

# CATALUNYA



*"Catalunya is quite simply staggering for birds. We reached 199 species on our last tour, but there is so much more. Beautiful alpine flowers, butterflies galore and scenery that is spectacular."*  
Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 7 - Sat 14 May 2022  
Price £2,195  
Deposit £430 Single Supp £250

Leaders Julian Sykes and Ricard Gutiérrez  
Flights EasyJet, scheduled, Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included  
Outbound: Morning, Gatwick-Barcelona  
Inbound: Afternoon, Barcelona-Gatwick  
Weather It will be warm on the steppes and in the Ebro but we could encounter snow in the mountains, 0°-30°C  
Walking Walks will be on good tracks and paths, with some steeper sections in the mountains  
Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8  
Insects Mosquitoes can be encountered in the Ebro Delta, especially in the evening, so bring repellent  
Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite  
Group 12

## Just some of what we hope to see:

|                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Little Bittern        | Iberian Green Woodpecker  |
| Purple Heron          | Red-necked Nightjar       |
| Squacco Heron         | Alpine Swift              |
| Lammergeier           | European Roller           |
| Black Vulture         | Black Woodpecker          |
| Egyptian Vulture      | Thekla Lark               |
| Short-toed Eagle      | Lesser Short-toed Lark    |
| Lesser Kestrel        | Red-rumped Swallow        |
| Purple Swampphen      | Black Wheatear            |
| Little Bustard        | Black-eared Wheatear      |
| Black-winged Stilt    | Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush |
| Collared Pratincole   | Western Orphean Warbler   |
| Audouin's Gull        | Bearded Tit               |
| Whiskered Tern        | Citril Finch              |
| Pin-tailed Sandgrouse | "Witherby's" Reed Bunting |

Catalunya is the richest region in Spain for birds. We take in the very best that this region has to offer, from the Pyrenees to the sea, in the company of Catalunya's leading ornithologist.

- The Pyrenees for Citril Finch, Lammergeier, Rock Thrush and spectacular scenery
- Steppes for six species of lark, Little Bustard and Stone Curlew
- The Ebro Delta for a mesmerising array of terns, ducks, herons, pratincoles and more
- Roller, Black Wheatear, Western Orphean Warbler and Eagle Owl
- Exclusive visit to a private vulture feeding site with all four species likely
- Fantastic Catalan hospitality and a trip to a pre-historic cave dwelling
- The expertise of Ricard Gutiérrez, creator of [www.rarebirdspain.net](http://www.rarebirdspain.net)

We fly to Barcelona where we meet Ricard Gutiérrez, before journeying to the Pyrenees. Our base will be in the charming village of Llavorsí, surrounded by forest-clad mountains and straddling the beautiful river La Noguera Pallaresa. If time permits we shall explore the village for Crag Martin and Dipper.

**2-3** This beautiful corner of the Pyrenees resembles the Swiss Alps and Llavorsí is perfectly located to explore the variety of habitats. We shall look for raptors here, with Lammergeier, Golden and Short-toed Eagles, Griffon Vulture and maybe Northern Goshawk. Honey Buzzards pass through, but also breed here.

Pine forests hold Black Woodpecker, Firecrest and Crested Tit, with Short-toed and Eurasian Treecreepers and this part of Catalunya has the



largest population of Tengmalm's Owl in Spain. Alpine meadows and rocky slopes are home to both Red-billed and Alpine Chough, Water Pipit, Citril Finch and Rock Bunting. The sunnier slopes hold Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Ring Ouzel and Red-backed Shrike. Broad-leafed woodlands hold Hawfinch and Bonnell's Warblers. Raptors overhead may include Egyptian Vulture, as we explore some of the more Mediterranean habitats for Rock Sparrow, Subalpine Warbler and Ortolan Bunting.

We shall visit a private vulture feeding station where hundreds of Griffon Vultures, along with Black and Egyptian Vultures and Lammergeier will astonish us.

**4** Leaving the mountains we head south. We shall stop to look for raptors, Blue Rock Thrush and Alpine Swift at Collegats Gorge. The





"Hundreds of Griffon Vultures in the air with Lammergeiers and Black and Egyptian Vultures, is a sight that will never be forgotten. How about a soundscape of larks over the Lleida steppe, or the huge wealth of life in the Ebro Delta? I simply can't wait to return!" Julian Sykes

Pre-pyrenees mountains are dramatic and here we may find Woodlark, Cirl and Ortolan Buntings and Subalpine, Western Orphea and Dartford Warblers. This a great area for raptors, with Peregrine, Golden Eagle, Red Kite, Griffon Vulture and Lammergeier regularly seen.

Our destination is a rural village in the Garrigues county, set in between the oliveyards of the plains and the hilly mountains, home of Spotless Starlings, Short-toed Eagle, Cirl Buntings or Sardinian Warblers.

**5-6** The steppes south and east of Lleida are the best areas in Catalunya for sought-after species such as Little Bustard and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse. Six species of lark are possible, with Montagu's Harrier and Stone Curlew, but the whole area is bird-rich with White Stork, Lesser Kestrel, Roller and Red-necked Nightjar. The last remaining Lesser Grey Shrikes in Spain breed here, but we shall need luck to find them.

The wetlands and lagoons of Utxesa and Ivars hold species such as Purple Heron, Little Bittern, Marsh Harrier, Water Rail, Great Reed Warbler, Bearded Tit and the odd Moustached Warbler. We shall look for the endemic sub-species of Reed Bunting - Witherby's Reed Bunting. At Ivars Lagoon, terns, herons, waders and species such as Penduline Tit and Melodious Warbler will keep us busy. The nearby cave of El Cogul with remarkable cave paintings, is likely to be a highlight, with Black Wheatear, Bee-eater, Blue Rock Thrush, Red-rumped Swallow and Tawny Pipit nearby.



We journey to the Ebro Delta on Day 6 where, if time allows, we shall visit a busy heronry.

**7** The Ebro Delta is a birding paradise and internationally important. We shall make the most of our time here, looking for species such as Night Heron, Little Bittern, Glossy Ibis, Greater Flamingo and Squacco Heron. The delta holds one of the world's largest colonies of Audouin's Gull, as well as Yellow-legged and Slender-billed Gulls and terns including Gull-billed, Little, Common, Sandwich and the odd over-summering non-breeding Caspian.

Collared Pratincole breed and Great Reed, Reed and Savi's Warblers will serenade us from the reeds. Waders include local breeders such as Avocet, Black-winged Stilt and Kentish Plover and we may see the last northbound migrants, that could include Little Stint, plovers or shanks, but this is the time of year when anything could turn up and if it does, then we shall be perfectly placed to go for it!

**8** We travel to Barcelona to catch our return flight to the UK, birding at Llobregat Delta if time allows.



### Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3 Fly to Barcelona, then a 3 hour transfer to Llavorsí. Birdwatching in the Pyrenees, taking in both National and Natural Parks of mountain, forest, lakes and meadows 3 nights Hotel Riberies
- Days 4-5 Transfer to Lleida. Birdwatching enroute in pre-Pyrenees mountains and gorges, plus steppe, grasslands and wetlands south of Lleida. Visit to cave with prehistoric paintings 2 nights La Garbinada Hotel
- Days 6-7 Birdwatching grasslands and wetlands to east of Lleida. Transfer to Ebro Delta for birdwatching to the north and south of the river 2 nights Delta Hotel
- Day 8 Birdwatching at Llobregat Delta if time allows. Transfer to Barcelona for flight to Gatwick

**Steve Batt:** Lammergeier, Red-necked Nightjar, Hoopoe, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Griffon Vulture, Black-winged Stilt