



Natural values



There is possibly no other place in Malaga where you can watch such diversity of migrant birds in September, excluding the wetlands. Nevertheless, choosing Las Campiñuelas as one of our suggestions for September has been a very hard decision as this site is unfortunately a good example of a really poor environmental management: rubble and garbage are left everywhere; motor vehicles are driven off-road out of the racetracks; hunting dogs are walked to disturb every bird trying to rest in the area...

We do not want to discourage your visit here. On the contrary, we want Las Campiñuelas to be known as a fantastic place to go birding and as a place deserving much more care and attention from everybody.

Las Campiñuelas extends over 80 has. of clayey bare soil and abandoned olive groves south east of Velez-Malaga in the Axarquia District. It is delimited by A7 motorway to the south, Camino de Torrox to the west, Camino de Algarrobo to the north and Rio Seco to the east.



These are some of the birds we can find here in September (MB = migrant breeding; P = on passage): Red-legged Partridge, Cattle Egret, Short-toed Snake Eagle (P), Booted Eagle (MB/P),



Kestrel, Stone Curlew, Dotterel (P), Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Turtle Dove (MB/P), Little Owl, Swift (P), Pallid Swift (MB/P), Hoopoe, Bee-eater (P), Wryneck (P), Crested Lark, Thekla Lark, Short-toed lark (P), Barn Swallow (MB/P), Red-rumped Swallow (MB/P), House



Martin (MB/P), Tawny Pipit (P), Tree Pipit (P), Yellow Wagtail (P), Nightingale (MB/P), Redstart (P), Wheatear (P), Black-eared Wheatear (P), Whinchat (P), Stonechat, Blackbird, Garden Warbler (P), Blackcap, Whitethroat (P), Western Orphean Warbler (P), Sardinian Warbler, Spectacled Warbler (P), Subalpine Warbler (P), Zitting Cisticola, Reed Warbler (P), Melodious Warbler (P), Willow Warbler (P), Western Bonelli's Warbler (P), Spotted Flycatcher (MB/P), Pied Flycatcher (P), Great Tit, Blue Tit, Iberian Grey Shrike, Woodchat Shrike (MB/P), Spotless Starling, Golden Oriole (P), House Sparrow, Rock Sparrow, Chaffinch, Linnets, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Serin and Corn Bunting.



Birds marked with "P" are some of the migrant species that can be found on passage during September. Birds do not migrate at the same time: the passage of some species like sylvia warblers, for example, is more intense at the beginning of September, while that of wheatears and pipits can still be noticeable at the end of the month. There could also be other birds on

passage that have not been included on the list for the sake of simplicity though... keep your eyes peeled!

We acknowledge Francisco Botella Segovia's contribution to interpret and love this battered corner of the Axarquia.

How to get there

Type "Club Aeromodelismo Axarquia" in Google Maps. It gives us a runway for model aeroplanes located just in the middle of Las Campiñuelas. We can park the car at Camino de Algarrobo, next to a "recreational area", at the north end of the site, as showed in the map.



We highly recommend an early start of our visit, specially during the weekends.

A bird walk around Las Campiñuelas

Las Campiñuelas is a place where you can wander about without following a precise route. We will describe a circular way and some landmarks in it to help you know the area and find the birds.

We will walk westwards from the car park on a platform along the road. Please, mind the traffic every time you cross the road! We will find a house some 300 m. away from the car park. Let's go across the road towards a water spring next to an old irrigation pool below a ruined farmhouse. Las Campiñuelas is a very dry place in summer so the spring attracts plenty of birds.



Back to the house by the road, let's follow the track down to the south across the olive grove. This is a good place for Little Owls. Other birds like hoopoes, flycatchers, redstarts and shrikes feel very comfortable in the olive trees as well. The grove is scattered with some fig trees that provide food to both resident and migrant birds in September.

We will have a nice view of the bare plains around the runway from the end of the track. Here is where the Dotterels regularly stop over for a few days every year. Red-legged Partridges,

Crested Larks, Stonechats, and finches are common resident birds here while Whinchats, Tree Pipits and Short-toed Larks and a big number of Wheatears will be present during the autumn migration.



Let's walk slowly towards the south end of the runway. Small birds like Zitting Cisticolas or even Spectacled Warblers on passage may show up as we go on. There is a little hollow full of tamarisks where rainwater accumulates on a clayey ground. It is the only wet place in these plains and it might host Yellow Wagtails, Reed Warblers and waders.



Going on to the south, we will approach the Camino de Torrox and find a pile of manure which is worthwhile scan for insectivorous



birds like warblers, wagtails and pipits. After all, this is the only acceptable waste at the countryside!

We will now head to the olive grove west of the manure and keep looking for wheatears, shrikes, flycatchers and warblers. Let's pay attention to larks and Tawny Pipits on the ground. We will go on northwards leaving the runway behind on the left. We will walk across the Camino de Algarrobo into another olive grove.



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Some of the trees here are very old and are full of natural holes which, together with a base of the trunk full of scrub, favour Little Owls and other birds to hide, nest and rest. We are close to the Rio Seco river bed here, a more favourable place for Turtle Doves and Bee-eaters, which can be easily watched while perched on the wires.



Our last milestone before coming back to the car is a hedge made of bramble, olive and fig trees. The blackberries and figs are manna for migrant birds so, if we stay quiet some metres away from the hedge, we may have great views of Whitethroat, Garden, Orphean, Sardinian, Subalpine, Reed and Melodious Warblers.



PHOTOS:

1. Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)
2. Las Campiñuelas
3. Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
4. Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)
5. Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*)
6. Map

7. Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)
8. Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)
9. Pond
10. Manure
11. Olive grove
12. Juvenile Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*)
13. Old olive tree
14. Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)
15. Hedge
16. Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)