

Mallorca – A Beginners Birdwatching Tour

Naturetrek Tour Report

23 - 30 April 2016



Red-knobbed Coot



Common Nightingale



Common Dolphin



2016 Tour Group

Report & images compiled by Alan Miller



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Tour participants: Alan Miller (leader) with seven Naturetrek clients

Summary

Spring birding is always a joy, especially around the Mediterranean after a UK winter. We saw early breeders busy with a young family to feed; we listened to many birds in full voice; and there was the anticipation of migrants passing through on their way north. No two years are the same and, for the Mallorca Beginners Birdwatching tour 2016, this was true. There had been little winter rain and the reservoirs were very low, to the extent that water restriction measures were being talked about. The weather was fairly kind to us. It was generally warm, rather than hot, with good visibility. The three exceptions were a cool, dampish morning at Cuber, early morning rain on the day we visited the south of the island but we soon drove away from the rain, and drizzle on our last morning as we set off for the airport. In all, we recorded 105 bird species but the key was the quality rather than the quantity of sightings on this Beginners Tour. Inevitably, not all birds sat long enough, but for many of the species we were able to discuss the identification features. Some of the highlights included Cinereous and Griffon Vultures in the mountains, brilliant views of Common Nightingales sitting in the open singing wonderfully at Lluc, Bee-eaters at the south of S'Albufera Reserve, and the constant bird song around the hotel from Cetti's Warblers, Sardinian Warblers, Greenfinches and Serins. Thanks must go to all 'Group' members for working together to make it a productive, enjoyable and rewarding week on a lovely island.

Day 1

Saturday 23rd April

UK - Palma Airport – Pollença Bay & Hotel

Group members set out on morning flights from Leeds/Bradford, East Midlands and London Gatwick airports with high hopes for a week's spring birding on Mallorca. Regional departures will only work if arrival times are fairly close. One group member flew from Stansted on an afternoon flight and joined us later at the hotel. For the rest of the group, our flights converged on Palma airport within an hour of each other and we met up in the Arrivals Hall where Alan was waiting to greet us.

Shortly after midday, we were on our way, heading to our hotel base in the north-east of the island. Our early sightings made us wonder why we had come so far to birdwatch as the first three species seen were House Sparrow, Common Starling and Common Wood Pigeon. However, things changed and, before long, we spotted a Yellow-legged Gull and discussed its relationship with the UK Herring Gull. We also spotted Red Kite, Common Swift, Barn Swallow, Eurasian Collared Dove and several other species, before arriving at the entrance to S'Albufereta Marsh where we stopped for a picnic overlooking part of the marsh. We were greeted by a pair of European Serins as we arrived at the parking area.

Once we had eaten, we turned our attention to the birds. A few male Red-crested Pochards were on the lake amongst the many Eurasian Coots. We spotted Red-legged Partridge on a wall, European Stonechat on a fence post, Spotted Flycatcher on a dead branch and two Common Terns on posts in the water. In the pond was a Great Egret and we discussed the differences between it and the commoner Little Egret and Cattle Egret which were also present. On the ground we looked at a single spike of Mirror Orchid.

After a gentle birding introduction, we set off to drive the short distance to our hotel and, as we crossed a small channel, a Common Sandpiper was seen. We followed Pollença Bay towards Puerto Pollença and our home for

the week, the Pollentia Club Resort, ideally located on the coast road, overlooking Pollença Bay and backing onto S'Albufereta Marsh.

After checking in and finding our rooms, being reunited with optics and abandoning baggage, we set off on an orientation tour of the hotel grounds. Cetti's Warbler, Sardinian Warbler and European Greenfinch were all singing as we walked around the grounds. On the land next to the hotel we stopped to look at a spike of Small-flowered Tongue Orchid. We worked our way around to the hotel hide where the highlight was watching a Western Osprey fishing and we had exceptional close views as it passed overhead. Marsh Harrier was also seen together with a few ducks and egrets. We then returned to our rooms to unpack.

At 6pm we reconvened at Bar Triton, located between our rooms and the restaurant. Alan talked over our prospects for the week ahead and we all shared our hopes and expectations. We then adjourned to the restaurant where we were joined by the last group member who had arrived on a later flight. We enjoyed a splendid evening meal with the atmosphere buzzing in anticipation of the week to come.

