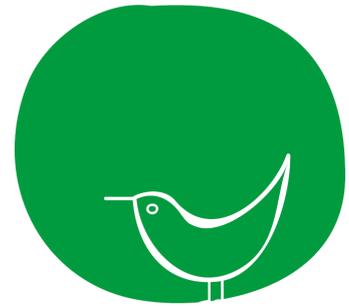


Southern Portugal

15th - 23rd October, 2022



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Participants: Heather Coats (all week), Peter Dwyer (Castro Verde, Ria Formosa West), Douglas Faulder (Ria Formosa West)

Leader: Guillaume Réthoré

Saturday 15th October- Ria Formosa East

We started the birdwatching week a day earlier as Heather had been present in the Algarve for a few days already. We left Cruzinha (A Rocha Portugal Field Study Centre and the accommodation during the week) in the sunshine and the weather was quite hot. We drove to Olhão to have a look at the salt pans.

As the tide was going down, few birds were resting in the salt pans but we still saw a few Black-tailed Godwits (*Limosa limosa*), Black-winged Stilts (*Himantopus himantopus*), Redshanks (*Tringa totanus*), a Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) and a Sanderling (*Calidris alba*). Many Dunlins (*Calidris alpina*), Black-tailed Godwits, Ringed Plovers (*Charadrius hiaticula*) and a few Kentish Plovers (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) were feeding on the mudflats. Some Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) were in a tank with deeper water. We spotted an Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) flying and soon joined by another bird. They both flew over the salt pans, giving us great views. Three Slender-billed Gulls (*Chroicocephalus genei*) flew into the salt pans and landed so we went looking for them. We did not find them but saw quite a few Redshanks and a Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*). It flew away but we discovered another one standing near a Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*). There was some agitation in the salt pans and a flock of Sanderlings landed in front of us. We spotted a Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) flying in the distance, probably the cause of the disturbance. We left Olhão and went to Santa Luzia to explore more salt pans.

We spotted straight a Common Magpie (*Pica pica*) when we arrived and were pleased with the birds present in the first lagoon: Dunlins, Ringed Plovers, Redshanks, Greenshanks (*Tringa nebularia*), two Little Stints and two Curlew Sandpipers (*Calidris ferruginea*). The second lagoon was even better! Many birds were feeding or resting and the number of Little Stints and Curlew Sandpipers was impressive! A Slender-billed Gull showing a nice rosy breast and a Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) were resting among Avocets (*Recurvirostra avosetta*). The next tank had fewer birds and most flew away when a car passed but we heard a Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*). We arrived at the area where the salt is collected and



three Slender-billed Gulls were swimming with three Avocets near the path, giving us great views. Many Audouin's Gulls (*Ichthyaetus audouinii*) were resting with Yellow-legged (*Larus michahellis*) and Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*Larus fuscus*). We found a Mediterranean Gull (*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*) in the middle and another, an adult, flew past us, showing its pale plumage. We had a look at lagoons further away: many Flamingos, Spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*), Cormorants

(*Phalacrocorax carbo*) and Oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus*) were resting. A few Audouin's Gulls were swimming on the canal and Sandwich Terns (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) fishing. A Spoonbill landed on a sandbar near a group of Oystercatchers. We started walking back to the car. We looked again at the first lagoons where many birds were still present. This time, three Caspian Terns were resting, one of them ringed but too far to be read. A group of Wood Pigeons (*Columba palumbus*) flew above the area.

We travelled to Cruzinha for dinner.

Monday 17th October- Sagres

On this day, we headed to the end of the world! Since Sagres and Cape St Vincent are the most south-western point of Europe, ancient people believed that it was the end of the world. It is also a good spot to watch the raptor migration as a lot of birds of prey end up in Sagres on their migration to Africa, believing they are in Gibraltar. We left at 8h00, the weather was cloudy. We saw a Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) as we left the centre. Before reaching Sagres, we saw a Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) perched on a post by the road.

Our first stop at Sagres was at Ponta da Atalaia. **Crag Martins** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) flew past us as we left the car. We walked along a hedge, looking for migrants. Stonechats (*Saxicola rubicola*) and Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) were perched on bushes and we heard Blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*), Robins (*Erithacus rubecula*), Sardinian Warblers (*Curruca melanocephala*) and House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). A Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) was perched on an Agave by a Stonechat. Yellow Wagtails (*Motacilla flava*) and Chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) flew over us. A Corn bunting (*Emberiza calandra*) was perched on canes. We walked a bit further but few birds were present. We stopped by the cliff and enjoyed the view on Sagres fortress. This place is where Henry the Navigator once had his navigation school. We had a look at the sea and saw a raft of Cory's Shearwaters (*Calonectris borealis*), some Gannets (*Morus bassanus*) and Balearic Shearwaters (*Puffinus mauretanicus*). We walked along the cliff and had great views of two Blue Rock Thrushes (*Monticola solitarius*), one of them singing! Thekla's Larks (*Galerida theklae*) were flying and singing around us. We stopped at the platform in front of the sea. The water was very calm, we saw some Yellow-legged and a Lesser Black-backed Gull, some Gannets and Cory's Shearwaters. A Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) was alarming in the air. Looking for it, we found two perched on an Agave and two more flying. We walked back to the car and saw a Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) by the car park.



