

*Come home to*  
**PARADISE**

*Ecotourism in Asturias*



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# Introduction

*#AsturiasEcotourism*

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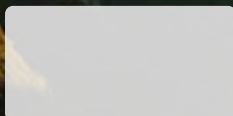
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greenspan  
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The spirit of the North



*asturiastourism.co.uk*



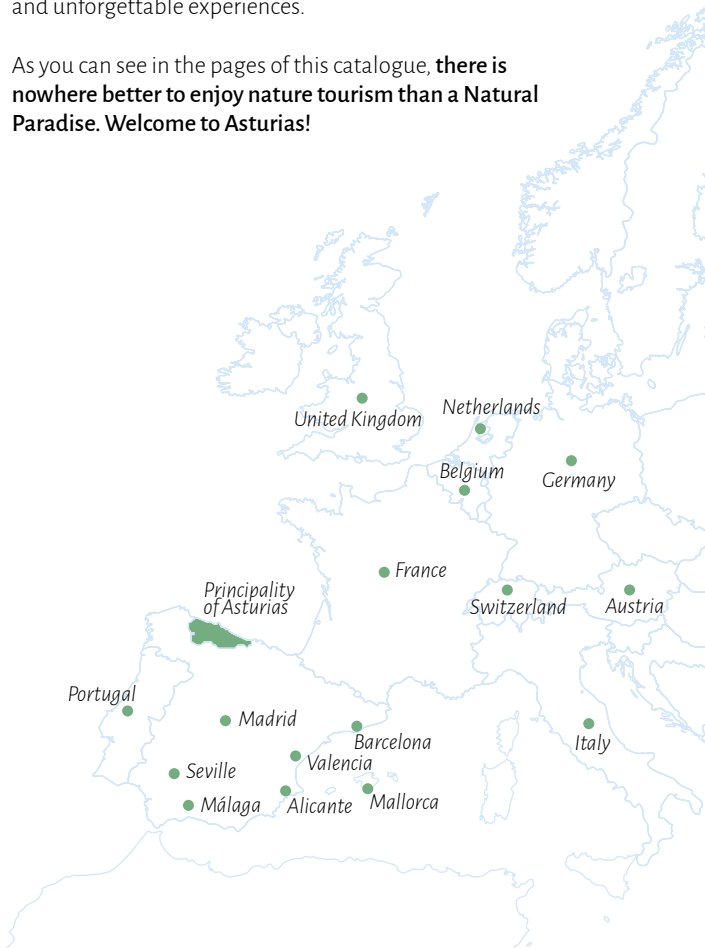
Nature watching

Lush forests and steep mountains adorned with a peaceful yet rugged coast; no detail is missing from Asturian nature for lovers of ecotourism. We are privileged and we want to share it by showing you a real paradise where you can observe, mix with and experience the natural world, including its landscapes, flora and wildlife, which in our region includes a large sample of the best of Iberian nature with touches of the Mediterranean and, above all the Atlantic. This is the Natural Paradise that we have preserved for you and that you will discover over these pages.

**Ecotourism** is nature tourism conducted sustainably and with respect for the environment, which contributes to local development and has a clear primary focus on the observation of natural resources while also helping to preserve the local geology, flora and fauna. It is an emerging form of tourism in Spain but it has seen rapid growth. Asturias has a magnificent cross-section of the main natural attractions on the Iberian Peninsula.

From the perspective of **conservation** and acting in keeping with being a good ecotourist in the authentic outdoor museum that is Asturias (we will give you some advice on how to do this in the Best Practices Manual), you will see that Mother Nature wanted to give you an unlimited list of possibilities for your visit. Unique species, unbeatable scenery and unforgettable experiences.

As you can see in the pages of this catalogue, **there is nowhere better to enjoy nature tourism than a Natural Paradise. Welcome to Asturias!**



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Rarely has a slogan better and more accurately defined the ecotourism possibilities of a region like that of Natural Paradise. That is exactly what visitors will find in Asturias, a place with all the ingredients to allow you to enjoy the best nature tourism.

Somiedo Natural Park

## Asturias, Natural Paradise for ecotourism

Lapped by the Cantabrian Sea, the Principality of Asturias is mostly covered by forests and mountains. Its intricate topography houses the highest peaks of the Cantabrian Mountains, with varied geology largely covered by dense forests and watered by a generous river system that irrigates the Principality from south to north.

*Asturias is home to an outstanding cross-section of Euro-Siberian flora and fauna, as well as Mediterranean touches which greatly increase the levels of biodiversity.*



Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

In Asturias you can expect to find **fauna and flora that is rare in the rest of Spain** and although our region barely represents 2% of the land area of the country, **67% of the national species of vertebrates** live here (including the mainland and islands), the highlight being the birds and mammals with around 75% of those found in Spain. As for vascular **flora**, we have around **2,200 native species**.

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*You just have to let yourself be captivated by one of the most comprehensive lists of protected natural areas in Europe, covering more than a third of the surface area of the Principality.*

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The Natural Paradise awaits you with its **7 Biosphere Reserves**, making it the Spanish province contributing the highest number of Biosphere Reserves to the World Network of the MAB programme and one of the regions with the highest density of these worldwide (Las Ubiñas-La Mesa, Muniellos, Picos de Europa, Redes, Ponga, Somiedo and Oscos-Eo), **1 National Park** (Picos de Europa), **5 nature parks**



Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*)



Crocus between leaves

(Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias, Las Ubiñas-La Mesa, Ponga, Redes and Somiedo), **1 full nature reserve** (Muniellos), **6 partial nature reserves**, **2 protected landscapes** and **39 natural monuments**. It also has the first declared marine reserve in Spain (El Cachucho).

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*Its prime location, breath-taking scenery and vast catalogue of natural resources make the list of attractions for nature tourism almost unlimited.*

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From bygone fauna (**dinosaur footprints**) to the most emblematic Iberian fauna such as the **Cantabrian brown bear**, the **Iberian wolf**, the **Cantabrian capercaillie**, the **bearded vulture**, **otters**, **golden eagles**, **wallcreepers**, **deer**, **Cantabrian ibex**, etc. and unparalleled flora led by forests such as Muniellos, the largest and best oakwood



Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

on the Iberian peninsula and one of the most important patches of forest in Europe. A forest map where beech trees dominate our mountains, where yew trees and hollies reach unexpected sizes and where the presence of oaks and cork oaks are reminiscent of the slight continental influences. A land rich in bio-indicator species which denote the good environmental health that await ecotourists. Otters, salmon or small Iberian desman reflect the quality of the freshwater and sea turtles and up to 25 species of cetaceans swim in the sea.

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*In the forest, lichens grow everywhere, a symbol of the purity of the air, while bears and wolves roam among the many hoofed animals.*

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## *Ecotourism best practices manual:*

Asturias is a Natural Paradise for lovers of nature tourism. From a safe distance and respecting environmental guideline and the rules to be a good observer, you will enjoy more than ever seeing how a bear walks with her cubs on a rugged mountainside, how the bellows of the deer echo in autumn, how the wolves peacefully enjoy their habitat in freedom and delight at the flight of one of the many birds that can be seen in the Asturian sky. Man, bears, wolves and the other animals have lived together in the mountains since time immemorial and we want it to stay that way, with the ecotourist enjoying the experience of seeing them and sharing the ecosystem with them. As a result we invite you to take part in **responsible tourism with the environment, respectful of the animal and plant species**. Watching them in the wild or following their tracks, but without leaving a trace of your presence there.



Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrino*)

Here we present some recommendations for you to make the most of your visit, taking part in **responsible** and **sustainable** nature tourism. Ecotourism/nature tourism must always be understood as a **conservation** tool:



- **Know and respect the rules** for the natural areas visited and the ecotourism activities in the event that regulations exist. The main legal tools for the preservation, planning and management of natural resources are: the Law on the Protection of Natural Areas (Law 5/1991, of 5 April, BOPA (Official Principality of Asturias Gazette) of 17 April), the Law on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity (Law 42/2007, of 13 December, BOE (Official State Gazette) of 14 December 2007, as amended), the Natural Resources of the Principality of Asturias Management Plan (Decree 38/1994 of 19 May) and the management rules for protected areas. The Regional Catalogue of Endangered Species of Flora of the Principality of Asturias (Decree 65/1995 of 27 April) and the Regional Catalogue of Endangered Species of Fauna of the Principality of Asturias (Decree 32/1990, of 8 March) revised in 2005 (BOPA No. 232 of 6 October 2005), in addition to the List of Wild Species under Special Protection and the Spanish Catalogue of Endangered Species (Royal Decree 139/2011, of February 4, BOE February 23 2011) make up the set of species under various forms of protection.
- **Be aware of** the protected areas because there are traffic restrictions in some areas.
- **Remember that many species are protected** by law. In addition to national legislation, there is a Regional Catalogue of Endangered Flora and Fauna in Asturias.
- **It is forbidden to kill**, hurt or intentionally disturb the wildlife, whatever the method employed or the phase of their life cycle. This prohibition includes their live retention and capture, the destruction, damage, collection or retention of their nests, their offspring or their eggs, even if these eggs are empty, and the possession, transport, trafficking and trade of living or dead specimens and their remains, including for foreign trade.
- **Do not change the behaviour of animals**, especially during the breeding season, or try to attract their attention. Animals may become aggressive when they are with offspring.
- **In the case of birds**, do not go near nests or breeding colonies.



