

# Southern Portugal 2019



## Birding and vacation

February 23 – March 4, 2019

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## Introduction

Longing for springtime and warm weather made us leave Denmark and head for Southern Portugal in the last week of February. Our aim was to enjoy nature and bird-life of the region Alentejo in a relaxing way.

This short report contains notes on our tour with a list of species. Because it was early in the season, we did not expect to see that many species of birds, but we were quite happy with the outcome anyway.

## Itinerary

**Saturday Feb 23.** We arrived in Lisbon late afternoon, got the rented car and drove directly to Hotel Luna Esperanca in Setúbal.

**Sunday Feb 24.** The hotel is situated close to the harbour from where we crossed the Sado Estuary to Troia Peninsula. From the ferry, we were lucky to see a group of some ten Dolphins. Heading south towards Comporta, we stopped and looked for the many shorebirds in Sado Bay. It was low tide though, so the birds were far away on the mud-flats, but there were many species of northern migrating waders like Curlew, Sanderling, Dunlin and Black-tailed Godwit.

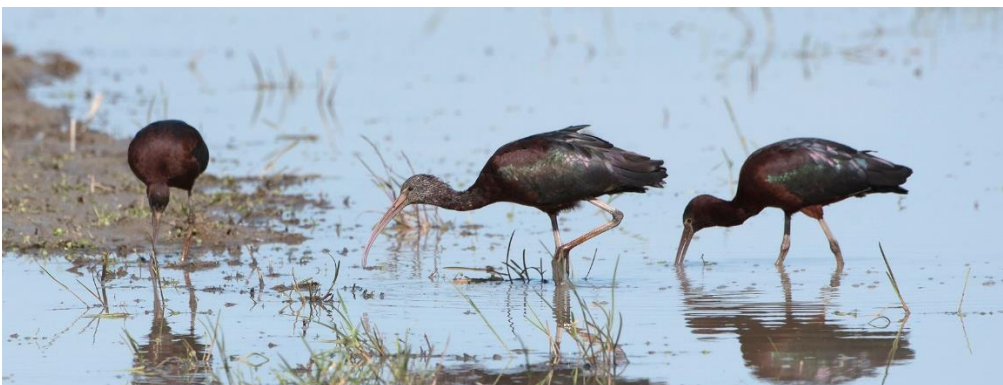


Sado Bay from Troia.

Just before arriving at Comporta we had fine view over the rice-fields. Here, the Glossy Ibis appeared in great numbers. We estimated 1000 to be seen from there. Comporta also had many White Storks on nests, and we enjoyed the stork colonies in many other villages and along roads on our tour as well.

From Comporta we visited the rice fields at Cambado and the fishing village Carrasqueira. Besides many Glossy Ibis, we had Little Egret, Stilt and a flock of Common Waxbill.

The afternoon was spend further south at Lagoa Santo André, a beautiful landscape with the big lagoon behind a big barrier of dunes. The northern part is quit built-up so we concentrated on the southern part with a walk along the coast. We stayed in the Hotel Rural Monte da Leziria in the town Santo André.



Glossy Ibis

**Monday Feb 25.** In the morning, we had a walk to the east coast of the lagoon from A26-1 through extensive farmland with some open forest and sandy soil. In the lagoon were Shoveler, Little and Black-necked Grebe, Osprey and Marsh Harrier.

Next stop was Vila Nova de Milfontes. Although the town is a tourist magnet, it is quite nice to visit at this time of the year. We stayed at Hotel Casa dos Arcos in the old part of the town, near Rio Mira where Sandwich Terns were fishing.



Vila Nova Milfontes

**Tuesday Feb 26.** South of the river mouth, we visited Cabo Sardao. This is a very impressive coast with tall rough cliffs. Here were some seabirds, like Gannet, Cormorant, Shag, and surprisingly, White Stork nesting on the exposed sea-cliffs. Thekla Lark was seen along the path on top of the cliffs.



White Stork nesting on sea-cliffs, Cabo Sardao

From the coast, we sat direction towards the steppe area between Castro Verde and Mertola. Here, we stayed at B&B Ecoland in Corte Gafo Cima the next 4 nights.

