

# GUÍA DE TURISMO ORNITOLÓGICO

ENTORNO URBANO Y PERIURBANO DE LA  
CIUDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MELILLA



Búho desértico (*Bubo ascalaphus*)  
© Francisco J. Pérez Ruiz

# **GUÍA DE TURISMO ORNITOLÓGICO**

## **Entorno urbano y periurbano de la Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla**

por Francisco José Pérez Ruiz



**Melilla**

**Patronato de Turismo de Melilla**

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## PRESENTATION

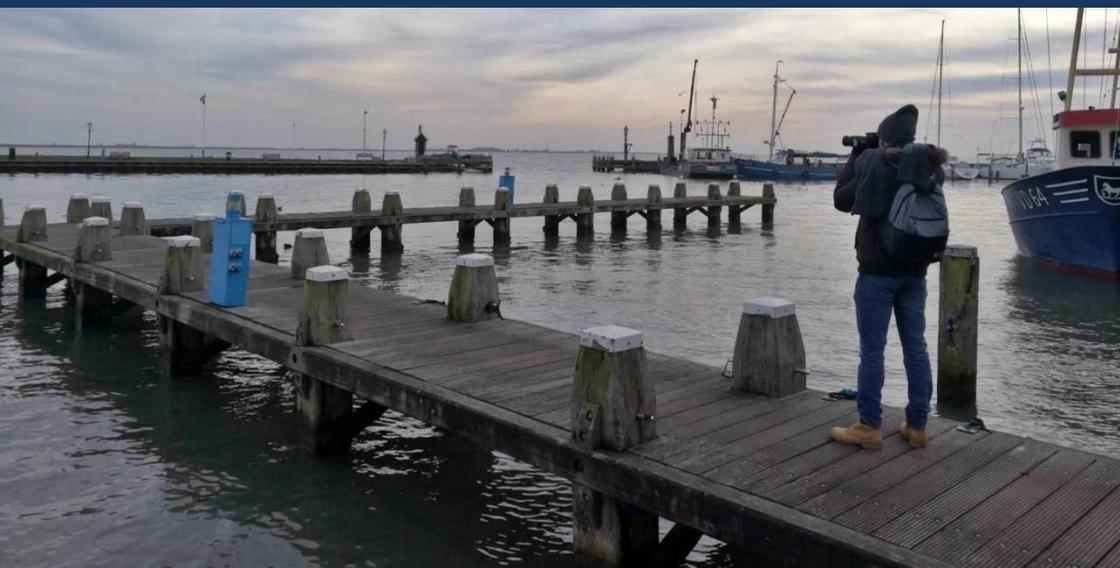
Located in North Africa, at the base of the prominent Cape Tres Forcas, is the Spanish city of Melilla, which, given its geographical location, includes some of the most fascinating natural diversity in Spain, where birds are the main embodiment of this variety.

In addition to the previously mentioned cape that crowns the city to the north, attracting a high density of migratory birds like a lighthouse, to the south we find the brackish lagoon of the Mar Chica, a RAMSAR listed area due to its priceless ornithological value. In addition, the roof of the area is crowned by Mount Gurugú, an 800-metre high massif belonging to the Atlas range, which plays its part as an ecosystem for Melilla's fauna.

All these factors, plus its position within the African continent, and the increasing number of species moving northwards, make Melilla an undoubtedly ecotourism destination for bird and nature lovers who want to enjoy different species with the advantage of not having to leave Spain.

**Bulbul naranjero (*Pycnonotus barbatus*)**  
© Francisco J. Pérez Ruiz





## BIRDWATCHING

Birdwatching is a growing phenomenon, especially in the field of sustainable tourism. More and more people of all ages are enjoying ornithological tourism and birdwatching. This kind of tourism is much friendlier and values the environment in a more sustainable way.

Melilla, as already mentioned, has the perfect location for bird lovers, who can enjoy the exoticism of Africa without leaving Spain, in a city that, without exceeding 12 km<sup>2</sup>, is home to an enormous biodiversity and different environments that are surprising for having, each one of them, their own different birdlife.

For all these reasons, this guide offers us routes and places to enjoy our own unique and striking birds, as well as the nature that surrounds them, linking the natural beauty of the city with the mysticism that makes this destination an important point for birdwatchers.

## ETHICAL CODE FOR BIRDWATCHING

The Spanish Ornithological Society SEO/BirdLife gives us some “good practices” to take into account in order to carry out this activity without disturbing the birds or their habitat:

The well-being of the birds comes first.

1. Habitat must be protected.
2. The behaviour of birds must not be altered.
3. Be cautious about sharing sensitive information about protected species and collaborate when you observe a risky situation affecting them.
4. Do not harass discursive species or rarities.
5. Respect bird protection guidelines at all times.
6. Respect the rights of land owners and field workers.
7. Respect the rights of people in the observation area and basic safety rules.
8. If you want to share your quotations, do so with caution and with the understanding that they can improve knowledge.
9. Be part of a sustainable tourism model that contributes to the maintenance of bird-friendly rural environments.

