

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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**Spring in the Spanish Pyrenees
7 – 14 May 2008**

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Holiday participants

Melvyn and Brenda Smith
David and Lesley Lord
Hilary MacBean
Wendy Oakley
Stan Lovett

Leader

Chris Gibson

Our hosts: Melanie and Peter Rich at Casa Sarasa www.casasarasa.arrakis.es

Report by Chris Gibson.

Illustrations by Alan Harris (short-toed eagle and crag martin) and Rob Hume (everything else).

Front cover: Berdún with red kite and griffon vultures by Rob Hume.

As with all Honeyguide holidays, £30 of the price of the holiday was put towards a conservation project, in this case for La Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO), the Spanish Ornithological Society, and its work in Aragón. The conservation contribution this year per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust and by a donation of £200 from Roger Jordan and friends in the Wildlife Outreach Network based in Essex, rounded up to a total of €610 (£469).

This donation, plus that from our Extremadura holiday, brings the total given to SEO since the first Honeyguide holiday in Spain in 1991 to £11,160. There is a thank-you letter from SEO at the end of this report (*but not this web version*).

The total for conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 was at £53,635 by June 2008.

Spring in the Spanish Pyrenees 7 – 14 May 2008

Wednesday 7 May: The journey there...

Stansted was bathed in lovely, warm evening sunlight as the group gathered, weather which was to remain unbroken throughout our time away, in stark contrast to the conditions we were set to experience. A delayed flight led to a late arrival; coupled with a navigational error on the Zaragoza ring-road caused by junction improvements, it meant we didn't reach Berdún until after 1am. But Peter and Melanie, our hosts at Casa Sarasa, were up and waiting, and before long we all fell gratefully into bed.

Thursday 8 May: local walks around Berdún – Río Veral and Río Aragón; Martés 'tip'

A leisurely start given our late arrival, after breakfast we drove up to the village, perched on its hilltop, for an orientation ramble. Despite low cloud, the views were spectacular up to the high Pyrenees, either way along the Canal de Berdún, and south to the pre-Pyrenees. A red kite floated around as we spotted the spotless starlings in the churchyard, and the twittering of house sparrows (not Spanish, just 'ordinary' house, although altogether more smart than many of our grime-encrusted city birds) mingled with the screams of newly-arrived swifts. From the northern slopes, nightingales, melodious warblers and a subalpine warbler were in fine song, as we made our way down onto the Badlands, a skeletal, eroded marl landscape, at first glance lifeless but far from the case in reality. A rock sparrow was gathering nest material from the track, and showed its tail spots and pale head stripes to advantage. In the first substantial patches of scrub, both melodious and subalpine warblers gave us good views, as did several of the singing male cirr buntings, while a woodlark serenaded us at very close quarters. Looking skyward, an Egyptian vulture drifted past; before long the first, distant griffon vultures headed out of the gorges, and a faraway short-toed eagle was recognisable from its hovering hunting action.

The slopes were home to yellow-flowering patches of Berdún broom and barberry, pink shrubby rest-harrow and bronzy-green box, and wherever the scrub afforded a little shelter from the sun and browsing animals, there were troops of lady orchids, mingling with the appropriately named, bright blue beautiful flax. Other plants, more tolerant and so less dependent on the protection of shrubs, included stinking hellebore, with its arsenal of chemical defences, and garden thyme, its herby aroma a dual defence against grazing and heat, and a wonderful addition to the scentscape.

Down at the river, a common sandpiper fed along the water's edge, and several golden orioles were calling from the poplars. In a nearby meadow we took lunch, with red and black kites overhead, with a noisy group of ten migrating bee-eaters. Along the edge of the meadow, in partial shade, fly honeysuckle, dogwood and wayfaring tree were flowering, and several spikes of white helleborine were just coming into flower, while in the more open grassland, we found early spider-orchids and dragon's teeth. A great spotted woodpecker landed on a nearby tree, and Cetti's warblers were in loud song, typically out of sight in the trees and bushes. A final sighting, fortunately after we had eaten, was the badly decomposed carcass of a stone marten, a hint of the local mammal fauna.

Returning uphill to the village, we collected the minibus and then drove slowly down through the valley towards the Aragón, picking up crested larks and woodchat shrikes *en route*. At the river, a pair of little ringed plovers stalked around the shingle bars, along with white and grey wagtails, a couple of common sandpipers, a grey heron and a yellow-legged gull. Then a wander along the south bank produced several orchids, including sword-leaved helleborine, military and greater butterfly-orchid, trying hard to steal our attention from the pale-phase booted eagle and peregrine overhead.

With a little time to spare, we then headed towards Martés, across vast plains of arable cultivation, enlivened by a ringtail Montagu's harrier and a much closer short-toed eagle (*right*) than the morning's distant speck. However, on arriving at the municipal tip, we found it had closed down two years earlier, and been levelled and grassed over. No scavenging birds then, apart from a solitary Egyptian vulture in the neighbouring field, stalking through the grass like a 'big chicken with baggy trousers', wondering where its easy meal had gone! But the