After dinner, some of the group walked to the hotel hide to see the sights and hear the sounds of the marsh as darkness fell. We watched a constant stream of Little Egrets going to roost in the reed bed, saw many hundreds of Barn Swallows hawking low over the water, heard the eerie call of Eurasian Stone-curlew, and watched two Black-crowned Night Herons, one of which passed over the hide and landed in the channel behind the hotel. As we walked back to our rooms we listened to the Iberian Water Frogs in the hotel's ornamental ponds and watched the bats hawking along the fence line.

Day 2

Sunday 24th April

Bocquer Valley and S'Albufereta Marsh

Our first pre-breakfast gathering in the hotel hide overlooking S'Albufereta Marsh was enjoyable and helped group members become more familiar with the sights and songs of the many species of birds around the hotel. There was the constant serenade of Cetti's Warbler, Sardinian Warbler and Greenfinch. Many Barn Swallows were hawking low over the water, and in the hide pools we added Grey Heron and Little Grebe to our bird list.

After breakfast we set off on our first expedition - to the famous Bocquer Valley. On the sea shore, we stopped to look at three Audouin's Gulls and noted their clean-looking heads and dark red bills and, on Puerto Pollença bypass, our first Common Nightingale and Corn Bunting were heard. We called at the supermarket to collect our picnic makings and then drove the short distance to the car park at the bottom of the Bocquer Valley to begin our walk.

We followed the track towards the Finca located at the start of the path up the valley. We could hear a Eurasian Hoopoe singing but couldn't locate it. The weather was cloudy and, initially, sightings were slow. A splendid light phase Booted Eagle was spotted in the sky over the ridge. We had just finished discussing its identification features when another came into view; this time it was dark phase. We were entranced as the eagle performed above us with numerous stoops and climbs before diving again. Next we came upon a small flock of Eurasian Crag Martins which circled low over our heads and we were able to appreciate their plumage and how it differs from other martins.

At the viewpoint overlooking the sea, at the head of the valley, we paused for a rest whilst Alison had some more exercise walking down to the sea and back. As we started our return walk, we paused to check an area of vegetation where we heard, and a couple of lucky group members saw a Balearic Warbler which briefly sat out in the open.

Back at the Finca, we checked the fig trees and found a couple of Spotted Flycatchers and a splendid Balearic Woodchat Shrike. After a pleasant morning walk, we returned to our vehicle and enjoyed our first proper Naturetrek picnic. Once replete, we loaded the vehicle and drove back to the hotel where we paused for a comfort stop and to collect Mariel who had spent the morning at the hotel. We then drove to S'Albufereta Marsh. As we pulled up we found a Eurasian Stone-curlew next to the wall and we managed telescope views before it disappeared into the vegetation. As we were watching the stone-curlew, a Eurasian Hoopoe flew past behind it. Pleased with our sightings, we set off through the pine trees towards the mound but hadn't got far when we stopped to admire two European Pied Flycatchers.

Once at the mound, we had a reasonable viewing point to look into the marsh. Our time there was accompanied by the song of Corn Bunting and new sightings included nine Greater Flamingos, Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers, a Purple Heron which flew in and landed, and a Common Greenshank which flew over calling before landing on an island. A highlight was watching a Western Osprey fishing over the marsh. We saw it dive down a few times before it dived and hit the water with a splash and came out carrying a fish. It landed and we watched it for a long time, feeding. We then moved across to Plataforma des Grau, a new observation platform, to get a different view of the osprey and to appreciate the size of the marsh and the amount of water channels where birds can be lost from view.

We returned to the vehicle and had a last scan around. On an island in the lake were two Common Terns, two Common Redshanks, a Common Greenshank and a Eurasian Stone-curlew. We watched the stone-curlew as it walked around the small island before taking off, and we saw it transform from a sandy coloured bird to displaying black and white wings in flight. Pleased with our first full day in the field, we returned to our hotel.

We reconvened at 6.15pm for our evening meeting where we did our first log call and realised that we had already seen 57 bird species. After outlining the plan for our next day, Alan talked about the way bird names, both scientific and common, are formed and recent developments by the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) published list of world bird names. He then introduced the first round of a bird quiz.

