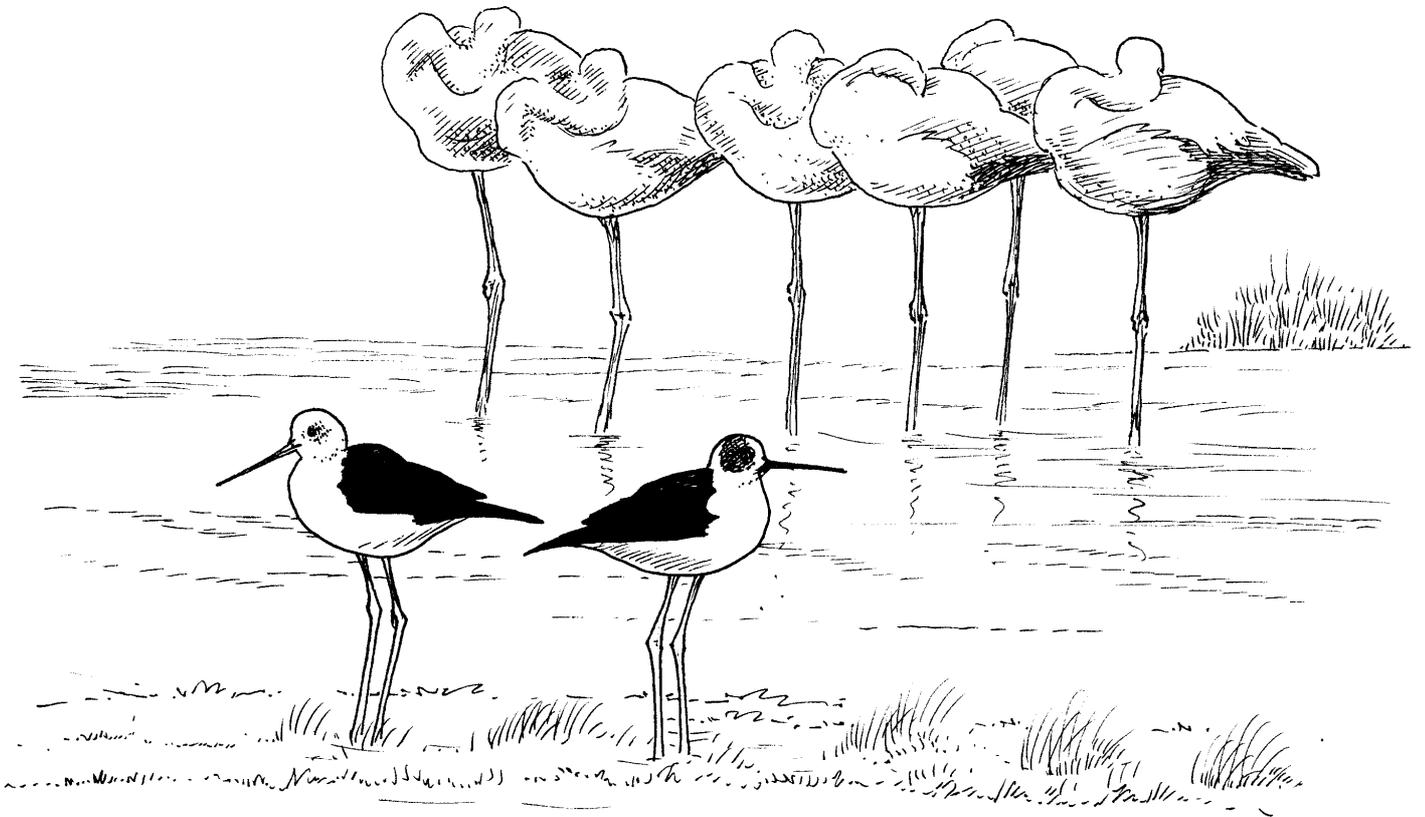


# Honeyguide

**WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

36 Thunder Lane Thorpe St Andrew Norwich NR7 0PX  
Telephone and Fax 01603 300552 Evenings and weekends



**The Camargue**  
**5 - 12 May 2001**

## The Camargue 5 – 12 May 2001

### Participants

Sue and Peter Burge	Oxford
Shirley Carre	Sark, Channel Islands
Alan Greengo	Ipswich
Jo Luders	Ipswich
Pauline and Tony Mathias	Aldeburgh
Hazel and Roger Pawley	London
Julian Philips	Hove
George Preston	London
Beryl Tite	Harwich
Elaine Tubby	Hove

### Leaders

Russell Leavett	Harwich
John Partridge	Orford

Daily log by John Partridge, bird notes and itinerary by Russell Leavett, plant list by Sue Burge and Beryl Tite.

*Illustrations by Rob Hume. Cover: flamingos and black-winged stilts.*

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. The conservation contribution this year of £25 per person in the Camargue was supplemented by the group in the Dordogne, leading to a total of £625 given to La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO, the French Bird Protection League).

This brings the total given to LPO to £5,325 since 1991, and to various conservation projects in Europe to £22,805. A thank-you letter from LPO is at the end of this report. If you read a little French you'll see that there were 64 pairs of lesser kestrels in 2001.

And finally, a late addition to the report from Russell:

### Butterflies

Orange-tip  
Adonis blue  
Marbled white  
Painted lady  
Black-veined white  
Red admiral  
Wall  
Large white  
Green-veined white  
Scarce swallowtail

Swallowtail  
Moroccan orange-tip  
Speckled wood  
Gatekeeper  
Meadow brown

### Moths

Death's-head hawkmoth  
Cream-spot tiger  
Large yellow-underwing

## **The Camargue, 5 – 12 May 2001, Itinerary**

Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Mid afternoon flight from London Gatwick to Marseilles, then on to Arles via N568, arriving mid evening.
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> May	Central Camargue. Étang de Vaccares via Gageron and Villeneuve, Mas d'Agon, lunch at Domaine de Mejanes. After lunch stopping at observation places overlooking Étang de Vaccares and the marshes of Tour du Vallat.
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> May	a.m. at Les Baux, partly overlooking adjacent valleys, partly in town, p.m. lunch in pine woods then a walk to the radio mast at La Caume.
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	West and Petit Camargue – to Le Paty de la Trinite via Gimeaux and Saliers. South to Les St. Maries de la Mer via Parc Ornithologique, lunch by the Digue la Mer. Return to Arles via Mas de Cacharel and observation platform overlooking Étang de Vaccares.
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> May	La Crau at various sites, where lunch was taken. Short visits to the rubbish tip at Entressen and the Étang d'Entressen. Evening visit to Mt. Valence.
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	East Camargue – saltpans at Salin de Giraud, lunch at Plage d'Arles, through salines to Étang du Fangassier, return to Arles via St. Bertrand, Petit Badon, Salin de Badon and Tour du Vallat.
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> May	Pont du Gard, lunch by the Gardon River, part of the group in Arles for p.m., the rest at Mt. Valence.
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> May	Dawn visit to observation post overlooking Étang du Vaccares, return to Arles via Mas d'Agon. Early afternoon flight to London.

