



Bird-watching in Navarre

Birding Navarra



Reyno de **Navarra**
Tierra de Diversidad

What kind of birds can you see in Navarre?

More than 320 species of birds have been checked in Navarre, of which around 250 are regular inhabitants or visitors. The variety of natural environments in this region encourages a very diverse range of species typical of habitats as distinct as wet forests or steppes. These are some of the main species you will come across on your visit to Navarre:

Herons ▶

The heron family is very widespread in Navarre, the main species being the **Cattle egret**, the **Purple heron** and, above all, the very rare **Bittern**.



Purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*)

◀ Large carrion-eaters

Navarre is home to one of the most impressive populations of carrion-eaters, with some 20,000 breeding pairs of **Griffon vultures**. Less common are the **Egyptian vulture** and **Bearded vulture**, but you are very likely to see them if you go to the right places.



Bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*)

Hoopoes, European bee-eaters and kingfishers ▶

These colourful birds are very common and easy to spot. The **Hoopoe** and **European bee-eater** primarily inhabit the Middle Zone and the Ribera region. The **Kingfisher** is common on almost all the region's rivers.



European bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)

◀ Larks

Seven species of larks live in Navarre. The most notable of these are the **Short-toed lark**, the **Lesser short-toed lark**, the **Thekla lark** and the **Dupont's lark**. Most of them can be found in the southern half of the region.



Dupont's lark (*Chersophilus dupontii*)

Eagles ▶

The **Short-toed eagle** and the **Booted eagle** are birds of prey that can be spotted quite easily throughout the region. The **Golden eagle**, which is rarer, needs a little more effort and luck.



Booted eagle (*Hieraetus pennatus*)

◀ Other birds of prey

We should not forget to mention other birds of prey, such as the common **Red** and **Black kites**, the **Montagu's harrier**, the **Goshawk**, the **Peregrine falcon** and the **Lesser kestrel**.



Red kite (*Milvus milvus*)

Steppe birds ▶

To the south, the steppes and grasslands are home to populations of birds such as the **Little bustard**, the **Black-bellied sandgrouse**, the **Pin-tailed sandgrouse** and the **Stone curlew**.



Pin-tailed sandgrouse (*Pterocles alchata*)

◀ Woodpeckers

There are up to seven species of woodpeckers in Navarre. The most interesting of these are the **Green woodpecker**, the **Black woodpecker**, the shy **Wryneck** and, above all, the rare **Middle spotted woodpecker** and **White-backed woodpecker**, whose westernmost distribution limit is found in Navarre in the case of the White-backed woodpecker.



Black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*)

Crows ▶

Of the six crow species living in Navarre, we should highlight the **Raven** and most especially the **Chough** and **Alpine chough** which can form groups of dozens or even hundreds of birds in mountain areas.



Alpine chough (*Pyrrhocorax graculus*)

◀ Mountain birds

The extensive mountain areas, some of them with Alpine characteristics, are home to some very interesting species such as the **Water pipit**, the **Alpine accentor**, the **Ring ouzel**, the **Citril finch** and the **Snowfinch**.



Water pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)

◀ Chiffchaffs

The **Bonelli's warbler** and the **Iberian chiffchaff** are another two species that arouse a lot of interest in bird-watchers.



Bonelli's warbler (*Phylloscopus bonelli*)

Warblers ▶

You can see up to eight species of *Sylvia* warbler in Navarre. Those from mediterranean environments, such as the **Orphean warbler**, the **Sardinian warbler** and the **Subalpine warbler** are common. The **Spectacled warbler** is slightly rarer. You can also find **Dartford warblers**.



Spectacles warbler (*Sylvia conspicillata*)

Other birdlife

There are numerous other interesting bird species, including the **Red-crested pochard**, the **Black stork**, the **Eagle owl**, the **Scops owl**, the **Red-necked nightjar**, the **Great spotted cuckoo**, the **Tawny pipit**, the **Rock thrush**, the **Blue rock thrush**, the **Redstart**, the **Short-toed tree creeper**, the **Woodchat shrike**, the **Great grey shrike**, the **Spotless starling**, the **Ortolan bunting**, etc.

