

Provence at Christmas

Naturetrek Tour Report

22 - 29 December 2012



Black Woodpecker



Wallcreeper at Les Baux

Report compiled by James Bray & Su Gough
Images courtesy of Alan Woodward



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Leaders: James Bray
Su Gough and Luke Delve

Participants: Sue Ford
Neil Thomas
Jill Thomas
Martin Shaw
Beryl Shaw
Stuart Mclean
Alan Woodward
Sandra Woodward
Gary Trew
Jean Trew
Alan Beamish
Chaz Shaw
Judy Shaw
Sheila Harry
Liz Waddy

Day 1

Saturday 22nd December

Hotel Les Granges

The flight from Gatwick to Marignane Airport in Marseille arrived on time with 13 tour participants. With the sun setting, we made our way to the hotel where we were met by two members of the group who had previously been travelling around Spain and the south of France. We arrived in good time for afternoon tea and cakes and had time to relax before a delicious Provençal meal. We all settled in for an early night looking forward to the next morning.

Day 2

Sunday 23rd December

Sunny, calm and mild all day

La Crau – Eyguieres airfield, La Jasse, Mas Chauvet, St. Martin de Crau, Etang des Aulnes, Peau de Meau, Les Baux.

Having checked the weather forecast we decided to make the most of the sunny and calm conditions and headed to La Crau. La Crau is an area of stony desert created when the River Durance changed course thousands of years ago leaving a flat plain of characteristic rounded stones which is now home to a specialised flora and fauna. With very little shelter it is not a place to be when the wind picks up, but we had ideal conditions to be searching for the very exciting birds that La Crau holds, and we were not to be disappointed.

We started at the airfield at Eyguieres but apart from a few small flocks of Corn Buntings and Meadow Pipits the area was quite quiet so we drove round to the other side of the airfield to La Jasse. The plain here is more bushy than other parts of La Crau and so has a slightly different mix of species. As we walked up the lane we were soon watching Stonechats and it wasn't long before we picked up the first target species of the day, Rock Bunting. Although they were quite flighty the whole group had very good views of these beautiful birds in the telescopes. We then spotted thirty Little Bustards flying in to the plain, their big white wing panels gleaming in the sun. They landed further up the track so we drove up to roughly where we thought they had landed but despite an intensive search we could not relocate them. Typical of a ground-dwelling bird, Little Bustards are excellent at disappearing in the even the scantest of vegetation. We did however enjoy good views of numerous small birds including a pair of Southern Grey Shrikes, and mixed flocks of Goldfinch and Linnet. We also saw Sparrowhawk and Red Kite hunting over the plain.

Moving on towards another patch of plain near Mas Chauvet we found three splendid Common Cranes in a road side field. Around Mas Chauvet we found some good sized flocks of Meadow Pipits and Sky Larks, but no other species mixed in with them. We also had really good views of Tree Sparrows and Corn Buntings here, reminding us of traditional farmland back in the UK. As time was ticking by we drove to the small town of St Martin de Crau for coffee in the sunshine, and then to Etang des Aulnes where we set up the first picnic lunch of the trip on the edge of a small wood. As we enjoyed some delicious local French food we were entertained by very close views of a Firecrest and the calls of Short-toed Treecreepers and Green Woodpeckers.

We then drove into the reserve at Peau de Meau where we enjoyed a lovely walk in the mid-winter sunshine with temperatures that felt decidedly spring-like. The coussous (a habitat characteristic of La Crau comprising low bushes and grasses) can seem devoid of bird-life but careful scanning is usually rewarded. As we searched for birds we were also able to look at some of the plants of La Crau, including the tiny, but distinctive Evax. It wasn't long before we found a typically wide-ranging Southern Grey Shrike, then Su found a small group of Little Bustards feeding a few hundred metres away from us. We managed to approach quite close and had fantastic views of them. Brown Hares were also seen chasing each other over the plains. Su then found another group of forty Little Bustards feeding at the edge of the coussous, and although they were quite distant the number of birds was very impressive.

