

# Strait of Gibraltar

## Migration to Africa

September 9 - 15, 2024

25 Annyversary!  
itinerary

### Day 1 / September 9: Malaga Airport - Tarifa Watchpoints - Tarifa / Algeciras

Meet and welcome at Malaga airport then transfer directly to the Tarifa-Algeciras watchpoints (winds permitting!) to enjoy the first soaring birds moving South to Africa... Booted and Short-toed Eagles, European Honey Buzzards and maybe Black Storks in their post-breeding migration. Some other rarer birds, such as Rüppell's Vulture and Long-legged Buzzard, might turn up at any time and so we keep our eyes open throughout the trip to look for these. Lunch in a nice local restaurant and evening birding in the vast rice & cotton fields of La Janda. This is a wonderful spot to see Montagu's Harriers (different plumages), Black Shouldered Kites, Spanish Sparrow and dozens of White Storks. In the late evening transfer to our hotel near Tarifa / Algeciras. Dinner and accommodation.

*\*We recommend to our all guests joining this tour to stay (if possible) the night before in Málaga. Please ask to the office if you require further details to book hotel for that night.*

### Day 2 / September 10: Tarifa / Algeciras - Doñana N.P. (Eastern section)

A full day birding in the Eastern section of the well-known Doñana Natural Park, just across the "other" side of the Guadalquivir river. We will explore different locations which will include coastal tidal marshes, saltpans and fresh water lagoons. Our main targets today will be Little Swift (one of the rarest birds of Europe with the only known colonies existing in this area), Marbled Duck, White-headed Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Caspian Tern, Greater Flamingo, Slender-billed Gull, Audouin's Gull, Western Osprey and a good selection of waders migrating including Curlew Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Pied Avocet, Little Stint and... with some luck, Red-necked Phalarope. Time permitting we will also dedicate some time explore some nearby vineyards where we might find scarce Rufous Bush Robin. Travel back home in order to have our dinner. Dinner and accommodation.

### Day 3 / September 11: Tarifa / Algeciras - Barbate tidal marshes - Sierra de la Plata

We must remind our travelers that this itinerary might change at any moment depending of the direction and speed of the winds present in the Straits. Raptors and storks tend to fly lower and closer to observers with strong easterlies, being generally reluctant to cross the 14 km distance between the two continents, while westerlies are usually better for seeing active migration with birds generally high in the air. This will be considered by your guide during the whole trip and would even change plans attending to the best chances to enjoy the raptor

migration which is the main aim of this tour.

This might be a day to explore the Barbate Marshes... waders, gulls and terns will be our targets for the first half of the day. Low tides are usually better than high tides so our visit will mainly depend on this issue. After our lunch in a local restaurant we will dedicate the afternoon visiting the impressive Sierra de la Plata and its amazing views of Bolonia beach and the roman ruins of Baelo Claudia. This is the kingdom of the Griffon Vultures while we may expect passing by Montagu's and Marsh Harriers, Sparrowhawks, Ospreys and maybe a wandering juvenile Spanish Imperial Eagle. This is a usual good spot for Bonelli's Eagle while Crag Martins, Rock and Cirl Buntings are also possible. If time allows we will quickly visit La Janda fields. Back to our hotel for a meal and accommodation.

## **Day 4 / September 12: Tarifa / Algeciras - Boat trip (Tarifa) - Algeciras watchpoints**

Transfer to Tarifa in the morning where we will start our boat trip between the two continents and two seas! This will be a 2-hour ride in a large tourist boat focus on finding sea mammals. In the many other trips made in the past we (nearly) always saw Pilot Whales and at least, one of the three species of Dolphins (Common, Striped and Bottlenose). In the last years we were also rewarded with cracking views of Sperm Whales, however this is more unlikely to see. Besides, an indeterminate number of Orcas visit the area following the tuna fish in their migration, but this usually happens earlier in the year and the chance to see orcas will be very little. Amongst the birds we might find common Cory's Shearwater and less usual Balearic Shearwater, but also European Storm-petrel, Great Skua, Pomarine Skua, Common, Sandwich and Black Terns are also possible while we have enjoyed occasionally raptors flying South right overhead.

