

SPAIN

May 15 - 24, 2019

10 days / 9 nights

\$3495

\$250 Single Supplement



Lammergeier

From the high Pyrenees to the Ebro Delta

By combining three vastly different habitats, each with its own special avifauna, at the peak of the breeding season, this tour provides some of the very best opportunities for birding, in Europe, let alone Spain, and so a long and impressive bird list is inevitable!



DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1, Wednesday, May 15

We meet at Barcelona airport, and drive south along the coast to our first base in the Ebro Delta, where there may be time for some local birding before dinner. Dinner and overnight at The Delta Hotel.

Dinner and overnight at The Delta Hotel (D)

Day 2, Thursday, May 16

We have a full day to explore the nearby Ebro delta, one of Europe's most important wetlands. The lagoons are dotted with thousands of different water birds like Black-necked Grebe, Red-crested Pochard, Glossy Ibis, elegant Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and Greater Flamingos, with a collection of 11 species of gulls and terns including Gull-billed, the mighty Caspian and thousands of Whiskered Terns, plus Yellow-legged, Mediterranean, Slender-billed and 11,000 pairs of Audouin's Gulls, representing 70% of the world population! Whatever next? The reed beds have Marsh Harrier, Great Reed, Moustached and Savi's Warblers and Penduline and Bearded Tits. The list continues to grow thanks to the heron family, with Squacco, Night and Purple Herons, Cattle and Little Egrets and Bittern and Little Bittern. Fan-tailed Warblers seem to be everywhere and all kinds of waders could be anywhere. Kentish Plover is a certainty and the aerobatic Collared Pratincole may also be breeding.

Dinner and overnight at The Delta Hotel (BLD)



Day 3, Friday, May 17

We drive northwest to the treeless steppes of Lower Aragon for a full day's birding and an overnight stay. This semi-desert landscape has a stark beauty quite unlike that of the Ebro Delta and provides great opportunities for a new set of special birds. Montagu's Harriers perform low level patrols, smart Black-eared Wheatears, Woodchat Shrikes and Little Owls perch obligingly, while Spectacled Warblers flit between sparse bushes. As well as Tawny Pipit, there are Short-toed, Lesser Short-toed, Calandra, Thekla and even rare Dupont's Larks, with curved bills and strange early morning songs. Due to the vastness of this harsh environment, some of the specialties are elusive but we can hope for lovely Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Stone Curlew, Lesser Kestrel, skulking Quail and even Little and Great Bustards.

Dinner and overnight at the Hotel Rincón del Cierzo (BLD)

Day 4, Saturday, May 18

We make an optional early start to search for the elusive Dupont's Lark, which only sings at dawn. After breakfast back at the hotel, we drive north to the Hecho Valley in the high Pyrenees, with birding stops along the way. Our lodging tonight will be in a lovely stone building in a remote mountain setting.

Dinner and overnight at Hotel de Montana Uson (BLD)

Day 5, Sunday, May 19

We have a full day to explore the beautiful wooded rocky scenery of the Hecho Valley, where we should find the delightful Firecrest and Crested Tit, plus Crossbill, Citril Finch and the striking Black Woodpecker, with Dippers along the fast flowing rivers, and with luck we may even see the rare and spectacular Wallcreeper.

Dinner and overnight at Hotel de Montana Uson (BLD)

Day 6, Monday, May 20

We drive west through the Pyrenees, to our next base near Ordesa National Park, with birding stops along the way at San Juan de la Peña Monastery and at the towering cliffs near Riglos. Our lodging for the next two nights will again be in a wonderful mountain setting.

Dinner and overnight at Hotel Palazzo (BLD)

Day 7, Tuesday, May 21

We have a full day to explore the Ordesa National Park, six thousand feet up in the high Pyrenees along the border with France, home to Alpine Marmots, Chamois and even Brown Bears! Above the treeline we can look out for Crag Martin, Black Redstart, Water Pipit, Alpine Accentor, Ortolan and Rock Buntings, Snow Finch and the dazzling Rock Thrush, while Golden Eagles, Alpine Choughs and the magnificent Lammergeier, will be soaring along the ridges above us, and the vertiginous slopes offer another chance to see the highly sought Wallcreeper.

Dinner and overnight at Hotel Palazzo (BLD)



Golden Oriole, Spotless Starling, Southern Grey and Red-backed Shrikes, Serin and Rock Sparrow, plus Sardinian, Subalpine, Orphean, Melodious, Olivaceous, Bonelli's and Dartford Warblers.

Dinner and overnight at the Boletas Birdwatching Centre (BLD)

Day 10, Friday, May 24

We drive back to Barcelona airport for our return flights home. **(B)**

All lunches will be picnics, except for the first day. The meal times will be decided daily once we have arrived, and there will be a roll call of the birds seen each day at some time during each evening. We may need to modify our plans according to weather conditions and local circumstances. The tour price includes all meals, except for lunch on the last day, but not personal items such as drinks. Your personal account for drinks with meals etc. should be settled directly with each hotel.

Price includes:

- ~ All accommodation (9 nights)
- ~ All meals (D on Day 1, BLD on days 2 – 9, only B on Day 10)
- ~ Private ground transportation in Spain
- ~ Reserve entrance fees
- ~ Customized bird checklist
- ~ Expert birding guide(s)
- ~ Services of 2 *Cheepers!* Tour leaders (Jim and Cindy Beckman)
- ~ Pre-trip gift package
- ~ Post-trip photo collection and electronic version of final checklist

Price does not include:

- ~ International flights to and from Barcelona
- ~ Gratuities
- ~ Items of a personal nature such as drinks, snacks, phone calls, laundry, etc.
- ~ Pre-tour hotel for the night of May 14, should you need to arrive a day early

PRICE IS BASED ON EXCHANGE RATE OF 1.349 BRITISH POUND = 1 US DOLLAR (May 17, 2018 rate). FINAL PRICE WILL BE ADJUSTED WHEN FULL PAYMENT IS MADE, BASED ON THE EXCHANGE RATE AT THAT TIME.

Day 8, Wednesday, May 22

We drive south to the Boletas Birdwatching Centre in the Pyrenean foothill village of Loporzano, with birding stops along the way.

Dinner and overnight at the Boletas Birdwatching Centre (BLD)

Day 9, Thursday, May 23

We have a full day to explore rugged landscape of the nearby Sierra de Guara Natural Park, where the local birds include Griffon and Egyptian Vultures, Short-toed and rare Bonelli's Eagles, Red and Black Kites, Scops and Eagle Owls, Alpine Swift, Bee-eater, Hoopoe, Wryneck, Blue Rock Thrush, Black Wheatear, Nightingale,