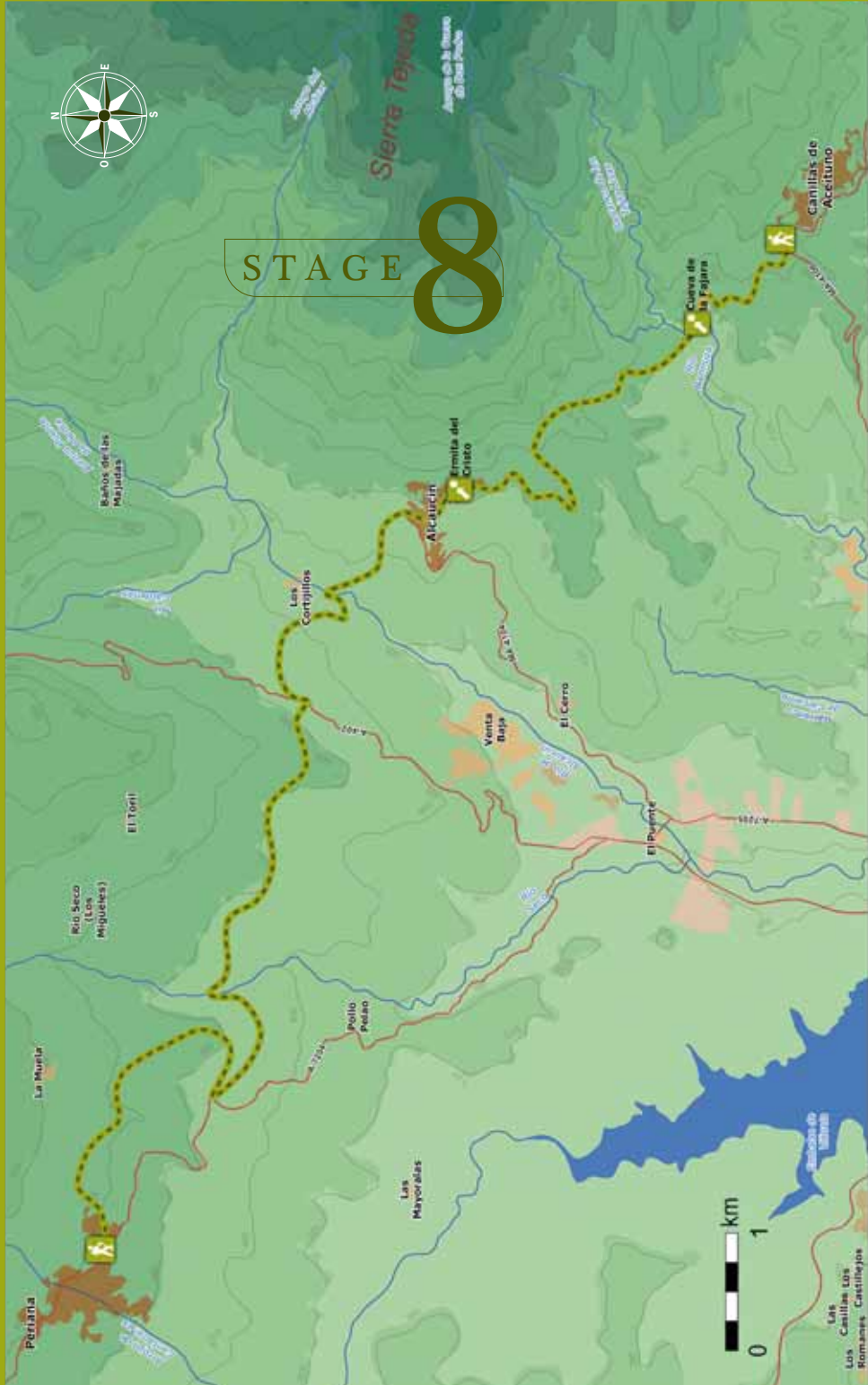




STAGE

8





STAGE 8

Canillas de Aceituno - Periana

LOCATION

Stage 8 begins close to the football pitch in Canillas de Aceituno and very soon it takes us into the pine

woods. It crosses Alcaucín and after 17 km arrives at a Periana, where you will have a very ample view of the Axarquía region.



