

Wolves & Bustards in Rural Spain

Naturetrek Tour Report Compilation

March 2007

Summary

The wolf watching trip has become so popular that it departed on four occasions this month and we were joined by 37 Naturetrek clients. Each trip was successful in its quest for Wolf and resulted in animals being recorded on seven days with a maximum daily sighting of seven. We were able to watch them hunting Red Deer, scavenging dead animals and also watch adults interacting with their young. The unique colour of their coats enabled us to 'get to know' certain individuals during the trips. We saw 14 species of mammals including Wild Boar, 121 species of birds which included 16 raptors and up to 250 Great Bustards.

The following are extracts from the four tour reports from March 2007:

Wolves

Another pre-dawn start saw us at our watch point in the pre-dawn gloom. Again within a couple a minutes we found our first Wolves. While watching them appear out of the heather we realised that there were actually more then a couple of wolves.

All unique in colour and coming out into the open we watched 6 individuals; 2 adults and 4 young (last year's) animals for the next fifteen minutes. Not quite believing our luck they slowly disappeared in the tall heather.



Wolf watching by Gerald Broddez

We kept scanning the valley and a little later found the same group again a bit further away. They were playing and chasing rodents, jumping and leaping high into the air and we also saw quite a bit of interaction between the adults and the youngsters. We watched them again for the next 25 minutes before we lost them out of sight. What an incredible morning it had been!!



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Great Bustards

We made a short stop along the main road for our first group of Great Bustards, which included a large displaying male, before turning onto one of the side roads.

A stop near a dehasa produced more Great Bustards, a small colony of White Storks, Grey Herons and Lesser Kestrels and a “zitting” Fan-tailed Warbler overhead.

Continuing further west we encountered several other groups of Great Bustards with over a 150 birds seen during the afternoon.



Great Bustards by Peter Dunn

Raptors and more.....

We continued through the agricultural land and stopped for our picnic at the gorge of the River where we spent some time taking in the view and looking across to the cliffs. While having our picnic we were interrupted several times by such great birds as Short-toed Eagle, Golden Eagle displaying, several Egyptian and many Griffon Vultures and a single Black Stork. After lunch there was time for a short rest or a walk to the viewpoint.



Griffon Vulture by Rupert Pye

Next we drove to another gorge below the dam of the Embalse. Here we saw more Griffon Vultures and a female Goshawk but it was the butterflies that stole the show. Several rare and beautiful species were seen and included several Large Tortoiseshell, Dappled White, Provence Hairstreak, Queen of Spain Fritillary, and to top it all a superb Spanish Festoon found by Sarah.

And finally more Wolves.....

We decided to return to our morning spot and try for the Wolves again. First all was quiet but then things started to happen fast; Red Deer appeared, a family of Wild Boar put in an appearance and then a blond animal was spotted walking towards us! A wolf in full view walked slowly towards a dead donkey and we had fantastic scope views as it walked on the track right out into the open. It circled the dead donkey twice before disappearing in the heather. Then a second animal appeared next to the donkey. We had not seen it arriving as it was much darker coloured; it stayed only for a short while before moving off into the scrub.



Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	13-17 March	17-21 March	21-25 March	25-29 March
Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		✓		✓
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>			✓	✓
Iberian Hare	<i>Lepus ibericus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Field Vole	<i>Microtus agrestis</i>	✓			✓
Common Vole	<i>Microtus arvalis</i>			✓	
Blind Mole	<i>Talpa caeca</i>				✓
Greater White-toothed Shrew	<i>Crocidura russula</i>	✓			
Miller's Water Shrew	<i>Neomys anomalus</i>	✓			
Soprano Pippistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus "sopranensis"</i>		✓		✓
Western Hedgehog					✓

Birds

Common name	Scientific name	13-17 March	17-21 March	21-25 March	25-29 March
Great crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		✓	✓	✓
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓		
Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	✓			
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	✓		✓	✓
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓		✓
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>				✓
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>			✓	
Pochard	<i>Athya ferina</i>	✓			✓
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	✓	✓		
Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	✓	✓		
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	✓		✓	✓
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>		✓	✓	✓
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>				✓

Common name	Scientific name	13-17 March	17-21 March	21-25 March	25-29 March
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	✓			
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓	✓
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		✓		
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	✓	✓		✓
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓		
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓			
Great Bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>				✓
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓		✓
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>			✓	
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	✓			✓
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>				✓
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>				✓
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓	✓		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓	✓		✓
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		✓		
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>		✓	✓	✓
Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	✓	✓		✓
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		✓		✓
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	✓	✓		
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>		✓	✓	✓
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asia flammeus</i>		✓	✓	✓
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>				✓
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	✓	✓		
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	✓		✓	✓
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>		✓		✓
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	✓	✓		✓
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>				✓
Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	✓	✓		✓
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>		✓		✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
White Wagtail	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓		✓
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Wheatear	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>		✓		✓
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓			✓
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	✓			
Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>				✓
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		✓		✓
Fan-tailed Warbler	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>				✓
Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crested Tit	<i>Parus cristatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>		✓	✓	✓
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	✓		✓	✓
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Linnet	<i>Acanthis cannabina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>		✓		✓
Serín	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	✓			
Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>		✓	✓	✓