



# SOUTHERN SPAIN IN WINTER

Birds, Culture & the Iberian Lynx

*January 16-28, 2027*



*Iberian Lynx © Wild Doñana*

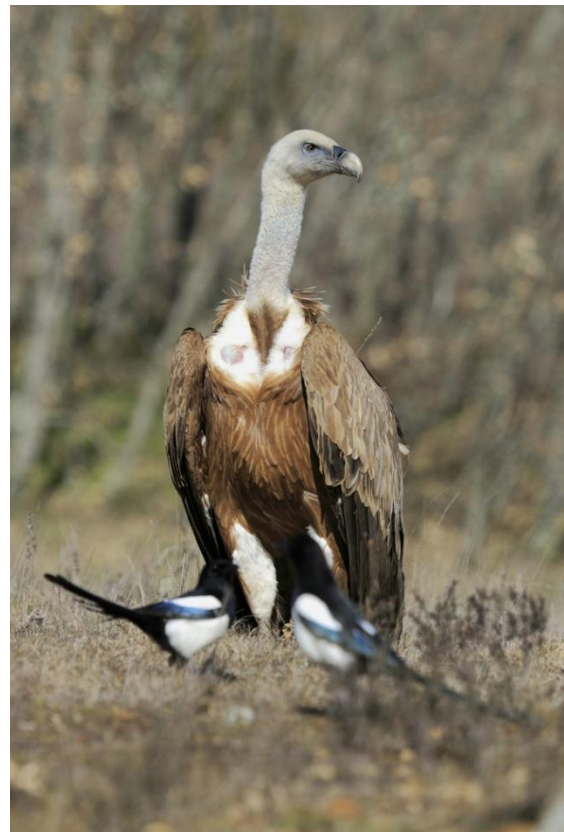
The Iberian Peninsula, separated from the rest of Europe by mountains and sea, is virtually a continent unto itself, with a range of natural and cultural features to match. Our new tour combines outstanding birding with an exploration of equally famous cultural and historical sites in beautiful southern Spain. Headquarters for the first days of our time together is glorious Seville, bastion of Mudéjar art and culture and birthplace of the Renaissance Age of Discovery; here we will visit the largest Gothic cathedral in the world and the fantastically ornate Alcázar, a royal palace built—figuratively and literally—on the foundations of an older Islamic structure. And Seville remains just as vibrant today as it was half a millennium ago, as an exciting evening performance of authentic Andalusian flamenco will prove.

We end our tour with another cultural highlight, a day in Gibraltar with its bustling shopping streets, ancient limestone caverns, and comical primates—the Barbary Macaque. The cession of the Rock to the British in the early eighteenth century would assume an unexpected significance

a hundred years later, when Gibraltar became a vital base in the Peninsular War, which eventually drove Napoleonic France out of Spain. Today, in spite of almost continual Spanish efforts to re-annex the area, Gibraltar is still a British Overseas Territory, the only part of the United Kingdom with a direct line of sight to Africa.

A notable feature of any trip to southern Spain is the food, from marinated sand shark (cazón en adobo) and spicy stewed carrots (zanahorias aliñadas) to puchero, Seville's hearty wintertime specialty of chicken, vegetables, chickpeas, and noodles. Most famous of all is jamón ibérico, the famous pork delicacy produced by fattening young pigs on acorns, chestnuts, and other rich fruits of the land. We will learn more about this traditional delight in the course of our first birding excursion, when we enjoy a wonderful jamón lunch at one of Andalusia's many ham cellars—accompanied, of course, by good Spanish wines.

Tearing ourselves away, reluctantly, from the culinary and the cultural, we will spend much of our time together at some of the best birding sites in Europe, chief among them Doñana National Park. With the vigorous encouragement of birding conservationists from all over the world, including Roger Tory Peterson, Guy Mountfort, and Prince Bernard of The Netherlands, these magnificent marshlands were declared a national park in 1969 to protect the Guadalquivir River ecosystem; twenty years later, the Spanish government created Doñana National Park as a further buffer against agricultural development. One of our visits to Doñana will be accompanied by park staff, giving us access to areas otherwise off limits to the public, where we will enjoy another fine meal in a uniquely wild setting.



*Eurasian Griffon © Wild Doñana*

Doñana and the other sites we bird will produce a list comprising virtually all of the Iberian specialties, including such rarities as Marbled and White-headed ducks, Spanish and Bonelli's

eagles, and Black-bellied and Pin-tailed sandgrouse. Our local contacts should also be able to point us to a wintering flock of Northern Bald Ibis, one of the most gravely imperiled birds in the world, which now, thanks to a successful reintroduction effort, holds tenuously to existence in two Spanish breeding colonies totaling almost two hundred pairs. Thekla's and both Short-toed larks, Black-winged Kites, and the full suite of European vultures (Cinereous, Egyptian, and Eurasian Griffon) are also among the good possibilities on our outings to this region's impressive range of wild habitats.

