

Birds of the Mar Menor

In my last article I described the Kestrel and Marsh Harrier, this time I will study the Buzzard and Black Kite. All of these birds are raptors, otherwise known as birds of prey.



The Buzzard is one of the most common birds of prey. It is seen throughout Europe all year round. It is a large chunky bird with a short tail, short rounded head and blunt-ended moth-like wings. It is easiest to spot when it is flying as it glides at a great height in circles making a mewing noise somewhat like a cat!

The Buzzard is quite a slow flyer and does not normally catch its food on the wing. It sits silently on a branch of a tree or post and waits for its next meal to walk by. It will then swoop down and catch it. Buzzards feed on rabbits, mice and sometimes other birds; they will also eat road kill and other dead animals. Buzzards tend to nest in wooded areas but they will often feed over open ground.



The Black Kite is roughly the same size as the buzzard but has longer wings. It is common to North Africa and southern Europe but may be seen in many European countries throughout the summer. It is much less common than the Buzzard in the Mar Menor area.



The easiest way to identify the Black Kite is by its forked tail, which you can spot while it is flying. Black Kites are actually dark brown in colour but appear black against the sky. Their call is a high whinnying peeie-ee-i-ee-i-ee.



Black Kites have a similar diet to a Buzzard but will also eat fish. They swoop down over the water and catch fish with their feet. They will also feed on dead or dying fish along the shoreline.

Kites also scavenge for food from rubbish dumps and will often live near human habitation where waste accumulates.

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