### **Saturday 5 May      Gatwick to the Camargue**

Everyone met at Gatwick in good time for the flight to the Marseilles. Picking up the two mini-buses was quick and straightforward and the trip to the hotel was done without a hitch. Because of the later flight time, our arrival at the hotel was much later than normal so it was time for evening dinner straight away. Simone and Marcel, the proprietors, were awaiting our arrival and had the meal already for us. The meal was excellent which was the case for the rest of the week. By the time we had finished, it was almost 11pm and everyone was ready for bed!

### **Sunday 6 May      The Camargue**

The early morning walk was offered last night at dinner so Russell and John, with Shirley and Roger were ready at 6.30am for the walk down the small lane running alongside the hotel. The ever-present nightingales greeted us as they did throughout the stay. Quite a selection of birds to start the day; Cetti's warblers (like the nightingales to be heard everywhere), fan-tailed warbler, three rollers farther on down the path giving good views on some wires (they were to show off every morning). A kingfisher darted up to the bridge but was gone instantly.

After a usual French breakfast of rolls, croissants and jam and very pleasant coffee, we were ready for the first venture into the Camargue. Moving through the paddy fields and other wet areas we were to be presented with a spectacle of bird life. Little egrets and cattle egrets were everywhere we went; it is amazing how blasé one becomes with such handsome birds when they are on show daily. Squacco heron and great white egret were also recorded quite early on. Very soon we were given a display from gull-billed tern, whiskered tern and black tern, the two latter terns in flight together giving the opportunity to compare these two marsh terns at close quarters. Both little gull and Mediterranean gull were present also. It was after

this that we came across two French cyclists/birdwatchers who were to tell us that pratincoles were in a field not far along the road from where we were. This was to be a special sight as up to 30 were on show both flying and on the ground. The passing marsh harrier obligingly raised the pratincoles off the ground so we could see them well. Lapwing and black-winged stilts joined the aerial display. Also in this field were skylark and crested lark.

This was, we thought, rather special but another spectacle was to present itself as we passed through quiet countryside. It was the turn of bee-eaters to show off their wonderful colours and to highlight their unmistakable call. This was to be one of Sue's most memorable parts of the bird watching holiday.

It was already apparent, at this early stage that Sue and Beryl were to be our plant experts and that they were going to record a substantial plants list. It would be amiss of me to try to include plants in this diary, as their impressive list is included separately.

Passing fields where the Camargue white horses and black bulls grazed and were to be a feature that we would see all week, we stopped at Domaine de Mejanes for our first picnic of the tour. A picnic that was a special treat and a treat that Simone would prepare every day for us. It was always wonderful and plentiful. A pattern soon emerged that plate monitors, cutlery monitors etc were established so everyone helped out!

Moving on we came to the observation tower overlooking Étang du Vaccares where a group of ruffs and wood sandpipers were busily feeding together. Here we had our first sightings of short-toed eagle. Someone shouted raptor and Russell soon identified two short-toed eagles above, one with a snake dangling from its claws (snakes being their principal food). John fleetingly spotted two green sandpipers that dropped behind some reed as quickly as they had appeared.

### **Monday 7 May                      Les Baux and La Caume**

On the morning walk John saw stone-curlew in a field by the hotel but only Sue got a fleeting glimpse of it.

A nice steady drive to the town of Les Baux. Parking on the roadside below the walled town, we could look across the valley to where we hoped blue rock thrush would be spotted. It was a while before one showed itself but there it was. The wind by this time had strengthened considerably, enough to actually blow telescopes and tripods over, luckily no damage was done. Decisions were then made as to whether to climb the many steps to the town or to walk down the road to bird watch. Most decided to go to the town, Beryl and Jo went a short way to check out the plants while Russell, John and Alan checked out the bird situation. This last group found a nice quiet path off the road and saw Sardinian warbler, two common buzzards overhead, bee-eater and a green woodpecker was heard. Moving farther up the path a snake was awakened from its sun bathing and slithered off into the undergrowth.

The group reformed mid-day and moved off to the lower parts of La Caume to have our picnic under the pine trees. As usual, the food was exceptionally inviting. Serin was heard but stayed hidden. Then the long uphill walk to the radio tower at the top of La Caume. The botanists were in their element here, plants wherever one looked, Sue and Beryl's delight. On the way up alpine swifts and a hobby were seen and at the top, fleeting glimpses of Dartford warbler who seemed to play hide and seek with those trying to see them. Unfortunately, the Bonelli's eagle that we had hoped to see was not to be found. We later learnt that their nesting had been unsuccessful this year, which may well account for them not being around regularly. Honey buzzard, hobby and short-toed eagle never the less made the climb well worthwhile. Beryl was determined to reach the top and with Jo's help managed to do so.

As we left the picnic site Alan again heard serin and with John caught a glimpse of it in the pines.

## **Tuesday 8 May      West and Petite Camargue**

The stone-curlew was seen much better this morning and all those early risers had good views of it. We drove down to Le Paty via Gimeaux and Saliers and on southward to Les St. Maries de la Mer via the Parc Ornithologique where we stopped for short break. It's a splendid building with fine viewing windows looking out across open water although while we were there the bird life was a bit sparse. One of Russell's favoured stops, to overlook a large area of reed, was cut short by local people having a coypu shoot. Coypu have become a major menace in the Camargue region and with so many areas for them to live it would appear that they are there to stay. However from the car park we saw purple heron, a Kentish plover that seem to have chosen the middle of the car park to nest and a short-toed eagle directly overhead that gave good views of the characteristic hanging leg posture. A hobby passed over and Russell spotted a bittern over the reed bed in the distance. A number of blue-headed yellow wagtails were close by here.

On to Les St. Maries de la Mer, which was extremely busy as the locals were on holiday celebrating VE day. We drove along the sand dunes to a quiet spot to have lunch. In the shallow lagoon area a nice selection of birds were to keep us busy; a good spot for terns, the noisy raucous call of the Sandwich tern contrasting with the petite and elegant little tern. To have the common tern and gull-billed tern there also was pleasing. Our first oystercatcher was seen although there are no great numbers of these in the Camargue at this time of the year. Kentish plover and ringed plover scurrying around together again showed comparisons at close range. Picnicking in a cool breeze and enjoying yet another superb meal we watches slender-billed gulls (or were they watching us?), one with its quite pinkish plumage. Farther out were avocets, which pleased John, as he had not seen any for at least a week. It was here that we found that the usual bottles of water were not with us; we promised that a stop later for drinks would be in order. In the tamarisks (bushes that were a feature in the Camargue) small birds flittered to and fro, including redstart and melodious warbler in its fine yellow plumage.

