

Andalusia Land of the birds



Andalusia, land of the birds

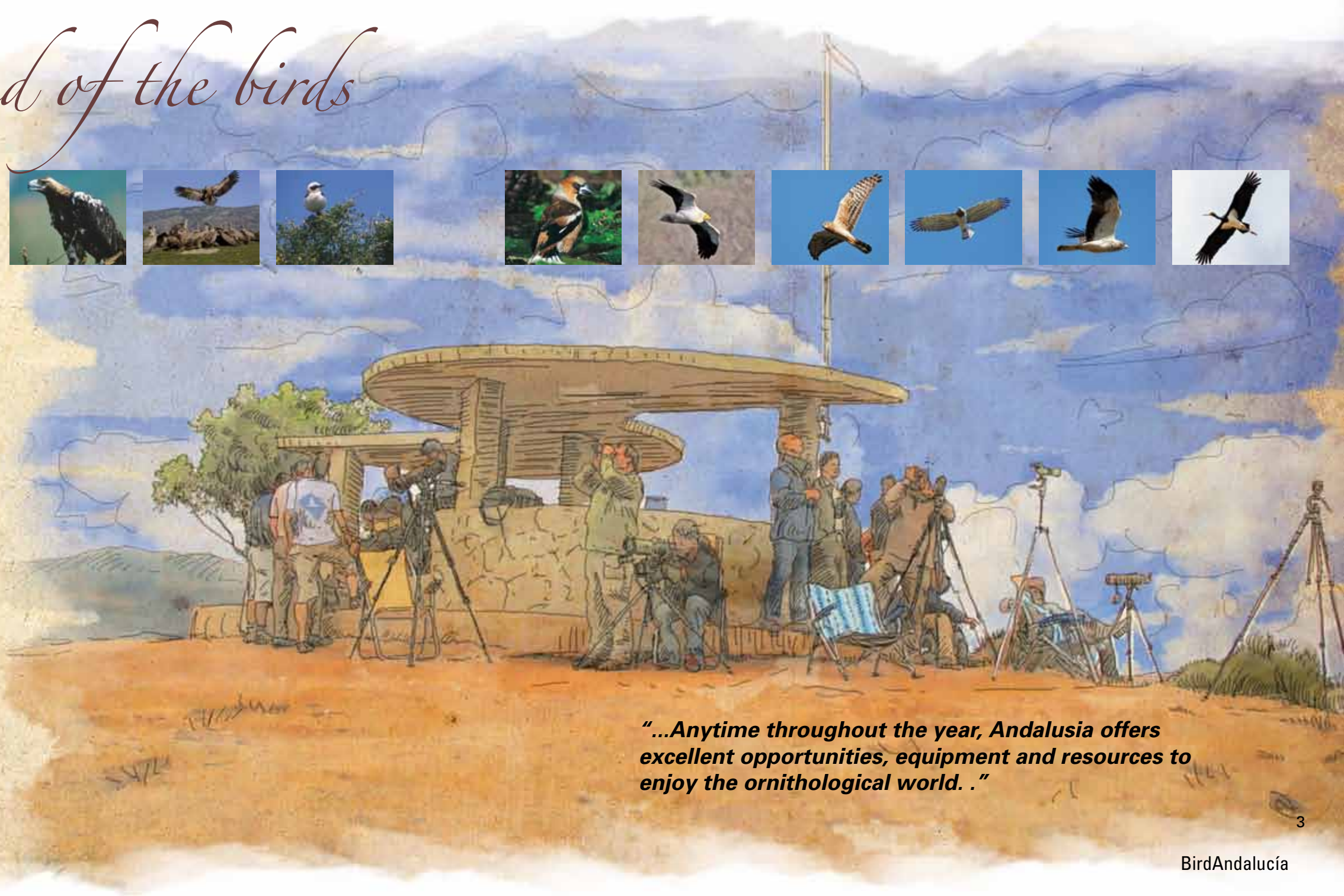


In a privileged geographical situation, Andalusia lies in the south of the Iberian Peninsula on the south-western point of the European continent. It provides a doorway to the north of Africa and together with its Mediterranean climate gives a certain continental character, converting Andalusia into a land of diversity and contrast, a region of wide variety and natural resources within Europe.

