

# Mallorca

## Naturetrek Tour Report

18 - 25 April 2012



2012 Naturetrek Group Picnic at Lluç Monastery



Flower meadow, S'Albufera



Gulls and Shearwaters trailing fishing boat at Cap de Salines Lighthouse



Purple Gallinule (Swamp hen) at S'Albufera

Report compiled by Dave Smith  
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Tour leaders:	Dave Smith Alan Miller
Participants:	Chris Benson Dru Benson Dave Ellis Marion Ellis Mary Peck Carole Smith Ken Williams Colin Balls Rhona Balls John Prince Sue Prince

## Day 1

Wednesday 18th April

Arrival at Palma airport, Mallorca; Transfer to hotel; walk to S'Albufereta, returning via hotel grounds and hide overlooking the adjacent S'Albufereta Marsh.

Weather: Sunny spells, cold northerly wind. Afternoon high of 17deg.C

With the group arriving in Mallorca on three different regional flights it was a bonus that everyone from the first two flights had gathered together in advance of our leaders Dave and Alan's arrival. The third flight was not scheduled to arrive until early evening so those clients had arranged to take a taxi to the airport. Alan's vehicle pick-up was on airport and was quickly organised. Dave's vehicle had to be picked up off site, so to avoid excessive delay Alan took the group to grab a light lunch while Dave sought out his transport. Arriving back as the repast concluded, the vehicles were quickly loaded and the group sped off to our hotel near Puerto Pollentia, arriving around 1300hrs.

This early arrival enabled us to have an extended acclimatisation to Mediterranean bird-watching, allowing us time to walk to the nearby S'Albufereta Marsh. Here we heard our first sounds of Nightingale and Cetti's Warbler and the constant ticking of Fan-tailed Warbler. Chris and Dru had fleeting glimpses of a Golden Oriole as they wandered through the pine trees, much to the envy of the rest of us. Water levels were quite high, so much so that the Torrent was devoid of the normally present waders. Viewing from the mound Osprey was quickly sighted as was a Great White Egret, huge in comparison to the nearby group of Little Egrets. Returning towards the hotel we encountered a number of Yellow Wagtails of the *iberiae* race (Spanish Wagtail) and had good views of Hoopoe, a Stone Curlew, courtesy of Mary's vigilance and our first encounter with Mirror Orchid.

The rough grassy area adjacent to the hotel's overflow car park contained a group of 3 Little Ringed Plovers and a superbly marked male Whinchat. Interesting flora species of note included Tassel Hyacinth but no Small-flowered Tongue Orchids.

Reaching the hotel hide, which looks over the S'Albufereta reserve, two Ospreys were overhead and the numbers of hirundines and Swifts appeared to be increasing, possibly held back by the weather. We watched a pair of Marsh Harriers slowly gliding over the reeds before returning to our rooms about 1700 to unpack.

At the evening meeting Dave highlighted the species seen during the afternoon, explained the workings of the hotel and described the proposed itinerary for the week. Afterwards a splendid evening meal was enjoyed by all, the atmosphere buzzing in anticipation of the week to come.

## Day 2

Thursday 19th April

Pre-breakfast birding from the hotel hide, our scheduled walk along the Bocquer Valley, and a visit to S'Albufereta Marsh

Weather: Cloudy to start with sunny spells developing. Sunny and warm by mid afternoon  
Temperature high was 23 deg.C

Our first pre-breakfast gathering in the hotel hide overlooking S'Albufereta Marsh produced good views of at least 5 Marsh Harriers quartering the area and disturbing the Little Egrets which numbered around 30 birds. Swallow passage was pretty hectic with an estimated 1000 birds noted during the 45 minutes or so we were there. House Martins were also on the move with some 500 being observed drifting steadily north. Surprisingly only 10 Swifts were seen. Again Cetti's Warbler and Nightingale presence was advertised by their song as was our first Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler.

After breakfast we set off on our first expedition and after collecting the ingredients for our picnic lunch, had reached the car park at the bottom of the Bocquer Valley by 0930 hrs. Scanning the adjacent fields we saw Redstart, Willow Warbler and a fairly flighty Hoopoe in the nearby Fig and Almond trees. As we set off towards the finca, at the start of the path up the valley, a superb pale phase Booted Eagle came into view. It was the start of a series of excellent sightings for this species with a further eight being seen during our trek. Viewing from the finca produced another Redstart, a Black Redstart, a Balearic Woodchat Shrike, two Ravens and our first Sardinian Warbler. Entering the valley Blue Rock Thrush could be heard and was soon being observed through our telescopes. Further sightings and song enabled a total of seven to be recorded for the day. Half way along a couple of Cirl Buntings were spotted and the Raven numbers increased to eight.

Our picnic was set up at the end of the valley around 12 noon, just in time for a pair of Black Vultures to disrupt the proceedings with a super fly past. After lunch we searched the surrounding scrub for Balearic Warbler but to no avail. Not surprising as there was a group of students from Derby University carrying out an extensive plant survey of the whole area at the time. The return down the valley brought sightings of Crag Martins patrolling mountainous ridges and a couple of Alpine Swifts that eluded everyone apart from the eagle-eyed Alan. Further Booted Eagle sightings kept our groups eyes pointing skywards, but not before a couple of Speckled Wood butterflies and three Roman Snails had been found. Viewing the finca gardens produced a couple of Swallowtail butterflies and small groups of Serin and Greenfinch.

