



## Almeria birds

(with grateful thanks to Ian Perry and [www.solalmeria.com](http://www.solalmeria.com))

Sun-drenched Almeria offers the travelling naturalist a unique opportunity to discover a wealth of wildlife in Western Europe's only true desert habitat. The best time of the year for 'Birdwatchers' is in Spring when you can see many wintering birds, together with those arriving for the summer months. In early April migrant birds pour into the coastal wetlands, sand-dunes and hill-sides when the desert explodes into bloom following the spring rains. At this time of year the normally arid landscape disappears under a wonderful carpet of blue, pink and yellow plant life, providing home for migrating birds and species unique to the region.

### Bird watching sites

**1. Cabo de Gata:** The reserve is also one of Europe's most important areas for breeding and over wintering birds and an important stopping-off point for migrating birds on the Africa-Europe route. Bird lovers must visit the 'Salinas de Cabo de Gata' saltwater lagoons, located between San Miguel and the Cabo de Gata headland. The lagoons are working salt pans which run parallel to the coast and are separated by a 400m-wide sand bar. Bird watching can be enjoyed year round with more than 80 different species, including Greater Flamingos, Black Winged Stilt, Herons, Waders, Egrets, The Duponts Lark, Ospreys, Storks, Eagles and especially the Pink Flamingo, with over 2,000 breeding pairs. Also visit the Rambla at Barranquetes, El Cortijo de los Frailes and Cala Higuera.

**2. The Rio Almanzora Estuary** is 10 km North of Garrucha on the road to Villaricos. The estuary travels inland for about 8 km towards Cuevas del Almanzora. Bird species sighting along the embankments and reed sections include Purple Gallinule, Hirundine Roost, Little Bittern, Great Reed, Savi's, Moustached and Fan-tailed Warblers. On the Southern bank, small lagoons hold a variety of Ducks and Waders, Kentish Plover and Black Winged Stilt. On the Northern embankment Y.L Gulls and Stone Curlews have been sighted with Golden Oriole and Little Owl sighting in the wooded headland. On the Almanzora beach you are able to explore the eucalyptus wood and the beach, look for Waders and Red-Breasted Merganser in winter and spring.

**3. Embalse de Cuevas del Almanzora** is 10 Km North West of Cuevas del Almanzora. Take the road on the southern bank of the Rio Almanzora from Cuevas and head towards the dam, look for a wetland section surrounded by rugged cliffs. Bird species sighting include Skulky Warblers, the Blue Rock Thrush and a Kingfisher. Further up the road towards the dam sighting of Roller, Hoopoe, Bee Eater and Red-rumped Swallow. Great-Crested Grebe, Crag Martins and Black Wheatears sighted on the reservoir.

**4. Pueblo Laguna** is located on the Rio Antas estuary between Garrucha and Puerto Del Rey. The reed fringed lagoons are located near tourist developments and for best sighting should be viewed early morning. Bird species include Cattle Egret, Squacco Heron, Little Bittern and a juvenile Greater Flamingo.

**5. The Vera Playa Badlands** is located inland. Travel from Garrucha along the coastal road towards Villaricos. After about 6 Km turn left onto a minor road and head inland for 1 km. Bird sighting include Great-Spotted Cuckoos and Magpies.

**6. El Cortijo Grande Valley** is 5 km South West Of Turre in the Sierra Cabrera foothills. Bird species sighting on the reservoir near El Cortijo Grande village include Red Rumped Swallow and Created Lark. On the remarkably green golf course look out for White Wagtail, Hoopoe and Serin. Just beyond the village in a shrubby area Olivaceous Warbler, Shrikes and Bee Eaters have been seen and as you climb further up the valley Red-rumped Swallow, Red-legged Partridges become common.

**7. Las Salinas at Roquetas**



## Almería Birds

Redstart



Black Redstart



Serin



European  
Bee Eater



Northern  
Wheatear



Black Wheatear



Trumpeter  
Finch



Flamingo



Hoopoe



Little Owl



Avocet



Red Kite



Black Tailed  
Godwit



Crested Coot



Kentish Plover



White Headed  
Duck

