



# Birds of Spain's Nature Trails



## IN THE COMPANY OF BIRDS

### NORTHWEST SECTOR

- Cantabrian Mountains Nature Trail
- Sierra de la Demanda Nature Trail
- Cantabrian Sea Nature Trail
- Senda del Duero Nature Trail

### NORTHEAST SECTOR

- Ebro Nature Trail
- La Hoya de Huesca Nature Trail
- Montfalcó to Mont-rebei Nature Trail
- Senda del Pastoreo Nature Trail

### CENTER SECTOR

- Cañada Real Soriana Oriental Nature Trail
- Eresma Valley Nature Trail
- La Mancha Wetlands Nature Trail
- Las Villuercas Nature Trail
- Lozoya Valley Nature Trail

### EAST SECTOR

- Noroeste Nature Trail
- Turia-Cabriel Nature Trail

### SOUTHERN SECTOR

- Aceite Nature Trail
- Guadix-Almendricos Railway Nature Trail
- La Sierra Nature Trail

### BALEARIC SECTOR

- Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail

### CANARY ISLANDS SECTOR

- Cumbres de la Gomera Nature Trail



FCO. JAVIER DUQUE

# IN THE COMPANY OF BIRDS

Today's society is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of nature and open-air exercise as essential components of our wellbeing. We at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery, Food and the Environment (MAPAMA in Spanish initials) are keen to contribute towards rural development, the observation of wildlife and the conservation of Spain's nature sites, doing so by fitting out disused railways and the like as trails from which to enjoy the surrounding scenery. This is where the "Nature Trail Network" comes in.

The routes run through open countryside along old railroads, driveways or traditional paths,

allowing us to discover along the way the biodiversity and beauty of Spain's priceless natural heritage as well as the villages, sights, traditions and people making up its singular cultural heritage too.

Feel free to use them at will. Enjoy the birds along the way.

BIRDS ARE PRESENT IN ALL OF SPAIN'S NATURE TRAILS. THEIR CONSERVATION DEPENDS ON THE STATE OF THE HABITATS THEY LIVE IN. YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS CRUCIAL

## NATURE TRAIL NETWORK



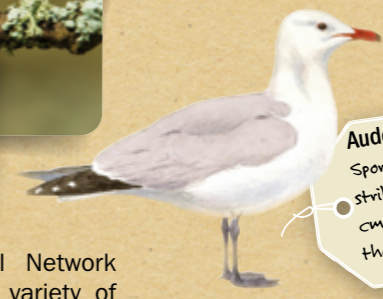
FERNANDO SANCHEZ-SHUTTERSTOCK

**Azure-Winged Magpie**  
Scores of individuals flock together. About 34 cm and common.



MARK CAUNT - SHUTTERSTOCK

**Griffon Vulture**  
Dun coloured with huge, broad wings. About 95-105 cm long and common.



**Audouin's Gull**  
Sports a particularly striking red bill. About 50 cm long and common in the Mediterranean.

**M**APAMA's Nature Trail Network runs through a huge variety of ecosystems and habitats, many of them included in Spain's system of national and nature parks or international biosphere reserves. These spots are of stunning beauty and value. They are home to species as eye-catching and coveted as the Cinereous Vulture, Eagle Owl or the tiny Firecrest. This new version of the natural pathways takes in some of the most interesting trails from the bird-watching point of view, with brief stops along the way to find and enjoy the most typical birds of each area.

### Countryside and coastlines

The trails running through hills, mountain ranges and crags are home to birds like the Griffon Vulture. Other inland routes run through handsome plains and bird-rich farmland packed with the smaller species like Crested and Thekla Lark, Bee-eater and Corn Bunting, without forgetting the world's heaviest flying bird: the Great Bustard. Yet others run along Spain's coast, giving us a taste of seabirds and waders like Gannet, Curlew and Whimbrel. Loafing on beaches or rocks, we might also see the doyen of the Mediterranean: Audouin's Gull.

The routes running through Spain's typical open grazing woods called dehesas are quite possibly the richest and most diverse. Many birds



**Marsh Harrier**  
Nests in reedbeds and similar wetland areas. About 45-55 cm long and somewhat scarce.

To find out more: [www.mapama.es/caminosnaturales](http://www.mapama.es/caminosnaturales)



VITALY IVASOV-SHUTTERSTOCK

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**  
Also called Barred Woodpecker due to its pied plumage. About 15 cm long and fairly scarce.

find here the necessary top-up resources before continuing their migratory odysseys or shorter trips. Here we might find gangs of spritely, blue-blazoned birds otherwise known as Azure-Winged Magpies.

### Woods and Islands

Woodland routes offer without doubt some of the most relaxing scenery. The sound of the breeze rustling through the foliage is sometimes punctuated by the drumming of Spain's smallest woodpecker, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Last but not least the islands are standout biodiversity treasure troves. Their particular land-sea relationship and huge amount of endemics means that a surprise might be waiting round any corner, for example a bird of prey that specialises in clutching fish in its talons rather than land-living quarry.



**Osprey**  
White with long, narrow wings. About 50-55 cm long and fairly common.

ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



Track: 600 Km

# CANTABRIAN MOUNTAINS NATURE TRAIL

## INLAND ASTURIAS / ASTURIAS

The Cantabrian Mountains Nature Trail runs east-west right across the whole of inland Asturias, crossing mountain scenery of the most breathtaking splendour. Walkers looking for beauty spots are spoilt for choice here. They will also be given a good idea of the traditional land-working and farming methods that still make up the lifestyle of many villages and hamlets.

The Natural Trail runs through singular protected sites, including the Protected Park of La Sierra del Cuera, hard by the National Park of Picos de Europa; Redes Nature Park and the Nature Park of Las Ubiñas-La Mesa, listed as a UNESCO world biosphere reserve. Between them they are home to such marquee species as Griffon Vulture and Peregrine Falcon, and there will always be other species waiting round every corner to surprise and delight us.



### Wayside birds

#### BLACK WOODPECKER

*Dryocopus martius*

● **Aspect**

All black apart from an eye-catching red cap. Its light-coloured bill and iris, within its otherwise dark plumage, give it a mesmerizing expression. Much bigger than its fellow woodpeckers.

● **Population**

A very scarce bird restricted to certain spots of the

major mountain ranges of the Picos de Europa and the Pyrenees.

● **Habitat**

Mountain woods of beech, fir, pine and oak.

● **Threats**

Its strict dependency on woods means that any woodland-affecting activity will have a big knock-on effect on this bird. The more aggressive logging activities wipe out its breeding and feeding areas.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Its ringing call, sometimes given



MARTIN PELANEK/SHUTTERSTOCK

out in flight, might help to locate it and then watch it pecking at the bark as it scurries up the trunk.

#### BULLFINCH

*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

● **Aspect**

Both males and females have black caps reaching below the eye to the base of the beak. The males, however, sport a bright crimson breast while the females' breasts are a dull purple.

Resident  
Length: 22-26 cm  
Wing span: 20-27 cm



ONDREJ PROSICKY/SHUTTERSTOCK

● **Population**

Its range is basically northern though it might reach the south of the country in winter. Well distributed though never really common within this small range.

● **Habitat**

Woods and scrubland though it also visits orchards to feed on the fruit trees.

● **Threats**

The main cause of its declining numbers is habitat disappearance, especially the ecologically harmful eucalyptus plantations.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Individuals, pairs or small flocks might be seen perched on the trees and bushes along the wood edges.



#### EGYPTIAN VULTURE

*Neophron percnopterus*

● **Aspect**

The smallest member of Spain's vulture family, it has an off-white plumage with a yellow head. Its

most conspicuous features in flight are its black primaries and wedge-shaped tail.

● **Population**

It breeds on the Spanish mainland, the Balearics and the Canaries (only in Formentera and Lanzarote). Common, more so in the north.

● **Habitat**

Mountainous and hilly areas where it nests on cliff ledges or in small caves.

● **Threats**

It is now listed as "in critical danger" due to powerline collisions, deliberate poisoning and the disappearance of some small vulture-feeding stations.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Just keep looking up to see this black and white bird soaring over the surrounding valleys.

Summer visitor  
Length: 55-70 cm  
Wing span: 1.55-1.7 m



GALABIN VASILEV/ASENOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

#### WALLCREEPER

*Tichodroma muraria*

● **Aspect**

This small bird, with a long, slightly curved beak, is quite a drab grey when perched, but when it flies it suddenly flashes the carmine patches of its rounded wings.

● **Population**

Scarce with a very small range, restricted to the major mountain ranges of the north, Picos de Europa and Pyrenees. Some southwards movements in winter.

● **Habitat**

A cliff dweller, usually in the high mountains.

● **Threats**

Tourism and mountain climbing might disturb the birds during the breeding season.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Creeps mouse-like over rock faces, moving upwards or downwards at will.

Resident  
Length: 15-17 cm  
Wing span: 30-35 cm



ANIBELE/SHUTTERSTOCK



### AND ALSO...



Water pipit



Golden Eagle



Eurasian Treecreeper



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker



Yellowhammer



Brambling



Wryneck



Red-Backed Shrike



Black Kite



Rufous-Tailed Rock Thrush



Grey Partridge



Bee-eater



Redstart



Alpine Accentor



Alpine Chough



Goldcrest



Sand Martin



Subalpine Warbler



Capercaillie



Redwing

ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



# SIERRA DE LA DEMANDA NATURE TRAIL

## BURGOS / CASTILLA Y LEÓN

Track: 52,4 Km



Lying hard by the Cantabrian Cordillera this sierra is exceptionally humid, favouring the growth of large beech- and oakwoods. These harbour many flagship species of Spain's fauna, including the Wolf, whose spine-chilling howls might sporadically be heard ringing through the local dales and peaks.

Many other species inhabit the moist, sprawling woods of this hilly spot. Small woodland birds such as the perky, tree-scrampering Nuthatch enliven the scene together with magnificent raptors like Sparrow Hawk and Goshawk, adding a sense of enigmatic mystery to the leafy woods. This spot, in short, is a fine introduction to the typical woodland birdlife of the northern sierras.

### Wayside birds

#### TREE PIPIT

*Anthus trivialis*

**Aspect**  
A long-tailed, fine-billed bird with an unusually long hind claw. Brown and streaky in general though its breast is subtly flushed with an ochre tone.



Summer visitor  
Length: 15 cm  
Wing span: 25-27 cm

**Population**  
This summer visitor breeds only in the north of Spain, where it is common.

**Habitat**  
Sometimes found in mountain areas but normally in oak- and pinewoods of varying density. Also frequents meadows and pastureland.

**Threats**  
No specific problems are known in Spain.



VIMBOR BUSEL-SHUTTERSTOCK

**Presence along the pathway**  
Can be seen perched high in the trees but also on the ground in woodland clearings and edges.

#### HAWFINCH

*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

**Aspect**  
This is a stout looking passerine with an unusually large beak, giving it its Spanish name of "picogordo" (thick-beak). It is pinkish hued with bluish tints on the wings and large white shoulder patches shown in flight.



ALANW-SHUTTERSTOCK

Resident  
Length: 18 cm  
Wing span: 29-33 cm

**Habitat**  
Woods, parks and other areas with trees bearing hard-stoned fruits.

**Threats**  
Habitat destruction and losses caused by bird-trapping and shooting.



#### SISKIN

*Carduelis spinus*

**Aspect**  
A fairly small greenish bird with darker streaks. Males have a natty black cap and are brighter



JOHN NAVAU-SHUTTERSTOCK

yellow than the capless, streakier and duller females.

**Population**  
This bird breeds in only a few spots in Spain so in general it is pretty scarce. Numbers rise in winter, when some migrants also reach the Balearics.

**Habitat**  
This seedeater frequents riverside copses and wooded areas where it finds its food still on the trees or fallen on the ground.

**Threats**  
Faced by no great threats though it is one of the target species of



Resident - winter visitor  
Length: 12 cm  
Wing span: 20-23 cm

bird trappers.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Keep an eye on the leafless twigs of seed-bearing trees, where flitting parties might be acrobatically feeding.