Large areas of this landscape consist of “montados” with scattered oak trees either used for grazing or growing grains between the trees. Some parts are more regular cultivated fields and some are plantations of pine. The steppe near Castro Verde is tree-less, dry grassland that seem to be partly cultivated in intervals.



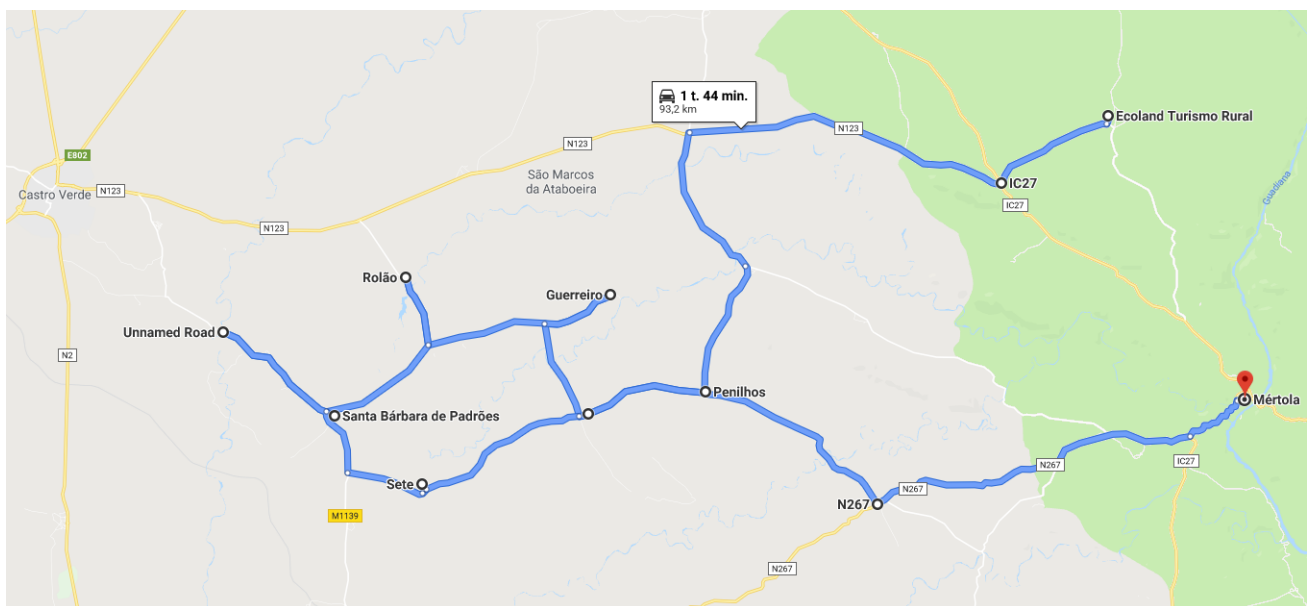


Montados

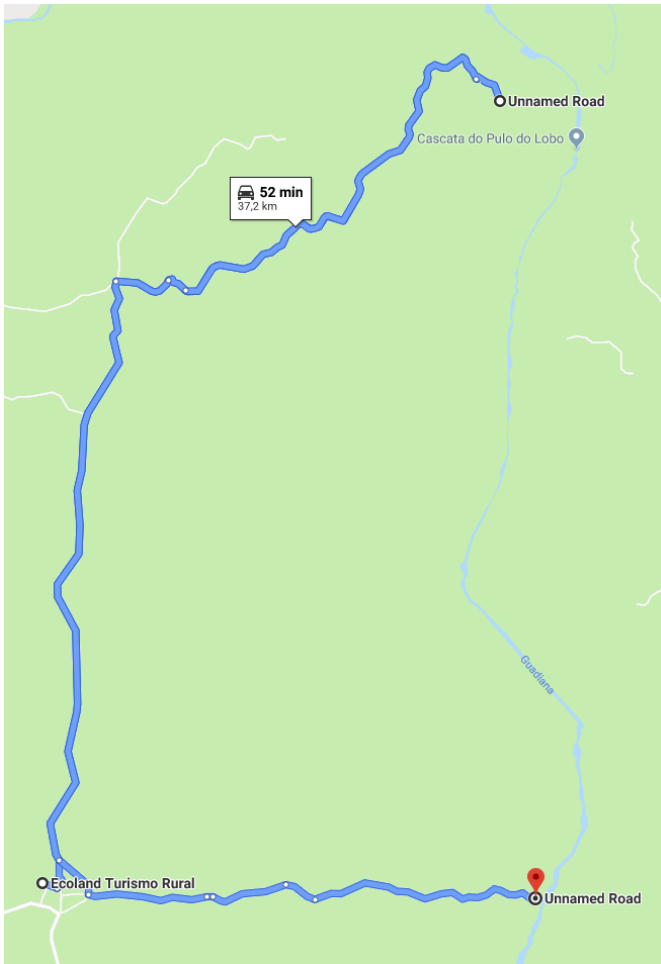
**Wednesday Feb 27 – Saturday Mar 2** we spend in the area between Mertola, Rio Guadiana, and Castro Verde. We enjoyed the many storks nesting in the villages and in trees and on pylons – the nests often filled with Spanish Sparrows, House Sparrows and Starlings. Corn Buntings were singing everywhere, and we had plenty of opportunities to practice identification of larks – five species.

