



Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Menorca
5 – 12 October 2022

Holiday participants

John Lewis
Jill Jordan
Helen and Malcolm Crowder
Barry & Sally Hennessey
Rowena and Frank Inzani

Clive
Everard Daniel
Julia Greaves and Jon Rosser
Julie Durdin

Leader

Chris Durdin, who wrote this report.

Our base at Matchani Gran: <http://menorcacountryhouse.com>

Photos by Chris Durdin and Everard Daniel (ED), all taken on the holiday.
Cover: Audouin's gull, Son Bou; scarlet darter, Tirant; Hermann's tortoise, Matxani Gran.
Below: the group enjoying lunch in Algendar Gorge.



Joining the group during the week (see page 8) were guests from Grup Balear d'Ornitologia i Defensa de la Naturalesa – GOB Menorca, namely Carlos Coll, President of GOB, his wife Deborah and Chita Laurie, who provides the translations for <https://english.gobmenorca.com/>.

As on every Honeyguide wildlife holiday, we contributed to a conservation project, in this case the work of GOB Menorca. The conservation contribution of £40 per person, supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, plus an additional donation, totalled £840. We also sent £550 in 2020, when Honeyguiders booked on the holiday cancelled due to Covid-19 kindly allowed the conservation contribution to be kept passed to GOB. These two donations bring the total raised by Honeyguide for GOB to £12,428. The total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 is £144,567 (October 2022).

Carlos says (via WhatsApp): “GOB is extremely grateful for generous gift Honeyguide is making to GOB Menorca. Our organisation relies on membership and donations from kind supporters like yourselves who make all the difference in our task of seeking the balance between progress and sustainability. Our aim is to maintain an unspoilt and sustainable island for future generations to enjoy.”

INTRODUCTION

While there is probably no such thing as a 'routine' Honeyguide holiday, this one had several elements that are notable. The coronavirus pandemic for one: this was our first group on Menorca since April 2018, with a group planned for April 2020 one of the first of many cancelled on account of Covid-19. Chris Gibson is Honeyguide's regular leader on Menorca, but a fitness issue meant he had to drop out at short notice. So that meant a step up for me from a nice easy role as co-leader. The navigation around Menorca proved straightforward, with Julie Durdin on maps following Chris G's detailed notes about the autumn itinerary he has developed from previous visits. A key role was co-driver, admirably done by Honeyguider Barry Hennessey, and two others also kindly offered to drive. A third element was that our stay included Menorca's rainiest day since records began; more on that in the daily diary. None of this prevented us having what turned out to be a very successful holiday enjoying the special landscape, wildlife and atmosphere of Menorca. Our lovely base at Matxani Gran plays a big part in that, as did the group: 'team Honeyguide' at its best.

DAILY DIARY

Wednesday 5 October: Gatwick to Mahón, Matxani Gran, Binidali

It was a routine early morning flight from Gatwick which flew over Menorca then looped to the island's south to approach the airport for a smooth landing. We collected minibuses from Doncars and less than ten minutes later the drivers were negotiating the entrance pillars and the avenue of Aleppo pines that lead to Matxani Gran. Immediately there was wildlife to see: several brimstone butterflies and at least three hummingbird hawkmoths on a colourful lantana, and that was just on the way to reception, where there was a praying mantis on a sign by the bar and a violet carpenter bee around some flowers. Lawrence and Lola settled us into our rooms and there was time to unpack before lunch of meatballs and chips (or vegetarian/vegan options). A red kite had already come and gone and then there was a fine view of an Egyptian vulture flying over. Exploring the garden, Everard found our first Hermann's tortoise and there were soon others.

Back around the front of Matxani Gran, there was more to see: butterflies here were a swallowtail, geranium bronze and Lang's short-tailed blue. Clive pointed to a shiny rosemary beetle and there were several paper wasps near the hummingbird hawkmoths at the lantana as we assembled for a short walk down the drive that we had driven up earlier. Three different white flowers took our attention: heliotropes, sweet Alison and, best of all, hundreds of autumn daffodils in the rough scrubby fields on the other side of the rugged walls. We heard a robin singing plus a more distant Cetti's warbler and frequent chattering of Sardinian warblers. A stone-curlew appeared all too briefly and walked out of sight under some scrub. In a more open area off the track there were distant clouded yellows. Helen had seen some birds of prey and they came back into view, somewhere over Matxani Gran: three booted eagles, two pale phase birds and one dark phase individual. In the meantime, a red-veined darter helpfully kept coming back to the same perch so everyone could see the blue-grey underside to its eyes.



Garden finds: Lang's short-tailed blue, on rosemary, hummingbird hawkmoth on lantana (ED), rosemary beetle on ... well, you can guess.

That gentle stroll had taken us an hour or so and we then set off for a very short drive south to the coast at Binidali, where the attractive rocky cliff-top was fringed by rock samphire. A lavender in flower was later identified as *Limonium ferulaceum*. Most – though not quite all – of the small flock of pigeons had the characteristics of wild rock doves. Clouded yellows were closer here; a male red-veined darter perched nicely, we found a crimson speckled moth. We strolled towards the cove, stopping for a willow warbler in lentisc scrub and a yellow-legged gull on the cliff's edge. There were human swimmers down on the small beach at Cala Binidali and you can see why – it was a very attractive spot. As we returned to the minibuses, a blue rock thrush perched on a wall by the cliff edge. Back at the ranch, as they say, Julie was the first to try the outdoor pool.



