



Natural values

The Cerro (hill) Alaminos is the highest peak at the east end of Sierra Blanca, a small mountain range situated south of Coin, in the Valley of the Guadalhorce District. It is a natural watchtower with magnificent views over the sea and also the pass between the Valley of the Guadalhorce plains and the Costa del Sol.



The south face of the Alaminos Hill hosts an aleppo and maritime pine forest with a pretty lush Mediterranean shrub layer while the south one, exposed to higher temperatures and affected by fires in the past, presents a much poorer scrubby vegetation cover.

Apart for an interesting resident population of forest birds and raptors coming from the surrounding mountains, September is a good month to visit this site and enjoy the passage of migrating raptors on their way to The Straits.

These are some of the birds we can find (R = resident; MB = migrant breeding; P = on passage): Short-toed Snake Eagle (MB/P), Booted Eagle (MB/P), Bonelli's Eagle, Black Kite (P), Honey Buzzard (P), Sparrowhawk (R/P), Peregrine Falcon, Swift (MB/P), Pallid Swift (MB/P), Alpine Swift (P), Bee-eater (P), Great Spotted Woodpecker, Sardinian Warbler, Dartford Warbler, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Crested Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Jay, Raven, Chaffinch, Common Crossbill and Rock Bunting.

Birds marked with "P" are some of the migrant species that can be found on passage during September. Birds do not migrate at the same time: Black Kites will pass on a decreasing pace during September, like swifts and Bee-eaters, while other raptors like Short-toed Snake Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Booted Eagle and Sparrowhawk will keep quite a constant flow during this month. There will also be many other passerines on passage that have not been included on the list for the sake of simplicity though... keep your eyes peeled!

How to get there

Type "Urbanización Los Nebrales Coin" in Google Maps. It is located at road MA-3303 next to the km. 3 sign. Set the counter to zero at the entrance and take the road to the left (Alhaurín El Grande – Mijas direction).



Turn right at km. 0.6 into a small road.



Follow the road up to km. 1.9 where you will find a crossroads where you can park the car.

The pine tree forest



The track on the left takes us to the Cerro Alaminos across a pine tree forest after an easy 1.7 km. walk.



We will take left at the fork 25 m. away from the road, following the signs of the Gran Senda de Malaga.



Further on, we turn right, leaving the Gran Senda de Malaga, into another track that will take us to the summit.

On these trails, we may see or hear tits, Short-toed Treecreeper, Chaffinch, Common Crossbill Jay and Great Spotted Woodpecker.



The summit

After a few twists, we finally reach a forest monitoring house with a fantastic viewpoint over the coast. This is the end of our walk. It is now time to look up for passing birds but also down to a little watering place below the house, among the trees, where most of the birds we saw on our way up will come drinking.

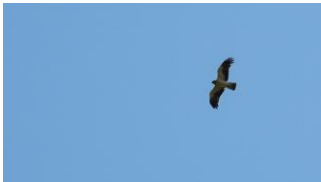


From the viewpoint, the bare south face is home for Rock Buntings, Sardinian and Dartford Warblers. If we look west at the rusty coloured peridotite hills of Sierra Alpujata, there is a chance to spot the resident Bonelli's Eagles of the area as well as the Peregrine Falcon.





Bee-eaters and swifts will fly across the mountain pass. If we scan the horizon to the north with our binoculars, we can find flocks of raptors circling on thermals to gain altitude and then fly down straight bound to The Straits. Good luck, they sometimes fly past over our heads!



PHOTOS:

1. South face of Cerro Alaminos
2. Access road
3. Car park
4. Trail to Cerro Alaminos
5. Turn left at the 1st fork
6. Turn right at the 2nd fork
7. Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)
8. Forest monitoring house
9. Coal Tits (*Periparus ater*)
10. Crested Tit (*Lophophanes cristatus*)
11. Great Tit (left, *Parus major*) and Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)
12. Juvenile Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*)
13. Panoramic views of the coast from Cerro Alaminos
14. Panoramic views of the Valley of the Guadalhorce from Cerro Alaminos
15. Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*)
16. Flock of Bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*)
17. Short-toed Snake Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*)