After dinner some of us met up and walked to the hotel hide. As we set off, three Purple Herons flew overhead, heading north. At the gate to the hide path, a European Pied Flycatcher was perched on the fence. It flew off and was immediately replaced by a Spotted Flycatcher. At the hide we watched lots of gulls heading towards Formentor and Little Egrets heading into the marsh to roost. There was a heavy cloud cover and lots of bats were in evidence around the hide. With the use of a Bat Detector they were identified as Common Pipistrelle. As we walked back to our rooms, there were more of them along the hotel boundary.

Day 3

Monday 25th April

Cuber Reservoir & Lluc Monastery

Alan and Barbara met at the hotel hide for a pre-breakfast birdwatch. It was an overcast morning with a cool easterly wind blowing. On the fence next to the hide path the Spotted Flycatcher was still present from the previous evening. From the hide a Purple Heron was seen to land in the marsh and there were two Little Grebes in the nearest hide pool. Swallows were hawking low over the marsh and at one point surrounded the hide.

After breakfast and our supermarket stop, we made the scenic journey through the Tramuntana Mountains to Cuber Reservoir for our planned day's birding. The route was made more interesting by having to pass lots of cyclists on twisty mountain roads. During the journey we discussed the identification features of some of the birds we were hoping to see. We left the vehicle at Cuber car park and made our way to the start of our walk. The weather was cloudy with a little damp mist in the air. We set off from the information boards, scanning the area of scrub prior to the reservoir. We soon saw one of our target birds as two Tawny Pipits were seen, one singing. Whilst scanning the ridge, two Northern Ravens were spotted. In the conifers we stopped to watch Common Chiffchaff, Eurasian Blue Tit, Great Tit and Sardinian Warbler. We were discussing a Pine Processionary Moth bivouac when we realised there was movement around it. When we looked closer with binoculars we found a family of male, female and three juvenile Red Crossbills. We had excellent, prolonged views at eye level and could see the crossed bills clearly. A large bird was then spotted over the far ridge and, on checking, we identified the bird as our first Cinereous (Black) Vulture. Another raptor was close by which turned out to be a Booted Eagle.

We crossed the reservoir dam and, when passing a patch of olive trees, we heard the distinctive call of a Eurasian Scops Owl. Although overcast and dull, it was still an unusual sound mid-morning. We continued to the quarry and looked at the endemic Balearic Cyclamen before turning round to return to the vehicle. On the return walk, we spotted vultures along a different ridge and identified two Griffon Vultures and a further Cinereous Vulture. We had connected with all our target birds.

We had our lunch on the picnic tables set under pine trees next to the car park. As we enjoyed our picnic, we were joined by lots of Common Chaffinches, and we watched Red Crossbill, Common Firecrest and Western Bonelli's Warbler. We also heard a Eurasian Wryneck. It had been a fabulous visit to Cuber.

Next we drove to Lluc Monastery where we spent a pleasant couple of hours with some fabulous bird sightings. In the Jardin Botanico (Botanical Garden), we watched a Common Firecrest feeding above our heads, but the star attraction was watching Common Nightingales sitting in the open and singing beautifully. We could see the throat vibrating for the first part of its song, and then it opened its bill wide to complete the serenade – wonderful! We also saw Spotted Flycatcher and heard Eurasian Wren. On the path to the cross, a European Pied Flycatcher and a Blue Rock Thrush were seen. We finished our visit with a well deserved coffee in the Monastery café before driving back to our hotel. As we drove round Pollença bay, we watched two sea planes doing practice take off and landings in the bay.

At our evening meeting, we reflected on a super day's birding before doing the log and marking the daily quiz. We then adjourned to the restaurant for dinner. Later some of the group met at the hotel hide. Dozens of Barn Swallows and Common Swifts were congregating over the marsh when a dark falcon was spotted. It passed by

the hide and landed on an exposed dead bush. A few moments later it took off again and circled the Pollença end of the marsh before disappearing from view. We had just seen our first Eleanor's Falcon. This was the first sighting by ourselves or by last week's tour group so the bird had probably just arrived from Africa. We were overjoyed and our pleasure affected a group of non-birders from the hotel who had come to see sunset from the hide. As the light was failing, we noticed bats over the marsh. We checked them using a Bat Detector and found that there were two species present: Common Pipistrelle and Common Noctule.

