



# A MARIÑA LUCENSE

## AN EXCEPTIONAL DESTINATION FOR BIRDWATCHING IN THE NORTHWEST OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA



Its four **Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs)**, combined with the diversity of its habitats and its strategic location along the **Western Galician-Cantabrian Migration Corridor**, make it a site of great importance within the **Natura 2000 Network**.

From its imposing **cliffs and extensive beaches** to its **estuaries, marshlands, and inland mountains**, this region provides an **essential refuge** for a wide variety of bird species. Among the most emblematic ones are the **eurasian spoonbill** (*Platalea leucorodia*), **balearic shearwater** (*Puffinus mauretanicus*), **eurasian curlew** (*Numenius arquata*), and an **extraordinary diversity of gulls**. This makes the area, along with **Estaca de Bares** (A Coruña) and **Cabo Burela**, one of the **best sites in Europe** for observing and photographing **migratory seabirds**.

Additionally, the estuaries, wetlands, and mountains of the region harbor an exceptional birdlife, including **rare and vagrant species** such as the **Bonaparte's gull** (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) or the **great northern diver** (*Gavia immer*), which can be spotted during winter in inlets and estuaries after Atlantic storms.

This brochure serves as a **practical guide** to discovering the **best birdwatching sites**, while promoting **sustainable and responsible tourism** in harmony with the rich natural heritage of A Mariña Lucense.



To enjoy an optimal birdwatching experience in A Mariña Lucense, it is advisable to have updated information on species, locations, and the best times for observation. Below are some useful resources:

### REFERENCE WEBSITES AND USEFUL APPS

**A Mariña Lucense Ornithology** | [amarinalucense.gal](http://amarinalucense.gal)  
Detailed information about observation zones, species, and tips for ornithological tourism in the area.

**SEO BirdLife** | [seo.org](http://seo.org)  
Information on species, conservation, and ornithological events in Spain.

**eBird** | [ebird.org](http://ebird.org)  
A collaborative platform for recording sightings and consulting bird listings in real-time.

**Galicia Birding** | [turismo.gal](http://turismo.gal)  
Resources and specific routes for birdwatching in Galicia.

**Merlin Bird ID**  
A free app that allows bird identification through photographs and songs.

### BEST TIME TO VISIT

**Spring** | March-June  
Ideal time for nesting of many species and the pre-nuptial passage.

**Autumn** | September-November  
Post-nuptial migration, with high transit of marine and wading birds.

**Winter** | December-February  
High concentration of wintering aquatic and marine birds in estuaries and wetlands.



Through the link code you can access further information about observation zones, interactive maps, guides and prominent species on the A Mariña Lucense website.

Following these resources, birdwatching in A Mariña Lucense will be a comfortable, accessible, and environmentally respectful experience. Enjoy it and take care of the environment!

# ORNITHOLOGICAL TOURISM IN A MARIÑA LUCENSE



MINI-GUIDE FOR BIRDWATCHERS

Picture @wildsidesanti



## BIRDWATCHING TIPS

Where to go, what equipment to bring, and suggested routes

To make the most of birdwatching in A Mariña Lucense, it is important to plan ahead and have the right equipment. Here are some useful tips:

### WHERE TO GO: CHOOSING THE BEST BIRDWATCHING SPOTS

**Take advantage of bird hides and natural viewpoints**  
They offer excellent conditions for observing seabirds and waterfowl.

**Check the tides**  
In intertidal zones such as estuaries and marshes, it is best to visit at **low tide or mid-tide**, when shorebirds are actively foraging.

