Go Slow in Mallorca

Naturetrek Tour Report

17th – 24th September 2025



Mediterranean Flycatcher



Audouin's Gull



Western Swamphen



Violet Dropwing

Tour report by Simon Breeze



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: Dave Jackson and Simon Breeze (leaders) with 12 Naturetrek clients

Summary

The Mediterranean central Balearic island of Mallorca, comprising an impressive mountain range and inland wetlands all surrounded by warm coastal waters, is a beautiful, relaxing and pleasant location to visit in early autumn. The group had hot weather for much of the week, with some welcome cooler but still warm conditions towards the end of the trip. Wildlife comprised a diverse mix of birds and other wildlife, which kept the group entertained and interested. Our hotel, just south of Port de Pollença in the north-east of the island, was both comfortable and well-situated, with the sea on one side and the Albufereta marsh on the other, and within a short drive of all the top birding, wildlife and scenic sites. Highlights for the week included excellent views of both Cinereous and Griffon Vultures, multiple Eleonora's Falcons, the rare Marbled Duck, and close views of Little Bittern, Western Swamphen, Blue Rock Thrush, Greater Flamingo, and a wealth of wading birds and interesting insects and plants.

Day 1

Wednesday 17th September

Port Blue Resort

The group made their way from their respective airports and were met by Dave and Simon at Palma airport arrivals, where we began our journey across the island to the north-east corner, where we checked into the hotel: PortBlue Club Pollentia Resort & Spa, nestled between Pollença Bay and the S'Albufereta Nature Reserve. Everyone checked into their rooms and enjoyed some time to rest and relax after a long journey. The group was informed about the areas to explore by foot in close proximity to the hotel, including the hotel's private hide looking out over S'Albufereta Nature Reserve, as well as the beach. Birds easily heard around the hotel included Cetti's and Sardinian Warblers, Water Rail and Spotted Flycatcher.

That evening we met up for a pre-dinner drink to discuss plans for the week ahead, before enjoying our first taste of the all-you-can-eat buffet restaurant, which proved popular throughout the week, serving a varied mix of delicious local and international food.

Day 2

Thursday 18th September

Maristany, Son Bosc – Depuradora & Llacuna de Sa Bacarassa

The group enjoyed a leisurely breakfast at around dawn (7.30am), before meeting at the buses to head off for our first excursion. After purchasing lunch from a local supermarket, the group made a leisurely drive down to Maristany, an area of pools and reeds on the edge of Alcudia. From our convenient parking spot between a lake and pools, we had close views of Black-winged Stilt, Glossy Ibis, Cattle and Little Egrets, along with Kentish, Little Ringed and Ringed Plovers. We soon spotted a couple of Mallorca specialities: a small group of Marbled Ducks and our first Western Swamphen of the week at the back of the pools. Masses of dragonflies patrolled the pools, with Lesser Emperor in good numbers, while a colony of French Paper Wasps was spotted at a nest on a cactus in a neighbouring garden.

We next travelled on to an area on the south side of Albufera marshes, known as Depuradora, and a viewing tower adjacent to a series of settlement pools. With both close and far-reaching views, sightings that soon followed included a Woodchat Shrike on a fenceline below, a Booted Eagle stooping to avoid being mobbed by a Kestrel, and a Zitting Cisticola in front of the buses as we ate our lunch. Invertebrates spotted included Cleopatra and Clouded Yellow butterflies, and an impressive Wasp Spider.

We returned to the hotel as the temperatures rose, and the group were given the opportunity to relax and cool down in the shade or in the pool. In the late afternoon some of the group went to visit a hide at Llacuna de Sa Bacarassa, on the south edge of the s'Albufereta marshes, where highlights included Greater Flamingo, along with Wood and Green Sandpipers and a pair of Kestrels.

A small number joined Simon for an evening bat stroll to the hotel hide using a bat detector, before setting up a moth trap. Soprano Pipistrelles were seen in good numbers flying around the hotel's ponds, with the detector also picking up Nathusius's Pipistrelle and Common Noctule.

