

Birds of the Mar Menor

Well, spring is here and the birds certainly know it. Every morning I am awoken early by loud chirping and the only way to get back to sleep is to resort to earplugs!

Over the next few publications I am going to write about songbirds. I will focus on those species that are common around the Mar Menor and that you should be able to see and hear at the moment. This week I will consider the Lark; both Skylarks and Crested Larks.

Skylarks are actually rather dull in appearance, your average SBB (Small Brown Bird). However, all that changes when they start to sing. They have a very distinctive song-flight where they soar upwards, hover and then plunge steeply. While doing this they sing continuously for several minutes at a time.



We recently went for a walk from Las Barracas (near Los Belones) through to La Manga Club. There is open farmland here, the perfect habitat for Skylarks who were making the most of it!

Due to their distinctive chirruping song and their close association with spring time, many poems and songs have been written about Skylarks. A particular favourite of mine is "The Green Cornfield", a poem by Christina Rossetti and set to music by Michael Head.

*"The earth was green, the sky was blue:
I saw and hear one sunny morn
A skylark hang between the two.
A singing speck above the corn;"*

If you bump into me I would be happy to give you a quick rendition...it is a beautiful song!

Larks spend a lot of time on the ground searching for food, which consists of insects, seeds, shoots and grain. They like to feed on open ground where they have good visibility all around and tend to avoid dense undergrowth. They make their nest in a small hollow on the ground amongst grass or other vegetation.

Crested Larks are very similar in appearance to Skylarks, however, their crest is much more pronounced and pointed. I frequently see Crested Larks on the beach or on scrub land adjacent to the beach. They are very quick on their feet and scurry across the sand looking for food.

The Crested Lark has a high circling song-flight and a rather melancholy song.

Name: **Crested Lark**
Length: ~7" (18 cm)
Wingspan: ~13" (33 cm)



Head and Body: speckled brown/beige
Under-body: pale white/cream
Underside of wings: rusty orange
Crest: pointed

Name: **Skylark**
Length: ~7" (18 cm)
Wingspan: ~13" (33 cm)



Head and Body: speckled brown/beige
Under-body: pale white/cream
White band along trailing edge of wings
Crest: blunt

Why not get out for a walk, enjoy this beautiful weather and see if you can spot some larks this week!

Lesley Singleton
AQUA ADICTA

EARLY SEASON SPECIALS FOR INFORMER READERS

SAILING, WINDSURFING, KAYAKING
2 HOUR LESSON/TRIP
INDIVIDUAL: 60€
GROUP: (3 FOR 2) 100€



Email: lesley@aqua-adicta.co.uk

Tel: 968 545 193 Mob: 659 434 811

Sailing & Windsurfing Lessons, Kayak Safaris
Powerboat Trips & Equipment Rentals
ALL INSTRUCTION TO RYA STANDARDS



Aqua Adicta
Water Activities La Manga
www.aqua-adicta.co.uk