

# *Honeyguide*

## **WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

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Autumn in Berdún  
29 September - 6 October 1996

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### AUTUMN IN THE PYRENEES

29 September -- 6 October 1996

Our mid-morning British Airways flight from Heathrow was uneventful although we seemed to take an unusually long while getting down into **Bilbao**, giving excellent views of the landscape below and especially the rows of hills far to the west of us as we did so. Once on the ground, it was quickly clear that the air was warm, if the sky was not especially bright: a pleasant change from London.

Europcar proved quick and efficient and our excellent 9-seater Fiat *Ducato Panorama* was quickly loaded; off we set, heading eastwards on the motorway system uphill and away towards **Vitoria** and **Pamplona**. Getting out of the airport and onto the right road proved to be extremely easy (more so, as it turned out, than getting back in again).

After a coffee stop (sorry, *cafe con leche/cafe solo* stop) and the bypass around Pamplona, the route became more twisty and interesting in a way, as we approached and passed the big reservoir, **Embalse de Yesa**, and entered the **Aragon valley**. The water level in the reservoir was actually extremely low and as always there were few obvious birds. At the eastern end, beyond the deserted village of **Tiermas**, we crested a rise and there, far ahead, was **Berdun**. Most of the group had heard something about it or seen photographs of it and were looking forward to a first acquaintance with the village: I don't think anyone was disappointed. For Marcella and myself, old hands at Berdun now, it was certainly like going back to a second home, and very welcome it was.

We were soon parked in the square by the school and water tower and unloaded our bits and pieces for the short walk to **The Painting School** in Calle Mayor. Being such a small group, we were not, as usually happens, split into two houses, but all fitted perfectly into one, the 'main' house with the common room. **Vivien** and **John Boucher** welcomed us and showed everyone their rooms and exclusive shower/toilet facilities and we were soon heading for the *Rincon de Emilio*: Emilio's place, where we were to have all our breakfasts (downstairs, in the bar) and evening meals (upstairs, in the dining room).

The weather, recently, had apparently been as perverse and unpredictable as we have become 'used to' at home: not a great summer, not much heat, not much anything really but a mixture of all sorts. But the prospects seemed fine and maybe more settled for our all-too-short week.

#### MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

A glorious morning! Indeed, a glorious day: it developed into a day of hot sunshine and clear blue skies, the temperature feeling well up into the 80s (in English money - 28°C because I know that can be turned back to front to 82°F). This was to prove the only really hot day we had and was slightly misleading as everyone worried about having the right clothes for the conditions - in the end we had everything, from genuine heat to real cold, from sunshine to drizzly rain and even the odd short downpour. But we never got wet and essentially we were very lucky with the weather all week.

This first day, being so bright, was excellent for butterflies and we soon found clouded yellows to be frequent and watched a **Queen of Spain fritillary** closely. Small birds were a little less obvious: as we walked down to the **Rio Veral** in the morning we saw rather few at first, going down the slope, but as we reached the fields across the river there were suddenly many more. On the way down, though, we were treated to good views of a **pie'd flycatcher** and **Dartford warblers**, local specialities in the short, aromatic, thorny shrubs. The best part is about two thirds of the way down to the river, after the bend at the old village water pipe, where the ground flattens a little each side of the path. Higher up, the ground is either steeper and bare or covered with grass and not so good for the Dartfords. The lower fields, beyond the river, were wet with dew, the hedges full of robins, blackcaps, chiffchaffs and goldfinches. Cetti's warblers sang, invisible as ever, by the river; but **woodlarks** were more surprising songsters at this late date (they are considered early spring singers back in England) and several could be heard overhead. On nearly every subsequent morning a woodlark could be heard in song from the village perimeter.

It was not until we were on our way back that the vultures appeared. On later days, with a cold north wind and no real heat, they were out and about before sunrise: using the wind rather than thermals to provide lift. Today, though, there was no wind to speak of and they had to wait for the warmer air to rise: we spotted a couple on a slope across the river and then saw one or two in flight. Valerie and Brian, though, then picked up many more in the air towards **Binies** and, as we walked back up the hill to Berdun, we could see at least 75 sitting on top of the blue marl slope between Binies and the lower farm buildings of Berdun village. These were all **griffon vultures**: the local Egyptians had obviously migrated south already, as had the black kites of which there was no sign.

