



Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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**Picos de Europa
17 – 24 June 2019**

Holiday participants

Malcolm and Helen Crowder
Peter and Sue Burge
Jean Dunn
Jill Jordan
Mark and Julian Elliott

Oliver and Christine Dix
Barry and Sally Hennessey
Dilys Wadman
Ann Greenizan

Leaders

Pau Lucio and Chris Durdin. Report by Chris Durdin.

We stayed at the Hotel Tierra de la Reina in Boca de Huérgano www.hoteltierradelareina.com



Photos by Jean Dunn (JD) and Chris Durdin (CD) or as attributed, all taken on the holiday.
Cover, top: alpine chough at Fuente Dé (JD). Bottom: *Linaria triornithophora* and spotted fritillary (CD).
Above: a group picnic (CD). Below: globe flowers (JD).



As on every Honeyguide wildlife holiday, we contributed to a conservation project. The conservation contribution of £40 per person, supplemented by an additional donation and gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, totalled to £940 for Asociación Zerynthia, a Spanish NGO dedicated to the study and conservation of butterflies. As at July 2019 the total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 is £132,482.

DAILY DIARY

Monday 17 June: Stansted to Santander, Santander to Boca de Huérgano

It was a slightly bumpy but prompt landing at the very compact airport at Santander, which meant we were through passport control and had bags at a speed you could only dream of at most airports. Pau was at the Europcar desk and paperwork was speedily completed so we could walk to the car park across the road to load up the two minibuses. The drive took us west at first before we headed south across quiet and mostly featureless roads, with not a lot a wildlife interest for most of the journey: a sprinkling of black kites and buzzards, the odd corn bunting, a few white storks. Naturally it all became prettier as we crossed into the Picos de Europa National Park, and it was just under 2½ hours later when we arrived at the Hotel Tierra de la Reina in Boca de Huérgano. We had half an hour to unpack before gathering for dinner.

As dusk approached, a few of us went outside and heard a nightingale. A tawny owl called too.

Tuesday 18 June: Fuente Dé

Yesterday evening there was a calling wryneck and this morning, before breakfast, it showed nicely. Oliver and I were out first and we found it on a very small tree. There was time to go back for cameras and telescope and still it was there, calling away. Jill was next to arrive. The wryneck moved but twice showed again, once on a distant dead tree then better on a wooden telegraph pole close to the hotel.

Fuente Dé offers access to high areas in the Picos but demands good weather. Last week Pau reported it shut on account of snow. With an eye on the good forecast we brought forward this visit, despite the long journey on the first day – the best part of 1½ hours. A large number of people had plainly had the same thought, so there was a long queue for cable car tickets and a delay to go up, reported as 90 minutes. Having bought tickets, we returned to the car park and botanised in the adjacent grazed meadow, where there were flowers including common rockrose, Pyrenean cranesbill, sulphur clover, Pyrenean germander and the stemless knapweed *Carthamus carduncellus*. An early picnic lunch made sense, rather than carrying it.



Cable car station and high mountain landscape (JD).

An hour later we returned to the cable car to find almost no queues now, quicker than anticipated, and up we went. From warmth to a biting wind, at first, but it could hardly have been better weather for the high tops with blue skies and sunshine. Immediately there were any number of alpine flowers: trumpet and spring gentians, rock-jasmine, spring squill and the pretty stock *Matthiola perennis*. Pau encouraged us to press on so we could reach an area known for wallcreeper. A single chamois – or isard, of the Cantabrian subspecies – was resting between some large rocks below us. Much farther over there were two more chamois on snowfields.

Snowfinches were glimpsed on a few occasions by various members of the group. These were all nice side-shows: by the time I reached the wallcreeper rock with my telescope, Pau had already glimpsed the sought-after bird. It had crept out of sight but with a little patience and some clear description by Jean we locked onto the perched bird, long enough for everyone to see it through the telescope. In the meantime, an alpine accentor was in a crevice then on the snow to our right.



Trumpet gentian (JD), alpine toadflax and alpine calamint (CD).

Alpine choughs came close to us as we set off, helped by a little bread. A fine northern wheatear on a rock and between us three species of vultures flying over were more sightings of note. Naturally there continued to be flowers to enjoy, including alpine and Pyrenean toadflaxes, *Iberis carnosa* and alpine calamint. It remained busy with people, which out in the open was quite sociable with wildlife experiences to share. Back at the cable car station café those who had and hadn't made it to the wallcreeper site gathered together and we realised that most people at the busy high tops were now looking to descend, so we joined the very long queue for the return cable car.

After dinner at the hotel Peter Burge arrived, a long-planned delay due to work, so at last the group was all together.

Wednesday 19 June: lowlands near Crémenes and La Encina

The weather may have been overcast but that didn't deter the local wryneck, which performed beautifully for Dilys and others. Stepping a few paces to one side of the hotel we admired the huge nest of white storks on a sweet chestnut tree. Both storks there looked rather grubby. A cuckoo was calling and serins and black redstarts were regularly in view: a very continental mix. A name came to Barry for the large, pale snapdragon growing opposite the hotel: *Antirrhinum braun-blanquetii*.

We headed south-west today, turning off in the village of Crémenes. It was one of those typically Honeyguide walks: lots of flowers by the track and in rich meadows with plenty of birds to hear and see. It was almost lucky that it wasn't butterfly weather (yet, anyway) or we'd have made little progress. Almost immediately there were two rock buntings flitting around a rocky outcrop, with a girl bunting on an adjacent wire. Whitethroats were singing as if it was May in England and the fluty notes of an oriole reached us from poplars near the river. Flowers were a curious mixture: some Mediterranean species like yellow bartsia and bellardia and others local in character, such as St. Dabeoc's heath and daisy-leaved toadflax (*Anarrhinum bellidifolium*). The botanists named what we could and took photos of others for later study.



