

Ebro Reservoir and Ojo Guareña Natural Monument

WEEKEND ROUTE

Burgos Province

INTERESTING SIGHTSEEING

- Ebro Reservoir ZEPA (Special Bird Protection Area)
- Monte Hijedo
- Ojo Guareña Natural Monument
- Nature Interpretation Center
- Gayangos Lagoon

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS

Forest birds and water birds.

SCHEDULE

Day 1

This route begins in a rather emblematic location: Ebro Reservoir. This location has been classified as a Special Bird Protection Area (ZEPA for its acronym in Spanish) and it represents one of the most important wetlands for Castilla y León water birds both at the national and international level.

This route leads all the way to Arija, where the “Ebro Reservoir Wetlands” ornithological hike route begins. You’ll enjoy watching the various bird species that inhabit the most representative ecosystems in this enclave. These ecosystems are comprised by water, peat, grassland, low shrub areas and well-developed forests. Thus, depending on the time of the year you’ll be able to observe different birds, such as mallards, little bitterns, European honey buzzards and short-toed snake eagles. During the summer season, the most common species you’ll spot is the white stork roaming along pasturelands. During fall, you’ll be able to observe common spoonbills and, during winter, you’ll most likely see various anatidae and shorebird species that hibernate at the reservoir. Because of its length, it is suggested to complete this route by bike, or by foot if done in several stages.

Day 2

Leaving this reservoir behind, the tour continues along the highway to Santa Gadea de Alfoz (6 km <3.7 miles>). On the exit to this town, on the way towards Higón, there is an asphalt road leading to the beginning of a hiking trail that goes through Monte Hijedo. This 11 km (6.8 miles) hiking trail allows you to walk along one of the largest and best-preserved oak groves filled with sessile oak trees in the Cantabrian cornice. Its importance is due, in part; to the fact, it represents a forest variety that is somewhat rare nowadays. Beech trees and holly trees grow side by side to oak trees, creating a forest ecosystem that is home to numerous bird species, such as jays, European green woodpeckers, blue nuthatches and goshawks.

30 km (18.6 miles) from Higón, the route continues on to a karst complex known as Ojo Guareña. This area is considered as a natural heritage site and spreads along more than 100 km (62 miles) of complex corridor networks of various levels. The water flow of the Guareña and Trema rivers pierces the limestone, giving shape to these formations. From an ornithological point of view, this is a particularly interesting region as a result of the predator birds, such as Egyptian vultures and golden eagles, which build their nests along the rocky, eroded cliffs. Black woodpeckers, spotted woodpeckers and middle spotted woodpeckers may also accompany you during the tour. Quintanilla del Rebollar is home to a nature interpretation center where you'll have the opportunity to learn a little bit more about these geological formations and their history.

About 20 km (12.4 miles) from Quintanilla, you'll arrive at Gayangos. From there, you can walk all the way to Gayangos lagoons, where you'll also find a bird observatory. These small-sized lakes of tectonic origin provide a refuge for numerous bird species, some of which inhabit the area year-round, such as the common grebe and the water rail. Among the species that dwell here during the summer, you can find red-backed shrikes. During the winter season, you will have the chance to see green-winged teals, pochards and northern shovellers.

Local Action Group: CEDER MERINDADES

