

# Mallorca - A Beginners Birdwatching Tour

Naturetrek Tour Report

15 - 22 April 2017



Western Swamphen by Tony Jones



Common Firecrest by Chris Powell



Corn Bunting by Chris Powell



Wood Sandpiper by Tony Jones

Tour report compiled by Andy Bunten  
Images courtesy of Chris Powell & Tony Jones



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Tour participants: Andy Bunten & Cliff Waller (leaders) with thirteen Naturetrek clients

## Summary

Spring birding is always a treat, especially around the Mediterranean after a UK winter. We saw early breeders busy with young families to feed; we listened to many birds in full voice and the wonderful sight of migrants passing through on their way north – perhaps en route to the UK?

For the Mallorca Beginners Birdwatching tour 2017 the weather was very kind to us. It was generally warm, even hot, with excellent visibility, though we did experience some very strong and cold northerly winds.

In all, we recorded 116 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 a Common Nightingale sitting in the open by a pool near the Cuber dam, a fantastic Firecrest sighting in the same area, staggeringly good views of a host of waders at 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 so well together to make it a productive, enjoyable and rewarding week on a lovely island, and thanks to Brenda for her sterling navigational help.

## Day 1

Saturday 15th April

### UK - Palma airport – Pollença Bay & Hotel

Group members flying in from Gatwick were slightly delayed, but a more major issue was our car hire company. The bus we were due to take had defective back doors and in the end we had to change hire companies and pick up a minibus from an off-airport supplier. All of this took time so unfortunately we didn't leave the airport until around 3.30pm.

Our drive thereafter was untroubled with sightings of common and familiar birds such as Woodpigeon and House Sparrow, and more exotic such as Booted Eagle, Hoopoe and Zitting Cisticola.

We settled into our great hotel, collected our keys and then regathered very briefly at 6pm at the Triton Bar to talk through the plans for the forthcoming week and people's hopes for potential sightings.

After a delicious evening meal we walked the very short distance to the hide overlooking the S'Albufereta to the accompaniment of wheezing Greenfinches and staccato Cetti's Warblers. At the hide a pair of hunched Black-crowned Night Herons watched us from a nearby tree while a very frenetic Cetti's Warbler leapt to and fro in the tamarisk bushes singing mightily and cavorting in the open - unusual for this normally skulking bird. In a more distant pond we watched three elegant Black-winged Stilts stalk about looking for food in the gathering dusk. After a tiring day of travel, we all went back to our rooms for a good night's rest

## Day 2

Sunday 16th 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, particularly, many Greenfinches. The Cetti's Warbler was once again showing itself prominently from a nearby perch – probably the most photographed Cetti's Warbler in Spain! Marsh Harriers appeared in the distance and one female landed on a post giving excellent views through the telescope. On the rear pool a Purple Heron lurked in the reeds and through the telescope we could observe it, a Little Egret and a Black-winged Stilt demonstrating their very different feeding techniques.

After breakfast we set off on our first expedition - to the famous Bocquer Valley. 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 valley to begin our walk. Almost immediately we were seeing butterflies in the bright sunshine – beautiful Clouded Yellows and Painted Ladies.

We followed the track towards the finca located at the start of the path up the valley where we stopped to scan the farmland below. A Balearic Woodchat Shrike performed well landing on the top of nearby trees and more distant hedge lines. Most of the group were able to see it though the telescope but it was fairly mobile, remaining on its perch for a few seconds before diving down in search of insects or other small prey. Greenfinches were calling everywhere and a female Cirl Bunting appeared in a bush just below us. A little while later a female Redstart flew from a Walnut tree below us, while Serins called and flew from perch to perch. A splendid light phase Booted Eagle was spotted in the sky over the ridge giving us good views before we headed off up the valley.

The walk up the valley was beautiful in the strong sunshine, and the Sardinian Warblers and Wrens were in good voice as walked slowly towards our destination at the viewpoint overlooking the sea. Eight Ravens flew, croaking, overhead before we finally reached the welcome rocks where we could sit for a while and take some water. A nearby Balearic Orchid was being photographed while the rest of us scanned the rocks to try to locate the source of an unusual 'wickering' call coming from the back drop of impressive cliffs. As we scanned, a wonderful light phase Booted Eagle appeared and moved effortlessly along the cliff ridge giving all of us excellent views, and shortly after it was joined by a dark phase bird too. We never located the strange call but wondered if it may have been a young eagle.