#### HONEY BUZZARD

*Pernis apivorus*

**Aspect**  
Small head, yellow eyes and greyish body. Its two most conspicuous features in overhead flight are the dark carpal markings of its wings and its barred tail, standing out against its generally pale plumage.



DERNIS JACOBSEN-SHUTTERSTOCK

Summer visitor  
Length: 52-60 cm  
Wing span: 1.35-1.5 m



**Population**  
Uncommon and generally restricted to the north with some outlying populations in the centre of Spain.

**Habitat**  
Zones with beech-, oak- or pine-woods and also pastureland and meadows.

### AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



# CANTABRIAN SEA NATURE TRAIL

LUGO / GALICIA

This Nature Trail of Cantabria starts in the Port of Ribadeo and then runs along the coastline, affording stunning views of cliffs and beaches and demonstrating the close relationship between the local folk and the sea. The route ends at O Barqueiro and also runs along other breathtaking places as As Catedrais beach, listed as a "natural monument" due to the striking beauty of the singular forms created by the sea.

The spectacular rock formations, looking like natural capriccios, not only provide nesting sites but also refuge from the harsh storms that often lash the Galician coast. On milder days large flocks of gulls and cormorants loaf on the rocks while smaller flocks of waders scuttle along the beaches and shores of this unique site.

Track: 18,4 Km



## Wayside birds

### SHAG

*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

● **Aspect**

This otherwise dark bird has a small bright yellow patch at the base of its long, thin bill. A



characteristic tuft of feathers stands up from the top of its head. In fact, in Spanish it is called the "tufted cormorant".

● **Population**

Its range is restricted to the coast, especially in Galicia, so it is fairly rare overall.

● **Habitat**

Strictly seafaring, sticking mainly to islands, islets and the open sea.

● **Threats**

Listed as "in danger"; its main threat is bycatch in fishing gear.



Resident  
Length: 65-80 cm  
Wing span: 90-105 cm

● **Presence along the pathway**

Sits on rocks and cliffs with gulls and cormorants along the whole route.

### YELLOW-LEGGED GULL

*Larus michaellis*

● **Aspect**

A light-coloured bird with white underparts and a greyish back. Its most striking feature is its strong, yellow-and-red bill. As its name suggests its legs are also yellow.



Resident  
Length: 55-65 cm  
Wing span: 1.3-1.5 m

● **Population**

It is one of the commonest gulls on mainland Spain, the Balearics and Canaries. Much more frequent in the north and very rare inland.

● **Habitat**

Breeds on cliffs, near islets and

frequents urban zones of the coastline and beaches.

● **Threats**

This species has no conservation problems.

● **Presence along the pathway**

This abundant bird is easy to see flying over the coast or built-up areas. Loafs on beaches and around ports.



BRUNO I. SILVA ALVES-SHUTTERSTOCK

### CURLEW

*Numenius arquata*

● **Aspect**

This is Spain's biggest wader; oddly enough it is the females that are usually the larger of the two. Its variegated brown plumage is not particularly striking



SYSASIA PHOTOGRAPHY-SHUTTERSTOCK

but its extremely long curved beak certainly is.

● **Population**

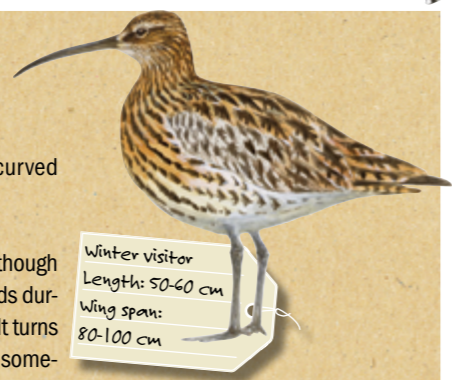
A common bird in winter, though there are also some records during the breeding season. It turns up more in the north and somewhat less on the eastern coast of Spain.

● **Habitat**

Beaches, marshes and coastal wetlands, always in areas with mudflats to probe in.

● **Threats**

Listed as "in danger" due to habitat loss as the result of re-



Winter visitor  
Length: 50-60 cm  
Wing span: 80-100 cm

forestation and the use of insecticides and pesticides.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Easiest to see feeding at low tide, though at high tide it might also be spotted resting up above the waterline together with other birds.

### LITTLE-RINGED PLOVER

*Charadrius dubius*

● **Aspect**

A long-legged, round-bodied, short-necked and -billed wader. Its unique face pattern consists of a black collar, black mask and white forehead. Its most striking feature is its yellow eye-ring.



Resident - Summer visitor  
Length: 14-15 cm  
Wing span: 42-48 cm

● **Population**

This is a fairly common species, more so during the summer months. Present on the Spanish mainland and the Balearics and spends the whole year in the Canaries.

● **Habitat**

Sandy areas and flats near

standing water inland. On the coast it drops in at wetlands, estuaries and saltflats.

● **Threats**

Habitat loss due to dam construction and the channelling of waterways are cutting down the numbers of this wader.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Loves to scamper round the edge of lakes or even the coast, so look out for it on the shores along the whole route.



## AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



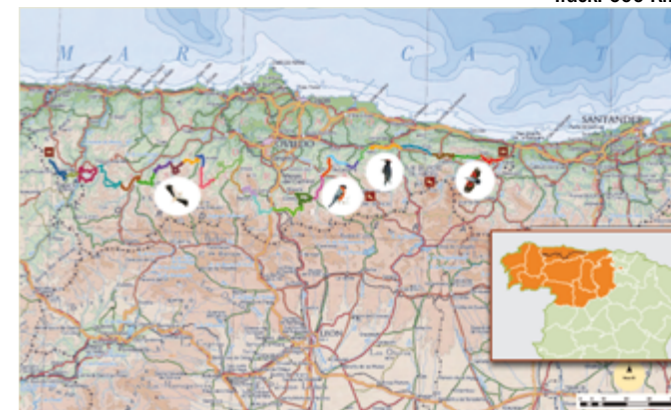
Track: 600 Km

# SENDA DEL DUERO NATURE TRAIL

BURGOS, SORIA, VALLADOLID, SALAMANCA AND ZAMORA / CASTILLA Y LEÓN

The 750-kilometre Senda del Duero Nature Trail goes through many places that have inspired poets and ramblers down the ages, showing today's walkers living portions of Spain's history, culture and cuisine.

From its birth in the Sierra de Urbión, in Soria, to its final destination in Vega Terrón, in Salamanca, the path crosses different environments, ranging from titmice-lively pinewoods to the riverside juniper copses and vineyards of the Duero, where the matinées of typical farmland birds brighten up the farming area known as Tierra de Campos each and every morning. These and other landscapes, like the mysterious holm-oak woods of Arribes del Duero, are home to Griffon Vultures and other, non-scavenging raptors that themselves stand testimony to the cultural and traditional values of this Castilian territory.



## Wayside birds

### LONG-TAILED TIT

*Aegithalos caudatus*

● **Aspect**

Small and plump with a very long tail. Overall it is dun grey in colour with a pinkish breast and a white head with dark lines running above the eye, often adorned with a reddish eyelid.

● **Population**

The birds make small winter movements. It is common and is distributed throughout nearly the whole of Spain, albeit more frequent in the north.

● **Habitat**

Needs trees, moving acrobatically among the smallest twigs of both riverside and upland trees and scrub.

● **Threats**

The main threat it faces is deforestation.



Resident  
Length: 14 cm  
Wing span: 16-19 cm

● **Presence along the pathway**

Very confiding though never still, so it is easy to see this bird flitting about in parties among the pathside twigs and branches.

ARTIN FOWLER-SHUTTERSTOCK

### LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

*Dendrocopos minor*

● **Aspect**

This is the smallest of our woodpeckers. Males have a bright red cap while the females' poll is black. Both have a smart chequered plumage.

● **Population**

It is fairly scarce and skulking. The biggest populations are in the north, the central massif and Ebro valley.

● **Habitat**

This woodland bird is particularly fond of mature trees.

● **Threats**

The main threat is habitat loss



VITALY ILVISOV-SHUTTERSTOCK

Resident  
Length: 14-15 cm  
Wing span: 25-27 cm

due to the replacement of mature woodland with conifer and eucalyptus plantations.

● **Presence along the pathway**

It can with some difficulty be spotted among the higher twigs of pathside trees.

### EAGLE OWL

*Bubo bubo*

● **Aspect**

Big, with very striking eyes.

● **Population**

Fairly common but with a patchy range, commoner in the centre, south and Mediterranean than in the north.

● **Habitat**

Curiously, although it frequents cliffs and mountainous areas, it builds its nest on the ground; when the chicks grow they can often be seen roundabout the nest site.

● **Threats**

Although its numbers are growing, threats such as powerlines and rabbit-affecting illnesses



Resident  
Length: 59-73 cm  
Wing span: 1.38-1.7 m

do tend to slow down its upward trend.

● **Presence along the pathway**

It can often be heard hooting at dawn and then might be spotted throughout the day, resting on rocks and in crannies.

CHRIS HILL-SHUTTERSTOCK

### CRAG MARTIN

*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

● **Aspect**

A swallow-like bird with greyish-brown upperparts and whitish underparts. It flashes its white tail patches as it twists and turns in flight.

● **Population**

Apart from the flattest inland areas, this very common bird's range takes in almost the whole of Spain and the Balearics.

● **Habitat**

Haunts cliffs and rocks, building its mud nests among cracks and crannies.



Resident - Winter visitor  
Length: 14-15 cm  
Wing span: 32 cm

● **Threats**

Although it seems to be faced with no serious conservation problems, its food sources may be reduced by insecticide use.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Can be seen flying near its rock-based nest sites or hawking along rivers and streams where the insect density is highest.

## AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA

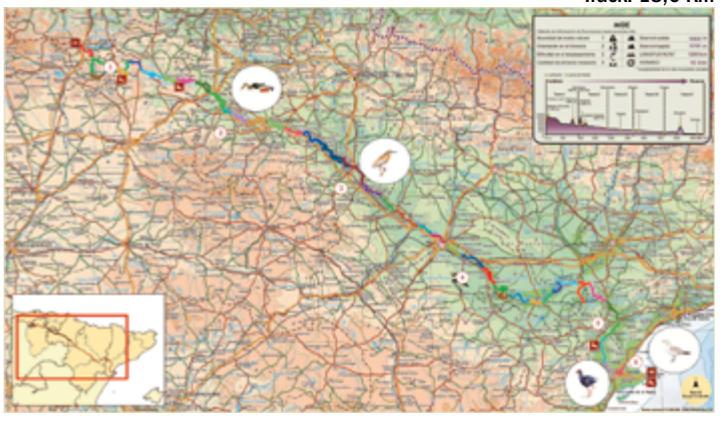


# EBRO NATURE TRAIL

## FROM DELEBRE TO CAMARLES - STAGE 42.1 TARRAGONA / CATALUNYA

It runs through an environment of irrigation ditches, ricefields, protected nature sites and a rich variety of places with centuries of history behind them.

Since being officially listed as the Ebro Delta Nature Park (Parque Natural del Delta del Ebro), this site has successively grown to take more of its hinterland under its protective umbrella. As a result it has by now become a park with a rich variety of beaches, dunes, brackish lagoons and ricefields, providing habitat for a wide range of waders, seabirds, flamenco populations and, during periods of flooding, many other members of the delta's birdlife.



### Wayside birds

#### SQUACCO HERON

*Ardeola ralloides*

**Aspect**  
Unlike other, mostly all-white egrets of its size, this bird sports an eye-catching tangerine flush on back and breast. It also has a stout yellow bill.

**Population**  
Its range is largely restricted to the southern and Mediterranean coastal areas of the country, where it is always pretty local.

**Habitat**  
Lakes, ponds, ditches, ricefields and other areas of standing water. It usually skulks unseen among the wetland vegetation.

**Threats**  
This species has been listed as "almost threatened" due to water pollution, wetland destruction and nest predation when water



Summer visitor  
Length: 40-49 cm  
Wing span: 71-86 cm

levels bottom out.  
**Presence along the pathway**  
Along the pathway keep an eye on the rice crops where stalks in search of prey.

