



IBERIAN WOLF, WILDCAT and BROWN BEAR IN THE CANTABRIAN MOUNTAINS

August 31st to September 6th 2020





The Cantabrian Mountains along with the West corner of Spain (Zamora and Galicia) hold the main population of Iberian Wolves and are the stronghold of the species in Western Europe. Our wildlife tour is divided in two parts. First, we will be focus on the stunning Picos mountains where we will focus on searching Iberian Wolves, Wildcats and Alpine birds. The second part of the trip will be in the Western *Cantabrian Mountains*, one of the most biodiverse regions in Europe. Here, we hope to see the Cantabrian Brown Bear.

The Sierra de Riano forms part of the Cordillera Cantábrica, which hold's most of Spain's 2500 - 3000 wolves, a marked and welcome increase since an estimated lows of the 1970's. An interesting story of environmental success due to a population decrease by man leaving for the less rural settings of towns & cities.

Looking for Wolves requires a great deal of persistence and patience. During the early morning, we will be driven by 4-wheel vehicles to remote viewpoints to scan from high ridges for Iberian Wolves and other mammals. After having a late breakfast, we will spend the rest of the morning looking for other wildlife such as birds, mammals and butterflies. After lunch and a deserves nape, we will head again to the watchpoints. Furthermore, these mountains hold a healthy population of Wildcats and we will look out for them the following days.

We will spend one full day in the highest mountains of Picos National Park looking for alpine birds: Wallcreeper, Citril Finch, Alpine Accentor and Yellow-billed Chough among others.



Flights

The closest airport is Santander. Ryanair flies 4 times a week from London Stansted to Santander airport.

Food

All included in the price from lunch on day 1 to dinner on day 6. Dinner will be in the hotel and it will consist of traditional local meals with local wine. Our picnic lunch will be prepared everyday by the rural hotel.

Accommodation

Two comfortable rural hotels in delightful surroundings. All rooms are provided with private facilities.

Cost

1380 € per person in double room (150 € single supplement). 90% Success Rate in Spotting the Iberian Wolf, Wildcat and Brown Bear!

Minimum 4 guests and maximum 7 guests.

Itinerary

Day 1. Monday August 31st. Arrival to Santander airport- Boca de Huérgamo

Your local guide will be waiting for you at the airport. On arrival we will drive southwest for about 2:30 hours towards our accommodation in the mountains. After check-in we will do the first excursion in search of mammals.

Day 2,3 and 4. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday September 1-3th.



For the next three full days, we will do excursion during early morning and evening to look for Iberian Wolf and Wildcat. Before sun rise, we will be in the watchpoint searching for the elusive Iberian Wolf. Be should be quiet at any time, and for long periods in order to see this top predator.

At mid-morning we will drive back to our hotel for a late breakfast and spend the rest of the morning walking around looking for bird migrants, butterflies and other wildlife. After lunch and a short rest, we will



continue looking for our targets in other locations.



The mountains and valleys are rich in birds of prey, and include Red Kites, Northern Goshawks, Short-toed Eagle, Griffon and Egyptian Vulture, and Golden Eagle. In addition, it is very likely we get migrants like Black Kites and Honey Buzzards. In the forest we might find Crested Tits, Firecrest, Short-toed Treecreeper and Crossbills among others. Furthermore, there are good numbers of Wildboar, Chamois, Red and Roe Deer which is the main food resource of Wolves.

During one of the 3 days, we will spend the day looking for alpine bird specialists such as the Wallcreeper, Water Pipit or Yellow-billed Cough. In addition, there are also good chances to find Citril Finches.

Day 5-6. Friday and Saturday September 4-5th. Western Cantabrian Mountains 3 h

After an early morning excursion, we will set off towards the Western Cantabrian Mountains to be ready for an evening trip to look for the Cantabrian Brown Bear in this incredibly scenic mountain range. The meadows in this part of Picos are rich in butterflies as well as mammals such as the Stoat and weasel.

Day 7. Sunday September 6th. Departure to Santander airport

Sadly, today will be the last day and we will transfer to Santander airport. End of the trip to one of the most pristine areas in Europe! Home of a wide variety of wildlife, including the Iberian Wolf!