On this day only we had lunch at Emilio's, rather than taking a packed lunch. It was excellent, with as much wine as the evening meal! The packed lunches also proved to be more than satisfying: enough food for two, each.

Normally after lunch the group takes a walk to the **Rio Aragon**, but the fields *en route* had all been ploughed, looking nice and red but a bit empty, so we elected to drive a little way first and then have a walk. At John's suggestion we went on farther to investigate the village tip: this proved a slight anti climax as there were just a few **red kites** and a group of ravens, although we did then see the only **booted eagle** and **hobby** of the trip flying overhead. Also, worth a mention, there were several **white wagtails**. White wagtails proved to be common and there were a few in Berdun every morning, but they were particularly clean, 'white' and attractive, quite unlike our (equally attractive) **pie'd wagtails**. Indeed, there is a school of thought that they should be treated as a separate species.

Rather than return to the Aragon, as was the original plan, I drove on via a couple of small villages and back round to the river closer to the reservoir. A short walk here produced more vultures and kites two **kingfishers** and some serins, but relatively little else, although we happened to stop at a spot that was excellent for numerous spikes of **autumn lady's tresses**, small white-flowered orchids. The vultures, though, were clearly returning to the cliffs to the north, so we moved on via **Sigues** to the local gorge and enjoyed the sight of vultures soaring around in close formation. It was also our first taste of the typical local scenery, deep, sheer-sided limestone gorges with green slopes above, cutting through to the level of the broader Aragon valley floor.

## TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER

The change could not have been more dramatic: hot, dry weather had become cold, windy and sometimes wet. Overnight there had been a good gale, then it suddenly became calm before a thunderstorm. But the rain kept off pretty well all day, while we were out.

The early morning in the village produced the regular **white wagtails**, **black redstarts** (singing well) and **spotless starlings**. I worried about the starlings. . . Most were obviously 'spotless', even the young and female ones with rows of greyish streaks/spots beneath and a grey bloom on the head and neck, but there were two or three starlings that appeared indistinguishable from winter common starlings. So, I suppose, that is what they were. Yet, they poked about the roof tiles of the church, entered the holes under the roof, hopped about the bell tower and generally behaved exactly as the locally-bred spotless starlings did. Would winter visitor starlings do that? Presumably that is what these were: not breeding here surely? Around the village it was usually possible to see a serin or two, sometimes a firecrest, and a sparrowhawk shot overhead on some mornings during the week, looking for breakfast and making the spotless starlings shout in alarm.

We drove to **Puente la Reina**, intending to go to the **Sierra de la Pena**: but looking up to the high hills, we saw better weather up there, with more blue sky, and decided instead to head up the Hecho valley first instead of later. The valley was fantastic: what fabulous colours! The mixtures of green pastures and golden, yellow and red trees, followed by the same gold, yellow and red mixed with deep but vivid greens of pines and slabs of rock, made the whole day a treat, with a constant procession of riches passing before the eyes. On the way up the valley we totted up some 13 **red kites** and nine **buzzards**.

At a big cliff on the left, well above **Hecho** and **Siresa**, two **lammergeiers** appeared well on cue: they settled on the cliff and allowed us to see their orange coloration well, before one flew off along the cliff and out of sight. Griffons were scattered everywhere in small numbers. We then walked through the next narrow gorge, well known as the 'wallcreeper gorge': wallcreepers had indeed bred there this year and had been seen by Vivien Boucher in July and a friend of mine who happened to pass through in August. But we were not so lucky. It was, though, a fine walk.

Afterwards we drove on up through the **Selva de Oza**, and right out onto the open high meadows beyond, in the area of **Guarrinza**, at the top of the **rio Aragon Subordan**, but by then it was dull and damp. We returned to the forest, had a walk, without seeing much, although **crested tit** and **short-toed treecreeper** gave very good views, then found a place for lunch by the river. We retreated to some big trees as the rain came down harder (all except for Martin, who fed half his lunch to a couple of inquisitive ponies), and set off back for the lower valley hoping to find the sun. It didn't really work out like that and we carried on to the **Sierra de la Pena**: here the fierce north-westerly wind piled cloud up on one side of the hills, while in the lee it was bright and sunny. We somehow contrived to keep just out of the sun most of the time!

