

WILDLIFE • 3 H

Wildlife-watching in the Catalan Pyrenees by motorhome

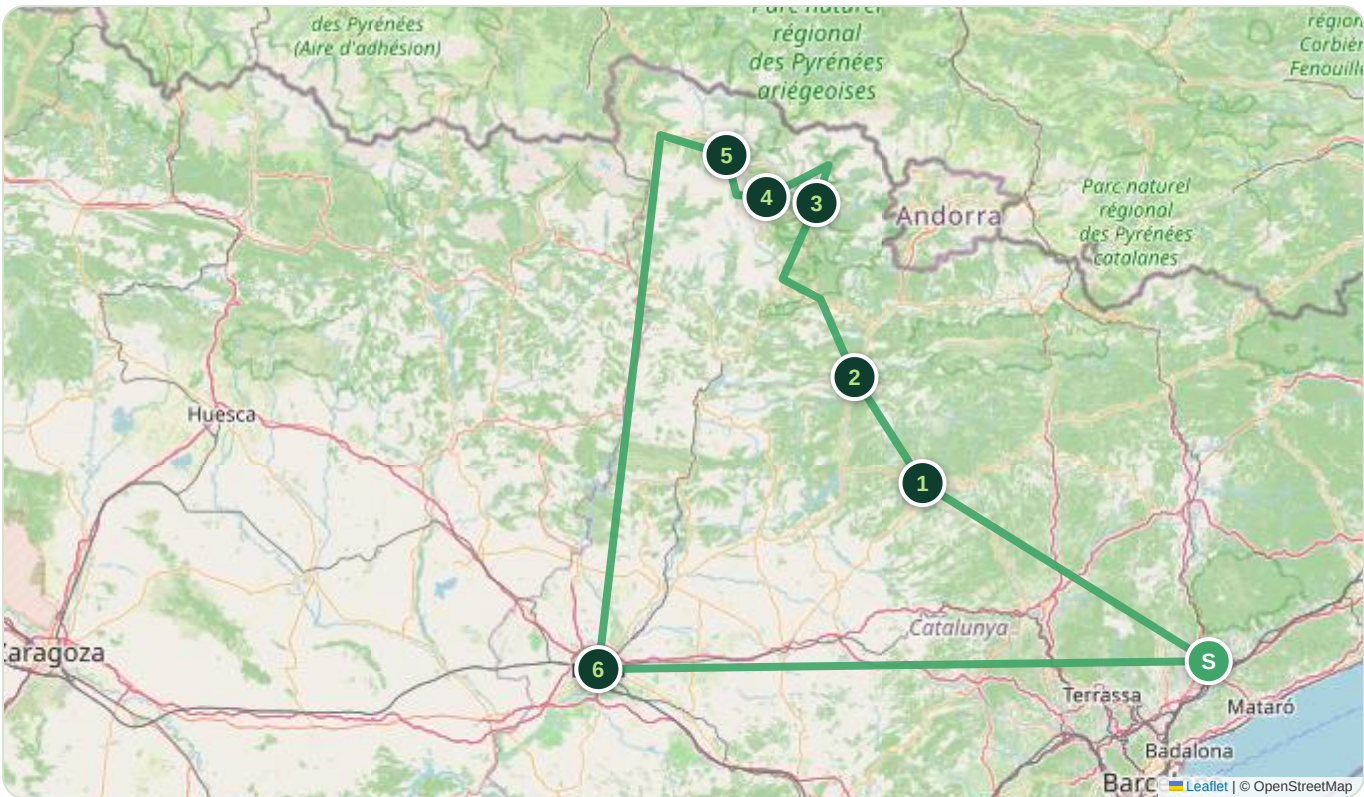
Bearded vultures, griffon vultures, chamois and marmots across the Pallars, Aigüestortes and the Vall d'Aran, with binoculars, patience and respect.

**START AND FINISH****Les Franqueses del Vallès****DURATION****6 rental nights****APPROX. DISTANCE****770 km****BEST TIME****May — October****MILEAGE****1,800 km included (300 km/day) • extra km €0.40****INDICATIVE PRICE****from €750 rental in low season**

The Catalan Pyrenees are one of the best places in Spain to watch mountain wildlife: bearded vultures soar over the Pallars valleys, chamois graze above the treeline and marmots whistle among the boulders. This route starts at our base in Les Franqueses del Vallès and takes in the Alt Pirineu Natural Park, Aigüestortes from the Espot side and the Vall d'Aran.

It is a six-day rental, six nights: you collect the motorhome on the afternoon of day 1 and return it on the morning of day 7. The best season runs from May to October; marmots hibernate from autumn to spring, and the red deer rut comes in September and October. With 4 days, the mid-season minimum, stick to the Pallars and Espot and come back the same way; in July and August the minimum is 7.