Of course, we were on the look-out for the special steppe-birds. And we were not disappointed: Great Bustard showed up three different places in flocks up to 30, Little Bustard 15 plus a few, and Blackbellied Sandgrouse seven times in small groups. Black-winged Kite was seen twice in pairs, Spanish Imperial Eagle one adult and one young, and Bonelli's Eagle seen two times (1-2). Common Buzzard and Red Kite were very common, as was Kestrel. Lesser Kestrel, we only saw in Mertola. On the open steppe, we saw flocks of Golden Plover and Lapwing.

Mentioned should also be Azure-winged Magpie in flocks, a few Great Spotted Cuckoo, and quite common, Little Owl in piles of stone in the fields and Hoopoe, Iberian Grey Shrike and Green Woodpecker.



Route with many opportunities to watch steppe birds between Mertola and Castro Verde.



Routes to River Guadiana from Gafo Cima



Steppe, Guerreiro

**Saturday Mar 2 – Sunday Mar 3.** We returned to Vila Nova de Milfontes for one night in the same hotel, enjoyed the beach and the cliffs north of the river mouth.

**Sunday Mar 3,** we drove straight to Setubal via the Troia ferry before noon, and in the afternoon, we had a tour in the Arrabida Mountains west of Setubal. Everybody else also had decided to spend the Sunday afternoon here, so it was not a perfect timing for us. But we accidentally came to Lagoa Albufeira, a small nature reserve near the west coast with water birds to watch. And at Cabo Espichel, we saw the petrified footprints of dinosaurs.

**Monday Mar 4.** Very early off to the airport and back to Denmark.

## Practical Information

- Air tickets with TAP, rental car, and the first hotel were booked through Svante Rejser <http://www.svante.dk/>.
- The B&B Ecoland in Corte Gafo Cima, we booked ahead: <https://www.ecoland.pt/en/home-en/>. This is a small accommodation, which we recommend for people who want to stay outside the towns Mertola or Castro Verde.
- The Crossbill guide-book Southern Portugal by Dirk Hilbers and Kees Woutersen was used in planning the trip and was a great help.
- The weather was mainly dry with temperatures up to 20 C.
- We used the map from Turinta 1:600.000 for driving and Google Maps for details.
- Handbooks used were Svensson L, Mullarney K and Zetterström D (2012): Fugle I Felten, and Aulagnier S. et al. (2009): Mammals of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.
- Camera: Nikon D750 with 200-400 mm/f4 + 1,4 converter and Nikon D610 with 24-120 mm/f4.
- Photos from this tour can be seen here: [www.natur-foto.dk](http://www.natur-foto.dk), click "Rejser".
- Contact: [bisschop@post6.tele.dk](mailto:bisschop@post6.tele.dk).



