

Extremadura & Sepulveda

31.5-5.6 – 2008

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Griffon Vulture, Sepulveda, June 2008. Photo: Måns Grundsten.

Introduction

Extremadura and Spain is off course a fantastic birding destination and deserves a lot more attention than just two-three days. Going in early June was perfect considering the White-rumped Swifts had arrived and the Dupont's Lark at Sepulveda still performed, and all other birds were still in breeding plumage and the passerines sang. Besides the common itinerary my girlfriend and I added Tablas de Daimiel in Castilla La Mancha south of Madrid. I had ten targets and luckily saw all of these with at least one day to spare. Did most of the birding early morning and late evening while the days went to doing cultural activities etc. My targets were: Black Vulture, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Great Bustard, Little Bustard, Great Spotted Cuckoo, White-rumped Swift, Dupont's Lark, Dartford Warbler, and Azure-winged Magpie.

Literature

Collins Bird Guide, Svensson, Mullarney, Zetterström
A Birdwatching Guide to Extremadura, Muddeman (2000)
Crossbill - The Nature Guide to Extremadura (2006)
Map: Marco Polo, Spain-Portugal 1:300 000

Itinerary at a glance

31.5: Arrival at Barajas mid-day. Drive to Sepulveda and Parque Nacional de las Hoces del Rio Duraton. Afternoon and late evening visit.
1.6: Some rain during the morning hours. Drive via Segovia, Avila and Sierra de Gredos to Trujillo.
2.6: Parque Nacional du Monfragüe, evening visit to the Belen steppes.
3.6: Morning at the steppes between Trujillo and Caceres.
4.6: Morning at the Belen steppes. Drive to Daimiel (NE of Ciudad Real in Castilla La Mancha), evening visit to Parque Nacional de Las Tablas de Daimiel
5.6: Morning visit to Parque Nacional de Las Tablas de Daimiel, drive to Madrid where we stayed until

the 9th for a flight back to Stockholm via Frankfurt.

Sites visited

Sepulveda - Parque Nacional de las Hoces del Rio Duraton - Ermita de San Frutos

Well described site for Dupont's Lark some 2h north of Madrid. Ermita de San Frutos is an old monastery/church right on the cliffs at the magnificent canyon formed by Rio Duraton. Sepulveda is the closest town, where it's also possible to find accommodation. I only needed one afternoon - evening visit to find my targets here. The walk from the car park to Ermita de San Frutos provided me with nice views of at least two Dartford Warblers. This site should also be good for Western Orphea Warbler, which I didn't put any effort in finding. After dinner I went back to the semi-desert site between the dried riverbed and the carpark at Ermita de San Frutos. At sunset, around 10 pm, I heard two different Dupont's Larks sing. They sang for about 20 minutes and I got scope views of one of them on top of a small rock.

Directions: Drive to Sepulveda and pass the restaurant. Turn right to Urueñas. Drive c.5 km and turn left toward Castrillo de Sepulveda. Keep left toward Villaseca. As you reach Villaseca turn right immediately after the church. This road goes to Ermita de San Frutos. Between the dried riverbed and the parking lot is the best place for Dupont's Lark.

Monfragüe

My targets here were White-rumped Swift (two soaring above the Pena Falcon, seen from the Castillo) and Spanish Imperial Eagle (seen from the Castillo and at Tietar).



Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Caceres plains, June 2008. Photo: Måns Grundsten.

The steppes between Caceres and Trujillo

The best steppes, where I found all the specialities, were located at sites 5-10 in Map 10, Muddeman. These steppes are located along a northbound dirt-road some 2,5 km before the road from Santa Marta de Magasca reaches the N-251 toward Caceres. Along this dirt-road birding was great, and few vehicles present made stopping roadside a trouble-free action. In one morning visit I saw: Great Bustard 40, Little Bustard 1 (+ several heard), Pin-tailed Sandgrouse 2+3+1, Black-bellied Sandgrouse 1+2, Roller, Calandra Lark, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Montagu's Harrier, Stone-curlew. Most of these species can also be found at Belen plains. The most difficult species to find was suprisingly Little Bustard, the grass had grown tall on most places, I think that was the main reason. When I finally saw one male displaying at Belen last morning, I also heard the strange snoring call, and immediately realized I had been hearing Little Bustards at many more places before, not knowing it was Little Bustard. It seems like the Caceres steppes are more reliable for the Sandgrouses. Early morning is essential since the haze makes birding impossible later during the day.

Parque Nacional de las Tablas de Daimiel

Not originally planned into the itinerary, and not having heard any other birdwatchers going here, we tried this wetland site. Fortunately it had been some rain prior to our arrival meaning at least some water. At the park headquarters we obtained a straight-forward map of the surroundings. Basically three marked paths made their way through the surroundings. One of them (marked yellow) went straight out into the wetland with an extensive grid of well-maintained boardwalks. The second one (marked red) went to Laguna Permanente which was a small hide next to a river. I never tried the blue route. Best birds seen were many Savi's, Moustached and Great Reed Warblers, two Gull-billed Terns, a fly-by Collared Pratincole, and two nice Pin-tailed Sandgrouse took off from a bank close to Laguna Permanente early morning. Also seen were a few Iberian Green Woodpeckers, Kentish and Common Ringed Plovers. There were at least five different hotels in Daimiel and outskirts. Most of them were actually fully booked although this was not a holiday season. And we were forced to choose a terrible motel just outside the town centre.