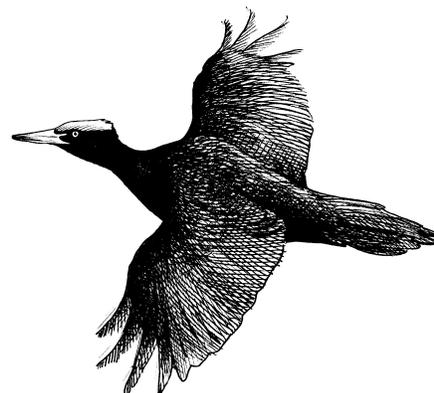
nearby Badlands scrub harboured several woodchat shrikes, one pair in particular showing very well, and several new plants, including early purple orchid, shrubby gromwell, tuberous meadow-rue and the aptly named sad stock, from its dismal brownish, yet rather beautiful, flowers. On the return drive, a little owl gave a virtuoso performance, standing on a pile of rocks, presumably near its nest, right by the road, and as we parked at Casa Sarasa, our first alpine swift joined the throngs of common swifts overhead. Then up to Emilio's for the first of many substantial, tasty evening meals, where we were joined by Peter and Melanie, and Viv Boucher, an old friend of Honeyguide, who used to run the Painting School where we stayed for many years.

Friday 9 May: San Juan de la Peña and Oroel

A breezy, damp dawn, but not bad enough to put off a hardy party before breakfast. However, it certainly kept the birds in bed, with just goldfinches, nightingales, black redstarts and a garden warbler to show for our perseverance.

Our first 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, some in occupation, but the low cloud really kept their flying antics to a minimum. Although no crag martins were patrolling the village, their part-built nests were visible on the church. A short walk up the hill soon produced some new plants. Cowslips, spurge-laurel and hepatica nestled in the hedge bottoms, with bold blue splashes of *Polygala nicaeensis* higher up. The pines here were very heavily infested with mistletoe, in its conifer-parasitising subspecies *austriaca*. Apart from a couple of bullfinches and some showy nightingales, there were few birds in evidence as result of the persistent drizzle.

Driving uphill was going back in time, and *Amelanchier* was springing into flower. But the viewpoint was obscured by cloud, and at the lower monastery, it was all change. No longer permitted to park there, we had to drive straight up to the upper monastery and car park. Here too there had been changes – the old toilets and café were closed – but the car park came up with the goods, in the shape of not one, but two black woodpeckers, changing shifts at their nest hole right in the car park, fortuitously just 50 metres from where we parked. An amazing view for most of the group, but one which was not to be repeated despite watching and waiting while lunching, although a couple of nuthatches provided some compensation.



Crossing the meadows in front of the new monastery, what at first seemed rather unpromising grassland produced swathes of grape-hyacinth, and patches of green-winged orchids interspersed with a few early purples. The area was also clearly much used by wild boar, to judge from the rootings and snufflings which were obvious all over the woodland: a delight to see, as I've long believed our British woodlands are all the poorer for the lack of their dynamic effects. A walk through the trees produced a variety of woodland birds, including coal tit, jay and goldcrest, and some fine displays of hepatica. But a spectacular sight awaited us in the small clearings by the ruined chapel of St Teresa: beautiful, scented drifts of rock daffodils, interspersed with a few elder-flowered orchids. The white asphodels were coming into flower, but the views of the surrounding landscape, normally so spectacular, were rather truncated by the weather.

A slow drive east through forests and hills eventually brought us to the *mirador* at Oroel, the partner mountain to St Juan de la Peña. A few crested tits fed in the pines, though proved difficult to see well, and David caught a glimpse of a lammergeier up near the summit, just before it drifted up into the cloud. At our feet, early purple and elder-flowered orchids were in magnificent patches, and nestling unobtrusively in the woods Solomon's-seal was in full flower. Exploring ever onwards in the van, we eventually ended up dropping down into the Canal de Berdún towards Sabiñanigo. Off the mountain, the weather improved markedly, and so did the birds. We were brought to an abrupt halt by a couple of whinchats, and a lovely group of nine bee-eaters perching and flying within a few metres of the van. A fine end to a funny day, rewarding despite the elements.

Saturday 10 May: Biniés gorge, Fago, and local walk

Rain stopped play for the early birders, not that we probably missed much – many of the migrant birds, including the swifts, appeared to have departed overnight.

A short trip in the minibus brought us to the start of the Foz de Biniés. Through the ‘entrance gates’ – vertical walls of rock, cleft by the river, and covered in many as yet non-flowering rosettes of Pyrenean saxifrage and the delicate pink flowers of *Petrocoptis*, and it was into the gorge proper, still wet and dripping, weather which unfortunately curtailed our plans for a longer walk to view the griffon nests at close quarters.

But the gorge produced many botanical delights and specialties: Pyrenean hyacinth in particularly fetching displays, purple gromwell, rock soapwort, yellow garlic and more *Petrocoptis*, to name but a few. Unfortunately though, the rosettes of *Ramonda*, clinging to the north-facing face of a large rock, were only just showing signs of flowering, suggesting the spring was a couple of weeks later than during previous trips. Bird-wise all was quiet, apart from a handful of bedraggled griffons and some distant views of blue rock thrush.

As it was still raining, and showing little sign of abating, I went back for the van, while the group caught up with grey wagtails and a dipper in the river, and we drove up the valley to Ansó, and across to Fago, heading back down the Fago Gorge, providing spectacular views, at least when we could see them. Lunch was an interesting affair in the valley bottom, as we tried to shelter from the rain, and drink/eat our nearly solidified noodle soup! But at least it was hot...the food that is, although not the air.

