
Tablas de Daimiel National Park (Ciudad Real, Spain) 23 to 27-May-2011

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1. SUMMARY

Between the 23rd and the 27th of May 2011, Juan Monrós (Univ. Valencia) and Eduardo Belda (Univ. Polytech. Valencia) organized an expedition to Tablas de Daimiel National Park (Ciudad Real, Castilla-La Mancha, Spain). The main objective was to census and to sample the local population of the endangered thick-billed southeastern Iberian subspecies of Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus witherbyi*). In addition, we systematically recorded three other species at the sampling points: Savi's Warbler (*Locustella lusciniodes*), Moustached Warbler (*Acrocephalus melanopogon*) and Bearded Reedling (*Panurus biarmicus*). Thanks to the Director, D. Carlos Ruiz de la Hermosa, the park provided considerable help with logistics. Overall, about 12 male Reed Buntings were found, three were sound recorded and one was ringed and sampled for blood. In addition, 108 species of birds, three of mammals and four of reptiles and amphibians were recorded – this report serves primarily to preserve that last information, which will not be used elsewhere. Highlights from a Portuguese viewpoint included Ferruginous, White-headed and Marbled ducks, Red-knobbed Coot and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, plus breeding Garganey, Great Egret, Black-necked Grebe, Black Tern and Stock Dove. Among locally scarce birds recorded, we emphasize Spoonbill, Hobby, Red-necked Nightjar, Sand Martin, White Wagtail, and Iberian Grey Shrike.

2. TEAM

Reseachers: Juan S. Monrós (JM), Marcial Marín (MM) and Pablo Vera (PV) [Institute “Cavanilles”, University of Valencia]; Eduardo J. Belda (EB) and Raul Sanchez-Serrano (RS) [IGIC, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia]; and Luís Gordinho (LG) [CIBIO, Porto University].

Parque Nacional de Las Tablas de Daimiel: D. Carlos Ruiz de la Hermosa (CR) [Director-Conservador]; Jordi Feliu (JF) [IREC]; Julio Escuderos (JE) [resident at Casa de los Motores = Casa de los Pinillas] and several park wardens and rangers.

3. CENSUS METHOD

We did five minute point counts in areas of suitable habitat for Reed Bunting. Minimum distance between points was 200 m. Protocol was: one minute of silence, one minute of playback, another minute of silence, a second minute of playback and a final minute of silence for listening. At each point the percentage of cover was noted in broad categories (e.g. open water, reed, cattail, fen-sedge, tamarisk, etc.). All teams used playback equipment from “Mundi Sound – Sonido Digital”

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(www.capadi.com), namely MR 105 devices and AB 105/110 external speakers. These were equipped with a chip containing recording of local birds (from Toledo and Daimiel). UTM coordinates (WGS84 datum) of sampled points were obtained using Garmin eTrex H devices.

4. CLIMATE, WEATHER AND VEGETATION

In recent years water levels in the park during spring have been highly variable. 2008 and 2009 were years of severe drought but, in 2010 and 2011, the area was flooded to almost unprecedented levels. Before that, there were years with intermediate water levels. Presumably that was the case in spring 2005, year of the national Spanish census of Reed Bunting (Atienza 2006). According to MM, 2007 and (possibly) 2006 were draught years too, but in 2007 there were strong rains in late May which caused damage to crops and a flood at Villarrubia de los Ojos.

We had fine weather during all week, including a clear sky and temperatures ranging from 10° to 28° C (www.aemet.es). Little or no wind on the 23rd and 24th; moderate wind between 7 and 9 PM on the 25th and 26th, but dropping after 9 PM on both days. On the 26th some clouds started to appear and, the next day, by late morning we had strong showers and wind.

In spring 2011 most of the marsh was flooded, with large expanses of open water along the central area. Reedbeds were also extensive but most had up to 1 m of water underneath preventing the settlement of sedges and rushes. No large patches of reedbed are cut (as a management action or to feed cattle) and there is no direct grazing by cattle. Reed is cut only along transects to prevent fire from spreading and to allow circulation by boat. Some stands of Fen-sedge or Sawgrass (*Cladium mariscus* locally known as masega) were also impressive because of plant size (>2m) and area occupied (see photos). One of these Fen-sedge stands held a large Purple Heron colony and a male Reed Bunting was holding territory there. Southern Cattail (*Typha domingensis* locally known as enea) occupied smaller areas scattered through the park. Riparian vegetation was scarce and consisted almost exclusively of tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp. locally taray) but a few white poplars (*Populus alba*, alamo blanco) were also present. The area of sedges and rushes (*Juncus*, *Scirpus*, etc.) was small and located mostly along the northwestern (Madre Chica) and northeastern (Isla de Algeciras) edges.