Moving back down the path, we re-joined Cliff who had been trying to see if he could locate a Balearic Warbler. He had heard one and had had a very brief view so we all lined up quietly and waited. A bird was singing away in the depth of a bush but remained steadfastly hidden until it suddenly flicked out of the back of the bush and whipped away into another one, giving only a very brief glimpse for some of the group.

Back at the finca we heard a singing Cirl Bunting and were at last able to track it down on top of a distant bush. Closer to us a couple of Eurasian Crag Martins circled low over the finca buildings, giving us an excellent opportunity to see how these stocky brown martins differ from other hirundines. After an excellent morning's

walk, we returned to our vehicles and enjoyed our first Naturetrek picnic. Once replete, we loaded the vehicles and drove back to the hotel, where we paused for a comfort stop and to collect a few items.

We then drove to S'Albufereta Marsh. We walked a little way down a track and, as we were setting up telescopes to look at a wetland, we heard calling Stone-curlew. Adjusting our position, we were able to get some views though vegetation and heat haze impeded us somewhat. We saw Kentish Plover and Black-winged Stilt before we moved on to the area of slightly raised ground known, reasonably enough, as 'the mound'. On the way to the mound we found some beautiful deep purple Irises, a very neat little wasp's nest and a small stand of Mirror Orchids.

At the mound we had much better views of the Stone-curlews on an island in a wetland where Red-crested Pochards swam and Black-winged Stilts bickered away. Better views too of Kentish Plover scuttling along the island's shore and a Common Sandpiper bobbing away behind low vegetation.

Zitting Cisticolas were calling regularly and a nearby Corn Bunting was putting on a great show. Perched high on top of a tree, it sang lustily while we put a telescope onto it and got up very close and personal. This was a wonderful view of a bird all too rarely seen now in the UK. At the rear of the pond sharp eyes in the group spotted three Hoopoes flying along. Although they were distant, for those who could pick them out, their characteristic floppy flight was very evident.

Time was getting on now so we didn't have an opportunity to climb the Platforma des Grau, a new observation platform - that pleasure would come later. So after an excellent first full day in the field we returned to our hotel.

We reconvened for our evening meeting and did our first log call of birds we'd seen so far on the trip and looked at the plans for the next day. After dinner a few of us went to the hotel hide where we had our now customary view of the extrovert Cetti's Warbler as well as a Little Ringed Plover on the further pond and two wonderful Night Herons. To round off the show a fish leapt out of the water three acrobatic times, creating spectacular splashes. Bats, assumed to be Pipistrelles, flittered past us as we went back to our hotel rooms and got ready for the next day.

## Day 3

Monday 17th April

### Cuber Reservoir & Lluc Monastery

A few of us gathered at the hide for early morning birding. It was wonderful to see migration happening so visibly with swifts and swallows flying past the hide, scooping up insects as they passed on north. Further away Marsh Harriers also were also hunting for their food but in a much more relaxed way than the swallows and swifts. Our friendly Cetti's Warbler was at his normal perch and the Coots and Gadwall dabbled around in the pond immediately in front of 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, but we were still able to see a Booted Eagle and a glimpse of a vulture – probably Griffon Vulture. Climbing through the woods we were hearing lots of Chaffinches and Great and Blue Tits calling as we wound past.

We left the vehicles at Cuber car park and immediately Charlie's sharp eyes picked out a vulture over the ridge. It didn't stay long, but long enough to get telescopes on it and confirm it was our first Cinereous Vulture. We then negotiated the rather fearsome style and set off along the short path to the reservoir.

At the area of scrub at the base of the reservoir we heard the distant singing of what seemed like a Blue Rock Thrush but try as we might, we couldn't locate it. We did however have extremely fine views of a Griffon Vulture. The light on it was brilliant and showed to perfection the pale and dark contrasting wing pattern and a very white head and neck. We were searching for sight or sound of Moltoni's Warbler on one side of the track while others were looking at the very distinctive, and prolific, bivouacs of the Pine Processionary Moth. Ravens flew overhead as we settled onto the dam to see what we could find in the valley below. Clouded Yellow butterflies appeared and in the shade of a small bush by a pond a Robin was hopping to and fro feeding away. It was then joined by a Common Nightingale which remained out in the open so we could all get good views through the telescopes – not an everyday occurrence. A pair of Common Kestrels flew rapidly over the valley and a Common Redstart appeared briefly as we continued to scour the bushes for migrants.