Yew berries

- **The conservation status** of some threatened species, such as the Cantabrian capercaillie, does not allow tourist activities to be carried out around this species.
- **Do not collect** animal or plant species. A photograph is the best souvenir.
- **The welfare** of the species observed comes first.
- **Remain silent** and keep at a safe distance.
- **Wear suitable clothing and footwear.** Always in accordance with the time of year. Keep an eye on the weather forecast.
- **Avoid the use of perfumes** and colognes that announce your presence. Situate yourself in areas of headwind where possible.
- **Use suitable optical tools**, binoculars or a terrestrial telescope are always recommended.
- **Explore the fauna in small groups** of no more than 8-10 people.
- **Carry out the activity using local professional businesses.** Follow the instructions and advice of the guide.
- **Carry out the activity in the dedicated areas.** Use the signposted ornithological and fauna observatories provided. For bear watching, there are different areas provided such as fauna observation points and there is a programme to improve and expand these points. Do not wait outside these areas, beside roads or in areas that may pose a risk to yourself or others.
- **Do not throw litter or waste.** Respect the environment. Not altering the habitat is essential to the survival of the species.
- **Approach** cetaceans and other marine species, including birds, slowly and keep a safe distance which should be a minimum of 100 metres for boats and 30 metres for small zodiac type inflatable boats, etc. Do not remain close to the animals for a long time (Mobile Cetacean Protection Area).
- **If you observe concentrations of seabirds** on the surface, go around them.
- **Avoid disclosing in real time the exact locations** of the observed species or the location of nests. Social networks and new technologies have an immediate knock-on effect that can be very detrimental to the species.
- **If you find an animal injured** or in danger, call 112.
- **Do not use bait, food or calls** to attract the wildlife. This creates future problems associated with the behaviour of the species and constitutes malpractice for photography or ecotourism. Report this behaviour by calling 112.
- **Respect the rights of property owners.** Do not enter private land without permission and do not stray from the permitted routes.
- **Avoid going to observe fauna with dogs.** If you must take them, always keep them on a lead.
- **If there are information or interpretation centres** in the natural area, visiting these first always helps to make the most of the activity.
- **Respect the biological processes** of water and soil. Under a simple stone may be hidden a habitat for invertebrates.
- **Remember that in nature**, the best footprint you can leave is no trace of your presence.
- **Also see the Manual of Best Practices** for the Observation of the Bear, Wolf and Lynx published by the Minister for the Ecological Transition.



<http://www.miteco.gob.es/en/biodiversidad/temas/>

# Photographing Nature

There are a thousand and one opportunities for photographing nature in Asturias, reflecting the huge number of species and landscapes that we have. When out in the countryside with the camera we recommend that you follow the advice in the Ecotourism Best Practices Manual (previous page) and we also have the following advice related to photography.

*Western Coast landscape*

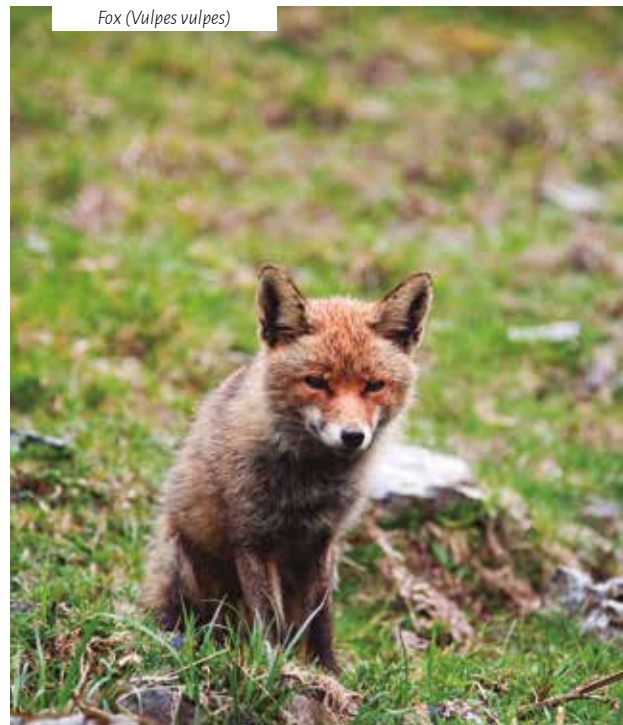


## Photographs that you cannot miss

There is an almost infinite number of corners to photograph in Asturias and you can always find one that is directly related to the photographer's interests, tastes, the moment to immortalise, etc. This makes it very difficult to create a list of recommendations, but let us suggest some photographs that you cannot miss out on taking in the Natural Paradise:

- ▶ The Picu Urriellu or Naranjo de Bulnes from some of the different lookouts from which you can see the most emblematic peak in the Picos de Europa (Camarmaña, Pozo de la Oración, Pedro Udaondo, etc.)
- ▶ Photographing the habitat of emblematic species such as the bear, wolf, etc.
- ▶ The landscapes of the East Coast and the West Coast, so different and so spectacular. Which? The best is to see both, from one of the strategically placed lookouts on beaches, cliffs etc.
- ▶ A different beach? Take a look at the inland beach of Gulpiyuri.

*Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)*



## Photography tips:

- The animal species are protected by law and some, under a protection system and/or catalogued, require special permits for their observation, photography or filming, permanently or in certain sensitive areas or times of the year for the species.

Avoid using the flash when photographing animals close-up. Remember that you are not allowed to handle them.

- In the mountains the weather can suddenly change. Always take suitable clothing, mountain boots and material to protect your photography equipment in inclement weather conditions.
- Take charged batteries/cells as well as spares (outdoor solar chargers are very useful). Also make sure you have enough memory cards. During a fauna-watching tour or photography safari, you will probably take more photos than you imagine.
- For reflex cameras, as much as possible avoid changing the lens and always do so with the camera off and

Photographing bears



- protected to minimise dust and particles entering the sensor.
- A tripod is a magnificent companion for nature photography. There are trekking poles which can also be used as monopods and vice versa.
- For photographing fauna, a zoom lens is recommended with a minimum focal distance of 300 mm (reflex) or the equivalent in compact cameras.
- Digiscoping is a technique that is increasingly used in photographing fauna. There is a wide range of lenses and adapters for the terrestrial telescope.
- Always choose the necessary lenses (tele, macro, etc.). An umbrella is useful for photography in the countryside; as well as acting as a parasol.
- Avoid carrying heavy photographic equipment, especially if you are going to take long walks in the mountain or to reach wildlife observation areas. Zoom lenses will give you more freedom and can avoid the need to carry several fixed lenses.

- ▶ It will be impossible to resist a panoramic photo from the Fitu lookout (Parres).
- ▶ In any of our oak groves or beech forests in autumn what is difficult is taking just a single photo.
- ▶ Do you like lakes? The Somiedo, Saliencia, Covadonga lakes, or Ubales lake among others, cannot be missed out in your photography collection.
- ▶ An image that will stand the test of time is that of the many dinosaur footprints that you will find on the Dinosaur Coast.
- ▶ If you like photographing birds, take away a good photograph to remind you of the wallcreepers in Picos de Europa, or of the aquatic birds in the Villaviciosa and Eo estuaries.

Picos de Europa National Park



# Great sightings

*Bears, wolves and other Asturian land mammals*

The brown bear is undoubtedly the emblematic animal of Asturias, but wolves and other mammals such as deer, ibex, roe deer, foxes and wildcats also live in our mountains. If you like spectacular natural sightings, Asturias is one of the best places to observe the great Iberian fauna.

Waiting for the great mammal

Few sensations are comparable to that of observing the great animals of the Iberian fauna. The sighting of wild animals is one of the most fascinating and captivating experiences in nature, and **Asturias has the best ingredients for enjoying the contemplation of the great Iberian mammals.** Carnivores such as the bear or wolf along with different species of hoofed animal (deer, roe deer, fallow deer, and ibex) and other mammals such as wild cats, genets and otters, to name just a few examples, are part of the privileged catalogue of Asturian fauna.

*The southern mountains of the Principality contain unparalleled natural life with the Cantabrian brown bear, the largest land mammal in Spain, being the main attraction, along with the presence of the carnivore par excellence: the Iberian wolf.*

Joining them on the podium of experiences are the bellowing sounds of deer in the Central Mountain and the high density of ibex in the limestone mountains of eastern Asturias.



Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Several local companies offer wildlife watching trips, so there is nothing better than putting yourself into their professional hands and letting them fulfil your dream of seeing a bear or a wolf in the wild, spotting their tracks and footprints, and discovering their natural habitat.

Among the endemic Cantabrian species the broom hare stands out. Numerous species of small mammals and bats also live in Asturias. There are species of bats present in our region, making up some of the largest Iberian populations.

## Cantabrian Brown Bear, our icon



Brown bear (*Ursus arctos arctos*)

The two bear populations in the Iberian Peninsula are genetically and geographically different. The Cantabrian bear population (300 specimens approx.) is divided into two well-differentiated subpopulations. The Pyrenean population, shared with France and Andorra, is divided into two groups, the Central Pyreneans being the largest with 40 specimens, all of Slovenian origin, descendants of bears released through reintegration programmes.

*Most of the Cantabrian bears live in Asturian land.*

Although a forest species, it is not easy to keep records of the bear population (census method essentially based on the monitoring of female bears with cubs).



Bear with cubs

### Encounters with bears

The bear is a wild animal and therefore must always be observed at a safe distance. If you walk through a bear area this is best done carefully but talking and making a noise, as its powerful sense of smell and hearing (it is short sighted) will cause the bear to move away as a result of our presence, avoiding a chance encounter.

Last studies estimate the Cantabrian bear population around 300. **The Nature Parks of Somiedo and Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña and Ibias are home to the largest group of bears in the Iberian Peninsula.** So, if you enjoy watching this powerful creature wandering free, Asturias is the place for you.

As you will see, the brown bear has also found its natural paradise in Asturias. The brown bear population in the 90's was estimated to be around 80-90 specimens. Today, this population has tripled and the first contacts between both Cantabrian populations have been observed. Different projects and activities aimed at the conservation and recovery of this species (mostly based on the improvement of their habitat) have not only increased the number of bears in the mountain range but also the contact between the western and eastern populations. Biological corridors that serve as natural passageways to the fauna have fostered the species' dispersion and genetic exchange.

So, from the standpoint of awareness, conservation and protection, we should highlight the work of the **Oso de Asturias Foundation** [www.osodeasturias.es](http://www.osodeasturias.es), the **Oso Pardo Foundation** [www.fundacionosopardo.org](http://www.fundacionosopardo.org) and the **Fondo para la Protección de los Animales Salvajes** (Wildlife Protection Fund, FAPAS) [www.fapas.es](http://www.fapas.es).



### Don't miss...

- ▶ Brown bear watching in the nature parks of Somiedo and Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias.
- ▶ The "Casa del Oso" (Bear House) in Proaza and "Somiedo y el Oso" (Somiedo and Bear) in La Pola Somiedo, Interpretation Centres dedicated to the great plantigrade.
- ▶ A visit to the nearby bears enclosure on the Bear's Trail (Proaza), where you can see the symbol of our fauna in the semi-wild.

