



Welcome to the Pyrenean Bird Center

What is the PBC?

Situated in the heart of the medieval town of Aínsa, on the access route to the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, the Pyrenean Bird Center provides specialised information on the observation and photography of carrion-eating birds of prey in the Sobrarbe district.

It is located in the Pyrenean Fauna Eco Museum, managed by the Lammergeier Conservation Foundation, which hosts an inspiring exhibition on Pyrenean biodiversity, and is hence an unmissable stop-off point for birdwatchers and nature lovers in the Pyrenees.



The Pyrenean Fauna Eco Museum and Bird Center.



Photographing scavengers from our hide with spy glass.

Our protagonists

The Sobrarbe district is amongst the best destinations in the world for the observation and photography of scavenger birds. The abundance of these species is due to the presence of extensive livestock farming; specific feeding sites; and a combination of geographic and climatic conditions that are highly favourable to these magnificent creatures.



Lammergeier/ Bearded Vulture
(*Gypaetus barbatus*)
Status in Spain: In danger of extinction
Population Sobrarbe/PBC: Around 30 reproductive units (made up of pairs or trios)



Egyptian Vulture
(*Neophron percnopterus*)
Status in Spain: Vulnerable
Population Sobrarbe/PBC: Around 20 breeding pairs



Red Kite
(*Milvus milvus*)
Status in Spain: In danger of extinction
Population Sobrarbe/PBC: More than 50 breeding pairs



Golden Eagle
(*Aquila chrysaetos*)
Status in Spain: Out of danger
Population Sobrarbe/PBC: Around 26 breeding pairs

Griffon Vulture
(*Gyps fulvus*)
Status in Spain: Out of danger
Population Sobrarbe/PBC: More than 150 breeding pairs



Black Kite
(*Milvus migrans*)
Status in Spain: Out of danger
Population Sobrarbe/PBC: More than 50 breeding pairs



Eurasian Black Vulture
(*Aegypius monachus*)
Status in Spain: Vulnerable
Population Sobrarbe/PBC: Individual birds visit occasionally



Common Raven
(*Corvus corax*)
Status in Spain: Out of danger
Population Sobrarbe/PBC: More than 150 breeding pairs



If you love nature and our birds of prey then you cannot afford to miss the opportunity of visiting our hides. Here you can watch the marvellous spectacle of the vultures banquet, an unforgettable experience with Griffon Vultures, Lammergeiers, Egyptian Vultures and kites that cannot fail to impress you. If you prefer “active” observation, then you can walk along a series of different trails with interpretive signs that will aid you in your observation of these species, whilst allowing you to enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery in the Pyrenees.

PBC Observation points and itineraries



1. Feeding site for scavenger birds in Aínsa
2. Trail “Los miradores de Revilla” (the Revilla viewpoints)
3. Trail “El mirador de los rapaces” (the bird of prey viewpoint)
4. Observation point “Gargantas de Escuaín” (Escuaín valley rivers)
5. Observation point “Paso de la Inclusa” (Inclusa pass)

Code of ethics for birdwatchers

Respect for the natural world should prevail over any activity carried out in this environment. As nature-lovers we should maintain the highest ethical standards at all times, aiming to serve as an example of integrity and correct behaviour for society as a whole.

1. Knowledge reduces negative impact. Birdwatchers should make themselves familiar with the behaviour, biology and requirements of the species.
2. We should serve as an example for others, obtain the necessary permits, and be familiar with the regulations governing the area we are visiting.
3. Getting too close to birds should be avoided. It disturbs them and causes stress, intimidation and changes in behaviour.
4. Special care should be taken at times when birds are more vulnerable, such as the nesting season and during periods of harsh weather.
5. Centers that keep animals in captivity are governed by specific regulations that we must be aware of and adhere to. The educative and conservation aims of these centres should prevail over any other purpose.
6. If we observe any breach of regulations or questionable behaviour on the part of other birdwatchers then we should report it to the relevant authorities.
7. It is important to note the details of any ringed or marked birds we observe and to transmit this information to the PBC. It is very helpful for tracking purposes and for the conservation of the species.

Make yourself invisible in order to photograph nature's secrets



Visit the Pirinean Fauna Eco Museum

The Pirinean Fauna Eco Museum is an initiative created and managed by the Spanish Foundation for the Conservation of the Bearded Vulture.

And furthermore:

- Summer service of guided nature visits to observe Pyrenean wild birds of prey in their environment, organized within the framework of the Lammergeier Recuperation Programme in Aragón.
- Sales point of nature books, guide books, craftwork, and souvenirs of the Pyrenean wildlife.

Follow us into the Pyrenean mountain range thanks to a lifelike scale model, and discover the native wildlife!

Get to know the Pyrenees in the video projection “The Mountains of the Lammergeier”!