Once back at the vehicles we set off to the S'Albufereta Marsh, stopping on the Puerto Pollentia sea front to add Audouin's Gull, Shag, Cormorant, Yellow Legged Gull and Gull-billed Tern to our growing list.

The marsh seemed quieter than the previous day apart from the huge number of Swifts, Swallows and House Martins hunting for insect prey. Scanning the open water through the heat haze produced two Great White Egrets, a Purple Heron and a single Greater Flamingo, our first for this location. Wildfowl were well represented with some 25 Red Crested Pochards and around 20 Mallard present. Flowers catching the eye included more Mirror Orchids, a small patch of Bumble Bee Orchids and blooms of Three-cornered Leek, Tassel Hyacinth and Tree Mallow. Surprisingly only one butterfly was abroad, a single Large White.

Our first day had been a success and had been filled with numerous good sightings with many species new to most of the group. Before our evening meal we met for a roll-call of sightings and the plan of action for the next day. After another good feed we retired to our rooms to ready ourselves for the next day.

## Day 3

Friday 20th April

Pre-breakfast walk and a visit to the S'Albufera Nature Reserve

Weather: Cloudy and drizzle to start, with clear skies and sunshine by mid morning.

Temperature rising to 23deg C by early afternoon

Despite the dull threatening conditions we took the pre breakfast attendees on a short walk to the wasteland north of the hotel. No sooner had we set off than it started to drizzle, a sure dampener to the group's spirits. All was not lost as a superb male Montagu's Harrier drifted slowly by, followed minutes later by a Marsh Harrier. A road kill adjacent to the beach deserved investigation resulting in an unmarked Brown Hare lying there. Staying on the beach we made our way back to the hotel, recording Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Common Sandpiper and Audouin's Gull on the way.

After the usual good breakfast we set off for the S'Albufera Reserve, collecting picnic food on the way. The walk down to the reception centre seemed quieter than normal, although the usual tree roost of Little and Cattle Egrets interspersed with Night Herons was still thrilling. Nearby was a group of Terrapins containing both Red-necked and European Pond, allowing the group to compare the diagnostic features of each. Accessing the boardwalk brought views of Osprey and Marsh Harriers overhead and Purple Gallinule in the marsh. A drake Garganey flew over as we reached the reception, but Moustached Warbler had eluded us.

The first hide on our visit list was the Sa Roca hide, here were good numbers of Black-winged Stilt, with small numbers of Redshank, Little Ringed Plover, Little Stint, Kentish Plover and the occasional fly-over of Purple Heron. Moving to the Observation hill, it was not long before Red-knobbed Coot came into view in the adjacent pond, allowing superb photo opportunities for our keener enthusiasts. Whilst there, a Purple Gallinule swam past no more than 3 metres away.

Lunch was calling so we made our way to the reception grounds and picnicked outside the administration block. After lunch we made our way to the Bishop hide 1 where a number of waders were residing, close views of Black-winged Stilt were expected and we were not disappointed. Also entertaining us were 15 Spotted Redshank, many approaching full summer plumage, a few Common Redshank, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Dunlin, Oystercatcher, Ruff and a very difficult to see Stone Curlew. Wildfowl included Teal, Shoveler, Red Crested Pochard and a splendid male Pintail.

Bishop hide 2 was not as busy although Egrets from the nearby colony put on a good show as they flew to and from their roost.

Heading back to the vehicles we stooped for another look for Moustached Warbler. We did not succeed but were rewarded with singing Great Reed Warbler and our first Pallid Swift of the trip. Along the access track Egyptian Grasshopper and numerous Speckled Wood butterflies were seen and a couple of Booted Eagles escorted us off the premises.

Again the evening roll call had much to enthuse over and it prepared us for another good meal. After the meal Alan and I looked over the marsh until it got too dark and were pleased to see one Night Heron, hear three calling Stone Curlews and witness a Short-eared Owl leaving high to the north, a new bird for the Mallorca Tour checklist - this stroke of good fortune prompting the group to join us for three nights viewing, from the hotel hide after dinner.

## Day 4

**Saturday 21st April**

Pre-breakfast at the hotel hide, Cuber Reservoir, Lluç Monastery and dusk at the hotel hide

Weather: Clear skies, sunny and warm with a light wind.

Temperature: a high of 25 deg C by mid afternoon

The group met up at 0700hrs for the pre breakfast gathering in the hotel hide, the highlights being four Purple Herons, three pairs of Gadwall and a splendid Turtle Dove on the wires adjacent to the hotel boundary. We also noted a few passerine migrants including Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat and a pair of Blackcaps.

