BIRD GUIDE to the boélical















Location



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Introduction

We have in our hands a field guide that aims to showcase the common birds we can observe during some of our trips through the territory that makes up the Subbética Commonwealth.

On each of its pages, you'll find two of these species, with a description of their plumage, the areas where they are most likely to be found, and a phenology chart that will indicate the time of year when we can expect to see them.

Although we might think that we don't know these birds and that it will be extremely difficult to identify the ones in this book, in reality, everyone knows at least some of them: vulture, eagle, duck, pigeon, starling, sparrow... It is precisely this knowledge that will help us understand the size of the described birds by comparing them with some of the birds we all recognize.

That way, we have the eagle and the vulture, with wingspans ranging from one metre (medium-sized eagles) to three metres (vultures), as a reference for the largest birds. Ducks and pigeons, which

are familiar to everyone, will serve as a reference for medium-sized birds. And the starlings—those black birds that we can often see on aerials—and sparrows will be used to reference the smaller birds.

A walk through the different habitats of this region, where the mountains, olive groves, wetlands, countryside, forests, and Mediterranean scrubland mix, will allow us to enjoy birdwatching.

On these pages, we will not find some of the most emblematic birds of the Natural Park and Subbética Mountains Geopark, such as the peregrine falcon or the Bonelli's eagle, which are present in the mountain areas but are not easy to spot.

That's why we've chosen to show the ones you're most likely to spot during your walks.

They're not all the birds that exist, but they are the easiest to spot if you pay a little attention.

Happy birdwatching!

How to use this guide

On each profile, we will find wellorganized and useful information that will help us identify the most common birds in the Subbética Córdoba area and locate the best spots to observe them.

In addition to a photo that will help us identify the bird, we will also learn the different names it goes by in English and Spanish, as well as the various regional languages spoken in Spain, including the scientific name and the vernacular name used in the Subbética. A chart will display the months of the year and show when we can spot each bird in the area: green

for resident birds, yellow for summer visitors, and blue for those that stay only in winter.

Below each photo, we will see an icon representing the type of habitat where we can spot the bird. The icons will be colour-coded: those in colour indicate the areas where it will be easier to see the bird, and those in black and white show areas where spotting them is less likely. This doesn't mean you will always find the bird in the coloured areas or that they cannot be seen in non-coloured spots; it's just an invitation to stay attentive. These are the icons:



Birds of wetlands, such as reservoirs, rivers, streams, and lagoons.



Birds of open areas and crops, often pasturelands.



Forest birds, which sometimes include open spaces.



Mountain birds and high-altitude pasture areas.



Birds that live in human-influenced environments.

This guide also offers a selection of interesting routes to enjoy birdwatching, with useful information that indicates the difficulty of each route, whether permission is required to access them, their duration, and a summary of the birds you can spot along the way. At the end of each route, we will find a field notebook section where you can

record the species you've spotted and the date of your observations. Lastly, the guide includes a section where users can find information about accommodations and businesses that are part of the 'Friends of the Birds' project, which protect, promote, and encourage birdwatching in the Subbética Córdoba region.

FEATHERS

Feathers play a fundamental role in birds: not only do they clothe them, but they also help regulate their body temperature, acting as an effective insulator against the cold and rain. During the cold winter days, it's common to see them with puffed-up feathers, a strategy that allows them to trap air between the feathers and create a thermal chamber that keeps them warm.

Additionally, feathers play a key role in courtship, serving as a display feature, and in camouflage, helping birds blend into their surroundings.

















LEGS

The legs also reflect the type of habitat where the birds live or how they feed. Birds of prey have powerful talons with sharp claws to capture and hold their prey. Waterbirds generally have webbed or lobed feet, which make swimming easier. Woodpeckers have strong feet with toes and claws adapted for climbing and gripping vertical trunks. Other species, like those that inhabit wetland areas, have long legs that allow them to walk through the mud in search of food.















BEAKS

The shape of the beak is directly related to the type of food the bird eats. In birds of prey, it is robust and hooked, as it is used to tear apart their prey. Birds that feed in mud generally have thin, long beaks that help them locate worms, mollusks, and insects. Insectivores have slender and sensitive beaks, unlike granivores, which have short, robust beaks. In the case of ducks and flamingos, their beaks have small barbs used for filtering.





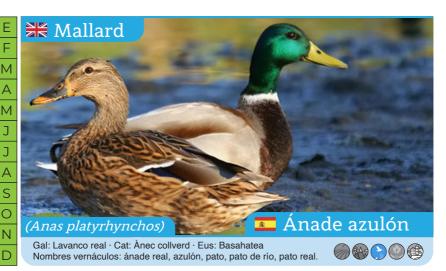












The male has an intense, iridescent green head and neck, with a white collar that separates the dark brown chest feathers. The upper body is brown, and the lower body is greyish, with two curly black feathers on its tail. The fema-

le has more subdued plumage, brown mottled with dark brown. Both have bright blue feathers on their wings, called specula. They can be observed in wetland areas: rivers, streams, irrigation ponds. lagoons...