**Choose the right times of the day**  
**Early morning and late afternoon** are when birds are most active.

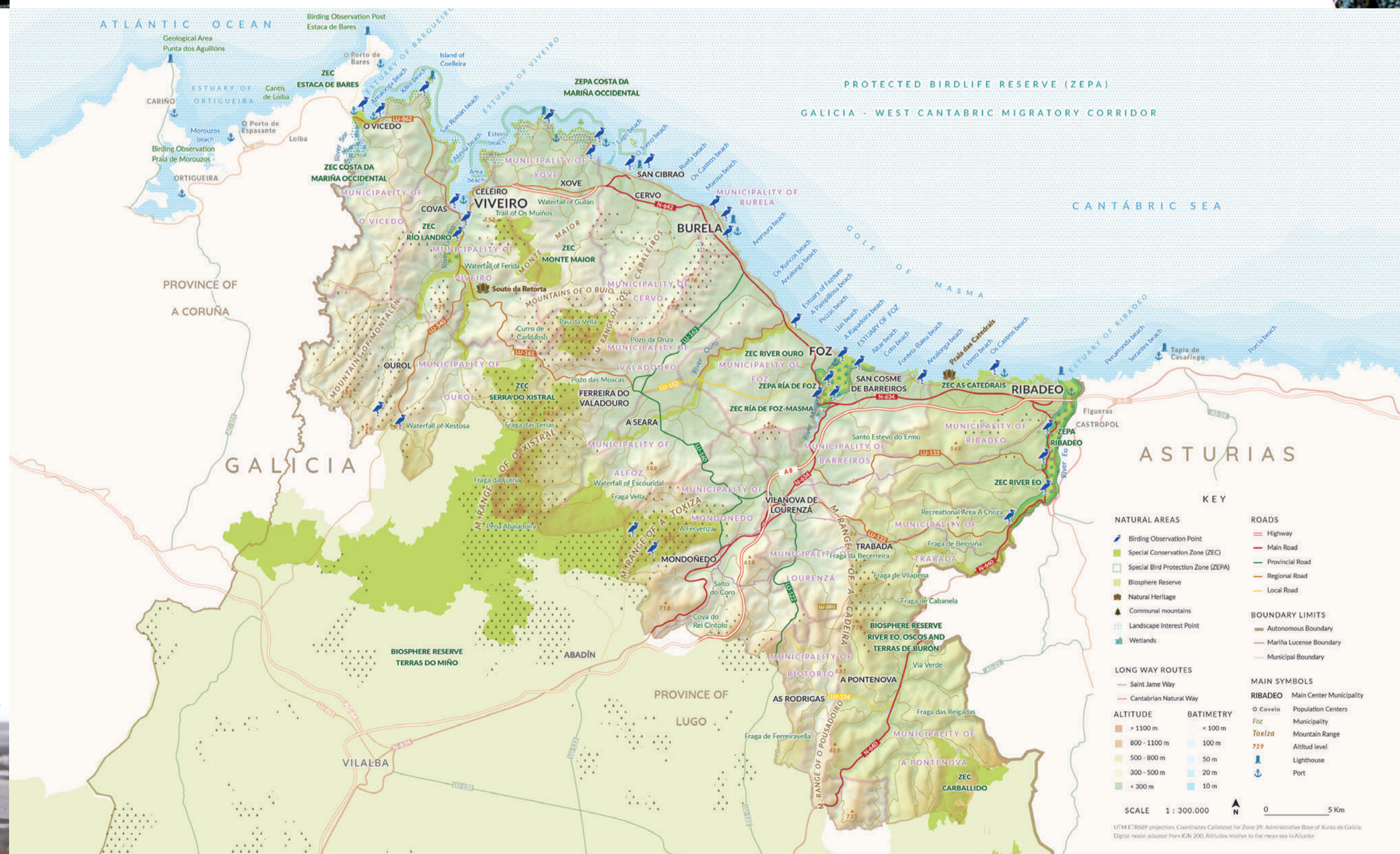
### WHAT EQUIPMENT TO BRING FOR A BETTER EXPERIENCE

**Binoculars**  
An **8x42** or **10x42** pair is ideal for detailed birdwatching.

**Spotting scope**  
Very useful for seabird watching and in large wetlands where birds may be far away.

**Bird guidebook**  
Bring a field guide or use apps like **eBird** or **Merlin Bird ID** for easy species identification.

**Appropriate clothing and footwear**  
Wear neutral-coloured clothing to avoid standing out and use comfortable, waterproof footwear for wetland areas.



## BEST PRACTICES FOR BIRDWATCHING

Birdwatching in A Mariña Lucense is a rewarding activity that fosters a connection with nature and allows visitors to discover the region's rich birdlife. To ensure a responsible and respectful experience, it is essential to follow these best practices:

### Respect the habitat

Birds depend on their environment to survive. **Do not step on marshes, dunes, nesting areas, or fragile habitats.** Do not leave litter or alter the natural landscape.

