



Photo: Dartford Warbler, by Pedro Marques

Week-long Birdwatching Programme in Northern & Central Portugal (Group Tour)

Lisbon Estuaries, International Tagus, International Douro & Villafáfila

(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 has an extensive bird list 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 and an excellent selection of ducks, waders, gulls and terns.

A two hour drive takes you to complementary biotopes and consequently new bird species in the Beira Baixa. Here, you will visit the bluffs and hills of the International Tagus Natural Park, noted for species like Black Stork, Iberian Imperial, Golden and Bonelli's Eagles, Eurasian Black, Griffon and Egyptian Vultures, Eurasian Eagle Owl, Red-necked Nightjar, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Eurasian Crag Martin, Red-rumped Swallow, Black-eared Wheatear, Blue Rock Thrush, Spectacled and Dartford Warblers, Spanish Sparrow and Rock Bunting.

The next region to be explored is the beautiful International Douro Natural Park, for more rock loving birds and especially rewarding for species like Turtle Dove, Eurasian Scops Owl, Alpine Swift, Black Wheatear, Western Orphean, Western Subalpine and Western Bonelli's Warblers, Red-billed Chough, Golden Oriole, Hawfinch and Cirl Bunting. Here, we shall visit the most important open-air Palaeolithic rock art site in the world, the Foz Côa Valley, a World Heritage Site.

The closeness of Salamanca and the Lagunas de Villafáfila Natural Park on the other side of the border, make these Spanish sites a great addition to our itinerary. While the magnificent Plaza Mayor of Salamanca provides great opportunities to see urban birds while having lunch, the steppes with lagoons of the special protected area of Villafáfila are excellent for species like Great and Little Bustards, Red Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, Stone Curlew, Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouses, Great Spotted Cuckoo, European Roller, Calandra Lark and Tawny Pipit. The lagoons should also provide some aquatic 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 – 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 and the cork oak woodlands of Pancas. Visit to a heronry on the river Tagus. Overnight stay at the Hotel Quinta da Praia das Fontes (or equivalent).

Day 3 – Travel to Rosmaninhal, in the Beira Baixa region. On the way, visit the Portas de Ródão area. Visit some of the sites in the International Tagus Natural Park (Cegonhas and Rosmaninhal). Overnight stay at the Hotel Quinta da Caldeireira, in Rosmaninhal (or equivalent).

Day 4 – Visit the bluffs and hills of the International Tagus Natural Park, including the Alares, Segura and Salvaterra do Extremo areas. Overnight stay at the Hotel Quinta da Caldeireira (or equivalent).

Day 5 – Travel to Freixo de Espada-à-Cinta, in the Trás-os-Montes region. Visit on the way the escarpments of the International Douro Natural Park, including Barca d'Alva, Mosteiros and Penedo Durão. Visit the open-air Palaeolithic rock art site in the Foz Côa Valley. Overnight stay at the Hotel Quinta do Salgueiro, in Freixo de Espada-à-Cinta (or equivalent).

Day 6 – Travel to Miranda do Douro, visiting on the way other sites in the International Douro Natural Park, including the viewing points of Lagoaça, Bruçó, Freixiosa and Picote. Boat trip on the river Douro. Overnight stay at the Hotel Parador Santa Catarina, in Miranda do Douro (or equivalent).

Day 7 – Visit the viewing point of São João das Arribas. Visit the town of Salamanca (excellent for urban birds) and the steppe habitat and lagoons of the Lagunas de Villafáfila Natural Park, in Spain. Overnight stay at the Hotel Parador Santa Catarina (or equivalent).

Day 8 – Visit the area of Cércio. Return to Lisbon, visiting *en route* the coast around Peniche for seawatching. Transfer to Lisbon Airport for return flight (or to your Lisbon hotel).

Price

2.350 Euros per person. Price includes guide fees (including a professional historian guide in Foz Côa), transfers from/to the airport/hotel, ground transport (in air-conditioned vehicles), a boat trip on the river Douro, accommodation (including breakfast), meals (lunches in local cafes and dinners in local restaurants, including quality wine at dinner), visit to the open air Palaeolithic rock art site in the Foz Côa Valley, 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, 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 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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