

Provence over New Year

Naturetrek Tour Report

28 December 2018 – 4 January 2019



Camargue Sunset



Coypu



Greater Flamingo



Les Alpilles

Report compiled by Jessica Turner
Images courtesy of Lorraine Byrne



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Summary

Wall-to-wall sunshine with amazing clarity of light and stunning sunsets each day were features of our trip to Provence over New Year. The antics of Flamingoes, the sight of them flying, pink against an evening sky, elegant White Storks, Cranes and Glossy Ibis, plus endless herons and egrets were a joy, while no less special were the crimson flashes of colour from Wallcreepers feeding on the iconic Roman aqueduct of Pont du Gard and on the cliffs at Les Baux. We enjoyed great views of a pair of Bonelli's Eagles in Les Alpilles, the hillsides fragrant with Rosemary and Thyme, while on Mont Ventoux, Crested Tits and Griffon Vultures were stars of the show. The Mistral, the northerly wind blew strongly for most of the week, giving the clear skies but making some birding quite challenging, although the sun was pleasantly warm. Marie-Jo and Bruno, as ever, welcomed us with generous hospitality and delicious meals, especially memorable being the feast for New Year's Eve. My thanks to the group for all sharing their skills and interests and contributing to a most enjoyable New Year's break.

Day 1

Friday 28th December

Marseille Airport to Hotel des Granges, Arles.

Five group members met with Jessica at Heathrow Terminal 3 for our 11am flight to Marseille. The flight was smooth and arrived in Marseille in good time. It was pleasantly sunny, as we sorted the vehicle, loaded up and headed north-west towards Arles. We reached our base for the week, the Hotel des Granges on the north side of Arles, at about 4pm, and received a very warm welcome from Marie-Jo and Bruno. We checked in and were shown to our rooms. The last two group members, who had travelled south by train, also arrived at this point.

In order to make the most of the late afternoon sun, we dropped our bags and went out again for a short walk near the hotel, walking down the minor road to the Canal du Vigueirot. As we gathered outside, a female Black Redstart was on the tiled roof, showing her rufous tail. A large flock of Corn Buntings were gathered on some wires; there must have been about 50 birds, moving around in small groups. It was lovely to see so many, as this species is declining in the UK. A Eurasian Sparrowhawk flew past on the other side, and we soon added House Sparrows, Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Linnets to our bird list. A Skylark was calling as it flew over, and a party of Meadow Pipits was also noted. A Cormorant was on the canal, and a distant Marsh Harrier was seen briefly, while one of the group spotted a Little Owl on a barn roof, but it didn't stay long enough for others to see it. The sunset, at about 5.15pm, was beautiful, but the temperature was dropping so we made our way back to the hotel.

We met again at 6.40pm in the dining room, where Jessica outlined plans for the week, and we admired the Christmas scene of a whole village with tiny figures ('santons') – including a Flamingo and a Hoopoe given by a previous Naturetrek group! We then enjoyed a delicious meal with local wines, before retiring for an early night, ready for our first full day in the Camargue.

Day 2

Saturday 29th December

East side of Camargue

After a good breakfast, we left the hotel at 8.30am to head down into the Camargue, the old delta of the river Rhône. Many of the old marshes have been converted to agriculture, but there are still large areas of natural habitat. The weather was fine and sunny, but with a chilly wind – the Mistral, which blows down the Rhone valley from the north, especially in winter. We took a minor road leading to Mas d'Agon, passing groups of the white horses and black bulls, so characteristic of the Camargue. A very fine male Hen Harrier flew across, and we also saw a good number of Marsh Harriers during the day. We had excellent views of Great Egret (including one with a frog in its beak), plus Little Egret and Grey Heron. Common Buzzards lived up to their name, often perched on trees or in fields. Little groups of passerines in the reeds and fields adjoining the road included Chaffinches, Goldfinches, House Sparrows, Reed Buntings, Meadow Pipits and Skylarks, and Cetti's Warbler was heard. As we continued, we passed a Red-legged Partridge, a Sparrowhawk flew over, and we added Common Snipe and our first Cranes to our list.