#### PURPLE SWAMPHEN

*Porphyrio porphyrio*

**Aspect**  
A large plump bird with a gorgeous purple sheen to its plumage, standing out against its

bright-red bill. Its toes are exaggeratedly long to cling to the plants it feeds from.

**Population**  
Its range takes in the whole of mainland Spain except the north. Sedentary in general, it sometimes spreads out to colonise new wetland territories.

**Habitat**  
Wetlands with rich bankside vegetation such as marshes, reservoirs and lakes.

**Threats**  
Although still listed as "vulnerable" it is currently on a clearly



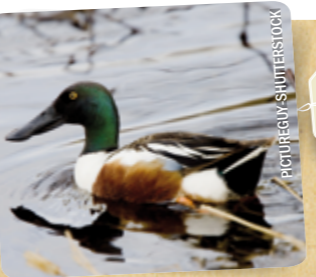
Resident  
Length: 45-50 cm  
Wing span: 90-100 cm

upward trend, sometimes balked by habitat destruction.  
**Presence along the pathway**  
Though it is often quite silent, it might be picked up stalking through the vegetation around areas of standing water.

#### SHOVELER

*Anas clypeata*

**Aspect**  
Drakes have a bright yellow eye standing out amidst the green-and-bluish hues of the head and neck. The white breast gives way to a russet patch on both flanks. Ducks are a duller, speckled colour though both sexes sport an eye-catching, shovel-shaped beak.



Resident  
Length: 44-52 cm  
Wing span: 70-84 cm

**Population**  
Its range takes in the whole of Spain and numbers are boosted by new arrivals in winter.

**Habitat**  
It is very common in shallower

wetlands where it can reach the underwater plantlife.

**Threats**  
Listed as "almost threatened" due to habitat alteration and falling water quality.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Can be spotted among other duck species in standing water all along the pathway. It is a dabbling duck that feeds by ducking the head under the water with its tail and hindparts standing bolt upright.



#### AUDOUIN'S GULL

*Larus audouinii*

**Aspect**  
A long-winged, strong-flying, sea-going gull with a clear grey mantle. Its most distinctive features are its bright red bill and grey legs.

**Population**  
Well distributed around the westernmost part of the Mediterranean coastline. More frequent in winter.

**Habitat**  
A coastal specialist rarely seen inland, it is often seen following fishing boats or resting up on offshore islets.



Resident  
Length: 46-52 cm  
Wing span: 1.17-1.28 m

**Threats**  
Listed as "vulnerable" due to alteration of breeding habitat

and human disturbance during the breeding season.

**Presence along the pathway**  
This seagoing gull is likeliest to be seen on the coast, either flying by or loafing on the beach.



### AND ALSO...





Track: 133 Km

# LA HOYA DE HUESCA NATURE TRAIL

HUESCA / ARAGÓN

La Hoya de Huesca Nature Trail, a 133-km route running west-east from Agüero to Bierge in the province of Huesca, links up in its final stretch with the nature trail of Somontano de Barbastro. Hoya de Huesca lies on a transition belt between the Pyrenean foothills and the Ebro-valley plain. The route runs first through Reino de los Mallos, then to continue through the sierra of Gratal and Arguis, reaching the sierra of Guara through the valleys of Belsué and Nocito, before doubling back through Vadiello to the farming plain and Somontano in the western part of La Hoya.

This path crosses protected sites like La Sierra y Los Cañones de Guara Nature Park, two Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and four Sites of Community Importance (SCIs), all of which can be enjoyed from the lookout points.



## Wayside birds

### WHITE-THROATED DIPPER

*Cinclus cinclus*

**Aspect**  
This small, stocky bird has a dark back and white throat and breast. Prominent features are its stout legs and stubby, up-turned tail.

**Population**  
Present all year but only on mainland Spain. It is fairly common in the northern half of the country and upland areas.

**Habitat**  
Stony rivers and streams with clean, quickly-flowing water, normally in the mid- or high-mountain range.

**Threats**  
River pollution, channelling work and felling of riverside woods change the characteristics of the river, forcing dippers to move



RNI-SHUTTERSTOCK

elsewhere.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Whenever the path runs alongside rivers and streams or crosses over bridges, check out the banks or the stones that stand above the water level.



Resident  
Length: 18 cm  
Wing span: 25-30 cm

### LAMMERGEIER

*Gypaetus barbatus*

**Aspect**  
Huge, about as big as a Griffon Vulture. Its flight silhouette of narrow wings and wedge-shaped tail is distinctive.

**Population**  
Its natural range is restricted to the Pyrenees, mainly the province of Huesca, and it spends the whole year among us. There are minor juvenile dispersal movements in search of new territories.

**Habitat**  
Mountains and high hills. It nests in caves and on cliff ledges.



ERNI-SHUTTERSTOCK

**Threats**  
Poisoned bait has wiped out many populations, reducing the species to an official listing of "in danger".

**Presence along the pathway**  
Keep your eyes on the sky to



Resident  
Length: 1.05-1.25 m  
Wing span: 2.35-2.75 m

spot this magnificent raptor soaring elegantly over the upland slopes.

### CHOUGH

*Phyrrocorax phyrrocorax*

**Aspect**  
A bright shiny black bird, its full name is Red-Billed Chough to distinguish it from its yellow-billed cousin.

**Population**  
It is present on the mainland; the only one of Spain's island

territories where it also breeds in La Palma. It is sedentary and spends all year with us.

**Habitat**  
Its breeding colonies nest on all sorts of natural cliffs on the coast or along rivers as well as some ruins or historical buildings.

**Threats**  
The Chough is listed as "nearly threatened" due to the meas-



JOSE MARIA DE LA PENA

ures taken to prevent its nesting on historical buildings and ruins, cutting down its potential breeding sites. Uncontrolled climbing and tourism also pose a threat.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Large, acrobatically flying flocks can be seen giving out this bird's noted ricochet-like call.



Resident  
Length: 37-41 cm  
Wing span: 68-80 cm

### WHITETHROAT

*Sylvia communis*

**Aspect**  
Male and female both have russet backs and white throats so they are sometimes hard to tell apart, although the male in breeding plumage has a much greyer head.

**Population**  
A fairly common summer visitor, arriving in spring to spend the breeding season here.

**Habitat**  
The Whitethroat is a typical scrubland species, also turning up on woodland edges with hedgerows.



VISHNEVSKIY VASILY-SHUTTERSTOCK

Summer visitor  
Length: 14 cm  
Wing span: 19-23 cm

**Threats**  
The burning of hedgerows and the grubbing up of scrubland due to the advance of extensive farming practices.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Sitting atop bushes, hedgerows and scrub, it can often be seen singing in spring close to the path.



## AND ALSO...



Water Pipit

Alpine Swift

Golden Eagle

Siskin

Short-Toed Eagle

Raven

Black Woodpecker

Ortolan Bunting

Peregrine Falcon

Thekla Lark

Southern Grey Shrike

Woodlark

Grey Wagtail

Egyptian Vulture

Wheatear

Redstart

Crag Martin

Penduline Tit

Whinchat

Mistle Thrush





# MONTFALCÓ TO MONT-REBEI NATURE TRAIL

## HUESCA AND LLEIDA / ARAGÓN AND CATALUÑA

The Montfalcó al Congost Mont-Rebei Nature Trail connects the abandoned settlement of Montfalcó, in the Huesca district of La Ribagorza, with the La Masieta-Corçà stage of the long-distance path GR-1, a "historic trail" in the Lleida district of La Noguera. This path takes us through the stunning chalk hills and cliffs of the Sierra del Montsec. Running along the border between Aragon and Catalunya, the River Noguera Ribagorzana has carved the area into two: Montsec de L'Estall on the Aragón side and Montsec d'Ares on the Catalan side, forming the dizzying gorge of Mont-Rebei.

The path crosses two rocky bluffs by means of wooden walkways fixed in the rock and also spans Canelles reservoir on a hanging bridge, made by specialist teams in high-level work. As well as the breathtaking stretch next to the gorges, the path also crosses the Site of Community Importance and Special Protection Area Sierra del Mongay, a prime raptor-breeding spot.



### Wayside birds

#### GOLDEN EAGLE

*Aquila chrysaetos*

- **Aspect**  
Massively elegant, impressively powerful and brawny, this brown eagle is reckoned to be the queen of the raptors.
- **Population**  
The few remaining breeding pairs in Spain have a patchy distribu-

tion around inland mountain chains, where it might locally be fairly common.

- **Habitat**  
This eagle lives in mountainous area, breeding on cliff ledges or in trees. From there is often sallies forth over lower-lying land in search of prey.
- **Threats**  
It is listed as "nearly threatened" because of frequent deaths from powerline electrocution or poisoned bait.



Resident  
Length: 75-85 cm  
Wing span: 1.9-2.2 m



VLADIMIR KOGAN MICHAEL SHUTTERSTOCK

- **Presence along the pathway**  
The queen of the raptors quarters plains and hillsides in search of live prey or carrion. It might well be seen perched on rocks or cliffs along the pathway.

#### PEREGRINE FALCON

*Falco peregrinus*

- **Aspect**  
A powerful, broad-shouldered bird with pointed wings, short tail, dark back and pale, barred underparts.

- **Population**  
Peregrines spend the whole year in Spain, their numbers swelled in winter by many new arrivals from northern Europe. In general it is fairly common.

- **Habitat**  
Its breeding sites are cliff ledges, castles or powerline pylons and its favourite hunting grounds are open spaces and cropland.
- **Threats**  
Nest-robbing, disturbance in the breed-



ERNI SHUTTERSTOCK



Resident  
Length: 39-50 cm  
Wing span: 0.95-1.15 m

- ing season, accidental shooting and predation by other raptors all tend to check any increase in the number of breeding pairs.
- **Presence along the pathway**  
The likeliest sightings will be birds dashing past in the open areas, perched atop outcrops along the way or chasing flocks of pigeons or starlings.

#### RUFIOUS-TAILED ROCK THRUSH

*Monticola saxatilis*

- **Aspect**  
Males in summer plumage flaunt a fiery orange breast with an equally striking array of pastel blues and white patches on the back. Females, like juveniles, are a speckled russet brown.

- **Threats**  
Potential threats might be nuisance from mountain-

Summer visitor  
Length: 17-20 cm  
Wing span: 30-35 cm



LEV PARASKEVOPOULOS SHUTTERSTOCK

- **Population**  
A scarce bird, commoner in the north and present only from March to October both on the mainland and in the Balearics.
- **Habitat**  
Upland rocky areas, peaking at 2000 m.

- walkers or -climbers, livestock farming or forest-plantation work.
- **Presence along the pathway**  
An inquisitive bird that likes to see what's going on from atop pathside rocks.

#### ALPINE CHOUGH

*Pyrrhocorax graculus*

- **Aspect**  
A black bird with a striking lemon-yellow bill. Rounded wings and tail show up in flight.

- **Population**  
Lives only in the Pyrenees and the Cantabrian Cordillera where it is fairly common and resident.

- **Habitat**  
Breeds only in alpine or high-mountain areas, normally higher than 1000 m.

- **Threats**  
Mountain climbing and caving affect Alpine Chough populations when carried out near

Resident  
Length: 36-39 cm  
Wing span: 65-74 cm



BIHRINGER FREDRICH



- their nesting sites in the breeding season.
- **Presence along the pathway**  
Flocks of several birds together can be seen, giving out their piercing fight calls to communicate with each other in their constant quest for food.

### AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



Track: 485 Km

# SENDA DEL PASTOREO NATURE TRAIL

ÁLAVA, GIPUZKOA, BIZKAIA (BISCAY), NAVARRA AND BURGOS / BASQUE COUNTRY, CASTILLA Y LEÓN AND NAVARRA

The Senda del Pastoreo Nature Trail is a circular route running through the hills surrounding the “Llanada Alavesa”, a plain of fluvial origin upon which the city of Vitoria-Gasteiz sits. Wedged between two east-west running mountain chains, it was formed under the influence of the River Zadors. The route aims to give the trekker an idea of one of humankind’s oldest activities, shepherding, linking up some of the main mountain pastures that ongoing grazing activities have helped to conserve.

