

## BLDT03 - Day trip around Leucate-La Franqui & La Palme (11)

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (re-scheduled from Tuesday due to the weather!)

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

**Participants:** 8

**Weather conditions:** sunny day with a sea breeze (fresh at times!) temps ranging from 10°C to 15°C

**Highlights of the trip:** Great spotted cuckoo, Slender-billed gull, Short-toed eagle, Avocet, Little stint accompanied by Kentish plover.

### Itinerary and birding spots of the day

We started the day in Leucate – La Franqui where we walked along Les Coussoules area made up of wetlands, open saltmarsh and a filtration pond.

On this walk we saw some Barn swallows on migration, one Black kite, many Chiffchaffs for one Willow warbler but above all the target species: the Great spotted cuckoo.

Interested by everything, we stopped to have nice views of a Mediterranean tree frog and a Mediterranean species of lizard: the Edwards' sand racer.



*The snow-covered Canigou in the distance ©PBenson*



*Mediterranean tree frog and Edwards' sand racer © K. Martorell*

Then, we had our picnic lunch on the waterfront in La Franqui, overlooking the lagoon and the sea but the water level was too high to be interesting for waders or other birds. After a coffee stop, we went to the La Palme salt pans!

Before starting the walk, a Blue rock thrush was found around the old quarry of La Palme quite a distance away and we had also great views of two Short-toed eagles in flight.



*Birdwatching around the La Palme salt pans © K. Martorell*

Then, on the salt pans, we saw many different species with quite good views: Black-winged stilt, Avocet, Little stint, Kentish plover, Slender-billed gull, and to finish the track, a great view of an Osprey trying to fish above the lagoon.



*Avocet, Little stint & Osprey © K. Martorell*

We finished the day around the old quarry of La Palme to have another look for the Blue Rock thrush but we found only a female quite far away.

It was a nice day where we found 48 species. You can find the bird list of the day just below.

## Bird List 27/03/24

| Common name          | French Name                   | Scientific name                   |   |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Great cormorant      | Grand cormoran                | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>        | x |
| Little egret         | Aigrette garzette             | <i>Egretta garzetta</i>           | x |
| Grey heron           | Héron cendré                  | <i>Ardea cinerea</i>              | x |
| Greater flamingo     | Flamant rose                  | <i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>       | x |
| Shelduck             | Tadorne de Belon              | <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>            | x |
| Mallard              | Canard colvert                | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>         | x |
| Osprey               | Balbusard pêcheur             | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>          | x |
| Short-toed eagle     | Circaète Jean-le-Blanc        | <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>         | x |
| Black kite           | Milan noir                    | <i>Milvus migrans</i>             | x |
| Marsh harrier        | Busard des roseaux            | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>         | x |
| Kestrel              | Faucon crécerelle             | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>          | x |
| Avocet               | Avocette élégante             | <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>     | x |
| Black-winged stilt   | Echasse blanche               | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>      | x |
| Kentish plover       | Gravelot à collier interrompu | <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>    | x |
| Little stint         | Bécasseau minute              | <i>Calidris minuta</i>            | x |
| Green sandpiper      | Chevalier cul-blanc           | <i>Tringa ochropus</i>            | x |
| Common sandpiper     | Chevalier guignette           | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>         | x |
| Black-headed gull    | Mouette rieuse                | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> | x |
| Slender-billed gull  | Goéland railleur              | <i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>      | x |
| Yellow-legged gull   | Goéland leucophée             | <i>Larus michahellis</i>          | x |
| Wood pigeon          | Pigeon ramier                 | <i>Columba palumbus</i>           | x |
| Collared dove        | Tourterelle turque            | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>      | x |
| Great spotted cuckoo | Coucou geai                   | <i>Clamator glandarius</i>        | x |
| Crested lark         | Cochevis huppé                | <i>Galerida cristata</i>          | x |
| Barn swallow         | Hirondelle rustique           | <i>Hirundo rustica</i>            | x |
| Meadow pipit         | Pipit farlouse                | <i>Anthus pratensis</i>           | x |
| White wagtail        | Bergeronnette grise           | <i>Motacilla alba</i>             | x |
| Yellow Wagtail       | Bergeronnette printanière     | <i>Motacilla flava</i>            | x |
| Black redstart       | Rougequeue noir               | <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>       | x |
| Stonechat            | Tarier pâte                   | <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>          | x |
| Blue rock thrush     | Monticole bleu                | <i>Monticola solitarius</i>       | x |
| Blackbird            | Merle noir                    | <i>Turdus merula</i>              | x |
| Blackcap             | Fauvette à tête noire         | <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>         | x |
| Sardinian warbler    | Fauvette mélanocéphale        | <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>       | H |
| Fan-tailed warbler   | Cisticole des joncs           | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>         | x |
| Cetti's warbler      | Bourscarle de Cetti           | <i>Cettia cetti</i>               | H |
| Willow warbler       | Pouillot fitis                | <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>     | x |
| Chiffchaff           | Pouillot véloce               | <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>     | x |

| Common name   | French Name          | Scientific name             |   |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Great tit     | Mésange charbonnière | <i>Parus major</i>          | H |
| Magpie        | Pie bavarde          | <i>Pica pica</i>            | x |
| Carrion crow  | Corneille noire      | <i>Corvus corone</i>        | x |
| Starling      | Etourneau sansonnet  | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>     | x |
| House sparrow | Moineau domestique   | <i>Passer domesticus</i>    | x |
| Chaffinch     | Pinson des arbres    | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>    | x |
| Linnet        | Linotte mélodieuse   | <i>Linaria cannabina</i>    | x |
| Goldfinch     | Chardonneret élégant | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>  | x |
| Serin         | Serin cini           | <i>Serinus serinus</i>      | x |
| Reed bunting  | Bruant des roseaux   | <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> | x |

|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| <b>Total species</b> | <b>48</b> |
|----------------------|-----------|

X: species seen

H: species just heard



Thank you all for your participation and see you next time  
for some more fun birding adventures!