The red-legged partridge is a robust bird, with both sexes looking alike except for a small spur that the male has. It gets its name, 'red-legged,' due to its red legs, as well as its red beak and eye-ring. The face and throat are white, as is a stripe over the eyes that extends

from the beak to the forehead. The neck is white and black striped. The rest of the body is reddish-brown, with the flanks barred in black, white, and grey. It prefers open areas with sparse scrub. Its diet consists of seeds, plants, and invertebrates



Small in size, it has a short beak and a light-coloured breast, which is very striking while swimming. Outside the breeding season, the plumage is brown. During this period, a white spot appears at the corner of the beak; the crown and body turn dark.

and the face and neck take on an orange tone. It is found in wetland areas such as ponds, lagoons, reservoirs, and irrigation ponds. Its diet consists of fish, crustaceans, amphibians, and aquatic insects, which it catches while diving.



It is the largest of the Iberian herons. The body generally appears in a grey tone, darker on the back and wings. The neck, which is quite long, is a paler grey with a black line running along it. It has a long, pointed, yellowish beak, the same colour as its legs. The white forehead stands

out against the black crown, which ends in two black feathers that protrude from the back of the head. This bird is associated with wetland areas, where it hunts by stalking, remaining completely still, preying on all types of prey, especially aquatic.



It is one of the birds with the largest wingspans in Europe. Its plumage is tawny, with a characteristic feathered ruff at the base of the neck, whitish in adults and darker in young individuals. Its powerful beak stands out at first glance, along with the fact that its neck and head are featherless. It is a gregarious bird typical of rocky cliffs, where it usually builds its nest. Strictly a scavenger, it feeds on dead wild or domestic animals.



It is the largest and most powerful of the eagles living in the Iberian Peninsula. The plumage of adults is dark brown, with golden reflections that stand out on the head and neck, a characteristic that has led to it being called the golden eagle in some areas. They are rock-dwelling birds par excellence. Their favourite habitats are rocky mountain areas with cliffs, although it is not uncommon to find them in lower mountain ranges.



It is a medium-sized, stocky bird with very variable colouration, ranging from chocolate brown to quite pale in different individuals. In flight, you can appreciate its short, broad, heavily barred wings and fan-shaped

tail. It is very common and easy to spot, thanks to its remarkable ability to adapt to any type of habitat. It has a very varied diet, including small mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, carrion, and more.



A small, fast raptor that stands out due to its long, barred tail with a dark band at the end and its wide, long, pointed wings. Both males and females display reddish-brown tones with numerous dark spots, along with the typical dark

moustache of falcons. It prefers open areas, such as grasslands, crops, fallow fields, and dehesas (traditional lberian oak wood pastures), where it feeds on small prey like small mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects.



The adult's plumage is dark brown. On its flanks, you can see a discontinuous white line that extends to the tail. The shield and base of the beak are red, contrasting with its yellow tip. This aguatic bird

is very common and can be seen in any wetland area: lagoons, rivers, streams... preferably with some vegetation along the shores. Its diet is very varied and can be both plant and animal-based.



A wading bird with an unmistakable and elegant appearance, featuring long and slender red legs. The wings and the dorsal area that connects them are black, as well as a variable exten-

sion from the head to the neck. The rest of the body is white. It has a long and slender beak. It lives in shallow wetland areas, where it feeds on aquatic invertebrates.



A large-sized pigeon, with dark-coloured upper parts, a prominent pinkish chest, and a light greyish belly. Its head is small in proportion to the body, and it has yellow eyes with a conspicuous pale iris. It has a white spot on each wing and on

each side of its neck, which are clearly visible when it flies. A forest bird commonly found in dehesas and mixed forests, and increasingly seen in urban parks. The diet of the wood pigeon mainly consists of seeds.



Like a small, slender pigeon, the chest is pinkish, while the belly is light. The wings display a mix of camel, black, and grey tones. On each side of the neck, there is a black spot crossed by several white streaks, and the eye is framed by a reddish mask. It prefers open areas with wooded zones, such as farmland with hedgerows and riparian forests. Its diet mainly consists of cereals.



The cuckoo is characterized by its broad, pointed wings and long dark tail, speckled with white spots, which, when in flight, could be reminiscent of a sparrowhawk. The males are slate-grey on the upper parts, with a greyish head and neck, and their undersides are whitish,

lightly streaked. The females are similar, but with the neck showing a more streaked grey pattern. Their main habitat is wooded areas, and they can be found in pine forests, oak groves, and dehesas. An insectivorous bird, its diet includes processionary caterpillars.