Most of the track runs through protected nature sites, duly reflecting the prime ecological and scenic value of the landscape. This scene is home to many resident, breeding or wintering species of Iberian birdlife.



## Wayside birds

### RED-BACKED SHRIKE

*Lanius collurio*

● **Aspect**

As its very name suggests this bird has a russet back contrasting sharply with an ash-grey head adorned with a black mask. Close up you can see its stout, hooked beak.

● **Population**

Common, but much more so in the northernmost fringe of the country, where most of the birds are concentrated, though it does extend from there southwards to parts of the central massif.

● **Habitat**

This species is quite easily found in mountain meadows with patches of bushes, trees and some scrub.

● **Threats**

Overuse of insecticides and habitat loss are undermining the Iberian populations of this species.



Summer visitor  
Length: 16-18 cm  
Wing span: 24-27 cm



● **Presence along the pathway**  
It is fond of perching on posts and on top of pathside bushes and trees, often dashing down to the ground to pounce on a beetle or other prey species.

### YELLOW WAGTAIL

*Motacilla flava*

● **Aspect**

Males and females are quite similar though the males' breasts are brighter yellow and their grey head is adorned with a smart black mask.

Summer visitor  
Length: 17 cm  
Wing span: 23-27 cm



● **Population**

It is common in the breeding season, both on mainland Spain and in the Balearics.

● **Habitat**

Very fond of wettish grassland, meadows, the borders of ponds and lakes, marshes or irrigated cropland.

● **Threats**

Intensive farming jeopardises its breeding habitat, leading to a recent slump from which it now seems to be recovering.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Migrating flocks are often seen around the edges of ponds and lakes as well as cropland with some standing water.



### GOLDCREST

*Regulus regulus*

● **Aspect**

This tiny, plumpish bird is the smallest in Europe. Its characteristic yellow, black-edged, crown-like crest gives it its

name of “Goldcrest” in English and “reyezuelo” (little king) in Spanish.

● **Population**

This common bird's winter range, after many winter visitors have flooded in from central Europe, takes in most of mainland Spain and the Balearics. It is also a resident but in much smaller numbers and reduced to certain spots of northern and central Spain.

● **Habitat**

Strictly a woodland species normally living above 1000 metres.



Resident - Winter visitor  
Length: 9 cm  
Wing span: 13-15.5 cm

● **Threats**

Any alteration to the woodland ecosystem could adversely affect its breeding success.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Restless, confiding and so small as to be sometimes invisible among the twigs of the trees.

### RING OUZEL

*Turdus torquatus*

● **Aspect**

Generally black with a yellow bill like the Blackbird but with a white, crescent-shaped breast band, much more eye-catching on the males than the duller females.

● **Population**

Breeding populations live in the north, in the Pyrenees and one-off points of the Cantabrian Cordillera. It may winter in some spots in southern Spain and the Balearics.

● **Habitat**

Mainly upland areas with some

trees and scrub, normally higher than 1700 metres.

● **Threats**

Although both its population and range are small, its preference for high-mountain habitat

saves it from most conservation problems.

● **Presence along the pathway**

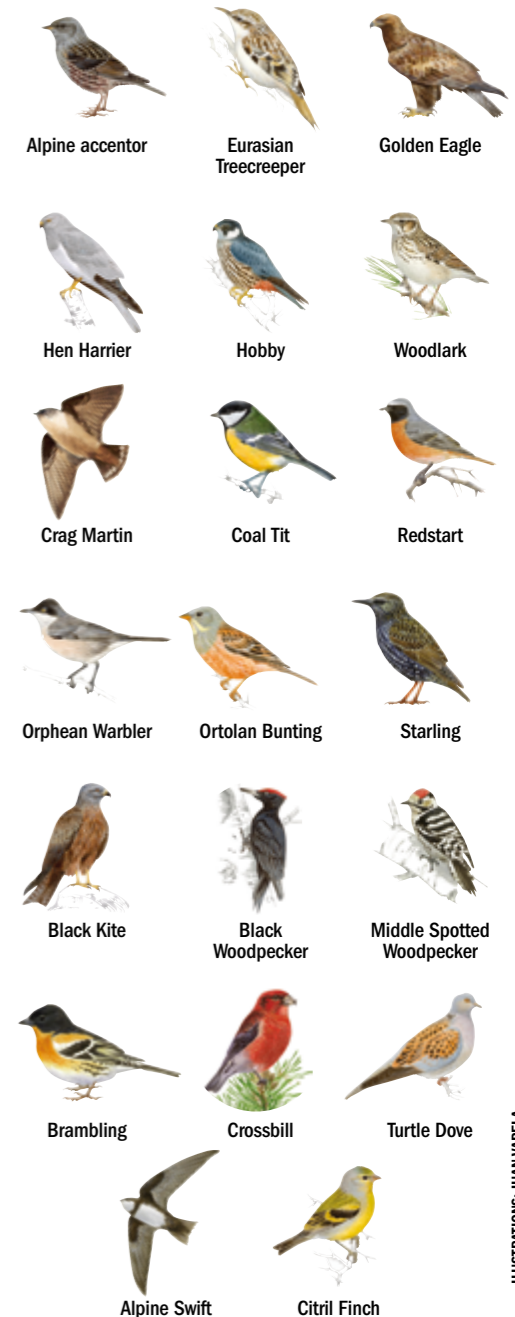
It can be seen feeding on berry-bearing scrubland bushes. Listen out for the tac tac flight call of winter flocks.



Resident - Winter visitor  
Length: 23-24 cm  
Wing span: 38-42 cm



## AND ALSO...



FLORIAN ANDRONACHE-SHUTTERSTOCK

ERNI-SHUTTERSTOCK

MENNO SCHAEFER-SHUTTERSTOCK

ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



MAPAMA



# CAÑADA REAL SORIANA ORIENTAL NATURE TRAIL

## MADRID REGION

This simple, attractive, 24-k pathway follows the droveway called Cañada Real Soriana Oriental in the southeast part of Madrid, one of the nine royal droveways or cañadas reales (traditional transhumance routes) running down the Iberian Peninsula from north to south and one of the four crossing the Region of Madrid. It takes hikers through the Madrid part of the patchwork Alcarria district of rolling downs, heaths and riverside fields and meadows, introducing them along the way to the main farming activities of the country communities of Brea de Tajo, Valdaracete and Fuentidueña de Tajo. It also whisks them back to a not too-distant time in which huge herds of livestock plied these droveways in a live-or-die search for food in this harsh, unforgiving environment.

This idiosyncratic landscape harbours flagship species like Golden Eagle and Hen Harrier, which quarter the vast farmfields in search of prey like voles and rabbits.



Track: 24 Km

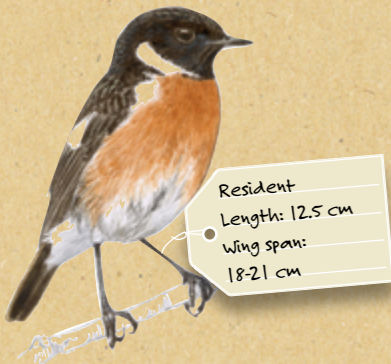
### Wayside birds

#### STONECHAT

*Saxicola torquatus*

● **Aspect**

This is a generally dark-toned passerine with an orange breast and striking white neck patches



Resident  
Length: 12.5 cm  
Wing span: 18-21 cm

standing out against the black hood. The females are much duller.

● **Population**

This feisty bird spends the whole year on the Spanish mainland and the Balearics, with many more streaming in from northern Europe in autumn in search of milder winters.

● **Habitat**

Open heathland and pastureland are its favourite haunts, especially with scattered bushes, sometimes also farmfields.



SYSASIA PHOTOGRAPHY-SHUTTERSTOCK

#### CARRION CROW

*Corvus corone*

Resident  
Length: 44-51 cm  
Wing span: 73-104 cm



● **Aspect**

A black bird with a stout beak, also black. Middling sized, it generally recalls the Raven, though the latter is much thicker set.

● **Population**

This common bird's range takes in the whole of Spain and the Balearics, though it is much commoner in the north.

● **Habitat**

This tree nester takes to many different ecosystems: open countryside with some trees, woodland and farmfields.



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● **Threats**

Fiercely persecuted due to its fame of harming crops or hunting species. It also often falls prey to poisoned bait.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Often seen perched on roadside posts, in trees and farmland.

#### ROCK BUNTING

*Emberiza cia*

● **Aspect**

Its bluish face is adorned with three black lines and it also sports russet patches on the rump and flanks.



JOHN NAVAJO-SHUTTERSTOCK

● **Population**

A common bird with a fairly uniform, countrywide range. It is resident but numbers are much higher in winter when birds from northern Europe move south to warmer climes.

● **Habitat**

Scrubland with scattered trees and bushes, woodland edges and open areas like pastureland or farmfields in winter.

● **Threats**

Winter food shortages and the spread of in-



Resident  
Length: 15-17 cm  
Wing span: 22-26 cm

tensive farming tend to reduce its numbers.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Sings from trees, bushes or even overhead wires. Forms small flocks in winter.

#### FIRECREST

*Regulus ignicapilla*

● **Aspect**

One of the smallest birds in Europe. Its most notable feature is a yellow-and-red crest from



MARTIN MECAROWSKI-SHUTTERSTOCK

which it takes its name. Its body is greenish and it has a conspicuous white eyestripe over a black line running through the eye.

● **Population**

This is a common bird spread liberally throughout the whole of Spain and the Balearics. Resident birds are boosted in winter by the arrival of many birds from central Europe.

● **Habitat**

A woodland bird with an eclectic liking for pines, deciduous and evergreen oaks, plantations, etc.



Resident - Winter visitor  
Length: 9 cm  
Wing span: 13-16 cm

● **Threats**

Pesticides used in forestry management might affect its breeding success.

● **Presence along the pathway**

Sprightly and so small that it is sometimes hardly visible among the twigs of the trees.

### AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



# ERESMA VALLEY NATURE TRAIL

SEGOVIA / CASTILLA Y LEÓN

The broad Eresma valley has long been highly appreciated by humankind. Inhabited since time out of mind, these river-side fields and meadows have been cultivated and transformed for human settlements. The original river-flanking woods of holm- and Pyrenean-Oak have thus given way to vast cropfields and poplar plantations. The River Eresma has been the silent witness to all these changes, ungrudgingly lending its verdure to the constant bustle of passenger and freight trains. Today it sheds its cool shade on the nature-lovers walking this nature trail, along the disused railbed of the old Segovia-Medina del Campo line.

Beginning in Segovia, the route follows the meandering Eresma as it nurtures the countryside it winds through, home to such handsome species as Great Spotted Woodpecker and Blackbird.



Track: 13,6 Km

## Wayside birds

### BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE

*Elanus caeruleus*

**Aspect**  
This is a very elegant, small and dainty raptor, generally pale grey with black shoulders and a piercing, bright-red eye.

**Population**  
It is a fairly uncommon resident, most frequent inland and in Extremadura.

**Habitat**  
This expert rodent hunter searches out its prey in the open woodland known as dehesas as well as farmfields and pastureland with some trees.

**Threats**  
Like any hunting bird it depends on the state of the habitat and prey abundance, currently altered by pesticide use. As a result it is



Resident  
Length: 31-36 cm  
Wing span: 71-85 cm

now listed as "nearly threatened".  
**Presence along the pathway**  
It might go unnoticed or be mistaken for a white dove. It often sits on overhead wires or on telegraph poles to spot its ground prey from on high.

### CETTI'S WARBLER

*Cettia cetti*

**Aspect**  
This uniformly reddish brown bird stands out more for its attention-grabbing song than its plumage.

**Population**  
Widely distributed and very com-



Resident  
Length: 14 cm  
Wing span: 15-19 cm

mon in all humid ecosystems, shunning high-mountain areas completely.

**Habitat**  
Leafy areas of river banks and reedbeds are its favourite hide-out, from where it gives out its short but powerful bursts of song.

