



Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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**Languedoc
25 April – 2 May 2013**

Holiday participants

John Rumpus and Rosemary Macdonald
George Malcolm and Sonia Donaghy
Charles and Sylvia Morgan
Margaret Dixey
Julia Maynard and Gill Page

From the Salisbury & District Natural History Society:
Barbara Carter, Brenda Davis, Stan Lovett, Ailsa McKee, Ray Witt

Leaders

Derek Moore and Rob Macklin

Report by Rob Macklin

Photos by John Rumpus, all taken during the holiday week.
Cover: Top – rock sparrow, *Tragapogon hybridum*, black-winged stilt.
Middle – view of Minerve from near La Caunette.
Bottom – early spider orchid, greater flamingo, rosy garlic.
Below: the group and leaders at the Chateau gates.

Our hosts at the Château de Siran: Gérard and Nadège Blet.
www.Château-de-siran.com



This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The conservation contribution of £40 per person, supplemented by gift aid, meant we were able to donate 790 euros to the local group of LPO, La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, the French BirdLife Partner.

An additional donation of €2000 was made to LPO in June 2013, linked to our holidays in the Dordogne, Camargue and French Pyrenees and combined. This gives a running total for donations to LPO of £19,876 since 1991.

As at June 2013, the total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 was £89,420.

DAILY DIARY

April 25th – To France

Our Ryanair flight from Stansted was a little delayed but flying at 33,000 ft in our Boeing 737-800 we arrived on time at Carcassone. During an initial hold-up at the airport, awaiting Derek's arrival, we saw a black kite over the town and a hoopoe fly across the car park. Most of the group saw a sub-adult male marsh harrier hunting over the airport while a lucky few got a brief glimpse of a swallowtail butterfly. Plants on display included the bright yellow urospermum, slender thistle, wild clary, plus both long-headed and common poppy. After Derek's arrival we quickly loaded up the minibuses and sped off to Siran. After coffee, drinks and cake at our hotel, Le Château de Siran, we headed up to an area of garrigue overlooking the Cesse gorge.



Blue and yellow forms of dwarf iris and Pyrenean snakeshead fritillaries.

The plants in this area really took the eye, with carpets of blue and yellow varieties of dwarf iris, large numbers of the stunning Pyrenean snakeshead fritillary and a small area of wild tulips. On the rocks and walls we found rue-leaved saxifrage, rusty-back fern and black spleenwort. As the group wondered what to look at next, a couple of cuckoos called, nightingales sang from the thick scrub and a distant orphean warbler burst into song. Temperatures around 20°C tempted out a few butterflies including small white, Portuguese dappled white, wall brown and two stunning Cleopatras. We then set up the telescopes on a distant golden eagle nest on the cliffs (sadly not in use this year) but were intrigued to see the size of the nest. Two large birds of prey way off in the distance were probably short-toed eagles, but we could not be sure.

Moving back down towards the road, we pulled off the track to look for orchids. This area proved productive, turning up many specimens of both early spider and yellow bee orchids. We also found sword-leaved helleborines in flower plus three lady orchids about to come out. To cap a fine afternoon out in the garrigue, a male Montagu's harrier flew over, John found two serins together in a black pine and on the way back to Siran we spotted blue aphyllanthes and carpets of lady orchid in flower on the roadside.

After a delicious evening meal complete with excellent local wines, Derek gave an introductory talk about the area and its wildlife to a background chorus provided by the local marsh frogs.

April 26th – Minerve, Cesse & Brian Gorges

Light overnight rain had ceased by dawn and skies were grey but there was little wind and promise of an improvement later in the day. Rock sparrows, black redstarts, swifts and house martins were seen around the Château after breakfast and a migrating Montagu's harrier flew north. After a short detour to the pharmacy at Olonzac we made our way to the Cathar stronghold of Minerve. We parked the buses overlooking the town before making our way down to the centre. We didn't make a great deal of progress as the plants growing in such profusion took all of our attention. However, Derek soon found a splendid male blue rock thrush singing on the cliffs and two house martins were soon joined by four red-rumped swallows and two alpine swifts, with the ever-attendant nightingales singing in the background.

The banks alongside the road were festooned with plants, highlighted by shepherd's needle, both Italian and Nottingham catchfly, white rampion fumitory, star clover and the stunning blue bearded iris.



Red-rumped swallows in Minerve.

As we reached the centre of Minerve, Charles quickly located a Bonelli's warbler in a fig tree and at least 20 red-rumped swallows were in flight around the viaduct. Three of these delightful birds then perched up on TV aerials giving us all superb close-up views. Walking down towards the river we encountered a single grey wagtail, two white wagtails and several crag martins gathering mud for their nests in the nearby caves. The plants were not left out as we soon identified white henbane and rosemary growing out of the limestone rocks, greater celandine and French lavender on the valley floor, a glorious Judas tree in full bloom and several magnificent specimens of tree mallow. On the way back up through the town, rock sparrows and black redstarts were singing from the rooftops.

We had our packed lunch in a meadow not far from Minerve but briefly stopped off at a known peregrine nest to see if the birds were there. No luck on that score but we did add amelanchier, horseshoe vetch and tassel hyacinth to an ever growing plant list. Our lunch spot overlooked a meadow sporting some 2,000 green-winged orchids in full flower – an amazing sight. The electric fence around the meadow looked to have denied us access but Rob put his coat on the wires allowing us to get really close for some great photographs.