Day 3

Friday 19th September

Cuber Reservoir & Lluc Monastery

After a wholesome breakfast, a selection of moths from the previous night's trapping was shown to the group, with highlights including Vestal, Small Marbled, and Crescent Dart. The buses then made their way up through the Serra de Tramuntana mountain range towards Cuber Reservoir, roughly an hour away. A brief stop at a scenic viewpoint gave stunning views along the mountain range and out to sea, while our first Crag Martins of the trip soared overhead. At the reservoir, with its turquoise waters and wooded hillsides, the options were to walk the circular path around the water, or take a slower walk taking in the wildlife at a more leisurely pace towards the dam wall.

Along the footpath, the group enjoyed views of Griffon and Cinereous Vulture up above the crags, some birds flying close to enable side-by-side comparison of size and wing structure. An Eleonora's Falcon was spotted flying along the reservoir edge, while Crossbills were heard continuously and briefly seen among the Aleppo Pines bordering the footpath. Good views of Sardinian Warbler were also had, while accommodating Violet Dropwing dragonflies perched on overhanging vegetation along the path.

Lunch was taken in the shade of the grounds of Lluc Monastery, roughly thirty minutes back along the mountain road. Here, the group enjoyed options to relax in a local café, in the shade of an arboretum, or to take a gentle but steep stroll among the monastery's botanic gardens, where a nice variety of insects was seen, including Short-tailed Blue, Keeled Skimmer, Violet Carpenter Bee and Speckled Wood, along with Firecrest and Iberian Water Frogs in the arboretum.

Arriving back at the hotel in the late afternoon, the group spent the rest of the day at leisure, before meeting for drinks and a run through of the day's checklist, and another excellent dinner.

Day 4

Saturday 20th September

S'Albufera Natural Park

Today we headed towards the birding jewel in Mallorca's wildlife crown: s'Albufera marsh. We strolled down to the main reception along the track bordered by the Canal de Siurana to the north, and an extensive marsh and reedbed to the south. Along the track we soon picked up several perching Night Herons and a stunning adult Little Bittern, while large fish continuously jumped from the canal. Further along, closer to the centre, we enjoyed fantastic close views of a Western Swamphen in a drainage channel, causally hunting insects on the reeds' edge.

At the visitor centre, the group divided to enable views from the various hides, some closer and some a little further away. Among the species seen from the hides, highlights included Caspian and Whiskered Terns, Curlew Sandpiper, an Osprey on a perching post, Spotted Redshank, and a diving Black-necked Grebe, while among the more common and numerous species, views of Great Flamingo, Black-winged Stilt and Glossy Ibis were enjoyed.

After lunch, seeking shelter within a covered area following what had been a very hot and slightly sticky morning in the hides, roughly half the group returned back to hotel to escape the heat, while half stayed and visited different hides. A juvenile Little Bittern was picked up, along with a variety of plovers including Ringed, Little Ringed and Kentish, and we had more great views of up to four more Western Swamphens. The group that stayed on popped into Maristany on the way back to the hotel, seeing similar birds compared to the last visit, plus another Curlew Sandpiper.

Day 5

Sunday 21st September

Son Real & s'Illot

The heat experienced throughout the week continued today; a number of group members opted to stay at the hotel for cooler and more relaxed conditions. Arriving at Son Real, approximately thirty minutes south of the hotel and halfway along the edge of Alcudia Bay, we made a hot stroll through the heathland, scrub and scattered pines towards the coast. Along the way, we picked up Mediterranean Flycatcher, Pied Flycatcher, Crossbill and Hoopoe, had great views of a Wryneck perched on a bare tree, and enjoyed continuous passes by Two-tailed Pasha butterflies. Two Hermann's Tortoise were spotted among the low vegetation, one casually strolling around us. At the beach, we had good views of Audouin's Gull, one of which with had a colour ring (we are investigating the bird's origin), with a small inshore island hosting Whimbrel, Turnstone, and several scattered Kentish Plovers. A gentle stroll along the shoreline saw Speckled Crimson moth, along with Sea Daffodil and Olive-leaved Sea-Lavender in flower.

After another lunch sheltering from the midday sun, the group made a brief stop at some disused settlement pools at S'Illot, on the edge of Albufera marsh. Although hot, the stop provide fruitful, as a host of waders was feeding among the sediment, including Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Green, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Sanderling, Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, and Ringed, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers. The group then returned to the hotel for time to relax, to visit the hotel hide, or to swim, before another pleasant meal.

