

Vegacervera Ravines and Picos de Europa

Weekend Route

León Province

INTERESTING SIGHTSEEING

- Vegacervera Ravines Natural Area
- Valporquero Caves
- Cola de Caballo Falls
- Casas del Parque at Puebla de Lillo and Lario
- Protected forest zones: Pinar de Lillo, Pardomino Forest
- Picos de Europa National Park

REPRESENTATIVE BIRDS

Forest birds, mountain birds, cliff nesting birds and river birds

SCHEDULE

This route begins 50 km (31 miles) from the city of León

Day 1

The town of Valporquero del Torio has a number of forests that give shelter to countless species of high mountain birds. This is the beginning of a round ornithological tour known as “Valporquero del Torio” that will take you to Peña Morena, where you’ll be able to observe large predator birds as well as smaller mountain birds, such as wheatears and alpine pipits. Yellow-billed choughs and red-billed choughs engage in acrobatic flights around the rocky cliff areas. In addition, you can pay a visit to Valporquero caves, which are known worldwide for their rock formations, which have been pierced by water during millennia.

Highway LE-311 will take you to the next spot in this route. You’ll have the chance to enjoy the limestone walls on both sides of the highway as you pass through Vegacervera Ravines. This protected natural area is home to ten species of predator birds, and the contrast provided by the rocky cliffs and the riverside habitat next to the Torio river creates a combination where you can observe wallcreepers and dippers as well as grey wagtails.

Upon reaching Otero de Curueño, you take a detour at Ranedo de Curueño, a town where another ornithological route known as “Curueño river basin around Ranedo” begins. You’ll be able to enjoy by watching various river and forest species. The tour begins at Ranedo, taking the course of Curueño river, one of the most beautiful and wild rivers in the León province, until you cross the Valdepiélagos area. Right before arriving at Montuerto, it is worth going into the Valderones creek valley, where you can follow a beautiful trail in order to watch and listen to robins, nightingales, blue tits, cuckoos, etc.

In a nearby location, at Noceo del Curueño, you’ll find “Cola de Caballo” falls.

Another option is to continue on to Valdecastillo. Between Valdecastillo and Primajas lies a mixed forest known as Pardomino Forest, which contains beech trees, oaks, ash trees and holly trees. This place is considered a botanical jewel, and you’ll have to get permission from the Environmental Agency Council to access this forest because it has been classified as a protected area. Among the species you’ll be able to see here we should highlight the presence of the rare and much valued western capercaillie.

Day 2

Going around the edge of Porma reservoir through highway LE-331 along a distance of 19 km (11.8 miles), you’ll cross part of the Caza de Mampodre Regional Reservation, an important ecosystem containing a variety of wildlife. The Picos de Europa park information center is found in Puebla de Lillo, in the west sector. The turret at Puebla de Lillo provides information about the park, including information panels describing the park’s wildlife and history.

Here you will find a number of trip suggestions. One of them consists on touring the Lillo native pine grove. This is one of the few native pine groves still preserved in Spain, and it represents a mating place for western capercaillies, deer, etc. You must obtain permission to access.

Another option is to walk through the beech tree groves. From here you can also start a round 15 km trip known as the Cervatina Route. This route will give you the chance to enjoy watching several species of forest birds, including nocturnal predator birds such as the tawny owl.

Depending on time availability, from Uña you may climb up to Puerto de Tarna, which entails an interesting option because you’ll be able to observe grassland birds and high mountain birds.

Finally, you’ll arrive at Lario. Picos de Europa Park is found in this town, in the eastern section. You can obtain information on different tours. You are advised to take an ornithological tour, starting in town and going through the beech tree groves and oak groves until reaching Ermita del Pontón. From the viewpoint at Piedrashitas you’ll be able to observe high mountain birds and you’ll have an excellent view of Valdeón Valley and Picos de Europa Park.

Local Action Group: CUATRO VALLES, MONTAÑA DE RIAÑO