Exciting as all those birds are, we have yet another objective on our days afield. The Iberian Lynx is a rare and shy nocturnal hunter, probably the rarest wild cat in the world. Careful conservation practices, though, have helped Spain's population rise from a mere hundred or so to nearly 2,000 individuals. And winter is the mating season for this incredibly charismatic mammal: the two circumstances combine to give us a good chance at actually seeing this almost mythical creature in the daylight.

We hope that you will join us to explore this wonderful corner of the Iberian Peninsula, where nature and culture intersect to give visitors unparalleled insight into a rich and ancient landscape.

## January 16, Day 1: Departure for Seville

Flights departing the United States today for Spain will arrive in Seville (airport code SVQ) tomorrow, January 18, with a connection in Madrid or another large European airport hub.

**NIGHT:** Aboard international flight to Spain

## January 17, Day 2: Arrival in Seville; tour welcome and orientation

Flights from the United States departing January 17, will arrive in Spain today; your connecting flight from Madrid or another European hub should have you in Seville (airport code SVQ) late this morning or in the afternoon.

On arriving in Seville, you will be met outside the baggage claim by a representative of our ground agent for the 25-minute transfer to our luxurious five-star hotel in the center of the Old City. Seville's **Casa Palacio Don Ramón** offers an experience of elegance fully in keeping with the rest of our tour. Just steps away from the Andalusian capital's famous cultural and historical sites, our hotel itself is one of the city's most celebrated structures, a fifteenth-century palace exquisitely redesigned to today's tastes and standards using the finest of local materials—and employing sustainable technologies from high-efficiency silent air conditioning to radiant stone flooring. The stunning design of the 26 rooms is the work of the famed studio of Alejandra Pombo, and the public spaces are decorated with distinguished works of art from the private collection of this exclusive hotel's owner.

After checking in, you will have time to rest or to undertake some preliminary exploration on your own before we gather as a group at 6:00 pm for a trip introduction and welcome, followed by our first dinner together.

**NIGHT:** Casa Palacio Don Ramón

## January 18, Day 3: The Sierra de Aracena and Iberico ham

The Spanish *dehesa* is a fascinating anthropogenic ecosystem combining ancient Mediterranean habitats with carefully managed agricultural features, a mix of grazing land, olive groves, chestnut orchards, and scattered oaks, including the famous cork oak, *Quercus suber*. We will spend the day exploring the gentle slate hills of Sierra de Aracena Natural Park, an hour northwest of Seville, where we will witness the unique intersection of nature and culture in this beautiful and unusual landscape.

This habitat mosaic, maintained in this corner of Andalusia for centuries, provides ideal conditions for a wide range of wildlife, including some of Europe's rarest birds of prey. More than 95% of Europe's 2700 pairs of breeding Cinereous Vultures are found in Spain, and the *dehesa* of the Sierra de Aracena is home to the greatest concentration of these enormous birds, which thanks

to a special type of hemoglobin regularly soar as high as a third of a mile above the earth in their search for carrion and the occasional live prey item.

In winter, Andalusia's resident Cinereous Vultures are joined by amazing numbers of two other important scavengers, the Eurasian Griffon and the Red Kite, imposing birds themselves but still dwarfed by the Cinereous, which can stand nearly four feet tall with a wingspan of almost ten feet. Even the Golden and Spanish Eagles—we will be scanning the skies for both of these local specialties—can seem puny in comparison.



*Red Kite © Andrew Whittaker*

Not all the birds of the *dehesa* are masters of the open skies. In open country and on rocky slopes, we will also be looking for such colorful ground-dwellers as the bizarrely crested Eurasian Hoopoe, Blue Rock- Thrush, and European Stonechat. In the trees, we will keep an ear and an eye out for Eurasian Bullfinches, Eurasian Nuthatch, and Green, Great Spotted, and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers. The very locally distributed and poignantly named Thekla's Lark, which may nest as early as February, is likely to be singing and conspicuous at this season.

Our birding route here will take us to an excellent local restaurant, featuring local wines and, of course, the Iberico ham, a delicacy of worldwide renown produced only in parts of Spain and Portugal. As soon as they are weaned, Black Iberian piglets are briefly fattened on grain, then turned loose on the *dehesa* to gorge themselves on acorns, chestnuts, and grasses and tubers. The hams are salt-cured for a period of one to four years, then served in delectable thin slices. As a regional specialty, the finest Iberico hams are labeled with a DOP, or Protected Denomination of Origin: the Jabugo DOP is reserved for hams cured in towns within the Sierra de Aracena

Natural Park. A visit to one of villages' ham "cellars" will be a chance to learn more about the process of making Iberico ham and, naturally, to sample the area's best products.

