



Natural values

The Fuente (spring) del Acebuche (wild olive tree) is located at the north hillside of the Sierra de Mijas, near Alhaurin El Grande, south of the Valley of the Guadalhorce District.



It is an interesting place to visit in July because it lies in the middle of a very dry aleppo pine forest with a typically Mediterranean shrub layer made of dwarf fan palm and purple Jerusalem sage in the lower level, complemented with kermes oak, mastic tree, different species of rock roses and even prickly juniper

as we go up into the sierra, what makes this watering place so valuable and attractive for both birds and amphibia.



Despite this is a dry area and July is a hot month, the big pine trees around the track and the drinking trough will provide us with a very comfortable shade during the trip.

These are some of the birds we can find around here in July: Sparrowhawk, Wood Pigeon, Bee-eater, Blackbird, Blackcap, Sardinian Warbler, Bonelli's Warbler, Firecrest, Wren, Spotted Flycatcher, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Crested Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Jay, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Serin, Common Crossbill and Rock Bunting.

How to get there



Type "Hotel Restaurante El Mirador, carretera Malaga, Alhaurin El Grande" in Google Maps. Take an entrance opposite the hotel with a stone pillar tagged "Camino Forestal (forest trail)". Set the counter to zero and follow the street up. Turn left at the end of the street (km. 0.1) when you find the gate of a property called "El Ardalejo", and right uphill into the Avenida de las Encinas.

The forest trail

The avenida ends at km. 0.9, where we must park the car in the track on the right as there is an order issued by the Environment Department of the Andalusian Government forbidding the light of fire and the off-road use of motor vehicles in forest areas from June 1st to October 15th due to the extreme risk of fire at the country side during the summer season, so we will not be allowed to drive the trails beyond the signs at the entrance to the forest track.





As we walk up the trail, most of the birds we have listed above will start to show up. The forest is very homogeneous and there are not special places for determined species.

These are some of the landmarks on the way to the Acebuche Spring:

- We will leave a track joining our way from the left behind.



- Green building labeled “Pozo (well) Los Peñascales”. We will be able to see the highest reaches of the Sierra de Mijas and some stone pine trees along the trail from here on.



- Crossroads: let’s take the trail to the left.



- First fork: let’s take the trail to the right (but not the entrance to a private property).



- Second fork: let’s take the trail to the right again. We will find a plot on the right with almond and olive trees. This is the best place to find Bee-eaters in flight, pay attention to their fluty calls!



- The path to the spring is on the left just at a steep bend to the right where the trail is protected with old crash barriers made of stone.



The Acebuche Spring



If we approach the drinking trough in silence we should sit down far enough not to frighten off the birds, and close enough to enjoy great views and even take good pictures of most of the forest species living in the area, with lots of juveniles at this time of year.



All the pictures showed below have been taken without a hide and using a compact camera.





PHOTOS:

1. Shrub layer made of dwarf fan palm (*Chamaerops humilis*) and purple Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis purpurea*).
2. Fire salamander larvae (*Salamandra salamandra*).
3. Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) forest.
4. Access to the forest trail from road A-404.
5. Access to the forest trail.
6. Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) forest.
7. Sierra de Mijas.
8. Los Peñascales well.
9. Crossroads.
10. First fork.
11. Second fork.
12. Access to the Fuente del Acebuche.
13. Fuente del Acebuche.
14. Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*).
15. Crested Tit (*Lophophanes cristatus*).
16. Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*).
17. Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*).
18. Blackbird (*Turdus merula*).
19. Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*).
20. Great Tit (*Parus major*).
21. Blackbird (*Turdus merula*).
22. Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*).
23. Chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) and Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*).
24. Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*).