From the coast of two seas, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, to the interior areas, the traveller can find within our region a large variety of outstanding scenery (wetlands, mountainous terrain, marshlands, vast coasts and beautiful beaches, river valleys, meadows etc.). It also has natural parks renowned internationally (Espacio Natural Doñana, Parque Natural de Cazorla, Segura and Las Villas, P.N. Sierra de Grazalema, P.N. de Los Alcornocales, P.N. del Estrecho, P.N. de la Sierra Norte etc.)

This mosaic of habitats and ecosystems within the area contains one of the highest concentrations of birdlife in the world, a true treasure of biodiversity, which still exists in these modern times have distinguished this land as an authentic paradise for lovers of bird watching in the whole of Europe.

Anytime throughout the year, Andalusia offers excellent opportunities, equipment and resources to enjoy the ornithological world. In this guide we propose a concise journey around the most privileged rural Andalusian districts, greatly endowed from an ornithological point of view, a land which will surprise and capture you by the variety and quantity of species that can be found within a natural environment containing diversity, beauty, emotion and life.



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The 12 Districts "BirdAndalusia"

Aljarafe-Doñana (Sevilla)

On the south western border of the province of Seville, this district boasts a mosaic of outstanding natural beauty and uniqueness. It is located amongst fertile plains from the rivers Guadalquivir and Guadiamar, and its features combine the green olive groves with marshy landscapes, as well as dense pine forests and Mediterranean mountains. 30% of its territory is integrated into the Natural Park of Doñana, and the large marshy plains and other strategic landscapes offer the perfect sanctuary for ornithological observation. Aljarafe-Doñana is a place where you can view up to 250 different bird species, and represents one of the most important wintering areas in the world.

Sierra Morena Sevillana (Sevilla)

This district occupies the central area of Sierra Morena, a mountainous chain which extends from Portugal to Jaen. Composed of a large variety of landscapes; Holm oak and cork oak meadows, Mediterranean shrubs, gallery woodlands, etc. the Sevillian Morena Mountains represent the Natural Park of the Sierra Norte, included in the Red Natura 2000 for its importance as the ZEPA zone. In these areas you can view numerous bird species, like bonelli's eagles, red kites, peregrine falcons, kingfishers and black vultures.

Condado de Huelva (Huelva)

The province of Huelva integrates a large part of its territory in the Natural Park of Doñana which makes this an important window in Europe for the observation of birds and stands out as one of the most important and oldest marshlands on the continent. This district represents an excellent destiny for lovers of ornithology. The beginning of autumn and winter sees thousands of aquatic birds originating from northern Europe to gather on these lands. The beginning of spring and summer other bird species arrive from Africa in search of food and a softer climate.



Photography: Felipe Rodríguez



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Costa Occidental de Huelva (Huelva)

Within this recently colonised territory, you can find the western coast of Huelva situated on the last stretch of the sedimentary basin of Guadiana, open to the Atlantic and bordering with Portugal along the western outskirts. It is a district of strong rural character which relies on natural resources and ornithologists, and is renowned by representatives of international protection groups. Amongst the protected groups of birds the district represents, the most important, in number as well as force, are the aquatic birds, which can be observed in one of the many natural enclaves.

Sierra de Aracena & Picos de Aroche (Huelva)

The mountains of Aracena and the Aroche peaks, situated south East of the Iberian Peninsula, are extended by the most westerly foothills of Sierra Morena, west of Andalusia. This area occupies a third of the northern province of Huelva and is an extraordinary place to observe birds of prey. It has one of the highest colonies of Black Storks in Andalusia which are protected here. Also amongst the birds you can find in the local mountain range are the black and red kites, black and griffon vultures, golden eagles, lesser kestrels and buzzards.

