Honeyguide WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Central Portugal 10th – 17th April 2010

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Holiday participants

John and Jan Croft
David and Diana Melzack
Malcolm and Helen Crowder
Andrew Camps

Lyn Guy Alan George and June Lawrence Steve and Kathy Kourik Sarah Barney and Helen Gough

<u>Leaders</u> Domingos Leitão and Rob Macklin



Our base from 10th to 13th April was the Hotel Rural de Santarém. www.hotelruraldesantarem.com
Our second base, from 14th to 17th April, was at the Albergaria El-Rei Dom Manuel in the fortified hilltop village of Marvão. www.turismarvao.pt
Report and lists by Rob Macklin.

All photos in this report were taken during the holiday, those edged blue by Steve Kourik, edged yellow by Rob Macklin, edged red by Helen Crowder and edged green by Domingos Leitão.

Cover photo: limestone pavement at Candeeiros.

Above: the group at Candeeiros (taken by Steve on automatic setting).

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As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of this one was put towards a conservation project, in this case for the Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA BirdLife in Portugal) which has a network of Important Bird Areas with volunteers monitoring these and acting as 'caretakers'. The Albufeira do Caia IBA has a large population of waterbirds, including collared pratincoles, little terns, gull–billed terns and red-crested pochards. SPEA is helping to manage the IBA by clearing and creating islands for terns and grebes, and runs a ringing station. During the week SPEA volunteer Luis Venancio guided us around this IBA and was presented with Honeyguide's cheque for €860 to assist the management of the area.

This year's donation brings the total given to SPEA since the first Honeyguide holiday in mainland Portugal in 2005 to £2328. The total amount of conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays as at the end of April 2010 was £63,851.

SPRING IN CENTRAL PORTUGAL 10th – 17th April 2010

Saturday April 10th - To Santarém

A tortuous check-in of over an hour followed by a 45 minute flight delay was soon put behind us as we finally boarded our late afternoon easyJet flight to Lisbon. A temperature of 21 °C greeted us at the airport as we met Domingos Leitão, our Portugese host for the week. We quickly loaded up the buses before heading north up the motorway to the Hotel Rural in Santarém.

We were greeted by our hosts at the hotel and were served an excellent evening meal topped off by a birthday cake for June and a resounding chorus of happy birthday from the group. We finally crawled off to bed at around midnight but looking forward to exploring Portugal in the days ahead.

Sunday April 11th - Cabanos Valley and River Tejo at Valada

First light brought chattering house sparrows, singing blackbirds, a calling carrion crow and a swallow taking a drink on the wing from the swimming pool. After a hearty breakfast we spent the morning exploring the local area, part of the Cabanos valley. Just opposite the hotel lie abandoned olive groves which were full of new and exciting flowers. Yellow bee-orchids seemed to be everywhere and we had to be careful not to step on them. A really good find was a mirror orchid and a *serapias*, a small tongue orchid, growing together with stunning tassel hyacinths, purple bugloss, narrow-leaved bugloss and the thistle-like galactites.

Serins and greenfinches were singing from the surrounding olive trees, a buzzard drifted slowly over the woods then we all had a superb view of a pale-phase booted eagle as it flew straight over us. Beeeaters could be heard overhead and a flock of at least six birds came into view with two of them perching up on the wires allowing good views — what stunning birds! Moving on we negotiated a slippery slope down through the valley bottom where nightingales and Cetti's warblers were in full song. Pale flax and the striking field gladioli were in full flower, common smilax tumbled through the hedges, dwarf convolvulus was growing across the fields and we found just one plant of the bright pheasant's-eye. Butterflies were thin on the ground but we did pick up small copper and southern speckled wood.

We then walked up through the woods where blackcaps and firecrests were singing and we were lucky enough to get a brief views of the latter as it moved through the trees. A huge cork oak here (right) was apparently one of the largest in the region and, as with the others, had had its cork bark recently removed. Just one clump of Spanish heather was found growing in the wood and we also came across rosy garlic, wild mignonette and blue hound's-tongue. Spanish bluebells were found on the roadside with carpets of ramping fumitory and Domingos led us off the beaten track to see two sorts of violet birdsnest orchid nestling among the undergrowth.



Walking back along the road towards the hotel we heard Iberian chiffchaff singing in the woods plus the very soft song of short-toed treecreeper. Large cuckoo-pint was full out on the roadside but our attention was soon turned to the many bright, white sword-leaved helleborines in flower. A flash of yellow was quickly identified as a Cleopatra butterfly and fan-tailed warblers began to sing from the open fields as we walked up the hill to the hotel and a well-earned lunch. A truly outstanding morning introduction to the wildlife of Central Portugal.

After lunch we boarded the buses for a short drive along winding lanes to the small town of Valada on the Tejo river. It was heartening to see hordes of house martins and swallows as we passed through numerous small villages. White storks and cattle egrets amused themselves looking for food on the open fields while a black kite drifted low over the town.

At Valada we boarded our boat for a cruise down the Tejo river. We were certainly not prepared for the sight that greeted us on an island in the river which was stacked full of thousands of breeding cattle egrets with smaller numbers of spoonbills, grey herons, night herons and little egrets. We were able to approach closely in the boat and were treated to wonderful views of a breeding colony in full swing. Another black kite flew low over the riverbank and we then spotted another on a nest on the bank. Sand martins were feeding low over the river and literally swarms of martins were at their breeding colony of holes in the riverbank. Several more black kites drifted lazily over and two bee-eaters also put in appearance. On the far bank we saw a herd of free-ranging Portuguese horses – a rare breed overseen by a national breeding authority. Time to head back to port but not before John spotted an osprey perched up feeding on a fish – a real find!