After breakfast and our supermarket stop, we made the scenic journey through the Tramuntana Mountains to Cuber Reservoir for our planned day's birding. Our half-way stop at Escora produced the usual Blue Tit and Chaffinch sightings and Firecrest was heard, but little else. Arriving at the car park we were disappointed to see the area cordoned off. There were many cars parked at both sides of the road and the area was awash with people, including radio and TV reporters. We had stumbled across the annual 'Ultra Mallorca Sierra de Tramuntana' cross-country running race from Andraxt to Pollensa, a distance of some 105 kilometres, to be completed within 24 hours. The car park had been transformed into a checkpoint/feeding station for the hundreds of runners competing in the race.

We managed to find a suitable parking spot for our vehicles but were not confident of finding many birds due to the obvious disturbance of the event, especially when helicopters came into the equation, flying low over the very ridges we normally observe raptor passage. We set off down the tarmac track to the towards the dam end of the reservoir, with the runners passing by on the opposite bank some 400 metres away, occasionally urged on by the cheers and applause of the spectators gathered there. It took us some time to locate our usual Tawny Pipit which eventually gave good views. Luckily Marion was sky-watching when we were pipit watching enabling us all to get great views of a pair of Griffon Vultures and a Booted Eagle!

Reaching the dam a number of Nightingales could be heard and seen together with Willow Warbler, Blackcap, Wren, and unusually for us, Robin. A number of Iberian Water Frogs could be observed in the stream below the dam, and the main water held at least 1200 Yellow Legged Gulls which later moved to the adjacent crags.

Heading towards the quarry a couple of Viperine Snakes gave excellent entertainment as they hunted a shoal of small fish in the shallows of the reservoir just metres below our feet. At the quarry 4 flowering spikes of Loose-flowered Orchid were blooming in their usual location and just 10 metres away were another previously undiscovered group, bringing our total to a splendid 24. Heading back to our vehicles along the northern edge of the water we heard Cirl Bunting and Blue Rock Thrush and were being constantly overtaken by race competitors, some scarcely out of breath, quite something as they had already passed the 90 kilometre mark!

With our normal picnic site being unavailable we went straight to Lluc Monastery and made use of the picnic tables there. Afterwards we split-up, some coming with us to the botanical gardens, some exploring the cultural aspects of the monastery and some relaxing in the sunshine with a cup of coffee. Unbeknown to us Lluc was another race checkpoint with large numbers of spectators cheering on the passing athletes.

The botanical garden was fairly quiet but had received a fair degree of much needed maintenance since our last visit. Many of the paths and ponds had been cleared of debris and a number of trees and shrubs pruned making the area much more welcoming. Birds present included Nightingale, Firecrest and Blackcap, while butterflies were represented by Brimstone, Cleopatra and Speckled Wood. A couple of Iberian Water Frogs provided a fairly close photographic opportunity.

Leaving the monastery we made our way back to the hotel, occasionally seeing the mega distance runners as they made progress way towards their Pollensa destination. Evening roll-call had few birds to discuss, but there was plenty of admiration for the 'iron men' we had encountered, and the snake experience would be a long lasting memory. Checking the internet on returning home I found out that the race is actually 107 Km long and this year's winner was Miguel Capo Soler in a time of 11h 51:59. That's an average of 9Km per hour, incredible!

The evening meal was a delight again and we topped off the day with a visit to the hotel hide for the half hour up to dark. Two Eleanor's Falcons few over hunting the numerous bats abroad over the marsh, two Night Herons flew by directly over the hide and at least three Stone Curlews were heard in the general area, a fine end to a varied day of experiences.

## Day 5

**Sunday 22nd April**

Pre-breakfast at the hotel hide, visits to The Formentor Peninsular, the S'Albufereta Marsh and dusk at the hotel hide

Weather: A very dull cloudy start with a NE breeze clearing the cloud during the morning. Sunny and warm afternoon. Temperature: A high of 20 deg C

The day started rather cool and dull, but undeterred our pre breakfast gathering in the hotel hide produced sightings of four Purple Herons, two Great White Egrets and an Osprey that successfully caught a fish, it's prey dangling in the bird's talons as it flew away to find somewhere to consume it's meal.

Migrants present this morning included Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Sedge Warbler and Redstart. Swallows and Swifts were present but only in small numbers.

After breakfast we made our usual daily shopping stop for picnic provisions then continued through Pollentia and onto the Formentor Peninsular, arriving at the Lighthouse car park before any other motorists. The on-shore breeze looked perfect for seabird passage and for raptor migration over the nearby mountain ridges, but the visit turned out to be a disappointment. Apart from Wheatear and Redstart no land borne passage was noted, although a search of the sea did produce seven Cory's Shearwaters and a single Balearic Shearwater our target species for this site, the latter spotted by a well-tuned-in Sue.

Driving back to Cases Velles we observed cattle and a couple of pigs in one of the fig tree plantations, however this proved to be a bonus when a group of 10 or more Yellow Wagtails dropped in to feed around the cows. At least three were of the race *flava* Blue Headed Wagtail and one was of the race *flavissima*, the yellow headed subspecies commonly found in the UK. Further scrutiny of the area produced 6 Redstart, 4 Wheatear, five Pied Flycatchers, two Spotted Flycatchers, two Whitethroat, a Whinchat and a mint plumaged male Black Redstart. Scanning the nearby ridges was rewarded with excellent sightings of at least 4 Booted Eagles and a couple of Ravens. Our time here had been well spent but we had not finished...overhead Crossbills could be heard as they flew to the nearby pines. It took a few minutes before Alan had located one on the 'scope for general observation, but it had flown before anyone else could enjoy it. However this time was not wasted as at least three Firecrests descended to the lower branches of a nearby tree for all to enjoy, with others heard calling nearby.