### Do not disturb the birds' behaviour

Observe birds from a safe distance. Do not force them to fly or interfere with their activities. During the breeding season, do not get too close to nests to prevent stress or nest abandonment.

### Use appropriate clothing and equipment

Wear neutral-coloured clothing to blend into the environment and comfortable footwear for safe movement. Use **binoculars or spotting scopes** to enjoy bird details without getting too close.

### Minimize noise and disturbances

Speak quietly and move discreetly to increase your chances of spotting birds. Avoid loud noises, such as playing music or shouting, and mute your phone.

### Stay on designated trails and paths

Respect the established routes and avoid restricted areas. Following the marked trails minimizes the impact on the ecosystem and protects local flora and fauna.

### Report endangered birds to authorities

If you see **injured, endangered, or trapped birds**, contact the relevant authorities, such as the **Galician Environmental Department** or specialized organizations. You can also record your sightings on platforms such as **eBird** or **SEO BirdLife**, contributing to species monitoring and conservation.



Pictures @wildsidesanti

# OUTSTANDING BIRDWATCHING AREAS IN A MARIÑA LUCENSE

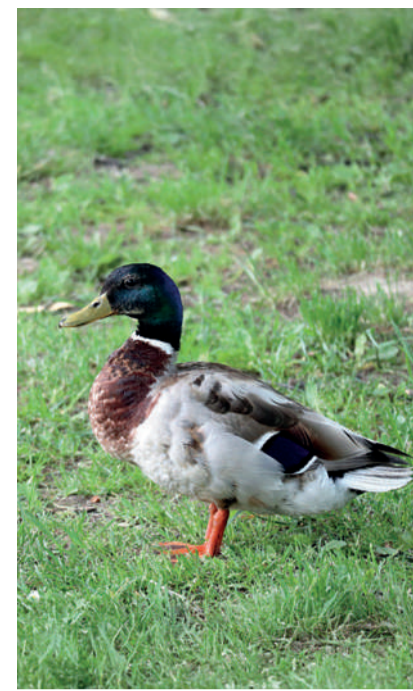


Common greenshank Picture @wildsidesanti



The **Ría de Foz**, protected within the **Natura 2000 Network**, is a key coastal ecosystem in A Mariña Lucense. Its combination of **marshes, estuaries, and intertidal zones** makes it a fundamental habitat for the migration of **aquatic and wading birds**, which find here a resting and feeding area during their seasonal movements.

During **spring, autumn and winter**, this estuary hosts emblematic species such as the **common spoonbill** (*Platalea leucorodia*), the **common greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*), and the **mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*). Moreover, its location on the **Western Galician-Cantabrian Migration Corridor** allows for the sighting of various species in transit.



Mallard



## TRABADA

The municipality of **Trabada**, located on the eastern edge of **A Mariña Lucense**, offers a landscape dominated by **riverbank forests and wet areas linked to the course of the Río Eo**, an ecosystem protected within the **Río Eo, Ocos, and Terras de Burón Biosphere Reserve**. Its combination of well-preserved woodlands and wetlands makes this territory a key refuge for **aquatic and forest birds**.

During **spring and summer**, the presence of the **mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) is common, which takes advantage of the calm waters of the river for breeding. Shorebirds such as the **common sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*), known for its incessant movements along the stony banks, can also be observed. In the nearby meadows, the **cattle egret** (*Bubulcus ibis*) moves about in search of insects, often near livestock.

Birdwatching enthusiasts can explore this environment through the **Área Recreativa da Chozá**, a key spot for observing aquatic birds.



Northern gannet

Picture @wildsidesanti



Sanderling



## BARREIROS

The municipality of **Barreiros**, located along the coastal strip of A Mariña Lucense, stands out for the ecological richness of its **dune systems and intertidal marshlands**, which form an essential habitat for numerous migratory bird species. Its coastline is dominated by wide sandy beaches and dune formations, with **notable sites such as the Foz Estuary marshes and the dune systems of Altar and Arealonga**, providing a haven for shorebirds and coastal birds.

Particularly during **spring and autumn**, the area becomes a key stopover point within the **Western Galician-Cantabrian Migration Corridor**, hosting species such as the **ringed plover** (*Charadrius hiaticula*), the **sanderling** (*Calidris alba*), and the **eurasian curlew** (*Numenius arquata*), which forage along the shorelines. These beaches are also frequented by **various gull species**, adding to the interest for birdwatchers.



