



Photo: Rufous Bush Robin, by Pedro Marques

## Short-break Birdwatching Programme in Southern Portugal

Algarve & Alentejo

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.

From Faro city centre and its International Airport, the Ria Formosa Natural Park is just 15 minutes drive away, and the Castro Marim Nature Reserve only 40 minutes. These two important protected wetland areas offer extensive bird lists that include Greater Flamingo, White Stork, Eurasian Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Purple Heron, Booted Eagle, Pallid Swift, Bluethroat, European Serin and an excellent selection of ducks, waders, gulls and terns. Some of the places you will visit are unique in Portugal as sites for rare and highly localised

species, like Audouin's and Slender-billed Gulls and Lesser Short-toed Lark. These are also excellent spots for getting close views of scarce species like Little Bittern and Purple Swamphen. Little Owl, Red-necked Nightjar, Eurasian Hoopoe, Common Kingfisher, European Bee-eater, Sardinian and Spectacled Warblers and Iberian Magpie are particularly abundant here.

Another short 45 minute 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, Common Crane, Red Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Black-winged Kite, Lesser Kestrel, Stone Curlew, Collared Pratincole, 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, Spotless Starling, Golden Oriole, Spanish Sparrow, Hawfinch and Rock Bunting.

## **Itinerary**

Day 1 – Transfer from Faro Airport (or from your Algarve hotel). Travel to Tavira. Visit the complex of canals, saline flats and salt pans of the Tavira area (Ria Formosa Natural Park) and of the Castro Marim Nature Reserve. Overnight stay at the Hotel Vila Galé Albacora, in Tavira (or equivalent).

Day 2 – Visit several habitats including dunes, open water, inter-tidal mudflats, salt marshes, salt pans, reed beds, lagoons and pine woods in other areas of the Ria Formosa Natural Park (Quinta do Lago and Ludo). Overnight stay at the Hotel Vila Galé Albacora (or equivalent).

Day 3 – Travel to Mértola, in the Alentejo region. Visit the great Castro Verde rolling plains. Overnight stay at the Hotel Museu, in Mértola (or equivalent).

Day 4 – 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 5 – Return to Faro, visiting on the way the Salgados lagoon and other interesting sites in the Ria Formosa Natural Park. Transfer to Faro Airport for return flight (or to your Algarve hotel).

## **Price**

1,500 Euros per person (based on 2 people). Price includes guide fees, transfers from/to the airport/hotel, ground transport (in air-conditioned vehicles), accommodation (including breakfast), 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: 150 Euros. Not included are flights, meals and items of a personal nature. Meals in selected restaurants can be included if you wish, as a supplement, at a fixed extra cost. Please note the price per person will be reduced as the number of participants increases.

### **Note**

If you prefer to arrive at and depart from Lisbon, we also have a Short-break Programme covering the Lisbon Estuaries and the Alentejo, available from there. 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.

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

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