

# Monfrague, Trujillo and Serena

This tour to Extremadura takes you to one of the premier sites for birds in Western Europe. Extremadura is a region of vast contrasts ranging from rugged mountains to miles of extensive steppes. Our main focus is observing several exceptional and rare species including Great Bustard, Spanish Imperial Eagle, Black-shouldered Kite, Black Stork, Eurasian Eagle Owl and Iberian Magpie. Other specialties include a wide-range of sylvia warblers and both Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse. Extremadura is a wonderful experience in springtime with fields of wild flowers and butterflies in addition to the dazzling array of birds. We visit Monfrague, Trujillo and the steppes of Serena, staying in hotels close to the best birdwatching localities. Flights are available from many destinations in Europe. Please ensure you arrive in Madrid by 1300 hours on Day 1. (both tours)

**Day 1:** Rendezvous at Madrid Airport. From Madrid we head in a westwards direction towards Extremadura, stopping at an old town with a medieval castle. The castle itself has nesting White Stork, Lesser Kestrel and Crag Martins. In the surrounding countryside, we expect to find typical birds of inland Spain including Eurasian Griffon Vulture, Short-toed Eagle, Black-shouldered Kite, Great Spotted Cuckoo and Woodchat Shrike. Transfer to our hotel within Monfrague for four nights.

**Day 2:** We start the day with a short walk in the dehasas around the hotel. This is an important habitat for Common Cuckoo, Western Orphean Warbler, Eurasian Hoopoe and Blackcap. Later, we follow a birding route inside Monfrague, part of it running along the River Tajo. We expect to have excellent views of Egyptian, Eurasian Griffon and Black Vultures, Spanish Imperial, Golden and the fast-declining Bonelli's Eagle, and Black and Red Kites. We also have opportunities to locate Eurasian Eagle Owl, Black Stork, Blue Rock Thrush and Red-rumped Swallows that utilise the cliffs above the river systems. In the forested areas, we search for Western Bonelli's Warbler, Short-toed Treecreeper, Eurasian Nuthatch and the Iberian race of Long-tailed Tit.

**Day 3:** Today we take a circular trip to the east and south of Monfrague. The route has

## Dates

Saturday April 15th - Saturday April 22nd 2017

Leader: Chris Bradshaw

Group Size: 8

Birds: 140-180

been specifically planned to cover the range of Sylvia warblers occurring in this area of Spain. We should see Spectacled, Western Orphean, Subalpine, Dartford and Sardinian Warblers. Raptors should again be in evidence along with parties of European Bee-eaters, Woodlark and Woodchat Shrikes. A picnic lunch is taken at Arrocampo Reservoir where we may encounter Purple Heron, Little Bittern, Eurasian Spoonbill, Marsh Harrier, Purple Swamphen, Common Kingfisher, Eurasian Penduline Tits and Savì's Warblers.

**Day 4:** A morning visit to the old castle of Castillo de Monfrague. The castle itself and adjacent habitat hold Black Redstart, Blue Rock Thrush, Thekla Lark, Rock Bunting and Iberian Magpie. We may also see raptors and perhaps White-rumped Swift. In the afternoon, we revisit the southern sector of Monfrague and forest areas.

**Day 5:** Today we head towards Serena with stops in Trujillo, the steppes of Belen and Embalse de Sierra Brava. In Trujillo we visit



**Griffon and Black Vultures** Photo: Simon Papps

the town centre to observe nesting White Stork, Lesser Kestrel and Pallid Swift. On the steppes of Belen our main interest is in locating Little and Great Bustards, Short-toed Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Little Owl and Woodchat Shrike. At the embalse we should locate terns and gulls and, with a little luck, Collared Pratincoles. Transfer to our hotel in Quintana de la Serena for a three-night stay.

**Day 6:** Birding in La Serena and Sierra de Tiros, a combination of mountain and steppe habitats. A thorough exploration of Sierra de Tiros may reveal Egyptian Vulture, Bonelli's and Short-toed Eagles, Eurasian Eagle Owl, Red-legged Partridge and the localised and declining Black Wheatear. On the steppes we have further opportunities for bustards, Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Stone Curlew and Spanish Sparrow.

**Day 7:** In the morning, we go birding along the River Zujar. Habitats along the river hold European Bee-eater, Golden Oriole, Grey Wagtail, Red-rumped Swallow, Western Bonelli's Warbler and Great Reed Warblers.

Little Grebe and Red-crested Pochard are sometimes present along with migrant waders. In Serena we look for any steppe species we may have missed, plus a selection of larks.

**Day 8:** Transfer to Madrid Airport where the tour concludes mid-afternoon.

## Prices

Ground Price: £1,595  
 Single room: £100  
 Deposit: £250  
 \*Air Fare: £150

This tour is fully inclusive of accommodation and meals, transport, park entrance fees and permits, guidance, tips and taxes.

**Not included:** drinks, insurance, and items of a personal nature.

*\*Please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights*