

Provence over New Year

Naturetrek Tour Report

28 December 2016 - 4 January 2017



Coypu



Common Cranes



Greater Flamingo



Slender-billed Gulls

Report compiled by James Bray
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Day 1

Wednesday 28th December

Marseille Airport to Hotel des Granges, Arles; Calm, mild and broken cloud.

Our flight arrived in Marseilles on time and we were soon through customs and into the warm Provence sunshine, warm compared to back home anyway. The drive to the hotel near Arles was fairly easy, with roadside Common Buzzards the only birds of note. After checking in to the lovely small hotel that was to be our base for the week, we decided to head out to a local area of marshes and pools as we had a couple of hours of daylight left.

There were quite a few birds calling from the bushes, with Blackcaps, and Cetti's and Sardinian Warblers noisy, but they proved difficult to see. A Green Woodpecker perched out in the open for a few of us to enjoy, but the star bird was a ringtail Hen Harrier drifting past us low over the reeds providing superb views. As dusk approached spectacular numbers of Jackdaws and Rooks started piling south, with thousands of birds, possibly tens of thousands, flying past in vast wheeling flocks. The egret roost was equally impressive, with a couple of large bushes virtually covered in Cattle Egrets with plenty of Little and Great Egrets mixed in. As the sun set, the bush glowed white, tinged with the apricot hues of the first of many beautiful sunsets.

With the temperature dropping fast we headed back to the hotel for a delicious meal prepared by Marie-Jo and Bruno. We celebrated our first evening in the south of France with locally produced wines and then had an early night ready for our first full day in the Camargue.

Day 2

Thursday 29th December

Camargue. Clear skies, mild and warm

After breakfast we headed down into the Camargue, the old delta of the river Rhone. Many of the old marshes have been converted to agriculture, but there are still large areas of natural habitat. We started by birding some of the freshwater marshes on the north side of the Etang de Vaccares, the huge saline lagoon that dominates the Camargue. We were soon sorting through large flocks of duck which included familiar birds like Shoveler, Wigeon and Teal, and found a decent sized group of Bewick's Swans. Marsh Harriers were very common, as were Great Egrets, a species whose population has increased massively over the past couple of decades. Six Glossy Ibis flew past, their rakish flight profile being very distinctive. A Spoonbill that flew past was the first that we have seen down here in winter for a long time.

We then had a very productive stop with the Etang de Vaccares on one side of us and a freshwater pool on the other. Vaccares was very calm which allowed us to have very good views of Black-necked Grebes, 15 Red-breasted Mergansers and the huge, tightly-packed flocks of coot that are a very impressive feature of Vaccares. The freshwater pools were equally productive with a flock of over 1000 Common Pochard packed onto it; five Greater Scaup amongst the Pochard were a real Camargue rarity. The poolside scrub was alive with birds as well and the group enjoyed good views of Dartford and Sardinian Warblers and Stonechats. A Hoopoe flying past was rather unexpected; it was the first that we've seen down here in winter, but sadly didn't perch in view.

Our next stop was at the lovely little reserve of La Capeliere. We had only just got out of the minibuses when a beautiful Firecrest was found. It fed in a sunny spot within metres of the group and was a great welcome to the reserve. The calm conditions really favoured us for our next target species, and it wasn't long before we could hear the thin high pitched calls of Penduline Tits coming from the reedbeds. In no time, we were enjoying brief but incredibly close views of three of these stunning little birds. Further on round the path Chiffchaffs, Sardinian Warblers and Zitting Cisticolas showed fantastically well.

After a relaxing picnic in the sun at the reserve, we headed on south towards the Mediterranean. We failed to find an open café but hopefully made up for it with large flocks of waders in the salt pans that abut the sea. Careful scanning through the hundreds of Dunlin and Little Stint revealed good numbers of Kentish Plovers, many of which were sporting bright chestnut caps, and a few Curlew Sandpiper and Sanderling tested our identification skills. Greater Flamingos glowed in the beautiful weather and we were really taken aback by the large numbers of Great Egrets roosting on the banks of the salt pans. The sea was relatively quiet but as we headed back to the minibuses we were treated to great views of a solitary, adult Slender-billed Gull.