Due to the holiday, the usual stop in Saintes Maries de la Mer for shopping and sight seeing was not practical as the place was jam packed and parking was impossible. The next stop was at Mas de Cacharel where we could walk along reed covered areas and listen to the call of great reed warbler. Usually these birds like to show off but on this occasion they kept their heads down, but the really enjoyable sight of about 80 or so spotted redshanks wheeling around showing off their majestic plumage was worth seeing. Spectacled warbler, Sardinian warbler and linnet were here also.

As promised we stopped at a small roadside café for that drink. This turned out to be quite a spot for bird watching. Sue spotted a whinchat that drew everyone to the fence to watch it, encouraging us to scout around further. Two horses grazed putting up insects which blue-headed yellow wagtails enjoyed. This was the 'hoopoe place' as at least three were seen from this spot, one showing its lovely plumage while in flight. Marsh harrier and short-toed eagle made this a fine stopping place. A quick stop at the concrete observation tower led Russell to have the quickest view of night heron.

## **Wednesday 9 May      La Crau**

There was no early morning walk today as we were to leave early for La Crau. Russell had arranged for Fredrick and Richard, our guides for the morning, to meet us at the hotel and after coffee lead us off to meet Philippe, the warden responsible for the lesser kestrel project. Almost as soon as we reached La Crau lesser kestrels were seen: in fact they were in good numbers. After a short introductory talk by Fredrick and Philippe we moved off to see how they had improved the breeding success of these kestrels.

The kestrels had first used piles of stone around the site but had suffered much predation, mainly from polecats. LPO decided to encourage kestrels to nest off the ground, which was done by simulating the piles of stone on the roof of a nearby building and also by having openings into



the roof itself leading into nest boxes. Both methods have proved successful and would appear to be the way forward. The main food of the kestrels is mole crickets and we were taken on a long walk to see the habitat where these crickets were. This walk was a bit far for Beryl who walked back to the mini buses but of course Beryl made good use of her time by studying plants. The long walk also kept Sue busy as plants were abundant here. Great debates as Sue and Beryl met up again at the buses. Two very distant lesser bustards and stone-curlew were seen from this spot. One could quite imagine many more of both species out there. Stonechat and whinchat both sat conveniently close by.

After another fine lunch we said goodbye to our three French friends and made off to a lake and woodland at Étang d'Entressen. Golden orioles tantalised us with their bell like calls but would not show themselves. A wryneck had the same thing in mind – calling to us but out of sight. Across the lake we could see the rubbish dump which we next visited. A fearful sight but one which black kites, yellow-legged gulls, jackdaws and crows enjoyed. A buzzard took centre stage here. We did not stop here long (but it brings home the amount of waste generated), so off to the disused airfield to spot lesser bustards. Arriving there we saw that the grass was quite long but there they were flying in the far distance, their distinctive white wing markings showing up against the backdrop of the tree line. Patience in birdwatching pays off and before long the bustards came closer and very nice views were had although all in flight, the grass being too long to see them on the ground. It was obvious there were quite a number out there. Russell's sharp eye picked up a Montagu's harrier and even sharper hearing caught the call of a quail.

After an early dinner we went to Mt. Valence to see the eagle owl. A long wait was occupied by scanning the rock face, then a cry from Pauline of 'raptor' which was the owl flying overhead. Everyone saw it but it flew over the hillside and away, not returning again. The distinctive call of the nightjar was heard somewhere in the area.

#### **Thursday 10 May      East Camargue**

The usual morning walk and usual rollers on show. We had learnt by now not to go over the small bridge which set the local dog to join the dawn chorus with its barking. A buzzard, perched on a dead tree, was easily seen.

A 9.00am start to meet John Walmsley, a friend of longstanding of Russell who would lead us to various places of interest. John soon got the ball rolling by showing us fine views of melodious warbler the minute we arrived. Before setting off for the day he showed us his 'moth station' which consisted of four posts on which he painted a sugary substance to attract not only moths but butterflies and insects so he could identify them before letting them go.

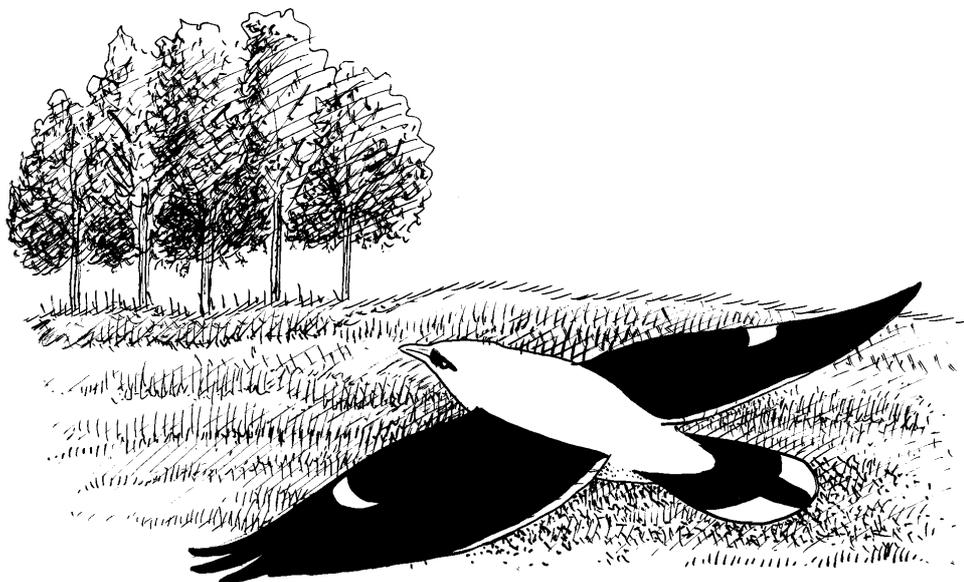
This first visit with John was to the salt pans at Salin de Giraud. He explained the complicated procedures by first creating the salt, then removing the salt and afterwards the various stages of cleaning. From the 12,000 hectares of *salines* (salt pans) the production of 1,000,000 tons of salt is declared; John estimates that this figure could be considerably higher. We moved on to stop at various places looking for waders in particular: a pair of avocets along with little stint, dunlins (some in full summer plumage), sanderlings with their dark shoulder patches, curlew sandpiper in full summer plumage. Six bar-tailed godwits, one of them also in full summer plumage, contrasted with the duller plumage of the rest of them. A winter plumage grey plover stood alone.