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We then left for Cabranosa, the most famous raptor-watching spot in Sagres. We heard a Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*) when we got there and saw it as we left the

car. We started our time there with a coffee. It was pretty quiet with just a few Kestrels around and a Buzzard perched on a tree. A Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) appeared; the light was not great but the flight pattern of this bird helped the identification. Several Thekla's Larks were singing around us. As it was very calm and cloudy, we went looking for Death head Hawkmoth (*Acherontia atropos*) caterpillars, flushed a Pied Flycatcher on the way and found a big caterpillar. We also scanned the sky for more birds. We spotted a distant Short-toed Snake Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) and a Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*). We explored the area around Cabranosa and flushed two Song Thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*) while a Blackcap was alarming hidden in an Apple of Sodom (*Solanum linnaeanum*) bush. Back on top of the hill, the sun was shining but as few birds were flying, we drove to the picnic spot.

We had a nice and quiet lunch by the pine hedge. We then drove to Cape St Vincent. We looked at the sea on the northern face of the cape and saw a few Gannets, Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Looking towards the south, there was a big fog patch at sea.

We then drove to Vale Santo and stopped by an old farm. A Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) was singing as we arrived. We walked on a track between two fields and had a good look at a group of Red-billed Choughs (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) feeding on the ground. We even found two Ringed Plover resting while looking at the Choughs. A look in the sky allowed us to spot a Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), both quite high.

As few birds were in the air, we drove back to Sagres which seemed lost in the mist. We stopped at the harbour but could hardly see anything because of the fog. We still flushed a Common Sandpiper from the side of the pier.



We finished the day passing by Martinhal lagoon. Some Ringed Plovers, a Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) and a Kentish Plover were resting or feeding by the little water present. We walked along the beach and added another two Turnstones and a Ringed Plover to the list of the day. Back at the car, we saw a White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) as we were leaving the area.

On the way back, we saw a Raven (*Corvus corax*) perched on a post along the national road and a Buzzard a little bit further. At Budens, Heather spotted a pale Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*).

We came back to Cruzinha by the Ria de Alvor marsh. The light was not great but we still saw Flamingos, Black-winged Stilts, Black-tailed Godwits, a Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*), an Avocet and two Lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*).

We had a look at the day list and the weather forecast for the following day before dinner.

Tuesday 18th October- Monchique

Monchique offered us a totally different landscape and habitat from which we had encountered the previous days. The weather was very cloudy when we left. On the way we saw many White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*).

We first stopped at Ribeira das Canas, a stream at the foot of the hills. Many Sardinian Warblers, Blackcaps and Robins were heard as we left the car. A Corn Bunting was singing from a telephone cable and an Iberian Green Woodpecker (*Picus sharpei*) called but we did not see it. We started walking along the stream, which was dry, hearing a Woodlark singing. A Cetti's Warbler called from inside a bush. Staring at this bush, we saw some movements but failed to actually see the bird. From the same spot, we had a look at a Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*). A Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*) was passing from a tree to another and many Chaffinches were feeding on the ground. We heard a Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*) but it did not show-up. As we reached an area with more vegetation and the weather seemed to improve a bit, we started walking to the car. Just before reaching the car park, we had a good look at a Woodlark singing from a wire.

We then drove down to Caldas de Monchique, a small spa town. There, we saw a Sparrowhawk and a Crested Tit (*Lophophanes cristatus*) while enjoying a coffee. We walked along a stream, this one with water, to an area with big tree. There we heard and saw Blue Tit, Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*), Blackcap and Robin. We arrived to a more open area. A Serin (*Serinus serinus*) and a Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*) were singing. The bunting perched on a branch right above our head, giving us nice views. We walked to a small chapel but did not see much on the way so we went back to the car.

We then explored an area with Cork Oaks near Monchique. We parked in the shade and walked along a small road. Heather found a male Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) on a telephone wire and then a Pied Flycatcher perched nearby. We stopped near a house. Heather spotted a Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) and discovered another Pied Flycatcher. At the same time, we heard a Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*). We walked back to the area of Cork Oaks and saw again the Redstart and Flycatcher at the same spot. A Praying Mantis (*Mantis religiosa*) was standing still on the side of the road. Wandering around the trees, we saw a Nuthatch and a Great Tit (*Parus major*). Some of the oaks had been stripped not long ago and still had a rufous-coloured bark. A Serin perched on a dead tree, giving us nice views. In a more open area, we saw a Blackcap and a Chiffchaff. We then returned to the car. While I was taking pictures of a Comma (*Polygonia c-album*), Heather found a female Cirl



Bunting perched above us. We had lunch under the shade of the oaks and drove to Foia afterwards as the weather was improving.