Green-winged orchid, Provence orchid and rampion fumitory.

After lunch we moved on to Boissot church. Here a song thrush was in full song, a large array of bearded irises were in flower alongside the church wall and several Montpellier maples were flowering. Our next stop was another open area of garrigue where we discovered a mass of early purple, green-winged and early spider orchids all growing together, then another smaller patch of the yellow Provence orchid. Meanwhile, a woodlark sang overhead and a cuckoo flew over. As we drove back towards Minerve, we stopped at a high point for a photo opportunity. We soon found yet more plants including one patch of shrubby gromwell, a splendid clump of blue aphyllanthes and yet more yellow bee and early spider orchids.

April 27th – Étang de Vendres & Gruissan

John joined Rob on a pre-breakfast walk to the outskirts of Siran in breezy, overcast conditions. A female Montagu's harrier was hunting over the vineyards, making a fine start to the day. A pair of kestrels flew out of a partially completed building but the highlight of the morning was a superb male golden oriole in flight, then singing in a nearby wood. A woodlark was in full song high over the vineyards and the morning walk was completed by good views of a hoopoe.

After another hearty breakfast we boarded the buses for the hour long drive to the Étang de Vendres. By the time we arrived, so had the wind and rain so the planned watch over the huge reedbed was quickly abandoned for a more sheltered location.

We parked the buses up by the lagoons at Pissevache and turned our attention to the wading birds. At least 19 avocets were feeding unconcernedly in the shallows along with many, extremely elegant, black-winged stilts. A curlew sandpiper in full summer plumage was a really good find and was feeding with 24 ringed plovers and 33 Kentish plovers. The birds kept on coming as six greater flamingos in one of the lagoons included two fine adults keeping company with two greenshanks, two common sandpipers and an amazing 200 Sandwich terns. Two marsh harriers were hunting low over the nearby reeds and 20 cattle egrets were feeding around several horses in the nearby paddocks.



One of the white storks nesting in the reedbed near Gruissan.

After stopping for very welcome coffees and hot chocolates at Narbonne Plage, we moved on to Gruissan. The lagoons here turned up another nine greater flamingos and six black-winged stilts and the rain was beginning to abate at last! Before lunch we looked for black-eared wheatears in a nearby vineyard and were delighted to find a pair feeding on the ground, along with two whinchats. The male then perched up in full view giving the group excellent views, and two red-legged partridges and several linnets were also found.

We had our lunch on picnic tables under the pines on the outskirts of Gruissan, tucking in to our usual fare of French sticks, salads, paté, eggs, cheese and fruit. New plants here included the delightful galactites, small medick and rafts of fodder vetch. In the scrub, two whitethroats and a Sardinian warbler chattered away unceasingly. After lunch we took the buses down a track through saltmarsh to look for waders and were pleasantly surprised to find three spotted redshanks on one of the pools with at least 18 greenshanks. Two of the redshanks were in full blackish summer plumage, hence the name 'dusky redshanks'. Two purple herons were another highlight here, flushed from the saltmarsh and giving us great views.

Our next stop was at a very large reedbed which we were able to skirt in the buses while looking in. The highlight here was a pair of white storks feeding out in the open and nesting in nearby trees, plus another purple heron. We also saw our first coypus here, plus hunting black kite and marsh harriers. Our final destination of the day was the Gruissan saltworks where the group explored the museum and art gallery. Across the road lay another vineyard (what do they do with all this wine?) where a pair of black redstarts and a wheatear were feeding. Rough ground on the edge also proved productive with over 100 yellow bee orchids in flower, bringing an end to another good day.

April 28th – St. Pons de Mauchien, Bessan & Étang de Vendres

A long drive this morning to our first port of call at St. Pons de Mauchien which hosts 100 breeding



Lesser kestrels at St. Pons de Mauchien.

pairs of lesser kestrels. Grey yet bright skies greeted us as we arrived at the town and our attention was immediately taken by a soaring short-toed eagle over the car park, quite a start to the day. We walked up to the impressive church which gave great views across the town and, more importantly, excellent views of some 20 lesser kestrels, the males looking particularly sleek with their blue heads and bright brown unspotted mantles. To cap it all, a singing black redstart perched up right over our heads and a hoopoe landed on a nearby roof, throwing his head back as he burst into song.

We then headed south to grasslands around Bessan, primarily to look for little bustards. As we clambered out of the buses a shout went up as two great spotted cuckoos flew low over the treetops before quickly disappearing out of sight. A male Montagu's harrier was hunting over the grassland and then we saw our first little bustards. Two males flew round and round quivering their wings in display flight and showing their large white wing patches to great effect – magnificent! Derek thought he heard a stone-curlew in the distance so we drove on to a freshly ploughed area, immediately flushing three stone-curlews. Careful searching of this area revealed two more birds here and the group was able to get excellent views through the scopes. An area of scrub and grassland turned up some excellent plants including over 100 long-lipped tongue orchids growing with more green-winged orchids, tassel hyacinths and the delightful Jersey toadflax.

