

PR-CU

67

SENDEROS EL ZÁNCARA

Ruta Circular

Ruta del Alcaraván



Description

“Alcaraván” Route is located in the natural region of La Mancha, in the South West of Cuenca province, in the county El Záncara. It goes through the towns Las Pedroñeras, El Pedernoso and Las Mesas, all of them with an interesting cultural and natural patrimony.

Its climate is continental Mediterranean, with extreme temperatures in Winter an Summer, although they allow trekking along every season of the year.

Natural values in this area, specially birds and vegetation of its wetlands, have made it worthy of being part of ZEPA (Birds Special Protection Area) as much as LIC (Communal Interest Place) and Biosphere Reserve “La Mancha Húmeda” since November 1980.

With a medium altitude of 688 m above sea level, its 11 km of route include an interesting variety of eco-systems and habitats, characterized by harvesting fields of grain, olive, vineyards..., spattered of lakes and small woods of pines and tamarinds, along with isolated specimens of holm oaks and black poplars, among others, what confers the area a great biodiversity.

In this scenario there are different ethnographic elements (roads, small houses, huts, orchards, irrigation channels, wells...), which are useful for us to understand the relationship that men and women from these lands have kept with their environment.

So, its value and aesthetics are almost a complete digest of the most representative aspects of the human-ized natural landscape of universal region of La Mancha.



FICHA TÉCNICA
Length: 11,1 Km
Difficulty level: very easy
Route: circular.
Start/end point: PK 5 CM-3110
coordinates: 523915/4363265 (Datum ETRS 89).
Cartography: IGN/IGE 1:50.000 nº 715
Prominent elements: landscape of La Mancha, aquatic and steppe birds, etc.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- Previously, prepare the route carefully and don't forget about your security.**
Know and plan your route before doing your trail, and follow carefully the tourism promoter **recommendations**. Inform yourself and pay attention to the activities that can be done in the area and that involve some risk –as, for example, hunting- and always carry with you the necessary equipment (suitable clothes and shoes, water, mobile telephone, map...).
- Care for the environment.**
Just passing through an area involves a certain impact on the environment. In order to reduce it as much as possible, avoid moving out of the roads, don't leave waste products, don't use or change the water in an irresponsible way, don't light fire and inform authorities of any serious problem you find along your trail.
- Respect living beings.**
Fauna and flora, besides having a high ecologic value, are the oldest settlers in the area you are visiting, what made them your main hosts, reason why their capture, harvest or any other kind of innecessary disturb are completely unacceptable.
- Promote patrimony preservation.**
Take advantage of your way through the cultural and natural patrimony as the main possible resource to raise awareness, specially in the youngest ones, of necessity and importance of its preservation.
- Respect local population and the rest of visitors**
Natural and cultural values that you can enjoy are the result of the local population effort and way of life, one more reason for deserving your greatest respect. Adapt yourself to the area custom and don't enter private properties without permission.
- Support local sustainable economy**
Enjoy accommodations and the rest of services in Las Pedroñeras, El Pedernoso and Las Mesas, and enjoy their traditional products (gastronomy, craftwork...).