ZOOLOGICAL PARK

Observe live but irrecoverable birds of prey, and get to know how and why they got here!



Photographs: FCQ, Archivo, Eduardo Vinales, Pedro Pérez, Vicent Lara, Dick Forsman, Francisco Márquez and Pedro Montaner.

Information and reservations

Pirineos Bird Center/ Eco Museo de la Fauna Pirenaica
Tel. (00 34) 974 500597
ecomuseo@quebrantahuesos.org
<https://pirineosbirdcenter.quebrantahuesos.org>



Other activities at the Pyrenean Bird Center

- Photographic sessions and filming from dedicated hides.
- Birdwatching itineraries for the observation of other mountain species.
- Activities in nature: group accommodation and training courses related to conservation.

COLLABORATE WITH OUR PROJECT

Over the last three decades the Lammergeier population in the Pyrenees has tripled, even though the species is still classified as “in danger of extinction”. Our current challenge is to repopulate other Iberian mountain ranges from which the species has disappeared. If you want to help this species and other disadvantaged birds, you can easily collaborate with our work in the following ways:

- Become a member of the FCQ
- Visit the Pyrenean Bird Center and Fauna Eco Museum and tell others about them
- Stay in our biological monitoring station “Monte Perdido”

Local authorities who have supported this work: Aínsa-Sobrarbe, El Pueyo de Araguás, Puértolas, Tella-Sin and Plan.





1 Feeding site for scavenger birds in Aínsa



2 “Los Miradores de Revilla” trail



3 “Mirador de las rapaces” trail



4 Observation point “Gargantas de Escuaín”



5 Observation point “Paso de la Inclusa”



A group of Griffon Vultures photographed from inside the hide.

Photographic hides inside the feeding site.

An adult Lammergeier in flight.

The “Monte Perdido” biological monitoring station, specialised accommodation for birdwatchers and naturalists.

An adult Lammergeier in flight.

The slopes of the Peña Montañesa.

Observatory at the supplementary feeding site.

Winter landscape in the Gargantas de Escuaín.

A group of Griffon Vultures at the supplementary feeding site.

General picture of the feeding site.

Particularities and environmental values:

At this feeding site we offer the use of photographic hides with spy glass installed. These hides are located within the feeding site itself, which enables the observation, photography and filming of emblematic avian scavenger species at distances of less than 20 metres from the food deposits. To book the hide for observation or photography call the PBC (0034 974500597). Included is a complementary visit to the Pyrenean Fauna Eco Museum, where the PBC is based, in the Aínsa castle. Here, amongst other exhibits, you will find a group of permanently disabled, live birds of prey.

Location and access

Urban centre of Aínsa. Leave your vehicle in the carpark beside the Ara River bus stop. Walk up the path beside the Meson de l’Aínsa hotel, in the direction of Morillo de Tou.

Geographical coordinates

42° 24’44.91” N 0° 08’24.57” E
Altitude: 534m

Trail description

An easy walk of about 1 km. When approaching the feeding site you will see an observation point opposite. This is 150m away from the site, cordoned-off by a line of cypress trees, and there is an information panel.

Ornithological interest

A feeding site specifically for scavengers. When food has been deposited the site is well used by Griffon Vultures. Egyptian Vultures and Red Kites are also very likely to be seen, and two pairs of Lammergeiers visit on a regular basis.

Visiting period

The site is accessible all year round, though it is advisable to contact the PBC to find out the day and hour of the food deliveries. Migratory species, such as the Egyptian Vulture and Red Kite, are not present in winter.

Particularities and environmental values:

This valley, nestled in the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, has a variety of outstanding geological, faunistic, and botanical features. The Lammergeier Conservation Foundation’s “Monte Perdido” Biological Monitoring Station is located in the village of Revilla. This provides accommodation for training courses and environmental studies (consult the PBC).



Location and access

From Aínsa, take the A-138 towards France. In Hospital de Tella take the turning on the left towards Tella, and further on take the next turning on the left towards Revilla. The trail starts by the information panels located where the road bends sharply, 500m from Revilla.

Geographical coordinates

Start point: 42° 35’51.65” N 0° 08’31.62” E
Altitude: 1,207m
Principal observation viewpoint: 42° 36’03.022 N 0° 07’44.842 E
Altitude: 1,240m

Trail description

The path runs along the left hand margin of the mouths of the Escuaín rivers, and is halfway up the cliff, which permits magnificent views of the rivers from the dedicated viewing platforms. The walk is 2kms long with an upward climb of 100m.

Ornithological interest

The indisputable star of this trail is the Lammergeier. Thanks to the supplementary feeding site nearby, the valley supports a high density of individuals. Other rock-dwelling raptors present include: Golden Eagle, Griffon Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, and Peregrine Falcon.

