

Portugal – The Algarve at Christmas

Naturetrek Tour Report

22 - 29 December 2016



Dartford Warbler by Roger Newton



Little Grebe by Neil McMahon



Iberian Hare by Neil McMahon



Western Swamphen by Neil McMahon

Report by Neil McMahon

Images by Roger Newton and Neil McMahon



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Tour participants: Neil McMahon & Nuno Barros (Leaders) with 14 Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Thursday 22nd December

With the majority of us assembled at Gatwick's North Terminal, we eventually took to the air on our BA flight at about 8.30am, and although this was slightly behind schedule, we made up for the time during the flight and arrived at Faro airport in the Algarve a little early. After retrieving baggage (which included a certain tour guide forgetting his suitcase!) and the usual formalities, we met Nuno and the adventure commenced! We had a bit of a wait to obtain our two almost brand new hired Renault Trafic minibuses, and two clients, Jenny and Alison were delayed due to a fog-bound Southampton. The remainder of jumped aboard our vehicles and we drove the short distance to Praia de Faro for birds of the estuary and our lunch-time restaurant.

Here we enjoyed watching Spoonbills, gulls, terns and waders from the comfort of a conservatory-style restaurant, and the food was good too!

After lunch we found a useful scanning area and enjoyed good views in excellent light of White Stork, three Audouin's Gulls, plenty of Mediterranean Gulls, two Caspian Terns, several Sandwich Terns and 10 species of wader including Kentish Plover and Whimbrel.

We reluctantly left this excellent area bound for our hotel in Sagres, a westerly drive of about an hour and forty minutes on very good roads and empty motorways. Birds included a single Barn Swallow, plenty of White Wagtails and House Sparrows, our first flocks of the distinctive-looking Iberian Magpies, a brief view of a Black-winged Kite and a flock of Cattle Egrets.

The very comfortable Memmo Baleeira hotel at Sagres is a regular and popular venue for Naturetrekkers, and it wasn't long before travel fatigue was forgotten and we were able to relax properly. Alison and Jenny had caught up and overtaken us and were safely ensconced in their rooms even before we arrived!

Day 2

Friday 23rd December

The breakfast lounge is on the basement floor at Memmo Baleeira and our 7.30am breakfast was enhanced with the birds we could see waking up and foraging just outside the lounge window. Every morning we espied Black Redstart, Chiffchaff, Meadow Pipit and Common Sandpiper flitting or strutting along on the lawns and low walls just the other side of the large window. Other birds on the first morning, as we watched the morning sun dapple the harbour waters, included an Osprey and a Kestrel. Passerines around the hotel included Spotless Starling, Siskins, Greenfinch, Blackcap, Sardinian Warbler and perhaps surprisingly, a British Pied Wagtail!

At about 9am we left the hotel and ventured slowly to Cape St Vincent, and the lighthouse which stands on the most south-westerly point of land in mainland Europe. We were ahead of the tourists and had the place to ourselves pretty much for the first hour or so. Two hunting Short-toed Eagles were arguably the avian highlight but also-rans included four Peregrines, a brief Balearic Shearwater, plenty of Gannets and small birds consisting of Thekla Lark, Black Redstart, Sardinian Warbler and Dartford Warbler.

After a brief comfort stop, we dawdled slowly in to nearby Vale Canto or the Sacred Valley. Red-legged Partridges were immediately on view and more careful scanning provided views of a flock of Skylarks, a single Short-toed Lark and more Theklas and some Crested Larks. For those looking down, the odd Friar's Cowl plant was quite numerous on the track verges. One of the Short-toed Eagles showed distantly and several Common Buzzards surveyed the scene from atop boulders. A crowd of black birds foraging on the fields proved to be a flock of fifty Choughs (or Red-billed Choughs if you prefer) and other crowd pleasers included a couple of Ravens, a shy Little Owl and plenty of Crag Martins fly-catching overhead. A distant large pipit in flight remained unidentified.

All this birding was making us feel hungry so we ate our lunches at Lagoa do Martinhal on the outskirts of Sagres. Here we could see a pair of White Storks with their nest on a distant rocky island, which was also home to plenty of Cormorants. The small saltwater lagoon was home to a few waders including three Grey Plovers plus a Kingfisher and the passerines included a Water Pipit. Adjacent vegetation attracted a male Spanish Sparrow and active insects included a Praying Mantis and Clouded Yellow and Red Admiral butterflies. Not bad in Europe for late December!