It is the largest nocturnal raptor in the peninsula. It is characterized by the prominent tufts on top of its head and its large orange eyes. Its plumage is tawny, heavily barred with dark brown and black on the upper parts, and lighter on the underside. It has powerful talons with feathered toes. It can be found in almost any type of habitat if there is an availability of food, especially rabbits.



A nocturnal raptor characterized by its whitish tones, lack of tufts, and a heart-shaped facial disc. Its plumage shows a strong contrast between the tawny colour of the upper parts and the white underside. It is a typical bird of open spaces, closely associated with hu-

mans. Its diet includes small mammals, birds, insects, amphibians, and reptiles. For resting and breeding, it can choose any cavity in the natural environment, but it often prefers spaces constructed by humans, such as barns, dovecotes, attics, ruined houses, or churches.



Easily recognizable by its size, large head, and numerous rounded white spots. Its plumage is dark brown, mottled with white, with distinct white eyebrows above its striking yellow eyes. It mainly lives in open spaces

with scattered trees, such as olive groves, dehesas, riverbank forests, and agricultural areas with stone walls or dry-stone walls. It preys on small mammals, reptiles, birds, and fairly large insects.



It is the smallest owl on the peninsula. Its plumage features a very cryptic colouration, ranging from grey to reddish-brown, mottled with splashes and darker stripes. Its head is distinguished by its intense yellow eyes and two tufts

known as "ears."

It is commonly found in riverside groves, parks, gardens, and other habitats. It feeds mainly on large insects such as beetles, cockroaches, moths, crickets, grasshoppers...



A nocturnal bird that camouflages perfectly thanks to its cryptic plumage — so well, in fact, that you can walk right past it and it won't fly away. When resting on the ground or perched on a branch, its feathers resemble a piece of bark or a

handful of leaf litter.

It can be spotted in dehesas (wooded pastures), olive groves, open areas with shrubs and trees, and pine forests with clearings, where it feeds on flying insects.



Bird with entirely black plumage, except for the white patch on its throat. It has very short legs and long, pointed, narrow wings designed for flight.

It can be found in almost any habitat where insects are present, and it usually chooses cracks and holes in human-made structures for nesting.



Its plumage is orange, with black wings and tail marked by broad white bands. But the most striking feature of this bird is the crest it displays on its head, made up of feathers tipped in black and white. It has a long, downward-curved beak

that it uses to probe the ground in search of insects, its main food source. It is a typical bird of wooded areas with open spaces, such as holm oak and gall oak dehesas, olive groves, and almond orchards.



Its upperparts display metallic bluegreen plumage, while the underparts are a vivid orange. The throat is white, as are two spots on each side of the neck. It has very short orange legs. It can be found in ponds, rivers, streams, reservoirs, and other bodies of water, provided there is an abundance of fish, amphibians, and crustaceans.



About the size of a starling, it has a strikingly colourful plumage that makes it one of the most beautiful birds in Europe. The upperparts are reddish-brown and yellowish, with green tones on the tail and parts of the wings, while the breast and belly are green or turquoise, depending on how the light falls on the feathers.

It is easy to spot in open areas with shrubs, where it feeds on insects caught in flight.



Its plumage is green, darker on the upperparts and greyish on the underparts. The top of the head to the nape is red, as is the "moustache," which is black

in females. Like other woodpeckers, it is associated with forested areas. It feeds mainly on ants and their larvae, which it catches with its long, sticky tongue.



It has a black back with white-speckled wings and a white wing stripe. The face is white, with a black head and a red nape in males, which is black in females. The underparts are light, with a red belly patch.

A forest-dwelling bird, it prefers coni-

ferous woods but is also common in riparian forests with poplars and elms. However, it can be found in a variety of habitats, including holm oak, gall oak, and juniper woodlands. Using its strong bill, it chips away bark in search of insects and larvae, its preferred food.



Stocky bird with pale brown plumage streaked with darker markings. It is distinguished by the crest on its head, which it can raise at will. Its tail is short, and like

other larks, it has a very long hind claw. It is abundant in dry farmland, grasslands, and wastelands, feeding on invertebrates, seeds, and shoots.



The swallow has black plumage with blue reflections on the upperparts and white on the underparts. The throat and forehead are a rusty-red colour. Its long, deeply forked tail is a distinctive feature. The female is similar to the

male but has a shorter tail.

It prefers open areas with a constant presence of insects, such as farmland and wetlands with marsh vegetation. It often nests in barns, stables, and rural houses.