A section of the stage leads through olive groves along the track seen in the image.

PHOTO: ARIM

DID YOU KNOW?



Iberian Midwife Toad (*Alytes dickhilleni*)

PHOTO: LGC

The Iberian Midwife Toad (*Alytes dickhilleni*, Artzen & García-Paris, 1995) was described for the first time using individuals found in Canillas de Aceituno, which is why the village is known as its *terra tipica*. This small toad's name comes from the fact that it carries its eggs on top of its body; it is typical of mountainous regions and it is the species of amphibian which occurs in the highest altitudes of all the amphibians in Malaga province. An Iberian endemic, essentially Andalucían, its populations are dispersed in various Baetic mountain chains of eastern Andalucía. In Malaga province it can only be found in the Sierras of Tejeda and Almirajara. TEXT: JSM



Mesa de Zalia on the left and Boquete de Zafarraya. PHOTO: ARM

DESCRIPTION

ABOUT THE BIRDLIFE:

Stage 8 leads through the mountains; in its first section, there are formations of Aleppo pine and rocky cliffs, as well as arable land mostly devoted to cultivating olive trees. The olive groves are mostly young, with a few areas where hundred-year-old specimens are predominant. The walk also passes through some uncultivated areas mainly containing retama broom. This is why during Stage 8 you will principally find birds typical of open spaces and crop fields, with some forest species.

HIGHLIGHTED SPECIES

In Canillas, as in villages in previous stages of the walk, you will be able to

see bird species accustomed to living close to humans. Barn Swallow, Spotless Starling and House Sparrow are the most common species at the beginning of Stage 8 which soon enters a pine wood. Once surrounded by trees you can find Common Wood Pigeon, European Turtle Dove, Common Blackbird, Common Chiffchaff, Spotted Flycatcher, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Crested Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper and Common Chaffinch. Around the Fájara cave the Blue Rock Thrush and Rock Bunting at the streambed the Blackcap and other typically riverside species such as Wren, European Robin and Golden Oriole.

Before arriving at Alcaucín you will be passing through uncultivated areas and vineyards where Crested Lark occurs, with the typical crest on its head and its cheerful song. Also, there is the Common Stonechat, Sardinian Warbler, Goldfinch, Common Linnet, Greenfinch and Serin. From Alcaucín onwards you will start walking downhill towards cultivated land, mainly olive



Red-rumped Swallow. PHOTO: JLM



groves and subtropical tree plantations, peppered with a few houses.

Here the predominant birds are Eurasian Collared Dove and Starling, also Barn Swallow European Robin, Black Redstart, Common Chiffchaff, Blackcap and Goldfinch. Next, cross the stream and start climbing towards the view of the reservoir called Pantano de la Viñuela, where you can enjoy the view of the Boquete de Zafarraya and La Mesa de Zalia, full of large rock faces inhabited by rock-dwelling raptors visible from the path of Stage 8. Once you come into the olive groves interspersed with the patchwork of grain fields, the Crested Lark again becomes the star species. In the next section you may see Short-toed and Booted eagles which tend to use this part of Stage 8 as hunting grounds, Bonelli's Eagle, Common Kestrel, Little Owl, Red-legged Partridge, Common, Pallid and Alpine Swifts, Common Wood Pigeon, European Turtle Dove, White Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Mistle and Song Thrush, Sardinian Warbler, Woodchat and Southern Grey Shrike, and many species of finches. The area around Arroyo Seco is a good spot to devote some time to



Goldfinch. PHOTO: JLM

identifying Swallows, as in spring and summer it is possible to find up to 4 species at the same time (Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Crag and House Martin) Additionally to the previously mentioned species of birds, the type of vegetation encourages the presence of Blackcap and Black-eared Wheatear. It is worth mentioning the presence of olive trees with very thick trunks before you arrive at Periana where amongst the Great Tits and Chaffinches you may be able to spot the rare Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, however it is a bird which is difficult to see.



Male Chaffinch. PHOTO: JLM

TIMING

Similarly to previous stages, seasonal differences in the bird species you can see at Stage 8 are not very pronounced, and it can be recommended for year round birdwatching except for the hottest months. ○