

Birding: Andalusia

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Participants: Ed.O'Hara: Lurgan, N.Ireland



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For the third year in a row I found myself back in Andalusia, for a birder this is a no brainer. The area around Seville is simply fantastic for birding, with so many prime habitats. I stayed in Dos Hermanas, an area just east of Seville, for a week with my wife and allocated three days for birding from the 9th-11th of November with Luis of *Andalusianbirdingholidays*, a guide I have used before.

The weather during the week was basically fine 20-24°C with two cloudy days and some rain. No doubt the non-birding highlight came on Tuesday night as we watched one DJ Trump become President of the USA. However back to the birding; we went to three sites in the Seville-Cádiz area, which of course included Donana National Park, one of the greatest birding areas in Europe, especially in winter.

9/11/16: GREEN CORRIDOR OF THE RIO GUADIAMAR

The day starts sunny, but it quickly became cloudy, although thankfully the rain stays away and the temperature rises to a pleasant 20°C.

The visit to this area consisted of a pleasant walk along the paths on either side of the Rio Guadiamar, whose banks consisted of a mixed woodland of Poplars, Wild Olive, Eucalyptus, Pistacia Lentiscus and Ash trees. The surrounding areas are dedicated mainly to agriculture, interspersed with Holm Oak.

The highlights of the walk along the riverbanks were: **Wryneck, Woodlark, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Spoonbill, Black-winged Kite, Booted Eagle** [pale form], **Green Woodpecker, Common Waxbill, Azure-winged Magpie, Red Kite, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Zitting Cisticola, Cetti's Warbler** and of course all the usual suspects that you would find in this type of habitat.



Male Spanish Sparrows



Zitting Cisticola

The sky began to get very dark and heavy rain looked likely, so we walked back to the car and drove back to Seville. I was looking forward to a nice warm bath.

10/11/16: CADIZ, BAHIA de CADIZ and SURROUNDING AREAS

[Chiclana de La Fronterra, Puerto Real and Puerto de Santa Maria]

The weather today was sunny with a mild NW wind, with temperatures around 22°C.

The golf courses of Chiclana are located in a very urbanized area, dominated by Pine and *Pistascia lentiscus*, accompanied by several ornamental species of shrubs and trees. In the Bahía de Cádiz NP, the marsh is the main habitat, dominated by halophytic plants. The rhythm of the tides and the artificial management of the habitat have defined the distribution and number of birds that can be seen in the bay. Economic activities such as fish farms and salt production also influence the variety of birds around the protected areas.

The main target today is one of the rarest birds in Europe, but it can be found in the Cadiz area due to a re-colonisation plan by the Spanish Authorities and nature conservation groups in Spain. Surprisingly in the winter months one of the bird's favourite habitats is the golf courses in the Chiclana urbanization. There are several golf courses in the area, but after searching for twenty minutes, we eventually found the birds at the edge of a course full of early golfers. At last we came face to face [literally] with the **BALD IBIS**. This penchant for golf courses is both a protector and a danger, already one bird has been killed and one badly injured. They will never win a beauty contest, however they have a certain charm.



Bald Ibis: Adult



Bald Ibis: Juvenile

After a light breakfast we then headed to the Bahía de Cádiz NP, a huge area, to search for several trip targets. Criss-crossing the bay area we stopped at several points and picked up the following, amongst many others:

Audouin's Gull, Caspian Tern, Greater Flamingo, Short-toed Eagle, Osprey, Whimbrel, Marsh Harrier, Avocet, Crested Lark, Grey Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Turnstone, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Sandwich Tern & Crag Martin.



Crag Martin



Slender-billed Gull

Sunny day with mild NW wind and temperature high of 22°C

The rice fields of Isla Mayor and La Puebla del Rio are a very rich habitat, which attracts and maintains huge numbers of bird species during most of the year. The agriculture of rice maintains a large number of invertebrates, which are the food source for the birds.

In the Dehesa de Abajo visitor centre the adjoining reservoir is a refuge for thousands of waterfowl, especially when autumn and winter are very dry and Donana and its surroundings have little water.



Part of the huge wildfowl flock in **Dehesa de Abajo**

The number of birds in the rice fields is truly astonishing; everywhere we turned birds were in the sky flying from one field to another depending on where the cutting was taking place. Unexpected was the large number of **Common Cranes** in the fields.



