

# 9 November 2018: A Day in Donana National Park



Ed. O'Hara/Luismi Miguel Garrido Padillo: [AndalusianBirdingHolidays.com](http://AndalusianBirdingHolidays.com)



After two days of miserable weather, Friday 9th November looked a reasonable day, well according to *El Tiempo*, a Spanish weather service. Thus I decided to call my old friend **Luismi** of [AndalusianBirdingHolidays.com](http://AndalusianBirdingHolidays.com) and booked Friday the 9th November for a visit to **Donana NP**.

As we approached the reserve from Isla Major, we came upon our first rice paddies that were being 'churned up' as we



Tractor churning up rice paddy

say at home. This was proving a huge magnet for many species of birds as they took advantage of all the food that was now available and of course the raptors overhead looking for potential prey. Birds that were present **Grey Plover, Green Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Black-winged Kite, Red Kite, Little Egret, Greater Flamingo, Black Stork, Greenshank, Lapwing, Cattle Egret, Great White Egret, White Stork, Glossy Ibis, Black-winged Stilt, Dunlin, Grey Plover, Booted Eagle, and White Wagtail,**

We then headed into the reserve proper and our first stop was at the

**Dehesa de Abaho Visitor Centre**, for a welcome cup of coffee in the café. We then walked down to the laguna which forms the heart of the centre. In the sunshine the brilliant pinks of the **Greater Flamingos** were the highlight of the Laguna.



Greater Flamingos at Dehesa de Abaho

Also present in and around the laguna were, **Common Pochard, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Teal, Greylag Goose, Coot, Moorhen, Little Grebe, Red-crested Pochard, Common Teal, Great White Egret, Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, Little Egret, Kingfisher, Booted Eagle, Common Buzzard, Red-legged Partridge, Grey Heron, Black-winged Stilt, Common Kestrel, Avocet** and the surprise bird was finding 9 **Marbled Teal**. It proved to be a very rewarding stop and after a quick walk to the hides which didn't add any new birds to our list, we set off to the second visitor centre of the reserve, where there had been reports of Black-winged Kites and several harriers had also been reported in the vicinity.

Along the way several more species were picked up, **Common Linnet, Greenfinch, Zitting Cisticola, Black Redstart, Robin, Little Owl, Sparrowhawk, Night Heron, Marsh Harrier, Greater Cormorant, Common Crane** very high overhead, migrating in from the north. We stopped for a 'field lunch', at the **Jose Antonio Valverde Centro Visitantes**, named after a man whom Luis tells me was the Spanish equivalent of David Attenborough. The centre itself had a few birds on the ponds but nothing new. However in and around the centre were several birds of note, i.e. overhead were **Hen Harrier, Marsh Harrier, Black-tailed Godwit, Swallows,**



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Montagu's Harrier, Red Kite, Black Kite, Booted Eagle and Black-winged Kite all showing well. Our next stop was a set of disused buildings that were the home for a colony of **Lesser Kestrels** and we saw at least 30 birds in the area. A number of birds had what looked like satellite wing tags on them as you can see from the picture opposite. Also noted nearby were several **Northern Wheatear**, **Stonechat**, **Lesser Short-toed Larks**, **Skylarks**, **Hoopoe**, and up in the sky, a tussle between several **Marsh Harriers** and an immature **Spanish Imperial Eagle**. You would think it couldn't get any better than this sequence of great birding; well Donana never fails to surprise the visitor. As we were driving along the main road between the reserve and some rice paddies, we witnessed an almost vertical assault from above of



Lesser Kestrel with satellite tag

a **Booted Eagle** on a **Little Egret**. We halted the car as soon as safety allowed and went back to the spot where we had seen the attack happening and sure enough there was the **Booted Eagle** on top of it's victim. We were able to get the car within 10m of the incident and watched for a few minutes as the eagle subdued its prey. It wasn't long before the local **Ravens** turned up to muscle in on the food. The **Common Magpie** didn't miss the event either and soon appeared as well, for any possible 'extras'. The day was getting on and I wanted to see their cousins [a-w magpie] at another location, which was supposed to be a good area to see them as they were used to people. After 15 minutes of hard driving i.e. not stopping if a suspect bird is seen, we reached the site and within minutes we saw the first of at least 50 birds. The **Azure-winged Magpie**, a handsome bird and easy to photograph for once. Also found at this location was a single **Sanderling**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Spotless Starling**, **Iberian Shrike** and **Grey Plover**.



Booted Eagle with Little Egret kill



Azure-winged Magpie



Black Redstart

Once again a wonderful days birding in Donana NP; a reserve that never fails to deliver, especially in the winter with all the northern species arriving in the park. My thanks again to Luis of Andalusian Birding holidays for making it memorable and subjecting his car to some dodgy tracks, but we made it through to the end.

