

# Wolf-watching in Spain

Naturetrek Tour Report

26 - 30 September 2016



Views from Casavegas



Walking in the Beech forest of Casavegas



*Dectitus verrucivorus*



Having lunch in Monte Royal

Report and images by Laura Benito



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

Tour participants: Laura Benito, Tino Garcia & Toño Ruiz de Gopegui (leaders)  
together with nine Naturetrek clients

## Day 1

**Monday 26th September**

London – Santander - Cordovilla

The tour started with a flight from Stansted which arrived at Santander at midday. Laura and Tino were waiting at the airport and once we were all together, we started our drive to the small village of Cordovilla, north of Palencia in Castilla y Leon, our base for the next four days.

Once at Cordovilla we had some time to relax before dinner time, and plans for the rest of the week were discussed. After a delicious dinner it was time to sleep and recover our energy for the next day!

## Day 2

**Tuesday 27th September**

Resoba (Laguna Cimera) - Celada de Roblecedo

We had an early start and set off to a Wolf territory not far from the hotel, in the heart of Montaña Palentina Natural Park. We drove to Resoba where we left the main road and then drove along a dirty track for 15 minutes to Laguna Cimera.

Not far from the car we sat down and waited; exercising our patience and scanning the valley with our binoculars and telescopes. Suddenly we spotted two people in one of the potential places to see the wolves...our expectations fell...but the animals surprised us as they appeared not far from the couple, who didn't see them! As always, the Wolves were moving quickly; appearing and disappearing like phantoms. All of us had good views before they finally disappeared from view.

It was a nice morning but cold and chilly, so deserving something hot, we left to go for a coffee.

After a coffee stop in Cervera, we continued to Celada de Roblecedo for a walk in the beautiful ancient oak forest. During our walk, sightings included Firecrest, Short-toed Treecreeper and Crested Tit. We then had our picnic in a place with fantastic views, where we enjoyed the sun and the landscape.

After lunch we went for another walk; enjoying the experience of walking in this peaceful forest. Everything was very quiet with some shy birds singing in the background. After the walk we drove slowly back to the hotel, through the valley of Perapertú.

Back at the hotel we had a rest, enjoyed a drink and had a great dinner that our chef Rosa had prepared for us.

## Day 3

**Wednesday 28th September**

Resoba – Cervera – Quintaluengos - Salinas

We again left our base very early and returned to the same spot we had visited the day before. The sunrise was absolutely fantastic and the morning promised a fantastic day - and it was! This time we had very good views of

the Wolves for more than an hour. Some of the juveniles were playing, others sleeping. We enjoyed the experience and had much better views than the previous day.

After a welcome hot coffee we went for a walk along the river Pisuerga in Quintanaluengos and had good views of a pair of Dipper and a beautiful Grey Wagtail having a bath. We then continued to Salinas the Pisuerga were we had our picnic in a nice spot next to the river, with a family of domestic geese brightening up the wait for the meal to be ready.

After lunch we went on a short walk to explore the river area. We briefly saw a Kingfisher crossing the river, and other than Blue Tit and Great Tit, the place was very quiet; maybe too hot for this time of the year. We moved on to Aguilar Reservoir where we saw an Osprey sitting on the shore, and other sightings included Lapwings, Marsh Harrier, Red Kite and Black-headed Gull.

After this we headed back to the hotel where we had our evening meeting and a delicious dinner to celebrate a successful day with the Wolves!

## Day 4

Thursday 29th September

### Rabanal de los Caballeros – Lores – Casavegas

Due to our success with Wolves, today we looked for a different species: Wildcat. First we went to Rabanal de los Caballeros where we waited at the top of a hill, scanning all the fields, but with no success.

We moved on and whilst driving through another area, we saw a Wildcat walking in one of the fields. We were able to stop the car and enjoy watching the juvenile Wildcat for a few seconds until he disappeared in the ditch. We waited in the hope he would reappeared, but he didn't. We then drove to another potential place called Los Redondos, but without success.

Next we drove to Casavegas, one of the places in Montaña Palentina with the most beautiful views. We stopped at one point and spent some time taking pictures of the superb landscape and scanning with the telescope. A group of Griffon Vultures were flying in front, and Tino found a Golden Eagle sitting on top of a rock in front of us: a magnificent bird. The scenery was amazing, with the Picos de Europa at the background. We continued walking to the refuge of Casavegas, where we had our picnic with time to relax, talk and enjoy the food.

After our picnic we went for a walk. In the beech forest we saw evidence of Black Woodpecker. We stopped at one viewpoint to enjoy the views, and had a break before continuing. Once out of the forest and walking to the cars, a Short-toed Snake Eagle appeared in flight and hovered above us giving good views. We also saw Yellowhammer, Linnet and Stonechat amongst others.

We then started our return drive to Cordovilla. We arrive to the hotel with time to relax before enjoying dinner with wine after another good day in the field.

## Day 5

Friday 30th September

La Varga - Monte Royal – Santander - London

It was our last day so we went to a different place: La Varga. Although nice, the morning was very cold. We waited for some time but nothing appeared in view. As the wind was so cold, we retreated for a coffee.

After a nice coffee that helped to warm us up, we went to Aguilar Reservoir for a walk. We saw a pair of Osprey trying to catch a fish which was spectacular!

For lunch we had a picnic in the pine forest of Monte Royal. Crossbills were making a noise at the top of the pines. We heard them but we couldn't see them.

We then returned to the hotel and after some time to pack and relax, started our drive to the airport at Santander, very happy and satisfied with our five-day experience in the impressive Montaña Palentina. We flew back to the UK where another Naturetrek adventure came to an end.

## 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](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) to sign up.

## Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!



Views from Casavegas



## Species Lists

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

	Common name	Scientific name	September				
			26	27	28	29	30
1	Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>		✓			
2	Iberian Hare	<i>Lepus granatensis</i>					✓
3	Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>		✓	✓		
4	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		✓			
5	European Wildcat	<i>Felis silvestris silvestris</i>				✓	
6	Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>		✓	✓		✓
7	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>		✓			

## Birds

1	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>			✓	✓	✓
2	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>			✓		
3	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			✓		✓
6	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>		✓	✓	✓	
7	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>				✓	
8	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>				✓	
9	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>					✓
10	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		✓			
11	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>			✓		
12	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>			✓	✓	
15	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
17	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>				✓	
18	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>			H		
19	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>		✓	✓		
20	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	✓		✓	✓	
21	Iberian Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus sharpei</i>				H	
22	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>					✓
24	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>					✓
27	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓	✓	✓	
29	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>		✓			
30	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>			✓		
31	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓		✓	✓
32	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
33	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		✓	✓		✓
34	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		✓			✓
35	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>					✓
36	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>			H		
37	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>				✓	
38	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			✓		✓

	Common name	Scientific name	September				
			26	27	28	29	30
39	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>				✓	✓
40	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>				H	
41	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		✓	✓	✓	
42	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>		✓			
43	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
44	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
45	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			✓	✓	
46	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>				✓	
47	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
48	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
49	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>			✓	✓	
50	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
51	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>			✓	✓	
52	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			✓	✓	✓
53	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
54	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓			
55	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>				✓	
57	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>				✓	
58	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓		✓	
59	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>		✓		✓	
60	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>				✓	
61	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>		✓			