Lunch at Plage d'Arles. There we saw death's head hawkmoth and large yellow underwing. On the way to Étang du Fangassier ('flamingo city'), we stopped by some bushes where many small birds were flitting about. Pied flycatchers, spotted flycatchers, whinchats, stonechats and redstarts made this an exciting spot. At Étang du Fangassier the sight of the flamingo colony was spectacular. John informed us that 25/30,000 pairs nested here.

After dropping John off at his home we called at a small lake where gadwall was recorded. False excitement when Roger pointed out a bird on a pine tree; a nightjar was at first diagnosed but it turned out to be part of the bark. A fortuitous stop at the observation platform at Tour du Vallat followed in that great white egret, whiskered tern, short-toed eagle, hobby, night heron and the rare occurrence of a great spotted cuckoo. A fox ambled past as if to say, "Why are you here?"

### **Friday 11 May      Pont du Gard**

A 9.00am start to Pont du Gard. On our arrival much had changed since Russell was here last year. The parking area was fenced and the usual pathway to the lunch site was barred. As soon as we got out



of the mini vans we heard the golden orioles calling and after a short while they flew above the tree line for everyone to see. While Russell did a check to see the best way to get to the picnic area, the rest of us slowly moved on to the river. Cirl bunting was spotted and then there was the striking three storey Roman aqueduct that reaches its finger-like pillars over the river Gard (or Gardon): quite a feat of engineering. Taking post at the rivers edge, little ringed plovers paraded on the shore opposite. Grey wagtail, white wagtail and common sandpiper were here also. A kestrel was spotted using a convenient hole in the building opposite to nest. As everywhere, frogs were seeing which could call the loudest; Roger lined his telescope onto them for all to see.

Again Sue and Beryl did more flower spotting (what a list they must have). Searching the arches for rock sparrows was unfruitful again this year. Perhaps the ongoing repair work to the structure has moved them away. The alpine swifts and crag martins paraded unceasingly around the magnificent arches of the aqueduct. As we left this wonderful spot to go to the lunch site, a short-toed treecreeper was seen by all (in the very same tree that Russell saw it last year and this year he could hear it) and crested tit was again heard but not seen.

At the riverside picnic area, golden orioles were heard but did not come into view. Maybe the party of school children calling and splashing in the river kept the orioles at bay. A kingfisher sped by.

Returning to the hotel after lunch the group split into two groups. John took those who wanted to see the town of Arles and Russell's group went Mt. Valence. Flowers were bought and presented to Simone at dinner for all the wonderful work she had done for us.

### **Saturday 12 May      Dawn visit to Étang du Vaccares and then the homeward journey**

A 5.30am bird watching trip for those who could make the early start. Both Russell and John were joined by Julian, Elaine, Shirley, Hazel and Roger; congratulations to Roger who was present on all the morning walks. The first stop was at the observation platform at Étang du Vaccares but this spot was quite quiet so we moved on to Mas d'Agon. This was an Aladdin's cave of bird life. A glossy ibis started first and then good numbers of night herons passing overhead, squacco heron, little and cattle egrets, grey and purple heron, great white egret, black and whiskered tern, gull billed tern and a garganey flew by in their usual fast flight. To round off a most successful morning we had a final look at the pratincoles before returning to the hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast and all packing completed, we said our goodbyes to Simone and Marcel and so off to the airport. Apart from a rather cool day on Sunday and a breezy one on Monday, the rest of the week had produced superb weather. What more could we have asked!

\* \* \* \* \*

We would like to thank the group for the unexpected gifts after our return home – they were much appreciated.

### **Systematic Bird List – combined for all members of the group**

<b>Great crested grebe</b>	Small numbers on open water at Étang du Vaccares and a few other sites.
<b>Cormorant</b>	Occasional at Étang du Vaccares and by the Digue la Mer.
<b>Bittern</b>	Heard only, at Mas d'Agon and from marshes at Le Paty de la Trinite, where there was also a very brief sighting.
<b>Night heron</b>	Rather scarce this year but several soon after dawn at Mas d'Agon on the last day, these birds returning from night time feeding to their breeding colonies.
<b>Squacco heron</b>	Occasional in rice fields and marsh edges in the central Camargue in particular, especially at Mas d'Agon.
<b>Cattle egret</b>	Very common and well distributed among rice fields and marshes, generally well out numbering little egrets.
<b>Little egret</b>	Common in marshes, saline pools and rice fields.
<b>Great white heron</b>	Singles on three days, always in the larger marshes. A scarce bird in the Camargue until relatively recently.
<b>Grey heron</b>	The commonest of the large herons, frequent in all marshes and some rice fields.
<b>Purple heron</b>	Superb views of this handsome heron confirmed its place as one of the most attractive members of this family.
<b>White stork</b>	A single from the watch tower on the first day, the injured bird at the Parc Ornithologique and a lone bird close to the road on our return to Marseilles were the only sightings of this always scarce bird in the Camargue.
<b>Glossy ibis</b>	A single on the last day at Mas d'Agon was an unexpected delight, the first Russell had seen in the Camargue!
<b>Greater flamingo</b>	As always one of the real pleasures of the Camargue with many sightings on all days spent in coastal situations. The huge breeding colony at Étang du Fangassier was thought to hold around 25,000 pairs!
<b>Mute swan</b>	Small numbers on the east side of the Camargue only.
<b>Shelduck</b>	Frequent in coastal situations.
<b>Garganey</b>	A pair on the first day and a single male on the last were the only sightings of this elusive duck.
<b>Gadwall</b>	Small numbers in marshes on the east side of the Camargue.
<b>Mallard</b>	The common duck of rice fields, marshes and coastal lagoons.
<b>Red-crested pochard</b>	A pair on two days – rather more scarce than in recent years.
<b>Honey buzzard</b>	A single overhead close to the summit of La Caume.