St. Dabeoc's heath; lizard orchid (CD).

Orchids farther up the hill illustrated the mix. It was strange to see sawfly orchid, usually an early Mediterranean species, alongside fully flowering lizard orchids, the latter a relatively late flower in France and elsewhere. Green-winged orchids were mostly over, and woodcock orchids were at various stages. Pyramidal and tongue orchids added to the variety, and *Orchis langei* was a very good find. Many of these were in a meadow alongside other flowers like yellow rattle, milkwork, dropwort and eyebright. The final part of the circuit was along a quiet road where flowers were familiar from the UK, though two songs were not, namely Iberian chiffchaff and short-toed treecreeper. There was a brief and successful search for some lost spectacles before we drove a very short distance into Crémenes for coffee in a local bar. A male common redstart in a garden and nesting house martins were both new birds for the holiday. As we returned to the minibuses, everyone's interest was sparked by a large flying insect. Peter managed a photo from which we found it was a stonefly, no doubt here as we were alongside a river.

Back close to where we'd come from, you couldn't have asked for a better picnic spot. Tables and benches by a modern chapel (*hermita*) dedicated to St. John were by a lush meadow where butterflies were emerging – often quite slowly, all the better for good views. Fritillaries were especially good: knapweed, meadow, Glanville and spotted, then a big 'frit': a dark green, the various species either seen as they perched and started to warm, or caught, taking advantage of Pau's licence to catch butterflies. Around the chapel there was an extraordinary density of lizard orchids. We'd already seen a peregrine overhead and a thermal of griffon vultures included one of the Egyptian vultures that were regularly around today.



Dark green fritillary (CD); beautiful flax (JD).

We drove farther south-west stopping in more meadows near La Encina, just beyond Yugueros. We'd passed the odd bee-eater on wires and naturally they were our first target, though views were rather brief. A melodious warbler sang and flitted without really settling, a woodlark paused on a wire, a quail called and Oliver found an Iberian grey shrike. Small and long-tailed blue butterflies were new, as was Oberthur's grizzled skipper, the last remaining nice and still for photographers. Our final orchid for the day was lesser spider, though much less showy than two flaxes here: the sheets of white Pyrenean flax and the intense blue beautiful flax.

Along the road we stopped to try again for bee-eaters, this time succeeding with clear if somewhat distant telescope views on dead branches that extended above some poplars. A red-backed shrike on a wire was a nice find rather closer.

Thursday 20 June: Valle de Valdeón

Before breakfast several of us walked through the village to the Roman bridge over the River Esla under which, in a matter of seconds, a dipper flew, landed in view and started to feed in the shallow water, followed shortly afterwards by a second bird. A grey wagtail also appeared, all a classic scene for a fast-flowing mountain river. Serins and black redstarts were vocal and visible.

Our first stop was along a quiet road by a stream where the meadows hosted a family group of Asturian Mountain cattle (*parda alpina* in Spanish). We started to explore, finding early purple and burnt-tip orchids. Damp patches by the road had deep purple whorled lousewort and there was a showy patch of large-flowered butterwort. What at first looked like lady's smock was the similar radish-leaved bittercress (aka large cuckoo flower). Water avens, rampion and early marsh orchid added to the mix and Barry recognised the pale-edged leaves of the small foxglove *Digitalis parviflora*. A weasel that dashed across the road was captured on camera by Jean.

We walked for a while along the stream, passing two large clumps of globeflower. Oliver pointed out the many caddis-fly larvae, so often impractical to see but here obvious on flat stones in the clear, shallow water. Turquoise blue was a nice addition to the butterfly list.



A showy patch of large-flowered butterwort (CD); burnt-tip orchids (JD).

It was warm enough to sit outside the café in Valdeón where, as happens so often, they provided nibbles to go with our late morning coffee. On a wall nearby and high on the church were cushions of Cantabrian saxifrage *Saxifrage canaliculata* as well as the ferns maidenhair spleenwort and wall rue. Pau then led us through the small town, pausing for good views of an Egyptian vulture, mostly to see the old buildings linked with the farming and food storage in years past. Just outside the town were recently fledged common redstarts among some livestock. We turned around once we'd reached a bridge over a river.

Not far away was another picnic site surrounded by flowers and overlooking a lake. Which 'willow emerald detective' – Ann or me – would be first to find this damselfly's distinctive egg-laying scars? It was me, and we explained about them.

There were two more relatively short stops. The first was by a roadside to see the stunning-looking and rather local toadflax *Linaria triornithophora* (cover picture). The second, a ten-minute walk from a car park, was for more orchids. The gathering clouds meant it was less easy to admire the mountain landscape at Mirador del Tombo: we moved quickly to take in scores of man orchids, a nice clump of fly orchids, a gone-over giant orchid and sweetly smelling fragrant orchids. There wasn't really time to take in yellow woundwort and patches of dodder as spits of rain had become heavier as we returned to the minibuses. We called it a day and drove back to base.



In Valdeón: a *casa tradicional* (JD), Cantabrian saxifrage *Saxifrage canaliculata* on a wall (CD).

Friday 21 June: La Uña

Part way to Puerto de las Señales this distinctly chilly morning it was clear that the cloud wouldn't be clearing, so we descended and took a path through meadows. Where we parked there was livelong saxifrage on a rock plus elder-flowered orchids growing on a ledge. Like everywhere there was lots to see along the gentle stroll: flowers included the blue toadflax *Linaria elegans*, thyme broomrapes and Pyrenean germander.