5. ACTIVITIES DAY-BY-DAY:

23: Lisbon – Daimiel (A6-E90-N430-A43), dropping luggage at Hostal Las Brujas and short walk from the park's visitor center (7:20-9 PM, LG); Valencia – Daimiel (MM, PV).

24: Morning (7AM-2PM) - Census in most of the flooded area using four boats, one heading south from the main embarcadero (PV+2rangers) and three heading north: one along western bank (JF+2rangers), one through the middle (LG+2rangers) and one along the eastern bank (MM,CR+1ranger). Afternoon (7-11PM) – JM arrived and PV left, census of northwestern edge (Madre Chica etc) using 4x4 vehicles (JM,MM,JF,LG).

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25: Morning (8AM-1PM) - Census of flooded area around Casa de los Motores using two boats, one heading west (JF,JE+1ranger) and other heading east (LG+2rangers); census in other edges using 4x4 vehicle (JM,MM). Afternoon (7-10:30PM) – JM+MM left, EB+RS arrived; census of the remaining flooded area southwest of the main embarcadero using two boats, one heading west (EB,JF) and another heading north (LG,RS+1ranger); census from the pasarelas including islas del Maturro and de los Tarayes (JF,LG), plus islas de la Entradilla and del Descanso (EB,RS).

26: Morning (5AM-1PM) – Ringing at Madre Chica area. Afternoon (7-10:30PM) - Ringing at Isla de Algeciras area (JF,EB,RS,LG).

27: Morning (5AM-1PM) – Ringing at the same two sites. Afternoon (3-11PM) – Daimiel-Lisbon (LOG; N4, dinner at Estremoz); Daimiel-Valencia (EB,RS).

6. SYSTEMATIC SECTION

AVES BIRDS (108 species, taxonomic criteria and species sequence from van den Berg 2011)

Anatidae ducks

1. *Anser anser* **Greylag Goose** – 3 heard and seen in flight from a boat WSW of the main embarcadero on the evening of the 25th (LG,RS), 12 in the right bank of river Guadiana just before the visitor center on the 26th (LG,JF). Breeding birds were introduced from the acclimatization zone.

(*Tadorna tadorna* **Common Shelduck** – 4 in the acclimatization zone on the 23rd [LG])

2. *Netta rufina* **Red-crested Pochard** – +/-300 seen mostly in southern and northeastern (Isla de Algeciras) areas of the park.

3. *Aythya ferina* **Common Pochard** - +/-150 seen. The first chicks were recorded by JF last week.

4. *Aythya nyroca* **Ferruginous Duck** – 4 in the acclimatization zone, 6 elsewhere (2 at Isla de Algeciras, 2 in northwestern bank, 2 near visitor center)

(*Aythya fuligula* **Tufted Duck** – 8 in the acclimatization zone [LG])

(*Aythya marila* **Greater Scaup** – 1 male in the acclimatization zone [LG])

5. *Oxyura leucocephala* **White-headed Duck** – 10+ sparsely distributed throughout the park. One male was seen displaying to a female (LG). A black headed male was recorded recently (JF). Allegedly more numerous near Daimiel waterworks (JF).

(*Bucephala clangula* **Common Goldeneye** – 12 were seen in a flooded field northeast of the park last winter by JF)

6. *Anas strepera* **Gadwall** - +/-100 seen, well distributed throughout the park

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(*Anas penelope* **Eurasian Wigeon** – 2+ in the acclimatization zone [LG])

7. *Anas clypeata* **Northern Shoveler** – 2+ in the acclimatization zone (LG), 10+ elsewhere (Isla de Algeciras, northeastern bank, etc.).

8. *Anas platyrhynchos* **Mallard** - +/-50 seen, sparsely distributed throughout the park.

(*Anas acuta* **Northern Pintail** – 2 in the acclimatization zone [LG])

9. *Anas querquedula* **Garganey** – 6+ in the acclimatization zone (LG), +/-6 elsewhere (including male chasing female in flight and calling around Isla de Algeciras and male seen from boat near the northern end of the open water [LG]).

10. *Marmaronetta angustirostris* **Marbled Duck** – 4+ in the acclimatization zone, 2 seen in flight west of the visitor center, one seen in flight southwest of Isla de Algeciras (LG).

Phasianidae pheasants

11. *Alectoris rufa* **Red-legged Partridge** – 3 adults near dust tracks north of the visitor center.

