

Extremadura and Castilla – La Mancha, 25 to 28-Jan-2012

Luís Gordinho

Itinerary summary

25-Jan-2012: Lisbon (6AM, local time) – 25th April bridge – A6 (direction Évora/Spain) – Montemor-o-Novo [7AM meet up with Júlio Neto (JMN), left my car at Largo Calouste Gulbenkian and we followed in his small Rover] – A6 (Elvas) – E90/A5 up to exit no. 316 (after Mérida) – N430 (direction Ciudad Real) – Santa Amalia – Ciudad Real – N420A (Carretera de Puertollano) – A41 – A43 (direction Daimiel/Madrid) – 2nd exit to Daimiel (no. 33) – N430 – Hostal Las Brujas (2PM lunch, meet up with Juan Monrós and Marcial Marín) – Quick visit to the hides at laguna de aclimatación and to the first hide northeast of those (on the blue trail) – Short meeting with some wardens at the park headquarters – Casa de Los Motores (4:30 PM ringing session with Jose Manuel Hernandez and a young female trainee: Dácil Unzué Belmonte) – Las Brujas (8PM; shower, beers, dinner, Barcelona vs Real Madrid 2-2)

26-Jan-2012: Las Brujas (7:30AM, breakfast, scrapping ice from car windshields, pushing Júlio's car to start it) – Ringing at Casa de Los Motores with previous day's people plus Luis, another trainee of GOA - Grupo Ornitológico de Alcázar; Jordi Feliu also did a quick visit to the site (8AM-12:30PM) – Quick look at river Guadiana – Mesón La Duquesa (2PM, lunch) – trip to Lagunas de Villafranca de Los Caballeros (in two cars, via Puerto Lapice and Herencia) – Ringing in the reedbeds of northern Laguna Grande with José Luis Hernández (GOA's president), Santiago Moraleda (aka Santi) and up to 5 other volunteers (including Dácil and Luis) – Mesón Las Lorcás (8PM, beers and dinner) – Lodge (11PM)

27-Jan-2012: Lodge (7AM) – Opening nets – Las Lorcás (breakfast) – Ringing at northern Laguna Grande – Las Lorcás (2PM, lunch) – Short walk around the lodge (3PM) – trip to Laguna de La Veguilla, Alcázar de San Juan (4PM) – Putting up mistnets and ringing at La Veguilla with Jose Manuel Hernandez and two similar aged female assistants – Las Lorcás (9PM, beers and dinner) – Lodge (11PM)

28-Jan-2012: Lodge (7AM) – Quero (ATM cash withdraw) – Las Lorcás (breakfast+payment) – La Veguilla (ringing with the same people from the previous day and birding with a local birder - Juan Carlos Marín, <http://petalosyplumas.blogspot.com>) – return to Portugal by the same roads used on the 25th but with stops at Arenas de San Juan (for a tortilla de patata sandwich), Puebla de Alcocér castle (for black wheatear, visiting rate = 1 euro per person), and at Puerto Peña griffon colony (at sunset). Before we split, we had another sandwich (fried pork) at Montemor.

Weather summary

Cold weather (down to -3°C on the 26th), clear skies and little wind most of the time. Cloudy skies and a few showers, some of them moderate, on the 27th.

Birdlist

Anatidae ducks

1. *Anser anser* Greylag Goose – 30+ at La Veguilla including one adult with some characters of eastern ssp. *A. a. rubrirostris* (see photos and read comments here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lgordinho/6823810025>).
2. *Tadorna tadorna* Common Shelduck – 2+ at the Laguna de aclimatación in Daimiel, 5+ at La Veguilla
3. *Netta rufina* Red-crested Pochard – Several hundreds at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla
4. *Aythya ferina* Common Pochard – Tens at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla
5. *Aythya nyroca* Ferruginous Duck – 5 at the Laguna de aclimatación in Daimiel
6. *Aythya fuligula* Tufted Duck – 3 at the Laguna de aclimatación in Daimiel
7. *Oxyura leucocephala* White-headed Duck – 2 males at at the Laguna de aclimatación in Daimiel, one female with pochards at La Veguilla (SE corner)
8. *Anas strepera* Gadwall – A few hundred at Daimiel and La Veguilla
9. *Anas clypeata* Northern Shoveler – Many hundreds at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla
10. *Anas platyrhynchos* Mallard – A few hundred at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla
11. *Anas acuta* Northern Pintail – A few hundreds at Daimiel and La Veguilla
12. *Anas querquedula* Garganey – 2+ at the Laguna de aclimatación in Daimiel
13. *Anas crecca* Common Teal – Many hundreds at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla
14. *Marmaronetta angustirostris* Marbled Duck – 5+ at the Laguna de aclimatación, 2 southeast of the bridge over Guadiana river near Mesón La Duquesa, all in Daimiel

Phasianidae pheasants

15. *Alectoris rufa* Red-legged Partridge – +/-5 in a field between Mesón La Duquesa and Casa de Los Motores/Pinillas (casa de D. Júlio Escuderos) in Daimiel.