A few of us then walked a little further over the dam to find the endemic Balearic Cyclamen before returning to re-join the others who were having the most fabulous views of a very active Firecrest. As we were looking down on the trees and bushes below, we all had incredible views of the top of this bird and were able to clearly see its distinctive head pattern. Probably the perfect view of a Firecrest for us all!

Walking back to our buses and a well-earned lunch, a Booted Eagle sailed overhead to bid us farewell from the reservoir. The birding wasn't over though as during lunch we had, together with the assembled throng of Common Chaffinches, a Red Kite flying across the ridge and then a couple of Red Crossbills feeding away on the top of a pine tree.

Somewhat late after our gentle stroll around the reservoir and a delightful, if leisurely, lunch on the picnic tables under the pine trees, we headed off to Lluç where we were further held up by a large bus and a myriad of cyclists, before arriving into our destination around 3.45pm. We decided to stay in this lovely monastery area until around 5pm and had a pleasant time wandering around the buildings and Jardin Botánico. Here we saw, and heard, many Iberian Water Frogs calling away from the cool ponds, accompanied by Eurasian Blackcaps singing lustily from the bushes. We finished our stay with a delicious coffee in the monastery café before once again negotiating the many perspiring cyclists on our way back to our hotel and another fantastic spread of food.

## Day 4

Tuesday 18th April

### S'Albufera Marsh

We were off to S'Albufera this morning and as we wanted to make sure we got a car parking space in the small car park, and to make the most of the day, we set off from the hotel at 8.15am. It was another beautiful day and, to the accompaniment of singing Cetti's Warblers, Common Nightingales and European Goldfinches, we quickly made our packed lunch from the ingredients that had been purchased the evening before. We then set off on the walk into this most wonderful of wetland sites.

We viewed the egret roost across the river and discussed the identification differences between the Western Cattle and Little Egrets. Black-crowned Night Herons were present too and it was most enjoyable to see these

three heron species so close together. A Sardinian Warbler was in extremely good voice and very showy in a tree as walked up the path and attracted the attention of the photographers in the party. A Eurasian Hoopoe that flew past was less obliging but still seen by most of the group.

We paused by the bridge over the stream which had large numbers of fish, Thick-lipped Mullet it was thought, and while we watched them a Purple Heron flew past silhouetted by the strong sunshine. Out in the pools in the reedbeds were Red-crested Pochard, Common Shelduck and scuttling Kentish Plover, all indicative of the huge richness of this marvellous place. A Eurasian Wren bounced up in a bush in front of us with its characteristic little cocked tail, only to be followed shortly afterwards by a Cetti's Warbler also showing a similar tail, like it was its bigger cousin.

We then grouped at the Information Centre and orientated ourselves with the large map sign before splitting the group into two to avoid overcrowding any one hide. Even before reaching the first Sa Roca hide we had a fantastic view of a Balearic Woodchat Shrike perched on top of a small tree just by the side of the footpath. Once in the hide we quickly found a great many more Common Shelduck, Red-crested Pochard and Kentish Plover, as well as excellent views of a male Western Marsh Harrier gliding over the reeds. Three Green Sandpipers were tucked behind some vegetation and Spanish Yellow Wagtails (the Iberian race) darted around the pool edges, particularly favouring being close to the white horses that stood away to our right. The horses proved a useful locational guide as a Western Swamphen (previously called Purple Gallinule) first tentatively and then very boldly emerged from the reeds to feed.

To the next hide and, once we'd worked out the door pushed and didn't pull, more excellent views of many bird species including very good opportunities to see the differences between Kentish and Little Ringed Plovers and more great views of Western Swamphen.