We spent the afternoon at the serene and pretty Boca do Rio, some 20 kilometres east of Sagres. Here a little valley snakes down to a sandy beach with cliffs either side, the valley floor giving way to agricultural concerns, scrubby slopes and a reed-bed. This site always attracts an impressive variety of birds and we birded here until almost dusk. An airborne Peregrine tussled with a Common Buzzard shortly before a Marsh Harrier and a Sparrowhawk came in to view and did much the same thing! Birds of the reed-bed were mostly out of view but included Water Rail, Cetti's Warbler, a Bluethroat singing briefly, Fan-tailed Warblers and Common Waxbills.

Wintering warblers were abundant in the scrub and hillside vegetation with Blackcaps giving sub-songs and plenty of Chiffchaffs dominating. A couple of Serins and a Hoopoe showed briefly and a fine Blue Rock Thrush perched sentinel-like on the cliff edge. Our last half an hour was spent admiring Snipe, Greenshank and both Common and Green Sandpipers feeding in the fresh-water shallows. Small numbers of Paperwhite Narcissi were in bloom.

The end of our first full day and with a little fatigue beginning to show, we drove gently back to the comfort of the Memmo Baleeira Hotel for relaxation, our evening meal and of course the Naturetrek wildlife log call!

Day 3

Saturday 24th December

In Portugal Christmas Eve is celebrated perhaps more than Christmas Day, but in this part of the Algarve Christmas is very low key with a distinct lack of decorations or fuss.

Following our sumptuous breakfast, we boarded our minibuses at 9am and drove steadily to the highest point in this part of Portugal – Monchique. Here it was warm, still, clear and sunny and we enjoyed the amazing views looking south at the southern Algarve coastline.

We wandered around the summit and clocked a couple of Blue Rock Thrushes, a Kestrel and the obligatory Stonechats. One male Dartford Warbler, in particular, showed extraordinarily well and was probably the most

photographed bird of the trip! Sharp eyes picked up some small bird movement on some roadside rocks and with patience we confirmed four wintering Alpine Accentors and a Rock Bunting. Fabulous!

We then manoeuvred to a woodland site lower down called Caldas de Monchique which resembles a large terraced garden incorporated in to upland light woodland with a stream and nearby hotel and café. And here we enjoyed the customary Naturetrek picnic with bread, salads, meats, cheeses and similar, whilst watching common birds nearby which included both Serin and Siskin, Nuthatch, Grey Wagtail, Jay, four species of tit and hearing three species of woodpecker. In addition, Nuno saw a fly-through Booted Eagle. For many though, the Monarch Butterfly sallying around the terraces was the highlight!

We were nicely full of our luncheon, and we planned to strike out for some coastal lagoons when disaster struck with one of the virtually brand-new minibuses suffering clutch problems and effectively making us immobile! This signalled the end of active birding for the day as we concentrated on travelling back to Sagres (within the remaining minibus and a private-hire people carrier) with some roadside photography of White Storks for some, leaving Nuno forlorn with his stricken vehicle!

So it was an early bath for some whilst the tour guides sorted out vehicles and a few logistics. I think a four-course Christmas Eve meal with a surplus of table wine courtesy of Naturetrek made up for our broken vehicle!

Day 4

Sunday 25th December

It might be Christmas Day but it was still breakfast from 7.30am and a 9am departure and yet again another day dominated by sunshine and blue skies.

We decided to check out some inland coniferous woodland and heathland in an effort to pick up Crested Tit and Short-toed Treecreeper. A short drive later we were padding around a wide ride dominated by Umbrella Pines, but not before we had scanned quite a number of singing Corn Buntings from our minibuses. With persistence, most of us managed views of the trilling Crested Tits and very flighty treecreepers, but the views were sadly not classic. We heard a Wild Boar but he declined to break cover, so a little scanning provided distant views of Southern Grey Shrike and brief views of Woodlark, Fan-tailed Warblers and common finches.

Nuno then navigated us to the historic town of Aljezur, once an Atlantic sea-port but now cut off from the ocean. Here a comfort stop preceded lunch at a serene stream-side picnic spot. Whilst munching we espied fidgety Serins, Grey Wagtails, Kestrels and Common Buzzards and it's not often you watch butterflies and a dragonfly in Europe on Christmas Day!