As the sun began to dip towards the horizon we made our way back to the hotel, a relatively easy drive back up alongside the Rhone. We enjoyed another delicious meal of traditional Provençal cooking, after a very enjoyable day in the Camargue.

Day 3

Friday 30th December

Les Alpilles: Initially overcast, then sunny. Calm and cool all day.

This day has the potential to be one of the best of the trip with some iconic species on the cards, and this beautiful part of southern France didn't disappoint. The scenery to start with is spectacular and we spent all day amongst the limestone hills of Les Alpilles. We spent the first part of the morning walking slowly up through conifer woods that cover La Caume, a small hill that looks out over St Remy de Provence to the north and the coastal plain to the south. Crested Tits and Firecrests called frequently and, by the end of the walk, most of us had had reasonable views.

The stars of La Caume are the resident Bonelli's Eagles, a species that is in sharp decline over much of its range. It took us a while to find them, but we were then treated to fairly distant, but very special views of the pair, as the female gathered nesting material whilst the male supervised from the branch of a large pine tree. We had much closer views of Crag Martins as they hawked for insects above our heads. At the top of the hill we found Woodlark and a few Blackcaps.

Having walked up with a good appetite, we had a very nice picnic in the sun again. After lunch we drove the short distance to Les Baux de Provence, a small ancient village perched on the top of a limestone outcrop, and the site for a much-hoped-for bird. We walked a short way below the village and then settled down to search the cliffs for the beautiful and often-elusive Wallcreeper. It didn't take too long this time, with a bird appearing as if from nowhere at the top of the cliff. Our Wallcreeper was a real crowd-pleaser as it didn't jump around as much as they can so everyone had prolonged views in the telescopes of what is a magical bird. The muted greys and blacks burst into life every time it flicked its crimson wings, and we were also able to see the long thin beak and claws that make this bird superbly adapted to its mountain habitat.

Just about sated with our incredible views of the Wallcreeper, we continued round the cliffs to where we found an Alpine Accentor perched high up above us. Whilst not close views, they did demonstrate a mountain species in its habitat. Sadly, after hot drinks in a local café, we could not re-find the Alpine Accentor in a small tourist square that is its other typical habitat.

With dusk approaching we left Les Baux and headed to yet another spectacular part of Les Alpilles. The weather was perfect, as was the habitat, but unfortunately people were again climbing on the cliff face that used to be the best site to see Eagle-Owls at in the area. We didn't hold out much hope of the birds being on the cliff and they weren't, but we did hear an Eagle-Owl singing for a prolonged period of time from some way off. The magnificent call did a lot to offset the disappointment of realising that the birds have been driven from their main site.

Day 4

Saturday 31st December

La Crau. Calm, cool and clear skies.

Today we headed for the grassy plains of Le Crau, the ancient floodplain of the River Durance. The course of the Durance was redirected over 10,000 years ago as the hills that we spent the day in yesterday were lifted up by tectonic movements. A huge, stony plain was the result that now provides ideal habitat for a number of species that in France are only found here, although much of it has been lost to agriculture and industry. It is a difficult site to bird in winter as the plain's birds congregate into elusive flocks, but it is also a fun place to spend the day as there are always plenty of birds to enjoy.

Although it was cold first thing, the sun was out and there was very little breeze which makes birding in the open areas of Le Crau much easier. Our first stop was in an area that is quite bushy and we were soon hearing the calls of buntings. Several Rock Buntings teased us, only perching up for short periods of time, however a group of Cirl Buntings were much more obliging and we all had good scoped views of this beautiful bird.

Our second stop, at Mas Chauvet, is an area of stubble and grassy fields on the edge of a large area of original plain habitat and can be particularly good for birds of prey. We didn't see any raptors of note today but were able to enjoy the sight of large flocks of Meadow Pipit, Skylark and Goldfinch.