At Foia, the highest point (902 m), the weather was clear but windy. We went to the area with lots of antennas, seeing two Kestrels on the way. Few birds were present, only a Stonechat and we heard a Sardinian Warbler. When we went back to the road, we counted four Kestrels and spotted a Common Buzzard in the distance, hovering. We walked along the road and stopped to a place from where we could see the surrounding bushes. We heard a Dartford Warbler (*Curruca undata*) and a Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) calling. A Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*) called and we saw one flying by but it disappeared quickly. We went further to have a better view of the area where it landed and found three feeding in a small tree. They were a bit distant but we had a good look at these birds. Two birds of prey caught our attention: a Peregrine Falcon chasing a Kestrel (another!) which managed to escape.

We then drove to an area a bit lower, near a lagoon with little water. Another



Kestrel was perched on a small solar panel by a weather station. A Woodlark flew-by and landed nearby. Heather found three **Ring Ouzel** drinking by the pool. By the time we had our telescope ready, they had flown away and perched on a small tree. Again, we had good views of these birds while a Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) flew over our heads. We explored another area. A few free-range pigs were feeding on chestnuts. We saw few birds, only a Buzzard perched and another which flew.

As we were driving down the hills, we heard a Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*). The bird was perched on a telephone wire along the road but it flew as a car passed-by. We stopped a few metres further as it was still calling. We found it but the observation was very quick.

We left the area, went down the hills and stopped at a small wetland unfortunately dry. Very few birds were in sight but an adult Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) flew over the area.

Back at Cruzinha, we had a hot drink while writing the list of birds of the day. We also, looked at the weather forecast, quite bad for the next days. We had dinner at the Yellow house.

Wednesday 19th October- Alvor dunes and Abicada

Since the forecast was bad for the day, we left later and went to Alvor because the tide was high during the morning. We saw a Marsh Harrier as we left Cruzinha.

We parked the car by the harbour and went to the boardwalk. Two Cormorants perched on wooden posts were drying their wings and a Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) was hidden in the vegetation. We heard a Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*) but it did not

show-up. A Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) passed in flight and a loose dog flushed a Redshank. We found another Bluethroat in a bush. This bird showed well but only for a few seconds. A few metres further, another one was singing a bit from the top of a bush. The tide was rising so we had a look at the estuary but only saw Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Since it was not raining and the weather was not too threatening, we went to the pier, walking along the estuary. We flushed a Sanderling and saw or heard Zitting Cisticolas (*Cisticola juncidis*), Stonechats and Crested Larks (*Galerida cristata*) in the dunes. At the end of the pier, we had a look at the sea: several Gannets were visible and Heather spotted two Sandwich Terns. On the beach, a group of people flushed about 20 Sanderlings and Heather found another 15. We walked back to the car park. Near the harbour, we looked at two Sandwich Tern fishing, found a Mediterranean Gull and two Ospreys flying by Quinta da Rocha. We saw a Crag Martin near the football field.

We went to the harbour to check the gulls and Heather found one bird with a yellow ring. It had been ringed in the Ria Formosa Natural Park, in Portugal.

We drove back to Cruzinha passing by the Ria de Alvor marshes. Many Redshanks and White Storks were feeding in the area with Flamingos, Black-tailed Godwits, Dunlins and a Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). Our picnic lunch turned into a real lunch. Fortunately, we were indoors since it started raining.

After the meal, we went to Abicada. We first stopped by the pumphouse. Since it was raining a little, we took shelter under a small tree. Many birds were present in this part of the lagoon as it had little water: Flamingos, **Spoonbills**, Redshanks, Dunlins, Coots (*Fulica atra*), Grey Herons, Little Egrets (*Egretta garzetta*), Ringed Plovers and a Greenshank. An Osprey was flying in the distance. One of the Spoonbills was ringed and we tried to read the combination of colour-rings. When this bird decided to show both legs, it went to an area where the water was deeper. We then went to the area by the dam. From the car park, we looked at a small marsh. Quite a few birds were present: Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Teals (*Anas crecca*), Black-winged Stilts and a Snipe.



Heather found a Bluethroat which showed well for a few seconds. Very few birds were visible on the lagoon from our position. A Caspian Tern flew in front of us, its heavy red bill very obvious. A Mediterranean Gull was flying among Black-headed Gulls, allowing us to see the plumage differences, much paler and without black on the wings for the Mediterranean Gull. We looked at the birds from the beginning of the dyke as the weather was pretty grey. The Osprey we saw earlier was now perched on a post. It started raining so we took shelter under a Carob Tree. The weather was still too grey to go far from the car and since few birds were in sight we decided to go back to the car. A Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) flew past us from the dam. A Dutch-ringed Spoonbill was feeding with a Little Egret close

to the car park. The Iberian Magpies (*Cyanopica cooki*) were very loud, usually a sign of a predator. We searched for the origin of the disturbance: a female Marsh Harrier.