Spring and early autumn are the best times to enjoy spotting these bears. Several local nature tourism companies offer bear watching activities and the interpretation of their habitat in the main areas of the bear populations. There are also different fauna observatories signposted in Somiedo Nature Park and Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Park.

In Cangas del Narcea, the viewpoints of Muniel.los and Brañas d'Arriba in Arbás area. The viewpoints of Fonduveigas and Alto El Capillo in Degaña, and the viewpoint of the lagunas de Muniel.los (lagoons of Muniel.los), in Ibias.

In Somiedo, the viewpoints of La Peral, Gúa and La Pola de Somiedo.

## Iberian wolf



Iberian wolf (Canis lupus)

After overcoming the population bottleneck of the 70s, with its record low distribution, the Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*) is experiencing a period of expansion. **Asturian wolves form part of the North Western population of the Iberian Peninsula, the largest in number.** It is estimated that

over 2,000 wolves live north of the Duero River, in the North-western quadrant of Spain. Several packs (**about 10% of the 300 packs** or groups in the North-western population) **are settled in the Asturian** region and others move around our mountains. Come and see the Asturian super-predator par excellence: the wolf, present in much of the territory except the coastal plain, the central depression, the middle valleys of Caudal and Nalón, and the pre-coastal mountains of the east.

*Their periods of movement are the best months to observe them in the wild as they are most active then. These are from August to September and then in December, January and February, coinciding with the mating season.*

It is an elusive animal and difficult to spot but interest lies not only in seeing it but also in spotting its tracks and trails and discovering the habitat, biology and ethology of the species in the company of one of the nature tourism companies.



### Don't miss...

- ▶ On the trail of the wolf in the Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Park.
- ▶ “La Casa del Lobo” (Wolf house) in Belmonte/Balmonte will explain everything about the great Iberian canine, one of the stars of Iberian fauna.
- ▶ Complete your visit to “La Casa del Lobo” with a guided tour of the wolf enclosure located in the woods near this interpretation centre.



Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)

## Hoofed animals

Easier to spot than the bear and the wolf are the various species of hoofed animals living in Asturias, from cervids such as **deer**, **fallow deer** and **roe deer**, to bovids such as **ibex** and suids such the **wild boar**.

*Among these the natural spectacle of the bellowing of the deer undoubtedly stands out. This takes place between mid-September and mid-October (variable depending on weather conditions).*



### Don't miss...

- ▶ The bellow of the deer in Aller, Ponga, Somiedo and Las Ubiñas-La Mesa.
- ▶ The limestone mountains in the Redes Nature Park and the Picos de Europa National Park are home to the highest density of ibex.
- ▶ The Sueve Mountains limestone massif is the only Asturian enclave where you can see fallow deer.

Nature has wanted Asturias to be the location for the most spectacular soundtrack for Iberian fauna, offering one of its best concerts. Why? Because the Asturian orography of the higher part of the valley where this takes place acts as a sounding board, amplifying the sound of the bellows of the deer in mating season. In Asturias the bellowing is heard at top volume. You simply have to get close to the mountains of Ponga, Redes, Aller, Las Ubiñas-La Mesa and Somiedo to confirm this.

Fox and wild boar are abundant in our forests and mountains, as well as the roe deer, the smallest European cervid, but this is more elusive and solitary in character and not seen easily. If you prefer to enjoy the presence of fallow deer you should go to the Sueve Mountains, the only Asturian enclave where you can see these spotted cervids. The groaning of the fallow deer in autumn is another natural sound spectacle not to be missed.

The rocky high mountain areas are the ideal habitat for thousands of Cantabrian ibex. The western massif of Picos de Europa and the limestone peaks of the Redes Nature Park are home to the greatest density of this slender wild bovid.

## Bear and Deer. Interpretive trails

Adopting the theme of the brown bear and the deer, there are a number of themed trails that we recommend you to follow.

There are three interpretive trails designed to discover different aspects of the Cantabrian brown bear. Two of them are located in Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña and Ibias Nature Park. The first, near El Puertu, is named "[Walking to the rhythm of the seasons](#)" and follows the bears' own calendar. This is an easy route covering a distance of 6.2 km (there and back), which begins in Brañas d'Arriba and ends in Cabuezos. The second trail "[The refuges of the brown bear](#)" reveals the key aspects of bear conservation on a 4.3 km circular route in the area of Muniel.los. Of medium difficulty, it begins at Muniel.los Interpretation Centre. The third interpretive bear route is in El Valle/Valle de Lago, in Somiedo Nature Reserve. From here, a 6.2 km trail (there and back to Braña de Sousas), of medium difficulty, invites visitors to discover "[Family life of bears](#)" and the key elements of their breeding habits.

In addition, Teverga's Prehistory Park allows you to discover "[The bear's nooks](#)" during a flora and fauna interpretive circular trail of 0.9 km and low difficulty.

In turn, the interpretive route "[The Deer and the Bellowing](#)" invites you to discover more about the life of deer in a 9.4 km circular route of medium difficulty between the recreational areas of Las Moyás (Cuevas-Aller) and El Pinganón.

*More information at:*  
[tierradeosos.es](http://tierradeosos.es)  
[parquedelaprehistoria.es](http://parquedelaprehistoria.es)

In the Cantabrian Sea, in the waters separating the Galician coast and the Basque coast in the Bay of Biscay, you can spot up to 25 species of cetaceans, both resident and on their migratory path. These species therefore move along the Asturian coast, located in the privileged heart of this coastal strip. The Cantabrian Sea, with cold waters rich in food available for the cetaceans, is one of the best whale watching spots in southern Europe.



Bottlenose dolphins

## Whale watching, *searching for Cantabrian sea mammals*

Among the main species observable are the common dolphin, striped dolphin, bottlenose dolphin, long-finned pilot whale, Risso's dolphin, harbour porpoise, Cuvier's beaked whale, common minke whale, and fin whale. The most difficult to spot because they are less common are the

minke whale, pilot whale, long-finned pilot whales, sperm whales, Risso's dolphin, and the Northern bottlenose whale. A sprinkling of rare species in the area are the blue whale, the humpback whale, Sowerby's beaked (or North Atlantic) whale, the killer whale and the Atlantic (or white sided) dolphin. For its part, the North Atlantic right (or Basque) whale, Balinville's beaked whale, True's beaked whale, pygmy sperm whale, dwarf sperm whale, pygmy killer whale, false killer whales, white-beaked dolphin and spotted dolphins complete the list of rare species.



Pilot whale

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*It is worth noting that 7 of the 20 species of beaked whales existing on the planet are present in Cantabrian waters even if they are difficult to spot because they stay submerged for over an hour.*

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Remember that in addition to cetaceans, on sea trips with luck you can see the loggerhead sea turtle, leatherback sea turtle, or more rarely, the green sea turtle. Another surprise is the presence of grey seals, usually young ones dispersing from colonies located in Ireland, Scotland and England and whose presence on the coast of northern Spain has seen a marked increase in recent years. The hooded seal can be seen much more sporadically along the coast of Asturias.

*Two of the best places to watch cetaceans, especially different species of dolphins and pilot whales, are Cañón de Lastres and much further away from the coast, the spectacular marine reserve of El Cachucho, located 65 kilometres off the coast of Ribadesella.*

There are no organised whale watching trips to the latter of these but its 2,350 square kilometres are the standard bearer of Asturian marine biodiversity. El Cachucho is the first declared marine reserve in Spain.

The spring and summer months are the best time for whale watching in Asturias. There are companies that organise whale watching trips from the ports of Gijón and Lastres.

Peñas



Centro de Experimentación Pesquera

## Sea Museums and Centres

In addition to Parque de la Vida (Valdés) and the Marine Environment of Cape Peñas (Gozón) and Nalón Estuary Interpretation Centres (L'Arena; Soto del Barco), there are other museums and centres linked to the sea that you should not forget to visit:

- > Centro de Interpretación de la Ría de Villaviciosa (Villaviciosa Estuary Interpretation Centre). [www.turismovillaviciosa.es](http://www.turismovillaviciosa.es)
- > Centro de Interpretación de la Ría del Eo (Eo Estuary Interpretation Centre), in Castropol. [www.castropol.es](http://www.castropol.es)
- > Gijón Aquarium. [www.acuario.gijon.es](http://www.acuario.gijon.es)
- > Museo de las Historias del Mar (Sea Stories Reception Centre), in Puerto de Vega, Navia.
- > Museo Marítimo de Asturias (Asturias Maritime Museum), in Gozón. [www.museomaritimodeasturias.com](http://www.museomaritimodeasturias.com)
- > Centro de Experimentación Pesquera (Fishery Experimentation Centre), in Gijón. <http://tematico.asturias.es/dgpesca/din/exper.php>



## Don't miss...

- ▶ A visit to Parque de la Vida in Lluarca/L. Luarca, a space for the recovery, conservation, education and dissemination of marine and land ecosystems, where you can discover unique species such as the giant squid. ([www.parquedelavida.org](http://www.parquedelavida.org)).
- ▶ A visit to the Centro de Interpretación del Medio Marino and the Centro de Recepción de Visitantes del Cabo Peñas (Marine Environment of Peñas Cape Visitor Reception and Interpretation Centre) (Peñas; Gozón) ([www.ayto-gozon.org](http://www.ayto-gozon.org))
- ▶ In the Centro de Interpretación de la Ría del Nalón, Puerta del Mar ("Gateway to the Sea" Nalón Estuary Interpretation Centre) (L'Arena; Soto del Barco) you will be able to discover the environmental features of the Nalón Estuary ([www.bajonalon.es](http://www.bajonalon.es)) and the importance of the elver.

# Birdwatching

## *Observación de aves*

From sea level to the highest mountains, the many ecosystems and habitats present in Asturias allow for the existence of nearly 400 species of birds. The jewel of our flying friends is the little Cantabrian capercaillie, which in recent years has been joined by the bearded vulture. Due to its own merits the Principality has become one of the leading areas in Spain for birdwatching. Dig out your binoculars and come to our protected natural areas to see this for yourself.