After a hot drink in the town of Saint Martin du Crau we stopped briefly at the Etang des Aulnes, a large freshwater lake nearby. The lake itself was relatively quiet although huge shoals of small fish were crammed into one of the channels that we walked along, presumably sheltering from the nearby Great Crested Grebes which showed well. Several Water Rails and Cetti's Warblers called from very close but stayed within their reedbed cover. We had our picnic lunch at a quiet spot just down the road and then drove back to Le Crau for a walk over the plain. Birdlife was fairly limited, but the walk did give us the chance to see the remarkable habitat up-close, and Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow butterflies seemed to be enjoying the sun as much as we were, and how nice to see butterflies in Europe on the last day of the year.

We finished the day by driving slowly across the plain searching for more birds. Corn Buntings perched up providing superb views in the soft late afternoon light. Two Green Sandpiper flew up from one of the streams that crosses the plain, and then finally we found a raptor; a merlin flying fast over the plain. It did perch for us

but was distant and left us hoping for better views. Just as we were about to reach the edge of the plain a huge male Wild Boar ran across the plain past us.

On our return to the hotel we had time to relax a little before a wonderful festive meal. Marie-Jo produced a wonderful variety of dishes for us to celebrate New Year's Eve, and the meal was finished off with the traditional thirteen deserts. It was a wonderful, if filling, way to sample the local Provençal culture, as was the thyme liqueur which some of us indulged in before heading for a much-needed relaxing night's sleep.

Day 5

Sunday 1st January

West side of the Camargue. Mainly overcast, light northerly wind, cold.

After another continental breakfast, we headed out into the Camargue, heading for the west side this time. Having crossed the Rhone passing the old city of Arles, our first stop in the Camargue was for three Common Cranes in a roadside field which turned out to be two adults and their offspring. With the roads being very quiet, we were able to have good looks at the cranes, and to see a ringtail Hen Harrier passing by behind them.

Our route took us through freshwater marshes, saltmarsh scrub and then along the Etang de Vaccares again. Exposed mud provided us with good views of Grey Plovers and Eurasian Curlews, and a dozen Slender-billed Gulls, fished close inshore, allowing superb views in the telescopes. Over a hundred Golden Plover were roosting in the same spot that they're in every year and a large flock of Red-crested Pochard were much appreciated, with the red crests (more orangey-red to be honest) particularly bright. A couple more Hen Harriers were found along the track and then we found a few Crested Larks and White Wagtails which again showed really well.

We checked the sea and a small area of salt pans at Saintes Maries des la Mer where we saw a few new species for the trip and had fabulous views of another adult Slender-billed Gull with a green darvic ring on it. Four Turnstones were foraging close-by on the breakwater walls, a Kingfisher perched incredibly close to us, and Sandwich Terns and Gannets fishing out at sea increased our anticipation of their return to the UK.

We then headed up to Pont du Gau and had a picnic at this very nice bird reserve. After lunch we walked around the reserve and were enthralled by the large flocks of displaying Greater Flamingos that were so close that each bird virtually filled a binocular view. Incredibly, we found DBC, a Flamingo that was colour-ringed in 1978 and has been seen on two of the previous Naturetrek trips. We enjoyed yet more frame-filling views of Firecrests and Cypripedium before heading towards Aigues Mortes.

We did have one unscheduled stop on the way there as hundreds of Common Cranes streamed fairly low overhead, bugling calls renting the air and providing breath-taking views. Aigues Mortes is a spectacular medieval town on the west side of the Camargue. It is completely surrounded by tall stone walls and long ago was on the shores of the Mediterranean, before the silting up of channels left it standing many kilometres inland. We walked around the town as well as enjoying hot drinks in the cafes, before heading back to the hotel for another delicious meal and an early night in preparation for the next day's early start.

Day 6

Monday 2nd January

Mont Ventoux and Pont du Gard. Broken cloud, cold, calm.

Mont Ventoux is an outlier of the Alps and, at 1900 metres high, can host alpine species if the weather conditions are suitable. The lower slopes of the mountain are also covered in an interesting succession of forest types which provides a range of species missing from further south. We left the hotel before it got dark so that we could make the most of the limited winter daylight and try to find some very exciting species.