12. *Coturnix coturnix* **Common Quail** – 10+ singing from agricultural land all around the park.

Phalacrocoracidae cormorants

13. *Phalacrocorax carbo* **Great Cormorant** - +/-10 immatures roosting in tall tree near the heron colony, could be over-summering *P. c. carbo* (**Atlantic Great Cormorant**) but some pairs (probably of *P. c. sinensis* Continental Great Cormorant) have breed in Embalse de El Vicario ca. 15 km to the southwest of the park in previous years (JF).

Ardeidae herons

(*Botaurus stellaris* **Eurasian Bittern** – According to the last atlas of breeding birds in Spain the species breeds in the area but JF has been unable to find them so far and we didn't record it either)

14. *Ixobrychus minutus* **Little Bittern** – The park holds a very nice population. I heard 10+ males and saw 3+ adults.

15. *Nycticorax nycticorax* **Black-crowned Night Heron** - +/-100 inds. seen, mostly from a boat north of the main embarcadero flying by (presumably from a colony/roost to feeding areas), many immatures (30 to 50%), 15+ fishing at Presa de El Morenillo by night, according to JF breeding has not been confirmed this year but we did see quite a few individuals dropping down in to the egret colony on the evening of the 25th.

16. *Ardeola ralloides* **Squacco Heron** – About 50 birds seen, mostly from a boat north of the main embarcadero. According to JF, there about 20 pairs breeding in the park this year.

17. *Bubulcus ibis* **Cattle Egret** – The commonest egret with 300+ birds seen.

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18. *Egretta garzetta* **Little Egret** – 100+ seen

19. *Casmerodius albus* **Western Great Egret** – Max. 3 birds together near Isla de Algeciras, lonely birds seen elsewhere 3 or 4 times could double that estimate. Breeding colored bare parts.

(*Ardea cinerea* **Grey Heron** – According to JF breeds in Embalse de El Vicario, 15 km to the southwest, but was not seen feeding in the park)

20. *Ardea purpurea* **Purple Heron** – 100+ seen throughout the park, nice colony in tall *Cladium mariscus* near the center of the park about 1 km north of the main embarcadero.

Ciconiidae storks

(*Ciconia nigra* **Black Stork** – According to de Juana [1994] and to local signs the species breeds at Embalse de García de Sola making it an interesting stop over site to any birder traveling by car from Lisbon to Daimiel)

21. *Ciconia ciconia* **White Stork** – 15+ seen in and around the park. Not as common as I would expect.

(*Leptoptilos crumeniferus* **Marabou Stork** – According to the park rangers the species has been recorded at Daimiel once)

Threskiornithidae ibises

22. *Platalea leucorodia* **Eurasian Spoonbill** – 1 ad. flying southwest high over the northwestern bank of the park early in the morning on the 26th (LG,JF); 1 flying over km 146 of N430 at 18:20 on the 27th (LG).

Podicipedidae grebes

23. *Tachybaptus ruficollis* **Little Grebe** – 30+ birds calling from dense reedbeds all over the park but very few seen.

24. *Podiceps cristatus* **Great Crested Grebe** - +/-30 breeding adults seen, one with chicks on the back.

25. *Podiceps nigricollis* **Black-necked Grebe** - +/-50 breeding adults seen.

Accipitridae hawks

(*Pernis apivorus* **European Honey Buzzard** – According to JF a pair probably breeds in the area)

26. *Milvus migrans* **Black Kite** – Several seen between Lisbon and Daimiel but not at the park (e.g. 2+ between km's 150 & 151 of N430)

(*Neophron percnopterus* **Egyptian Vulture** – According to de Juana [1994] and to local signs the species breeds at Embalse de García de Sola making it an interesting stop-over site to any birder traveling by car from Lisbon to Daimiel)

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27. *Gyps fulvus* **Griffon Vulture** – Large colony at Embalse de García de Sola. Flock (25+) searching for food between km's 150 & 151 of N430 at 3PM on the 23rd.

28. *Aegypius monachus* **Cinereous Vulture** – 2 birds in the griffon flock mentioned above, one adult with white stork 5,5 km of Piedrabuena, between km's 286 & 287 of N430, at 4:10 PM on the 27th.

29. *Circaetus gallicus* **Short-toed Snake Eagle** – 1 perched in electricity pylon between km's 90 & 91 of A6 (near Évoramonte, Portugal) at 10:25 AM on the 23rd.

30. *Circus aeruginosus* **Western Marsh Harrier** – +/-20 seen all around the park. Bird growing tail and outer primaries had a spotted eagle like silhouette!

