

Ravines at Escalote River and Monteagudo Reservoir

Weekend Route

Soria Province

INTERESTING SIGHTSEEING

- Altos de Barahona (Special Bird Protection Area and Community Relevant Site)
- Ravines at Escalote River
- Monteagudo de las Vicarias Reservoir

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS

Steppe birds, river birds, cliff nesting birds and water birds

SCHEDULE

The route described below runs along southern Soria, starting at Altos de Barahona, a region that has been classified as a Special Bird Protection Area and that has been incorporated to Natura Network 2000. Most of its surface is covered by oro-Mediterranean heaths, alpine meadows and subalpine limestone.

Day 1

In the town of Lumías you can readily engage in griffon vulture watching, which nests in rocky formations. These rocky formations comprise an interesting 7 km (4.3 miles) trail all the way to Torrevicente. (This tour can also be done inversely). The red rock faces created by the Talegones River will leave you spellbound due to the contrasting elements, including rock formations that lie among ash tree groves, black poplars and cork oaks. There are many water springs along the road. In addition to vultures, you can watch other types of predator birds, such as the hobby.

Highway SO-P-4102 leads to the walled town of Rello. This town offers several trip possibilities, including a round ornithological route that begins and culminates in the same location. The Ravines at Escalote River (in addition to the Ravine at Oceca) are relief formations which appear as cutting sedimentary structures from the Mesozoic era. The contrast found among cliffs, which house a number of cliff nesting birds such as the common rock thrush, as well as the flat plains housing several steppe birds, will give you the chance to enjoy a large variety of bird species.

The surrounding area is comprised by high moorlands and empty terrain. These moorlands, which have virtually no trees and form large plains interrupted by vantage points, represent an ideal location for observing steppe birds, such as stone curlews and black-bellied sandgrouses. The presence of a large number of little bustards gives this site international recognition. Nonetheless, the most representative species in the area is the Ricotí lark. The 2200 couples of this species choose Los Altos de Barahona, making it one of the best habitats in Spain for this type of bird. A route begins in the town of Rello and leads to Bordecorex, a county in which another ornithological route known as “Bordecorex–Fuentegelmes” runs through. This route takes you to the locations where you will most likely be able to observe birds. Certain species are easy to spot, such as chiffchaffs and warblers. The most abundant species is the nightjar, though large numbers of jays, common tits, blue tits, wood pigeons and thrushes are present during the fall/winter season to feed on berries and acorns.

Day 2

This route continues on to Aguaviva de la Vega. While in this town you can visit a place known as “Las Cudrillas”. The road access is in a somewhat bad shape, but once you arrive at Las Cudrillas you’ll be able to see various predator birds flying over the rocky limestone hills. These hills are haphazardly eroded by water, thus constituting a rather peculiar landscape.

24 km (15 miles) from here, at the end of the route, you’ll arrive at Monteagudo de las Vicarias. This location holds an artificial dam that is included in the catalog of special interest wetlands and has been recognized as a ZEPA (Special Bird Protection Area). It has a bird observatory where you are recommended to use a telescope in order to observe the numerous bird species that find shelter in the reservoir’s waters.

The black-necked grebe and the red-crested pochard live and mate in this reservoir. There are also several species of migratory birds that stopover in this wetland layer. The importance of this location has to do with the dryness found in the surrounding terrain. The reservoir area is basically the only wet place in this zone. As a result, the outlying area offers a very interesting option where you will find steppe birds, especially black-bellied sandgrouses.

Local Action Group: ADEMA