**NIGHT:** Casa Palacio Don Ramón



*Sierra de Aracena National Park © Wild Doñana*

## January 19, Day 4: The Steppes of Extremadura

The Campiña Sur lies in extreme southern Extremadura, close to the border of that Autonomous Community with Andalusia. The agricultural fields and *dehesa* that characterize this gentle countryside are famous as one of the most important habitats in Europe for landbirds and raptors typical of steppe grasslands; in winter, those sought-after specialties are joined by significant numbers of Common Cranes, totaling between 15,000 and 20,000 birds in most years, a quarter of all those wintering in western Spain.

These famous steppes, some of the best and most accessible in western Europe, are home to both Great and Little Bustards. Great Bustards, especially males, move into *dehesa* and olive groves in the winter, often making these gigantic birds easier to observe at close quarters. Little Bustards are more

mobile, and some of the birds wintering here in Extremadura have migrated from as far away as central and western France. These vast open expanses are also where we will look for Eurasian Hoopoes, Eurasian Thick-knees, and Black-bellied Sandgrouse, a gregarious pigeon relative famous later in the season for the males' behavior of transporting water in their belly feathers to nestlings. Overhead, Cinereous Vultures, Eurasian Griffons, Red Kites, and Golden, Bonelli's, and Spanish eagles are on the lookout for an easy meal.

The Campiña is watered by the Matachel River, a principal tributary of the Guadiana, which over part of its nearly 500-mile course, forms the border between Spain and Portugal. The rocky hillsides above the river are covered with dense Mediterranean woodland, providing shelter for Sardinian and Dartford Warblers and Blue Rock Thrushes.

**NIGHT:** Casa Palacio Don Ramón



*Great Bustards © Pedro Marques*

## January 20, Day 5: Seville and Flamenco

Set on the banks of the serene Guadalquivir River, Seville, capital of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. At its heart is the Barrio de Santa Cruz, the old Jewish quarter, a colorful tangle of narrow alleyways, fountain-filled plazas, and

historic buildings. The fourteenth-century Puerta del León, part of the original wall that surrounded the Barrio, leads to the royal palace of Seville, the famous Alcázar. Once the site of an Islamic citadel, the Alcázar owes much of its present architectural appearance to updates and new construction carried out in the mid-1360s by Pedro I, called Pedro the Cruel, king of Castile and León. Pedro employed architects and artisans from Islamic Granada for his palace, which is decorated in an elaborate and fantastic Mudéjar style, characterized by highly ornamental geometric elements directly borrowed from Islamic art. Among the signal features of this style are “horseshoe” arches, arabesque plasterwork, and the liberal use of colorful tile. The Alcázar is universally considered the greatest surviving specimen of Mudéjar art and architecture.

Like the Alcázar, Seville’s Cathedral of St. Mary of the See is a registered UNESCO World Heritage site. With a transept rising to 130 feet, a central nave of 400 feet, and no fewer than 15 portals and 80 chapels, this is the largest Gothic cathedral and the third largest Christian church in the world. Most of the structure dates to the fifteenth century, though a few elements of an earlier mosque on the site are preserved, chief among them the twelfth-century Giralda, built originally as a minaret and transformed into a campanile after the fall of Islamic Andalusia. The church’s furniture includes an enormous altarpiece completed in the sixteenth century after the design of the noted Flemish sculptor Pieter Dancart. Here, too, is the tomb holding the bones of Christopher Columbus, who reported to Queen Isabella on his first voyage next door, in the Admiral’s Hall of the Alcázar.

The passion and spirit displayed by the great architectural monuments of old Seville are just as vividly reflected in a more modern art, flamenco. Dating to the later part of the eighteenth century, flamenco—formally designated by UNESCO in 2010 a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage—is the most popular of Andalusian artistic genres, known today all over the world. Originally performed in domestic settings, by the end of the nineteenth century flamenco had become a public genre, enjoyed in theaters and bars whose modest stages ultimately developed into the more elaborate *tablaos*, or flamenco dancefloors, where performances are held today. We will attend a live performance of this most Andalusian of performing arts.