Golden Eagle

Ornithological tourism has more and more followers and Asturias, with its landscapes, can once again offer some of the best places or spots for birdwatching. The binomial of the sea and the mountain becomes more important than ever when it comes to hosting some landscapes that translate into a rich biodiversity of ecosystems and habitats for birds. This can also be seen in the wide variety of sea birds, waterfowl (rivers, estuaries, reservoirs, lakes), and riverside, open field, forest, urban, and mountain birds, etc. A total of **385 species have been listed, including resident and migratory**.

Several SPAs (Special Protection Areas for Birds) confirm the ornithological importance of the Asturian coast for many resident birds, and in migration periods, for the countless

species that use Asturian land (or water) as a place to feed before continuing on their journey between Europe and Africa through the East Atlantic Migratory Route. There are the migratory routes in Spring (pre-nuptial) to their breeding grounds in the north and in Autumn (post-nuptial) they return south with their offspring. The Principality of Asturias has **13 SPAs** which cover a total area of 223,102 land hectares and 16,574 marine hectares. They occupy 21.03% of the region and they are: Somiedo, Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias, Ubiña-La Mesa, Penarronda-Barayo, Busto Cape-Lluanco/Luanco, Ribadesella Estuary-Tina Mayor Estuary, central reservoirs (San Andrés, la Granda, Trasona and la Furta), Picos de Europa, Muniel.los, Villaviciosa Estuary, Redes, Ponga-Amieva, Eo Estuary.

Birdwatching



### Don't miss...

- ▶ “Las Montañas del Quebrantahuesos” Centre for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (Benia, Onís).
- ▶ Ornithological walk on the banks of the Güeña (Benia, Onís).
- ▶ The Partial Nature Park of the Villaviciosa Estuary is one of the most important birdwatching spots in Spain. You should not forget to visit the interpretation centres of the Villaviciosa Estuary (Villaviciosa) and the Eo Estuary (Castropol).
- ▶ Nocturnia, a nocturnal bird of prey show at the Gijón Botanical Garden.



Bluethroat

In Asturias you can spot almost 70% of the birds in Spain.

**Waterfowl** (gulls, herons, ducks, cormorants, waders etc.) are those that live in wetlands in river mouths, estuaries, reservoirs and lakes. There are also the sea birds that reside in or pass by our coast.

Many of our most emblematic species are **forest birds**; from small birds to woodpeckers, birds of prey and the capercaillie, many live in forest environments. The vast and well-preserved Asturian forests are their home.

**Birds of prey** always awaken special admiration. From the osprey to the golden eagle and the bearded vulture, these predatory birds live from sea level to the high Cantabrian Mountains.

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*Eo and Villaviciosa Estuaries have been declared RAMSAR Wetlands of International Importance.*

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The coast provides a "safe harbour" for seagulls (larids), auks, waders, cormorants, anatids, passerines and birds of prey, mainly in places such as Tina Mayor Estuary, the Sierra del Cuera mountains, Ribadesella Estuary, Villaviciosa Estuary, Peñas, Barayo Reserve, the cliff-lined coast of Navia, Deva Island, Tapia Island, and the Eo Estuary. Estuaries, river mouths, rivers, forests, mountains and a good number of islets and inaccessible cliffs create the ideal habitat for a large number of birds. Highlights among the **sea birds** are the European shag, European storm petrel, guillemots, razorbills, gannets and various species of seagull.

As for **waterfowl**, waders, herons, rails and anatids make up a long list from which to observe, among other birds: loons, grebes, herons, spoonbills, Black winged stilts, ansarinae, anatidae, Eurasian teals, water rails, curlews, limosas, tringas, common sandpipers, charadrius, dunlins, common snipes, Eurasian oystercatchers, seagulls, etc.



Cantabrian capercaillie

The Cantabrian capercaillie is certainly one of our most emblematic birds, but its delicate situation in terms of numbers makes its preservation more of a priority than it being a tourism resource.

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*The most prominent bird of prey along the coast is the osprey, while in the river areas there are lots of common kingfishers and white-throated dippers, and in the forest the lord and master is the small Cantabrian capercaillie -an Asturian ornithological gem- which shares its habitat with the middle spotted woodpecker.*

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As for **mountain birds**, most notable from among the many are the wallcreepers, which can even be seen in the cliffs of the coastal plain, the golden eagles and the bearded vultures, who have returned to fly over the mountains of Picos de Europa. The most beautiful of the four Iberian vultures has come back to stay.

Thanks to the activity of "**Vida y Seguimiento del Quebrantahuesos**" (Life and monitoring of the Bearded Vulture) you can find out all about the biology, history and ecology of this bird of prey in Asturias. It is run by "Fundación para la Conservación del Quebrantahuesos" (Bearded Vulture Conservation Foundation) from the "Las Montañas del Quebrantahuesos" (Bearded vulture Mountains) Centre, located in Benia (Onís). This is a centre for biodiversity and sustainable development in Picos de Europa. Guided activities for the observation of bearded vultures and other carrion-eating birds take place there.

In the Asturian region there are different environmental facilities in the protected natural areas such as visitor and interpretation centres, providing information on the birds in each location. There are also marked trails and bird observatories in the main birdwatching enclaves as well as companies offering guided tours.



Common kestrels



Wallcreeper



Northern goshawk



Eurasian coots

## Birdwatching spots

### ■ La Reina Lookout

This is a feeding site for necrophagous birds in times of scarcity. Opened in July 2015, this famous lookout found on the climb to the Covadonga Lakes offers exceptional panoramic views, information and the opportunity to spot birds of prey such as the griffon vulture, bearded vulture, Egyptian vulture, golden eagle, red kite and crow.

### ■ Villaviciosa Estuary

The Partial Nature Reserve of Villaviciosa Estuary (Special Conservation Area, Special Protection Area for Birds and Wetland of International Importance) is the main location for bird watching in Asturias. Among the most notable birds are the osprey, kingfisher, great cormorant, black-headed gull, yellow-legged gull, greylag goose, Eurasian teal, mallard, little egret, grey heron, Eurasian oystercatcher, common sandpiper, dunlin, Eurasian curlew, common redshank, common greenshank, common snipe, grey plover, common ringed plover, European golden plover, lapwing, the rare Eurasian stone curlew and the bar-tailed godwit.

There are different bird observation points in this reserve: *El Puntal* (black-headed gull, yellow-legged gull and lesser black-backed gull, waders and, in winter, terns, loons, razorbills, scoters, etc.), *Interpretation Center* (waders, herons, cormorants and in winter concentrations of northern shovellers,

mallards, Eurasian teal, geese, vanellus, etc.), *El Cierrón* (waders, herons and ducks, black kites, common kestrels, etc.), *El Gaitero* (waders, herons and little egrets, cormorants, black-headed gull, etc.), *Sebrayu* (Eurasian coots, common moorhen, little grebes, and various species of duck, little egrets, cattle egrets, geese, etc.), *La Ancienona de Seloriu* (Eurasian coots, common moorhen, rails, kingfishers, waders, mallards, etc.), *El Picu* (waders, mallards, Eurasian wigeons, little grebes, Eurasian coots, etc.) and *Misiegu* (waders and sea birds). In the Villaviciosa Estuary you can spot other birds such as the northern shoveller, the northern pintail, little grebe, black-necked grebe, great crested grebe, great northern loon, and wading birds such as the grey heron, cattle egret, European spoonbill, and much more rarely seen the purple heron, Eurasian bittern and squacco heron. The greylag



Middle spotted woodpecker

goose finds in the estuary the only place where it can winter in the region. You can even get to see white storks, black storks and cranes.

To see birds in this reserve we recommend the PR-AS231 route (Ria de Villaviciosa route), the self-guided trail "1.100 pasos para descubrir la Ría (1,100 steps to discover the Estuary)", and of course a visit to the reserve's interpretation centre where, if necessary, they will lend you some binoculars so that you can make the most of your visit.

### ■ Eo Estuary

In winter the Eo Estuary (Special Conservation Area, Special Protection Area for Birds and Wetland of International Importance) is one of the most interesting places for lovers of waterfowl, especially for anatids (up to 80% of the anatids that winter in Asturias mainly use the Eo Estuary). In the Asturian part of this Biosphere Reserve there are three notable observation areas: *La Linera* (As Salías y Rozos) for anatids, waders, little egrets, cormorants, herons and gulls; *muelle de Castropol* to see grebes, cormorants and gulls, and the *A Ribeira rest area* for anatids and waders feeding in the channels of A Xunqueira. Among the most important waterfowl in the Estuary are the anatids such as the northern pintail, Eurasian wigeon and Eurasian teal, and the waders like the dunlin and Eurasian curlew. To this we can add the gadwall, shoveller, Eurasian coot, little egret, bar-tailed godwit, common ringed plover, common sandpiper, grey plover, oystercatcher, common redshank, grey heron, great cormorant, black-headed gull, black-necked grebe and lesser black-backed gull.



Grey Heron

### ■ Gijón Coast

The strip that runs between San Lorenzo Cape and Torres Cape is one of the most important areas in northern Spain for sea birds. Here we will find sea habitats, coastal cliffs and plains, as well as beaches and river mouths. *The Gijón Coast ornithological route* (on foot and by car) allows you to see the spectacle of the post-nuptial migration from mid-August to December. Many species stay to spend the winter in the area such as the great northern loon, red-throated loon, great shearwater, sooty shearwater, manx shearwater, Balearic shearwater, leach's storm petrel, gannet, common eider, common scoter,



Black woodpecker

velvet scoter, merlin, oystercatcher, purple sandpiper, Eurasian curlew, pomarine skua, common gull, great black-backed gull, razorbill, common murre, Atlantic puffin, Eurasian rock pipit, common starling or the snow bunting. Besides these, on their migratory path you can see red-breasted merganser, Eurasian dotterel, European golden plover, common ringed plover, sanderling, little stint, curlew sandpiper, bar-tailed godwit, whimbrel, red phalarope, parasitic jaeger, Mediterranean gull, little gull, common tern, Arctic tern, tawny pipit, whinchat, garden warbler and Iberian chiffchaff. Among the resident species we find some as interesting as the European shag, the European storm petrel, the yellow-legged gull, the red kite, the Western marsh harriers, hen harriers and peregrine falcon, and in summer, the Eurasian hobby, Eurasian scops owl, common whitethroat and red-backed shrike.