Day 6

Monday 22nd September

Albercuxt, Port de Pollenca & Bocquer valley

The group woke to a shift in the weather, with fog shrouding the bay and marsh surrounding the hotel. Heavy rain fell as we made our way up the mountain roads surrounding Formentor. Arriving at the parking space below Albercitx watchtower, the rain thankfully ceased, to reveal shafts of lights piercing through the clouds, illuminating the sea across Badia de Pollença. As the sky continued to clear, we began to get views of Eleonora's Falcon high overhead, along with brief glimpse of Sardinian Warbler, crowned by great views of female/juvenile Blue Rock Thrush.

Back down the mountain, we made a short stopover in Port de Pollença pocket park at the foot of the valley, where we saw and enjoyed great views of two Hoopoes. Slowly strolling around the park, we were then treated to views of Mediterranean Flycatchers, some perching up just in front of the group.

Travelling back up the hillside, we made our way to the close by Bocquer Valley, where we parked at the foot of the valley and began our walk through the mosaic of scrub, heath and boulders strewn hillside. Half the group remained at the foot of the valley, opting for a shorter walk, while the remainder continued up the valley to a view of the sea. Highlights of the stroll included a juvenile Western Black-eared Wheatear, along with two Common Redstarts, Eleonora's Falcon and Crag Martin high up above the peaks, while on the way back Paul spotted a stunning male Blue Rock Thrush, with another spotted almost instantly further along.

After travelling back to the hotel and some rest time, some of the group opted for a short trip back to Maristany to see if any additional species had arrived since the last visit. A similar range of species was observed, with the addition of a Coscoroba Swan, a South American species! It was not a wild bird... In the evening, just before dinner, some of the group met at the hotel hide where Purple Heron, Osprey and Marsh Harrier, among some of the commoner species of the marsh, were seen.

Day 7

Tuesday 23rd September

S'Albufera Natural Park & S'Illot

Following another leisurely and enjoyable breakfast, moths from a trap set the night before were shown to the group just before heading off for the day. A few of the more 'showy' species included Discrete Chaperon, Striped Hawk-moth, Olive-tree Pearl and Tree-lichen Beauty.

On our last full day of the tour, we returned to the excellent s'Albufera marshes. On the way down the entrance track we enjoyed excellent views of Little Bittern and Night Heron once more. Again, the group divided between the different hides either side of the visitor centre, where a similar mixture of birds was enjoyed, with the addition of Avocet, a species that hadn't been seen so far on the trip, in the pools to the north. At the pools south of the visitor centre, highlights included Garganey and Purple Heron.

Heavy rain swept in after lunch, which the group managed to avoid, half making it back to the bus in time to go back safely to the hotel; the other half taking shelter in one of the hides. Before heading back to the hotel to relax

for the afternoon and begin packing for the trip home, the group that stayed on at s'Albufera undertook another short trip to the settlement pools at s'Illot, which resulted in a similarly impressive number of waders to the last trip, with the addition of Snipe and Spotted Redshank.

That evening, final visits to the hotel hide were enjoyed by some, before our last culinary 'indulgences' at the hotel restaurant.

Day 8

Wednesday 24th September

Return to the UK

With plans in place to check out and make a start driving back to the airport around 10.30am, some of the group enjoyed last views of wildlife around Albufereta marsh and Pollensa bay. There were close views of a Water Rail by the hotel hide, along with distant views of Cattle and Little Egrets and Greater Flamingo, while along the shoreline others enjoyed final views of the ever faithful foraging Sanderling, Kentish Plover and Audouin's Gull.

With a number of different flights back to the UK, the group said their farewells at the drop-off area close to departure, and began their trips home.

With fantastic wildlife, enjoying great views of a range of birds, insects and plants, along with superb landscapes and scenery, comfortable accommodation, delicious food and great company, it had been a highly enjoyable week.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek email list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers.

naturetrek.co.uk/e-newsletter-signup



Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, Bluesky and X and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers, exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays



facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays



naturetrek.bsky.social

<u>x.com/naturetrektours</u> (formerly Twitter)

