



Photo: Sardinian Warbler, by P. Marques

10 Days Birdwatching / Bird Photography Program in Southern Portugal (9 – 18th April 2019)

Lisbon Estuaries, Alentejo and Algarve

Birds & Nature Tours Portugal

Overview

Portugal possesses a fantastic diversity of habitats and consequently of birds in a relatively small area, so the birding programs designed by Birds & Nature Tours enable you to visit several species rich areas without needing to travel long distances.

In practical terms, you will find within half an hour's drive from Lisbon city center and its International Airport the Tagus Estuary and the Sado Estuary Nature Reserves. These two remarkable protected wetland areas have extensive bird lists that include Greater Flamingo, White Stork, Glossy Ibis, Squacco and Purple Herons, Black and Black-winged Kites, Collared Pratincole, Pallid Swift, Iberian Chiffchaff, Iberian Grey and Woodchat Shrikes,

Spotless Starling, Rock Sparrow and European Serin and an excellent selection of ducks, waders, gulls and terns.

A further one hour's drive takes you to other complementary biotopes and consequently new bird species in the Alentejo. Here, you will visit both the rolling plains of Castro Verde (the home of Great and Little Bustards, Red Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Great Spotted Cuckoo, European Roller, Calandra Lark, Black-eared Wheatear, etc...) and the bluffs and hills of the Guadiana Valley Nature Park, noted for species like Spanish/Iberian Imperial, Golden and Bonelli's Eagles, Eurasian Black and Griffon Vultures, Black Stork, Eurasian Eagle Owl, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Eurasian Crag Martin, Red-rumped Swallow, Blue Rock Thrush, Golden Oriole and Rock Bunting.

After exploring these Alentejo biotopes, a further 45 minute drive takes you to the Algarve, a Portuguese region rich in protected wetland areas situated on a major fly-way for migrants from Africa and notable in particular for waders and passerines. Some of the places you will visit, namely the Ria Formosa Nature Park and the Castro Marim Nature Reserve, are unique in Portugal as sites for rare and highly localised species, like Audouin's and Slender-billed Gulls and Lesser Short-toed Lark. Other places you will experience are excellent spots for getting close views of scarce species like Purple Swamphen and Little Bittern. Red-necked Nightjar, Eurasian Hoopoe, European Bee-eater, Sardinian, Dartford and Spectacled Warblers and Iberian Magpie are particularly abundant here.

Itinerary

Day 1 (9th April 2019) – Transfer from Lisbon Airport (or from your Lisbon hotel). Travel to the Hotel Quinta da Praia das Fontes (Alcochete). Visit several areas and a variety of habitats within the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve, including the inter-tidal mudflats and salt marshes of Hortas, the salt pans of Atalaya, Ribeira das Enguias and Samouco and the Barroca d'Alva rice fields and pastures. Overnight stay at the Hotel Quinta da Praia das Fontes (or similar).

Day 2 – Visit other interesting sites of the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve, including the open fields, rice fields, reed beds, lagoons, inter-tidal mudflats and salt marshes of the Ponta da Erva area. Boat trip at Escaroupim, in the river Tagus, for visiting one of the most important heronries in Portugal. Overnight stay at the Hotel Quinta da Praia das Fontes (or similar).

Day 3 – Visit the cork oak woodlands of Pancas (Tagus estuary). Visit the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve (northern bank), namely the salt pans, inter-

tidal mudflats and salt marshes of Mitrena, Mourisca and Zambujal. Overnight stay at the Hotel Quinta da Praia das Fontes (or similar).

Day 4 – Travel to the Hotel Museu (Mértola), in the Alentejo region. Visit the great Castro Verde rolling plains. Overnight stay at the Hotel Museu (or similar).

Day 5 – Visit the bluffs and hills of the Guadiana Valley Nature Park, including the Mértola, Mina de São Domingos and Alcaria Ruiva areas. Overnight stay at the Hotel Museu (or similar).

Day 6 – Visit other interesting areas of the great Castro Verde rolling plains. Overnight stay at the Hotel Museu (or similar).

Day 7 – Visit other interesting areas of the Guadiana Valley. Overnight stay at the Hotel Museu (or similar).

Day 8 – Travel to the Hotel Vila Galé Albacora (Tavira), in the Algarve region. Visit the Castro Marim salt pans and the complex of canals, saline flats and salt pans of the Tavira area (Ria Formosa Nature Park). Overnight stay at the Hotel Vila Galé Albacora (or similar).

Day 9 – Boat trip at Ria Formosa (Olhão). Visit several habitats such as dunes, open water, inter-tidal mudflats, salt marshes, salt pans, reed beds, lagoons and pine woods of other areas of the Ria Formosa Nature Park (Quinta do Lago and Ludo). Overnight stay at the Hotel Vila Galé Albacora (or similar).

Day 10 (18th April 2019) – Visit the Sagres and Cape St. Vincent area. Visit the Salgados lagoon. Return to Lisbon. Overnight stay at the Hotel Zenit, in Lisbon (or similar). End of services.

Day 11 – Departure to the US (or visit Lisbon).

Prices

2.500 euros per participant (for 7 paying participants). (400 euro Single Supplement) Price include guide fees, transfer from the airport/hotel, ground transport (in vehicles with air- conditioning), boat trips on the river Tagus and at Olhão, accommodation (including breakfast), meals (lunches in local cafes and dinners in local restaurants, from lunch on day 1 to dinner on day 10), free use of optical equipment (quality binoculars and telescopes) and field guides, bird list,

entrance fees to private or protected areas, participant's accident insurance and VAT. Not included are flights and items of a personal nature.

For enquiries, please contact us:

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