We arrived at our first stop at the foot of Mont Ventoux in good time, and were soon enjoying good numbers of Serins flying about, with a few stopping long enough to provide good views in the telescopes. Large flocks of thrushes and finches were a bit too distant for decent views but Fieldfare, Mistle Thrush, Chaffinch and Brambling were all seen. A Blackcap singing from deep scrub did try to add a hint of spring to what was a fairly cold morning.

We stopped higher up the mountain and tried for Black Woodpecker. We couldn't find it, but did have good views of Crested and Marsh Tits. Higher still, the woods were alive with finches and, after a frustrating few minutes, we were all enjoying superb views of Citril Finches and Common Crossbills. They were foraging, singing and bouncing about all over the place, but many of both species were coming down onto the road to pick up grit, thereby providing brilliant views in the telescopes. Thereafter wherever we stopped we saw loads of both Citril Finch and Crossbill, and by far the most that we have encountered on Mont Ventoux before.

Reaching the highest point that one can drive, we walked slowly up the road and, amongst more Citril Finch calls, we picked up the thin calls of Rock Buntings. They were typically flighty, but some birds did perch in the open long enough for most of us to enjoy good scoped views of this beautiful bunting. We enjoyed a warming lunch in Chalet Reynard and then tried to find a Black Woodpecker again. A lucky member of the group did see one flying briefly above the treeline, but the rest of us had to be satisfied with two Ravens flying low overhead, cronking as they went, as well as yet more superb views of Citril Finches and Crossbills!

We then headed back down the mountain, and found a nice spot to look back up at the mountain and take some photos. We then successfully negotiated the rather confusing roads around Avignon and arrived at the Pont du Gard with a couple of hours of daylight in which to enjoy the beautiful Roman aqueduct (and hopefully a few birds!). The three-tiered aqueduct is in superb condition and is a spectacular bit of engineering given when it was built. We wandered around the site enjoying the views of the aqueduct and of the steep-sided gorge that it crosses, and then started to look for birds.

Despite intense searching we could not another Wallcreeper, but a very showy Black Redstart was much appreciated. As dusk approached flocks of Rock Sparrow flew in to roost on the aqueduct, and we were able to spend time watching them in the telescopes and to study their identifying (if rather drab) features. Later still a small flock of Crag Martins headed in to roost as well.

Day 7

Tuesday 3rd January

Arles and the east side of Camargue. Brisk northerly wind, clear skies, cold

With a very brisk and cold Mistral wind blowing in from the north, the group spent the morning exploring the museums, Roman buildings and cafes of Arles. It is a beautiful old town, with highlights including a Van Gogh museum, an intact Roman amphitheatre, and riverside walks along the Rhone (though maybe not on days when the Mistral is in full spate!). A few Black Redstarts were the birding highlights.

We had our picnic lunch out of the wind back at the hotel, and finished the meal with raspberry tarts that James and Su had found at a local patisserie. With only one afternoon of the trip remaining, we decided to head into the Camargue to see if we could find a few more birds, although some chose to relax in the warmth and comfort of the hotel.

It turned out to be a very good afternoon's birding despite the wind, although we didn't see too many small birds. As we drove into the Camargue, a large female Peregrine flew overhead and after stopping quickly we were all able to pick her up and have reasonable views. Better still was only a little bit further south, when two large eagles were spotted close to the road. Piling out of the vans again we soon realised that we were watching two juvenile Bonelli's Eagles. They were really good views as well, as the eagles were heading north into the wind so making slow progress. We were able to chase them up the road a bit and had yet more good views!

We then headed into the saline lagoons at the southern end of the Camargue and were soon enjoying incredibly close views of Water and Meadow Pipits side by side, allowing us to practice our identification skills. As we were watching them a Merlin flew in and perched within fifty metres of us allowing unbelievably good views in the telescopes. This was quickly followed by a ringtail Hen Harrier that was also really close to us. We drove slowly through the network of lagoons finding a good selection of waders including Grey Plover, Curlew and Common Redshank, and careful scanning found our only Spotted Redshank of the trip.

With dusk approaching we headed back north towards the hotel with the sun setting, our last beautiful sunset of the trip. We enjoyed our last dinner of the trip and raised a toast to Marie-Jo and Bruno for their very kind and welcoming hospitality.