Navarre: a great place for birdwatching

Birdwatching has experienced a considerable surge in interest in the last few years and today we're willing to travel almost to the ends of the earth to admire these wonderful creatures. However, there are still numerous corners yet to be discovered for birdwatching, and one of those is Navarre.

Navarre is situated in northern Spain at the western end of the Pyrenees, and despite its small area (10,391 km²) it encompasses a wide range of climates and landscapes which encourages the presence of a huge variety of very different birdlife (grassland, woodland and water birds, birds of prey, etc.), which can be observed easily without having to travel great distances. To respond to this growing demand in a professional manner, the government of Navarre has set up **Birding Navarra**, a service geared specifically towards birders to give them all the information and guidance they need to pursue their hobby and guarantee as far as possible that their trip will be successful.

Navarra



● The Atlantic Valleys

These are the damp valleys of the north whose river basins flow out into the Cantabrian Sea. The terrain is rugged, with deep basins and fast-moving rivers. There are numerous wet forests of deciduous trees and the birds that inhabit this region are the eurosiberian species typical of woodlands, grasslands and low mountain regions.



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● The Western Sierras

This region features major mountain ranges including the Aralar, Urbasa-Andia and Lokiz sierras, deep but relatively open valleys, and rugged terrain. The lush woodland vegetation still points to a predominantly atlantic influence, but this is combined with a more mediterranean type of vegetation towards the south. Mountain pastures, grassland meadows and wider rivers are other features of this landscape. Birdlife is extremely varied here, with woodland and grassland birds and numerous birds of prey.



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● The Ribera Region

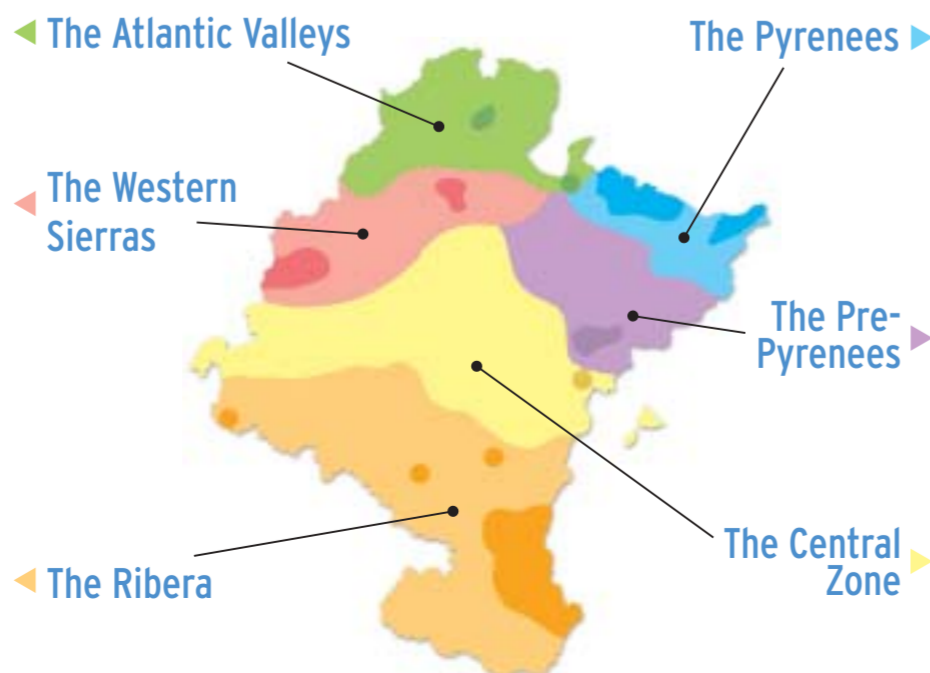
This forms the southern extreme of the province and consists of a vast plain crossed by large rivers, including the Arga, the Aragon and the Ebro. Croplands and steppes occupy most of the territory, and other notable features are the lush thickets that mark out the river banks and some Mediterranean woods bearing witness to the past. Grassland and mediterranean birds are the most characteristic species here.