Atlantic Gannet



Partridge



Alpine chough



Egyptian vulture

### ■ Peñas

The Peñas Cape Protected Landscape is another place of reference for sea birds. Highlights here are the breeding populations of yellow-legged gulls, European shags and European storm petrels. Among the land birds the peregrine falcon stands out. Peñas is a good place to observe Atlantic gannets during migration. Punta de la Vaca is probably the best place to see birds in this coastal area.



Bearded vulture

### ■ Central Mountains of Asturias

High mountain habitats and Atlantic forests of the municipalities of Aller, Mieres, Lena, Morcín, Riosa and Ribera de Arriba are one of the best areas to spot birds linked to these habitats, the highlights among which are: golden eagle, griffon vulture, hen harrier, northern goshawk, peregrine falcon, grey partridge, Eurasian woodcock, short-eared owl, black woodpecker, middle spotted woodpecker, Eurasian crag martin, grey wagtail, white-throated dipper, alpine accentor, Dartford warbler, marsh tit, wallcreeper, Eurasian treecreeper, Alpine chough, red-billed chough, white-winged snowfinch, bullfinch, yellowhammer, rock bunting. Resident birds are joined in the summer by others such as the European honey buzzard, Egyptian vulture, short-toed snake eagle, booted eagle, European nightjar, Eurasian wryneck, water pipit, common redstart, whinchat, black-eared wheatear, common rock thrush, ring ouzel, common whitethroat, Western Bonelli's warbler, Iberian chiffchaff and red-backed shrike. The Red kite, merlin, vanellus, European golden plover, Eurasian skylark and meadow pipit swell the list in winter. Occasionally the tawny pipit, whinchat, northern wheatear and European pied flycatcher are seen on their migratory path. A 253 kilometre circular route (Mountains and Forests of the Central Asturian Mountains Ornithological Route) in car with walks on foot through paths and trails allows you to visit different sites of ornithological interest.

■ **Other natural mountain spaces** such as Somiedo, Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias, Ponga and other areas of Las Ubiñas-La Mesa (besides those included in the Central Mountains) are magnificent places to find the forest and mountain species listed above for the Central Mountains. The rare middle spotted woodpecker, golden eagle, Egyptian vulture, peregrine falcon, goshawk, grey partridge and the sand martin are among the most important. In addition, the high limestone mountains of Picos de Europa are the perfect habitat for bearded vultures.

# Through the Asturian Forests

Our trees and forests are one of the hallmarks of the natural paradise that awaits you. It is mainly oak groves and beech forests that make Asturias so green, creating some of the most important forests on the Iberian Peninsula and the European continent.

*Muniel.los Forest is the largest oak forest in Spain*

**Asturias is not green by chance.** It belongs to the Euro-Siberian phytogeographic region (Atlantic super-province), characterised by a wet and mild climate, tempered by the presence of the Cantabrian Sea, although the proximity of the Mediterranean region, with a more drastic climate (very hot summers and very cold winters) is felt in the south of the province, in areas like the upper basin of the Navia.

*Thanks to its geographical location, three types of bio-geographic elements come together in our autonomous community: Eurasian, Afro-Mediterranean and West African.*

The result translates into a **high biodiversity of flora**: 200 species of algae, more than 2,500 taxa macromycetes fungi, some 1,000 species of lichens, 600 species of bryophytes and about 2,200 species of native vascular plants.

Soil type, orientation and inclination of the slope, altitude, and especially the climate (rainfall and temperature) are parameters that determine the presence of the particular flora and thus the distribution of the plant communities (phytosociological). The geological variety of the Asturian region and its rugged terrain, with altitudes ranging from sea level to heights of over 2,500 metres, mountains, ranges and mountain massifs reaching the four corners, allow for



*Common holly*

the growth of a wide variety of forests. Carbayedas, sessile oak groves, riverside forests and beech forests are the main natural forest formations, but typically Mediterranean evergreen trees such as holm oaks and cork oaks also grow in our forests, as do others linked to our history such as the yew and the holly, which along with the carbayo have been the most sacred trees for the Asturian people.

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*The distribution of the great mountain forests across Asturias is generally characterised by the presence of beech forests in the east and centre of the province and oak in the West.*

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Alder, willow, poplar, ash, maple, hazel, etc. grow along the rivers and streams, forming dense riparian forests. Chestnut and birch trees, and others such as the holly and yew, also grow in mountain areas and create relict forests.

These are mostly deciduous forests which, except for the riparian forests (consisting of different species that grow next to the water, on the banks of rivers and streams) and the mixed forests (also composed of different trees), are named depending on the dominant tree species.

Look at this in a little more detail, in Asturias you can find the following types of forests: carbayedas (dominated by



*Amanita muscaria*

## Fungi

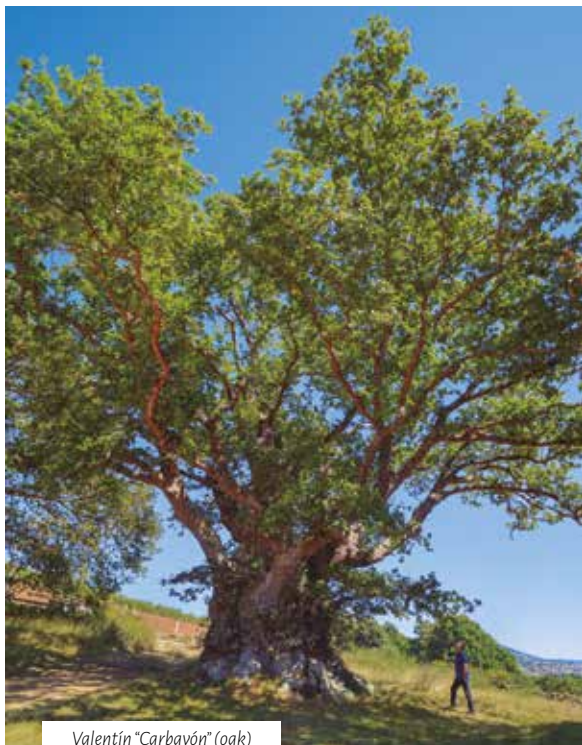
If you are a fan of fungi then you're in luck. In the mycological area we have **more than 2,500 species** of macromycetes taxa (fungi) of which most are mushrooms.

Autumn is the best season, but the weather and variety of forests allow you to enjoy the presence of mushrooms practically all year. Spring or St George's mushrooms (one of the most famous in northern Spain) open the mycology season, in summer we see chanterelle, some boletus and russula mushrooms and in autumn the majority of the boletus, lepista nudas, tricholoma, lactarius, etc. Even in winter you can see some species such as the *Flammulina velutipes*. A mycological paradise 365 days a year if we bear in mind that **two of the three most popular mushrooms among mycology lovers are found in Asturias**: Boletus mushroom (*boletus edulis*) and Caesar's mushroom (*amanita cesarea*).

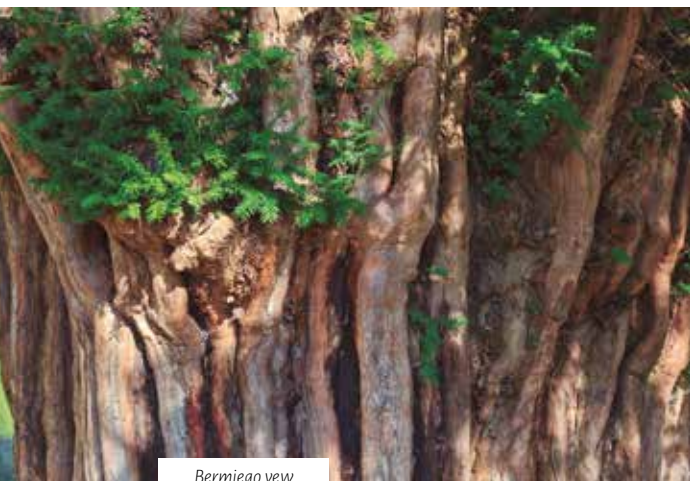
Redes Forest



the oak carbayo), which are found in places like Hoces del río Esva (Valdés), Axuyán and Brañes (Oviedo), Cuadonga/Covadonga, Bergueres and Lieres (Siero), etc.; Holm oak in Pimiango (Ribadedeva), Llanes and Soutu (Salas); and kermes oak (subspecies of holm oak named kermes oak) in Castro and La Malva, both in Somiedo; corks in the towns of Santesteba (Illano) and above all in Boxu (Allande); riverside woods (alder, valley willows and montane riparian forests without alders) along any Asturian watercourse; mixed forests of maple, ash, hazel and birch (Muniel.los); Pyrenean oak (Muniel.los, Belmonte and on sunny slopes in Degaña); sessile oaks, with the white oak as the protagonist (Muniel.los, Valdebueyes, Degaña, La Fuente (Aller), Caliao (Caso), Beyos or Tielve gorge



Valentín "Carbayón" (oak)



Bermiego yew

(Picos de Europa), etc.; beech forests (very humid forests dominated by beech) among which the highlights are the forests of Monesteriu d'Ermu-Xedré (Cangas del Narcea), Redes (Caso), Peloño (Ponga), Monte Palomberu and Pome (Picos de Europa), El Gumial (Aller), Monte Grande (Teverga); and finally the birches, which are mainly located in Valdebueyes (Ibias), Muniel.los and Monesteriu d'Ermu (Cangas del Narcea), Degaña, Monte Grande and Puerto Ventana (Teverga).

Throughout the length and breadth of the land there are **different forests and ancient trees declared Natural Monuments**: between the forest formations are the Natural



## Don't miss...

- ▶ Muniel.los Forest, the largest and best preserved oak forest in Spain and one of the largest in Europe.
- ▶ Monesteriu d'Ermu Forest is the largest beech forest in the Principality.
- ▶ Come and visit any of the ancient trees growing in our region classified as a Natural Monument.