Leaving the hide and heading over a small bridge, we stopped to admire the Red-eared Terrapins sitting motionless in the water when a Little Bittern calmly stalked out in front of us and spent a good amount of time moving around in search of prey items. A bonus for the photographers in the party! Then on to a small reed-fringed pond where a Little Grebe was calling but being drowned out by a Great Reed Warbler's amazingly loud 'jagging' song. In a little while our singer appeared and even stayed long enough to enable us to get the telescope onto it.

An excellent end to our morning and we repaired back to the Information Centre to meet the other half of our group, have lunch and hope that the person appointed to carry the chocolate hadn't been tempted half way round! We compared notes with the other half of our group who had also had a splendid morning and, although envious of our Little Bittern, had had close up views of Red-knobbed Coot that the first group hadn't managed yet (but did later).

For the afternoon we re-split into our two groups and headed off to another set of hides –the Bishop Hides. The further hide was extremely productive with 20 plus Pied Avocets, including some young chicks with tiny upturned bills, sweeping away through the water in approved fashion. Black-winged Stilts marched around and called anxiously while sharp eyes spotted a beautiful male Garganey against the further shore. A Water Rail appeared briefly before disappearing into the marsh next to a probing Common Snipe, but four Common Terns

were far more static, perched on a small island in front of us and enabling some discussion about tern identification features.

We then moved on to the next hide from where the mass of birds both in numbers and species richness truly took our breath away. It was difficult to know where to look first. Common Pochard and three Marbled Teal were at the rear of the pool with the more usual Common Shelduck. The Marbled Teal were a very exciting find and we studied these closely through the telescopes. A Collared Pratincole was perched on a nearby small island and also gave excellent views. A flock of Whiskered Terns dashed past quickly. However it was the profusion of waders that really grabbed our attention. There were large numbers of splendid dark, speckled Spotted Redshanks looking wonderfully smart; Little Ringed Plovers and a Ringed Plover were present; Black-winged Stilts and Pied Avocets were feeding away and there were Common Greenshanks with their subtly upturned beaks. Right in front of the hide a profusion of Wood Sandpipers dashed around while Little Stint and Temminck's Stint appeared feeding close together enabling perfect opportunities to compare and contrast. Wader heaven!

We finally left this fantastic nature reserve around 5pm and made our way back to the hotel for more fantastic food and the usual species round up and re-living of an incredibly good day.

## Day 5

Wednesday 19th April

### Formentor Peninsula and S'Albufereta Marsh

A few of us gathered at the hotel hide for some early birdwatching which was relatively quiet this morning. Our usual Cetti's Warbler performed away as always and a few Barn Swallows, perhaps held up by the cool wind that was building up, dashed low over the marshes. On the pool there were Coots and a Common Sandpiper was bobbing along the shores, while both male and female Western Marsh Harriers drifted over distant reedbeds.

After breakfast we set off towards Puerto Pollença along the coast road. We made our daily stop for lunch 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.

Almost immediately we saw a Peregrine Falcon hanging, almost directly above us, in the strong northerly wind. It did some swooping and diving which made us wonder if we were going to see a kill, but eventually it moved away to the other side of the peninsular. We waited and watched hoping that the wind might blow in the shearwaters we were hoping to see, but for some while nothing appeared other than the regular Yellow-legged Gulls. Then all of a sudden a group of mixed seabirds, gulls and shearwaters appeared from the east around the tip of the Cap. They were clearly all feeding on something and provided us with pretty good views, enabling the differences between Scopoli's and Balearic Shearwaters to be determined. The flocks of shearwaters remained around for some time and all of the group were able to use the telescopes and see these intriguing, quintessentially marine, birds well.

We indulged ourselves with a toilet break and cups of coffee at the café before heading back west and away from the, by now, very crowded car park. After a few miles of twisty-turny roads full of cyclists, we pulled in to Casa Vellas, a little patch of agricultural land in this otherwise pine forested and limestone peninsula. Here we settled

for the next couple of hours and marvelled at the spectacle of migration which we were witnessing. Various different birds appeared, perched on one of the sea of posts used to hold the vines, then dropped back down to earth again: a Whinchat on one, a beautiful male Common Redstart on another, a Pied Flycatcher on yet another. The difficulty was getting everyone to see the birds before they suddenly vanished. It was like a sort of fairground game. Fortunately we quickly became adept at picking up one another's directions and most people were able to find these elusive travelling birds. One of the earliest to appear was a wonderfully smart Black-eared Wheatear and one of the easiest to see was a Blue Rock Thrush as it abandoned the posts and perched on a corrugated iron roof where a telescope could be put onto it. Other birds were migrating too of course and two Western Marsh Harriers were spotted flying high over the nearby ridge – an unlikely habitat for these birds. More Pied Flycatchers were appearing on either side of the road and a male Common Redstart stayed put long enough for many of the group to get a very good view.