Route guide

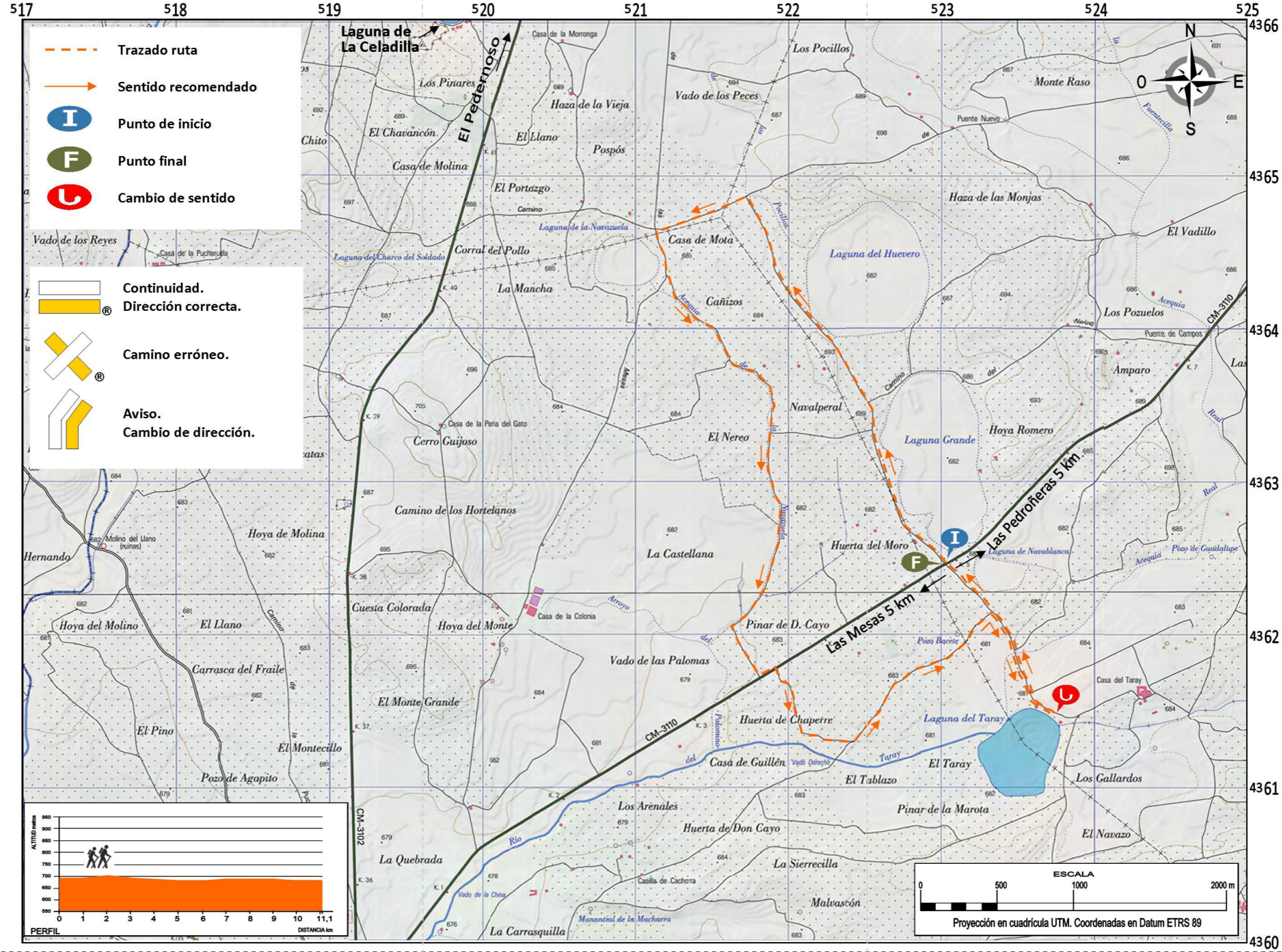
The route starts in a place that once was covered by a great sheet of water and that, nowadays, thanks to development and modernity, is crossed by the road CM-3110, with links towns of Las Mesas and Las Pedroñeras.

In this point, besides the stated road (K.P. 5, coordinates 523915/4363265. Datum ETRS 89), we will find an informative signal of the path. We can leave our car here, as much as the route is circular and also ends here.

Once on track towards North West, without leaving our way at any time in spite of finding other paths converging with it, we will see at our left as the terrain slightly raises, taking in plots of different farmings as garlic, grain, vineyard and olive, what makes possible what here is called “Huertas” (orchards). As the “**Huerta del Moro**”, landscape that we leave in the West and whose name takes us back to the time when other cultures settled in this part of the Peninsula.

At the same time, on the right, the terrain goes down softly, but enough for forming a long hollow of 2 kilometers, which have been occupied by two of the lakes that we will see along this route. Just a few of the hundreds, or even thousands, of them that spatter the plain region of La Mancha, which effectively contributed to its landscape and biological diversity, although only a small part of it have been preserved.

The first lake of the rout, called **Laguna Grande**



(big lake), remains dry and cultivated since several decades ago, due to the decrease of the phreatic stratum of the aquifer we are on. This is the result of the rain shortage and the intense and continue extraction with agricultural goals.

The second lake, the **Laguna del Huevero** (the egg cup lake), stills retains water although it only fills up in the few years of generous rains, attracting then a rich birds fauna, sign of it was in the past. Among these periods, besides of the water shortage, it preserves typical vegetation from wetlands, what still attracts aquatic birds, what makes possible their observation at any season. Both lakes are part of ZEPA “Humadales de La Mancha” (La Mancha Wetlands).

After this lake, we will be able to see in the horizon the town line of Las Pedroñeras –municipality we are now- with the tower of its church from XVI Century as it main distinctive element.