Quiet cove at Binidali; crimson speckled moth on rock samphire *Crithmum maritimum*.

Thursday 6 October – Son Bou and Torre d'en Gaumes

The forecast storm came to nothing, so – along with beach tourists – we were soon at the big car park at Son Bou. From the short boardwalk to the beach there was a nice flurry of bird activity: two stonechats, Sardinian warblers, blackbirds, calling greenfinches and goldfinches. The stream that emerges from the big Son Bou reedbed had its usual collection of mallards plus a couple of coots. Of more interest were the Audouin’s gulls, especially an adult on a beach sign and another on a beach umbrella. There were yellow-legged gulls, too, and red-veined darters in tandem were ovipositing into the water. We walked onto the beach among those there for the sunshine, and Julia paddled. From the wildlife perspective, the additional points of interest were ‘nun’s farts’ – matted fibres of sea grass – on the sand, sea daffodils in the dunes, mostly chunky seedheads plus several in flower, and Everard found a common blue butterfly.

We then drove round the back of Son Bou to well-signed piece of the Camí de Cavalls, the Menorcan coastal footpath. Jon was alert to a copper demoiselle (as known as Mediterranean demoiselle), soon joined by others, on some narrow-leaved reedmace. We saw many more, perching beautifully for us, on the way back later. Our main stopping point was overlooking lagoons, which had many wintering ducks, albeit in eclipse plumage: teals were the most numerous, plus shelducks, gadwalls, mallards and a single shoveler. Of more interest were five flamingos, a similar number of cattle egrets, a few little egrets and an avocet. Something made everything fly – probably not the booted eagles that drifted past – revealing a small group of flying wood sandpipers. A clump of fennel, mostly dry stalks, was behind us on a bank, and Helen clambered up to scrutinise. She found what she was looking for: a stripeless tree frog. The same place had a Honeyguide favourite: the black and red bug called *Graphosoma italicum*.



Copper demoiselle, female, Son Bou; sea daffodils with Son Bou beach behind (ED).

We retraced our steps and then drove through the ‘urbanisation’ and its one-way system back to the main Son Bou car park. Next was coffee in one of the tourist bars, followed by our lunch, all packed in three cool boxes, eaten on picnic tables under the pines.



Two views at Torre d'en Gaumes.

Our afternoon visit was to the bronze age monument of Torre d'en Gaumes (as it says on maps, though Torre d'en Galmes in the on-site literature), with its many stone structures sprinkled with wild olive trees. For those returning here after quite a gap – including me – the place was even bigger and more interesting than before, with extra areas added, a clear circuit as marked on the site's information leaflets, and excellent information boards. Wildlife distractions were relatively few: some butterflies including a wall brown, a Thekla lark overhead for three of us and more tortoises. We returned in good time to Matxani Gran.

Friday 7 October – Mahón

Rain dominates today's write-up. Lightning and thunder started during the night, and heavy rain found its way into some rooms, finding cracks in fragile tiles damaged by hail in late summer. By breakfast time there were enough signs of improvement to stick to 'Plan A' so we drove to the harbour in Mahón. Here we parked by the gin factory and picked up tickets for the 10:30 departure of the glass bottom boat operated by Yellow Catamarans. The break in the rain for the short walk along the quay didn't last long and mopping of rooftop seats proved futile when the rain came back. Happily, there was plenty of room inside for everyone. The hour's tour of Mahón's huge natural harbour, with multi-lingual commentary, proved a good way to spend a wet morning, though little in the way of natural history to add to the history: a few bedraggled swallows and a heron.

Returning to dry land, though not weather-wise, we walked up the steps into Mahón (the lift was too busy). Once in the covered market in the old cloisters we set a rendezvous for an hour's time and split up. My little group had a drink, with Jill's infusion of flowers a point of interest. We then walked around the fish market then a little way into town and to a mirador over the harbour, having first passed giant ombú trees with huge, extended bases. Others shopped or visited the church. We retraced our steps, fairly literally, and drove back to Matxani Gran. On the pine-fringed driveway my bus disturbed a hoopoe, seen by those in the front of the following minibus.



Mahón from the boat, the gin factory is in the centre; rainy view from a café.

We had our picnics under the open, covered area where we'd had lunch on Wednesday, while watching the rain get worse and the puddle by the steps get deeper. Everard gets a mention in despatches for paddling to the kitchen with a list of after-lunch teas and coffees. We settled down for some quiet time in.

The next 'rain check' moment was 4pm, and it was easing off. Three of us had a go at squeezing the fruits of squirting cucumbers, several plants of which had both flowers and fruits. The group grew to eight and we potted around some scrubby fields, then along Matxani Gran's entrance lane. It was just after five group members headed back that the first hoopoe showed, and soon there were six of them.

At the bar before dinner, Lawrence reported that today's rainfall was a record on Menorca, based on records at the airport since 1965. An internet search (in Spanish) goes further: 159.2 litres per square metre – we'd note this as 15.9 centimetres or little over six inches of rain – corresponds with other data showing that, until now, the record value for daily rainfall on the island was 145.5 litres per square metre on 4 October 1957 in Mahón¹.

