



# *Honeyguide*

**WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

36 Thunder Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0PX

Telephone: 01603 300552

www.honeyguide.co.uk E-mail: [chris@honeyguide.co.uk](mailto:chris@honeyguide.co.uk)



## **SPRING IN THE SPANISH PYRENEES**

**11 – 20 April 2013**

## Participants in this private holiday of Honeyguide friends

Lesley Scott  
Suzanne Hunter  
Shevaun Mendelsohn and David Nind  
Sue Lewis-Jones and Peter Easingwood

### Leader

Chris Gibson  
Our hosts: Melanie and Peter Rich at Casa Sarasa [www.casasarasa.com](http://www.casasarasa.com)  
Photos by Chris Gibson.  
Front cover: Berdun and the high Pyrenees.  
Below: lunch at San Juan de la Peña.



This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed, in this case for La Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO), the Spanish Ornithological Society, and its work in Aragón. The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, leading to a total of £360 (€400).

This donation, plus that from our Extremadura holiday, brings the total given to SEO since the first Honeyguide holiday in Spain in 1991 to £15,285. The total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 is £86,302 up to the end of April 2013.

## Daily Diary

### Thursday 11 April: The journey there...

Leaving behind the late, miserable English 'spring' from Stansted at a very sociable hour, we arrived in Biarritz mid-afternoon – in the midst of a downpour! And the rain stayed with us as I collected the minibus and set off down the motorway, straight into a serious traffic jam. That delayed us for an hour or so, but eventually we were on an open road and heading east, the weather improving every step of the way, setting the weather scene for the rest of the holiday. And red and black kites and a few griffon vultures provided the birding template. Although construction works for the motorway which is due to extend right across northern Spain, including through the Aragón valley and the Canal de Berdún, has reached Yesa reservoir, thankfully for the moment (and given the current financial climate it may be a long moment) our immediate environs remain untouched. So it was to the tranquility of Casa Sarasa we rolled up at 18.45 to be met by our welcoming hosts Peter and Melanie (and of course Chisco the dog, who soon became everyone's best friend). Time to unpack, quickly ascertain that we had beaten the nightingales there – bird song was restricted to blackbirds, robins, black redstarts and the chattering of house sparrows – before we sat down for the first of many exceptional meals. A glass or two of wine later, bedtime beckoned...

### Friday 12 April: local walks around Berdún – Río Veral and Río Aragón; Martés

A 50% turn-out for the pre-breakfast walk remained constant for the rest of the trip. Yesterday's cloud was clearing rapidly, leaving an ever-changing mist-scape, and as we reached the churchyard at the top of the hill we were completely enveloped. Our walk introduced us to the birds – those which had been singing the previous evening, together with numerous showy serins, spotless starlings, great tits and just a few tastes of summer, including blackcaps and swallows. By now it was clear that we had arrived at pretty much the start of spring (a combination of an early trip and a late season – right up to our arrival it seems the area had been plagued by cool and very wet weather, not dissimilar to that in the UK). The glorious sheets of grape hyacinths on the lawn of Casa Sarasa bore witness to that: in previous years, to see this species in flower we needed to be maybe 500m higher up.

After breakfast, with freshly-baked local bread and croissants, we drove up to the village, perched on its hilltop, for an orientation ramble. The warmth of the sun was growing by the minute, as we expected from the forecast (though less expected was the fact that such weather would be with us for the week – it truly was the first week of spring!). The mist had all cleared and the views were spectacular up to the high Pyrenees, either way along the Canal de Berdún, and south to the pre-Pyrenees, the Tolkeinesque triangular peak of Oroel rapidly becoming a familiar landmark. A brown splotch high on an east-facing wall soon resolved into a humming-bird hawk-moth, looking much plainer than the busy, orange-flashing sprite it would have turned into once fully up to temperature.



Pale-phase booted eagle and red kite.

Red and black kites floated around as we spotted the spotless starlings, and the chattering of house sparrows (not Spanish, just 'ordinary' house, although altogether more smart than many of our grime-encrusted city birds) mingled with the 'rustling sweet-wrapper' rattle of black redstarts. Overhead, swallows and house martins were present, albeit sparsely, and an unfamiliar yelping call drew our attention to a superb displaying pale-phase booted eagle, soon joined by a second bird.

We drove slowly down onto the Badlands, a skeletal, eroded marl landscape, at first glance lifeless but far from the case in reality, although the number of plants in flower strongly reflected the late season – just yellow-flowering Berdún broom, bronzy-green box, and most remarkably for me given that I have never previously seen them here, low, dense patches of blackthorn in full flower. Clearly this is a fleeting phenomenon as by the end of the week, blackthorn flowers were almost gone. Of course there were other plants waiting in the wings to come through, such as the lady orchid rosettes nestling among the spiny bushes, seeking protection from the sun and browsing animals, and bold blue splashes of shrubby gromwell. Stonechats and linnets atop the bushes, singing subalpine warblers usually deep within, and crested and wood larks (the latter in beautiful liquid song) on the marl slopes provided small-bird interest, all to the accompaniment of jangling corn buntings. And as it continued to warm, so the skies were graced by raptors: the usual kites, the locally-breeding common buzzards, and eventually the first griffon vultures drifting out of the mountains to their feeding sites in the lowlands.



Shrubby gromwell and Panoptes blue.

The Río Veral itself was rather quiet, with just a few white wagtails, singing northern chiffchaffs and Cetti's warbler among the numerous robins, which although singing away furiously are largely winter visitors at such low levels. A clump of stinking hellebores in full flower showed the purple fringing on its 'petals', and incessant movement in the bushes soon revealed blackcaps feasting on the ivy berries. And to complete the picture a southern speckled wood was seen basking in the sunshine, while a pristine Panoptes blue sipped salts from a puddle, allowing close examination. After a brief pause to admire the large pond skaters on the marginal pools, we returned uphill to Casa Sarasa for lunch, pausing only for the occasional basking Iberian wall lizard.

After lunch, the garden and car parking area were coming alive – a swallowtail was feeding avidly on the yellow composites, although ignoring the glorious blooms of grape hyacinth; numerous fire bugs and lizards were taking advantage of the warmth; and a whitethroat provided another sign of returning birds. A short drive then took us into the main Aragón valley. From Martés Bridge, common sandpipers and white wagtails were feeding on the water-washed rocks, and a wander along the south bank produced several butterflies (including brimstone, Cleopatra and Bath white) and numerous green tiger beetles scurrying and flying along the track. As elsewhere, rather little was in flower, although we did find a few sombre bee-orchids and the delightfully fragrant corn mignonette.

With a little time to spare, we then drove slowly across vast plains of arable cultivation, enlivened by many corn buntings and a few stonechats, and interspersed with Badlands scrub. A couple of red-legged partridges, here in their natural home, tried hard to evade our attention, as indeed did the vultures: a scan of the distant slopes revealed several enormous turkey-like griffons, with wings spread like solar panels, on the canopy of the pine trees, and after much searching, a sub-adult lammergeier in the same ungainly posture. Disappointing that it was not on the wing, when it assumes its full majesty, but a good bird nonetheless...