**NIGHT:** Casa Palacio Don Ramón



*Flamenco in Seville © Shutterstock*

## January 21, Day 6: Brazo del Este and quest for the Iberian Lynx

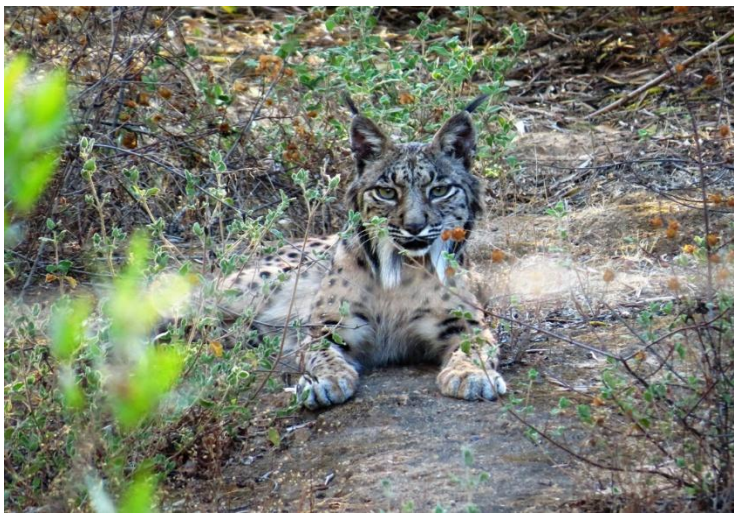
We will leave our Seville hotel today to establish a new base in Doñana National Park.

Ten miles south of Seville, the Guadalquivir River splits into a 25-mile series of meandering channels, one of which flows through an important wetland complex now protected as Brazo del Este Natural Park. This preserve is a precious oasis in a landscape significantly modified by agricultural activities, and it has proved to be of particular importance to aquatic birds. Declared a Special Bird Protection Area by the European Union, this marsh complex provides lifesaving shelter to breeding and wintering birds suffering from falling water levels at nearby Doñana.

Nearly 250 bird species have been recorded here. We will be looking for residents and winter visitors including Red-knobbed Coot, Western Swamphen, Black-tailed Godwit, Mediterranean

Short-toed and Calandra Larks, and Eurasian Penduline Tit. During this season, Brazo del Este is especially well known for waterfowl, including such relatively uncommon species as Garganey and Red-crested Pochard, and the rare Marbled, Ferruginous, and White-headed ducks. The rice paddies of nearby Dehesa de Abajo can be equally good for finding scarce waterfowl.

After lunch, we will explore the Mediterranean forest as we search for its most sought-after resident, the Iberian Lynx. From a historic low of just 100, this beautiful wildcat has recovered to a population of some 2000 individuals—but it is still the most endangered felid on Earth. The second-highest number of lynx is usually found here in Doñana, and as this is the season when mating begins, they are more active and slightly easier to see than at other times of year. Sightings of large predators like this can never be guaranteed, of course, but even if we do not encounter one of these big-footed, tassel-eared cats, the search will be exciting and enjoyable.



*Iberian Lynx © Wild Doñana*

Our new accommodation is in El Rocio, a historic enclave in famous Doñana National Park. Matching its picturesque setting, **La Malvasía Hotel** mixes modern elegance with rustic charm. Owned by the same sophisticated hotelière as our Seville lodgings, the exquisite interiors here also feature imaginative design by Alejandra Pomba, and the rooms and public spaces join comfort with advanced technologies for environmental sustainability. Best of all, La Malvasía offers the most immediate access to Doñana possible, a circumstance we will take full advantage of as we explore the habitats and wildlife of this famous European birding paradise.

**NIGHT:** Hotel La Malvasía, El Rocio

## January 22, Day 7: The Western Doñana

Doñana covers a vast area, and to fully enjoy its fantastically varied birdlife requires visits to several different localities. In the northwestern portion of the national park, we will bird along the Rocina River, which empties into the Madre de las Marismas—the Mother of the Marshes—at El Rocio. When water conditions are right, this large shallow lagoon can be spectacularly rich in birdlife, including many of Doñana’s common and rare wintering waterfowl, herons and egrets, Red-knobbed Coots, Black-tailed Godwits, and Greater Flamingos. Raptors, too, recognize this as a productive site, and we will be looking for Black and Red Kites, Booted and Spanish Eagles, and Hen and Western Marsh Harriers as they prospect for a meal.

There are several visitor centers nearby, each with good paths and blinds where we can hope to see these and other species at close range. Here, too, bird concentrations and viewing opportunities will depend on water levels, which can be very low if the autumn rains were disappointing.



*Madre de las Marismas in Winter © Wild Donana*

The variety of landscapes in Doñana is astonishing. We will visit the scrubland and ancient dunes of Asperillo, some of them almost 200 feet high, in search of Dartford and Sardinian warblers. A real winter specialty here is the Ring Ouzel, a handsomely marked black and white thrush that breeds at scattered high elevations and coastlands in northern Europe and Asia before moving south to winter in more congenial climes. The cliffs above the dunes have a distinctive orange or ochre tone, the result of iron-rich waters flowing through gullies and rills in the sandstone.

Between Matalascañas and the mouth of the Guadalquivir River, unspoiled white-sand beaches stretch for more than 15 miles.