Lunchtime was approaching so we moved the short distance our picnic location, enjoying the insect hunting antics of a Spotted Flycatcher and the adjacent flush of colourful blooms as we ate. After our pleasant interlude we made our way to the Mirador de Albercutx in search of further spoils and encountered large numbers of tourists, many arriving by coach. Looking over the viewpoint parapet we were soon observing a splendid Blue Rock Thrush just a few metres below our vantage point and a couple of Crag Martins, flitting to and fro along the cliff face. Next to appear was an Osprey fishing low over the surface of the sea hundreds of feet below us. Some of the group made the short walk to the Mirador highpoint, a vista giving superb panoramic views of the coastal cliffs and mountain ridges of the peninsular.

Heading back towards the hotel we observed five Audouin's Gulls on the beaches of Puerto Pollensa before dropping some of the party off at the hotel to swim and relax, before continuing the short distance to the S'Albufereta Marsh. Stone Curlew was again present, thrilling us with a very close vocal fly-past. Viewing from the mound the Great Flamingo and Great White Egret were still present, as was an Osprey and a Marsh Harrier. A couple of Sandwich Terns flew over and then we discovered a White-winged Black Tern perched in the distance. It later took to flight joining a party of 50 Swifts feeding over the marshland waters. Returning to the vehicles we notched up another 2 Wheatears and an Osprey coming in off Pollensa Bay that presented excellent photo opportunities as it flew directly over our heads.

Our pre evening meal meeting had much to discuss regarding the days sightings and tomorrows trip to the south of the island. After arguably the best meal of the week to date, we again invited interested parties to join us in the hide for a dusk bird-watch. Again Stone Curlews were quite vocal but no Eleanora's showed up.

Five Night Herons flew past the hide on the way to their night-time feeding sites just as seven Purple Herons left high to the north, probably heading to the Spanish mainland en route to mainland Europe. It was a fine way to end a long but enthralling day!

## Day 6

Monday 23rd April

Pre-breakfast walk to the Torrent, tour of the South of Mallorca – Salinas de Levante and Cap de Salinas and dusk in the hotel hide.

Weather: Cloudy start to the day after heavy overnight rain. Sunny by mid morning, producing a temperature high of 21deg C

We started the day with a pleasant short walk to the S'Albufereta Torrent noting at least 20 Little Egrets, two Great White Egrets and four Purple Herons on the way. Arriving at the torrent the water levels were still high but three Kentish Plovers, a Little Ringed Plover and two Common Sandpipers were in the vicinity. On the return to the hotel a number of migrants sprang into view with one bush in particular holding a couple of Sardinian Warblers, Stonechat, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and a Yellow Wagtail of the race *iberiae*. Both Cetti's Warbler and Nightingale were heard in the usual thickets and Serin, Greenfinch called from the hotel grounds. A search of the overflow car park this time produced a couple of Small-flowered Tongue Orchids, but not the numbers we normally see.

Another good breakfast was consumed before we mounted the vehicles for our lengthy drive to the south of the island. The rural roads in the centre of the island again provided large numbers of Corn Buntings, the occasional perching Woodchat Shrike and a sprinkling of Thekla Larks. Our usual half-way stop provided good views of Thekla Lark and Balearic Woodchat Shrike. Throughout our journey the road-side verges were full of wild flowers with Wild Gladiola, and the bright yellow blooms of crown daisy being particularly common.

Reaching the Salinas around 1130hrs, we were again welcomed by the sight and sound of a particularly large pair of Turkeys proudly sporting a small group of youngsters. The water levels in the Salinas were quite high which detracted from their suitability for the smaller wading birds. On the plus side was the provision of a new footpath with interpretation boards. The falling down shack of previous years had been refurbished into a refreshment outlet (pity it was closed). Early bird sightings included good numbers of Black Winged Stilt and Avocet, the latter sharing the water areas with flocks of Shelduck. A small fragmented group of Greater Flamingos gave rather distant views before a number of fly-bys enabled the group, now totalling nine were able to reform into one colourful mass. 15 Common Redshank, one Ruff and six Kentish Plover were seen in the lagoon edges together with two Greenshanks and a single Little Stint. While pointing out the plumage characteristics of the Little Stint to the attentive group members a further group of some 25 flew in but left without landing.

We had now reached the refurbished stone building, taking shade under the newly erected canopy. Colin drew our attention to a large falcon-type bird which sped off at great speed, but not before giving up its identity as a Peregrine Falcon. A brief view of a Water Rail eluded all but those looking at the vegetation when it appeared, but the 'squeeling' calls of other individuals at least gave an indication of their presence. We retraced our steps back towards the vehicles revelling in the sightings of Whiskered Tern and another Great White Egret on the way. Despite a good view over the pools west of the salt works, our picnic was relatively bird free, although Swallowtail butterfly was noted by Chris during a short comfort break.

