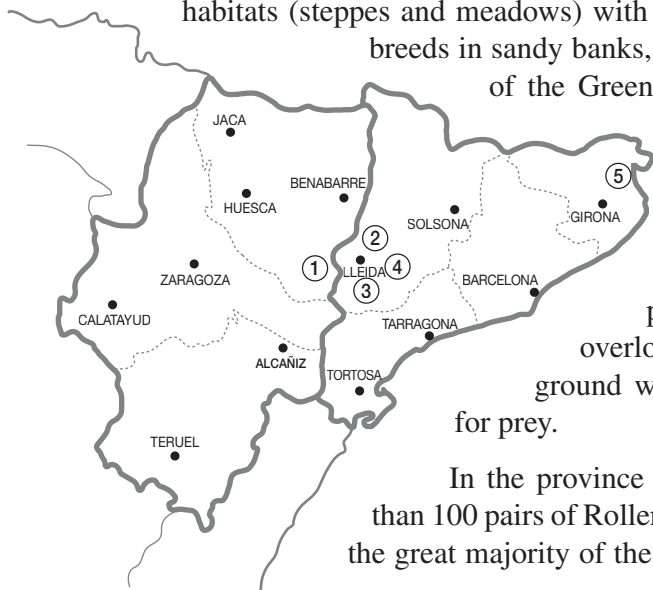


ROLLER *Coracias garrulus*:

Present in Spain from mid-April to September the Roller winters in the Afrotropical region. It is a lowland species, favouring open, sunny habitats (steppes and meadows) with scattered, mature trees. It breeds in sandy banks, in walls and in nest-holes of the Green Woodpecker, although it



will also accept suitable nest-boxes. It avoids intensively-cultivated areas. Birds hunt from open perches on trees, posts and overhead wires overlooking sparsely vegetated ground which provides little cover for prey.

In the province of Lleida there are fewer than 100 pairs of Rollers, although this represents the great majority of the Catalan population of the

species. It appears that parts of Aragón, especially the southern part of Huesca, were colonized from the neighbouring population in Lleida around the year 1980, and that the species is still spreading in some parts of the Ebro valley.

- 1) **Ballobar-Candasnos-Ontiñena:** the best areas to search are just to the north of the junction of the Candasnos-Ontiñena road with that of Ballobar, mainly to the west of the road, as well as the pseudosteppe a few kilometres to the east of the village of Candasnos, on the higher ground on either side of the N-II. The species also occurs on either side of the N-II between Bar Ventorrillo and Ventas del Rey, to the west of Fraga. (Site map 9).
- 2) **Balaguer Drylands:** Rollers inhabit areas bordering the River Farfanya between Castelló de Farfanya and Menàrguens. From Balaguer head towards Menàrguens on the C-12 (LV-9224) and just after the first entrance to the village of Menàrguens turn right onto a wide track following the course of the River Farfanya, signposted to Castelló de Farfanya. Pay particular attention to the clumps of trees here and there along the river's edge. The first 4kms are the best. (Site map 12).
- 3) **Alfés Drylands:** several pairs of Rollers can be found in the area immediately to the east of the village of Alfés on both sides of the River Set, to the north of the road between Alfés and Aspa. The species may also be encountered to the east of the LV-7021 between Aspa and Artesa de Lleida. Rollers also occur further south, between Alcanó and Sarroca - the best area is along the track that runs southwest from the edge of Alcanó village towards Sarroca. (Site map 11).
- 4) **Belianes Drylands:** the area to the east of the LP-2015 between Preixana and Sant Martí de Maldà is currently a very good one for Rollers, but its future as such looks bleak because of plans to irrigate the remaining drylands.
- 5) **Aiguamolls Natural Park:** some of the 6-7 pairs of Rollers breeding in the park can normally be seen from the path that leads to the hide at Vilaüt and at the Closes de Mornau, as well as at the Cortalet meadows. (Site map 5).

Rollers are also present in the area between Berbegal and Barbastro, in the province of Huesca.

- 5) **South of Bujaraloz:** birds are mostly localised in areas of saltsteppe vegetation in the dry basins of some of the many salt lakes that are dotted around this area. Places to look are the Lagunas de Pito and de Pueyo at the eastern end of the the larger Laguna la Playa, the Salinas del Camarón and del Rollico to the southwest, and any of the smaller “hoyas” (hollows) visible from the road to Sástago that appear to have areas of natural vegetation. (Site map 10).
- 6) **Mont-ral:** several pairs remain in a scrubby hollow just to the west of the Canal d’Aragó i Catalunya (irrigation channel). Approach the area along the L-800 Alcarràs-Vallmanya road, and after less than a kilometre after passing the canal turn left, signposted “Finca Mas Blanc”. After approximately 2 km bear right towards “Finca Usón” and then take the next left past the Pantà del Román. Take the next track leading up to the left, go past an old water tank and continue until you see a large pile of stones on the left. Turn left here, parking near the stones and search the hollow below.