31. *Buteo buteo* **Common Buzzard** – Several seen between Lisbon and Daimiel (e.g. 2 between km's 150 & 151 of N430 around 3PM on the 23rd) but very few (if any) at the park.

32. *Aquila pennata* **Booted Eagle** – 1 pale morph near Valdivia around 2:30 PM and another near Talarrubias around 3:15 PM, both on the 23rd. Not seen at the park.

Falconidae falcons

33. *Falco naumanni* **Lesser Kestrel** – One colony with around 30 pairs in the WSW area of the park (JF).

34. *Falco tinnunculus* **Common Kestrel** – 1 seen in the eastern area of the park over agricultural land.

35. *Falco subbuteo* **Eurasian Hobby** – 1 seen in the northwestern area of the park over the marsh.

(*Falco peregrinus brookei* **Mediterranean Peregrine Falcon** - According to de Juana [1994] and to local signs the species breeds at Embalse de García de Sola making it an interesting stop-over site to any birder traveling by car from Lisbon to Daimiel)

Rallidae rails

36. *Rallus aquaticus* **Water Rail** – 1 seen in flight west of the visitor center, 10+ heard throughout the park but mainly around the edges (las orillas) where the water was not so deep.

37. *Gallinula chloropus* **Common Moorhen** – One adult bird dead in the center of Santa Amalia village (between Mérida and Villanueva de la Serena) on the 23rd around 2PM, 50+ birds heard or seen throughout the park.

38. *Porphyrio porphyrio* **Western Swamphen** – 25+ heard, widespread throughout the park, single adult bird flying around for some time in the northwestern bank.

39. *Fulica atra* **Eurasian Coot** - +/-500 seen throughout the park mostly in or near open water, including some large groups, rather asynchronous breeder with both small chicks and large juvenile birds seen.

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40. *Fulica cristata* **Red-knobbed Coot** – 2+ breeding adults seen between the main embarcadero and the 1st observatory north of it on the 23rd. Very vocal.

Otididae bustards

41. *Tetrax tetrax* **Little Bustard** – One male in breeding plumage singing from fallow-land East of the park on the 27th.

Recurvirostridae stilts

42. *Himantopus himantopus* **Black-winged Stilt** – 3 birds flying over Daimiel marsh west of the visitor center on the 24th (LG); several birds in rice fields along N430 near Villanueva de la Serena, e.g. around km 94 on the 23rd (LG).

Burhinidae thick-knees

43. *Burhinus oedicanus* **Eurasian Stone-curlew** – 2 heard and 4 seen around the park.

Glareolidae pratincoles

44. *Glareola pratincola* **Collared Pratincole** – One heard calling in flight high over the northwestern area of the park late in the morning (LG), one seen in flight from N430 around km 94 at 7:13 PM (LG), both on the 27th.

Scolopacidae sandpipers

45. *Actitis hypoleucos* **Common Sandpiper** – Heard twice in the eastern part of the park but not seen.

Laridae gulls

46. *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* **Black-headed Gull** – Nice colony with 50+ adults north of Casa de los Motores seen from a distance on the morning of the 25th (photos). A few birds were seen feeding throughout the area in all days.

47. *Larus fuscus graellsii/intermedius* **Lesser Black-backed Gull** – 50+ birds resting and feeding throughout the marsh. All immatures or subadults. The Presa de El Morenillo seems to be one of the favoured roosting sites. Not all birds were closely inspected, so the presence of one or more immature *Larus michahellis* **Yellow-legged Gull** cannot be excluded.

Sternidae terns

48. *Gelochelidon nilotica* **Gull-billed Tern** – 2 birds flying NNE at medium height over Daimiel marsh in the morning of the 25th seen from a boat northeast of Casa de los Motores (LG,JF).

49. *Chlidonias hybrida* **Whiskered Tern** - +/-75 birds, more widespread through the park than black tern.

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50. *Chlidonias niger* **Black Tern** – Min. 40 birds (20 pairs) breeding northeast of Casa de los Motores (LG). The two nests checked had one egg each indicating that females were still laying eggs (see photos). Birds were seen feeding elsewhere (e.g. south of Isla Algeciras). Call very distinctive – more direct, pleasant and less harsh than that of whiskered tern.

Pteroclididae sandgrouse

51. *Pterocles orientalis* **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** – 2 adult birds, male and female (presumably a pair), in a dry ploughed field near Casa del Sevillano (NE area of the park). Few calls but close views (JF,LG,EB,RS).