On account of the weather we arrived back at Berdún by mid-afternoon, so after an hour’s drying time, we wandered out again onto the Badlands by the lower route. It was still very overcast, but it had at least stopped raining, and the bushes were alive with birds. Nightingales were singing everywhere, several out in the open, and melodious warblers gave us a good opportunity to take in their subtly distinctive plumage and structural features, while pondering about the reasoning behind their rather incongruous name. Best of all though was a smart male black-eared wheatear, showing well alongside a couple of northern wheatears. The plants were much as on our first day, although this section of the Badlands had some lovely, extensive, silvery patches of *Paronychia* in full flower.

Another impromptu addition to the itinerary then was a tour of the church, including for some a trip up the tower, by Viv’s son, John. At our evening meeting, Melanie produced a cream-spot tiger moth which had appeared on the window the previous night, and to ring the changes we visited La Trobada, a restaurant by the main road, for dinner. While all welcomed the fact that we had a choice of what to eat, the general feeling was that it lacked a little of the atmosphere of Emilio’s.

Sunday 11 May: High Pyrenees - Portalet to Formigal

The early risers were treated to a spectacle today, sun-rise over a mystical, writhing mist-scape, ever-reshaping itself in the breeze, and producing fog-bows below us. The signs were that the skies were clearing so we took the opportunity to head for the hills. Typically the high level reservoirs were birdless, but short stops there gave us some splendid views of the mountains in sunlight. The tunnel at Escarilla was closed, but it was here that serendipity struck. Caught at the traffic lights, waiting for our turn around the diversion, all of a sudden a wallcreeper flew in and landed on the rock face right next to the van, giving an unforgettable view, albeit brief, at least for those on the left hand side.



Higher and ever higher, towards Formigal, then Portalet, was like peeling back the seasons: early summer in the lowlands, to the first inkling of spring at five thousand feet. Here, snow beds lay just above the border crossing, and evidently the complete blanket of snow had receded only a few days ago. After a coffee stop, we explored the local rocky grassland, a natural alpine garden. Most dramatic of all were the bold pink splashes of *Primula hirsuta*, together with wild daffodil, oxlip, green hellebore, and cushions of that earliest of alpines, purple mountain saxifrage. Gentians, both spring and trumpet (*left*), were opening their first

flowers, a tantalising glimpse of the riches to come lower down.

Overhead, first one, then a second, golden eagle cruised around the mountain tops, and continued to appear on and off throughout the morning. A peregrine headed rapidly out of France and down the valley, and both red- and yellow-billed (alpine) choughs were flying noisily around the pastures and outcrops. Northern wheatears and black redstarts were on almost every rock, and a few water pipits, in subtle shades of blue and pink about as 'pretty' as any pipit can ever be, were singing in their parachute song-flights and feeding around pools of water. Several alpine marmots sat atop their rocky mounds, which presumably formed their winter hibernation homes and the slopes echoed with their strange wader-like piping cries.

And then it was back into the bus, dropping downhill into spring, and stopping by a blazing patch of kingcups for lunch. Closer investigation soon added bird's-eye primrose, horned pansy, and alpine forget-me-not to the list, and as we watched a golden eagle even closer than before, a male rock thrush watched us from its rocky perch. Lower down still, below Formigal, the roadside pastures were a visual delight, in particular the intense blue gentians mingling with the two colour forms of elder-flowered orchid, in their thousands. Our final stop was back at the wallcreeper site, on the off chance...alas no luck on that front, but we did see grey wagtail and brimstone butterfly.

After dinner, we thought a bit of batting may be productive. So it proved – Daubenton's, pipistrelle and European free-tailed bat were all detected, the last being particularly noticeable on account of its audible calls, albeit above the rooftops and out of sight. And making a welcome return after a few years' absence, two or three scops owls were calling as we made our way back down through the village.

Monday 12 May: Arbayún and Lumbier gorges, and Yesa Reservoir

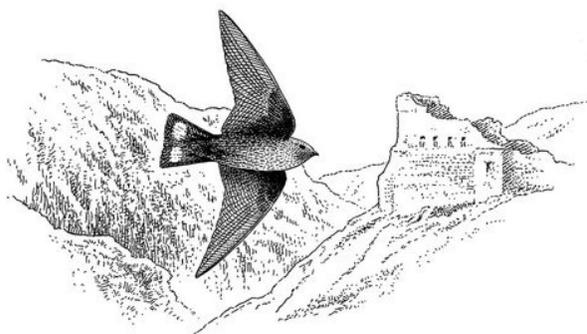
Before breakfast, we headed down to the Aragón, hoping for a few early birds. But in the depths of the valley, it was still cool, and our main target, the golden orioles, were only just waking up, with a few half-hearted bouts of calling, just as we left. But good views of a rock sparrow and the entry of song thrush onto our week's list was some reward for our over-optimism.

Although low mist was blanketing Yesa as we departed in that direction, it seemed clearer behind, so we were optimistic for the prospects. As usual, the reservoir was pretty lifeless, with just a scattering of great crested grebes as we drove along its full length. Then to the vulture restaurant near Lumbier, where dozens of griffons and a few Egyptians were hanging around, and squabbling over the last few morsels of the carcasses.

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 kites, chattering parties of alpine swifts, and in the gorge, a pair of Egyptian vultures at their nest site.

At Lumbier Gorge, the weather had cheered up considerably. The sun was out, and it was turning into a very hot day. Within the shelter of the gorge, butterflies were everywhere and of every kind: orange tip with Moroccan orange tip; both species of swallowtail; brimstone and Cleopatra; holly, common and green-underside blues; dingy and grizzled skippers; southern speckled wood and wall – more than we had seen over the past few days put together. A large psammodromus lizard posed conveniently on the track, and wild snapdragon, jasmine and poppies provided a riot of colour. An interesting find was the normally coastal winged sea-lavender (the florists' statice), but a group of lizard orchids were still a couple of weeks from bud-burst.

