

Spain

Tarifa migration

Dates: 13–19 September 2018

Leader: Led by Neil Gartshore

From various manned raptor watch-points we should see Egyptian Vulture, Eurasian Griffon, Short-toed and Booted Eagles and Black Kite, with Rüppell's Griffon a possibility, as they prepare to cross the Strait of Gibraltar to Africa. Target species on excursions will include White-headed Duck, Black-shouldered Kite, Bonelli's Eagle, Western Swamphen, Audouin's Gull and many other southern European birds.

Day 1 Arrival into Malaga, followed by a two hour drive to the Tarifa area then birding en route to our base in Vejer de la Frontera.

Day 2 Our days will be kept flexible as the best sites for migrating raptors will vary depending on the weather conditions. As well as spending time at the excellent raptor watching viewpoints we'll visit other sites in the area to ensure that we pick up a good selection of the bird life that this fascinating area has to offer.

Tarifa and raptor watching viewpoints The stretch of coast around Tarifa is a major flyway in the autumn for raptors and storks, their numbers reaching into the thousands, as they cross the Strait of Gibraltar at its narrowest point to the African continent. We'll visit a number of the manned watch points dotted along the coast where it is often a case of where to look first! Eurasian Griffon, Egyptian Vulture, Booted and Short-toed Eagles, European Honey-buzzard, Black Kite, Eurasian Marsh-harrier and Eurasian Sparrowhawk can all pass in very large numbers and Rüppell's Griffon is a possibility. Being the autumn, small birds are also on the move and potentially anything could turn up along the coastal scrub and headlands. Birds we might see include swifts (we'll look for Pallid amongst the Common, and both White-rumped and Little have been recorded in the area), European Bee-eater, Red-rumped Swallow, Tawny Pipit, Northern Wheatear, Sardinian Warbler, European Pied Flycatcher, Firecrest and Cirl Bunting.

La Janda This was formerly a huge lagoon, but was drained for agricultural use. The area still holds a good selection of birds though including Cattle Egret, White and Black Storks, Glossy Ibis, Montagu's and Northern Harriers, Lesser Kestrel,



Booted Eagle

European Turtle-dove, Eurasian Hoopoe, Crested Lark, Zitting Cisticola and Corn Bunting. Our target bird here is Black-shouldered Kite, which can be found in good numbers.

Cadiz The estuary and salt pans of the Bahía de Cádiz area will produce a good selection of waders, gulls and terns: Eurasian Thick-knee, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish and Common Ringed Plovers, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Dunlin, Little Stint, Slender-billed and Audouin's Gulls, Caspian and Black Terns amongst them. Other birds in the area should include Greater Flamingo, Eurasian Spoonbill and Osprey.

Barbate This is another wetland area, closer to Vejer, that is currently undergoing restoration work. Species will be similar to those around the Cadiz area whilst a scan offshore may pick up passing seabirds including Balearic and Cory's Shearwaters.

Laguna de Medina, Bonanza Salt pans and the Rio Guadalquivir Located in the rolling hillsides near the sherry town of Jerez, Laguna de Medina is a large shallow lagoon (120ha) that attracts a large number of water birds. Our main targets here will be White-headed Duck, Ferruginous Duck and Red-knobbed Coot. The first two should stand out if they are about but the latter will test our observational skills to pick out one of the handful of birds amongst possibly thousands of its common relative. Other birds of interest on the laguna should include Eared and Great Crested Grebes, Purple Swamphen, Red-crested Pochard and Whiskered Tern. This is also a wintering site for Eurasian Penduline-tit. The journey continues eastwards to the Bonanza salt pans and the road along the eastern bank of the Rio Guadalquivir (and the edge of the Coto Doñana National Park). This part of the day will offer another selection of waders and gulls as well as passing raptors.

Los Alcornocales This extensive area of cork oak forest will provide a good opportunity to look for some of the local raptors including a good chance of Bonelli's Eagle. Whilst looking skyward we will also keep an eye open Alpine Swift and Eurasian Crag-martin. Down in the forest a selection of smaller birds may include Eurasian Wryneck, Wood Lark, Dartford Warbler, Iberian Chiffchaff, Created Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper and Rock Bunting.

Day 7 We'll head back to Malaga airport, birding along the way as time permits, in time for our flight back to the UK.

General Information Daily temperatures should be pleasantly warm (up in to the high 20s°C). It can be quite windy and there is a chance of some rain. The tour pace is relaxed with generally easy walking. There are no health requirements. Insects can be a minor problem at some localities and repellents are recommended.

Group Size Minimum number for tour to go ahead: 6; maximum group size: 8 with 1 leader; 14 with 2 leaders.

Tour price: £1295

Air price: £100

Ground price: £1195

Single supplement: £160

Deposit: £250

Price includes economy flights between London and Malaga, all ground transport within Spain, accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in a local hotel, a buffet breakfast, a packed lunch, dinner in local restaurants and services of the leader throughout. Excluded are alcoholic drinks, gratuities, insurance and items of a purely personal nature.

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