Step by step our way reaches another transverse path (Km 2.8). Here it is located a small bridge over the water of “**Acequia de los Pocillos**”. As a curiosity, this humble water course crosses, near in the North, the spot known as “**Vado de los Peces**”, what proofs the life that once hosted.

Here we will turn to the left, passing briefly through the municipality of **El Pedernoso**. After 600 meters (Km. 3.43), we will turn again to the left towards the South in a crossroads, leaving at our right the

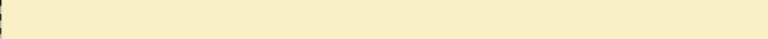


popular “**Laguna de la Navazuela**”, dry from decades ago, although its tamarinds are a proof of certain humidity. This one and the nearby “**Laguna de la Celadilla**” –which has been recently recovered thanks to an interesting environmental restoring project- were famous for being bath places for locals and visitors from near villages, conferring to its salty water medicinal properties. From here, already in its municipality, we will soon be able to see in the South West the town of **Las Mesas**.

Taking up the path again, our next two kilometers run besides the river bed of “**Acequia de la Naval-cudia**”, almost reaching its end point, the “**Arroyo del Palomino**”, which flows into “**Río del Taray**”, in the area known as “**Vado de las Palomas**”.

However, we won't reach it because before that, once we have passed the halfway point of our route, we will turn again to the left, to the road CM-3110, walking 400 meters (km 6.88). Once we are beside this road, we will take the parallel path in the left along 100 m, in order to find the point where we are going to cross it carefully.

Leaving the road behind us and what once was “**Pinar de D. Cayo**”, we cross the area “**Huerta de Chaperre**”, full of vineyards, watching the poor vegetation of “**Río del Taray**”, which, the same as we are doing, makes its way towards the homonymous lake.



We won't leave our path, always ignoring the tracks that we find on our right in consecutive forks. This way we will reach a new crossroads of four ways (km 9.08), that we are going to cross twice. First time turning to the right and, the second one, coming back after enjoying the nearby “**Laguna del Taray**” and the fresh shadow provided by its close pine forest.

This lake, included by its natural values as a LIC (Communal Interest Place), was also a traditional bathing area and pike fishing point. Today it preserves water thanks to underground springs, what benefits its interesting bird fauna and its marshy vegetation.

From here, we can also see the village **Casa del Taray**, remarking the top of its ornamental cedars. Just when the road reaches the stated pine forest we will turn back (km 9.88), retracing our steps, again through the cross roads (km 10.7) until the end of the path. In the last stretch we will see at our right several spots with grey land, which once were the bed of the disappeared “**Laguna de Navablanca –or de la Blanca**”, as it is known locally, that it was separated from the nearby “Laguna Grande” by the road CM-3110. Between the lake and the road, it is preserved, although affected by time, the “**Chocete La Blanca**”, example of popular architecture in “**piedra seca**” (dry stone), which, as many others, was used as shelter, and that seems to be telling us goodbye, as much as our path is finished, exactly where we started (km 11.1).



DIRECTORY
Las Pedroñeras
Information 967 139 002.
Restaurants
CASTILLA. Ctra. Madrid-Alicante, 159. 967 160 294.
EL BOMBA. Ctra. N-301, Km 160. 967 160 022.
LAS REJAS. C/ General Borreros, 49. 967 161 089.
LOS ÁNGELES. Ctra. N-301 Km 162. 967 160 330.
Accommodation
HOSTAL EL BOMBA. Ctra. N-301 Km 160. 967 160 022.
Activities
ZÁNCARAVENTURA. C/ Bonilla, 83. 967 162 274.

El Pedernoso
Information 967 164 306.
Restaurants
CERVANTES, Ctra. Madrid-Alicante km 151. 606 324 230.
EL RINCÓN DE JULIÁN. Ctra. Las Mesas, 8.
LOS TEJARES. Avda. Constitución, 1. 619 119 964.
SANTO PANZA. Ctra. Madrid-Alicante km 150. 967164080.

Las Mesas
Information 967 155 901.
Restaurants
LA POSADA. Ctra. Mota del Cuervo, Km 1. 967 573 064.
Accommodation
CASA RURAL JULIA. C/ Pez, 14. 666 357 859.
HOTEL RURAL LA POSADA. Ctra. Mota del Cuervo, Km 1. 967 573 064.

