



## Birdwatching Route through Geopark Las Villuercas – 145 kms.

Turn right at the gate of Finca Las Abubillas to the village. At the end of the road, turn left on the old highway NV. Keep on going this very quiet road. You leave the village. After a few kilometres the road goes down and you will pass on your left hand a reservoir that is called Arroyo the la Vid. In springtime there might be some interesting birds, like the Great Reed Warbler, although it is normally very quiet with birds here. In the evenings, by the way, this is an excellent spot for listening to Red Necked Nightjar and even Common Nightjar.

Again after a few kilometres, still driving on the NV, you turn right to Deleitosa. You cross the A5 (Highway to Madrid-Badajoz). Keep on going to Deleitosa. On the mountain ridge at your left hand, there are always Black Vultures to be seen. On the right you have very nice vistas towards Trujillo. The road passes the village of Deleitosa. Five kilometres further on you turn right to Cañamero. Keep following this road along dehesas with Holm- and Cork Oaks. In front you see the mountains of Las Villuercas. You drive through the tiny hamlet of Retamosa. A few kilometres further you enter the valley of Rio Almonte and come to a roundabout. Here take the first road on your right (Later on this day you come to this roundabout from the opposite side).

Park your car close to the bridge over the Almonte River that you just crossed. You can make here a short walk in the direction of the ravine. There is a small path going in that direction. Along the stream you might see Grey Wagtail and Kingfisher perhaps. On the rocky outcrops you will definitely see vultures and even have a chance on Golden Eagle and Short Toad Eagle. Go back to your car and keep up following the road.

After a little while you see at your left hand two big rocks with a small village; this is Cabañas del Castillo, worth a visit! Park somewhere in the village. There are breath-taking vistas from this village and for sure from the ruin that peaks above Cabañas. If you want to go up all the way, look for the church and follow the path behind it. This brings you to the top. Be aware, with rainy weather the path might be a bit slippery. Once on top there are splendid views around. Birds that can be seen here: Blue Rock Thrush, Rock Bunting, Peregrine, Griffon and Black Vulture, Black Stork, Booted Eagle, Crag Martin, Alpine Swift. With sunny weather there might be a lot of butterflies on top of this rock too.

Take the same way back and keep following the road to the next villages Solana del Cabañas and Berzocana. The road leads through magnificent examples of Cork Oak woodland. Keep an eye at the rock ridge on your left. It is a good place for raptors. Just before the village of Solana you see a court for playing football. From this place you can make a walk in the direction of the River Berzocana. It is a nice walk of approximately one and a half hour and a nice place for a picknick. Look for a small path, south direction. You might cross some fences; just open and close them after you have passed.

Once be back follow your route. First along Solana and then going to Berzocana. Again you will see beautiful forests of Cork Oak and Pyreneese Oak, the latest are deciduous. The road makes a few sharp bends, of which in one you see a sign “Casa Rural Cielo Abierto”. Little further on a small road goes to the right. Take this one, which brings you in Berzocana. Follow the road till the church and go sharp left just before the church. No worries, you can pass. This street brings you to the Plaza of Berzocana. A nice place for a break!

From this village you go in the direction of Cañamero. It might be that you have to find your way out of Berzocana, because it is not always well signposted. Once on the road to Cañamero you come across a roundabout where you take the third exit which goes to Navezuelas. This road leads upwards the mountain with beautiful views. The mountain range is in terms of geology very interesting and quite unique in the world. They host lots of birds of prey; like Golden Eagle and Bonelli's Eagle. On the road to Navezuelas you see at a certain moment the highest peak of Las Villuercas on your right hand side. This peak has big iron pilons on top. You can't miss it. (The weather has to be clear of course). This peak is called Pico the Villuercas and it rises 1601 metres above sea-level. The origin of the River Almonte is to be found here. You can drive to the top, but it is a bit difficult to explain how to find this particular road.

After a sharp bend to the left, passing a bridge, there goes a small concrete path steep upwards (12%) on your right hand. It is signposted with a quite big sign of Junta de Extremadura and something as 'Inclinal del Rio Almonte'. There is lot of Chestnut trees here. The road to the peak has plenty of hairpins. In some of them you can easily park your car and enjoy the surroundings. Normally there is no traffic at all on this path, so you might be find yourself alone. The road ends on a wider path. At this point turn right. Remember this, because you go the same road down later on. This road ends at Pico the Villuercas. Amazing views around here, and some birds like Chough, Alpine Accentor (in winter) and Egyptian Vulture, depending time of the year. Far down you can see the town of Guadalupe with its beautiful Monastery.

Go back the same road and go on to Navezuelas. Depending the time you have you can make a little extra to the Hidden Valley which is called Valle de Vieja. It is signposted at the end of Navezuelas to the right. Finally this road ends in the Valle de Vieja; a beautiful valley hidden in the mountains with exceptional flora and nice trees on the slopes. Take your time here; you can make short walks in each direction, following the stream at the bottom. Take the same way back to Navezuelas and turn right where you left the road to go to Valle de Vieja.

Again there is beautiful Cork Oak woodland at both sides of the road. You cross the hamlet of Roturas. Just follow the road through the village and keep going on. After a while you arrive at the roundabout where you turned right this morning. Now take the first exit and again you come along Retamosa and Deleitosa.

As soon as you cross the highway A5 (Madrid-Badajoz) you can either choose to take the highway to Badajoz and take exit number 227 or just drive along until you come to the T-junction where you go left to Jaraicejo.