

White-rumped Swifts

Cerro Gordo, Almunecar, Spain 1-7-2013

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This was a classic compromise holiday with the girlfriend. I had two target birds: Red-necked Nightjar which was not difficult and White-rumped Swift.

I had already spent an afternoon and evening at the site in Bolonia which was nice but totally void of Swifts! A local man informed us that the site had now been deserted?



The Bolonia site in June 2013

So before I made the 11 hour round trip to the reserve at Castello Monfrague, Exdremadura, which is probably still the most reliable site for the Swifts in Spain. I decided first to try and get some help from the local Tourist Information Centre in Malaga where I was staying. I picked up a leaflet from BIRDAYTRIP (info@birdaytrip.com) which I promptly called and was given details for a site by a very helpful man named Luis Alberto Rodriguez which was not too far from Malaga.

The site in cliffs could be seen from a local beach. I only saw Pallid Swifts which had all dispersed by 10 am. I then spent the rest of the day searching the area for empty or abandoned buildings for Red-rumped Swallows and Swifts. At about 3 pm I found a site high up in the mountain on what appeared to be a new estate. There was a row of unfinished buildings and also Swifts and Red-rumped Swallows! After a 30 minute search I finally got lucky and saw 3 White-rumped Swifts among the Pallid Swifts.



White-rumped Swift at Cerro Gordo



White-rumped Swift at Cerro Gordo

How to get there:

I travelled from Malaga on the A7 and then the N 340 coastal road. Just before you get to Almunecar there is the Tunel de Cerro Gordo and just before that a sign to turn right to Cerro Gordo. Follow this road until the third sharp right turn. At this point you should see a sign advertising property and a road going left. Take the left turn and follow the steep and winding road to the top of the cliff. At the top take the left turn and stop at the unfinished buildings on the left hand side. With luck you should see the Swifts from this point? I was so excited about finding the Swifts that I did not explore the rest of the estate. Maybe it is worth a better look?

To get to the beach you must take a right turn before the Cerro Gordo turn off. There is a restaurant there called Restaurant la Barraca and a car park. Look for Swifts in the cliffs there.

Good luck .

Cerro Gordo Map

A = The site where I saw three White-rumped Swifts

B = A site in the cliffs where they are supposed to be breeding.

