

Spain - Realm of the Iberian Lynx

Naturetrek Tour Report

28 October - 2 November 2019



Eurasian Hoopoe



Spanish Ibex



Sunset Over Andujar



Little Owl on eucalyptus stump

Report compiled by Simon Tonkin
Images courtesy of Helen Wilson



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Simon Tonkin & Alejandro Onrubia (leaders) with 13 Naturetrek clients.

Summary

Fields and marshes full of Red and Fallow Deer, hillsides littered with lazing Wild Boar and valleys ringing out to the clacking of Spanish Ibex horns. Avian surprises were bountiful with Spanish Imperial and Golden Eagles, Northern Goshawks and hulking Cinereous Vultures darkening the skies as Red-billed Chough calls filled the valley. Despite not seeing Iberian Lynx on this occasion, there was still a wealth of wildlife to be enjoyed in its realm.

Day 1

Monday 28th October

Alex and Simon met the group at Sevilla Airport and we were soon on our way to our first base at El Rocío.

Upon arrival at the outskirts, Iberian Magpies fluttered across the road and we spotted a single Booted Eagle. As we entered the town of El Rocío, Black Redstarts flitted atop the buildings and the tarmac gave way to sandy streets akin to something out of a Western movie.

Once we had unloaded and settled into Hotel Toruño, we made an excursion to the now sadly dry Madre de Marismas - despite it being dry due to increased drought conditions and unsustainable agriculture draining the water that feeds Donaña, we still managed some good initial sightings.

On the small pools that remained, Little Ringed Plovers, Common Snipe and Green Sandpipers were found and a Peregrine Falcon cruised through, causing panic. Among the reedbeds we found Penduline Tits, counting up to five individuals. Red Deer came to the wooded edge as dusk approached.

Day 2

Tuesday 29th October

Today we met with our partners at Doñana Nature, who took us into the area of the Natural and National Parks where we had the best chance of finding the Iberian Lynx. Here we found plenty of this feline's prey items - European Rabbits - but sadly, despite our extensive searching, no Lynx!

Among the wooded areas we found plenty of Red Deer plus some Fallow Deer as we continued to make our way through the Lynx hotspots. As the morning edged away, we decided to move out to the more open areas of the park. Cruising along the tracks we found a group of ten Eurasian Hoopoes! Calandra Larks buzzed in the now dry *marismas*. Here the few water sections that remained yielded five Purple Swamphens, Red-rumped Swallows and a Black-winged Kite.

We took our lunch in El Rocio, and after time to relax and explore the town we headed out once more for the afternoon and evening to give us more chance of being in the right place at the right time for Lynx activity. We searched extensively once more and entered the Coto del Rey where we observed Iberian Grey Shrikes, Woodlarks and Dartford Warblers.

Following some scanning we found a Spanish Imperial Eagle and so we jetted off to get closer views. We managed to get much closer, enabling us to obtain fabulous views of not just one but two individuals!

As dusk approached, we again searched the areas well known for Lynx activity and despite our very best efforts we couldn't find any.

Day 3

Wednesday 30th October

We started again early and in earnest to search for the Iberian Lynx once again. Red Deer and European Rabbits were abundant and we enjoyed the beauty of the forest again before heading back for our lunch.

After some time to refresh we drove the short distance to Acebuche and took our picnic among the trees surrounded by Iberian Magpies that were grateful for any leftovers!

Today also saw us travel to our second base, in the hope we would have more luck in the hills of the Sierra de Morena near Andujar. On arrival we settled into our rooms and enjoyed a great evening meal and warm welcome from owner Ramon and his staff.

Day 4

Thursday 31st October

Early morning following a breakfast of good, strong coffee and a hearty *tostada con tomate*, we headed out to the best known areas for finding Iberian Lynx at La Lancha.

Here we took our positions and covered the ground, searching in earnest and scanning every hillside from our well-chosen vantage points.

Scanning provided us with views of six Wild Boar and we also found our first European Mouflon. A group of calling Red-billed Chough came into view. As the day began to warm the first Eurasian Griffon Vultures cruised from their roosts joined by Europe's biggest raptor, the Cinereous Vulture, of which at least ten were seen darkening the skies! A Hen Harrier drifted through.

We headed to Mirador de Jandula where we took our picnic lunch of fine local cheeses and locally produced bread as well as wine! Looking through the valley, we were able to find more Cinereous and Griffon Vultures.

Following our lunch, we dropped down to the Embalse de Jandula. Here we were able to find a group of Spanish Ibex clambering around the rock face as well as two males fighting, their cracking of colliding horns echoing across the valley.

We entered a cave where we found several bat species roosting. Schrieber's and Mediterranean Horseshoe Bat were found and we were extremely careful not to disturb them. On the dam wall we found a dead Death's Head Hawkmoth, quickly followed by a live one perched on the wall where we could get a selfie with it!

As the late afternoon approached, we again found ourselves searching the hillsides at La Lancha. Constantly scanning, we made sure we never gave up hope that an Iberian Lynx would cap off a fabulous day! Sadly it wasn't to be, but we did have brief but good views of Northern Goshawk.

Day 5

Friday 1st November

Our final stand! We again started out early to La Lancha, where we hoped we had the best chance of finding the elusive Lynx. Despite tired eyes, Alex and Simon never gave up scanning with an intense concentration which found us five European Mouflon.