Dinner that evening, as delicious as ever, was enlivened by the production of bottles of cava to celebrate Sue's birthday!

## Saturday 13 April: San Juan de la Peña and Oroel

A clear dawn saw the early morning crew walking around the hill to the Badlands, taking in excellent views of rock sparrows and an Egyptian vulture low overhead. But the big news was the arrival of nightingales, at least four birds were heard and seen, indicating a substantial overnight arrival – the magic of migration unfolding before our eyes!

Our first main destination of the day was the historic village of Santa Cruz de la Serós, at the foot of La Peña. From the village, griffon vulture nests could be picked out on the towering cliffs, although few appeared to be occupied. As the day warmed so the griffons started to fly, and at least two Egyptian vultures joined them, their smaller size, longer tail and contrasting colours showing well. The church was home to a couple of crag martin nests, their occupants feeding swift-like overhead, and a male black redstart gave a stunning performance in the still-bare branches of a stream-side tree, offset beautifully by the azure sky.

A short walk up the hill soon produced some new plants: sheets of blue and white hepaticas (with just a few pink ones) were more extensive than I have ever seen previously, intermingled with yellow cowslips, and a bewildering range of *Primula* hybrids, probably involving three species – cowslip, primrose and oxlip. The pines here were very heavily infested with mistletoe, in its conifer-parasitising subspecies *austriaca*. A common shrew was found dead on the track, and butterflies included holly blue, orange tip and a confiding grizzled skipper, while several violet carpenter bees were seen foraging for nectar and nest sites. Among the birds in the bushes and trees were several bullfinches and firecrests, heard rather than seen until a rumpus right next to the path, just a couple of metres from us, revealed a couple of male firecrests in a (presumably territorial) dispute. Completely oblivious to our presence, they put on a remarkable show. And everywhere the trilling song of Bonelli's warblers: normally reluctant to show themselves, one male in particular put on a whole-body shivering show, displaying its subtly beautiful grey and yellow plumage, demonstrating yet another advantage of our early visit – it wasn't hidden by leaves!



Blue and white hepaticas and a red squirrel.

Driving uphill, a brief stop at the viewpoint gave tremendous views across to the high Pyrenees, usefully interpreted (in understandable Spanish) on the geological trail boards provided. Ever onward and upward, we drove then to the car park by the new monastery at the top. Being the weekend and sunny it was busy, but our chosen picnic table location proved the ideal spot, combining sun and shade to suit everyone's taste, with hepaticas twinkling at us under the pines, and in the branches chaffinches, the ubiquitous companions to any picnic.

Crossing the meadows in front of the new monastery, what at first seemed rather unpromising grassland revealed two species of daffodil: rock daffodils with usually two or three small fragrant flowers on each stem, and lesser daffodils, like a mini version of the wild daffodil. After a short loo stop, and leaving Suzanne to peruse the delights of the monastery tour, the rest of us headed through the woods to the ruined hermitage of St Teresa. Hepaticas were just everywhere, and a yet another daffodil, the large, creamy, drooping alpine subspecies, displayed a hitherto unrealised abundance, based upon previous Honeyguide trips.

The pines produced a range of woodland birds, including coal and crested tits, before opening out into small clearings marked by beautiful drifts of rock daffodils in a dramatic setting looking across the blue-remembered hills of the pre-Pyrenean range to the Ebro valley and beyond, set to the sound of a distant cuckoo. Peter (that is 'our' Peter, rather than 'big, lovely' Peter at Casa Sarasa!) started to show his unparalleled prowess as super-spotter, by pointing out a Cleopatra showing interest in a 'piece of litter' on the path – which we soon realised was a much-paler female Cleopatra. The amorous couple then proceeded to flutter around each other in a display embrace, eventually towering out of sight into the deep blue sky, presumably to Paradise and back... And everywhere around us the sap was rising, as down by the Monastery pond the margins were alive with mating pairs of winter damselflies.

Heading back to the van, Peter struck again, by finding a pair of red squirrels in the tree tops, which after a short while gradually descended to ground level and gave us a few delightful minutes of entertainment as they scoured the car park for food.

A slow drive east through forests and hills eventually brought us to the *parador* at Oroel, the partner mountain to San Juan de la Peña. A drink was in order here; some opted to relax and enjoy the spectacular views and griffon vultures, while others potted around the woods. Nuthatches and crested tits were all around, but very hard to get a clear view of, and a female crossbill came down to drink at a puddle on the road, accompanied by three chaffinches. Again there were few flowers other than hepatica, although the slopes near the car park had some lovely displays of yellow star-of-Bethlehem.

Heading back via Jaca, we diverted briefly off the tarmac road to Berdún Marsh. A marsh harrier was seen a couple of times, including at rest in the marshy grassland, and Sue's photo subsequently showed that it had caught a viperine snake. And then the final drive along the track towards Berdún allowed us good views of corn buntings, crested larks and a single northern wheatear.

#### **Sunday 14 April: Arbayún, Lumbier and Yesa; Aragón Valley**

Before breakfast we headed down to the River Aragón, hoping for a few early birds. In the depths of the valley it was still cool, but as we arrived at the bridge a group of five grey herons, shortly followed by two more and a little egret, flew along the valley. The poplar wood was full of blackcaps and chiffchaffs, and as the first rays of sun infiltrated the barely-expanded foliage a willow warbler came into half-hearted song. Rock sparrows were much in evidence around the bridge, their wheezy calls on a par with the incessant chatter of house sparrows. As we returned, two separate little owls were surveying the new day from the top of buildings around the crossroads.



Little owl.

We headed west after breakfast, taking advantage of the new motorway where possible. Along the banks of the Yesa Reservoir the milky blue waters were typically almost devoid of birds, with only a single great crested grebe spotted. On arriving at Arbayún, the skies were soon full of griffons, above us, below us, eye to eye, and starting to stack over the mouth of the gorge, before drifting away to feed for the day, hopefully avoiding the massed ranks of wind turbines on the opposite valley side. Among them were several black and red kites and chattering parties of alpine swifts, while a peregrine scythed through the heart of the gorge to come to rest out of sight in a smaller side gorge.

At Lumbier Gorge the weather had stepped up a gear, from warm to hot, and with it out came the crowds, not surprising for the first summery Sunday of the year. Notwithstanding the crowds, birds were still much in evidence, protected from the masses by the inaccessibility of the gorge walls, and no doubt to some extent habituated to disturbance at this justifiably popular site.

Crag martins flittered around the rock faces; choughs called incessantly and floated buoyantly around, although their red bills were often obscured by the bunches of sheeps' wool they were carrying to their nest holes; and of course we were accompanied every inch of the way by griffons, gliding overhead or perched on the cliff edges and ledges. Two shrubs were in good, if contrasting, flower: Mediterranean buckthorn, with insignificant clusters of greenish flowers, and St Lucie's cherry, covered in glorious white blossom.