Day 8

Wednesday 4th January

Journey home

We left for the airport after breakfast and, having dropped Birte off at her hotel, we headed into Marseille airport. In contrast to the previous two years, the passage through the airport was swift and hassle-free and our flight arrived on time back in London where we said warm farewells to each other after what had been a very enjoyable and successful trip.

Winter in the south of France is a great time to be there. On top of the beautiful architecture, landscapes and wide variety of habitats, the delicious food and wine and the beautiful sunsets, we had some wonderful views of some very special wildlife. Avian highlights included watching nest-building Bonelli's Eagles on the thyme- and rosemary-scented hills of Les Alpilles; superb views of hunting Hen Harriers and Merlins and large flocks of ducks and waders on the lagoons of the Camargue; huge flocks of Common Cranes flying right over our heads;

watching flocks of Greater Flamingos dancing and serenading each other, knowing that DBC, a 38 year old Flamingo, is still amongst them; and pride of place as always goes to the stunning Wallcreeper on the scenic cliffs at Les Baux.

The unpredictability of winter birding in the south of France adds to the fun. We particularly enjoyed the flocks of Citril Finch that seemed to carpet Mont Ventoux; the single Spoonbill flying alongside a flock of Bewick's Swans in the Camargue; and a flock of Rock Buntings near the top of Mont Ventoux.

Su and James would like to thank the group for making this tour such a pleasure to lead, and on behalf the whole group would like to thank Marie-Jo and Bruno for being such wonderful hosts.

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Species Lists

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

	Common name	Scientific name	December/January						
			29	29	30	31	1	2	3
1	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	1	30		✓	✓		✓
2	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>		150			✓		
3	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	2			✓	✓		
4	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>					2		
5	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	50	✓		✓	✓	20	✓
6	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		1					
7	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	c400	✓		✓	✓		c400
8	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		15			30		
12	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>		✓			✓		✓
13	Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>		15			✓		
14	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓
15	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		2					2
16	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		✓			1		✓
17	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>		✓			✓		
18	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>		✓			✓		
20	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>		1					
21	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>		✓			✓		
22	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓			✓		
23	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>		1			45		
24	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		1000					
25	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		1					
26	Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>		5					
27	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>					✓		
28	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>		20					
29	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		1					
30	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1	3			3		3
31	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓
32	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		2		✓		✓	✓
33	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
34	Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>			2				2
35	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>							2
37	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>				1	2		1
38	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>				2			
39	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		✓		✓			
40	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>		100+			506		✓
41	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	1	✓		✓	✓		
42	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓
43	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓		✓	✓		
44	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		50			12		
45	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		2					
46	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>		25					
47	European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		2		1	120		

	Common name	Scientific name	December/January						
			29	29	30	31	1	2	3
48	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		3			25		20
49	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		✓		100	1		100
50	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>					8		
51	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		3					
52	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		200			200		60
53	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris feruginea</i>		4					
54	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>		200			10		
55	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		3			12		20
56	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>					10		30
57	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>							1
58	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		1					
59	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	1	2		2			3
60	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		1		1			
61	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus</i>		5					
62	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>		1			15		
63	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
65	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>					5		
66	Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
67	Common Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
68	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
69	Eurasian Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>			✓				
70	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>							
71	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	✓	10		✓	✓		2
72	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>						✓	
73	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	1						
74	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	1			✓		2	1
75	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>				✓	✓		
76	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>			7				
77	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>		✓		✓	✓		
78	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>			6			6	
79	Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>							1
80	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
81	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
82	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓		
83	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
84	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
85	Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>			1				
86	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
87	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
88	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓
89	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
90	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>						25	
91	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>			5			2	
92	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
93	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>						6	
94	Fan-tailed Warbler	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓
95	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
96	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>		1	✓				
97	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
98	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	December/January						
			29	29	30	31	1	2	3
99	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
100	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>						✓	
101	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	✓	4	2		3	2	
102	Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>		3		✓	✓		
103	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>						1	
104	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>			2			✓	
105	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	
106	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
107	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>						✓	
108	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>						✓	
109	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>				✓		✓	
110	Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>			1				
111	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>				1			
112	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
113	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			✓	✓		✓	
114	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
115	European Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	000s	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
116	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>						2	
117	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
118	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
119	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
120	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>						60	
121	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
122	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>						✓	
123	Citril Finch	<i>Carduelis citrinella</i>						75	
124	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>					4	15	
125	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
126	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
127	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
128	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>			4			75	
129	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		✓		✓			✓
130	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>				8			
131	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>				3		10	
132	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓

Mammals

1	Coypu	<i>Myocastor coypus</i>	✓	✓			✓		
2	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>				1			
3	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		✓			✓		
4	Brown Rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>					✓		
5	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europeus</i>				✓			
6	Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>			✓				

Butterflies & Moths

1	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>		1					
2	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>				4			
3	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>				4			
4	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>				1			
5	Pine Processionary Moth	<i>Thaumetopoea pityocampa</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		

Plants

Scientific name	Common name	Location
GYMNOSPERMS	CONIFERS	
Cupressaceae	Juniper family	
<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>	Italian Cypress	Often pencil-shaped. Frequent
<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Common Juniper	Mt Ventoux
<i>J. phoenicea</i>	Phoenicean Juniper	Les Alpilles
<i>J. oxycedrus</i>	Spiny Juniper	La Caume
Pinaceae	Pine family	
<i>Cedrus atlantica</i>	Atlantic Cedar	Planted, La Caume
<i>Pinus halepensis</i>	Aleppo Pine	The common pine higher up
<i>P. pinea</i>	Stone (Umbrella) Pine	The iconic lollipop pine
<i>P. uncinata</i>	Mountain Pine	Small, found high on the mountains
ANGIOSPERMS	FLOWERING PLANTS	
Dicots	Dicotyledons	
Lauraceae	Bay family	
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	Bay Tree	La Capeliere
Adoxaceae	Moschatel family	
<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Viburnum	Les Baux, in flower
Amaranthaceae	Pigweed family	
<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>	Sea Purslane	Salt steppe, low grey shrub
<i>Sarcocornia fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Glasswort	Salt steppe, often red
<i>Suaeda vera</i>	Shrubby Sea-blite	Salt steppe, low shrub
Apiaceae	Carrot family	
<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Field 'Sea Holly'	Dried stems, scattered throughout
<i>E. spinalba</i>	Silver 'Sea Holly'	Dried stems, Mt Ventoux
Araliaceae	Ivy family	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	Frequent
Boraginaceae	Borage family	
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's Bugloss	La Crau, leaves
Brassicaceae	Cabbage family	
<i>Iberis sempervirens</i>	Evergreen Candytuft	La Caume, in flower
<i>Cardamine amara</i>	Sweet Rocket	Common. Huge colony on La Crau
<i>Sinapis arvensis</i>	Charlock	Scattered weed
Buxaceae	Box family	
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	Les Alpilles
Caprifoliaceae	Honeysuckle family	
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Small Scabious	La Caume, in flower
Cistaceae	Cistus family	
<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey Cistus	Les Alpilles
Compositaceae (Asteraceae)	Daisy family	
<i>Anthemis maritima</i>	Sea Mayweed	Les Saintes Maries de la Mer

