

## Day trip around Leucate & La Palme – Aude (11)

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Guide:** Karline Martorell accompanied by Philippa Benson

**Participants:** 8

**Weather conditions:** good weather partly cloudy with a very light easterly wind, temps ranging from 10°C to 14°C

**Highlights of the trip:** Osprey, Common redstart, Temminck's stint, Yellow wagtail

### Itinerary and birding spots of the day

We started the day in the Coussoules de Leucate. This low-lying dune area is a great spot to see birds migrating. Here we found some passerines on migratory stopover including a beautiful male Common redstart, some Willow warblers singing, and good numbers of Barn swallow. Amongst the flocks of hirundines, we identified some House martin, Sand martin and Common swift - the first of the year for everybody! At the end of the track we got some excellent views of an Osprey perched in a tree. It was very obliging and took off and circled above us. A superb view for this migratory bird!



Common redstart and Osprey © K. Martorell

After this walk, we had a quick visit to the Leucate headland to try and see the Isabeline wheatear. This species was found a few days ago by some local birders, but unfortunately we dipped on it. However, we did see large groups of finches on migration (Serin, Linnet and

Chaffinch), and Crag martin too. Also rather spectacular views of flying in a V-formation parallel to some paragliders.



Great Cormorant showing the paragliders how to do it! © K. Martorell

After eating our picnic lunch at La Franqui, while watching some Slender-billed gulls fishing and a few Pied oystercatcher, we moved on to the La Palme Salt pans.



Slender-billed gull, Oystercatcher and a few "slender-billed" Steves! © K. Martorell

In the salt pans, we were very happy to find large groups of waders! We took our time checking each group. These included Avocet, Black-winged stilt, Kentish plover, Dunlin, Little stint and.... a single Temminck's stint! This species was the surprise of the day! It was in a middle of a big group of small waders. The all took off *except* two Kentish plovers and this Temminck's stint, which allowed us all excellent views of all its distinctive criteria for identification.

At the end of the afternoon we had good views of several bright and colourful Yellow wagtail, the first arrivals of this very late Spring!



Bad picture of the Temminck's stint (at right) with the two Kentish plovers © K. Martorell



Flamingo in flight, group of Dunlin and Little stint, Yellow wagtail and Black-winged stilt © K. Martorell

We finished this day by looking for Blue rock thrush in the old quarry, where we found a shy male and female.

We finally found 62 species during this day trip, what is really good for this early spring, with a late migration of birds. You can find the bird list below.

## Bird List 28/03/22

Common name	French Name	Scientific name
Little grebe (H)	Grèbe castagneux	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great cormorant	Grand cormoran	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Little egret	Aigrette garzette	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Great white egret	Grande aigrette	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Grey heron	Héron cendré	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Greater flamingo	Flamant rose	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>
Shelduck	Tadorne de Belon	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Mallard	Canard colvert	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Gadwall	Canard chipeau	<i>Anas strepera</i>
Garganey	Sarcelle d'été	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
Osprey	Balbusard pêcheur	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Black kite	Milan noir	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Marsh harrier	Busard des roseaux	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Common buzzard	Buse variable	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Sparrowhawk	Épervier d'Europe	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Kestrel	Faucon crécerelle	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Water rail	Râle d'eau	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
Moorhen	Gallinule poule d'eau	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Coot	Foulque macroule	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Oystercatcher	Huîtrier pie	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Avocet	Avocette élégante	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Black-winged stilt	Echasse blanche	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Little ringed plover	Petit gravelot	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Kentish plover	Gravelot à collier interrompu	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
Dunlin	Bécasseau variable	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Little stint	Bécasseau minute	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Temminck's stint	Bécasseau de Temminck	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
Black-headed gull	Mouette rieuse	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Slender-billed gull	Goéland railleur	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>
Yellow-legged gull	Goéland leucophée	<i>Larus michahellis</i>
Wood pigeon	Pigeon ramier	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Collared dove	Tourterelle turque	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Crested lark	Cochevis huppé	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
Common swift	Martinet noir	<i>Apus apus</i>
Sand martin	Hirondelle de rivage	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Crag martin	Hirondelle de rochers	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
Barn swallow	Hirondelle rustique	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
House martin	Hirondelle de fenêtre	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Meadow pipit	Pipit farlouse	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>

Common name	French Name	Scientific name
White wagtail	Bergeronnette grise	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Yellow Wagtail	Bergeronnette printanière	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Robin	Rougegorge familier	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Common redstart	Rougequeue à front blanc	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
Stonechat	Tarier pâtre	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
Blue rock thrush	Monticole bleu	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
Blackbird	Merle noir	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Blackcap	Fauvette à tête noire	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Sardinian warbler	Fauvette mélanocéphale	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>
Fan-tailed warbler	Cisticole des joncs	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Cetti's warbler (H)	Bourscarle de Cetti	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
Willow warbler (H)	Pouillot fitis	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Chiffchaff	Pouillot véloce	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Great tit (H)	Mésange charbonnière	<i>Parus major</i>
Magpie	Pie bavarde	<i>Pica pica</i>
Jackdaw	Choucas des tours	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
Starling	Etourneau sansonnet	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
House sparrow	Moineau domestique	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Chaffinch	Pinson des arbres	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Linnet	Linotte mélodieuse	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Goldfinch	Chardonneret élégant	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Serin	Serin cini	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
Reed bunting	Bruant des roseaux	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>

62 species

(H) : species just heard



Thank you for coming along and we look forward to seeing you soon for some new friendly birdwatching adventures!