The weather continued cloudy and cool but without any rain so we were able to have our picnic lunch on the edge of Beziers airport. Scores of hirundines and swifts were searching for insects overhead and the flock included a splendid red-rumped swallow. Yet more little bustards were seen on the airfield, in flight and on the ground, but the avian highlight here was a short-toed eagle perched up in an Italian cypress. More flowers were also found here including bladder campion and the strikingly colourful purple viper's bugloss and Italian bugloss.

As we were in the general area, we paid another visit to at Pissevache. This turned out to be an inspired choice as the lagoons were alive with feeding terns. Out in the bay were 130 Sandwich terns and these were joined by four common terns, three little terns and an amazing migrant Caspian tern, its massive red bill showing up perfectly through the telescopes. As if this was not enough, more tern activity on the landward side comprised 10 whiskered terns and 12 absolutely stunning white-winged black terns in full summer plumage – a glorious sight. After this excitement it turned decidedly cooler in the wind, so we headed for home. On the way back we drove through an area of flooded fields by Capestang where we unexpectedly encountered an Egyptian goose and some 20 wood sandpipers.

April 29th – Leucate, Peyriac de Mer and Bages

The promise of rain throughout the day did little to dampen our spirits as we left the Château in dry overcast conditions. As we departed, a male Montagu's harrier flew over, with another seen on the outskirts of Siran. As we neared the Leucate area the rain began to fall and unfortunately hardly stopped all day! However we were determined to press on, and drove along the beach at Leucate looking for waders. This area was rather quiet but did turn up 10 black-winged stilts, two Kentish plovers and a new species in the shape of two oystercatchers. Bright yellow-horned poppies were in flower here along with the alien Hottentot fig. We then drove up to the Cap de Leucate but were beaten back by driving rain and strong winds. To warm up we had coffees and hot chocolates at one of the few open bars.

The rain then abated for a while so we looked at a small nearby marsh. Five shovelers quickly flew off as we entered the site, seven greater flamingos flew over and we inadvertently flushed a snipe, wood sandpiper and several yellow wagtails. Masses of white henbane festooned the banks, growing with blue houndstongue and banks of thistles. Two large brown warblers diving into cover turned out to be great reed warblers and a Cetti's warbler uttered a brief burst of song.

At Peyriac de Mer, two great crested grebes were out on the lake and Ray found asparagus fern growing on the banks. Our proposed lunch spot was under the cover of pines trees but as we encountered a fierce thunderstorm, torrential rain and lightning it was time to beat a hasty retreat. We headed back to Siran via the lakes at Bages where we found more birds in the shape of 41 greater flamingos, four Kentish plovers and a great white egret.

Back at the Château, tea and cakes were laid on by Nadège to warm us up after an eventful day.

April 30th – Bages, Cap de Leucate, La Franqui & Narbonne reedbed.

Another grey start to the day but the promise of better weather made us change our itinerary and revisit the Leucate area, particularly the Cap de Leucate. Our first stop was at Bages where we found 19 greater flamingos, three great crested grebes and three avocets, while scores of swifts and hirundines were feeding low over the lagoons. We moved on to the beach at Leucate where nine little terns were roosting on a sandy spit while black-winged stilts and Kentish plovers were feeding in the shallows. Our main aim of the day was to fully explore the Cap de Leucate and we arrived in overcast yet bright conditions, a vast improvement on the previous day. We explored the open rocky area



Black-eared wheatear.

behind the lighthouse, soon turning up a good range of migrants including 16 wheatears, a whinchat, four whitethroats, a garden warbler, three willow warblers and two pied flycatchers. A wryneck was seen briefly on the track by Derek but it soon disappeared from view. We had excellent views of a tawny pipit and especially four black-eared wheatears, the two males in their superb bright ochre, black and gold spring colours. A nice surprise was a spotless starling in the same bush as a Sardinian warbler. Many of the plants here had yet to come into flower but we did find blue aphyllanthes, rosy garlic, small salsify and plentiful cneorum, a strange small shrub sprouting a mass of yellow flowers.

After a picnic lunch at Leucate we moved on to an open scrubby area by La Franqui where the sun finally burst through at 2:30pm! This area is dominated by tamarisk scrub and soon began to prove its worth with at least eight whinchats perched up in full view, six wheatears on the sandy ground, good views of a crested lark plus male and female pied flycatchers. Two hoopoes then showed themselves, two Mediterranean gulls flew over calling loudly "mou mou," but the highlight was three bee-eaters flying low over the trees. Sonia and George were fortunate enough to get a picture of one perched up in a dead tree. The sun and welcome warmth finally brought out a few butterflies, with Ray spotting both painted lady and dingy skipper, while the rest of the group saw brown argus and southern speckled wood. As we walked back to the buses we were treated to excellent views of a cuckoo and a hoopoe perched out in the open on fence posts.

Our last stop was at a small reedbed near Narbonne, recently created as compensatory habitat for losses in the area. It was extremely muddy here after the recent heavy rain, but in true Honeyguide spirit the group battled through! Two pairs of marsh harriers were hunting over the reeds, reed warblers sang from dense cover and we managed to find a great reed warbler perched up on the reeds. Four eagles then drifted across the site together and the consensus was that they were short-toed eagles. A new plant here, growing along the reed edge, was a birthwort with blackish trumpet flowers – *Aristolochia pistolochia*. When we arrived back at the Château we all deposited our muddy boots by the kitchen storerooms to dry out and be cleaned later.