<b>Black kite</b>	The most numerous raptor of agricultural land, marsh edges and hill country.
<b>Short-toed eagle</b>	Some splendid sightings of this distinctive raptor including a bird carrying a snake!
<b>Marsh harrier</b>	The common raptor of marshes and rice field edges.
<b>Montagu's harrier</b>	A single 'ringtail' at La Crau was the only sighting.
<b>Sparrowhawk</b>	Occasional singletons.
<b>Common buzzard</b>	1 - 2 birds on four days, usually where marshes meet farmland, especially in wooded situations.
<b>Lesser kestrel</b>	We were privileged to visit a wardened breeding colony within La Crau where ten birds were present.
<b>Common kestrel</b>	Widespread and common.
<b>Hobby</b>	Singles on three days, the bird at Le Paty being especially close.
<b>Quail</b>	A single bird picked up dead on the edge of La Crau and calling birds on two occasions.
<b>Pheasant</b>	Heard near Tour du Vallat only, odd birds dead on roadsides.
<b>Corncrake</b>	A single heard calling by Alan close to the hotel was the only record.
<b>Moorhen</b>	Frequent in marshes.
<b>Coot</b>	Common on the larger water bodies and marshes.
<b>Little bustard</b>	Up to twenty-five birds 'rushing around' at La Crau, frequent calls were heard from displaying birds but due to tall vegetation they could not be seen!
<b>Oystercatcher</b>	Occasional in coastal lagoons.
<b>Black-winged stilt</b>	Often frequent in shallowly flooded marshes and rice fields, one of the 'stars' of the Camargue.
<b>Avocet</b>	Thank goodness we saw lots of these on our visit to the western lagoons, as John was clearly suffering from avocet withdrawal symptoms by then!
<b>Stone-curlew</b>	A single bird close to the hotel and two birds at La Crau were the only sightings. Sightings at La Crau were difficult due to tall vegetation this year.
<b>Collared pratincole</b>	Excellent sightings of up to 35 birds north of Mas d'Agon, one of the real treats of the visit.
<b>Little ringed plover</b>	Two on river shingles at Pont du Gard, including some display.
<b>Ringed plover</b>	Common in coastal lagoons along both the east and west sides of the Camargue.
<b>Kentish plover</b>	Frequent in similar situations to the last species.

<b>Grey plover</b>	Five seen in coastal lagoons along the edge of the Petit Camargue.
<b>Lapwing</b>	Never common but several pairs breeding with collared pratincoles and black-winged stilts to the north of Mas d'Agon.
<b>Sanderling</b>	Up to 50 in saline lagoons close to Salin de Giraud.
<b>Little stint</b>	A total of 30 or more in similar situations, and often with the last species.
<b>Curlew sandpiper</b>	About ten, of which some were in summer plumage, with stints and other coastal waders.
<b>Dunlin</b>	Only seen in coastal pools along the west edge of the Camargue and then only in small numbers.
<b>Ruff</b>	Attractive groups in shallow marshes on several occasions.
<b>Curlew</b>	Three overhead on the last morning was the only sighting.
<b>Redshank</b>	Surprisingly scarce, with a few sightings only.
<b>Spotted redshank</b>	A handsome group of 160, many of which were in full summer plumage, in marshes at Cacharel plus occasional singletons.
<b>Wood sandpiper</b>	Small groups in shallow marshes and rice fields, especially with ruff.
<b>Bar-tailed godwit</b>	Six in a saline lagoon close to Salin de Giraud.
<b>Green sandpiper</b>	Two in marshes close to the Étang du Vaccares on the first day.
<b>Common sandpiper</b>	Up to five in saline lagoons between Salin de Giraud and Étang du Fangassier.
<b>Turnstone</b>	Two in a coastal lagoon by the Digue la Mer, not a species we normally see at this time.
<b>Mediterranean gull</b>	Common in flooded rice fields and coastal lagoons, their calls a distinctive sound of the Camargue.
<b>Little gull</b>	Almost the first bird we saw as made our way through flooded rice fields on the first day, nice views of a group of fifteen, including a few adults.
<b>Black-headed gull</b>	Very common and widespread, especially in coastal situations.
<b>Slender-billed gull</b>	Some excellent sightings of this delightful gull including some in full adult summer plumage that were almost as pink as the flamingos!
<b>Yellow-legged herring gull</b>	Widespread and abundant, including tens of thousands at the rubbish tip at Entressen!
<b>Gull-billed tern</b>	Small groups of this distinctive tern were seen in flooded rice fields and coastal lagoons.
<b>Sandwich tern</b>	Very much a tern of coastal situations, so seen on the two days that we ventured near to the sea.
<b>Common tern</b>	In similar situations to the last species.
<b>Little tern</b>	Once again a coastal tern but rather more common than the previous two species.

<b>Black tern</b>	Up to five seen on two days at Mas d'Agon with whiskered terns.
<b>Whiskered tern</b>	Especially at Mas d'Agon where there were 35 on the first day plus small numbers elsewhere.
<b>Rock dove/feral pigeon</b>	Frequent in farmland and around habitation.
<b>Woodpigeon</b>	Never numerous but not uncommon away from the wetter areas.
<b>Collared dove</b>	Widespread and common, especially around habitation.
<b>Turtle dove</b>	Rather scarce with a few on some days.
<b>Great spotted cuckoo</b>	A single immature from the Tour du Vallat observation platform was seen well by part of the group. Not a species we see every year!
<b>Cuckoo</b>	Decidedly scarce with singles only but on most days.
<b>Eagle owl</b>	A brief but enjoyable fly past by the male as it crossed the valley at Mt Valence, not to be seen again!
<b>Nightjar</b>	A single bird was heard churring at the eagle owl site.
<b>Swift</b>	Thousands were seen on most days, either hunting over marshes or steadily moving north.
<b>Alpine swift</b>	A bird of the heights of Les Baux and La Caume with further sightings at Pont du Gard.
<b>Kingfisher</b>	A single bird by the canal close to the hotel and another at Pont du Gard.
<b>Bee-eater</b>	Many sightings of this most delightful species, their calls a memorable sound of the trip.
<b>Roller</b>	Three close to the hotel proved to be very good value for early risers, only a few birds were seen elsewhere.
<b>Hoopoe</b>	Never common, this species was only seen on two days and as in previous years mainly in the west of the Camargue.
<b>Wryneck</b>	A calling bird in woodland close to Étang d'Entressen was almost certainly of this species although we were unable to confirm it by a sighting.
<b>Green woodpecker</b>	Individuals were heard or seen on a number of occasions.
<b>Great-spotted woodpecker</b>	A single on one day.
<b>Short-toed lark</b>	A single on La Crau the only sighting.
<b>Crested lark</b>	A few scattered individuals, more often heard than seen.
<b>Skylark</b>	Frequent and widespread.
<b>Sand martin</b>	Never numerous but good numbers over some of the marshes of the central Camargue.
<b>Crag martin</b>	Frequent around the cliffs and town at Les Baux and on La Caume as well as at Pont du Gard.