Los Alcornocales (Cádiz)

In this local district 20 different habitats of interest for birds have been catalogued, which accommodates a total of 226 various species, and about 200 of them can be seen frequently. The importance of the area for bird watching is well known to ornithologists all over the world; at any time during the year you can enjoy this unique natural observation where the griffon vulture reigns, a very emblematic species in this area, with a wide distribution and more than 800 existing recorded pairs.



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Litoral de la Janda (Cádiz)

The outskirts of La Janda is a doorway to the Straits of Gibraltar (a crossing for birds between European and African continents) and establishes a space where natural habitat and resources abound for outstanding ornithology. A total of 235 species from 58 families can be seen in this district, where you can find observation points of great interest, mainly on the coast, but also within the protected areas of the Natural Park of the Breña and the Marshlands of Barbate, and Tombola of Trafalgar Natural Monument, etc. and their surrounding areas.



Sierra de Cádiz (Cádiz)

In this local district you can find two types of clearly different landscapes; countryside and mountains. This area is primarily integrated into the Natural Park of Grazalema, which stands out for its exceptional ecological values, climate and unique geologies. The observation of birds is an exceptional display in the interior and surrounding areas of the natural park, where you can see up to 186 different species, including the bonelli's eagle, the griffon vulture, the peregrine falcon, and booted and short-toed eagle and the eagle owl.



Sierra de Cazorla (Jaén)

The mountains of Cazorla district have 40% of its territory integrated into the Natural Park of Cazorla, Segura and Las Villas, the largest area of natural space protected in Spain. This extension and diversity of habitats which accommodate the park, makes this territory a very special place for bird watching in oak groves and undergrowth (doves, wood pigeon, etc.), pine groves (crows, cuckoos...), grasslands (linnets, warblers, ...), lagoons and lakes (blackbirds, kingfishers, harriers...) or on the higher peaks and crags (Egyptian, griffon and lammergeiers vultures).

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Guadalteba (Málaga)

The diversity of landscapes and ambient creates a refuge in this Malaga district, and being located relatively close to the Straits of Gibraltar is catalogued as a privileged area where ornithologists and lovers of nature in general can find a thousand and one reasons to be glued to their binoculars and camera lenses. Guadalteba is a place to pass through, a place for wintering and breeding of bird species in large numbers, some of them endangered, maintain the true ornithological jewels.

Photography: Jesús Noguera Fernández

Guadalhorce (Málaga)

The river Guadalhorce, is a vital river core in the Malaga province, which crosses and backbones this district and is the main artery of the territory. The river Grande is one of the most important rivers to flow through Guadalhorce creating in the lower sections and mouth of the river an ideal place to watch numerous species of resident and migratory birds. The diversity of the ecosystems represented in this district determines the presence of very diverse groups of birds, emphasizing the importance of birds living among the woodlands, hedgerows, and the agricultural farmlands.



Serranía de Ronda (Málaga)

The mountainous region of Ronda is one of the places in Andalusia which has conserved its environment very well. The diversity of habitats and high grade of conservation of the environment has converted this place to be an ideal ornithological observatory. There are many possibilities to see birds in this part of the Malaga province, based on the time of the year and the enclaves you can visit. Being so close to the Straits of Gibraltar, the migration becomes a natural phenomenon, which you can also enjoy in this region.



Natural Spaces of Ornithological Interest



- 1.- Parque Natural Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche.
- 2.- Espacio Natural de Doñana.
- 3.- Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema.
- 4.- Parque Natural de la Breña y Marismas del Barbate.
- 5.- Parque Natural Del Estrecho.
- 6.- Parque Natural Los Alcornocales.
- 7.- Parque Natural Sierra de las Nieves.
- 8.- Parque Natural Sierra Norte de Sevilla.
- 9.- Parque Natural Montes de Málaga.
- 10.- Parque Natural Sierra Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas.