During dinner a rhinoceros beetle flew in, landing by the table. In an instant Miguel, our waiter, picked it up with his hands and took it outside.

Saturday 8 October – Es Grau

Hoopoes perched on a wire as the minibuses drove down the entrance track. At Es Grau, we started at the nature reserve's information centre, which was of little interest inside apart from loos and ascertaining that an unannounced group wasn't a problem. However, the planting outside was of interest, especially tree spurges and labelled 'socarrels', endemic garrigue plants of the low-growing, wire-netting type though mostly bare this time of the year.

From the car park we took 'route 1', a walk through mostly lentisc scrub with various viewing points over the very big lake, that lake a muddy brown colour after yesterday's deluge. From the first small hide there were about five black-necked grebes as well as little and great crested grebes. Cormorants and little egrets were there too, as might be expected. The most numerous species of wildfowl was coot, closely followed by gadwall. Elsewhere, Everard and Helen were finding long-tailed blue. We all gathered at the viewpoint at the far end of route 1 where green sandpaper on a rock was a new bird, and there were booted eagles in the sky. Walking back, we saw Egyptian locusts in various places, often a large flying insect making a clumsy landing though also some that perched well enough to see. A wheatear perched on a bush on the near skyline, then was joined by a robin. There were tortoises, lizards and a wall brown, too.

We were all pretty warm by now, so we postponed doing 'route 2' and instead went into Es Grau village by the coast, parked and found a café overlooking the sea. Cleopatras feeding on a mesembryanthemum kept us entertained, especially when the pair did a tumbling flight as they interacted. We had picnics on various benches and seats near the car park.



The group at Es Grau; a confiding, if slightly camouflaged, male Cleopatra.

Thunder sounded ominously, and rain followed, though how set in it would be was unclear. So we set off for 'route 3' through pine forest, going steadily as the rain continued, though pausing to find berries on butchers broom. The route brought us back via the beach, which had masses of nun's farts and a good selection of dune vegetation, such as sea holly and sea spurge. People had mostly deserted the beach, given the weather, though there were very tame Audouin's gulls.

We went back to the nature reserve car park, and some stayed in the minibuses rather than don wet coats. The rest of us did the closer elements of 'route 2'. From one viewpoint there were three cattle egrets in a small tree and from a second we re-found several black-necked grebes, albeit distant, and 14 common pochards. We returned via a fuel station on the road around Mahón.

¹ www.20minutos.es/noticia/5067219/0/menorca-registra-un-record-historico-de-lluvia-en-la-isla-con-159-2-litros-por-metro-cuadrado-en-un-dia/

Back at base, the sun came out, and wet clothes were spread to dry. As ever, there was much wildlife to see in the garden, including our first speckled wood and a turtle dove that briefly joined collared doves on a roof ridge. The rhinoceros beetle visited the dinner table again. This time it stayed so everyone could see it.



A dinner time guest, a rhinoceros beetle, officially called *Copris hispanicus*; Moorish gecko.

Sunday 9 October – Cap de Cavalleria

The seasonal wetland at Tirant is on the spring itinerary for Menorca and not for the autumn, but the risk of it being dry seemed much reduced in view of the past two days, and so it proved. Not many wetland birds had yet discovered it though: a few cattle egrets flew away as we arrived, we saw our first marsh harrier and there were a few feeding hirundines. Red kite and booted eagle flew over, though that could apply to anywhere on the island. The star of the show here was a bright red broad scarlet dragonfly – aka scarlet darter – that perched for all to see through the telescope (see cover photo). Frank found an easy to see Egyptian locust (I did hear someone call it an Egyptian vulture, but we knew what they meant).

We drove onto Cap de Cavalleria, the rocky headland that is the most northerly tip of the island, and parked by the lighthouse. A stonechat was briefly by the car park as we arrived. The windswept vegetation included low-growing *socarrels*, as we'd seen at the visitor centre yesterday, and some gorgeous compact rosemary. However, the shape of the plants didn't reflect today's warm and still weather and the area was busy with visitors this sunny Sunday. Looking out to sea, there were two birds of prey. The first was easy, a red kite, and the second was probably an Eleonora's falcon, on shape, though it moved away all too quickly. Two Thekla larks were more cooperative; those who didn't see them where we first found them just on bare ground just over the wall were able to see them where they moved to, also in the open but where they plainly felt undisturbed with a wall in between them and us. John and Barry pointed out *Arum pictum*. I think we were all pleased to patronise the café and loos.



Cap de Cavalleria; Thekla lark (ED).

The sun was rather fierce, so it was helpful that the next place on Chris Gibson's itinerary was woodland, mostly Aleppo pine, near Sa Roca. However, it was another tree that was the main draw here: strawberry tree, especially as it is the larval foodplant for two-tailed pasha. Whether the stopping point was exactly as Chris G intended we're not sure, though there was plenty of parking, lots of strawberry tree and places to eat our picnics, accompanied by a tame red-veined darter. Just along from where we sat was also plainly also on a circuit for cross-country cyclists with large groups and some noisy stewards. Two bushes of the autumn-flowering heather *Erica multiflora* were in fine flower. No two-tailed pasha showed while we picnicked, but I briefed everyone about them anyway and hoped we might find a larva.

I was on the point of giving up on that when Everard found a caterpillar, not on fresh young growth of strawberry tree where the cyclists were going in through but on some older, taller growth by the road.