About the size of a small swallow, this bird is characterized by its white underparts and rump, and glossy blackish-blue upperparts. It has a tiny beak, short legs, and feathered toes. It is most

easily observed in urban environments, where it often builds its nest on buildings, forming colonies of varying sizes. It feeds on small insects, which it catches in flight.



Its long tail, which it constantly wags up and down, is particularly striking. The upperparts are bluish-grey, the face and forehead are white, the crown, nape, and throat are black, and the underparts are white. It prefers pastures with livestock, as well as wetlands, ponds, rivers, streams, and roadside edges. It feeds on both terrestrial and aquatic insects.



Unmistakable. It is a bird with pale olive-brown tones, darker on the upperparts, and a distinctive orange patch covering its breast, neck, and face. It inhabits woodlands with open areas

and scrub, as well as parks, gardens, and riverside groves. It feeds on small insects, spiders, and worms, and in autumn and winter also eats berries and the occasional seed.



A bird that rarely ventures out of the safety of the scrub, where it hides perfectly. Its upperparts are reddish-brown, while the underparts are greyish. Its preferred habitat is the undergrowth and wooded areas with dense scrub, where it feeds on insects it catches on the ground by lifting dry grass and leaf litter.



Slightly larger than a sparrow, it is an unmistakable bird. Males are entirely black, with a white tail and rump. Females share this pattern, but their black is less intense, appearing more brownish.

It establishes its territory in arid areas with sparse vegetation, rocky slopes, quarries, and stony ground. Its diet is mainly insectivorous, feeding on small beetles, caterpillars, ants, and other invertebrates.



Smaller than the mistle thrush, it has brown upperparts and underparts that are white on the belly and buff on the flanks, heavily spotted with inverted heart-shaped markings. The underwing is orange, visible in flight.

It is associated with wooded areas and feeds on invertebrates such as earthworms, beetles, and snails. In autumn and winter, it also eats seasonal fruits such as hawthorn berries, mastic fruits, and wild olives.



A large thrush with greyish upperparts and whitish underparts covered with numerous rounded spots. On both sides of the breast, it has a distinctive dark patch. It prefers forested areas, whether dense or with clearings, showing a particular liking for holm oak groves and coniferous forests. Its diet includes both fruits and invertebrates.



A medium-sized bird with very characteristic and unmistakable plumage. The male is entirely black, with an orange beak and eye-ring. The female is dark brown, with a dull yellow beak and a less conspicuous eye-ring.

It is present throughout most of the territory and is very common in humanized areas such as parks and gardens. Its diet consists mainly of invertebrates, such as insects and earthworms, supplemented in autumn and winter with fruits and berries.



Similar in size to a sparrow, this bird is easy to identify thanks to the black cap of the males and the reddish-brown cap of the females and juveniles. The rest of the body is covered in greyish plumage. It is very common in undergrowth, areas

with abundant brambles, parks, and forests with shrub cover. Its diet consists mainly of invertebrates, although a large part of it is also made up of figs, persimmons, blackberries, wild olives, pomegranates, and other fruits.



The male's plumage is generally grey, lighter on the underparts, with a black head that extends below the eyes, a red eye-ring, and a white throat. The female has a less contrasting design, with more brownish tones and no black head.

Dense scrubland is the ideal habitat for this small warbler, where it moves skilfully among mastic bushes, rockroses, hawthorns, wild olives, and gorse in search of the small invertebrates it feeds on.



Very small, with greenish-yellow plumage, lighter on the underparts, dark legs, and a faint pale-yellow eyebrow. The beak is black and slender.

It is found in wooded and shrubby areas,

preferring humid or flooded zones, where it feeds on small invertebrates. In autumn and winter, it may also consume some fruits.



One of the smallest birds in Europe, it is characterized by its reddish-brown plumage, finely barred on the wings and tail. The underparts are a paler shade, especially on the throat. The tail is short and is often held upright, wagging up and down when something catches its

attention.

It can be found in humid areas, streams, riverside forests, and shaded spots with shrub cover. An insectivorous species, it hunts prey suited to its small size, such as flies, mosquitoes, spiders, small caterpillars, and aphids.



It has a glossy black head with white cheeks, a green back, and yellow underparts with a vertical black band—thicker in males—that runs from the throat to

the base of the tail. A forest-dwelling bird, it is also present in dehesas, riverside groves, parks, and gardens, where it feeds on insects, seeds, and fruit.



The common blue tit is distinguished by its white cheeks, blue crown, and a black line that runs across the eye from the beak to the nape. The back is greenish, the wings are bluish, and the underparts are yellowi-

sh with a vertical black stripe.

