



MORE INFO



Birding Aragon Series

CENTRAL SPANISH PYRENEES

North Spain

2024 Purposed Dates

April - June 2024

Duration

8 days / 7 nights

Group size

Min 4 / Max 8

From **1.750 €**

Ind. Sup. 150€

📞 ESP +34 669 962 970

✉ info@spainnaturaltravel.com

📞 UK +44 784 336 68 46

🌐 www.spainnaturaltravel.com



ARAGON

If we were to choose one word to describe our region, it would be **diversity**. The fact that Aragon spans the central part of the Ebro Valley and extends from the French border to the Iberian system, means that a number of diverse environments can be enjoyed within each 100 km range.

The landscape changes drastically in short distances, ranging from 3,000 meter peaks in the **Pyrenees** to the arid semi-desert lowlands of the **Ebro river basin**, passing through Mediterranean ecosystems as we move towards the **Iberian range** in the south.



The Birding Aragon itineraries consist of a series of organised trips **designed by and for birdwatching enthusiasts**. All the accommodation and guides involved in the trip belong to the Birding Aragon Association and share a passion and respect for nature that all experienced birdwatchers require during an observation trip.



The proposed journey focuses on exploring the stunning valleys and mountains of the **Aragonese central Pyrenees** and searching for their most representative bird species.

Central Pyrenees

Exuberant and conspicuous, the alpine peaks and vast extensions of woodland give way to the **unique geological formations** found in the lower plains making these natural reserves some of the most geographically varied and abundantly bio-diverse. Large areas of this region are protected as a result of the **great variety of species, which are rare or even absent from the rest of Europe.**



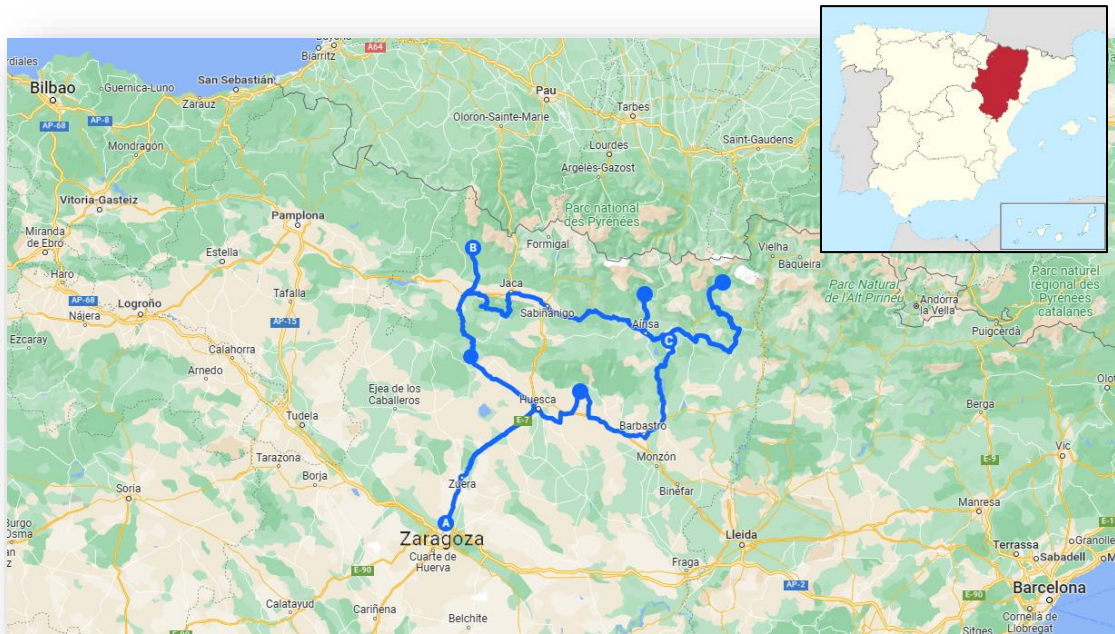
The **birdlife diversity** ranges from mountain specialists such as Rock Thrush or Snowfinch to species more commonly found around open woodland, including Bee-eater or Woodchat Shrike. But this area deserves a special mention for hosting one of **Europe's most significant concentrations of raptors**, griffon and Egyptian vulture, and the emblematic bearded vulture. Other distinctive mountain species are **wallcreeper and alpine chough**, while high-density forested areas and meadows with **black woodpecker, song thrush, or marsh tit** resemble more central European habitats.