May 1st – The Corbières

Mayday dawned with overcast skies but several of us took a pre-breakfast walk to the outskirts of Siran. Two hoopoes were calling as we left the Château and the ever-present black redstarts and rock sparrow were on nearby roofs. As we reached the outskirts of the village a little owl was briefly seen on a deserted building. Several nightingales were in full song and we were able to see one singing right out in the open. A male Montagu's harrier was again hunting over the vineyards, a buzzard was perched sentinel-like on a fence post and a short-toed eagle drifted low over the fields. Two woodlarks were singing high in the sky and their song at the same time as the many nightingales was a joy to hear! Returning to the Château we were amazed to see three stunning male golden orioles flying through, probably on their way to their breeding grounds in central France.

A fairly long drive today, south into the heart of the Corbières, and in bright sunshine with temperatures around the 20°C mark. Our first stop was at the base of a gorge where six alpine swifts and three crag martins were buzzing around the cliffs. The ever-present nightingales were in full song but our attention was quickly turned to a bright, male blue rock thrush on the overhanging rocks. As the day warmed up, many butterflies took to the air and we were treated to our first sightings of Bath white, clouded yellow, holly blue, a bright yellow male Cleopatra on oil-seed rape and a female brimstone laying her eggs on the lush vegetation. New plants here included thyme broomrape growing on the roadside, annual scorpion vetch and star-of-Bethlehem.

Moving on, we stopped at a large area of stunning lady orchids, growing in their thousands in this area of the Corbières. As the cameras were clicking away, Sonia found a fresh specimen of sombre bee orchid and a new butterfly appeared in the shape of the delicate baton blue. Our lunch stop was under the cliffs at Peyrepertuse where paragliding was in full swing off the high cliffs, though this did not seem to bother a hunting male kestrel. The ground around us was festooned with hoary rock-rose, the bright blue Nice milkwort was in flower on the edge of the scrub and John found a male subalpine warbler chattering away in the bushes. Our last port of call was at a vulture feeding station in the far west of the Corbières. When we arrived we found a group of Danish bird watchers already in position to see the vultures and as we disembarked from the bus we found green hairstreak and dingy skipper butterflies. As we climbed the bank to get a good view of the landscape and the feeding station, a small dark falcon appeared behind us. This turned out to be a male red-footed falcon, a rare visitor to this area, and he delighted us by acrobatically catching insects in the air. Birds then started appearing from everywhere and included four ravens, a short-toed eagle, two buzzards and a superb pale-phase booted eagle. A hobby then dashed across the skies and a jay called from the woods but the real highlight was the sight of 39 griffon vultures circling the feeding station, some coming in very low, but not actually coming down to the food, with several perched up on nearby rocks surveying the scene – a fantastic end to a superb last full day in the Languedoc.



Rob presents Honeyguide's cheque to LPO representative Alain-Jean.

In the evening we were joined by Alain-Jean Loiseau and two colleagues from LPO for dinner, when we presented a cheque for 790 euros from the Honeyguide group. Gérard, in his usual way, announced the menu before yet another superb meal prepared by Nadège and her staff.

May 2nd – Carcassone & UK

An early breakfast and sunny weather for our departure and there was just time for a group photo at the Château gates. It had been a really good first ever Honeyguide trip to the Languedoc although we were unlucky with the very unusual wet and cool weather. Nonetheless the group had a great holiday and will treasure fond memories of this area of southern France. During the week we noted 126 bird species, 22 butterfly species, and compiled a comprehensive plant list.

SPECIES LISTS

BIRDS

Great crested grebe	2 at Peyriac sur Mer on Apr 29 th & 3 at Bages on Apr 30 th .
Cormorant	Peak of 22 at La Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Cattle egret	20 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Little egret	Widespread & common in the wetland areas.
Great white egret	One at Gruissan on Apr 27 th & one at Bages on Apr 29 th .
Grey heron	Peak of 6 at Étang de Vendres & Gruissan on Apr 27 th .
Purple heron	3 at Gruissan on Apr 27 th , one at Étang de Vendres on Apr 28 th & one at Narbonne on Apr 30 th .
White stork	Two at the reedbed by Gruissan on Apr 27 th & 5 in the Bages area on Apr 30 th .
Greater flamingo	Peak of 41 in the Bages area on Apr 29 th .
Egyptian goose	One by Capestang on Apr 28 th .
Shelduck	Widespread & common in the wetland areas.
Gadwall	Peak of 6 at Étang de Vendres & Gruissan on Apr 27 th .
Mallard	Widespread & common in the wetland areas.
Shoveler	5 at La Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Tufted duck	Pair at Étang de Vendres on Apr 28 th .
Black kite	Peak of four on way to St.Pons De Mauchien on Apr 28 th .
Griffon vulture	39 at the Corbières feeding station on May 1 st .
Short-toed eagle	Peak of 4 at Narbonne on Apr 30 th .
Marsh harrier	Peak of 4 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th & Narbonne on Apr 30 th .
Montagu's harrier	Regularly seen especially around Siran & Bessan.
Sparrowhawk	One from the bus on Apr 30 th .
Common buzzard	Peak of three at the Corbières on May 1 st .
Booted eagle	Pale phase bird high over feeding station in Corbières on May 1 st .
Lesser kestrel	At least 20 at St.Pons De Mauchien on Apr 28 th .
Common kestrel	Widespread & relatively common.
Red-footed Falcon	Male near feeding station in Corbières on May 1 st .
Hobby	One over feeding station in Corbières on May 1 st .
Red-legged partridge	Peak of 3 at Gruissan on Apr 27 th .
Moorhen	Widespread & common in the wetland areas.
Coot	Widespread & common in the wetland areas.
Little bustard	Minimum of 8 at Bessan on Apr 28 th .
Oystercatcher	2 at Leucate beach on Apr 29 th .
Black-winged stilt	Peak of 20 at Étang de Vendres & Gruissan on Apr 27 th .
Avocet	Peak of 19 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Stone curlew	5 at Bessan on Apr 28 th .
Ringed plover	24 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Kentish plover	Peak of 33 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Curlew sandpiper	One in summer plumage at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Common snipe	One at La Franqui on Apr 29 th .
Redshank	Peak of 3 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 28 th .
Spotted redshank	3 at Gruissan on Apr 27 th .
Greenshank	Peak of 18 at Gruissan on Apr 27 th .
Wood sandpiper	10 at Gruissan on Apr 27 th & 20 at Capestang on Apr 28 th .
Green sandpiper	One at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Common sandpiper	2 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Mediterranean gull	2 at La Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Black-headed gull	Widespread & common at coastal areas.
Slender-billed gull	One at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Yellow-legged gull	Widespread & common at coastal areas.
Caspian tern	One at Étang de Vendres on Apr 28 th .
Sandwich tern	Peak of 200 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Common tern	4 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 28 th .
Little tern	3 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 28 th & 9 at Leucate beach on Apr 30 th .

