

THE LEADERS



MARK FINN lives on the Black Isle in Scotland and is the principal leader of Birdwatching Breaks having formed the company in May 1987. In 2005, Mark set up Black Isle Birding for tours based in Scotland. Mark originally trained in hotel management and catering before pursuing careers in the Merchant Navy, industrial catering and finally as a sales representative. He has travelled widely in search of birds both whilst leading trips and on reconnaissance trips for future tours. His travels have taken him to a wide variety of destinations around the world. Mark is also a member of the Scottish Ornithologists Club and RSPB. In between leading tours, Mark deals with the administration work of Birdwatching Breaks. He has a keen interest in sport, particularly cricket and soccer, and enjoys wine and good food.



CHRIS BRADSHAW lives in North Yorkshire. He is a vastly experienced birdwatcher having travelled to many countries in pursuit of birds. Chris has built up a loyal following among clients who appreciate his professionalism and knowledge in the field. He is particularly interested in the birds of Asia and is an authority on the region's birds having led many tours there. Chris is also responsible for updating and compiling the Birdwatching Breaks website, a legacy from his previous employment in the information technology industry.



STEVE DUFFIELD lives on South Uist in the Western Isles of Scotland where he operates Western Isles Wildlife tours. Steve has been an active birder for many years having travelled extensively in Asia and South America. He has also held jobs with conservation bodies within the UK. Away from birding, Steve is a keen mountaineer and has climbed several high peaks around the world. Steve is now settled in South Uist where he has found many rarities in recent years. He is also the moth and butterfly recorder for the islands.



FELIX FELGER lives in Krakow in southern Poland from where he operates his own birdwatching company. Felix has a wealth of experience of birds in Poland and knows where to find them. He has a particular interest in Great Snipe and Aquatic Warbler, two of Europe's most threatened species. Away from Poland, Felix has travelled extensively in his quest for birds. He is a welcome member to our list of local guides.



NICKY ICARANGAL is Birding Adventure Philippines lead bird guide. Nicky has had extensive experience leading birding trips for private individuals and groups as well as for tour operators. A veteran birder himself, Nicky knows his birds. He is recognized for his talent for spotting birds and patience in calling in elusive endemics such as pittas, shamas and tailorbirds. His experience in leading tours, his keenness as a birder and his easy going nature have made Nicky very popular with both his local and foreign clients



CRISTIAN JENSEN lives in Catalonia and currently operates Audouin Birding Tours. He is one of Spain's up and coming bird guides with a particular interest in the birds of Catalonia and Spain. His travels have taken him to Iceland and Mauritius where he has worked with the Mauritius Wildlife Association. His easy going nature, his language and people skills and his extensive knowledge of wildlife make him a popular and respected bird guide.



JUAN CARLOS LUNA has 16 years birding experience across Colombia and has participated in many ornithological and ringing courses, including training in the UK. He has conducted many detailed bird studies at reserves since 1995. Juan Carlos is a founder member of ProAves and one of Colombia's most passionate conservationists.



NEIL MACLEOD is the founder of SafariWise. He started as a freelance guide in Namibia before taking the plunge on his own, offering tours to friends of friends. The business took off! Little did he know that his name would become synonymous with adventurers, wildlife lovers and more specialised interests like bird watching. Neil has expanded his phenomenal birding knowledge to include wildlife, plants and almost everything to do with nature. Working with people is second nature to him. His clients can't speak highly enough of him and they all leave as friends. He sets the standard for personalised eco holidays and creates memories that are never to be forgotten.



MESERET MEKURIA lives in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Meseret formerly worked for the national park service in Ethiopia studying birds and mammals. Today, he is one of the country's top birdwatchers with a passion for Ethiopia's endemic birds and mammals. Meseret is a welcome addition to the Birdwatching Breaks team of guides in this relatively unknown country for birds.



SIMON PAPPS lives in Waltham Abbey, Essex. Simon is a vastly experienced birder having travelled to a wide range of countries in pursuit of birds. He was formerly the sub-editor at Birdwatch Magazine, the highly respected monthly publication for birders. Currently, Simon works as the Commissioning Editor for Natural History Books at New Holland Publishers based in London. Away from birding, Simon enjoys all sports, but particularly football.



GRAHAME SNOW is a popular South African bird guide. Grahame was one of the pioneers who returned to bird in Mozambique at the end of the devastating civil war when many felt that it was not wise to do so. He has been leading birding trips to southern and central Mozambique since 2003. Grahame has an intimate knowledge of the area and its birds, having led numerous birding trips there. His ability to find the birds in their environment has become legendary and he has a reputation amongst those who know him for his ability to identify the species by their calls alone.



BRENT STEPHENSON lives in Napier, New Zealand. Brent is one of New Zealand's top birders today and runs Wrybill Birding Tours with his business partner Sav Saville. Brent and Sav were the birders who rediscovered the almost mythical New Zealand Storm Petrel in the first half of this decade. Brent has an encyclopedic knowledge of the country's birds and where to locate them, including the offshore Chatham Islands. Brent has a passion for seabirds and the amazing endemic species that exist in New Zealand today. Earlier in his career Brent worked for The Department of Conservation a leading light on the conservation of New Zealand's unique bird life.



LEMULE VALLE is a biologist and an expert in birds and mammals of his native Guatemala. As a consultant, he has worked with environmental agencies and conservationist organisations in Guatemala. He has a special interest in regional endemic bird populations, including Pink-headed Warbler and Horned Guan in addition to globally-threatened species such as Golden-cheeked Warbler and Cerulean Warbler. Lemule is good company and has an extensive knowledge of Guatemala's birds and where to find them.



MOHAMED ZAKI lives high in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Mohamed is a Berber by birth and extremely proud of his heritage and traditional way of life in the isolated mountain village where he resides. He has been operating Zaki Tours for several years specialising in birds and the rich natural history that Morocco offers. Mohamed is probably one of the most skilled birders residing permanently in Morocco today. His people skills and ability to find unusual birds are second to none.