

Madrid + Castile La Mancha (+ Picos List 21-23 July): July 24-26th 2020

Ed.O'Hara/Comghal McQuillan in association with BirdingTrekking & Nature Madrid.



White-headed Ducks at Tablas de Daimiel NP

Foreword:

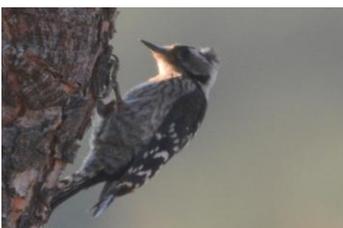
Covid-19

Having come back from our successful trip to the Picos de Europa NP, we had three days left, so we decided to book Luis of BTN again for one day's birding in Castile-La Mancha and the other two days we would bird around Madrid using the metro system. The big change from previous trips was the wearing of masks, now *de rigueur* in the city, against Covid-19 which had a significant impact on Madrid a few months earlier. Wearing a mask was not pleasant in the high temperatures.

Friday 24th July: Madrid: El Pardo 07:30-12:00: Weather Very Hot and Sunny 38°C

We got the first metro train at 06:00 and arrived at Moncloa Metro Interchange station and took the bus out to El Pardo. The terminus leaves you at the edge of this former royal hunting park. At times it can be brilliant birding, sometimes you see very little, that is birding! Today however we had a reasonable morning. The usual suspects were seen very quickly **Tree Sparrow, Greenfinch, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Stock Dove, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Hoopoe, Spotless Starling, Mallard, Blackcap, Cetti's Warbler, Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Sand Martin, House Martin, Common Swift and Woodchat Shrike.**

Highlights were seeing **Little Bittern** along the river, **Nuthatch** at the car park along with **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** and finally a **Spanish Imperial Eagle** flew over El Pardo itself, hunting along a ridge of trees. It was now around noon and getting very hot, 38°C, so we headed back to our hotel .



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Spanish Imperial Eagle

Green Woodpecker *ssp Sharpeii*

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Saturday 25th July: Castile-La Mancha: Weather Very Hot and Sunny 40°C

Early pick-up again at our hotel with the temperature a decent 23°C, later to climb to 40°C on the southern plains. We headed to an area that Luis knew well about an hours drive south of the city. After we left the autovia and entered some minor roads we were birding. On a ridge near the road we spotted **Little Bustard** and hidden in the undergrowth three other birds suddenly flew off but unmistakable in the air, **Stone Curlew**. This was a great start. We continued on along this road and saw several more birds of both species. Also seen were **Spotless Starlings** in large flocks and the ubiquitous **Woodpigeon**.

We turned back onto a main road and within a few minutes saw our first of several **Montagu's Harriers**.



Little Bustard



Montagu's Harriers

By now it was just after 10:40am and already the temperature was in the early 30's, which meant any distant views would be affected by the heat haze already visible. It wasn't long before Luis spotted our next target bird **Great Bustard**. Although over the course of the day we saw several small flocks of these magnificent birds, at no time did we ever get too close due to their natural wariness and they blend so well into the background.



Typical Great Bustard habitat, although a very large bird the group in the middle distance were almost invisible to naked eye.



Great Bustard

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Having done some of the steppe birds we then travelled to the **Laguna de Alcazar de San Juan** for some aquatic loving bird species. From that perspective very disappointing as the laguna was almost bone dry. However all was not lost for we did find a lifer for Comghal here, three **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** flew in to what little water there was, 200m away, accompanied by four **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**; so not a bad return for so little water. We even found another 'bonus' bird in the shape of two flying **Collared Pratincoles** plus three **Turtle Doves** sitting in a dead tree.

We tried two other lagunas but they were the same, bone dry, so we decided to go down some farm tracks to see what was about and after noting some of the usual suspects namely **Zitting Cisticola**, **Corn Bunting** and **Crested Larks**, we came across a most unexpected find, a juvenile **Great Spotted Cuckoo** begging for food from some Common Magpies. Luis said he would expect them to be gone by now to Africa; serendipity!