Areas Visited: Los Mallos de Riglos Natural monument, Western Valleys Natural Park., Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, Posets-Maladeta Natural park, Sierra y Cañones de Guara Natural Park.



Route layout



Itinerary

Day 1. Transfer, Pyrenean Foothills and trip presentation.

Reception at Zaragoza airport and train station followed by a 2h private transfer to our first accommodation venue in the Western Pyrenean valleys. On our way north, we make a first observation stop at **Los Mallos de Riglos Natural Monument**.

These massive, ocre, limestone conglomerates, rising to 300 metres in height, stand guard over the village of Riglos on the banks of the Gállego River and are a **paradise for birds of prey**, that nest and breed in the many hollows and crevasses.



Days 2-3. Western Valleys Natural Park.

The Natural Park of the Western Valleys is located at the northwest corner of the Aragonese Pyrenees, bordering with France to the north and with Navarra to the west. Shaped by the action of past glaciers, its landscape is marked by **sculpted slender peaks and U-shaped circuses and valleys** that frequently harbour some of the last remaining terns or glacial lakes in Europe.



It stands out for its **remarkable and well-preserved mixed forests**, including beech and fir. It also has a **tremendously rich flora** resulting from the varieties in soil, differences in orientation and relative altitudes. These biodiverse ecosystems provide a refuge for endangered species such as the Brown Bear or the Western Capercaillie, as well as for a rich profusion of other bird species. Among these, the "Barranco del Infierno" is one of the best places in Western Europe to observe the elusive **Wallcreeper**.

Habitats: Atlantic forests, Mountain pastures, limestone cliffs and peaks.



Special Interest Bird Species: Red Kite, Northern Goshawk, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Bearded Vulture, Griffon Vulture, Golden Eagle, Common Buzzard, Ptarmigan, Grey Partridge, Black Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, White-Backed Woodpecker, Greater-Spotted Woodpecker, Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Alpine Accentor, Marsh Tit, Wallcreeper, Citril Finch, Common Crossbill, Snowfinch.

Days 4-5-6. Central Pyrenees. Ordesa and Posets-Maladeta Natural Parks.

In the next three days, we explore two of the **most notable protected areas** of the Pyrenees, the National Park of Ordesa and Monte Perdido, and the Natural Park of Posets-Maladeta.



Diversity and a wealth of wildlife species are guaranteed within the mosaic landscape surrounding us. **Marmots**, easy to detect by their sharp whistles, **Wild Boar and Chamois** are the largest and easiest mammals to observe, but we also visit some of the best places in the world to observe raptors, most notably **the majestic Bearded Vulture** in its natural habitat.

Habitats: Mixed and coniferous forests, mountain pastures, limestone cliffs and peaks.



Special Interest Bird Species: Rock Ptarmigan, Western Capercaillie, Grey Partridge, Bearded Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, Short-Toed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Booted Eagle, Eurasian Woodcock, Alpine Swift, Alpine Accentor, Common Rock Thrush, Ring Ouzel, Wallcreeper, Eurasian Treecreeper, Red-Backed Shrike, Alpine Chough, White-Winged Snowfinch, Citril Finch.

Day 7. Sierra de Guara Natural Park

On our way south back to Zaragoza, we will have a chance to explore a fourth protected area, the spectacular Sierra de Guara Natural Park and its **unique landscapes sculpted by water erosion.**



The singular canyons and narrow, deep ravines of the Guara range are filled with striking turquoise rivers that form impressive waterfalls, siphons and caves as they meander through the landscape. The steep rocky walls are **exceptional places for large birds such as Griffon Vultures, Golden Eagles or Bearded Vultures** to establish their nests.

Habitats: Patchwork of arable fields with oak woods, Mediterranean scrub and rocky cliffs.