Our drive to the Cap and its lighthouse was fairly uneventful apart from the sight of at least five pairs of Red-legged Partridges evenly spaced along the access roadway, and a Wheatear missing the vehicles windscreen by the narrowest of margins. Alighting from our transport and regrouping on the rocky foreshore we were disappointed see nothing on the barren ocean apart from a small fishing boat in the distance. As the boat got nearer it was obvious that a large amount of sea-birds were following it. Scoping it indicated a number of gulls and shearwaters in a melee all around it, probably feeding from the scraps being thrown overboard by the fishermen. As the boat passed just a couple of hundred metres in from of us super views of this sea bird gathering was obtained. In addition to the large numbers of Yellow-legged Gulls present some 200 Cory's Shearwaters were counted together with at least 20 of the smaller Balearic Shearwater. It was the most shearwaters seen and best views obtained during our Mallorcan tour leading career. The group managed to calm down from this superb spectacle just in time to photograph a couple of Andouin Gull's enticed onto the beach in front of us by Carole and Dru with the help of an uneaten picnic baguette, originally destined for the hotel's Mallard ducklings.

Time was moving on so we commenced our journey back to our northern base, encountering huge numbers of Swifts as we passed by the S'Albufera Reserve as we neared the end of our journey. Our evening roll-call had many highlights to enthuse about enabling the group to savour yet another satisfying meal. Our now regular post meal trip to the hotel hide produced the goods again with an Eleanora's Falcon flying by rather slowly, and low, with its undercarriage down as though it was clutching something. A couple of Night Herons and two more calling Stone Curlews kept up the interest before a huge swarm of Swallows, numbering some 2000 to 3000 birds, appeared overhead before spiralling down into the marsh to roost, just north of the hotel. Would they be there tomorrow?

## Day 7

Tuesday 24th April

Pre-breakfast at the hotel hide, visit to the Southern end of S'Albufera Marsh – Old Salt Pans, Depuradora(water works) and 'Lone Pine' walk

Weather: Mainly cloudy start with a moderate easterly breeze. Clear skies and sunshine after lunch

Temperature: 23 deg C

We entered the hide on our pre breakfast sortie expecting to see yesterday evenings mass of Swallows feeding over the marsh before leaving towards mainland Europe. With only 25 on view we had either arrived too late or they had left during the night. There were still plenty of Little Egrets about, many frequently disturbed by the antics of three hunting Marsh Harriers. Again two Great White Egrets were present on the marsh and a single Little Grebe swam in front of the hide.

After breakfast we made our way to the southern end of the S'Albufera Reserve, calling in Alcudia to pick up picnic provisions on the way. Arriving and disembarking at the old salt pans, Ses Salinetes, we were soon watching Red Crested Pochard, Coot, Gadwall and Black Winged Stilt. It was quite windy so the chances of connecting with our targets species Moustached Warbler was not guaranteed. Continuing up the track we heard snatches of song which eventually turned into a reasonable view of Moustached Warbler, but it had flown before everyone had peered through the scope. The next 20 minutes produced at least two more sightings and another two in song nearby.

With everybody happy we returned to the vehicles but not before Dave E had asked for an ID on the wader over there. It turned out to be the trips only Wood Sandpiper. We re-boarded the vehicles and drove the short distance to the Water Works, inching our way down the access track to avoid missing anything. Hoopoe and a Balearic Woodchat Shrike were both sighted before we reached our destination. Wildflowers in this area were in profusion, one field in particular prompting a mass exodus from the vehicles to photographically record the event. It was covered in yellow, white and red blooms, the latter courtesy of a number of different poppy species. Above us at this juncture were three Short-toed Larks busily performing their territorial song flight.

On arrival at the observation platform Red Crested Pochard, Common Pochard and Shoveler were easily recognised on the main concrete lined ponds, Common Sandpiper numbers were into double figures and at least 5 Black-necked Grebes were present. Behind us some 25 Yellow Wagtails of mixed race including at least two *feldegg*, Black-headed Wagtail, strutted along the arable field together with a White Wagtail and a couple of Linnets. The nearby ruined finca held a resplendent Kestrel which looked particularly nervous when a Peregrine Falcon passed over. Our picnic was leisurely eaten, using the platform steps as suitable seating. Again it was not interruption free as our first Lapwing for the trip flew steadily by. Our traditional team photo was set up after lunch just in time for the arrival of five Whiskered Terns over the main water and a Swallowtail butterfly and three Speckled Woods beneath us.

Moving on we parked near the waterworks entrance and strolled through the old farm small holding towards the Ses Puntes Observation Deck. Species recorded here included Northern Wheatear, another Balearic Woodchat Shrike, two Ospreys fishing in tandem and a couple of Ravens. The plant life here included Bog Orchid and substantial numbers of Small-flowered Tongue Orchids. Insects observed included Common Darter dragonfly and three Egyptian Grasshoppers, bringing our trip sightings for this fascinating creature to six. Heading back to the vans we were interrupted by a group of 500 swifts one of which was readily identified as a Pallid Swift.