It was soon warm enough to have coffee in a courtyard outside a bar in Acebedo. From the village we watched three Egyptian vultures flying with two ravens, and there were storks and a common redstart.



Our late morning routine: a *café con leche* or other drink in a bar (JD).

With the improvement in the weather, going higher now made sense: we had lunch on the steps of a small chapel. A rather distant pale phase booted eagle offered less than ideal views; a singing tree pipit on a wire was better, at least for a short time; and everyone saw the tiny spiny toad. The meadows here looked good, as everywhere, but we didn't linger as Pau had other places to show us. The first stop was for a frog orchid, nearby which there were large numbers of leaves and fruits of early-flowering dog's tooth violets. There were daffodils in a hollow, but gone over so the species was uncertain, and a bluebell out of context foxed us for a while.

Moving on, we visited two small pools set in alpine meadows. Pau remained on form for amphibians: in the first he found a palmate newt. Louseworts were the most obvious wild flower here. By the second pool we started with an Iberian tree frog followed up with two small Iberian frogs, with Pau showing us the long toe on this species, then another tree frog on the grassy fringe of the tarn. As the sun came out, so did dragonflies: around a dozen four-spotted chasers, though moving rapidly and not settling.



Mountain pool (CD).

After re-fuelling in Riaño, we returned early to Boca de Huérgano so we could stroll around the village, by now in shorts weather. The usual white storks, serins and black redstarts were present though these were somewhat eclipsed by the find of a male pied flycatcher with the bright white patches of the rather local Iberian race. We watched it in a small oak for a while, sometimes half-hidden, sometimes showing quite well. A slowworm on a path near the river reversed into the long grass. From the bridge over the river we all saw the local dipper and grey wagtails, watched shoals of barbels and chatted to a young woman walking the Camino de Santiago.

After dinner, an idea of Ann's in partnership with Jean and Jill was to walk to the Roman bridge and sup some cava to celebrate today's summer solstice. It turned into a dusk wildlife ramble with calling midwife toads in a village garden, brief views of bats, big and small, and the various singing birds in the dusk chorus included, inevitably, nightingales. As we returned, a nightjar churred somewhere across the open land opposite the hotel. Jupiter and three moons appeared over the hilly horizon and showed clearly in the telescope.

Saturday 22 June: Lois

Two rock sparrows were hopping around on the ground opposite the hotel before breakfast. There was also a lot of mist or low cloud, partly as it comes from the big reservoir at Riaño, as Pau explained later, though that soon burnt off. No wryneck for the first time this morning, but plenty of serins, linnets and goldfinches. Reaching a compact, modern church, there was a male red-backed shrike on a wire.

We started the morning walking along the Roman road near Las Salas. Before crossing the bridge over the River Esla we looked at about six chamois on a steep hillside. Like every walk, there was a nice mix of flowers and other wildlife, starting with lots of flowering large-flowered butterwort on a wet rockface, with immaculate lizard orchids nearby. A bronze-coloured goatsbeard *Tragapogon crocifolius* caught our eye and patches of *Erygnium bourgatii* seemed to be mixed with field eryngo *Erygnium campestre*. There were various bees, beetles and pollen chafers to study. Some of the group saw a Bonelli's warbler and the persistent 'chuff chuff chuff' of an Iberian chiffchaff came from riverside poplars.

We drove onto the quaint village of Lois – was the winding road there Lois Lane? – starting with coffee in the village bar. Maria was at the ‘smoke-house’, *la casa del humo*, to guide us round this small local dwelling that was lived in until the late 1990s. The thatched roof of rye straw was permanently smoked by indoor fires with no chimney, the smoke removing pests from the straw and adding a tarry coating, visible as tiny black stalactites. A fire safety nightmare, certainly, and the smell of smoke was still enough to make you cough many years on. We split into two for brief tours, Pau translating, while others browsed a gift shop of products from the Indian subcontinent that occupied part of the property, a slightly incongruous mix.

Adjacent to this was the ‘Catedral de la Montaña’, a church built of pale limestone, big considering the small size of the village on account of a generous benefactor. Decoration was under way: an archway of broom outside and inside a mosaic effect created by a mixture of flowers, leaves and cut card of various colours.



Outside and inside the ‘Catedral de la Montaña’ (JD, CD); oak-leaf orb web spider on yellow rattle (CD).

We had our lunch in a picnic area nearby. Scanning down from here, Oliver found a tawny owl roosting by the trunk of an apple tree. It took a little while for us to realise there was a second owl tucked in behind. A quail called from the open hillside above and outside the picnic area we spent a while trying to see all the features on a silver-studded blue butterfly. Ideas of moving on were shelved: the glorious meadows set in stunning scenery on a warm afternoon were too good to miss. We had a couple of hours of pottering, adding new butterflies to the list such as mallow skipper and Amanda’s blue. Ascalaphids (also known as owl-flies, here *Libelluloides longicornis*) hunted over the meadows, new to many in the group. Other mini-beasts included bush-crickets and an oak-leaf orb web spider, plus various moths such as burnet companion. Slender vetch was probably a new flower for all of us.

We reconvened in the picnic site, where a violet carpenter bee was feeding on false acacia flowers, and we set off home. Some of those in the first minibus saw an ocellated lizard on rocks by the road, and we were struck by the volume of flying insects, stoneflies especially. We were back in Boca de Huérgano in good time to enjoy a beer in the hotel’s garden.

