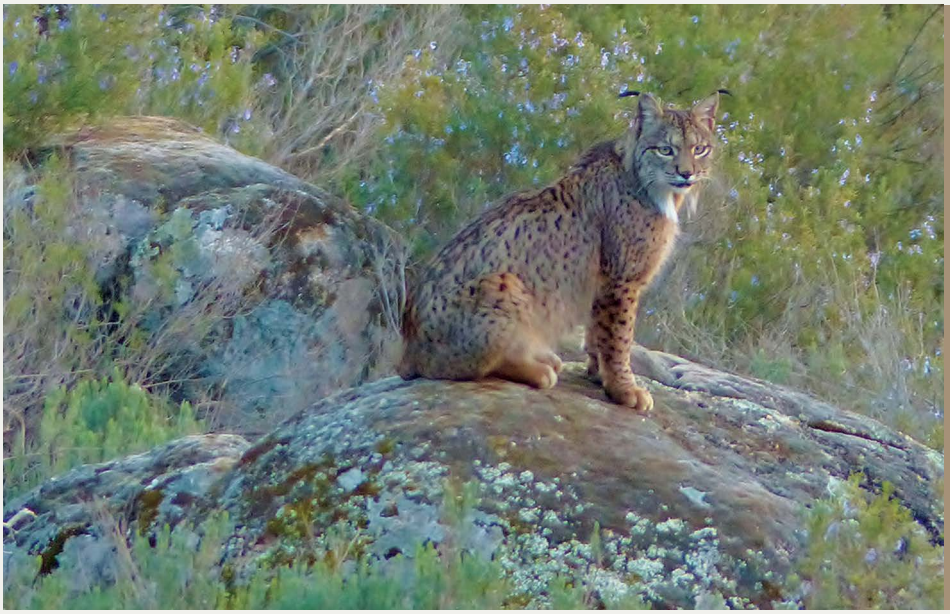
LYNX AND LAMMERGEIER



"On this tour we hope to see one of the rarest mammals in the world - the gorgeous Iberian Lynx. Due to some hard work by the conservationists, their numbers are increasing and our chances are good, as this is the best time to visit."
Julian Sykes

Dates	Sun 21 - Sun 28 Jan 2024
Price	£2,525
Deposit	£500 Single Supp £150

Leader	Julian Sykes
Flights	EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Malaga Inbound: Afternoon, Malaga-Gatwick
Weather	Probably a mixture of sun and showers (0°-15°C), warmer in lowland areas but can be very cold in the mountains whilst looking for wildlife. We could also encounter snow
Walking	There will be some short walks up to 3km on good tracks and paths, which could be slightly more difficult in the mountains
Meals	All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8
Insects	Biting insects are not usually a problem
Accom	Twin and single rooms all ensuite
Group	7

Just some of what we hope to see:

Iberian Lynx
Otter
Wild Boar
Mouflon
Spanish Ibex
Red Squirrel
Iberian Hare
Daubenton's Bat
White-headed Duck
Black-necked Grebe
Greater Flamingo
Lammergeier
Black Vulture
Spanish Imperial Eagle
Golden Eagle
Goshawk
Stone Curlew
Little Owl
Great Bustard
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse
Black-bellied Sandgrouse
Iberian Green Woodpecker
Black Wheatear
Blue Rock Thrush
Iberian Magpie
Hawfinch
Rock Bunting

Andalucia holds some of Spain's best kept secrets - Iberian Lynx, one of the world's most endangered cats and an increasing number of Lammergeier

- Perfectly placed accommodation with beautiful grounds
- Spanish Imperial Eagle, Golden Eagle, Black Vulture
- Sierra de Cazorla for Lammergeier, Spanish Ibex and Red Squirrel
- Iberian Magpie, Hawfinch, Hoopoe, Firecrest
- Otter, Mouflon, bats, Boar and Iberian Hare
- Beautiful scenery with remnants of true Mediterranean Forest
- Steppe species on the open fields of Castilla La Mancha