Montegrande beech forest

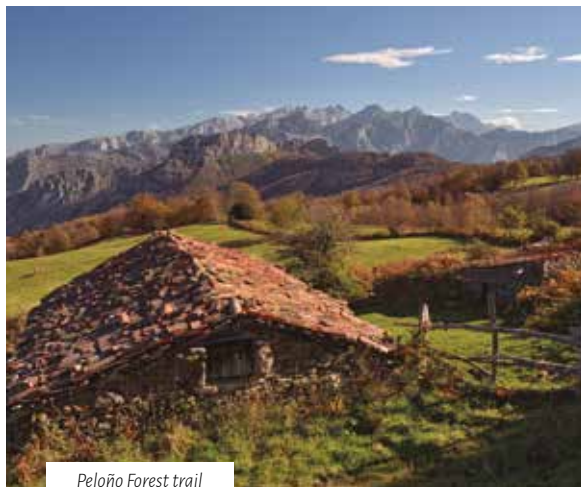
Monuments Boxo Cork Oak Grove (Allande), Buelles Willow Groves (Peñamellera Baja) and El Tragamón Oak Grove (Gijón). Monumental trees such as the Valentín "Carbayón" (Valentín; Tineo), the Lavandera "Carbayón" (Tueya; Gijón) and the yews of Pastur (La Bobia; Illano), Santa Coloma (Allande), Lago (Lago; Allande), Salas (Salas), Bermiego (Quirós) and Santibanes de la Fuente (Aller).

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*These are forests with personality and magic, lots of magic. The magic that comes with the proliferation of mosses and lichen on the trunks and branches, a sure sign of the good environmental health of the air.*

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There is a reason why we can find living and passing through here everything from bears, western capercaillie and woodpeckers to goblins and xanas, our elves and nymphs, and who knows, you might come across other mythological beings such as *El Lloberu*, *Xuán de la Borrina* and *El Busgosu*. While the Asturian forests are beautiful throughout the year, in autumn they create a range of colours worthy of the palette of the best painter. We can see every colour from ochre to red, including browns, oranges and yellows of every imaginable shade.

One of the most rewarding ecotourism experiences in Asturias is to explore any of these forests in the company of the companies that offer natural environment interpretation activities, allowing you to make the most of your visit.

## You should visit the following forests

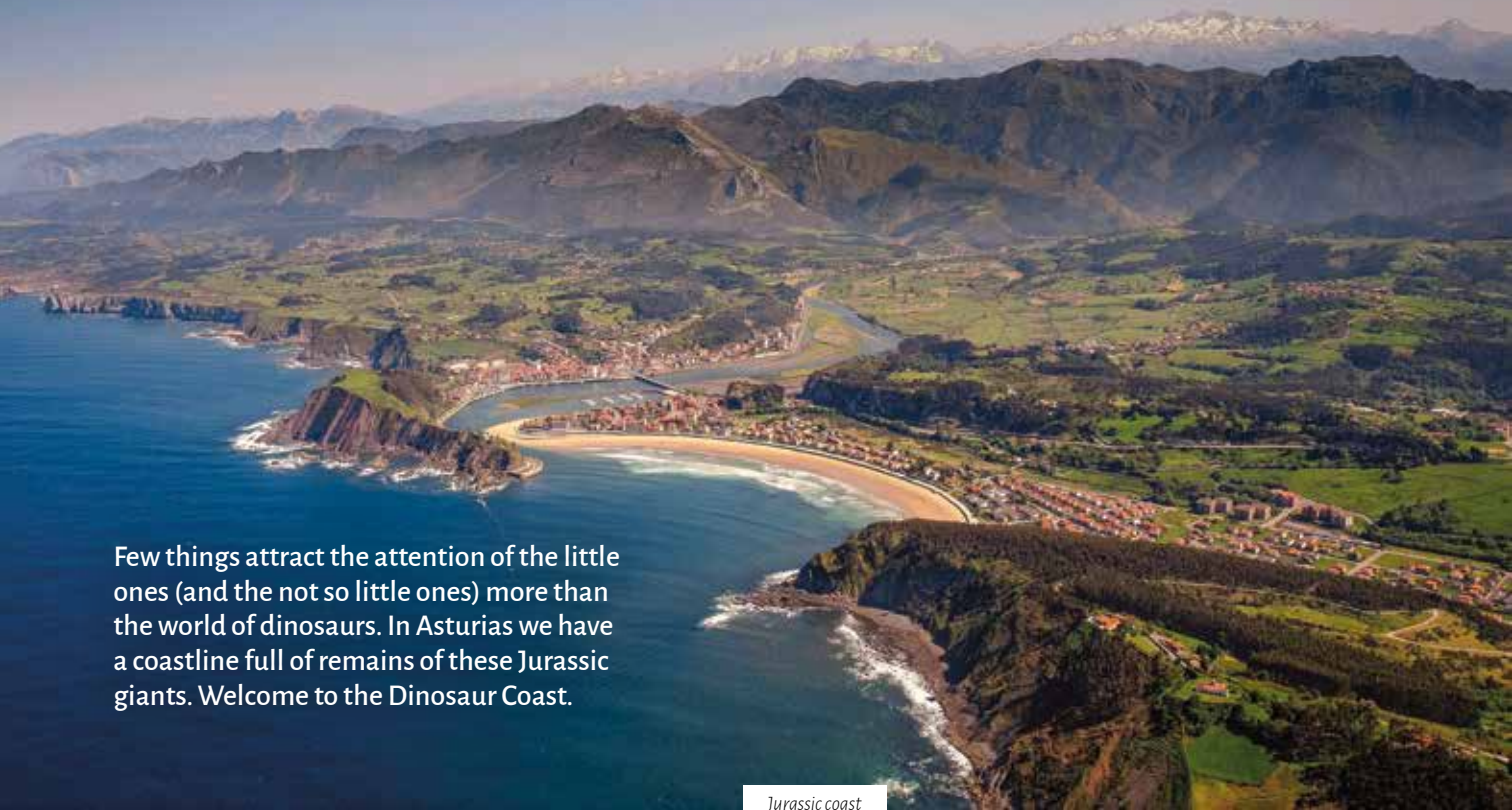
- **San Emeterio Oak Forest** (Pimiango). This is one of the northernmost oak forests of the Cantabrian coast. It grows on the eastern edge of the province on the sea-front, next to San Emeterio Cape.
- **Buelles Willow Grove** (Peñamellera Baja). This Natural Monument on the banks of the river Deva is one of the largest and best preserved willow groves of the Cantabrian coast. Different species of willow grow here (bitter willow, crack willow, twill and white willow), along with riparian alder.
- **La Biescona Beech Forest** (Sueve Mountains). It has the peculiarity of being the beech forest located at the lowest altitude of those growing in Spain. It grows at only 200 metres altitude on the northern slope of the Sierra del Sueve massif.



- **La Tejada** (Sueve Mountains). This yew forest also grows in the Sierra del Sueve which occupies 8 square kilometres, being one of the biggest in Europe. Hollies also grow next to the yews which create an imposing bush.
- **Peloño Forest** (Ponga). Peloño Forest is one of the best preserved beech forests of the Iberian Peninsula. It is located in the mountains of the Parque Natural de Ponga National Park and occupies about 1,000 hectares.
- **Redes Beech Forests** (Caso and Sobrescobio). The beech spans around the National Park and Biosphere Reserve covering an area of over 9,000 hectares, equivalent to three-quarters of the surface of this protected area.
- **Monasteriu d'Ermu** (Cangas del Narcea). Within the Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Park, characterised by oak groves, we find the largest beech forest in Asturias, covering around 1,500 hectares.
- **Muniel.los Forest** (Cangas del Narcea). The Asturian forest par excellence. Muniellos Nature Reserve is the largest and best preserved oak grove on the Iberian Peninsula. It is also one of the largest stretches of sessile oak in continental Europe. You will need to order a visitor's permit through the website of the Principality of Asturias, and there is a limit of 20 people per day.
- **Boxo Cork Oak Grove** (Allande). This Natural Monument houses the largest cork forest in the Principality of Asturias.

Buelles Willow Groves Natural Monument. Peñamellera Baja





Jurassic coast

Few things attract the attention of the little ones (and the not so little ones) more than the world of dinosaurs. In Asturias we have a coastline full of remains of these Jurassic giants. Welcome to the Dinosaur Coast.

## The Dinosaur Coast

There are several places scattered along the stretch of **coastline between Ribadesella/Ribeseya and Torres Cape** in Gijón (in the municipalities of Ribadesella, Caravia, Colunga, Villaviciosa and Gijón) that have dinosaur footprints (ichnites). These are included within the **Natural Monument of the Ichnitas (dinosaur footprints) Sites of Asturias** and make up a route following 44.5 kilometres of coastline.

Without a doubt you must visit: Santa Marina beach, Tereñes cliffs and Vega beach in Ribadesella, La Griega beach and Lastres cliffs in Colunga, and finally Tazones port, Tazones lighthouse, Oles cliffs and Merón beach in Villaviciosa, from east to west.

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*They date back 150 million years, to the Jurassic era, when different species of bipedal and quadrupedal dinosaurs left their tracks imprinted in the soft muddy and sandy soil.*

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Its sedimentation, now converted into solidified rock, has allowed the conservation of these footprints until today. Moulds and counter moulds. There are several information panels at the site but it is best to first stop at the magnificent

Dinosaur Replica (MUJA)



facilities of the **Asturian Jurassic Museum (MUJA)** in Colunga, where you can watch, learn and discover everything about these fantastic animals, their presence on the Asturian coast and the international importance of these sites.

Very close to MUJA you will find **La Griega** beach with its site of footprints. It is the most important because **it has the**



Footprints in La Griega Beach (Colunga)

largest Theropod and Stegosaurus footprints known so far, which are among the largest in the world.

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*The fossilised nature that you will find in the Asturian sites stands out for its good state of conservation and its abundance of footprints, making this palaeontological site one of the leading sites nationally and internationally.*

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Footprints in Tazones. Tereñes Cliffs (Villaviciosa)



Footprints in Museo del Jurásico



### Don't miss...

- The site at La Griega beach (Colunga) with its Sauropod dinosaur footprints found in a coastal lagoon. These footprints are among the largest in the world.
- A visit to the Asturian Jurassic Museum in Colunga. The museum houses the best collection of dinosaur footprints in Europe and the third best in the world.

