

Trip report Spain

'In search of Iberian Lynx in Adujar'

12 – 18 January 2023



Dear reader,

My cousin Jillis Roos and I enjoy both watching wildlife and mainly the carnivores. We have seen wild wolves in the Netherlands together. Now we wanted to do a trip together and decided to go for Iberian lynx in Spain. I had seen these beautiful cats a few times but never really got decent photos. Sightings were mostly distant. For Jillis it would be a lifer and so we both had a goal and we were eager to go.

We planned the trip half January and hoped to be there in the middle of the mating season. We hoped chances would be best to see this cat.

As always I try as best to make nice pictures of the wildlife if I get to see it in the wild.

I hope you'll enjoy this report. Feel free to commend or ask questions!

At last always thanks again to www.mammelwatching.com for presenting such worth full trip reports.

Best regards,

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General information

Preparation

I have been in Andujar area before several times and it is well known by most people. Nowadays it is a major tourist attraction and many people try to get a glimpse of this beautiful cat. A lot of tour companies bring their guests especially to the 'La Lancha area'. This is the best viewpoint for lynx. You will never be there alone in January. Some companies also have hides for lynx watching mainly situated in private land. We considered trying one but only if we wouldn't be successful in the first days. In the end we didn't try the hides 😞

Sleeping

We stayed in Los Pinos in a room for two. We mostly had diner in the restaurant.
From there it is a 30 minute drive to the La Lancha viewpoint and 20 minutes to Andujar.

Logistics

We flew early morning from Eindhoven to Malaga and booked a rental car. We arrived early so we drove direct to La lancha viewpoint. The final day we drove back after lunch to Malaga and flew early evening.

Spotlighting

We only did a little bit of spotlighting. We hoped to see the cats in daylight and only would focus on this if we would fail to see the lynx. Luckily we didn't have to wait too long.

Money

Like in any European place you can mostly pay by card or cash.

Roads/Safety

Roads in Spain are good. Only the last part of the road to La Lancha is really bad and bumpy. Anyone who has been there will remember. We have driven this stretch many times.

Daily schedule

Daytime is from 8-18 this time of year. We mostly scanned at the La Lancha viewpoint all day. We had two visits to the dam (further down the road after the La lancha viewpoints). Also we visited twice the Jandula river to look for otter.

Weather

First days were pleasant with sunshine and 15C. Last days it was cloudy and sometimes a bit rainy and more cold even for Spain it was rather cold than.

Day by day

We drove straight to La Lancha and arrived around 16.30 at the viewpoint. We saw some **red deer** on the way up. Sunset is around 18.00. There was a some nice evening sunshine and it was quit no wind. I told Jillis that there probably would be quit some public trying to see the lynx. Well indeed there were even more people than during my previous visits. I would say some 100 people were spread out over the viewpoints. A large group of people had gathered at one certain viewpoint halfway. A lot of cameras and scopes pointed in one direction. A lynx family was hanging around and eating from a large fallow deer carcass. The deer had died the day before. People told it seemed to be ill last days. It was not clear if the lynx killed it or that it died because of the injury. The carcass was beneath a large tree and partly hidden in the undergrowth. A young lynx was eating and the mother was laying behind. It was quit still far away, around 250 meters. So actually for photos not that good, but by scope you could see it well. Well this was an excellent start with three **Iberian lynx**!

The next three days we would take the carcass as a stake out because the mother lynx and cubs would come and eat here. The following day the kill was moved a bit to a more open spot. It was very nice to see the cats eating and also the interaction between the mother and the cubs.

Jillis presented himself a digi scoping expert and made some nice footage of these lynx sightings. You can watch the short videos on his Instagram *Jillisroos97* the videos are presented.

Two times an *Iberian Imperial Eagle* watched from a tree above the carcass. It only overlooked for a while and flew away.

During the day we sometimes drove up to 'the torres' area or the 'Jandula river' just to see some other mammals. We saw on our way: **Fallow deer, rabbits, wild boar**. At the road to the Jandula dam we saw a group of **Iberian Ibex**.