Erica multiflora (ED); two-tailed pasha larva on a chewed strawberry tree leaf.

We moved on to Monte Toro, the island's highest point (358m) with fine views over the whole island. We had an hour here to enjoy the views, wildlife, monastery and monuments. The imposing statue of 'Jesus of the Sacred Heart' led to some discussions as it looks like a war memorial but with no dates. Rather than dating from the Civil War, it was erected in memory of Menorcans that fell in the Spanish-Moroccan war of the early 20th century (the 'Rif War' 1921-26.²)



A huge bulb of sea squill, with a euro coin for scale; a confiding swallowtail; the distinctive leaves and a flower of the mullein *Verbascum sinuatum*.

Amazingly, a few of the group saw a two-tailed pasha: the earlier briefing hadn't been in vain. Ro took a fine photo of a swallowtail, which then settled for many of us to see and photograph. Caper plants growing from walls added to the interest: it helped that there was one last-lingering flower as well as some fruit. A dead spike of sea squill had just about the biggest bulb of this species that I've ever seen and the mullein *Verbascum sinuatum* was still in flower.

Rather than using the main 'M1' road across Menorca, we returned on the rural Camí d'en Kane, built while Sir Richard Kane was English governor of the island in the early 18th century. It gave a nice feel for the extent of the island's rural interior.

We were joined before and at dinner by Carlos Coll, President of GOB Menorca, his wife Deborah and Chita Laurie, who prepares English translations of GOB material. Carlos spoke about GOB Menorca's extensive range of conservation (and some welfare) work. There are notes about Honeyguide's donation to GOB on page 2.

Four of us had looked through the telescope at Jupiter plus four of its moons last night, and more of the group did so tonight.

Monday 10 October – Algendar gorge

We headed west, with our first stop two adjacent cliff-top viewpoints in Cala Galdana. Though the views over the sea towards Mallorca were pretty, and some sand martins flew past, it mostly showed that Cala Galdana is a built-up area best avoided. We didn't linger.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rif_War

We returned to the roundabout west of Ferreries and took the smallest road to Barranc Algendar – Algendar Gorge. The narrow road wound towards a substantial rough car park. A search for wasp spiders here yielded none: perhaps they were washed away by the recent rain? Everyone agreed that vervain in flower was somewhat underwhelming: of more interest were many big daisies – southern daisy, *Bellis sylvestris* – essentially a winter flowering species. I lifted a few stones and found a small scorpion under one, which stayed long enough for most to see it. Some friars cowl was coming into flower among masses of their leaves. Flowering ivy was buzzing with bees, wasps and hoverflies. We had the sound of Cetti's warblers, Sardinian warblers and robins almost constantly with us, though the main bird interest was overhead. Two ravens flew over and red kites and booted eagles were there off and on all morning. However, the best birds were certainly Egyptian vultures: on a high rock and in the air, especially when we'd descended into the main part of the gorge.

Shrubs provoked discussion, especially a mysterious orange fruit. Later we had it for lunch. There were loquats and pomegranates too. The red foliage and near black fruit of Virginia poke (pokeweed or ink plant are among many other names for this species) prompted a comparison with the ombú trees of Matxani Gran, which are in the same genus. Ro described how this general poisonous plant can be a poor person's salad in the USA's southern states, as described in the song Polk Salad Annie.³

The farthest point that we reached had an open area of water, then another and a small concrete bridge, and these two wet areas had dragonflies – common darter and migrant hawkler – and damselflies, namely more copper demoiselles and many willow emeralds (western willow spreadwing), often in tandem. I was especially pleased to find egg-laying scars of willow emeralds on fig.⁴



Willow emerald and egg-laying scars on a fig; the mega-rare Menorcan loosestrife.

We timed it perfectly, arriving at Lawrence's father's house for lunch in the garden. Lawrence had laid on a splendid spread, providing us with many plates of barbequed food. At the end we were given the orange persimmon fruit we'd seen in the gorge. Lawrence called them kakee, an alternative name which chimes with their scientific name *Diospyros kaki*. All the while Egyptian vultures flew around: a great occasion.

Almost opposite the way into the properties was a cleared area with a few shrubs. A wall had a label for *Viola stolonifera* – the leaves were there. More importantly, behind a rope, was a patch of Menorcan loosestrife. This plant was extinct in the wild and has been reintroduced here. Barry recognised the variegated leaves, having grown it at home: oddly, it's a species more common in captivity than the wild.

The return uphill walk to the minibuses seemed much shorter and we set off for the afternoon's visit to Cales Coves, on the coast not far from Sant Clement. We started at the 'wrong' place, quite a nice bit of ruderal vegetation, over which a Thekla lark flew, and we smelt the leaves of pitch trefoil. Then we followed the necropolis signs, which took us to the 'right' place. As well as many autumn daffodils, there were big patches of pink merenderas, plus many autumn squills. Two praying mantises added interest. Several of the group went all the way down to the cove itself, a pretty little bay with holes in the cliffs, the necropolis said to date from the Bronze Age.

³ Written by Tony Joe White, a minor hit for Elvis Presley https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polk_Salad_Annie

⁴ Adrian Parr, who leads on willow emeralds for the British Dragonfly Society, says: "Thanks for the photo and news about WE oviposition into *Ficus*. That's a new species for me, but I tend to be most aware of the literature from northern Europe (and sadly I'm not a great linguist either 😊). But as you say, I imagine that in southern Europe it's likely a not unusual occurrence. I'll keep my eyes open in case I find anything more!"



