

STAGE 19



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Campillos - Embalses del Guadalhorce

LOCATION

Stage 19 begins in Campillos, the street Calle del Doctor Óscar Fernández being the starting point. Along this route you will discover lagoons which resemble true oases amongst the cultivated fields. After **23 km**, Stage 19 ends at the reservoirs Embalses de Guadalhorce y Guadalteba, at the point where the dams meet.



Ravens. PHOTO: JLM

DESCRIPTION

ABOUT THE BIRDLIFE:

Stage 19 is the last of the series of stages where farmland is the main type of environment and the next stages become more mountainous. Stage 19 still passes through olive groves and grain

fields however its special feature are a group of lagoons, Lagunas de Campillos, and pine tree formations, which together convert this part of the walk into a mosaic of landscapes accompanied by an interested variety of birds.

HIGHLIGHTED SPECIES

In the centre of Campillos you will have a chance to see urban species, principally Eurasian Collared Dove, Common and Pallid Swift, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Spotless Starling, House

DID YOU KNOW?

The Catalogue of Lakes of Spain, written by the hydro-biologist Luis Pardo in 1948, mentions the endorheic lagoons in the steppes around Campillos as an interconnected complex of lakes, located south-east of Laguna de Fuente de Piedra, and he quotes Laguna Dulce, del Cerero, Salada, de Camuñas, de Capacete, de Lobón, Redonda and de la Marcela. According to the Natural Reserves Law (Ley de Espacios Naturales) from 1989 established by the Parlamento Andaluz first five lakes are protected as Natural Reserves. They hold such water birds as Greater Flamingo, Black-winged Stilt, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Widgeon, Coot, White-headed Duck, various species of gulls, as well as an important contingent of wintering Common Cranes. TEXT: SMB



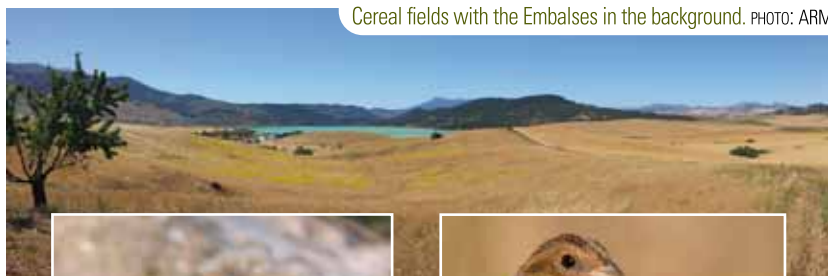
Male Little Bustard. PHOTO: JLM

Sparrow, plus Common Kestrel, European Turtle Dove and Common Starling around the industrial estate located in the outskirts. Once you leave these buildings behind you will enter cultivated fields and olive groves where Red-legged Partridge, Song Thrush, Hoopoe, Crested Lark, Common Blackbird, European Robin, Blackcap, Common Chiffchaff, Great Tit, Goldfinch, Common Linnet and Corn Bunting are the most common species. Although Little Bustard is chosen as target species of all of Stage 19, and indeed it can be observed during the route, a good spot to enjoy this species is around Laguna Dulce very close to the starting point. The presence of large scattered pine trees are the reminder of what the area must have looked like before the land was ploughed and turned into farmland.

These trees produce such species as Common Buzzard, Coal Tit and Raven. The group of lagoons you will be visiting are, in walking order, El Cerero, Laguna de Camuñas and la Marcela; these are areas which constitute true oases for water birds in an environment dominated by dry crop farming. The most common species in these wetlands are Little Grebe, Eared (Black-necked) Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Grey Heron, Greater Flamingo, Mallard, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Red-crested Pochard, Common Pochard, White-headed Duck, Moorhen, Coot, Black-winged Stilt, Lapwing, Golden Plover, Snipe, Green and Common Sandpiper, Black-headed Gull, White and Yellow Wagtail, and Meadow Pipit. Moreover, Cranes can be seen in the surroundings in winter months.



View of the reservoir and the cliffs. PHOTO: ARM



Cereal fields with the Embalses in the background. PHOTO: ARM



Quail. PHOTO: JLM



Corn Bunting. PHOTO: JLM

In the pine wood, before you cross the Arroyo del Boquerón, such birds could appear as the Common Wood Pigeon, European Turtle Dove, Hoopoe, Greenfinch, Serin, Crossbill and Common Chaffinch, whilst in the scrubland, before the downhill section leading towards the reservoirs, you can fairly easily find Crested Lark, Stonechat, European Robin, Song Thrush and Sardinian Warbler. During migration periods in this part of Stage 19, Black Kite, Honey Buzzard, and good numbers of Bee-eaters tend to be seen

flying overhead; neither is it uncommon to see Griffon Vulture, Bonelli's Eagle and Peregrine Falcon in flight, frequenting the area in search for food. Once you reach the end of the stage at the foot of the reservoirs, water birds become the focus again, even though the depth of the Embalses limits the diversity of species, mainly to Little Black-backed, Yellow-legged and Black-headed Gulls, Mallard, Little and Eared (Black-necked) Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Grey Heron and Coot.



Grey Heron. PHOTO: DPM

T I M I N G

Winter months are particularly suitable to walk Stage 19 on account of the fact that you can then enjoy good numbers of wintering water birds which take over the wetland areas; spring is also a good time due to the diversity of breeding species. The hottest months are best avoided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Although Stage 19 does not take you to Laguna de Capacete, it is worth a visit considering that the site holds, fairly reliably, the White-headed Duck. This lagoon is around a metre deep on average and its waters are slightly salty. The surrounding vegetation mainly includes Tamarisk and reeds, where you can hear and see Western Olivaceous Warbler,

Spanish Sparrow. PHOTO: JLM





and where Eurasian Reed Warbler and Great Reed Warbler nest.

Although for a long time it used to serve as a dumping ground for the organic residues coming from the nearby pig farm, since this was forbidden, the quality of its water has greatly improved. Similarly to other lagoons you visit during the stage, this one is also included in the Reserva Natural Lagunas de Campillos. ◉



House Sparrow. PHOTO: JLM



Western Olivaceous Warbler. PHOTO: JLM



Crested Lark. PHOTO: JLM



Common Starling. PHOTO: JLM