We encountered a massive raft of Coot, huddled together on the Étang de Vaccarès, the large saline lagoon which dominates the centre of the Camargue, and large numbers of Great Crested Grebes. We moved on to the visitor centre at La Capelière, and after admiring the ornithological 'santons', we took the trail round the reserve. We had good views of a Kingfisher, and a Green Sandpiper was dozing on a bank. A sheltered area of field and hedges had Stonechats, Sardinian Warbler, Robin and Chiffchaff, and a group of Teal and Pochard was on one of the ponds. We enjoyed our picnic in a sheltered spot in the warm sun, appreciating home-made bread, local cheese and wine as well as other French produce, while a Blackcap sang nearby.

Refreshed, we moved on, finding good numbers of Black-necked Grebes with the Great Cresteds. Four Cattle Egrets were in a field of bulls, and two landed on the roadside verge just ahead, giving excellent views. From the observation tower at Marais de Grenouillet, we saw our first, rather distant, Flamingoes. We drove on through Salin de Giraud, passing groups of Cranes, usually twos and threes in fields, and moved down to the salt pans. Here we added Shelduck, while small waders included Little Stint and Dunlin. A flock of Golden Plover were seen in flight and then settled, and there were a large number of very distant Avocets feeding. A freshwater lake held Pochard and Little Grebe, and Water Rail was heard by some. There were large numbers of Mute Swans on the Rhône, and then we saw a large flock of Flamingoes in a lagoon on the other side. The sea was blue but quiet, apart from gulls, so we started to head back. The flock of Flamingoes took flight, looking amazing in the evening light. As we headed north, we saw large skeins of Cranes heading to roost, and enjoyed the beautiful sunset.

We took a detour through the centre of Arles to avoid the 'gilets-jaune' demonstrators who were stopping traffic at roundabouts on the ring road, arriving back at the hotel at 6pm. After a break, we met to complete our checklists before enjoying another delicious meal of traditional Provençal cooking, having had a very enjoyable and full day in the Camargue.

Day 3

Sunday 30th December

West side of the Camargue:

After another continental breakfast, we headed out into the Camargue, this time focusing mainly on the west side. It was sunny and clear, but the Mistral, which had been fierce through the night, was still blowing strongly. We took the road from Albaron to Mas de Mejanès; it was quite quiet, bird-wise, but we could see a mixed flock of duck on the water of the Marais de Mejanès, which included Gadwall, Shoveler, Pochard, Wigeon and Mallard. We then drove the slow road to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, past the Étang de Vaccarès, and between the Étang de Consecanière and the Étang de Malagroy and Dit l'Imperial. We stopped at a field entry with Meadow Pipits and a Corn Bunting, and two Tundra (Bewick's) Swans flew over. Further on there were Lapwings with Starlings, Meadow Pipits and Skylarks, and a fine male Reed Bunting perched up briefly in some roadside reeds. Horses were grazing the salt steppe, with its salt-tolerant plants dominated by Shrubby and Perennial Glassworts (*Sarcocornia fruticosa* and *S. perennis*). On the muddy shore of the étang we encountered Redshank, Grey Plover and Dunlin, while a Zitting Cisticola showed well for some.

After morning coffee, we drove to the east end of the town, to look at the sea. Sandwich Terns were fishing noisily by the jetty, while gulls included Slender-billed and Lesser Black-backs. Black-necked and Great Crested Grebes joined the fishing Cormorants, while a few Gannets were passing further out. Time was moving on, so we continued to the Pont de Gau Nature Reserve, where we had our picnic in warm sun, well sheltered from the still-strong wind. In fact, most of the reserve was fairly sheltered, and we explored the trails, enjoying the many hundreds of Flamingoes at close quarters, observing their interactions of squabbles and display. There were many Little and Cattle Egrets and Grey Herons, but a surprise was a Sacred Ibis, an introduced species that the authorities have tried to eradicate, partly because they affect especially Cattle Egret populations through predation of eggs and chicks. By 2013, they had reduced the numbers of Sacred Ibis in Camargue from nearly 500 birds to three. We also saw quite a few Coypu, including a couple of kits swimming just below us. There were more, fairly distant, Marsh Harriers, and a flock of Teal. We looked at some of the plants, including Lentisk (also called Mastic Tree, *Pistacia lentiscus*), Golden Samphire (*Limbarda crithmoides*) and Hairy Spurge (*Euphorbia hirsuta*), while a Cream-spot Tiger moth caterpillar was on the move.