More information:



Moroccan Wagtail (*Motacilla alba ssp subpersonata*)  
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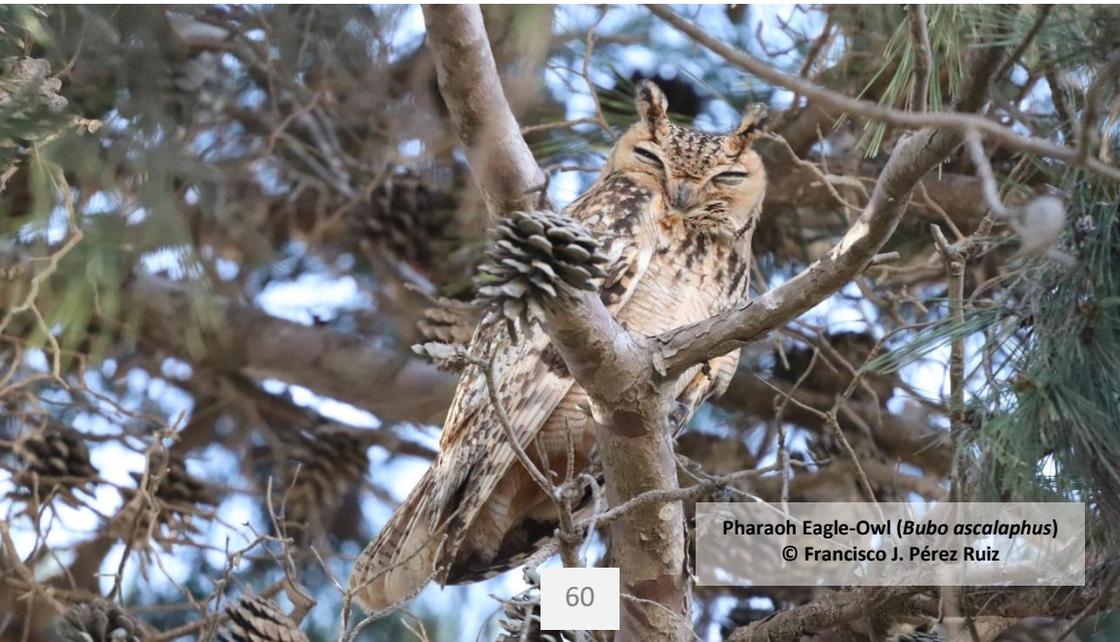


## BIRDWATCHING IN NATURA 2000 NETWORK

Natura 2000 is a European ecological network of biodiversity conservation areas. It aims to ensure the long-term survival of species and habitat types in Europe, helping to halt biodiversity loss. It is the main instrument for nature conservation in the European Union.

In Melilla there are two areas belonging to this network, both catalogued SACs (Special Area of Conservation), the **Aguadú cliffs maritime-terrestrial zone** and the **Barranco del Nano ravine**.

These two areas are home to a very important biodiversity, with flora such as the *Helianthemum caput-felis* or the *Tetraclinis articulata*, as well as a large group of reptiles, micro-mammals and, of course, birds such as the Audouin's Gull (*Ichthyaeetus audouinii*) or the Barbary Falcon (*Falco pelegrinoides*) that breed in the cliffs of Aguadú, or the Barbary Partridge (*Alectoris barbara*) and the Pharaoh Eagle-Owl (*Bubo ascalaphus*) that rule the cliffs of the Barranco del Nano ravine.



Pharaoh Eagle-Owl (*Bubo ascalaphus*)  
© Francisco J. Pérez Ruiz

## WHAT IS AN ENDEMISM?

When we study biodiversity and its importance, one of the most important data to take into account is the location of the species, i.e. the space it occupies on the planet. While some animals or plants can be seen in any place, country, or ecosystem, others are specific to particular environments, relying on very special parameters such as temperature, humidity, food, etc., which makes them especially vulnerable to any change and, therefore, important and relevant for biodiversity conservation.

Imagine that specific dish of food for which it is worth going to a specific restaurant, there are dishes in all of them, but this one stands out and is different from the rest, and it is only found in that specific restaurant. That is Melilla for biodiversity in general, and specifically for birds.

Due to its specific location, as we mentioned at the beginning of this guide, **Melilla has a total of 14 endemic bird species**, some of which can only be found in our city in Spain, while others are shared with African territories such as Ceuta or the Canary Islands. These species are a valuable sample of our Natural Heritage, which is enhanced by a list of flora and fauna that make Melilla a reservoir of species for our country.

Given its importance, the guide below provides a brief overview of some of the most representative endemic species.

# GUIDE OF ENDEMIC BIRDS OF MELILLA

## LEGEND

**Phenology:** When this species can be seen. It indicates the months when it is found in our city



\*Strong presence, slight presence, absence

**Protection status:** Refers to the protection index given to this species by the IUCN.



\*Minor concern, near threatened, endangered, critically endangered

**Location:** the space it occupies in the city.



**Dark green:** Strong presence    **Light green:** Possible presence



E	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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**Great Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*):** ~25 cm. A bird that winters strongly in the city, although there have been signs of summer breeding in recent years. Pale grey in colour, with a black mask and white base. It differs from the Southern Grey Shrike that can be seen on the peninsula, the latter having pinkish tints and fewer whites on the wings.

Can be seen in open and semi-arid areas of the city, on lotus jujube and bushes that serve as hunting grounds.



E	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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**Common Bulbul (*Pycnonotus barbatus*):** ~20 cm. Abundant resident in the city, with an exponential increase in the number of individuals in the last decade. Brown in colour, with a darker head, black bill and tousled crown. It has a loud, insistent and repetitive, characteristic song.

Widespread, it can be seen in large concentrations in parks and wooded areas, especially in the 'Juan Carlos I' Forest Park.



**Moussier's Redstart (*Phoenicurus moussieri*):** ~12 cm. Occasional wintering bird, very scarce but increasingly frequent. Reddish-orange ventral colouring in males, with a dark back and a white tiara that gives it its name. Females are less brightly coloured and less eye-catching.



It enjoys rough open terrain, as well as semi-arid areas. In the city, it has been observed in the riverbed of the Río de Oro and areas on the outskirts of the city. .