<b>Swallow</b>	Widespread and often very common indeed, thousands on some days.
<b>House martin</b>	Few sightings with a maximum of only five.
<b>Tawny pipit</b>	A single only, on La Crau.
<b>Yellow wagtail</b>	The common wagtail of the marsh edges, most were of the 'blue-headed' form.
<b>Grey wagtail</b>	A pair on river shingles at Pont du Gard.
<b>White wagtail</b>	Like the grey wagtail only noted at Pont du Gard, where up to five birds were present on river shingles and in adjacent grassland.
<b>Robin</b>	Always elusive on this trip, birds were heard on a couple of occasions plus one brief sighting.
<b>Nightingale</b>	Along with Cetti's and fan-tailed warblers, this species was heard very frequently from the vehicles. A numerous bird of farmland, marsh and roadside edges.
<b>Black redstart</b>	A few at Les Baux and among buildings on the riverbank at Pont du Gard.
<b>Common redstart</b>	Good numbers in Tamarix along the edges of the salines.
<b>Whinchat</b>	Occasional sightings, usually on fences among animals.
<b>Stonechat</b>	In similar numbers and locations to the last species.
<b>Northern wheatear</b>	Surprisingly only two birds were seen, on the edge of the salines.
<b>Blue rock thrush</b>	Distant views of two birds at Les Baux, on a rather windy day, and a single bird singing but not seen at Mt Valence.
<b>Blackbird</b>	Heard only and only at Les Baux.
<b>Cetti's warbler</b>	A commonly heard bird of ditches, marsh edges and roadsides but seldom seen.
<b>Fan-tailed warbler</b>	Few will forget the persistent calls of this diminutive warbler.
<b>Reed warbler</b>	A few on the first day, then none, where can they have got to?
<b>Great reed warbler</b>	Up to eight birds heard in the reedbeds of Cacharel.
<b>Melodius warbler</b>	Only just arriving while we were in the Camargue, five in marshy scrub on the east side of the Camargue introduced us to this species, especially the first, outside John Warmsley's house.
<b>Dartford warbler</b>	Small numbers at La Caume and a single bird on La Crau.
<b>Spectacled warbler</b>	Single birds in scrub on the edges of saline lagoons on two days.
<b>Sardinian warbler</b>	More frequently heard than seen, a characteristic bird of dense scrub.
<b>Blackcap</b>	The rich song of this species was heard on most days.
<b>Chiffchaff</b>	Only heard in song once but several sightings of unidentified ' <i>Phylloscopus</i> ' warblers were undoubtedly of this species or the next.

<b>Willow warbler</b>	Much more numerous than chiffchaffs with good numbers of recently arrived birds in bushes on the east side of the Camargue.
<b>Wood warbler</b>	Two in bushes close to John Warmsley's house.
<b>Pied flycatcher</b>	Occasional in coastal bushes, especially along the Digue la Mer.
<b>Spotted Flycatcher</b>	In similar situations to the last species but only by the Digue.
<b>Crested tit</b>	Two in pines at the start of the walk to La Caume.
<b>Blue tit</b>	Occasional singles only.
<b>Great tit</b>	Likewise.
<b>Short-toed treecreeper</b>	Two at Pont du Gard, one in exactly the same tree as last year; this year Russell could hear it!
<b>Golden oriole</b>	A calling bird or two in woodland by Étang du Entressen and up to ten at Pont du Gard, including a 'gang' of males displaying high above the trees.
<b>Red-backed shrike</b>	As always scarce, but a fine pair by the track not far from the hotel on one morning and other singles.
<b>Woodchat shrike</b>	Fleeting views of a single bird in tamarisk by the salines.
<b>Jay</b>	A single bird only, in woodland by Étang du Entressen
<b>Magpie</b>	A very common bird throughout the area, hundreds daily.
<b>Jackdaw</b>	Equally as common as magpie.
<b>Carrion crow</b>	Widespread but in small numbers only.
<b>Starling</b>	Widespread and very common.
<b>House sparrow</b>	Widespread and abundant.
<b>Tree sparrow</b>	Frequent around habitation and where animals are found.
<b>Chaffinch</b>	As always scarce on this trip but several around Les Baux and in the pines at the start of the walk to La Caume.
<b>Serin</b>	Rather a thin year for this species but in similar situations to chaffinches.
<b>Greenfinch</b>	Occasionally around the hotel and a few elsewhere.
<b>Goldfinch</b>	The common finch of this trip with good numbers around farmland, where animals occur and close to habitation.
<b>Linnet</b>	Scarce, a few sightings on two days.
<b>Cirl bunting</b>	Only at Pont du Gard, where up to three recorded.
<b>Reed bunting</b>	A single bird in marshes at Cacharel was the only sighting.
<b>141 species</b>	

### Daily bird list – Camargue 2001

	06/05/01	07/05/01	08/05/01	09/05/01	10/05/01	11/05/01	12/05/01
(h = heard)							
Great crested grebe	6		1	4	6		
Cormorant	6		3				
Bittern	heard		1				heard
Night heron			1		1		5
Squacco heron	3		5				2
Cattle egret	100s	10	100s	10s	100s	10	100s
Little egret	50+	5	50+	5	50+	5	10s
Great white egret	1				1		1
Grey heron	10s	2	10s	5	10s	1	10s
Purple heron			20		15		2
White stork	1		1				1
Glossy ibis							1
Greater flamingo	1000		1000s		25,000prs		100s
Mute swan					6		
Shelduck	12		40		25		10
Garganey	2						1
Gadwall					6		
Mallard	50+	10	100s		100s	15	10s
Red-crested pochard	2				2		
Honey buzzard		1					
Black kite	25	20	25	100s	10s	15	10
Short-toed eagle	2	1	1		6		
Marsh harrier	20		20	5	25	3	5
Montagu's harrier				1			
Sparrowhawk			1	1			
Common buzzard		2		1	2	1	
Lesser kestrel				10			
Common kestrel	10	15	25	10	15	8	3
Hobby		1	1		1		
Quail				1		1	
Pheasant					heard		
Corncrake			1heard				
Moorhen	5	2	15	1	5		2
Coot	50		30		10		5
Little bustard				25			
Oystercatcher			10		4		
Black-winged stilt	100		50		20	2	10
Avocet	2		100		5		
Stone-curlew		1	1	2			
Pratincole	35						10
Little ringed plover						2	
Ringed plover			100		20		
Kentish plover	2		10		18		
Grey plover					5		
Lapwing	20		3				
Sanderling					50		
Little stint					30		
Curlew sandpiper					10		