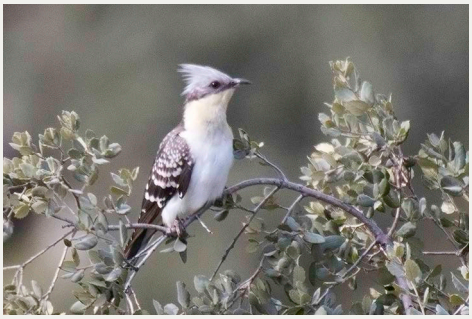
1 After our morning flight to Malaga, we drive north to the Laguna de Fuente de Piedra, where we shall spend some time looking at this huge saline lake. Greater Flamingos feed in the shallow waters and occasionally, the rare Lesser Flamingo can be found amongst their much commoner cousins. Other species that could be found include Shelduck, Marsh Harrier, Avocet, Stone Curlew and Water Pipit. We shall enjoy lunch overlooking open fields and hope to see our first Crested Larks, Spotless Starlings and maybe a wandering Hen Harrier.

Moving north towards Córdoba we should see our first White Storks and Red Kites, with a brief view of the famous mosque La Mesquita as we pass the city.

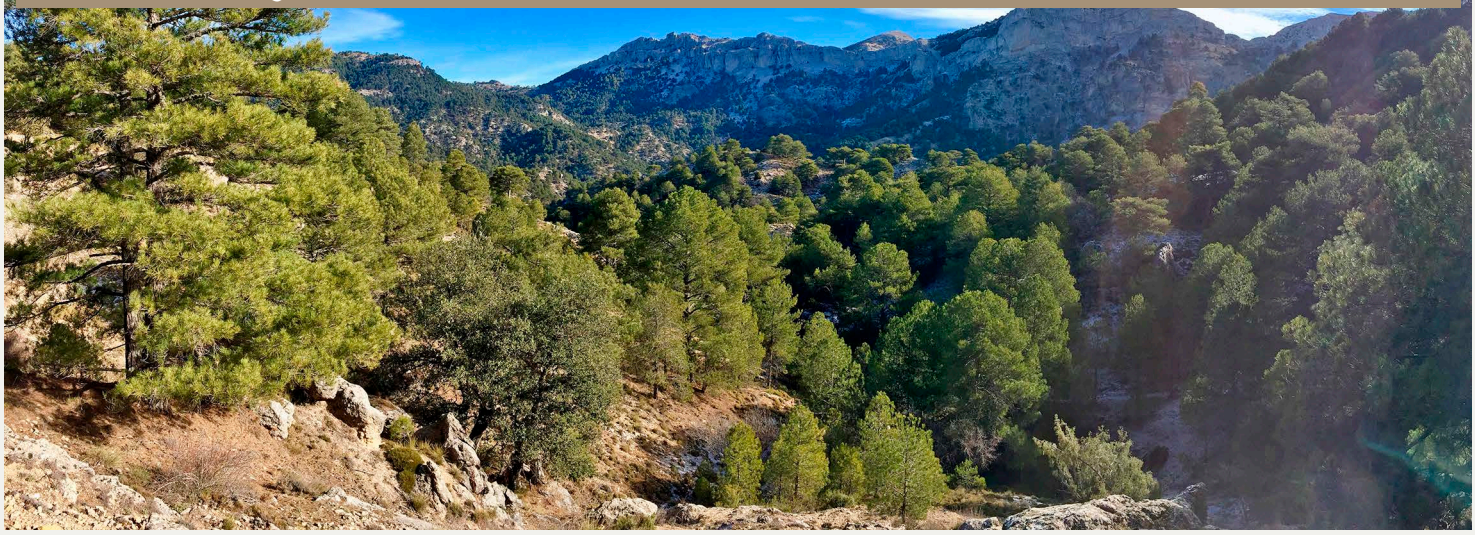
We continue driving to our charming hotel on the edge of the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, where our rooms overlook fantastic gardens, with a small onsite bird hide. Birds around the hotel include Azure-winged Magpie, Crested Tit and Short-toed Treecreeper. This afternoon, if time allows, we might make our first visit to one of the viewing areas in the hope of finding an Iberian Lynx.

