

Spanish Pyrenees

... and Ebro River steppes

June 10 - 16, 2024

25 Anniversary!
itinerary

Day 1 / June 10: Madrid airport - Henares River * - Hecho Valley

Meet and welcome at Madrid airport after which we head to the nearby Henares river to stretch our legs and enjoy the first birding in Spain. Here we try to locate Eurasian Eagle Owl, Western Marsh Harrier, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Red-billed Chough, Iberian Green Woodpecker and Eurasian Penduline Tit amongst others. After our lunch in a local restaurant en route we will drive straight to the Pyrenees, first crossing Zaragoza and the famous Ebro river and then Huesca, the most important town close to the mountains. We will arrive in the evening at our base in the Hecho Valley.

Dinner and accommodation at Hecho Valley.

** The visit to the Henares river might be replaced by a couple of hours birding in another location if the day is not too hot*

Day 2 / June 11: Hecho Valley - Gabardito - Selva de Oza

We start with an early morning walk in the surroundings of our hotel before breakfast, and then we will head to the famous and dramatic spot of Boca del Infierno where a Wallcreeper used to breed in the past, however an encounter with this winged treasure will be a pure luck. The spectacular ravines and deep gorges of this site will also provide us with the chance to see Egyptian Vulture, White-throated Dipper, Crag Martin, Grey Wagtail and Red-billed Chough. After the visit to the Boca we will drive up towards the well known Gabardito refuge, and in the surroundings we will look for Citril Finch, Marsh Tit, Black Woodpecker, Firecrest and Garden Warbler. From the refuge we will walk into another traditional and more likely place for nesting Wallcreepers, where we might also spot Red-billed and Alpine Choughs, Lammergeier, Black Redstart, Rock Bunting and Alpine Swift. After a morning full of excitement we will return to the Hecho Valley and then visit the Selva de Oza forest where Lammergeier, Black Woodpecker, Citril Finch and Yellowhammer are all present. Chances also exist for seeing Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Water Pipit, Northern Wheatear, Lammergeier and two of the most representative mammals of the region, Pyrenean Chamois and Alpine Marmot. Dinner and accommodation at Hecho Valley.

Day 3 / June 12: Hecho Valley - Roncal Valley - Rincon de Belagua - French border

Today we will concentrate in the most western of the valleys that we will explore on our trip, the Roncal Valley, where a very popular sheep's milk cheese is made and where the last Brown Bears of the Pyrenees still survive in a very low number. In the mixed woodland areas of ancient firs and beeches of the Rincon de Belagua Natural Reserve still survive some of the rarest birds in the Spanish Pyrenees such as Boreal Owl, Capercaille and White-backed Woodpecker, all three very tough, rare, and hard to find species, so we will mostly concentrate to see some other more reliable targets such as Citril Finch, Eurasian Bullfinch, Alpine Accentor and Ring Ouzel... besides we will cross the border into France! In the nearby Zuriza Valley we might see Golden Eagle, Lammergeier, Eurasian Griffon and Egyptian Vultures, Short-toed Eagle and European Honey Buzzard. Dinner and accommodation in the Hecho Valley.

Day 4 / June 13: Hecho Valley - San Juan de la Peña - Alastuey Ravines

Driving further South today and in lower terrain we will dedicate time to explore the Scotch Pine forest of San Juan de la Peña. Our first stop in the morning will be near an old monastery excavated in the rock dating from the 10th century, where Black Woodpeckers have been nesting in the last few years. After this we will travel to the Mediterranean-like Alastuey ravines, where we may see amongst others Melodious, Western Subalpine and Sardinian Warblers, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Ortolan Bunting plus Tawny Pipit... Dinner and accommodation at the Hecho Valley.

Day 5 / June 14: Hecho Valley - Escuin Gorge - Ainsa

Today we will travel into a different section of the Central Pyrenees still belonging to Aragon region. In the morning we will certainly do some birding on route, arriving to a good location to see Lammergeiers in flight. After a more relaxing afternoon we will arrive to our hotel near the medieval town of Ainsa. Dinner and accommodation near Ainsa.

Day 6 / June 15: Ainsa - Escuin Gorges - Belchite steppes (Ebro River Valley)

The program for our last full day of the tour will be fairly intensive since we will visit the Escuin Gorges in the morning, which usually provide some of the best looks of Lammergeiers (sometimes several individuals at the same time), to travel South in the afternoon to El Pla-

nerón Reserve near Belchite, where we will look for in the evening Stone Curlew (Eurasian Thick-knee), Black-eared Wheatear, Greater Short-toed, Lesser (Mediterranean) Short-toed, Calandra, Crested and Thekla Larks, Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, plus of course the enigmatic Dupont's Lark, although second half in June is not the best time to find it. Dinner and accommodation near Belchite.

Day 7 / June 16: Belchite - Madrid airport

Early start for some more local birding near Belchite trying to get the species that we had missed the previous evening and then start our journey back to Madrid airport where the tour ends in the evening.

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

PRICES:

Per person sharing in twin / doubled-room with private faciiliies: **€ 1,575**

Single Supplement: **€ 325**

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 accomodaion with en suite bathroom (4 nights in Hecho Valley + 1 night near Ainsa + 1 night near Belchite)
- * All meals inc breakfast, fantasic “tapas-rationes” lunches and evening meals + red wine in a moderate consumption
- * Services of professional birding guide
- * Basic travel insurance
- * Bird checklist
- * 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 **€ 500 as deposit** for all the Spain tours. Deposits for our overseas tours 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 90 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:

If the cancellation is made between booking and 90 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.

If the cancellation is made between 89 and 61 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.

If the cancellation is made within 60 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.*