We decided to return via Mas D'Agon. We stopped at the Observation Tower we had been at yesterday, and a Wild Boar ran across the road. At Mas D'Agon, there were four Bewick's Swans with the Mute Swans and a fine White Stork. When it flew, it was joined by another. There were also many Coypu feeding on the marsh in the dusk. A flock of about 40 Glossy Ibis flew over but landed out of sight. We could see several Marsh Harriers going to roost, and could hear Cetti's Warbler again, despite the wind. As the sun set, the sky was glorious, and the deep apricot and pink hues lasted for a good half hour as we drove home. A Merlin shot across the road, only seen by two in the front of the minibus.

After a break, we met to update our lists and enjoy another delicious meal, having had another excellent day.

Day 4

Monday 31st December

Mont Ventoux and Pont du Gard

We had an early breakfast this morning, leaving the hotel by 7.30am to make the journey north to Mont Ventoux. Passing through Avignon and round Carpentras, we soon reached the foothills of this Alpine outlier

which reaches 1,900 metres in height. We stopped for a short leg-stretch above Sainte Colombe, where all was very quiet, but Blackcap and Blackbird were among the calls heard. We then started the main ascent, driving up through the Black Pine (*Pinus nigra*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) trees. We stopped to try for Black Woodpecker, but we got no response to playback. We stopped again just below the Chalet Reynard, where there are a number of holiday chalets among the pine trees. Here, we encountered a delightful pair of Crested Tits, which gave excellent views.

This year there was no snow so, having stopped briefly at Chalet Reynard, we were able to drive for maybe a kilometre further up. We parked by a fountain, where the road was barred, and started walking. The cold wind was strong, but where we were sheltered (sometimes by standing in the lee of a scrubby tree), the sun was quite warm. The mountain slopes were rocky, dotted with Mountain Pine (*Pinus unciata*) and Prostrate Juniper (*Juniperus communis* var. *saxatilis*). Large numbers of Fieldfares moved through the Beech trees in a gulley, a couple of Redwings among them. A small flock of Citril Finch flew past down the wind but could not be relocated and more Crested Tits were seen in the pines. A very large bird hanging above the ridge was seen to be a Griffon Vulture, and it was soon joined by another, then a couple more moving along the ridge; later we counted 11 individuals. At our feet, we noted the dried stems of a relatively large-flowered Carline Thistle (*Carlina acaulis*) and *Eryngium spinalba*.

We started to retrace our route, aiming to stop for refreshments at Chalet Reynard, but we discovered that it was now jam-packed with masses of both old and new cars and was apparently a destination for a rally. We drove cautiously through the throngs and down to a quieter layby, where we had our picnic in the sun. We tried walking along another track for woodpeckers but again, all was quiet, although Ann glimpsed a Great Spotted Woodpecker above the picnic site.

Our afternoon destination was Pont du Gard, so we retraced our route to Avignon, taking the road along the bank of the Rhône, from where we could see the famous bridge as well as the castle and city walls. We then crossed the river, driving west, and taking the route to the Rive Droite, or southern side of the River Gardon, where we parked. This impressive Roman aqueduct, which was built in the First Century as part of a system to carry water from Uzès to Nîmes, drops in height by only one inch as it crosses the gorge of the River Gardon. White Wagtail and Grey Wagtail were along the river, and a few Crag Martins were flying around. After some scanning of the sunny side of the aqueduct, we soon found a Wallcreeper feeding on the stonework, and had some great views, especially through the scope. Although the bird is small, we could see clearly the colours of its wings as it flicked them. After quite some time enjoying this, we decided to walk across the bridge. From the viewpoints on the other side we were looking along the structure and had some even better views, although the bird disappeared from view more often in the stonework. A flock of Rock Sparrows landed on the top of the aqueduct, flying around before diving into tiny holes to roost. They were popping in and out of the holes and we could see the head markings clearly. As the light was fading and the wind increasing in strength again, we made our way back to the minibus, driving back towards Arles while enjoying the incredibly beautiful apricot hues of the sky.

Marie-Jo and Bruno had prepared a special, delicious meal to mark New Year's Eve, starting with aperitifs, and finishing with the 13 desserts, which are all symbolic for the season, and a new-year toast. We celebrated Maggie's birthday with a candle on the 'bouche de Noel', an ice-cream log. However, we retired before midnight, after our long and active day in the field.