With dusk approaching we headed towards a rather spectacular amphitheatre of limestone cliffs that is usually home to a pair of rather spectacular birds. We scanned the cliffs for only a short time before finding our target, an Eagle Owl sitting out in full view on a rock ledge. We were able to enjoy all the plumage features of this bird, and as dusk approached it became more active, hooting a few times and then flying to another cliff face where it was joined by its mate. With darkness nearly on us we headed back to the hotel where we relaxed over a delicious meal.

Day 3

Monday 24th December

Overcast, intermittent drizzle, breezy

West side of the Camargue - Etang de Consecanière to Domaine de Mejane, Stes. Maries de la Mere, Pont du Gau Nature Reserve, Aigues Mortes

With the forecast not looking too promising we headed for the west side of the Camargue this morning knowing that we would be able to find shelter if necessary. Our first stop was to look over a small muddy field where we found a very close group of Water Pipits and White Wagtails which were soon joined by a pair of Crested Larks. With diagnostic features of all three noted we drove up the track looking for reedbed birds. The wind was a bit too strong for reedbed passerines to show but our next stop looking over a large lake was much more productive with a large flock of over 400 Common Pochard mixed with over 200 Red-crested Pochard. Further on we spent some time watching a flock of Coot on the Etang de Vaccares. Whilst Coot do not usually distract one for too long, this flock was truly spectacular as over 750 birds were tightly packed together like roosting waders, but with constant activity as birds dived and others bobbed up to the surface. We speculated that this might be an anti-predator strategy as this normally aggressive bird doesn't usually appreciate its peers in such close proximity.

We drove along the track to Domaine de Mejane slightly disappointed by the lack of birds of prey as this is usually a good area for Harriers and occasionally a wintering site for a rather elusive Spotted Eagle, but did enjoy the wide open spaces of the Camargue and views of the white horses and black bulls that the Camargue is famous for. We did however see a dapper male Hen Harrier quartering the marshes and watched it on the ground in our telescopes as it ate a small mammal that it had caught.

With the weather not brightening up we drove to the seaside town of Stes. Maries de la Mere where hot drinks warmed us up! The sea was very choppy and the only seabirds that we saw were a couple of over-wintering Sandwich Terns, but the marshes held a nice flock Dunlin which had over 20 Little Stint mixed in. Rather unusually this was the only decent sized flock of waders that we saw all week. Maybe the milder winter weather further north had not pushed as many waders south as it normally would. A pair of Black Redstart and a Crested Lark also gave us very good views.

We ate another delicious picnic lunch in a hide at the bird reserve at Pont du Gau where we marvelled at the sight of hundreds of Flamingos dancing and singing to each other virtually within touching distance of us. Whilst singing might be a bit generous, their balletic dancing and pink plumage certainly was beautiful to watch.

We then drove to Aigues Mortes, a beautiful walled town which was established in 1240 by Louis the IX as a means to access the sea to participate in the crusades. The group strolled round the narrow streets with a few of us tempted into the delicious chocolaterie. The walls are very impressive and the town made a very interesting end to the day for us.

As we were returning to the hotel three groups of Common Cranes flew over the road to mark the end of very enjoyable day in the Camargue. We arrived at our hotel in good time, eagerly anticipating the delicious traditional Provençal Christmas dinner which we knew Monique, Marie-Jo and Bruno were preparing for us.

The main Christmas meal is eaten on Christmas Eve in France and a real feast had been prepared for us. We had a very enjoyable evening and a delicious meal, finished off by thirteen puddings, in which pride of place went to two Bouche Noels, (chocolate logs). As is customary, at the end of the meal the youngest and the oldest members of the group carried a real log to the fire to bring good luck for the next year.

Day 4

Tuesday 25th December

Dry, overcast, mild, light wind in the afternoon

East side of the Camargue - Mas D'Agon, Mas Neuf, La Capalière, Vaccares, Salin de Giraud salt pans, Consecanière

With the weather forecast predicting rain we headed out to the east side of the Etang de Vaccares hoping to make the most of the early dry weather, but although it was rather a grey day, we were lucky and the rain did not materialise. An early Christmas present materialised very close to the hotel in the form of a ringtail Hen Harrier hunting over a field right by the road. We were all spell bound as we watched it twisting and turning as it chased small passerines less than twenty metres from us.