Another superb meal at the hotel in Santarém and the new Honeyguide badges were handed out to one and all. The hotel staff took great delight in wearing theirs! Outside the hotel the bee-eater flock had risen to the dizzy heights of 17 birds.

Monday April 12th - Tejo Estuary and Ponta da Erva



Another glorious day, temperatures up to 27°C, on which to head south for a whole day exploring the Tejo estuary. Crested larks and a red-rumped swallow were seen from the buses and Steve found a waxbill in a supermarket car park as we stopped to take on water. Our first stop was at Alcochete (*left*) where the tide was out exposing a huge area of mudflats. Wading birds were very much in evidence here including a stunning flock of some 200 avocets that came closer to us as the tide rose. Grey plovers and ringed plovers were feeding on the mud while a flock of 30 turnstones decided to perch up on the local boats. A little stint was found among the other



waders while a curlew flew off as we approached. A real surprise came in the shape of a Caspian tern, with a huge red bill, flying right past us giving us all really good views then a superb flock of 20 spoonbills flew onto the river. More excitement then turned up in the shape of a male marsh harrier hunting over the saltmarsh before two large, distant eagles drifting off the cork oak forest and were quickly identified as Bonelli's eagles. Before we left this area we found time to have a look at some of the plants including a nice patch of three-leaved snowflake (*left*).

Our exploration of the area continued as we took the buses along an unmade track on the east side of the estuary bordering the cork oak forest and montados. A pool at the back of open fields quickly turned up a host of birds including at least 10 black-winged stilts, five greenshanks, a couple of ruff and a stunning glossy ibis. In the woods a Bonelli's warbler broke into song, a nuthatch worked its way along a branch singing intermittently and

two red-legged partridges scampered away. Domingos then made a snare out of grass and skilfully caught a lizard for all of the group to see, which turned out to be a large psammodromus, before being released. Time for lunch at this spot under the shade of the cork oaks and surrounded by masses of startlingly pink Mediterranean catchfly, the large white flowers of gum cistus and clumps of a yellow shrubby rock-rose *Halimium commutatum*.

The next phase of the day involved walking and driving along the length of the estuary, which turned out to be very rewarding. At least four woodchat shrikes were seen well across the wood pasture –

montados in Portugal – but a real highlight was two black-shouldered kites perched up on electricity pylons, giving much better views than from the top of a cork oak. To add to the excitement a soaring booted eagle came into view, a hoopoe was seen briefly and a very loud great spotted cuckoo quickly disappeared into the trees. To cap it all two more black-shouldered kites were found nearby and the day's only kestrel was hunting over the open fields. While watching the kites several of the group found just one, startingly fresh, hoop petticoat narcissus while the patches of blue flowers were identified as *Scilla monophyllos*.

Our last stop of the day was at Ponta da Erva, a huge area of farmland comprising both arable and pasture criss-crossed by a network of drainage ditches. This area was known to be a haunt of purple herons and we did not have to wait too long before one was found fishing along one of the dykes. Several yellow wagtails of the Iberian race *Motacilla flava iberiae* flitted among the dense vegetation while skylarks sang from the skies and corn buntings seemed to be everywhere – what a contrast to the UK! At least two quails were calling from the dense vegetation and several marsh harriers hunted over the fields.

Domingos then took us to an innocuous looking small farmstead with a small heavily-grazed field next to it. We could hardly believe our eyes when we saw up to five collared pratincoles using this field as a breeding area and not being in the least bit phased by our presence and giving the whole group cracking views (enhanced digiscoped image, right). The pratincoles would sit quietly in the field before launching into the air to snap up some unfortunate insect that happened to be passing. After all this excitement it was time to head home but not before we encountered two



wheatears and three more purple herons with one flying alongside the bus before landing out in the open. A herd of fierce looking black bulls peered inquisitively at us and a movement behind them turned out to be a large fox moving stealthily through the vegetation. A great end to a great day!

Tuesday April 13th - Natural Park of Serra de Aires e Candeeiros

A decided change in the weather with more cloud, lower temperatures and a brisk wind. Boarding the buses we headed up to the limestone hills of Candeeiros and our first stop on a rather windswept plateau was to look for orchids among the limestone pavement. We didn't have to wait long as we first identified many early purple orchids Orchis olbiensis – the local species or subspecies, depending on which book you follow - plus many relatively dull man orchids. The group then spread out delving into the scrub and soon came up with some rather good finds including the stunning woodcock orchid, lots of yellow anemones, more striking naked man orchids, champagne orchids, a few conical orchids and just one sawfly orchid. Perhaps the star of the show here was the Portuguese fritillary Fritillaria lusitanica (right), although rather scarce. Domingos turned over a few rocks and came up with a yellow scorpion while careful searching revealed a green hairstreak butterfly on the wing as well as the locally common Spanish festoon - or should that be Portuguese? Birds were a little scarce here but two woodlarks were singing high in the air.

Our next stop was on a rather exposed hillside covered in thick low scrub garrigue dominated by two defunct windmills, although a local man seemed intent on restoring one for tourism! Rob almost stood on a large snake that was quickly identified by Domingos as a ladder snake, which most of the group got to see. Occasional buzzing from the scrub turned out to be at least



three Dartford warblers that were very difficult to pin down but some of the group got good views. Helen C then found a Thekla lark perched up in a tree, the first definite sighting of the trip. A chough called way up in the hills and was briefly glimpsed as it flew away which left us all a little disappointed. However as we walked back to the buses a pair of choughs flew down and began feeding on the patches of open ground – wonderful!

