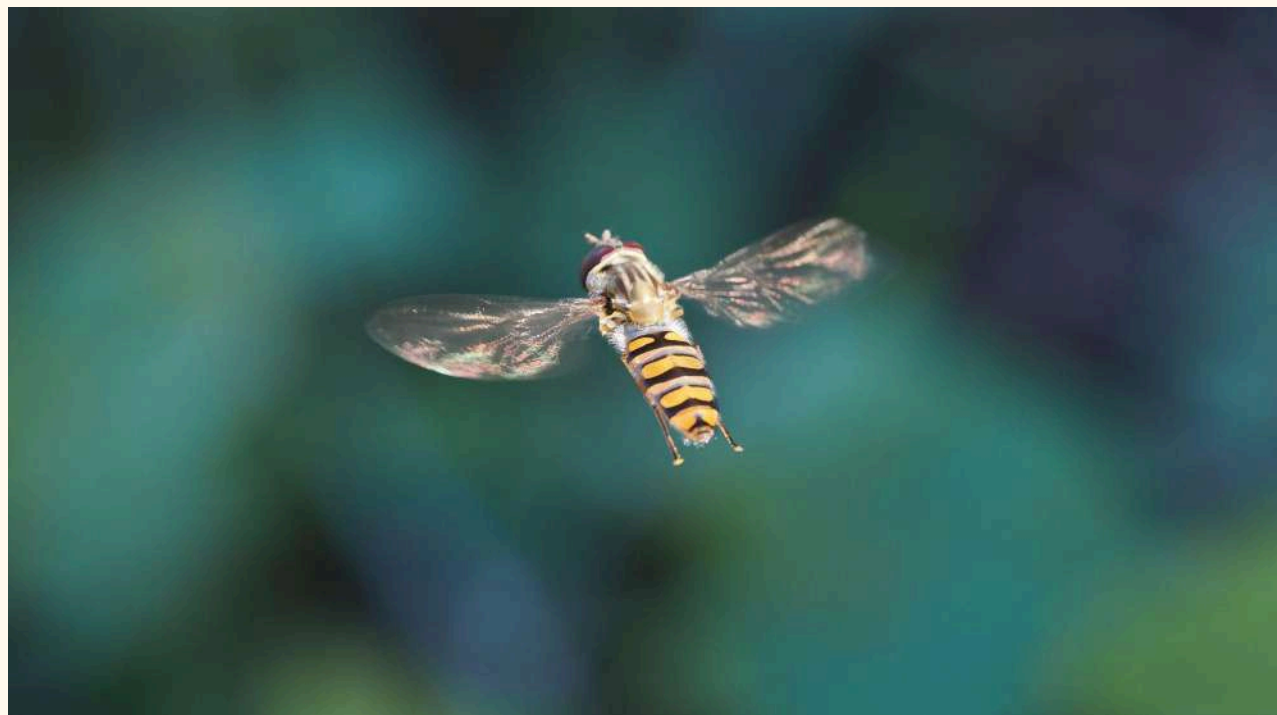


Nature in Andalusia and beyond



The very common Marmalade hoverfly (*Episyrphus balteatus*) is yet another migrant insect.



**ANDALUCIA
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Marbled Duck conservation / observations

The beautiful marbled teal is, without a doubt, emblematic of the Mediterranean Spanish wetlands and a difficult target for bird trips. Hopefully, on-going conservation programmes are bringing back the species in the wild, giving us better chances to spot it.

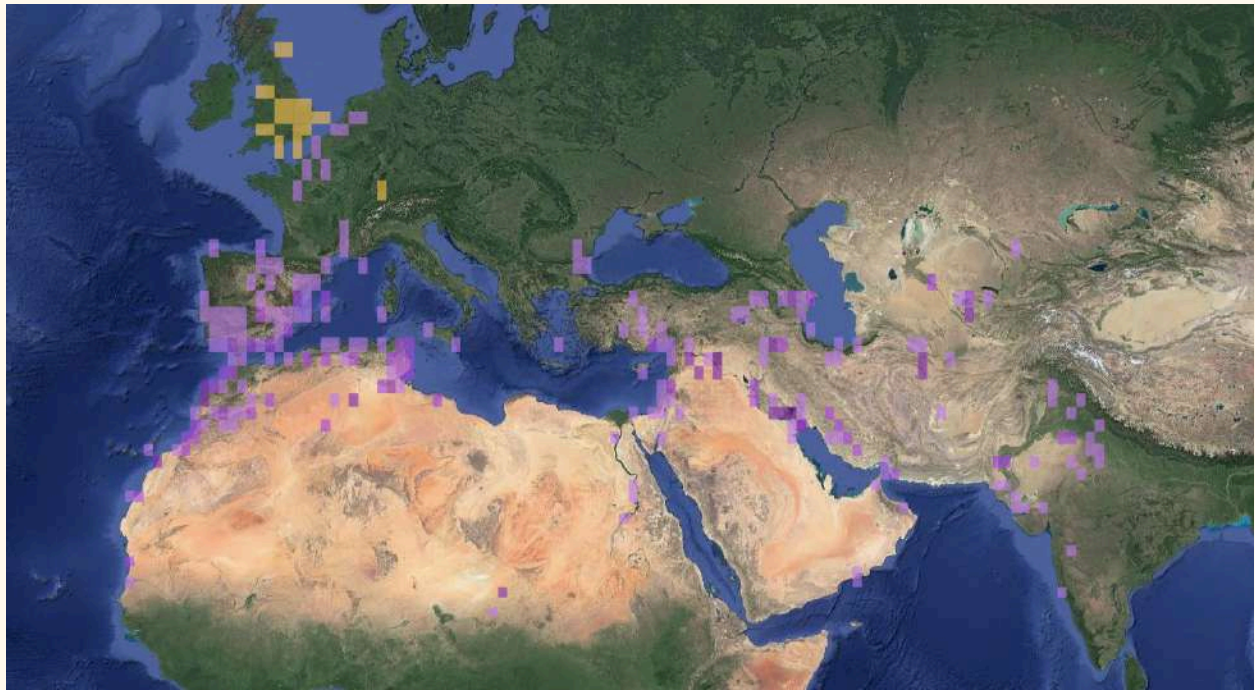


Marbled teals are truly unique with only one described species in the genus (“monotopic”).