**Griffon vultures** put on another great show for us here: there were at least 50 of them. When we reached the monastery under the overhanging cliff near the top, we found it open (but empty) and looked around for a while before continuing up to the top and walking through the woods to the viewpoint over the steep drop to **Santa Cruz**. Actually, the best birds were right where we had parked, with a little party of tits, chiffchaffs, a **short-toed treecreeper** and **firecrests**. But the visit was saved (because it is a place where we rarely fail to see one) by a **lammergeier** flying overhead: an adult, but very white by comparison with the two seen earlier.

#### WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER

The weather looked better, but the hills to the north were hidden in cloud so it seemed that a trip south was in order. First we set off west, along the valley to **Puente le Reina**, then on south along the Huesca road. After a stop to admire our first views of the dramatic **Mallos de Riglos**, we turned west (right) to the village of **Aguero**, tucked in under some almost equally dramatic cliffs. The silence was broken, unfortunately, by the noise of building work on a house and the sound of a JCB digging up the stone flags in front of the church: but later

all this stopped and we had some peace and quiet, albeit a little cold. It was, all the same, quite sunny here, with not much wind, so the lack of small birds was a bit disappointing: we heard Dartford and Sardinian warblers but saw neither species. **Black redstarts** were good and several **serins** were about; the village was full of **spotless starlings**.

After Agüero we went to **Riglos railway station**, where we had lunch, with a singing woodlark and calling (but equally invisible) Sardinian warblers. A steady stream of griffon vultures came overhead. Angela found some sweet, ripe figs and handed them around for most of us to try.

**Riglos** itself was bright, mostly sunny but cold and often windy - all a bit bleak, with not many birds to show for it. We were disappointed to find the communal washing place in the middle of the village falling apart, all the roof tiles having been pillaged: not so long ago Marcella and I saw it still in use. Even now, on a weekday in October, the cliffs had several rock climbers scattered over them. It is, of course, a most dramatic and spectacular place, birds or no birds. It also proved good for vegetables: great red peppers and fine tomatoes! Our vegetable garden watching came on later, after it had been noted by Brian that rarely has a group of birdwatchers been reduced to watching garden produce so intently!

With little else to keep us here, though, and the weather brightening, we decided to make for **Loarre castle**, via **Ayerbe**: another journey punctuated by red kites. This was quite a long, winding drive up to the incredible *Castillo*, from which we had hugely expansive views south over **Huesca** and far beyond towards Zaragoza. Around the castle we found six confiding **woodlarks** (this, although not mentioned so often as some of the more obvious birds, is a really characteristic species of this region); in stubble fields nearby were many **rock buntings**. Sadly, these were hard to see well because of the cold wind that kept them low or inside the shelter of nearby conifers; their thin 'sip' calls are not much different from the calls of **cirl buntings**.

At 4 o'clock the castle opened to visitors and we trooped into this most interesting and majestic building, perched as it is on several columns of rock. A **blue rock thrush** was the best bird 'in the castle'. I think we all agreed that the castle itself is well worth a visit, while the views from it are simply out of this world. The small reservoir nearby, which we approached via a lengthy rough track, was less productive: wind whipped water up over the dam, while on the lake were just a few mallards and several coots.

#### THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER

A small road from the Aragon valley heads north, just west of Berdun, to **Villa Monreal** and on via a spectacular gorge along the **Barranco de Fago**, to **Fago** itself, a very small but fascinating village way up in the hills. It really is remote. We walked up through the best of the gorge but saw strangely few birds: an occasional griffon, a few distant, briefly-glimpsed choughs, but some fine, close **crag martins**.

After Fago we turned left towards Roncal, but stopped soon after leaving Aragon and entering Navarre, to have lunch at a marvellous viewpoint looking out over the hills towards Roncal and north toward Belagua. It was great: fine and warm, with the sound of bells on cattle and goats all around. The landscape here is largely wooded, although very mountainous. Down in the lower valleys, stands of tall poplars were already strongly yellow: many were yellow one side, green the other, or green at the top or bottom. Whatever, they looked wonderful, the leaves sparkling as they trembled in the sunshine.