**Corn Bunting**



**Spanish Imperial Eagle**



**Great Bustard**



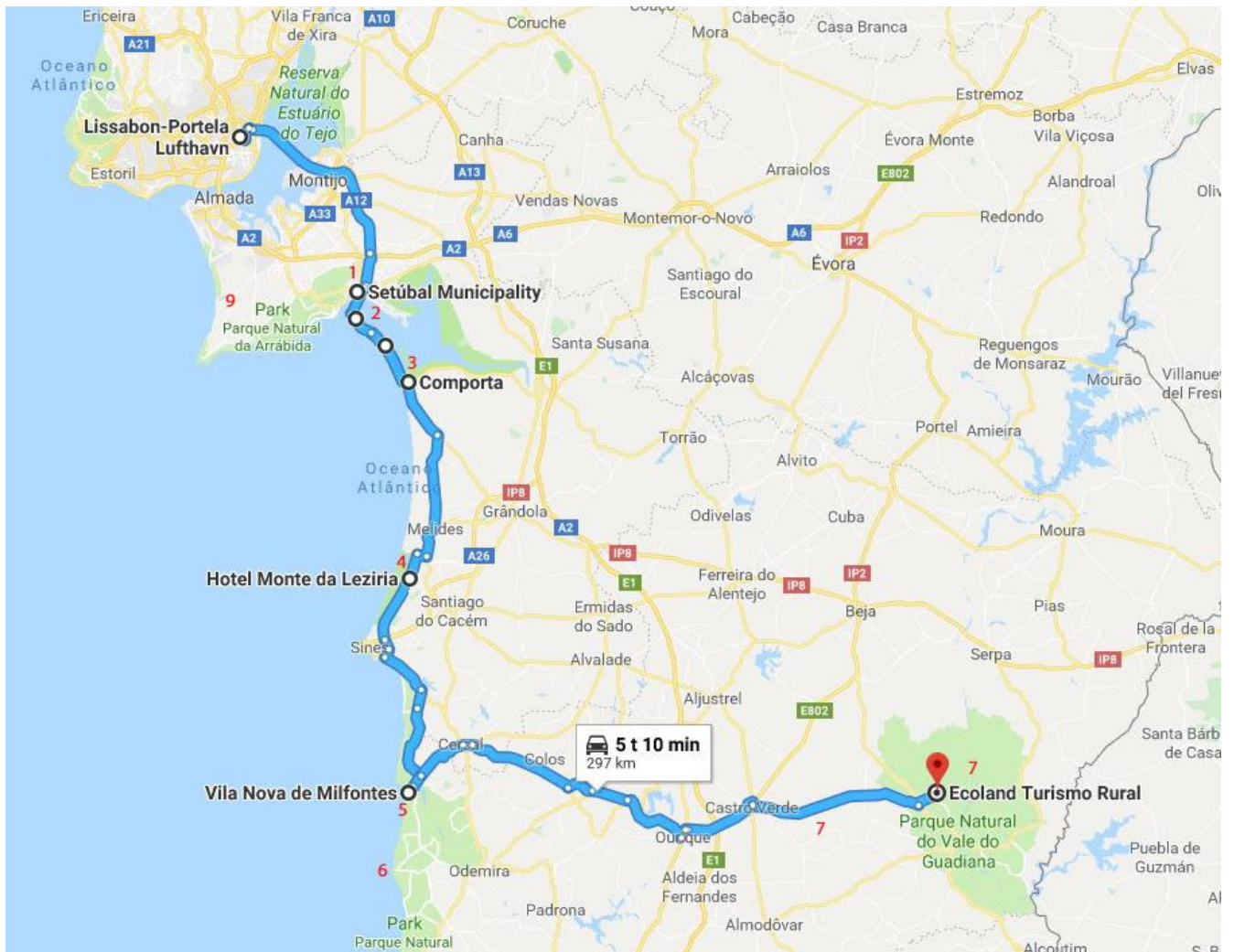
**Red Kite**



**Great Spotted Cuckoo**



## Species List



The route in Portugal with locations numbered 1 – 9.