After lunch we drove slowly down a beach-bound sandy track, walking short sections. An Osprey flew away from us, a female Sparrowhawk sauntered across the valley and the disused fish farm hosted a Spoonbill and plenty of Cormorants plus a few Grey Herons and Little Egrets. The small area of saltmarsh was suitable for wintering Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, Ringed Plover and Grey Plover which we saw in small numbers. Busy passerines included the ever-present Sardinian Warblers and Stonechats plus Southern Grey Shrike.

We decided to then head for the very scenic headland of Porta da Atalai. Here we enjoyed amazing views looking north along the coastline and looked down to examine the extensive invasive and flowering Hottentot Fig.

Below us were the nests of attendant White Storks, possibly the only cliff-nesting White Storks in Europe. Distant Razorbills and a single Balearic Shearwater amongst the passing Gannets and Yellow-legged Gulls provided interest on the sea and a complete surprise was two Quail flushed from trackside vegetation.

It was then a leisurely and scenic drive back to Sagres and our last night at the luxurious Memmo Baleeira Hotel.

Day 5

Monday 26th December

Boxing Day, and the curse of the minibuses continued with a broken clutch on our second vehicle, this one with little more than 1500km on the clock! But we knew what to do and Nuno gathered up our bemused gathering of Naturetrekkers with an impromptu recce on foot of the nearby Baleeira Harbour and Ponta da Atalaia headland, seeing an excellent array of birds at close range, including the locally rare Rock Pipit, Kingfisher, Peregrine, Sandwich Terns and much more. Butterflies enjoying the warm and sunny conditions included a particularly large Monarch butterfly – all exotic stuff!

By the time we had eaten lunch we had our second replacement vehicle, and were back on schedule to visit the exciting Salgados lagoons where we birded until after 5pm. It was hard to know which way to look – there were waders strewn around on the mud, five species of raptor either perched or flying around above us, a variety of ducks plus Greater Flamingo, Glossy Ibis, Western Swamphen (a new name for Purple Swamphen, which has been split), Audouin's Gull, Kingfishers and a couple of furtive and bobbing Bluethroats. Phew! The colours, calls and flight patterns were all a bit bewildering as this concentration of birds big and small swarmed around in front of us. It was easy to ignore the small birds with the larger birds of water margins taking centre stage, but interesting passerines included Crested Lark, Woodlark, Corn Bunting, plenty of Chiffchaffs of course, Crag Martin and Barn Swallow. An Iberian Hare and Little Owl stared after us as we departed for our new hotel at Santa Catarina.

We arrived in the dark at Hotel Rural Quinta do Marco and were greeted warmly and quickly provided with our rooms. A relatively new hotel run by a family proudly emphasising traditional cuisine amid a large horticultural concern proved to be good for us!

After our very enjoyable meal we again took to our checklists but then to bed after a rather long and eventful day!

Day 6

Tuesday 27th December

After a comfortable night at our new hotel in the low hills of the eastern Algarve, we enjoyed breakfast from the panoramic restaurant and alert observers saw Serin and Black Redstart. We had a slightly earlier start today, with an 8.30am ensemble, as we were off to the wide, open plains of the inland area between Castro Verde and Mertola. Good roads ensured it only took us 90 minutes to reach the outskirts of the traditional town of Castro Verde, with White Storks and common raptors visible along the way. After a comfort stop in the town, it was a slow drive in to the plains and fields to the east of the town and we quickly encountered Little Owl, Red Kite and plenty of Corn Buntings and larks. Common Buzzards and Kestrels adorned telegraph poles and rocks and there were plenty of skittish Southern Grey Shrikes to admire. This is an important place for wintering Lapwing, particularly with colder weather further to the east and north in Europe and we saw plenty of these.

With some careful scanning, we found the first of several flocks of Great Bustards; these large, stately birds kept their distance but were still impressive. A male in this first flock was feeling a little frisky and we witnessed some rather brief tail-spreading and wing-flapping as he intimidated some of his companions. During the day we saw around 50 of these birds, and this is very much one of the reasons why this area is always on the itinerary.

Common finches, flocks of Skylarks, Eurasian Magpies and Carrion Crows were all part of the scenery, and then we encountered a loose group of Calandra Larks. A couple of individuals were singing high up ‘rowing’ through an impossibly blue sky and making them very difficult to see! It was good to hear the musical if buzzy and intense song. White Wagtails were common by the roadsides and furtive flocks of Meadow Pipits frequently rose and flitted back down to the field margins and rough edges.

