

# Wolf-Watching in Spain at Christmas

Naturetrek Tour Report

23 - 27 December 2016



Waiting from "La Lastra"



Badger and Wolf footprint



Lunch time in "La Espina"



Toño searching some wildlife

Report and images by Laura Benito



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

Tour participants: Laura Benito, Tino Garcia & Toño Ruiz de Gopegui (leaders) together with ten Naturetrek clients

## Day 1

Friday 23rd December

London – Santander - Cordovilla

The tour started with a flight from Stansted airport, which arrived at Santander late in the evening. We were met at the airport by Laura, Tino and Toño. Once we were all together, we drove to our accommodation at Hotel Piedraabierta, based in the small village of Perapertú, north of Palencia in Castilla y Leon.

It was very late when we arrived at the hotel. We were welcomed by Karmah and as everyone was tired, we retired to sleep and recover our energy for the next morning!

## Day 2

Saturday 24th December

Resoba (Laguna Cimera) – Castillera - Valle Perapertú

We had a very early start and set off to Valle de Resoba, a wolf territory, 40 minutes drive from the hotel. It was still dark when we left the hotel and the sky, full the stars, promised a good day.

Upon arrival, we walked to the viewpoint and sat down to scan the valley with our telescopes. Everything was very quiet - too quiet. Several groups of Red Deer were grazing. We spent over two hours scanning, without success. It was a beautiful day with a blue sky, no clouds and the sun was shining to warm us up. Any sign of snow wasn't normal for this time of the year.

Next it was time for coffee in Cervera de Pisuerga. After our break we moved to Celada de Robledo where we had a nice walk in the beautiful ancient oak forest. During our walk we had incredible views of Middle Spotted Woodpecker, which is not easy to see at this time of the year. The weather allowed us to have a picnic in the field with beautiful views and enjoying some sunshine.

After lunch we went for another walk to where Tino and Toño were waiting for us with the cars at the end of the track. We moved on to explore the valley of Perapertú. We spent the last part of the afternoon looking for wildcat without success.

Eventually it was time to return to the hotel and enjoy a drink and a great dinner prepared by our chef, Karmah.

## Day 3

Sunday 25th December

La Lastra - Valle Miranda - Perapertú

We left our base very early, to try a different spot: La Lastra. As usual we waited, scanning the landscape with our telescopes. We spent over three hours here, during which the leaders spotted three wolves running in the far distance, but unfortunately none of the group saw them. We hoped they would re-appear, but we were out of luck.

The morning was fine but chilly, so next we headed to Vidrieros for a hot drink. After a hot chocolate we moved to Valle Miranda. We drive through the valley, stopping at some interesting points. We saw several herds of Red Deer and the remains of an old civilization that was living in this valley many years ago. We then continued to the refuge 'La Espina' where we stopped to prepare lunch. Whilst the chefs prepared the food, we went for a walk and we saw several Wolf and Brown Bear footprints. Back at the refuge we sat outside and enjoyed our food in the sunshine. The weather was so good, but not the typical weather for this time of the year.

We spent the rest of the afternoon checking potential places for wildcat without success. Eventually we headed back to the hotel and had time to relax before enjoying our special Christmas dinner, with local food and wine!

## Day 4

**Monday 26th December**

### Lastra – Casavegas - Perapertú

It was our last chance to see wolves, so we tried again at La Lastra. The morning was beautiful and it promised to be another good day. Unfortunately we failed to see any wolves or the signs of them.

We went for a coffee in Cervera de Pisuerga before moving to Casavegas. We scanned the fields on the way just in case a wildcat was hunting. We stopped at one point for a short walk. The views of the Picos and part of the Montaña Plentina were stunning. We spent some time here taking photographs. We walked to the refuge Alto Velasco where we had lunch. The strong sun warmed us up while we were having lunch and we enjoyed our meal in a beautiful place.

After lunch we had some time to relax and for a short walk. We then started our way back to the hotel, still checking the fields for signs of wildcat. We were all a little sad at not seeing a wolf, but with the feeling that we had done everything we could. On the plus side, the weather had been very good and landscape marvelous. That's wildlife!

## Day 5

**Tuesday 27th December**

### Santander - UK

The group had an early flight. We started our drive to Santander leaving the mountains behind. With the wolves in our minds. We weren't very lucky this time with them, but we enjoyed a fantastic weather, beautiful landscape, quiet atmosphere, nice group, perfect combination for a different Christmas holiday

## Species Lists

Mammals (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	December			
			24	25	26	27
1	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>			x	
2	Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	x	x	x	

## Birds

1	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	x	x		
2	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	x	x	x	
3	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		x		
4	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	x	x	x	
5	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	x	x	x	x
6	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	x	x	x	x
7	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	x		x	
8	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	x	x	x	
9	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			x	
10	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>		H		
11	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>	x			
12	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	x	x		
13	Iberian Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus sharpei</i>		H	H	
14	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	x	x	x	
15	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	x	x	x	
16	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	x	x	x	x
17	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	x	x	x	
18	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	x	x	x	
19	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	x	x		
20	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	x			
21	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	x	x		
22	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	x	x	x	
23	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	x	x	x	
24	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	x	x		
25	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	x			
26	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	x	x		
27	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	x			
28	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	x	x		
29	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	x			
30	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	x			
31	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			H	
32	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	x	x		
33	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	x	x		
34	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	x	x	x	x
35	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	x	x	x	x
36	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	x	x		
37	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		x	x	
38	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	x	x	x	
39	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		x		
40	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>		x		
41	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	x	x	x	
42	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		x		
43	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	x	x	x	

	Common name	Scientific name	December			
			24	25	26	27
44	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	x	x	x	
45	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			x	
46	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	x			
47	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	x	x	x	
48	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		x		

## Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) to sign up.

## Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!