

SPANISH PYRENEES

(The perfect one-centre all around nature tour!)

Sunday 27th June – Tuesday 6th July 2010

The Pyrenean mountain range is a paradise for the all-round nature lover. Stunning snow capped peaks dominate the horizon and beautiful flower filled alpine meadows covered in butterflies abound. It is a perfect environment within which to search for the alpine bird specialities.

<u>Targets:</u>	<u>Highlights:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wallcreeper• Lammergeier• White-winged Snowfinch• Alpine Accentor• Citril Finch• Black Wheatear• Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush• Cuvier's Beaked and Fin Whales• * Apollo Butterfly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One-centre holiday• Superb hotel in wonderful location• Excellent selection of butterflies• Flower-filled meadows• Relaxing, easy-paced tour.• Many cetacean possibilities• All-round wildlife holiday• Excellent photographic opportunities• * Alpine bird specialities

Our journey begins aboard ship as we sail from Plymouth to Spain crossing the Bay of Biscay where among numerous cetaceans we can see up to 4 species of dolphin and have previously recorded 9 species of whale. Seabirds vary from year to year but can include Cory's and Manx Shearwater, Great and Arctic Skuas, European Storm-petrel, and on a few occasions Wilson's Storm-petrel and Little Shearwater. On arrival in Spain we will drive to our wonderfully remote hotel in the middle of the beautiful Hecho valley our base for the next 7 nights. The skies here abound with raptors and include the huge and majestic Lammergeier, king of all the vultures, but the sheer volume of Eurasian Griffons has to be seen to be believed. With only short distances to travel between sites we will be able to spend plenty of time searching the rich and varied habitats, from the rugged snow covered mountain tops, where we will seek out all the high altitude species, to rolling alpine meadows and rocky gorges where we usually have close views of one of the most sought after of birds, the exquisite Wallcreeper. The low river valleys, woods, and dry zone hold a whole host of other exciting species as well as countless butterflies and a profusion of glorious flowers. Add to this some rare amphibians, insects, dragonflies and plenty of orchids and you can see why this is a naturalists paradise. No need to worry about difficult walks – there are none. We have minibuses with us at all times and spend each day at a slow pace enjoying the wealth of wildlife on offer.

Our Tour Itinerary

Day 1 We will meet inside the ferry terminal building at Plymouth Ferryport, Millbay in time for our overnight crossing to Santander, Spain. On board there are a selection of restaurants, shopping malls and even a swimming pool. During the crossing you will be provided with comfortable en-suite twin cabins. Night aboard ship.

Day 2 By first light we will have reached the edge of the continental shelf and can turn our attention to the exciting possibilities that sea watching here provides. Because of the stability of our large vessel and the extra height of the deck, we will be able to scan a wide area of open sea. In recent years this crossing

has started to get a really good reputation from cetacean enthusiasts, with many sightings of whale and dolphin species including Sperm, Minke, Pilot, Fin and Cuvier's Beaked Whales, as well as Striped, Common and Bottle-nosed Dolphins. Common seabirds we can expect to see include the diminutive European Storm Petrel, Northern Gannet, Arctic and Great Skuas and Manx Shearwater. We have now recorded Little Shearwater many times, add to this Wilson's Petrel, Sabine's Gull, Cory's, Great, Balearic and Sooty Shearwaters as well, and you can see why this trip is so popular. On arrival at the port of Santander, Spain we will disembark and make our way towards the Spanish Pyrenees, a journey of about four and a half hours. En route we will break the journey with a stop at a traditional site to see nesting White Storks, followed later by a coffee / snack break. Our base for the next seven nights is a delightful, family run hotel situated in the heart of the beautiful Hecho Valley.

Days 3 - 8 There will be little travelling as we visit a number of localities within easy reach of our hotel, and it should not take too long for us to familiarise ourselves with some of Northern Spain's exciting flora and fauna. The Aragon Valley and Binies Gorge hold a fine collection of species including Black and Red Kites, Egyptian and Griffon Vultures, Short-toed Eagle, Woodchat Shrike, Rock Sparrow, Spotless Starling, European Bee-eater, Serin, Golden Oriole, Melodious and Subalpine Warblers and Ortolan Bunting. We may also go out one night at dusk to search for the huge Eagle Owl. The Hecho Valley leads from lowland right up to snow-capped mountains and here amongst the alpine meadows, with hundreds of flowers and butterflies, we will search for the legendary Lammergeier. This superb bird has often been seen from our hotel while we enjoy an early evening cup of tea. We should see Alpine and Red-billed Choughs, Rock Bunting and at a site very close to our hotel, the exquisite and much sought after Wallcreeper. We have seen this beautiful bird every year, and on many occasions we have watched this pair down to 15 feet away. Other sites we will visit include Candanchu, Roncal and Anso Valleys. Amongst the profusion of species to be encountered at these sites we should see Citril Finch, Alpine Accentor, Booted and Golden Eagles, Alpine Swift, Crag Martin, Red-backed Shrike, Crested Tit and Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush. White-winged Snow Finch is a speciality that we have never missed seeing; in fact we are the only company to see this species in the Spanish Pyrenees without having to walk very far! We will also keep a look out for Alpine Marmots and shy Chamois. Amongst the hundreds of butterfly and flower species the magnificent Apollo Butterfly and several species of orchid should be found. As a contrast to the mountains, we will spend a day in the dry zone around Riglos. Here we will look for Blue Rock Thrush, Black Wheatear, and Sardinian, Orphean and Dartford Warblers.