Directions: Tablas de Daimiel is clearly signed from Daimiel and also from the A43 and 430 highways. The park headquarter is situated at the eastern parts of the national park, which is around 10 km west-northwest of Daimiel.

List of bird-species observed in Spain 31.5-5.6, 2008

Total: 121 species

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

4f Tablas de Daimiel 4-5.6.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Seen daily.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

1 Velada 1.6, a few Caceres-Trujillo 2-4.6.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*



Booted Eagle, Sepulveda, June 2008. Photo: Måns Grundsten

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

1 Tablas de Daimiel 4-5.6.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

At nest at Pena Falcon and at Tietar

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*
 1 just south of Velada which is west of Talavera de la Reina (along E90) 1.6.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*

Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*
 Around 6 seen in Monfrague 2.6.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*
 1 Sierra de Gredos 1.6, 1 Monfragüe 2.6, 2 between Trujillo and Monroy 3.6.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*
 30 Trujillo-Caceres steppes 3.6.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti*
 1 ad Castillo Monfrague 2.6, 1 ad Tietar 2.6.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
 1 subad Tietar 2.6.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*
 Seen at Trujillo.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*
 Several at Tablas de Daimiel 4-5.6.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Common Coot *Fulica atra*



Great Spotted Cuckoo, Caceres plains, June 2008. Photo: Måns Grundsten.

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*
 1 seen in flight on the steppes NE of Caceres 3.6, 3+1+2 seen at Belen 4.6, many displaying males heard.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*
 c.40 Belen 2&4.6. c.40 NE Caceres 3.6.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*
 8 Tablas de Daimiel 4-5.6.

Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oedicnemus*

8 NE Caceres 3.6, 3 Belen 4.6.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

1 Tablas de Daimiel 5.6.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

1 Rio Almonte, Monroy 3.6.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

2 Tablas de Daimiel 5.6. Strange. What did two Common Ringed Plovers do in the middle of Spain in early June?

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

1 male at Tablas de Daimiel 5.6.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

1 Tablas de Daimiel 5.6.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

3 Tablas de Daimiel 4.6.

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*

2 Tablas de Daimiel 5.6.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

1 NE Caceres 3.6.

Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*

1+2 NE Caceres 3.6.

Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata*

2+3+1 NE Caceres 3.6, 2 Tablas de Daimiel 5.6.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Common Wood-Pigeon *Columba palumbus*



Habitat for Dupont's Lark, Sepulveda, June 2008. Photo: Måns Grundsten.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*

2 1y S of Velada 1.6, 5 SW of Santa Marta de Magasca 3.6, 2 NW of Santa Marta de Magasca 3.6, 3 at Emb. de Guadiloba 3.6.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

1 Sepulveda, 1 Belen, 1 Trujillo, 1 Caceres-Trujillo steppes.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

10 Pena Falcon 2.6.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

A few positively identified among Common Swifts in Trujillo and Caceres.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer*

2 scoped soaring at Pena Falcon from Castillo Monfragüe.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

1 Tablas de Daimiel 5.6.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Many seen. A colony seen between Monroy and Caceres.

Eurasian Roller *Coracias garrulus*

1 at Velada 1.6. At least 2-3 pairs NE Caceres 3.6.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upopa epops*

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis sharpei*

1 Sierra de Gredos 1.6, 3 Tablas de Daimiel 5.6.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

1 Sierra de Gredos 1.6.

Dupont's Lark *Chersophilus duponti*

2 at Sepulveda 1.6.

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*



Blue Rock Thrush, Parque Natural de Monfragüe, June 2008. Photo: Måns Grundsten

Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae*

Seen at Sepulveda and Belen.

Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris*

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava iberiae*

1 Sierra de Gredos 2.6.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

1 Segovia 2.6.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

1 Sierra de Gredos 2.6.
European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*
Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
1 Sierra de Gredos 2.6.
Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*
Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
1 at Sierra de Gredos 1.6.
Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*
Sepulveda and Trujillo-Caceres.
Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*
2 at Monfragüe 2.6.
Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*
Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*
1 Sierra de Gredos 2.6.
Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*
1 at Sepulveda 31.5, 5 at Tablas de Daimiel 4-5.6.
Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*
Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*
c. 10-15 Tablas de Daimiel 4-5.6.
Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*
c. 5 Tablas de Daimiel 5.6.
Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*
Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*
2 Sepulveda 31.5.
Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*
1 Monfragüe 2.6.
Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*
1 E Trujillo 4.6.
Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*
1 Sierra de Gredos 1.6.
Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*
Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*
1 Sierra de Gredos 1.6.
Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*
Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus iberiae*
Crested Tit *Parus cristatus*
Coal Tit *Parus ater*
Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*
Great Tit *Parus major*
Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*
1 Sierra de Gredos 1.6.
Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*
Monfragüe and Belen.
Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*
Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*
Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*
Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*
Commonly seen at Sepulveda and Trujillo-Monfragüe.
Magpie *Pica pica*
Red-billed Chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*
Many at Sepulveda 31.5.
Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
Common Raven *Corvus corax*
Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor*
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

2 at Tietar 2.6.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Serín *Serinus serinus*

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*



Savi's Warbler, Parque Nacional de Las Tablas de Daimiel, June 2008. Photo: Måns Grundsten.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*

Sierra de Gredos and Monfragüe.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

1 Tablas de Daimiel 4.6.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

This report was compiled by Måns Grundsten: m.grundsten@spray.se