Day 5

Tuesday 1st January

Les Alpilles

Today we visited Les Alpilles, the chain of limestone hills, rising to just under 500 metres, that stand impressively above the Crau plain. After breakfast, we left the hotel as usual at 8.30am, driving north then south-east, round the base of Les Baux to reach La Caume car park. We set off along the access road for the communications mast that winds gently uphill. The first part was mainly through Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) with Kermes Oak (*Quercus coccifera*) understorey, then Atlantic Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*); the open rocky areas held fragrant species such as beautifully flowering Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) and Lavender (*Lavendula angustifolia*). A Short-toed Treecreeper was glimpsed, as were Coal and Crested Tits. We reached an open area where we scanned the dramatic cliffs around us. Jackdaws were moving over the cliff face, but then we located two large birds: the resident Bonelli's Eagles. They were perched on the top of a cliff, enjoying the morning sunshine and we were treated to incredible views of this rare species. Eventually one flew off, coming down to another cliff where it disappeared behind a crag, but soon they were together in another spot. We watched them for a long time, able to pick out all their features in the clear light. What a New Year treat!

We eventually walked on, leaving the birds to their cliff. Sardinian Warbler was heard and seen, as well as a Robin and Black Redstarts. We added Golden Feltly Germander (*Teucrium aureum*) and Narrow-leaved Red Valerian (*Centranthus angustifolius*) to our growing plant list, plus a Two-spot Ladybird. From the TV mast, we walked a short way along the plateau, encountering more Sardinian Warblers, before retracing our steps. We enjoyed our excellent picnic in the sun. A pair of Great Tits were eyeing the remains of the picnic and came to forage as we left.

Refreshed, we drove down to the village of Les Baux, which stands atop a limestone outcrop, surrounded by cliffs and boulders. Parking near the village, we prepared to take the path round the outside, under the cliffs. Scorpion Broom (*Genista scorpius*) was flowering profusely, as were Southern Daisies (*Bellis sylvestris*). We were scanning the cliffs above for movement, and Richard first spotted another Wallcreeper. It was feeding in the cracks and crevices of the cliff, and showed really well, flicking its wings and exposing the magnificent crimson coloration. We had some fantastic views of this iconic species, as well as seeing Crag Martins and a delightful group of Serins which glowed yellow-green in the sun. A possible Blue Rock Thrush was glimpsed silhouetted on a rock, but dropped down, never to reappear. Where the path was slightly shadier, we passed Laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*) and a budding Giant Orchid (*Himantoglossum robertianum*), before making our way up into the village. We had time to explore, have hot drinks and do some shopping, enjoying a fine male Black Redstart but, sadly, no Alpine Accentor.

We then returned to the vehicles and drove a short way down to olive groves facing a cliff, where we stopped to listen for Eagle-Owls. This used to be the best site in the area, but over recent years, the increase in human disturbance on the cliffs seems to have driven the birds away; although there were no climbers today, neither could we hear any owls. The cold wind was now blowing even more strongly, and we decided the chance of hearing any birds was slim in these conditions, so we enjoyed the post-sunset sky, but called it a day.

Day 6

Wednesday 2nd January

The east side of Camargue

The wind was roaring round the hotel through the night and continued to blow a gale through the day, although it was beautifully clear and sunny. Two of the group opted for a day in Arles, but the rest of us left at 8.30am. Following a short stop for fuel and for picnic top-up supplies, we took the road towards Port-St-Louis, down the east side of the Rhône. We were hoping to find some shelter at the Marais du Vigueirat Nature Reserve. Chiffchaff and Black Redstart were in the sunny courtyard by the buildings, but a Kestrel was huddled by a chimney, seeking shelter. Having read that there is year-round access to the site, we discovered that this applies only to a small discovery area of pools and channels and a larger area of marshy meadow. The latter held a number of Great, Little and Cattle Egrets and Grey Herons sheltering on the margins, and a few Lapwing. The boardwalk path was very slippery, so we walked the discovery-area paths, where we had nice views of a Coypu family.

We decided to move on but were unsure whether the little ferry across the Rhône would be running in such winds, so we retraced our route back to Arles to cross the river there. A Sparrowhawk flew in front of us as we left the Marais. We took again the road to Mas D'Agon; a flock of small birds in a field showed themselves as Chaffinches and large numbers of Tree Sparrows, the latter showing well as they flew up onto a wire fence. A Chiffchaff was flying down the edge of the reeds and feeding on the road verge, again presumably affected by the wind. A little further on, we saw three Cranes in a roadside field, then realised it also contained five magnificent White Storks. We had great views of these wonderful birds, watching them take off to drop in to the next field. A single White Stork was also feeding in a field on the other side of the road, and a Marsh Harrier flew along a line of scrubby willows. The four Bewick's Swans were still in the same location and another Coypu was seen. Then a flock of Glossy Ibis appeared in flight, followed by more and more, until about 100 had appeared, some very close to us. We could enjoy their coloration in the perfect light, from the comfort and height of a windproof minibus!