Days 9 - 10 We can spend the morning trying to connect with any species still missing from our lists or simply revisit a favourite area, before driving back to Santander to connect with our early evening ferry. Once out at sea, whales, dolphins and seabirds will occupy our time once again.

Leaders: Nick Bray and Viv Stratton

TOUR PRICE

£1095.00 per person

Single supplement: £195.00

Deposit: £350.00

Maximum group size: 14 Excluding leaders

Single cabin supplement: £85.00

Included in cost: Return fare from Plymouth to Spain on Brittany Ferries, with twin berth cabins en-suite, transport throughout the tour by minibus, hotel accommodation based on twin rooms en-suite, all meals from dinner at hotel Day 2 until breakfast at hotel Day 9, including picnic lunches, wine, afternoon tea, and services of leaders.

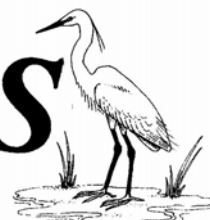
Not included: Insurance, meals on-board the ferry, and en-route to/from ferry to hotel, drinks other than wine and water, and items of a personal nature.

Note: Because of the popularity of this tour we anticipate that it will again fill very quickly, so book early to avoid disappointment.

BIRDSEEKERS – Holidays for Birdwatchers

BIRDSEEKERS

HOLIDAYS FOR BIRDWATCHERS



BOOKING FORM

PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS THROUGHOUT

Tour name..... Dates.....

Surname	Initials	Mr/Mrs/Miss	First Name (That by which you wish to be known on trip)	Are you joining the tour in the UK? Yes/No	Are you over 65

Address for Correspondence:	
Postcode:	
Telephone: (Home)	(Work)
E-mail Address:	
Contact Number: (in case of accident or emergency - this must be filled in)	
Doctors Number:	

Passport Details: * (Please fill in forenames as they appear on your passport)					
Surname	*Forename(s)	Passport No.	Place of Issue	Date of issue	Expiry date

Please make the above reservations

I/We enclose £..... **Deposit** (Please see tour description for amount)

I/We enclose £..... **Flight booking fee £30**

(If you request Birdseekers to arrange your flight add £30 per person)

TOTAL £.....

I confirm that I have read the current terms and conditions as set out in the 2010 brochure and agree and accept them on behalf of all persons named above. Terms and conditions are also available on our website www.birdseekers.co.uk

SIGNATURE DATE

Please make your cheque payable to 'BIRDSEEKERS' and return, together with completed booking form to the address overleaf.

PLEASE TURN TO BACK OF FORM AND COMPLETE ALL RELEVANT SECTIONS

Other Details:

Accommodation required (please tick) single twin double

Couples please specify if Double or Twin beds required although we cannot guarantee availability:

I am a single traveller and would be prepared to share twin-bedded accommodation yes no

What type of passport do you hold? This must have at least six months to run after the return date of your holiday. British Citizen Other (please state)

Do you have any special dietary requirements (vegetarian, diabetic, other?) yes no

If yes give details.....

Do you have any medical conditions we should know about? Or is there anything else which may prohibit full participation of the tour? Yes no

If yes give details

Flights: please tick as appropriate

You wish to book your own flight. NOTE: Please wait for confirmation from us before you book your flight. When you have booked your flight please notify us of times, number and dates

You wish Birdseekers to book your flight. NOTE: If Birdseekers books your flight there is a booking fee of £30 per person to our agent due with this form and your initial tour deposit.

For office use only:	Conf.	D & C	ATR
Outward Flight No:	Arrival time:	Return Flight:	Departure time:

(Wish List!)

Please fill-in if there are any particular species of bird or other form of wildlife that you would like to see on this tour. We cannot guarantee anything, but it helps to let us know if you have any target species.

Birds:	Other Wildlife: / Sites etc:
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4

Other countries you would like to visit?.....

Other interests, Butterflies, Mammals, Flowers, Whales, Photography etc
.....

Please return this form with enclosed cheque to:

BIRDSEEKERS, 2a Plymouth Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon, PL7 4JR

Tel/Fax: 01752 342001

e-mail: info@birdseekers.com

www.birdseekers.co.uk

ATOL No. 6156

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Bookings are welcome right up to the last minute, please ring for details of any vacancies.

Steve Bird trading as BIRDSEEKERS