We decided to have lunch out of the wind in the shelter of an olive grove, just as well as the temperature refused to climb above 16°C. The plants here took centre stage with more early purple orchids, naked man-orchids and sword-leaved helleborines. Perhaps the most surprising find was *Ophrys dyris*, a sombre bee orchid type, discovered by Kathy right next to her lunch box!! Before leaving we had a little exploration and Alan and John came up with a stunning large pink snapdragon growing out of the rocks. We also found a large peony here along with stacks of stinking hellebore, which was not that pungent. Domingos had another surprise in store as he turned up another reptile, this one an Iberian ribbed salamander.

Time for a coffee stop (Domingos liked his coffee in the afternoon) but not before we brought the buses to a shuddering halt to admire several giant orchids in full flower on the roadside among more early purple orchids. A hoopoe flew swiftly across the road and a raven 'cronked' as it flew over. Time for coffee in the local village where Sarah and Helen thought the old guys would discuss 'the group from England' for many days. Somehow in the bar we managed to agree a visit to a local cooperative, which turned out to be an absolute gem!! The 'shop' sold local olive oil and cheese and many purchases were made although Jan might have gone a bit over the top buying 50 goats cheeses – mind you they were rather good!

The last stop of the day was at local olive groves and as we disembarked the cry went up "hoopoe over there". We all looked round eagerly and after a while it became apparent that there were at least seven individuals breeding in this one grove – Lyn was particularly pleased to get such good close-up



views. We attempted to walk round in a loop but the brambles put paid to that so we took another route through the groves. More giant orchids were found here as well as a peculiar looking yellow broomrape. A booted eagle drifted overhead but the stars of the moment were a wasp actually in a paper wasp nest and a large unidentified brown mouse (almost rat-sized) that darted off from under a tarpaulin. Walking back to the buses we came across a rather stunning pink which turned out be *Kohlrauschia velutina*.

Tonight was to be our last evening at Santarém and the whole group was rather reluctant to leave as we had been so well looked after here. Our last night was not going to disappoint as Salome and her team had prepared a special Honeyguide cake, the design taken from the front cover of the Honeyguide brochure – an amazing finale to three exceptional days.

Wednesday April 14th - To Marvão

Time to bid farewell to Santarém for the journey across central Portugal to Marvão. A cloudy and cool start to the day although we still noted black-shouldered kite and black kite from the buses. We had intended to have a picnic lunch on the way at Vila Velha de Rodeo and watch vultures and storks but continuous heavy rain put paid to that. Instead we pushed on and arrived in Marvão in the early afternoon having our picnic lunch in the hotel.

The rain abated somewhat as the afternoon wore on but Marvão was still smothered in low cloud. We decided to explore the castle and its surroundings immediately finding a female black redstart and two rock buntings at the castle. A male stonechat gave us good views and we also spotted our first blue rock thrush through the fog. Both mossy and white stonecrop were found on the cobbled streets of the castle.

We then explored the old medieval road to Castelo de Vide, which runs for just 700 metres at the rear of Marvão. The road was lined with chestnut and Pyrenean oak trees with many interesting plants below them including splendid Spanish bluebells, a delightful yellow gagea *Gagea arvensis*, Solomon's seal, narrow-leaved blue lupin and a few, almost over, Angel's tears *Narcissus triandrus*. Birds were rather thin on the ground here but we did find another rock bunting and mistle thrush while Domingos produced yet another find from under a rock, a false smooth snake.

We all convened later in the bar before dinner to catch up with the logs, plan the day ahead and hoping for an improvement in the weather.

Thursday April 15th - Serra de São Mamede Natural Park

Still breezy, misty and damp at Marvão but this did not seem to deter the many house martins nesting on the old town's buildings. Fortunately the weather improved as we left the hilltop village and our first stop by the River Sever in the park turned up red-rumped swallows nesting under the bridge and already feeding young. Nightingales and Cetti's warblers sang in the background, a couple of crag martins were spotted among the other many hirundines and a hoopoe flew through an olive grove. A nearby white stork's nest had been invaded by a colony of Spanish sparrows, which had built their grass nests among the sticks making up the huge stork's nest.

We then moved on to an open area of scrub and grassland immediately turning up several woodchat shrikes all giving excellent views and Sarah found our first southern grey shrike. Two Thekla larks showed really well and we spent several minutes trying to glimpse an Orphean warbler which was singing from dense cover but occasionally popping into view. By now the weather had improved enough for one or two butterflies to appear including a vivid orange clouded yellow. Raptors then took centre stage as five griffon vultures came into view soaring over the area followed by a superb view of a hunting short-toed eagle. Plants here included a nice patch of an allium, wild leek, plus a fine specimen of the parasitic greater broomrape. To cap a fine morning another 17 bee-eaters flew overhead, we had another view of the southern grey shrike and griffon numbers rose to at least 10.

We decided to have lunch at a high spot overlooking more scrub and grassland and into Spain. Among the showers we immediately found four stunning azure-winged magpies at a small farm with two more woodchat shrikes and singing Thekla larks. Four more griffon vultures drifted overhead before raptor numbers soared to over 40 as vultures came in from everywhere, presumably having found a carcass. Careful searching among the griffons the produced at least two of the altogether larger and magnificent black vultures soaring into view. We remained in this area throughout the early afternoon watching the spectacle unfold in the air where the vultures were joined by a booted eagle, several black kites and four ravens.

Our next stop was just before the Spanish border as the cliffs here were known to support breeding griffon vultures and we soon had our telescopes on the nests on the cliffs, one of which already had two young.





At least 20 griffons were seen here but more unexpected was a pair of Egyptian vultures high up on the crags, a great sight. Swifts and martins were darting back and forth across the cliff face and high overhead at least 14 of the larger alpine swifts were seen against the sky. We then drove the short

distance to the once busy, now long deserted crossing point, only inhabited by 30 pairs of house martins nesting under the eaves.