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Navarre: a land of diversity

Because of its geographical position and relief, Navarre is home to a tremendous variety of natural landscapes, so it is not easy to sum up this diversity in just a few words. Very generally speaking, we can distinguish six natural regions of interest for bird-watching:



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● The Pyrenees

North-east Navarre is where the westernmost end of the Pyrenean range is located. The land here is exceptionally rugged, with plunging valleys and soaring mountains whose peaks reach altitudes ranging from 1,000 to almost 2,500 metres. The valley bottoms and mountains are home to lush deciduous and conifer woods as well as wide tracts of alpine meadows. The most characteristic birds here are woodland and mountain birds.

● The Pre-Pyrenees

These are the spurs of the Pyrenees stretching towards the south and have a marked Mediterranean influence slightly mitigated by their altitude and the rugged terrain. A notable feature here are the numerous foci (rocky gorges), carved out by the mountain rivers. There are still large conifer woods as well as mediterranean oak woods towards the south of the region. Birdlife is abundant, most notably birds of prey and rock-dwelling birds.

● The Middle Zone

This is a transitional area between the mountains and the Ebro river basin. It is of average ruggedness and although a large part of it has been transformed into crop fields there are still excellent examples of the original forests of holm and Portuguese oaks. This is a good spot to see birds of prey and a more Mediterranean type of birdlife.



www.birding.navarra.es
e-mail: birding@navarra.es



Gobierno de Navarra

Where can you bird watch in Navarre?



Short-toed eagle (*Circus gallicus*)
© Ricardo Rodríguez



Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)
© Joseba del Villar

Birding Navarre has selected a series of locations whose characteristics, infrastructures and species make them ideal for birdwatching.

Here you will find information points, signposted paths, lookout points and, in many cases, observatories, offering a whole series of facilities to birders. From the recommended spots you can observe almost all the species of interest in Navarre.

Recommended spots:

- 1 Señorío de Bertiz Natural Park** Valles Atlánticos
Oak and beech woods in the Atlantic Baztan Valley.
- 2 Robledales de Ultzama** Sierras Occidentales
Oak woods and atlantic countryside.
- 3 Sierra de Urbasa-Andía Natural Park** Sierras Occidentales
A large mountain range with extensive beech woods, mountain pastures and rocky outcrops.
- 4 Linduz-Ibañeta** Valles Atlánticos
Mountain passes with beech woods and pasturelands; a key spot for migratory birds.
- 5 Irati-Abodi** Pirineo
Mountains with beech and fir woods and pasturelands.
- 6 Belagua** Pirineo
A mountainous area with forests of scots pine, beech and mountain pine, pasturelands and rocky outcrops.
- 7 Nature Reserves of the Lumbier and Arbáñun Gorges** Prepireneo
Huge rocky canyons and Mediterranean woodlands.
- 8 Sangüesa and the surrounding area** Zona Media
River valley and lower mountain slopes with Mediterranean vegetation.
- 9 Las Cañas Reservoir Nature Reserve** Ribera
Lagoon of open waters and marshy vegetation.
- 10 Sotos del Arga** Ribera
Mediterranean river thickets and copses on the river Arga.
- 11 Pitillas Lake Nature Reserve** Ribera
Endorheic (inward draining) pool in a steppe-like environment.
- 12 Bardenas Reales Natural Park** Ribera
Steppe-like plains with earthy outcrops and the remains of Mediterranean pine forests.

Migratory birds

Navarre lies at a strategic point for migratory birds on the main European-Atlantic route where the Bay of Biscay and the Pyrenees form a funnel. The Pyrenean passes in Navarre are well-known as being excellent points for observing migratory birds, especially in autumn, particularly flocks of birds such as geese, storks, diurnal raptors, cranes, pigeons and perching birds. After overcoming these difficult mountain areas, the numerous woodlands and grasslands offer a place for terrestrial birds to rest and feed, while the wetlands play host to countless water fowl.

Izalzu (Valle de Salazar)



Selva de Irati

A network of information at your service

Birding Navarre has an extensive Ornithological Information Network to address the needs of birdwatchers. This network not only provides information on what areas to visit, the species that inhabit them and the best time of year to visit them, but also offers a constantly updated information service on birdwatching and the most interesting events taking place at any given time.



Orphean warbler (*Sylvia hortensis*)
© Eduardo Ayala



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Bird-watcher at the Pitillas Lagoon

How is the network organised?

