

# Spain - Realm of the Iberian Lynx

Naturetrek Tour Report

18th – 23rd January 2026

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Spanish Imperial Eagle



Iberian Lynx



Iberian Magpie



Eurasian Spoonbill

Tour report by Byron Palacios  
Photos by Byron Palacios and Simon Cook



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Tour participants: Byron Palacios and Sonia Alis (leaders) with 11 Naturetrek clients

## Day 1

Sunday 18th January

London Gatwick – Seville airport – El Rocío

The group's flight left Gatwick Airport on time, and arrived in Seville airport in the early evening, where they were met by the two leaders and four group members already in Spain. After going through airport formalities, we jumped in our van and drove to El Rocío, checked in to our comfortable hotel and went to the restaurant to enjoy a delicious dinner. After a good time getting to know each other over dinner, we retired to our rooms for a restful first night, very much looking forward to our first excursion the following day.

## Day 2

Monday 19th January

Doñana National Park (Royal Track – Coto del Rey – José Valverde visitor's centre)

We started just before dawn exploring the core area of Doñana National Park, driving through the Raya Real (Royal Track) in promising sunny weather. The first Iberian Magpies and Red Deer started to show as well as many rabbits. We kept checking for animal tracks in the sandy terrain, finding Badger, Red Fox and Wildboar tracks, but not Lynx. We continued exploring the park, finding a pair of Little Owls perched on top of a pile of tree stumps. We also saw lots of Stonechats, Goldfinches, Grey Herons and Lapwings.

After this first two hours of the morning, we took a nice walk in the Coto del Rey area. The weather was still good, and we enjoyed our walk, seeing beautiful birds such as White Storks, Woodlark, European Stonechat, Black Redstart and a fidgety Zitting Cisticola. We found a few Thekla's Larks, Dartford Warbler, a very fast Peregrine Falcon flying by, large flocks of Lapwings and Golden Plovers, and a few Stone-curlew, all wintering in the area. Towards midday and feeling a bit peckish, we drove back to El Rocío to enjoy a local lunch and a break afterwards. Some of us took a quick scan over the marshes behind the hotel, which produced Greater Flamingoes, Spoonbills, Shovelers, Black-winged Stilt, Greylag Geese and Glossy Ibis, among others.

In the afternoon, we drove back into the National Park again, this time going further afield towards the open *marisma* area (seasonally flooded grasslands). We found a great array of birds such as Great, Little and Cattle Egrets, White Wagtail, Common Kestrel and Common Cranes. We found a large group of Greater Flamingoes, Shovelers, Red-crested Pochards, Spoonbills and lots more herons. We also made a quick stop at the José Valverde visitor centre, which produced Western Swamphen, Spanish Sparrows and Marsh Harrier, among others. Super happy and over the moon after a very productive day, we drove back to our hotel, from where we enjoyed watching a beautiful sunset from the marsh edge. We then retired to our rooms to get ready for celebration drinks and dinner.

**Day 3****Tuesday 20th January****Doñana National Park (Royal Track) – Dehesa de Abajo – Andújar**

After an early breakfast, we drove back to the National Park, going along the Raya Real in our 4x4. It was a sunny morning which showed off the beautiful landscapes of Doñana well. We took a little walk among beautiful Iberian forest, enjoying the many Cork Oaks, as well as a few daffodils (*Narcissus papyraceus*) that were already in flower. After this excursion, we returned to our hotel to collect our belongings, and set off towards Andújar. We made a stop at Dehesa de Abajo to do some birding along the way; this stop produced two pairs of the rare Marbled Duck, alongside other birds such as Marsh Harrier, Black-winged Stilt, Black-necked Grebe, and Red-crested and Common Pochards. After this delightful stop, we found a picnic area near Aznalcázar, where we enjoyed our delicious picnic lunch.

After lunch, we started our long drive to Andújar (via Seville) and a comfort stop in the outskirts of Córdoba, arriving at our hotel in the mountains just in time to get our rooms and to get ready for some local drinks and a delicious dinner.

**Day 4****Wednesday 21st January****Andújar Natural Park (La Lancha – El Encinarejo)**

After breakfast, we drove to the upper valley area, known as Los Escoriales. The weather was not the best, as mist and scattered showers covered the area. We drove further afield towards the dam of La Lancha, where we had good views of a few Griffon Vultures, Spanish Ibex, Red-billed Choughs, Crag Martins, Blue Rock Thrush and Black Redstart, among others. After lunch, we switched valleys and went to the lower portion of the River Jándula, where we had time to have a scan over a good portion of this lovely valley; we had two kettles of mostly Griffon Vultures, with the odd Cinereous Vulture, and Spanish Imperial Eagle among them. The weather improved a bit, but a few showers kept hitting the area, and a chilly wind was blowing from the north; the light was fading away, so we drove back to our lodge to take a break, before gathering together again for local drinks and a delicious dinner.