It was now lunchtime, so we sought a sheltered spot for our picnic, finding it in the car park of La Capelière, where the strategic positioning of the vehicle meant we were hardly affected by the wind. After another look at the shop and display area, we headed south to Étang de Fangassier and the Digue de la Mer. Here it was both very exposed and exceedingly windy, but during an exhilarating walk, we managed to see a few Water Pipits; we later saw another very briefly from the shelter of the minibus. Some waders were also noted: flocks of Redshank, Little Stint and Dunlin, and a few Grey Plover. We decided to have a final visit to the salt pans in the hope of seeing Flamingoes where they had been previously. A beautiful male Hen Harrier flew over the bus as we were returning to the main road. Sadly, we failed to find Flamingoes: they were probably also sheltering somewhere. However, large groups of Cranes were flying to roost, we glimpsed a Kingfisher, and watched the sun drop into the sea.

Over another delicious dinner, we compared notes with those who had explored Arles, and we all agreed we had had a very enjoyable day, despite the wind.

Day 7

Thursday 3rd January

La Crau

For our last full day, we headed for the stony, grassy plains of La Crau, semi-arid steppe formed from the ancient flood plain of the River Durance. It was another gloriously sunny morning, and the wind had moderated slightly, but with lower air temperatures today, it felt cold. After breakfast, we drove eastwards towards Salon de Provence, turning off the autoroute to take the old road. Our first destination was the road leading to La Jasse. We soon stopped when an Iberian Grey Shrike was spotted perched up on a tree. The light was not ideal, but we could see it was darker than Great Grey Shrike. A Black Redstart was in a farmyard. We moved on to park in a more open area and explored the environs. The wind meant small birds were tricky to see and identify, but we did see a female Cirl Bunting briefly. As we were about to leave, a pair of Red Kites drifted overhead. Buzzard and Kestrel were also seen. A fragrant plant was Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), together with Sweet Alison (*Lobularia maritima*).

We next moved on to Mas de Chauvet, where we encountered a large flock of Lapwing and Golden Plover. Grey and White Wagtails, Stonechat, Black Redstart, Robin, Chaffinch and a small flock of Corn Bunting were also noted. As we moved on, we added Linnets and Skylarks, Common Buzzard and Kestrel. Access to La Crau is now restricted, so we parked and walked out onto the plain. The wind was stronger, and it was hard to get on to the small birds which bounced up and down again rather quickly. A Marsh Harrier flew over. In a sheltered field a flock of the local sheep, Mérinos d'Arles, with lambs were grazing, attended by some Cattle Egrets and White Wagtails. We were amused to watch individuals of both species riding the backs of the sheep, after insects. Along the hedgerow, a Chiffchaff was feeding and showing well, and we also had occasional good views of a Dartford Warbler which was also there, the colours glowing in the sun. A couple of Serins flew into a tree above.

We returned to St. Martin de Crau, in order to get permits to visit the reserve area of Peau de Meau, and to have a warming coffee, before enjoying our final picnic at the Étang des Aulnes, where we heard a Green Woodpecker. The paths down to the lake were very muddy and overgrown, so we drove a short way to a fishermen's access point, where we heard Water Rail and Cetti's Warbler and saw a flock of Cormorants, Great Crested Grebes and Black-headed Gulls on the water.

Further on, we parked at the northern entrance to La Crau Reserve, at Peau de Meau. We followed the track across the plain. Again, the wind was biting cold, and apart from Skylarks and Stonechats, we saw little; watering eyes didn't help! We retreated to the van and decided to explore the southern end of the reserve. Two Green Sandpiper were on a small pool, and a large flock of Golden Plover were in a field with a few Lapwing. We found the track with the gate open. The light was starting to fade, and we watched the sun set in glorious colour. Two Red-legged Partridge walked across by the bus. Then Ann saw three birds flying ahead of us – Little Bustards! We noted where they landed, not too far from the minibus, so three of us now braved the even-colder wind to look for them. We didn't locate them again but, as we went, we disturbed two Pin-tailed Sandgrouse which were little more than camouflaged shapes as they flew off.