52. *Pterocles alchata* **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** – 20+ seen including flocks of 12, 4 and 2 (LG). Mostly in the southwestern area of the park (Campo o Llanura de San Juan) seen from a boat (!). Also heard in the northern area of the park (Madre Chica). Mostly seen flying over dry, short, fallow fields. More vocal than black-bellied, but not very vocal.

Columbidae doves

53. *Columba livia* **Common Pigeon** – A few flocks of feral pigeons flying around and resting in rooftops overall around 50 birds.

54. *Columba oenas* **Stock Dove** – 2 or 3 pairs nesting in small abandoned houses in La Duquesa area, East of the park (JF,LG).

55. *Columba palumbus* **Common Wood Pigeon** – Common even in the southeastern area of the park, dominated by agricultural land and with very few trees. Often resting in overhead electricity or telephone wires. Some birds still singing. 50+ birds seen mostly in pairs.

56. *Streptopelia decaocto* **Eurasian Collared Dove** – Common (50+ seen) and very vocal. Larger houses with trees nearby (like the visitor center and Casa de los Motores) are strongholds for the species.

57. *Streptopelia turtur* **European Turtle Dove** – Just three birds seen in flight, one in the NNW and the others in the southeast. None heard singing.

Cuculidae cuckoos

58. *Clamator glandarius* **Great Spotted Cuckoo** – One juvenile and one adult in La Duquesa area, East of the park, both in dry fallow fields with scattered trees (LG, JF). Three juveniles seen by JM in the morning of the 25th. Probably all nest parasites of Eurasian magpie since Iberian magpie is very rare in the area.

59. *Cuculus canorus* **Common Cuckoo** – Several birds still singing all around the park, mostly early in the morning. Overall, around five different birds heard.

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Strigidae owls

60. *Otus scops* **Eurasian Scops Owl** – At least three different males singing between Isla de los Tarayes, Isla del Pan and the visitor center area on the 25th, around 10:30 PM (LG, JF, EB, RS).

(*Bubo bubo* **Eurasian Eagle-Owl** – According to Manolo, one of the park rangers, there was a bird wintering in some tamarisk/salt cedar trees over reedbed and open water in the Isla Layos area last year)

61. *Athene noctua vidalii* **Western Little Owl** – 5+ pairs seen in the rooftops of abandoned houses and barns around the park.

Caprimulgidae nightjars

62. *Caprimulgus ruficollis* **Red-necked Nightjar** – Two birds resting on the asphalted road between Daimiel and the park's visitor center (Valdelobos area) around 10:30 PM on the 24th (LG,MM,PV).

Apodidae swifts

63. *Apus apus* **Common Swift** – Flocks of up to 15 birds seen feeding over the marsh. Overall +/-50 birds seen. All swifts closely inspected belonged to this species (LG,JF).

Alcedinidae kingfishers

64. *Alcedo atthis* **Common Kingfisher** – Uncommon. Just three individuals seen but widespread through the park.

Meropidae bee-eaters

65. *Merops apiaster* **European Bee-eater** – Common, 25+ birds seen in pairs or small flocks. Favoring areas of dry, low, grass with scattered trees.

Coraciidae rollers

66. *Coracias garrulus* **European Roller** – About five pairs breeding around the park (JF), including Quintanar, Casa del Sevillano and Casa Blanca areas (LG,JF,etc.).

Upupidae hoopoes

67. *Upupa epops* **Eurasian Hoopoe** – Common with 15+ birds seen and heard.

Alaudidae larks

68. *Galerida cristata* **Common Crested Lark** – Common in agricultural land all around the park.

69. *Lullula arborea* **Woodlark Elvas** – One bird singing in olive grove between Elvas and Estremoz around 7:30 PM on the 27th (LG).

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Hirundinidae swallows

70. *Riparia riparia* **Sand Martin** – A few (3+) seen over the embarcadero north of Casa de los Motores late in the morning on the 25th (LG).

71. *Hirundo rustica* **Barn Swallow** – The most common hirundine at the tablas in late May (probably 100+ birds seen). Nest with small chicks in one of the park hides (LG).

72. *Delichon urbicum* **Common House Martin** – Few feeding at the tablas, many nesting in surrounding villages and between Lisbon and Daimiel.

73. *Cecropis daurica* **Red-rumped Swallow** – Two seen near the visitor center late in the evening on the 23rd (LG).

Motacillidae wagtails

(*Anthus campestris* **Tawny Pipit** – A couple of birds heard in dry ploughed fields in the Tesoro area [N] and in the Campo de San Juan [SSW] but very distant short calls so best regarded as unconfirmed)

74. *Motacilla iberiae* **Iberian Wagtail** – Very rare in areas with open water and flooded reedbed that are used only for feeding (no sedges, etc. to build nest on), much more common in Madre Chica area (up north) where breeding was confirmed with a few males singing and several (10+) fledged juveniles (LG). Overall 30+ birds were seen.