Iberian green woodpecker

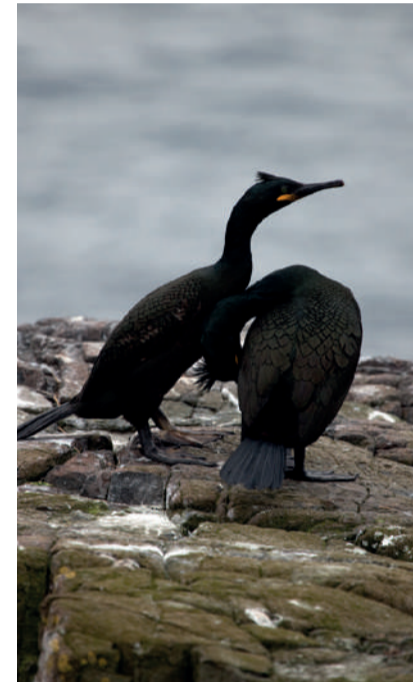


## MONDOÑEDO

Surrounded by lush **Atlantic forests and mid-altitude mountains**, **Mondoñedo** is a privileged enclave for observing **forest birds and raptors**. Its oak, chestnut, and birch groves provide shelter for numerous species, while the rocky cliffs and open slopes favour the presence of large scavengers.

**Throughout the year**, it is possible to spot the **Iberian green woodpecker** (*Picus sharpei*), a distinctive bird with its greenish plumage and powerful fluty call. In the mountain rivers and streams, the **citril finch** (*Carduelis citrinella*) can be seen diving into the water in search of invertebrates, while in the mountainous skies, the **griffon vulture** (*Gyps fulvus*), which has colonized the area in recent years, soars overhead.

Visitors can explore this environment through the trails of **A Fraga Vella**, one of the best-preserved woodlands in the region, or head to the **Montes de Tronceda**, where it is possible to spot large birds of prey in flight and enjoy the area's natural richness.



European shag



## O VICEDO

The coastline of **O Vicedo** is characterized by its spectacular combination of **cliffs, islets, and the mouth of the Río Sor**, creating an ideal environment for observing seabirds and migratory birds. Within this landscape, the **Coelleira Island** stands out as one of the few Galician enclaves where the **Atlantic Cory's shearwater** (*Colonyctris borealis*), a pelagic species that only comes ashore for breeding, nests.

During **spring and autumn**, the cliffs and beaches of O Vicedo are excellent observation points for the **European shag** (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), which nests on the coastal rocks, and the **common scoter** (*Melanitta nigra*), a sea duck that winters in these waters after migrating from its breeding areas in Northern Europe.

To enjoy this ecosystem without interfering with its balance, **the port and the mouth of the Sor River**, along with the cliffs, offer spectacular panoramas and unique opportunities for observing seabirds in their natural habitat.



Balearic shearwater



## BURELA

**Cabo Burela**, along with **Estaca de Bares (A Coruña)**, is one of the most **strategic sites in Europe** for observing migratory seabirds passing through the **Western Galician-Cantabrian Migration Corridor**. Its privileged location on the Cantabrian coast offers unique opportunities to spot and photograph pelagic species migrating across the Atlantic during their seasonal movements.

In **autumn**, the cape becomes an exceptional birdwatching site, where it is possible to observe the critically endangered **Balearic Shearwater** (*Puffinus mauretanicus*), as well as the **atlantic puffin** (*Fratercula arctica*) and the **grey phalarope** (*Phalaropus fulicarius*), which occasionally approach the coast during stormy weather.

To facilitate observation, its seafront promenade offers excellent panoramic views of the coastline, allowing visitors to enjoy the migration spectacle without disturbing the habitat. Cabo Burela is a must-visit destination for seabird enthusiasts.



Griffon vulture



## OUROL

Located in the interior of **A Mariña Lucense**, **Ourol** is distinguished by its **mid-mountain landscape**, dominated by lush **forests, cliffs, and open areas**, creating ideal habitats for the observation of **raptors and cliff-dwelling birds**. Its ecological richness makes it a prominent enclave within the region, offering refuge to species adapted to rugged environments.