We came back to Cruzinha where we had tea and a piece of cake looking at the weather forecast for Thursday which was quite grim.

Thursday 20th October- Open Day at Cruzinha

As Thursday is Cruzinha's weekly open day, the plan was to do a bit of ringing. However, the rain only allowed us to ring a few Blackcaps and Robins until 10h. The rest of the morning was quiet.

After lunch, it was decision time according to the forecast. As the situation did not improve, we decided to cancel the trip Lagoa dos Salgados. We had time to rest as the next day would be a long one with an early start.

Friday 21st October- Castro Verde

This day was the longest of the week in terms of time spent in the field. The Castro Verde area has a totally different landscape from the Algarve and different birds as well... We left quite early, picked-up Peter, who joined us for the day, at Alvor, and headed towards the Alentejo. The trip went smoothly. The weather was cloudy but dry when we arrived at Castro Verde. We saw a large flock of Iberian Magpies on the way and a Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) as we reached our destination.

We took the road leading to the LPN reserve (Liga para a Proteção da Natureza also called Vale Gonçalinho) stopping on high spots to look around for birds. At the first stop, we saw a Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*) chasing a Red Kite from the tree where it was perched. We heard Corn Buntings and Crested Larks. While scanning the fields for birds, we found three Great Bustards (*Otis tarda*), quite close and had great views of these birds. We resumed our journey, seeing a Common Magpie on the way. We stopped again on another high spot. An Iberian Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*) was perched on a small tree in the distance. A mixed flock of House and Spanish Sparrows (*Passer hispaniolensis*) was feeding in a nearby field. A Small group of Lapwings flew over.

At Vale Gonçalinho, we parked near the centre and had our coffee break.



Several Jackdaws (*Coloeus monedula*) were around and we found a flock of Great Bustards flying. The landscape of the reserve is mainly steppes where a specific avifauna lives. We started walking, heard Back-bellied Sandgrouses (*Pterocles orientalis*) and found three in the air. They landed nearby. They are very mimetic but we managed to find them on the ground. We had great views through the telescope. We resumed our walk. We spotted a strange bird in the air, it was

just a Cattle Egret flying with its neck stretched. We passed the gate to get in the reserve and had great views of an Iberian Grey shrike perched on the fence and a Wheatear a bit further. Before we reached old farm buildings, we saw two Hoopoes (*Upupa epops*) and two very distant Great Bustards. At the ruins, we scanned the surroundings but no birds were in sight. We came back to the car and left the centre on the same track as we came

We came back to Castro Verde and headed towards Entradas. We stopped by a lagoon which was unfortunately very low. A few waders were still present: two Green Sandpipers (*Tringa ochropus*), two Greenshanks, three Lapwings. A Kingfisher was perched on a rock.

We then drove between fields. We found a Little Owl (*Athene noctua*), the first of the trip on a ruin by the road. It moved to a farm building where it stared at us. We reached a river, which was almost dry. A Green Sandpiper and a White Wagtail flew as we arrived. Peter found two Chiffchaffs in the vegetation. A Grey Heron was perched on a rock, it took off and perched on a dead tree. A Grey Wagtail was on a stone and we heard a Cetti's Warbler. In the air, we only saw a few Red Kites. We heard a Woodlark before reaching São Marcos da Ataboeira.

From there, we headed to Nossa Senhora de Aracelis. On the way, we saw more Corn Buntings and Iberian Grey Shrikes. We ate our picnic by the chapel but it was a quite windy. By the end of our lunch, a few drops of rain were falling. From this hill, we had an amazing view of the Alentejo plain. We had a look around but few birds were present. Going down from the hill, we found a Little Owl perched on a pile of rocks and another one a few metres further.

We crossed the national road and took another small road. We stopped by a river. A Common Sandpiper flew away and Heather found a Grey Heron. Some White Storks nests were impressive. Lapwings and Spotless Starlings (*Sturnus unicolor*) were feeding on the ground among the sheep. From this spot, we also saw two species of magpies. We stopped near another river further. A Hoopoe was perched on a post, a Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*) on a wire and an Iberian Grey Shrike on a dead tree. The river was very low. In the distance, we spotted a Short-toed Snake Eagle hunting. Just before turning on a dirt track, four Red-legged Partridges crossed the road. We also found an Iberian Grey Shrike close to the road. We continued and stopped by another lagoon. A gate (but no fence so far) was being built. Four Spoonbills and two Mallards flew when we left the car but came back. None of the spoonbills was ringed. A good selection of waders was present: two Black-winged Stilts, six Ringed Plovers, two Snipes and two Green Sandpipers. A Little Grebe



(*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) was swimming in the middle of the pool. The waders took-off, we looked for the reason but did not find any. We counted again the plovers, they were 10 in total! Looking around, we found two Golden Eagles. Unfortunately, they were a bit far and did not come closer before they landed out of sight. We still managed to see the big size, dark tone and the wings held in a V shape. The weather was very dark in the area where we were heading next. A Red Kite was flying and perched on a pile of rocks near the road.