We drove around in a big circle and then began to meander back to Castro Verde, and encountered a majestic Spanish Imperial Eagle as he cruised over the road and away. Far from a guaranteed sighting, this confirmed a good morning’s birding so it was time for our traditional Alentejo regional lunch! And a feast awaited us! Quality meats, cheeses, salads and vegetables, the local, yummy tomato soup encapsulating bread and egg, superb wine and an array of wonderful sweets were brought out for our consumption.

All too soon we had to say goodbye to our fine hosts and off we went again in search of wildlife encounters east of Castro Verde. We saw more of the same with, of course, plenty of Red Kites, Common Buzzards, Red-legged Partridges and both species of magpie. We enjoyed watching some Hoopoes, particularly with three birds feeding close to each other and saw Raven, Golden Plover and plenty of roadside White Storks atop their nests.

We visited a small hill providing magnificent views across the impressive landscape and walked around the small church of Our Lady of Aracelis. From here we could see a 300-strong flock of Common Cranes feeding on the large fields, sadly just out of earshot. More Great Bustards were picked out, and two stunning Hen Harriers were another highlight. The sunshine provided the opportunity to see both Red Admiral and Painted Lady butterflies and passerines included Dartford Warbler and four Woodlarks.

With dusk approaching we decided to ‘up stumps’ and meander our way back to our hotel further south. A Woodcock flew over us a little later, not a common bird here and a nice bonus for those who saw it. We arrived back at Hotel Rural Quinta do Marco just before 7pm, and despite our gastric lunchtime delight, somehow found some room for more during our 8pm evening meal!

Day 7

Wednesday 28th December

Today was our last full day in sunny Portugal. After our customary 7.30am breakfast, we trundled out of the hotel at about 8.45am and bought some provisions for our picnic later. It was also an opportunity to purchase some fine Port for those who wished to take something back with them.

Our next venue was the salt pans near to Tavira and, although relatively quiet, we saw a fine array of waders which included several small flocks of Little Stints. Shelduck, Marsh Harrier, Caspian Tern, Bluethroat and lots of Black-winged Stilts provided evidence of the quality setting, and we played hide-and-seek with the local non-photogenic Sardinian Warblers!

After a couple of hours here it was back on to the A22 and we drove further east towards the Spanish border. Here we visited the nature reserve of Castro Marim Scanning here provided views of a couple of Ospreys, displaying Marsh Harriers, a large gathering of more Caspian Terns, and distant flocks of Spoonbills and Greater Flamingo. More waders included our only Curlew Sandpipers of the trip, and diligent observers picked out some wintering Eurasian Starlings.

We enjoyed our picnic lunch here in a peaceful setting and then it was time for our afternoon birding foray. As we left, a couple of close Iberian Hares were spotted nearby, one of them posing nicely.

We drove west towards Faro and Nuno skilfully navigated us around the myriad of roundabouts, fine lawns and big mansions of Quinta do Lago, to locate us close to the amazing freshwater lagoon adjacent to one of many local golf courses. Always a very special place, the water birds here are so used to seeing people at close range that they mostly ignored us. Very close views of Western Swamphen, Little Bittern, an array of ducks and Kingfisher were highlights for many, but the more distant Booted Eagles and flock of hirundines which included Barn Swallow, House Martin, Sand Martin, Red-rumped Swallow and Crag Martin were very special too. Iberian Magpies, Hoopoes, Cetti's Warbler, Glossy Ibis, Red-crested Pochard and even a Water Vole provided more diversity close at hand. Common Waxbills showed briefly as did a single Village Weaver and there were plenty of terrapins basking on the edge of the water.

We finally tore ourselves away from this bird extravaganza and took a gentle drive back to our hotel for the log call, evening meal and, of course, packing!

Day 8

Thursday 29th December

We said good-bye to our lovely hotel and left just after 8am, refuelled our minibuses and decanted at Faro Airport. Here we said our goodbyes to Nuno, and the rest of the day was all about returning home which seemed to go according to plan.

We left the Algarve under blue skies and sunshine, weather which had sustained us throughout. We notched up something like 144 bird species during our eventful and memorable week.

