



Photo: Lesser Kestrel, by Miguel Rolo

## Short-break Birds & Conservation Programme in Southern Portugal (Group Tour)

Lisbon Estuaries & Alentejo

(Group size: Maximum 7 Participants)

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, the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve is a mere 20 minutes' drive from Lisbon's city centre and its International Airport. This remarkable protected wetland area have extensive bird lists that include Greater Flamingo, White Stork, Eurasian Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Little Bittern, Squacco

and Purple Herons, Booted Eagle, Black-winged Kite, Purple Swamphen, Collared Pratincole, Little Owl, Pallid Swift, Eurasian Hoopoe, Common Kingfisher, European Bee-eater, Sardinian, Savi's and Melodious Warblers, Iberian Chiffchaff, Iberian Grey and Woodchat Shrikes, Iberian Magpie, Spotless Starling, Rock Sparrow, European Serin, Cirl Bunting and an excellent selection of ducks, waders, gulls and terns.

A further one hour's drive takes you to 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, Little Bustard, Red Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, Stone Curlew, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Great Spotted Cuckoo, European Roller, Calandra Lark, Tawny Pipit, Rufous Bush Robin, etc...) and the bluffs and hills of the Guadiana Valley Natural Park, noted for species like Black Stork, Iberian Imperial, Golden and Bonelli's Eagles, Eurasian Black and Griffon Vultures, Turtle Dove, Eurasian Eagle Owl, White-rumped Swift, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Eurasian Crag Martin, Red-rumped Swallow, Black-eared Wheatear, Blue Rock Thrush, Golden Oriole, Spanish Sparrow, Hawfinch and Rock Bunting.

This special five days 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 in the Guadiana Valley Natural 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 and habitats 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 river Tagus. 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 Natural 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 Natural 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 on the Castro Verde rolling plains and in the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve, including the cork oak woodlands of Pancas. Transfer to Lisbon Airport for return flight (or to your Lisbon hotel).

## **Price**

1.580 Euros per person. Included in the price is a fee of 160 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 Natural Park by Birds & Nature Tours Portugal). As per normal, price also includes guide fees, transfers from/to the airport/hotel, ground transport (in air-conditioned vehicles), accommodation (including breakfast), meals (lunches in local cafes and dinners in local restaurants, including quality wine at dinner), bottled water throughout the tour, 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: 160 Euros. Not included are flights and items of a personal nature.

## **Note**

The tours start and end in Lisbon. If you need accommodation for the nights before and/or after the tour, we are happy to help. We suggest you discuss your flight details with us before booking your flights. These are small group tours with a maximum of 7 participants. We guarantee that any tour will run for 2 people or more.

### **For enquiries, please contact us:**

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