**NIGHT:** Hotel La Malvasía, El Rocio

## January 23, Day 8: The Northern Doñana

Our Doñana adventure continues today, with fantastic opportunities to see and to photograph some of the area's loveliest landscapes and most charismatic wildlife. We will be met at our hotel by one of the park's official four-wheel-drive vehicles, which will take us on a four-hour excursion into a restricted area preserving two of Doñana's most important ecosystems, forests and marshlands.

In the pine and cork oak woodlands, our main objective will once again be the Iberian Lynx, while secluded wetlands are home to a tremendous variety of birds. We may even be so fortunate as to meet up with a Short-eared Owl or one of the breeding pairs of the rare Spanish Eagle. Among the other very special residents here are Black-winged Kites, Eurasian Spoonbills, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Lesser Short-toed Larks, and Spanish Sparrows. We will also be looking for such rare wading birds as the Great Bittern and the Black Stork.



*Spanish Eagle © Wild Doñana*

Lunch today, featuring the finest of local delicacies, will be served in Doñana Natural Park, which was created in 1989 to afford further protection to the area's sensitive habitats and wildlife.

**NIGHT:** Hotel La Malvasía, El Rocio

## January 24, Day 9: Sanlúcar de Barrameda

As we travel south of Seville, we will check the salt marshes between Trebujena and Sanlúcar for Glossy Ibis, or Calandra Larks. We also have a chance at the rare Marbled Duck, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, and Osprey. Road conditions permitting, we will follow a riverside route to look for Black Storks and Greater and Mediterranean Short-toed Larks. The alternative takes us through

the pine woodland of Algaida, where Black Kites and Booted Eagles may be present; a nearby reservoir often produces White-headed and Ferruginous Ducks.

Once in Sanlúcar, we will visit the salt pans of Bonanza, which attract an impressive variety of shorebirds and gulls, along with Greater Flamingos. At the marina of Chipiona, we should meet up with one of the newest additions to Spain's breeding avifauna, the Little Swift, which has colonized a few sites in Cadiz after expanding from northern Africa with the warming climate.



*Ferruginous Duck © Ecotours Wildlife Holidays*

Our final planned stop is the beach of Montijo. The tide should be right for good numbers of shorebirds and terns—perhaps even including a Lesser Crested or an Elegant tern. Among the gulls to watch out for here are two of the world's most beautiful species, the Slender-billed and the Audouin's.

We will wind up the day at our hotel in Tarifa, a small city named for its eighth-century Islamic conqueror. Quiet and relaxing, Tarifa's **Mesón de Sancho**, our base for the next three days, is set among beautiful gardens, with a lovely pool, a bar, and an excellent restaurant.

**NIGHT:** Mesón de Sancho, Tarifa

## January 25, Day 10: La Janda wetlands

Southwestern Cádiz is characterized by a wide range of ecosystems, among them marine habitats, salt marsh, pine woodland, and, above all, sheer cliffs, some of them rising more than 300 feet from the sea. Among the birds breeding on these rugged structures are Little and Western Cattle egrets, Yellow-legged Gulls, Peregrine Falcons, and Eurasian Jackdaws. Recently, the cliffs have welcomed, or welcomed back, one of the rarest birds of the Western Palearctic, the Northern Bald Ibis.

After an absence of some five hundred years, the ibis returned to Spain as the result of a reintroduction project involving some 30 birds, which were released on a military installation in La Janda. Breeding took place for the first time in 2008, and today, there are nearly 200 Northern Bald Ibis at two Cádiz sites: the coastal cliffs and an escarpment five miles inland at La Barca de Vejer. We have a good chance today at seeing these birds, especially as they tend to feed predictably in the same areas each winter.

Just northwest of the Strait of Gibraltar, La Janda was once one of the most extensive freshwater wetlands in the whole of the Iberian Peninsula. The *laguna* was drained in the 1960s and the land converted to agricultural use, a tremendous loss to the wildlife of Cádiz. Today, though, the varied landscape is once again favored by birds, especially in winter and migration. Pastures, olive groves, dryland crops, rice paddies, and thickly vegetated ditches and canals attract waterfowl, shorebirds, and gulls, especially during winter floods, when the visiting birder can get a glimpse of what the area must have looked like before the drainage projects of the mid-twentieth century. Shallow waters provide feeding areas for Eurasian Spoonbills, Western Swampheens, Black-tailed Godwits, and Black Storks, while Common Cranes winter in good numbers on the drier fields, which are hunted over by Black-winged Kites, Hen Harriers, and Short-eared Owls. With its location at the southern tip of Europe, just across the narrow water from Africa, La Janda, even in its reduced state, remains a vital resting and refueling site for birds crossing the Strait of Gibraltar.