White-winged black tern	12 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 28 th .
Whiskered tern	10 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 28 th .
Feral pigeon	Widespread & common.
Woodpigeon	Widespread & common.
Collared Dove	Common in towns & villages.
Great spotted cuckoo	2 at Bessan on Apr 28 th .
Cuckoo	Peak of 3 in Minerve area on Apr 26 th .
Little owl	One at Siran on May 1 st .
Swift	Widespread & common.
Alpine swift	2 at Minerve on Apr 26 th & 6 at Corbières gorge on May 1 st .
Bee-eater	3 at La Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Hoopoe	Peak of 4 at Siran on May 1 st & seen regularly.
Wryneck	One at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Green woodpecker	One calling at feeding station in Corbières on May 1 st .
Crested lark	Peak of 4 at Cap de Leucate & La Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Woodlark	Peak of three in Corbières on May 1 st .
Skylark	One at Carcassone airport on Apr 25 th .
Sand martin	Peak of 10 at Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Crag martin	Peak of 4 at Minerve on Apr 26 th & Corbières gorge on May 1 st .
Swallow	Widespread & common.
Red-rumped swallow	Peak of 20 at Minerve on Apr 26 th .
House martin	Widespread & common in towns & villages.
Tawny pipit	One at Minerve on Apr 26 th & Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Yellow wagtail	Peak of 10 at Gruissan & Étang de Vendres on Apr 27 th .
Grey wagtail	One at Minerve on Apr 26 th .
White wagtail	Widespread but not common.
Robin	One singing in the Corbières on May 1 st .
Nightingale	Widespread & common in all scrubby habitats.
Black redstart	Peak of 6 at Minerve & Siran on Apr 26 th .
Redstart	One at Siran on Apr 27 th .
Whinchat	Peak of 10 at La Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Stonechat	One at Minerve on Apr 26 th & the Corbières on May 1 st .
Northern wheatear	Peak of 23 at Cap de Leucate & Lan Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Black-eared wheatear	3 at Gruissan on Apr 27 th & 4 at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Blue rock thrush	Single males at Minerve on Apr 26 th & Corbières gorge on May 1 st .
Blackbird	Widespread & common.
Song thrush	Singing male at Boissot Church on Apr 26 th .
Mistle thrush	One at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Cetti's warbler	Noted at coastal wetland sites.
Fan-tailed warbler	Singles at Bessan on Apr 28 th & La Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Reed warbler	Two singing at Narbonne reedbed on Apr 30 th .
Great reed warbler	Two at La Franqui on Apr 29 th & Narbonne reedbed on Apr 30 th .
Subalpine warbler	Singing male at Peyrepertuse on May 1 st .
Sardinian warbler	Peak of two at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Western orphean warbler	Singing males above Cesse gorge on Apr 25 th & near Minerve on Apr 27 th .
Common whitethroat	Peak of 4 at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Garden warbler	One at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Blackcap	Singing male above Cesse Gorge on Apr 25 th .
Western Bonelli's warbler	One at Minerve on Apr 26 th .
Chiffchaff	Singles at Gruissan on Apr 27 th & Corbières gorge on May 1 st .
Willow warbler	6 at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Pied flycatcher	Peak of 4 at Cap de Leucate & La Franqui on Apr 30 th .
Spotted flycatcher	One at Minerve on Apr 26 th .
Blue tit	Singles at Minerve on Apr 26 th & St.Pons de Mauchien on Apr 28 th .
Great tit	Peak of 3 at Minerve on Apr 26 th .