After a very short journey we arrived in the stubble fields at the north end of the Camargue and were stopped by huge flocks of passerines. There were hundreds of Corn Buntings and Tree and House Sparrows with smaller numbers of Reed Bunting mixed in and were a spectacular sight as they swarmed down to the ground and then up again, particularly when another Hen Harrier flew through. Two very approachable Coypu in roadside ditches were very distracting, especially when three pups swam out to briefly join their mother.

We then moved on to the marshes of the Camargue, stopping at Mas d'Agon. Plenty of Great White and Little Egrets were present, a couple of Snipe were seen in flight and a Purple Swamp Hen called briefly, but the marshes were not as busy as they can be. We then drove on down the east side of the huge Etang de Vaccares which was almost flat. This allowed us excellent views of hundreds of Great Crested and Black-necked Grebes. A single Slender-billed Gull flew past but a little bit further along the lake shore we found two more and were able to enjoy these beautiful pink-tinged birds at leisure as plunge-dived close in to the shore. We stopped at a couple of other marshes where Great White Egrets were numerous, and had good views of three White Storks in roadside fields, just after Su's bus had watched a pair of Kingfishers chasing each other in a narrow channel.

Having found a bar that was open for a warming hot drink in Salin de Giraud we drove around the vast salt pans between the town and the sea. There were plenty of Black-headed Gulls and Shelducks but we didn't manage to find any waders, which was very surprising as the pans usually hold many species in high numbers. With the wind being fairly brisk by the sea we headed back to Salin de Giraud hoping to find a boulangerie following a slight picnic malfunction (James left the bread at the hotel!). We found that the boulangerie had closed but we had more than enough food for the lack of bread not to matter, and I really appreciated how good natured the group was about this.

After lunch we headed back to the track that runs along the Etang de Consecaniere determined to give the Spotted Eagle another chance to show itself. A pair of Red Squirrels at the start of the track in a small deciduous wood showed wonderfully well and was a good start to the drive. The rest of the drive was fairly quiet, the grey sky and brisk wind not helping the birding. As usual Sardinian and Cetti's Warblers scolded from deep cover, and there were plenty of Great White and Little Egrets and a large flock of Golden Plovers flew over whistling their mournful calls. With conditions not looking like they would brighten up we decided to head back to the hotel in time for hot drinks and cakes, followed by a lovely Provencal meal. Whilst the meal was not as elaborate as Christmas eve, it was delicious as always, and to top it all off Monique had made a superb ice-cream log for pudding!

Day 5

Wednesday 26th December

Sunny, brisk north-easterly wind, mild

Les Alpilles – La Caume and Les Baux en Provence

We awoke to a beautiful sunrise and clear skies and over another relaxed breakfast looked forward to a change of scenery today. We headed for Les Alpilles, a line of limestone hills that overlook the coastal plane, and which are home to an exciting range of resident and wintering species. Our first stop of the day was at La Caume, a hill that has a broadcasting tower at the top, and whilst not being the most scenic addition to a hill, does at least provide easy access on its service road. We wandered slowly up the road enjoying the smell of the pine trees and a different habitat to the past few days. Birds were initially relatively difficult to find in the brisk winds, but concentrating on sunny sheltered areas we soon found mixed tit flocks that included Great, Blue, Coal, Long-tailed and Crested Tits with a few sparkling Firecrests for company. We spent some time scanning a valley for the Bonelli's Eagles that are resident here but were unfortunately unable to find them. Some compensation came in the form of a group of seven Common Crossbills perched at the top of some low pines. Rather unusually they were very settled allowing us some beautiful views in our telescopes.

Continuing up the hill we reached the top of La Caume and decided to walk a little way over the heath as it was relatively sheltered from the wind. It didn't take long for us to find our target as a small group of Citril Finch flew up off the path but quickly landed a few metres on. They didn't stay long but fortunately the flock flew to a very sheltered area of long grass where they settled down to feed. We watched them from less than twenty metres away for nearly thirty minutes and were all completely taken with this beautiful, and often elusive, finch, the males glowing yellow in the bright winter sunshine.

