

Iberian Lynx & La Mancha

Birds and mammals in Winter

January 16 - 22, 2021

Itinerary

Day 1 / January 16: Madrid airport - La Mancha - Sierra de Andujar I (Lynx land)

Meet and welcome at Madrid airport before we transfer to Sierra de Andújar, Andalucía. We do the first birding on route in the area known as "La Mancha Húmeda", a vast flat region containing some important Ramsar wetlands and also arable fields where Great and Little Bustards are present all year round. We continue driving south, arriving at our accommodation for our evening meal. Accommodation and dinner in the Sierra de Andújar.

Day 2 / January 17: Sierra de Andujar II

We will dedicate the following days to exploring the best locations in our search to find the rarest feline in the world, the Iberian Lynx. Most of the area is strictly protected as a Natural Park, being the most important refuge for this magnificent animal. Although 90 individuals still survive in and around the Doñana National Park, plus a few more in nearby locations, all of them in the SW corner of Spain, the Sierra de Andújar is without doubt the best spot to try and see this highly endangered species. For this our first day we will wake up early in the morning in search of our target in the Encinarejo area where some other mammals are also often recorded such as River Otter, Wild Boar, Red Fox and Red Deer.

This is also a great place to enjoy along with the local territorial Spanish Imperial Eagles as they mark their territories using their raucous calls and plunging display flights. Other raptors are also present in the Park, including Griffon and Black Vultures, and Northern Goshawks. In the early evening we will drive up to the Virgen de la Cabeza sanctuary where we will enjoy the impressive scenery.

Day 3 / January 18: Sierra de Andujar III

Another full day looking for Iberian Lynx in and adjacent to the Sierra de Andújar Natural Park. Today we'll explore the valley close to the Jándula reservoir, in particular searching the slopes of the area known as Las Lanchas. It is not difficult to see Mouflon here, while up in the sky we will surely find more Spanish Imperial Eagles in addition to a few other raptors. Hawfinch, Rock Bunting, Iberian Azure-winged Magpie, Dartford and Sardinian Warblers are all present in numbers too. Back to our accommodaton in Sierra de Andújar.

Day 4 / January 19: Sierra de Andujar IV

Our fourth day will provide us the last chance to find our quarry again, known locally as the "ghost of the hills", although hopefully by then we will have had good views of the Iberian Lynx during the previous days. Iberian Green Woodpecker, Cirl Bunting, Blue Rock Thrush, Rock Sparrow and even depending on previous cold fronts the rare Wallcreeper! will be all possible.

Day 5 / January 20: Sierra de Andujar V - Campo de Calatrava Plains - Ciudad Real

Depending on our success on previous days with the Lynx we will dedicate the last morning in Andujar to our last search or just move into the plains of the Important Bird Area of Campo de Calatrava. Although still an unknown place for many wildlifers this region holds an impressive concentration of steppe birds during the cold months, mainly Pin-tailed Sandgrouse and Little Bustards, which can be seen in mixed flocks of several hundreds of birds. Great Bustards, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Red-billed Choughs and Golden Plovers are also well present here. In the evening we will move to our new base in the town of Ciudad Real. Dinner and accommodation.

Day 6 / January 21: Ciudad Real - Alarcos & El Vicario reservoir - Calatrava castle

Today we will explore two main different ecosystems, marshes, in the Guadiana river near the ruins of Alarcos and the El Vicario reservoir, and the rocky habitats, in the Calatrava castle and surrounding hills a good place for raptors and species related to the cliffs. Amongst the wildfowl present in the wetlands we might see Glossy Ibis, Great Egret, Eurasian Spoonbill, Western Marsh Harrier and with some luck Black-shouldered Kite, with a couple of individuals overwintering in recent years. In the cliffs around the Calatrava castle we should be able to find Black Wheatear, Blue-Rock Thrush, Rock Bunting and Hawfinch. This is also a good place for both Bonelli's and Golden Eagles. In the evening travel back to Ciudad Real for a meal and accommodation.

Day 7 / January 22: Ciudad Real - Daimiel N.P. - Madrid airport

After checking out in our hotel of Ciudad Real we will then move towards the town of Daimiel where we will dedicate time to bird in the Tablas de Daimiel National Park and the nearby Navaseca lagoon. Excellent chances for Penduline and Bearded Tit, White-headed Duck, Water Rail, Purple Swamp Hen, Black-necked Grebe, Reed Bunting, Red-crested Pochard and Ferruginous Duck (with at least 9 different individuals present in the last winters). We will arrive Madrid after lunch with time to catch our flights back home.