[*Coturnix coturnix* Common Quail – Song briefly heard by JMN near Casa de Los Motores (Daimiel) was probably from this species. However we decided to exclude it from the list due to the possibility of confusion with starling (*Sturnus* spp.) mimicry]

Phalacrocoracidae cormorants

16. *Phalacrocorax carbo* Great Cormorant – Tens at Daimiel, a few in other areas including Embalse de García de Sola (Badajoz), one bird at Daimiel showing large white thigh patches and a black head could be *P c carbo* Atlantic Great Cormorant

Ardeidae herons

17. *Nycticorax nycticorax* Black-crowned Night Heron – 3+ 1st-w in the tamarisks of Guadiana river east of the bridge between Daimiel and the Park headquarters.

(*Ardeola ralloides* Squacco Heron – one possible in the same area as the night herons but seen only from a moving car)

18. *Bubulcus ibis* Cattle Egret – A few tens but mostly on the way to Castilla – La Mancha (i.e. in Extremadura and in Portugal)
19. *Egretta garzetta* Little Egret – Very few, mostly on the way to Castilla – La Mancha
20. *Casmerodius albus* Western Great Egret – 1 to 3 in Daimiel, seen flying northeast over the tablas at the end of the day.
21. *Ardea cinerea* Grey Heron

Ciconiidae storks

22. *Ciconia ciconia* White Stork – A few hundred at La Veguilla, mostly on the western bank. Several hundred at flooded rice paddies between Mérida and Orellana. Tens elsewhere, e.g. at nests in Guadiana river between Daimiel and the park.

Phoenicopteridae flamingos

23. *Phoenicopterus roseus* Greater Flamingo – 50+ at La Veguilla
24. ***Phoenicopterus minor*** Lesser Flamingo – One adult with greater flamingos at La Veguilla (see photo here <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lgordinho/6788856401>)

Podicipedidae grebes

25. *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Little Grebe – Tens at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla
26. *Podiceps cristatus* Great Crested Grebe – 4 at Daimiel (NNW of Casa de Los Motores), 6 at Laguna Grande of Villafranca de los Caballeros (southern bank)
27. *Podiceps nigricollis* Black-necked Grebe – A few (5+) at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla

Accipitridae hawks

28. *Elanus caeruleus* Black-winged Kite
29. *Milvus milvus* Red Kite – 7+ in Extremadura on the 25th
30. *Gyps fulvus* Griffon Vulture – Many (50+) at the colony in Embalse de García de Sola (Badajoz)
31. *Aegypius monachus* Cinereous Vulture – 2 birds north of N 430 between Puebla de Don Rodrigo and Herrera del Duque
32. *Circus aeruginosus* Western Marsh Harrier – 40+ at La Veguilla, similar numbers at Villafranca de los Caballeros and Daimiel. Very vocal at this time, but still roosting in large groups. Roost at La Veguilla is on the southwestern reedbeds.
33. *Accipiter nisus* Eurasian Sparrowhawk – One in Daimiel, near Casa de los Motores; one over N 430 between Puebla de Don Rodrigo and Herrera del Duque
34. *Buteo buteo* Common Buzzard – A few seen but mostly on the way to Castilla – La Mancha (i.e. in Extremadura and in Portugal)
35. ***Aquila chrysaetos*** Golden Eagle – One subadult between Alcázar de San Juan and Daimiel, another subadult south of N 430 between Puebla de Don Rodrigo and Herrera del Duque
36. ***Aquila fasciata*** Bonelli's Eagle – One adult in flight south of the Puebla de Alcocer castle car park

Falconidae falcons

(*Falco naumanni* Lesser Kestrel – One adult male kestrel seen in flight from the moving car south of Villafranca de los Caballeros was probably of this species. According to José Luis Hernández the first birds had already arrived)

37. *Falco tinnunculus* Common Kestrel – A few seen in all main areas and along the way

Rallidae rails

38. *Rallus aquaticus* Water Rail – A few heard calling at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla

39. *Gallinula chloropus* Common Moorhen – A few at most sites but not many except e.g. at Guadiana river between Daimiel and the park headquarters

