



STAGE

12



STAGE 12

Villanueva del Rosario - Archidona

LOCATION

Stage 12 starts in Villanueva del Rosario, at the bridge over a stream named Arroyo de Canaleja, then crosses the river Guadalhorce, passes through a *dehesa* type holm oak woods and the splendid Hoz del Arroyo de Marín, arriving in Archidona after **18,5 km.**

DESCRIPTION

ABOUT THE BIRDLIFE:

The most defining feature of Stage 12 is the presence of the *dehesas* and the section along Hoz de Marín river. The walk also leads through cultivated areas, pine woods, and scrubland which add interesting elements to this stage.

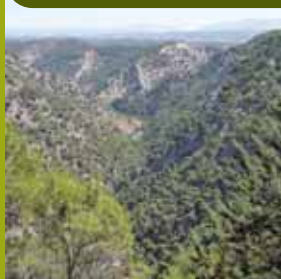


View of the path along Hoz de Marín. PHOTO: ARM

HIGHLIGHTED SPECIES

Stage 12 begins by taking you along the stream bed of Arroyo Cerezo, a stream which flows into the Río Guadalhorce later on, where the restricted riverside vegetation is pushed towards the riverbed by the farmland and where the following species occur frequently: White Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, European Robin, Common Nightingale, Common Stonechat, Common Blackbird, Blackcap, Sardinian Warbler,

DID YOU KNOW?



The **Hoz de Marín** is a gorge excavated by the stream Arroyo Marín which has created one of the most exceptionally beautiful landscapes. The presence of gypsum karst formations as well as volcanic rocks is a geological peculiarity. The site also harbours one of the scarce natural native woods of Aleppo pine where the Red Deer can be frequently found visiting from nearby areas.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPH: JSM



Griffon Vulture. PHOTO: DPM

Spotless and Common Starling, Great Tit, Golden Oriole, House Sparrow, Common Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Serin, Greenfinch, Common Linnet and Cirl Bunting, among others. In the neighbouring farmland such birds as Red-legged Partridge, Little Owl, Crested Lark, Common Stonechat, Zitting Cisticola and Corn Bunting occur most frequently. In the area of the farm buildings you may see Common and Red-rumped Swallows, House Sparrow, together with



Pied Flycatcher. PHOTO: JLM



Green Woodpecker. PHOTO: JLM

Eurasian Collared Dove. The section following the spot where you must quickly cross the motorway, once you leave the road behind you, is a *dehesa* area of great ornithological value. Prevailing species are Common Wood Pigeon, European Turtle Dove, Cuckoo, Scops Owl, Tawny Owl, Red-necked Nightjar, Pallid and Common Swifts seen as they mostly hunt insects here, Hoopoe, Bee-eater, Green Woodpecker, Woodlark, Thekla Lark, Meadow Pipit, European Robin, Black-eared Wheatear, Common Blackbird, Song and Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Black-eared Wheatear, Blackcap, Firecrest, Spotted Flycatcher, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Woodchat and Southern Grey Shrike, Western Jackdaw,



Wryneck. PHOTO: DPM

Common and Spotless Starling, Spanish Sparrow, Common Chaffinch, Serin, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Common Linnet, Eurasian Siskin and Hawfinch. Some winter seasons you may see Brambling joining flocks of other members of the finch family.



Long-tailed Tit. PHOTO: JLM



Mistle Thrush. PHOTO: JLM

In the patches of crop fields which break up the *dehesa* you may also see Common Kestrel and, still scarce in Malaga province, Black-winged Kite; in May 2014 there was a record of an adult with two chicks. You will arrive at the Hoz de Marín gorge walking through an almond grove and then a copse of pine where you can find Coal Tit and start hearing the first Crossbills of the day. Also, there are the woodland species mentioned earlier. This is a spot of great beauty with well-preserved riparian vegetation where Azure-winged Magpie can be relatively easily found and where you will most likely hear, given their



Azure-winged Magpie. PHOTO: JLM

secretive nature, the Wryneck, Green Woodpecker and Golden Oriole. You will also be able to find Long-tailed Tits and, if you pay attention to the birds high in the sky, with a bit of luck you may make out the silhouette of the Bonelli's Eagle; the area contains one of the few known nests in the province which have been built

on a tree top. You may also see during Stage 12 the Common Buzzard, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Northern Goshawk, Short-toed Eagle and Booted Eagle. Arriving in Archidona you will be in a good spot to watch Swifts; amongst them you will be able to distinguish the Alpine Swifts with their strikingly white bellies.



Hawfinch. PHOTO: DPM



A pair of Bonelli's Eagles. PHOTO: JLM



Red Deer. PHOTO: ARM

In the patches of retama bush which line the path as it leads towards the end of the stage, larks, Sardinian Warbler and Corn Bunting occur most frequently.

NATURAL VALUES

Stage 12 crosses areas where you can quite easily see Red Deer, mainly

at the firebreak which you must follow to reach Río Marín. Moreover, there are other mammals which can be detected by their tracks and signs, such as Fox, Badger, Stone Martin, Genet, Egyptian Mongoose, European Polecat and Wildcat. If you look around you may find signs of Otter close to the riverbed in Hoz de Marín. ◉



Whinchat. PHOTO: JLM