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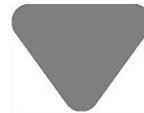
**House Bunting (*Emberiza sahari*):** ~14 cm. Bird recently settled in the city but has established itself as a successful resident. With earthy and reddish tones, with greyish contrast on the head, especially in males, as well as typical bunting facial markings.



Very urban in behaviour, it can be seen foraging on the rooftops of neighbourhoods and on the ground in parks and gardens.



E F M A M J J A S O N D





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PREOCUPACIÓN  
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**African Blue Tit (*Cyanistes teneriffae ssp ultramarinus*):** ~11,5 cm. A very common resident parid in the city. Yellow on the belly and greenish and bluish tones on the back, white face with black mask and dark blue crest. Different from the peninsular, among other things, due to the dark colouring of its head.

It lives in wooded areas such as Rostrogordo and the outskirts, as well as in landscaped areas with trees such as urban parks. Common in the Hernández park.



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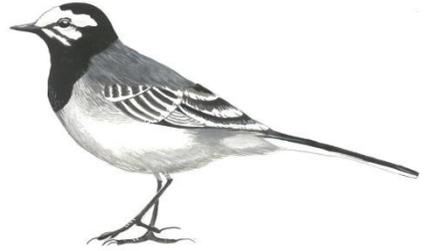
**African Chaffinch (*Fringilla spodiogenys ssp africana*):** ~16 cm. Newly differentiated resident as a species from the peninsular variation. Males with blue tones on the head, greenish on the back, light abdomen and white lines on the wings. Females own less showy shades.

Its habitat is identical to the blue tit's, but it is a forest bird. Instead, it likes to forage for insects and seeds on the ground.



**Moroccan Wagtail (*Motacilla alba ssp subpersonata*):**

~18 cm. A subspecies of endemic wagtail, the one with the smallest territory of all, entirely on the northern coast of Morocco. With white tones and a grey back, it has a black crown and very characteristic facial markings of said colour.



They can be seen near fresh water, such as in the Rio de Oro, the lake in the Forest Park or the Adelfas reservoir. Although they are associated with winter, they can be seen here all year round.



**Laughing Dove (*Spilopelia senegalensis*):**

~27 cm. Out of the three species of turtle dove, it is the only one that is strictly African. With purplish and reddish tones, and smaller and more stylised than other turtledoves, it has a characteristic spotting on its neck. It can only be seen in our city and the Canary Islands.



Linked to aquatic and calm environments, it can be seen throughout the Rio de Oro, as well as in the surrounding orchards.





**Barbary Partridge (*Alectoris barbara*):** ~34 cm. Gallinaceous bird that has its healthiest and most natural population in Melilla. Stubby in stature with a general grey colouring and reddish touches, this African species has a clearly different appearance from the red-legged partridge that can be seen in the rest of Spain.

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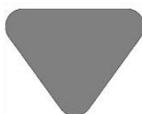


It enjoys undergrowth areas with rocky ridges, slopes and sandy soils. In Melilla, both SAC areas and the car track maintain a large population.



**Cream-coloured Courser (*Cursorius cursor*):** ~27 cm. Another of the Saharan-influenced species, occasionally found in Melilla. With soft sandy tones and a dark ciliary line, it appears slender and slender. It cannot be seen on the peninsula but can be spotted in the Canary Islands.

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A sole runner, it enjoys steppes and areas of sparse, low shrubland. In Melilla it is occasionally seen on the southern periphery.



**Barbary Falcon (*Falco pelegrinoides*):** ~50 cm. The rocket of our sky, we are talking about the fastest animal in the world. It has a slate-coloured back, a striated belly with ochre colouration, an extensive cheek patch and a brown nape. This last characteristic differentiates it from the Peregrine Falcon, the species of the same name in the rest of Spain.



It breeds in our city, taking advantage of walls and cliffs as a safe vantage point from which to do so. A skilled hunter that can be seen all around the outskirts of the city. .

E F M A M J J A S O N D



**Long-legged Buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*):** ~60 cm. Our buzzard, Melilla's medium-sized bird of prey by excellence. With blonde-orange tones, short beak and rounded wings. A different species to the peninsular buzzard, our cirtensis subspecies has a large population that uses our fields for hunting.



It can be seen in the skies above the Barranco del Nano SAC, as well as the car track and the entire peripheral area.

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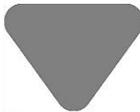
**Maghreb Owl (*Strix mauritanica*):**

~43 cm. The most numerous nocturnal bird of prey in the city. With tones ranging from light sand to dark brown and ash, cryptic and with pronounced visual pavilions. Different from the Tawny Owl that can be seen on the peninsula, its distinctive song fills Melilla's nights.

A very urban bird, distributed throughout the city, looking for tall trees such as ornamental eucalyptus to breed. Skilful hunter.



E F M A M J J A S O N D



**Pharaoh Eagle-owl (*Bubo ascalaphus*):**

~70 cm. The Great Sultan, the largest nocturnal bird of prey. Light ochre in colour, with tufts like "ears" and large orange - coloured eyes. Our most recent resident species in the city, it is similar to the Eagle Owl in the rest of Spain, but with a lighter colouring.

A hunter at twilight, silent and shy, very difficult to spot, but the Barranco del Nano ravine and its surroundings, as well as Aguadú, are the ideal places.



