



In this 8-day itinerary, we will visit two of the best and well-known wildlife destinations in Europe: Extremadura and Coto de Doñana.

A birding visit to Extremadura in late winter offers a great opportunity to explore this wonderful region. Many of the resident birds are much easier to see in winter than in any other season. For instance, raptors such as Bonelli's and Spanish Imperial Eagle will display, and the low grass will make easier to find some of the targets on the steppes. Besides, the temperatures are relatively mild in March, and we shall witness the arrival of early migrants such as Black Kites, Short-toed Eagle and Great Spotted Cuckoo.

During our 4-night stay in Extremadura, we will be based in a delightful country house located in the middle of the steppes, where we will search on winter flocks of Great and Little Bustard. We will be literally surrounded by White Storks; 40 pair nests have been recorded in the surroundings of the rural hotel.

On 5<sup>th</sup> day, we will departure to Coto de Doñana. We will be based in the quaint village of El Rocío. With its sandy streets, the town looks like a film set from a spaghetti western. This is a place like no other in southern Spain. The following days, we will explore the National Park of Doñana and we will also visit the Odiel Marshes.

### Flights

There are plenty of options. For instance, Easyjet flies 4 times a day from London Gatwick to Madrid and once a day to Seville airport.

In order to reduce driving, **the arrival will be in Madrid airport and the departure from Seville airport.** Please, bear this in mind. We can assist you in finding the best flight.

### Food

All included in the price from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 8. In Extremadura, dinner will be in a restaurant in the medieval town of Trujillo, just 10 minutes' drive from our accommodation and it will consist of traditional Spanish meals (starter, main course and dessert) with local wine. Our picnic lunch will be prepared everyday by the rural hotel or local guide.

In Doñana, dinner will be in a local restaurant located right in front of the hotel.

### Accommodation

In both locations, we will stay in a beautifully restored and comfortable country house in delightful surroundings. All rooms are provided with private facilities.



## Cost

1350 € per person in double room (160 € single supplement). Minimum 4 guests and maximum 7 guests.

## Itinerary

### Day 1. Sunday March 14<sup>th</sup>. Arrival to Madrid airport-Trujillo



Your local guide will be waiting for you at the airport. On arrival we will drive southwest for about three hours towards the medieval town of Trujillo. Depending on the flight times, we may stop for a leg stretch and do some birding at Arrocampo Reservoir where Purple Gallinule, Spoonbill, Black-winged Kite and Lesser Kestrel are found. Finally, we will set off to our accommodation in a rural hotel.

### Day 2. Monday March 15<sup>th</sup>. Steppes and water reservoir



After breakfast we will set off to the steppes of Madrigalejo to look for Little and Great Bustards (the world's heaviest flying bird) as well as for different species of larks, including Thekla, Short-toed and Calandra Lark. The Extremadura Steppes are some of the richest and least disturbed grassland habitats in Europe and hold great number of specialities.

We will continue visiting different water reservoirs where we will see good numbers of wildfowl, including Black-necked Grebe, Little, Cattle and Great White Egret and Hoopoe among many other species.

### Day 3. Tuesday March 16<sup>th</sup>. Monfragüe National Park



Monfragüe is an incredibly beautiful area packed with raptors. We will take a walk to the top of the castle for an eye to eye view of soaring raptors. From this high vantage point you usually can see a nice variety of raptor species as well as Black Storks as they take advantage of the thermals, a truly breath-taking sight! We will stop in some specific places to see top raptor species such as Spanish Imperial Eagle, Black and Egyptian Vulture and Bonelli's Eagle among other species. Along the rivers and dams, we shall keep an eye



for otters and in the forest, we will look for Iberian Magpies, Woodlarks, Firecrest and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. At this time of the year and bit a bit of luck, we might find early summer visitors such as Egyptian Vultures and Alpine Swifts.

#### Day 4. Wednesday March 17<sup>th</sup>. Los Llanos Plains



Around these well-preserved steppes we will look for Stone Curlews, Calandra and Thekla Larks. Spanish Sparrows are common as well as Corn Buntings and Hoopoes. Other species we might find in this habitat are Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouses, Iberian Grey Shrikes, Little Owl, Spotless Starlings and Red-rumped Swallow which will have just arrived to breed.

In good weather conditions we might see some amphibians and reptiles such as Stripeless Tree Frog, Spanish Terrapin and Large Psammodromus.

#### Day 5. Thursday March 18<sup>th</sup>. Trujillo-El Rocío



*El Rocío*

After early breakfast, we will load the minibuses and set off towards Coto de Doñana. The transfer will take a bit more than 3 hours, but we will make some stops for leg stretching. We will spend the rest of the day birding in the marshes of El Rocío which holds a nice variety of wildfowl as well as Greater Flamingos, Red-Knobbed Coots and waders. In addition, Squacco Heron and Marbled teals might be seen in the marshes.



**Day 6. Friday March 19<sup>th</sup>. Odiel Marshes and South area of Doñana**

Today we will visit the coastal marshes of Odiel. This Natural Park is an important stop over and wintering ground for numerous Waders, Gulls and Ospreys. Greater Flamingos and Spoonbills feed on the swallow salt pans. After lunch, we will drive back to El Rocío to visit one of the visitor centres of the national park.

**Day 7. Saturday March 20<sup>nd</sup>. North area of Doñana**



Today will be birding in the heart of the park. To get to this isolated area, we will have to spend some time driving around tracks. All this effort will pay off with stunning birds. We should see Black-winged Kites, Glossy Ibis (hundreds) and Black Storks among other birds. We will keep an eye on the wintering Barn Owls that winter in the area. Furthermore, we will visit a couple of nature reserves where usually White-headed Duck,

Marbled Teals, Ferruginous duck and Red-crested Pochard are found.

**Day 8. Sunday March 21<sup>st</sup> Transfer to Seville airport**

Sadly, this will be the last day of the birding trip to two of the top wildlife destinations in Europe. Your guide will take you to Seville airport which is located approx. 1 h from the accommodation.

Last trip check list (Feb 24-March 3rd, 2019) can be download [here](#)