Dunlin						30		
Ruff	20		30					2
Curlew								3
Redshank	5					1		
Spotted redshank	1		160			heard		
Bar-tailed godwit						6		
Wood sandpiper	20		12			2		
Green sandpiper	2							
Common sandpiper						5	1	
Turnstone			2					
Mediterranean gull	100s		100s			100s	6	10s
Little gull	15							
Black-headed gull	100s		1000s	100		1000s	100	100s
Slender-billed gull			40			25		
Yellow-legged gull	100s	10s	1000s	1000s		1000s	100	100s
Gull-billed tern	15		8			20		5
Sandwich tern			25			30		
Common tern			25			2		
Little tern			25			10s		
Black tern	5							5
Whiskered tern	35					2		2
Rock dove/feral pigeon	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Woodpigeon	2	4	1	10		6	6	
Collared dove	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Turtle dove	1			2		6		
Great spotted cuckoo						1		
Cuckoo	heard	1				heard	1	1
Eagle owl				1				
Nightjar				1 heard				
Swift	1000s	100s	1000s	100s		100s	100s	10s
Alpine swift		15					50	
Kingfisher	1						1	
Bee-eater	40	30	50	5		20	6	
Roller	3	2	5	2		3	3	3
Hoopoe	1		5					
Wryneck				1heard?				
Green woodpecker		heard		heard		1	heard	1
Great spotted w'pecker						1		
Short-toed lark				1				
Crested lark	2		heard	1				1
Skylark	8		20	10		5		3
Sand martin	10s		10s					
Crag martin		50					15	
Swallow	1000s	50	1000s	50		100s	50	10s
House martin	5		2					
Tawny pipit				1				
Blue-headed wagtail	10		50			60		5
Grey wagtail							2	
White wagtail							5	
Robin		heard		1				
Nightingale	h-10s	h-10s	h-10s	h-10s		h-10s	h-10s	h-10s
Black redstart		2					3	
Common redstart			1			15		
Whinchat			1			3		
Stonechat	1		1	1				

Northern wheatear					2		
Blue rock thrush		2				heard	
Blackbird		2heard					
Cetti's warbler	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s	10s
Fan-tailed warbler	50	1	10s	5	10s	1	10s
Reed warbler	3						
Great reed warbler			8				
Melodious warbler			1		5		
Dartford warbler		5		1			
Spectacled warbler			1		1		
Sardinian warbler		2	1	5	3	5	
Blackcap		6	1	2	10	10	
Willow/chiffchaff			5				
Chiffchaff					1		
Willow warbler					50		
Wood warbler					2		
Pied flycatcher			5		20		
Spotted flycatcher					10		
Crested tit		2					
Blue tit		1				1	
Great tit				1	1	1	
Short-toed treecreeper						2	
Golden oriole				heard		10	
Red-backed shrike	1	3					
Woodchat shrike					1		
Jay				1			
Magpie	100s	10s	100s	100s	100s	100s	100s
Jackdaw	100s	100s	100s	100s	100s	100s	10s
Carrion crow	50	5	5	5	5	5	5
Starling	100s	10s	10s	100s	10s	10s	10s
House sparrow	100s	100s	100s	100s	10s	10s	10s
Tree sparrow	20		30	5		5	
Chaffinch		8				2	
Serin		5				5	
Greenfinch					2	heard	
Goldfinch	30	10	20	10	12	30	20
Linnet			5		1		
Cirl bunting						3	
Reed bunting			1				

### Plant list, Camargue 2001

Compiled by Sue Burge and Beryl Tite

Day	Scientific name	Common Name	Number (Med Wild Flowers)
	4 <i>Ficus carica</i>	Fig	42
	4 <i>Osyris alba</i>	Osyris	44
H	<i>Aristolochia rotunda</i>		63
H	<i>Aristolochia clematitis</i>	Birthwort	67
	5 <i>Arthrocnemum perenne</i>	Perennial Glasswort	82
	1 <i>Salicornia europaea</i>	Glasswort, Sea Samphire	85
	1 <i>Suaeda vera</i>	Shrubby Seablite	94
	1 <i>Halimione portulacoides</i>	Sea Purslane	100
	<i>Salsola kali</i>	Prickly saltwort	102

	1 <i>Spergularia media</i>	Greater Sea-Spurrey	144
	<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder campion	157
	<i>Silene alba</i>	White campion	158
	2 <i>Silene italica</i>	Italian Catchfly	161
	6 <i>Silene dichotoma</i>	Forked Catchfly	172
	<i>Silene colorata</i>		180
	6 <i>Silene conica</i>	Sand Catchfly	182
	4 <i>Kohlruschia velutina</i>	Kohlruschia	187
	<i>Adonis microcarpa</i>	Yellow pheasants-eye	222
H	<i>Ranunculus sardous</i>	Hairy Buttercup	239
	<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous buttercup	240
	6 <i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	283
	3 <i>Glaucium flavum</i>	Yellow Horned-Poppy	293
	6 <i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	Ramping Fumitory	303
	6 <i>Bunias erucago</i>	Bunias	311
	<i>Malcomia maritima</i>	Virginia stock	316
	5 <i>Matthiola sinuata</i>	Sea Stock	326
	<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	Sweet Alison	336
	6 <i>Biscutella didyma</i>	Biscutella	341
	5 <i>Cakile maritima</i>	Sea Rocket	363
	<i>Reseda alba</i>	White mignonette	375
	<i>Rosa sempervirens</i>		404
	<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i>	Fire thorn	417
H	<i>Rubus sanctus</i>	Bramble	428
	<i>Calycotome villosa</i>	Hairy thorny broom	453
	2 <i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish Broom	481
	6 <i>Psoralea bituminosa</i>	Pitch Trefoil (not in flower)	508
	4 <i>Vicia laxiflora</i>	Slender Tare	521
H	<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch	524
	3 <i>Vicia pannonica</i>		526
	2 <i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common Vetch	531
H	<i>Lathyrus annuus</i>		549
	4 <i>Lathyrus aphaca</i>	Yellow Vetchling	553
	6 <i>Trigonella corniculata?</i>		581
	2 <i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick	594
	<i>Medicago arborea</i>	Tree Medick	598
	5 <i>Medicago marina</i>	Sea Medick	605
	5 <i>Medicago littoralis</i>		606
	4 <i>Medicago polymorpha</i>	Toothed Medick	618
	6 <i>Medicago minima</i>	Small Medick or Bur	622
	5 <i>Medicago arabica</i>	Spotted Medick	623
	<i>Ornithopus compressus</i>	Compressed birds-foot	639
	3 <i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Hop Trefoil	656
	3 <i>Trifolium resupinatum</i>	Reversed Clover	657
	4 <i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Star Clover	662
	4 <i>Dorycnium hirsutum</i>	Dorycnium (not in flower)	676
	7 <i>Scorpiurus muricatus</i>	Scorpiurus (petrol station on way to airport)	684
	2 <i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> subsp.praepropera	Mediterranean Kidney Vetch	690
	6 <i>Coronilla valentina</i>		695
	2 <i>Hippocrepis ciliata</i>		707
	6 <i>Onobrychis saxatilis</i>	Rock Sainfoin	717
	6 <i>Oxalis articulata</i>	Pink Oxalis	735
	3 <i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-Foot Crane's-Bill	741
	<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved cranesbill	743
	<i>Geranium pusillum</i>	Small-leaved cranes-bill	744