The birds were equally noticeable, most particularly the numerous griffon vultures on and around the cliffs, mixed with noisy parties of choughs and jackdaws, and crag martins (*below, left*) dancing in the breeze. A



peregrine flashed down the gorge, and there were several blackcaps singing in the riverside trees. Lunch was taken in the picnic area, the trees providing welcome shade for some. As we finished, and explored the little quarry nearby, finding numerous early spider-orchids, *Convolvulus cantabricus*, and the pink Pyrenean rock-rose, a short-toed eagle was spotted dropping onto a ledge, in full view on the far side of the gorge entrance.

After refuelling, we then spent a productive hour

exploring the margins of Yesa Reservoir. The meadow may have been small, but it proved fruitful, with large blue alkanet, yellow bee-orchid, and two species of tongue-orchid, *Serapias lingua* and *S. parviflora*. The latter is not recorded in the Aragón flora atlas, but sadly it is doomed, if and when the proposed reservoir raising takes place. Insects included the burnet moth with a white collar *Zygaena lavanduli*, the improbably large caterpillar of a lackey moth, and Adonis blue butterflies, while a couple of common sandpipers and a redshank fed along the water's edge. On the road verge, two species of parasitic broomrape provided their customary identification challenge – we eventually settled on *Orobanche rapum-genistae* and *O. gracilis*.

As we left Berdún in the morning, Peter had predicted storms by 5pm. And so it proved: we saw the first flash of lightning over Berdún as we approached, and for the next couple of hours we had grandstand views, firstly of two storms colliding over the Aragón, and then a magnificent rainbow over La Peña.

Tuesday 13 May: Aísa, Gabardito and the Boca del Infierno

A lovely sunny start, the early birders were in time to catch the sunrise from the top of the village, along with dramatic fog mounds in the upper valleys, almost looking like solid dams.

For our last full day, we headed east again, and turned into the hills at Jaca. Once up at the Aísa car park, it was still warm, despite the altitude, and before we had even gone through the gate, a scan of the tops produced a few izard, the southern chamois. Almost immediately, a lammergeier hove into view and proceeded to cross the valley, and before it had even completed its traverse, a golden eagle followed suit.

So then we headed up into the hanging valley, a place of incredible scenic beauty and relatively undisturbed, so a haven for mountain wildlife. The lower, box-covered slopes were alive with the signs of summer, including basking Iberian wall lizards, while the meadows above were simply stunning in the trappings of spring – intensely blue patches of spring and trumpet gentians, and bold yellow splashes of yellow rock-jasmine to name just a few. Higher up the valley, oxlips, bird's-eye primrose, globularias and pink kidney-vetch added their hues to the botanical kaleidoscope.

With so much underfoot, it was hard to look elsewhere. But when we did, we spotted more izard on the scree slopes, a much closer adult lammergeier (*right*) drifted along the mountain top, and a blue rock thrush was singing from the top of a distant rock. As we got closer, the song changed and indeed the bird had changed – now it was a mistle thrush. These two birds proceeded to swap shifts for the next couple of hours. After lunch, we headed back under stronger sunlight, which if anything made the sights even more wonderful as it opened the gentian flowers properly. A final delightful cameo, to cap a wonderful morning, in the sort of place that makes one thankful that such places remain in this troubled world.



In a departure from our usual itinerary, we then headed over the mountains, up and down the wiggly forest roads, until we got into the Hecho Valley. There, heading upwards again, we finally found a much-awaited red-backed shrike, perched obligingly next to the road. Then off piste once more, we turned up to the refuge at Gabardito, yet another uphill, hairpin-filled ride. Set amidst incredible scenery and open, mixed scots pine and beech wood, we trekked out to the main reason for visiting, a large rock which has overtaken the Boca del Infierno as the prime local site for wallcreeper. We failed – it was a large rock and the birds are small, and the word from the other birdwatchers was that they had not been seen since lunchtime. But we did have superb views of a pair of short-toed treecreepers around their nest site, and as always, tremendous views of griffon vultures circling in the valley..

Finally, we drove up to the Boca del Infierno, if only to see the views of the dramatic rocky gorge, living up to its name of Hell's Mouth. A long day, but full of drama, even if we failed to connect with wallcreeper. Back at Berdún, our last meal at Emilio's was rather special, rounded off with a creamy cake and champagne.

Wednesday 14 May: Riglos, Belchite and the journey home

Another rainy start, but no plans for an early walk today. Instead, after breakfast, we were invited to visit the bakery, the source of all our delicious bread. Then back to Casa Sarasa, packing, farewells and off by 10. With an evening flight, we still had a full day ahead of us. Heading back towards Zaragoza, first stop was next to the Peña Reservoir. Again not for birds, although there was a dipper by the waterfall, getting even wetter than we were (by now it was raining heavily), alpine swifts overhead and a subalpine warbler in the bushes. A short walk over the dam brought us to a veritable rock garden, covered in saxifrages and other plants, including some superb flowering examples of Pyrenean saxifrage and *Ramonda*, even if they did look a little bedraggled in the rain.