40. *Porphyrio porphyrio* Western Swamphehen – One bird calling at La Veguilla

41. *Fulica atra* Eurasian Coot – Several hundreds at Daimiel, Villafranca and La Veguilla

Gruidae cranes

42. *Grus grus* Common Crane – Several hundred between Mérida and Orellana in rice fields, farmland, olm oak savanna, etc; 30+ southeast of Tablas de Daimiel National Park in farmland, many more either roosting at the tablas or on the northwestern bank (impossible to see due to thick fog)

(*Grus canadensis* Sandhill Crane – Last seen near Hernán Cortés, Don Benito [Badajoz, Extremadura] on 02-Jan-2012, we passed that location twice and saw a few hundred cranes there but had no luck with the sandhill)

Recurvirostridae stilts

43. *Himantopus himantopus* Black-winged Stilt – 10+ at La Veguilla

Burhinidae thick-knees

44. *Burhinus oedicnemus* Eurasian Stone-curlew – 5 in farmland south of the road from Daimiel to the park headquarters before Guadiana river

Charadriidae plovers

45. *Pluvialis apricaria* European Golden Plover – One at Daimiel, in a field between river Guadiana and Casa de Los Motores; a few in fields between Mérida and Orellana

46. *Vanellus vanellus* Northern Lapwing – Hundreds along the way, mostly between Mérida and Orellana

Scolopacidae sandpipers

47. *Philomachus pugnax* Ruff – A few in rice fields between Mérida and Orellana

48. *Gallinago gallinago* Common Snipe – A few in the dry pastures around La Veguilla!

49. *Limosa limosa* Black-tailed Godwit – Hundreds at the rice fields between Mérida and Orellana, seen only from moving car.

50. *Actitis hypoleucos* Common Sandpiper – A few at Villafranca and Daimiel

51. *Tringa ochropus* Green Sandpiper – One calling at La Veguilla, heard from the southeastern bank
52. *Tringa nebularia* Common Greenshank – 1+ at La Veguilla. Later I found out that both marsh sandpiper (*T. stagnatilis*) and lesser yellowlegs (*T. flavipes*) had been seen recently at the site. However JMN and me agree that we saw at least one confirmed common greenshank.

Laridae gulls

53. *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Black-headed Gull – Several hundred at Laguna Grande of Villafranca de los Caballeros and at the ricefields between Mérida and Orellana. Smaller flocks at Daimiel and La Veguilla
54. ***Hydrocoloeus minutus*** Little Gull – One adult in winter plumage at La Veguilla (southeastern corner), found by JMN
55. *Larus fuscus* Lesser Black-backed Gull – Largest flocks (several tens to a few hundred) were at Guadiana river between Daimiel and the park headquarters, Villafranca and La Veguilla. Not seen in detail, but mostly *L f graellsii/intermedius*. A few *Larus michahellis* Yellow-legged Gull might be present as well.

Sternidae terns

56. *Chlidonias leucopterus* White-winged Tern – One winter plumaged bird flying over the southeastern corner of La Veguilla for a long period, sometimes in the company of little gull. Self-found (photos here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lgordinho/6788856313>).

[*Sterna* sp. Unidentified tern – two birds flying northeast late in the afternoon over the tablas seen at long range (>800m) with 10x first looked like *Sterna sandvicensis* Sandwich Tern and later like *Sternula albifrons* Little Tern so ID uncertain]

Columbidae doves

57. *Columba livia* Common Pigeon – None at Daimiel but several elsewhere, including Villafranca and La Veguilla.
58. *Columba palumbus* Common Wood Pigeon – Large roost (or pre-roost) in the short (but 30 years-old!) pinewood west of the place where the Lagunas Grande and Chica meet (several hundred birds). Smaller roosts at Daimiel and La Veguilla (several dozens of birds).
59. *Streptopelia decaocto* Eurasian Collared Dove – Very common, e.g. around Casa de los Motores in Daimiel

Strigidae owls

60. *Bubo bubo* Eurasian Eagle-Owl – One calling at sunset from a cliff near Embalse García de Sola (Puerto Peña) southeast of the main griffon colony.

Alcedinidae kingfishers

61. *Alcedo atthis* Common Kingfisher – One bird seen in the field and another one caught and ringed near Casa de los Motores in Daimiel.

Upupidae hoopoes

62. *Upupa epops* Eurasian Hoopoe – A few (3+) seen, e.g. at Daimiel, Villafranca and along the way

Laniidae shrikes

63. *Lanius meridionalis* Iberian Grey Shrike – A few (3+) seen along the way, notably between Alcázar de San Juan and Daimiel.

