



Eagle owl



Great bustard



Mountains are well represented in Villena, with peaks such as **Peñarubia**, **Cabrera**, the **Morrón** or the **Sierra de Salinas** range, a place of major significance due to its excellent state of conservation, and where one finds the municipality's highest point, **La Capilla**, at 1,238 m. These areas of stunning pine and oak forest – often found together with terraced cultivation – are home to a huge variety of species, notably the majestic **Golden eagle** or the **Eagle owl**, as well as **Jays**, **small Wrens**, **Black Wheatears**, **Sub-alpine warblers**, **Golden orioles**, **Short-toed tree creepers** or another of our nocturnal raptors, the **Tawny owl**.

MOUNTAIN

Villena's steppe lands and fields of cereal cultivation are unquestionably the best **areas in Alicante province** to watch birds, in particular the **Lesser kestrel**, which uses the roofs of old buildings to rear its young, and flies over the surrounding fields where it's easy to spot specimens of this small hawk alongside other species such as the **Pin-tailed sandgrouse**, the **Little bustard**, **Stone curlew**, **Montagu's harrier**, the **Northern wheatear**, **Calandra lark**, **Corn buntings** and more occasionally, **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** and the awesome **Great bustard**.

STEPPE

Evidence of the municipality of Villena's environmental importance is the high percentage of protected land it is home to, part of the European Union's Natura 2000 network, via 4 protection mechanisms: **ZEPA** (Special Protection Areas for birds or SPAs in English), **LIC** (Site of Community Importance or SCI), **Flora Micro-reserves** and **Wildlife Reserves**, with the main habitats being:

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However, the municipality has a jewel tucked away which often goes unnoticed by its visitors, a highly unique asset: its natural environment. **The landscapes of Villena** change depending on the time of day or season of the year, never the same, going from the barren vines of February to the lush fields of cereal in May, **dynamic and alive** yet, above all, **of significance due to the huge variety of bird species to be found all year round**. These birds are the target of a form of sustainable tourism: **Birdwatching**.

Villena is on course to become one of the main tourist destinations of inland Alicante province thanks to its many tourist attractions, amongst others the **Atalaya Castle** or the unparalleled **Treasure of Villena**, the most important hoard find of prehistoric Europe, at over 3000 years old. Together with gems such as the **Churches of Santiago** and **Santa María**, **museums**, **cave houses** and **archaeological sites**, Villena is rising as a cultural destination of undoubted importance. Furthermore, the notable presence of **vineyards and wineries**, along with a cuisine that brings together the best dishes from the coast and hinterland, production of top-quality children's footwear, the **Moros y Cristianos festival** ('Moors and Christians') with the highest attendance in the world, and a return to the past with its Medieval **Fiestas**, means that the number of people visiting the town has witnessed a significant increase in recent years.



VILLENA

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BIRDWATCHING TOURISM

Respect the birds and their habitat: remember that you must prioritise the birds' welfare above all, and be respectful of the species and the habitat they live in. Do not alter their behaviour in any way, particularly in breeding season.

Learn about the environmental regulations in place in the areas you are visiting: before a visit, find out if the area is part of a Protected Natural Area (*Espacio Natural Protegido* in Spanish), which areas are open to public visits, and whether there are any areas of restricted access for which entry must be requested in advance. Respect the current regulations at all times.

Respect the land owners' rights: most of the time, such birdwatching sites are privately owned, meaning you must stay on the paths at all times and be aware of the property's fences and gates.

Commit an important number to memory: 112. If you find an injured bird or one showing clear signs of distress, contact the emergency services immediately on 112. They will activate the necessary protocol and will explain what to do in each case.

Share your sightings: Your sightings can be useful in improving the knowledge and protection of our bird species and their habitats. Share your sightings in as much detail as possible with local birdwatching groups, conservationists, or digital apps and platforms, providing us with invaluable information that can help to protect birds.