A steady drive back to the hotel included a refuelling stop for Alan's vehicle to prevent delay the next day. The evenings roll-call touched on everyone's trip highlight, there being so many that no single sighting could be claimed the best. We had all contributed to a wonderful time, many new friends had been made and we were all sad that the experience was nearly over. Again the ample repast cheered us up.

## Day 8

Wednesday 25th April

Return journey to Palma Airport

Weather: Sunny and bright start to the day, becoming warmer as the day progressed.  
Temperature: Around 20 deg C

With our planned departure from the hotel set for 0745 hrs there was no time for an early morning walk so we loaded up the vans and had an early breakfast. The roads were surprisingly quiet, enabling us to reach the airport in good time for everyone to make their flights and for Dave and Alan to return the vehicles before checking in. Sightings before departure included a Spotted Flycatcher and a Pallid Swift which swooped low over us as we were climbing into the vehicles, perhaps a gesture of "Bon Voyage".

By the time I had arrived back from depositing my vehicle, the Stansted flight had already boarded, and our Leeds flight was high on the list for gate allocation. It was not until we got back to the UK that we found out the Stansted flight departure had been delayed. I hope it did not spoil what had been a great trip.

Thanks to all for a wonderful week and for your companionship!

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## Species List

Birds (H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	April							
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		1	2		1		2	
2	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>							5	
3	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>					7	200+		
4	Balearic Shearwater	<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>					1	20+		
5	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	1	8	2	12	1	2	2	
6	Shag	<i>P. aristotelis</i>		3		3				
7	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>								
8	Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>			8	2	5	2		
9	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	50		30		1	2	3	
10	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	4	25	25	10	40	30	30	
11	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	1	2		1	2	3	4	
12	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	3	4	2	1	1	1		
13	Purple Heron	<i>A. purpurea</i>		2	2	1	6+7	4	4	
14	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>		1			1	9		
15	Shelduck	<i>T. tadorna</i>	2	1	6		4	50	10+	
16	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	2	1	10	2	6		15	
17	Teal	<i>A. crecca</i>			4					
18	Mallard	<i>A. platyrhynchos</i>	20	20	25	20	20	10	25	6
19	Pintail	<i>A. acuta</i>			1					
20	Garganey	<i>A. querquedula</i>			1					
21	Shoveler	<i>A. clypeata</i>			8				10	
22	Red - crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	25	27	20		20		10	
23	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			1				15	
24	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>				3				
25	Black Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>		3						
26	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	2	5	8	2	4	3	11	1
27	Montagu's Harrier	<i>C. pygargus</i>			1					
28	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>		10	2	3	4	1		
29	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	3	1	2		2	1	3	
30	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1	4	1	1	1	4	3	1
31	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>F. eleonora</i>			1	2	1			
32	Peregrine	<i>F. peregrinus</i>						1	1	
33	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		2				10	2	
34	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		1H				1+2H	1H	
35	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2	2	4	2	2+yg		6	
36	Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>			4				1	
37	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	30	40	25	2	2		8	
38	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>			6					
39	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>			1					
40	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	15	15	50	6	15	25	10	
41	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>						25		
42	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	1		1+3H	3H	2	3		
43	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	3		2			3	2	
44	Ringed Plover	<i>C. hiaticula</i>			1					
45	Kentish Plover	<i>C. alexandrinus</i>			4		2	8		
46	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>						1		
47	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>							1	

	Common name	Scientific name	April							
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
48	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>			2			26		
49	Dunlin	<i>C. alpina</i>			1		2			
50	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>			1			1		
51	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>			20					
52	Common Redshank	<i>T. totanus</i>	1	1	12		1	10	1	
53	Greenshank	<i>T. nebularia</i>	1H	1	3			2	1	
54	Green Sandpiper	<i>T. ochropus</i>			1					
55	Wood Sandpiper	<i>T. glareola</i>							1	
56	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		1	3	1H		3	10	
57	Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus audouinii</i>	2	2	1	2	5	4		1
58	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	50	20	5	1200	15	200	25	10
59	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>		1			1	1		
60	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>					2			
61	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>						1	4	
62	White-winged Black Tern	<i>C. leucopterus</i>					1			
63	(Feral) Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>	5	8	3	4	3	100	10	50
64	Wood Pigeon	<i>C. palumbus</i>	5	10	12	6	8	10	6	4
65	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>				1		3	10	2
66	Turtle Dove	<i>S. turtur</i>				1			1	
67	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammmeus</i>			1		1			
68	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>		2	1					
69	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	200	500	700	500	50	500	500	30
70	Pallid Swift	<i>A. pallidus</i>			1				1	1
71	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	1	2		1+1H		1H	1	
72	Short-toed lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>							3	
73	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>						7		
74	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	10	5	2				10	
75	Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		5			4			
76	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	100	500	80	100	50	3500	100	10
77	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	50	200	60	6	50	50	50	5
78	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>				1+2				
79	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motocilla flava flavissima</i>					1			
	Spanish Yellow Wagtail	<i>M. flava iberiae</i>	10	4	1	1	5	1	20	
	Blue-headed Wagtail	<i>M. flava flava</i>					3		2	
	Black-headed Wagtail	<i>M. flava feldegg</i>							2	
80	White Wagtail	<i>M. alba alba</i>		1H					1	
81	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		1H		1H	1H			
82	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		1H		1				
83	Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	3H	2	2+3H	3+6H	3H	5H	4H	
84	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>		1			1			
85	Common Redstart	<i>P. phoenicurus</i>		4			6	3		
86	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	1				1			
87	Stonechat	<i>S. torquata</i>	5	6		2	2	20	10	
88	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>					5	2	4	
89	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>		3+4H		1	1			
90	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	4	6	5	6	7	6	8	5
91	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	6H	1+5H	6+4H	3+3H	4H	1+5H	2+6H	
92	Fan-tailed Warbler	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	4	4	2	2	2+2H	3+5H	2+6H	1
93	Moustached Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>							5+3H	
94	Sedge Warbler	<i>A. schoenobaenus</i>				1	1H		1H	
95	Great Reed Warbler	<i>A. arundinaceus</i>			3H				1H	