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Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only; M = male; F = female; ad = adult)

	Common name	Scientific name	December									
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
1	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>								✓		
2	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>								3		
3	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>					✓			✓		
4	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>					✓			✓		
5	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>					✓			✓		
6	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>					✓			✓		
7	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>					✓			✓		
8	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>						1M		1M		
9	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>						1F		✓		
10	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>								✓		
11	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>				2						
12	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		✓				10	✓	✓		
13	Balearic Shearwater	<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>		1		1						
14	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>						20		✓		
15	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>								1		
16	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>						6		4		
17	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	2	2	35	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	
18	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>						1		5/6		
19	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	5			1	1			30		
20	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>								2		
21	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
22	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2	✓		✓	✓			✓		
23	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓		✓	1			✓		
24	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓					
25	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>				1	1			✓		
26	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
27	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		1		1	1			2		
28	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	1			1	1					
29	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>			1		2			3		
30	Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>		2								
31	Spanish Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>							1			
32	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		2		1						
33	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		1			2/3			2		
34	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>							2			
35	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>							8			
36	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		4	✓	10	✓	✓	✓			
37	Great Bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>							50			
38	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		H						H		
39	Western Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>					2			14		
40	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		H		1	✓	1	✓			
41	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					✓			✓		
42	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>							300			
43	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓							5		
44	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>					4			✓		
45	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>								✓		
46	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					✓	✓				
47	European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>						30	40	20		

	Common name	Scientific name	December							28	29
			22	23	24	25	26	27			
48	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓	3		3			✓		
49	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	✓	2		3	✓		✓		
50	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	6						✓		
51	Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>						1			
52	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		5			✓		2		
53	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	✓				1		✓		
54	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	1				1		✓		
55	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	10						✓		
56	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	2						2		
57	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓			1	✓		✓		
58	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		1		4	1		2		
59	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>					1				
60	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		2			1	2			
61	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		6	2	6	4		2		
62	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	6				4		✓		
63	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	7								
64	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	✓				34		✓		
65	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>							12		
66	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	6				10		✓		
67	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
68	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>	✓	1			✓		✓		
69	Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus audouinii</i>	3 ad				1				
70	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
71	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
72	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	2						13		
73	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	✓				✓		✓		
74	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>				10					
75	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
76	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		H			1	3/4			
77	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
78	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>					H	H			
79	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>		1			1	4			
80	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1	1			3		3		
81	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		1			2	8	8		
82	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>			H						
83	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			✓	H					
84	Iberian Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus sharpei</i>			H			1			
85	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
86	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		5			3				
87	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>				2		✓	1		
88	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			✓	✓		3			
89	Iberian Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cooki</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
90	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>			1		2	2	4		
91	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>		52	2						
92	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>				3					
93	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>				1		✓			
94	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		2		3		5	1		
95	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>				6					
96	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>			✓	✓		✓			
97	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>			✓	✓		✓			
98	Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>		1							

	Common name	Scientific name	December							28	29
			22	23	24	25	26	27			
99	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
100	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>		✓			✓				
101	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>				7	1	4	2		
102	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		40		✓	✓	✓			
103	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1				3	1	20		
104	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>								30+	
105	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		50		6	30	1	1		
106	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>								3/4	
107	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>								30+	
108	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			✓						
109	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		4			2		1		
110	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
111	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
112	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
113	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>		1	6	4		1			
114	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
115	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			2	H					
116	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>			H	6					
117	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
118	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>								2	
119	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
120	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
121	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
122	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>		H			2		2		
123	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1		
124	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
125	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>		1	2						
126	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
127	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>		1M							
128	Village Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>								1	
129	Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓		
130	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			✓			✓			
131	Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>			4						
132	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		5	3	2	1				
133	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
134	Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>		1	2						
135	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
136	Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>					1				
137	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
138	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>		2	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
139	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
140	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
141	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		6	✓	1			1		
142	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		2+	2	✓		✓	✓		
143	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		2	4	✓	✓	✓	✓		
144	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>			1						

Mammals

1	Western Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>			✓					
2	Iberian Hare	<i>Lepus granatensis</i>					✓		✓	
3	Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>						2	2	

	Common name	Scientific name	December							
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
4	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>				1				
5	European Water Vole	<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>				1+				

Reptile & Amphibians

1	Terrapin sp.							1		
2	Lizard sp				1					

Butterflies

1	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
2	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>		✓			✓		✓	
3	Green-striped White	<i>Euchloe belemia</i>					✓			
4	Monarch	<i>Dabaus plexippus</i>			✓		✓			
5	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓		
6	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		✓				✓		
7	Wall Brown	<i>Lassiommata megera</i>					✓			

Other invertebrates

1	Praying Mantis sp			✓						
2	Millipede sp.							✓		

Notable Plants

1	Friar's Cowl	<i>Arisarum vulgare</i>		✓					✓	
2	Paperwhite Narcissus	<i>Narcissus papyraceus</i>		✓						



Sea-watch binoculars by Neil McMahon



White Stork by Neil McMahon