Scientific name	Common name	Location
<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>	Southern Daisy	Widespread
<i>Carlina acaulis</i>	Large-flowered Carlina Thistle	Mt Ventoux, leaves only
<i>C. corymbosa</i>	Small-flowered Carlina Thistle	La Crau, dried stems
<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	Canadian Fleabane	Common weed, often in flower
<i>Dittrichia graveolens</i>	Stink Aster	Camargue
<i>Filago (Evax) pygmaea</i>	Evax	La Crau, tiny leaves in path
<i>Glebionis segetum</i>	Corn Marigold	La Crau
<i>Hyoseris radiata</i>	Hyoseris	Scattered, dandelion-like leaves
<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk Thistle	Common. White-veined spiny leaves
<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelion	Common
Convolvulaceae	Bindweed family	
<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	Dodder	La Caume. Parasitising plant, in flower
Crassulaceae	Stonecrop family	
<i>Umbelliscus rupestris</i>	Navelwort	Pont du Gard
Euphorbiaceae	Euphorbia family	
<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Mediterranean Spurge	Widespread, in bud
<i>E. helioscopia</i>	Sun Spurge	Common weed, in flower
Fagaceae	Oak and Beech family	
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	Frequent
<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes Oak	Les Alpilles. Shrubby, bristly oak of hills
<i>Q. ilex</i>	Holm Oak	Widespread. Tall, evergreen oak
<i>Q. pubescens</i>	Downy Oak	Widespread. The 'standard' oak
Geraniaceae	Geranium family	
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Stork's-bill	Les Alpilles, in flower
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	Les Alpilles, leaves only
Lamiaceae	Dead-nettle family	
<i>Lavendula angustifolia</i>	Lavender	Les Alpilles, in flower
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	White Horehound	La Caume, furry silver leaves
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary	La Caume, in flower
<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	Wild Clary	La Crau
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Thyme	Les Alpilles
Leguminosae	Pea family	
<i>Genista scorpius</i>	Scorpion Broom	Les Alpilles, spiny shrub
<i>Ononis spinosa</i>	Spiny Restharrow	Les Baux, pink flowers
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish Broom	Frequent. Distinctive Mediterranean shrub
<i>Ulex parviflora</i>	Small-flowered Gorse	Les Baux, flowering
Oleaceae	Olive family	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	Etang des Aulnes
<i>Olea europaea</i>	Wild Olive	Throughout Camargue
<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>	False Olive	La Capeliere
Papaveraceae	Poppy family	
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine	Les Baux
Plantaginaceae	Plantain family	
<i>Globularia alypum</i>	Shrubby Globularia	Les Baux, dead flower heads
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buck's-horn Plantain	Salt steppe

Scientific name	Common name	Location
Platanaceae <i>Platanus orientalis</i>	Plane family Oriental Plane	Planted occasionally. Elegant
Plumbaginaceae <i>Limonium cf narbonense</i>	Thrift family A sea lavender	Salt marshes and steppe
Ranunculaceae <i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Buttercup family Stinking Hellebore	Mt Ventoux, in flower
Rubiaceae <i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Bedstraw family Wild Madder	La Capeliere
Salicaceae <i>Populus alba</i> <i>P. tremula</i>	Willow family White Poplar Aspen	Scattered Scattered
Scrophulariaceae <i>Verbascum sinuatum</i>	Figwort family Wavy Mullein	La Crau, rosettes of furry, wavy, grey leaves
Tamariscaceae <i>Tamarix</i> sp.	Tamarisk family Tamarisk	Widespread (but several similar species)
Urticaceae <i>Parietaria judaica</i> <i>Urtica dioica</i> <i>U. pilulifera</i>	Nettle family Pellitory of the Wall Nettle Roman Nettle	Les Baux, walls, in flower Common Les Baux, pompom flowers
Monocots	Monocotyledons	
Araceae <i>Arum italicum</i> <i>A. maculatum</i>	Arum family Italian Arum Cuckoo-pint	Scattered Pont du Gard
Asparagaceae <i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Asparagus family Butcher's Broom	Mt Ventoux
Iridaceae <i>Iris foetidissima</i>	Iris family Stinking Iris/Roast Beef Plant	La Capeliere
Orchidaceae <i>Himantoglossum robertianum</i> <i>Ophrys</i> sp. <i>Platanthera bifolia</i>	Orchid family Barlia/Giant Orchid A Bee Orchid Greater Butterfly Orchid	La Caume, leaves only La Caume, leaves only La Caume, leaves only
Poaceae <i>Arundo donax</i> <i>Phragmites australis</i>	Grass family Giant Reed Common Reed	Widespread, distinctive Widespread
Smilacaceae <i>Smilax aspera</i>	Smilax family Smilax ('vicious ivy')	Les Alpilles, spiny creeper
Xanthorrhoeaceae <i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>	Asphodel family Hollow-stemmed Asphodel	La Crau, leaf tufts