



VIA PONTICA TOURS
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TOUR INFO

SPAIN ***SPRING BIRDING TOUR (12 DAYS)***

Suitable period: *April – June*



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On this intensive tour you can observe over 200 species of birds, including 15 raptors, all 4 species of European vultures.

During the tour we will explore high mountains to coastal wetlands and visit some of the best birdwatching places in Spain.

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Day by day itinerary

Day 1

Meet and welcome in the Barcelona International Airport. Transfer to Pyrenees and birding in Lleida Steppes for this morning. Here we will have our first's views of some wonderful birds including *Little Bustard*, *Montagu's Harrier*, *Roller*, *Short-toed Eagle*, *Tawny Pipit*, *Stone Curlew*, *Ortolan Bunting* or *Turtle Dove*. The area is noted for the variety of its birdlife so a good list will be done in the first hours of the tour. Mid-afternoon arrival to our hotel, where we will enjoy our firsts views on *Black*, *Egyptian*, *Griffon & Bearded Vultures*!

Day 2

Full day birding in Boumort Game Reserve, considered one of the five best places for raptors in Europe. All four species of vultures will appear along with *Booted & Golden Eagles*. *Wryneck*, *W Orphean Warbler*, *Golden Oriole*, *Red-backed Shrike*, *Woodlark*, *Rock Sparrow*, *Bee-eater* and *Subalpine Warbler* will complete the list!

Day 3

Before heading to Los Monegros steppe lands we will do a stop in the high mountain grassland near our hotel. This is a wonderful place for *Citril Finches*, as over 40 of them can be seen in a morning from mid-June onwards. Lammergeier is also likely to appear. Arrival to our accommodation in Los Monegros for lunch and afternoon birding in the area around. Here *Blue Rock Thrush*, *Black Wheatear*, *Hoopoe*, *Dartford Warbler*, *Black-eared Wheatear* and *Thekla Lark* will appear. We will have an early dinner as a nocturnal trip is waiting for us! (see explanation on day 4).

Day 4

Full day in the steppe-lands. We will have first looks into *Pin-tailed & Black-bellied Sandgrouses*, *Calandra*, *Lesser & Greater Short-toed Larks*, and the poorly known *Dupont's Lark*, if being a bit lucky! *Little Bustards*, *Stone Curlews* and *Spectacled Warblers* are also common here! After dinner we will go to enjoy the nocturnal trip. *Red-necked Nightjar*, *Barn Owl*, *Scops Owl* and *Long-eared Owl* will easily appear and will give excellent chances to photographers!

Day 5

Early morning visit to Belchite, to have better views on *Dupont's Lark*. This really rare bird (the most endangered passerine in Europe) has its biggest populations in the Ebro basin. Other birds appearing here includes *Lesser Kestrel & Pin-tailed Sandgrouse*, *Red-billed Chough*. Transfer to Gredos Mountains, expecting to arrive about 6:00pm

Day 6

In the morning we will explore the rocky slopes of Gredos Mountains. Here we will see *Common Rock Thrush*, "Gredos Bluethroat", a gorgeous variety showing no central spot in its blue gorge, *Common Crossbill*, *Rock Bunting*, *Water Pipit*, *Citril Finch*, *Northern Wheatear*, *Firecrest* and the magnificent *Spanish Ibex* along with many other birdlife. After lunch we will do the short transfer to Monfragüe. Along our way we will have some stops to have first's views on birds like *Iberian Flycatcher*, *Spanish Sparrow*, *Spanish Magpie*, *Black Stork* along with other interesting birds such as *Black Vulture*, *Booted Eagle*, *Woodchat Shrike* and *Cirl Bunting*.

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Day 7

Full day birding in Monfragüe, the paradise for raptors in Europe. *Black & Egyptian Vultures* are common here as it is so *Booted & Short-toed Eagles*. We will look for two very special raptors: *Spanish Imperial Eagle* (7 territories within the National Park) and *Black-winged Kite*. Along with them a really long list of birds living in the “dehesa” ambient: *Melodious, Sardinian, Dartford & W Orphean Warblers, Thekla Lark, Spanish Magpie, Spanish Sparrow, Hoopoe, Roller, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Black Stork, Red-rumped Swallow & Iberian Grey Shrike* will all occur. During the afternoon we will look for *Eagle Owl* and *White-rumped Swifts*!!

Day 8

Full day in the Plains of Cáceres. Here we will enjoy the majestic flocks of *Great Bustards* in the cereal-steppes. Along with them, good numbers of *Little Bustards, Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouses* live here. *Calandra Lark* is fairly, as it is so *Greater Short-toed Lark*. In the late afternoon we will visit Trujillo to observe the amazing numbers of *Lesser Kestrels, Pallid & Common Swifts* coming back to their nesting sites in the centre of the town!

Day 9

Early morning start to visit one of the few nesting sites of *Rufous Bush Robin* in northern Extremadura. After enjoying this spot, we will visit the Arrocampo wetlands. Here we will have chances for some interesting birds including *Little Bittern, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Spoonbill, Penduline Tit and Cetti's, Fan-tailed, Savi's and Great Reed Warblers*. The area also supports some *Great Bitterns* along with *Squacco and Black-crowned Night Herons*. Here we will also spot two alien birds living in the grasslands; *Red Avadavat and Common Waxbill*. During the afternoon transfer to our next spot in La Mancha Húmeda, arrival to our hotel and free evening.

Day 10

Morning birding visiting some lagoons around and near Pedro Muñoz. We are in La Mancha Húmeda, a huge area in Castilla where over 400 endorheic lagoons are located. Here are living really interesting birds such as the endangered *White-headed Duck* along with *Red-crested Pochard, Greater Flamingo, Purple Heron, Black-necked Grebe, Cetti's Warbler, Penduline Tit and Bearded Tit*. Some pairs of the highly endangered *Marbled Duck* are also nesting in the area depending on the year. Afternoon transfer to Ebro Delta, check in and birding in the late afternoon. We will visit a colony of herons right beside our accommodation. Hundreds of heron will be getting in and out of their nests including *Night, Squacco & Purple Herons* as well as *Little, Cattle & Great White Egrets. Little Bittern* and *Savi's and Moustached Warblers* also live here.

Day 11

Full day of birding in Ebro Delta to enjoy the big flocks of *Glossy Ibises* and *Greater Flamingoes* feeding in the marshes and the paddy fields. *Audouin's and Slender-billed Gulls* are both common in some areas and we will visit the huge colonies of these species along with *Little, Common, Sandwich's and Caspian Terns* nesting in the salt marshes and the beaches. Both *Whiskered and Gull-billed Terns* seem to be everywhere as it is so the *Purple Swamphens. Collared Pratincoles* are also locally common here. *Mediterranean Gulls* are scarcer but still we will have some of them. The area is also excellent for waders: *Sanderlings, Curlew Sandpipers, Ruffs, Godwits and Whimbrels*

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are all probably appearing along with scarcer species such as *Temminck's Stint*, *Eleonora's Falcon* or *Dotterel* and good numbers of nesting *Shelducks*, *Pied Avocets* and *Kentish Plovers*.

Day 12

We will enjoy the Delta wildlife until the time of our final transfer back to Barcelona (2hours).

Group size:	4-14 persons	1575 EUR
Individual:	2-3 persons	ask for price
Deposit:		200 EUR
Single room supplement:		440 EUR

Price include: Transport with comfortable bus and coach, accommodation in good hotels with private facilities, full board, professional guide, all entrance taxes.

The price does not include: Airfares, travel insurance, alcohol drinks and cigarettes, room service, telephone calls.