Domingos briefly saw a couple of hawfinches but we were unable to locate them in the trees though we did get a really good view of a Bonelli's eagle as it drifted over.

Our final stop was over the border into Spain, much to Kathy's delight (another country ticked off) where the sun finally came out. A male subalpine warbler flashed across the road in front of Rob's bus and we had another view of the distant Bonelli's eagle to cap another fine day.

Friday April 16th - Elvas plains, Vila Fernando SPA and Caia Dam IBA



A bright and breezy start to the day although still a great deal of cloud over Marvão (street leading to hotel, left). Before breakfast a blue rock thrush was singing from the castle ramparts and another was seen by the hotel as we boarded for buses for our drive south. Our first stop on the Elvas plains was rewarded by four great bustards with the male in full display, a superb sight. A female Montagu's harrier was briefly seen over the fields and several red-rumped swallows were feeding on the wing. We drove down a track across a local property where the plains were covered in purple viper's bugloss (below) and corn buntings were in full song, even when the rains came! Time for a coffee in Vila Fernando.

We headed back to the same area but on the other side of the main road and were mightily pleased that the rain had abated. As we drove into another property an Iberian hare ran off across the plain, a woodlark broke into song and two distant falcons eventually came close enough to be confirmed as lesser kestrels.



and another little bustard was spotted out in the fields.

We drove on into the property and were well rewarded by excellent views of a roller perched up and then in flight – magnificent colours! The wet tracks made it impossible to take the buses any further so we parked up and walked out onto the open plain. Careful searching eventually revealed a male little bustard sat out of the wind among the rocks, the only calandra lark of the trip flew past

Lunch was by an ancient Roman bridge stretching across the river into Spain just as the rain returned. A colony of 30 jackdaws was nesting on the bridge and soon saw off a passing black kite that ventured too close. Domingos caught a viperine water snake then admitted he didn't particularly like snakes! Another singing woodlark was in the air, red-rumped swallows hawked for insects over the river and the ground was covered in yet more purple viper's bugloss with clumps of startlingly white star-of-Bethlehem and purple sand-spurrey. We then met up with Luis Venancio, a volunteer for SPEA who looks after the local sites. After introductions we headed out to Vila Fernando and the Caia Dam Important Bird Area immediately spotting several, heavy-looking, gull-billed terns, more white storks, eight black-winged stilts and at least eight gadwalls.

With a strong wind blowing we decided to seek more shelter towards the rear of this large wetland parking up by the river running into the area. Great crested grebes, coots and moorhen were all new birds for the trip but Sarah found a stunner here, a singing melodious warbler in full view giving the group great views. Nightingales and Cetti's warblers were in full song in the riverine woodland and scrub, a raven flew over 'cronking' while new ducks included a solitary male shoveler and a pair of teal. An Iberian ribbed salamander was dead on the road and among the many plants David and Diana discovered a splendid sawfly orchid.

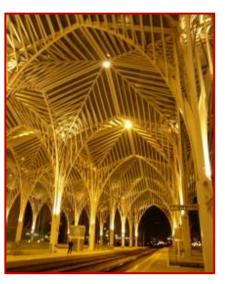
Time was moving quickly on so we boarded the buses for the long drive back to Marvão followed by Luis in his own car. Back at the hotel a final log check was carried out in the bar and Malcolm presented a substantial cheque for €860 from Honeyguide, which was gratefully accepted by Luis on behalf of SPEA. Our final meal at Marvão was slightly overshadowed by rumours of cancelled flights out of Lisbon due to the Icelandic ash cloud!

Saturday April 17th to Thursday April 22nd - The long route home

News finally came through that our flight to London had been cancelled so we decided to head straight for Lisbon and see what our options were. Before we left several of the group saw blue rock thrush and black redstart at Marvão, which was still encompassed in cloud! On the way we saw many white storks and three booted eagles from the buses and decided to stop at Entroncamento to see if we could get train tickets to Madrid. Sarah and Helen G managed to get tickets for the overnight sleeper that evening, and after much discussion (mainly in Portuguese) we were able to get tickets for the Sunday evening. Domingos then phoned around many hotels, which were quickly filling up, and finally managed to get us booked in at the Olissippo very close to the train station. We all had dinner together that evening at the Buffalo Grill before Sarah and Helen bade farewell for Madrid.



The Portugese are particularly good at paving (Calçada) – this outside our hotel in Lisbon.



Lisbon mainline station at night.

Sunday was a day of exploring Lisbon, an entertaining way to spend the day taking in the Oceanarium, among other delights. An early supper at the Buffalo Grill then off to the station for the 22:30 overnight sleeper to Madrid. Alan was rather unwell by this stage so both Alan and June stayed behind in Lisbon hoping for an early flight home. They flew home on the Friday.

After a somewhat noisy and uncomfortable night we arrived at Madrid in the morning to be told there were no trains or buses into France available for several days – not really the news we wanted or expected to hear. So we moved on to Barcelona on the extremely comfortable and impressive high-speed train, arriving mid-afternoon. Unfortunately we encountered the same situation here with all trains and buses to France full up for several more days. No extra trains or buses had been laid on and when we phoned the British consulate we found they went home at 16:30!! Another night on the road and we stayed in the Barcelona Sants hotel at the station – somewhat expensive at 150 euros. We had been advised that we might be able to get a local train to the French border and in the morning we were relieved to be able to get 11 tickets for Cerbère.