This was an excellent site and we decided to lunch here to the accompaniment of loudly calling Red Crossbills and of tinkling European Serins. A distant Common Kestrel tantalised us with possibilities of being a Lesser Kestrel but the evidence was mixed and we settled for the commoner of the two species.

This had been a magical place of movement and colour and we left after our lunch to do battle with the buses and cyclists. We had thoughts of visiting the Mirador de Albercutx but with it being Easter it was absolutely packed and so we made our way back towards the hotel for a quick toilet stop before moving to another area of S'Albufereta.

Just a little way north of our hotel was Al Prat de Can Cullarassa, an area which had been restored in 2009/10 and at a cost of 372,000 euros. Here walked along a scrub and pool-lined path and used the viewing screens to look over a couple of nice pools. The pools held Little Ringed Plover and Black-winged Stilt as well as Spanish Yellow Wagtails which darted around catching insects. Two Red Kites put on a good show for us but best of all were two splendid male Montagu's Harriers quartering land between us and a small hill. We enjoyed wonderful views of these most elegant of harriers. A Purple Heron flew past and some caught a glimpse of a Water Rail disappearing quickly into the vegetation. The wind was still quite strong but this was clearly an excellent area for butterflies and we saw Clouded Yellow, Red Admiral and Wall Brown.

Back at the hotel we met for our daily meeting before the usual amazingly good dinner. The wind was still very strong and while we had originally intended to go out to the wooded slopes below Mount Sant Marti to see if we could find Eurasian Scops Owl, we decided it was just too windy and we'd have to console ourselves with visiting the buffet's pudding section again.

## Day 6

Thursday 20th April

### South Felanitx farmland, Salinas de Levante and South Mallorca

Another windy and decidedly cool morning probably wisely kept many in their comfortable hotel rooms this morning, as it was small but select group who visited the hide in the early morning. Despite the conditions we had some excellent views of our familiar Cetti's Warbler, a nice female Sardinian Warbler right in front of the hide and a Willow Warbler creeping through the Tamarisk bushes. Stilts, harriers and Barn Swallows were also present to reward our diligence.

After the, now customary, amazing breakfast we headed off on our day trip to the south of the island. Our first stop was a 'new' supermarket in Alcudia where we quickly got the provisions for our picnic lunch and then we headed off with Brenda once again doing a splendid navigational role to ensure we didn't lose our following bus. We headed south via Santa Margalida and Manacor, and then stopped at Es Cruce service area for a comfort break and a quick coffee. In the car park near the service station we had Common Swift and Barn Swallow zooming around us with Zitting Cisticola calling away and a brace of Corn Buntings sitting plumply in a bush ahead of us.

On leaving the highly charismatic service area we entered some very rural roads in the centre of the island to look for farmland birds. Driving slowly along, we came across a Red-legged Partridge before we stopped at the five kilometre marker to try to get a good view of any larks or other farmland birds that may be around. The second coach had looked into a newly cut field just behind where we'd stopped and had noticed some good visible birds on the ground. After having a really good look at some splendid Stonechats perched on a post and wire fence, we walked the few yards back to the cut field to look for our main 'quarry' species – Thekla and Short-toed Larks.

We could hear the Short-toed Larks singing lustily in their display flights despite the strong, cold wind and quickly found a nearby Thekla Lark which we able to get in the telescope so everyone could get a view of this very special bird. Soon after, Short-toed Larks were also visible on the ground and also 'scopeable' -an excellent opportunity to compare these lovely little birds. Soon afterwards a much bigger bird, a Red Kite, came past giving breathtakingly beautiful views of its plumage in the sun.