It is a forest bird, preferring areas with holm oaks, gall oaks, dehesas, parks, gardens, and undergrowth. Mainly insectivorous, it also feeds on fruits and seeds.



Slightly larger than a sparrow, it is notable for its reddish-brown cap. The underparts are white with soft cream tones, contrasting with the black upperparts and tail. It has a characteristic black mask and a short, curved beak reminiscent of a bird

of prey. It prefers open areas with shrubs, medium-sized trees, and even farmland, as long as there is a place to build its nest. A skilled hunter of insects, it also includes in its diet small reptiles such as lizards and small mammals such as mice and voles.



Its plumage is pinkish-brown, with striking black wings marked by white bands and a vivid blue wing patch barred with black. The tail is also black, with a conspicuous white rump. The face is paler than the rest of the body, highlighting its robust beak and a distinct black moustache. It is a forest bird that can be observed in coniferous and deciduous woodlands, as well as holm oak forests.



The largest of the corvids, its plumage is entirely black with metallic reflections. The beak, covered at the base with bristles, is robust, long, and powerful. It can be observed almost anywhere:

although typically associated with rocky cliffs, it also nests in large trees or even on electricity pylons. An opportunistic omnivore, it feeds on virtually anything within its reach.



Black with metallic reflections in both sexes, though less glossy in the female. It has a yellow beak with a greyish base and pink legs. In winter, adults show slightly speckled plumage and a dark beak.

This species is often associated with

humanized environments such as farmland, farmhouses, silos, livestock sheds, villages, and parks. The starling usually searches for insects and seeds while walking on the ground, but it is also a frequent visitor to orchards.



There is a notable difference between the sexes. The male has grey underparts, neck, and crown, while the back is reddish-brown, streaked with black and cream. It shows a black mask and a black bib, which becomes larger during the bree-

ding season. Females and juveniles are brownish-grey on the underparts, darker and streaked on the upperparts, and lack the bib. It is associated with humanized landscapes. Although mainly granivorous, it also feeds on fruit and insects.



As its name suggests, it is a brownish bird, slightly smaller than a sparrow. During the breeding season, the male develops crimson tones on the forehead and breast, with the grey on the face and neck becoming more intense. It prefers open areas with shrubs where it builds its nest, feeding mainly on small seeds.



Its face is red, with a black-and-white pattern on the head. The beak is conical, designed to access the seeds of thistles, which form the basis of its diet. The black wings feature a bright yellow band, especially visible in flight. The back and flanks

are brown, while the underparts are white. The tail is black with white patches. It breeds in lightly wooded areas. In autumn and winter, it forms large flocks together with other birds in open areas, feeding mainly on seeds.



Sparrow-sized, with greenish-yellow tones, which in males become brighter and more yellow during the breeding season. Females are duller, with a more greyish colouration. Its preferred habitat

is open woodlands, and it is also common in parks, gardens, olive groves, holm oak woods, and citrus plantations. It feeds mainly on seeds, supplemented with fruits and small insects.



A small bird with greenish-yellow plumage, more greyish in females, and lightly streaked. During the breeding season, the male intensifies its colours, showing a bright yellow face,

neck, and breast. It prefers open areas with patches of light woodland. Its diet is based mainly on seeds, though it may occasionally consume small insect larvae.



Larger than a sparrow, it is notable for its large head and thick, powerful beak. The black wings have a white band with metallic reflections, and the tail is tipped with white. Overall, the plumage combines various tawny tones, darker on the back and lighter on the underparts. The head is orange with a grey neck, a black mask, and a black bib.

Females are similar but with duller, greyer tones. It frequents woodlands with oaks such as holm oak, cork oak, and gall oak, as well as areas with fruit trees, beech forests, and undergrowth. It is specialized in eating hard-stoned seeds, which it cracks open with its strong beak, such as cherries, hackberries, and wild olives.

Establecimientos asociados

Activities

Explora Natura SL (Cabra)

exploranaturasl@gmail.com · exploranatura.com · Tlf.: 651 692 055

Management of hides / observation points for bird photography. Educational

workshops

Centro Ecoturista El Castillejo (Carcabuey)

cecosubbetica@gmail.com · Tlf.: 605 908 516

Birdwatching and bird photography. Binoculars available and use of digital Al tools. Activities for building, decorating, and installing nest boxes.

Parque Ornitológico de la Subbética (Carcabuey)

turismo@carcabuey.es · Tlf.: 661 864 016

Free access for self-guided visits. To access the observation hide, a password is required, available from the Carcabuey Tourist Office.

Birding Iznájar (Iznájar)

birdingiznajar.es · info@birdingiznajar.es · Tlf.: 646 407 348 / 692 712 171

Guided birdwatching tours and hide rentals.

Guías de la Ruta del Tempranillo (Jauja-Lucena)

carmencarreño41@gmail.com · Tff: 646 00 28 39 Birdwatching and bird photography.

Dxocio SL (Doña Mencía)

Observation of urban birds.

www.dxocio.com · info@dxocio.com · Tif.: 691 843 532 Workshop on building nest boxes.

NATEAM (Iznájar)

www.nateam.es · info@nateam.es · Tlf.: 692 712 171

Guided birdwatching tours. Brand of the Natural Park of Andalusia.

Accommodations

Cortijo de Frías (Cabra)

cortijofrias@cortijofrias.com·web.cortijofrias.com·Tlf.: 957 334 005

Tourist apartments / Farm school. Birdwatching and bird photography. Binoculars and bird guides available.

La Posada Amena (Carcabuey)

booking.com/Share-DybjbeT \cdot posadaamena@outlook.com \cdot Tlf: 722 347 673

Birdwatching information. Binoculars and bird quides available.

Villa Mohana (Iznájar)

Info@ecovillamoana.com·www.ecovillamoana.com·Tlf: 623 559 390

Birdwatching information. Binoculars and bird guides available.

Apartamentos Rurales Los Castillarejos (Luque)

loscastillarejos.com · reservas@loscastillarejos.com · Tlf.: 957 090 012
Birdwatching information. Binoculars and bird guides available.

Tandem House (Priego de Córdoba)

tandemhouse@hotmail.com · Tlf.: 660 628 336

Birdwatching information. Binoculars and bird quides available.

Posada Niña Margarita (Aldea de Los Villares – Priego de Córdoba)

info@posadalaninamargarita.com·posadalaninamargarita.com· Tlf.: 638 281 362 - 957 704 054

Rural houses. Birdwatching information. Binoculars and bird guides available. Bird photography hide and guided tours offered.

Casa Rural La Era (Zambra-Rute)

conencantorural.com · info@conencantorural.com · Tlf.: 630 788 877

Birdwatching information. Binoculars and bird quides available.

Birdwatching Routes and Observation





Buitreras de Luque

- Route type: Linear. Access via dirt track.
- Transport: On foot, by bicycle, on horseback, or by motor vehicle. Cortado de
- Permits: Not required.





S Gancha o Bernabé Fountain

Recommended season: From October to May, early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

Oifficulty: Easy.

From the start of the track at the Carcabuey junction, numerous flocks of finches can be observed, including chaffinches, serins, greenfinches, linnets, and goldfinches. This is thanks to the quality of the territory, made up of organic olive groves that provide abundant food.

place here, given the presence of small riverside woodlands with marsh vegetation and Mediterranean scrubland, which offer food in autumn and winter such as wild olives, blackberries, and mastic berries. Among these species, you may encounter several warblers:

Sardinian, garden, western Orphean, subalpine, blackcap, and Dartford.

As the path continues through olive groves, scrubland, and remnants of poplar stands, it is easy to spot blackbirds, great tits, blue tits, long-tailed tits, cirl buntings, rock buntings, and European robins. At the base of the cliff known as Las Buitreras, you can enjoy the majestic flight of the great giants of the Subbética—the griffon vultures. On these limestone walls, you may also see red-billed choughs, jackdaws, common kestrels, and, with some luck, the emblematic peregrine falcon.

Additional resources

About 3.5 km from the start of the dirt track lies La Gancha de Bernabé, a spillway system nearly three metres high that channels large amounts of water into circular stone basins.

The Buitreras de Luque are part of the

Public Use Trail of the Sierras Subbéticas Natural Park, the Buitreras Route, which is 18 km long. It is also an IM-BA-certified MTB trail. It can be completed on foot, by bicycle, or by vehicle, and it ends in the beautiful town of Luque.

Field notebook



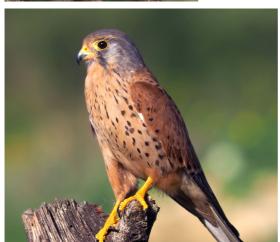


La Gancha de Bernabé (Carcabuey)





Las Buitreras de Luque





Bailón River Canyon





Viewpoint

Viewpoint

- Route type: circular. Transport: On foot. Permits: Not required.
- Recommended season: From October to May, early in the morning or late in the afternoon.
- Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

This route can be done as a circular walk, starting in Zuheros along the road to the Cueva de los Murciélagos (Bat Cave) up to the Piedra de la Estrella fountain, where a marked trail leads into the Bailón River Canyon, descending back to the village. Alternatively, you can walk a section along the road, leaving the canyon to one side—also an excellent option for birdwatching, recommended for people with reduced mobility. Along both options, a great variety of species can be observed, particularly cliff-dwelling birds that find their paradise here: blue rock thrush, black wheatear, rock bunting, European stonechat, Thekla's lark, common kestrel, Bonelli's eagle, griffon vulture, red-billed chough, peregrine falcon, and crag martin. From the viewpoint, sunset is a privileged moment to listen to the calls of the majestic Eurasian eagle-owl.