1. Setubal 24 Feb + 3 Mar.
2. Ferry to Troia 24 Feb
3. Troia peninsula, Comporta, Cambado and Carrasqueira 24 Feb
4. Lagoa de Santo Andre 24-25 Feb
5. Vila Nova de Milfontes 25-26 Feb + 2 Mar
6. Cabo Sardao 26 Feb
7. Castro Verde – Mertola, Corte Gafo de Cima and Guadiana River 26 Feb – 2 Mar
8. Observations en route
9. Lagoa Albufeira 3 Mar



Birds observed in Portugal Feb 24 – Mar 3 2019			Location number								
Species	Scientific name	Danish name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Tufted Duck	<a href="#">Aythya fuligula</a>	Troldand				30					x
Northern Shoveler	<a href="#">Spatula clypeata</a>	Skeand				20		1			x
Gadwall	<a href="#">Mareca strepera</a>	Knarand						3			x
Mallard	<a href="#">Anas platyrhynchos</a>	Gråand	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Common Teal	<a href="#">Anas crecca</a>	Krikand						2			
Common Quail	<a href="#">Coturnix coturnix</a>	Vagtel							x		
Red-legged Partridge	<a href="#">Alectoris rufa</a>	Rødhøne	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Little Grebe	<a href="#">Tachybaptus ruficollis</a>	Lille Lappedykker				x					1
Great Crested Grebe	<a href="#">Podiceps cristatus</a>	Toppet Lappedykker				1					
Black-necked Grebe	<a href="#">Podiceps nigricollis</a>	Sorthalset Lappedykker				10					
Rock Dove	<a href="#">Columba livia</a>	Klippedue						x			
Wood Pigeon	<a href="#">Columba palumbus</a>	Ringdue							x		
Eurasian Collared Dove	<a href="#">Streptopelia decaocto</a>	Tyrkerdue			x	x	x		x	x	
Black-bellied Sandgrouse	<a href="#">Pterocles orientalis</a>	Sortbuget Sandhøne							20		
Great Spotted Cuckoo	<a href="#">Clamator glandarius</a>	Skadegøg							3		
Western Water Rail	<a href="#">Rallus aquaticus</a>	Vandrikse				2					
Common Coot	<a href="#">Fulica atra</a>	Blishøne				x			x		
Common Moorhen		Rørhøne							x		x
Little Bustard	<a href="#">Tetrax tetrax</a>	Dværgtrappe							22		
Great Bustard	<a href="#">Otis tarda</a>	Stortrappe							70		
European White Stork	<a href="#">Ciconia ciconia</a>	Hvid Stork	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cattle Egret	<a href="#">Bubulcus ibis</a>	Kohejre			x	6			x	x	
Grey Heron	<a href="#">Ardea cinerea</a>	Fiskehejre			1	1					1
Great Egret	<a href="#">Ardea alba</a>	Sølvhejre				1					
Little Egret	<a href="#">Egretta garzetta</a>	Silkehejre			x						1
Eurasian Spoonbill	<a href="#">Platalea leucorodia</a>	Skestork			x						
Glossy Ibis	<a href="#">Plegadis falcinellus</a>	Sort Ibis			x						
Northern Gannet	<a href="#">Morus bassanus</a>	Sule						x			
European Shag	<a href="#">Phalacrocorax aristotelis</a>	Topskarv						x			
Great Cormorant	<a href="#">Phalacrocorax carbo</a>	Skarv	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<a href="#">Haematopus ostralegus</a>	Strandskade			x						
Black-winged Stilt	<a href="#">Himantopus himantopus</a>	Stylteløber			1						
Eurasian Golden Plover	<a href="#">Pluvialis apricaria</a>	Hjejle			x				180		
Common Ringed Plover	<a href="#">Charadrius hiaticula</a>	Stor Præstekrave			x						
Kentish Plover	<a href="#">Charadrius alexandrinus</a>	Hvidbrystet Præstekrave					4				
Northern Lapwing	<a href="#">Vanellus vanellus</a>	Vibe							20		
Whimbrel	<a href="#">Numenius phaeopus</a>	Småspove			2						
Eurasian Curlew	<a href="#">Numenius arquata</a>	Storspove			x						
Black-tailed Godwit	<a href="#">Limosa limosa</a>	Stor Kobbersneppe			x						
Ruddy Turnstone	<a href="#">Arenaria interpres</a>	Stenvender					6				
Curlew Sandpiper	<a href="#">Calidris ferruginea</a>	Krumnæbbet Ryle			x						

