

100+ Birds Malaga bird watching tour (2016.09.14)
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I had such a pleasant day sharing a wonderful trip with Linda and Dave (Manager of Birding Ecosse in Scotland).

Click here for the complete list of birds: <http://www.birdaytrip.es/blog/item/597-100-birds-malaga-bird-watching-tour-costa-del-sol-andalucia-southern-spain>

Linda and Dave accepted meeting at 5:30 in order to try the Red-necked Nightjars. These funny birds were so nice and showed up so quickly that we could enjoy a fantastic sky from the Montes de Malaga for quite a long time.

But the morning was so quiet and no nocturnal bird wanted to break a fabulous silence. At day break, Backbirds began to call and they were followed by the typical forest birds in the area, including Common Crossbills, Crested Tits, woodpeckers, Hawfinches and Nuthatches. A pair of Sparrowhawks kept flying and calling for quite a while and there was a great irruption of Chiffchaffs, the first I saw this season!

The way down for the breakfast break gave us the nice glide of a Short-toed Eagle, a Booted Eagle mobbing a Honey Buzzard that tried to ride a thermal away towards the Strait and a Woodlark sitting on a tree by the road.

We had a very entertaining time at El Torcal trying to identify lots of little birds in the scrub. Black Redstarts were so evident but Cirl and Rock Buntings, Serins and Garden Warblers (another irruption!) took us some more time. While searching for Thekla Larks, we had a glimpse of a Rock Thrush on a bush.

We were very lucky to find a place to stop the car on our way to the Fuente de Piedra lake when we spotted a Montagu's Harrier quartering a plot. It was a beautiful young bird that led us to find a Common Buzzard on a fence and our first Yellow Wagtail of the day.

In the middle of a severe drought, there are just a small flock of Flamingos in the Fuente de Piedra lake but the Laguneto by the Visitors Centre is still a good resort for very entertaining wader identification with Black-winged Stilt, Common, Green and Curlew Sandpipers, Dunlin, Greenshank, Kentish, Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers, Lapwing, Little Stint, Ruff, Sanderling, Snipe and Turnstone. A White Stork was present and we saw two Red-crested Pochards at the nearby Laguna de Las Palomas. The surprise there was a Kingfisher taking off from an olive tree at the Visitors Centre... Amazing!

The tour across the farmlands gave us nice views of Stone Curlew, Crested Lark, Tawny Pipit, Hoopoe, Woodchat Shrike, migrant Wheatears and a very difficult to identify Spanish Sparrow among House ones jumping in the dark shade of an olive tree.

We stopped by the cliffs of El Chorro to try and tick a few more birds. The Griffon Vultures, with a few couples in nice synchronized flights and possibly juveniles following them and playing in the air, gave us a wonderful time. Dave spotted a much smaller silhouette among them that turned out to be the Egyptian Vulture.

After a very relaxed birding day, we were running a bit short of species but Linda and Dave did not mind and we still stopped to enjoy the Black Wheatears, a Crag Martin and a travelling Orphean Warbler.

No very much time remaining but for a short call to Zapata, where we very much enjoyed the Kingfishers in their natural environment, Cattle Egret, Marsh Harrier and Grey Wagtail.



Red-necked Nightjar (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*)



Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)



Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirrus*)



Who talked about a heat wave? El Torcal



White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)



A guest birdwatcher...



Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedicephalus*)



Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*)



Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*)



Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)



Griffon Vultures (*Gyps fulvus*)