**Threats**  
River channelling work and the

cutting down of vegetation represent a habitat loss, forcing the tiny Cetti's to look for a home elsewhere.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Usually hidden deep within the River Eresma's bankside vegetation, though it may dash out now and then to pounce on an insect.

### AZURE-WINGED MAGPIE

*Cyanopica cookii*

**Aspect**  
The only bird showing vivid blue patches on its wings and long tail. It has a shiny black hood contrasting with a bright white throat.

**Population**  
An Iberian-Peninsula species living nowhere else in Europe; as such it is a very special bird. It is sedentary and fairly common in the west and centre of Spain.

**Habitat**  
Fond of wooded areas and dehesas where they team up in groups.



Resident  
Length: 31-35 cm  
Wing span: 38-40 cm



**Threats**  
The disappearance of wooded areas and overhunting tend to whittle down the numbers of this species.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Very easy to find and see as they fly from tree to tree in boisterous gangs.

### CRESTED TIT

*Lophophanes cristatus*

**Aspect**  
The Crested Tit can safely claim to boast one of the smartest crests of all birds. Its black-and-white face pattern is almost equally striking.

**Population**  
Sedentary and common. Its range is almost country-wide but it is less frequent in the south.

**Habitat**  
Woods, mainly of pine and holm oak, where it can often be seen pecking at the pine cones up high or seeking seeds and insects on the ground.



Resident  
Length: 11.5 cm  
Wing span: 17-20 cm

**Threats**  
Its fondness for woodland makes it very vulnerable to any habitat change or alteration, as well as poor woodland management.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Agile and tirelessly acrobatic, it flits from twig to twig to gobble up pinecone seeds and feed on shoots, though it may also hop on the ground in search of other food.

## AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



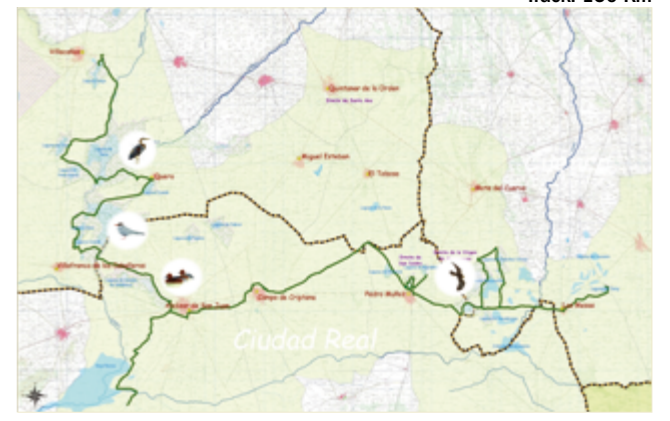
MAPAMA

# LA MANCHA WETLANDS NATURE TRAIL

TOLEDO, CUENCA AND CIUDAD REAL / CASTILLA-LA MANCHA

Right in the centre of Castilla-La Mancha, this flagship set of lakes and ponds, lying within the Mancha Húmeda Biosphere Reserve, is considered to be Spain's prime inland wetland area. Though the area might seem at first sight seem to be flat and dry, this nature trail takes the visitor through Castilla-La Mancha's "oasis".

Passing alongside some of the over 450 lakes and ponds that have been identified in this vast region, the pathway takes in the breeding areas of many birds, including some as threatened as the Ferruginous Duck.



Track: 150 Km

## Wayside birds

### PURPLE HERON

*Ardea purpurea*

**Aspect**  
A long-legged, long-necked heron whose dark, barred plumage is shot through with purplish sheens.



**Population**  
This bird lives in mainland Spain and the Balearics only during its breeding season. Fairly scarce overall but locally common in its wetland breeding sites.

**Habitat**  
Lakes, ponds and large rivers with dense bankside vegetation which it stalks through in search of its prey.

**Threats**  
The main problem affecting this species is overuse of pesticides, greatly cutting down its breeding success and leading to many failed nests.

Summer visitor  
Length: 70-90 cm  
Wing span: 1.1-1.45 m



JAVIER CARRIVAL GONZALEZ-SHUTTERSTOCK

### FERRUGINOUS DUCK

*Aythya nyroca*

**Aspect**  
Very dark. Its most striking feature is its white undertail coverts, often visible while it is swimming. Some birds have a very light-coloured iris.

**Population**  
Increasingly scarce, the few records of this species come from marshland in the south and east of Spain; it is much rarer inland.

**Habitat**  
Shallowish lakes with rich vegetation both underwater and on the surface.

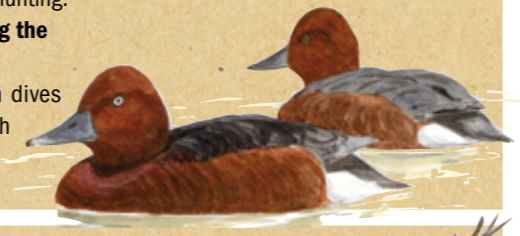
**Threats**  
Listed as "in critical danger" due to the draining of wetland, habitat loss and hunting.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Swims and often dives underwater. With a bit of luck it might be seen on any of the pathside lakes.



Resident  
Length: 32-42 cm  
Wing span: 60-67 cm

MARTIN MECAROWSKI-SHUTTERSTOCK



### WHISKERED TERN

*Chlidonias hybrida*

**Aspect**  
This smallish, greyish tern has a sharp beak and short legs, both red. Its striking white cheek



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stands out sharply against its natty black cap.

**Population**  
It is fairly easy to see in its breeding colonies but much rarer elsewhere in Spain.

**Habitat**  
This colonial species builds its nests on saltflats, islets or lakes with floating plantlife. It feeds in ricefields and marshland.



Summer visitor  
Length: 50-60 cm  
Wing span: 80-100 cm

**Threats**  
Listed as "vulnerable" due to habitat loss and the transformation of wetlands into arable land.

**Presence along the pathway**  
It can often be seen hawking low over the water for flying insects or resting up on posts poking out of the water.

### MARSH HARRIER

*Circus aeruginosus*

**Aspect**  
Females are dark with cream-coloured shoulders, chin, crown and nape. Males have a smart grey wing panel shown off in flight.



ERIN-SHUTTERSTOCK

**Population**  
Uncommon, largely restricted to wetland sites both of mainland Spain and the Balearics. Much commoner inland than on the coast.

**Habitat**  
Any wetland with bankside vegetation, such as reed or bulrush. It may also quarter surrounding cropland in search of prey.

**Threats**  
One of this bird's main threats comes from harvesting machinery, which spells doom for many nests every year.

**Presence along the pathway**  
This singular lake- and reservoir-specialist can quite often be seen flying low over the wetland or perching among the reeds or surrounding dead trees.

Resident - winter visitor  
Length: 48-55 cm  
Wing span: 1.1-1.25 m



## AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA

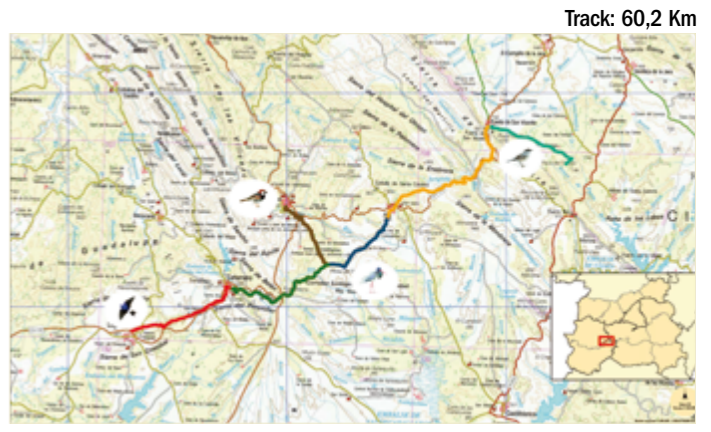


# LAS VILLUERCAS NATURE TRAIL

CÁCERES / EXTREMADURA

Villuercas takes its name from the surrounding sierra. Lying between the Tagus and Guadiana valleys, it is particularly famous for its singular geological riches, giving rise in turn to idiosyncratic plantlife and water formations. This natural pathway, serving as nexus between the Guadiana's fields and meadows and La Jara Nature Trail, gives walkers a fine idea of this area's natural, historical and architectural heritage.

The areas known as Lorera de la Trucha, Corredor Ecológico y de Biodiversidad Río Guadalupejo or the SPA of Sierra de las Villuercas are all magnificent spots of great ecological importance that will be discovered on this route. Beautiful and typical species of the area like Egyptian Vulture and Peregrine Falcon use this splendid spot to live in or rest up on their migration routes.



Track: 60,2 Km

## Wayside birds

### BLACK STORK

*Ciconia nigra*

**Aspect**  
As its name suggests, this stork's plumage, apart from the belly, is black, though the adult's plumage is shot through with all sorts of greenish and purplish sheens.



Summer visitor  
Length: 90-105 cm  
Wing span: 1.1-1.45 m



**Population**  
This species has a very small breeding population. It summers in Spain and is distributed over the centre and west of the country.

**Habitat**  
This flagship Spanish species can be seen in wooded areas or fishing alongside rivers and streams.

**Threats**  
Listed as "vulnerable", this stork's breeding territory is being

continually eaten up by urban sprawl and overdevelopment. Many also desert the nest due to human disturbance.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Might be seen perched on trees or on the rocks and cliffs where it builds its nest. Far more often seen flying by.

### HOUSE MARTIN

*Delichon urbicum*

**Aspect**  
Although it can look black in flight the House Martin is in fact a lovely metallic blue colour, only visible in good light. The underparts and feathered legs are pure white.



Summer visitor  
Length: 12-13 cm  
Wing span: 26-29 cm



**Population**  
Widely distributed and very common throughout the whole of mainland Spain and the Balearics, arriving in spring to breed and leaving again in autumn.

**Habitat**  
A largely rural bird, constructing its mud nests on buildings, bridges or dams and also some-

times on cliff walls.

**Threats**  
Overuse of insecticides considerably cuts down its food stocks, with a negative knock-on effect on its numbers.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Easily seen hawking for insects in groups or resting up on the overhead wires.

### SPANISH SPARROW

*Passer hispaniolensis*

**Aspect**  
This is a large sparrow. The males have thick dark blotches on the belly and a glossy black bib. Females are duller without these black marks.



Resident  
Length: 14-16 cm  
Wing span: 20-22 cm



**Population**  
A fairly common bird, very abundant in the centre, south and west of Spain, numbers thinning out in the north. Equally abundant on the Canary Islands.

**Habitat**  
A species of open countryside usually living close to crops and sometimes near towns and cities.

### BLACKCAP

*Sylvia atricapilla*

**Aspect**  
Males and females both look like they are wearing a tight-fitting cap, black in the males and chestnut brown in the females. The body otherwise is greyish.



Resident  
Length: 13-14 cm  
Wing span: 20-23 cm



**Population**  
Lives all year in Spain and in both the Balearics and Canaries. Fairly common in general, numbers boosted in winter by birds from northern Europe.

**Habitat**  
More frequent in upland areas and humid spots like rivers, though it is especially fond of

scrubland and bosky countryside

**Threats**  
It does not seem to suffer from any important problems though pesticide use might affect the species.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Always on the move looking for insects among the vegetation or eating the berries of some bushes.

## AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



Track: 53,2 Km

# LOZOYA VALLEY NATURE TRAIL

## MADRID REGION

This pathway comprises one main route plus six offshoots, offering walkers various alternative ways of getting to know the southern slopes of the Sierra de Guadarrama in the northwest corner of the region of Madrid. This valley, carved out over time by the ever-present River Lozoya, is dotted with hermitages hidden away among centenary pinewoods and also boasts a rich biodiversity, including species as threatened as Spanish Imperial Eagle and Cinereous Vulture.

The path, following the marvelous, bird-rich environs of the River Lozoya, runs through leafy oak woods, spacious scrub-dotted meadows, singular ash dehesas and picturesque villages of the sierra. Scores of bird species have made this river and valley their home, delighting eye and ear with their plumage and songs.