A sheet of merenderas at Cales Coves; Cales Coves itself; autumn daffodil (ED).

Iola had invited group members who so wished to join here in riding Matxani Gran's horses, a regular activity for guests. Julia, Julie and I went along to ride, and Clive watched. For me it was sedate walking around the stony paddock; for Julie and Julia they were surprised to have a hand-hold rather than a real saddle, and to be instructed on raising arms aloft in various positions and to lie along the horse's back. An enjoyable and memorable experience.

We found five Moorish geckos this evening, four of them in the large, open covered entrance area by the lantana bush.



Will this catch on as regular Honeyguide activity?

Tuesday 11 October – Addaia wetlands

Finding the way into the lagoons at Addaia was straightforward, for me the same starting point as going to Mongofre Nou many years ago, only walking this time on the western side of the lagoons along more well-marked paths on part of the Cami de Cavalls. Overlooking the first brackish area there were greenshanks and we soon added green sandpiper, common sandpiper and several little ringed plovers. In the distance as there were two flamingos, and as we walked on we found more: Jill and I agreed that there were 21. A kingfisher flashed past two or three times and an Egyptian vulture flew low overhead. There were many small fish in a watercourse and a long fish that caused some debate on its ID. All good food for the occasional little egret and grey heron we'd seen. There was a single great crested grebe and three gadwalls with a flock of mallards. We continued as far as where the former saltpans reached the inlet from the sea. Shortly after turning around to head back, it was Julie who noticed a large wasp spider on an even bigger spider web. Some of us were looking up at the right moment as two peregrine falcons flew past, calling noisily, and returned from the direction that they had appeared.



Rock formations & pines at Addaia; large wasp spider; cage web spider, the flattened discs are egg sacs.



Flamingos on the lagoons at Addaia, heads mostly tucked out of sight, situation normal!

We drove a short loop to find a bar for coffee to Addaia itself. The first bar we tried was shut on Tuesdays but the advice that the bar in the port would be open was spot on. From here we drove to Cap de Favàritx, which proved to be not as easy as expected as traffic was swept into a large car park two kilometres from the point and lighthouse: it was no longer possible to drive to the end as in the past. We ate picnics there and concluded, especially as rain was starting, that the point itself was too far to walk to.

We returned to Matxani Gran where many in the group opted for a quiet time for the rest of the afternoon. Half a dozen of us – meaning Barry could be driven instead of driving – took one minibus to where rain had prevented a visit last week, to a wooded walk to a tiny cove at Alcafar near S'Algar.

Chris Gibson's directions proved good, as for everywhere else, and after some drier areas – with more merenderas – we found the gap in a wall Chris described that led off this part of the coastal footpath into a woodland walk. There were boletes under the holm oaks and white henbane was a new flower. Among the rocks and pools in the cove we saw many crabs and found hermit crabs, a beadlet anemone and colourful fish, probably Mediterranean rainbow wrasse. On the walk back, two ravens flew over and there was a sand martin with the many swallows.

Back at base I bumped into Everard as I went to photograph some bracket fungi on an Aleppo pine. These were probably red-belted conk, based more on the gone over brackets than the freshly emerging orange fungi. As well as the by now expected hoopoes, we found the first chaffinch of the week, saw a spotted flycatcher, picked up on four distant swifts (too far away to confirm species) and re-found the stone-curlew seen on our arrival day.

Even more remarkable, once back at Matxani Gran, I checked a warbler in the ombú and it was a yellow-browed warbler. Everard and Malcolm were standing with me there but didn't see any plumage detail as all too quickly it flew into the next tree and disappeared from view. Àgueda Escaño from GOB Menorca agrees it's a good record, though "Every year some specimens are captured in ringing campaigns."

After checklists, we had our final meal, splendid as usual, served at table by Miguel. During this we collected the holiday highlights collected below, and thanked various people, especially Barry for driving so well all week.

Wednesday 12 October - return

It was another damp morning, though it didn't matter. We left after breakfast for the short drive to the airport and it was a safe and routine flight back to the UK.

Holiday highlights, as nominated by group members

| | |
|---------|--|
| Julia | People, Cleopatra butterflies, hummingbird hawkmoths. |
| Julie | Matxani Gran, people, hoopoes, rhinoceros beetle. |
| Jill | Willow warbler, Thekla lark, two-tailed pasha and the company. |
| Sally | Wasp spider, Egyptian locust, rhinoceros beetle. |
| Malcolm | Egyptian vultures, the character of the island, olive wood gates and stone walls. |
| Ro | Hoopoes, Egyptian vultures, flamingos, Torre d'en Gaumes. |
| Frank | Wasp spider, Cleopatra, Torre d'en Gaumes, stonework – walls and buildings. |
| Everard | Eleonora's falcon, all the butterflies, hummingbird hawkmoths. |
| Clive | Flamingos and hoopoe, insects on lantana. |
| John | Cales Coves and autumn flowers. |
| Barry | <i>Narcissus serotinus</i> , <i>Colchicum filifolia</i> (merendera), <i>Pancratium</i> (sea daffodil). |
| Helen | Good views of Egyptian vultures, merenderas with narcissi and praying mantis, meeting new Honeyguiders. |
| Chris D | Willow emeralds and egg-laying scars on fig, yellow-browed warbler, autumn-flowering bulbs, especially narcissi. |



Fungi at Rafalet. Left, a bolete, perhaps *Boletus comptus*.
Right, probably jack-o'-lantern mushroom *Omphalotus olearius*, noted for its bioluminescent properties.