The Marbled duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) is small sized, superbly pale-spotted, with dark eye patch, black bill and shaggy head.

Identification is straightforward. Males and females are similar and mostly silent. The species is omnivorous...

... feeding mainly on aquatic plant seeds but also on invertebrates, and picking items off the surface and head-dipping. Marbled teals are typically found in shallow, freshwater or brackish wetlands with abundant emergent vegetation (“*Scirpus*” *Schoenoplectus* and *Bolboschoenus* spec.).



World distribution of the Marbled Duck (Source: e-Bird).

A resident species –with a peak of activity in April– and one of the most threatened birds in the Mediterranean region and Europe. Global population estimates 15,000-61,000 individuals, largely concentrated in the Mesopotamian marshes. The Guadalquivir marshes (= Doñana) and El Hondo (Alicante) are the two most important wetlands for the species in Europe.

Spain's breeding atlas established a population of 60 pairs in the period 2014-2018 and a loss of over 50% of its distribution range.

The species fluctuated between 20-150 pairs in the 1994-2007 period and 74 pairs were censused in 2020. As a result, the Marbled Duck is considered Critically Endangered in Spain (SEO/Birdlife). In the early 20th Century, it was considered the most abundant breeding Anatidae in Doñana (!), but decreased inexorably, with strong fluctuations depending on yearly precipitations, and even disappearing as a breeding species in the Guadalquivir Marshes during the 1990'.

A European Life project (<https://www.cerceta-pardilla.es>) is on-going until 2025. Moreover, Cañada de los Pájaros established an ex-situ breeding programme since 2008. In Andalusia, Marbled teals were released in Doñana, Fuente de Piedra, Guadalhorce and a few other localities.

Picture in the wild, picture in captivity...

In a recent visit to Doñana, we detected 86 individuals of this incredibly rare species. Large gatherings of up to 200 (!) teals were favored by the 2023/2024 winter drought in Andalusia. We later visited the *ex-situ* programme.



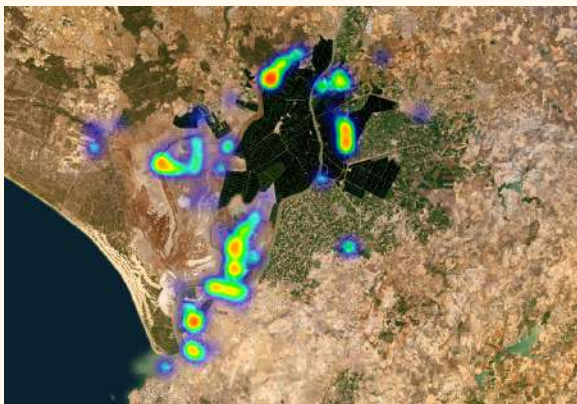
Digiscoping at 400 m distance



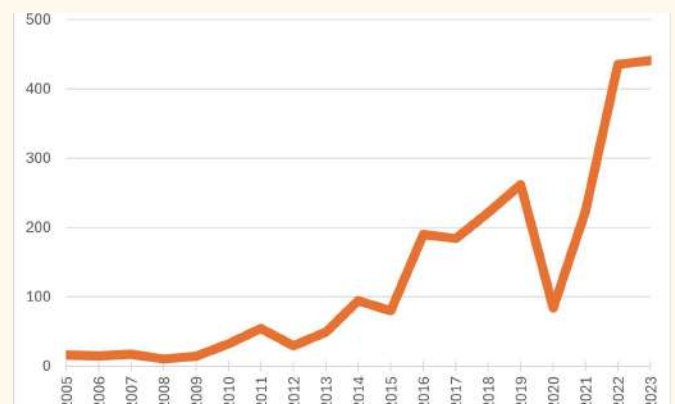
Breeding at Cañada de los pájaros

Citizen science webs testify the gains

The citizen science platform Observation.org has noticed a strong increase of records in 2022 and 2023 in Spain, particularly in Doñana wetlands at Dehesa abajo, Valverde center, Brazo del Este, Veta La Palma and Laguna Tarelo.



Location of recent records in Doñana
(source: Observation.org)



Surge of observations in 2022 and 2023
(source: Observation.org)

A few links. The IUCN Red List (2022) [Marmaronetta angustirostris](#) ● Salvador, Amat & Green (2023). Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*. Birds of the World. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.martea1.02>
● SEO/ Birdlife <https://atlasaves.seo.org/ave/cerceta-pardilla/>

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2023 report and videos

Field trips in August

At the peak season



Large carnivores:
North Spain, the
Cantabrian range

Brown bear
(370 ind.)

Birds
Forests & mountains

Wild cat
(common)

Insects
Butter- & Dragonflies

Grey wolf
(a hundred)

Private tour :

2024 August 14-24: Rambling...

the whole Cantabrian mountains

September 2-8: Shortened tour...

focusing on Cantabrian bears

Cantabrian mountains are
lush, cool and sunny
in summer.