Golden oriole	One at Siran on Apr 27 th , 2 from the bus on Apr 28 th & 3 at Siran on May 1 st .
Woodchat shrike	One above Cesse gorge on Apr 26 th .
Jay	One from the bus on Apr 28 th & one at the Corbières on May 1 st .
Magpie	Widespread & common.
Jackdaw	Widespread & common.
Carrion crow	Widespread & common.
Raven	Peak of 4 over vulture feeding station in the Corbières on May 1 st .
Starling	Widespread & common.
Spotless starling	One at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
House sparrow	Widespread & common.
Tree sparrow	8 at Siran on Apr 28 th .
Rock sparrow	Peak of 3 at Minerve on Apr 26 th .
Chaffinch	Widespread & common.
Serin	Widespread & common.
Greenfinch	Widespread & common.
Goldfinch	Widespread & common.
Linnet	Peak of 3 at Cap de Leucate on Apr 30 th .
Cirl bunting	Singing males at Minerve, Olonzac & Corbières.
Corn bunting	Widespread & common across agricultural land.

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail	Western Dappled White	Small Copper
Scarce Swallowtail	Portuguese Dappled White	Holly Blue
Large White	Orange Tip	Baton Blue (<i>below right</i>)
Small White	Clouded Yellow	Brown Argus
Green-veined White	Brimstone	Painted Lady
Southern Small White	Cleopatra	Southern Speckled Wood
Bath White (<i>below left</i>)	Green Hairstreak	Wall Brown
		Dingy Skipper



INVERTEBRATES

Violet Carpenter Bee	7-Spot Ladybird
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REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Slow-worm	Marsh Frog	Iberian Wall Lizard
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MAMMALS

Hedgehog – dead on road	Polecat – dead on road
Wild Boar – signs only	Roe Deer – one at Bessan
Coypu – at Gruissan & Étang de Vendres	

PLANTS		
FAMILY	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
CONIFERS Cupressaceae Cypresses & Junipers	<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>	Italian Cypress
	<i>Juniperus oxycedrus</i>	Prickly Juniper
	<i>Pinus halepensis</i>	Aleppo Pine
	<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Black Pine
	<i>Pinus pinea</i>	Stone Pine
FERNS	<i>Asparagus densiflorus</i>	Asparagus Fern
	<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black Spleenwort
	<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rusty-back Fern
	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male Fern
	<i>Polypodium cambricum</i>	Southern Polypody
	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
FLOWERING PLANTS Acereceae: Maples	<i>Acer monspessulanum</i>	Montpelier Maple
Agavaceae: Agaves	<i>Agave americana</i>	Agave
Aizoaceae: Hottentot Figs	<i>Carpobrotus acinaciformis</i>	Hottentot Fig
Amarylidaceae: Daffodils	<i>Narcissus jonquilla</i>	Common Jonquil
Anacardiaceae: Pistacio Family	<i>Pistachia terebinthus</i>	Turpentine Tree
	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Mastic Tree
Apiaceae: Umbellifers	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel
	<i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant Fennel
	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Shepherd's Needle
	<i>Smyrniium clusatrum</i>	Alexanders
Araceae: Arums	<i>Arum italicum</i>	Italian Arum
Arialaceae: Ivy Family	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
Aristolochiaceae: Birthworts	<i>Aristolochia pistolochia</i>	
Asteraceae (Compositae): Composites	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
	<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Field Marigold
	<i>Carduus tenuiflorus</i>	Slender Thistle
	<i>Chrysanthemum coronarium</i>	Crown Daisy
	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle
	<i>Evax pygmea</i>	Pygmy cudweed
	<i>Galactites tomentosa</i>	Galactites
	<i>Helichrysum stoechas</i>	Curry Helichrysum
	<i>Inula ensifolia</i>	
	<i>Latuca perennis</i>	Mountain or Blue Lettuce
	<i>Matricaria maritima</i>	Sea Mayweed
	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel
	<i>Senecio inaequidens</i>	Tansy Ragwort
	<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk Thistle
	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth Sow-Thistle
	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Dandelion
	<i>Tragopogon hybridum</i>	A Salsify
	<i>Tragopogon porrifolius</i>	Salsify
	<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard
<i>Urospermum dalechampii</i>	Urospermum	
Boraginaceae: Borage Family	<i>Anchusa arvensis</i>	Bugloss
	<i>Anchusa italica</i>	Italian or Pale Bugloss
	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage
	<i>Cynoglossum creticum</i>	Blue Hound's Tongue
	<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>	Hound's Tongue
	<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	Purple Viper's Bugloss
	<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's Bugloss
	<i>Lithodora fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Gromwell
	<i>Myosotis arvense</i>	Field Forget-me-not