Day 4

Tuesday 26th April

Formentor Peninsula and S'Albufereta Marsh; eve Mount Sant Marti

It was calm and still with a clear sky and good visibility as we gathered at the hotel hide before breakfast. We saw both Purple and Grey Herons and discussed the identification differences, two Western Ospreys were found on low perches in the marsh, two Willow Warblers were seen in the tamarisk near the hide and we could see the lighter legs and brighter tones than the Common Chiffchaff we had seen earlier. Whilst we scanned around we could hear a Eurasian Hoopoe calling and a Water Rail made its squealing call a couple of times.

After breakfast we set off towards Puerto Pollença along the coast road. We made our daily stop for picnic provisions then continued through Puerto Pollença and on to the Formentor Peninsula, arriving at the Lighthouse car park before most of the daily throngs of tourists. We set up station overlooking the sea about 100 metres below us. The conditions were really too good for us to see shearwaters, as the breeze was from behind and the sea was calm, keeping the birds out to sea. A strong wind blowing the birds towards us with some wave action would have been better. One Scopoli's Shearwater was spotted about 400 metres away moving right to left but the challenge to see it was too much for most of the group. The supporting cast whilst we were there was excellent. We saw Blue Rock Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher and Common Chiffchaff close to our position, and we watched two Peregrine Falcons as they passed by several times. We were just preparing to return to the vehicle when Patrick spotted something unusual in the water. Once we were focussed on it we were delighted to watch a Common Dolphin and calf as they slowly moved through the water towards us. It was brilliant to see the calf swimming around, over, under and alongside the adult.

Pleased with our lighthouse visit, we drove back to Casas Vellas, an agricultural oasis in the limestone and pine forested peninsula. The lighthouse car park was overflowing as we set off and we passed many cyclists and cars on the way. As we got out of the vehicle at Casas Vellas, we realised that only feet from us and stationary on the wall was a Moorish Gecko. In half an hour or so, we watched Red-legged Partridge, Blue Rock Thrush and Spotted Flycatcher in the fields whilst a Cinereous Vulture being mobbed by Northern Ravens passed overhead, with a Red Kite close by.

It was now after midday so we moved to our picnic location at Formentor car park. Whilst having lunch, sightings included a Common Firecrest and a European Pied Flycatcher. After a pleasant lunch, we continued to Mirador de Albercutx where we stopped. Whilst some of us scanned from the viewing platform, others climbed the stairs to the viewpoint. We watched Eurasian Crag Martins close by and they kept disappearing into large holes in the cliff face, presumably to nests. We also saw Common Kestrel and Northern Raven and, just as we were returning to the vehicle, male and female Blue Rock Thrush flew low over our heads and landed with the male in view.

We then drove off the peninsula and called at our hotel for a comfort stop before going to the northern end of S'Albufereta reserve to Al Prat de Can Cullarassa, some habitat restored in 2009/10 at a cost of 372,000 Euros. There was a pleasant path through scrub, bordered by flowers and shrubs, which led to two viewing screens overlooking pools. The path was alive with butterflies and we saw Swallowtail, Speckled Wood, Small Heath, Clouded Yellow and Small White. At the pools we discussed the differences between the Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers, and admired the Black-winged Stilts. The whole time we were accompanied by the song of Common Nightingale, Cetti's Warbler, Zitting Cisticola and Sardinian Warbler. As we were returning, a large insect was spotted which turned out to be an Egyptian Grasshopper. We all agreed the walk had been an excellent way to end our day out.

Once back at the hotel, we met later for our daily meeting before another enjoyable dinner. After eating, half the group went 'owling'. We drove to a quiet area on the wooded slopes below Mount Sant Marti. As we turned off the main road a Eurasian Hoopoe landed a few metres to the side of our vehicle. We stopped and watch it dust-bathing for a couple of minutes before it flew off. We then continued to our listening spot. Whilst it was still light, a single spike of Violet Bird's-nest Orchid was found. As darkness fell, we listened to the sounds of the night and we heard a wonderful selection of birds including Northern Raven, Eurasian Stone-curlew and Eurasian Wryneck, and a new bird for the list when a European Nightjar began to churr. Whilst no owls were heard, the experience was appreciated and we happily made the return to our hotel.