# Windows to Paradise

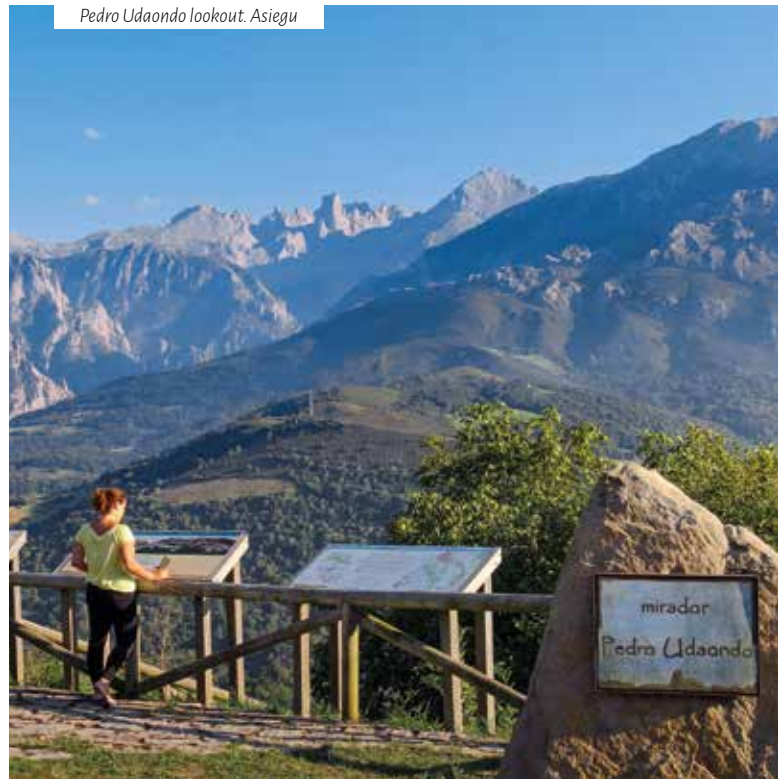
Great beauty and a rugged relief are two of the first impressions made by the Asturian landscape. From the sea to the high mountains, there are few natural settings not on offer to visitors. A series of strategic lookouts allow them to be enjoyed to the maximum. These are the windows to paradise.

Fitu lookout. Parres

Spain's Landscapes Atlas, called "Atlas de los Paisajes de España", identifies three parallel and longitudinal strips in the region of Asturias: the mountainous southern strip, where the Asturian middle and high mountains are found, with altitudes over 2,000 metres, the northern coastal strip bathed by the Cantabrian Sea, and the central hills and valleys, hilly, wooded landscapes dominated by low and medium mountains, which links the two strips. The layout of the relief and the climate, along with the degree of anthropogenic influence, define the richness of its nature.

*In total, 51 landscapes are identified in Asturias, with a dozen types of landscapes that form part of 7 landscape associations: the Northern Mountain Ranges ("Macizos montañosos septentrionales" in Spanish, located to the south of the province) and the estuaries, marshes and Cantabrian-Atlantic flats on the coast.*

Pedro Udaondo lookout. Asiegu





Busto Cape (Valdés)



### Don't miss...

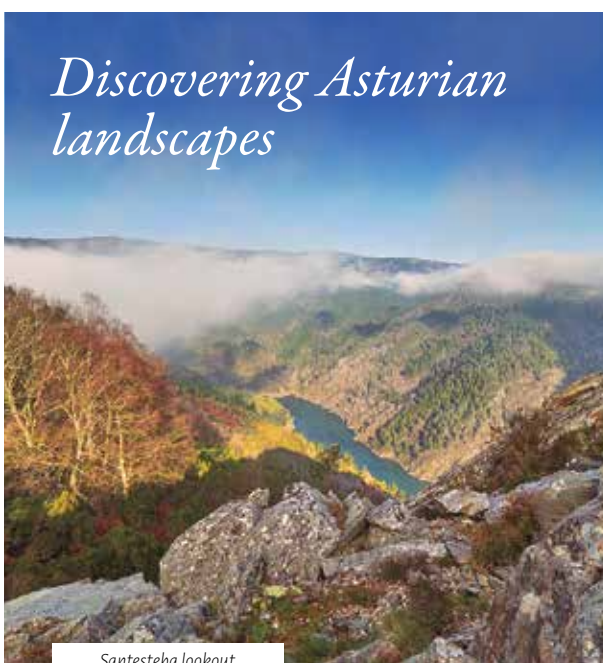
- ▶ Ruta de los Puertos in Western Asturias (Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Park).
- ▶ The panoramic views of Pico Urriellu (Naranjo de Bulnes) from the lookouts of Pozo de la Oración, Pedro Udaondo and Camarmaña.
- ▶ The landscape of the West Coast from the Vidio Cape lookouts.

Between the two bands are the five associations of central landscapes: Atlantic and sub-Atlantic ranges and mountains, river basins, depressions, passageways, valleys and gorges, and ravines.

*Landscapes that invite a relaxed approach to discovering them, with slow contemplation at the different lookouts provided across the length and breadth of the province.*

A region that seems to have been designed to be explored on foot or also by Touring, either by car or motorbike, but always with a camera to hand. It will not give you time or hold it back... **Photographic tourism** gains fans every year and two of the most favourite options for most visitors are nature and landscape photography. Asturias is a must-visit region.

Many man-made lookouts are available in addition to the natural lookouts created by the Asturian relief. The coast and inland have an extensive list of viewpoints, each more spectacular. Beaches, cliffs, gorges, lakes and lagoons, peaks, forests... you have many choices.



Santesteba lookout

From east to west, among others, the following **viewpoints**:

- Along the coastline, also from east to west: La Boriza (Llanes), San Roque (Llastres), San Lorenzo Cape and Torres Cape (Gijón), Peñes (Gozón), Espíritu Santo (Muros de Nalón), Vidio Cape (Cudillero), Busto Cape and the Hermitage of La Regalina (Valdés), Penarronda (Castropol-Tapia de Casariego), etc.
- In the valley area and central mountains: El Fitu (Sueve Mountains), Coto Bello (Aller); El Naranco and the Meanders of the Nora River (Oviedo), Alto de la Cobertoria (Lena), Las Ubiñas (Quirós), Monteagudo (Pravia), Alto del Palo (Allande); Penouta (Boal), Santesteba de los Buitres (Illano), Salime (Grandas de Salime), Puerto de la Garganta (Villanueva de Oscos), etc.
- In the mountains in the southern area: Pozo de la Oración and Pedro Udaondo (Cabrales), Covadonga Lakes (Picos de Europa) encompassing the lookouts of Los Canónigos, La Reina, El Príncipe, El Rey, La Princesa and Entrelagos, El Puertu (Caso), Flor de Acebos and Alto de la Cubilla (Lena), Puerto de Cerredo (Degaña), Puerto del Connio (Cangas del Narcea), etc.

One of the most beautiful nature trails in Spain is the one that crosses the interior of Asturias from one end of the province to the other. Pull on your hiking boots and discover the wide variety of ecosystems and habitats that you will find on your way.

## Nature Trail

### *of the Cantabrian Mountains. Inland Asturias*

Peñamellera Baja

On its winding route, which follows the rugged Asturian relief, Nature Trail of the Cantabrian Mountains is **one of the most attractive Nature Trails in Spain**.

*It crosses the principality from east to west through the interior of the province, starting in the municipality of Peñamellera Baja and ending, 606 kilometres later, in the municipality of Santa Eulalia de Oscos.*

Do you dare follow the trail? Plan the **27 stages** well or divide it into several trips and take up the challenge. At every step you will see how the landscape changes, as you go from hills to the bottom of valleys, walking along one of the countless waterways, and how the peacefulness inside the forest ends up creating an incomparable natural atmosphere. Despite it being a long way, you certainly won't want it to end - because you are in Asturias!



### Don't miss...

- ▶ The range of forests along the Nature Tail, which runs through oak carbayo, sessile oak, beech, chestnut, conifer, riparian forests, etc.
- ▶ The traditional architecture found in its path: granaries, bakeries, *cortines* (circular stone enclosures that defend beehives), etc.
- ▶ Other historic trails that form part of the route such as Camín Real de la Mesa, Vía Romana de La Carisa and the Original Way of St. James.

Grandas de Salime reservoir





Nature Trail sign

This Nature Trail, like the rest of the nature trails plotted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment, is a great trail intended to bring you closer to the natural environment, encouraging awareness of nature and the landscapes, as well as rural development. It goes through some of the most important protected natural areas in our region: Picos de Europa National Park, Redes Nature Park, the Protected Landscape of the Coalfields, Ubiñas-La Mesa Nature Park, near the Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Park and part of the Río Eo, Oscos y Terras de Burón Biosphere Reserve. It also goes through natural enclaves as interesting as the Cuera Mountains, Pico Caldoveiro and the Carondio and Valledor mountain ranges.



Infierno river (Piloña)



Nature Trail of the Cantabrian Mountains: Inland Asturias, through the municipalities of Peñamellera Baja, Cabrales, Onís, Cangas de Onís, Parres, Piloña, Nava, Bimenes, Laviana, Aller, Lena, Quirós, Santo Adriano, Proaza, Yernes y Tameza, Teverga, Belmonte de Miranda, Tineo, Cangas del Narcea, Allande, Grandas de Salime and Santa Eulalia de Oscos. It covers a length of just over 606 kilometres and is divided into the following stages:

## 27 stages

Setting point	Destination	Distance (Km)	Duration (h)
1 Panes	Altes	17.85	5.00
2 Altes	Carreña	15.98	4.30
3 Carreña	Benia	19.02	5.00
4 Benia	Cangas d'Onís/Cangas de Onís	23.58	4.30
5 Cangas d'Onís/Cangas de Onís	Villamayor	22.98	7.30
6 Villamayor	Espinaréu	13.40	4.30
7 Espinaréu	El Fresno	9.26	3.00
8 El Fresno	Melendreras	15.93	5.30
9 Melendreras	Entrialgo	13.37	4.30
10 Entrialgo	Beyo	18.51	6.00
11 Beyo	Santibanes de Murias	32.54	6.00
12 Santibanes de Murias	Campumanes	26.09	8.30
13 Campumanes	Chanuces	25.96	8.30
14 Chanuces	Bárzana	20.17	5.00
15 Bárzana	Vil.lanueva	18.14	5.00
16 Vil.lanueva	Vil.lamayor	43.67	9.00
17 Vil.lamayor	Dolia	22.65	8.00
18 Dolia	Belmonte/Balmonte	13.99	4.30
19 Belmonte/Balmonte	Bueinás	17.25	5.00
20 Bueinás	Tuña	24.62	4.00
21 Tuña	Ounón	16.68	4.00
22 Ounón	Courias	23.77	7.00
23 Courias	Bisuyu	20.02	6.30
24 Bisuyu	Berducedo	42.21	4.00
25 Berducedo	Grandas de Salime	45.71	6.00
26 Grandas de Salime	Castro	13.25	3.00
27 Castro	Santalla	29.43	6.00

Santa Eulalia de Oscos



# Other experiences in nature

The possibilities afforded by the nature of Asturias do not stop here. Butterflies, stargazing, etc. are some of the other ecotourism experiences available and for which Asturias, once again, provides an excellent environment.