We tried hard to find some shade for lunch but the best we could manage was under some still-leafless trees. However, the more open view did allow us to follow the passage of birds overhead, and it soon became clear the griffons were gathering around some food, very close to the car park. In total perhaps 80 birds were either over the area or at rest in the fields, presumably replete.



Griffon vultures.

With the temperature peaking at around 26°C, we then spent an hour exploring the margins of Yesa Reservoir. The small meadow had not yet really come into bloom so we retreated to the shade of the waterside pines. Alas the water itself was devoid of birds, although we did see a hoopoe in flight over the reservoir a couple of times, and were all treated to a virtuoso nightingale performance.

To complete the day, we then returned to Berdún, and then headed down again to the Aragón, this time taking the track along the north side of the river from Martés Bridge. Immediately we came to a halt as a male Spanish yellow wagtail fed around a puddle; on the return journey it was still there and joined by a pair of grey wagtails, making for an excellent comparison. Our main purpose of this route was to see if some of the special flowers were out but alas no – the wild tulips and fritillaries were still in bud, although it seemed that we might be in luck by the end of the holiday, especially if the weather continued in the same vein. But we did all see a lovely green hairstreak, and overhead a short-toed eagle put on a wonderful hovering display as it searched for reptiles on the Badland slopes below; at one time it was in the same binocular vision as a red kite, sparrowhawk and common buzzard.

#### **Monday 15 April: Ansó valley to Linza; Roncal and Belagua, to San Martin; Fago Gorge**

A milder start, due to there being a little more cloud, saw us heading out before breakfast down to Berdún Marsh, where all was quiet (apart from nightingales) and this time two marsh harriers which were seen hunting on several occasions.

Despite the cloud we decided to make this our first high mountain day, and so headed through the Biniés Gorge and its dramatic dolerite sills into the Ansó valley. In the upper valley, at a brief stop to survey the scene, Peter noticed movement on the scrubby hillside above, which eventually revealed three roe deer moving gradually along the slope. Once back in the van, it started to rain. A short but heavy downpour ensued, but by the time of our next stop near Zuriza (where two separate lammergeiers drifted over at some distance) it was over, turning into the sort of sunny day we had become used to, albeit much cooler at such high altitudes. Here we also found lungwort blooming.

Above Zuriza we started to encounter snow-beds, although the road was still clear; in the patches of turf exposed by snowmelt, least daffodils and oxlips were springing up, with colt's-foot on the unstable road verges, but perhaps the most arresting sight was the snow sublimating straight into mist as the sun came out.



Isard, or southern chamois.

We headed on to the end of the road, the refuge at Linza, which was unfortunately closed so no chance to avail of the facilities. But scanning over the mountain slopes and snow-beds, David's patience paid off in the form of a group of a dozen or so isard, almost invisible except when they crossed the snow. Moving back down the road, a stop in the mixed beech and pine forest produced a selection of woodland birds, with singing song thrush and short-toed treecreeper, crested and long-tailed tits, as well as some flowering clumps of green hellebore, here very much a high altitude plant.

And so to lunch, taken at a convenient stopping point on the forest road between Zuriza and Isaba. Although most attention was on the delightful spread, we did lift our eyes long enough to see another lammergeier, a distant adult golden eagle, and a couple of jays in the tree tops. Then it was back to the hairpins, over into the Roncal-Belagua valley, and then up to the (unmarked) border crossing at San Martin. The snowy landscape and open pine forests were simply stunning, though largely devoid of wildlife apart from four ring ouzels around the closed buildings and large, noisy flocks of alpine choughs in the air, but there were some exciting signs, including a trail of bear footprints below us, no doubt one of the small reintroduced French population which had made a foray into Spain.

Back down into the valleys, we made a short stop in the (almost deserted) village of Gardes, for loos (sadly vandalised) and a walk through the town up to its fine church, before heading east to Fago, and to the dramatic viewpoint overlooking the gorge. Several Bonelli's warblers were in fine song, and two male blue rock thrushes were perched typically on the top of rocks, one above us and one below. Griffons sailed around with three Egyptian vultures, and as a fitting end to a fine day, two more Egyptians perched together on the gorge edge proceeded to mate before our eyes, before engaging in a delightful bout of mutual preening and nuzzling.

The final passage down the Fago Gorge to Berdún completed a wonderful day of hairpins, gorges, snowscapes, rain, sun and sex!

### **Tuesday 16 April: Arrés and Biniés Gorge**

Another clear dawn, and the early starters had all had less sleep than normal as the local little owls had been very noisily active around Casa Sarasa during the wee small hours. A rejuvenating stroll round to the Badlands produced, as expected, nightingales, one of which showed itself to the assembled thronglet very well; splendid views of rock sparrow; and a battalion of five ravens moving overhead.

Across the other side of the Canal from Berdún lies the tiny village of Arrés, which can be reached by a delightfully scenic scrubland and woodland walk from Puente la Reina, a section of the Camino de Santiago. Unfortunately, the previous months' rain now seeping out of the hillside meant that the path was very wet and muddy in places, which dictated that Suzanne sat this one out, and indeed everyone found themselves looking down more than up in order to keep a secure footing. Sadly there were relatively few flowers out to enliven the trudge, although some spectacular examples of yellow pheasant's-eye were some reward. As indeed were the insects, including green hairstreak and a bloody-nosed beetle which proceeded to behave eponymously on my hand.





The Badlands and River Veral.

The scrub and woodland were full of singing Bonelli's warblers and several subalpine warblers, some of which performed admirably in front of us, including songflighting. And then when Peter and I turned around to collect Suzanne and the minibus, we were rewarded with a fine male pied flycatcher, our first of the trip and a welcome sign of ongoing migration.

Our destination was Arrés, another lovely village and one with a very welcome bar... time for a much-deserved drink, and as we headed back down to the van we also enjoyed excellent views of a hummingbird hawk-moth nectaring on honesty at the foot of the village walls. And so back to Casa Sarasa for lunch and a siesta, during which David reported hearing a group of bee-eaters flying over, raising our hopes for the final few days.

In mid-afternoon, we then headed out to the nearby Foz de Biniés, where I left the group in order to move the van down to the bottom of the gorge. By the time we regrouped in mid-gorge, they had seen numerous griffon vultures low overhead, including several on nest ledges, along with grey wagtails and just a single dipper (for Peter's sharp eyes only) in the river; once a very reliable site for this species, the population in the gorge seems to have declined substantially in recent years, much as it has in the uplands of Britain. The rosettes of *Ramonda*, clinging to the north face of a large rock, were showing no signs of flowering, nor indeed the rosettes of Pyrenean saxifrage, and the patches of yellow garlic were still in tight bud. But some of the botanical specialities, much to Lesley's evident delight, were showing at least some hint of flowering – rock petrocotis and Pyrenean hyacinth were especially appreciated, along with large Mediterranean spurge in full flower (rapidly retitled 'last minute dot com spurge' by Shevaun...). And the amorous antics of numerous black, red and white asparagus beetles, on wild asparagus, didn't go unnoticed by Sue and her omnipresent camera!

