

# Saint Cyprien, France - 15-22 August 2010

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St Cyprien is a small village situated by the Mediterranean coast near Perpignan in the French county Roussillon. I spent a week here in August to play tennis at the UCPA centre in Les Capellans. I brought my bins and between the other activities I managed to squeeze in a few walks, including two brief visits with our rented car to Etang de Canet a few kilometers north on the way to Canet. The days were generally dry and very hot, up to 35 degrees, so birds were mostly active only the first hour after dawn. Decent light were had from around 6.45 in the morning and it became dark around 8 pm. Many birds were juveniles and the adults were often in heavy moult. Not much singing this time of the year, although e.g. a few orioles and treecreepers were sometimes heard singing the first morning hour. I did not do any research before going so there may be much better places to go nearby, especially if you have time to go a bit further south where the mountains near the Spanish border soon appear. Nonetheless these few notes could give the holiday visitor with interest in birds a hint on what to expect in the post-breeding season in the area.

Map 1. Etang de Canet where I visited the area around the canal.

Map 2. Les Capellans where I stayed at the UCPA centre and made a few walks to a forested area just east of the centre and to some open areas and fields and forested places southwards as indicated.



## Days with birding

Tue 17/8. Morning walk from UCPA centre in Capellans south along open area a couple kilometers.

Wed 18/8. Afternoon walk in a forested area just east of the UCPA centre along the water.

Thur 19/8. Morning along the thin land strip between the sea and Etang de Canet just south of Canet (a few kilometers north of St Cyprien along the coast). Thereafter a short walk in

the fields and forested areas near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech.

Sat 21/8. In the morning, a second visit along the thin land strip between the sea and Etang de Canet just south of Canet. Thereafter a short visit to the fields and forested areas near the beach and Aqualand south of the UCPA centre.

Evening walk in the open area south of the UCPA centre and the forested area by the water east of the UCPA centre.

### Notes on the birds seen

**Great Cormorant**, *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Several Etang de Canet both visits.

Grey Heron, *Ardea cinerea*. Several flying at dusk in St Cyprien and recorded around Etang de Canet.

**Little Egret**, *Egretta garzetta*, Some 10 birds in total during two visits to Etang de Canet.

**Greater Flamingo**, *Phoenicopterus roseus*. 100+ seen at great distance in Etang de Canet.

**Mallard**, *Anas platyrhynchos*. Several Etang de Canet, also seen a few times St Cyprien.

**Kestrel**, *Falco tinnunculus*. About 5 birds around St Cyprien and Canet.

**Common Pheasant**, *Phasianus colchicus*. One heard calling a few times one morning near the canal by Etang de Canet.

**Eurasian Coot**, *Fulica atra*. Perhaps 40+ seen at great distance in Etang de Canet.

**Common Ringed Plover**, *Charadrius hiaticula*. Two in the canal between Etang de Canet and the ocean.

**Kentish Plover**, *Charadrius alexandrinus*. More than 100 in the canal between Etang de Canet and the ocean on both visits.



Large flock of Kentish Plovers in the small canal between Etang de Canet and the Mediterranean sea.

**Eurasian Curlew**, *Numenius arquata*, 1+1 in the canal between Etang de Canet and the ocean.

**Common Greenshank**, *Tringa nebularia*, A single bird in the canal between Etang de Canet and the ocean.

**Common Sandpiper**, *Actitis hypoleucos*, 2+1+5 in and near the canal between Etang de Canet and the ocean on two visits.

**Curlew Sandpiper**, *Calidris ferruginea*. An adult bird in the canal between Etang de Canet and the ocean.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**, *Larus fuscus graellsii*. 2-3 adults near the canal between Etang de Canet and the ocean. Possibly a bit overlooked.

**Yellow-legged Gull**, *Larus (argentatus) michahellis*. Common and seen daily.

**Black-headed Gull**, *Larus ridibundus*. Fairly common, seen daily.

**Feral Pigeon**, *Columba livia*. Widespread.

**Wood Pigeon**, *Columba palumbus*. Common and widespread.

**Turtle Dove**, *Streptopelia turtur*. In total 4-5 seen in flight, most in the fields and forested areas near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech.

**Collared Dove**, *Streptopelia decaocto*. Common and widespread.

**Tawny Owl**, *Strix aluco*, Heard from the garden at the UCPA centre in St Cyprien on two separate nights. Very vocal, possibly more than one bird.

**Alpine Swift**, *Apus melba*. 1 heavily moulting seen with bee-eaters in the fields near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech.

**Common Swift**, *Apus apus*. Tricky because of the presence of also the next species, but several identified among several flocks with swifts seen over grasslands south of the UCPA centre.