We drove further south after our stop in central Mallorca, reaching the first area of salt pans and marshes in late morning/early afternoon. Here, despite the strong, cold wind we still saw quite a few birds. The marshy pools held our first Common Redshank, some Green Sandpipers as well as more familiar Wood Sandpipers and a number of Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and two Greenshanks. Most noticeable though were the hirundines – House Martins, Sand Martins and Barn Swallows - as well as Common Swifts flying low and obviously feeding above the marshes and reeds.

We moved on a little further to find a place to stop and have lunch that overlooked the salt pans. Unfortunately two of groups' bags had gone missing and in an attempt to find them again, one vehicle returned to the central Mallorca farmland site, leaving the rest of the group to have lunch and watch the waders, including Pied Avocets galore, in the salt pans. Sadly our mission was not successful and by the time we returned, it was time to head down to the most southerly part of the island near the lighthouse at Cap de Salinas. There were several Audouin's Gulls, one of which was keen to take the leftover bread from our picnic and provide a good photographic opportunity, though it was pointed out that the size of one piece of bread provided made the swallowing gull look like it had a goitre. We hoped to get good views of shearwaters here and we were not disappointed, with very close and clear views of both Scopoli's and Balearic Shearwaters.

All too soon it was time to return to the vehicles and start the drive back to Pollença Bay, where we arrived at around 6.30pm and so headed more or less straight into the arduous task of trying to make a dent in the huge dinner buffet.

## Day 7

Friday 21st April

### S'Albufera Marsh (S'Illot and Depudora S'Illot); eve Mount Sant Marti

The early morning hotel hide group met on another beautiful sunny day and this time the wind had dropped, so it felt warmer too. Water Rail was squealing from its nearby hiding place and five Gadwalls were seen both in the pond and flying around calling excitedly. Our Cetti's Warbler was doing its usual thing and there were a lot more Common Swifts around, at least 50, which we assumed were making up for the cold northerly winds of the previous day.

Swiftly picking up our picnic provisions, we continued to S'Illot, the old salt pans, and squeezed into a small parking place there. The ponds held a number of birds including three Marbled Ducks which gave us a good opportunity to have a really good look at these rare birds. Also close were a number of Little Ringed Plovers which were obligingly still and allowed excellent views through the telescopes, and a short 'masterclass' on the difference between these and their cousins: Kentish and Ringed Plovers. These pools were also good for the very colourful Red-crested Pochards with their small ducklings and, of course, Common Shelduck. Smaller birds were in evidence as well with a very loud Great Reed Warbler belting away in nearby reeds and lots of Barn Swallows and Sand Martins swooping low over the water. A very distant falcon circling towards the mountains was identified as a Peregrine Falcon, while much closer to home a very fine and robust specimen of a Bee Orchid was found just by the footpath. As we walked back down the track a Western Osprey appeared and a Western Yellow Wagtail also landed briefly on the track in front of us.

Back at the vehicles, we drove round to the rear of the reserve and down the lane leading to the Depudora (Water Works). We drove slowly down hoping to see signs of European Bee-eater but sadly none seemed to have arrived yet. We did see Pied Flycatchers, Common Redstart and some lovely Swallowtail butterflies, and the first bus was rewarded with a lovely Turtle Dove on the track in front of us.

From Son Bosc observation platform we checked the ponds at the Depudora. Sightings included four Whiskered Terns, Common and Red-crested Pochards, Common Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover and numerous Red-eared Terrapins lining the stone sides. In the slightly more distant ponds we saw a wonderful male Garganey. Little Ringed Plovers were scuttling around the edge of the near pond again giving good opportunities to fix in our minds the difference between these and the other 'ringed' plovers. Two Marbled Ducks appeared in the near pond, a Purple Heron flew by, as did two Cattle Egrets and a Hoopoe. Birds everywhere!

As we had our lunch we were entertained by a Zitting Cisticola which clearly had a nest nearby and was busily going to and fro with beak-fulls of food. After lunch a last scan from the platform was rewarded with a pair of Tufted Ducks, four Northern Shovelers and a rather elusive Ferruginous Duck – definitely a good bird to find.

A slow drive back down the track enabled us to find a Tawny Pipit at last, trotting along a rough track in a nearby field. Then it was a fairly early return to the hotel to enable some pre-packing to be done and to gather our strength for another onslaught onto the mouth-watering buffet.