After lunch we turned back and drove to **Anso**, stopping at the little bridge there to watch **cirl buntings**, **serins** and **red kites** with a fine crop of leeks and spinach. On a bit of a whim, because it was so fine, sunny and warm, I decided to nip across to Hecho and Siresa, to look again for the lammergeiers and have another go at the wallcreepers. Neither quite worked

out: no wallcreepers at all, but at least a **lammergeier** appeared. It was not above its regular cliff, but on the other side of the valley, very high up and distant but still great to see - as were two **golden eagles**, equally distant yet somehow very characteristically, distinctively of their species. Also, our one and only **short-toed eagle** of the trip flew by at quite close range.

So, back over the hills towards Anso, returning to Berdun early, via **Foz de Binies**, for a pre-dinner talk from Juan Carlos from Zaragoza about the Belchite reserve. The drive to the top of the *Foz*, or gorge, was as colourful as ever, with some great views down to the river below on the left. The gorge is a fine example of this typical local landform.

Juan Carlos gave his talk and received his cheque: on good form as ever, he was entertaining, informative and equipped with a fine selection of slides. He surprised us by saying that he was due to travel to England to attend a conference on steppe habitat on behalf of SEO: he thought it was 'in Ipswich, about 100 km west of London.' Either Ipswich has moved, or he was wrong about the 'west' or it was somewhere else. He was sure it was 'west' and had a castle and a golf course: our best bet was Warwick. It was, in fact, held at Newbury: I hope Juan Carlos didn't get lost on the bypass.

#### FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER

This was *the* day to venture high into the hills: and, fortunately, we were blessed with the best weather to do just that. It was a super morning.

The journey along the Aragon valley, heading east, was a constant delight with poplars changing to yellow and gold, red maples, deep yet vivid green conifers and the full range of colour from red and grey soil to purple hills. As ever, the manmade element of the countryside was equally appealing and important: little villages perched on steep hills, farmhouses with scores of plant pots full of flowering geraniums, churches and odd ruins - all add to the variety and richness of the place and most seem 'just right' for their setting. We bypassed **Jaca** and turned north via **Biesca**, scene of the recent flood tragedy: the 'campsite' just below the road was cleared away into a long, flat heap of rubble. Heading north we went through increasingly spectacular scenery, with the autumn colours more and more intense, the sky ever more blue, or so it seemed.

After some short stops to admire all of this, we reached **Col de Pourtalet** and retired to a cafe for coffee by the open wood fire. It was barely chilly, really, but this was a comfortable half hour, nevertheless. Then we regrouped and walked over the border into France, to look across the deep valley to the **Pic du Midi d'Ossau**, crystal clear, as if you could reach out and touch the rocky peak. We climbed gently over the slopes to the east, heading for a cliff face and scree slopes above. Here, many years ago, I had seen my one-and-only party of alpine accentors, but several subsequent visits had failed to find them again. Likewise, I had once, but never again, seen snowfinches down by the road.

While some stayed lower down, a few of us ventured to the scree slopes and around their upper edge: it proved to be 'too close' in, under the cliffs, for us to see much overhead but both **choughs** and **alpine choughs** were seen very well, and everyone enjoyed good views of **wheatears** and **water pipits**. A couple of marmots called, but we could not see them: although the reason may have been us, and the dogs that followed us up from the road, it was more likely that they were alarmed by the presence of two **red foxes**, one on the skyline and one low down below the scree slopes.

The dogs had a great time, finding and burying bones and rolling boulders down on unsuspecting birdwatchers below. But it was not until we had regrouped at 'base camp' that some small birds on the higher cliffs were spotted. Soon we were watching a couple of **ring ouzels**, some **black redstarts** and, more exciting, three or four **alpine accentors**. I have to admit, though, that if anyone had refused to believe it I would not have been surprised.

With binoculars they were just 'dots'; a telescope revealed little more than a tapered-at-both-ends shape, greyish heads, blackish tails, dull brown upperparts and some orange-rusty colour on the flanks. They looked quite a bit like nuthatches in a way, but hopped and fluttered about - fortunately revealing blackish tails, to remind us that we were not watching black redstarts. Alpine accentors: an objective achieved, but not the best of views!