## COMPLETE LIST OF BIRDS WITH PRESENCE IN MELILLA

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	PRESENCE
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Migratory
European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	Migratory (in flight)
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Summery
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	Summery
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>	Resident – Hunting
Harrier sp	<i>Circus sp</i>	Migratory (in flight)
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>	Wintering
Eurasian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oediconemus</i>	Resident
Northern Ganne	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Wintering
Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	Summery
Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	Resident
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	Punctual
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Resident
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Resident
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Wintering
Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>	Summery
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Summery
Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	Wintering
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Resident
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Resident
Pharaoh Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo ascalaphus</i>	Resident
Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	Resident
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	Resident
Maghreb Owl	<i>Strix mauritanica</i>	Resident
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Resident
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	Summery
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Summery
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Summery
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	Summery
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Summery
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Resident
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Resident
Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	Wintering

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	PRESENCE
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	Resident
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Resident
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Resident
Red-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimilgus ruficollis</i>	Migratory
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Migratory (in flight)
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Resident
Zittin Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	Resident
Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Summery
Lark sp	<i>Galerida sp</i>	Resident
Moussier's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>	Punctual
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Summery
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus Ochrurus</i>	Summery
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Migratory
Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>	Resident
Western Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	Summery
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Wintering
Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	Punctual
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Wintering
Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	Resident
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Resident
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Migratory
Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>	Resident
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Resident
Western Subalpine Warbler	<i>Curruca iberiae</i>	Summery
Western Orphean Warbler	<i>Curruca hortensis</i>	Summery
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	Summery
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>	Summery
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Punctual
House Bunting	<i>Emberiza sahari</i>	Resident
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	Resident
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Summery
Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	Resident
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Wintering
Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Resident
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Resident
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Resident
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Resident

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	PRESENCE
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Summery
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Resident
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Resident
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	Wintering
Audouin's gull	<i>Ichthyaetus audouinii</i>	Resident
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	Resident
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Wintering
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Wintering
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Summery
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Resident
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispanolensis</i>	Resident
Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>	Resident
African Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes teneriffae ssp ultramarinus</i>	Resident
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Resident
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	Wintering
Moroccan Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba ssp subpersonata</i>	Resident
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Summery
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Resident
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Resident
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Wintering
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Migratory
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Migratory (in flight)
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Resident
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	Resident
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Resident
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Wintering
Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>	Wintering
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Summery
Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	Summery
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Migratory
Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus orialus</i>	Migratory
Oystercatcher	<i>Haemantopus ostralegus</i>	Wintering
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Wintering
Parasitic Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Wintering

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	PRESENCE
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Resident
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Resident
European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleucas</i>	Summery
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Resident
Balearic Shearwater	<i>Puffinus mauritanicus</i>	Summery
Cory's shearwater	<i>Calonectris borealis/diomedea</i>	Summery
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Resident
Barbary Partdrige	<i>Alectoris barbara</i>	Resident
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Resident
African Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla spodyogenis</i>	Resident
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Wintering
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Resident
Blue Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	Resident
Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	Summery
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	Wintering
European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	Resident
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	Wintering
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Wintering
European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Summery
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	Resident
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Resident
Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus/apus</i>	Summery
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Resident
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Wintering
Little Grebe	<i>Tchybaptus ruficollis</i>	Resident
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Wintering
Western Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Iduna opaca</i>	Summery
Melodious Warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	Summery



European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

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## Areas of Interest

- 1.** Nano River Ravine  
Hiking Zone
- 2.** Rostrogordo Pine Forests  
Nature Area
- 3.** Quemadero Ravine  
Hiking Zone
- 4.** Sendero verde de la pista de carros

- 5.** Juan Carlos I Forest Park  
Urban Forest Park
- 6.** Hernández Park  
Historic Garden
- 7.** Lobera Park  
Urban Park

-  Area Extension
-  Green Zones
-  Rivers of the City
-  Border



## 1/ SAC BARRANCO DEL NANO RAVINE

### PERIPHERAL AREA

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Barranco del Nano is a space belonging to the Natura 2000 Network as a SAC area, formed by an old riverbed carved into the rock, forming gullies, vertical walls and a sandy bed. The ecosystem is mostly made up of Mediterranean scrubland and pine forests, although the dry riverbed area has native plant species such as araar, wild olive, carob and kermes oak, as well as eucalyptus plantations. The upper area, under the Tres Coronas hill, also holds a replanting area with young trees and shrubs.

#### HIKING TRAIL

The hike along the ravine has two possible variants: the main path, about 2.07 km long, starts at the hill Cerro de las Tres Coronas and runs along the riverbed, crossing winding wooden bridges until it reaches a fork that takes you up through the American army track to a tall forest of Aleppo pines and eucalyptus trees, whose path leads to the Adelfas reservoir, our goal.

An alternative route takes advantage of this fork in the route and continues along the riverbed towards its end at Mariguari. Although it is somewhat shorter, about 1.86 km, the path cuts through a rocky area in the dry riverbed and increases its difficulty slightly.

## ORNITHOLOGICAL INTEREST AND RELEVANT BIRDS

We are facing an area of vital importance for biodiversity, due to the fauna it shelters and its relevance for the migratory passage of species. Its topography favours the presence of Moorish partridge and wood pigeon, making it the perfect hunting ground for large birds of prey such as the booted eagle, Bonelli's eagle, sparrow hawks, kestrels and, of course, our pharaoh eagle owl. In addition, its various woodlands are the perfect refuge for migratory birds such as the European bee-eater, cuckoo, countless gnatcatchers and warblers.

It is also worth mentioning that the Las Adelfas reservoir is home to a large number of waders, herons and seagulls such as the common sandpiper, common greenshank, Moroccan wagtail, grey heron, gulls such as the omnipresent yellow-legged seagull but also the protected Audouin's gull or red-billed gull, grebes, coots..., and an innumerable list of species that have a break in their migration to hydrate themselves in its waters.

## PHENOLOGY

Any time of the year is perfect to visit this place, although we recommend spring for a full enjoyment of its fauna and flora.