After the boat trip and a well deserved lunch we might stop in some of the local popular watchpoints to experience the raptor migration such as the known Cazalla, Trafico or Algarrobo watchpoints... this latest is ideal for passing Honey Buzzards by hundreds with Westerlies. In the evening we will return to our nice hotel for having dinner and a well deserved rest.

## **Day 5 / September 13: Tarifa / Algeciras - Los Alcornocales N.P. - Medina**

Time to explore the most Southern section of Los Alcornocales Natural Park, which houses a wide variety of passerines and supports a strong community of raptors. On the days of strong winds many birds take refuge here while they wait for better weather conditions to cross to Africa. Amongst the most interesting species we must not forget to mention Firecrest, Crested Tit, Western Bonelli's Warbler, European Serin, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Woodchat Shrike

and Sardinian Warbler... After visiting Los Alcornocales we will try our luck finding White-rumped Swifts and then off to the lagoon of Medina\*, a good site for seeing Greater Flamingos, White-headed Duck and, with some luck, Crested Coot! Back to the hotel for our evening meal and an overnight.

*\*The visit to Medina Lagoon will depend on the lever of the water since in the last few years has been completely dry after the Summer.*

### **Day 6 / September 14: Tarifa / Algeciras - Benalup - La Janda**

We will start a new day targeting one of the weirdest bird species present in the Straits! As part of an introduction project in the area we can now enjoy a healthy population of Northern Bald Ibis. The ibis have wonderfully adapted to this region and they currently breed in the wild in good numbers. All birds are still being ringed by the local scientists who are following the evolution of this gregarious species having its nearest wild population in the Atlantic coast of Morocco. The Spanish population has been in fact possible initially thanks to birds from the Moroccan colonies. Adults started to produce successfully youngsters which were afterwards released through a "hacking" technique. Northern Bald Ibis are now part of the European fauna and they are wandering around along the coastline once they finish the breeding season.

The western section of La Janda (Benalup) is an usual good site to find resident species of eagles such as Spanish Imperial and Bonelli's. A few juveniles from both species visit this area looking for some food. We will also look for Black-shouldered Kites, Montagu's Harriers and perhaps, Purple and Squacco Herons hidden into the many rice fields of this vast area. In the late evening we will drive back to our hotel for our last night accommodation.

### **Day 7 / September 15: Tarifa / Algeciras - Birding on route - Malaga airport**

For our last day we might dedicate time exploring new sites on route or, if our guide decides, we will newly visit the migration watchpoints. It would not be the first time that we have a wonderful highlights of many raptors crossing just by the last day of our tour. Then transfer to Malaga after lunch in order to arrive in the early evening to catch flights back home.

**The itinerary / activities planned might suffer changes due to the unpredictable winds present in the Strait of Gibraltar all year round**

## PRICES:

Per person sharing in twin / doubled-room with private faciiliies: **€ 1,575**

Single Supplement: **€ 325**

*Group size: Min. 4 – Max. 7 travelers plus our guide*

## The price includes:

- \* Ground transport from Malaga airport in modern, fully seat-belted, air condiioned 9-seat vehicle
- \* 6 Nights accommodaion with en suite bathroom (all 6 nights near Tarifa)
- \* All meals inc breakfast, fantastic “tapas-raciones” lunches and evening meals + red wine in a moderate consumption
- \* Services of professional birding guide
- \* 2 hours seawatching boat trip
- \* Basic travel insurance
- \* Bird checklist
- \* All taxes

## The price doesn't include:

- \* Air fare (Easyjet, Ryanair & other companies operate daily flights from several UK airports)
- \* Extra drinks and other items of a personal nature

## Number of travelers:

The minimum number of travellers on each trip is 4 and the usual maximum number is 7 plus the guide or 14 with two guides.