By the time we reached Riglos, the rain was less persistent, but the village and its massive backdrop of conglomerate cliffs were shrouded in cloud and mist. So much so we could only imagine the landscape, and listen for birds – alpine swift and blue rock thrush were all we could come up with, until back at the van, we all watched a nightingale in full song right out in the open, quite a feature of this trip. We headed up to the vulture interpretation centre for lunch; although it was closed, the views back to Riglos as the cloud started to break up let us see what we had been missing earlier. The low clouds swirling into the natural amphitheatre on a keen wind made for a seriously dramatic sight.

From there we continued south, out of the mountains and into the Ebro Valley; the weather brightened up, the landscape changed, and we started to see white storks at nest on the churches. Heading past Zaragoza, we eventually arrived in the Belchite area, surrounded by extensive steppe habitats, new ground for the participants and the leader. Various stops produced many new birds, including red-legged partridge, mallard, hoopoes, southern grey shrike (with many woodchats), and zitting cisticola, and we eventually arrived at El Planerón, the steppe reserve to which Honeyguide has contributed a considerable amount of funding over the years. As it was now late afternoon, we had little time to explore, but the viewpoints revealed many birds typical of this habitat, including several short-toed eagles, marsh and Montagu’s harriers, and a veritable plethora of larks – crested, thekla, calandra, short-toed and lesser short-toed. In fact the only one we failed to connect with was Dupont’s.

Returning towards Zaragoza on the motorway, we soon found the truth in the phrase ‘the rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain’, as we drove into the mother of all storms. Zero visibility brought the traffic to a near halt, and flooding completed the task. But eventually we found our way to the airport, only to find that it too was flooded, outside and inside, clearly an unusual event as the local TV station was filming the result. For us it meant our plan to eat at the restaurant was thwarted – it was closed, so we had to make do with whatever the snack bar could offer. And then a flight delay, with the result that we returned to Stansted well after midnight, on the very day that the UK’s heatwave broke down. But at least we had our memories, of a fascinating holiday in a marvellous place, in spite of distinctly dodgy weather!

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The Best Bits

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

- Brenda – wallcreeper (she saw it better than anyone, and knew what it was!); vultures, and Aísa
- David – black woodpeckers; best ever views of firecrest; magical Aísa
- Hilary – so many flowers; short-toed eagle at Lumbier; Berdún on the misty morning; nightingale song; the Badlands: like a slagheap but so rich!
- Lesley – birds of prey, and gentians
- Melvyn – black woodpeckers; Aísa; yours truly (!) and my details about the wonderful plants
- Stan – Aísa geology, plants and lammergeier
- Wendy – the flowers generally; Aísa; and the exceptional views of little owl

Strangely, no-one mentioned the weather!

For my part the highlight had to be our pair of black woodpeckers, my best sighting ever, anywhere. Aísa too is always very special, as reflected above; while our ‘discovery’ of Casa Sarasa, and Peter and Melanie, gives me confidence that we will have many wonderful trips there in the future. My thanks to all involved.

KEY TO LOCALITIES

B - Berdún, including the banks of the Veral and Aragón, Martés 'tip'
Bi - Biniés gorge, Ansó and Fago
J - San Juan de la Peña and Santa Cruz de la Serós; Oroel
L - Lumbier and Arbayún Gorges
Y - Yesa
P - Portalet and Formigal
A – Aísa
G – Gabardito and Hecho Valley
R - Riglos and the 'Ramonda rock'
E – Ebro valley, Belchite

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 J P
Ceterach officinarum Rustyback Fern B Bi
Polypodium interjectum Intermediate Polypody Bi
P. vulgare Common Polypody Bi
Pteridium aquilinum Bracken J

GYMNOSPERMS (Conifers)

Abies alba Silver Fir Bi
Cupressus sempervirens Cypress B R
Juniperus communis Juniper B Bi J R
J. communis ssp. *nana* P A
Pinus nigra Black Pine B Bi J P A G
P. sylvestris Scots Pine B Bi J P A G
Taxus baccata Yew Bi

DICOTYLEDONS

The list concentrates on those seen in flower, with just a few more distinctive non-flowering species

Aceraceae

Acer campestre Field Maple B Bi
A. monspessulanum Montpellier Maple Bi
A. opalus Bi

Anacardiaceae

Pistachia lentiscus Lentisc Bi R
P. terebinthus Turpentine Tree Bi L R

Apiaceae

Bupleurum rigidum Bi
Conium maculatum Hemlock B
Conopodium majus Pignut J
Daucus carota Wild Carrot B
Eryngium bourgatii P
E. campestre Field Eryngo B Bi
Foeniculum vulgare Fennel B
Meum athamanticum Spignel P