Corvidae crows

64. *Cyanopica cooki* Iberian Magpie – A few flocks seen along the way, mostly in Extremadura
65. *Pica pica* Eurasian Magpie – A common bird between Évora and La Veguilla
66. *Garrulus glandarius* Eurasian Jay – A few seen along the way
67. *Corvus monedula* Western Jackdaw – Probably the commonest Corvidae between Badajoz and Alcázar de San Juan. Many flocks seen, especially near La Veguilla
68. *Corvus corone* Carrion Crow – A few seen along the way mostly between Montemor and Mérida
69. *Corvus corax* Northern Raven – Two birds seen flying west and calling from the northern side of Puebla de Alcocer Castle

Regulidae goldcrests

70. *Regulus ignicapilla* Common Firecrest – A flock of up to five birds in the pinewood between the lagunas Grande and Chica at Villafranca de los Caballeros

Remizidae penduline tits

71. *Remiz pendulinus* Eurasian Penduline Tit – Rather common in all reedbeds visited including 5+ at Casa de los Motores, Daimiel (4 ringed); 5+ at Villafranca (3 ringed); 5+ at La Veguilla (3 ringed).

Paridae tits

72. *Cyanistes caeruleus* European Blue Tit – Several heard calling or seen, e.g. at the eastern side of Laguna Grande (Villafranca de los Caballeros), east of Casa de Los Motores (Daimiel), etc.
73. *Parus major* Great Tit – Several heard singing or seen, e.g. at the same site as blue tit

Panuridae reedlings

74. *Panurus biarmicus* Bearded Reedling – 15+ in the reed patch between the two southern observatories at La Veguilla, very good views e.g. of birds feeding seeds from the top of reeds, very vocal. Probably heard elsewhere (Daimiel and Villafranca) but far away so better regard those records as unconfirmed.

Alaudidae larks

75. *Galerida cristata* Crested Lark – Seen in several agricultural areas along the way

76. *Galerida theklae* Thekla Lark – Seen in several olm oak savanna and scrub areas along the way

[*Lullula arborea* Woodlark – Some calls heard by JMN in a olm oak savanna area along the way were probably from this species. However we decided to exclude it from the list due to the possibility of confusion with starling (*Sturnus* spp.) mimicry]

77. *Alauda arvensis* Eurasian Skylark – A few small flocks seen in fields near Daimiel and La Veguilla, larger flocks along the way (e.g. in Talarrubias area)

Hirundinidae swallows

78. *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Eurasian Crag Martin – Up to five birds seen from Puebla de Alcocer castle, notably on southern (sunny) side flying low over the countryside

Cettiidae bush warblers

79. *Cettia cetti* Cetti's Warbler – A few heard at most reedbeds visited and some caught and ringed (e.g. at the lagunas of Villafranca)

Aegithalidae long-tailed tits

80. *Aegithalos caudatus alpinus/europeus* Long-tailed Tit – A few small flocks heard calling, e.g. east of Casa de Los Motores (Daimiel)

Sylviidae sylvias

81. *Sylvia undata* Dartford Warbler – One bird in thistels on the pastures southeast of La Veguilla

82. *Sylvia melanocephala* Sardinian Warbler – Alarm call heard at most locations including Daimiel, Puebla de Alcocer, etc.

83. *Sylvia atricapilla* Eurasian Blackcap – A few birds calling and seen at most locations

Phylloscopidae leaf warblers

84. *Phylloscopus collybita* Common Chiffchaff – Very common in most areas, including around reedbeds, several caught and ringed, one in firecrest flock at the lagunas of Villafranca

Acrocephalidae reed warblers

85. *Acrocephalus melanopogon* Moustached Warbler – Several “treck” notes (louder, drier and quieter than those of stonechat) heard from the observatory on the eastern bank of La Veguilla were probably from this species. Bird low on reeds and invisible. JMN also noted that the bird “sounded rather loud for an *Acrocephalus* warbler, but apparently it was very close and the area is rather quiet, so maybe I got the wrong impression”. Later JMN and me agreed that calls were almost an exact match to those in two samples provided by Magnus Robb (8 sec + 1min 20 sec). Given our limited experience with Moustached W calls (I've focused mostly on song) and since the bird was not seen, ID is best considered unconfirmed.

Cisticolidae cisticola's

86. *Cisticola juncidis* Zitting Cisticola (presumably *C. j. juncidis* Western Zitting Cisticola) – A few at most locations.

Troglodytidae wrens

87. *Troglodytes troglodytes* Eurasian Wren – One or two birds singing at the few areas of dense forest (inc. riparian) visited.