Juvenile Great Spotted Cuckoo

We then proceeded to the **Tablas de Daimiel NP**, a wetland in the mainly arid area of La Mancha. Luis assured us it would have water and indeed it had. With an area of 3000ha, the park is the smallest of Spain's fifteen national parks. Firstly we drove around the perimeter before going to a hide at the west end of the reserve, where you could get quite close to the birds. This was indeed the case and there quite a few species here including a lifer for Comghal, **Bearded Reedling**.

In the reeds, **Reed Warbler**, **Zitting Cisticola** & **Little Bittern** were all showing well and sometimes down to a few metres. **Little Bitterns** seemed to be very common as birds were appearing every few minutes in front of the hide.



Little Bittern



Bee-eater

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In two hours birding we saw a fantastic variety of birds, every moment there was something flying in or out of the reserve. Here is a synopsis of what was seen: **Glossy Ibis, Squacco Heron, Whiskered Tern, Reed Warbler, Zitting Cisticola, Marsh Harrier, Booted Eagle, Woodchat Shrike, White Stork, Black-necked Grebe, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Bee-eater, Barn Swallow, Grey Wagtail, Purple Samphen, Common Buzzard, Black-headed Gull, Little Egret, Cattle Egret, Little Bittern, Common Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Red-crested Pochard, Stock Dove, Moorhen, Coot, Northern Pochard, Mallard, Serin and Gadwall.**



A Squacco Heron, landing literally at our feet was a pleasant surprise and allowed us the chance to get some very close pics of this normally secretive bird. Time was now getting on, we were two and half hours from the city so we left the Tablas de Daimiel with some wonderful memories. Luckily for us it wasn't over, well not just yet. As we were driving down the road towards the autovia, almost in harmony we all shouted "'Roller'". It was just sitting on a wire at the side of the road. It looked as if it was panting' in the evening temperature, still in the mid 30's.

Well if that wasn't enough we still had one more close encounter that we were not expecting.



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Approaching the motorway, Luis noticed a large raptor sitting in a tree. We turned off into a lay-by and we were able to get fairly good views of the Short-toed Eagle before it flew off, and that was the end of a great day's birding.



Short-Toed Eagle

Sunday: 26th July: Madrid 07:30-12:00: Weather Very Hot and Sunny 40°C

Our final birding day of the trip and with the weather forecast of 40°C by mid-afternoon, we decided take the earliest 211 bus to the Rio Jarama before to get too hot. We arrived at the river at 07:30 and immediately heard a **Golden Oriole** singing in the canopy, eventually finding him after five minute search. Not a bad start. Continuing our walk along the river we

picked up **Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, House Sparrows Tree Sparrows, Spanish Sparrows, Sardinian Warbler, Zitting Cisticola, Serin, Reed Warbler Blackcap, Cormorant, Stock Dove, Wood Pigeon Buzzard, Black Kite, Kestrel, Red-rumped Swallow**



Western Bonelli's Warbler

and hundreds of **Swifts** overhead. By 10:30 it was getting hot, 33°C on my phone, and as we started our return walk we picked a very elusive **Western Bonelli's Warbler**.

By now the birds were also feeling the heat and activity had dropped dramatically, but Comghal spotted some birds ahead and they were a family of **Woodlarks**. Last bird of the trip was a **Night Heron**, resting at the river's edge.

By 12:40 we were back at the hotel, temperature 39°C on the hotel screen.

A after quick shower and change into more appropriate clothing, we went to the poolside for a very welcome ice-cold beer and some lunch. We reminisced on the wonderful birding trip we just had, social distancing of course, and looked forward to a day when this virus problem was over.

Our thanks to Luis of BirdingtrekkingNature Madrid for his expert guiding.