Aquifoliaceae

Ilex aquifolium Holly J

Araliaceae

Hedera helix Ivy B Bi J R L
H. hibernica Irish Ivy Bi

Asteraceae

Achillea millefolium Yarrow P
Artemisia absinthium Wormwood B

A. campestre Field Southernwood B
Bellis perennis Daisy B J P
 B. sylvestris B
Calendula arvensis Field Marigold B
 C. officinalis B
Carduus acanthoides Watted Thistle B
 C. tenuiflorus Slender Thistle B
Carlina acanthifolia P
 C. acaulis Stemless Carline-thistle P
Centaurea calcitrapa Y
Helichrysum stoechas B
Lactuca perennis Blue Lettuce Bi L
Pallenis spinosa B
Rhagadiolus stellatus L
Santolina chamaecyparissus Lavender Cotton B Bi
Silybum marianum Milk Thistle B
Taraxacum sp. Dandelion B P
Tussilago farfara Colt's-foot J P A
Berberidaceae
Berberis vulgaris Barberry B Bi R
Betulaceae
Betula pendula Silver Birch B J P
Boraginaceae
Anchus azurea Large Blue Alkanet Y
Borago officinalis Borage B
Buglossoides purpureo-caerulea Purple Gromwell Bi
Cynoglossum creticum B Bi
Echium plantagineum Purple Viper's-bugloss Bi
Lithodora fruticosum Shrubby Gromwell B Bi
Lithospermum arvense Corn Gromwell B
Myosotis alpestris Alpine Forget-me-not P A
Brassicaceae
Aethionema saxatile Burnt Candytuft Bi J
Alliaria petiolata Garlic Mustard Bi J
Alyssum alyssoides Small Alison B
Arabis alpina Alpine Rock-cress P Bi
 A. turrita Towercress Bi P
Biscutella didyma R
Capsella bursa-pastoris Shepherd's-purse B
Cardaria draba Hoary Cress B
Cardamine raphanifolia P
Draba aizoides Yellow Whitlow-grass P A
Lepidium heterophyllum Smith's Pepperwort B
Matthiola fruticulosa Sad Stock B
Sisymbrium austriacum P G
 S. officinale Hedge Mustard B
Thlaspi alpestre Alpine Pennycress P A
Buxaceae
Buxus sempervirens Box B Bi J R L
Caprifoliaceae
Lonicera etrusca Perfoliate Honeysuckle Bi
 L. periclymenum Honeysuckle B
 L. pyrenaicum R
 L. xylosteum Fly Honeysuckle B
Sambucus ebulus Dwarf Elder B
 Sambucus nigra Elder Bi
Viburnum lantana Wayfaring Tree B Bi J
Caryophyllaceae
Arenaria aggregate B
 A. grandiflora A
Cerastium alpinum A

Paronychia argentea B
Petrocoptis hispanica Bi
 P. pyrenaica Bi
Saponaria ocymoides Rock Soapwort Bi
Silene alba White Champion Bi J
 S. nutans Nottingham Catchfly Bi
 S. vulgaris Bladder Champion B

Cistaceae

Helianthemum apenninum White Rock-rose B Bi J L
 H. canum Hoary Rock-rose L
 H. nummularium ssp. *pyrenaicum* Pyrenean Rock-rose B L

Convolvulaceae

Convolvulus cantabricus L

Cornaceae

Cornus sanguinea Dogwood B

Corylaceae

Corylus avellana Hazel B Bi J

Crassulaceae

Sedum dasyphyllum Thick-leaved Stonecrop B
Sempervivum montanum P
Umbilicus rupestris Navelwort Bi J

Cucurbitaceae

Bryonia dioica White Bryony B Bi L

Dipsacaceae

Dipsacus fullonum Teasel B

Ericaceae

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi Bearberry J
Vaccinium myrtillus Bilberry J

Euphorbiaceae

Euphorbia amygdaloides Wood Spurge B Bi J
 E. characias B Bi
 E. flavicomis P
 E. helioscopia Sun Spurge B
 E. serrata B Bi L

Fabaceae

Anthyllis vulneraria ssp. *forondae* Kidney Vetch P A
 A. vulneraria ssp. *pyrenaica* L
Astragalus monspessulanus B Bi R L
Cercis siliquastrum Judas Tree B
Colutea arborescens Bladder Senna B Bi
Coronilla emerus Scorpion Vetch B Bi
Echinopartium horridum J
Genista hispanica Spanish Gorse B
 G. scorpius B Bi J L
Hippocrepis comosa Horseshoe Vetch B
Laburnum anagyroides Laburnum B
Lathyrus setifolius B
Lotus alpinus A
Medicago suffruticosa A
Onobrychis viciifolia Sainfoin B
Ononis fruticosa Shrubby Rest-harrow B
Oxytropis pyrenaica A
Psoralea bituminosa Pitch Trefoil R BI
Robinia pseudoacacia False Acacia B
Scorpiurus muricatus Y
Tetragonolobus maritimus Dragon's-teeth B
Trifolium alpinum P
Vicia cracca Tufted Vetch B R
 V. pyrenaica A G
 V. sativa Common Vetch B R

Fagaceae

Fagus sylvatica Beech J G A
Quercus coccifera Kermes Oak B Bi L
 Q. ilex Holm Oak B Bi J L
 Q. petraea Sessile Oak J
 Q. pyrenaica Pyrenean Oak J

Fumariaceae
Corydalis solida P
Fumaria officinalis Fumitory B

Gentianaceae
Gentiana acaulis Trumpet Gentian P A
 G. verna Spring Gentian P A G

Geraniaceae
Erodium cicutarium Common Stork's-bill B
Geranium molle Dove's-foot Crane's-bill B
 G. purpureum Little-Robin B Bi
 G. robertianum Herb-Robert Bi

Gesneriaceae
Ramonda myconi Bi R

Globulariaceae
Globularia cordifolia Bi
 G. punctata B
 G. repens A

Lamiaceae
Acinos alpinus A
Lamium amplexicaule Henbit Dead-nettle B
 L. maculatum Spotted Dead-nettle A
Marrubium vulgare White Horehound B
Salvia verbenaca Wild Clary B L
Stachys recta Yellow Woundwort Bi
Thymus vulgaris Garden Thyme B Bi L Y