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Species	Scientific name	Danish name									
Sanderling	<a href="#">Calidris alba</a>	Sandløber			x						
Dunlin	<a href="#">Calidris alpina</a>	Almindelig Ryle			x						
Common Snipe	<a href="#">Gallinago gallinago</a>	Dobbeltbekkasin							x		
Common Sandpiper	<a href="#">Actitis hypoleucos</a>	Mudderklire			x						
Green Sandpiper	<a href="#">Tringa ochropus</a>	Svaleklire							3		
Common Greenshank	<a href="#">Tringa nebularia</a>	Hvidklire			x						
Common Redshank	<a href="#">Tringa totanus</a>	Rødben			x						
Black-headed Gull	<a href="#">Chroicocephalus ridibundus</a>	Hættemåge	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Mediterranean Gull	<a href="#">Ichthyæetus melanocephalus</a>	Sorthovedet Måge	x				10				
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<a href="#">Larus fuscus</a>	Sildemåge	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Yellow-legged Gull	<a href="#">Larus michahellis</a>	Middelhavs-sølvmåge	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Sandwich Tern	<a href="#">Thalasseus sandvicensis</a>	Splitterne				1	x				
Osprey	<a href="#">Pandion haliaetus</a>	Fiskeørn				1					
Black-winged Kite	<a href="#">Elanus caeruleus</a>	Blå Glente							5		
Spanish Imperial Eagle	<a href="#">Aquila adalberti</a>	Spansk Kejserørn							2		
Bonelli's Eagle	<a href="#">Aquila fasciata</a>	Høgeørn							2		
Western Marsh Harrier	<a href="#">Circus aeruginosus</a>	Rørhøg			2	2			x		1
Hen Harrier	<a href="#">Circus cyaneus</a>	Blå Kærhøg							2		
Montagu's Harrier	<a href="#">Circus pygargus</a>	Hedehøg							1?		
Red Kite	<a href="#">Milvus milvus</a>	Rød Glente							x		
Black Kite	<a href="#">Milvus migrans</a>	Sort Glente							3		
Eurasian Buzzard	<a href="#">Buteo buteo</a>	Musvåge	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Little Owl	<a href="#">Athene noctua</a>	Kirkeugle							x		
Eurasian Hoopoe	<a href="#">Upupa epops</a>	Hærfugl				x			x		
Green Woodpecker	<a href="#">Picus viridis</a>	Grønspætte							3		
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<a href="#">Dendrocopos major</a>	Stor Flagspætte							1		
Common Kingfisher	<a href="#">Alcedo atthis</a>	Isfugl							1		
Lesser Kestrel	<a href="#">Falco naumanni</a>	Lille Tårnfalk							x		
Common Kestrel	<a href="#">Falco tinnunculus</a>	Tårnfalk	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Peregrine Falcon	<a href="#">Falco peregrinus</a>	Vandrefalk							1		
Iberian Grey Shrike	<a href="#">Lanius meridionalis</a>	Sydlig Stor Tornskade							x		
Azure-winged Magpie	<a href="#">Cyanopica cyanus</a>	Blåskade							x		
Eurasian Jay	<a href="#">Garrulus glandarius</a>	Skovskade								1	
Eurasian Magpie	<a href="#">Pica pica</a>	Husskade							x		
Eurasian Jackdaw	<a href="#">Corvus monedula</a>	Allike							x		
Common Raven	<a href="#">Corvus corax</a>	Ravn							x		
Carrion Crow	<a href="#">Corvus corone</a>	Krage	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Common Waxbill	<a href="#">Estrilda astrild</a>	Helenaastrild			10						
House Sparrow	<a href="#">Passer domesticus</a>	Gråspurv	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Spanish Sparrow	<a href="#">Passer hispaniolensis</a>	Spansk Spurv	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Meadow Pipit	<a href="#">Anthus pratensis</a>	Engpiber			1				x		
White Wagtail	<a href="#">Motacilla alba</a>	Hvid Vipstjert			x				x		
Common Chaffinch	<a href="#">Fringilla coelebs</a>	Bogfinke							x		