We decided to take our picnic at Embalse de Encinarejo by the river. Here we relaxed, feeling in high spirits as a Spanish Imperial Eagle cruised overhead along with a gaggle of both Cinereous and Griffon Vultures and then a Golden Eagle!

Following our picnic, we headed to the dam wall at the end of the road, which is a crossing point sometimes used by Iberian Lynx. Here we had great views of Hawfinch. Sadly though, as the evening drew in, we had to resign ourselves to the fact that despite our intense efforts, there would be no Iberian Lynx seen on this trip.

Day 6

Saturday 2nd November

Today it was time to return home, and we left early to ensure we arrived in good time at Sevilla airport. Alex and Simon bade the group farewell and we left with some great memories of a wildlife-filled trip.

Simon and Alex would like to express their sincere thanks for the good humour, patience and effort of the "team" and we were sad not to have found the elusive Iberian Lynx.....until next time!

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers and exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays



www.twitter.com/naturetrektours



www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays

Species Lists

Mammals (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	October/November				
			28	29	30	31	1
1	Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>		✓		✓	✓
3	European Mouflon	<i>Ovis orientalis musimon</i>				1	5
4	Spanish Ibex	<i>Capra pyrenaica</i>				c.15	
5	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Iberian Hare	<i>Lepus granatensis</i>					1
7	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>				6	2
8	Common Bent-wing Bat	<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>				✓	
9	Mediterranean Horse-shoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>				✓	
10	Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>				✓	

Birds

1	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓	✓		
2	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		4			
3	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		2			
4	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓		10	5
5	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		20			
6	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		c.10			
7	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		20	10	✓	✓
8	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>		5	4		
9	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓		
10	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	4	10	1	1	1
11	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		4			
12	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			2	5	3
13	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>		2	1		
14	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>		40		50	45
15	Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>				10	5
16	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	1		1		
17	Spanish Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>		2	1	6	4
18	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>					1
19	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	2	2	1	2	2
20	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>				1	1
21	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	2	4	2		
22	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>				1	
23	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	2	6	2		
24	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	5	5	10		1
25	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		1			
26	Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>		5			
27	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		3	10		1
28	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		15			
29	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	2	20	5		
30	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	2				
31	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	10	5			
32	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	1	4			
33	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	5	10			
34	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	✓				
35	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	2

	Common name	Scientific name	October/November				
			28	29	30	31	1
36	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
37	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
38	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>			1	2	1
39	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>					1
40	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					2
41	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		10	2	7	6
42	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		2		4	4
43	Iberian Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus sharpei</i>				✓	10
44	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>			2		
45	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	5	6	5	1	
46	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1	1			
47	Iberian Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>		6	3	2	1
48	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>				✓	✓
49	Iberian Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cooki</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
50	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
51	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>				5	
52	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		✓			
53	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	2	4	2	4	3
54	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>		5		3	4
55	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
57	Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	5	2			
58	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		4	2	20	10
59	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	4	✓	10	5	3
60	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>					1
61	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	✓	✓	✓		
62	Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>		5			
63	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	10				
64	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>				50	20
65	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>		3			
66	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	10	20	5		2
67	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
68	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓	✓	✓	5	3
69	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	3	15	5		
70	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
71	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>		3	1	15	6
72	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
73	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>		4		2	2
74	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				3	2
75	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>		✓	✓	5	✓
76	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
77	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
78	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				10	5
79	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
80	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
81	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	4	7	5	10	5
82	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>				2	1
83	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
84	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		5			
85	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
86	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		2			

	Common name	Scientific name	October/November				
			28	29	30	31	1
87	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>				2	1
88	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
89	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
90	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
91	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>				2	1
92	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>				30	20
93	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
94	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
95	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
96	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	10	60	20	20	10
97	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				10	10
98	Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>			2		
99	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	5	100	150	10	5

Dragonflies

1	Scarlet Darter	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>		✓			
2	Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	✓	✓	✓		
3	Lesser Emperor	<i>Anax imperator</i>		✓			
4	Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	✓	✓	✓		
5	Violet Drogwing	<i>Trithemis annulata</i>					✓

Butterflies

1	Geranium Bronze	<i>Cacyreus marshalli</i>		✓			
2	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>		✓		✓	✓
4	Lang's Short-tailed Blue	<i>Cupido argiades</i>		✓			
5	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		✓			✓
6	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>					✓
7	Bath White	<i>Pontia daplidice</i>				✓	✓
8	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>				✓	✓
9	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>				✓	
10	Southern Brown Argus	<i>Aricia cramera</i>				✓	
11	Cleopatra	<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>				✓	

Reptiles & Amphibians

1	Mediterranean Tree Frog	<i>Hyla meridionalis</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
2	House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i>			✓		
3	Moorish Gecko	<i>Tarentola mauritanica</i>	✓	✓	✓		
4	Iberian Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis hispanicus</i>			✓	✓	✓
5	Large Psammodromus	<i>Psammodromus algirus</i> ,					✓
6	Iberian Frog	<i>Rana iberica</i>					✓
7	European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>					✓
8	Red-eared Terrapin	<i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>					✓

Other Species

1	Wasp Spider	<i>Argiope bruennichi</i>			✓		
2	Blue-winged Grasshopper	<i>Oedipoda caerulescens</i>				✓	
3	Death's Head Hawkmoth	<i>Acherontia atropos</i>				✓	