Lentibulariaceae
Pinguicula vulgaris Butterwort P

Linaceae
Linum narbonense Beautiful Flax B Bi
 L. suffruticosum Pyrenean Flax B

Loranthaceae
Viscum album ssp. *austriacum* J

Malvaceae
Malva sylvestris Common Mallow B

Moraceae
Ficus carica Fig B R L

Oleaceae
Fraxinus excelsior Ash B Bi
Jasminum fruticans Wild Jasmine Bi L
Olea europaea Olive R

Orobanchaceae
Orobanche gracilis Y
 O. rapum-genistae Y

Papaveraceae
Chelidonium majus Greater Celandine Bi
Papaver rhoeas Common Poppy B

Plantaginaceae
Plantago sempeervirens Shrubby Plantain B

Plumbaginaceae
Limonium sinuatum Winged-Sea-lavender L

Polygalaceae
Polygala nicaeensis J
 P. vulgaris Common Milkwort B

Primulaceae
Anagallis arvensis Scarlet Pimpernel B
Androsace villosa A

Primula elatior Oxlip P A G
P. farinosa Bird's-eye Primrose P A
P. hirsuta P
P. veris Cowslip Bi J
Vitaliana primuliflora Yellow Rock-jasmine P A
Ranunculaceae
Aquilegia vulgaris Columbine Bi
Caltha palustris Marsh-marigold P A
Clematis vitalba Traveller's-joy B Bi
Helleborus foetidus Stinking Hellebore B Bi J L
H. viridis Green Hellebore P A G
Hepatica nobilis J A G
Ranunculus arvensis Corn Buttercup B
R. gouanii P A
R. gramineus J
R. pyrenaicus P
Thalictrum tuberosum B Bi R
Resedaceae
Reseda lutea Mignonette B
Rhamnaceae
Rhamnus alaternus Mediterranean Buckthorn L
R. pumilus Rock Buckthorn P
Rosaceae
Alchemilla alpina Alpine Lady's-mantle P A
Amelanchier ovalis Snowy Mespilus B Bi J R
Crataegus monogyna Hawthorn B Bi J
Fragaria vesca Wild Strawberry Bi J
Geum montanum Alpine Avens J
G. pyrenaicum P
Potentilla erecta Tormentil G
P. repens Creeping Cinquefoil B
P. tabernaemontani Spring Cinquefoil B Bi J P A
Prunus avium Wild Cherry J
P. mahaleb St Lucie's Cherry L
Rosa canina Dog Rose B Bi P
Rubus fruticosus Bramble B Bi J
Sanguisorba minor Salad Burnet B Bi
Sorbus aria Whitebeam Bi J
Spiraea hypericifolia L
Rubiaceae
Cruciata laevipes Crosswort J
Galium mollugo Hedge Bedstraw Bi L
G. verum Lady's Bedstraw Bi L
Rubia peregrina Wild Madder B
Sherardia arvensis Field Madder B
Salicaceae
Populus nigra Black Poplar B Bi
P. tremula Aspen B
Salix alba White Willow B Bi
S. eleagnos B
S. purpurea Purple Willow B
Saxifragaceae
Saxifraga granulata Meadow Saxifrage J
S. longifolia Pyrenean Saxifrage Bi R P
S. oppositifolia Purple Mountain Saxifrage P
Scrophulariaceae
Antirrhinum majus Snapdragon B Bi L
Chaenorhinum organifolium Bi
Cymbalaria muralis Ivy-leaved Toadflax B
Linaria alpina Alpine Toadflax A
L. pyrenaica P A

L. supina Prostrate Toadflax L
Veronica austriaca Y
V. fruticans P A

Solanaceae

Hyocyamus niger Henbane B

Thymelaeaceae

Daphne laureola Spurge-laurel J
D. laureola ssp. *philippii* P

Ulmaceae

Ulmus minor Elm B Bi

Urticaceae

Parietaria judaica Pellitory-of-the-wall R L

Valerianaceae

Centranthus ruber Red Valerian B
Valeriana globularifolia J A

Violaceae

Viola cornuta Horned Pansy P
V. odorata Sweet Violet J
V. pyrenaica Pyrenean Violet P
V. riviniana Common Dog-violet J

MONOCOTYLEDONS

Amaryllidaceae

Narcissus minor Least Daffodil A
N. pseudonarcissus ssp. *pseudonarcissus* Wild Daffodil P
N. rupicola Rock Daffodil J A

Cyperaceae

Schoenus nigricans Black Bog-rush B

Dioscoreaceae

Tamus communis Black Bryony Bi

Iridaceae

Iris germanica Purple Iris R
I. pseudacorus Yellow Flag B

Liliaceae

Allium moly Bi
A. roseum Rose Garlic R
Aphyllanthes monspeliensis B Bi
Asphodelus albus White Asphodel Bi J
Gagea fistulosa Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem P
Hyacinthus amethystinus Bi A
Muscari comosum Tassel Hyacinth B
M. neglectum Grape-hyacinth J
Polygonatum odoratum Solomon's-seal J
Ruscus aculeatus Butcher's-broom J L
Scilla verna Spring Squill A

Orchidaceae

Cephalanthera damasonium White Helleborine B
C. longifolia Sword-leaved Helleborine B
Dactylorhiza sambucina Elder-flowered Orchid J P A
Himantoglossum hircinum Lizard Orchid L
Ophrys fusca Sombre Bee-orchid B
O. lutea Yellow Bee-orchid Y
O. scolopax Woodcock Orchid B
O. sphegodes Early Spider-orchid B Bi L
Orchis mascula Early Purple-orchid J P
O. militaris Military Orchid B
O. morio var. *picta* Green-winged Orchid J
O. purpurea Lady Orchid B Bi
Platanthera chlorantha Greater Butterfly-orchid B
Serapias lingua Tongue Orchid Y
S. parviflora Small-flowered Tongue-orchid Y