It started raining and got worse and worse. At some point, the rain was so heavy that we had to stop the car and even heard thunder. We resumed our journey when the rain calmed down. We saw the 4th and 5th Little Owl of the trip from the same spot, each one on a side of the road on a pile of rocks. We stopped again to look around. The 6th Little Owl of the day was perched on big pile of rocks. It disappeared when we stepped out of the car. At least six Red Kites were in the area, perched or flying. In the distance, we saw a flock of about 40 Calandra Larks (*Melanocorypha calandra*). A big military palane flew over our heads. We counted again the Red Kites and got to 11 birds. The clouds were disappearing and we even saw the sun.

We drove through Castro Verde and visited a lagoon just outside the town. We heard many Spotless Starlings in the Eucalyptus by the car park. Many Mallards, Spoonbills and a few Cormorants were present on the piece of water. One of the Spoonbills was carrying an engraved ring, it had been ringed in the Netherlands. As it was getting darker, we went back to Castro Verde for a snack.

The café had a rustic look but the staff was very nice and the food lovely. We drove back under the rain. We left Peter at Alvor. We had dinner at Cruzinha, checked the weather forecast and decided our plans for the following day.

Saturday 22nd October- Estombar ricefields

On Saturday, we left later as the previous day had been long. The weather was grey again.

It was cloudy when we arrived at Sitio das Fontes. We left the car on the upper car park and walked towards the ricefields. On the way, we saw many Waxbills (*Estrilda astrild*) and several White Storks in the distance. Heather found a Marsh Harrier. A Caspian Terns and several Black-headed Gulls were flying over the river. A Kestrel was perched on the pumphouse. Several birds were on a more open and flooded area: a Little Egret, five Spoonbills and a Greenshank. The Spoonbills flew away and joined a group of **Flamingos**. Five Snipes flew from a nearby field, calling and zigzagging. We walked along the dyke. Many Stonechats, Chiffchaffs, Waxbills and a few Bluethroats



flew across the path, disappearing in the vegetation. We saw well the orange base of the tail of the Bluethroats. A Green Sandpiper and a Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*) flew over us, calling. The Flamingos seemed nervous but we could not figure why. A Peregrine Falcon was perched on a dead tree on the other side of the river. The weather seemed bad on Monchique as the hills had disappeared in the clouds. We saw again the Marsh Harrier. A Louisiana Crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*) was in the middle of the path. This exotic and invasive species is a source of food for many animals, including Otter. We found some pink Otter spraints, the colour coming from the crayfish shell. We came back to the car without seeing anything new.

We had lunch at Sitio das Fontes. Unfortunately, it finished under the rain. We stopped at Portimão harbour on the way back but very few birds were present.

Back at Cruzinha, we had a look at the list of bird with a coffee.

Sunday 23rd September- Ria Formosa West and departure

On the last day, we left after lunch since Heather was only flying in the evening. We picked-up Peter at Alvor and Douglas at the Portimão cruise terminal. We then, went to an area of lagoons and saltpans behind Faro airport.

A big flock of White Storks was soaring before we reached the saltpans of Ludo. We passed by an area which burned last summer. The first lagoon had a lot birds: Flamingos, **Audouin's Gulls**, a Redshank, a Ruff, a Black-winged Stilt, two Avocets and a few Shelducks (*Tadorna tadorna*). We did not stay long as we wanted to go to the bird hide. Few birds were in the second pool but they were very close: a Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*), a Ruff, several Sanderlings, a Turnstone, a Flamingo and a Dunlin. We drove past a



big pile of salt and more saltpans. Only one lagoon had birds: four Greenshanks, a Redshank and a few Black-headed Gulls which came to roost.

We parked next to the Quinta do Lago golf course under big eucalyptuses. We walked along the green, heading towards the bird hide. Usually, some birds use the golf course to forage but we saw few since many people were playing golf. We heard Great Tit and Robin. A Stonechat was hiding in a Carob tree near the roman ruins.

The lagoon next to the golf course is usually a very good spot and has a nice bird hide. We first looked at the birds from outside the hide. A Tern flew over us but it was too quick for us to identify it. We found it again at the back of the lagoon and identified it as a White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*). This bird had been present for a few days. A pair of Gadwalls (*Mareca strepera*), Moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*) and Little Grebes were visible. An Audouin's Gull flew over us. Heather found a Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) on the golf course. We heard a Little Bittern

(*Ixobrychus minutus*) from the reedbed but it did not show itself. We entered the hide. A group of Audouin's Gulls was swimming in the middle of lagoon. A lonely Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) was resting by an inland. Many Coots were feeding on the green. We found a Little Bittern in the reeds in the distance but it disappeared. Two more flew across the lagoon but vanished as they landed. Iberian Magpies flew in front of the hide. A Stonechat was perched on a small tree nearby. Several Black-headed Weaver (*Ploceus melanocephalus*), an introduced species flew in front of us. We heard a Kingfisher, found it flying across the lagoon and it perched in the vegetation at the base of the hide. Looking at the gulls, we found a few Mediterranean Gulls. After a while, we left the hide. A Common Sandpiper flew quite high over us.