It was rather later than planned when we got back, but we were soon enjoying a final dinner of Camargue beef served with Camargue rice. Afterwards, we thanked Marie-Jo and Bruno for their kind and welcoming hospitality, before retiring to pack in preparation for our journey home.

Day 8

Friday 4th January

Mas D'Agon, journey home

We had some time this morning before we had to leave for Marseille airport. Some of the group opted to return to Mas d'Agon, for some final birding. A Yellowhammer, sitting on a wire next to a Reed Bunting, was new for the list. The magnificent male Hen Harrier flew across, maybe a bird we had seen previously. Two Bewick's Swans were with a couple of Mallard at the back of a lake; Mute Swans were on the other side of the road and in flight. We drove as far as the observation tower, but all was quiet, so we drove back up the road, with the sun behind us. The flock of Glossy Ibis were flying round, as well as the usual selection of Great and Little Egrets and Grey Herons. Three Cranes and a White Stork were in a field, and Marsh Harriers were low over the reeds. A final new sighting was a Curlew, near where we had heard one on a previous evening.

We arrived back at the hotel at 10.30am, with time to finish our packing and say farewell to Richard and Linda who were going by train to Paris. We left at 11.15am and had a smooth journey to the airport. We checked in and had plenty of time for a snack in the nearly deserted departure area, before a straight-forward flight back to London and our onward journeys home, full of memories of a great week in Provence.

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Grey Heron

Species Lists

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

	Common name	Scientific name	December - January								
			28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	
1	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>		✓	✓				✓		✓
2	Tundra Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>			4				4		2
3	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		✓	✓				✓		
4	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		✓	✓						
5	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			✓						
6	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>			✓						
7	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓	✓					✓
8	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓	✓						
9	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		✓	✓						
10	Red-legged Partridge - I	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		1	1					2	
11	Common Pheasant - I	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		1	✓					D	
12	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		✓	✓						
13	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	
14	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>		✓	✓				✓		
15	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>		✓	✓						
16	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>			2				6		1
17	African Sacred Ibis - I	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>			1						
18	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>			c30				c100		c30
19	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
20	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
21	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
22	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
23	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>			✓						
24	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
25	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>				11					
26	Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>					2				
27	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	1	1	1	1			1		1
28	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
29	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>		1	1				1		1
30	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>								2	
31	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		✓	✓	✓	1		✓	✓	✓
32	Little Bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>								3	
33	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		H						H	
34	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			✓				✓	✓	
35	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
36	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>		✓	✓				✓		✓
37	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		✓							
38	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		✓	✓				✓	✓	
39	European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		✓						✓	
40	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>			✓				✓		
41	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		2					1		
42	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			H						1
44	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		H	✓				✓		
45	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		3	1					2	
46	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		2							
47	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>							✓		
48	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>		4					✓		

	Common name	Scientific name	December - January								
			28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	
49	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		✓	✓				✓		
50	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>			✓						
51	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
52	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
53	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>			✓						
54	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>			✓						
55	Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles alchata</i>								2	
56	Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia (feral)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
58	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
59	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
60	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	1								
61	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		1					1		
62	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				1					
64	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>								H	
65	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
66	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>			1					1	
67	Iberian Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>								1	
68	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>				H				✓	
69	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
70	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
71	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓								
72	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
73	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>				✓	H				
74	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>				✓	✓				
75	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	H			✓				H	
76	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
77	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	1		✓					✓	✓
78	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>				✓	✓				
79	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H	H					H	
80	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		H	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
81	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		✓	✓						
82	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		✓		H	H	H		✓	
83	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>								1	
84	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>		✓			✓				
85	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H			✓	✓			
86	Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>				1	1				
87	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>					1				
88	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
89	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓		H				✓	
90	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>				✓					
91	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>				2					
92	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	H	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
93	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	1	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
94	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		✓	✓					✓	
95	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
96	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>						✓			
97	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>				✓					
98	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓							
99	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>				✓		✓	✓		
100	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	December - January							
			28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
101	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓
102	Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>						✓		
103	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
104	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓						✓	
105	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
106	Citril Finch	<i>Carduelis citrinella</i>				✓				
107	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>					✓		✓	
108	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	c50	✓	✓				✓	c30
109	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>								1
110	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>							✓	
111	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		✓	✓					✓

