

Spain - Realm of the Iberian Lynx

Naturetrek Tour Report

8th – 13th February 2026



Hoopoe



Wild Boar



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker



Red-knobbed Coot

Tour report by Byron Palacios



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Day 1

Sunday 8th February

UK – Seville – El Rocío

The majority of the group left the UK from two different airports, arriving in a rather wet Seville towards midday. After going through all the airport formalities, we met up with other members of our group who had made their way to Seville earlier, and drove straight to the unique small town of El Rocío. We enjoyed a delicious lunch at Casa Marcelo, followed by check in to our lovely hotel, El Toruño.

After settling in our comfortable rooms, we went out for a walk along the marsh promenade, which produced a good array of water birds such as Spoonbill, Great, Little and Cattle Egrets, White Storks, Black-winged Stilts, Northern Shoveler, Crag Martin and others. The poplars along the shore produced lots of Greenfinches, Goldfinches, Barn Swallows, Spotless Starlings, and European Serins, and fantastic views of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

Towards the end of the afternoon, we retired to our rooms to get ready for drinks, the checklist and dinner.

Day 2

Monday 9th February

Doñana National Park (Villamanrique – Coto del Rey)

We made an exciting early start today, in order to explore the core area of Doñana National Park. The main access to the national park from El Rocío was restricted due to the intense rainfall of the last few days. So, we drove to village of Villamanrique de la Condesa to access the park using the northern entrance. We found a good number of birds, such as Common Cranes, Lapwings, Black Stork, Golden Plover and two Hen Harriers flying by. We also found plenty of Marsh Harriers drifting along. We then got to a point known as Caño del Guadiamar, from where we had terrific views of Lesser Kestrels, Western Swamphen, Marbled Ducks and two pairs of very rare Red-knobbed Coots.

Happy with results of the morning, we continued driving along the *marismas* (seasonally flooded heathlands) to the Mediterranean Forest, making a stop in the area known as Coto del Rey. Here, we enjoyed our picnic lunch, served by our host from Doñana Nature, while watching Hoopoe, Common Kestrel, Spotless Starling, Green Sandpiper and others. After lunch, we took a little stroll in this beautiful forest, where we managed to find a few Iberian Hares and a Red Fox. We then jumped into our 4x4 vans and started our long drive out of the park, back through the northern entrance at Villamanrique, and making our way back to El Rocío in the late afternoon. Most of us had a bit of energy left to walk towards the park entrance from El Rocío, and walked along the Raya Real (Royal Track), where we enjoyed Iberian Magpies.

Back at the hotel, we had a little break before gathering again for drinks and nibbles, followed by dinner and the checklist.

Day 3

Tuesday 10th February

Doñana National Park (Royal Track – El Acebuche – Andújar Natural Park)

After an early breakfast, we set off back into Doñana National Park. The water levels had dropped dramatically overnight, so we managed to get to drive along the Raya Royal (Royal Track), with just the odd “stuck in the mud” incident! We enjoyed watching lots of Red Deer, Iberian Magpies, Red-legged Partridges and Sardinian Warblers. We then headed back to our hotel mid-morning, checked out, and drove a short distance to El Acebuche visitor's centre, to pay a special visit to the Iberian Lynx Reproduction Centre managed by the EU LIFE Project. We had a great experience here, learning about the Iberian Lynx, and we were lucky enough (they don't always show up) to watch a famous pair Lynxes who have bred several healthy individuals which have since been introduced to other areas of Spain and Portugal since 2014. Although they're kept in an eight-hectare natural enclosure, sometimes it is bit difficult to find them; we were very lucky to find them rapidly and fairly close. We enjoyed watching these two individuals, and every single aspect of their fur, patterns and forms: they were truly stunning animals.

The weather was a bit foggy but dry, so we enjoyed our delicious lunch on site, watching Iberian Magpies and Hoopoes nearby. After lunch, we finished our visit to the centre, and hit the road to start our three-and-a-half-hour drive to Andújar Natural Park, making a coffee break stop at the motorway services near the city of Córdoba. We arrived to our lodge in Andújar in time to get our rooms, followed by drinks and a delicious local dinner.

Day 4

Wednesday 11th February

Andújar Natural Park (La Lancha – El Encinarejo)

After an early breakfast, we drove to the upper valley of the River Jándula, to an area known as La Lancha. The weather wasn't the best, as we had waves of drizzle from time to time; despite this, we had a lot of interesting wildlife along the way, such as Fallow and Red Deer, Wild Boar, Iberian Magpies, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Red-legged Partridge, Mistle Thrush and others. We then arrived at the open valley, where we found a nice corner to scan the area; we found a pair of Spanish Imperial Eagles, Mouflon, Iberian Grey Shrike, and Sardinian and Dartford Warblers. The mist and rain were not helpful at times, so we decided to drive down to the dam of La Lancha, where a little stroll produced Blue Rock Thrush, Crag and House Martins, Griffon Vultures perched on the rocky face, Black Redstart and Spanish Ibex. We also found a pair of Red-billed Choughs.