The tracks that run along the edge of the rice fields allow you to use your vehicle as a mobile hide, very advantageous when you want to get close to the birds. The following is a summary of some of the birds seen: **Black Stork, White Stork, Yellow-crowned Bishop, Common Waxbill, Corn Bunting, Spanish Sparrow, Penduline Tit, Bluethroat, Red Kite, Hen Harrier, Marsh Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Serin, Booted Eagle, Glossy Ibis,**



Night Herons disturbed by a Marsh Harrier

Great White Egret, Cattle Egret, Red-crested Pochard, Kingfisher, Black-winged Kite, Yellow-legged Gull, Iberian Grey Shrike, Spoonbill, Common Stonechat, Greater Flamingo, Crested Lark, Common Snipe, Wood Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Common Kestrel, Greenshank and a few distant unidentified warblers that appeared suddenly out of the reeds and then disappeared as quickly.



Greater Flamingo



Green Sandpiper



Wood Sandpiper



Common Kestrel

Having been here in September and November, both periods offer some fantastic birding but if I had a preference it would be September, due to the huge numbers of birds that go through on migration. However, with Donana and surroundings as a backdrop, any trip will be rewarding at any time of year.

I would like once again to thank Luismi for a superb three days in the field and his homemade delicacies that we ate en route.

Bird list:

BIRD	LATIN	AREA
1 Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	Several seen in Donana
2 Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	Large numbers in Donana
3 Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
4 Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Several seen in Donana
5 White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Large numbers in Donana
6 Northern Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>	20 plus seen in Chiclana
7 Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
8 Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	30 plus in Donana/Cadiz
9 Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Several seen in Donana
10 Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Large numbers in Donana
11 Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Several seen in Donana
12 Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	4 seen in Donana
13 Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Large numbers in Donana
14 Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Several seen in Donana
15 Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1 seen at Cadiz
16 Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	4 seen in Donana area

17	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Several seen in Donana
18	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	4 seen in Donana
19	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	20 plus in Dos Hermanas
20	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	1 seen in Bahia de Cadiz
21	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Several seen in Donana
22	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1 male seen in Donana
23	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo butea</i>	Several seen
24	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	3 birds seen Donana/Cadiz
25	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Several seen in Donana
26	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 bird near Isla Major
27	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Several seen
28	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Common in Donana
29	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
30	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Large numbers in Bahia de Cadiz
31	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
32	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Large numbers in Bahia de Cadiz
33	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
34	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1 bird in Bahia de Cadiz
35	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Large numbers in Bahia de Cadiz
36	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Several seen in Donana
37	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Several seen in Donana
38	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	1 bird in Bahia de Cadiz
39	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
40	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Several seen in Donana
41	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Several seen in Donana
42	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	3 birds on Bahia de Cadiz
43	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Several seen in Donana
44	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Several seen in Bahia de Cadiz
45	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Several seen in Bahia de Cadiz
46	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Several seen in Bahia de Cadiz
47	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Large numbers in Donana
48	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	Several seen in Bahia de Cadiz
49	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
50	Audouin's Gull	<i>Larus audouinii</i>	20 plus seen in Bahia de Cadiz
51	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	Large numbers in Donana
52	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
53	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	20 plus seen in Bahia de Cadiz
54	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	200 plus seen in Bahia de Cadiz
55	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Common in most areas
56	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	30 plus seen
57	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	3 in Donana
58	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	5 seen in different areas
59	Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	1 seen at the Rio Guadamar
60	Lesser Sp. Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	3 seen at the Rio Guadamar
61	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	1 seen at the Rio Guadamar
62	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	1 seen at Dehesa de Abajo
63	Azure-winged Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cooki</i>	30+ seen at the Rio Guadamar
64	Common Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Several seen
65	Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Several seen

66	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	4 seen at the Rio Guadamar
67	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	4 seen at the Rio Guadamar
68	Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	Several seen in Donana
69	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	Common in suitable habitat
70	Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	1 seen at Rio Guadamar
71	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	10+ in Dehesa de Abajo
72	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyanoprogne rupestris</i>	100+ in Cadiz
73	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Several seen in Donana
74	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	2 seen at Rio Guadamar
75	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Common in all areas
76	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	1 seen at Rio Guadamar
77	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	Several seen in Donana
78	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Common in all areas
79	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	Common in all areas
80	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Several seen in suitable habitat
81	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Several seen in suitable habitat
82	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Several seen in suitable habitat
83	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Several seen in suitable habitat
84	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	1 bird seen in Donana
85	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>	Common in all areas
86	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Several seen in Donana
87	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Common in all areas
88	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	Large numbers in Donana
89	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Large numbers in Donana
90	Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Several seen in suitable habitat
91	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>	Large numbers in Donana
92	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Several seen in Donana
93	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Several seen in suitable habitat
94	Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	Common in all areas
95	Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Common in all areas
96	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Common in all areas
97	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Common in all areas
98	Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Several seen in suitable habitat
99	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	Large numbers in Donana