

algarve,  
europe's  
most famous  
secret

## The Algarve

The Algarve, in the far south of Portugal, is one of the country's most interesting regions for birdwatching. It has more than 300 species throughout the year including numerous birds of prey, seabirds, shorebirds, ducks, passerines and many others.

Its limited size (approximately five thousand square kilometres) enables visitors to get to know several sites in a single day - from the mountains inland to the coastal marshes – and observe a great number of different species. This variety is also enhanced by the richness of the landscape, which accommodates all of Portugal's main habitats such as extensive cork oak woods, grasslands, coastal lagoons, salt flats and marshland.

Around 40 per cent of the region has been designated Natura 2000 areas under the Birds and Habitats Directives and there are Important Bird Areas (IBA - Birdlife International) in the Algarve. This extensive network of areas of ornithological importance include the Ria Formosa estuary and the Castro Marim marshes, two of the country's most important wetlands where thousands of waterbirds can be found, with rare species such as the swamp hen and Audouin's Gull. The Sagres peninsula and cape is the main migration bottleneck in Portugal for birds of prey and other soaring birds, such as the black stork, the imperial eagle and the Egyptian vulture.

These natural attractions, combined with easy access within the region, a wide variety of accommodation and its popular beach culture, make the Algarve a rich birdwatching area worth discovering. Birdwatching in this beautiful region provides an outdoor experience that should not be overlooked!



### Good Conduct

- › Whenever you use the services of a tourism company, check that it is duly licensed and has the necessary permission to operate in protected areas.
- › Give preference to local companies organising birdwatching activities, this will help to boost the local economy.
- › Avoid disturbing nests and breeding bird colonies.
- › If you find an injured bird, contact the following authorities:  
GNR - SEPNA (Lisbon) Tel. (+351) 217 503 080  
SOS Ambiente Tel. (+351) 808 200 520  
RIAS (Ria Formosa Estuary Bird Rehabilitation Centre): Tel. (+351) 927 659 313
- › In the event of a fire: call 117
- › In case of an emergency: call 112



#### Swamp Hen

*Porphyrio porphyrio*



This species is resident in the Algarve and particularly numerous around the fresh-water coastal lagoons of the Ria Formosa Estuary, the Vilamoura reed beds and the Salgados Lagoon. A symbol of the Ria Formosa Estuary Nature Park and one of the principal attractions of the region.



#### Audouin's Gull

*Larus audouinii*



Present in the wetlands of the Ria Formosa Estuary and Castro Marim. It may easily be observed on the salt flats at the Cerro do Bufo (Castro Marim), in the Ludo area (Formosa Estuary), at the Ferreira Neto Fishermen's Village and at Santa Luzia (Tavira). The Audouin's Gull is present all year round although less abundant in the summer and autumn months.



#### Flamingo

*Phoenicopterus ruber*



A common species in the main wetlands of the Algarve especially Castro Marim, the Ria Formosa estuary and Salgados Lagoon. Although resident, it is more abundant in winter and especially in the salt-flat areas where it feeds and rests.



#### Little Bittern

*Ixobrychus minutus*



A small heron which is relatively rare in the Algarve. It can be spotted in the reedbeds of the freshwater coastal lagoons, particularly São Lourenço and Salgados. Although a summer migrant, it is frequently seen in autumn and winter also.



#### Red-Crested Pochard

*Netta rufina*



A duck with localised distribution in the Algarve, easily observed at the São Lourenço Lagoon and others nearby sites such as Foz do Almagem. Although a resident species, spring and summer are the best times to observe this beautiful bird.



#### Little Bustard

*Tetrax tetrax*



A grassland bird which is rare in the Algarve, it can be seen at the Sagres peninsula and Castro Marim. The best time to see it is in the spring when the males are fairly active.



#### Bee-Eater

*Merops apiaster*



A summer visitor, present in large numbers from April to September especially in inland areas where there are plenty of bees to feed on. The bee-eater is very easy to observe in the Serra do Caldeirão and the area around the Ria Formosa Estuary (Ludo, Castro Marim, etc).



#### Azure-Winged Magpie

*Cyanopica cyanus*



A fairly common bird in the Algarve which is present in nearly all types of habitats. Very abundant in coastal pine forests, especially in the Ludo, Ria Formosa estuary and Serra do Caldeirão.



#### Red-Rumped Swallow

*Hirundo daurica*



A summer species, fairly common in the inland areas of the Algarve particularly the Serra do Caldeirão and Monchique mountains. Nests close to river banks and can easily be observed in orchards and meadows.



#### Sardinian Warbler

*Sylvia melanocephala*



One of the region's most common species, the warbler appears in a wide variety of habitats year round from the coastal wetlands to the inland cork oak forests.



#### Little Tern

*Sterna albifrons*



Fairly common during the spring and summer months especially at the Ria Formosa estuary, Castro Marim and the Alvor estuary. It can be observed close to the coastal salt flats and lagoon areas.



#### Black-Winged Kite

*Elanus caeruleus*



A bird of prey regularly seen in the Algarve especially in winter in areas such as the Ria Formosa Estuary and the Vilamoura reed beds, it may also be observed in autumn and spring, especially in the Sagres area.



#### Black-Eared Wheatear

*Oenanthe hispanica*



A rare summer migrant which is restricted to the inland areas of the Algarve during the breeding season. The Serra do Caldeirão and Monchique mountains are the best places to observe this passerine, which migrates to Africa for the winter in mid-September.



#### Dartford Warbler

*Sylvia undata*



This bird is also relatively common in the Algarve, although its habitat is limited to the inland mountainous areas rich in rock-roses and cork oaks. Resident and easy to observe at sites such as the Serra do Caldeirão, Monchique and the Sagres peninsula.



#### Collared Pratincole

*Glareola pratincola*



A summer migrant present in localised areas of the Algarve. It occurs mainly in coastal wetlands particularly the Castro Marim marshes (Cerro do Bufo salt flat) and the Ria Formosa estuary (Santa Luzia and Ludo).



#### Kentish Plover

*Charadrius alexandrinus*



A fairly common shorebird in the Algarve which is present throughout the year. This bird nests on salt flats and sand dunes, and is very easy to observe. The Ria Formosa and Alvor estuaries, Castro Marim and Salgados lagoon are popular sites where this species can be seen in large numbers.



#### Griffon Vulture

*Gyps fulvus*



Although it neither nests nor spends the winter in the Algarve, the griffon vulture is relatively common in this region in the autumn during migration. At that time of year it can be seen in the Sagres area, the Serra do Caldeirão and Monchique mountains, sometimes in flocks of hundreds.



#### Glossy Ibis

*Plagadis falcinellus*



A regular winter visitor and easy to observe particularly at the Salgados Lagoon and the São Lourenço Lagoon at Quinta do Lago.



#### Spoonbill

*Platalea leucorodia*



Although resident its population is most abundant in winter. Among the best places for observation are the salt marshes in Castro Marim, Arraial Ferreira Neto in Tavira, Santa Luzia, Ludo in the Ria Formosa, the Salgados Lagoon and Alvor Estuary.



#### Yelkouan Shearwater

*Puffinus yelkouan*



A threatened seabird, it regularly migrates along the Algarve coast between July and October. The easiest place to observe this bird from land is Cape St Vincent and it is also possible to see the species anywhere on the Algarve coast from a boat.