At the Jandula river (on the other side of Los Pinos some 45 minute drive from La Lancha) we saw an **otter** one afternoon quit well. It's just a matter of luck if it shows up. We were told the otter usually comes out in the morning and afternoon/early evening. Other people had seen it fishing from the bridge, but we preferred to see it from the rocks on the riverside so we would have a low angle view. This worked out quit well.

Later some people told they waited several ours but the otter didn't show. So it is no guarantee...

In the dark on our way back we saw some **Iberian hare** crossing on the road.

After three days the deer carcass was completely eaten and the lynxes didn't showed up anymore. From than it was a bit more the classical way of scanning the area for lynx, which is far more difficult. We had another very nice sighting of the lynx family in the early morning. Jillis found the mother lynx sleeping under a bush. After a while the young lynxes joint their mother and she was grooming the cubs. They walked a bit and sat down for a brief moment in a more open area. They crossed a hill and luckily they sat down on a rock with a very nice morning sunlight. This was around 100-150 meter distance, so not very close, but very clear to watch especially by scope.

We also saw a few times some male **mouflon**. They keep distant and are rather shy we only saw this in first ours of the day.

One afternoon we saw an individual young adult lynx more close. But because of all people the sighting was disturbed and the lynx ran off. That is quit an issue with so many people watching. It is very difficult to keep everybody calm. The cats are not really shy, but if people start running or walking towards the cats the can react skittish.

The fourth day the lynx family was spotted far away on the other side of the valley. Now there were four lynx together! The old territorial male had join the mother lynx and her cubs. They hang out together mostly sleeping. But no mating signs. After a while they separated and the mother lynx and cubs walked to our side of the valley. The mother lynx hunted a rabbit just right in sight. What a quick rush! It was around 250 meters away. Quit a special sighting 😊

On our last afternoon a young adult male lynx was seen in the 'Torros area'. When we arrived we just could see a last glimpse while it walked off. It gave us a nice look back.

On our way back to Malaga we had a short visit to a birding place not far form the airport. Here you can do some birdwatching and there are some birdwatching hides. If you are interested in birds it is recommendable place to check.

All together we were very happy with this trip and hope to come back again in the future.

TRIPLIST MAMMALS

Iberian Lynx – 6 different animals. A mother and her two cubs seen almost every day in the La Lancha area. A single younger female close to the road in La Lancha. A young male in the 'torros area'. And the large territorial male of La Lancha that joined the mother and her two cubs on the last day.

Red deer – easy to see along the road to La Lancha and also from the viewpoint.

Fallow deer – small groups along the road to La Lancha.(and a carcass of a stag)

Wild boar – only two rather tame animals along the stretch two La Lancha and 1 single animal near Los Pinos.

Rabbit – here and there some individuals but not many seen.

Iberian Hare – 3 seen in car lights on the road to and from La Lancha.

Otter – 1 animal seen very well at the Jandula river close to the bridge near the dam.

Mouflon – a few groups of large males

Iberian Ibex – a group of 8 near the ruins next to the viewpoint after La Lancha. A single big male on the rocky outcrops.

Egyptian mongoose – roadkill on the way to Malaga



Typical La Lancha views





Mother lynx stretches in the morning



Red deer are rather common





Curious wild boar



Fallow deer



Iberian Ibex, an impressive male and a young adult





Moeflon, an impressive male and a young adult



Spanish Imperial Eagle



Mother lynx and one of the cubs





Lynx family together, a true privilege to see her and the cubs





The young female lynx above and the young male in the 'Torros area' beneath





Lynx showing 'live' how to hunt a rabbit





Lynx in last light not far from the road



The male lynx and the two cubs on a large rock on the other side of the La Lancha valley



The mother lynx at the fallow deer carcass on the second day



Spanish Imperial eagle having a look for a bite of the carcass



Black vulture and Griffon vulture