Species lists

Birds

I=Introduced						er 202		1	
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Coscoroba Swan - I	Coscoroba coscoroba						✓		
Black Swan - I	Cygnus atratus		✓						
Common Shelduck	Tadorna tadorna				✓	✓		✓	
Garganey	Spatula querquedula							✓	
Northern Shoveler	Spatula clypeata		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Gadwall	Mareca strepera		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Teal	Anas crecca							✓	
Marbled Duck	Marmaronetta angustirostris		✓		✓				
Common Pochard	Aythya ferina		✓					✓	
Common Swift	Apus apus		✓	✓					
Feral Rock Dove	Columba livia		√	✓					
Common Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus	✓	√	✓	✓	√	√	✓	✓
Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto		√		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Water Rail	Rallus aquaticus	✓	√	√	√	√	✓	√	✓
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	✓	√	✓	✓	√	✓	√	✓
Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra	✓	√	√	√	✓	✓	√	✓
Western Swamphen	Porphyrio porphyrio		√		√		✓	√	
Little Grebe	Tachybaptus ruficollis		√				✓		
Great Crested Grebe	Podiceps cristatus							√	
Black-necked Grebe	Podiceps nigricollis				√			√	
Greater Flamingo	Phoenicopterus roseus		√		√	√	✓	√	
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Haematopus ostralegus					✓			
Black-winged Stilt	Himantopus himantopus		√		√	√	√	√	
Pied Avocet	Recurvirostra avosetta							√	
Common Ringed Plover	Charadrius hiaticula		√		√	√	√	√	
Little Ringed Plover	Charadrius dubius		√		√	√		√	
Kentish Plover	Anarhynchus alexandrinus		√		√	√	√	√	
Eurasian Whimbrel	Numenius phaeopus					√			
Bar-tailed Godwit	Limosa lapponica					√		√	
Common Snipe	Gallinago gallinago							√	
Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos		√			√	√	√	
Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus		√		√	✓	✓	✓	
Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola		✓			✓	√	√	
Spotted Redshank	Tringa erythropus				√			✓	
Common Greenshank	Tringa nebularia		√		✓	√	√	✓	
Ruddy Turnstone	Arenaria interpres				√				
Ruff	Calidris pugnax					√		√	
Curlew Sandpiper	Calidris ferruginea				√	√		√	
Sanderling	Calidris alba		√	√	✓	✓	√	✓	
Dunlin	Calidris alpina		·	-	√	√		√	
Caspian Tern	Hydroprogne caspia				√	<u> </u>			

I=Introduced				Se	ptemb	er 202	25		
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Whiskered Tern	Chlidonias hybrida				✓				
Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus		✓		✓	√	✓	✓	
Audouin's Gull	Ichthyaetus audouinii	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Yellow-legged Gull	Larus michahellis				√	✓	√	√	
Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo				√	√			
European Shag	Gulosus aristotelis					✓		√	
Glossy Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus		✓		√	✓	✓	√	
Little Bittern	Botaurus minutus				√			√	
Black-crowned Night Heron	Nycticorax nycticorax				√			√	
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	✓	✓	√	√	✓	✓	√	✓
Great Egret	Ardea alba	✓	✓		√			√	
Western Cattle Egret	Ardea ibis				√	√	✓	√	
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	√	✓		✓	✓	√	✓	
Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea						✓	√	
Osprey	Pandion haliaetus				√		√	√	✓
Cinereous Vulture	Aegypius monachus			✓					
Griffon Vulture	Gyps fulvus			√					
Booted Eagle	Hieraaetus pennatus		√						
Western Marsh Harrier	Circus aeruginosus		✓		√		✓		
Red Kite	Milvus milvus		✓	√	√	√		√	
Eurasian Hoopoe	Upupa epops			√		√	✓		
Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis				√		√	√	
Eurasian Wryneck	Jynx torquilla					√			
Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus		√		√	√			
Eleonora's Falcon	Falco eleonorae			√			✓		
Woodchat Shrike	Lanius senator		✓			√			
Eurasian Jay	Garrulus glandarius		√						
Northern Raven	Corvus corax			√		√	✓		
Eurasian Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	✓	✓	√	√	√	√	√	
Great Tit	Parus major	√	√	✓	√	√	√	√	
Sand Martin	Riparia riparia	√	√						
Eurasian Crag Martin	Ptyonoprogne rupestris			√			√		
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica			√	√		√		
Western House Martin	Delichon urbicum		√						
European Red-rumped Swallow	Cecropis rufula		√						
Cetti's Warbler	Cettia cetti	√							
Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus			✓					
Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita						√		
Common Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus				√			√	
Zitting Cisticola	Cisticola juncidis	√	√						
Eurasian Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla			√		√			
Sardinian Warbler	Curruca melanocephala	√							
Common Firecrest	Regulus ignicapilla			√					
Eurasian Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes			√					
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris		√		√	√	√	√	