In **spring and early summer**, Ourol provides opportunities to spot the **griffon vulture** (*Gyps fulvus*), which has established **one of the main colonies in Galicia** here. Additionally, the **common kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*), an agile raptor that hovers in the air while hunting small rodents, is frequently seen. On the cliffs and rocky outcrops, the **rock martin** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) can be observed performing acrobatic flights, especially in spring and summer.

For observers, the **A Xestosa waterfall** and the **site of O Sisto** offer mountain trails and natural viewpoints, ideal for enjoying the avifauna without disturbing its environment, making Ourol an attractive destination for mountain ornithology.



Great northern diver



## VIVEIRO

The municipality of **Viveiro** offers a great diversity of coastal habitats, where the **Covas Inlet** and the **mouth of the Río Landro** stand out as key points for observing aquatic and marine birds. During the winter, these areas host a notable concentration of **gulls, waders, and marine species that winter**, making it a destination of great ornithological interest.

Among the most noteworthy species during this season are the **great northern diver** (*Gavia immer*), the **common eider** (*Somateria mollissima*), and the **Iceland gull** (*Larus glaucooides*), a winter rarity that can occasionally be spotted in the inlet. Additionally, the **intertidal zone of the Landro attracts various waders and herons** searching for food in its shallow waters.

For observers, Viveiro has a **bird observatory**, a privileged point to enjoy this natural refuge without interfering with the ecosystem, ideal for the practice of responsible ornithology.



Whimbrel



Lesser black-backed gull



## CERVO

The coastline of **Cervo** offers a varied landscape of **beaches, cliffs, and estuaries**, where the mouth of the **Río Covo** and the **Punta Atalaia lighthouse** stand out as key points for birdwatching. This combination of ecosystems provides shelter and food for a great diversity of species, making the area an ideal destination for ornithology.

**Throughout the year**, it is possible to spot the **lesser black-backed gull** (*Larus fuscus*), the **great cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), and the **sanderling** (*Calidris alba*), among other seabirds and waders that frequent the beaches and rocky areas.

Access to various **natural viewpoints** allows for enjoying panoramic views of the coastline and the migratory passage of various species, consolidating Cervo as a privileged enclave for birdwatching on the Cantabrian coast.



Osprey



## RIBADEO

The **Ría de Ribadeo**, situated on the natural border between Galicia and Asturias, is one of the most important ecosystems in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula for migratory birdlife. Protected as a **Special Protection Area (SPA)** and classified as a **RAMSAR wetland of international importance**, this estuary harbors an extraordinary diversity of habitats including **marshes, sandbanks, saline grasslands and intertidal zones**, providing refuge and sustenance to a wide variety of waterfowl and wading birds.

During the **autumn and winter migration**, the estuary becomes a strategic enclave for thousands of birds either passing through or wintering. Notable species include the **Eurasian wigeon** (*Mareca penelope*), the **Eurasian curlew** (*Numenius arquata*), and the **spotted redshank** (*Tringa erythropus*), which find in its shallow waters an ideal habitat for resting and feeding. Additionally, the **osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) takes advantage of the abundance of fish in the estuary.

To complement these rich ecosystems, the **Charca de Rinlo**, a small seasonal lagoon located near the coast, provides crucial additional habitat for migratory and resident birds.

To facilitate observation, there are **birdwatching hides** as: **Muro de Lamas** and **Reme**, both strategically located to enjoy this natural sanctuary without interfering with its delicate ecological balance.



European herring gull



## XOVE

The coastline of **Xove** offers spectacular landscapes with cliffs, coves, and beaches, making it a strategic point for observing **migratory seabirds**. **Punta Roncadoira** and **Punta de Morás** stand out as privileged places to spot species in transit along the **Western Galician-Cantabrian Migration Corridor**. In addition, the **surroundings of Lago beach** - beach, marsh and lagoons - provide an ideal complement to these coastal habitats as a refuge for many species of aquatic and sea birds.

During the **autumn**, this area becomes an exceptional viewpoint to observe the **northern gannet** (*Morus bassanus*), which crosses the coast in large numbers on its migration south. In the rocky coastal areas, the presence of the **ruddy turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*) is common, while the **European herring gull** (*Larus argentatus*) is a regular visitor throughout the year.



European robin