The bird list below reflects the two part nature, pardon the pun. Initially it was a trip primarily to the **Picos de Europa**, see link below, but then we added the Madrid area and Castile-La Mancha as well. Hope it's not too confusing.

http://www.realbirder.com/SPAIN_JULY2020.pdf



Night Heron

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** The list refers to two reports this one and the link to the Picos trip is as stated above:-

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English	Latin		Date	Area
ANATIDAE:				
Goose, Egyptain	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	3 birds flying	21-Jul-20	Madrid
Goose, Greylag	<i>Anser anser</i>	20+ birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Duck, Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	10+	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Duck, Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	20+	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Duck, White-headed	<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	30+	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	20+ birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Pochard, Red-crested	<i>Netta rufina</i>	14birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	8 birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	5 birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae				
Partridge, Red-Legged	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	3 birds flying	25-Jul-20	Lillo
PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae				
Grebe, Black-necked	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Adult with juvenile	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Grebe, Great Crested	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	4 birds on lake	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Grebe, Little	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Several birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae				
Bittern, Little	<i>Ixobrychus miotus</i>	at least 5 birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Egret, Cattle	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	4 birds on lake	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Egret, Little	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	10+	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Heron, Grey	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	3 birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Heron, Night	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	1 bird	26-Jul-20	Rio Jarama Madrid
Heron, Purple	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	2 birds seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Heron, Squacco	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	1 bird 5 m distant	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Ibis, Glossy	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	12 birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
CICONIDAE:				
Stork, White	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	20+	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Flamingo, Greater	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	30+	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
ACCIPITRIFORMES:				
Buzzard, Common	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Eagle, Booted	<i>Aquila pennata</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Eagle, Golden	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	1 bird seen	22-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Spanish Imp. Eagle	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>	1 adult seen	24-Jul-20	El Pardo
Eagle, Short-toed	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	la Mancha
Harrier, Marsh	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Harrier, Montagu's	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Vulture, Egyptian	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Vulture, Eur. Black	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	Bird sitting in diel	25-Jul-20	Madridejos
Vulture, Eur.Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	50+ seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae				
Falcon, Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 bird seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	3 birds seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa

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GRUIFORMES: Rallidae				
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Gallinule, Purple	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	1 bird seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
OTIDAE:				
Bustard, Great	<i>Otis tarda</i>	12+	25-Jul-20	Lillo
Bustard, Little	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Lillo
GLAREOLIDAE:				
Pratincole, Collared	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	2 birds seen	25-Jul-20	Laguna de El Longar
Stilt, Black-winged	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
CHARADRIIFORMES:				
Curlew, Stone	<i>Burhinus oedienemus</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Lillo
CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae				
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	20+	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Plover, Grey	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1 bird	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Plover, Kentish	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	3 birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Plover, Ringed Little	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae				
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	3 seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	2 seen	26-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Sandpiper, Com.	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Sandpiper, Green	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Sandpiper, Wood	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae				
Gull, Black-headed	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Gull, Lesser BB	<i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>	3 birds seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Gull, Yellow-legged	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	1 bird seen	23-Jul-20	Burgos
CHARADRIIFORMES: Sternidae				
Tern, Whiskered	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
PTEROCLIFORMES: Pteroclididae				
Sandgrouse, Bl.-bellied	<i>Pterocles orientalis</i>	4 birds seen	25-Jul-20	Laguna de San Juan
Sandgrouse, Pin-tailed	<i>Pterocles alchata</i>	5 birds seen	25-Jul-20	Laguna de San Juan
COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae				
Dove, Collared	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Dove, Stock	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Dove, Turtle	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	3 birds seen	20-Jul-20	Laguna de San Juan
Pigeon, Wood	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
PSITTACIFORMES: Psittacidae				
Parakeet, Monk	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	Common in city parks	20-Jul-20	Madrid
CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae				
Cuckoo, Great Spotted	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	1 juvenile with Magpies	25-Jul-20	Lillo
Swift, Common	<i>Apus apus</i>	Hundreds in sky over Madrid	20-Jul-20	Madrid
CORACIIFORMES: Upupidae				
Hoopoe, Eurasian	<i>Upupa epops</i>	2 birds seen	24-Jul-20	El Pardo
CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae				
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1 bird	24-Jul-20	El Pardo