Day 5

Wednesday 27th April

S'Albufera Nature Reserve

It was a still, clear morning when we met for our pre-breakfast birding at the hotel hide. Initially it was quiet but things hotted up when a juvenile Peregrine Falcon flew past the hide. Shortly after that, we had a rare Mallorcan sighting as a Glossy Ibis flew the length of the marsh from north to south at hide eye level, giving us excellent flight views. A male Western Marsh Harrier was spotted before we headed off for breakfast. As we neared the restaurant, a splendid Red Kite flew slowly along the hotel/marsh fence line. It had been a good start to the day.

Mariel and Patrick decided to have a day off with an easy morning at the hotel and a visit old Alcudia. The rest of us left the hotel at 8.45am and drove straight to S'Albufera Nature Reserve car park where we got the last parking space. After an orientation explanation at the information board, we set off along the access driveway. We viewed the egret roost across the river and discussed the identification differences between the Western Cattle and Little Egrets. Then we spotted a Squacco Heron which had climbed to the top of the roost bushes, and we watched it before it flew off. Lastly, we looked at a Black-crowned Night Heron to complete the suite of herons and egrets present. We crossed the bridge over a water channel and viewed from a gate overlooking a wet, reedy area where a Western Swamphen (Purple Gallinule) was seen by a few before it disappeared behind the rushes. We then progressed along the boardwalk to the Information Centre where we checked in and used the facilities.

Next we visited the Sa Roca hides area. The first hide was busy so we went straight to the second hide where we spent some time familiarising ourselves with the array of birds in front of us. We separated the many Little Ringed from Kentish Plovers, added Pied Avocet to our bird list, and watched more Western Swamphen, Black-winged Stilt, Red-crested Pochard, Gadwall and Spanish Yellow Wagtails.

As we moved round to the observation mound, a Reed Warbler was being photographed by a group low in the reeds, and we had superb views of a Great Reed Warbler at the top of the reeds singing loudly. After checking the mound and the pool next to it, we went to a bridge and, on looking over, had good views of two Red-knobbed Coots. After a morning full of interesting sightings we headed to the central area for our picnic lunch.

Once replete, we set off on our afternoon route to visit the Bishop Hides. As we crossed the river bridge, we could see a Red-eared Terrapin on a stone at the edge of the water, and we compared the Red-crested and Common Pochards which were both present. We then spend a pleasant couple of hours around the Bishop Hides, looking north over the reserve, and interesting sightings included Spotted Redshank, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, Common Tern and Gull-billed Tern. Our whole visit had been accompanied by the wonderful song of nightingales, and as we walked back from Bishop 2 hide along the narrow trail path we watched one, a few feet above our heads, singing for all it was worth – wonderful!

By mid-afternoon, fewer people were on the reserve so we returned via the Sa Roca hide which had been busy earlier. Western Marsh Harriers were active over the marsh, a couple of Purple Herons flew by, and sat motionless a few metres away in the grass beside the hide were two Eurasian Stone-curlews. It had been a fantastic visit to this premier birding site and we returned to the vehicle tired but happy.

In the evening we had our usual log call and meeting before dinner. Then some of us ended an enjoyable day with a visit to the hotel hide. A Western Osprey was perched, presumably at roost for the night. Lots of Little Egrets were heading for their communal marsh roost. We also heard a distant Eurasian Scops Owl. As darkness fell we started seeing the silhouette of bats and a check using the Bat Detector revealed they were Common Pipistrelle and Common Noctule bats. As we were walking back to our rooms, a cicada was heard.

Day 6

Thursday 28th April

Salinas de Levante and South Mallorca

We awoke to a dull morning with light rain and a grey sky. Some hardy group members made it to the hotel hide at 7am and found the Western Osprey still in the same where it had been last night. A Western Marsh Harrier was also perched in the marsh and we watched a number of egrets land in a scrubby area. We also saw Grey and Purple Herons, before heading for breakfast.

Today was our day in the south of the island. We set off after breakfast and stopped in Alcudia to collect our picnic makings. The rain had stopped and, whilst it was overcast for the rest of the day, it remained dry but with a fresh easterly breeze near the coast later. We headed south via Santa Margalida and Manacor, and then stopped at Es Cruce service area for a comfort break before entering some rural roads in the centre of the island to look for farmland birds. As we drove slowly along, we saw lots of Corn Buntings and European Stonechats and soon we saw our first Thekla Lark, a new bird for many on the tour. We stopped to watch a Western Marsh Harrier hunting over a field next to the road, before stopping to ‘scope’ an area of open farmland. Greater Short-toed Lark was seen twice but not particularly well. We also saw Red-legged Partridge and heard Eurasian Stone-curlew. The drive through the farmland was enhanced by the many wild flowers which were enjoyed by some of the group.