## SUGGESTED ROUTE STARTING POINTS



Entrance via reservoir



Entrance via replanting area



**2.** Cerro de las Tres Coronas Viewpoint



**1.** Las Adelfas Reservoir  
Nano river

Tails

- 1.** Las Adelfas Reservoir
- 2.** Cerro de las coronas Viewpoints
-  Hiking Routes
-  Trails
-  Area Extension

# Nano River Ravine

Areas of Interest



## 2/ BARRANCO DEL QUEMADERO RAVINE AND AGUADÚ VIEWPOINT

PERIPHERAL AREA

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Barranco del Quemadero ravine is the terrestrial area included in the Aguadú SAC, a space formed by a small humid canyon under the shade of large trees. The flora we can find, alongside the omnipresent pines, is made up of aromatic plants such as thyme or rosemary, araares, mastic trees and a good number of cat's head rockroses, the most important plant species in Melilla in terms of protection status. From the final viewpoint over the cliffs of Aguadú a panoramic view of Mediterranean coral can be seen.

### HIKING TRAIL

A very pleasant walk of less than 500 metres along a path flanked by cypress trees, both of the Greek and Californian species. We continue along the southern slope of the Barranco del Quemadero ravine, passing through areas of pine forest dotted with bird nesting boxes, as well as old trenches and bunkers, evidence of territorial tensions in the area, which covers part of the border perimeter.

We will reach a platform over the ravine where there was an old animal crematorium that gives its name to the area, to end up rising above the magnificent cliffs of Aguadú, from the viewpoint, glimpsing the vast Mediterranean sea and one of the most biologically important areas of our city.

## ORNITHOLOGICAL INTEREST

As we have already mentioned, the area is home to a nest box project to promote certain species of forest ptarmigan, such as the great tit and the blue tit, allies in the fight against one of the frequent pests in the area, the pine processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea pityocampa*). In addition to these beautiful birds, there is a good population of finches, robins and blackbirds and, in the area of the viewpoint, we can observe the nesting area of gulls, especially Audouin's gull, which has one of the most successful breeding colonies in the Alboran Sea in this particular area. We can also enjoy the blue rock thrush, a bird of a beautiful metallic blue, as well as black wheatears and the imposing barbary falcons, one of our emblematic species.

Also noteworthy is the floral diversity of the area, its scents and colours at different times of the year.

## PHENOLOGY

We recommend late spring and early summer to enjoy the hawk flights and the merriment of the seagulls, although if you do it in late winter and early spring you will enjoy the yellow of the oxalis and jarilla fields.

## SUGGESTED ROUTE STARTING POINT



Only starting point of the route

**1. Agudú Viewpoint**  
Viewpoint



**2. Quemadero Platform**  
Viewpoint



**Quemadero Ravine**

Areas of Interest

- 1.** Agudú Viewpoint
- 2.** Quemadero Platform Viewpoint
-  Viewpoint
-  Hiking Routes
-  Area Extension



## 3/ ROSTROGORDO PINE FOREST

### PERIPHERAL AREA

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This is the periurban park of Rostrogordo, a pine forest which, although it has been subjected to excessive stress in the past, has recovered thanks to different projects and nowadays it is an ideal place to spend the day with the family or enjoy a walk in nature.

Although its ecosystem is predominantly made up of Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), many other native plants from later replantings dot its barbecue areas, lakes and recreational areas.

#### ENVIRONMENT

With an area of 0.23 km<sup>2</sup> that joins the Aguadú SAC to the east and the Barranco del Nano ravine SAC to the west, it has several paths that cross the area, as well as different barbecue sites, picnic areas and fountains where you can enjoy the day in a pleasant atmosphere.

Also in its heart lies the sports complex of the “Fuerte de Rostrogordo”, an ancient fortress with a relevant history that today has evolved into a recreational area where you can play different sports such as paddle tennis, football or mini-golf.

## ORNITHOLOGICAL INTEREST

A forest area which has its well-known representatives. As well as coal tit, blue tit and chaffinch, its pines attract a species highly specialised in tasting its pine nuts, the red crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) which, with its scissor-shaped beak, its colours and its calls, provide a special nuance to this environment.

In addition, you can enjoy the cooing of the European turtle doves (*Streptopelia turtur*) in summer, which have an important breeding ground in this area. Other animals to be enjoyed are the leper tortoises (*Mauremys leprosa*), a species of aquatic turtle that is abundant in the different irrigation ponds found in the pine forest.

## PHENOLOGY

Although any time is a good time to enjoy this landscape, the early and late summer, when temperatures moderate slightly, can be a perfect time to enjoy the birds and animals that crowd together to drink at watering holes and ponds.

## SUGGESTED ROUTE STARTING POINTS



Entrance via playground



Entrance via west parking lot



**2.** Children's Area and Campsite  
Picnic Areas



**1.** Fort of Rostrogordo  
Tourist Attraction



- 1.** Fort of Rostrogordo
- 2.** Children's Area and Campsite
-  Picnic Areas
-  Trails
-  Area Extension

# Rostrogordo Pine Forests

Areas of Interest



## 4/ GREEN TRAIL OF THE CAR TRACK

### PERIPHERAL AREA

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

We are talking about a natural environment dotted with old farmland, steppes, and partially dry riverbeds of small rivers, which gives the area a wonderful diversity of environments for enjoying walks or bike rides, as well as bird watching.

The Farhana creek and the area around Villa Pilar provide shelter for very specific species that can only be found in this part of the city.

#### HIKING TRAIL

With a length of over 4 km, this route starts at the southern end of the city and circles around it until it reaches the base of the Barranco del Nano ravine (connecting the two areas), making it a whole trail from the southernmost point to the northernmost point of the city.