Additional resources

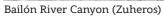
A must-see is the Cueva de los Murciélagos, located 4 km from the town center. It offers a tourist route of 515 metres with 700 steps. Currently, it is the largest cave in the province of Córdoba (guided visits available at +34 957 694 545). It is also highly recommended to stop at the various scenic viewpoints and enjoy a walk through the beautiful village of Zuheros.

Field notebook	



Cueva de los Muciélagos road (Zuheros)







Birdwatching area





Ascent to Puerto Cerezo





Upper part of Puerto del

- Route type: Out-and-back.
- Transport: On foot.
- Permits: Required this is a raptor nesting area, and access is prohibited during the breeding season
- Recommended season: From September to February.
- Difficulty: Easy/Moderate.

This mountain pass lies between two of the highest peaks in the province of Córdoba: La Tiñosa and Pico Bermejo. The habitat is frequented by large raptors such as the griffon vulture, golden eagle, and Bonelli's eagle. The ascent is not technically difficult but is long, following a zigzagging path. Much of the route runs alongside a small stream,

making it easy to observe small and medium-sized birds such as warblers, chiffchaffs, thrushes, and accentors—as well as their predators, including the common kestrel and sparrowhawk. In the higher zones, the ring ouzel can be observed in winter, and in spring, with the appropriate permit, the striking blue rock thrush.

Additional resources

The trail passes between the Sierras of Alhucema and Bermejo, reaching Puerto del Cerezo at an altitude of 1,304 metres. From here, it is possible to continue up to Pico Bermejo (1,474 m). Along the margins of the Puerto stream, riverside vegetation can be observed, including white poplar (Populus alba), black poplar (Po-

pulus nigra), giant reed (Arundo donax), narrow-leaved ash (Fraxinus angustifolia), dog rose (Rosa canina), and bramble (Rubus ulmifolius).

Permits: No permit is required if you remain on the public track. However, entering the forest or participating in organized activities does require authorization.

Field notebook









Lagoons of Southern Córdoba





Amarga

Route type: Observation points.

Transport: On foot.
Permits: Not required

Recommended season: All year round, as long as there is water in the lagoon visited; sunrise and sunset are the best times

Difficulty: Easy.

Within the municipalities that make up the Subbética Commonwealth, there are three lagoons of particular interest due to the abundance of waterbirds they host: Salobral, Dulce, and Amarga.

Laguna del Salobral (or del Conde) is located in the municipality of Luque. It is a shallow, seasonal, brackish lagoon, accessed via a country road at km 345 of the N-432 highway. When it holds water (it usually dries out in summer), it is possible to observe species such as flamingos, white-headed ducks, great crested grebes, little grebes, black-necked grebes, and marsh harriers.

Lagunas Dulce and Amarga are located in the municipality of Lucena, just a few

metres apart. Starting from the parking area, a short trail leads to Laguna Dulce, a very shallow seasonal lagoon, ideal for observing waders such as avocets, redshanks, stilts, sandpipers, and plovers, as well as herons and flamingos among others.

Laguna Amarga is the only permanent lagoon in the Subbética. Its name ("Bitter Lagoon") comes from the taste of its water, caused by high concentrations of dissolved magnesium sulfate. From the observation hide, birds such as the redcrested pochard, white-headed duck, gadwall, black-necked grebe, common and crested coot, and moorhen can be observed.

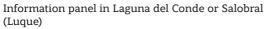


Laguna Amarga trail (Lucena)











Vía Verde del Aceite

Vía Verde del Aceite



Route type: Linear.

Transport: On foot, by bicycle.

Permits: Not required

Recommended season: All year round; in summer, best early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

Difficulty: Easy.

The former railway line of the so-called Olive Oil Train has been converted into one of the most popular trails in the Subbética. Skirting the Natural Park, it offers a route through an area with a remarkable presence of raptors: Bonelli's eagle, short-toed snake eagle, peregrine falcon, common kestrel, Eurasian eagle-owl, and little owl.

The route runs between the mountains and the countryside, making it possible to observe a wide variety of birds from both habitats. Along the way, you may encounter species such as the woodchat shrike, various warblers (including Sardinian and western Orphean), red-legged partridge, black redstart, and common chaffinch.

Additional resources

Most of the stations along the Greenway (Lucena, Cabra, Doña Mencía, and Luque) have rest areas, free parking, mo-

torhome areas, restaurants, and public facilities. Cycling is highly recommended to fully enjoy the natural landscapes.