We reached the Salinas late morning and parked on the road to Es Trenc, overlooking the salt pans. Before lunch we had a walk where we saw lots of Common Shelduck, Pied Avocet and Kentish Plover. A new bird seen by a few was Ruff, and two Booted Eagles drifted overhead. In the fields opposite the Salinas, we saw Common Linnet and Eurasian Hoopoe. Once back at the vehicle, we tried to have our picnic but the array of birds on offer kept distracting us. We saw European Turtle Dove, Balearic Woodchat Shrike, Eurasian Hoopoe, Red-legged Partridge and Eurasian Stone-curlew behind us whilst over the Salinas a Western Marsh Harrier had an aerial tussle with a Red Kite – wow!

Eventually, after enjoying another Naturetrek picnic, we set off and drove through Ses Salines to the most southerly point near the lighthouse at Cap de Salinas. There were several Audouin's Gulls, some of which were keen to take the leftover bread from our picnic. Whilst sea watching we were rewarded with seeing both Scopoli's and Balearic Shearwaters. Most of the 'Scopoli's' were quite a distance offshore and on a couple of occasions we could see them wheeling in big numbers as though they had found a shoal of fish. The two 'Balearics' flew the width of our sea vision, from right to left, and we could see their darker, smaller shape and different flying style. Before leaving we checked the lighthouse grounds and had close telescope views of a pair of Thekla Larks. All too soon it was time to return to the vehicles and start the drive back to Pollença Bay, happy with our day in the south of Mallorca. There was one last new bird spotted near Manacor when a Eurasian Spoonbill flew over the vehicle. Unfortunately, most of us were in neutral after a long, enjoyable day and missed it.

Before dinner, we met to do our lists and discuss the day's events. Afterwards, some of the group again visited the hotel hide as dusk fell. As we walked to the hide and whilst there, dozens of Barn Swallows were flying low over the hotel grounds and the marsh. In the marsh were a number of Western Marsh Harriers and we counted six females and a male. There was also a constant stream of egrets to the marsh roost including a flock of 40-50 and two smaller flocks of a dozen. We estimated that over 100 birds had gone to the roost which was the highest count of the week. To complete the evening we saw both Grey and Purple Herons

Day 7

Friday 29th April

Southern end of S'Albufera Marsh (S'Illot and Depuradora)

Patrick and Alan were at the hotel hide at 7am on a bright, clear and still morning with excellent visibility. They watched migration in progress as swifts and swallows were high in the sky moving purposefully northwards over the marsh, and most of the Western Marsh Harriers seen going to roost last night took to the wing and gained height before also drifting northwards. Other raptors seen included Common Kestrel, Red Kite and two Western Ospreys, one carrying a fish in its talons. A Western Swamphen was seen and a new bird for the trip was a Whinchat.

The group was depleted this morning as Mariel, Barbara and Michael stayed at the hotel. We set off from the hotel at 9am and Alison was dropped off in Alcudia to visit the old town. We then continued to S'Illot, the old salt pans. First we checked the ponds and there was an interesting selection of ducks including three Marbled Ducks which we discussed for some time. We then moved along the track and were rewarded with super views of four European Bee-eaters which were a delight and enjoyed by the group as they were a target species for many. The reed bed was very quiet except for Cetti's Warbler, Zitting Cisticola and European Stonechat. On the

way back, we spotted a Balearic Woodchat Shrike, and overhead were Northern Ravens and several Western Marsh Harriers.

Back at the vehicle, we drove to Can Picafort where we stopped to get our picnic provisions, then continued round to the rear of the reserve and down the lane leading to the Depudora (Water Works). From Son Bosc observation platform we checked the ponds at the Depudora. Sightings included Common Tern, Common Pochard, Common Sandpiper and Little Ringed Plover. Then there was some excitement as a Collared Pratincole was found. In the end there were three birds which we watched on the ground and hunting over the ponds. On checking the farmland behind, we saw Eurasian Stone-curlew and, over the vast reed beds, we saw more Western Marsh Harriers, Western Osprey, Common Kestrel and Red Kite.

