

Babia and Valle de San Emiliano-Natural Area

WEEKEND route

Province of Leon

PLACES OF INTEREST

- Nature interpretation centers in Palacios del Sil and Caboalles de arriba.
- Lumajo's cascade.
- Roman road named Puerto de Mesa

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REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS

Mountain, forest and aquatic birds.

ITINERARY

First day's journey

The route begins in Barrios de Luna, a village located next to a swamp that has its name. Here, there is a museum called Museo del Pastor, where the shepherd tradition of the region is represented. (to be able to visit it outside summer days, it's necessary to contact the following phone number: 987 581 492). Bordering the swamp in Mirantes de Luna, one finds the most northern Savin Juniper bush population of Europe.

Once traveling beyond the swamp, the local LE-481 road goes into the Valle de San Emiliano Natural Area. This valley is surrounded by tall mountains; it has karstic morphological zones of the glacier type with moraines and cirques. Within it Torresito is found, a village with well-preserved raised granaries from where the roman road of the plateau begins; a road that traversed the northern mountain range. When traveling in it, one accompanies numerous forestry areas with bird species associated with these environments.

Another alternative is continuing until getting to Torre de Babia, where the “Laguna de las verdes” ornithological hiking route begins. In it, one is obliged to visit “el macizo calizo del Montigüero”, where it isn’t difficult to observe the flight of Eurasian Griffon Vultures, Golden Eagles, Common Kestrels, Red-billed crows and Yellow-billed crows. During the summer, we can observe the White-winged Snowfinch, the Common Rock Thrush, the Alpine Accentor, the Dunnock, the *Anthus spinoletta*, and even the Common Mallard.

8km from here, Riologo a village is located, characterized by its buildings, the renaissance palace of cultivated land and the fortified enclosure.

Second day’s journey

Taking the CL-623 up again and after overcoming Piedrafita de Babia, one crosses the canyon of the Sil river across the Palomas bridge. In the proximity Lumajo, one of the most impressive and unknown cascades of León that carries water all year long is located.

The journey continues into the Luciana valley, a biosphere reserve and refuge to the wolf and the Black Grouse. Once crossing Rioscuro, where a Calecho, (a structure that enables the confirmation of wolf hunting in antiquity) is preserved, one reaches to Caboalles de arriba. In its interpretation center: Centro del Urogallo, adapted and accessible for persons with some kind of physical disability, one can receive information about the zone and also about hiking routes. Additionally, here is where the ornithological hiking route of “Bosque de Caboalles” begins. The straight and comfortable route, goes from Caboalles de Arriba to Puerto de Cerrredo, and crosses through a mixed forest of great interest. The outing is ideal for the observation of forest birds like the Eurasian Nuthatch, the Goldcrest, the Bullfinch, the Eurasian Jay, the Marsh Tit, the Common Buzzard or the Short-toed Snake Eagle. Additionally, it is also important to point out, because of its uniqueness and endangerment level, the presence of the capercaillie.

The Palacios del Sil Nature Interpretation Center is located in Palacios del Sil, 14 km (8.7 miles) from Villablino, bordering Las Rozas reservoir.

It is possible to engage in other ornithological hiking routes close to this weekend’s trip:

- “Peranzanes and its birds” in the town of Peranzanes. This trip takes place in an environment filled with shrubs and small-sized oak trees, where hedge sparrows and snow buntings roam.
- “Selga de Ordás Reservoir,” in close proximity to the town of Selga de Ordás. This location is home to various water birds, such as mallards, common teals, great crested grebes, common grebes and great cormorants.

- “Robledales de la Lomba” in the vicinity of Riello. A peaceful walk suitable for observing forest birds, such as spotted woodpeckers, blue nuthatches, blackcaps, firecrests, long tailed tits, common chaffinches, jays, goshawks and common tits.

GAL (Local Action Group): CUATRO VALLES