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CORACIIFORMES: Meropidae				
Bee-Eater, European	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	12 birds	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
PICIFORMES: Picidae				
Woodpecker, Les. Sp.	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	1 bird seen	24-Jul-20	El Pardo
Woodpecker, GS	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Several seen		Madrid
Woodpecker, Green	<i>Picus viridus sharpei</i>	Common in city parks	20-Jul-20	Madrid
PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae				
Lark, Crested	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	Common	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Lark, Wood	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	5 birds seen	26-Jul-20	Rio Jarama Madrid
PASSERIFORMES: Hirundae				
Martin, Crag	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	30+	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Martin, House	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Martin, Sand	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	3 seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Swallow, Barn	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Swallow, Red-rumped	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	6 birds	24-Jul-20	El Pardo
PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae				
Pipit, Water	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Wagtail, White	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae				
Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae				
Redstart, Black	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>	Common	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	3 birds seen	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Stonechat	<i>Sax. torquatus rubicola</i>	2 birds seen	21-Jul-20	Piedralengua
PASSERIFORMES: Oenanthae				
Wheatear, N	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Common	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae				
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Thrush, Mistle	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	3 birds seen along roadway	21-Jul-20	Burgos
PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae				
Cisticola, Zitting	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	at least 5 birds seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
PASSERIFORMES: Sylvidae				
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	1 bird seen	24-Jul-20	El Pardo
Warbler, Bonelli's. W	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	1 bird seen	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Warbler, Cetti's	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	3 birds seen	24-Jul-20	El Pardo
Warbler, Reed	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Warbler, Sardinian	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	2 birds seen	26-Jul-20	Rio Jarama Madrid
PASSERIFORMES: Paridae				
Tit, Bearded	<i>Panurus biaricus</i>	At least 3 birds seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
Tit, Blue	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Tit, Coal	<i>Parus ater</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Tit, Great	<i>Parus major</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Tit, Long-tailed [WE]	<i>Aegithalos caud. rosaceus</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Tit, Marsh	<i>Parus palustris</i>	3 birds seen	21-Jul-20	Piedralengua
PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae				
Treecreeper, Sh.-toed	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	2 birds seen	20-Jul-20	Madrid

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Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	1 bird seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae				
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europae</i>	3 birds	24-Jul-20	El Pardo
PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae				
Iberian Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	2 birds seen	25-Jul-20	Lillo
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	3 birds on wires	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Shrike, Woodchat	<i>Lanius senator</i>	Several seen	25-Jul-20	Tablas de Dalmiel
PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae				
Chough, Alpine	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	50+ birds , very common	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Chough, Red-billed	<i>Pyrrhocorax p.</i>	100+ birds coming in to roost	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Crow, Carrion	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae				
Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
PASSERIFORMES: Oriolidae				
Oriole, Golden	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Family party of 5 seen	24-Jul-20	El Pardo
PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae				
Sparrow, House	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	3 birds seen	26-Jul-20	Rio Jarama Madrid
Sparrow, Tree	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Snowfinch, White-winged	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae				
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	2 birds seen	21-Jul-20	Piedralenguas
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	Common	20-Jul-20	Madrid
Linnet, Common	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Several seen	21-Jul-20	Picos de Europa
PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae				
Bunting, Corn	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	4 birds seen at roadside	21-Jul-20	Burgos
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	2 birds seen	21-Jul-20	Piedralengua



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Conclusion: 125 birds seen in total, with **two lifers**. We missed a lot, but with the repressive Covid 19 masks and the searing heat we were pleased with our total. Many thanks once again to Luis Sitges of Birdingtrekking&Nature Madrid for his expert guiding.



Ed. O'Hara
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05-Aug-20