We arrived in France late Tuesday morning and were about to be rescued by our friends in the Dordogne! Chris Durdin had phoned Keith and Cathy at Honeyguide's holiday base at Castang and they arranged for two minibuses to come to the French border and collect us – a 1000km round trip! After having supper on the way we finally arrived at Castang late into the evening to be greeted like old friends by Keith and Cathy. After the group had retired for the night Keith and Rob pored over timetables and maps trying to figure out the best way to the channel ports.

Before breakfast on Wednesday morning Keith and Rob went down to the station at Le Buisson and managed (thanks to Keith) to get tickets all the way through to Calais via Paris and Lille, but the timings were going to be tight. Bidding farewell to Castang we boarded a bus to Le Buisson then because of the French railway strike, another bus to Bergerac, From there we went straight through to Paris and Gare Montparnesse. The next stage was dragging our luggage across the Metro to Gare Nord for the train to Lille. We had to literally run through the Metro and we only made the train with seconds to spare - what a relief!! We had to change at Lille for the train to Calais, which was absolutely packed, but the group just charged on, luggage and all, much to the bemusement of homeward-bound commuters!

We finally arrive at Calais late afternoon, where we encountered yet another queue, this time for a bus to the ferry terminal. Any hopes of boarding quickly soon evaporated as we queued yet again, this time for 3½ hours in the cold, before finally getting our tickets for Dover. The ferry finally left at 00:30 French time before arriving at Dover at 01:30 UK time Thursday morning and the end of an eventful journey!!

BIRDS Checklist of Species

Great Crested Grebe 20+ at Caia Dam IBA Podiceps cristatus Phalacracorax carbo Noted at Tejo river and estuary. Cormorant Black-crowned Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax Nesting in colony at Tejo river. Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis Common, inc. huge colony on Tejo river. Little Egret Egretta garzetta Widespread and common. Grey Heron Ardea cinerea Seen at Tejo river, estuary, and Caia Dam IBA. Purple Heron Ardea purpurea 4 at Ponta da Erva. White Stork Ciconia ciconia Widespread and common. 100+ at colony on Tejo river and 20 on estuary. Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia Glossy Ibis Pleaadis falcinellus 2 at Teio estuary. Gadwall Anas strepera 6 at Caia Dam IBA. Anas platyrhynchos Mallard Relatively common. Shoveler Anas clypeata Male at Caia Dam IBA. Teal Anas crecca 2 at Caia Dam IBA. Black-shouldered Kite Elanus caeruleus 2 pairs E of Tejo estuary, 1 on road to Marvão. Black Kite Milvus migrans Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus 2 on cliffs at Spanish border. Griffon Vulture Gyps fulvus

Black Vulture Aegypius monachus Common Buzzard Buteo buteo

Short-toed Eagle Circaetus gallicus

Montagu's Harrier Circus pygargus **Booted Eagle** Hieraateus pennatus Bonelli's Eagle Hieraateus fasciatus Pandion haliatus Osprev Lesser Kestrel Falco naumanni Kestrel Falco tinnunculus Red-legged Partridge Alectoris rufa

Quail Coturnix coturnix

Moorhen Gallinula chloropus Fulica atra Coot

Widespread and relatively common. 60+ at Serra de São Mamede NP. 2 at Serra de São Mamede NP. Widespread and common. 1 at Serra de São Mamede NP and 1 at Caia Dam IBA. Female on the Elvas plain. Regularly seen in the week. 2 over Tejo estuary, 1 at Spanish border cliffs. 1 on Tejo river. 8+ on the Elvas plains. 3 during the week. Regularly seen throughout the week. Several heard at Ponta da Erva,

2 on Tejo estuary and 3 at Caia Dam IBA.

Candeeiros and the Elvas plains.

At least 3 at Caia Dam IBA.

Little Bustard Great Bustard Black-winged Stilt Pied Avocet Collared Pratincole Ringed Plover Little Ringed Plover Grey Plover Turnstone Little Stint Dunlin Ruff Curlew Greenshank Wood Sandpiper Common Sandpiper Black-headed Gull Lesser Black-backed Gull Gull-billed Tern Caspian Tern Sandwich Tern Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon Woodpigeon

Tawny Owl Bee-eater Roller Hoopoe

Alpine Swift

Little Owl

Collared Dove

Cuckoo

Swift

Great Spotted Cuckoo

Great Spotted Woodpecker Short-toed Lark Calandra Lark Crested Lark Thekla Lark

Skylark Sand Martin Crag Martin Swallow

Woodlark

Red-rumped Swallow House Martin

White Wagtail

Yellow Wagtail Wren Tetrax tetrax Otis tarda

Himantopus himantopus Recurvirostra avosetta

Glareola pratincola

Charadrius hiaticula Charadrius dubius Pluvialis squatarola

Arenaria interpres Calidris minuta

Calidris alpine Philomachus pugnax

Numenius arquata Tringa nebularia Tringa glareola

Actitis hypoleucos Larus ridibundus Larus fuscus Sterna nilotica

Sterna caspia Sterna sandvicensis Columba livia

Columba palumbus Streptopelia decocto Clamator glandarius Cuculus canorus

Apus apus Apus melba Athene noctua

Strix aluco Merops apiaster Coracias garrulous Upupa epops

Dendrocopos major Calandrella brachydactyla Melanocorypha calandra Galerida cristata Galerida theklae Lullula arborea

Alauda arvensis Riparia riparia

Ptyonoprogne rupestris Hirundo rustica

Hirundo rustica Hirundo daurica Delichon urbica

Motacilla alba

Motacilla flava

Troglodytes troglodytes

2 males on the Elvas plains. At least 10 on the Elvas plains.

Tejo estuary and 6 at Caia Dam IBA.

c.200 on Tejo estuary.

