



### Natural values



The Guadalmina is one of those typical short rivers of the Western Costa del Sol District that begin to flow in the mountain ranges close and parallel to the coast. It flows through a very narrow gorge called “Angosturas (narrow passes) del Guadalmina”, downstream from the village of Benahavis, surrounded by a very lush forest composed of willow, maritime pine, oleander, Phoenician juniper, great reed, tamarisk, mastic tree, bramble, fig tree, common smilax, grape, etc.

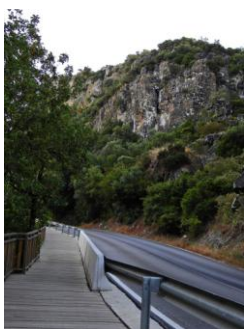
It is already hot in July and here we will have the opportunity to watch fantastic birds in the shade and even take a bath during our trip.

These are some of the birds we can find at Guadalmina River:

Bonelli's Eagle, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Rock Dove, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Swift, Pallid Swift, Bee-eater, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Crag Martin, Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, House Martin, Grey Wagtail, Robin, Blackbird, Blackcap, Sardinian Warbler, Cetti's Warbler, Firecrest, Wren, Spotted Flycatcher, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Crested Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Jay, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Greenfinch and Serin.



### How to get there



Type “Parque Torre Leonera, Benahavis” in Google Maps. There is a car park in front of the entrance to the park. Walk the pavement down towards the roundabout and go on the footbridge alongside the road.

### The Angosturas del Guadalmina

At this time of year, there will be plenty of House Martins, fewer Barn Swallows and some Red-rumped ones, as well as some typical urban birds like Collared Doves and House Sparrows, flying around the park and houses of the village. Other human friendly birds like Blackbirds and finches (Goldfinch, Greenfinch and Serin) will also be present in the surroundings of the park.

From Benahavis downstream, the river is escorted by nice cliffs at both banks. If we pay attention to the ridges, we could find Kestrels, Bonelli's Eagles and swifts, both Common and Pallid ones. The Sparrowhawks sometimes circle over the peaks, gaining altitude over the Crag and House Martins in an attempt to catch them in sudden dives across the flocks.



We will soon reach an access to the river from the footbridge. It takes you to a pool called “Charca de las Mozas” (Girls’ Pool), a fantastic place to enjoy a bath on our way back to the car after the walk. It is also the beginning of the more “thrilling” experience of jumping and swimming across the deep and narrow river bed... We will leave it for another occasion!

Some of the birds we can hear and watch from the footbridge are



Grey Wagtail, Cetti’s Warbler, Wren, Blackcap and Firecrest, this latter normally fluttering and calling in the widespread Phoenician junipers. Rock Doves are also present in the gorge, though flocks include too many feral individuals of different colours.



## The Sendero de la Acequia

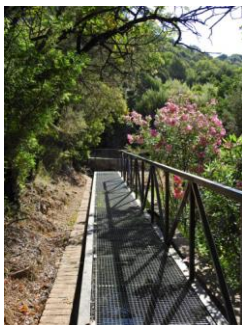


Around one kilometer down the Girls’ Pool, we will find a bridge over the river at the end of the gorge that can be accessed from a pergola by the road. It is the beginning of the “Sendero (path) de la Acequia (Spanish word of an Arab origin that refers to an irrigation channel)” a nice circular path across a cool and shady

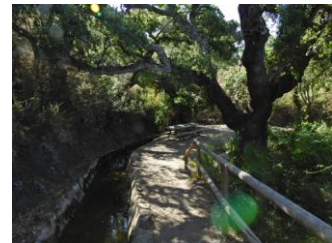
forest of holm, cork and Portuguese oaks and maritime pine along and old ditch used to irrigate orchards in distant times. Our suggestion is following the path up to a viewpoint 1.2 kilometres from the bridge before it descends to the river. That last part of the path beyond the viewpoint is of less interest from a birding point of view (though Golden Orioles and Cirl Buntings can be found at the eucalyptus stands around the chapel next to the road), and much hotter than coming back the same way.



Before walking across the bridge, let’s pay attention to a small quarry on the other side of the road used by Crag and House Martins to nest. We can also take an access a bit further away to go down and have a look around the river bed and even take a bath in some fantastic pools just below the bridge.



Once on the path, we will notice the presence of forest birds like Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Wood Pigeons, Chaffinches, Crested Tits, Short-toed Treecreepers and Sardinian Warblers. Spotted Flycatchers are very common in summer here and Bee-eaters and Red-rumped Swallows use to fly over the river bed.



We will reach a little dam from where some water falls down to the river amongst bramble and the rest goes into a pipe below the path that widens to become a track. We will soon reach the viewpoint from which we will see the sea and lower valley of the Guadalmina River, the chapel and eucalyptus stand next to the road, and the hills around Benahavis upstream.



At this time of year, after breeding, birds will be moulting and their behaviour turns much shyer,

specially during the central and hot hours of the day. So it is now time to come back, take a bath in the river, have a drink and enjoy the Costa del Sol summer!



## PHOTOS:

1. Vegetation at the banks of the Guadalmina.
2. Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*).
3. Footbridge along the road.
4. Juvenile Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*).
5. Charca de las Mozas (Girls' Pool).
6. Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*).
7. Rock Dove (*Columba livia*).
8. Bridge over the gorge.
9. Angosturas del Guadalmina (Guadalmina Gorge) from the bridge.
10. Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)
11. Footbridge over the irrigation channel.
12. Sendero de la Acequia.
13. Little dam where the water goes underground.
14. Benahavis from the viewpoint.