

Birds of the Mar Menor



This week we took a trip on Bob (the boat) to investigate the bird life on two islands in the Mar Menor. Armed with a bird spotting sheet and a pair of binoculars, we headed for Isla del Sujeto and Isla Redonda. These islands are situated just to the north of Isla de Ciervo (which used to be connected to La Manga strip via a causeway). Both islands are nature reserves and many birds live and breed there. It is best, if you wish to view the birds, to do it from the water. You should not land on the islands, as this will distress the birds, particularly when it is breeding season.

Most of the birds we saw were gulls and in today's article I will provide details on the two most prevalent; the Yellow Legged Gull and the Lesser Black Backed Gull. We also spotted a large number of Little Egret (featured in last weeks article) on Isla Redonda. These birds are pure white, with black legs and bill and therefore easy to distinguish.



Lesser Black Backed Gull

Both the Lesser Black Backed and Yellow Legged Gulls are very similar in both size and appearance, the key difference is the Lesser Black Backed Gull has much darker wings. Both birds have yellow legs so you can't use that to help to distinguish them.

These gulls make nests on piles of grass on the ground, this makes their nests vulnerable to predators and is why they tend to nest in locations which are inaccessible by foot. They generally feed on; aquatic invertebrates, molluscs and fish. Due to the volume of fish that they can consume they are not very popular with fishermen!



Yellow Legged Gull

Mar Menor Island Names
Isla del Sujeto —Island of the character <i>(I assume a local "character" such as a hermit must have lived on the Island)</i>
Isla Redonda —Round Island
Isla del Ciervo —Deer Island

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