From there we drove back a little way to what used to be a narrow dirt track heading into a small valley to the west, just below the pass. Now it is a broad track taking lorries and other heavy vehicles up to a skiing development high in the hills: we got to a big car park area and stopped for lunch. Braving the worst of the track, now narrow and rough, we decided to go a little bit farther on before starting to walk: instead we got quite a lot farther, zigzagging uphill until we were close to a ridge with fresh snow. We walked on up until we could see over the top, looking down on the next valley with more established skiing infrastructure above **El Formigal**.

A lammergeier gave two brief views, spotted by Martin; alpine choughs were more cooperative and the whole area was full of water pipits - dozens of them. Several buzzards sat on rocks or hovered over the slopes, probably migrants resting in the good weather. A super male chamois looked down on us from a higher ridge. It was, despite the disturbance of the building operations, exhilarating to be up here on top of the world, with views of some of the highest and most rugged ranges of the west-central Pyrenees all around us. This, it seemed, is what life is all about. And not a cloud in the sky all day!

The buzzard count - BOPs, buzzards on posts - was good both there and back again on this trip - even John saw a few - and red kites were typically everywhere on the return journey after a rather thin time earlier on. We drove through the centre of Jaca just to have a look at the place on our way back to Berdun after a day with small numbers of birds but truly exciting scenery. It is an extraordinary environment.

#### SATURDAY 5 OCTOBER

Another glorious dawn, with a cold north-west wind but mostly crisp, blue skies: the panorama to the east, especially, with the Sierras of Oroel and de la Pena like dark cardboard cut-outs, endlessly fascinating. The vultures were amazing: there were griffons over the village slope at 8 am, before the sun rose at 8.15; by then there were many of them and more were heading 'our way' from Binies. Before breakfast I counted 51, usually with 30-35 in view at a time and many came within 30 yards or less. As they were lit by the rising sun and turned orange, they looked fabulous. After breakfast we had a leisurely start and walked around the village in the cold wind: there were then another 50 vultures around, mostly higher overhead.

We also investigated the village bakery, the Panaceria, and saw the wood-burning oven in which our excellent bread and croissants were baked: this oven had not cooled down for 45 years! The croissants did not cool down, either, before being consumed every morning.

After this we drove to the foot of the **Foz de Binies**. Very soon there were two 'different' vultures heading our way from the gorge (wings long and angled) and two superb adult lammergeiers drifted by. One later reappeared briefly over the village of Binies, very low down: our baker had seen one the previous day over Berdun and we wondered if these two were later to be found soaring along the Berdun streets! What a view we *might* have had. . . Lammergeiers really *are* rare and special: we did well!

Next on the menu was a snake: a smallish, silvery-grey snake found by Marcella, later identified by Martin as an **Aesculapean snake**. (Actually, it is possible that this was a small Montpellier snake, best identified by its large eyes and 'frowning' brow ridges: the snake we saw did not appear to have these, but on the other hand we did not look very critically at

scale patterns and so on which are diagnostic; Aesculapian would be at the southern edge of its range, whereas Montpellier would be near the northern edge of its distribution, but certainly occurs here.) One of its characteristics of Aesculapian, apparently, is that it does not sneak away if disturbed: true enough, it was exactly where Marcella had found it when we all reached the spot and, even after close examination and photographs, it remained stubbornly unmoved.

The rest of the gorge was really stunning visually but something of a birdwatching disappointment. There were few griffons and no eagles, no grey wagtails and only the briefest of glimpses of a dipper. This gorge is a bit hit and miss at the best of times but usually has a little more to offer, with a greater variety of birds of prey especially.

Suddenly, though, not too high on the opposite side, a movement became the star bird of the day, perhaps the trip: a stunning wallcreeper. It flicked and danced around an overhang and then flew a few yards to another spot; it fairly soon disappeared back down the gorge but John felt that it had crossed to 'our' side and indeed it had. We all had splendid views of it, sometimes not more than 25 yards away and just a few feet above the road. Once it flew along the cliff face and dropped down to within 6 feet of the roadside!

I've seen wallcreepers well before but only for a matter of minutes: now we all had half an hour of wallcreeper watching and when, eventually, it flew off out of sight and the rest of the group walked on for a well-deserved lunch, I went back and found it again, to complete a full hour of wallcreeper!