Spinach burgers were a popular choice for dinner, after which we tried to find the local nightjars, with limited success. The first churr was at 10:04 but it wasn’t until 10:30 that the sound became continuous, but there were no sightings in the by then poor light. In the meantime, big bats flew high overhead, noctules presumably, and Jupiter and its moons were on show again.

Sunday 23 June: San Glorio Pass

Jill and I had a good view of a garden warbler by the bridges on our pre-breakfast leg-stretch. Otherwise the usual village birds were around, including the wryneck that had been quiet yesterday.

With better weather this morning, we were able to drive to San Glorio Pass (1609m). Alongside a plantation of mountain pine those who’d kept up with Pau saw citril finches, and one made a brief appearance later by the minibuses. Other passerines singing were a typical high altitude combination: tree pipit, dunnock, garden warbler, whitethroat and yellowhammer. Patches of sheepsbit were the most obvious flower, then a robust marsh orchid alongside other marsh species in a very wet meadow near the minibuses.

We moved on to the viewpoint of Pandetrave (Mirador de Pandetrave) where cameras rattled away in panorama setting. From there we dropped down to Valdeón where we had coffee outside the same town bar that we’d visited on Thursday. So far, so good. We then discovered that the road to our next destination was blocked: a motorhome was stuck half on and half off the road. We heard this just before the turn to the lovely picnic site in a meadow by a lake that we’d used the other day, so we turned down there in the hope that the obstacle would be moved by the time we’d finished lunch.

A spotted flycatcher showed by one picnic table and Sue stopped looking at roses for a while to draw our attention to an unfamiliar woundwort, later pinned down as alpine or limestone woundwort *Stachys alpina*. Back on the road, the police advised Pau that vehicles were squeezing through. It turned out that one minibus could do that and the other was a tad wider and could not. We gave up and returned to base.



San Glorio Pass; robust marsh orchid (CD).

Cloud had appeared and spits of rain started as many of the group reconvened for a local walk. In the village we had good view of both male and female common redstarts. We didn't stay long by the dead greater white-toothed shrew. Dippers showed well from the bridge beyond which we followed a path along the other side of the river. Here Julian was alert to two superficially similar white flowers: one was white flax, the other *Cistus clusii*. Chapman's ringlet was a surprise find, especially considering it had started to rain; it is one of the largest ringlets and common only in the mountains of Cantabria

Monday 24 June: Santander and home

We left the hotel soon after nine o'clock and had a smooth journey to Santander, with a break for coffee at Aguilar del Campoo and glimpses of a fox and a little owl from Pau's minibus. Around midday we parked at the office of SEO (BirdLife Spain) in Santander where SEO also has an unusual nature reserve. Opposite us, the first part of El Astillero was a tidal lagoon named Marismas Negras created on a former eucalyptus plantation, as Roberto from SEO explained; a few trunks and many stumps remained. Inevitably any intertidal site has most value in winter, though common terns were nesting on platforms (we saw some juveniles) and a black-tailed godwit flew through. Those who walked that far went on a pontoon bridge under a dual carriageway to the freshwater pool and reedbed of Marismas Blancas; the cattle egrets flying to and fro had their colony here, we had learnt. On the open water were little grebes, gadwalls and coots and we found a nice scattering of bee orchids in a flower-rich margin. As an urban nature reserve, designed to interest the public in wildlife, the children's play area and network of good paths for joggers and walkers were perhaps equally important. We ate us much of our large sandwiches as we could manage and drove the short distance to the airport. We said farewell to Pau and it was a smooth journey home.

Holiday highlights

These are the highlights nominated by group members at the final checklist session.

Sue	Oliver's owl; the richness of the hedgerows; scenery and the guides.
Peter	Tawny owl, various bugs and beetles.
Sally	The variety especially at Valle de Valdeón; tree frogs, white storks and the owl.
Barry	Two storks on their nest in courtship display; magnificent rock gardens.
Christine	Fuente Dé scenery with wallcreeper; owl; today's Mirador de Pandetrave viewpoint; scenery.
Oliver	Wryneck, owl and bee-eaters.
Dilys	Wryneck, owl and stunning scenery.
Malcolm	Landscape; mountains; rivers; buildings; storage houses; the 'soot' house; wryneck; pied flycatcher; owl.
Helen	Male common redstart; pied flycatcher; tawny owl; botanising, birding and generally Honeyguiding in wonderful habitat.
Mark	Trumpet gentians against backdrop of peaks; bee-eater in flight, turning and colours showing.
Julian	Bee-eaters; landscapes of various types; lizard and other orchids; leaping Pau.
Jean	Valdeón; Lois and its meadows; wryneck; ascalaphids.
Jill	Wryneck; tawny owl; gentians; tree frog; scenery.
Ann	The opportunity to be at high altitude; bee-eaters; bird and invertebrate life; Jupiter and 'her' three moons; butterflies.
Pau	Landscape; snowfinch; tawny owl; richness of meadows.
Chris	Iberian pied flycatcher; bronze Tragopogon; Pau taking charge of domestic practicalities.

WILDLIFE LISTS

BIRDS

Little grebe	On the freshwater wetland at Santander.
Cormorant	1-2 flying past the hotel most days; Santander.
Cattle egret	Santander nature reserve.
Grey heron	A single bird seen on 21/6.
White stork	Nesting in Boca de Huérgano and regularly elsewhere.
Gadwall	Santander only.
Mallard	Seen on 3 days, but many looked like they were of feral origin.
Black kite	Seen every day.
Egyptian vulture	Seen on 5 days.
Black vulture	1 flew over at Fuente Dé, reintroduced into the Picos.
Griffon vulture	Seen every day, apart from the travel days.
Short-toed eagle	Seen on 3 days.
Buzzard	Seen every day.
Booted eagle	A single pale phase bird on 21/6.
Common kestrel	Seen on 3 days.
Peregrine	1, 19/6/.
Quail	Heard on 2 days.
Coot	Fresh water lake at Santander only.
Black-tailed godwit	1, Santander.
Black-headed gull	Santander only.
Yellow-legged gull	Recorded on 4 days, often flying past the hotel.
Common tern	Nesting at Santander.
Feral pigeon	Seen on 1 day.
Woodpigeon	Seen on 4 days.
Collared dove	Seen on 2 days.
Cuckoo	Heard every morning around the hotel, but not seen.
Tawny owl	A memorable daytime sighting of 2 roosting near Lois.
Little owl	1 seen on the drive to Santander.
Nightjar	Heard in Boca de Huérgano on 21/6 & 22/6, but not seen.
Swift	Seen daily.
Bee-eater	Several on 19/6.
Wryneck	Calling or seen every day apart from one opposite the hotel.
Great spotted woodpecker	Seen or heard on 4 days.
Iberian woodpecker	Surprisingly vocal; seen or heard on 3 days.
Black woodpecker	Heard on 21/6.
Red-backed shrike	Seen on 4 days.
Iberian shrike	Seen by Oliver near the bee-eaters.
Golden oriole	Heard by all and glimpsed by one group member on 19/6.
Jay	Seen on 4 days.
Magpie	Seen daily.
Red-billed chough	A flock seen flying below Fuente Dé, heard one other day.
Alpine chough	Several and very tame on the high tops at Fuente Dé.
Carrion crow	Seen daily.
Raven	Seen only on 3 days, including flying past the hotel.
Marsh tit	Seen on 3 days.
Coal tit	23/6 only.
Great tit	Seen on 4 days.
Blue tit	Seen on 4 days.
Long-tailed tit	Seen on 2 days.
Barn swallow	Daily.
Red-rumped swallow	2 outside the hotel on 21/6.
Crag martin	Seen on 4 days.
House martin	Seen on 4 days in various towns and villages.
Woodlark	On a wire near the bee-eaters.
Cetti's warbler	Heard on 2 days.
Reed warbler	Santander freshwater reedbed.
Melodious warbler	1 singing near the bee-eaters.
Iberian chiffchaff	Heard or seen on 3 days.
Western Bonelli's warbler	Heard and seen on the riverside walk, 22/6.
Blackcap	Heard daily, occasionally seen.
Garden warbler	Heard or seen on 3 days, including by the bridge in Boca de Huérgano.
Whitethroat	Seen on all 6 days.
Firecrest	Heard while waiting for tickets at Fuente Dé.
Goldcrest	Recorded on 21/6.
Dipper	Seen on every visit to the bridge in Boca de Huérgano.
Wren	Heard or seen every day.
Nuthatch	Heard or seen on 4 days.
Wallcreeper	1, Fuente Dé.
Short-toed treecreeper	Heard or seen, 2 days.
Spotless starling	Heard or seen on 4 days.
Blackbird	Seen every day.

Song thrush	Heard on 2 days.
Mistle thrush	Seen on 2 days.
Robin	Seen every day.
Nightingale	Heard every day, especially opposite the hotel.
Black redstart	Seen every day, including in Boca de Huérgano.
Common redstart	Seen on 4 days, including in Boca de Huérgano.
Northern wheatear	2 days only, both high altitude.
Spotted flycatcher	On 21/6 only.
Pied flycatcher	A splendid male of the Iberian race <i>iberiae</i> in Boca de Huérgano, 21/6.
House sparrow	Seen daily.
Rock sparrow	Opposite the hotel on 24/6.
Snowfinch	Fuente Dé only, where seen several times.
Alpine accentor	Fuente Dé, a single bird.
Dunnock	Seen on 5 days.
Grey wagtail	Seen on 5 days, especially from the bridge in Boca de Huérgano.
White wagtail	Seen every day.
Tree pipit	Singing birds 21/6 and 23/6.
Chaffinch	Seen daily.
Serin	Seen daily, lots in Boca de Huérgano.
Citril finch	Brief views on 23/6.
Greenfinch	Seen or heard on 3 days.
Goldfinch	Seen daily.
Linnet	Seen daily.
Yellowhammer	Heard or seen daily.
Cirl bunting	Seen on the first 2 days.
Rock bunting	19/6 and 20/6.
Corn bunting	Seen most days, and on farmland close to the hotel.

MAMMALS

Fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Southern chamois/Isard <i>Rupicapra pyrenaica parva</i>
Weasel <i>Mustela nivalis</i>	Greater white-toothed shrew (dead) <i>Crocidura russula</i>

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Slow-worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>	Common midwife toad <i>Alytes obstetricans</i> (heard)
Ocellated lizard <i>Timon lepidusi</i>	Spiny toad <i>Bufo (bufo) spinosus</i>
Wall lizard <i>Podarcis</i> sp.	Iberian tree frog <i>Hyla molleri</i>
Palmate newt <i>Lissotriton [=Triturus] helveticus</i>	Iberian frog <i>Rana perezi</i>

DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES

Western willow spreading/Willow emerald damselfly <i>Chalcolestes viridis</i> – egg-laying scars	Four-spotted chaser <i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>
Common bluet/Common blue damselfly <i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Red-veined darter <i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i> Santander