Leaving the finches on the plateau we wandered back down the hill and stopped once again in a sheltered spot to scan the eagle valley. We didn't have any luck on the eagle front, but an amazing spot by Beryl soon had us watching our first Wallcreeper of the trip; it was a great bit of birding by Beryl as the bird was at the other side of the valley. We were all able to watch the Wallcreeper in the telescopes and thoroughly enjoyed our first views of this species on this trip. The crossbills from earlier were still in the same trees so we had yet more wonderful views of them before walking back to the mini-buses in time for a picnic lunch in the warm sunshine. Those not too pre-occupied by their lunch were able to watch very close Crested Tits and Firecrests.

After lunch we drove the short distance to Les Baux en Provence, a beautiful old village perched on limestone cliffs looking out towards the Mediterranean. Looking down into the valley below from where we had parked we had brief views of a male Cirl Bunting, and several Sardinian Warblers and Blackcaps. We didn't hang around long as we had a particular target in mind. Walking along a path that circles the southern end of Les Baux we marvelled at the beautiful shapes that the limestone had been eroded into whilst we intently scanned the cliff faces. After only a short wait Gary was the first to shout "Wallcreeper". This stunning bird then put on a wonderful show as it flew and crept up and down the cliff face pulling insects out of narrow cracks with its long thin bill, all the time flashing its crimson wings in the sunshine. It even descended right to the bottom of the cliff giving even better views. A pair of Blue Rock Thrush put in brief appearances allowing most of the group good scoped views. Having had our fill of the stunning Wallcreeper we walked into the village of Les Baux where most of us stopped for a hot drink before wandering around the narrow streets of this beautiful old village.

We headed for a corner of the village hoping for another montane species that winters in the Mediterranean sun and didn't have to wait long before a small group of Alpine Accentor dropped in. They showed wonderfully well for a few minutes at very close quarters before continuing on their way over the roofs of the village. We did stop briefly for the Eagle Owls again, but with a brisk cold wind the birds were not showing and as we were more than content with our views on the first day, we headed back to the hotel to relax before another wonderful dinner.

Day 6

Thursday 27th December

Sunny intervals, light wind, mild

La Capeliere, Etang de Galabert, Etang de Vaccares, Scamandre

We headed straight to La Capeliere, a delightful reserve that protects reedbeds, wet alder woods and freshwater pools. A Firecrest was the first bird that we found, and as we walked slowly round the reserve we heard the high pitched contact calls of several Penduline Tits, the harsh scolding of Sardinian and Cetti's Warblers, and the pig-like squeals of Water Rails. There were some very impressive examples of the Wild Olive a very rare plant these days, and plenty of evidence of the rooting of Wild Boar although, sadly we saw none of the culprits. Birds were hard to see, however, in the grey conditions so we were pleased when a superb little Penduline Tit sat up and allowed most of the group excellent views. It soon lost interest in us and disappeared back into the reed beds, but it was great to have seen this bird as they can be frustratingly elusive in winter.

We then drove down to the large saline lagoons south of La Capeliere which in summer is home to France's only breeding colony of Greater Flamingos. There were plenty of this stunning bird feeding in the shallow waters, and we were also treated to very close views of a group of Water Pipits. A large flock of Golden Plover dropped down to roost on the sand flats allowing us to wonder at their glowing golden plumage in the sun which had finally come out. We drove through large areas of salt pans but the only wader flocks that we found were too far to really appreciate. Despite that frustration there were plenty of birds to see besides the Flamingos, with Linnet, Reed Bunting and Shelducks being fairly common.

With lunchtime approaching we headed back to the reserve at La Capeliere. Su's bus stopped for some amazingly close views of Slender-billed Gulls and a few Red-breasted Mergansers on Vaccares and when we all met up we set up a lovely picnic lunch in warm sunshine at the reserve. Following lunch and a chance to visit the small museum in the reserve centre we went back to the Slender-billed Gulls which were still showing really well. These are such beautiful and elegant gulls that we spent some time watching them, as well as a flock of sixty-one Red-breasted Mergansers, a really impressive number for this species.

