

Camargue and Languedoc Bird Tour 16-23 May 2019



Lammerguier (Eva Casey) – Serin (Eva Casey)



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Camargue and Languedoc birding tour 16th to 22nd May 2019

Summary

We travelled from Avignon to Toulouse in order to see as many species of birds as possible while discovery the natural beauty of southern France. Local life and culture was also part of the package as we stayed off the beaten tracks for large parts of the tour.

16th of May: Meeting in Avignon - The Crau

Once the tour participants were collected in Avignon, we drove to the Crau through the Alpilles. We had stunning views of a **Eurasian Roller** by the road. A walk in central Crau did not produce many of the specialties, but we got good views of **Tawny Pipit**, **Skylark**, **Black kite** and distant **Lesser Kestrels**. This walk allowed us to discover the only French steppe on the fossil estuary of the River Durance.



Eurasian Roller (Eva Casey)



Black Kite (Eva Casey)

17th of May: the Camargue

For the first full day of the trip we stayed in the Camargue. We started by the salt pans at the Phare-de-la-Gachole. We got a nice selection of waders, many **Slender-billed Gulls**, our first **Greater Flamingos** as well as a **Spectacled Warbler**.



The tour team near La Gachole



Greater Flamingo (Eva Casey)

After that, we headed towards the north of the Etang du Vaccarès with a stop on the way to see the **Collared Pratincoles** at the Mas-Canard; there we also had a **Stone Curlew**. The Mas-d'Agon was brilliant as usual with a wide variety of Herons, 5 **White winged Terns** with good numbers of **Black and Whiskered Terns**. Great Reed Warblers gave great views. We had stunning views of **Eurasian Bee-eaters** feeding on some beehives. We finished the day with an evening tour of the Plage d'Arles with **Slender-billed gulls**, **Sanderlings**, **Curlew Sandpipers**, **Pied Avocets**, **Little gulls** and a lone **Spotted Flycatcher** just arriving from Africa.



Pied Avocet (Eva Casey)



Great Reed Warbler (Eva Casey)



Bee-eaters

18th of May: The petite Camargue and the Cevennes

We head slowly towards the Petite Camargue. On the way we had a very cooperative **Squacco Heron** and good views of a **Red-footed Falcon**. At the Pont-des-Tourradons the reed bed was teeming with birds, unfortunately the **Moustached warbler** that sang just a few yard from us did not show itself but we had **Red crested Pochard**, **Purple Gallinule**, **Reed warbler**, **Black-winged Stilt** and a **Great Spotted Cuckoo**.



Purple Gallinule (Eva Casey)



Squacco Heron



Black-winged Stilt

We then headed for the Cevennes. We had lunch near a vulture feeding place where we got Griffon vulture. We then headed to l'Esperou where we spent the night.

19 th of May : Mont Aigoual – Causses and Basse Vallée de l’aude

Our day in the mountain was damp and grey to start with, before it got windy and rainy, so we had to use the little dry times as best as we could. Despite the poor conditions around the Mont-Aigoual we saw a **Bullfinch**, some **Coal Tits** and heard **Robin**, **Garden Warbler** and **Dunnock**. In Meyrueis while having a hot chocolate stop we had **Grey wagtail**, **Dipper** and **Crag Martin**.



Dipper and Grey Wagtail (Eva Casey)

In the Gorges de la Jonte we had very good views of **Lammergeyer**, **Griffon Vulture**, **Black Woodpecker** and **Bonelli’s warbler** as well as more distant **Red-billed Chough** and **Short-toed Eagle**. Because of the foul weather we changed our plans and headed for the Basse vallée de l’Aude (and l’Etang de Pissevache) where we saw **Lesser Kestrel**, **Gadwall**, **Crested Lark** and **Fan tailed Warbler**.



Griffon vulture, Lammergeyer and Lesser Kestrel (all Eva Casey)

Throughout the day we got a good diversity of Orchids: Man, Monkey, Lady’s, Military, Elder-scented, Male, Green-veined and Pyramidal where among the species seen.



Green-veined Orchid

Pyramidal Orchid

Military Orchid

Lady’s Orchid

20th of May Gruissan

We started in the Ile-St-Martin where **Woodchat Shrike**, **Red-legged Partridge**, **Corn bunting**, **Cirl bunting**, **Orphean warbler** and two **Red-rumped Swallows** were very cooperative and we (finally) got good views of a **Sardinian Warbler**. Gruissan salt pans provided with **Flamingos**, **Sandwich**, **Common and Little terns**, **Kentish Plovers** and **slender-billed gull**.



Red Legged Partridge (Eva Casey)



Corn Bunting



Woodchat Shrike



Sandwich Terns (Eva Casey)

During our lunch on the foothill on the Clappe we had a **Pied Flycatcher** on its way to Scandinavia and a subalpine warbler was very close but did not give good views. As the Tramontane was blowing there was a steady passage of **Honey buzzards** all day. We then headed for our second night in the town of Narbonne.