A trip to the shop in Berdún was requested by the ladies before dinner, but on finding it closed they repaired to Emilio's bar for a taste of local culture – leading yours truly astray with them!

### **Wednesday 17 April: Portalet to Formigal**

A lovely dawn heralded another beautiful day as we headed down to the Aragón at Martés Bridge before breakfast. Both common sandpiper and little ringed plover were feeding along the water's edge, and a smart kingfisher made a couple of fly-pasts along one of the still backwaters, even landing briefly. At least two wrynecks had dropped in overnight and were calling loudly, and a male cirl bunting gave a long-awaited open view, but as yet no orioles around the poplar woods. At breakfast, on wishing Shevaun a Happy Birthday, it soon became clear it wasn't her birthday at all – it turned out to be the date her passport expires in 2015!

Our second trip to the high tops took us to Sabiñanigo and thereafter up to the border crossing at Portalet, interrupted for a few minutes when we were pulled over by the *Guardia Civil* at a roundabout. After giving the bus a close examination (during which even they could find no fault which might have helped to bolster the ailing public coffers) and peering suspiciously at my motley crew of international terrorists and smugglers, we were waved on our way – I didn't even need to demand to see the Ambassador! Up the road, the high level reservoirs were typically birdless, but a short stop there gave us some splendid views of the mountains, as well a cheery wave from our friends in the *Guardia Civil*.

Higher and ever higher, towards Formigal, then Portalet, was like peeling back the seasons: early summer in the lowlands, to the very first inkling of spring at five thousand feet, with snow lying thickly all around us, some 3 metres deep on those parts of the top car park which had not been cleared. A coffee and retail therapy stop was interrupted rudely when a beautiful, ethereal short-toed eagle drifted from behind the mountain and remained stationary overhead for several minutes. After a short while it was joined by a second bird, as a snow finch flashed overhead and a female ring ouzel was picked out on a distant rock. Water pipits, subtly beautiful in shades of mauve and pink, were all around, along with a few northern wheatears and mixed flocks of the two chough species, while the purple patches of purple mountain saxifrage on rocks which can have been snow-free for only a day or two were simply wondrous.



Short-toed eagle.



One of the bee-eaters which make nesting holes in the ground at this particular location in the Aragón valley.

As we moved gradually downhill, a couple of small tortoiseshells were a surprise, and then we were among the marmots, standing sentinel, basking, whistling and generally having fun. A stunning immature golden eagle spent several minutes scouring the mountainside for food, even landing on a boulder briefly, before drifting off, making a desultory stoop at a group of isard which seemed quite unperturbed – presumably marmots would have been more to its taste. But with all this going on in front of us, this particular lay-by seemed just the place for us to have our picnic.

Our final mountain stop was Escarilla, a short potter around a side valley in which I have seen wallcreeper in the past. Alas not this year though, but the dramatic slate geology, a couple of courting brimstones, and a vertical, dripping wall of large-flowered butterwort in bloom were some compensation.

Back in the lowlands with time to spare, we decided to head down to the Aragón again, on the off chance that the breeding bee-eaters had arrived. And our hunch paid off, with about 20 flying around the nesting site, although there was as yet no sign that they had started to refurbish last year's holes.

After dinner, it was warm and still so we took the chance to stroll around near Casa Sarasa with the bat detector. At least two species were confirmed, as the trilling of mole crickets drifted up from the valley, and best of all two scops owls were calling loudly and seen fleetingly under the lights.

## Thursday 18 April: Hecho Valley, Gabardito, Aragón Valley

In the beautiful light of a clear blue dawn, the early crew headed to Berdún Marsh. A marsh harrier was seen, and Cetti's warbler heard, but the abiding memory of that perfect sunrise was a virtuoso nightingale serenade as the first rays of sun swept over the Badlands' marl ridges.

As the forecast was for the weather to break tomorrow, I swapped plans for the final two days to try and ensure our last high mountain day would be in good weather. And so it proved as we headed up the Hecho Valley and through the dramatic rocky gorge, the Boca de lo Inferno (the aptly named Hell's Mouth), before parking near Selva in the upper valley. We stopped first at a reported site for Pyrenean desman, but (as ever) no sign, and then headed up the valley as far as we could drive. The scenery in the high valley was stupendous, and further enhanced as an adult and an immature lammergeier rounded a cliff and drifted wingtip to wingtip for perfect comparison, with never a flap as they disappeared from view a couple of minutes later.

Back down through the gorge we turned off-piste, uphill to the refuge at Gabardito, another hairpin-filled ride. Amidst incredible scenery and open, mixed scots pine and beech woodland, we watched a pair of crossbills shearing twigs and carrying them to their intended nest site, and we then trekked out to the main reason for visiting: a large rock which has overtaken the Boca de lo Inferno as the prime local site for wallcreeper. It is a very large rock and the birds are rather small, and as it happened we could not get into prime viewing position as the path was blocked by a snowdrift. So it is perhaps not surprising that all we managed was to hear the song of the male, with no hint of a visual connection. Indeed, the best birds turned out to be parties of alpine swifts chickering overhead, and a showy male citril finch performing song-flights in one of the clearings. Meanwhile, Suzanne who had remained at the car park, discretion not valour being the watchword, had heard a black woodpecker.

The forest drive back down produced a selection of woodland birds, including great spotted woodpecker and nuthatch, and at one corner the concentration of birds was such that we decided to adopt it as our picnic site. Of course the birds flew away, but such was the anticipation that our picnic was held in uncharacteristic silence – Honeyguide pioneers Zen picnicking!

Given the poor forecast, we then decided to dash down to Berdún Marsh to see lady orchid, at last in full flower, then the Aragón to revisit the tulips and fritillaries in sunshine. Just as we had hoped, the first few of both were now flowering. Also, purple gromwell had come out since our last visit, but best of all was the glade of purple toothwort, its large tubular flowers arising from underground tissues parasitizing the roots of black poplars, the dominant tree in this flood-plain woodland. And as for birds, the Spanish yellow wagtail was in its usual haunts, this time accompanied by a female cirl bunting.



*Fritillaria lusitanica*, purple toothwort and lady orchid.

In the evening we were treated to a visit and talk from Luis Tirado, the regional officer of SEO Aragón, recipient of this trip's Honeyguide donation of €400. As always with those who benefit from Honeyguide visits, he was entertaining, informative and simply excellent, as well as inordinately grateful for our support. In the UK we become accustomed to major NGOs being well-funded, largely through their vast base of supporters, but on the continent that is all too often not the case. And to the shame of all other tour companies, Honeyguide is still the only one which regularly supports conservation in the places we visit and get so much out of...

### **Friday 19 April: Loarre, Riglos and Agüero; Alastuey Valley**

Overnight the wind got up from the north, the temperature dropped, and we were treated to an impressive thunderstorm with heavy rain. We had already decided to call off the early walk based on the forecast, but for those wandering around before breakfast there were clear signs of migration, presumably birds forced down by the weather, including a male golden oriole which moved through the garden.