Mammals

Coypu, *Myocastor coypus*

Wild Boar, *Sus scrofa*

Badger (dead), *Meles meles*

Insects

Egyptian Grasshopper, *Anacridium aegyptium*

White-tailed Bumblebee, *Bombus lucorum*

Buff-tailed Bumblebee, *Bombus terrestris*

Two-spot Ladybird, *Adalia bipunctata*

Cream-spot Tiger caterpillar, *Arctia villica*

Hoverfly spp., *Syrphidae*

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Location
GYMNOSPERMS		
Cupressaceae		
<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>	Italian Cypress	Often pencil-shaped; scattered
<i>Juniperus communis var. saxatilis</i>	Common Juniper (Prostrate)	Mt. Ventoux
<i>Juniperus oxycedrus</i>	Spiny Juniper	Les Alpilles
<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i>	Phoenicean Juniper	Les Alpilles
Pinaceae		
<i>Cedrus atlantica</i>	Atlantic Cedar	Les Alpilles
<i>Pinus halpensis</i>	Aleppo Pine	Common
<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Black Pine	Mt. Ventoux
<i>Pinus pinea</i>	Stone (Umbrella) Pine	Usually coastal; umbrella-shaped
<i>Pinus uncinata</i>	Mountain Pine	Mt. Ventoux
PRE-DICOTS		
Lauraceae		
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	Bay Tree	Pont de Gau
EU-DICOTS		
Adoxaceae		
<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Viburnum (or Laurustinus)	Les Baux
Amaranthaceae		
<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>	Sea Purslane	Pont de Gau, low shrub with grey oval lvs
<i>Sarcocornia fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Glasswort	Salt steppe and marsh; often reddish
<i>Sarcocornia perennis</i>	Perennial Glasswort	Salt steppe and marsh; often reddish

Scientific Name	Common Name	Location
<i>Suaeda vera</i>	Shrubby Sea-blite	Salt steppe; low shrub with 'bobbly' lvs
Anacardiaceae	Sumach Family	
<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Lentisk or Mastic Bush	Pont de Gau (evergreen)
<i>Pistacia terebinthus</i>	Terebinth Tree	Les Alpilles (deciduous)
Apiaceae	Carrot family	
<i>Bupleurum fruticosum</i>	Shrubby Hare's-ear	Les Baux (dead heads on green shrub)
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild Carrot	Les Alpilles - in flower
<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Field 'Sea Holly'	La Jasse - dried stems
<i>Eryngium spinalba</i>	Silver 'Sea Holly'	Mont Ventoux - dried stems
Araliaceae	Ivy family	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	Pont de Gau
Boraginaceae	Borage family	
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's Bugloss	Les Alpilles
Brassicaceae	Cabbage family	
<i>Arabidopsis arenosa</i>	A tall, white-flowered 'cress'	Nr Mt Ventouz & La Jasse
<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	Sweet Alison	Les Alpilles and elsewhere
Buxaceae	Box family	
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	Les Alpilles
Caprifoliaceae	Honeysuckle family	
<i>Centranthus angustifolius</i>	Narrow-leaved Red Valerian	Les Alpilles - in flower
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red Valerian	Les Baux - in flower
<i>Lonicera implexa</i>	Perfoliate Honeysuckle	Les Baux
<i>Scabiosa atropurpurea</i>	Small Scabious	Les Alpilles - in flower
Cistaceae	Cistus family	
<i>Cistus albidus</i>	Grey Cistus	Les Alpilles
Compositaceae (Asteraceae)	Daisy family	
<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>	Southern Daisy	Les Baux
<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Field Marigold	Les Baux
<i>Carlina acaulis</i>	Large-flowered Carline Thistle	Mont Ventoux - dried stems
<i>Carlina corymbosa</i>	Small-flowered Carline Thistle	Les Baux
<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	Canadian Fleabane	Scattered weed
<i>Lactuca viminifolia</i> subsp <i>chondrilliflora</i>		Les Alpilles; tall plant with small yellow flowers,
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	Rough Hawkbit	Les Alpilles
<i>Limbarda (Inula) crithmoides</i>	Golden Samphire	Pont de Gau; yellow flowers
<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk Thistle	Nr Hotel; white-veined lvs
<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelion	Les Alpilles
Cornaceae	Dogwood Family	
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	Camargue roadside - in flower
Crassulaceae	Stonecrop family	
<i>Sedum rupestre</i>	Rock Stonecrop	Les Alpilles (with dead heads)
Euphorbiaceae	Euphorbia family	