What is "BirdAndalucía"?

It is a cooperation in which 11 Andalusian Rural Development Groups (GAL) participate collectively, and their mutual goal is to protect their territories of great natural resources and ornithology. The object of this project is to emphasize the valuable ornithological patrimony and transform it into a base of rural tourism whilst still maintaining and respecting the natural environment.

This objective will ensure various lines of work for the organisations, which start with the creation of the Products Club of natural foundations. It is also to raise awareness and educate the towns about ornithological resources within the region and to create a group of inner territorial networks to work and support the initiating developments of sustainable foundations for nature tourism in general and in particular ornithology. This partnership is based on a network of protection and the evaluation of the natural resources in this rural environment.



The participating GDR

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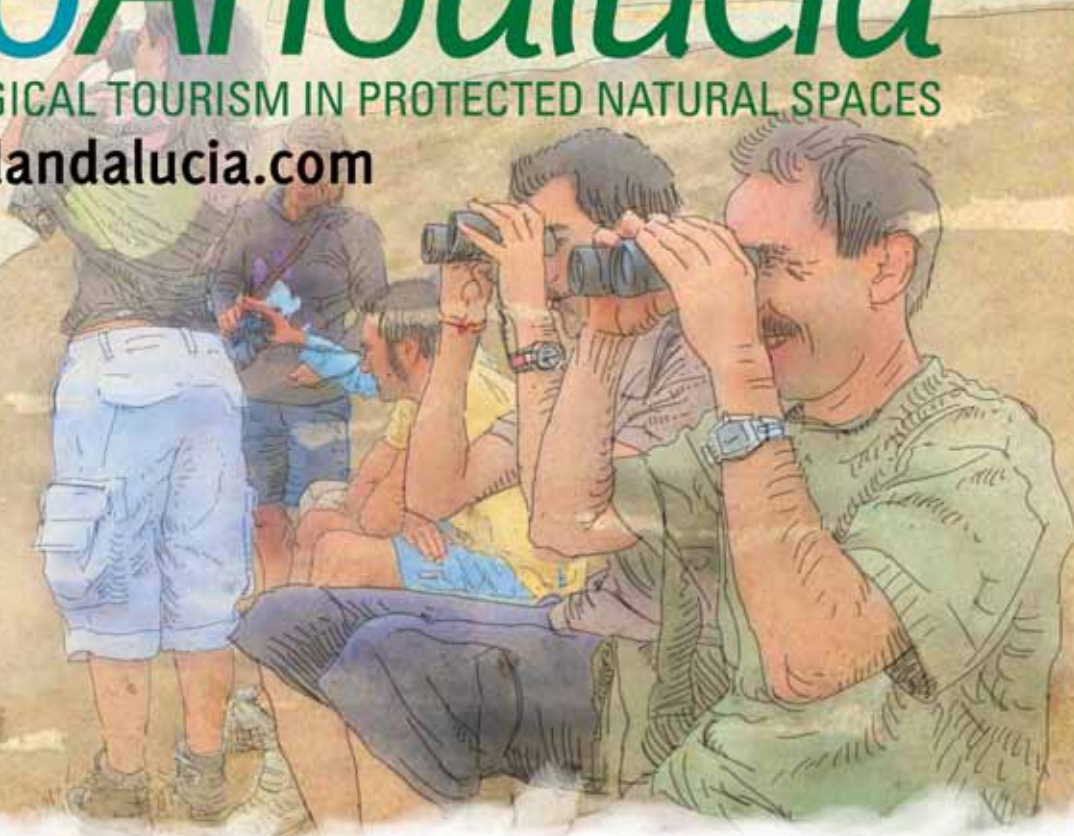
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BirdAndalucía

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