Route map (approximate line)



Route plan

Day 1	Pick-up • Solsona
Day 2	Organyà • Port del Cantó • Sort
Day 3	Vall de Cardós • Tavascan
Day 4	Espot • Estany de Sant Maurici
Day 5	Port de la Bonaigua • Vall d'Aran
Day 6	Vall d'Aran • Vielha tunnel • Lleida

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 · Pick-up and a short leg to Solsona

You collect the motorhome between 16:00 and 19:00 and, after the handover, take the C-17 to Vic and then the Eix Transversal westwards. In an hour and a half you reach Solsona, a quiet town with a walled old centre. It is an easy first stage to get used to the V66. Spend the night at a campsite or authorised area and get your binoculars ready: tomorrow the vultures appear.

Day 2 · Organyà, Port del Cantó and Sort

Head up the Segre valley via Oliana and Organyà. Over the cliffs and gorges of the Pre-Pyrenees, griffon vultures are a common sight when the day warms up. Pass La Seu d'Urgell and climb the Port del Cantó, at over 1,700 m: stop in a safe lay-by and scan the sky, as bearded vultures, with their diamond-shaped tails, patrol these slopes. Drop down into the Pallars Sobirà and spend the night near Sort.

Day 3 · Vall de Cardós and Tavascan

Follow the Noguera Pallaresa up to Llavorsí and turn into the Vall de Cardós, inside the Alt Pirineu Natural Park, the largest in Catalonia. From Ribera de Cardós and Tavascan, paths lead to high meadows where, with luck and an early start, you will see chamois and marmots. The forests are home to the capercaillie, which is very sensitive to disturbance: stay on the paths. Sleep in the valley or back near Sort.

Day 4 · Espot and Estany de Sant Maurici

Espot is the eastern gateway to Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park. Private vehicle access is restricted: walk up to the lake or take the authorised 4x4 taxis. Around Estany de Sant Maurici, beneath the Encantats peaks, chamois show themselves on the slopes and marmots give their warning whistle. Activity peaks early and late in the day. Spend the night near Espot.

Day 5 · Port de la Bonaigua and the Vall d'Aran

Climb the Port de la Bonaigua, at over 2,000 m, where the alpine meadows are good marmot country in summer. On the other side lies the Vall d'Aran, with dense forests and an Atlantic-facing landscape. Brown bears live in these valleys, but sightings are exceptional; if it happens, move away calmly. If you want more of the valley, our Vall d'Aran route explores it in depth. Sleep near Vielha.

Day 6 · Vall d'Aran, Vielha tunnel and Lleida

Use the morning for a last walk in the valley forests. Then the Vielha tunnel and the N-230 take you down through the Ribagorça to Lleida, around two and a half hours' drive. Spending tonight near Lleida splits the journey home: on the morning of day 7, the dual carriageway gets you to the Vallès in just under two hours, in good time for the return between 9:00 and 12:00. In autumn, the Boumort National Game Reserve in the Pallars Jussà is well known for the rut.

What you will see



Bearded vulture · Port del Cantó



Pyrenean chamois · Tavascan



Estany de Sant Maurici

Where to sleep

The Pallars Sobirà, Espot and the Vall d'Aran have campsites, and some villages have authorised motorhome areas. Many mountain campsites only open from spring to autumn, so check dates before

you go. In summer, book ahead. Park4Night or Campercontact help you find areas and water points.

You may park wherever any vehicle may park, as long as you are not camping: no awning, chairs or levelling chocks, and no emptying of waste water. Wild camping is not permitted in Catalonia, and the national and natural parks have stricter rules. To watch wildlife at dawn, sleep at a nearby campsite or area and set off on foot.

Practical tips

- Keep your distance: if an animal changes its behaviour because of you, you are too close. Binoculars or a spotting scope bring you closer without disturbing.
- Speak quietly, move slowly and make the most of dawn and dusk, when animals are most active. Never feed them.
- If you travel with a dog, keep it on a lead at all times and check each protected area's rules; see our guide to motorhome travel with a dog.
- Respect seasonal path closures and breeding areas: they protect sensitive species such as the bearded vulture and the capercaillie.
- The route covers about 770 km in six days: with the 300 km a day included in Segimon Rental's 3 to 6-day rentals, you have plenty of margin.
- Mountain passes are winding and steep; check road conditions and remember the Bonaigua can close in the snow season.

Information and bookings

segimonrental.com/en/routes/pyrenees-wildlife-route/

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Camí Antic de Vic, 29 · Les Franqueses del Vallès

Indicative itinerary. Check road conditions, opening times and restrictions before setting off. Up-to-date information on our website.