

ANDALUCIA TRIP REPORT

6-8 NOVEMBER 2018

PARTICIPANTS:

Ed. O'Hara/Comghal McQuillan and Vicent Esteller Turlo of Donana Wings



Once again I spent a week in Seville with my wife, for the fifth consecutive year but this time we were joined by fellow birder Comghal McQuillan who was staying for four days, three of which we had booked with Donana Wings Birding Tours. The weather all week was a mixture of sunshine and clouds with some rain and this was the case during our three days with **Vicent Esteller Turlo** of **Donana Wings**. However we still managed a healthy list with Comghal getting five 'lifers'.

5 Nov Arrival day: We flew from Dublin to Seville with **Ryanair** and got a taxi to our Hotel, **TRH La Motilla** in Dos Hermanas, 15 km south of Seville. Arrived at 18:30 hours and after a welcome dinner went to bed to prepare for birding next day.

6 Nov : Day 1	Cadiz Region	AM : Sunny	PM: Sunny	TEMP: 22 C
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07:40 **Vicent** of **Donana Wings Bird Tours** arrived and we set off for the Cadiz region to look for some of the 'lifers' on Comghal's list. Our first stop was at the **Laguna de Medina** just off the **A-381** near **Las Pachecas**. We stopped at the car park, approximately 1Km from the bird hide overlooking the Laguna. The bushes down to the hide were full of **Chiffchaffs**, **Blackcaps**, **Sardinian Warblers**, **Blackbirds**, **Song Thrushes** and **Robins**, presumably a lot down from the north and wintering in the area. Overhead was the first of the many **Red Kites** and **Black Kites** we saw in the region.

Arriving at the hide, sighted high above the Laguna which gave a panoramic view of the water, we immediately saw Comghal's first 'Lifer' of the trip, **White-headed Duck** - a flock of 30 birds. Also to be seen were **Black-necked Grebe**, **Ferruginous Duck**, **Gadwall**, **Red-crested Pochards**, **Cattle Egrets**, **Little Egrets**, **Grey Herons** and a solitary juvenile **Greater Flamingo**, the first of many. Also observed was our one and only **Common Kingfisher**. As we walked back **Linnet**, **Serin**, **Zitting Cisticola**, **Greenfinch**, **Great Tit**, **Penduline Tit**, **Great Crested Grebe**, **Buzzard**, **Little Grebe**, **Eurasian Coot**, **Moorhen**, **Sparrowhawk**, **Red-legged Partridge**, **Shoveler**, **Common Pochard**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Jackdaw** and **White Wagtail**.



White - headed Duck: Laguna de Medina

The Laguna proved a rewarding first stop and so we left anticipating our next target bird, one of the rarest in Europe and hopefully Comghal's second 'lifer' of the trip. To see the bird we travelled south to the town of **Vejer de la Frontera** and began with a search of a golf course in the area where they had been reported to be present a few days earlier. After an extensive search around the area we found three of the birds near a municipal dump, the iconic **Bald Ibis**. It won't win a beauty contest but the fact it has survived is a testament to all those involved in its recovery programme in Spain. It's looks are not one the general public would warm to but *they* [birds] can't be all as stunning as the bee-eater family.



Bald Ibis : Vejer de la Frontera

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After this we headed west towards Cadiz and eventually to our next target bird and Comghal's third 'Lifer'. Along the way we skirted around the Bahia de Cadiz NP with **Whimbrel, Golden Plover, Turnstone, Curlew, and Grey Plover.**

We reached our destination the fish market at

Chipiona. After a wait of about fifteen minutes we saw two birds flying over the building and they were indeed

Little Swifts. Not an easy bird to find on the European continent with only a few sites where this bird can be

seen. After a quick 'field lunch' we drove to **Playa de Montijo** and here we picked up six **Common Scoter,**

Sandwich Tern, Booted Eagle and across the river in Donana two **Eurasian Griffon Vultures.** There were

only a few birds flying up and down the river, so we proceeded to our next stop, the disused salt pans at

La Algaída. Birds of note were **Greenshank, Caspian Tern, Slender-billed Gull, Peregrine Falcon, Spotted Redshank, Little Ringed Plovers, Ringed Plovers, Kentish Plovers, Grey Plovers, Great Cormorants, Golden Plover, Meadow Pipit** and one **Black-winged Kite** a long way off but unmistakable even at that distance.