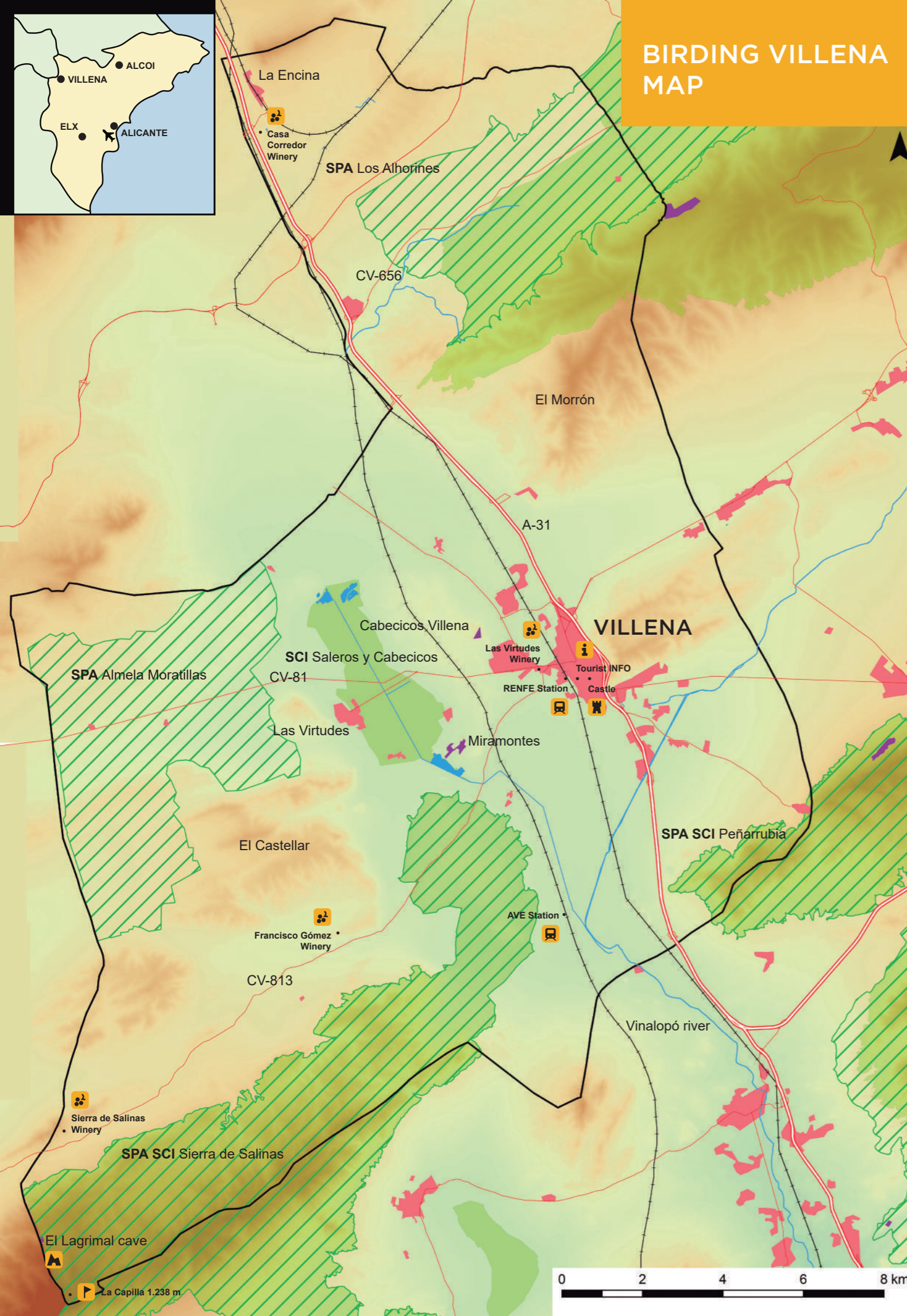
Remember: No photo or sighting is worth it if it disturbs or endangers the presence of our bird species. Never forget this!

Lesser kestrel

BIRDING VILLENA

BIRDWATCHING

VILLENA
FORTALEZA MEDITERRÁNEA
TURISMO



BIRDING VILLENA MAP

MAP KEY

- Station
- Winery
- Castle
- Tourist Info
- La Capilla peak
- El Lagrimal cave
- SPA (ZEPA)
- SCI (LIC)
- Flora micro-reserve
- Urban or built-up areas

MOST REPRESENTATIVE SPECIES

- Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*) Summer
- Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) Sedentary
- Lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) Summer
- Little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) Sedentary
- Black-winged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) Summer
- Stone curlew (*Burhinus oediconemus*) Sedentary
- Little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*) Summer
- Great bustard (*Otis tarda*) Occasional
- Pin-tailed sandgrouse (*Pterocles alchata*) Sedentary
- Black-bellied sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) Sedentary
- Eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*) Sedentary
- Tawny owl (*Strix aluco*) Sedentary
- Red-necked nightjar (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*) Summer
- Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) Summer
- Green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*) Sedentary
- Calandra lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*) Sedentary
- Greater short-toed lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) Sedentary
- Winter wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) Sedentary
- Northern wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) Summer
- Black-eared wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*) Summer
- Black wheatear (*Oenanthe leucura*) Sedentary
- Zitting cisticola (*Cisticola juncidis*) Summer
- Spectacled warbler (*Sylvia conspicillata*) Summer
- Short-toed tree creeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*) Sedentary
- Golden oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*) Summer
- Southern grey shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*) Sedentary
- Eurasian jay (*Garrulus glandarius*) Sedentary
- Rock sparrow (*Petronia petronia*) Sedentary
- Corn bunting (*Emberiza calandra*) Sedentary

- Steppe
- Mountain
- Salt marsh



Golden eagle



Spectacled warbler



Black wheatear



Little bustard



Stone curlew



Pin-tailed sandgrouse



Greater short-toed lark