We went through our list and sightings for the last time and found we'd seen 116 species – a very commendable total. However as we shared our highlights of the week it was clear that it was the quality, not quantity that mattered and it wonderful to hear those magical little moments that made each of our holidays so special.

The wind had dropped considerably today so we decided to go to the Mount Sant Marti site to see if we could find Scops Owl. At 8.15pm we headed out but it was not to be a successful trip. The second bus lost track of us and we couldn't raise them on the walkie-talkie. So after waiting a while one bus made the trip up the track. It was a beautiful site (despite a rather noisy camp going on there) and although we did hear the eerie sounds of calling Stone-curlews, we didn't hear a Scops Owl and so returned home around 9.45pm.

## Day 8

Saturday 22nd April

### S'Albufereta and Puerto Pollena to Palma Airport

We awoke to yet another beautiful and sunny day. Andy had been up early to say goodbye to our two early leavers who had set off on the Transfer Coach to the airport at 6.15am. Then a few of us headed to the hotel hide for one last look out over the marsh. We were greeted by our usual friends: the extrovert Cetti's Warbler, Black-crowned Night Heron, Coot and Gadwall in the near pond and Black-winged Stilt in the more distant pond.

After breakfast we had time for one last bit of birding so we went to the southern S'Albufereta and climbed up the Platforma des Grau, that we didn't have time to go up on our last visit. From here we had a wonderful view of the marshes and could truly appreciate their extent. Swifts, Barn Swallows and Sand Martins flew past and gave an excellent chance to talk about how to best to identify these birds which, when you're starting out birding, can be frustratingly hard to differentiate.

In pools in front of us we had good views of Great Egret and Purple Heron as well a large and rather imposing looking dog that gradually made its way through the reeds and put the herons up. The bushes and fences below provided perches for a very vociferous Sardinian Warbler and for beautiful European Stonechats. We made our way to the mound from where we saw our last pale phase Booted Eagle, Stone-curlew on the island and a few Little Egrets including one which was a most odd looking dirty grey individual. Stilts and Kentish Plovers were once again on the island and a final Western Swamphen was spotted in the reeds. However perhaps the star turn was a great Corn Bunting which sang clearly and consistently while perched on top of a tree – another bonus for the photographers and an excellent way to remember the quality of the sightings we'd had.

A final early lunch was taken before we went back to the hotel to pack the bags into the vehicles and head off south to the airport. The drive was uneventful and at the airport goodbyes were said to Cliff and Andy who were staying to lead another group. Then everyone headed off to their various queues for their flights back to the UK, where another Naturetrek adventure ended. Cliff and Andy would like to thank the group for their patience while sorting out the bus matters at the beginning of the trip and for being so friendly, helpful and a pleasure to be with for a wonderful holiday.

## Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!

## Species Lists

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

	Common name	Scientific name	APRIL							
			15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		1		12		30	20	
2	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	2	6	2	10	3	2	20	5
3	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>				1			4	
5	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>				2			5	
6	Marbled Duck	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>				5			5	
7	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>		3		30+			15	
8	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>				1			12	
9	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>							2	
10	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>							1	
11	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>						8		
12	Scopoli's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>					250	50+		
13	Balearic Shearwater	<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>					30	20		
14	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>				1			2	
15	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>				1				
16	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	2	1	1	12+				1
17	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>				30		8	12	
18	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2	1	1	2				1
19	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		1	1	4	1	1	3	1
20	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	1	1	2					1
21	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	8	✓	8	20	20+	
22	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>				4	4			
23	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		2	1	1			1	2
24	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>					1		4	
25	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>			3					
26	Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>			3					
27	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>	1	3	4					1
28	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		4	2	4	4	5	10	
29	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>					2			
30	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>			1		4	4	1	
31	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>					1			
32	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			H	1	1		H	
33	Western Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>				4				1
34	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓	✓	6	10	10	10	12	
35	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>				6				
36	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
37	Eurasian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicanus</i>		4		H		H		
38	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	3	15	3	30+	6	40	25	
39	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>				20+		150		
40	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>				2				
41	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		1		6	2		5	
42	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>		3		20		12		4
43	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>				4				2
44	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>				20				
45	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>						4		
46	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>				2		2		