*An Asturcón horse*

**Do you like butterflies?** You are in the right place. In Asturias there are 142 species of lepidoptera out of the 230 existing in the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic Islands, which represent 61.7% of the Spanish species of butterflies (excluding the Canary Islands).

The most popular butterflies among fans, and which are among the most threatened are: the Apollo butterfly (*Parnassius apollo*) in subalpine meadows and sunny rocky mountain slopes, the marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia* in the oakwoods, the

*Apollo butterfly*





Lopanga achine in deciduous forests of Picos de Europa and the nearby environment, the large blue (*Maculinea arion*) in open grasslands and meadows of dandelions in beech groves or the dusky large blue (*Maculinea nausithous*) in reeds and hygrophilous mountain meadows.

**Where can you see them?** A gradient of decreasing diversity can be seen from the east to the west.

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*Picos de Europa, the strip of the Cantábrica Mountains between the massif of Ubiña and Somiedo, where the limestone substrate dominates, as it does in the Picos, are the areas with the most butterfly species.*

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Although with less diversity, other areas of interest are the basin of the Navia River, El Puertu (Tarna), Aramo Mountains, Cuera Mountains, and some enclaves of the western mountains such as La Bobia Mountains and the forest of Muniel.los.

And after spending the day thoroughly enjoying our nature, night invites us to look up at the sky and be captivated



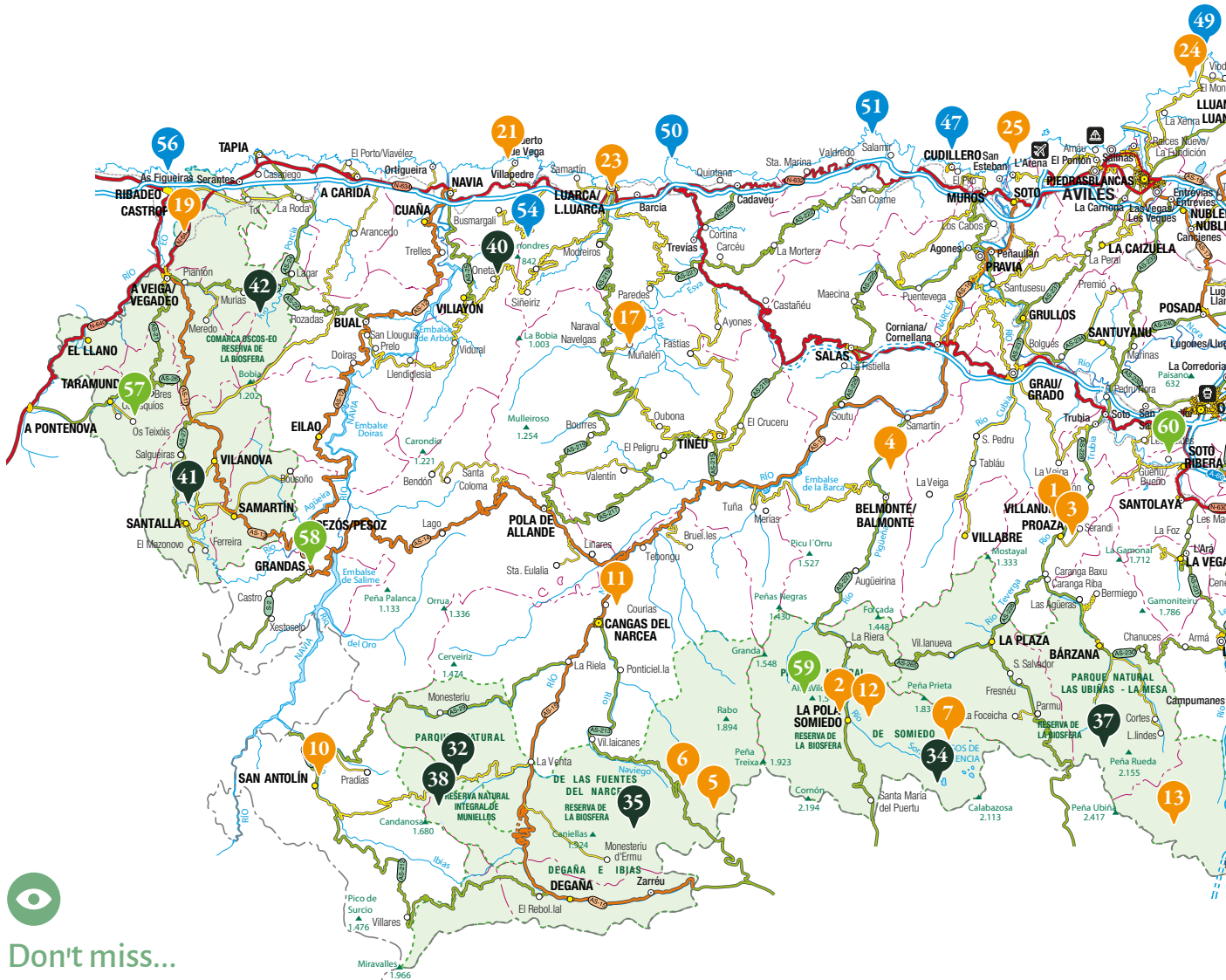
by the **firmament** that can be seen thanks to the **low light pollution** of our sky. Why not check it out in the rural apartments LObservatoriu (Valdés), with Starlight certification, and visit Parque de la Vida (Luarca/L. Luarca), with its astronomical observatory and digital planetarium.

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*And do not forget the Asturcón, an Asturian horse. One of the oldest and purest breeds in the world.*

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You will see them around our mountains and meadows, and you can learn more about these small indigenous horses in the Ca l'Asturcón Eco-Museum (La Quintana de la Foncalada; Villaviciosa).



Don't miss...

### Ecotourism

1. The bear House Interpretation Centre (Proaza)
2. "Somiedo and the Bear" Interpretation Centre (Somiedo)
3. Bear enclosure in "The bear trail" (Proaza)
4. The wolf house and enclosure (Belmonte de Miranda)
5. Interpretive trails: Walking to the rhythm of the seasons (Cangas del Narcea)
6. Interpretive trails: The refuges of the brown bear (Cangas del Narcea)
7. Interpretive trails: Family life of bears (Somiedo)
8. Interpretive trails: The deer and the bellowing (Aller)
9. Interpretive trails: The bear's nooks (Teverga)
10. Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Park Educational Exhibition on Nature (San Antolín, Ibias)
11. Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Park House (Courias, Cangas del Narcea)
12. Somiedo Nature Park Reception and Interpretation Centre (Pola de Somiedo, Somiedo)
13. Las Ubiñas-La Mesa Nature Park Information Centre (Tuíza Ribá, Lena)
14. Water House (Rusectu, Sobrescobio)
15. Redes Nature Park Interpretation Centre (El Campu, Caso)
16. Pedro Pidal Visitor Centre (Cangas de Onís)
17. Forest Museum (Muñalén, Tineo)
18. Villaviciosa Estuary Interpretation Centre
19. Eo Estuary Interpretation Centre (Castropol)
20. Gijón Aquarium (Gijón)
21. Sea Stories Museum (Puerto de Vega, Navia)
22. Fishing Experimentation Centre (Gijón/Xixón)
23. Parque de la Vida Interpretation Center (Valdés)
24. Marine Environment Interpretation Centre of Peñas Cape (Gozón)
25. Nalón Estuary Interpretation Centre (L'Arena, Soto del Barco)
26. Asturias Maritime Museum (Gozón)
27. Bearded Vulture Mountains Interpretation Centre (Benia, Onís)
28. Atlantic Botanic Garden (Gijón)
29. Ecomuseo Ca'l'Asturcón (Villaviciosa)
30. Fitu Lookout (Parres)
31. Pozo de la Oración Lookout (Cabrales)
32. Puerto del Connio Lookout (Cangas del Narcea)

### Explore Paradise



- 33. Covadonga Lakes – Picos de Europa National Park
- 34. Somiedo Lakes – Somiedo Nature Park
- 35. Las Fuentes del Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Nature Park
- 36. Redes Nature Park
- 37. Las Ubiñas-La Mesa Nature Park
- 38. Muniellos Nature Reserve (Cangas del Narcea e Ibias)
- 39. Ponga Nature Park
- 40. Oneta Waterfall Trail (Villayón)
- 41. Seimeira Waterfall Trail (Santa Eulalia de Oscos)
- 42. Cioyo Waterfall Trail (Castropol)
- 43. Xurbeo Waterfall Trail (Aller)



**Submerge yourself on the coast**

- 44. Pría Blowholes (Llanes)
- 45. Arenillas Blowholes (Llanes)
- 46. Santiuste Blowhole (Llanes)
- 47. Cudillero Port
- 48. Gulpiyuri Beach (Llanes)
- 49. Peñes (Gozón)
- 50. Busto Cape (Valdés)

- 51. Vidio Cape (Cudillero)
- 52. Lastres Cape (Colunga)
- 53. The Dinosaur Coast and the Jurassic Museum of Asturias (Colunga)
- 54. Barayo Partial Nature Reserve (Navia and Valdés)
- 55. Villaviciosa Partial Nature Reserve
- 56. Landscape of the Eo Estuary (Castropol and Vegadeo)



**Breathe Asturias**

- 57. Taramundi and Os Teixóis Ethnographic Site
- 58. Grandas de Salime Ethnographic Museum
- 59. A walk through the Somiedo *brañas* with their emblematic *teitos* (thatched roof cottages)
- 60. *Hórreos* (raised granaries) in Güeñu/Bueño (Ribera de Arriba)
- 61. The Plains of Picos de Europa

# Asturias

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