At times it was very flighty, flitting about from place to place non-stop. It dipped and bounced, flicked its wings and sometimes seemed to be caught by the wind and half-spun round, one wing extended, before taking flight. It explored beneath overhangs and poked in and out of holes and crevices. Later it also took to clinging to sheer, smoother slabs of rock and then tended to remain within a few square yards for some minutes at a time, often without wing flicks, although it seemed to catch as much food as ever. Then it would revert to the springy, flighty, wing-flicking behaviour again and cross from one side to the other.

It was a female or winter-plumaged male, with a satiny white chin and throat. Often it would look half pale grey-half black, with flashes of red intermittently; sometimes the red was more dominant. From beneath in flight, it was essentially black with two rows (one long, one short) of large, round, white spots on each wing. All in all, this lovely butterfly/moth-like bird was a real gem, surely one of Europe's best.

We eventually ate our lunch by the roadside at the top of the gorge, in warm sunshine, before moving on to Anso and then through a superbly colourful and dramatic valley to Zuriza. Sadly, the weather deteriorated as we got higher and all the upper valleys were under thick cloud, with steady rain preventing all but the most superficial look at the beeches and oaks, in forests of magnificent colour.

So, we retraced our steps to Anso, where we celebrated the wallcreeper with coffee and ice creams. Anso is slightly overdone in parts, but essentially remains a very typical little town with all the High Pyrenees features and is well worth a look around on foot. It is one of the most attractive of the 'busier' towns hereabouts - and not that busy.

Time beat us and we were unable to look for the wallcreeper on our way back: in any case the gorge there was largely gloomy and in deep shade when we drove back through. And we had to pack. . .

John and Vivien joined us for dinner. With an added glass or two of champagne as well as the local red wine, it was as pleasant as ever: several conversations going on at once, but with that curious characteristic that most of us were able to join in all the other's half-heard

jokes. We drank to the wallcreeper, to John and Vivien, to Emilio and to ourselves. I would like to reinforce my own thanks to all the people who made this trip possible, from Chris and Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays back home, to Vivien and John Boucher, Emilio and Louisa and most of all the rest of the group: Brian and Valerie, Ann, Angela, Martin and John. Small but select (the group, not John, although of course, he is too). And extra thanks to John Boucher who gave us such a fascinating talk on the local history, architecture and lifestyles and to Juan Carlos, of the Sociedad Espanola Ornitologia, who drove up from Belchite reserve to tell us about that and to receive a cheque for SEO from Honeyguide.

#### SUNDAY OCTOBER 6

Oh dear, the last day and far too soon. As we loaded our luggage into the bus in the square beneath the church, we were attended by 46 griffon vultures hanging in the air overhead: the morning had dawned cool but clear, very fine, with marvellous lighting effects everywhere except over the high peaks, which remained resolutely hidden beneath a thick layer of cloud: the oft-used term blanket being just the right description.

We left at 9.05 and headed west: Bilbao, here we come. Bilbao, here we came: a turning too soon, I fear, but a chance to see the town and its docks. I would have liked an hour or two to study the gulls on the roofs of dockside warehouses but didn't stop to bore everyone else with them. Our diversions mattered little: we were soon at the airport and tucking into one more packed lunch from Emilio's.

#### Participants

John Durdin  
Martin McCleary  
Valerie Payne  
Brian Payne  
Angela Turner  
Ann Suckling  
Marcella Hume  
Rob Hume