WILDLIFE LISTS

BIRDS

Species in italics are uncertain records of various kinds.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Little grebe | Son Bou and Es Grau. |
| Black-necked grebe | 6 at Es Grau. |
| Great crested grebe | Es Grau and Addaior |
| Cormorant | Mahón, Es Grau and Addaior |
| Cattle egret | Little groups seen on 4 days. |
| Little egret | Also on 4 days, at all the wetlands. |
| Great white egret | Es Grau. |
| Grey heron | Also on 4 days, at all the wetlands. |
| Greater flamingo | 5 Son Bou, 21 at Addaior |
| Shelduck | Son Bou. |
| <i>Muscovy duck</i> | <i>2 or 3 presumably domestic rather than feral ducks from the MG drive.</i> |
| Gadwall | Son Bou, Es Grau and Addaior. |
| Teal | Son Bou |
| Mallard | Son Bou, Es Grau and Addaior. |
| Shoveler | Son Bou and Es Grau. |
| Pochard | 14 at Es Grau. |
| Red kite | Seen daily all over the island. |
| Egyptian vulture | Seen on 3 days, including over MG; the best were at least 4 in Algendar Gorge. |
| Marsh harrier | 1 at Tirant, 9/10. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Booted eagle | Every day except the wet day in Mahón, all over the island. Pale & dark phases. |
| Kestrel | Seen daily. |
| <i>Eleonora's falcon</i> | <i>A large falcon at Cap de Cavallería was probably Eleonora's on shape, but the view was too brief and distant to be sure.</i> |
| Peregrine | 2 over the lagoons at Addaior, 11/10. |
| Water rail | Heard, Es Grau. |
| Moorhen | 1, Son Bou. |
| Coot | 3 days, 3 wetlands. |
| Avocet | 1 at Son Bou. |
| Stone-curlew | Seen on 2 occasions at Matxani Gran, heard on dry nights. |
| Little ringed plover | 10, Addaior. |
| Greenshank | 5, Addaior. |
| Green sandpiper | Singles at Es Grau and Addaior. |
| Common sandpiper | 2, Addaior. |
| Wood sandpiper | 5 flying at Son Bou when all the waders and ducks took to the air. |
| Audouin's gull | Close views at the beaches at Son Bou and Es Grau, distant at Cala Galdana's viewpoint. |
| Yellow-legged gull | Daily. |
| Black-headed gull | 2 days, including Mahón harbour. |
| Rock dove/feral pigeon | Many pigeons at Binidali and from the boat trip in Mahón harbour seemed to have the characteristics of wild rock doves, though a few didn't. |
| Woodpigeon | Daily sightings. |
| Collared dove | Daily sightings. |
| Turtle dove | 1 joined collared doves on the roof at Matxani Gran, 8/10. |
| <i>Swift sp</i> | <i>4 at Matxani Gran, 11/10, too far away tell if they were common or pallid swifts.</i> |
| Kingfisher | Es Grau and Addaior. |
| Hoopoe | Widespread: maximum count at Matxani Gran was 6. |
| Thekla lark | Over Torre d'en Gaumes; best view was two at Cap de Cavallería. |
| Sand martin | On 2 days. |
| Swallow | Daily except the arrival day. |
| House martin | Seen on 4 days. |
| Robin | Heard or seen daily. |
| Black redstart | Seen on 3 days, generally brief glimpses. |
| Stonechat | Seen on 3 days. |
| Northern wheatear | Single at Es Grau. |
| Blue rock thrush | Binidali, 5/10 & Es Grau, 8/10. |
| Blackbird | Recorded on three days, including at Matxani Gran. |
| Song thrush | Also recorded on three days, including 8 or 10 at Matxani Gran, 11/10. |
| Cetti's warbler | Heard every day. |
| Sardinian warbler | Heard or seen every day. |
| Blackcap | Recorded on three days, including at Matxani Gran. |
| <i>Chiffchaff</i> | Several poor views of what were probably chiffchaffs; two leaf warblers seen well were, somewhat surprisingly, the following two species. |
| Willow warbler | 1, Binidali, 5/10. |
| Yellow-browed warbler | 1 at Matxani Gran, 11/10. |
| <i>Spotted flycatcher</i> | <i>A single bird seen by Chris and Everard at Matxani Gran on 5/10, though it was distant and we cannot rule out Mediterranean flycatcher,⁵ a recent 'split'.</i> |
| Great tit | Not recorded until the last 2 days, 10/10 & 11/11. |
| Raven | Seen on 4 days. |
| Starling | Seen almost daily: all seen well were common starling, not spotless starling. |
| House sparrow | Numerous everywhere. |
| Chaffinch | A late addition to the list on the last afternoon at Matxani Gran |
| Greenfinch | Seen or heard on three days, often in flight. |
| Goodfinch | Seen daily. |
| Linnet | Seen or heard on five days, often in flight. |
| Corn bunting | Poor views on a wire near the entrance to Addaia, 11/10. |

⁵ www.birdguides.com/articles/identifying-vagrant-mediterranean-flycatchers-in-catalunya

KEY TO LOCALITIES: where noted, generally when seen at one or a very few locations.