This itinerary might change according weather conditions or at discretion of our guide

PRICES:

Per person sharing in twin / doubled-room with private facilities: **€ 1.450**

Single Supplement: **€ 250**

Group size: Min. 4 – Max. 7 travelers plus our guide

The price includes:

- * Ground transport from Madrid airport in modern, fully seat-belted, air conditioned 9-seat vehicle
- * 6 Nights accommodation with en suite bathroom (4 nights in Andujar & 2 nights in Ciudad Real)
- * All meals inc breakfast, fantastic “tapas-rationes” lunches and evening meals + red wine in a moderate consumption
- * Services of professional birding guide
- * Basic travel insurance
- * Bird checklist (revised edition 2016)
- * All taxes

The price doesn't include:

- * Air fare (Easyjet, Ryanair & other companies operate daily flights from several UK airports)
- * Extra drinks and other items of a personal nature

Number of travelers:

The minimum number of travellers on each trip is 4 and the usual maximum number is 7 plus the guide or 14 with two guides.

Travel:

Because other birding tours normally carry the cost of the airfare and are not necessarily the cheapest, *Spainbirds Nature Tours* asks the customer to book the flights independently to Madrid, Málaga, Seville, Santander or any other specified airport where the trip starts and ends. This gives you the customer, greater flexibility in terms of choosing the flight and return leg of your journey home (flights and/or other means of transport) specific airport departures, times to suit you, special offers and carrier companies. *Spainbirds Nature Tours* is a licensed tour operator (CICMA 2517) which is allowed to book flights for our clients, please don't hesitate to letting us know if you prefer that we book your airline tickets for you. The meeting point for customers will be the corresponding local airport depending on the trip selected.

Ground transport:

We always use comfortable, modern air conditioned minibus or people carrier. All our vehicles comply with the current EU safety legislation. Notice please that we don't charge any fee to transport people, and our incomes are applied as a trip organizer and wildlife guide services but never as professional drivers.

Accommodation & food:

Accommodation is carefully chosen by *Spainbirds Nature Tours* to offer the customer a good quality standard of hotel or fully equipped country inn next to the birding areas. We ensure that all rooms are en suite and price includes usually full board (breakfast, picnic lunch and evening meal + red wine & water unless other board conditions are applied). For those who require a single room they will have to pay the corresponding supplement, which will depend on the chosen itinerary shown in the tours section of our web site or current brochure.

Dates:

Since the groups are usually small, the journey dates may occasionally be fine tuned to meet the needs of all interested parties but will never be changed if the flights have been already booked.

Insurance:

It is highly advisable to take out a personal insurance policy before leaving your country. Please let us know the name of your company insurance before travelling. For information of all travellers *Spainbirds Nature Tours* has its own civil liability insurance through **REALE SEGUROS, policy number 1331100001899/0**, covering damages to third parties to a maximum of 1,800,000 Euros. As travel agency licensed by the Spanish Tourism Board all our clients will be traveling covered by a *basic travel insurance*, but which might not be enough to cover certain personal or items damages.

In addition to your personal Travel & Medical Insurance, do bring (and carry with you when out and about) your up to date European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) – they only last 5 years! If you still have one of the older forms (E111) then it needs to be changed to this new card.

Note for UK travelers: You do not have to pay for an EHIC, which can be obtained or renewed free of charge by calling 0300 3301350 or applying on-line at www.ehic.org.uk. This is a secure site that diverts to the correct page within the main NHS.UK website. The cards are valid for five years, after which they can be renewed, again, free of charge. Please notice that the new Brexit situation will make to all cards expire after December 31, 2020!!!

How to book a tour to Spain:

To book our services you need to make a written confirmation by letter or email or fill our booking form available on our web site, plus paying **€ 450 as deposit** for all the Spain tours. Deposits for our overseas expeditions are showed in the literature related to every tour.

The rest shall be paid to *Spainbirds Nature Tours* by wire transfer or credit card, **at the latest 60 days** before the journey starts. The price includes guide services, accommodation, all meals, ground transport and fuel. Customers are entitled to cancel their bookings at any moment, but on the following terms:

1. If the cancellation is made between booking and 60 days before the start of the trip they will forfeit the deposit or, if preferred, it will be kept for future tours run by *Spainbirds Nature Tours* **with an expiration date of ONE year**.
2. If the cancellation is made between 59 and 31 days before the start of the journey they will forfeit **50%** (where the deposit would be also included) of the total amount paid to *Spainbirds Nature Tours*.
3. If the cancellation is made within 30 days of the start of the journey they will forfeit **100%** of the total paid. Any breach of the above instalments or unjustified delays in paying them will automatically lead to cancellation of the booking, the above mentioned rules then being applied. The post-cancellation sum of money to be reimbursed will be sent by wire transfer. All amounts paid must be done by bank transfer to our account on OPENBANK (details will be sent to you once you confirm booking).

If you agree these booking conditions please then fill and send us your **booking form**.

** Every of our overseas tours has its own booking conditions since all international and domestic flights are usually included in the price. If you are interested to fly from your home country and not meeting the group in Spain please let the office know this issue to find the most suitable alternative for both sides. You will be able to find our terms and conditions for the overseas tours in the pdf file linked in the literature of every tour.*

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