<i>Buxaceae</i> : Box Family	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box
<i>Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)</i> : Crucifers	<i>Arabis alpina</i>	Alpine Rockcress
	<i>Arabis turrata</i>	Tower Cress
	<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	Hairy Bittercress
	<i>Cardaria draba</i>	Hoary Cress
	<i>Cheiranthus cheiri</i>	Wallflower
	<i>Diplotaxis erucoides</i>	White Wall Rocket
	<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	Sweet Alison
	<i>Lunaria annua</i>	Honesty
	<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>	Wild Radish
	<i>Cactaceae</i> : Cactus	<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>
<i>Caprifoliaceae</i> : Honeysuckles	<i>Lonicera implexa</i>	
	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Common Elder
	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring Tree
<i>Caryophyllaceae</i> : Chickweeds, Pinks & Campions	<i>Cerastium pumilum</i>	Dwarf Mouse-ear
	<i>Silene alba</i>	White Champion
	<i>Silene italica</i>	Italian Catchfly
	<i>Silene nutans</i>	Nottingham Catchfly
	<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder Champion
<i>Chenopodiaceae</i> : Goosefoot Family	<i>Arthrocnemum perenne</i>	Perennial Glasswort
	<i>Beta vulgaris ssp.maritima</i>	Sea Beet
	<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>	Sea Purslane,
	<i>Salicornia macrostachya</i>	Reddish Perennial Glasswort
	<i>Salicornia europaea</i>	Sea Samphire
	<i>Suaeda vera</i>	Shrubby Seablite
	<i>Cistaceae</i> : Cistuses & Rockroses	<i>Cistus albidus</i>
	<i>Cistus salvifolius</i>	Sage-leaved Cistus
	<i>Helianthemum appeninum</i>	White Rockrose
	<i>Helianthemum canum</i>	Hoary Rockrose
<i>Cneoraceae</i> : Cneorums	<i>Cneorum tricocon</i>	Cneorum
<i>Convolvulaceae</i> : Bindweeds	<i>Convolvulus lanuginosus</i>	
<i>Cornaceae</i> : Dogwoods	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood
<i>Crassulaceae</i> : Stonecrops	<i>Sedum acre</i>	Wallpepper
	<i>Sedum dasyphyllum</i>	Thick-leaved Stonecrop
	<i>Sedum ochroleucon</i>	
	<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort
<i>Cucurbitaceae</i> : Cucurbits	<i>Bryonia cretica</i>	White Bryony
<i>Dipsacaceae</i> : Scabious Family	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Wild Teasel
<i>Equisetaceae</i> : Horsetails	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail
<i>Ericaceae</i> : Heathers	<i>Erica arborea</i>	Tree Heather
<i>Euphorbiaceae</i> : Spurges	<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Large Mediterranean spurge
	<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>	Cypress Spurge
	<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun Spurge
	<i>Euphorbia serrata</i>	
	<i>Mercurialis annua</i>	Annual Mercury
<i>Fagaceae</i> : Oaks, Beech & Chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Horse Chestnut
	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
	<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes Oak
	<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm Oak
<i>Fabaceae (Leguminosae)</i> : Pea Family, Legumes	<i>Anthyllis vulneraria ssp. praepropera</i>	Mediterranean Kidney Vetch
	<i>Astragalus hamosus</i>	Milk Vetch
	<i>Calycotome spinosa ssp.infesta</i>	Thorny Broom
	<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judas Tree
	<i>Coronilla emerus</i>	Scorpion Senna
	<i>Coronilla scorpioides</i>	Annual Scorpion Vetch

	<i>Genista scorpius</i>	
	<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>	Horseshoe Vetch
	<i>Lathyrus selifolius</i>	
	<i>Lathyrus sphaericus</i>	
	<i>Medicago arabica</i>	Spotted Medick
	<i>Medicago marina</i>	Sea Medick
	<i>Medicago minima</i>	Small Medick or Bur Medick
	<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Alfalfa, Lucerne
	<i>Onobrychis saxatilis</i>	Rock Sainfoin
	<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish Broom
	<i>Tetragonolobus purpureus</i>	Asparagus Pea
	<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Hop Trefoil
	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil
	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
	<i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Star Clover
	<i>Vicia hybrida</i>	Hairy Yellow Vetch
	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common Vetch
	<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch
	<i>Vicia villosa</i>	Fodder Vetch
<i>Fumariaceae: Fumitory Family</i>	<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	Ramping Fumitory
	<i>Fumaria densiflora</i>	Dense-flowered Fumitory
	<i>Fumaria muralis</i>	Wall Fumitory
<i>Geraniaceae: Crane's-bills & Stork's-bills</i>	<i>Erodium botrys</i>	
	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Storksbill
	<i>Erodium petraeum ssp.crispum</i>	Rock Storksbill
	<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dovesfoot Cranesbill
	<i>Geranium pusillum</i>	Small-leaved Cranesbill
	<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little Robin
	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
	<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved Cranesbill
<i>Iridaceae: Iris Family</i>	<i>Iris germanica</i>	Bearded German Iris
	<i>Iris lutescens</i>	Dwarf Iris
	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Flag
<i>Lamiaceae (Labiatae): Deadnettle Family, Labiates</i>	<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit Dead-nettle
	<i>Lavandula augustifolia</i>	Common Lavender
	<i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	French Lavender
	<i>Phlomis lychnitis</i>	Iberian Jerusalem Sage
	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary
	<i>Salvia verbeneca</i>	Wild Clary
	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Thyme
<i>Liliaceae: Lily Family</i>	<i>Allium roseum</i>	Rosy Garlic
	<i>Aphyllanthes monspeliensis</i>	Blue Aphyllanthes
	<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>	Common Asphodel
	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>	Hollow-stemmed Asphodel
	<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Tassel Hyacinth
	<i>Muscari neglectum</i>	Grape Hyacinth
	<i>Fritillaria pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean Fritillary
	<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i>	Star of Bethlehem
	<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's Broom
	<i>Smilax aspera</i>	Smilax
	<i>Tulipa australis</i>	Wild Tulip
<i>Linaceae: Flaxes</i>	<i>Linum bienne</i>	Pale Flax
<i>Loranthaceae: Mistletoes</i>	<i>Viscum album</i>	Mistletoe
<i>Malvaceae: Mallows</i>	<i>Lavatera arborea</i>	Tree mallow
	<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow

<i>Matthiola</i> : Stocks	<i>Matthiola sinuata</i>	Sea Stock
<i>Meliaceae</i> : Mahogonies	<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Indian Bead Tree
<i>Moraceae</i> : Mulberries & Fig	<i>Ficus carica</i>	Fig
<i>Oleaceae</i> : Olives	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
	<i>Fraxinus ornus</i>	Manna Ash
	<i>Olea europea</i>	Olive
	<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>	False Olive
<i>Orobanchaceae</i> : Orobanches	<i>Orobanche alba</i>	Thyme Broomrape
	<i>Orobanche crenata</i>	
<i>Orchidaceae</i> : Orchids	<i>Anacamptis morio ssp.picta</i>	Green-winged Orchid
	<i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>	Sword-leaved Helleborine
	<i>Barlia robertiana</i>	Giant Orchid
	<i>Ophrys fusca</i>	Sombre Bee Orchid
	<i>Ophrys lutea</i>	Yellow Bee Orchid
	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>	Mirror Orchid
	<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>	Early Spider Orchid
	<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early Purple Orchid
	<i>Orchis provincialis</i>	Provence Orchid
	<i>Orchis purpurea</i>	Lady Orchid
	<i>Serepias vomeraceae</i>	Long-lipped Tongue Orchid
<i>Oxalidaceae</i> : Oxalis Family	<i>Oxalis articulata</i>	Pink Oxalis
<i>Papaveraceae</i> : Poppy Family	<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine
	<i>Glaucium flavum</i>	Yellow Horned-Poppy
	<i>Papaver dubium</i>	Pale Poppy
	<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy
<i>Plantaginaceae</i> : Plantains	<i>Plantago afra</i>	
	<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buckshorn Plantain
	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Platanaceae</i> : Planes	<i>Platanus occidentalis x P.orientalis</i>	London Plane
<i>Polygalaceae</i> : Milkworts	<i>Polygala nicaeensis</i>	Nice Milkwort
<i>Polygonaceae</i> : Docks	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheep's Sorrel
<i>Primulaceae</i> : Primroses	<i>Anagallis foemina</i>	Blue Pimpernel
	<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip
<i>Ranunculaceae</i> : Buttercups	<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Stinking Hellebore
	<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous buttercup
	<i>Ranunculus graminifolius</i>	Grass-leaved Buttercup
<i>Resedaceae</i> : Mignonettes	<i>Reseda alba</i>	White Mignonette
	<i>Reseda phyteuma</i>	Corn Mignonette
<i>Rosaceae</i> : Rose Family	<i>Amelanchier ovalis</i>	Snowy Mespilus
	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil
	<i>Poterium verrucosum</i>	Mediterranean Salad Burnet
	<i>Prunus dulcis</i>	Almond
	<i>Prunus mahaleb</i>	St.Lucie Cherry
	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
	<i>Rosa canina</i>	Common Dog Rose
	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
	<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad Burnet
<i>Rubiaceae</i> : Bedstraws	<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	Crosswort
	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
	<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild Madder
	<i>Rubis tinctorum</i>	Madder
	<i>Valentia muralis</i>	Valentia
<i>Salicaceae</i> : Willows &Poplars	<i>Populus alba</i>	White Poplar
<i>Saxifragaceae</i> : Saxifrages	<i>Saxifraga granulata</i>	Meadow Saxifrage
	<i>Saxifraga tridactylites</i>	Rue-leaved Saxifrage

Scrophulariaceae: Foxgloves, Toadflaxes & Speedwells	<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	Snapdragon
	<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax
	<i>Linaria pelisseriana</i>	Jersey Toadflax
	<i>Linaria supina</i>	Dwarf Toadflax
	<i>Verbascum phlomoides</i>	Orange Mullein
	<i>Veronica persica</i>	Common Field Speedwell
Solanaceae: Nightshades	<i>Hyoscyamus albus</i>	White Henbane
Tamaricaceae: Tamarisk Family	<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	Tamarisk
Ulmaceae: Elms	<i>Ulmus minor</i>	Small-leaved Elm
Urticaceae: Nettles	<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Pellitory of the Wall
	<i>Parietaria officinalis</i>	Mediterranean Pellitory
	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle
Valerianaceae: Valerian Family	<i>Centranthus angustifolius</i>	Narrow-leaved Valerian
	<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red Valerian
	<i>Valerianella discoidea</i>	Mediterranean Lamb's Lettuce
Cyperaceae: Sedges	<i>Carex acutiformis</i>	Lesser Pond Sedge
Juncaceae: Rushes	<i>Juncus acutus</i>	Sharp Rush
	<i>Juncus maritimus</i>	Sea Rush
Poaceae (Gramineae): Grasses	<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant Reed
	<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking Grass
	<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Wall Barley
	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed



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