It can be divided into two areas, south and north, with the south area consisting of 1.3 km until we reach to the airport, from where we can decide to visit the Forest Park, another privileged area, and enjoy the Barrio del Real neighborhood. On the other hand, the northern section extends for almost 3 km from the airport area to the end of the golf course, leaving us at the bottom of the intimidating Cuesta de la Peseta and the access to the upper area of the Barranco del Nano ravine.

## ORNITHOLOGICAL INTEREST

Because of the above mentioned diversity of environments, the options are diverse: in the southern area, on the shores of the Arroyo Farhana we can enjoy large birds and different types of herons such as the grey heron, little egret, cattle egret and, the crown jewel, a population of glossy ibis that feed assiduously in the river bed.

Heading north we can enjoy the abandoned crops, with a good population of Moorish partridges and different doves such as the laughing dove and the european turtle dove, as well as the swift sparrowhawks attracted by them.

In the wooded areas near the airport and Villa Pilar we can enjoy different passerines, especially finches such as goldfinches and greenfinches, which will brighten up our walk with their singing.

## PHENOLOGY

Spring and autumn are the best times to enjoy this pleasant trail.

## SUGGESTED ROUTE STARTING POINTS



Beginning in Arroyo de la Mezquita bridge



Entrance via CETI/Golf course



# Sendero verde de la pista de carros

Areas of Interest

- 1.** Golf Course
- 2.** Huertas del Arroyo Mezquita
- 3.** Trailhead
-  Hiking Route
-  Area Extension



## 5/ FOREST PARK “JUAN CARLOS I”

### PARKS AND GARDENS

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

An environment created for the enjoyment of biodiversity, housing six different settings (forest area, desert, palm grove, Mediterranean, aromatic plants and lake meadow) which, together, maintain a specific flora and fauna, making the walk a constant discovery of landscapes and the living beings adapted to each one of them.

Additionally, the meadow surrounding the central lake, with its striking geyser, is the ideal place to rest, read or have a picnic in a pleasant and fully naturalised environment in the middle of the city. The surroundings are meandered by a man-made river, with bridges and paths around the site. It is also an ideal place for children as it is a safe, fun park with a variety of playgrounds.

#### ROUTE AND ENVIRONMENT

The park can be enjoyed without the need to follow a specific itinerary, but fortunately following the perimeter paths allows you to follow a circular route in either direction.

We recommend starting in the forest area, with its scent of conifers and its enclosed woodland; then, bordering the lake, we reach the desert area dotted with cacti and succulents; crossing the main avenue we come to a varied palm grove that ends in a waterfall; From here we reach the Mediterranean area with its fruit trees such as pomegranate, olive and fig trees; finally we return to the beginning passing through a beautiful aromatic garden where we can find

rosemary, thyme and lavender under the shade of mulberry trees.

### **ORNITHOLOGICAL INTEREST**

One of the most suitable places to enjoy bird watching. We are in the area with the largest population of one of the emblematic species of the city, the common bulbul, in addition to other endemic species such as the western olivaceous warbler. In addition, in winter we can enjoy the area's only picarel, the wryneck, as well as a population of the protected common moorhen, which shyly hides and even breeds among the river's papyrus.

If we add to all this the fact that it is one of the most important migration stopover points in Melilla, we can see practically anything, and it is a real surprise to enjoy its birdlife.

Don't forget to ask if there are any scientific bird ringings, as this is one of the areas where they are regularly performed.

### **PHENOLOGY**

Its diverse environments mean that you can enjoy some species at any time of the year, with spring being the most splendid time to visit, although I would not miss the autumn colours and scents in its gardens.

### **PARK TO ENJOY WITHOUT AN ESTABLISHED ROUTE**

# Rey Juan Carlos I Forest Park

## Areas of Interest

- 1. Waterfall
- 2. Central Pergola
- 3. Geyser Lake
- 4. Children's Area
-  Viewpoint
-  Area Extension



**1.** Waterfall  
Forest Park



**3.** Geyser Lake  
Forest Park



**2.** Central Pergola  
Forest Park



## 6/ HERNÁNDEZ PARK

### PARKS AND GARDENS

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

We are talking about a historic icon of the city, a centrally located park that houses some of the largest trees in Melilla, as well as its own architecture and history that is worth immersing yourself in.

From its main gate that faces the Plaza de España and is crowned by the stone statue of Guzmán el Bueno, the same iconography of the city's coat of arms and its link to the house of Medina Sidonia, to its modernist promenades and its unique flora, we are talking about one of the must-see places for anyone visiting Melilla.

#### ROUTE AND ENVIRONMENT

The park should be enjoyed without a set route, as there are several remarkable landmarks in the park. From its eminent araucaria, through the central palm walkway, to a maze of arcares with Greco-Roman motifs and ending among the lianas of the ficus macrophylla, making the park a real delight for the senses.

In addition, its children's playground, fountains and a terrace where you can relax and enjoy a beverage in this oasis in the heart of the city centre, make this a pleasant experience and one of those unforgettable moments you will remember from your visit to Melilla.

## **ORNITHOLOGICAL INTEREST**

It has an omnipresent population of blackbirds that scamper among the hedges and gardens, with their incessant calls. It is also easy to spot more typical forest birds such as tits and chaffinches, as well as chickadees, which share the site with robins and chiffchaffs.

Not to forget that, in spite of its pigeons (as a self-respecting park), we are at the epicentre of the Kramer's Parakeet population in Melilla, an exotic species that finds in the buildings around the park the perfect breeding grounds to make this environment its domain in the city, so it is easy to hear its 'chattering' on the palm trees, or to enjoy its flights and colours.

## **PHENOLOGY**

Any time of the year is ideal to visit this place, with no particular predilection, as each date has its own charm.