Narbonne and its Cathedral

21st of May Leucate – Carcassonne - Le Lauragais

Our first birding was on the plateau de Lapalme where we had migrating **March Harriers** and **Honey buzzards** as well a good movement of hirundines and **Common Swifts**. We also had **Black eared wheatear**, **Tawny Pipit**, glancing views of **Thekla Lark**. We heard **Ortolan Bunting** but could not get views and we had good flight views of a **Quail**.



Black-eared Wheatear (Eva Casey)



the team Birding on the Plateau de Lapalme

We then headed to Leucate where we had **Spotless Starlings** while we sampled local sea food. On the way we saw the rare **Mirror Orchid** and **Corbière Orchid** as well as a hybrid between Mirror and **Bee orchid**.



Eating fresh Sea-food (Eva Casey)



Spotless (left) and Common (right) Starlings



Mirror Orchid, Bee X Mirror Orchid Hybrid And Corbière Orchid

We then headed toward the Lauragais with a stop to see the Cité de Carcassonne. We then visited the old cité de Mirepoix. On the way we had **Hobby**, **Cirl Bunting**, **Stonechat** and **Whitethroat**.



La Cité de Carcassonne

We finished the day by a visit to a **Butterfly orchid** (*A papilionacea* as there as different species known as "Butterfly Orchid") site where we had **Tree Pipit**, **Yellow hammer** and **Montagu's Harrier** as well as **Lizard** and **Early Spider-Orchid** and **Long-lipped Serapias** .



Butterfly orchid , Long lipped Serapias and Early spider Orchid

Day 7 Belpech -Toulouse

On the final morning of the tour we went for an early morning walk on the banks of the River Hers. There we had **Song thrush**, **Hoopoe** (finally) stock dove, good views of **Blue tits** (at long last). It was now time to take the tour members towards Toulouse Airport for the return trip for Eva and for Stauffer and Jenny to head towards the Pyrenees and the Gers



Song Thrush, Hoopoe and Woodpigeon (All Eva Casey)

List of Birds seen during the tour

H heard only, () only seen/heard by Tour leader,

English Name	Latin name	Trip	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	001		X	X		X	X	
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo carbo</i>	002		X	X	X	X		
Night heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	003		X	X				
Squacco heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	004		X	X				
Cattle egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	005	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	006	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Great white egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	007		X	X		X		
Purple heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	008		X	X				
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	009	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
White stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	010	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Glossy ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	011	X	X	X				
Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	012		X					
Greater flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	013		X	X	X	X	X	
Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	014		X	X				
Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	015						X	
Common shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	016		X	X	X	X	X	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	017	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	018		X			X		
Red-crested pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	019		X	X				
Honey buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	020					X	X	X
Black kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	021	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lammergeier	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	022							
Griffon vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	023				X			
Short-toed eagle	<i>Circus gallicus</i>	024	(X)	X	X	X	X	X	
Marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	025	(X)	X				X	
Montagu's harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	026						X	
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>								(X)
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	027			X	X	X		
Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	028			X				
Lesser kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	029	(X)				X		
Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	030	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	031		X	X		X	X	
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				(X)	(X)			
Red-footed falcon	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	032			X				
Red-legged partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	033		(X)			X	X	
Common quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	034				H	H	X	
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	035		X	H			H	
Water rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			H	H				
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	036		X	X		X		

English Name	Latin name	Trip	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	037			X				
Common coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	038		X	X		X	X	
Black-winged stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	039	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	040		X			X		
Stone curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	041		X					
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	042		X					
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	043	X	X	X	X			
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	044		X	X		(H)		
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>				H				
Ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	045		X	X		X		
Kentish plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	046		X	X		X		
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			G					
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	047		X	X		X		
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			(X)					
Wood sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>			(H)					
Common sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>						(X)		
Curlew sandpiper	<i>Calidris feruginea</i>	048		X					
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	049		X	X		X		
Little stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	050		X					
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	051		X					
Ruddy turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	052		X					
Yellow-legged gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	053	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Little Gull	<i>Larus minutus</i>	054		X					
Mediterranean gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	055	X	X	X			(H)	
Black-headed gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	056	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Slender-billed gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	057		X	X			X	
Whiskered tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	058		X	X	X			
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	059		X	X				
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i>	060		X					
Gull-billed tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	061	X	X	X				
Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	062		X	X		X	X	
Little tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	063		X			X	X	
Sandwich tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	064	X		X			X	
Rock (feral) dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	065	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Stock dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>								(X)
Wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	066	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	067	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	068	H	H	X		H	X	
Great spotted cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	069		X				X	
Common cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	070	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Common swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	071	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pallid swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	072					X	(X)	