MOTHS

Hummingbird hawkmoth <i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	July belle <i>Scotopteryx luridata</i>
5-spot burnet moth <i>Zygaena trifolii</i>	Bright-line brown-eye <i>Lacanobia oleracea</i>
Forester moth <i>Adscita</i> sp.	Argent and sable <i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>
Latticed heath <i>Semiothisa clathrata</i>	<i>Lythria sanguinaria</i>
White-spotted black <i>Eurrhysis pollinalis</i>	Chimney sweeper <i>Odezia atrata</i>
Burnet companion <i>Euclidia glyphica</i>	Clouded buff <i>Diacrasia sanno</i>
Mullein moth caterpillars <i>Cucullia verbasci</i>	Wood tiger moth <i>Parasemia plantaginis</i>

BUTTERFLIES

Mallow Skipper <i>Carcharodus alceae</i>	Chapman's Ringlet <i>Erebia palarica</i>
Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus armoricus</i>	Meadow Brown <i>Maniola jurtina</i>
Small Skipper <i>Thymelicus action</i>	Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>
[Common] Swallowtail <i>Papilio machaon</i>	Pearly Heath <i>Coenonympha arcania</i>
Large White <i>Pieris brassicae</i>	Chestnut Heath <i>Coenonympha glycerion</i>
Green-veined White <i>Pieris napi</i>	Southern Speckled Wood <i>Pararge aegeria aegeria</i>
Orange-tip <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	Green Hairstreak <i>Callophrys rubi</i>
Clouded Yellow <i>Colias crocea</i>	Sooty Copper <i>Lycaena tityrus</i>
Brimstone <i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	Long-tailed Blue <i>Lampides boeticus</i>
Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	Small Blue/Little Blue <i>Cupido minimus</i>
Small Tortoiseshell <i>Aglais urticae</i>	Silver-studded blue <i>Plebejus argus</i>
Dark green Fritillary <i>Mesoacidalia aglaja</i>	Brown argus <i>Aricia agestis</i>
Knapweed Fritillary <i>Melitaea phoebe</i>	Amanda's Blue <i>Polyommatus amanda</i>
Glanville Fritillary <i>Melitaea cinxia</i>	Turquoise Blue <i>Polyommatus dorylas</i>
Spotted Fritillary <i>Melitaea didyma</i>	Adonis Blue <i>Lysandra bellargus</i>
Meadow Fritillary <i>Mellicta parthenoides</i>	Common Blue <i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
Marbled White <i>Melanargia galathea</i>	



Moths: White-spotted black (C Dix); *Lythria sanguinaria* (CD); Argent and sable (HC).

SPIDERS

Oak-leaf orb web spider <i>Aculepeira ceropegia</i>	Daddy long-legs spider <i>Pholcus phalangioides</i>
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OTHER INSECTS

Great green bush-cricket (nymph) <i>Tettigonia viridis</i>	'Millwall' bug <i>Graphosoma italicum</i>
Paper wasp <i>Polistes</i> sp.	Fire bug <i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i>
Bee-fly <i>Bombylius</i> sp.	A soldier beetle <i>Trichodes alvearius</i>
Common carder bee <i>Bombus pascuorum</i>	Beetle, with red collar <i>Heliotaurus ruficollis</i>
Bee <i>Cf Bombus cullumanus</i>	Pollen chafer <i>Oxythyrea funesta</i>
Violet carpenter bee <i>Xylocopa violacea</i>	Bee chafer <i>Trichius gallicus</i>
Ascalaphid <i>Libelluloides longicornis</i>	A blister-beetle <i>Mylabris variabilis</i>
Stone-fly <i>Cf Dinocras cephalotes</i>	A froghopper <i>Ceropsis intermedia</i>
Rhopalid bug <i>Corizus hyoscyami</i>	



Some holiday highlights: 'Oliver's owl' (PB); rich wildlife walks; white storks in Boca de Huérgano; Iberian tree frog (JD).



PLANTS
NiF = not in flower

FERNS	
<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	Wall rue
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair spleenwort
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	Hard fern
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rusty-backed fern
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
CONIFERS	
<i>Juniperus thurifera</i>	Spanish juniper
<i>Pinus (mugo) uncinata</i>	Creeping or mountain pine
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots pine
DICOTYLEDONS	
Apiaceae (Umbelliferae) Carrot family (incomplete)	
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley
<i>Conium maculatum</i>	Hemlock
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut
<i>Crithmum maritimum</i>	Rock samphire, NiF, Santander
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild carrot
<i>Eryngium bourgatii</i>	Pyrenean sea holly
<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Field eryngo
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel NiF
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Meum athamanticum</i>	Spignel or baldmoney
<i>Pimpinella major</i>	Greater burnet saxifrage
<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Shepherd's needle
<i>Thapsia villosa</i>	'villous deadly carrot'
Asteraceae (Compositae) Daisy family (incomplete)	
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Andryala integrifolia</i>	
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Carduncellus mitissimus</i>	= <i>Carthamus carduncellus</i>
<i>Cardus cardoides</i>	
<i>Carduus carlinoides</i>	Pyrenean thistle
<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Cornflower
<i>Centaurea nutans</i>	Musk thistle
<i>Centaurea montata</i>	Perennial (or mountain) cornflower
<i>Cirsium rivulare</i>	Brook thistle
<i>Galactites tomentosa</i>	Mediterranean field thistle, Santander
<i>Inula salicina</i>	Alpine coltsfoot
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Ox-eye daisy
<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	Mouse-ear hawkweed
<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk thistle
<i>Tragopogon crocifolius</i>	(bronze & purple)
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goatsbeard
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Coltsfoot
Boraginaceae Forget-me-not family	
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's bugloss
<i>Lithodora oliefolia</i>	Shrubby gromwell
<i>Myosotis alpina</i>	Alpine forget-me-not
Brassicaceae (Cruciferae) Cabbage family	
<i>Biscutella sp</i>	Buckler mustard
<i>Cardamine raphanifolia</i>	Large (or radish-leaved) cuckoo flower
<i>Iberis carnosa</i>	Pruit's candytuft
<i>Matthiola perennis</i>	a stock
Campanulaceae Bellflower family	
<i>Campanula persicifolia</i>	Peach-leaved bellflower
<i>Jasione montana</i>	Mountain sheep's-bit
<i>Phyteuma spicatum</i>	Spiked rampion
Caprifoliaceae Honeysuckle family	
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle
<i>Sambucus ebulus</i>	Dwarf elder
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder

Caryophyllaceae Pink family	
<i>Arenaria purpurascens</i>	Pink sandwort
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Field-mouse ear
<i>Dianthus deltoides</i>	Maiden pink
<i>Hernaria glabra</i>	Smooth rupturewort
<i>Kohlruschia (Petrohragia) velutina</i>	Hairy pink
<i>Silene alba</i>	White campion
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red campion
<i>Silene nutans</i>	Nottingham catchfly
<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder campion
Cistaceae Rock-rose family	
<i>Cistus clusii</i>	Mediterranean flora 969
<i>Helianthemum canum</i>	Hoary rockrose
<i>Helianthemum nummularian</i>	Common rockrose
<i>Tuberaria macrosepala</i>	
Convolvulaceae Bindweed family	
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field bindweed
<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	Dodder
Corylaceae Hazel family	
<i>Corylus avellane</i>	Hazel
Crassulaceae Stonecrop family	
<i>Sedum anglicum</i>	Englisch stonecrop
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting stonecrop
Disacaceae Teasel/scabious family	
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel
<i>Knautia dipsacifolia</i>	Wood scabious
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Small scabious
Droseraceae Sundew family	
<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	
Ericaceae Heath family	
<i>Daboecia cantabrica</i>	St. Dabeoc's heath
<i>Erica arborea</i>	
Euphorbiaceae Spurge family	
<i>Euphorbia pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean spurge
Fabaceae (Leguminosae) Pea family	
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	Kidney vetch (yellow)
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> subsp. <i>pyrenaica</i>	Kidney vetch (pink)
<i>Chamaespartium sagittale</i>	Winged greenweed/broom
<i>Cytisus cantabricus</i>	Cantabrian broom
<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>	Horseshoe vetch
<i>Lathyrus filiformis</i>	Slender vetch
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow vetchling
<i>Lotus alpina</i>	Alpine birdsfoot trefoil
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Birdsfoot trefoil
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Lucerne
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	Ribbed melilot
<i>Onobrychis viciifolia</i>	Sainfoin
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish broom
<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Hop trefoil
<i>Trifolium montana</i>	Mountain clover
<i>Trifolium ochroleucon</i>	Sulphur clover
<i>Trifolium pretense</i>	Red clover
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted vetch
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush vetch
<i>Vicia pannonica</i>	Pyrenean vetch
Fagaceae Oak and Beech family	
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet chestnut
<i>Quercus pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean oak
Gentianaceae Gentian family	
<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>	Yellow-wort
<i>Gentiana angustifolia</i> subsp. <i>corbariensis</i>	Pyrenean trumpet gentian
<i>Gentiana verna</i>	Spring gentian

Geraniaceae Geranium family	
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common storksbill
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved cranesbill
<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	Shining cranesbill
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little robin
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Bloody cranesbill
<i>Geranium sylvaticum</i>	Wood cranesbill
Globulariaceae Globularia family	
<i>Globularia nudicaulis</i>	Leafless-stemmed globularia
<i>Globularia repens</i>	Creeping globularia
Hypericaceae St. John's Worts	
<i>Hypericum linarifolium</i>	Flax-leaved St. John's wort
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St. John's wort
Lamiaceae (=Labiatae) Mint family	
<i>Acinos alpina</i>	Alpine calamint
<i>Acinos arvensis</i>	Basil-thyme
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	Spotted dead-nettle
<i>Melittis melissophyllum</i>	Bastard balm
<i>Mentha longifolia</i>	Horse mint
<i>Prunella grandiflora</i>	Large self-heal
<i>Prunella laciniata</i>	Cut-leaved self-heal
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Self-heal
<i>Stachys alpina</i>	Limestone alpine woundwort
<i>Stachys recta</i>	Yellow woundwort
<i>Teucrium pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean germander
<i>Thymus</i> sp.	Wild thyme
Lentibulariaceae Butterwort family	
<i>Pinguicula grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered butterwort
Linaceae Flax family	
<i>Linum perenne</i>	Perennial flax
<i>Linum narbonense</i>	Beautiful flax
<i>Linum suffruticosum</i> subsp. <i>salsoloides</i>	Pyrenean/white flax
Malvaceae Mallow family	
<i>Malva moschata</i>	Musk mallow
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common mallow
Oleaceae Olive & Lilac family	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
Onograceae Willowherb family	
<i>Oenothera glazoviana</i>	Large-flowered evening Primrose
Papaveraceae Poppy family	
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater celandine
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common poppy
Plantaginaceae Plantain family	
<i>Plantago alpina</i>	
<i>Plantago media</i>	Hoary plantain
Plumbaginaceae Thrift family	
<i>Armeria cantabrica</i>	(= <i>Armeria maritima</i> ssp. <i>alpina</i>)
Polygalaceae Milkworts	
<i>Polygala</i> sp	Milkwort
Polygonaceae Knotweed family	
<i>Polygonum viviparum</i>	Alpine bistort
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheep's sorrel
<i>Rumex alpinus</i>	Monk's rhubarb
Primulaceae Primrose family	
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet pimpernel
<i>Androsace villosa</i>	Ciliate rock-jasmine
<i>Coris monspeliensis</i>	Coris
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip NiF
Ranunculaceae Buttercup family	
<i>Anemone pavoniana</i>	Windflower
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh marigold
<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Stinking hellebore
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup

<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup
<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.	Water crowfoot
<i>Trollius europaeus</i>	Globeflower
Resedaceae Mignonette family	
<i>Reseda alba</i>	White mignonette
<i>Reseda lutea</i>	Mignonette
<i>Reseda luteola</i>	Weld
Rhamnaceae Buckthorn family	
<i>Rhamnus frangula</i>	Alder buckthorn
Rosaceae Rose family	
<i>Agrimonia euphatoria</i>	Agrimony
<i>Alchemilla alpina</i>	Alpine lady's mantle
<i>Alchemilla plicatula</i>	
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet
<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>	Dropwort
<i>Fragaria</i> sp	Wild strawberry NiF
<i>Geum rivale</i>	Water avens
<i>Geum pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean avens
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil
<i>Potentilla recta</i>	Sulphur cinquefoil (pale)
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog rose
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad burnet
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan
Rubiaceae Bedstraw family	
<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	Crosswort
<i>Galium album/mollugo tbc</i>	White bedstraw
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw
Saxifragaceae Saxifrage family	
<i>Saxifraga canaliculata</i>	Cantabrian saxifrage
<i>Saxifraga granulata</i>	Meadow saxifrage
<i>Saxifraga umbrosa</i>	Wood saxifrage
Scrophulariaceae (inc. Antirrhinaceae) Figwort family	
<i>Anarrhinum bellidifolium</i>	Daisy-leaved toadflax
<i>Antirrhinum braun-blanquetii</i>	
<i>Bartsia (Parentucellia) viscosa</i>	Yellow bartsia
<i>Bartsia (Bellardia) trixago</i>	Bellardia
<i>Chaenorhinum originifolium</i>	Malling toadflax
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved toadflax
<i>Digitalis parviflora</i> NiF	a small brown foxglove
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove
<i>Erinus alpinus</i>	Fairy foxglove
<i>Euphrasia</i> sp	Eyebright
<i>Linaria alpina</i>	Alpine toadflax
<i>Linaria elegans</i>	(purple)
<i>Linaria saxatilis</i>	(yellow, hairy)
<i>Linaria supina/pyrenaica</i>	Prostate/Pyrenean toadflax
<i>Linaria triornithopus</i>	
<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	Common lousewort
<i>Pedicularis verticillata</i>	Whorled or verticillate lousewort
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow rattle
<i>Scrophularia canina</i>	French figwort
<i>Verbascum nigrum</i>	Dark mullein
<i>Verbascum pulverulentum</i>	Hoary mullein
<i>Veronica arvensis</i>	Wall speedwell
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	Brooklime
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander speedwell
Valerianaceae Valerian family	
<i>Centranthus angustifolius</i>	Narrow-leaved red valerian
<i>Valeriana pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean valerian
Violaceae Violet family	
<i>Viola arvensis</i>	Field pansy
<i>Viola cornuta</i>	Horned pansy
<i>Viola</i> sp.	Dog violet tbc
Viscaceae Mistletoe family	
<i>Viscum album</i>	Mistletoe

MONOCOTYLEDONS	
Liliaceae Lily family	
<i>Allium sphaerocephalon</i>	Round-headed leek
<i>Aphyllanthes monspeliensis</i>	Blue aphyllanthes
<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>	Common asphodel
<i>Erythronium dens-canis</i> NiF	Dog's-tooth violet
<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Tassel hyacinth
<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i>	Star of Bethlehem
<i>Scilla verna</i>	Spring squill
<i>Veratrum album</i> NiF	False white helleborine
Amaryllidaceae Daffodil family	
<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i> ssp. <i>nobilis</i>	Wild daffodil
Orchidaceae Orchid family	
<i>Aceras anthropophorum</i>	Man orchid
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal orchid
<i>Barlia robertiana</i>	Giant orchid
<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Frog orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza elata</i> var. <i>iberica</i>	Robust marsh orchid

<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>	Early marsh orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza insularis</i>	(pale yellow)
<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>	Heath spotted orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza sambucina</i>	Elder-flowered orchid
<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	Fragrant orchid
<i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>	Lizard orchid
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee orchid, Santander
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	Fly orchid
<i>Ophrys scolopax</i>	Woodcock orchid
<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>	Early spider orchid
<i>Ophrys tenthredinifera</i>	Sawfly orchid
<i>Orchis langei</i>	
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early purple orchid
<i>Orchis morio</i>	Green-winged orchid
<i>Orchis ustulata</i>	Burnt-tip orchid
<i>Serapias lingua</i>	Tongue orchid
Sedges and grasses (very incomplete)	
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking grass
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Cottongrass



ABOVE

Tragapogon crocifolius, a good-looking species of goatsbeard;
Vicia pannonica, a reminder to check Mediterranean flora at lower altitudes; cut-leaved self-heal *Prunella laciniata*.

BELOW

Thapsia villosa: the flowers may look like giant fennel *Ferula communis* but the leaves don't;
Pyrenean germander *Teucrium pyrenaicum*.

