



Spanish Spring Birds

Photographic tour with tour leader Chris Gomersall

21st - 27th April 2027

Trip Overview

Group size:

The trip accommodates a maximum of 5 guests.

Cost includes:

Airport transfers, accommodation, local transportation, all meals, use of hides.

Cost excludes:

International flights, sundry items, alcohol and personal travel insurance.

Accommodation:

We will be staying in our own well-appointed typical Spanish town house in the small town of Montgai which offers clean and comfortable accommodation with ample space. With packed breakfast and lunch dependant on our daily schedule we will enjoy dinner in a local restaurant each evening. Rooms are on a single basis or shared for couples.

Level of Fitness:

There are relatively short walks involved in accessing the hides, and our time in each hide will predominantly be for a morning or evening session (a maximum at any one time of approximately 4 hours) there will be a full day of closer to 8 hours in the Lammergeier hide so an appropriate level of fitness is required for this.

LEVEL 3



Trip Overview

We are always looking for new opportunities for wildlife photography especially for short haul in Europe. Spain is a country that offers some wonderful opportunities and, in a way, goes under the radar. The Catalanian region of Spain offers an array of opportunities for the keen bird photographer in habitats that range from the mountainous to the picturesque plains. In these dramatic settings, the onset of Spring is a key time for both resident and migratory birds as they begin their displaying, nesting and breeding seasons: this combination of behaviour and the freshness of their breeding plumage at this time of year is an ideal time to take advantage of a well-established collection of private photographic hides, the majority of which are glass-fronted, to work with an impressive array of species including Lammergeier, Griffon and Black Vulture, Little Bustard, Hoopoe, Little Owl and a drinking pool with an array of potential visiting species including Corn Bunting and Spanish Green Woodpecker. It's a trip that offers an array of opportunities for the keen bird photographer for sure.



Itinerary

Day 1: We are due to arrive at Barcelona Airport at roughly the same time from where we will then travel north to our base in the village of Cubells in the province of Lleida, and approximately 2 hours' drive away. Once we are settled into our accommodation, we will discuss our specific plans for the coming days and shop for some essential supplies. (Flight recommendations will be sent out nearer the time).

Days 2 – 6: Our accommodation is close to an area of steppe and traditional farmland, and conveniently placed for many of our target subjects, especially when early starts are called for. We have a little further to drive for the vultures and mountain birds, in the foothills of the Pyrenees.

The hides we will be using are fitted with one-way optical glass, which affords an extraordinary view of what is happening in front of you, so that not only are you able to achieve some amazing images but experience the habitat and activities in a far more involving way. This is an especially successful approach with sensitive bird subjects that might otherwise be easily disturbed from a conventional hide. The hides variously accommodate between one and six persons, with the smaller single person hides easy to relocate at short notice, offering us much greater flexibility to quickly respond to changing circumstances. That means from a logistical perspective we will need to split into two different groups, rotating between locations. Most days that will involve separate morning and afternoon sessions, but our local guides will help us with seeing everybody in to position as quickly and efficiently as possible. Obviously, we will try to ensure everybody gets their fair share of attention and support. Typically, we'll be starting between 06.00 and 07.00 each day, and breaking for lunch somewhere.



Itinerary

Subject-wise, in the steppe area we will be concentrating mainly on displaying little bustards, but there may be opportunities for little owl, stone-curlew, European bee-eater and hoopoe - much depends on the breeding season and arrival times of migrants. Corn bunting, calandra lark and green woodpecker are also common in this area and readily come to the drinking pools.

Further north, in the mountain habitat, we're fortunate to have access to a couple of state-approved vulture feeding stations with specialist photography hides. One site is particularly reliable for the rare cinereous vulture (also known as European black vulture), along with griffon vulture, Egyptian vulture, black kite, red kite and raven. Here we'll have the opportunity to photograph flight approaches as well as birds on the ground in a stunning mountain setting. You might be surprised just how close these birds come!

At another location, we should have the chance to photograph the magnificent lammergeier (or bearded vulture), in flight and on the ground, with a glorious mountain backdrop. Here too they will be accompanied by griffon vultures, and possibly other birds of prey. This will be a full day session, and two adjacent hides will accommodate the whole group.

Elsewhere in the mountains we might make use of hides at various drinking pools, with a wide variety of bird subjects possible; for example, serin, citril finch, crossbill, rock bunting, crested tit, Bonelli's warbler, subalpine warbler, pied flycatcher, blackcap, etc.

Day 7: We will have an early start to make the journey back to Barcelona Airport on time to catch our return flights back home.



Things to bring



Our private hostel accommodation is clean and comfortable with all bedding and towels provided and so you simply need to bring yourself, any special dietary requirements you may have – please let us know if there's anything you can't/won't eat!! In terms of clothing, you'll obviously need weatherproof clothing just in case but generally the weather will be warm and sunny, but it pays to go prepared. Early mornings and evenings can be chilly so having a jumper or sweatshirt to hand makes sense, along with a good pair of strong waterproof walking boots.

Please note that, as is typical in Spain, there are no facilities for tea and coffee-making in the rooms. Therefore, if you really must have a cup of tea first thing in the morning you might wish to bring a travel kettle and plug adapter. We will of course provide other refreshments to sustain you, and on some days with early starts we can come back to the hotel for a late breakfast after our shoot.

Camera equipment

A young eagle chick, possibly a Bonelli's Eagle, is shown in profile, facing left. It has dark brown feathers, a light-colored patch around its eye, and a dark, hooked beak. It is standing in tall, green grass. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green field.

In terms of camera kit, you'll need the longest lens you have (300mm with converter or 500mm would be our recommendation/choice) and then some supplementary lenses for other opportunities such as a 24-70mm for wide-angle landscapes and then maybe an intermediate zoom (70-200mm or 100-400mm) so that you don't miss anything in terms of opportunity. You'll get the chance to decide what you want/need for each session, so you won't be burdening yourself with it all of the time either. Tripods are essential for long lens photography from the hides, although some have shelves and fixing points for attaching your gimbal head or ball & socket head. Bring plenty of memory cards with you as well because if you get a good day, you will take a lot of images

Useful Contact Information



My contact number for the build up to and for the duration of the trip is:

Chris: +44 (0) 7719 546004



Please don't hesitate to contact me even if you think it is a minor question, I am here to help.



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