**NIGHT:** Mesón de Sancho, Tarifa



*Common Cranes at La Janda © Wild Doñana*

## January 26, Day 11: The Strait of Gibraltar

The Strait of Gibraltar, the narrow channel connecting the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, separates Europe from Africa; at the narrowest point, the two continents are a scant nine miles apart, making this a perfect point of crossing for the millions of migratory birds that fly each year between their European breeding grounds and African winter range. One of the most famous points in the world for observing visible migration, known to birders somewhat preciously as Vismig, Gibraltar is a can't-miss site for anyone interested in that still mysterious phenomenon.



*El Estrecho National Park © Wild Doñana*

El Estrecho Natural Park, the southernmost wildlife refuge in Spain, and thus in Europe, safeguards more than 72 square miles of terrestrial and marine habitats between the towns of Algeciras and Tarifa. The mix of agricultural fields, mountains, beaches, cliffs, and lagoons makes the area as appealing to birders as it is to birds. We will make our way through the park from east to west, with Africa just off our left shoulder as we visit such exceptional localities as the marshes of the Palmones River, the watchpoints at Punta Camorro and Cazalla, Los Lances Beach, the Sierra de la Plata, and Puerto de Facinas.

**NIGHT:** Mesón de Sancho, Tarifa

## January 27, Day 12: The Rock and the town of Gibraltar

The treaty that ended the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713 ceded the two and a half square miles of Gibraltar to Britain, and it has remained a British Overseas Territory since; Spanish efforts at reabsorbing the tiny patch of land notwithstanding. Our visit today will take in the Rock's complicated and multicultural history, its impressive caves, and, inevitably, its notorious Barbary Macaques, introduced from Morocco sometime before 1492 and now zealously protected by

sentiment and superstition: it is said that Great Britain will control Gibraltar for as long as these importunate blond primates survive there.

Once we have crossed from Spain and the EU into the Overseas Territory, we will start our visit at Punta de Europa, the southernmost spot in Europe, within sight of the Moroccan coastline. A six-minute cable car ride takes us to the top of the Rock of Gibraltar, where the views from nearly 1300 feet above sea level are nothing short of spectacular.

Over the ages, the Rock's limestone has been slowly dissolved by contact with rainwater, creating large caverns connected by long passages. St. Michael's Cave is one of the largest of the 150 known such systems; the room known as the Auditorium can seat an audience of more than 100 people for

concerts and other events. The portions of the cave accessible to the public are fully illuminated,



*Gibraltar © Sokolovsky/Shutterstock*

letting us admire the otherworldly stalactites, stalagmites, “curtains,” and other features created by centuries of seepage and deposition. Tourism here has a long tradition, as evidenced by pottery and wall paintings found in the cave and dating back as far as 20,000 years ago.

The monkeys of Gibraltar are Barbary Macaques, the only wild-living apes found anywhere in Europe. They are believed to have been introduced to Spain during the Islamic period, most likely as pets, and today are under the care of the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society, which feeds and monitors the animals; each of the 300 or so macaques is tattooed and microchipped, and they are regularly captured for medical examinations and fertility regulation. The monkeys are entirely used to human admiration, and sometimes take advantage of that familiarity to beg for food or even to climb onto visitors' laps, two behaviors that should be discouraged.

Unlike the macaques, you have lunch today on your own, followed by time to explore the bustling pedestrian streets of the town of Gibraltar. There are plenty of cafes and bars to offer respite to visitors overcome by the frenzy of shoppers in search of low prices on jewelry, watches, electronics, alcohol, cosmetics, and perfumes. As time allows, travelers may gather for one final birding opportunity at the mouth of the Guadalhorce River, a protected site where Marbled and White-headed Ducks are among the more than 360 species observed over the years.

We will leave Gibraltar to head to Spain's Costa del Sol, where we will spend the final night of our tour in a four-star beachfront hotel near Málaga Airport (airport code AGP).

**NIGHT:** Parador de Málaga Golf, Málaga

## January 28, Day 13: Departures

Our ground operator will provide transfers from our hotel to Málaga Airport this morning.

### **Essential Tour Information**

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour is limited to 10 tour participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one in order to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

**TOUR LEADER(s):** This tour is led by **Raymond VanBuskirk** and **Manu Mojarro**.



**Raymond L. VanBuskirk** is an expert birder who has been guiding tours for over a decade. Raymond has led tours throughout the Western Hemisphere from Alaska to Chile and most parts in between. He has guided in almost every country in Central America, across the Caribbean, and down both sides of the Andes in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. Raymond’s experience is not limited to the New World—he has traveled widely across the globe, has spent a great deal of time in the Pacific studying pelagics, and has led

tours in Asia and Africa.

Raymond has had a longtime commitment to ornithology. In addition to guiding, he has conducted research with USFWS in the Arctic Ocean, North Pacific, and New Mexico. He has held leadership roles in the Central New Mexico Bird Alliance and Western Field Ornithologists. Raymond also helped guide the next generation of birders by being a regular instructor at the ABA’s youth birding camps and at the Hog Island Audubon camps in Hog Island, Maine.