MG – Matchani Gran
R – Rafalet
EG – Es Grau
SR – Sa Roca
SSN – Son Saura del Nord
B – Binidali Cove

SB – Son Bou
TG – Torre d'en Gaumes
T – Tirant
CdC – Cap de Cavalleria
BL – Binimel-là
AL – Addaia Lagoons

CF – Cap Favàritx
CG – Cala Galdana
AG – Algendar Gorge
EC – Es Canutells
CC – Cales Coves

| BUTTERFLIES | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Swallowtail | Large white | Clouded yellow | Cleopatra |
| Wall brown | Speckled wood form <i>aegeria</i> | Red admiral | Painted lady |
| Two-tailed pasha | Lang's short-tailed blue | Long-tailed blue | Geranium bronze |
| Common blue | Southern brown argus | | |
| MOTHS | | | |
| Vestal | Hummingbird hawk-moth | Silver Y | Crimson speckled |
| DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES | | | |
| Migrant hawkler <i>Aeshna mixta</i> | | Scarlet darter <i>Crocothemis erythraea</i> | |
| Red-veined darter <i>Sympetrum fonscolombei</i> | | Common darter <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i> | |
| Copper demoiselle <i>Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis</i> | | Western willow emerald <i>Chalcolestes viridis</i> | |
| GRASSHOPPERS AND CRICKETS | | | |
| Egyptian locust <i>Anacridium aegyptiacum</i> | | Red-winged grasshopper <i>Oedipoda miniata</i> | |
| MANTISES | | | |
| Praying mantis <i>Mantis religiosa</i> | | | |
| BUGS | | | |
| <i>Gonocerus insidiator</i> Nymphs of a squash bug on <i>Pistacia</i> | | <i>Spilostethus pandurus</i> A red-and-black ground bug | |
| | | <i>Graphosoma italicum</i> | |
| BETLES | | | |
| <i>Copris hispanicus</i> Rhinoceros beetle MG | | <i>Blaps gigas</i> Large churchyard beetle TG | |
| <i>Ocyopus olens</i> Devil's coach-horse MG | | <i>Chrysolina americana</i> Rosemary beetle MG | |
| <i>Chrysolina bankii</i> TG | | | |
| BEES AND WASPS | | | |
| <i>Xylocopa violacea</i> Violet carpenter-bee MG | | <i>Polistes gallicus</i> Paper wasp MG | |
| <i>Apis mellifera</i> oneybee MG | | <i>Colletes hederæ</i> Ivy bee AG | |
| OTHER INVERTEBRATES | | | |
| <i>Asterodiaspis ilicicola</i> A scale insect on holm oak leaves MG | | | |
| Arachnids | | | |
| <i>Euscorpium balearicus</i> Balearic scorpion | | <i>Araneus diadematus</i> Garden spider | |
| <i>Cyrtophora citricola</i> Cage-web spider | | <i>Argiope trifasciata</i> Large wasp spider | |
| Sea anemones | | | |
| <i>Actinia equina</i> Beadlet anemone | | | |
| REPTILES | | | |
| Hermann's tortoise | Italian wall lizard | Moorish gecko MG | |
| AMPHIBIANS AND FISH | | | |
| Stripeless tree-frog sb | | Thick-lipped grey mullet eg | |
| FUNGI. IDs, with the help of Chris Gibson, are best guesses based on photos. | | | |
| Red-belted conk <i>Fomitopsis pinicola</i> on Aleppo pine MG | | | |
| Bolete sp, perhaps <i>Boletus comptus</i> R | | | |
| Jack-o'-lantern mushroom <i>Omphalotus olearius</i> R | | | |



The Lantana at Matxani Gran was great for invertebrates, here southern speckled wood and violet carpenter bee (ED).