## Travel:

Because other birding tours normally carry the cost of the airfare and are not necessarily the cheapest, Spainbirds Nature Tours asks the customer to book the flights independently to Madrid, Málaga, Seville, Santander or any other specified airport where the trip starts and ends. This gives you the customer, greater flexibility in terms of choosing the flight and return leg of your journey home (flights and/or other means of transport) specific airport departures, times to suit you, special offers and carrier companies. Spainbirds Nature Tours is a licensed tour operator (CICMA 2517) which is allowed to book flights for our clients, please don't hesitate to letting us know if you prefer that we book your airline tickets for you. The meeting point for customers will be the corresponding local airport depending on the trip selected.

## Ground transport:

We always use comfortable, modern air conditioned minibus or people carrier. All our vehicles comply with the current EU safely legislation. *Notice please that we don't charge any fee to transport people, and our incomes are applied as a trip organizer and wildlife guide services but never as professional drivers.*

## Accommodation & food:

Accommodation is carefully chosen by Spainbirds Nature Tours to offer the customer a good quality standard of hotel or fully equipped country inn next to the birding areas. We ensure that all rooms are en suite and price includes usually full board (breakfast, picnic lunch and evening meal + red wine & water unless other board conditions are applied). For those who require a single room they will have to pay the corresponding supplement, which will depend on the chosen itinerary shown in the tours section of our web site or current brochure.

## Dates:

Since the groups are usually small, the journey dates may occasionally be fine tuned to meet the needs of all interested parties but will never be changed if the flights have been already booked.

## Insurance:

It is highly advisable to take out a personal insurance policy before leaving your country. Please let us know the name of your company insurance before travelling. For information of all travellers Spainbirds Nature Tours has its own civil liability insurance through **REALE SEGUROS**, policy number 1331100001899/0, covering damages to third parties to a maximum of 1,800,000 Euros. As travel agency licensed by the Spanish Tourism Board all our clients will be traveling covered by a basic travel insurance, but which might not be enough to cover certain personal or items damages.

In addition to your personal Travel & Medical Insurance, do bring (and carry with you when out and about) your up to date European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) – they only last 5 years! If you still have one of the older forms (E111) then it needs to be changed to this new card.

*Note for UK travelers: You do not have to pay for an EHIC, which can be obtained or renewed free of charge by calling 0300 3301350 or applying on-line at [www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk). This is a secure site that diverts to the correct page within the main NHS.UK website. The cards are valid for five years, after which they can be renewed, again, free of charge. Please notice that the new Brexit situation will make to all cards expire after December 31, 2020!!!*

## How to book a tour to Spain:

To book our services you need to make a written confirmation by letter or email or fill our booking form available on our web site, plus paying **€ 500 as deposit** for all the Spain tours. Deposits for our overseas tours are showed in the literature related to every tour.

**The rest shall be paid to Spainbirds Nature Tours by wire transfer or credit card, at the latest 90 days before the journey starts.** The price includes guide services, accommodation, all meals, ground transport and fuel. Customers are entitled to cancel their bookings at any moment, but on the following terms:

If the cancellation is made between booking and 90 days before the start of the trip they will forfeit the deposit or, if preferred, it will be kept for future tours run by Spainbirds Nature Tours with an expiration date of ONE year.

If the cancellation is made between 89 and 61 days before the start of the journey they will forfeit 50% (where the deposit would be also included) of the total amount paid to Spainbirds Nature Tours.

If the cancellation is made within 60 days of the start of the journey they will forfeit 100% of the total paid.

Any breach of the above instalments or unjustified delays in paying them will automatically lead to cancellation of the booking, the above mentioned rules then being applied. The post-cancellation sum of money to be reimbursed will be sent by wire transfer. All amounts paid must be done by bank transfer to our account on OPENBANK (details will be sent to you once you confirm booking).

If you agree these booking conditions please then fill and send us your [booking form](#)

*\*Every of our overseas tours has its own booking conditions since all international and domestic flights are usually included in the price. If you are interested to fly from your home country and not meeting the group in Spain please let the office know this issue to find the most suitable alternative for both sides. You will be able to find our terms and conditions for the overseas tours in the pdf file linked in the literature of every tour.*

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