Raymond is also committed to including everyone in birding, and organizes and leads annual conferences for QBNA, an informal club for LGBTQIA+ birders. When not leading tours or conducting research, Raymond can be found at his home in St. Louis, Missouri with his partner, Marissa; stepdaughter Savannah; and their dog and two large snakes.



**Manu Mojarro** has been a wildlife enthusiast almost since birth. With years of experience as a group leader and heritage expert, he has organized professional birding and walking tours since 2004. His deep love for nature led him to establish Platalea, a tour company, and Brizna, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving local natural heritage. In 2012, Manu launched Wild Doñana, a project that marks his full-time commitment to guiding birders and hikers from around the world. Over the years, he has led thousands of nature lovers

from Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, the

Netherlands, and beyond. Widely recognized as an expert in the birdlife of the Iberian Peninsula, Manu brings unmatched insight into the region's avian biodiversity. He also volunteers regularly in local bird banding and tracking initiatives, contributing hands-on support to conservation efforts.

## **TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION**

**TOUR FEE:** The fee for **Southern Spain in Winter** tour is **\$11,375** per person in double occupancy or **\$12,523** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to dinner on Day 12, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Seville and return from Malaga, alcoholic beverages, gratuities for VENT tour leader(s), laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (**September 18, 2026**) prior to the tour departure date.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose a surcharge. If

a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges have been passed on to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**FUEL SURCHARGES:** Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TIPPING:** An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

## **CANCELLATION & REFUNDS**

### **CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:**

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.

- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

**CANCELLATION BY VENT:** If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “*Force Majeure*” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

**MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE/PROTECTION REQUIREMENT:** This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. **For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist** plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please refer to the TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION section for additional information.

**SUGGESTED OPTIONS:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

### **About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan**

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.\*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: [Ripcord Travel Insurance](#); or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

### **About Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan.**

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company's primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](https://www.Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

### **GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

**AIR TRAVEL:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.\* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

\*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

**BAGGAGE:** Please limit luggage to one medium-sized bag and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restriction.

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of [the Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

#### **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:**

**PASSPORTS:** United States citizens must travel with a passport valid for at least three months beyond your planned departure from Spain. Please visit <https://www.state.gov/travel/> for information on how to get or renew a passport. At present, no other documentation is required, but beginning in late 2026, US citizens traveling to countries in the European Union will have to obtain an ETIAS document; this document, essentially a visa waiver, will be available on line at etias.com. The cost is expected to be about nine dollars US, and the waiver will be valid for up to three years, depending on the validity of your passport.

United States citizens must travel with a passport valid for at least three months beyond your planned departure from Gibraltar.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport. Keep the photocopies in a safe place, so if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so please do not pack it in your checked luggage.

**VISAS:** Citizens of the United States and Canada do not need to obtain a tourist visa to enter Spain or Gibraltar. Non-U.S. and Canadian citizens should check with the respective consulate or embassy.

Citizens of countries other than the United States consult the embassies or consulates of Spain and of the United Kingdom in their home country for up-to-date instructions.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

**CLOTHING:** As this trip combines birding with an interpretive walking tour and one or two other culturally-oriented activities, you will want to pack a mix of clothing that prepares you for all occasions. The following items are recommended:

- **Pants:** Several pairs of pants are recommended. Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight, yet durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular.
- **Shirts:** Several long-sleeve shirts in addition to other comfortable styles suitable for warm weather.
- **Hat:** For protection from the sun is essential.
- **Smart-casual (optional):** The atmosphere for this tour is definitely casual, but some people prefer a slightly dressier attire for evenings. For women this includes casual dresses or skirt/slacks ensembles. For men this includes khakis/slacks and open-collared shirts. To be clear, the degree of dress is also in accordance with your personal preference.
- **Outerwear:** Mild to cool weather is expected on this trip, but a fleece and warm jacket or coat is strongly recommended in the event of a cold front or winter conditions.

- **Other cold weather gear:** Temperatures could drop into the 30s or low 40s in the evenings and early mornings—especially in the event of a cold front. For this reason, we recommend bringing gloves and a knit hat, particularly for the morning hours.

**FOOTWEAR:** A lightweight hiking boot or trail shoe is recommended for birding excursions. Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled from muddy conditions. For other situations, like walking tours and when around our hotels, you may prefer sandals and/or athletic shoes.