Special Interest Bird Species: Bearded Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, Short-Toed Eagle, Booted Eagle, Alpine Swift, Common Rock Thrush, Subalpine Warbler, Red-Backed Shrike.

Day 8. Wrap up and farewell

After a relaxed breakfast at our accommodation in Zaragoza, it's time to make our way home. If the returning schedules allow, there will be time for one last walk along the Ebro riverbeds in the morning. Zaragoza airport and train station transfers will be provided if required.

Accommodation

Hotel de montaña Uson

Our first trip base enjoys a privileged setting at the heart of the Western Valleys Natural Park. Surrounded by impressive mountains and untouched nature, the hotel has a large private garden and a stunning terrace with spectacular views.

Your hosts, Imanol and Lucia, were pioneers of ecotourism in the area – they generate most of the hotel's energy from renewables. The hotel is a wonderful place to switch off – there is no tv or internet - and perfect for enjoying a beer while birdwatching as our hosts also produce home-made beer in their small cottage brewery.



Casa Gerbe

Our second base of this trip is Casa Gerbe, a charming small rural guest house run by bird lovers Miguel Angel and Nuria, right in the centre of three of the Pyrenees' most important protected natural areas.

This hidden jewel is made up of six large ensuite bedrooms, 3 of which have double beds. It offers outstanding views of the Monte Perdido massif and the Mediano reservoir, plus providing access to a privately-owned photographic hide for guests to enjoy. It is a perfect spot for birdwatching enthusiasts.





The tour includes

- ✓ Accommodation in double/twin rooms, single or double use.
- ✓ All meals included. Picnic lunches are prepared in-house when needed.
- ✓ Transportation and transfers to and from the Zaragoza airport and train station.
- ✓ English-speaking local guides.
- ✓ Entry tickets to all the attractions visited.
- ✓ Welcome pack: Cloth bag, bento picnic box and a refillable aluminium bottle.

What's not included

- ✗ International flights.
- ✗ Travel insurance.
- ✗ Additional drinks, tips, and any other personal expenses.



Packing list

- ✓ Personal First Aid Supplies: Sunscreen/Lipbalm, painkillers, blister kit, clearly labelled prescribed medicines, spare contact lenses or glasses.
- ✓ Documentation: Passport, additional ID, Cash
- ✓ Clothing guideline: Rain gear, warm jacket, long & short-sleeved tops, hiking trousers & shorts, cap/hat, medium weight comfortable hiking boots, casual shoes, good walking socks, light gloves and hat for colder weather.
- ✓ Equipment: Sunglasses, folding sticks or trekking poles.
- ✓ Additional equipment: AC adaptor, camera, light binoculars, hand-washing soap (laundry available if needed).



How to get there

The tour price includes the transport to/from Zaragoza airport and Zaragoza Delicias Train Station with a dedicated driver. Zaragoza has excellent high-speed rail connections with Barcelona and Madrid and Ryanair operates flights between London Stansted and Zaragoza on a regular basis.



How to book

1. Make your booking

Once you have chosen your trip and verified that you understand and agree to our booking conditions, please choose one of the following ways to make your booking:

- Click "select a date and book now" and complete your details online.
- Email us or use our contact form to let us know your details.
- On the phone: Call us on +44 784 336 68 46 if you call from the UK or +34 669 962 970 when calling from the EU

2. Secure your reservation

Once you have chosen your desired holiday, we will ask you to pay the correspondent deposit of 10% of the total amount of the booking to secure your reservation.

3. Full travelling information

A complete booking form will then be sent to gather essential details about you and the people you are travelling with, so we can do our best to make everything run smoothly during your trip (dietary requirements, medical conditions or details of your own travel insurance cover).

4. Booking confirmation

Within no more than two working days, we will send the final confirmation of your holiday and provide you with all the relevant information about your trip as appropriate, as well as the outstanding amount to be paid before the correspondent cut-off date.

5. Balance payment

From this moment on and until six weeks prior to departure, we require full payment to be made. If you make your booking within six weeks of the starting date, the total amount will need to be made in full to proceed with the reservation.

ENQUIRE

Should you need to extend your stay before or after the trip, please let us know.



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