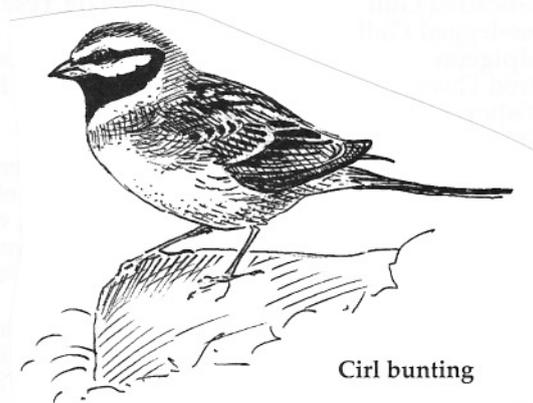
Rob Hume  
October 1996



## List of birds seen during the trip

Grey Heron	occasional, rivers/riverside fields
Mallard	near Loarre only
Red Kite	quite numerous and often excellent views
Griffon Vulture	numerous, brilliant views at Berdun
Lammergeier	Hecho valley, San Juan de la Pena, Binies, Formigal
Hen Harrier	Singles, from and return to Bilbao
Sparrowhawk	Infrequent, Berdun, San Juan etc
Buzzard	Frequent, often on roadside telegraph poles/wires
Golden Eagle	Pair, Hecho valley
Booted Eagle	One, Aragon valley (pale phase)
Short-toed Eagle	One, Hecho valley
Kestrel	Rather scarce
Hobby	One, Aragon valley
Peregrine	Hecho valley, Riglos
Red-legged Partridge	Fago
Coot	Near Loarre
Common Sandpiper	Binies only
Black-headed Gull	Embalse de Yesa, Bilbao
Yellow-legged Gull	Bilbao
Woodpigeon	Very few, Aragon valley
Collared Dove	Berdun, Puente la Reina
Kingfisher	Aragon valley
Green Woodpecker (heard)	Rio Veral
Crested Lark	Quite scarce, Berdun area
Woodlark	Berdun, Riglos etc, still singing well
Crag Martin	Fairly frequent, especially Fago, Binies, Riglos
Swallow	Two or three times: Berdun only once
Tree Pipit	San Juan de la Pena; heard over Berdun
Meadow Pipit	Formigal only
Water Pipit	Formigal, Zuriza - numerous on high meadows
Grey Wagtail	Rio Aragon, Binies
White Wagtail	Common and widespread at all altitudes
Dipper	Hecho valley, Zuriza, Binies
Wren	San Juan de la Pena, Hecho valley
Dunnock	Infrequent in higher woods
Alpine Accentor	Col de Pourtalet
Robin	Infrequent in riverside and higher woods, singing
Black Redstart	Common, singing in villages, on cliffs, in gorges
Stonechat	Only two or three sightings, Aragon valley etc
Wheatear	Col de Pourtalet, Aguero
Blue Rock Thrush	Castillo de Loarre only
Ring Ouzel	Col de Pourtalet (two)
Blackbird	Infrequent in woods
Mistle Thrush	San Juan de la Pena, Hecho valley
Cetti's Warbler (heard)	All river valleys
Dartford Warbler	Berdun, Aguero, Riglos
Sardinian Warbler (heard)	Aguero, Riglos
Garden Warbler	Berdun
Blackcap	Berdun
Chiffchaff	Frequent in all wooded areas (not sure which race)
Goldcrest	Hecho valley
Firecrest	Berdun, Hecho valley, San Juan de la Pena, Binies
Spotted Flycatcher	Berdun/Aragon valley
Pied Flycatcher	One, Berdun
Long-tailed Tit	Several, Berdun, Binies, Hecho valley
Marsh Tit	Hecho valley, road to Formigal
Crested Tit	Most wooded areas but infrequently seen; best Hecho valley
Coal Tit	All wooded areas
Blue Tit	Few encounters
Great Tit	Fairly frequent
Nuthatch	San Juan de la Pena, Hecho valley
Wallcreeper	Foz de Binies
Treecreeper?	Hecho valley (Selva de Oza: very white-flanked, silent)
Short-toed Treecreeper	Hecho valley, Berdun, San Juan de la Pena (dull, calling)
Jay	Riglos etc

Magpie	Infrequent
Alpine Chough	Col de Pourtalet (no large flocks; 100 choughs sp near Anso)
Chough	Rather few in gorges but over 40 above Binies; Pourtalet
Jackdaw	One on way to Formigal
Carrion Crow	Infrequent
Raven	Several, Berdun, Binies, Riglos, Hecho, San Juan de la Pena
Starling	Two or three, Berdun, with Spotless on church
Spotless Starling	Quite frequent in villages
House Sparrow	Common
Chaffinch	Common in woods
Serin	Frequent in village areas
Greenfinch	Few, woods and villages
Goldfinch	Common
Linnnet	Common on bare slopes, high hills, mountains
Yellowhammer	Zuriza only
Cirl Bunting	Infrequent, in small groups; song heard once only
Rock Bunting	Infrequent, in small groups, especially Loarre, Fago
Corn Bunting	Quite rare - no song, very few noted.



Cirl bunting