75. *Motacilla alba* **White Wagtail** – A single bird calling in flight over the central area was recorded on the 24th early in the morning (LG).

Troglodytidae wrens

76. *Troglodytes troglodytes* **Winter Wren** – One singing at Río Bulloque near Luciana around 4:50 PM on the 23rd (LG).

Turdidae thrushes

77. *Luscinia megarhynchos* **Common Nightingale** – Common in the park. Three males countersinging in a small area of Isla de Los Tarayes on the 25th. Overall 25+ males singing around the area.

78. *Saxicola rubicola* **European Stonechat** – One of the commonest passerines in the park, present in many different habitats.

79. *Turdus merula* **Common Blackbird** – Common with some birds still singing, e.g. at Isla de Algeciras.

Sylviidae warblers

80. *Cettia cetti* **Cetti's Warbler** – Detection mainly acoustic so can be underestimated if not in full song (due to seasonal variations). Apparently not very common, with just +/-25 birds heard. One male singing in Río Bulloque, near Luciana, around 4:50 PM on the 23rd (LG).

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81. *Cisticola juncidis* **Zitting Cisticola** – Very common, one was ringed in Madre Chica area.
82. *Locustella luscinioides* **Savi's Warbler** – Common, mostly west and southwest of the visitor center but also in the north and in Isla Layos area. Overall about 30 males were heard but this estimate must be replaced by census results. Nevertheless a very strong decline was noted since last census (JM & EB com. pess.).
83. *Hippolais polyglotta* **Melodious Warbler** – One male singing from a broom shrub in a holm oak dehesa with short dry pasture underneath near an irrigation channel between km's 150 & 151 of N430 around 3 PM on the 23rd (LG).
84. *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* **Eurasian Reed Warbler** – One of the commonest passerines at the tablas. Several were ringed at Madre Chica and Isla de Algeciras areas on the 26th and 27th.
85. *Acrocephalus melanopogon* **Moustached Warbler** – 7 pairs detected in the park by JF so far this spring. We saw two from the pasarela to Isla del Maturro and ringed one in Madre Chica area. Pictures and audio-recordings were obtained. In the field it looks as large as a common reed warbler but in the hand it's clearly smaller and assumes a rather unpleasant hunch-backed posture. Sings at mid height in the reeds but not from dense cover and allows close approach, so I had really nice views of them.
86. *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* **Great Reed Warbler** – Common and very vocal even late in the morning and early in the evening. Number of males singing is hard to estimate *a posteriori* since we were not focusing on them but it could reach 100 birds. Often singing in the open from the top of tamarisks or reeds. One bird ringed in Isla de Algeciras area (see photos). One male singing in Río Bulloque, near Luciana, around 4:50 PM on the 23rd (LG).
87. *Sylvia melanocephala* **Sardinian Warbler** – Uncommon in the tablas where areas of scrub are scarce (but some broom is being planted by the park in the Eastern bank, around La Duquesa area). Common in several sites between Lisbon and Ciudad Real, where it was seen and heard from the road.
88. *Sylvia atricapilla* **Eurasian Blackcap** – A few males singing from riparian tall vegetation. Uncommon.

Muscicapidae flycatchers

(*Muscicapa striata* **Spotted Flycatcher** – According to JF a bird has been seen recently near Casa del Sevillano but breeding has not been confirmed)

Timaliidae babblers

89. *Panurus biarmicus* **Bearded Reedling** – One adult male was seen calling in flight in the center of the marsh near the northernmost area that could be reached by boat on the 24th (LG). A few (min. 3) were seen, heard and sound recorded about 1.5 km East of Casa de los Motores on the 25th (LG). It was seen in at least three more sites by other teams, generally in small groups, suggesting +/-15 birds

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present. The reedling is said to have disappeared from the tablas during the two years of severe drought (2008 and 2009, JM com. pess.) but came back in the first year of flood and seems to be more common this year. However numbers don't seem to have reached those of pre-drought years, were the species could be seen from the pasarelas. They nest on the reeds, with nests frequently overhanging deep water so the flood does not reduce their breeding habitat.

Paridae tits

90. *Cyanistes caeruleus* **European Blue Tit** – A few heard in the park but, since the holm oak dehesas in the western bank were not properly explored, it's hard to say how common it is.