Birding Navarre website:

www.birding.navarra.es

This website is managed from the network's head office and is updated several times a week. Here you will find descriptions of Navarre: its different regions and habitats, its birdlife, selected birdwatching sites with descriptive texts on each of them, advice on visiting Navarre and all its sights of interest, contact details for associated services and even updated news on which birds are currently being observed and where... in short, everything you need to plan your birdwatching trip to Navarre.

1 Bird Information Points

There are six offices distributed around Navarre which specialise in providing bird-watching information on the region. These are as follows:

- **Pitillas Lake Bird Observatory**
Carretera NA-5330, km. 5. PITILLAS. Tlf: 619 463 450
- **El Bordón Bird Observatory**
Carretera N-111. VIANA. Tlf: 696 830 898
- **Las Foces Interpretation Centre**
Plaza Mayor s/n. LUMBIER. Tlf: 948 880 874
- **Ochagavía Interpretation Centre**
Carretera Izalzu, s/n. OCHAGAVÍA. Tlf: 948 890 641
- **Roncal Interpretation Centre**
Gayarre, s/n. RONCAL. Tlf: 948 475 316
- **Orgi Oak Forest Natural Recreation Area**
LIZASO (Ultzama). Tlf: 948 305 300



Cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
© Ricardo Rodríguez

Our website also gives dates and opening hours of each of these information points.

Advisory Service

If you have any queries, you can contact our Advisory Service at birding@navarra.es which will be delighted to assist you.



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Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*)



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Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*)

Travelling to Navarre

Navarre is easy to reach whichever way you travel:

By road:

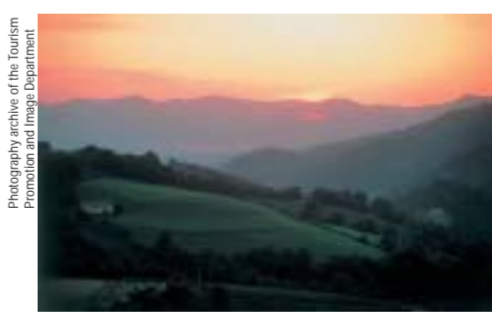
- From the north (France and Guipúzcoa) via the N-1, A-15 and N-121-A.
- From the west (Álava, La Rioja) via the A-10 and N-111/A-12.
- From the east (Huesca) via the N-240/A-21.
- From the south (Zaragoza, Soria, Madrid) via the AP-15 and the N-121.

By train:

- From Madrid, Zaragoza (Saragossa), San Sebastián-Irun, etc

By air:

- **Pamplona** airport (Noain): 8 kilometres from Pamplona.
 - **San Sebastián** airport (Hondarribia, Guipúzcoa): 100 km from Pamplona.
 - **Vitoria** airport (Foronda, Álava): 100 km from Pamplona.
 - **Bilbao** airport (Loiu, Vizcaya): 165 km from Pamplona.
 - **Biarriz** airport: 130 km from Pamplona
- These airports have flights to Madrid, Barcelona, London, Paris and other destinations.*
- By sea:**
- Bilbao-Portsmouth ferry: Port of Santurce/Santurtzi, 180 km from Pamplona.



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Baztan valley at sunset



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Department of Culture and Tourism
Príncipe de Viana Institution

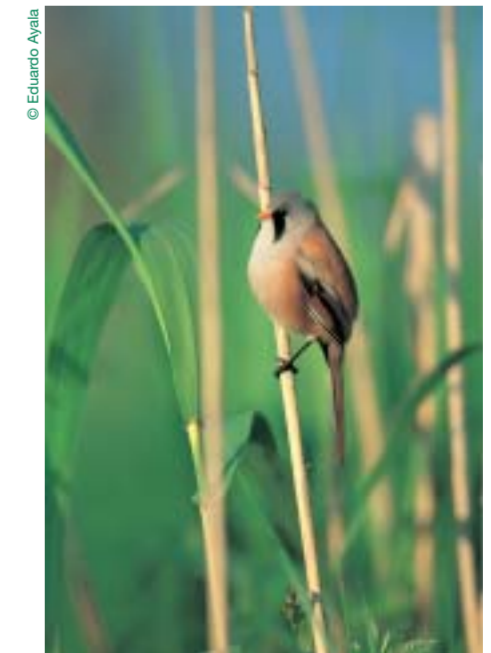
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Bearded tit (*Panurus biarmicus*)