Birding tour to the Hoces del Duratón Natural Park

Complementary activities to the
VI International Swift Congress

May 23, 2020
Segovia

#SwiftSegovia2020

2020 SEGOVIA SWIFT CONFERENCE

Foro GeoBiosfera

SEGOVIA

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Junta de Castilla y León

Among the complementary activities to the VI International Swift Congress, the Organiszing Committee proposes a visit to Hoces del Duratón Natural Park.

Hoces del Duratón Natural Park is located the northeast of Segovia, downstream from the town of Sepúlveda. In this area the river Duratón embedded in a deep canyon, which in some places reaches more than 100 metres in depth. The gorge contains great archaeological and historical richness which adds to the interest and beauty of the landscape.

In the high rocky cliffs that surround the gorges, almost 250 pairs of Griffon Vultures nest, as well as a good number of Egyptian Vultures, Golden Eagles and Peregrine Falcons.

The natural values of the area are enhanced, both historically and artistically, by the Romanesque Hermitage of San Frutos, caves with Bronze Age engravings and the architectural complex of Sepúlveda.

Hermitage of San Frutos

The easiest walk through the Hoces del Duratón starts at the dirt track where the Villaseca road ends. From there you must head towards the rocky spur, surrounded by cliffs, on which the San Frutos hermitage stands.

After crossing a stone bridge over a deep crevice, called La Cuchillada, you will ascend to the ancient Benedictine monastery. After contemplating this romantic construction from the 12th century, you can continue towards its nearby cemetery, where several tombs decorated with anthropomorphic designs from the early Middle Ages are preserved. To the left of the cemetery there is a rustic staircase carved into the rock that was probably used by the early hermits to go down to the river which is now regulated by the small Burgomillodo reservoir.

Fauna

The fauna of this natural space includes the **Griffon Vulture** (*Gyps fulvus*), which has an important breeding colony in this area. In the cliffs we also find breeding **Egyptian Vultures** (*Neophron percnopterus*), **Peregrine Falcons** (*Falco peregrinus*), **Kestrels** (*Falco tinnunculus*), **Golden Eagles** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and **Eagle Owls** (*Bubo bubo*), among others, as well as important colonies of **Jackdaws** (*Coloeus monedula*) and **RChoughs** (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*).

Among the forest birds of prey, the **Booted Eagle** (*Hieraetus pennatus*), **Goshawk** (*Accipiter gentilis*), **Buzzard** (*Butteo butteo*), **Black and Red kite** (*Milvus migrans and Milvus milvus*) and **Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*) stand out, and among the passerines, there are several species of **martins, wagtails, nightingales, wheatears, rock thrushes, warblers, tit mice** including **Coal Tit** (*Periparus alter*), **shrikes and buntings.**

The moorland maintains an interesting community of passerines in which the **Dupont's lark** (*Chersophilus duponti*) stands out. As for mammals we can highlight **badger, marten, weasel, fox, hare and rabbit**, with occasional sightings of otters, as well as numerous **rodents, shrews and bats**.

The **Ocellated lizard** (*Lacerta lepida*), **Large Psammodomus** (*Lagargita colilarga/Psammodomus algirus*), **Bastard snake** (*Malpolon monspessulanus*), **Ladder snake** (*Zamenis scalaris*) and **Viperine snake** (*Natrix Maura*), on the one hand, and **Common frog** (*Rana temporaria*), **Midwife toad** (*Alytes obstetricians*) and **Common toad** (*Bufo bufo*), on the other, are the most representative species of the Park's herpetofauna.

Sepúlveda

One of the gateways to the park is the historic town of Sepúlveda, where the rivers Duratón and Caslilla meet to shape this unique landscape of limestone canyons.

Throughout the day we will be able to enjoy a unique natural environment, with a great natural and anthropological history. You will be able to enjoy one of the best breeding sites of birds of rocky habitat in the Iberian Peninsula which is also home to one of the most unique birds of the steppe habitats, the Dupont's lark.

We recommend that you bring comfortable clothing and footwear for a day in the countryside and equipment for wildlife observation (binoculars, telescopes) and cameras as this is an ideal place to photograph vultures and other birds.

More information::
https://patrimonionatural.org/espacios-naturales/parque-natural/parque-natural-hoces-del-duraton

Schedule may, 23

08:30: Departure from Segovia by bus.

09:30: Birdwatching route around the San Frutos hermitage.

14:00: Lunch in Villar de Sobrepeña.

16:00: Visit to Casa del Parque in Sepulveda and the route of the Two Rivers.
19:00: Return trip to Segovia.

Price 30 € per person
(includes transportation, lunch, guides (English and Spanish), and entry tickets)
Maximun: 50 participants
(Registration for the activity will be on a first-com-first-serve basis; registration for the congress is required)
Required registration through the website: www.swiftsegovia2020.com
Registration will continue until all places are filled 👈

Images of Miguel Pascual