I=Introduced		September 2025							
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Common Blackbird	Turdus merula		✓	√	✓	✓	√	✓	
Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	√				✓			
Mediterranean Flycatcher	Muscicapa tyrrhenica		✓			√	✓	✓	
European Pied Flycatcher	Ficedula hypoleuca					✓	✓		
Common Redstart	Phoenicurus phoenicurus						✓		
Blue Rock Thrush	Monticola solitarius						✓		
Whinchat	Saxicola rubetra							✓	
European Stonechat	Saxicola rubicola	√	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Western Black-eared Wheatear	Oenanthe hispanica						✓		
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs				✓	✓	✓	✓	
European Greenfinch	Chloris chloris			✓			✓	✓	
Common Linnet	Linaria cannabina			✓		✓	✓	✓	
Red Crossbill	Loxia curvirostra			✓		✓			
European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis		√	√	√	√	√	√	
European Serin	Serinus serinus				✓		✓		

Mammals

I=Introduced		September 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
European Rabbit - I	Oryctolagus cuniculus				✓			✓			
European Free-tailed Bat	Tadarida teniotis		✓				✓				
Common Noctule	Nyctalus noctula		✓				✓				
Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus						✓				
Soprano Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pygmaeus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Nathusius' Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus nathusii		✓				✓				
Kuhl's Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus kuhlii		√								
Savi's Pipistrelle	Hypsugo savii						√				

Amphibians & reptiles

I=Introduced			September 2025							
Common name	Scientific name	17 18 19 20 21 22 23							24	
Iberian Water Frog	Pelophylax perezi			✓	√					
Hermann's Tortoise	Testudo hermanni					✓				
a terrapin - I?	Emys / Trachemys sp.		✓		√					

Butterflies

Common name		September 2025									
	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
Common Swallowtail	Papilio machaon			√							
Cleopatra	Gonepteryx cleopatra		√		√	√					
Clouded Yellow	Colias croceus		✓	✓	√	√		√			

		September 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
Large White	Pieris brassicae		√		✓						
Lang's Short-tailed Blue	Leptotes pirthous					√					
Short-tailed Blue	Cupido argiades			√							
Two-tailed Pasha	Charaxes jasius					✓					
Speckled Wood	Pararge aegeria			√	✓			√			

Moths

				S	eptem	ber 20	25		
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Rosy-striped Knot-horn	Oncocera semirubella		√						
Olive-tree Pearl	Palpita vitrealis						√		
Rush Veener	Nomophila noctuella						√		
Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth	Hemaris tityus				√				
Hummingbird Hawk-moth	Macroglossum stellatarum					√	√	√	
Striped Hawk-moth	Hyles livornica						√		
Vestal	Rhodometra sacraria		√						
Pine Processionary	Thaumetopoea pityocampa		√				√		
Crimson Speckled	Utetheisa pulchella					√	√	√	
Small Marbled	Eublemma parva		√				√		
Discrete Chaperon	Cymbalophora pudica						√		
Tree-lichen Beauty	Cryphia algae		√				√		
Small Mottled Willow	Spodoptera exigua						√		
Crescent Dart	Agrotis trux		√						

Damselflies & dragonflies

		September 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
Small Red Damsel	Ceriagrion tenellum		✓								
Blue-eyed Hawker	Aeshna affinis		✓								
Lesser Emperor	Anax parthenope		✓		✓	✓		✓			
Keeled Skimmer	Orthetrum coerulescens			✓							
Red-veined Darter	Sympetrum fonscolombii					√					
Violet Dropwing	Trithemis annulata			√							

Other insects

				S	epteml	ber 20	25		
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
French Paper Wasp	Polistes gallicus		✓				✓		

Selected plants

		September 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
Dwarf Fan Palm	Chamaerops humilis						✓				
Hedgehog Plant	Astragalus balearicus			✓		✓	✓				
Aleppo Pine	Pinus halepensis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Mediterranean Heath	Erica multiflora					✓					
Late Narcissus	Narcissus serotinus					✓					
Olive-leaved Sea-Lavender	Limonium virgatum					✓					
Red Squill	Drimia maritima						✓				
Sea Holly	Eryngium planum		√			✓					
Sea Daffodill	Pancratium maritimum					✓					
Corsican Hyssop	Micromeria filiformis					✓					