### Wayside birds

#### CINEREOUS VULTURE

*Aegypius monachus*

**Aspect**  
Bigger than the Griffon and quite a bit darker. Easily distinguished in flight by its straight wings and wedge-shaped tail.

**Population**  
Fairly uncommon throughout its range in inland and eastern Spain. As a species it is sedentary, though the year's young birds will move out in search of new territories.

**Habitat**  
Frequents sierras wooded with pines or cork oaks. May be seen soaring solo or in large scattered breeding colonies.

**Threats**  
Listed as "vulnerable" due to disturbance in the breeding season, poisoning or misguided removal of carrion from the countryside.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Throughout the route small soaring groups of 2 or 3 birds might be seen.



DENNIS JACOBSEN - SHUTTERSTOCK

#### CIRL BUNTING

*Emberiza cirius*

**Aspect**  
Males are an eye-catching yellow with a masked face pattern. Females are duller and lack the face pattern. Both have a russet mantle.

**Population**  
During summer it is commonest in the Mediterranean part of the country but the arrival of wintering birds from the whole of Europe boosts numbers and extends its range.

**Habitat**  
It is fairly common in woods, riverside copses and most habitat

with some trees, though it also visits farmfields in winter.

**Threats**  
Some of the threats it faces are habitat alteration and reduction of food stocks.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Look out for this bird drinking from pathside puddles or singing from a tree or bush.



MARTIN PELANEK - SHUTTERSTOCK

Resident  
Length: 15-16.5 cm  
Wing span: 22-25.5 cm

#### BONELLI'S WARBLER

*Phylloscopus Bonelli*

**Aspect**  
Its greenish-brown upperparts contrast with its very pale underparts. Has long, thin dark legs and large dark eyes.

**Population**  
A very common summer visitor

Summer visitor  
Length: 11-12 cm  
Wing span: 16-19 cm

tor that is fairly liberally spread throughout the whole of Spain.

**Habitat**  
A strictly woodland bird, especially Pyrenean oak, but it might equally take to other species like holm oak, pines or junipers.

**Threats**  
Currently faced by no known threats.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Its characteristic trill makes it fairly easy to pick out among the foliage.



PIERRE DALOUS - COMMONS-WIKICOMMONS

#### RED KITE

*Milvus milvus*

**Aspect**  
A large raptor with a grey head, deeply forked tail and white

Resident plus wintering birds  
Length: 60-66 cm  
Wing span: 1.54-1.7 m

wing patches, making it an easily identifiable bird.

**Population**  
Except on the Mediterranean coast and Galicia, this species is widely spread around inland Spain, especially in winter.

**Habitat**  
Hilly and mid-mountain woods.

**Threats**  
Persecution, poisoning and

electrocution have drastically cut down the numbers of this bird, with the result that it is now listed as "in danger".

**Presence along the pathway**  
Some of the kites migrate, joining up in large flocks at dusk so in winter it can be seen in flocks. Keep looking up along the path and you are likely to spot one elegantly plying the sky.



MARK MEDCALF - SHUTTERSTOCK

### AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



# NOROESTE NATURE TRAIL

## MURCIA REGION

This is one of the two stretches of the nature trail running from Murcia to Caravaca de la Cruz along the old railway line that fell into disuse in 1971 after 40 years of low-key service. The route gives a good idea of the diverse habitats of the Region of Murcia, from the fertile market gardens of Vega del Segura to the wasteland stretching over the northwest plains.

This type of wasteland is characteristic of arid zones heavily eroded by wind and sporadic torrents. These plains are home to an important community of open-country birds, with a particularly high number of larks, sparrow-sized birds that are typical denizens of arid zones. The whole area is riddled with interesting geological formations like canyons, gullies and ravines, providing many species of birds with their nest sites.

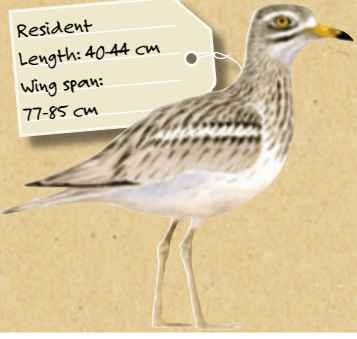


### Wayside birds

#### STONE CURLEW

*Burhinus oedicnemus*

● **Aspect**  
Its plumage is a canny mix of camouflage browns. Nicknamed "Thick Knee", it has notably long legs and a striking yellow eye.



Resident  
Length: 40-44 cm  
Wing span: 77-85 cm

● **Population**  
It is frequent in inland Spain and rare in the north and in upland areas. The Canary Island birds are reckoned to belong to a difference subspecies from the Spanish birds.

● **Habitat**  
Fond of open land with low natural vegetation where its camouflage comes into its own.

● **Threats**  
Listed as "nearly threatened", continually losing breeding habitat to the spread of inten-

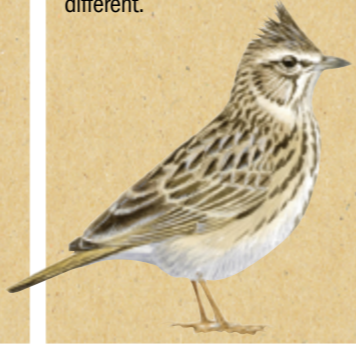


BUTTERFLY HUNTER, SHUTTERSTOCK

#### CRESTED LARK

*Galerida cristata*

● **Aspect**  
Recalls the skylark, especially in terms of its mimetic plumage, but it sports an eye-catching crest and its song is completely different.



Resident  
Length: 18 cm  
Wing span: 29-38 cm

● **Population**  
Widely distributed throughout the whole of Spain barring part of the north and the high mountain.

● **Habitat**  
Open countryside is its favourite habitat, where it is very common. May also be seen on the outskirts of towns, paths and roadside verges.



MARK CAHILL, SHUTTERSTOCK

#### CALANDRA LARK

*Melanocorypha calandra*

● **Aspect**  
Looks somewhat like a Skylark but two characteristic black marks, one on each side of the



GERDZHNIKOV, SHUTTERSTOCK

neck, make it unmistakable. Its streaked, pale-brown plumage camouflages perfectly with the land where it lives.

● **Population**  
Widely distributed in inland Spain; shuns the north, upland areas and the Mediterranean coast.

● **Habitat**  
A typical bird of mown grassland areas and dryland crops, where it is very common.

● **Threats**  
Increasingly intensive farming has led to habitat loss and a



Resident  
Length: 18-19 cm  
Wing span: 32-42 cm

moderate decline in the numbers of Calandra Lark.

● **Presence along the pathway**  
Along the whole route it may be seen scurrying over the pathside open land. The birds join up in large winter flocks.

#### BEE-EATER

*Merops apiaster*

● **Aspect**  
The Bee-eater is one of Spain's most staggeringly colourful and eye-catching birds. It has a long, dark beak and a central tuft of longer feathers in the tail.



Summer Visitor  
Length: 27-29 cm  
Wing span: 44-49 cm

● **Population**  
Fairly widespread but absent from the north. It migrates to Africa at the end of the summer and comes back in early spring.

● **Habitat**  
Abundant in open land near the river banks where it tunnels its nests.

● **Threats**  
Overuse of pesticides and habitat fragmentation prevent this species from expanding.



ICHARD CONSTANTINOFF, SHUTTERSTOCK

### AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA





# TURIA-CABRIEL NATURE TRAIL

TR.:TURIA-SIETE AGUAS / VALENCIA / VALENCIA REGION

From the waters of the River Turia, walkers can look out over a rich patchwork landscape of farmfields interspersed with clusters of natural Mediterranean vegetation, some adapted to upland areas and others to riverside environments. Passing through Los Serranos and Hoya de Buñol, walkers can also look out on droveways, traditional Arab-type wells called *aljibes* and livestock corrals, while crossing peaks and gullies affording sweeping views and breathing in a heady Mediterranean mix of orange blossom, rosemary, heather and cistus rockrose.

The hillside bushes are home to a rich variety of nesting birds, Stonechats, scrub warblers and wheat-ears, perched atop the pathside bushes, all entertain the passer-by with their particular ditties.



## Wayside birds

### BONELLI'S EAGLE

*Aquila fasciata*



Summer visitor  
Length: 60-70 cm  
Wing span: 1.5-1.7 m

**Aspect**  
This is a large raptor, somewhat smaller than the Golden Eagle but bigger than the Booted Eagle. In flight its dark wings stand out from its pale underparts.

**Population**  
Its range takes in inland Spain and the Mediterranean coast. It is a sedentary species with minor dispersal movements.

**Habitat**  
Nests on crags, cliffs and river canyons, and tends to hang around the same areas.



ANDREANITA-SHUTTERSTOCK

### BLUE ROCK THRUSH

*Monticola solitarius*



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Resident  
Length: 21-23 cm  
Wing span: 33-37 cm

**Aspect**  
A Blackbird-like bird with a stumper tail. Far off the males look black but they actually have a lovely bluish sheen; females are a duller brown colour.

**Population**  
It is frequent in the east and somewhat rarer in the north of Spain; also present in the Balearics. They spend the whole year in Spain.

**Habitat**  
A rock-loving species par excellence.

**Threats**  
Rock climbing activities near its nest or habitat loss have caused a moderate decline in its numbers.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Look out for it in any area of rocks and cliffs, where it can easily be seen flying back and forth from its favourite perches.

### HOOPOE

*Upupa epops*



BILDAGENTUR ZOOVAR GMBH-SHUTTERSTOCK



Summer visitor  
Length: 27 cm  
Wing span: 44-48 cm

**Aspect**  
Its back is barred black and white but its most striking features are its characteristic peach-coloured crest and its eponymous song.

**Population**  
Widely distributed round the whole country in summer. Most migrate to Africa in winter but some hang on in the south of the country.

**Habitat**  
With its unique, deckchair-like pattern it is an unmistakable sight in the woods, dehesas and pastureland where it lives.

**Threats**  
Insecticides, poor woodland management and increasingly intensive farming have produced a moderate decline in Hoopoe numbers.

**Presence along the pathway**  
It nests in holes in trees. With a little bit of luck it will be seen flitting butterfly-like across the path.

### NUTHATCH

*Sitta europaea*



RUDMER ZWERNER-SHUTTERSTOCK

**Aspect**  
A woodland bird with a greyish-blue back and black mask. Its underparts are flushed with orange, more intense in the undertail coverts. This combination of colours and pattern makes the bird unmistakable.

**Population**  
Distributed throughout the whole of Spain but somewhat commoner in the north.

**Habitat**  
Very common in woods of all type, where it can be seen climbing up the trunks but also feeding on the ground.

**Threats**  
Its woodland habits make it very sensitive to forest fires and fragmentation of woodland.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Keep an eye out for it running up and down the trunks and branches, pecking at them for food, or listen out for its typical, far-reaching "tuit" call.

Resident  
Length: 12-14 cm  
Wing span: 22-27 cm

## AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



# ACEITE NATURE TRAIL

## TRAMO JAÉN - RÍO GUADAJEZ / JAÉN / ANDALUCÍA

This route in the province of Jaén runs along the old railbed that used to carry the local products to the port of Malaga, especially olive oil; for that reason this railway was formerly known as the Olive Oil Train. This 54-kilometre nature trail links up with the Subbaetic Mountain Range Nature Trail between Jaén and the River Guadaloz and also with the Cordoba stretch of the "Olive Oil".

If there is one feature that characterises this natural pathway it is the immense sea of olive trees stretching off to the horizon; hence the name of the trail itself. Despite this scenic homogeneity birds as common as the starling or as rare the Rufous-Tailed Bush Robin have found here enough resources to set up home.



### Wayside birds

#### WOODLARK

*Lullula arborea*

● **Aspect**  
A bird of variegated brown tones with a very pale eyestripe, a fairly thin beak and shortish tail. One of its most distinctive features is a small black-and-white mark on the lower edge of the folded wing.

● **Population**  
A fairly common, sedentary bird distributed throughout the whole country, thinning out towards the north.