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KILOMETRIC POINT	INFORMATION	COORDINATES DATUM ETRS 89
0	Start/end point Km. 5. Ctra. CM-3110	523915/4363265
2,00	Continuity	522965/4364940
2,80	Turn left Change way	522600/4365655
3,43	Turn left Crossroad	522005/4365425
6,88	Turn left Parallel to road	522695/4362520
7,00	Turn right Road crossing	522810/4362570
9,08	Turn right Crossroad	524220/4362940
9,88	Turn back. Pine forest Laguna del Taray	524600/4362295
11,1	End/start point Km. 5. Ctra. CM-3110	523915/4363265

Birdwatching. "Ruta del Alcaraván" PR-CU 67

Comarca El Zancara (Cuenca)

www.arauca.es



Grulla común
(*Grus grus*)



Cernícalo vulgar
(*Falco tinnunculus*)



Aguilucho lagunero occidental
(*Circus aeruginosus*)



Busardo ratonero
(*Buteo buteo*)



Flamenco común
(*Phoenicopterus ruber*)



Gaviota reidora
(*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)



Pagaza piconegra
(*Gelochelidon nilotica*)



Gorrión moruno
(*Passer hispaniolensis*)



Cuchara común
(*Anas clypeata*)



Focha común
(*Fulica atra*)



Ánade azulón
(*Anas platyrhynchos*)



Porrón europeo
(*Aythya ferina*)



Zampullín común
(*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)



Pato colorado
(*Neta rufina*)



Garza real
(*Ardea cinerea*)



Ánade rabudo
(*Anas acuta*)



Malvasia cabeciblanca
(*Oxyura leucocephala*)



Cigüeñuela común
(*Himantopus himantopus*)



Escribano palustre
(*Emberiza schoeniclus*)



Avefría europea
(*Vanellus vanellus*)



Chorlitejo chico
(*Charadrius dubius*)



Alcaraván común
(*Burhinus oedicephalus*)

Autor: Jesús Alarcón

The area crossed by this route offers a wide catalogue of birds that can be watched in their own diversity of habitats and ecosystems. Because of these and another natural value, the area is part of a ZEPA (Birds Special Protection Area), a LIC (Communal Interest Place) and Biosphere Reserve "La Mancha Húmeda".

Birds that can be watched depend of the season and the kind of habitat or ecosystem. Some of these species approach occasionally in their local movements from close areas, as Laguna de Manjavacas or the steppe area of San Clemente-Villarrobledo.

This way, in wetlands as Laguna del Taray and Laguna del Huevero (this one specially when receives a minimal sheet of water, we can find among the resident species, ie, which can be found all over the year... Little Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*), Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Red-crested Pochard (*Neta rufina*), Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Western Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*),...; nesting or summer time, which can be found in Spring or Summer for reproduction, we can see Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), Pied Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*),

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*), Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), Collared Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*), Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*),... and winter species, which only can be seen in Autumn and Winter, Western Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)... It can be remarkable in this habitat—with different phenological status—other bird species that can be seen, as the ones that find shelter among the marshy vegetation: Zitting Cisticola (*Cisticola juncidis*), Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*), Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*), Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglotta*), Bearded Reedling (*Panurus biarmicus*) y Common Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*); or the species that prefer the banks as archibeques, andarrios, fumareles... In steppe and harvesting fields environments, we have the chance of watch, as residents, Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*), Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Pin-tailed Sandgrouse (*Pterocles alchata*), ...; nesting, White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*), Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*), Booted Eagle (*Hieraetus pennatus*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), Common Quail (*Coturnix*

coturnix), Eurasian Stone-curlew (*Burhinus oedicephalus*), European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*), European Roller (*Coracias garrulus*), Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), Eurasian Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*); and winter species as Common Crane (*Grus grus*). In addition, with different phenologic status, Red-legged Partridge; pigeons and similars (Common Wood Pigeon, Eurasian Collared Dove, European Turtle Dove ...); Great Spotted Cuckoo and Common Cuckoo; night birds of prey (Western Barn Owl, Eurasian Scops Owl, Little Owl and Long-eared Owl); European Nightjar and Red-necked Nightjar; swifts and similar (Common Swift, Barn Swallow and Common House Martin); woodpeckers (European Green Woodpecker and Great Spotted Woodpecker); larks (Calandra Lark, Greater Short-toed Lark, Lesser Short-toed Lark, Crested Lark and Eurasian Skylark) Tawny Pipit; Northern Wheatear and Black-eared Wheatear; Common Blackbird; Southern Grey Shrike and Woodchat Shrike; corvids (Eurasian Magpie and Carrion Crow); House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow and Rock Sparrow; finches (European Serin, European Greenfinch, Goldfinch y Common Linnet); along with many other species, from big birds of prey to small insectivore birds, being possible to find more diversity during migratory stops.