Poaceae (very incomplete)

Anthoxanthum odoratum Sweet Vernal-grass B
Arundo donax Giant Reed B R
Catapodium rigidum Fern-grass B
Dactylis glomerata Cock's-foot B
Deschampsia cespitosa Tufted Hair-grass B
Hordeum murinum Wall Barley B
Melica uniflora Wood Melick Bi J
Phragmites australis Common Reed B
Poa annua Annual Meadow-grass B

Typhaceae

Typha latifolia Greater Reedmace B

LICHENS

Cladonia foliacea B
Rhizocarpon geographicum P A

MAMMALS

Northern Mole J P A G (molehills only)
European Free-tailed Bat B
Daubenton's Bat B
Common Pipistrelle B
Snow Vole P (runs)
Red Squirrel J (nibbled cones) Bi
Alpine Marmot P A
Brown Hare B
Stone Marten B (dead)
Wild Boar J A G (rootings only)
Roe Deer G
Izard A

AMPHIBIANS

Iberian Water Frog (Marsh Frog) B

REPTILES

Iberian Wall Lizard B A L
Large Psammmodromus L
Green Lizard L
Slow-worm L

MOTHS

Zygaena lavanduli Y
Adela croesella L
Yponomeuta padella L (caterpillars)
Giant Peacock B (wings)
Lackey Y (caterpillar)
Common Heath L
Cream-spot Tiger B
Pine Processionary Moth - caterpillars everywhere
where there were pine trees
Silver-y Y
Four-spotted Y
Burnet Companion B L Y

BUTTERFLIES

Dingy Skipper L
Grizzled Skipper L
Alpine Grizzled Skipper P
Scarce Swallowtail L
Swallowtail B
Large White
Small White
Wood White L
Orange-tip L
Moroccan Orange-tip L
Brimstone P L
Cleopatra L
Small Tortoiseshell P
Southern Speckled Wood L
Wall L
Marbled White L
Common Blue B Y
Adonis Blue Y
Green-underside Blue L
Holly Blue L
Small Blue P A

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Arion ater a large black slug J P
Gryllus campestris Field Cricket B L
Anacridium aegyptiacum Egyptian Locust L
Coccus ilicis a gall insect on kermes oak L
Pyrrhocoris apterus Fire-bug B L
Bombylus major Bee-fly B L
Blaps mucronatus Churchyard Beetle L
Timarcha tenebricosa Bloody-nosed Beetle G
Geotrupes stercorarius Dor-beetle P A
Oxythyrea funesta Flower-chafer B L
Oedemera nobilis B
Xylocopa violacea Violet Carpenter-bee B L
Polistes gallicus a paper wasp B L

BIRDS

Great crested grebe – Yesa and Peña Reservoirs
Grey heron – Yesa and Aragón valley
White stork – Ebro Valley
Mallard – Ebro Valley
Black kite
Red kite
Lammergeier – Oroel; A(2)
Egyptian vulture
Griffon vulture
Short-toed eagle – B L E
Montagu's harrier – B E
Marsh harrier – E
Common buzzard
Booted eagle – B; only a single bird seen
Kestrel
Peregrine – B P L A
Red-legged partridge – E
Quail – B
Little ringed plover – B
Common sandpiper – B Y
Redshank – Y
Yellow-legged gull – B Y
Rock dove – J L / Feral Pigeon
Woodpigeon
Collared dove
Turtle dove – B and journeys
Scops owl – B
Little owl – B
Cuckoo
Great spotted cuckoo – E
Swift
Alpine swift – B L J R
Bee-eater
Hoopoe – B(very few) E
Great spotted woodpecker – B J
Green woodpecker – L G
Crested lark
Thekla lark – E
Short-toed lark – E
Lesser short-toed lark – E
Calandra lark – E
Woodlark – B
Skylark – P
Crag martin
Swallow
House martin
Tawny pipit – B
Water pipit – P
Meadow pipit – P
Grey wagtail
White wagtail
Dipper – Bi R
Wren
Dunnock – A
Robin
Nightingale
Black redstart
Whinchat – J E
Stonechat
Northern wheatear

Black-eared wheatear – B E
Blue rock thrush – Bi A R
Rock thrush – P
Blackbird
Mistle thrush – J G
Cetti's warbler
Fan-tailed warbler – L E
Melodious warbler
Subalpine warbler – B R L
Garden warbler – B
Blackcap
Bonelli's warbler – J G
Chiffchaff
Goldcrest – J G
Firecrest
Spotted flycatcher – E
Pied flycatcher – B
Long-tailed tit
Crested tit – J G
Coal tit – J Bi G
Blue tit
Great tit
Nuthatch – J
Golden oriole – B L
Treetreeper – J
Short-toed treetreeper – G
Red-backed shrike – G E
Woodchat shrike – B E
Southern grey shrike – E
Jay
Magpie
Alpine chough – P A G
Red-billed chough
Jackdaw – L R
Carrion crow
Raven
Spotless starling
House sparrow
Rock sparrow – B L
Chaffinch
Serin
Greenfinch
Goldfinch
Linnet
Bullfinch – J Bi G
Yellowhammer – P
Cirl bunting
Corn bunting

Total – 108 species