● **Habitat**  
As its name suggests it likes some



Resident  
Length: 15 cm  
Wing span: 27-30 cm



JOSÉ MARÍA DE LA PEÑA

trees and is also present in mountainous areas. Also fond of pastureland and wooded areas with some scrub.

● **Threats**  
Agricultural intensification, de-

pletion of olive groves and the disappearance of dehesas wipe out a lot of potential territory for this bird.

● **Presence along the pathway**  
Often seen in its songflight or perched on a tree, overhead wire and sometimes on rocks.

#### ROCK SPARROW

*Petronia petronia*



● **Aspect**  
A brown bird with a stout, seed-eating beak and pale eyestripe. Adults have a subtle yellow smudge on the breast.

● **Population**  
Liberally distributed on the mainland and the Balearics and Canaries, where it is present all year. It is a very common bird, albeit absent from the northern Cantabrian fringe of the country.

● **Habitat**  
A rock-lover that also takes to bridges, ruins and even newer housing developments. Their colonies are usually very boisterous affairs.

● **Threats**  
On mainland Spain it faces no threats. Numbers have fallen in



Resident  
Length: 14-17 cm  
Wing span: 21-23 cm

JOHN NAVAJO - SHUTTERSTOCK

the Canaries, however, where the Spanish Sparrow has displaced it to more built-up areas.

● **Presence along the pathway**  
Fairly easy to see perched on a small rock or giving out its squealing call from an olive tree, though it might be confused with a female House Sparrow.

#### LESSER KESTREL

*Falco naumanni*

● **Aspect**  
Smaller than a Peregrine. The male has a reddish mantle and blue-grey head. Females are duller and more mottled.



TYANBELIN - SHUTTERSTOCK

● **Population**  
A common bird that lives in the west and south of the country, shunning the north. Some birds overwinter in Andalusia; in the rest of the country it is a summer visitor.

● **Habitat**  
A colonial nester, normally in churches and other old buildings. Its favourite hunting grounds are farmfields and pastureland.

● **Threats**  
Listed as "vulnerable" due to the loss of potential breeding habitat and food-reducing insecticide abuse.



Summer visitor;  
some overwinter  
Length: 27-33 cm  
Wing span: 63-72 cm

● **Presence along the pathway**  
Can be seen perched on the roofs and walls of old buildings. With a lighter and more buoyant flight than the Common Kestrel, it hunts its prey over open countryside.

#### BOOTED EAGLE

*Aquila pennata*

● **Aspect**  
This is a middle-sized, dashing eagle. Its overhead flight pattern of pale body and forewing contrasting with all-dark flight feathers is unmistakable.

● **Population**  
Common and well distributed throughout the whole country. There is a resident population in the Balearics though the bird is mainly a summer visitor elsewhere. Some overwinter on the Mediterranean coast.

● **Habitat**  
Low- and mid-mountain zones



Summer Visitor  
Length: 42-55 cm  
Wing span: 1.1-1.35 m

AMBELE - SHUTTERSTOCK

with outcrops and cliffs. It is a tree-nester, however, so it does need some woodland areas in its territory.

● **Threats**  
As a tree-nester it is particularly

susceptible to tree-felling and forest fires; poisoning also takes its toll.

● **Presence along the pathway**  
Soaring majestically over the olive groves in the hottest hours of the day.

### AND ALSO...



ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



MAPAMA

# GUADIX-ALMENDRICOS RAILWAY NATURE TRAIL

GRANADA AND ALMERÍA / ANDALUCÍA

The Almeria town of Serón, strategically set between the Sierra de Filabres and the valley of the River Almanzora, boasts a very pleasant year-round climate, with fresh mountain breezes in winter and benign summer temperatures. This makes it ideal for curing the local jamón serrano that has given this town its fame. Strolling around this area is, without any doubt, both aesthetically pleasing and culturally enriching.

The path at first climbs gently up through cropland and open countryside that attracts many bird species, including a great variety of songbirds that reap the fallen seed left in the wake of the harvesting machines. Clumps of poplars and other trees among the cereal plains provide all these birds with their ideal nesting sites each year.

Track: 12,4 Km



## Wayside birds

### ROLLER

*Coracias garrulus*

- **Aspect**  
This bird is a striking electric blue colour with a russet mantle and a staggering range of indigo-blue flight feathers.
- **Population**  
This summer visitor is very com-



AAATAIR-SHUTTERSTOCK

mon in Extremadura and south-west Spain.  
 ● **Habitat**  
Frequent in dry open countryside and pastureland with scattered trees.  
 ● **Threats**  
It is listed as "vulnerable" due to habitat fragmentation caused by agricultural intensification and the transformation of dryfarming crops to irrigated crops.  
 ● **Presence along the pathway**  
It nests in holes in trees but along it the route it might be



Summer visitor  
Length: 30-32 cm  
Wing span: 66-73 cm

seen perched on overhead wires or the pathside fences. It takes readily to nestboxes set up for this and other species.

### GOLDEN ORIOLE

*Oriolus oriolus*

- **Aspect**  
One of the most striking birds in Spain. Males are luminescent yellow with jet black wings. Females are greener and the wings are not so dark.
- **Population**  
Widely distributed throughout Spain



Summer visitor  
Longitud: 24 cm  
Envergadura alar: 45 cm

YK-SHUTTERSTOCK

during the whole summer.  
 ● **Habitat**  
This is a typical bird of riverside woodland like poplar copses though it also takes to oakwood in more upland areas.  
 ● **Threats**  
The main threats are habitat

destruction and transformation.  
 ● **Presence along the pathway**  
Its fluty call is easy to hear along the route and it may also be seen flashing between the trees. In general it is quite a shy species that tends to remain hidden among the foliage.

### CUCKOO

*Cuculus canorus*

- **Aspect**  
A greyish, long-tailed, long-winged bird with a barred breast. Its hallmark trait is that it never incubates its own eggs, instead laying them in the nests



KOO-SHUTTERSTOCK

of various host species that bring up its off spring as their own.  
 ● **Population**  
A widespread summer visitor in the whole of Spain though more frequent in the north and upland areas.  
 ● **Habitat**  
Its favourite zones are low- and mid-mountain areas with some trees and bushes.



Summer visitor  
Length: 32-36 cm  
Wing span: 54-60 cm

● **Threats**  
This species is affected by habitat deterioration and fragmentation but, as a parasitic nester, it also suffers a knock-on effect from the problems of its host species.  
 ● **Presence along the pathway**  
More often heard than seen along the route because its famous "cuckoo" call is far reaching while the bird itself is quite shy. The best chance of seeing one is to check out the woodland edges where it is singing.

### KESTREL

*Falco tinnunculus*

- **Aspect**  
Smaller than a Peregrine. Both sexes are ruddy brown, the female more speckled and the male sporting a blue-grey head.
- **Population**  
Widely distributed and common both on mainland



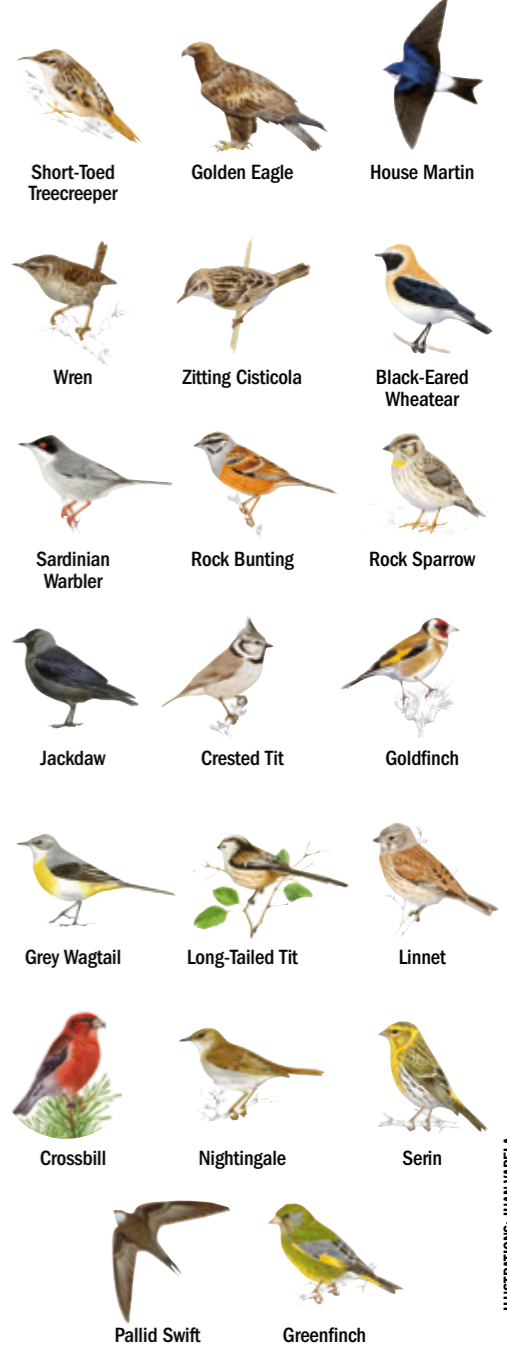
Resident  
Length: 34-39 cm  
Wing span: 65-80 cm

ANDREW ASTBURY-SHUTTERSTOCK

Spain and in the Canaries and Balearics.  
 ● **Habitat**  
Nests on cliff ledges, trees, buildings, etc., and often hunts in cropland and pastureland.  
 ● **Threats**  
One of the Canary subspecies is listed as "vulnerable". It is af-

ected by extensive farming and egg robbing.  
 ● **Presence along the pathway**  
Can be seen perched on good lookout points or hovering with its head stock-still, tail splayed, peering down for its ground prey to pounce on.

## AND ALSO...



- Short-Toed Treecreeper
- Golden Eagle
- House Martin
- Wren
- Zitting Cisticola
- Black-Eared Wheatear
- Sardinian Warbler
- Rock Bunting
- Rock Sparrow
- Jackdaw
- Crested Tit
- Goldfinch
- Grey Wagtail
- Long-Tailed Tit
- Linnet
- Crossbill
- Nightingale
- Serín
- Pallid Swift
- Greenfinch

ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN VARELA



# LA SIERRA NATURE TRAIL

## CÁDIZ AND SEVILLA / ANDALUCÍA

This route goes through a total of 29 tunnels, carved out of the heart of the sierra for the railway line meant to join up Jerez de la Frontera and Almagren. The longest tunnel of all, towards the end of the route, is nearly 500 m. After all this formidable spadework, the Spanish Civil War nipped this project in the bud and it was never finished. This 35.5 kilometre nature trail starts at Olvera train station and ends at Puerto Serrano.

The route runs for several kilometres alongside the River Guadalete, accompanied at first by typical riparian woodland in a landscape dominated by the mighty viaducts of Gilleteand Los Azares. Another striking feature is Zaframagón crag, holding a vulture colony hard by Olvera and Coripe.



Track: 35,5 Km

### Wayside birds

#### RUFOUS-TAILED BUSH ROBIN

*Cercotrichas galactotes*

- **Aspect**  
This is a small, elegant bird with a reddish tinge to its sandy plumage, often holding its tail erect with striking black-and-white marks at the tip.
- **Population**  
A summer visitor breeding only



in the south of the country. Its small population is rapidly dwindling further.

- **Habitat**  
It nests in olive groves, vineyards or almond orchards, frequently flitting from tree to tree.
- **Threats**  
It is listed as "in danger". Since it is a migratory bird, many of the factors that might be affecting the species are unknown, but one of its main problems might be the abandonment of olive farming.



Summer visitor  
Length: 15-17 cm  
Wing span: 22-27 cm

- **Presence along the pathway**  
Scurries over the ground, pausing every now and then to raise its tail and spread it like a fan. Hence its Spanish name of "alzacola" (tail-lifter). Can also be seen feeding on the ground or perched on rocks.

#### RED-RUMPED SWALLOW

*Cecropis daurica*

- **Aspect**  
A swallow-like bird with a reddish/pinkish rump (hence the name in English) and a plain



chest without the swallow's bib. Its mud nests have a short entrance tunnel.