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<b>Species</b>	Scientific name	Danish name									
<b>Hawfinch</b>	<a href="#">Coccothraustes coccothraustes</a>	Kernebider							1		
<b>European Greenfinch</b>	<a href="#">Chloris chloris</a>	Grønirisk							x		
<b>Common Linnet</b>	<a href="#">Linaria cannabina</a>	Tornirisk						x	x		
<b>European Goldfinch</b>	<a href="#">Carduelis carduelis</a>	Stillits	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>European Serin</b>	<a href="#">Serinus serinus</a>	Gulirisk				2	x				
<b>Corn Bunting</b>	<a href="#">Emberiza calandra</a>	Bomlærke	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Cirl Bunting</b>	<a href="#">Emberiza cirlus</a>	Gærdeværbling							x		
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<a href="#">Cyanistes caeruleus</a>	Blåmejse							x		
<b>Great Tit</b>	<a href="#">Parus major</a>	Musvit							x		
<b>Calandra Lark</b>	<a href="#">Melanocorypha calandra</a>	Kalanderlærke							x		
<b>Wood Lark</b>	<a href="#">Lullula arborea</a>	Hedelærke				1			x		
<b>Eurasian Sky Lark</b>	<a href="#">Alauda arvensis</a>	Sanglærke				x			x		
<b>Thekla Lark</b>	<a href="#">Galerida theklae</a>	Theklalærke					1	x			
<b>Crested Lark</b>	<a href="#">Galerida cristata</a>	Toplærke				x		x	x		
<b>Zitting Cisticola</b>	<a href="#">Cisticola juncidis</a>	Cistussanger				x					
<b>Northern House Martin</b>	<a href="#">Delichon urbicum</a>	Bysvale					x		x		
<b>Red-rumped Swallow</b>	<a href="#">Cecropis daurica</a>	Rødrygget Svale					1		x		
<b>Barn Swallow</b>	<a href="#">Hirundo rustica</a>	Landsvale	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Eurasian Crag Martin</b>	<a href="#">Ptyonoprogne rupestris</a>	Klippesvale							x		
<b>Sand Martin</b>	<a href="#">Riparia riparia</a>	Digesvale								x	
<b>Iberian Chiffchaff</b>	<a href="#">Phylloscopus ibericus</a>	Iberisk Gransanger							x		
<b>Cetti's Warbler</b>	<a href="#">Cettia cetti</a>	Cettisanger				x					
<b>Eurasian Blackcap</b>	<a href="#">Sylvia atricapilla</a>	Munk					x		x		
<b>Sardinian Warbler</b>	<a href="#">Curruca melanocephala</a>	Sorthovedet Sanger							1		
<b>Short-toed Treecreeper</b>	<a href="#">Certhia brachydactyla</a>	Korttået Træløber							1		
<b>Eurasian Wren</b>	<a href="#">Troglodytes troglodytes</a>	Gærdesmutte							x		
<b>Spotless Starling</b>	<a href="#">Sturnus unicolor</a>	Ensfarvet Stær	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Crested Myna</b>	<a href="#">Acridotheres cristatellus</a>	Topmaina	x								
<b>Black Redstart</b>	<a href="#">Phoenicurus ochruros</a>	Husrødstjert				x			x		
<b>Blue Rock Thrush</b>	<a href="#">Monticola solitarius</a>	Blådressel							1		
<b>European Stonechat</b>	<a href="#">Saxicola rubicola</a>	Vestlig Sortstrubet Bynkefugl	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	<a href="#">Turdus viscivorus</a>	Misteldrossel							x		
<b>Eurasian Blackbird</b>	<a href="#">Turdus merula</a>	Solsort			1	x		x	x		

IOC World Bird Names, version 9.1

#### Mammals:

<b>Genet</b>	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	Genet	1 road-killed, loc 7
<b>Hedgehog</b>	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Pindsvin	1 road-killed, loc 7
<b>Rabbit</b>	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Kanin	Common locally
<b>Iberian Hare</b>	<i>Lepus granatensis</i>	Iberisk Hare	Common locally
<b>Roe Deer</b>	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	Rådyr	1 near Mertola