



Natural values

The Fuente de los 100 Caños (Fountain of 100 Spouts) is located at the foot of Sierra de San Jorge north face, in Villanueva del Trabuco, Malaga Northeast District. It is a spectacular water outcrop from a limestone boulder, forming a stream tributary of the Guadalhorce River short after this one begins to flow very close upstream.

We will walk across an Aleppo Pine forest mixed with Holm and Andalusian Oaks where birds will be showing their joy for longer and warmer days in March after the winter, and the advent of the breeding season.

These are some of the species we will spot during our trip: Griffon Vulture, Golden Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Sparrowhawk, Peregrine Falcon, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Grey Wagtail, Robin, Black Redstart, Stonechat, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Blackbird, Blackcap, Sardinian Warbler, Dartford Warbler, Firecrest, Wren, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Crested Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Short-toed Treecreeper, Jay, Chough, Spotless Starling, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Serin, Common Crossbill, Cirl Bunting and Rock Bunting.

How to get there

Type "Fuente de los 100 Caños" in Google Maps. The track turns off from road MA-4100 coming from Villanueva del Trabuco, from where the way and entrance to the track is very well signposted, just after crossing the bridge over the Guadalhorce River.

The fountain



We will find the fountain around one kilometre from the road. There are big recreational facilities there where we can park the car and have a look at the stunning fountain and the river forest downstream the fountain, where the first birds like Robin, Great Tit, Serin, Short-toed Treecreeper, Blackcap, Blackbird, Song Thrush, House Sparrow and Chaffinch, which will accompany us for the whole day, will show up. Possibly, the only river related bird we will find is the Grey Wagtail.





Keep looking at the tall cliff over the fountain in search for the Peregrine Falcons.

The route we will describe from now on can (and we always recommend for bird watching and health purposes!) be done on foot. It is 10 km long return but there is quite a steep slope of almost 2 km to the pass between Sierra de San Jorge and Sierra Gorda, so that stretch could be too physically demanding and it is not of a particular birding interest. Let's set the counter to zero and do the trip either on walk or by car.

The pine woods



As we walk along, we will enter a pine tree forest. We will take left at the fork 300 m. away from the fountain.

When the pine trees to the right clear, a beautiful mosaic of rolling hills covered in olive groves and wheat field patches opens to our sight, and the calls and songs of Goldfinches, Greenfinches and Serins come to our ears.



Life is very quiet here and it looks as if there are only Chaffinches and Wood Pigeons around until we go past some stands of Holm Oaks where birds are more diverse and noisy. There is



one of these at km. 1.8, where the track widens and we can park to have a look around for Short-toed Treecreeper, Blackbirds, Firecrests, tits and Green Woodpeckers.



The mountain pass

We will soon turn left uphill (km. 2) into a wide track linking Villanueva del Trabuco and Alfarnate in the Axarquía District. It will take us to a mountain pass (km. 3.8) where there is a small building in a fenced plot to the right with a sign "Finca Particular, Prohibido el paso" (private property, no trespassing). We can park the car aside.



The landscape is very different here. We will see the top of all the limestone sierras around, including the Chamizo Peak to the west (see Altos de Hondonero, one of our January trips), the cliffs near Alfarnatejo to the south (see Tajos del Fraile, Santa Ana y Gómer, one of our February suggestions) and the highest reaches of the Sierra de San Jorge to the east. Pine trees have been replaced by Holm Oaks, Mediterranean scrub and gorse and birds like Dartford Warbler, Black Redstart and Stonechat will show up on the bushes while the big raptors described in January and February (Griffon Vulture, Golden and Bonelli's Eagles) could fly above the crests. As



March goes on, Short-toed Eagles and other migrating birds of prey like Booted Eagles, Black Kites and Honey Buzzards can enlarge the list of observations.



Back to the track towards Villanueva del Trabuco, and before taking the car again, a walk across the pine woods (especially that on the right hand side as we walk down the hill) will be very rewarding in terms of forest birds that will be very active at this time of year. Mistle Thrushes singing from the top of the trees;

Nuthatches calling; Great and Blue Tits giving the alarm signal as we go along; Coal and Crested Tits flitting about the canopy; Long-tailed Tits enjoying the last days before their families split; Rock and Cirl Buntings misleading us with their weak calls that you never know where they come from!; Great Spotted Woodpeckers calling from behind the trunks...



If you came up here by car and still have some energy available, you can enter the Parque de Arborismo (recreation on trees) on the left as we drive down, park again at the end of the recreational facilities, and have a walk along this beautiful stretch of the Gran Senda de Malaga (stage 11 Alfarnate – Villanueva del Rosario).

PHOTOGRAPHS:

- 1-4 Fuente de los 100 Caños
5. Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)
6. Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)
7. Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) forest
8. Views from the pine woods
9. Short-toed Treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*)
10. Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)
11. Villanueva del Trabuco and Peña de los Enamorados (background)
12. Chamizo Peak (Sierra del Jobo)
13. Alfarnatejo and Tajos del Fraile, Santa Ana y Gómer
14. Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)
15. Great Tit (*Parus major*)
16. Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*)