English Name	Latin name	Trip	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	073		X	X			H	
European bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	074	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Common roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	075	X	X	X	(X)		X	
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	076		H				H	X
Black woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>	077			X				
Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Picoides major</i>							(X)	H
Middle spotted woodpecker	<i>Picoides medius</i>								(X)
Green woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>								H
Short-toed lark	<i>Calendrella brachydactyla</i>		H					H	
Crested lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	078	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Wood lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	079					H	X	
Sky lark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	080	X	X	X	X	X	X	H
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	081		X			X	X	
Crag martin	<i>Hirundo rupestris</i>	082			X	X	X		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	083	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
House martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	084	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	085					X	X	
Blue-headed wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	086	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	087			X				X
White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	088			X	X	X	X	X
Tawny pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	089							
Tree pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>					H		(X)	H
Woodchat shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	090					X	X	
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	091			X	X			
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>				H	H	H	H	H
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>				(H)				
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>				H	H	H	H	H
Nightingale	<i>Erithacus megarrhynchos</i>	092	H	X	H	H	H	H	H
Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	093	(X)	(X)	(X)	X	X	X	X
Common redstart				TG	H				
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	094						X	X
Common Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			TG					
Black-eared wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	095						X	
Blue rock thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>		H			H		H	
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	096	H	X	X	X	X	X	X
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	097	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				H	(X)			
Bearded tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>				(H)			X	
Fan-tailed Warbler	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	098	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cetti's warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H	H	H	H	H	H	H
Reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	099		H	X	H			
Great reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	100	H	X	X	H			

English Name	Latin name	Trip	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Moustached Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>				H				
Melodious warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	101	H	X	X	H	H	H	H
Orphean warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	102			(X)	H	X	(X)	
Sardinian warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	103		H	(X)	H	X	(X)	
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	104	H	H	X	X	(X)	H	X
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	105			(X)	H	H	X	H
Garden warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>			(X)	(X)				
Spectacled warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	106		X		X	H	H	X
Bonelli's warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	107			H	X	H	H	H
Subalpine warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>				(H)	(H)	(X)	(H)	
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybitus</i>		H	H	X	H	H	H	H
Willow warble	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			TG	TG				
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				H	H			
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>		H	H		H	H	H	H
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	108		X	X	X			
Pied flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	109					X		
Coal tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	110			H	X			
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	111		(X)	X	X	X	X	X
Blue tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	112			H			H	X
Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>								
Crested Tit	<i>Parus cristatus</i>				H	H			
Marsh Tit	<i>Parus montanus</i>				H				
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	113			H	H			X
Short-toed treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	114				H	H	X	X
Common treecreeper	<i>familiarisbrachydactyla</i>					(H)	(H)		
Corn bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	115	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	117						X	
Cirl bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	118	X			X	X	X	X
Ortolan Bunting								H	
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	119			X	H	H	H	X
Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	120	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>					(H)			(X)
Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>				(H)			H	H
Citril Finch	<i>Carduelis citrinella</i>				(X)				
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	121	X	X	X			X	X
Linnet	<i>Acanthis cannabina</i>	122	X			X	H	X	
Red crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>				(H)				
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	123			(X)	X			
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	124	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	125		(X)	X				
Rock sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	126					X	X	
Common starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	127	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

English Name	Latin name	Trip	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	128						X	
Golden oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>							H	(X)
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	129				H			
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	130	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Red-billed chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	131				X	X	X	
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	132				H	H		
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		(X)	(X)	(X)				
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	133	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	134		X	X				

List of Butterflies seen during the tour

English Name	Latin name
Old World Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machao</i>
Scarce Swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podiliarius</i>
Brimstone	<i>Gonopteryx rhamni</i>
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>
Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>
Bath White	<i>Pontia daplidice</i>
Black veined White	<i>Aporia crataegi</i>
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>
Red admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>
Speckled wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>
Dusky Heath	<i>Coenonympha dorus</i>
Western Marbled White	<i>Melanargia occitanica</i>
Spanish gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia bathseba</i>
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tytonus</i>

List of Orchids seen during the tour

We did not list all the plants seen during the tour but we provide a list of all orchid species seen (

English Name	Latin name
Elder-flowered orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza sambucina</i>
Spotted Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>
Early-purple orchid	<i>Orchis mascula</i>
Man orchid	<i>Orchis (=Aceras) anthropophora</i>
Lady's orchid	<i>Orchis purpurea</i>
Military orchid	<i>Orchis militaris</i>
Monkey orchid	<i>Orchis simia</i>
Long-lipped serapias	<i>Serapias vomeracea</i>
Lesser butterfly-orchid	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>
Mirror Orchid	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>
Corbières Orchid	<i>Ophrys corbariensis</i>
Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>
Early spider Orchid	<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>
Butterfly Orchid	<i>Anacamptis papilionacea</i>
Pyramidal orchid	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>
Green veined orchid	<i>Anacamptis morio</i>
Lizard Orchid	<i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>



Legend of the map on the previous page:

Red dots where we stayed at night from right to left:

Salin de Giraud

L'Espérou

Narbonne

Belpech

In blue birding sites

1 La Crau

2 Phare de la Gachole

3 Mas d'Agon

4 Plage d'Arles

5 Pont de Tourradons

6 Le Triadou

7 Mont Aigoual

8 Meyrueis et les gorges de la Jonte

9 Embouchure de l'Aude

10 Gruissan

11 Plateau de Lapalme

12 Leucate

13 Mirepoix

14 Belpech