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## A DAY IN DONANA BIRD LIST: 9 NOVEMBER 2018

English Name	Latin	Area	#	Notes
<b>Flamingo, Greater</b>	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	1000's	Common
<b>Goose, Greylag</b>	<i>Anser anser</i>	General	100's +	One site
<b>Gadwall</b>	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	100's +	Common
<b>Mallard</b>	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	100's +	Common
<b>Duck, Marbled</b>	<i>Marmaronetta aug.</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	9	One site
<b>Pochard</b>	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	50+	One site
<b>Pochard, Red-crest.</b>	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	50+	One site
<b>Shoveler</b>	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	100's +	One site
<b>Teal</b>	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	100's +	One site
<b>Partridge, Red-Leg.</b>	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	5	One site
<b>Grebe, Little</b>	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	General	100's +	Common
<b>Cormorant, Sinens.</b>	<i>Phal. Carbo sinensis</i>	General	50+	Common
<b>Egret, Cattle</b>	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	General	100's +	Common
<b>Egret, Great White</b>	<i>Ardea alba</i>	General	7	Common
<b>Egret, Little</b>	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	General	100's +	Common
<b>Heron, Grey</b>	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	General	25	Common
<b>Heron, Night</b>	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	General	12	One site
<b>Stork, Black</b>	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Rice Paddies	4	Wintering birds
<b>Stork, White</b>	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Rice Paddies	100's +	Common
<b>Ibis, Glossy</b>	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Rice Paddies	100's +	Common
<b>Spoonbill, Eurasian</b>	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	General	5	Wintering birds
<b>Buzzard, Common</b>	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	General	4	Wintering birds
<b>Eagle, Booted</b>	<i>Aquila pennata</i>	General	3	Migrants
<b>Eagle, Spanish Imperial</b>	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>	General	1	Immature bird
<b>Harrier, Hen</b>	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	General	5	Wintering birds
<b>Harrier, Marsh</b>	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	General	11	Wintering birds
<b>Harrier, Montagu's</b>	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	General	1	Single migrant
<b>Kite, Black</b>	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	General	3	Migrants
<b>Kite, Red</b>	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	General	6	Wintering birds
<b>Kestrel, Common</b>	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	General	4	Common
<b>Kestrel, Lesser</b>	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	General	30	One site
<b>Sparrowhawk, Eurasian</b>	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	General	1	One site
<b>Coot, Eurasian</b>	<i>Fulica atra</i>	General	50	Common
<b>Gallinule, Purple</b>	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	General	1	One site
<b>Moorhen, Common</b>	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	General	6	Common
<b>Crane, Common</b>	<i>Grus grus</i>	General	8	Several sites
<b>Avocet</b>	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Rice Paddies	30	Several sites
<b>Stilt, Black-winged</b>	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Rice Paddies	12	Several sites
<b>Lapwing</b>	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Rice Paddies	13	Several sites
<b>Plover, Kentish</b>	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Rice Paddies	6	Several sites
<b>Plover, Little Ringed</b>	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Rice Paddies	7	Several sites
<b>Owl, Little</b>	<i>Athene noctua</i>	General	1	One site





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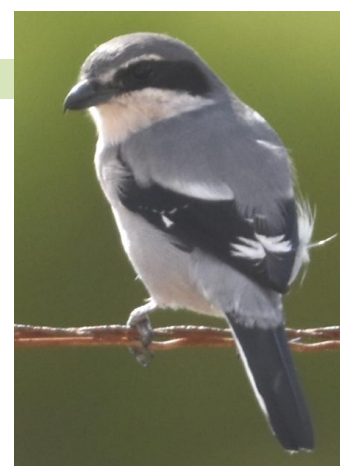
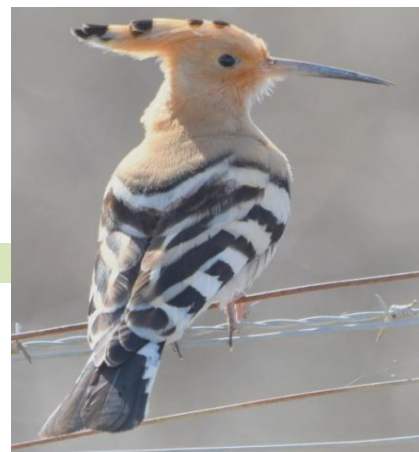


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Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Rice Paddies	3	Several sites
Redshank, Spotted	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Rice Paddies	1	Several sites
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Rice Paddies	4	Several sites
Sandpiper, Green	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Rice Paddies	7	Several sites
Snipe, Common	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	2	One site
Gull, Black-headed	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	General	25	Common
Gull, Lesser BB	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	General	20	Common
Gull, Yellow-legged	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	General	12	Common
Dove, Collared	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	El Rocio	4	Common
Pigeon, Wood	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	General	12	Common
Hoopoe, Eurasian	<i>Upupa epops</i>	General	11	Common
Lark, Crested	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	General	5	Common
Swallow, Barn	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	General	7	One site
Kingfisher, Common	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	General	1	One site
Wagtail, White	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	General	12	Common
Redstart, Black	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>	General	4	Common
Stonechat, European	<i>Saxicola tor. rubicola</i>	General	12	Common
Wheatear, Northern	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	El Rocio	5	one site
Cisticola, Zitting	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	General	3	Common
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	General	11	Common
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	General	2	Common
Thrush, Song	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	General	1	Common
Warbler, Cetti's	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	General	1	Common
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	General	12	Common
Pipit, Meadow	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	General	5	Common
Tit, Great	<i>Parus major</i>	General	4	Common
Shrike, Iberian Grey	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	El Rocio	1	One site
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	El Rocio	6	Common
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	General	12	Common
Sparrow, House	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	General	30	Common
Sparrow, Spanish	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	El Rocio	5	One site
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	General	30	Common
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	General	4	Common
Serín	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	General	40	Common
Linnet, Common	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	General	5	Common
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	General	3	One site
Bunting, Corn	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	El Rocio	20	One site



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