| PLANTS IN FLOWER | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Arisarum vulgare</i> | Friar's cowl | MG AG |
| <i>Arum pictum</i> | | CdC |
| <i>Bellis sylvestris</i> | Large or southern daisy | AG |
| <i>Cakile maritima</i> | Sea-rocket | SB EG BL |
| <i>Calendula arvensis</i> | Field marigold | |
| <i>Cichorium intybus</i> | Chicory | |
| <i>Clematis cirrhosa</i> | Maiden's Bower | |
| <i>Colchicum filifolium</i> | Merendera | B CC |
| <i>Crithmum maritimum</i> | Rock samphire | |
| <i>Ecballium elaterium</i> | Squirting cucumber | MG |
| <i>Datura stramonium</i> | Thorn-apple | MG |
| <i>Erica multiflora</i> | Mediterranean heath | SR |
| <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> | Fennel | |
| <i>Galactites tomentosa</i> | Mediterranean field thistle | |
| <i>Glaucium flavum</i> | Yellow horned-poppy | CC BL |
| <i>Hedera helix</i> | Ivy | |
| <i>Hyoscyamus albus</i> | White henbane | R |
| <i>Inula crithmoides</i> | Golden samphire | SB AL EG CC |
| <i>Limonium ferulaceum</i> | | SB EG BL |
| <i>Lobularia maritima</i> | Sweet Alison | |
| <i>Narcissus serotinus (= obsoletus)</i> | Autumn daffodil | MG B EG CC |
| <i>Pancratium maritimum</i> | Sand daffodil | SB EG BL |
| <i>Phytolacca americana</i> | Pokeweed | AG |
| <i>Prospero autumnale</i> | Autumn squill | CC |
| <i>Ricinus communis</i> | Castor oil plant | |
| <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> | Rosemary | SR |
| <i>Santolina magonica</i> | Menorcan chamomile | CdC |
| <i>Sonchus tenerrimus</i> | | |
| <i>Urginea maritima</i> | Sea squill | EG CdC CF |
| <i>Verbascum sinuatum</i> | | Monte Toro |
| <i>Verbena officinalis</i> | Vervain | AG |
| <i>Vites agnus-castus</i> | Chaste tree | |
| PLANTS IN FRUIT, DISTINCTIVE LEAVES etc | | |
| <i>Ailanthus altissima</i> | Tree-of-heaven | |
| <i>Arbutus unedo</i> | Strawberry-tree | SR |
| <i>Asphodelus aestivus</i> | White asphodel | |
| <i>Asparagus albus</i> | | |
| <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i> | Sea-purslane | SB AL EG |
| <i>Calicotome spinosa</i> | Spiny broom | |
| <i>Capparis spinosa</i> | Caper | |
| <i>Cistus albidus</i> | | |
| <i>Cistus monspeliensis</i> | | |
| <i>Cistus salvifolius</i> | | |
| <i>Daucus carota hispanica</i> | Wild carrot | |
| <i>Ephedra fragilis</i> | Joint-pine | EG BL |
| <i>Eryngium maritimum</i> | Sea-holly | SB EG BL |
| <i>Euphorbia dendroides</i> | Tree spurge | |
| <i>Euphorbia paralias</i> | Sea spurge | EG |
| <i>Evax pygmaea</i> | | CdC |
| <i>Ferula communis</i> | Giant fennel | |
| <i>Ficus carica</i> | Fig | |
| <i>Hedera helix</i> | Ivy | |
| <i>Juniperus phoenicea</i> | Phoenicean juniper | |
| <i>Launaea cervicornis</i> | Hedgehog lettuce | CdC EG |
| <i>Lysimachia minoricensis</i> | | AG |
| <i>Olea europaea</i> | Olive | |
| <i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i> | Prickly pear | |
| <i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i> | Bermuda buttercup | |
| <i>Pinus halepensis</i> | Aleppo pine | |
| <i>Pinus pinea</i> | Umbrella pine | B |
| <i>Pistacia lentiscus</i> | Lentisc | |
| <i>Portulaca oleracea</i> | Common purslane | |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Psoralea bituminosa</i> | Pitch trefoil | CC |
| <i>Punica granatum</i> | Pomegranate | AG |
| <i>Quercus ilex</i> | Holm oak | |
| <i>Rubia peregriana</i> | Wild madder | |
| <i>Ruscus aculeatus</i> | Butcher's-broom | MG R AG |
| <i>Salsola kali</i> | Prickly saltwort | SB BL |
| <i>Sarcocornia fruticosa</i> | Shrubby glasswort | SB AL EG |
| <i>Smilax aspera</i> | | |
| <i>Viola stolonifera</i> | | AG |
| GRASSES etc | | |
| <i>Ampelodesmus mauritanicus</i> | | |
| <i>Arundo donax</i> | Giant Reed | |
| <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> | Bermuda grass | MG |
| <i>Lagurus ovatus</i> | Hare's-foot grass | MG |
| <i>Typha domingensis</i> | Lesser reedmace | |
| <i>Posidonia oceanica</i> | Neptune-weed | |
| FERNS | | |
| <i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i> | Maidenhair fern | AG |
| <i>Asplenium sagittata</i> | Mediterranean hart's-tongue fern | AG |
| <i>Polypodium cambricum</i> | Western polypody | EC |
| <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> | Bracken | SR |
| CULTIVATED PLANT SPECIES (a selection) | | |
| <i>Agave americana</i> | Century plant | |
| <i>Araucaria heterophylla</i> | Norfolk Island pine | |
| <i>Bougainvillea spectabilis</i> | Bougainvillea | |
| <i>Diospyros kaki</i> | Persimmon or kakee | |
| <i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> | Hibiscus | |
| <i>Ipomoea indica</i> | Morning glory | |
| <i>Lantana camara</i> | Lantana | |
| <i>Mesembryanthemum cordifolium</i> (= <i>Aptenia cordifolia</i>) | Baby sun rose | |
| <i>Nerium oleander</i> | Oleander | |
| <i>Paulownia tomentosa</i> | Foxglove tree | |
| <i>Phytolacca arborea</i> | Ombú | |
| <i>Plumbago auriculata</i> | Plumbago | |
| <i>Podreana ricasoliana</i> | Pink trumpet vine | |
| <i>Tecomaria capensis</i> | Cape honeysuckle | |
| <i>Washingtonia filifera</i> | California fan palm | |
| LICHENS & LIVERWORT | | |
| <i>Xanthoria parietina</i> Sunburst lichen | <i>Cladonia foliacea</i> a lichen | <i>Lunularia cruciata</i> Crescent-cup liverwort |



Colourful exotics at Matxani Gran: pink trumpet vine and bougainvillea.