As we assembled in the car park just after 9AM, five griffon vultures and a booted eagle were hanging low over Berdún, taking advantage of the updraughts from the wind hitting the hillside, rather than the thermals of previous days, and a party of ten common swifts spent a few minutes around the church, the vanguard of the flood which would no doubt arrive in the days to come. As we left, a 'new' male marsh harrier hunted the fields close by.

To the southernmost reaches of the pre-Pyrenean range, first stop was next to the Peña Reservoir. It was cold, with a strong wind and heavy cloud as we crossed the reservoir on a wobbly concrete slab bridge, and water birds were restricted to a handful of yellow-legged gulls and grey herons, and a pair of great crested grebes. But despite the temperature, there was a woodlark in full song, and we watched a spotted flycatcher making 'short-hop' northward migration flights up the valley.

Then a short drive to the dam, and as we parked the rain started. We made our way across the dam to pay homage to a veritable rock garden covered in saxifrages and other plants, including some superb near-flowering examples of Pyrenean saxifrage and a single flower on one *Ramonda* rosette. But by now the rain was really quite heavy so we took refuge in the van and headed south – past our intended destination of Riglos – in search of better weather. By the time we got to the castle of Loarre there was still no sign of the rain abating, so we opted for a warm drink in the café to reassess options. However, some chinks in the cloud appeared and before long we were once again in sunshine, albeit chilly with the northerly wind. The views over the Ebro plain were dramatic, and we managed to find a sheltering hoopoe and several subalpine and Sardinian warblers.

Now approaching lunchtime, we explored the minor road leading to Sarsamarcuello, stopping to watch an Egyptian vulture which was paying close attention to a cattle field. A turtle dove shot through, and the shrubby plantain at our feet provided some botanical interest. A little further on, a river bank seemed to be a good picnic stop, with crested larks and fly-over hoopoe and bee-eater to keep us on our toes. A drive on country tracks up the river then revealed (just) a singing male orphean warbler.

A short drive across the main road then took us to Agüero, the smaller but quieter counterpart of Los Mallos de Riglos. The only birds around the cliffs seem to be the ubiquitous griffons, but the scrub produced an abundance of flowering rosemary, reflecting the more Mediterranean characteristics of this area, and a splendid snowy mespilus bush in full flower.

Although we didn't have the time to examine Riglos close-up, a short stop by the main road allowed the photographers the opportunity to capture the magnificent scenery. And beautiful flax and grey-leaved cistus added to our list of attractive plants in flower.

With time in hand, we made a diversion on the way home into Bailo, and thence to Alastuey, a side valley to the Canal de Berdún, in which both red and black kites were observed following the plough, no doubt taking advantage of the upheaval to get a few worms. And then a final look at Berdún Marsh, which produced two pied flycatchers, female golden oriole, sparrowhawk, several turtle doves and cuckoo. The later bird migrants were clearly coming through, with further pied flycatcher and a female common redstart at Casa Sarasa – all agreed we would like another few days there to witness the ever-changing bird scene!

Time then to pack for tomorrow's early start, before settling down for our last, excellent meal and a review of the past few days of wildlife and landscape delights.

### **Saturday 20 April: the way home...**

An early start took us through the Pyrenees in a swirl of dramatic cloudscapes, arriving in Biarritz at 10AM for our flight home.

## The Best Bits

As is customary on a Honeyguide trip, I asked the group to tell me their favourite parts and sightings of the past eight days:

- David** The short-toed eagles suspended above Portalet; hepaticas in profusion; and the flocking griffon vultures at Lumbier.
- Lesley** Our drive up and down the dramatic Boca de lo Inferno, and the sheets of hepaticas.
- Peter** The ghostly short-toed eagles over Portalet; the colour of the expanding poplar leaves next to Berdún Marsh, intensified by the first rays of sunlight; and his Van Gogh moment at Agüero, a vineyard set amidst a sea of yellow flowers.
- Shevaun** Our amorous Egyptian vultures, before, during and after 'the event'; the interplay of light and panoramic views at dawn.
- Sue** Our early morning walks, particularly down at the Aragón; and getting to grips with the flowers, eagles and other delights, especially Spanish yellow wagtail.
- Suzanne** Our wonderful views of isard, lammergeiers and bee-eaters.

For my part, the highlights had to be the wonderful show of purple toothwort; the ebb and flow of migrant birds on a daily basis, witnessing the arrival of nightingales, bee-eaters, swifts, orioles, flycatchers etc; and those precious moments of intimacy shown by Egyptian vultures, Cleopatras, brimstones and cattle – the sap was rising!

By common consensus, mealtimes were a highlight of every day, and despite our diverse range of dietary constraints, the always fresh and tasty delights we were served by Melanie and Peter completed the perfect triumvirate of wildlife, weather and food!

My thanks to all involved in what was another outstanding Honeyguide trip, one which I feel privileged to have led.



Friday's storm disappearing over the Ebro valley.

**SPECIES LISTS**  
**KEY TO LOCALITIES**

In the lists below, specific locality codes are given only for the more interesting species found in a small number of localities. Otherwise if any code is given, it is the generalised zone code.

**Canal de Berdún (CB)**

B – Berdún, including the banks of the Veral and Berdún Marsh  
Ar – Río Aragón, between Puente la Reina and the confluence with the Veral  
Arr – Arrés

**Pre-Pyrenees (PP)**

J – San Juan de la Peña and Santa Cruz de la Seros  
O – Oroel  
R – Riglos and the ‘Ramonda rock’  
Ag – Agüero  
Lo – Loarre

**Lower gorges (LG)**

Bi – Biniés gorge  
Fa – Fago gorge  
L – Lumbier and Arbayún gorges

**High Pyrenees (HP)**

P – Portalet and Formigal  
E – Escarilla  
G – Gabardito and Hecho Valley  
SM – San Martin and Belagua  
An – Upper Ansó Valley

**BRYOPHYTES (Mosses)**

*Grimmia pulvinata* B

**PTERIDOPHYTES (Ferns)**

*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* Black Spleenwort Bi  
*A. fontanum* Bi  
*A. ruta-muraria* Wall-rue B Bi  
*A. trichomanes* Maidenhair Spleenwort Bi  
*Ceterach officinarum* Rustyback Fern Bi  
*Polypodium interjectum* Intermediate Polypody Bi  
*P. vulgare* Common Polypody Bi  
*Pteridium aquilinum* Bracken J

**GYMNOSPERMS (Conifers)**

*Cupressus sempervirens* Cypress B R  
*Juniperus communis* Juniper CB PP  
*J. communis* ssp. *nana* Alpine Juniper P SM  
*J. Phoenicia* Phoenician Juniper Ag  
*Pinus nigra* Black Pine B PP HP  
*P. pinaster* Maritime Pine PP  
*P. sylvestris* Scots Pine PP HP  
*P. uncinata* Mountain Pine SM  
*Taxus baccata* Yew Bi

The following list concentrates on those plants seen in flower, with just a few more distinctive non-flowering species. Given the lateness of the spring and the early visit date, this list is much more compact than in previous years.