After all the excitement, we went down to the vehicle and enjoyed our last Naturetrek picnic. Before leaving, we had another scan from the platform but nothing new had arrived. We then moved on to the other side of the Depudora where we had a pleasant walk to the rear of the reserve. All too soon it was time to return to the vehicle and we drove slowly back along the access road. As we passed a farm we spotted our last new bird, a Common Redstart. We stopped at a pool to watch European Serin and European Goldfinch bathing together and lastly, nearing the main road, a Eurasian Stone-curlew flew over the vehicle. With some reluctance we turned out onto the main road and returned through Alcudia to our hotel with time for packing before tomorrow's departure.

After a lovely day we met before dinner to do our last log call and debriefed a wonderful week of superb bird sightings and magnificent scenery. We marked the last of our daily bird quizzes and Barbara and Michael were crowned as 'Bird Brains of the Week'. Thanks were said for a good week's birding and for all joining in and enhancing the 'group' experience. Everyone then had the opportunity to give their birding highlights of the tour which included the views of singing Common Nightingales, Osprey taking a fish, Turtle Dove, Great Reed Warbler singing at S'Albufera, Sardinian Warbler with its black head and beady red eye, Western Swamphen, Blue Rock Thrush and European Pied Flycatcher. Another highlight was the Common Dolphins at Formentor.

We enjoyed our last evening meal and then some of us went for a last time to watch the marsh at dusk from the hotel hide. There were lots of swifts and swallows hawking over the marsh and a Purple Heron visited the hide pool, but the star was undoubtedly a dark phase Eleanora's Falcon which flew towards us, circled the hide and then flew away. We thought it had gone but suddenly it passed by close again and we watched it flying away to a position probably over the start to the Bocquer Valley where it circled lazily in the sky. It was joined by a second bird. The light was fading at distance but it was the same size and structure so probably a second falcon, and they circled together for three or four minutes before disappearing from view. What a lovely way to end the day! As we were walking back to the hotel grounds a Black-crowned Night Heron flew over our heads.

Day 8

Saturday 30th April

Puerto Pollençà to Palma Airport

We awoke to a dull, cloudy and damp morning – perhaps a sign it was time to go home. There was some interest at 'Mallorca 312', an international cycle race involving several thousand competitors that passed the hotel on the coast road about 7.20am.

After breakfast we loaded the vehicle, checked out, said goodbye to Jonathan who was waiting to be collected by his parents, and set off for Palma airport. The journey to the airport was uneventful and we spotted a few birds en route, including Western Cattle Egret feeding on the verge, before arriving at the airport.

At Palma airport farewells were said as group members departed for their various flights back to the UK where another Naturetrek adventure came to an end. Thank you for your patience and tolerance accommodating different arrival and departure times at Palma airport, and thank you for your companionship during a wonderful week on a beautiful island.

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Black-winged Stilt



Collared Pratincole

Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	April							
			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		2			6	20+	6	
2	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	1	2			4	2	6	
3	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>					2			
5	Marbled Duck	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>								3
6	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	4	12			25+		4	
7	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>					6		6	
8	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	1			7		7	1	
9	Scopoli's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>				1		100+		
10	Balearic Shearwater	<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>						2		
11	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		1	2	2	1			
12	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>		9						
13	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>					1			
14	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>						1		
15	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	2		1		4	1	1	
16	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>					1			
17	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	6				30+	10	20	3
18	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		1	1	2	1	1	2	
19	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		5	1	2	2	2	3	
20	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	1	1			1	1		
21	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>		2		1				
23	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	1	1		4			2	
24	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	2	2	1		1	2	3	
25	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>			3					
26	Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>			3	1				
27	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>		2	1		1	2		
28	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1	1			8	12	15	
29	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	1		1	1	1	1	2	
30	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			H	H		H	H	
31	Western Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>					10		1	
32	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
33	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>					4			
34	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
35	Eurasian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	H	2			2	1	3	
36	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		6		10	40+	30+	10	
37	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>					10	50+		
38	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>					3			
39	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		1		6	30+	2	1	
40	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>		2		3	25+	20		
41	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>					1			
42	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		2			1			
43	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		1			4			
44	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1			2	6		8	
45	Curllew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>					1			
46	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>						2		
47	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>								3