Our last stop of the day was on the heels of a report on *Rarebirds Spain* of a fourth 'Lifer' for Comghal at **La Pantano,** luckily for us just south of Dos Hermanas where we were staying. When we reached the spot we had only 30 minutes of daylight to find them and with little time to spare we saw them; **Laughing Doves,** three of them flying around an orchard. Normally a resident of Africa and the Middle East, they were a fantastic finish to brilliant days birding.



Caspian Tern at La Algaída

7 Nov : Day 2	Osuna Area	AM : Dry/Overcast	PM : Rain	TEMP: 19 C
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The weather forecast for today was dire, so we had to change our plans and Vicent suggested the best thing to do was to head east and avoid the oncoming storm for as long as possible; which we did. We were lucky because we managed to avoid the rain until the early afternoon. After an hours drive eastwards on the **A-92,** we arrived at some remnant steppe like area, which is getting harder to find, with Olive tree plantations expanding rapidly everywhere we went. We birded the **Campina de Osuna** area in general.

Driving around the area we stopped frequently as birds came into view. First stop was a large field with a flock of 66 **Great Bustards,** also nearby were the first of the many **Ravens** to be found in this area. The bushes at the roadside held quite a selection of birds including

Sardinian Warbler, Blackcap, Robin, Hoopoe, Serin, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Spotless Starling, European Starling, Black Redstart, Great Tit, Corn Bunting, Greenfinch, Eurasian Linnet, Common Chaffinch, Wood Pigeon and Collared Dove.



Great Bustard



Remnant Steppe: Campina de Osuna

Birding in the mud at Osuna



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A small pond area produced **Coot, Little Grebe, Green Sandpiper, Common Snipe, White Stork, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Marsh Harrier, Red-legged Partridge, Mallard, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull,** and then we headed for an old Cortijo [in ruins] as the sky began to darken with the rain clouds approaching. Along the way we saw **Spanish and House Sparrows,** a **Dartford Warbler** [great spot by Vicent] hiding in some undergrowth; also seen were a flock of **Calandra Lark, Stone Curlew, Skylark, Merlin, Kestrel, Sand**



Iberian Grey Shrike

Martins and Jackdaws. Overhead several **Buzzards, Booted Eagles, Red Kites** and **Black Kites** were seen and also the final 'Lifer' of the trip for Comghal, although fairly distant but still unmistakable, 9 **Common Crane**. After this the rain, which had threatened all morning, began to fall. The light was failing and so we decided to call it a day and we headed back to the Hotel, thankful that Vicent's weather gamble had worked for the most part.

8 Nov : Day 3	Donana NP	AM : Overcast/Rain	PM : Overcast/Rain	TEMP: 18 C
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On the third and final day of the tour, there was nothing Vicent could do about the weather; the forecast was poor, so we had to make the best of it. Well even on a bad day Donana NP can deliver and indeed, that was the case. We concentrated on Donana North due to the weather and still we amassed a total of over 90 species in the few hours available to bird.

We drove southeast out of Seville on the **A-8053** and we started birding around the rice fields near **Isla Major**. Highlights were **Greater Flamingo, Glossy Ibis, White Stork, Black Stork, Greenshank, Pied Avocets, Great White Egrets, Common Snipe, Black-winged Stilt, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Green Sandpiper, Cattle Egret, Little Egret** and some unidentified waders which looked like Ruff.



Greater Flamingo at Isla Major rice fields

We then continued into the reserve itself and at the **Dehesa de Abaho Centre** once again we saw large numbers of **Flamingos** and other species, but one new one was **Marbled Duck**, 9 birds in total.

Our next stop was the **Antonio Valverde Centre**. On approaching the centre the rain started again and the light was poor, but we still managed to get reasonable views of two **Black-winged Kites** and a juvenile **Spanish Imperial Eagle**. We went into the centre for a quick look but there was nothing of note on the ponds. We then continued along the track to where Vicente had seen Dotterel a few days ago, but we couldn't find them. Still we did get our first views of **Hen Harriers** and **Lesser Kestrels**.