**DICOTYLEDONS**

**Aceraceae Maple Family**

*Acer opalus* Bi

**Anacardiaceae Pistachio Family**

*Pistachia lentiscus* Lentisc Ag

**Apiaceae Carrot Family**

*Bupleurum rigidum* Bi Ar  
*Eryngium campestre* Field Eryngo B Arr  
*Foeniculum vulgare* Fennel  
*Scandix pecten-veneris* Shepherd’s-needle

**Aquifoliaceae Holly Family**

*Ilex aquifolium* Holly

<b>Araliaceae Ivy Family</b>		
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	
<i>H. hibernica</i>	Irish Ivy	Bi
<b>Asteraceae Daisy Family</b>		
<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	Wormwood	B
<i>A. campestre</i>	Field Southernwood	Ar
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	
<i>Carlina acanthifolia</i>		HP
<i>Helichrysum stoechas</i>		CB
<i>Rhagadiolus stellatus</i>		R
<i>Santolina chamaecyparissus</i>	Lavender Cotton	CB
<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk Thistle	B
<i>Taraxacum</i> sp.	Dandelion	HP
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Colt's-foot	HP
<b>Berberidaceae Barberry Family</b>		
<i>Berberis vulgaris</i>	Barberry	CB PP
<b>Betulaceae Birch Family</b>		
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder	
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	
<b>Boraginaceae Borage Family</b>		
<i>Asperugo procumbens</i>	Madwort	B
<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage	B
<i>Buglossoides purpureo-caerulea</i>	Purple Gromwell	Ar
<i>Cynoglossum cheirifolium</i>		L
<i>Lithodora fruticosum</i>	Shrubby Gromwell	CB
<i>Pulmonaria affinis</i>	Lungwort	G An
<b>Brassicaceae Cabbage Family</b>		
<i>Aethionema saxatile</i>	Burnt Candytuft	L
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	
<i>Alyssum alyssoides</i>	Small Alison	CB
<i>Arabis turrata</i>	Towercress	Bi
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's-purse	
<i>Cardaria draba</i>	Hoary Cress	
<i>Erophila verna</i>	Whitlow-Grass	
<i>Erysimum grandiflorum</i>		An
<i>Lepidium heterophyllum</i>	Smith's Pepperwort	B
<i>Lunaria annua</i>	Honesty	
<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>	Wild Radish	
<b>Buxaceae Box Family</b>		
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	CB PP
<b>Caprifoliaceae Honeysuckle Family</b>		
<i>Lonicera xylosteum</i>	Fly Honeysuckle	B
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	
<b>Caryophyllaceae Pink Family</b>		
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	
<i>Paronychia argentea</i>		CB
<i>Petrocoptis pyrenaica</i>		Bi
<i>Silene alba</i>	White Campion	
<i>S. nutans</i>	Nottingham Catchfly	Ag
<b>Cistaceae Rock-rose Family</b>		
<i>Cistus incanus</i>	Grey-leaved Cistus	R
<i>Fumana ericoides</i>		CB Ag
<i>Helianthemum apenninum</i>	White Rock-rose	CB PP
<i>H. canum</i>	Hoary Rock-rose	CB Ag
<b>Crassulaceae Stonecrop Family</b>		
<i>Sedum dasyphyllum</i>	Thick-leaved Stonecrop	R J
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort	Bi
<b>Cucurbitaceae Cucumber Family</b>		
<i>Bryonia dioica</i>	White Bryony	B Bi
<b>Ericaceae Heather Family</b>		
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Bearberry	J Ag

<b>Euphorbiaceae Spurge Family</b>		
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge	CB J
<i>E. characias</i>	Large Mediterranean Spurge	PP Bi
<i>E. helioscopia</i>	Sun Spurge	
<i>E. serrata</i>		CB
<b>Fabaceae Pea Family</b>		
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> ssp. <i>forondae</i>	Kidney Vetch	HP
<i>Astragalus monspessulanus</i>	Montpelier Milk-vetch	CB
<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judas Tree	B
<i>Coronilla emerus</i>	Scorpion Vetch	CB LG
<i>Echinospartium horridum</i>		J Arr
<i>Genista hispanica</i>	Spanish Gorse	Ar
<i>G. scorpius</i>	Berdún Broom	CB PP
<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>	Horseshoe Vetch	CB
<i>Lathyrus setifolius</i>		B Ar Ag
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	False Acacia	B
<b>Fagaceae Oak Family</b>		
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	PP HP
<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes Oak	CB PP
<i>Q. ile</i>	Holm Oak	CB LG PP
<i>Q. petraea</i>	Sessile Oak	PP
<i>Q. pyrenaica</i>	Pyrenean Oak	PP
<b>Fumariaceae Fumitory Family</b>		
<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	Ramping Fumitory	L
<i>F. officinalis</i>	Fumitory	B
<i>F. parviflora</i>	Small-flowered Fumitory	B
<b>Geraniaceae Crane's-bill Family</b>		
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-bill	
<i>E. gruinum</i>		Ag
<i>E. moschatum</i>	Musk Stork's-bill	Ag
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	
<i>G. purpureum</i>	Little-Robin	Li
<i>G. robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert	LG
<b>Gesneriaceae African-violet Family</b>		
<i>Ramonda myconi</i>		Bi R
<b>Globulariaceae Globularia Family</b>		
<i>Globularia punctata</i>		CB
<b>Lamiaceae Labiate Family</b>		
<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit Dead-nettle	
<i>L. purpureum</i>	Red-Dead-nettle	
<i>Phlomis lychnitis</i>		CB
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary	R Ag
<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	Wild Clary	Ag
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Shrubby Thyme	CB PP
<b>Lentibulariaceae Butterwort Family</b>		
<i>Pinguicula grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered Butterwort	E
<b>Linaceae Flax Family</b>		
<i>Linum narbonense</i>	Beautiful Flax	R
<b>Loranthaceae Mistletoe Family</b>		
<i>Viscum album</i> ssp. <i>album</i>	Mistletoe	CB
<i>Viscum album</i> ssp. <i>austriacum</i>		J G
<b>Malvaceae Mallow Family</b>		
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow	
<b>Oleaceae Olive Family</b>		
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	Bi
<i>Jasminum fruticans</i>	Wild Jasmine	B
<i>Olea europaea</i>	Olive	R
<b>Orobanchaceae Broomrape Family</b>		
<i>Lathraea clandestine</i>	Purple Toothwort	Ar
<b>Papaveraceae Poppy Family</b>		
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine	Bi
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	



