



Photo: Rufous Bush Robin, by Pedro Marques

Week-long Birds & Dragonflies Programme in Southern Portugal (Group Tour)

Algarve & 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.

From Faro city centre and its International Airport, Ria Formosa Natural Park is just 15 minutes' drive away, while Castro Marim Nature Reserve can be reached in 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.

All this birding activity is combined with visits to sites where we will have great opportunities to watch dragonflies, including some of the rarest Iberian specialities.

For a short list of the dragonflies, please see the itinerary below.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Transfer from Faro Airport (or from your Faro hotel). Travel to the Alentejo. Visit the Castro Verde plains. Common dragonfly species include Iberian Bluetail *Ischnura graellsii*, Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*, and Broad Scarlet *Crocothemis erythraea*. Overnight stay at Hotel Museu, in Mértola.

Day 2 – Visit the Guadiana Valley Natural Park (Canais, Santana de Cambas, Mina de São Domingos, Bombeira). Orange-winged Dropwing *Trithemis kirbyi* have been seen in this area. It also holds records for several skimmers, Goblet-marked Damselfly *Erythromma lindenii*, Small Redeye *Erythromma viridulum* and Iberian Bluetail *Ischnura graellsii*. Overnight stay at Hotel Museu.

Day 3 – Visit the Guadiana Valley Natural Park (Romeiras, Alvares, Água Santa da Morena, Pulo do Lobo). Long Skimmer *Orthetrum trinacria*, Orange

Featherlegs *Platycnemis acutipennis*, Goblet-Marked Damselfly *Erythromma lindenii* and Iberian Bluetail *Ischnura graellsii* are some of the species recorded in the area. Overnight stay at Hotel Museu.

Day 4 – Travel to the Algarve. Visit the rivers in the east Algarve (ribeira do Vascão and Pereiro dam) and the Castro Marim Nature Reserve. Along the tributaries of the Guadiana there are good areas for Small Pincertail *Onychogomphus forcipatus* and Goblet-marked Damselfly *Erythromma lindenii*. Orange-spotted Emerald *Oxygastra curtisii*, Long Skimmer *Orthetrum trinacria* and Black Percher *Diplacodes lefebvrii* may also be present. Yellow Clubtail *Gomphus simillimus*, Green Hooktail *Paragomphus genei* and Splendid Cruiser *Macromia splendens* occur earlier in the year but are exceptionally rare. We will also visit one of the few sites in Portugal for Dark Spreadwing *Lestes macrostigma*, where Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope* is common. Overnight stay at Hotel Vila Galé Albacora, in Tavira.

Day 5 – Visit the fonte de Benémola, the ribeira da Asseca and the Ria Formosa Natural Park (Tavira salt pans). Copper Demoiselle *Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis*, Western Clubtail *Gomphus pulchellus* and the rarer Pronged Clubtail *G. graslinii*, Small Pincertail *Onychogomphus forcipatus*, and Epaulet Skimmer *Orthetrum chrysostigma* are possible. In 2017, Portugal's first records of Orange-winged Dropwing *Trithemis kirbyi* came from this area. Overnight stay at Hotel Vila Galé Albacora, in Tavira.

Day 6 – Travel to Sagres. Visit the Nossa Senhora do Rosário rice fields and the Budens lagoon. Visit the Sagres area. The dragonflies here include White Featherlegs *Platycnemis latipes*, Orange Featherlegs *P. acutipennis*, Vagrant Emperor *Anax ephippiger*, Western Clubtail *Gomphus pulchellus*, Western Spectre *Boyeria irene*, Large Pincertail *Onychogomphus uncatus*, Long Skimmer *Orthetrum trinacria*, Southern Darer *Sympetrum meridionale* and the beautiful Black Percher *Diplacodes lefebvrii*. Overnight stay at Hotel Memmo Baleeira, in Sagres.

Day 7 – Visit Monchique and the Salgados lagoon. Copper Demoiselle *Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis*, Western Demoiselle *C. xanthostoma* and Beautiful Demoiselle *C. virgo* can be found in this part of the Algarve, along with other notable species like Large Pincertail *Onychogomphus uncatus*, Western Spectre *Boyeria irene*, Orange-spotted Emerald *Oxygastra curtisii* and Common Goldenring *Cordulegaster boltonii*. Ringed Cascader *Zygonyx torridus* has also been recorded in this area. Overnight stay at Hotel Memmo Baleeira, in Sagres.

Day 8 – Visit the Quinta do Lago and Ludo (Ria Formosa Natural Park). This area has some very interesting species, particularly Banded Groundling *Brachythemis impartita*, Black Pennant *Seliothemis nigra* and Long Skimmer *Orthetrum trinacria*. Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope*, Iberian Bluetail *Ischnura graellsii* and Violet Dropwing *Trithemis annulata* are common. Small Red Damsel *Ceriagrion tenellum*, Common Spreadwing *Lestes sponsa*, Small

Spreadwing *L. virens*, Robust Spreadwing *L. dryas*, Migrant Spreadwing *L. barbarus* and Southern Darter *Sympetrum meridionale* are all known from the area. Transfer to Faro Airport for return flight (or to your Faro hotel).

Price

2.340 Euros per person. Price 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, dragonfly list, entrance fees to private or protected areas, a contribution of 40 Euros to our Conservation Project in the Guadiana Valley Natural Park (Portugal), participant's accident insurance and VAT. Single supplement: 300 Euros. Not included are flights and items of a personal nature.

Note

The tours start and end in Faro. 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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