



Photo: Lesser Kestrel, by Miguel Rolo

Short-break Birds & Conservation Programme

Lisbon Estuaries and Alentejo

(max. group size: 7 Participants)

22 – 26th June 2017

21 – 25th June 2018

Birds & Nature Tours Portugal

Overview

Portugal offers a fantastic diversity of habitats and consequently of birds in a relatively small area, so the birding programmes designed by Birds & Nature Tours Portugal 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 centre 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-winged Kite, Purple Swamphen, Little Bustard, Collared Pratincole, Pallid Swift, Eurasian Hoopoe, European Bee-eater, Bluethroat, Iberian Chiffchaff, Iberian Grey and Woodchat Shrikes, Iberian Magpie, 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 Bustard, Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Great Spotted Cuckoo, European Roller, Calandra Lark, Rufous Bush Robin, Black-eared Wheatear, etc...) and the bluffs and hills of the Guadiana Valley Nature Park, noted for species like Iberian Imperial, Golden and Bonelli's Eagles, Eurasian Black and Griffon Vultures, Black Stork, Eurasian Eagle Owl, White-rumped Swift, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Eurasian Crag Martin, Red-rumped Swallow, Blue Rock Thrush, Golden Oriole and Rock Bunting.

This special five day programme includes one morning in which participants help to monitor colonies of Collared Pratincoles in the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve and another morning contributing to the ringing of Lesser Kestrels and Montagu's Harriers at the Guadiana Valley Nature Park.

These activities offer a unique opportunity to add to our knowledge of threatened species at a European level and give the participant a chance in a lifetime to observe endangered species at ultra close range. Even more important, by taking part, participants are contributing directly to the conservation of these three species, since a significant part of the tour price reverts directly to the two protected areas, helping to purchase rings, radio devices and monitoring equipment for use on these birds.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Transfer from Lisbon Airport (or from your Lisbon hotel). Travel to 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, in Alcochete (or equivalent).

Day 2 – Monitoring Collared Pratincole's nests with the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve staff. Visit other interesting sites in 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. Visit a heronry on the Tagus river. Travel to Mértola, in the Alentejo region. Overnight stay at the Hotel Museu, in Mértola (or equivalent).

Day 3 – 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 equivalent).

Day 4 – Ringing of Lesser Kestrel and Montagu's Harrier chicks with the Guadiana Valley Nature Park staff. Visit the great Castro Verde rolling plains. Overnight stay at the Hotel Museu (or equivalent).

Day 5 – Return to Lisbon, visiting on the way other interesting sites in the Castro Verde rolling plains and the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve, including the cork oak woodlands of Pancas. Transfer to Lisbon Airport for return flight (or to your Lisbon hotel).

Prices

1.340 euros per person. Included in the price is a fee of 150 euros which is directly and exclusively used to purchase monitoring material for these three species (the fee is directly donated to both the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve and the Guadiana Valley Nature Park by Birds & Nature Tours Portugal). As per normal, price also includes guide fees, transfer from/to the airport/hotel, ground transport (in vehicles with air-conditioning), accommodation (including breakfast), meals (lunches in local cafes and dinners in local restaurants), 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. Single supplement: 130 euros. Not included are flights and items of a personal nature.

For enquiries, please contact us:

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