2	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	747
	<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	Shiny cranes-bill	749
4	<i>Erodium malacoides</i>	Soft or Mallow-Leaved Stork's Bill	752
4	<i>Erodium ciconium</i>		760
4	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-Bill	761
2	<i>Linum narbonense</i>	Beautiful Flax	775
4	<i>Linum bienne</i>	Pale Flax	777
	<i>Linum maritimum</i>		782
	<i>Euphorbia paralias</i>	Sea spurge	813
3	<i>Euphorbia pithyusa</i>		814
2	<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>	Cypress Spurge	816
2	<i>Euphorbia serrata</i>		817
	<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Large Mediterranean spurge	818
2	<i>Pistacia terebinthus</i> ?	Turpentine Tree	861
4	<i>Eleagnus augustifolia</i>	Oleaster	890
H	<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow	898
	<i>Lavatera arborea</i>	Tree mallow	912
2	<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey-Leaved Cistus	961
4	<i>Cistus salvifolius</i>	Sage-Leaved Cistus	965
4	<i>Cistus monspeliensis</i>	Narrow-Leaved Cistus	966
	<i>Cistus populifolius</i>	Rockrose	973
4	<i>Tuberaria guttata</i>	Annual Rockrose, Spotted Rockrose	985
2	<i>Helianthemum appeninum</i>	White Rockrose	993
2	<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	Common Rockrose	996
	<i>Helianthemum canum</i>	Hoary Rockrose	1005
2	<i>Fumana ericoides</i>		1011
3	<i>Tamarix gallica</i> ?		1017
	<i>Tamarix tetragyna</i>		1024
5	<i>Frankenia pulverulenta</i>		1026
	<i>Frankenia hirsuta</i>		1028
6	<i>Bryonia cretica</i>	White Bryony	1033
1	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	1069
	<i>Eryngium maritimum</i>	Sea holly	1073
1	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel	1108
2	<i>Coris monspeliensis</i>	Coris	1196
3	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet Pimpernel (scarlet )	1198
4	<i>Anagallis foemina</i>		1199
3	<i>Limonium bellidifolium</i>	Matted Sea Lavender	1225
4	<i>Jasminum fruticans</i>	Wild Jasmine	1239
4	<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>	Yellow-Wort	1249
2	<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>	Swallow-Wort	1269
3	<i>Galium setaceum</i>		1297
3	<i>Valantia hispida</i>	Valantia	1303
2	<i>Convolvulus cantabrica</i>	Pink Convolvulus	1329
1	<i>Cynoglossum creticum</i>	Blue Hound's Tongue	1402
6	<i>Anchusa arvensis</i>	Bugloss	1413
4	<i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i>	Ground Pine	1425
6	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	White Horehound	1445
2	<i>Calamintha grandiflora</i> ?	Large-Flowered Calamint	1498
2	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Thyme	1508
2	<i>Mentha suaveolens</i>	Apple Mint	1523
2	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary	1526
2	<i>Lavandula augustifolia</i>	Common Lavender	1532
5	<i>Salvia verbeneca</i>	Wild Clary	1545
	<i>Verbascum sinuatum</i>	Mullein	1601

	Antirrhinum siculum	Antirrhinum	1608
	2 Antirrhinum latifolium ?		1610
	6 Veronica cymbalaria	Cymbalaria-Leaved Speedwell	1645
	Orobanche purpurea?	Purple broomrape, ?on composites	1659
	6 Orobanche cernua ?	Broomrape possibly on artemesia	1661
	Globularia alypum	Shrubby Globularia	1677
H	Sambucus ebulus	Dwarf Elder, Danewort	1710
	2 Lonicera etrusca	Etruscan Honeysuckle	1712
	2 Centranthus ruber	Red Valerian (white and red forms)	1723
	2 Centranthus calcitrapa		1725
H	Dipsacus fullonum	Wild Teasel (not in flower)	1732
	4 Knautia arvensis ?	Field Scabious	1735
	4 Campanula persicifolia ?	Peach-leaved Bellflower	1758
	4 Evax pygmaea		1805
	5 Filago minima ?	Small Cudweed	1819
	5 Helichrysum stoechas		1824
	Xanthium spinosum	Spiny cocklebur	1853
	3 Anthemis maritimus		1857
	1 Carduus pycnocephalus ?		1952
	4 Galactites tomentosa	Galactites	1971
H	Silybum marianum	Milk Thistle	1982
	2 Volutaria lippi	Volutaria	1987
	Centauarea solstitialis	Yellow star thistle	1994
	Centuarea diffusa		2000
	Tolpis barbata	Tolpis	2030
	4 Urospermum dalechampii	Urospermum	2039
	2 Tragopogon hybridum		2056
	2 Lатуca perennis	Mountain or Blue Lettuce	2078
	2 Aphyllanthes monspeliensis	Aphyllanthes	2096
	6 Muscari comosum	Tassel Hyacinth	2201
	4 Smilax aspera	Common Smilax (not in flower)	2222
H	Iris pseudoacorus	Flag Iris	2290
	2 Iris lutescens	(flowering over)	2294
H	Arum Italicum	Large Cuckoo Pint	2361
	4 Orchis laxiflora	Lax-Flowered or Jersey Orchid	2420
	2 Orchis sphegodes ?	Early Spider Orchid ?	2428
	Cynosurus echinatus	Rough dogs-tail	2458
	Bromus madritensis	Compact brome	2464
	Aegilops geniculata		2467
	Dasypyrum villosum		2469
	Avena sterilis	Winter wild oat	2471
	1 Lagurus ovatus	Hare's-Tail	2473
	Stipa capensis	Med. Needle-grass	2477
	6 Sanguisorba minor	Salad Burnet	p.112 "Wild Flowers of Britain and N.Europe"
	4 Potentilla reptans	Creeping Cinquefoil	p.118 "Wild Flowers of Britain and N. Europe"
	2 Amelanchier ovalis ?	Snowy Mespilus	p.120 "Wild Flowers of Britain and N.Europe"
	4 Trifolium arvense	Haresfoot Clover	p.138 "Wild Flowers of Britain and N.Europe"
	6 Conium maculatum	Hemlock	p.170 "Wild Flowers of Britain and N.Europe"
	6 Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet, Woody Nightshade	p.216 "Wild Flowers of Britain and N.Europe"
	6 Veronica persica	Common Field Speedwell	p.226 "Wild Flowers of Britain and N.Europe"
	6 Persicaria maculosa	Redshank, Redleg	p.40 "Wild Flowers of Britain and N.Europe"