**Pallid Swift**, *Apus pallidus*. A few identified in the several flocks with swifts seen over the grasslands south of the UCPA centre.



*Pallid Swift over fields south of the UCPA centre.*

**Bee-eater**, *Merops apiaster*. Fairly common in the area. Most birds seen in the fields and forested areas near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech, but also seen and heard several times closer to St Cyprien.

**Hoopoe**, *Upupa epops*. 1+2 near the UCPA centre, 1 Etang de Canet.

**Green Woodpecker**, *Picus viridis*, Several around Grand stade and the UCPA centre. Also noted on the walk southwards.

**Crested Lark**, *Galerida cristata*. A probable family group of 3-4 birds seen on two visits in the open area south of the UCPA.

**Barn Swallow**, *Hirundo rustica*, Common and widespread.

**House Martin**, *Delichon urbicum*. Some 10 birds seen on one of the walks south of the UCPA centre.

**(Crag Martin**, *Hirundo rupestris*. Seen at the Girona airport north of Barcelona.)

**White Wagtail**, *Motacilla alba*. A total of some 15 birds seen at most places visited.

**Firecrest**, *Regulus ignicapilla*. 2 in the forested area by the water east of the UCPA centre.

**Wren**, *Troglodytes troglodytes*. One bird singing behind the tennis courts in Les Capellans one morning.

**Blackbird**, *Turdus merula*. A total of 10 birds around St Cyprien, some heavily moulting.

**Zitting Cisticola**, *Cisticola juncidis*. Some 5 birds seen singing in fields and grassland on the walks south of the UCPA centre.

**Cetti's Warbler**, *Cettia cetti*. 1 singing in the fields near the beach south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech.

**Reed Warbler**, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*, 3-5 seen in reeds near the beach south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech.

**Melodious Warbler**, *Hippolais polyglotta*. One seen in feeding in a tree in the forested areas near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech.

**Chiffchaff**, *Phylloscopus collybita*, 4-5 birds in the forested areas near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech. Some were calling and sounded like *collybita* rather than *ibericus*.

**Blackcap**, *Sylvia atricapilla*. About 5 birds seen around St Cyprien. Poor views of a probable silent Sardinian Warbler near the beach was the only other *Sylvia* warbler encountered.

**Spotted Flycatcher**, *Muscicapa striata*. In total 5 birds seen on single occasions in forest and parkland around St Cyprien.

**European Pied Flycatcher**, *Ficedula hypoleuca*. At least 10 in parkland around St Cyprien and the forested area near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech.

**Common Nightingale**, *Luscinia megarhynchos*. Fairly common with at least 20 birds seen, none singing and some heavily moulting. Surprisingly easy to get good views of.

**Black Redstart**, *Phoenicurus ochruros*. One male seen several times at the UCPA centre.

**Long-tailed Tit**, *Aegithalos caudatus*. Flocks of some 10 birds seen 3 times around St Cyprien. Great Tit, *Parus major*. Fairly common, at least 15 seen.

**Blue Tit**, *Parus caeruleus*. Two together near the UCPA centre.

**Short-toed Treecreeper**, *Certhia brachydactyla*. One of few passerines that were heard singing a few times. 4-5 in total seen and heard.

**Golden Oriole**, *Oriolus oriolus*. At least 10 in parkland around St Cyprien and the forested area near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech. Heard singing a few mornings.

**Red-backed Shrike**, *Lanius collurio*. A juvenile seen in the open area south of the UCPA centre on one evening.

**Eurasian Jay**, *Garrulus glandarius*. 4-5 in the forested area near the beach and Aqualand south of Chemin de la Batterie du Tech.

**Common Magpie**, *Pica pica*. Common around St Cyprien.

**Common Starling**, *Sturnus vulgaris*. Common and widespread, big flocks seen several times.

**House Sparrow**, *Passer domesticus*. Fairly common.

**Tree Sparrow**, *Passer montanus*. Common.

**Greenfinch**, *Carduelis chloris*. 3-4 by the tenniscourts on one occasion was the only sighting.

**Goldfinch**, *Carduelis carduelis*. Common around St Cyprien.

**Serin**, *Serinus serinus*. 1+2+5 seen in open areas on the walks south of the UCPA centre.

**Cirl Bunting**, *Emberiza cirlus*. 1+4+1+1 in open areas south of the UCPA centre and further down to the beach, including a singing male.

**Corn Bunting**, *Emberiza calandra*. 1 near the canal by Etang de Canet.

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*Corn Bunting south of Canet*