	Common name	Scientific name	April							
			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
48	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>					6		2	
49	Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus audouinii</i>		3		2	1	6	1	
50	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	✓	✓	200+	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
51	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>					2			
52	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	2	2			2		4	
53	(Feral) Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia (feral)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
54	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
55	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>						2		
56	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1	4	2	1	2	2	2	1
57	Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>			H		H			
58	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>				H				
59	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
60	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>							4	
61	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		3		1		4	3	1
62	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>			H	H				
63	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		2		1		2	2	
64	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>			1				2	
65	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				2	1			
66	(Balearic) Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator badius</i>		1				1	2	
67	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>			6	11			3	
68	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>			1					
69	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>			8	1	2	1	H	
70	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>						6		
71	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>						2		
72	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
73	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		10		12				
74	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>						2	2	
75	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	H	2	3	6	10	4	4	
76	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				2	1			
77	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			1	1				
78	Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>			1					
79	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>					2			
80	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>					1			
81	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		2	H	4	4	2	4	
82	Balearic Warbler	<i>Sylvia balearica</i>		1						
83	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	2	10	2	4	6	4	4	
84	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>			2	1				
85	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			H	H				
86	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1							
87	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
88	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1	4	3	3		4	3	
89	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>		H	3	1	4	1	4	
90	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>		3	1	2				
91	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>							1	
92	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>			1	3				
93	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>							1	
94	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	2	10				20	15	
95	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
96	(Spanish Wagtail)	<i>Motacilla flava iberiae</i>	1	2		1	4		1	
97	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>			2					
98	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			40+	✓	1			

	Common name	Scientific name	April							
			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
99	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
100	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		5		2	2	4	4	
101	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>			6					
102	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	2	2	2	2		2	8	
103	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	2	8	1	4	4	4	8	2
104	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		4	H			30+		
105	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>					1			

Orchids

2	Mirror Orchid	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>	✓	✓						
3	Bug Orchid	<i>Anacamptis coriophora</i>							✓	
4	Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>					✓		✓	
5	Robust Marsh Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>							✓	
6	Small-flowered Tongue Orchid	<i>Serapias parviflora</i>	✓				✓		✓	
7	Violet Bird's-nest Orchid	<i>Limodorum abortivum</i>				✓				

Butterflies

1	Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>				✓			✓	
2	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>				✓			✓	
3	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	✓			✓	✓		✓	
4	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>				✓			✓	
5	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>				✓				
6	White sp.		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
7	Blue sp.								✓	

Dragonflies

1	Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>				✓			✓	
2	Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>							✓	
3	Southern (Blue) Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>					✓			

Reptiles and Amphibians

1	Iberian Water Frog	<i>Rana perezi</i>	H		H		H		1	
2	Red-eared Terrapin	<i>Trachemys scripta</i>					1		4	
3	Moorish Gecko	<i>Tarentola mauritanica</i>				2				

Mammals

1	Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>					✓	✓		
2	Common Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>		✓	✓		✓			
3	Common Noctule Bat	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>			✓		✓			
4	Bat sp.		✓						✓	
5	Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>				✓				

Insects

1	Violet Carpenter Bee	<i>Xylucopa violacea</i>	✓			✓				
2	Pine Processionary Moth Bivouac		✓		✓	✓			✓	
3	Egyptian Grasshopper	<i>Anacridium aegyptium</i>				✓				
4	A Chafer	<i>Oxythyrea funesta</i>				✓	✓		✓	
5	Marmalade Hoverfly	<i>Episyrphus batteatus</i>				✓				
6	A Cicada sp.						H			

	Common name	Scientific name	April							
			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
7	A Black Beetle sp.								✓	

Other sightings of note

1	Dwaft Fan Palm	<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	Hedgehog Plant	<i>Astragalus balearicus</i>			✓					
3	Balearic Sowbread (cyclamen)	<i>Cyclamen balearicum</i>			✓					
4	Common Asphodel	<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5	Balearic St. John's-wort	<i>Hypericum balearicum</i>			✓	✓				
6	Field Gladiolus	<i>Gladiolus italicus</i>				✓			✓	
7	Viper's-bugloss	<i>Echium vulgare</i>						✓		



European Serin & European Goldfinch bathing



Kentish Plover