birds Malaga Challenge.

Click here for the complete list of birds: <http://www.birdaytrip.es/blog/item/589-100-birds-malaga-bird-watching-challenge-costa-del-sol-andalucia-southern-spain-2016-08-17>

The trip started at 5:00 in Zapata with an attempt to take a picture of the Red-necked Nightjar. The shot is not very good, but the bird posed very well!

Scops Owls were very active today and the Tawny Owl joined them with a few miaows with the first lights of the day at Montes de Malaga. The Green Woodpecker was very noisy as well. One of these times, I heard it flying closer to me behind some trees when it came out and then a Sparrowhawk behind! It seems as if the woodpecker's speed and cries dissuaded the raptor to keep on chasing it.

There were two species on passage at Montes de Malaga: Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers. On the way to El Torcal, I could also see a nice flock of Bee-eaters when I stopped to watch a couple of Booted Eagles.

The long and dry summer has make El Torcal a more silent place. I could not spot some of the typical inhabitants in the last months, but I still watched Spectacled Warbler, Griffon Vulture, Black Redstart and Blue Rock Thrush. I tried to spot a bird among the leaves in a tree when I found a face with very nice white eyes... it was an Orphean Warbler!

As I did not see the Black-eared Wheatear from the road, I walked to the place where they use to be. Thekla Larks soon sang at me. Then, lots of Pallid Swifts began to fly very close to the ground and to me across the ridge; it was fantastic! I eventually found the wheatear and learned how they hide in the shade of the big rocks when it is hot as it was today.

Next stop was Fuente de Piedra. A flock of around 100 Flamingos still feeds in the last pond of the lake. Some of them have come back to the Laguneto, which has also lost a lot of water so diving ducks have left. Red-crested Pochards and a Ferruginous Duck have moved to the little Laguna de la Paloma, near the Laguneto. Olivaceous Warblers are very active all around the site and there was a massive passage of Bee-eaters over the lake.

A walk along the cliffs of El Chorro gave me the flight of the young Bonelli's Eagle, lots of Griffon Vultures, Dartford Warbler and a big flock of Corn Buntings.

I saw a Short-toed Eagle over the road on my way down to the coast through the Valley of the Guadalhorce.

I was still 16 species behind the target so visiting Zapata and the mouth of the river was going to be necessary. I got Cattle and Little Egrets, Grey Heron and Kingfisher in my quick visit to Zapata.

Once at the mouth: Monk Parakeet, White-headed Duck, Teal, Audouin's, Lesser Black-back and Yellow-legged Gulls, Avocet, Redshank, Scopoli's Shearwater (fantastic views with the sunset light!), Pochard and Gadwall, 99 species just before my last chance at Laguna Grande.

Then, waders went into action: Curlew Sandpiper (100!), Kentish Plover, Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Little Stint, Whimbrel, Sanderling and the non-wader Glossy Ibis.



The beginning: Red-necked Nightjar (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*)...



Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)



Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)



Black-eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*)



Newly arrived Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*Larus fuscus*)



White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*)



100th bird! Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)



Avocets (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)



Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)



... and the end: Laguna Grande