The bird reserve at Scamandre was our next stop. This reserve protects a large area of reed bed and flooded tamarisk scrub and rang to the piping of displaying Teal. In the background we could also hear a large number of Cranes bugling, but unfortunately they were out of sight in an inaccessible area of farmland. We wandered slowly around the reserve enjoying the atmospheric sights and sounds, and were treated to extremely close views by four confiding Goldcrests. With dusk approaching we wound our way back to the hotel through the backroads of the Camargue, arriving in time to allow us to relax before dinner.

Day 7

Friday 28th December

Clear skies, windy in the morning, sunny and calm in the afternoon

Mont Ventoux and Pont du Gard

For the final day of the trip we left the hotel before dawn so that we could spend as much daylight time as possible at Mont Ventoux, one of the toughest stages on the Tour de France. It rises very steeply out of flat planes and on a clear day is visible from the coastal plane. The woods that cover the lower slopes and then montane habitats at the top offer very different bird communities to the rest of the trip, as well as some very exciting species. As the sun rose we were treated to another beautiful sunrise and reminder of why so many artists have made the journey to the south of France.

A vast flock of Starling left their roost as we passed Carpentras, and we made our first stop at a spot that overlooks vineyards and village gardens. We searched in vain for Hawfinch, but a flock of Wood Lark flying past and a perched Mistle Thrush were ample compensation. The wind had really picked up as we drove up the slopes of Mount Ventoux with leaves been whipped up from the ground and trees being shaken by the force of it. Birds were therefore fairly hard to come by, so when a Black Woodpecker appeared from nowhere in response to a brief play of James' ipod we were ecstatic. Walking out to where we had seen the Black Woodpecker it showed again briefly before flying away. Looking up, we found the reason for its presence; we had walked beneath its nest hole which was right above a picnic table!

We decided to come back later so returned to the vans and drove as far as we could up the mountain. There wasn't much snow, but the road was very icy, and with the wind whistling past us we took a very slow and careful walk up the road enjoying the beautiful views and bright sunshine. We found a large flock of Fieldfare feeding on berries on the stunted Juniper bushes, some of which gave us lovely views. With no sign of the wind decreasing we headed down the mountain to Chalet Reynard where hot drinks and some delicious crepes were really appreciated.

Heading further down the hill we stopped at a spot over-looking the Black Woodpecker hole but after a while it appeared that it was not around. However, as we drove past the hole we realised that it was looking out of its hole at us! It flew off to soon so we retreated a bit and waited. We didn't have long to wait before it flew back in and perched by the nest hole giving quite incredible views. After a few minutes it popped back into the nest hole. We waited a few minutes but there was no sign of activity so we drove slowly down towards the nest hole until it looked out of the hole at us. We watched it again for several more minutes before it flew off into the woods where we left it in peace and with the most amazing views of this spectacular species etched in our memories.

We found a sheltered picnic spot and had another delicious lunch accompanied as usual by a local French wine, and this time by a large group of fire bugs that were roosting communally in the loose bark of a pine tree. It was then off to the Pont du Gard, one of the best preserved Roman aqueducts, and with three tiers is truly spectacular. Bathed in late afternoon sunshine, the aqueduct looked beautiful and we had plenty of time to wander about and to admire it from various different angles. By happy coincidence, the river that the aqueduct bridges, as well as the aqueduct itself, are very good for birds and we were soon watching Kingfishers and Grey Wagtails on the river.

The tranquillity of the river was soon broken however as Beryl, our Wallcreeper star spotter, had found another Wallcreeper on the aqueduct! We all raced over and were soon having yet more incredible views of this amazing species. It spent over 30 minutes exploring the face of the aqueduct. As dusk approached good numbers of Crag Martins and Rock Sparrows flew in to roost on the aqueduct and we had very good views of both as they perched on the ancient brickwork. With the sun setting, bathing the aqueduct in beautiful colours we made our way slowly back to the buses wondering why the managers of the site felt the need to add garish lights to the scene! It was just a short drive back to the hotel where we had our final delicious meal at the hotel care of Monique, Marie-Jo and Bruno.