91. *Parus major* **Great Tit** – The comment above also applies. In addition, it was recorded in Río Bulloque, near Luciana, on the 23rd around 4:50 PM (LG).

Remizidae penduline tits

(*Remiz pendulinus* **Eurasian Penduline Tit** – Two calls heard about 1 km East of Casa de Los Motores in the morning of 25th were probably from this species [LG]. According to the ranger Manolo, the species has breed at this site in previous years. The site has a small patch of large tamarisk trees surrounded by reedbed and open water. There are also a few white poplars near by)

Oriolidae orioles

92. *Oriolus oriolus* **Eurasian Golden Oriole** – One bird at Río Bulloque, near Luciana village, on the 23rd around 4:50 PM (LG).

Laniidae shrikes

93. *Lanius meridionalis* **Iberian Grey Shrike** – Just one record of a single silent adult in vineyards northwest of Madre Chica (LG).

94. *Lanius senator* **Woodchat Shrike** – Just two adults seen in the park but, as mentioned for the tits, holm oak dehesas on the Western side were not explored.

Corvidae crows

95. *Cyanopica cooki* **Iberian Magpie** – Not seen in the park but many between Lisbon and Ciudad Real e.g. in Río Bulloque, near Luciana village, on the 23rd around 4:50 PM (LG).

96. *Pica pica* **Eurasian Magpie** – Common in the park with about 50 birds seen.

97. *Corvus monedula* **Western Jackdaw** – Uncommon in the park. Just two or three pairs breeding in the same houses as the stock doves (see above).

Sturnidae starlings

98. *Sturnus unicolor* **Spotless Starling** – Common and already in flocks. 100+ birds seen.

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Passeridae sparrows

99. *Passer domesticus* **House Sparrow** – Common in the park. Seen in rooftops at several locations, from the visitor center to Casa de Los Motores. Not as common as next species though.

100. *Passer montanus* **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** – Very common especially northwest of Madre Chica, around Presa de El Morenillo, etc. Several birds ringed (see photos).

101. *Petronia petronia* **Rock Sparrow** – Not recorded at the park. A few calling and seen in the bridge over Río Bulloque near Luciana village around 4:50 PM on the 23rd (LG).

Fringillidae finches

102. *Fringilla coelebs* **Common Chaffinch** – One male singing at S.^a de Saceruela on the 27th around 5 PM (LG). Not recorded at the park.

103. *Serinus serinus* **European Serin** – Uncommon in the park with a just a few heard calling in flight e.g. near the visitor center.

104. *Chloris chloris* **European Greenfinch** – Rather common, heard and seen at several sites with at least a few trees, including near the Hostal Las Brujas.

105. *Carduelis carduelis* **European Goldfinch** – Common, generally in pairs, probably the commonest fringillidae. Seen all around the park in areas with and without trees.

106. *Carduelis cannabina* **Common Linnet** – Also common but distribution more restricted to open agricultural land.

Emberizidae buntings

107. *Emberiza schoeniclus* **Common Reed Bunting** – Our target species, here represented by the thick-billed southeastern Iberian subspecies *E.s.witherbyi*. In 2005, with intermediate water levels, the local population was estimated to be 90-120 pairs (Atienza 2006). After two years of drought (2008 and 2009) this was the second year of flood. The flood left very few nesting sites in the center of the marsh and so, presumably, most males moved to the edges, notably to the NNW edge. Regardless of our efforts, we were only able to find about 12 males most of which were silent. That lack of vocal activity of males in optimal habitat could be either because females were incubating or because they had been unable to attract females and so subsequently stopped singing. No females were seen during the four days of fieldwork. Three males heard singing for longer periods (all in sub-optimal habitat – very flooded reedbed) were using the fast song type (Nemeth 1996, Brunner & Pasinelli 2010) indicating that they had no social female. A single second calendar year male was ringed in the Madre Chica area (see photos).

108. *Emberiza calandra* **Corn Bunting** – Very common. One of the commonest passerines in the park. Many had nests at the time so adults often alarmed by our presence.

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MAMMALIA MAMMALS

Oryctolagus cuniculus **Common Rabbit** – Not as common as the next species. Just three adults were seen in agricultural land of the Eastern side. Possibly commoner in the holm oak dehesas of the Western side that were not explored.

Lepus granatensis **Iberian Hare** – Rather common with 5+ seen in agricultural land of the Eastern side.

Vulpes vulpes **Red Fox** – Three seen from the car on dust tracks before dawn and after dusk, including adult at Presa de El Morenillo and juvenile and immature on the Western side.

AMPHIBIA AMPHIBIANS

Rana perezi **Iberian Marsh Frog** – Common in the marsh and very vocal.