<b>Plantaginaceae Plantain Family</b>		
<i>Plantago sempervirens</i>	Shrubby Plantain	R
<b>Polygalaceae Milkwort Family</b>		
<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	Common Milkwort	Arr
<b>Polygonaceae Dock Family</b>		
<i>Oxyria digyna</i>	Mountain Sorrel	Bi
<b>Primulaceae Primrose Family</b>		
<i>Coris monspeliensis</i>		R
<i>Primula elatior</i>	Oxlip	HP
<i>P. veris</i>	Cowslip	J HP
<i>P. veris x elatior</i>		J HP
<b>Ranunculaceae Buttercup Family</b>		
<i>Adonis vernalis</i>	Yellow Pheasant's eye	Arr
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine	Bi
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh-marigold	HP
<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Stinking Hellebore	CB PP
<i>H. viridis</i>	Green Hellebore	HP
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	Hepatica	J G
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser Celandine	
<b>Resedaceae Mignonette Family</b>		
<i>Reseda phyteuma</i>	Corn Mignonette	Ar
<b>Rhamnaceae Buckthorn Family</b>		
<i>Rhamnus alaternus</i>	Mediterranean Buckthorn	Ag Bi
<b>Rosaceae Rose Family</b>		
<i>Amelanchier ovalis</i>	Snowy Mespilus	CB Ag
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry	J
<i>Potentilla tabernaemontani</i>	Spring Cinquefoil	CB PP
<i>Prunus mahaleb</i>	St Lucie's Cherry	Bi L
<i>P. spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Bramble	
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad Burnet	CB
<b>Salicaceae Willow Family</b>		
<i>Populus nigra</i>	Black Poplar	Ar
<i>Salix alba</i>	White Willow	Bi
<i>S. purpurea</i>	Purple Willow	Ar
<b>Santalaceae Sandalwood Family</b>		
<i>Osiris alba</i>		Ag
<b>Saxifragaceae Saxifrage Family</b>		
<i>Saxifraga corbariensis</i>		R
<i>S. longifolia</i>	Pyrenean Saxifrage	Bi R P
<i>S. oppositifolia</i>	Purple Mountain Saxifrage	P
<i>S. tridactylites</i>	Rue-leaved Saxifrage	L R
<b>Scrophulariaceae Figwort Family</b>		
<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	Snapdragon	Bi
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	B
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	Ivy-leaved Speedwell	
<i>V. persica</i>	Common Field Speedwell	
<b>Thymelaeaceae Daphne Family</b>		
<i>Daphne laureola</i>	Spurge-laurel	J
<b>Violaceae Violet Family</b>		
<i>Viola odorata</i>	Sweet Violet	PP
<i>V. riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet	J
<b>MONOCOTYLEDONS</b>		
<b>Amaryllidaceae Daffodil Family</b>		
<i>Narcissus minor</i>	Least Daffodil	J An
<i>N. pseudonarcissus</i> ssp. <i>alpestris</i>	Alpine Daffodil	J
<i>N. pseudonarcissus</i> ssp. <i>pseudonarcissus</i>	Wild Daffodil	An SM
<i>N. rupicola</i>	Rock Daffodil	J L Arr
<b>Dioscoreaceae Yam Family</b>		
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black Bryony	Bi

<b>Iridaceae Iris Family</b>		
<i>Iris germanica</i>	Purple Iris	
<b>Liliaceae Lily Family</b>		
<i>Allium moly</i>	Yellow Garlic	Bi
<i>Asparagus acutifolius</i>		CB
<i>Asphodelus albus</i>	White Asphodel	Bi J
<i>Fritillaria lusitanica</i>		Ar
<i>Gagea fistulosa</i>	Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem	J
<i>Hyacinthus amethystinus</i>	Pyrenean Hyacinth	Bi
<i>Muscari neglectum</i>	Grape-hyacinth	CB PP
<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i>	Star-of-Bethlehem	CB
<i>Tulipa sylvestris</i>	Wild Tulip	Ar
<b>Orchidaceae Orchid Family</b>		
<i>Ophrys fusca</i>	Sombre Bee-orchid	CB
<i>Orchis purpurea</i>	Lady Orchid	B
<b>Poaceae Grass Family</b>		
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed	B
<i>Poa bulbosa</i>	Bulbous Meadow-grass	CB
<b>Typhaceae Reedmace Family</b>		
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Greater Reedmace	B
<b>LICHENS</b>		
<i>Cladonia foliacea</i>		
<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>	Starburst Lichen	



Sombre bee orchid *Ophrys fusca*, and rock daffodil *Narcissus rupicola*.

## BIRDS

<b>Great Crested Grebe</b>	Yesa (1) and Peña (2) Reservoirs
<b>Little Egret</b>	1 over the Aragón at Martés
<b>Grey Heron</b>	small numbers in the Aragón, with some early morning movement; 2 at Peña Reservoir
<b>Mallard</b>	Aragón
<b>Black Kite</b>	numerous; birds following the plough at Alastuey
<b>Red Kite</b>	also numerous, and following the plough at Alastuey
<b>Lammergeier</b>	Martés; Ansó Valley (3); Hecho valley (2)
<b>Egyptian Vulture</b>	1-4 birds at Santa Cruz, Biniés, Berdún, Fago and Sarsamarcuello
<b>Griffon Vulture</b>	widespread, with notable concentrations at Lumbier
<b>Short-toed Eagle</b>	Portalet (3); Aragón
<b>Marsh Harrier</b>	Berdún Marsh, at least three individuals
<b>Sparrowhawk</b>	Aragón; Berdún; Arrés
<b>Golden Eagle</b>	Ansó (adult); Portalet (immature)
<b>Common Buzzard</b>	widespread, especially on journeys, perched on telegraph poles
<b>Booted Eagle</b>	Berdún; Arrés; Lumbier
<b>Peregrine</b>	Arbayún; Fago
<b>Kestrel</b>	
<b>Red-legged Partridge</b>	pairs at Martés and Berdún
<b>Little Ringed Plover</b>	Aragón, at Martés Bridge (1 only)
<b>Common Sandpiper</b>	Aragón, at Martés (up to 3)
<b>Yellow-legged Gull</b>	Aragón, and Peña Reservoir
<b>Feral Pigeon</b>	widespread around settlements; some convincing Rock Doves in Lumbier Gorge
<b>Woodpigeon</b>	more frequent in small groups around Berdún than in previous years
<b>Collared Dove</b>	Abundant in built-up areas
<b>Turtle Dove</b>	Sarsamarcuello; Berdún
<b>Barn Owl</b>	Berdún (1)
<b>Scops Owl</b>	Berdún (2)
<b>Little Owl</b>	Berdún
<b>Cuckoo</b>	San Juan de la Peña; Berdún
<b>Kingfisher</b>	Aragón at Martés
<b>Common Swift</b>	Berdún, just one flock seen
<b>Alpine Swift</b>	Arbayún; Gabardito
<b>Bee-eater</b>	Aragón Valley; Berdún
<b>Hoopoe</b>	Yesa Reservoir; Sarsamarcuello; Loarre
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b>	
<b>Green Woodpecker</b>	San Juan de la Peña
<b>Black Woodpecker</b>	Gabardito
<b>Wryneck</b>	Martés Bridge (3 birds)
<b>Crested Lark</b>	lowlands
<b>Skylark</b>	Portalet, in song
<b>Crag Martin</b>	
<b>Swallow</b>	
<b>House Martin</b>	
<b>Tree Pipit</b>	Berdún
<b>Water Pipit</b>	Portalet; Upper Ansó valley
<b>Spanish Yellow Wagtail</b>	Martés Bridge, a single male; other yellow wagtails, not sub- specifically identified, flying over
<b>Grey Wagtail</b>	Upland and gorge rivers; also by the Aragon at Martés
<b>White Wagtail</b>	
<b>Dipper</b>	Biniés Gorge
<b>Wren</b>	upland forest and gorges
<b>Dunnock</b>	San Martin
<b>Robin</b>	large numbers singing in the lowlands, and more typically higher up
<b>Nightingale</b>	became abundant in the lowlands during the course of the week
<b>Black Redstart</b>	from lowland to mountain tops, a wide altitudinal range around cliffs, rocks and buildings
<b>Redstart</b>	Berdún