Outside the hide, four Serins were drinking in a puddle. A Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) joined them, quite useful to compare size and colours. One of the Serins was a male, very yellow.

We checked another lagoon before leaving the area. A few Spoonbills were quite close with a Flamingo and many Shovelers. An Osprey was perched on a big tree, mobbed by Magpies. It took-off and perched almost on the same spot. The Magpies came back to annoy it. A Caspian Tern flew in front of us several times. Three Wigeons (*Mareca penelope*) arrived and landed in front of us, they were very vocals. We found a few more and a Flamingo passed in flight.

We drove again between the salt pans. Many Black-headed and a few Mediterranean Gulls were resting in one of them. By the pile of salt, we spotted a Kentish Plover on a dyke. We stopped again by the lagoon with waders close to the path and looked at them from the car not to scare them. The **Spotted Redshank** was



resting on a dyke and soon joined by a **Redshank**. Seeing them together was a great opportunity to study their differences: the Redshank was smaller, darker, with a smaller bill. A Greenshank and a Sanderling were feeding in the shallow water. A Black-winged Stilt was quite close and a few more at the back of the tank. A Ruff and a Little Stint joined the other waders. In that small corner, seven species were present! This was a great opportunity to see and photograph these birds, so close! A great way to finish the week!

I left Heather at the airport, after a great week. Even though the weather did not help, we managed to see 129 species of birds.

List of species

- Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*): 4 at Ludo.
- Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*): 5 at Santa Luzia and seen at Ludo.
- Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*): 2 at Quinta de Lago.
- Eurasian Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*): seen at Ludo.
- Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*): seen at Abicada (5) and Castro Verde (Alvares and Horta da Nora).
- Eurasian Teal (*Anas crecca*): 1 at Abicada.
- Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*): heard at Monchique (Ribeira das Canas) and seen at Castro Verde (Alvares).
- Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*): seen at Castro Verde (3 near Castro Verde and 17 at Vale Gonçalves).
- Black-bellied Sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*): 3 at Castro Verde (Vale Gonçalves).
- Common Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*): 14 at Santa Luzia salt pans and seen at Ria Formosa West.
- Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*): seen on the way to Monchique, at Alvor and Castro Verde.
- Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*): seen at Ria Formosa West.
- Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*): seen at Abicada (11), Lagoa dos Salgados and Ria Formosa West.
- Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*): seen at Castro Verde (1 at Alvares) and Quinta do Lago.
- Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*): 1 at Quinta do Lago.
- Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Ria de Alvor, Abicada (52), Estombar rice fields (120) and Ludo (68).



- Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*): seen at Santa Luzia salt pans.
- Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*): seen at Olhão salt pans, Ria de Alvor, Abicada (3), Castro Verde (2 at Alvares) and Ludo.

- Pied Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Ria de Alvor (1), and Ludo (2).
- Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*): seen at Ria de Alvor and Castro Verde.
- Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*): seen at Ria Formosa East.
- Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Sagres (2 at Vale Santo, 2 at Martinhal), Abicada, Castro Verde (10 at Alvares) and Ludo.
- Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Sagres (1 at Martinhal) and Ludo (1).
- Eurasian Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*): seen at Abicada.
- Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*): seen at Ria Formosa East and Ria de Alvor.
- Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*): seen at Olhão salt pans, Sagres (1 at Martinhal) and Ludo (1).
- Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*): 1 at Ria de Alvor and 3 at Ludo.
- Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*): seen at Santa Luzia salt pans.
- Sanderling (*Calidris alba*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Alvor dunes and Ludo.
- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Ria de Alvor, Abicada and Ludo.
- Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*): seen at Ria Formosa East and Ludo (1).
- Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*): seen at Ria de Alvor, Abicada (2), Castro Verde (2 at Alvares and 1 at Horta da Nora) and Estombar rice fields (5).
- Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*): seen at Olhão salt pans, Sagres (1 at Martinhal), Alvor dunes (1), Abicada (2), Castro Verde (1 at João Serra), Estombar rice fields (1) and Ria Formosa West (1 at Quinta do Lago and 1 at Ludo).
- Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*): seen at Castro Verde (2 at Entradas and 2 at Horta da Nora) and 1 at Estombar rice fields.
- Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Ria de Alvor, Alvor dunes, Abicada and Ludo.
- Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*): 1 at Ludo.
- Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Abicada (1), Castro Verde (2 at Entradas), Estombar rice fields (1) and Ludo (4).
- Slender-billed Gull (*Chroicocephalus genei*): seen at Ria Formosa East (3 at Olhão salt pans and 4 at Santa Luzia salt pans).



- Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Alvor dunes, Abicada, Estombar rice fields and Ludo.
- Audouin's Gull (*Ichthyaetus audouinii*): seen at Santa Luzia salt pans and Ria Formosa West.
- Mediterranean Gull (*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*): seen at Santa Luzia salt pans (3), Alvor dunes (1), Abicada (1) and Ria Formosa West.
- Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, cape), Alvor dunes, Abicada and Ria Formosa West.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, cape), Alvor dunes and Ria Formosa West.
- Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*): 3 at Santa Luzia salt pans, 1 at Abicada, 1 at Estombar rice fields and 1 at Ludo.
- Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*): 4 at Santa Luzia salt pans and 2 at Alvor dunes.
- White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*): 1 at Quinta do Lago.



- Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris borealis*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia).
- Balearic Shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*): Seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia).
- Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*): 1 at Sagres (Vale Vanto).
- White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*): seen at Odiaxere, Ria de Alvor, on the way to Monchique, at Abicada, Castro Verde, Estombar rice fields (30) and Ludo.
- Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*): seen from Santa Luzia salt pans, Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cape St Vincent) and Alvor dunes.
- Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*): seen at Santa Luzia salt pans, Alvor dunes (1), Abicada (4), Castro Verde (3 at Horta da Nora), and Ria Formosa West.
- European Shag (*Gulosus aristotelis*): 2 at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia).
- Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*): 1 at Quinta do Lago.
- Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Abicada (32), Castro Verde (4 at Alvares, 26 at Horta da Nora), Estombar rice fields (5) and Ludo - 12).
- Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*): 3 at Quinta do Lago.
- Western Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*): seen at Sagres (Vale Santo), Abicada, Castro Verde, at Quinta do Lago (3).

- Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*): seen at Santa Luzia salt pans (1), Alvor dunes (2), Abicada (9), Castro Verde (1 at Entradas, 1 at João Serra, 1 at Horta da Nora), Estombar rice fields (1) and Ludo (3).
- Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*): seen at Olhão salt pans, Alvor dunes, Abicada, Castro Verde (1 at Alvares), Estombar rice fields and Ria Formosa West.
- Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*): 2 at Olhão salt pans, 2 at Alvor dunes, 1 at Abicada, and 1 at Ludo.
- European Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*): 1 at Sagres (Cabranosa).
- Short-toed Snake Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*): 1 at Sagres (Cabranosa) and 1 at Castro Verde (João Serra).
- Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*): 1 at Budens.
- Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*): 2 at Castro Verde (Alvares).
- Eurasian Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*): 1 at Sagres (Cabranosa) and 1 at Monchique (Caldas de Monchique).
- Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*): 1 at Morgado.
- Western Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*): 1 female at Olhão salt pans, 1 female Abicada and 2 at Estombar rice fields.
- Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*): seen at Castro Verde.
- Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*): seen at Sagres (2 at Cabranosa), Monchique (Foia), Castro Verde and Estombar rice fields (1).
- Little Owl (*Athene noctua*): 6 at Castro Verde (1 at Entradas, 2 at Corte Pequena and 3 at Rolão).



- Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*): 3 at Castro Verde (2 at Vale Gonçálinho, 1 at João Serra).
- Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*): 1 at Abicada, 1 at Castro Verde (Entradas), 1 at Estombar rice fields and 3 at Quinta do Lago.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*): 1 at Monchique (Cerca da Rita).
- Iberian Green Woodpecker (*Picus sharpei*): seen at Monchique (1 at Ribeira das Canas, 1 at Caldas de Monchique).

- Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*): seen at Sagres (5 at Ponta da Atalaia, 3 at Cabranosa, 2 at Vale Santo), Monchique (5 at Foia), Castro Verde and Estombar rice fields.
- Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*): 1 at Sagres (Vale Santo), 1 at Monchique (Foia) and 1 at Estombar rice fields.
- Iberian Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*): seen at Castro Verde (Vale Gonçalves, Alvares).



- Eurasian Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*): seen at Monchique (Ribeira das Canas, Cerca da Rita).
- Iberian Magpie (*Cyanopica cooki*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia), Monchique (Ribeira das Canas), Abicada, Castro Verde, Estombar rice fields and Ria Formosa West.
- Eurasian Magpie (*Pica pica*): seen at Santa Luzia saltpans (2), Castro Verde and Ria Formosa West.
- Red-billed Chough (*Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*): seen at Sagres (15 at Cabranosa, 38 at Vale Santo).
- Western Jackdaw (*Coloeus monedula*): seen at Castro Verde (40 at Vale Gonçalves).
- Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*): seen at Castro Verde.
- Northern Raven (*Corvus corax*): seen at Sagres and Castro Verde.
- Crested Tit (*Lophophanes cristatus*): 1 at Monchique (Caldas de Monchique).
- Eurasian Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*): seen at Monchique (Ribeira das Canas, Caldas de Monchique).
- Great Tit (*Parus major*): seen at Monchique (Cerca da Rita) and Quinta do Lago.
- Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*): seen at Sagres (Cabranosa) and Monchique (Ribeira das Canas, Foia).
- Eurasian Skyark (*Alauda arvensis*): seen at Sagres (Vale Santo) and Castro Verde (Vale Gonçalves).
- Thekla's Lark (*Galerida theklae*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cabranosa, Vale Santo).

- Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*): seen at Santa Luzia saltpans, Alvor dunes, Abicada and Castro Verde.
- Calandra Lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*): seen at Castro Verde (4 at Vale Gonçalves, 40 at Rolão)
- Eurasian Crag Martin (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cabranosa), Monchique (Ribeira das Canas, Foia), Alvor dunes and Abicada.
- Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*): 1 at Abicada.
- Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*): 1 at Santa Luzia saltpans, 1 at Monchique (Ribeira das Canas), 1 at Castro Verde (Entradas) and heard at Quinta do Lago.
- Common Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*): seen at Monchique (Ribeira das Canas, Caldas de Monchique, Cerca da Rita), Castro Verde (Entradas), Estombar rice fields and Ludo.
- Zitting Cisticola (*Cisticola juncidis*): seen at Monchique (Foia), Alvor dunes, Abicada Sagres and Estombar rice fields.
- Eurasian Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cabranosa), Monchique, Cruzinha (ringing) and Quinta do Lago.
- Sardinian Warbler (*Curruca melanocephala*): seen at Ria Formosa East, Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cabranosa), Monchique and Alvor dunes.
- Dartford Warbler (*Curruca undata*): 1 at Monchique (Foia).
- Eurasian Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*): seen at Monchique (Foia).
- Eurasian Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*): seen at Monchique (Cerca da Rita).
- Spotless Starling (*Sturnus unicolor*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia), Monchique (Ribeira das Canas), Castro Verde and Ria Formosa West.
- Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*): 2 at Sagres (Cabranosa).
- Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cabranosa), Monchique, Alvor dunes and Quinta do Lago.
- Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*): seen at Monchique (8 at Foia).
- European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cabranosa), Monchique, Abicada, Cruzinha (ringing) and Quinta do Lago.
- Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*): seen at Alvor dunes (2), Abicada (2) and Estombar rice fields.
- European Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*): seen at Cruzinha (1), Sagres (1 at Cabranosa) and Monchique (2 at Cerca da Rita).



- Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*): 1 at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia).
- Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*): 1 at Sagres (Cabranosa) and 1 at Monchique (Cerca da Rita).



- Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*): 2 at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia).
- European Stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*): seen at Santa Luzia salt pans, Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cabranosa, Vale Santo), Monchique, Alvor dunes, Abicada, Castro Verde, Estombar ricefields and Quinta do Lago.
- Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*): seen at Sagres (1 at Ponta da Atalaia), Abicada (1) and Castro Verde (Vale Gonçalvesinho).
- Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*): seen at Castro Verde.
- House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*): seen at Santa Luzia salt pans, Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia), Alvor dunes, Abicada, Castro Verde and Estombar rice fields.
- Black-headed Weaver (*Ploceus melanocephalus*): seen at Quinta do Lago.
- Common Waxbill (*Estrilda astrild*): seen at Estombar rice fields.
- Western Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia).
- Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*): 1 at Monchique (Foia), 1 at Abicada and 1 at Castro Verde (Entradas).
- White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*): 1 at Sagres (Martinhal) and 1 at Castro Verde (Entradas).
- Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia), Alvor dunes, Abicada and Castro Verde (João Serra).
- Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*): 1 at Estombar rice fields.
- Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia, Cabranosa) and Monchique.
- European Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*): seen at Monchique and Quinta do Lago.
- European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*): seen at Monchique and Abicada.
- European Serin (*Serinus serinus*): seen at Monchique, Alvor and Quinta do Lago.
- Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra*): seen at Sagres (Ponta da Atalaia) and Castro Verde.

- Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*): 1 at Monchique (Foia).
- Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*): seen at Monchique (2 at Caldas de Monchique, 1 at Cerca da Rita).

- Spanish Pond Turtle (*Mauremys leprosa*): seen at Quinta do Lago.
- European Pond Turtle (*Emys orbicularis*): seen at Quinta do Lago.

- Louisiana Crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*): seen at Estombar ricefields.

- Praying Mantis (*Mantis religiosa*): 1 at Monchique (Cerca da Rita).



- Comma (*Polygonia c-album*): 1 at Monchique (Cerca da Rita).
- Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*): seen at Sagres and Monchique.
- Death head Hawkmoth (*Acherontia atropos*): caterpillars seen at Sagres (Cabranosa).

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Bird names according to Gill F, D Donsker & P Rasmussen (Eds). 2022. IOC World Bird List (v12.1).