REPTILIA REPTILES

Emys orbicularis **European Pond Terrapin** – One adult crossing the track where the red and yellow routes diverge, just west of the visitor center, around 8:30 PM on the 23rd (LG).

Lacerta lepida **Ocellated Lizard** – One large male seen from the car in one of the dust tracks of the Eastern bank (LG, JF).

Elaphe scalaris **Ladder Snake** – One large juvenile on the same exact place as the terrapin but on the 25th around 10:30 PM (LG, JF, EB, RS).

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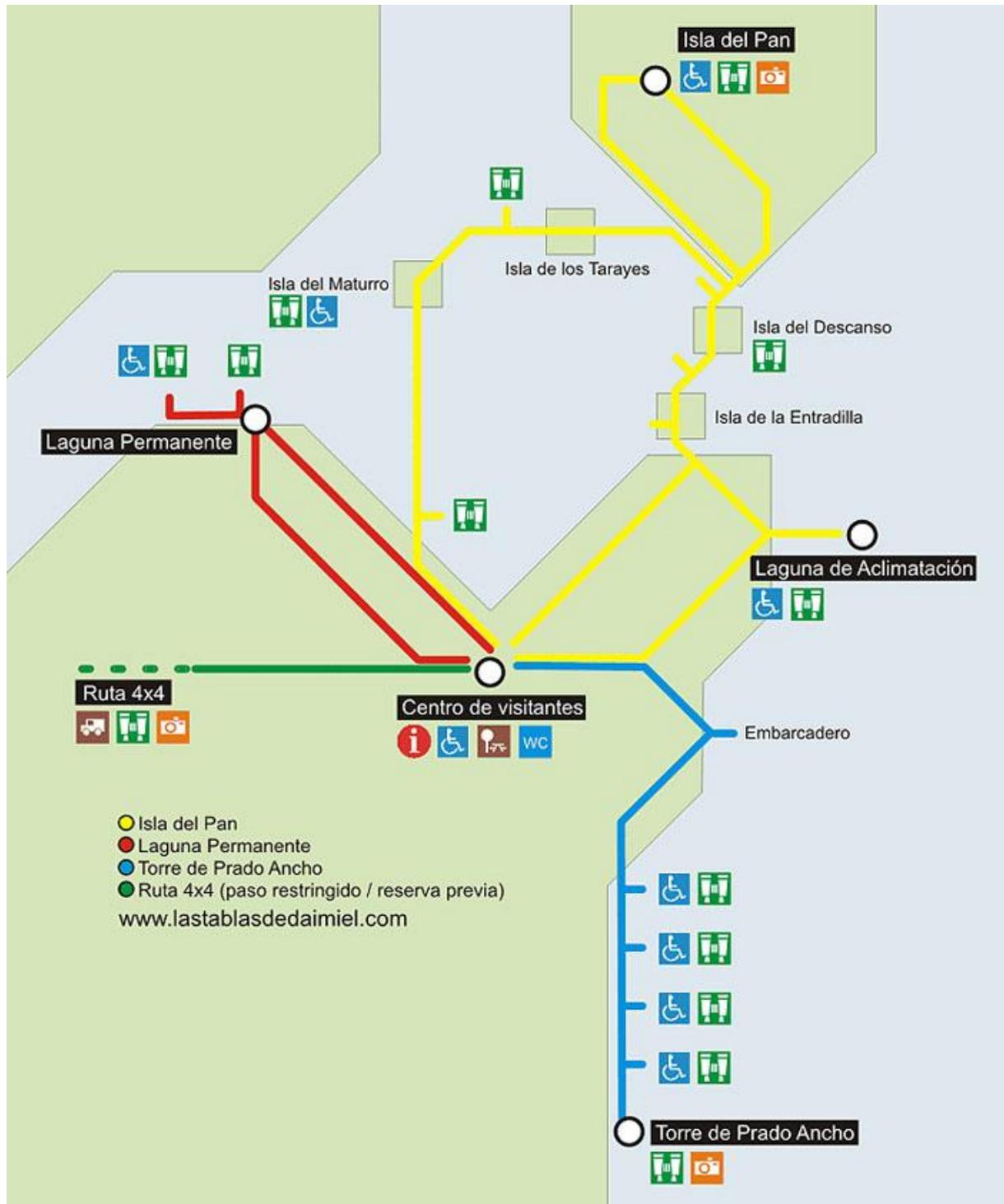
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ANNEX I – MAPS

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Map 2. Routes starting at the visitor's center from www.lastablasdedaimiel.com (note that North is down).