Sturnidae starlings

88. *Sturnus vulgaris* Common Starling – Many starling flocks seen at several locations but few were carefully checked. Still, one common starling was seen singing in the city of Villafranca de los Caballeros
89. *Sturnus unicolor* Spotless Starling – Many starling flocks seen at several locations but few were carefully checked. Still, one spotless starling was seen singing north of the lodge on the western side of Laguna Grande in Villafranca

Muscicapidae flycatchers

90. *Turdus merula* Common Blackbird – Several seen in most areas, 3 in the ridge west of Puebla de Alcocer castle could not be checked for ring ouzel (*T. torquatus*) but the typical calls of the latter were not heard
91. *Turdus philomelos* Song Thrush – A few seen in several areas, including near Casa de Los Motores (Daimiel) and on the southeastern bank of La Veguilla (Alcázar de San Juan)
92. *Erithacus rubecula* European Robin - Several heard and seen in most areas, a few even in the tamarisks of La Veguilla southeastern bank
93. *Luscinia svecica* Bluethroat (*L. s. cyanecula* White-spotted Bluethroat) – One 1st-w female caught and ringed at La Veguilla
94. *Phoenicurus ochruros* Black Redstart – A few seen in several areas, including 5+ on the southern side of Puebla de Alcocer castle. *P. o. gibraltariensis* clearly outnumbering local *P. o. aterrinus*.
95. *Saxicola rubicola* European Stonechat - A few seen in several areas, caught and ringed near Casa de los Motores (Daimiel)
96. *Oenanthe leucura* Black Wheatear – One seen from Puebla de Alcocer castle in rocky outcrops to the south, the castle is very high (693 m vs +/-500 m outside) so distant views, and severe downward angle made digiscoping impossible!
97. *Monticola solitarius* Blue Rock Thrush – One or two males near Puebla de Alcocer castle, first near the black wheatear and later on the castle itself.

Prunellidae accentors

98. *Prunella modularis* Dunnock – Several birds heard calling e.g. near Puerto Peña (Embalse Garcia de Sola) and around Puebla de Alcocer castle.

Passeridae sparrows

99. *Passer domesticus* House Sparrow – Several seen at most sites, roosting alongside Spanish sparrows east of Casa de los Motores (Daimiel) but not seen at La Veguilla roost
100. *Passer hispaniolensis* Spanish Sparrow – Large roosts east of Casa de los Motores (Daimiel) and on the southern reedbeds of La Veguilla were several (7+) were caught and ringed.
101. *Passer montanus* Eurasian Tree Sparrow – small roost (+/-25 birds) south of Villafranca de los Caballeros ringing station (in the pinewood between lagunas Grande and Chica)

Motacillidae wagtails

102. *Motacilla alba* White Wagtail – Many, seen mostly in ploughed fields, notably in Daimiel
103. *Motacilla yarrellii* Pied Wagtail – Black and white wagtails were not checked systematically however a very conspicuous pied was seen on the road near Badajoz
104. *Anthus pratensis* Meadow Pipit – Several seen in most areas
105. *Anthus spinoletta* Water Pipit – A few seen or heard in some areas, e.g. in Daimiel, northeast of the main embarcadero; in the western bank of Laguna Grande (Villafranca); etc.

Fringillidae finches

106. *Fringilla coelebs* Common Chaffinch – Several heard or seen in most areas
107. *Serinus serinus* European Serin – A few heard or seen in most areas, notably in Extremadura (Puebla de Alcocer, Puerto Peña, etc.) where some were singing
108. *Chloris chloris* European Greenfinch – Several heard or seen in most areas, e.g. Daimiel
109. *Carduelis carduelis* European Goldfinch – Many heard or seen in most areas, notably Daimiel
110. *Carduelis cannabina* Common Linnet – A few heard or seen in some areas, e.g. Daimiel and La Veguilla

Emberizidae buntings

111. *Emberiza schoeniclus* Common Reed Bunting (comments refer to nominate *E. s. schoeniclus* unless stated otherwise) – 10+ seen in the field and one caught and ringed at Casa de Los Motores (Daimiel); 5 birds (including 3 *E. s. witherbyi* – 2 males and 1 female) caught and ringed at the lagunas of Villafranca; 10+ seen and one caught and ringed at La Veguilla where several were seen feeding on seeds on the top of reed stalks.
112. *Emberiza calandra* Corn Bunting – Small roost (tens) near Casa de los Motores (Daimiel) were a few were caught and ringed; large roost (hundreds) in the southern reedbeds of La Veguilla where several were ringed. Several seen and heard elsewhere.