	Common name	Scientific name	April							
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
96	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	2	15	10	3	5	5	4+3H	
97	Whitethroat	<i>S. communis</i>				1	2			
98	Blackcap	<i>S. atricapilla</i>	1	1		5	3	2		
99	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>			4		2			
100	Chiffchaff	<i>P. collybita</i>		1H			1	1		
101	Willow Warbler	<i>P. trochilus</i>		3		2	2	2	1	
102	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>				2H	3+4H			
103	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>					2	1	3	1
104	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>					5		1	
105	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>				2				
106	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	2H	3	3	2	4	3	3	2
107	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1							
108	Balearic Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator badius</i>		1				3	3	
109	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	3	8	1	2	2	2	4	
110	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	20	20	30	50	25	30	30	10
111	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>				20	6			
112	Serín	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	5	10	10	6	10	6	6	2
113	Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	2	10	6	5	4	6	2	
114	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	1	6			1	2	4	
115	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>						3	2	
116	Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>					4+3H			
117	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>		2		2				
118	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>							1	
119	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	5	2	2	2	7H	30+50H	2H	1H

## Butterflies

**Brimstone** *Gonapteryx mammi* – 2 in the botanical garden at Lluç Monastery on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 1 at S'Albufera on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Cleopatra** *G. Cleopatra* – 2 reported from Lluç Monastery gardens on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Swallowtail** *Papilio machaon* – 2 near the Bocquer Valley finca on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 1 at Sas Salinas on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 2 at our picnic site, S'Albufera water works, on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta* – Singles noted near Cases Velles on 22<sup>nd</sup> and at the S'Albufera water works on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Speckled Wood** *Pararge aegeria* – fairly common, with 2 in the Bocquer Valley on 19<sup>th</sup>, 20 at S'Albufera on 20<sup>th</sup>. 2 at Lluç Monastery on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 6 at S'Albufera on 24<sup>th</sup>.

– 2 at the bottom of the Bocquer Valley, on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Large White** *Pieris Brassicae* – 2 at S'Albufera on 20<sup>th</sup> and singles noted at Cuber on 21<sup>st</sup> and at the S'Albufereta on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**White** *Pieris sp.* - Individuals not positively identified included singles in the Bocquer Valley on 19<sup>th</sup>, and at Sas Salinas on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Common Blue** *Polyommatus icarus* – one at the S'Albufera water works whilest packing away the picnic on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Dragonflies

Rather scarce with just 4 sightings to report this year.

**Blue-tailed Damselfly** *Ischnura elegans* – recorded at Albufera with 1 seen on 20<sup>th</sup> and a pair entwined in courting posture on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa* – A single seen at S'Albufera on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Darter** *Sympetrum strolatum* – One at the Sas Salinas on 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Reptiles and Amphibians

**Iberian Water Frog** *Rana perezii* heard daily from the hotel's ornamental ponds and very vocal, suggesting large numbers, at S'Albufera., especially on our visit of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Also seen and heard at Cuber and the Lluc Monastery on the 21<sup>st</sup>, but only in small numbers.

**Red Eared Terrapin** *Trechemys scripta* – 7 in the Gran Canal, S'Albufera on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

**European Pond Terrapin** *Emys orbicularis* – 2 basking at S'Albufera on 20<sup>th</sup>, just metres away from the previous species, allowed the group to compare the identification features of both species.

**Viperine Snake** *Natrix Maura* – 2 together near the dam wall at Cuber reservoir on 21<sup>st</sup> kept our group entranced for some time as the snakes hunted a shoal of small fish in the shallows.

## Mammals

**Rabbit** *Oryctolagus cuniculu* - One dead on the road from the airport on 18<sup>th</sup>, a single at S'Albufera on 20<sup>th</sup>, 2 there on 24<sup>th</sup> and 2 seen during our journey to the south of the island on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.and seen from the vehicles during or journey to the south of the island on 21<sup>st</sup> and 2 at the Salinas on arrival.