7 at Ponta da Erva and 2 at Caia Dam IBA.

At Tejo estuary and Caia Dam IBA.

2at Caia Dam IBA. On Tejo estuary.

c.30 on boats at Tejo estuary.

5 on Tejo estuary.

Common on Tejo estuary. 4 on east side of Tejo estuary.

1 on Tejo estuary.

5 on east side of Tejo estuary.

1 at Caia Dam IBA.
On Tejo river and estuary.

On Tejo estuary and Caia Dam IBA. Relatively widespread and common. Large colony at Caia Dam IBA.

1 at Tejo estuary. 1 at Tejo estuary.

Widespread and common.

Fairly common.

Common in towns and villages.

1 on east side of Tejo estuary.
Fairly common with 4 at Candeeiros.

Widespread and common.

14 over cliffs at Spanish border. Heard on east side of Tejo estuary and 1 from the bus in the Elvas area.

1 heard at hotel Santarém. Widespread and quite common.

1 on the Elvas plains.

Peak of 7 in olive groves on way

back from Candeeiros.

2 reported on the Elvas plains. 2 in song at Ponta da Erva.

1 on the Elvas plains. Widespread and common.

Relatively common in rocky areas.

Singles at Candeeiros, Serra de São Mamede NP and Elvas plains.

Relatively widespread.

Hundreds at colony on Tejo river. 4 at Serra de São Mamede NP. Widespread and common.

Peak of 4, Serra de São Mamede NP.

Widespread and common in

towns and villages.

Peaks of 4 on Tejo river and 3 at

Caia Dam IBA.

Only noted at Ponta da Erva.

Noted at Santarém.

Robin Nightingale

Black Redstart Stonechat Wheatear Blue Rock Thrush Blackbird Mistle Thrush Cetti's Warbler Fan-tailed Warbler **Dartford Warbler** Subalpine Warbler Sardinian Warbler Blackcap

Orphean Warbler Melodious Warbler Bonelli's Warbler

Iberian Chiffchaff **Firecrest** Blue Tit Great Tit Nuthatch Short-toed Treecreeper Southern Grey Shrike

Jav Azure-winged Magpie

Woodchat Shrike

Magpie Red-billed Chough Jackdaw Carrion Crow Raven Spotless Starling House Sparrow Spanish Sparrow

Common Waxbill Chaffinch Serin Greenfinch Goldfinch Linnet Hawfinch Cirl Bunting Rock Bunting Corn Bunting

Erithacus rubecula Luscinia megarhynchos

Phoenicurus ochruros Saxicola torquata Oenanthe oenanthe Monticola solitarius Turdus merula Turdus viscivorus Cettia cetti Cisticola juncidis Sylvia undata Sylvia cantillans Sylvia melanocephala Sylvia atricapilla Sylvia hortensis Hippolais polyglotta Phylloscopus bonelli

Phylloscopus brehmii Regulus ignicapillus Parus caeruleus Parus major Sitta europaea Certhia brachydactyla Lanius meridionalis

Lanius senator Garrulus glandarius Cyanopica cyanus

Pica pica Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax Corvus monedula Corvus corone Corvus corax Sturnus unicolor Passer domesticus Passer hispaniolensis

Estrilda astrild Fringilla coelebs Serinus serinus Carduelis chloris Carduelis carduelis Carduelis cannabina Coccothraustes coccothraustes 2 at Spanish border. Emberiza cirlus Emberiza cia

Miliaria calandra

Noted at Santarém and Candeeiros. Noted at Santarém, Serra de São Mamede NP and Caia Dam IBA. Found at Santarém and Marvão. Widespread and fairly common. 2 at Ponta da Erva.

Several at Marvão but elusive. Widespread and common.

1 at Marvão, 2 at cliffs on Spanish border. Fairly widespread and common.

Widespread and common. Up to 3 at Candeeiros.

1 flew across the road just into Spain.

Widespread and common. Widespread and common. 1 at Serra de São Mamede NP. Singing male at Caia Dam IBA. Singing male in cork oaks on east

side of Tejo estuary. Singing male at Santarém.

2 at Santarém.

Widespread and common.

Widespread and relatively common. 1 in cork oaks on east side of Tejo estuary.

Heard at Santarém.

2 at Serra de São Mameded NP and c.10 on the Elvas plains. Widespread and relatively common. Regularly seen inc.3 at Santarém. 4 at Serra de São Mamede NP and

1 on the Elvas plains. Seen in small numbers.

3 at Candeeiros.

32 at Roman bridge near Elvas. Widespread and common.

Peak of 4 at Serra de São Mamede NP.

Widespread and common. Widespread and very common. Peak of 10 nesting in white stork's nest at Serra de São Mamede NP.

2 at supermarket on way to Tejo estuary.

Widespread and very common. Widespread and common. Widespread and common. Widespread and common. Peak of 20 at Candeeiros.

Seen at several locations.

3 at Marvão.

Widespread and very common.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Large Psammodromus Iberian Wall Lizard Ladder Snake False Smooth Snake (photo 1) Viperine Water Snake (photo 2) Iberian Ribbed Salamander Green Frog

Mammals

Fox Badger – presence detected. Rabbit Iberian Hare Wild Boar – presence detected. Mole – hills only.