Day 8

Saturday 29th December

Sunny, calm and mild

Arles

Sadly our last day of the trip, but with late afternoon flights we were able to spend the whole morning wandering around the beautiful old city of Arles in glorious sunshine. The tour participants visited many of the delights of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Arles including the Roman Amphitheatre, the Roman theatre, the Espace de Van Gogh, and the Church of St Trophime. Saturday is also market day in Arles and it is really good fun to wander along the hundreds of metres of stalls sampling (and buying!) the huge variety of local cheeses, meats, breads, fruits and vegetables; many of the things that France is so famous for.

Having had one last picnic lunch back at the hotel we drove the relatively short distance back to Marseilles airport. Our flight was on time and we were soon back at Heathrow where we bid our fond farewells.

Summary: The trip was extremely enjoyable with a great group that gelled really well with firm friendships hopefully made, and James, Su and Luke have to say thank you to all for making it so enjoyable. Bruno, Marie-Jo and Monique at the hotel were incredibly friendly and welcoming and provided us with wonderful food and a fantastic Provencal Christmas experience. The landscapes and ancient architecture in Arles, Aigues Mortes and Pont du Gard are fascinating and beautiful and add a huge amount to the trip. We were very lucky with the weather with almost no rain all week, although a little more sun might have helped with some of the birds. Large flocks of waders were conspicuous by their absence perhaps not heading as far south as normal in this milder winter, however most of the altitudinal migrants were present, so we will just have to say it was a strange winter! Having said that, the birding was as usual truly amazing with huge numbers of birds and numerous highlights that included stunning views of Wallcreepers and Slender-billed Gulls, large numbers of Little Bustards, two Eagle Owls and a male Black Woodpecker at its nest hole. Provence truly provided us with a diverse and exciting trip and a great way to spend Christmas.

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Species List

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted; h = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	December					
			23	24	25	26	27	28
1	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		3	150		5	
2	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>			150		30	
3	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>			3		2	
4	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	10	100	100		60	30
5	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	5	12	1			
6	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		10	40		6	1
7	Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	4	20	40	1	20	
8	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	6	40	40	1	30	1
9	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>		2	4			
10	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>			2			
11	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>		000s	200		200	
12	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		50	80		30	
13	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		2	50			
14	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		20	60		20	
15	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	20	100	150		100	
16	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>		5				
17	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>		15	50			
18	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>					200	
19	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>		200	8			
20	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		410				
21	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>					61	
22	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	11					
23	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>		2	2	1	1	
24	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		20	30		15	1
25	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	2	4	2	1	1	
26	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	15	40	40	1	40	3
27	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	12	12	12	2	15	2
28	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	1		1			
29	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	5			2		
30	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		1	6	1	1	
31	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	3	80	25		8	
32	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			h		h	
33	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		15	2		20	
34	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	15	750	800		200	
35	Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>			h			
36	Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	77					
37	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		30	50		180	
38	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		12	16		2	
39	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	5	4	25			
40	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		1				
41	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>			3			
42	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		90	1		2	
43	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>		20				
44	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		6	15		1	
45	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		12	4		15	
46	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>			3			
47	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>			1		2	