**EQUIPMENT:** Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Below is a list of items that will ensure you are well-prepared:

- **Backpack** – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all land excursions
- **Umbrella** – You should consider bringing a small collapsible umbrella in case we are outside in light rain.
- **Notebooks and pens**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Cameras, lenses, film, memory cards, and extra batteries**
- **Plug adapters** – See ELECTRICITY below
- **Collapsible walking stick** – A highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking.
- **Tissue packs**

**Binoculars:** We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. We strongly recommend you avoid mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

**Spotting Scopes:** Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

## **DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS**

**CLIMATE & WEATHER:** Winter in the areas visited on this tour is relatively mild, with low temperatures typically around 40° F and afternoon highs reaching 60°. It is often a bit warmer in Cádiz and a bit cooler in Seville, though a breeze can make it feel chillier anywhere. Rain is possible at any time, with the daily average chance of precipitation just shy of 20%.

**CONDITIONS:** We will be staying in excellent, modern accommodations, and our meals will range from very good to memorable. Sunrise at this time of year is around 8:30 am, sunset around 6:45 pm, making for relatively relaxed daily schedules. Meals in Spain are taken later than you may be used to, with breakfast starting around 8:00, the midday meal around 2:00, and dinner around 8:00.

Spain is a very large country, but our in-depth exploration of this small corner of the Iberian Peninsula requires no particularly long drives. Birders never go “straight through,” of course, but in terms of absolute distance, it is one hour from Seville to El Rocio, two hours from El Rocio to Cádiz, one and a half hours from Cádiz to Tarifa, and one hour from Tarifa to Gibraltar. Virtually all of our drives will be broken with birding stops and coffee and restroom breaks. The physical demands on this tour are light.

**FOOD & WATER:** Food and water quality is very high in Spain. The water is safe to drink at all restaurants. Many people prefer bottled water, which always be available in our vehicles and at hotels.

**CURRENCY & SPENDING:** Your trip to Spain includes all necessary expenses. The official currency is the Euro (EUR). U.S. Dollars are not accepted anywhere in the country. Credit cards are widely used, but you are likely to find cash more convenient for drinks, stamps, laundry, and other small personal expenses. It is best to carry small denominations of cash as places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. VENT recommends acquiring local currency before leaving home, or at the airport or an ATM upon arrival in Spain.

You can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting “XE-The World’s Favorite Currency Site” at: <http://www.xe.com/>.

Please consult your bank before departure about using your credit and ATM cards abroad.

**ELECTRICITY:** The electrical current in Spain is 230V (110-120V in the U.S.). Electrical outlets are one of the two European standard socket types: the "Type C" Europlug and the "Type F" Schuko. All of these outlets are ungrounded with openings for two round pins. You will need an adapter to plug in your appliances as well as an all-purpose transformer if your appliances are not suitable for higher voltage.

**INTERNET ACCESS:** Wifi is available at all of our hotels; at times, it may be stronger in the public areas than in the rooms.

**LANGUAGE:** Spanish (Castilian). English is spoken by many people, especially younger people, in the cities we visit. Most of the staff of our hotels is bilingual.

**TIME:** Spain observes Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time and nine hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time.

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Laundry service is available at an additional charge in our hotels, but it is always better to have enough clothing to get you through the tour. Note that Spanish hotels do not provide washcloths, so you should bring your own if needed.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**

**HEALTH:** No special vaccinations are required to visit Spain. VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, whether by prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance for avoiding COVID-19.

**SUN EXPOSURE:** The sun’s ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), even in winter and early spring. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

**BITING INSECTS:** Mosquitos and other biting insects are unlikely to be a problem, or even present, at this season.

### **SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION**

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles. We also recommend Andrew Isles books for the Asia-Pacific region at <http://www.andrewisles.com> for difficult to find and out of print books for Australia.

### **FIELD GUIDES:**

#### **Birds**

Mullarney, Killian and Lars Svensson and Dan Zetterstrom. *Birds of Europe*. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2023 (third edition). This is the

most important natural history guide for this tour. It is the best all-around field guide to the birds of Europe.

De Juana, E., and J. Verela. 2024. *Birds of Spain*. 2nd ed. Barcelona: Lynx Nature Books. A beautifully illustrated and very useful guide to the birds of the Iberian Peninsula; QR codes in the text lead to a treasure trove of internet information. Also available in Spanish, as the fourth edition of *Aves de España*.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin. Continuously updated. This free reference and recording app, available for iPhone and Android, helps keep track of your sightings and can even suggest identifications, visual and aural, of many of the birds you encounter. Once you have installed the app on your phone, download the Europe: Iberian Peninsula pack.

### **Mammals**

MacDonald, David and Priscilla Barrett. *Mammals of Europe*. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2002.

### **History**

Phillips Jr., William D. *A Concise History of Spain* (Cambridge Concise Histories). Cambridge University Press; second edition, 2016.

### **TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.**, a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses

or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above. Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on June 1, 2026 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion.

VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by

any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete [Terms and Conditions](#) on our website.

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