<b>Whinchat</b>	a single migrant at Berdún
<b>Stonechat</b>	
<b>Northern Wheatear</b>	Berdún; Portalet
<b>Blue Rock Thrush</b>	Fago
<b>Blackbird</b>	
<b>Ring Ouzel</b>	San Martin; Portalet
<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	Gabardito and the Hecho valley
<b>Song Thrush</b>	Berdún; Ansó and Hecho valleys
<b>Cetti's Warbler</b>	
<b>Sardinian Warbler</b>	Loarre
<b>Subalpine Warbler</b>	Berdún; Arrés; Loarre
<b>Whitethroat</b>	Berdún
<b>Orphean Warbler</b>	Sarsamarcuello (male in song)
<b>Blackcap</b>	extremely abundant at low and mid-altitudes
<b>Bonelli's Warbler</b>	Santa Cruz; Arrés; Fago
<b>Northern Chiffchaff</b>	
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	Aragón
<b>Wood Warbler</b>	Aragón (sub-song)
<b>Goldcrest</b>	San Juan de la Peña; Gabardito; Ansó Valley
<b>Firecrest</b>	Santa Cruz
<b>Spotted Flycatcher</b>	Peña Reservoir
<b>Pied Flycatcher</b>	Berdún and Berdún Marsh; Arrés
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	
<b>Crested Tit</b>	San Juan de la Peña; Oroel; Gabardito
<b>Coal Tit</b>	
<b>Blue Tit</b>	
<b>Great Tit</b>	
<b>Nuthatch</b>	San Juan de la Peña; Oroel; Gabardito
<b>Golden Oriole</b>	Berdún and Berdún Marsh
<b>Wallcreeper</b>	Gabardito
<b>Short-toed Treecreeper</b>	Aragón; Ansó Valley
<b>Jay</b>	
<b>Magpie</b>	
<b>Alpine Chough</b>	large groups seen at very high levels
<b>Red-billed Chough</b>	Portalet; Lumbier
<b>Jackdaw</b>	Lumbier
<b>Carrion Crow</b>	
<b>Raven</b>	
<b>Spotless Starling</b>	
<b>Common Starling</b>	Berdún, a late winter migrant
<b>House Sparrow</b>	
<b>Tree Sparrow</b>	Berdún (just one bird)
<b>Rock Sparrow</b>	numerous at Berdún and Martés Bridge
<b>Snow Finch</b>	Portalet
<b>Chaffinch</b>	
<b>Serin</b>	
<b>Citril Finch</b>	Gabardito, including a displaying male
<b>Greenfinch</b>	
<b>Goldfinch</b>	
<b>Linnet</b>	
<b>Crossbill</b>	two at Gabardito (nest-building); Oroel
<b>Bullfinch</b>	Santa Cruz
<b>Yellowhammer</b>	Portalet
<b>Girl Bunting</b>	
<b>Corn Bunting</b>	abundant at low levels

**Total – 110 species**

and that was without seeing several expected species, including shrikes, Tawny Pipit, Black-eared or Black Wheatears, Rock Bunting, Rock Thrush or Melodious or Dartford Warblers.

## MAMMALS

Northern Mole	molehills only
Common Shrew	J(dead)
Daubenton's Bat	B
Common Pipistrelle	B
European Free-tailed Bat	B
Red Squirrel	J
Alpine Marmot ( <i>right</i> )	An P
Stone Marten	Arr(droppings)
Red Fox	B
Brown Bear	SM(tracks)
Wild Boar	PP Bi (rootings only)
Roe Deer	An
Isard	An P



## BUTTERFLIES

Grizzled Skipper	P
Scarce Swallowtail	
Swallowtail ( <i>top right</i> )	
Large White	
Small White	
Green-veined White	
Bath White	Ar
Orange-tip	
Clouded Yellow	
Wood White	Bi
Brimstone	
Cleopatra ( <i>courtship, below right</i> )	
Peacock	
Comma	
Red Admiral	
Small Tortoiseshell	HP
Southern Speckled Wood	
Wall Brown	
Panoptes Blue	B Ag
Holly Blue	P
Small Blue	
Green Hairstreak	Arr Ar



## MOTHS

Pine Processionary Moth <i>Euranthis plumistraria</i>	caterpillars everywhere where there were pine trees
Hummingbird Hawk-moth	B Ar
Silver Y	B

## AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Iberian Water Frog	Ar B
Iberian Wall Lizard ( <i>right</i> )	CB PP
Slow Worm	Arr
Viperine Snake (in the talons of a Marsh Harrier)	B



## OTHER INVERTEBRATES

<i>Cepaea hortensis</i>	a banded snail	
<i>Oedipoda coerulescens</i>	Blue-winged Grasshopper	R
<i>O. germanica</i>	Red-winged Grasshopper	CB PP
<i>Anacridium aegyptiacum</i>	Egyptian Locust	B
<i>Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa</i>	Mole-cricket	B
Nymphal stick insect sp.		Lo
<i>Sympecma fusca</i>	Winter Damselfly	J
<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i>	Fire-bug	B
<i>Aquarius najas</i>	a large pond skater	B Ar
<i>Bombylius major</i>	Bee-fly	J
<i>Cicindela campestris</i>	Green Tiger-beetle	Ar Arr
<i>Timarcha tenebricosa</i>	Bloody-nosed Beetle	Arr
<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	Seven-spot Ladybird	
<i>Tropinota hirta</i>	a hairy beetle	
<i>Crioceris asparagi</i>	Asparagus Beetle	Bi
<i>Geotrupes stercorarius</i>	Dor-beetle	An
<i>Apis mellifera</i>	Honeybee	
<i>Formica rufa</i>	Wood Ant	
<i>Xylocopa violacea</i>	Violet Carpenter-bee	
<i>Diplolepis rosae</i>	Robin's Pincushion gall	B
<i>Podalonia hirsuta</i>	a sand wasp	Ar