Scientific Name	Common Name	Location
<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Mediterranean Spurge	Les Alpilles; large, greyish shoots
<i>Euphorbia cyparassias</i>	Cypress Spurge	La Crau, looks like Pine seedlings
<i>Euphorbia hirsuta</i>	Hairy Spurge	Pont de Gau
<i>Euphorbia peplus</i>	Petty Spurge	Les Alpilles
Fagaceae	Oak and Beech family	
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	Mont Ventoux
<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes Oak	Les Alpilles; shrub with small holly-like lvs
<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm Oak	Widespread, evergreen tree
<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Downy Oak	Mont Ventoux
Geraniaceae	Geranium family	
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Stork's-bill	La Crau
Lamiaceae	Dead-nettle family	
<i>Lavendula angustifolia</i>	Lavender	Les Alpilles
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	White Horehound	Les Alpilles
<i>Oreganum vulgare</i>	Oregano	La Crau
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary	Les Alpilles - in flower
<i>Teucrium aureum</i>	Golden Felty Germander	Les Alpilles - in flower
<i>Teucrium polium</i> agg.	Felty Germander	Les Alpilles
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Thyme	Les Alpilles
Leguminosae	Pea family	
<i>Bituminaria bituminosa</i>	Pitch Trefoil	Les Baux
<i>Coronilla juncea</i>	A Broom-like shrub	Les Baux
<i>Genista scorpius</i>	Scorpion Broom	Les Baux n flower
<i>Hippocrepis glauca</i>	A Horseshoe Vetch	Les Alpilles - in flower (wavy seed-pod)
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish Broom	Les Alpilles
<i>Ulex parviflora</i>	Small-flowered Gorse	La Jasse - in flower
Oleaceae	Olive family	
<i>Olea europaea</i>	Wild Olive	Les Alpilles
<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i>	False Olive	Widespread shrub in Camargue
Papaveraceae	Poppy family	
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine	Les Baux - leaves
Plantaginaceae	Plantain family	
<i>Plantago afra</i>	Branched Plantain	Les Alpilles
Platanaceae	Plane family	
<i>Platanus orientalis</i>	Oriental Plane	Roadsides / towns
Plumbaginaceae	Thrift family	
<i>Limonium cf narbonense</i>	A sea lavender	La Capelière, dead flowerheads
Ranunculaceae	Buttercup family	
<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Stinking Hellebore	Mt. Ventoux, leaves
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw family	
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild Madder	La Capelière
Rutaceae	Rue Family	

Scientific Name	Common Name	Location
<i>Ruta graveolens</i>	Rue	Les Alpilles - pungent smell
Salicaceae	Willow family	
<i>Populus alba</i>	White Poplar	Widespread in Camargue
<i>Populus tremula</i>	Aspen	Scattered in Camargue
Scrophulariaceae	Figwort family	
<i>Verbascum sinuatum</i>	Wavy Mullein	La Crau
Solanaceae	Nightshade Family	
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Black Nightshade	Pont de Gau - in flower
Tamariscaceae	Tamarisk family	
<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	Tamarisk	Widespread in Camargue
Urticaceae	Nettle family	
<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Pellitory of the Wall	Les Baux
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Nettle	
<i>Urtica pilulifera</i>	Roman Nettle	Les Baux
MONOCOTS	MONOCOTYLEDONS	
Araceae	Arum family	
<i>Arum italicum</i>	Italian Arum	Nr Hotel
Asparagaceae	Asparagus family	
<i>Asparagus acutifolius</i>	Prickly Asparagus	Les Baux - some in berry
<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	Common Asparagus	Les Baux
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's Broom	Les Baux
Iridaceae	Iris family	
<i>Iris foetidissima</i>	Stinking Iris/Roast Beef Plant	Étang des Aulnes
Orchidaceae	Orchid family	
<i>Himantoglossum robertianum</i>	Giant Orchid	Les Baux - rosette with bud
Poaceae	Grass family	
<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant Reed	Widespread in Camargue
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed	Widespread in Camargue
Smilacaceae	Smilax family	
<i>Smilax aspera</i>	Smilax ('vicious ivy')	Les Baux
Xanthorrhoeaceae	Asphodel family	
<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>	Hollow-stemmed Asphodel	La Crau - tufts of leaves