	Common name	Scientific name	December					
			23	24	25	26	27	28
48	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		1	4		1	
49	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>			47		16	
50	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>		50	50		20	
51	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cacchianans</i>	5	30	100	2	30	1
52	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>		4				
53	Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
54	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	20			1		
55	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	25	50	50	2	100	20
56	Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	2					
57	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>			2			1
58	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>						1
59	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	2h		1			
60	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	90	30	20			
61	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>				2		8
62	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>		9	2		2	
63	Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>						30
64	Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>		15	2		8	
65	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	100	12	6		6	
66	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	30	2	1		5	2
67	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	4					1
68	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	4	6	6	2	3	1
69	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	h			h3	h2	
70	Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>				7		
71	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	6		1	1	1	2
72	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	4	12	6	3		7
73	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	20		5			
74	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	1			4		
75	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	6h			5	2	
76	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>						100
77	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	10					
78	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		1				2
79	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>						3
80	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		1	2		h	
81	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>			h			
82	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	2			2		3
83	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	6h	10h	2	2	1	1
84	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	4	1	6		5	
85	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	1		1	5	4	2
86	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	2			8	1	
87	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>					1	
88	Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>					1	
89	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	6			5		
90	Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>				12		
91	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	5	10	15	2	12	2
92	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	1			2	2	2
93	Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>				2		
94	Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>				2		1
95	Iberian Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	3					
96	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	00s	100	100	✓	230	8000
97	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	2			1		1
98	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	00s	100	100	10	50	5

	Common name	Scientific name	December					
			23	24	25	26	27	28
99	Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	00s	100	100	20	000s	00s
100	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>				2		
101	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	12	15	15		3	5
102	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	20					
103	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	6		100			
104	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		6	100+		100+	30
105	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>						15
106	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	20	20	30	25	200+	100
107	Citril Finch	<i>Serinus citrinella</i>				25		
108	Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>			4			
109	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	90	5	5	6	2	
110	Linnet	<i>Acanthis cannabina</i>	50	4			12	
111	Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>				20		
112	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	20		250			
113	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>				1		
114	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	1		15		10	
115	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>						

Mammals

1	Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	1					
2	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	4					
3	Coypu	<i>Myocastor coypus</i>			6		8	
4	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>			1			
5	Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>			2			

Insects

1	Dappled Bath White	<i>Euchloe crameri</i>	1					
2	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>				1		
3	Harelquin Ladybird	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i>						
4	Firebug	<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i>						✓

Plants - A small and eclectic selection of plants that were noted by the group

1	Aleppo Pine	<i>Pinus halapensis</i>	23	Rosemary	<i>Rosmarius officinalis</i>
2	Stone Pine	<i>Pinus pinea</i>	24	Thyme	<i>Thymus sp.</i>
3	Italian Cypress	<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>	25	Lavender	<i>Lavandula sp.</i>
4	Phoenician Juniper	<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i>	26	Clary	<i>Salvia officianalis</i>
5	Kermes Oak	<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	27	Oregano	<i>Origanum sp.</i>
6	Glasswort	<i>Salicornia europea</i>	28	Silver Sage	<i>Salvia argentea</i>
7	Shrubby Seablite	<i>Sueda vera</i>	29	Black Nightshade	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>
8	Shrubby Orache	<i>Atriplex halimus</i>	30	Mullein	<i>Verbascum sp.</i>
9	Sea Stock	<i>Matthiola sinuata</i>	31	Southern Daisy	<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>
10	Alyssum	<i>Iberis sempervirens</i>	32	Evax	<i>Evax pygmaea</i>
11	Wild Rocket	<i>Eruca sativa</i>	33	Goldenrod	<i>Conyza canadensis</i>
12	Spanish Broom	<i>Spartium junceum</i>	34	Milk Thistle	<i>Silybum marianum</i>
13	Storcksbill	<i>Erodium sp.</i>	35	Spring Ashphodel	<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>
14	Cypress Spurge	<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>	36	Butchers Broom	<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>
15	Mastic Tree	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	37	Wild Asparagus	<i>Asparagus esculentus</i>
16	Box	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	38	Vicious Ivy'	<i>Smilax aspersa</i>
17	Bay	<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	39	Italian Arum	<i>Arum italicum</i>
18	Tamarisk	<i>Tamarix sp.</i>	40	Cuckoo-pint	<i>Arum maculatum</i>
19	Field Eryngo/Sea Holly	<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	41	Twayblade	<i>Listera ovata</i>

20	Sea Lavender	<i>Limonium sp.</i>	42	Common Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
21	Wild Olive	<i>Olea europea oleasta</i>	43	Giant Reed	<i>Arundo donax</i>
22	Wild Madder	<i>Rubia peregrina</i>			

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