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47	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>				4		2		
48	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		1		15+		4	3	
49	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		1	1	8	3	2	8	
50	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>				5				
51	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>				3				
52	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>				1				
53	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>							14	
54	Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus audouinii</i>	2	1			1	4	1	
55	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>				6		1	3	2
57	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>				30				
58	(Feral) Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia (feral)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
59	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	20	✓	2	✓	20	20
60	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>						4	1	
61	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	8	6	2	10	10	6
62	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>		10	8	10	6	200	100+	50+
63	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>				1		1		
64	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>		H						
65	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	1	3		1		1	1	
66	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>						3		
67	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	2	4	3		3	8	3	1
68	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>						1		
69	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>					2		1	
70	(Balearic) Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator badius</i>		2		1				
71	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		20	10		3	2	2	
72	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>			10					
73	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>			12	2	2	2	H	2
74	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>						3		
75	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>						4		
76	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>						2	20	10
77	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		4	20	6	20	30+	80	20
78	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		2						
79	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>			1			6	8	
80	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	3	3	2	10	6	2	3	2
81	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				2	1	1		
82	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>				H				H
83	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>				1			1	
84	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>				1				
85	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>				2				
86	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	H	4	H	1	H	1	2	2
87	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		3	2				H	
88	Balearic Warbler	<i>Sylvia balearica</i>		1						
89	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	2	✓	6	6	4	6	5	3
90	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>			2					
91	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H	1	1				
92	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>						8	1	
93	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	20+	5	4	10+	10	10
94	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			2	1				
95	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>			1	1		1	H	H
96	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>					6		1	
97	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>		1			3		1	

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			15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
98	Common Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>								
99	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>			H		1			
100	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>					2			
101	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		5	1	1		12	8	2
102	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>					2			
103	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>					1			
104	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
105	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		1						
106	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>								1
	(Spanish Wagtail)	<i>Motacilla flava iberiae</i>		2		3	26	12	1	2
107	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>							1	
108	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			30		6			
109	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	2	10	H	8	6
110	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		6		2		6		3
111	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>			2		6			
112	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	12	10	10	6	8	6
113	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>		6	10	5	10	10	10	
114	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		2	H			10	H	1
115	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>		1						

### Butterflies

1	Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>		2		1			2	1
2	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>		✓	✓		✓	2	4	
3	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>			✓					
4	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		✓	✓			1	3	
5	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>					✓			
6	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		✓			✓		3	
7	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>				1	✓		✓	
8	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		✓				1	1	
9	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>			✓	1			✓	
10	Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>			✓	1	✓		1	
11	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		✓						
12	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>		✓	✓					

### Dragonflies

1	Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>				3	3		1	
2	Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>							1	
3	Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>							1	
4	Broad Scarlet	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>				1				
<b>Reptiles and Amphibians</b>										
1	Iberian Water Frog	<i>Rana perezi</i>			12	✓				
2	Red-eared Terrapin	<i>Trechemys scripta</i>				6			12	
3	Common Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis muralis</i>	1							

### Mammals

1	Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>						1	✓	
2	Common Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	✓	✓					✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	APRIL						
			15	16	17	18	19	20	21

## Insects

1	Dung Beetle	<i>subfamily Scarabaeina</i>		1						1
2	Grasshopper sp				1		1			
3	Rose Chafer	<i>Macrodactylus subspinosus</i>					1			
4	Humming-bird Hawk-moth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>						2		
5	Digger Wasp sp	<i>family Crabronidae</i>							2	

## Fishes

1	Thick-lipped Mullet	<i>Chelon labrosus</i>			✓					
2	Common Carp	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>			2					
3	Pike	<i>Esox lucius</i>			1					

## Orchids

1	Mirror Orchid	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>		✓						
2	Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>							✓	
3	Balearic Orchid	<i>Ophrys balearica</i>		✓						

## Other Flora

1	Dwaft Fan Palm	<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>		✓						
2	Hedgehog Plant	<i>Astragalus balearicus</i>		✓	✓					
3	Balearic Sowbread (cyclamen)	<i>Cyclamen balearicum</i>			✓					
4	Asphodel	<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>		✓						
5	Field Gladiolus	<i>Gladiolus italicus</i>		✓						
6	Tassel Hyacinth	<i>Leopoldia comosa</i>		✓						

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Swallowtail by Chris Powell



Sardinian Warbler by Tony Jones