As the weather deteriorated, we drove back to our lodge, where we enjoyed of a delicious hot lunch, and some *vino* and beers. After lunch and a short break, we drove to the lower valley of the River Jándula, where we had great views of Crested Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Iberian Magpie, and Long-tailed, Blue and Great Tits, alongside others. The weather was persistently wet, so we drove back to our hotel for a break, and the usual drinks and a delicious dinner afterwards.

Day 5

Thursday 12th February

Andújar Natural Park (Los Escoriales)

After another early start, we set off to explore the upper valley again, as the weather was meant to be better, according to the local weather forecast. We drove to the area known as Los Escoriales, where we started our usual scan of the whole valley, finding more interesting wildlife such as Mouflon, and Spanish Imperial Eagles displaying and flying really close to us. We also had Little Owls, Red-legged Partridge, Griffon and Cinereous Vultures, Sardinian and Dartford Warblers, Ravens, Iberian Grey Shrikes, Thekla's Lark and more. Then suddenly someone from another group of observers spotted a male Iberian Lynx, but only briefly: it had gone by the time we had run to the spot. How very unlucky. We decided to stay at this new spot, in the hope that the Lynx might turn up again, and had our picnic lunch in the area.

After enjoying our picnic lunch break, with some interesting birds such as a perched Goshawk, Golden Eagle and Sparrowhawk, we kept scanning the valley, finding more Red and Fallow Deer, Spanish Ibex, Mouflon and a very beautiful Wild Boar female with four cute piglets around her: it was wonderful to watch them at rest among the scrub. We kept scanning intensively for Iberian Lynx till dusk. Despite the lack of views of the feline, we managed to see more beautiful birds and mammals around this great spot. We got back to our hotel in the early evening for the usual break before drinks and dinner.

Day 6

Friday 13th February

Andújar to Seville airport

A very early start was a must today, so as to make it in time to our different flight schedules from Seville airport. Some of us were staying on in Seville for a few days, to explore this fantastic city. The London contingent made it to Gatwick on time, where we all wished each other the best for the future, and a safe journey to our respective homes.

It had been a fantastic tour, full of great wildlife. The challenge of seeing an Iberian Lynx in the wild remains a very considerable one, but we now have an excuse to return in search of this rare animal! We really enjoyed watching the Lynxes at the Reproduction Centre, which was of course a consolation sighting given our lack of luck in the wild. As always, it's about being at the right place, at the right time. I'm sure the time will come for all of us one day.

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Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

N=Near-endemic	Common name	Scientific name	February 2026				
			8	9	10	11	12
	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		✓	✓		
	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	✓	✓			
	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Marbled Duck	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</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>	✓	✓	✓		
	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</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-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	✓	✓	✓		
	European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		✓			
	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓	✓		
	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		✓	✓		
	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>		✓			
	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓		
	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>		✓			
	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>		✓	✓		
	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</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>	✓	✓	✓		
	Little Bittern	<i>Botaurus minutus</i>	✓				
	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓		
	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>		✓			
	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓	✓			
	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓		
	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓		
	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		✓			
	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>				✓	✓
	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	✓		✓		
	Spanish Imperial Eagle - N	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>				✓	✓
	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>					✓
	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>					✓
	Eurasian Goshawk	<i>Astur gentilis</i>					✓
	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>		✓			
	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	H

N=Near-endemic		February 2026				
		8	9	10	11	12
Common name	Scientific name					
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		✓	✓		
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		✓			
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>	✓				
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				✓	✓
Iberian Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus sharpei</i>			✓	✓	✓
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>		✓	✓		
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</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>				✓	✓
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		✓			
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>				✓	
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	H	H	✓	
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			H	✓	
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>				2	
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		✓	✓		
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>				✓	✓
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>			H		✓
Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>	✓	H	✓	✓	✓
Dartford Warbler	<i>Curruca undata</i>					✓
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		✓	H	H	✓
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				✓	
Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</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>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>				H	✓
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓			✓	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓			✓
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	H	✓	✓	✓
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>					✓
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓			
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

N=Near-endemic		February 2026				
Common name	Scientific name	8	9	10	11	12
European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	✓	✓	✓		
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		✓	✓		✓

Mammals

N=Near-endemic, C=captive		February 2026				
Common name	Scientific name	8	9	10	11	12
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		✓		✓	✓
Iberian Hare - N	<i>Lepus granatensis</i>		✓			
Mediterranean Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>		✓			
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>					✓
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>				✓	✓
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spanish Ibex	<i>Capra pyrenaica</i>				✓	✓
Mouflon	<i>Ovis aries</i>				✓	✓
Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>		1			5
Iberian Lynx - N	<i>Lynx pardinus</i>			2(C)		
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		2			