Butterflies

Swallowtail
Spanish Festoon (photo 3)
Large White
Small White
Clouded Yellow
Cleopatra
Red Admiral
Small Copper
Green Hairstreak
Speckled Wood

Other Invertebrates

Violet Carpenter Bee Paper Wasp (at nest –photo 4) Rose Chafer Common Yellow Scorpion A centipede – *Scolopenda singulata* (photo 5)











PLANT LIST 2010

PTERIDOPHYTA Ferns and Allies **Adiantaceae** Andiantum capillus-veneris maidenhair fern **Aspleniaceae** Ceterach officinarum rustyback fern Hypolepidaceae Pteridium aquilinum bracken Polypodiaceae Polypodium cambricum ssp australe southern polypody **SPERMATOPHYTA** Conifers **Araucariaceae** Araucaria heterophylla Norfolk island pine Pinaceae Pines Pinus pinaster maritime pine Pinus pinea umbrella pine **ANGIOSPERMS** Aizoaceae Aizoons Carpobrotus edulis Hottentot fig **Allium** Garlics and Leeks Allium ampeloprasum wild leek Anacardiaceae **Pistacios** Pistacia lentiscus mastic tree or lentisc Anenomes Anenomes Adonis annua pheasant's eye Apiaceae Carrots Foeniculum vulgare fennel Smyrnium olusatrum alexanders **Apocynaceae Oleanders** Nerium oleander oleander Vinca difformis periwinkle Araliaceae Ivy family Hedera helix ivy Aristolochiaceae Birthworts Aristolochia pistolochia Asteraceae (was Compositae) **Daisies** Bellis annua annual daisy Bellis sylvestris southern daisy Calendula arvensis field marigold Chrysanthemum coronarium crown daisy, entirely yellow Chrysanthemum coronarium var. discolor crown daisy, yellow and white Cichorium intybus Mediterranean field thistle Galactites tomentosa Helichrysum stoechas Pallensis spinosa spiny golden star Sonchus oleraceus common sow thistle Boraginaceae Borage Anchusa azurea large blue alkanet Anchusa undulata undulate alkanet Borago officinalis borage

blue hound's tongue

Cynoglossum creticum

Echium plantagineumpurple viper's buglossEchium angustigoliumnarrow-leaved buglossLithodora diffusascrambling gromwellBuglossoides arvensispurple gromwell

Brassicaceae (Cruciferae) Cabbages

Sinapis arvensis charlock

Capsella bursa-pastoris shepherd's purse

Cactaceae Cacti

Opuntia ficus-indica prickly pear

Caryophyllaceae Pinks

Silene colorata Mediterranean catchfly Silene gallica small-flowered catchfly

Kohlrauschia velutinakohlrauschiaSilene latifoliawhite campionSilene vulgarisbladder campion

Paronychia capitata

Spergularia media greater sea-spurrey Spergularia purpurea purple sand-spurrey

Centranthus Valerians

Centranthus calcitrapa Portuguese valerian

Cistaceae Rockroses

Cistus crispus

Cistus ladanifer gum cistus
Cistus salvifolius sage-leaved cistus

Halimium commutatum

Clinopodium Calamints

Thymus polytrichus wild thyme

Clusiaceae Hypericums

Perforate St. John's Wort hypericum perforatum

Convolvulaceae Bindweeds

Convolvulus althaeoides mallow-leaved bindweed

Convolvulus tricolor

Crassulaceae Stonecrops

Sedum albumwhite stonecropCrassula tillaeamossy stonecropUmbilicus rupestrisnavelwort

Dipsacaceae Teasels

Dipsacus fullonum wild teasel

Ericaceae Heathers

Erica australisSpanish heathErica arboreatree heathArbutus unedostrawberry tree

Euphorbiaceae Spurges

Euphorbia helioscopia sun spurge

Euphorbia characias Mediterranean spurge

Fabiaceae (was Leguminosae) Peas

Anthyllis vulnararia ssp praepropera Mediterranean kidney vetch

Ceratonia siliqua carob
Cercis siliquastrum Judas tree

Coronilla valentina ssp. glauca

Lathyrus setifoliusbrown vetchLathyrus ochruswinged vetchlingLupinus angustifoliusnarrow-leaved lupin

Lupinus luteus vellow lupin Medicago polymorpha toothed medick Medicago arabica spotted medick Melilotus indicus small melilot

Ornithopus compressus compressed birdsfoot

Trifolium stellatum star clover Trifolium repens white clover Vicia villosa fodder vetch

Vicia hybrida hairy yellow vetchling

Fagacea Oaks

Quercus ilex holm oak

Quercus coccifera holly / prickly / kermes oak

Quercus suber cork oak Quercus faginea Portuguese oak Castanea sativa sweet chestnut

Gagea Gageas

Gagea arvensis meadow gagea

Genista Greenweeds

Ulex parviflorus small-flowered gorse

Geraniaceae Geraniums

Erodium cicutarium common storksbill Geranium dissectum cut-leaved cranesbill Geranium molle dovesfoot cranesbill

Geranium purpureum little robin

Geranium rotundifolium round-leaved cranesbill

Geranium robertianum herb Robert

Helianthus Sunflowers

Senecio vulgaris groundsel

Lamiaceae Mints

Lamium purpureum red dead-nettle Lamium amplexicaule henbit dead-nettle Lavandula stoechas French lavender Prasium majus Spanish hedge nettle

Rosmarinus officinalis rosemary Salvia verbenaca wild clary

Lepidium Pepperworts

Lunaria annua honesty

Linaceae Flaxes

Linum bienne pale flax

Linaria Toadflaxes

Cymbalaria muralis ivy-leaved toadflax

Malvaceae Mallows

Lavatera olbia tree lavatera common mallow Malva sylvestris dwarf mallow Malva negelecta