Visiting period

The site is accessible all year round. During the summer months of July and August, the Lammergeier Conservation Foundation provides a guided visit service (information in the PBC).

Particularities and environmental values:

One of the sectors that provides the richest birdlife of the entire Pyrenean area, due to the marked difference in altitude and the diversity of habitats contained in a very small space (from Mediterranean woodland to high-altitude pine forests). There are other walks in the area, such as the Ascension of the Peña Montañesa, or the Espelunga Chapel trail. The nearby San Victorian Monastery offers guided visits at certain times of the year.



Location and access

From Aínsa, take the local road towards Pueyo de Araguás and Torrelisa. Park in the dedicated area opposite the village of Torrelisa, identifiable by its information panels and picnic tables.

Geographical coordinates

42° 27’36.67” N 0° 11’18.59” E
Altitude: 884m

Trail description

The path winds through the extensive Holm Oak forests on the slopes of the Peña Montañesa Mountain, in a circular fashion. It is 7km in length and runs close to the cliffs, permitting the observation of both rock- and forest-dwelling birds. An easy-to-follow leaflet explaining the route is available from tourist accommodation in Pueyo de Araguás, and also at the PBC.

Ornithological interest

Both rock- and forest-dwelling birds, such as Lammergeiers, breeding colonies of Griffon Vultures, Egyptian Vultures, Peregrine Falcons, Red Kites, Goshawks, Short-toed Snake Eagles, Booted Eagles, and European Honey Buzzards.

Visiting period

Winter, spring and autumn. In the summer it can be very hot, depending on the weather.

Particularities and environmental values:

This sector is located within the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, and special protection rules apply. There are clearly printed restrictions on the information panels provided, which indicate that one must keep to the path near the feeding site and not disturb the birds. The signs will take you to a wooden observatory, which contains information panels and an explanation of how to participate with bird tracking by giving information on any sightings made. In the village of Escuaín there is a park office, open from Easter through to October. More information is available at: www.aragon.es/ordesa

Location and access

From Aínsa, take the A-138 towards France. In Escalona take the turning on the left at the roundabout, towards Puértolas. On arrival there continue to Escuaín. Park about 100m before the village, beside the information panels, and continue on foot via the forest trail.

Geographical coordinates

Start point: 42° 35’44.61” N 0° 07’42.46” E
Altitude: 1,227m
Observation point: 42° 36’46.71” N 0° 05’54.81” E
Altitude: 1,521m

Trail description

Follow the woodland trail from the valley until you arrive at the end in an area of pastureland, known as La Corona (approx. 1h and 15mins by foot, 4.8km, change in elevation +320m). The route leaves the mouths of the Escuaín rivers and the Sierra de las Sucas on the right, and winds through meadows, abandoned cultivated areas, and pinewoods, before arriving at the target observatory.

Ornithological interest

A high density of Lammergeiers belonging to different age groups. Scavengers such as the Griffon Vulture, Red Kite, Egyptian Vulture, and, exceptionally, the Black Vulture. Also present are Golden Eagles; Red-billed and Alpine Choughs, and chamois.

Visiting period

All year round, although snow may cause problems in winter, particularly from December to March. On such occasions the park rangers move the feeding site to more accessible points.

Location and access

From Aínsa, take the A-138 towards France. In Salinas take the A-2609 to the valley of Gistain. Go through the three tunnels on the roadway on the way to Plan. On emerging from the third tunnel, park the car in the lay-by situated on the first curve, before arriving at the bridge that crosses the river Cinqueta.

Geographical coordinates

42° 33’57.79” N 0° 17’27.39” E
Altitude: 1,042m

Trail description

A feeding site specifically for carrion-eating birds, supplied with meat by local herdsmen. Scavengers are continually present at this site, since its position in a river canyon with high cliffs on either side favours the frequent presence of a variety of rock-dwelling species, whether or not food has been recently supplied.

Ornithological interest

A colony of Griffon Vultures; both adult and juvenile Lammergeiers are habitually present; a pair of Egyptian Vultures; Red and Black Kites; and Ravens. A good place for observing other rock-dwelling species such as the Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Alpine Swift, Eurasian Crag Martin, Blue Rock Thrush, and Wallcreeper (the latter outside the breeding season).

Visiting period

All year round, though warm clothes are recommended in winter because the observation point is in the shade of the cliffs and consequently temperatures are low. There are no fixed days for food supply to the site.

Particularities and environmental values:

The Inclusa Pass opens the door to one of the valleys where livestock farming and other traditional agricultural activities are still carried out. Its position, between rocky cliffs and various mountain ranges, make it an important observation point for Lammergeiers of different ages. Both this observation point, and the valley in its entirety, are amongst the best places for sighting Pyrenean mountain, forest, and alpine birds.

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PIRINEOS BIRD CENTER

Ornithological itineraries Gypsobarbe

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