Juvenile Spanish Imperial Eagle: Donana

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In the distance Vicent could hear **Common Cranes**, but the misty conditions meant that visibility was poor. So we drove in the direction of the sounds, out in the park. We parked up beside some disused buildings where the **Lesser Kestrels** had their

colony. A **Little Owl** briefly sat on the roof before flying off. At last, after waiting 10 minutes, the **Common Cranes**

came into view. All in all about 100 flew past us in the rain and mist. However some did land about 300m distant and we got pictures, albeit in the mist. As we made our way back we found several **Lesser Short-toed Larks** beside the road with **Crested Larks** and **Skylarks**

The weather was beginning to close in again, with the heavy rain never far away, so we decided to leave the marsh and head for some wooded area to look for woodpeckers. However Donana marshland had two last surprises in store. The first was an immature **Short-toed Eagle** sitting drenched on a post. Finally exiting the marsh, Vicent with a fantastic piece of observation, saw a very bedraggled **Barn Owl** sitting in a bush beside the road, completely drenched with the incessant rain.

We then drove to a wooded area in the **Vado del Quema** and walked along a riverine area of bushes and lush vegetation, however we didn't see any woodpeckers; the only birds of note were some late migrating **Pied Flycatchers**.

It was the end of a brilliant tour, despite the weather, with over 100 species seen and with some brilliant fieldwork by Vicent to get this total. His knowledge of birds seen was exemplary and I would have no hesitation in recommending Vicent to other birders.

Ed.O'Hara

Lurgan

N.Ireland

19/11/2018



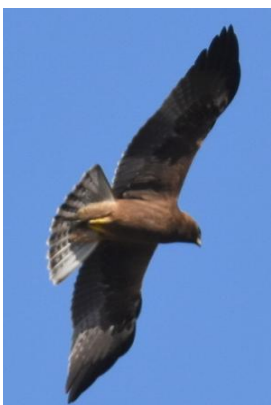
Cranes flying in Donana



Short-toed Eagle: Donana



Barn Owl : Donana



Booted Eagle: Cadiz



Black-winged Kite in Donana



Common Kestrel getting drenched in the rain

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English Name	Latin	Area	Notes
Flamingo, Greater	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	Donana	1000's of birds
Goose, Greylag	<i>Anser anser</i>	Donana	100+
Duck, Ferruginous	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	Laguna de Medina	4 birds
Duck, Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Laguna de Medina	7 birds
Duck, Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	All	Common
Duck, Marbled	<i>Marmaronetta aug.</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	9 birds
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Laguna de Medina	5 birds
Pochard, Red-crest.	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Laguna de Medina	3 birds
Scoter, Common	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Rio Quadiquiver	8 birds
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	100+
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Dehesa de Abaho	20+ birds
Duck, Tufted	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Laguna de Medina	2 birds
Partridge, Red-Leg.	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	All	20+ seen
Grebe, Black-necked	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Laguna de Medina	3 birds
Grebe, Great Crest.	Crested Podiceps	Laguna de Medina	3 birds
Grebe, Little	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Cormorant, Sinens.	<i>Phal. Carbo sinensis</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Egret, Cattle	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	All	100's
Egret, Great White	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Donana	5 birds
Egret, Little	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Donana	100's
Heron, Grey	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Heron, Night	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Donana	15 birds
Stork, Black	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Donana	5 birds seen
Stork, White	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Donana	100's on the reserve
Ibis, Bald	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Vejer de la Frontera	3 birds
Ibis, Glossy	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Donana	100's in the rice fields
Spoonbill, Eurasian	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Donana	Flock of 20 seen
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Cadiz	1 bird
Buzzard, Common	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Eagle, Booted	<i>Aquila pennata</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Eagle, Short-toed	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Donana	1 bird
Eagle, Spanish Imperial	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>	Donana	1 immature
Harrier, Marsh	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Donana	20+ birds
Kite, Black	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Kite, Red	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Vulture, Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Donana	3 birds
Falcon, Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Cadiz	1 bird
Kestrel, Common	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Kestrel, Lesser	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Donana	30 plus birds
Sparrowhawk, Eurasian	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Laguna de Medina	1 bird
Coot, Eurasian	<i>Fulica atra</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat



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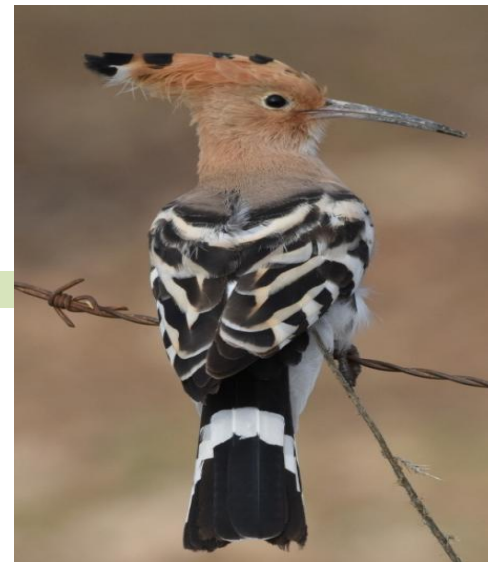
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English Name	Latin	Area	Notes
Gallinule, Purple	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	Donana	2 birds
Moorhen, Common	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Crane, Common	<i>Grus grus</i>	Donana	100+ birds
Bustard, Great	<i>Otis tarda</i>	Osuna	66 birds in field
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Stilt, Black-winged	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Curlew, Stone	<i>Burhinus oedienemus</i>	Osuna	2 birds
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Osuna	Flock of 20 birds
Plover, Kentish	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Plover, Ringed Little	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Owl, Little	<i>Athene noctua</i>	Donana	1 bird
Owl, Barn	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Donana	1 bird
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Donana	Several in rice fields
Redshank, Spotted	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Cadiz	2 birds
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Cadiz	13 birds
Sandpiper, Green	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Donana	Several in rice fields
Snipe, Common	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Osuna	10+ birds
Gull, Audouin's	<i>Larus audouinii</i>	Cadiz	2 birds
Gull, Black-headed	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	All	Common
Gull, Lesser BB	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Gull, Slender-billed	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>	Cadiz	3 birds
Gull, Yellow-legged	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	All	Common
Tern, Sandwich	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	Cadiz	12 birds
Dove, Collared	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	All	Common
Dove, Laughing	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	El Pantano	4 birds
Pigeon, Wood	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	All	Common
Hoopoe, Eurasian	<i>Upupa epops</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Lark, Calandra	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	Osuna	30+ birds
Lark, Crested	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	All	Common in suitable habitat
Swallow, Barn	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	All	Several seen
Martin, House	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	All	Several seen
Martin, Sand	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	All	Several seen
Kingfisher, Common	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Laguna de Medina	1 bird
Wagtail, White	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	All	Common
Redstart, Black	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>	All	Common
Stonechat, European	<i>Saxicola tor. rubicola</i>	All	Common
Wheatear, Black	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>	Osuna	1 bird
Wheatear, Northern	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Donana	5 birds
Cisticola, Zitting	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	All	Common
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	All	Common
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	All	Common



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English Name	Latin	Area	Notes
Thrush, Song	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	All	Common
Warbler, Cetti's	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Donana	10 birds
Warbler, Dartford	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	Osuna	1 bird
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	All	Common
Flycatcher, Pied	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	Vado del Quema	2 birds
Pipit, Meadow	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Donana	3 birds
Tit, Great	<i>Parus major</i>	All	Common
Tit, Blue	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	All	Common
Tit, Penduline	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	Laguna de Medina	1 bird
Shrike, Great Grey	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	Osuna	1 bird
Shrike, Iberian Grey	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	Osuna	3 birds
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	All	Common
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	All	Common
Sparrow, House	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	All	Common
Sparrow, Spanish	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	Osuna	Common
Sparrow, Tree	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Osuna	Common
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	All	Common
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	All	Common
Serín	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	All	Common
Linnet, Common	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	All	Common
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	All	Common
Bunting, Corn	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	All	Common
Bunting, Reed	<i>Emberiza sch.</i>	Donana	4 birds



Cortijo at Osuna with a traditional landscape, favoured by the Great Bustards, sadly now being turned into Olive Groves