



STAGE **6**



STAGE 6

Frigiliana - Cómputa

LOCATION

Stage 6 takes you up to some excellently located viewpoints in the Sierra Almirara. The stage starts at the square Plaza Ingenio in Frigiliana and continues on to the settlement called El Acebuchal. This stage is **26, 4 km** long, it climbs up to the altitudes of over 1000 metres above sea level and it ends in Plaza del Carmen square in Cómputa.

DESCRIPTION

ABOUT THE BIRDLIFE:

The stage starts in an urban environment which, little by little, gives way to a pine wood. The wood, varying in thickness, will keep you company along a large section of Stage 6. Streams and scrubland continue towards the higher areas of the walk and they also determine the type of birdlife, together with the sheer rock faces which support a wealth of rock-dwelling fauna.



Dartford Warblers. PHOTO: JLM

HIGHLIGHTED SPECIES

The first section of Stage 6, after leaving Frigiliana, leads along the road lined with houses and copses of pine. Because of that, species such as White Wagtail, Black Redstart, House Sparrow and Starlings, which typically can be found in inhabited areas, share territory with the species more linked to woodland, including Common Blackbird, Common Chiffchaff, Great Tit,

DID YOU KNOW?

If we were to say what group of birds are typically Mediterranean, the genus of *Sylvia* warblers would deserve to be in the spotlight. There are 26 species and 34 subspecies of these small birds. Up to 8 different species can be seen during the year along Stage 6; here the scrubland species are especially interesting, namely Sardinian Warbler, Dartford Warbler and Spectacled Warbler. It is an interesting group of birds to watch due to their abundance and the variety of plumage colours depending on their sex and age. Identifying their song by ear can prove challenging both to an expert and a beginner birder. TEXT: ARM



and Common Chaffinch. Along this first tarmac section of Stage 6 you can also find Eurasian Collared Dove, Common and Pallid Swift, Swallows and House Martins, European Robin, Black Redstart, Sardinian Warbler, Coal Tit, Goldfinch and Serin.

Once you set off on the forest track leading to El Acebuchal, the true woodland begins, where, amongst the Aleppo pines you can see such species as Mistle Thrush, Short-toed Treecreeper, Spotted Flycatcher and Greenfinch, together with Wren, European Robin, Common Nightingale, Blackcap, Cetti's Warbler, Golden Oriole, Crossbill and Cirl Bunting as you get closer to the stream. Past El Acebuchal you will be walking along a *rambla*, a dry streambed lined with oleanders and large pine trees where the predominant species are Common Wood Pigeon, European Turtle Dove, Song Thrush, Sardinian Warbler, Crested Tit and Eurasian Siskin, though you can still see the forest birds mentioned above. This is the basic make up of Stage 6

birdlife until you reach higher altitude and open areas, where additionally you will be able to see Red-legged Partridge, Bee-eater, Hoopoe, Swifts, Common Stonechat, Black-eared Wheatear, Woodchat Shrike, Common Linnet and Rock Bunting. Past the Cortijo del Daire there is a combination of large extensions of broom and scrub where Short-toed Lark and Dartford Warbler breed; this is a good spot to pay attention to the sky looking for raptors. This *sierra* harbours Northern Goshawk, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Common Buzzard, Short-toed and Booted Eagle, and in the cliffs and gorges carved out by the streams, Bonelli's and Golden Eagle. You can also see Common Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon, generally close to the rock faces, where you can also find Black Wheatear, Blue Rock Thrush and Raven. Watching these species in such rocky environment proves to be especially rewarding for a birdwatcher. It's worth mentioning the presence of other species though they might be difficult to see, such as



A view of the part of Stage 6 which leads to Cortijo del Daire

PHOTO: ARM



Cuckoo, Scops Owl, Tawny Owl, Eagle Owl, Red-necked Nightjar and Green Woodpecker; in any case these are birds which are easy to identify by their call or song. As you arrive in Cómpeeta you are once more surrounded by the typically urban-dwelling birds.

T I M I N G

If you take into account the length and level of difficulty of Stage 6, combined with the best time to see most of the species, it is recommended to avoid the hottest months of the year.

NATURAL VALUES

The itinerary offers highly varied vegetation adapted to its characteristic environment (calcareous sands coming from disintegrating marble). The predominant plant formation is a reforested pine wood and various shrubs, including kermes oak, rosemary, juniper, and *cistus clusii*, also called *romero macho* in Spanish, "male" or false rosemary, as it closely resembles the herb. In lower areas the Aleppo pine is more abundant and as you gain altitude it is being replaced by the maritime pine,



Spiny-footed lizard (*Acanthodactylus erythrurus*). PHOTO: ARM



whose *fascicles* or needles are bigger and deeper green in colour.

In the areas where pine wood has not developed, it is substituted by scrubland consisting mainly of broom and rosemary. Along the streams and gullies there are oleanders, willows, brambles, rushes and, in shady spots, heather which is easily identifiable by its little branches of pink flowers. At the beginning of the walk boxwood appears, easily recognised when its leaves turn reddish in spring and summer. Another interesting species, which, together with boxwood are distributed at the border of Malaga



Spotless Starling. PHOTO: JLM



Mistle Thrush. PHOTO: JLM

and Granada provinces in the Iberian Peninsula, is the el *Cneorum tricoccom*. Both are catalogued as endangered in the Red List of Threatened Flora of Andalucía.

Yet another notable species of plant which can only be found along Stage 6 of the Great Malaga Path is the *Maytenus*



One of the lime kilns you encounter along this stage. PHOTO: ARM



Oleanders lining a stream on the way to El Acebuchal. PHOTO: ARM



senegalensis, its distribution is afro-iberian and in Spain it appears only on the eastern coast of Andalucía and on the coast of Murcia.



Dianthus malacitanus. PHOTO: ARM

Male and juvenile Crossbills. PHOTO: JLM