## **PARK TO ENJOY WITHOUT AN ESTABLISHED ROUTE**



**1.** Music Pavilion  
Hernández Park



**3.** Araucaria  
Hernández Park



**2.** Maze  
Greco-roman

- 1.** Music Pavilion
- 2.** Greco-roman Maze
- 3.** Araucaria
- 4.** Children's Area
- ◆ Main Promenade
- ◇ Area Extension

## Hernández Park

Areas of Interest



## 7/ LOBERA PARK

### PARKS AND GARDENS

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A heritage park in the city, it contains a historical complex and museum of walls that made up the defensive zone of the land enclosures of ancient Melilla.

After several years closed due to interior renovations, this park is now a different kind of nature area, with a promenade dotted with fountains and pergolas, as well as a space for children to enjoy in its children's area, perfectly integrated into the surroundings.

Bordered by the Parador de Melilla on top and the Carvajal Auditorium below, it is an idyllic setting in the heart of the city centre.

#### ROUTE AND ENVIRONMENT

We propose a relaxed walk, without a route, as it is a small park whose charm is the enjoyment of its surroundings, the lullaby of the water and enjoying this patch of nature in the heart of the city, where its huge trees give us a sense of peace and serenity despite the hustle and bustle of the area.

We recommend that, after your visit, you continue on to the fortifications of Victoria Grande, Victoria Chica and El Rosario, to complete a route that is as beautiful as it is historic.

### **ORNITHOLOGICAL INTEREST**

Thanks to the huge pine trees that crown the park, as well as the hedges and water areas, it is a green spot that attracts many species, especially woodland species such as the great tit or our blue tit and chaffinch. In addition, the local population of pigeons is occasionally joined by the parakeets, mainly Kramer's, which attracts the attention of visitors with its splashes of colour.

In addition, during the migratory season you can enjoy the sight of different species at a migration stopover, which choose this environment to rest and nourish themselves before continuing on their journey.

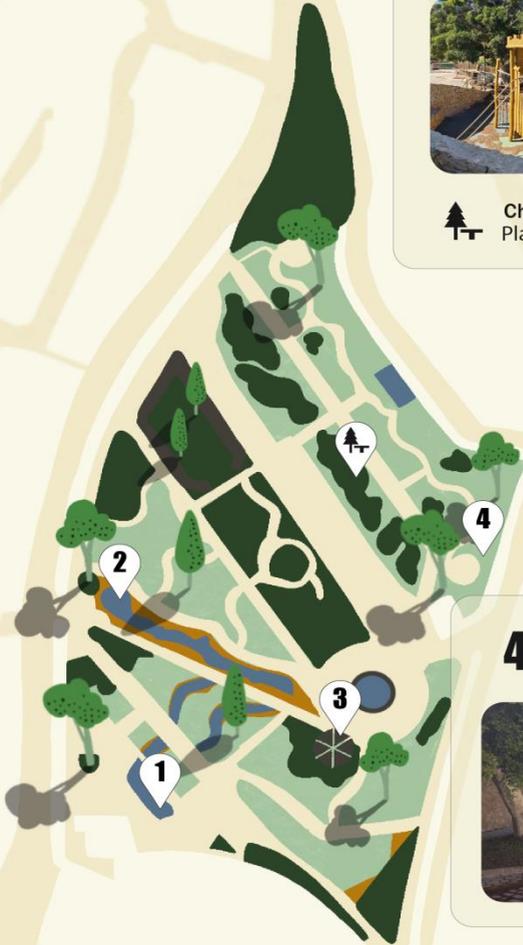
### **PHENOLOGY**

Any time of the year is ideal to visit this place. We recommend spring and autumn.

### **PARK TO ENJOY WITHOUT AN ESTABLISHED ROUTE**

# Lobera Park

Areas of Interest



 Children's Area  
Playground

**4.** San Carlos Moat  
Fortification



- 1.** Duck Pond
- 2.** Principal Waterfall
- 3.** Music Pavilion
- 4.** San Carlos Moat
-  Picnic Area and Children's Area
-  Area Extension

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)  
© Francisco J. Pérez Ruiz



## SEABIRD WATCHING

After this journey through the different ecosystems and green areas of Melilla, as well as its biodiversity, highlighting these fascinating spaces and its striking avian fauna, we cannot forget that the city is a balcony overlooking the Mediterranean, and that from its lighthouse we can glimpse another world to be discovered.

Its waters are rich in biodiversity, and as always the birds are its best representative, being able to enjoy a large number of species throughout the year. However, winter is its golden season, as the warm and relatively calm waters of our sea are the perfect haven for the rest of many travellers from far away, who spend the cold months fishing off our coasts.

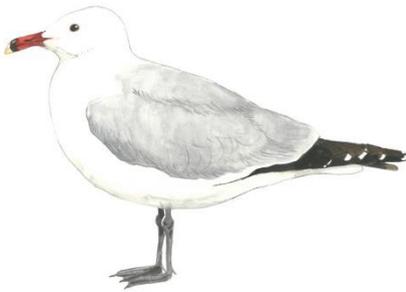
In this guide we will highlight a total of **12 relevant marine species** that can be enjoyed in the city, some seen from land or even breeding on our coasts, others temporary travellers that give real aerial spectacles of dives and chases.



**MELILLA SEABIRD GUIDE**

**Audouin's Gull (*Ichthyaetus audouinii*):** ~52 cm. Standard protected city gull, large, slightly smaller than the yellow-legged, all lighter in feathers, with a dark red bill and grey legs.

Can be seen on the coast, especially in the breeding season, it is not anthropogenic so it does not share direct space with humans. Highly dependent on fishing discards. Breeds on cliffs and city quarterings.



**Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*):** ~65 cm. The largest and most numerous of our gulls, its yellow bill and legs, as well as its bold temperament make it unmistakable.

They can be seen all over the city, in uncontrolled numbers due to human parasitism and their adaptability. They are harmful to other species in Melilla, such as the Audouin, as well as being a disturbance to the citizens due to their breeding and feeding habits.



**Black-headed Gull (*Coicrocephalus ridibundus*):** ~37 cm. A smaller, slender gull with a black cap on the head, a fine dark red bill and a dark primary projection.

It likes estuaries and mouths for their brackish and calm waters, and can be seen in the area of the water treatment plant under the influence of the Mezquita stream, as well as the mouth of the Oro river when it floods. It is more common in the winter months.



**Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephala*):** ~40 cm. Slightly larger than the Black-headed Gull, similar in appearance but with a more powerful bill, darker black on the crown and, above all, white wing projection on the primary feathers.

Occasionally seen on the coast, flying over the beach, on the water or on buoys. It is especially present in winter but not very abundant.



**Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*):** ~100 cm. Wintering. Large pelagic bird with pure white adults, dark wing tips and yellowish head. Famous for its fishing bites, it is most easily seen on somewhat windy and stormy days, as it moves closer to shore.

It can be seen at some distance from the coast, in winter, where it makes fishing approaches with the aforementioned bites. It rarely approaches land.



**Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*):** ~100 cm. Numerous winter visitors, iridescent black in colour and large in size, easy to identify both on the ground, where they can be seen drying their feathers with outstretched wings, and in the air.

In Melilla we can see it in different places, notably the Adelfas Reservoir, at the tip of the Cargadero de Mineral, where it can be seen sunbathing, and a small non-breeding colony under the ledge of the Military Museum.



**Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*):** ~46 cm. Numerous winter visitors. A fine and elegant bird, identifiable by its graceful flights and fishing bites, its dark bill and legs, and its black head in summer and with dark spots in winter.

It can be seen with a similar attitude to gannets but closer to the coast, even fishing in the harbour and boat basin of Puerto Noray port. It sometimes lands on the different breakwaters.

E F M A M J J A S O N D



**Lesser Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bengalensis*):** ~43 cm. Long-staying winter visitor, similar to the black-footed booby but with a powerful yellow-orange bill. Relatively solitary.

It can be seen on fishing flights or in small groups on the breakwater. Common on the southern Mediterranean coast but scarce or absent on the Andalusian coast. It has a breeding population in Libya.

E F M A M J J A S O N D



**Scopoli's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea/borealis*):** ~56 cm. Two very similar, pelagic species, recognisable as they surf the waves a few centimetres away by their light belly, brown back and glide with almost no wing flapping. Unseen perched on shore.

Crían Both species breed in the nearby Chafarinas Islands, and their comings and goings for fishing can be observed from Melilla, as well as the winter migration to the Atlantic coast of up to 20,000 specimens in one morning.



E F **M A M J J A S O** N D



**Razorbill (*Alca torda*):** ~39 cm. Increasingly numerous winter visitor. White on the belly and black on the back, very similar to a penguin due to evolutionary convergence. Powerful beak.

In Melilla, it is observed on migratory flights or as a reservoir on the coast, with a greater presence in recent years due to undefined causes, with a large number of weak specimens arriving in the Mediterranean, which end up appearing on the shore or near the coast.



E F M **A** M J J A S O N D





## MELILLA, BEYOND ITS COUNTRYSIDE

We have presented the city's incredible winged biodiversity, which allows you to enjoy its natural surroundings by looking up at the sky, so you won't miss any of its jewels.

But if you are looking for a more intimate contact with nature and birds, companies such as the Environmental Education Centre of Melilla (CEAM) offer a wide range of activities, workshops and events with birds as protagonists, offering exhibitions of birds of prey, biological collections, courses, children's activities and much more with birds as protagonists.

In addition, associations such as the Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO/BirdLife) have a local group in Melilla that carries out guided tours, scientific bird ringing and lectures to learn more about the richness of the autonomous city.

Without a doubt, the city's ornithofauna can be enjoyed in different ways, more or less immersive, allowing the visitor to observe the beauty of Melilla in a natural, sustainable way and valuing its considerable natural heritage, which has birds as its greatest ambassadors.

## CONTACTO DE ASOCIACIONES ORNITOLÓGICAS

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## MELILLA

TU PRÓXIMO DESTINO MÁS CERCA DE LO QUE IMAGINAS

### Patronato de Turismo



Palacio de Exposiciones - C/ Pintor Fortuny, 21



[melillaturismo.com](http://melillaturismo.com)



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**Horario de atención al público**

**Lunes a viernes de 9:00 a 13:00**

### Oficina de Turismo



Plaza de las Culturas 1 - L 3



[melillaturismo.com](http://melillaturismo.com)



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**Horario de atención al público**

**Lunes a viernes de 8:00 a 19:00 / Verano: 09:30 a 19:00**

**Sábados de 8:00 a 14:00 / Verano: 09:30 a 15:00**

**Domingos y festivos de 10:00 a 14:00**

## AGRADECIMIENTOS Y COLABORACIONES





LA AUTORÍA DE ESTA GUÍA PERTENECE AL  
PATRONATO DE TURISMO DE MELILLA



Tu  
próximo  
destino

Si el encanto de Melilla se mide por su rico patrimonio, el natural no debe desdeñarse.

En esta guía aprenderemos a pasear por la ciudad mirando al cielo, viviendo sus espacios naturales, sus parques y sus jardines con los ojos y oídos, para disfrutar, no solo de un paseo agradable, si no de la compañía de sus aves, especies propias y otras más cosmopolitas que harán de la ciudad un entorno que descubrir y valorar.



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