

## Day trip between Canet-en-Roussillon and Saint-Hippolyte (66)

20<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Guide of the day:** Karline Martorell accompanied by Philippa Benson

**Participants:** 6

**Weather conditions:** sunny but very windy weather, temps ranging from 6°C to 11°C+

**Highlights of the day:** Bluethroat, Water pipit, Kentish plover, Iberian green woodpecker

### Itinerary and birding spots of the day

We started the day with some observations around the Cabane des pêcheurs on the Canet-en-Roussillon lagoon. First we visited a hide where we had good views of Kentish plover and grebes (Great crested grebe and Black-necked grebe). In the distance, we could see many birds sheltering in the edge of the reed beds: large groups of Shoveler, Flamingo, Sandwich tern and Mute swan with the occasional Marsh harrier quartering the reed beds.



A bridge provided a high point to scan a canal with muddy margins. On the way, we stopped when we saw small passerines feeding on a small swampy area. And to our great surprise, it was a Water pipit and a BLUETHROAT!!!! A gorgeous view of Bluethroat with a male adult in breeding plumage. Usually this species is hidden in reeds and rarely visible on migration. So we really were lucky!

Even for the Water pipit, it is unusual to see it as well as the Meadow pipit, which is much more common. So excited to get such a good long view of these two species feeding in the open.



Great view of Bluethroat and Water pipit!



After that we had a quick walk along the beach to the breakwater at the mouth of the river *E/ Reart* where we had good views of Kentish plover, Little egret and Sandwich tern.



The next stop was too windy to stay with the scopes so we headed on. But as we were leaving, a Great spotted cuckoo flew in to land and perched on the wooden beach fences. We all saw it well looking for insects on the ground.

After this good view of one of the target species of the day, we went to picnic at our Iberian green woodpecker spot. This has long been considered a subspecies of the European Green woodpecker. In France, this new species can only be found in the Pyrénées-orientales and a part of the Aude. Iberian green woodpecker differs in having less black on the cheeks and around the eyes. We had such a good view of it that this distinguishing feature appeared well in the scope.



After lunch, we explored the open landscape along the *El Reart* river. Upon arrival, a Short-toed eagle flew directly over us, carried by the wind. A few Marsh harrier flew across the Canet lagoon and several Common kestrel were hunting above the meadows. Too much wind for most birds.



To finish the day, we went to the Sagnette reserve in Saint-Hippolyte. Here in some inlets, we saw a Little grebe, good numbers of Coot, Teal and a Water rail. Four Alpine swift flew over quite low on migration, a great way to finish the day.

Fifty one species for this good day trip! As often with birding, it turned out to be a day full of surprises! Some great rewards for a very challenging day weather wise!

## Bird List 20/03/21

English Name	French Name	Scientific Name
Mute Swan	Cygne tuberculé	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Mallard	Canard colvert	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Northern Shoveler	Canard souchet	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Eurasian Teal	Sarcelle d'hiver	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Common Shelduck	Tadorne de Belon	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Black-necked Grebe	Grèbe à cou noir	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
Little Grebe	Grèbe castagneux	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	Grèbe huppé	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Great Cormorant	Grand Cormoran	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Little Egret	Aigrette garzette	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Grey Heron	Héron cendré	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Greater Flamingo	Flamant rose	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
Western Marsh Harrier	Busard des roseaux	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Common Buzzard	Buse variable	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Short-toed Snake Eagle	Circaète Jean-le-Blanc	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	Épervier d'Europe	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Common Kestrel	Faucon crécerelle	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Eurasian Coot	Foulque macroule	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Common Moorhen	Gallinule poule-d'eau	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Water Rail	Râle d'eau	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
Common Crane	Grue cendrée	<i>Grus grus</i>
Common Ringed Plover	Grand gravelot	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Kentish Plover	Gravelot à collier interrompu	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
Common Sandpiper	Chevalier guignette	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Yellow-legged Gull	Goéland leucopnée	<i>Larus michahellis</i>
Black-headed Gull	Mouette rieuse	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Sandwich Tern	Sterne caugek	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	Tourterelle turque	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Great Spotted Cuckoo	Coucou geai	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>
Alpine Swift	Martinet à ventre blanc	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
European Green Woodpecker	Pic vert	<i>Picus viridis</i>
Iberian green woodpecker	Pic de Sharpe	<i>Picus sharpei</i>
Crested Lark	Cochevis huppé	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
Barn Swallow	Hirondelle rustique	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
White Wagtail	Bergeronnette grise	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Meadow Pipit	Pipit farlouse	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Water Pipit	Pipit spioncelle	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>

English Name	French Name	Scientific Name
Bluethroat	Gorgebleue à miroir	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>
Common Blackbird	Merle noir	<i>Turdus merula</i>
European Robin	Rougegorge familier	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Black Redstart	Rougequeue noir	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
European Stonechat	Tarier pâtre	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
Zitting Cisticola	Cisticole des joncs	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Common Chiffchaff	Pouillot véloce	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Western Jackdaw	Choucas des tours	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Eurasian Magpie	Pie bavarde	<i>Pica pica</i>
Common Starling	Étourneau sansonnet	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
European Goldfinch	Chardonneret élégant	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Common Chaffinch	Pinson des arbres	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
European Serin	Serin cini	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
European Greenfinch	Verdier d'Europe	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>

**51 species**

Beach and coffee stop closely watched by Black-headed and Yellow-legged gulls



**Thank you all for your participation and see you next time!**