**Brown Rat** *Rattus norvegicus* - One seen at S'Albufera as we disposed of our picnic waste into the refuse receptacles on the 20<sup>th</sup>, one seen running up the access track to the Albufera water works on the 24<sup>th</sup> and one dead on the road during our trip to the Sas Salinas on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Brown Hare** *Lepus europaeus* – One dead on the roadside hard-shoulder opposite the hotel on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Bat sp.** - Up to 10 or more, of 2 different sizes, seen daily at dusk in the hotel grounds and adjacent marsh.

**Mouse sp.** – One swam across a small puddle on our approach to the S'Albufera water works on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Hedgehog** *Erinaceus europaeus* – Singles seen as road casualties on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Stoat** *mustela ermine* – A single ran across the footpath during our post picnic stroll at S'Albufera on 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Insects

**Firebug** - seen at the S'Albufereta on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Egyptian Grasshopper** *Anacridium aegyptium* – One at S'Albufereta on 19<sup>th</sup>, 2 at S'Albufera on 20<sup>th</sup> and 3 near the waterworks on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**7-spot Ladybird** *Coccinella 7-punctata* – one seen during our Sas Salinas trip on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Black Ground Beetle** – 6 in the Bocquer Valley on 19<sup>th</sup> not identified to species.

**Hummingbird Hawkmoth** *Macroglossum stellatum* – one feeding along the footpath to the S'Albufereta on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Chafer Leaf Beetle** *Oxythyrea funesta* – Noted on our visit to the southern end of the S'Albufera on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Other interesting sightings:

**European Eel** *Anguilla Anguilla* – One captured by a Purple Heron at the S'Albufereta on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Roman Snail** *Helix pomatia* – 3 seen in the Bocquer valley on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Mullet** *Chelon labrosus* – Seen on our visit to S'Albufera on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Carp** *Cyprinus carpio* – Noted at S'Albufera on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Orchids

**Mirror Orchid** *Ophrys speculum* – noted at the Albufereta on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, at the picnic stops on Formentor on 22<sup>nd</sup> and Sas Salinas on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Small-flowered Tongue Orchid** *Serapias parviflora* - Recorded on our walk to the Albufereta Torrent on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and at the Ses Salinetes, S'aaAlbufera on the 24<sup>th</sup>

**Bumblebee Orchid** *Ophrys bombyflora* – specimens seen on at S'Albufereta on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and at Sas Salinas on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Bog Orchid** *Orchis Palustris* – one seen at the southern end of S'Albufera on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Loose-flowered Orchid** *Orchis laxiflora* - 24 in flower in the quarry at Cuber on 21<sup>st</sup>, our best ever count here.

**Other Plants of note** – a list of the more obvious species recorded during the week:

*Sibthorpia Africana*

**Star of Bethlehem** *Ornithogalum arabicum*

**Blue Hound's-tongue** *Cynoglossum creticum*

**Opium Poppy** *P. somniferum*

**Rough Poppy** *P. Hybridum*

**Balearic Sandwort** *Arenaria balearica*

**Hedgehog Plant** *Astragalus balearicus*

**Common Asphodel** *Asphodelus aestivus*

**Balearic Horse-shoe Vetch** *Hippocrepis balearicus*

**Small Melilot** *Melilotus indicus*

**Winged Pea** *Tetragonolobus purpureus*

**Euphobia sp.**

*Cistus creticus*

*Ipomoea sagittata*

**Malcomia sp.**

**Bellardia** *Bellardia trixago*

**Three-leaved Toadflax** *L. triphylla*

**Crown Daisy** *Chrysanthemum coronarium*

**Chicory** *Cichorium intybus*

**Common Smilax** *Smilax aspera*

**Three-cornered Leek** *A. Triquetrum*

**Small-flowered Melilot** *Melilotus indica*

**Tree Mallow** *Lavatera arborea*

**Wild Madder** *rubia peregrine*

**Pink Convolvulus** *Convolvulus cantabrica*

**White Mignonette** *Reseda alba*

**Rosy Garlic** *Allium roseum*

**Crimson Clover** *Trifolium incarnatum*

**Pale Bugloss** *Echium italicum*

**Common Poppy** *Pavaver rhoeas*

**Prickly Poppy** *P. Argenone*

**Cytinus** *Cytinus hypocistis*

**Bladder Campion** *Silene vulgaris*

**Star Clover** *Trifolium stellatum*

**Field Gladioli** *Gladiolus italicus*

**Fodder Vetch** *Vicia villosa*

**Black Medick** *Medicago lupulina*

**Little Robin** *Geranium purpureum*

**Sage-leaved Cistus** *Cistus salvifolius*

**Scarlet Pimpernel** *Anagallis arvensis (red and Blue)*

**Sweet Alison** *Lobularia maritime*

**Giant Fennel** *Ferula communis*

**Common Toadflax** *Linara vulgaris*

**Annual Daisy** *Billis annua*

**Corn Marigold** *C. Segetum*

**Aloe** *Aloe arborescens*

**Wild Leek** *Allium ampeloprasum*

**Dwarf Palm** *Chamaerops humilis*

**Mallow** *Mahva cretica*

**Tassel Hyacinth** *Muscari comosum*

**Cuckoo Pint** *Arum maculatum*

**Creeping Cinquefoil** *Potentilla reptans*

**Wild Mignonette** *R. lutea*