**Day 5****Thursday 22nd January****Andújar Natural Park (La Lancha dam – El Encinarejo)**

This was another day with overcast skies and heavy mist covering the mountains and both valleys. We ventured down the upper valley of the River Jándula, exploring the spot known as La Lancha. We took a walk along the

dam, which produced great views of Spanish Ibex, Griffon and Cinereous Vultures, Blue Rock Thrush and Crag Martins flying around. The rain covered the area again, so we looked for a sheltered area for lunch. Some of us managed to have a brief view of a very elusive Iberian Lynx passing by, but quite briefly. After lunch, we started our drive back to the lower valley again; the weather improved a bit, leaving the valley a bit clearer for a while, but then showers hit the area again. We managed to see Spanish Imperial Eagle, Griffon and Cinereous Vultures, Golden Eagle, Red-legged Partridge, Iberian Magpies, Sparrowhawk, Little Owl and Iberian Green Woodpecker, among others.

We then returned back to our lodge for a break followed by drinks and dinner, which we all enjoyed, as always.

## Day 6

Friday 23rd January

### Los Escoriales – Andújar – Seville airport

A beautiful sunny morning was very welcome today, after the unsettled weather conditions we had had over the last two days. We planned to make the most of this, our last day in the field. So, after the usual early breakfast, we drove back to the upper valley, the area known as Los Escoriales. We started our intensive scan here, covering as much as we could of the surrounding valleys and ravines: suddenly, Simon blew his Iberian Lynx whistle! A hundred metres from his location, a beautiful male Iberian Lynx was walking along the upper slope of the track. We all managed to get fantastic views of the cat. We then decided to walk down the road and see if we could spot him again, and so we did. He continued walking among thick vegetation, and then in the open where we had more fantastic views of him: it was superb. And it had happened just in time, and within the last hour we had in the field! The sun helped a lot: he looked beautiful and clear under the good sunlight. We were incredibly grateful for this fantastic chance to see this beautiful feline. After nearly thirty minutes watching him, the gorgeous Iberian Lynx vanished among the hillside bushes, leaving great excitement and memories behind with us.

Super happy and satisfied, we drove back to our lodge to finish our packing, followed by a delicious lunch before the journey to Seville airport. We said goodbye to Los Pinos and hit the road, arriving at Seville airport in good time for our late afternoon flight.

We enjoyed fantastic moments during this week, exploring two beautiful areas of Andalusia. The weather didn't help much at times, but we were lucky enough to see some great wildlife, and of course, a beautiful Iberian Lynx, which is always such a privilege to see in the wild.

The efforts conservationists are currently making to keep this species safe and thriving are titanic, and have been very successful. Nevertheless, it's a task full of challenges for the species itself and the conservationists who are still learning of the ecology of the Iberian Lynx. For those who've had the privilege to see them in the wild, the question remains as to how far this and other species of endangered felines around the world will cope in the

future. It is in our hands: it is a huge challenge, and it is our responsibility to do our best to protect them and make their habitat sustainable for their preservation, so that generations to come can continue to see and enjoy this amazing animal.

Hasta pronto, amigos...see you soon Spain!

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## Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

N=Near-endemic	Common name	Scientific name	January 2026				
			19	20	21	22	23
	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>		✓			
	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>		✓			
	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	✓	✓			
	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		✓			
	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Marbled Duck	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>		✓			
	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>		✓			
	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		✓			
	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>		✓			
	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	✓				
	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓	✓		✓	
	Western Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	✓				
	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	✓				
	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓	✓		✓	
	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	✓	✓			
	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>		✓			
	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	✓				
	Eurasian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	✓				
	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	✓	✓			
	European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	✓	✓			
	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	✓	✓			
	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓				
	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		✓		✓	
	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓				✓
	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>					✓
	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>		✓			
	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	✓	✓			
	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	✓	✓			
	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓	✓			
	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓	✓			
	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	✓				
	Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>				✓	✓
	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Spanish Imperial Eagle - N	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>				✓	
	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>				✓	

N=Near-endemic	Common name	Scientific name	January 2026				
			19	20	21	22	23
	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>			H		
	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	✓	✓		✓	
	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>					✓
	Iberian Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus sharpei</i>			✓	✓	✓
	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	✓			✓	
	Iberian Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	✓		✓		✓
	Iberian Magpie - N	<i>Cyanopica cooki</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>			✓		
	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓	✓			✓
	Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>			H	✓	H
	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	✓				
	Thekla's Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>	✓		✓		
	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	✓				
	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>			✓	✓	✓
	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓			
	Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>			✓	✓	
	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	✓	H			
	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>					✓
	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	✓				
	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	✓				
	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓				H
	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓				
	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			✓	✓	✓
	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>					✓
	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>			✓	✓	
	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>				✓	
	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	✓				
	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>				✓	✓
	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			✓	✓	
	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	✓	✓	✓		
	Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>			✓		

N=Near-endemic		January 2026				
Common name	Scientific name	19	20	21	22	23
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	✓				
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>				✓	

## Mammals

N=Near-endemic, I=introduced		January 2026				
Common name	Scientific name	19	20	21	22	23
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Iberian Lynx - E	<i>Lynx pardinus</i>				1	1
Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>			✓		✓
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>			✓	✓	✓
Spanish Ibex	<i>Capra pyrenaica</i>			✓		✓
Mouflon - I	<i>Ovis orientalis</i>			✓		✓

## Insects

Common name	Scientific name
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>
White-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus lucorum</i>