- **Population**  
Widely distributed around inland Spain, shunning the north. It is fairly common in the southwest.



Summer visitor  
Length: 17 cm  
Wing span: 33 cm

- **Habitat**  
Frequents land with scattered bushes and trees, often joining up in small flocks. It is a rock nester, also taking to bridges or buildings.
- **Threats**  
It has no natural predators but many other species take over

its nest once constructed, forcing the rightful owner to look elsewhere.

- **Presence along the pathway**  
Pairs may flit overhead during the route or may also be seen perched on overhead wires.

#### GRIFFON VULTURE

*Gyps fulvus*

- **Aspect**  
This is a huge, sandy-coloured scavenger with a bare neck and head. Shows off its rounded tail during its majestic soaring flights.
- **Population**  
Widely distributed around inland Spain, barring Galicia and the coast.
- **Habitat**  
It can often be seen perched on crags and cliffs, sunbathing with its huge wings spread. It nests colonially in the same places.



Resident  
Length: 95-110 cm  
Wing span: 2.3-2.65 m

- **Threats**  
Although its numbers are rising slightly, poisoned bait and misguided removal of carrion from the countryside are undermining this otherwise favourable position.
- **Presence along the pathway**  
Along the whole route soaring groups can be seen riding the thermals in search of carrion on the ground.



#### TURTLE DOVE

*Streptopelia turtur*

- **Aspect**  
A pigeon-like bird with a chestnut mantle, a chequered neck patch and a dark tail with white edges.
- **Population**  
This summer visitor is fairly well distributed throughout inland Spain and the Canaries.



Summer visitor  
Length: 26-28 cm  
Wing span: 47-53 cm

- **Habitat**  
Wooded terrain, whether near rivers or farmfields, but never in the high mountains.
- **Threats**  
It is now listed as "vulnerable" since overhunting and habitat



destruction have led to a moderate decline.

- **Presence along the pathway**  
Its characteristic purring "rrrrrr" can be heard along the route. It is not a very common species but can quite often be seen in groups or perched on dead twigs in wooded areas.

### AND ALSO...





Track: 186 Km

# CAMÍ DE CAVALLS NATURE TRAIL

## MENORCA ISLAND / BALEARICS ISLANDS

The name of this nature trail bears witness to the historic importance of the Menorquin Horse, an autochthonous black, svelte and pony-sized breed that can often be seen along the whole route. Horses and fortresses are indeed the prime features on the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail, a route that whisks us back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when troop movements were the order of the day round here, the route then serving as the link between all the defensive constructions put up along the whole Minorcan coast.

The path runs along the coastline, where the strong tramontana wind and salt have both left their mark on the vegetation, leading to the evolution of cushion plants and bushes that in turn provide refuge for many species of birds. The route crosses areas of great scenic and natural value, bringing out the huge environmental importance of this part of the world.



### Wayside birds

#### TAWNY PIPIT

*Anthus campestris*

**Aspect**  
A long-tailed, sandy-coloured pipit with a clean, unspotted breast and a distinctive dark line



running across the coverts, visible when the wings are closed. One idiosyncratic feature is an extremely long nail on the hind claw.

**Population**  
This pipit is seen only on passage and in summer, when it is fairly common. Commoner in the north of Spain but there are also some populations on the Balearics.

**Habitat**  
Short-grassed plains with scattered bushes, also in uplands and cropfields.

Summer visitor  
Length: 15-18 cm  
Wing span: 28-30 cm



**Threats**  
Abandonment of crop-growing and pasturing practices has caused a slight decline in its numbers.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Can be seen perched on the bushes dotted across the plains or scampering along the tracks, when its camouflaged plumage makes it well-nigh invisible at times.

#### SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

*Muscicapa striata*

**Aspect**  
In general greyish-brown in colour, it gets its name from its paler, speckled breast.

**Population**  
The best time of the year to see this species are the months

that coincide with its spring and autumn passage (April to May and August to October) and in summer. It is a fairly common bird on the mainland and in the Balearics.

**Habitat**  
Fond of wooded, bushy areas with open glades.



Summer visitor  
Length: 14 cm  
Wing span: 23-25 cm

**Threats**  
As an insect eater it could be affected by insecticide use.

**Presence along the pathway**  
Flycatching from a high twig or the branches of a dead tree, this solitary traveller is easy to see.

#### SLENDER-BILLED GULL

*Chroicocephalus genei*

**Aspect**  
A large white gull with greyish mantle, dark red beak and light-coloured iris. Despite its name,



the bill is not really any thinner than other gulls' bills; this is an optical illusion simply because it is a bit longer than normal. Breeding adults have a lovely pink flush on the breast.

**Population**  
Very scarce and local in the Mediterranean and certain wetlands. It spends the whole year in Spain, with a large influx of winter visitors too.

**Habitat**  
Coasts, saltflats or marshes, where it establishes its breeding colonies.

Resident - winter visitor  
Length: 37-42 cm  
Wing span: 90-102 cm



**Threats**  
It is listed as "vulnerable" because the breeding colonies are very susceptible to predation. To make matters worse, its best breeding sites are usually occupied by other bigger species.

**Presence along the pathway**  
On the coast and some shores or flying over the water.

#### OSPREY

*Pandion haliaetus*

**Aspect**  
Big and powerful with strong feet and talons and a wide wing span. Its yellow eyes stand out within its darker mask. Upperparts dark and underparts paler.

**Population**  
Some birds remain all year in Spain, as in the Balearics, while many additional birds from the rest of Europe arrive in winter. Never common, it is distributed around the coast of the mainland, Balearics and Canaries.

**Habitat**  
It drops into wetlands and

sometimes reservoirs, also on the coast.

**Threats**  
Habitat destruction and disturbance in breeding zones have re-

duced this handsome raptor to a status of "critically endangered".  
**Presence along the pathway**  
A consummate fish catcher, it can often be seen flying along the coast with a fish clutched torpedo-like in its talons or perched on a post to rest.



Resident - winter visitor  
Length: 52-60 cm  
Wing span: 1.45-1.7 m



### AND ALSO...





Track: 44,1 Km

# CUMBRES DE LA GOMERA NATURE TRAIL

LA GOMERA ISLAND / CANARY ISLANDS

This Nature Trail links San Sebastián de La Gomera with Vallehermoso beach, coinciding in nearly all its length with the long-distance trek GR-131. This roughly 3-hour walk takes you through a large part of the island's varied ecosystems, dotted with whimsically shaped rocks, deep and narrow ravines and a rich plantlife that is home to many endemics. The splendid specimen of the Canary Island's monteverde (laurel woods) on the high central plan, pride of place going to the Garajonay National Park, makes this whole path a veritable gift for the senses.

In the National Park live a whole host of flora and fauna with Europe's highest endemic-density ratio, including some of our bird species.



## Wayside birds

### WHITE-TAILED LAUREL PIGEON

*Columba junoniae*

- **Aspect**  
This pigeon's dark plumage has iridescent bluish and purplish hues; it has a grey, white-tipped tail.
- **Population**  
It is a fairly scarce endemic, living only in some Canary Is-

land; the highest density is in La Palma.

- **Habitat**  
Rocky spots with small patches of woodland in several of the ecosystems and landscapes of La Gomera.

- **Threats**  
Listed as "in danger" due to woodland destruction and feral cat predation.

- **Presence along the pathway**  
Sometimes frequents farmfields but feeds in woodland, so it might often be seen perched in



Resident Length: 37-38 cm  
Wing span: 64-67 cm

pathside trees or resting in the shade thrown by rocks and cliffs.

### DARK-TAILED LAUREL PIGEON

*Columba bollii*

- **Aspect**  
Dark grey in colour with a pinkish breast and green and brown iridescence on the neck. All this,

together with its black tail and orange-hued beak, makes this endemic species a striking bird.

- **Population**  
Endemic and quite common, living only in the Canary Islands; most frequent in Garajonay and rare in El Hierro.

- **Habitat**  
Typical woods and copses of the island, living in the various ecosystems and landscapes of La Gomera, nesting in trees.

- **Threats**  
Destruction of ecosystems like the laurel woods and nest pre-



Resident Length: 35-39 cm  
Wing span: 65-68 cm

ation by rats have reduced it to a status of "nearly threatened".

- **Presence along the pathway**  
Perches perching on stout-branched trees, whether dead or with leaves.

### BERTHELOT'S PIPIT

*Anthus berthelotii*

- **Aspect**  
Long legged and very elegant. It has a variegated brown back with pale underparts and a speckled breast.

- **Population**  
It is well distributed and fairly common on all the islands.

- **Habitat**  
It has no overriding habitat preference.

- **Threats**  
Little is known about the threats it faces though its spread is no doubt balked by ecosystem de-



Resident Length: 14 cm  
Wing span: 22 cm



struction and fragmentation.

- **Presence along the pathway**  
In carparks, sandy areas and among the pathside crops. In open areas it might be seen scuttling over the ground or resting in some shade.

### BARBARY PARTRIDGE

*Alectoris barbara*

- **Aspect**  
Its grey head and throat are ringed by a reddish, white-speckled collar. Its flanks are barred black, white and red.

- **Population**  
Lives naturally only in the Canaries though it has also been introduced in Gibraltar. More frequent in Fuerteventura, Tenerife and La Gomera and scarcer in Gran Canaria.

- **Habitat**  
Lives in rolling open countryside, scrubland and farmfields at any altitude.

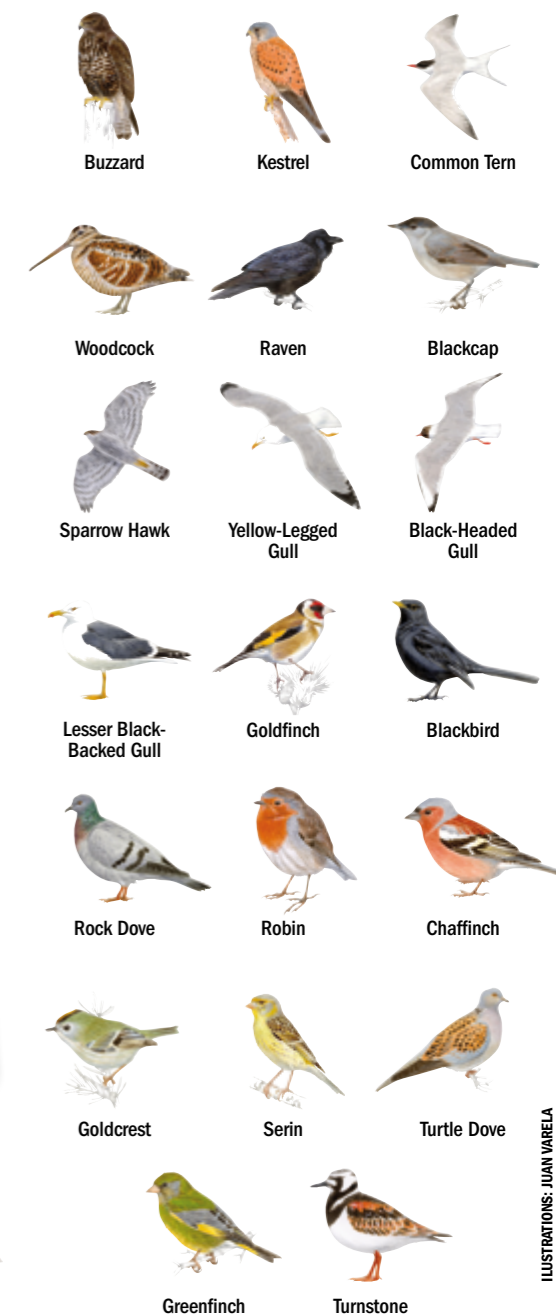


Resident Length: 32-34 cm  
Wing span: 46-49 cm



- **Threats**  
Overhunting is one of the main problems reducing its already small populations.
- **Presence along the pathway**  
Look for this bird when climbing up to peaks and on slopes where the terrain opens up, especially at dawn or dusk, when it most often calls too.

## AND ALSO...



To find out more: [www.mapama.es/caminosnaturales](http://www.mapama.es/caminosnaturales)