2-7 Most of our days will be spent in the Sierra de Andujar, a contrasting region with some of the best representations of Mediterranean Forest still surviving in Europe. It forms part of the Sierra Morena Mountains and has a landscape of hills and mountains formed from granite, quartz and slate, which is bordered by the Jandula and Yeguas rivers. This Natural Park is home to the elusive and highly endangered Iberian Lynx, of which only 400 or so remain in the wild in Spain and Portugal.

We shall spend early mornings and late afternoons searching for this secretive animal from strategic points around the Park, with lots more to attract



"This week in Andalucia might be targeting Iberian Lynx, but that is just one part of a potentially fantastic week of some truly wonderful wildlife. We'll also enjoy spending time searching for other mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies and even flowers, which are starting to emerge with spring around the corner. It is almost 20 years since I first visited and I still get a buzz of excitement planning our next return!" Julian Sykes



our attention. There are plenty of other mammals with herds of Red and Fallow Deer, the distinctive Mouflon, Wild Boar and bats at their roost.

We shall also hope to see Iberian Magpies, Short-toed Treecreepers, Firecrests, Nuthatches and Crested Tits amongst the scattered Holm and Cork Oaks, with Iberian Green Woodpeckers revealing themselves with their raucous call. We should find pairs of Little Owl on this beautiful granite landscape across the valleys and hills.

This Natural Park is also home to the magnificent Spanish Imperial Eagle and many other sought after birds of prey, including Golden Eagle, Black Vulture and Goshawk. The tranquil Rio Jandula is punctuated by a series of reservoirs, with their dramatic dam walls, which attract Blue Rock Thrush, Rock Bunting, Black Redstart, Crag Martin and Red-billed Chough. The river is home to Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail and Grey Heron, with always the possibility of Otters playing and fishing in this quiet spiritual location.

We also plan to have a couple of days away from Lynx-watching with a focus on a completely different target species – the magnificent Lammergeier, plus steppe species. To the east is the wonderful Sierra de Cazorla, with its extensive coniferous forest and limestone massifs. Lammergeier can found drifting along these incredible mountain ridges, along with the much commoner Griffon Vulture. This place is home to a good population of Spanish Ibex, Red Squirrel and Red Fox, all of which can be difficult in Andujar.

To the north of the Reserve is the region of Castilla La Mancha and its extensive and productive agricultural lands. This area is home to steppe species such as bustards, sandgrouse, larks and raptors - we shall enjoy a day driving these tracks hoping to find these unique birds.

8 After breakfast we'll sadly load the minibus and make our way back towards Malaga, possibly visiting a lagoon enroute for White-headed Duck and Black-necked Grebe.

Eventually we shall reach the Malaga coastline. With sufficient time, we should see Mediterranean and Western Yellow-legged Gull, Gannet and possibly Common Scoter offshore, with possibly Booted Eagle over a nearby Nature Reserve. We head to the airport and our flight home.

Outline Itinerary

Day 1	Fly from Gatwick to Malaga and transfer to our base on the edge of the Sierra de Andujar Natural Park, stopping enroute at Laguna de Fuente de Piedra 7 nights at La Caracola Hotel Rural
Days 2-7	Birdwatching and wildlife exploration, mostly in the Sierra de Andujar, with days out in the Sierra de Cazorla for Lammergeier and Castilla La Mancha for steppe species
Day 8	Transfer to Malaga for our flight back to the UK, with maybe time at the Rio Guadalhorce rivermouth

Julian Sykes: Lynx, Sierra de Cazorla, Firecrest
Stephen Kourik: Azure-winged Magpie
Robin Martin: Great Spotted Cuckoo, Iberian Ibex
Stephen Batt: Lammergeier