Fleid notebook		



"Vía Verde del Aceite" Viaduct



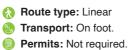






Doña Mencía Motorhome Area (Vía Verde)

Valdecañas Route









Farmhouse o
Santa Rita

Fountain of Valdecañas

Recommended season: From October to May, early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

Difficulty: Easy.

Just 200 metres from the Santa Rita Visitor Center lies an abandoned stretch of the old road to Granada. The starting point, next to the old Santa Rita farmhouse, is a true haven of life—a perfect place to pause and listen to the songs of dozens of birds. Here you may observe golden orioles, jays, nightingales, thrushes, accentors, warblers, great spotted woodpeckers, and wrynecks.

The route continues alongside the cliffs known as El Choclaero, territory of the golden eagle and often frequented by griffon vultures. From there, it follows the Valdecañas stream until reaching the farmhouse of the same name. Along the way, it is common to see small flocks of goldfinches, stonechats, red-rumped swallows, hoopoes, wrens, and starlings searching for food among the grazing goats.

Additional resources

Tirlian and a large

A visit to the Santa Rita Visitor Center is highly recommended. It serves as the Interpretation Center of the Sierras Subbéticas Natural Park and UNESCO Global Geopark. From here, two additional trails begin: the Enrique Triano Botanical Trail and the ascent to the Cabrera Viewpoint.

Fleid notebook	











From Los Pelaos to El Picacho in the Sierra de Cabra





Picacho Area

- Route type: Linear / out-and-back.
- Transport: On foot, by bicycle, or by motor vehicle.
- Permits: Not required
- Recommended season: From October to May, always early in the morning or late in the afternoon.
- Difficulty: Moderate if on foot or by bicycle 6 km uphill with a gentle slope.

Starting from the Venta de Los Pelaos, there are several places to park vehicles and use them as birdwatching points, if you decide to do the route this way. Otherwise, bird activity itself will determine your stops.

On both sides of the road, up to the junction with the La Nava trail, the landscape is arid, dominated by limestone rocks and low scrub with gorse, hawthorn, matagallo, and wild olive. Small and medium-sized birds are the main highlights of this first section, including stonechat, rock and black wheatears, rock bunting,

corn bunting, woodchat shrike, blue rock thrush, common kestrel, and red-billed chough.

From the La Nava junction up to El Picacho, the vegetation changes. On one side of the road lies a pine forest, while on the other there is a dehesa landscape with holm and gall oaks. Here you may observe species such as the crossbill, crested tit, coal tit, golden oriole, and Bonelli's eagle. Throughout the route, griffon vultures will often soar overhead, and flocks of finches—goldfinches, linnets, and greenfinches—can also be seen.

Additional resources

Once at the top, a visit to the Sanctuary of the Virgen de la Sierra and the natural viewpoints of the Natural Park is highly recommended. About 500 metres before the Sanctuary, along the same

road, you will find the starting point of the Bailón River Trail, a beautiful 12 km linear route that leads to the town of Zuheros. (Permit required via: pnsierrassubbeticas.es/permisos-senderos)

Field notebook		



Bailón River Trail. (Cabra)



Malpasillo Reservoir

LOCATION:



- Location: Bordering the province of Seville
- Transport: Access by car or bicycle to the parking areas.
- Permits: Not required
- Recommended season: All year round, best early in the morning or late in the afternoon.
- Difficulty: Easy.

This small reservoir, located on the border with the province of Seville, hosts an interesting colony of marsh harriers that can be observed from a distance without causing disturbance, offering a spectacular view of the meander formed by the Genil River before reaching the dam. The viewpoint can be accessed via a dirt road at km 13 of the road connecting Corcoya and Badolatosa. At the dam, there is a privileged spot to enjoy the wildlife inhabiting the riverside vegetation on the opposite bank, where species such as purple swamphen, common coot, moorhen, little bittern, several species of herons, common snipe, sandpipers, and cormorants can be seen.

Additional resources

Tempranillo, a cultural and tourist route inspired by the legend of the romantic bandit José María "El Tempranillo,"

We recommend visiting the Ruta del which runs through the municipalities of Jauja, Alameda, Casariche, Benamejí, Palenciana, Badolatosa, Corcoya.

Field notebook



Malpasillo Reservoir (Lucena)







Subbetica Turism



Wikiloc Routes

Mancomunidad de la Subbética

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Actuación incluida en el PSTD "Plan de Desarrollo de Turismo Sostenible en la comarca de la Subbética Cordobesa", en el marco del Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia - Financiado por la Unión Europea - Next Generation EU (C. 14.I1.2).