Oleaceae Olives

Jasminum fruticans wild jasmine Olea europaea

olive

Orobanchaceae Broomrapes

Orobanche minor common broomrape Orobanche rapum-genistae greater broomrape

Oxalidaceae Sorrels
Oxalis pes-caprae Bermuda buttercup common sorrel
Paeoniacea Peonies
Paeonia humilis peony
Papaveraceae Poppies
Fumaria capreolata ramping fumitory Fumaria officinalis common fumitory Papaver rhoeas common poppy
Plantaginaceae Plantains
Plantago coronopus buck's horn plantain Plantago lanceolata ribwort plantain
Platanaceae Plane trees
Platanus orientalis oriental plane
Primulaceae Primulas
Anagallis arvensis scarlet pimpernel
Ranunculaceae Buttercups
Helleborus foetidus stinking hellebore
Caltha palustris marsh marigold Anemone palmata yellow anemone Nigella damascena love-in-a-mist
Resedaceae Mignonettes
Reseda lutea wild mignonette
Rosaceae Roses
Prunus dulcis almond Rubus ulmifolius (R. sanctus) bramble Sanguisorba minor subsp magnolia Mediterranean salad burnet Crataegus monogyna hawthorn
Rubiaceae Bedstraws
Galium aparine goosegrass
Scrophulariaceae Figworts
Antirrhinum majus subsp cirrhigerum large snapdragon Misopates orontium lesser snapdragon / weasel's snout Scrophularia sambucifolia
Solanacaea Nightshades
Solanum dulcamara bittersweet
Tamaricaceae Tamarix
Tamarix africana tamarisk
Thymelaeaceae Daphnes
Daphne gnidium
Urticaceae Nettles
Parietaria judaica pellitory of the wall
Verbascum Mulleins
Verbascum thapsus great mullein
Violaceae Violets Viola arvensis field pansy
MONOCOTYLEDONS
Agavaceae - Agave family
Agave americana American agave
Amaryllidaceae Daffodils
Leucojum tricophyllum three-leaved snowflake Narcissus bulbocodium hoop petticoat narcissus
17

Narcissus triandrusangel's tears narcissusOrthinogalum angustifoliumstar of BethlehemPolygonatum multiflorumSolomon's-sealRuscus aculeatusButcher's broom

Araceae Arums

Arum italicum large cuckoo pint

Dioscoreaceae Yams

Tamis communis black bryony

Iridaceae Irises

Gladiolus italicus field gladiolus
Gynandriris sisyrnchium barbary nut
Crocus columnae sand crocus
Iris pseudacorus yellow flag

Liliaceae Lilies

Allium roseum rosy garlic

Asphodelus fistulosus
Dipcadi serotinum
dipcadi, brown bells
Fritillaria lusitanica
Portuguese fritillary
Muscari comosum
Scilla monophyllos
Scilla hispanica
Smilax aspera
hollow-leaved asphodel
dipcadi, brown bells
Portuguese fritillary
tassel hyacinth
one-leaved squill
Spanish bluebell
rough bindweed

Orchidaceae Orchids

Cephalanthera longifolia narrow/sword-leaved helleborine

Epipactus helleborine broad-leaved helleborine Limodorum abortivum violet bird's nest orchid

Limodorum abortivum ssp: trabutianum short spurred violet bird's nest orchid

Aceras anthropophorum man orchid

Ophrys (fusca or omegaifera) dyris* a sombre bee-orchid

Ophrys speculum (O. ciliata) mirror orchid Ophrys scolopax woodcock orchid Ophrys lutea yellow bee orchid Ophrys tenthredinifera sawfly orchid Orchis champagneuxii champagne orchid Orchis conica conical orchid Orchis italica Italian man orchid Orchis (mascula) olbiensis early purple orchid

Himantoglossum robertianam giant orchid Serapias lingua tongue orchid

Serapias parviflora small-flowered tongue orchid

Poaceae Grasses

Arundo donaxgiant reedPhragmites australiscommon reedTypha latifoliareedmaceBriza maximaquaking grass

More orchid and flower photos taken during the holiday are on http://www.honeyguide.co.uk/wildlife-holidays/portugal-wh.html

^{*} Ophrys dyris is also known as Ophrys fusca subsp dyris, Ophrys atlantica subsp. dyris or Ophrys omegaifera subsp. dyris.

CONSERVATION CONTRIBUTION

Our Central Portugal holiday contributed €860 to SPEA, BirdLfe in Portugal, towards the protection of an Important Bird Area called Albufeira do Caia IBA. This story was in SPEA online, copied below, or for an English summary see www.honeyguide.co.uk/wildlife-holidays/portugal-cons.html

EM DESTAQUE

1) Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays contribui para a IBA da Albufeira do Caia

Pela quinta vez, a empresa britânica *Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays*, especializada em excursões de natureza, atribui um donativo à SPEA. Por ocasião da visita de um grupo organizado no Ribatejo e Alto-Alentejo, atribuíram um donativo recorde de 860 euros, que se destina à IBA da Albufeira do Caia, tendo o vigilante desta IBA sido convidado pelo grupo para receber o cheque, em representação da SPEA.

Com este donativo, a SPEA vai poder continuar o seu trabalho nesta IBA, que é uma das mais importantes para aves aquáticas no interior do país. Vamos continuar com o seguimento e anilhagem da colónia tagazes, com a gestão do habitat das ilhas onde criam o Tagaz, a Chilreta e a Perdiz-do-mar e reforçar a disponibilização de pousos para a Águia-pesqueira. Este donativo vem reforçar os cerca de 300 euros angariados no Leilão Silencioso em prol desta IBA, que decorreu durante o VI Congresso do Ornitologia da SPEA, em Dezembro último em Elvas.

Vimos assim agradecer mais uma vez a todos os que têm contribuído para as acções de estudo e conservação desenvolvidas na IBA da Albufeira do CAIA.



Entrega de cheque com donativo à SPEA