

# 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.



**HARRIET KEMIGISHA** is Uganda's only female bird guide and undoubtedly one of the best residing in Uganda today. Harriet hails from south western part of Uganda, in the small town of Bigodi Kamwenge, close to Kibale National Park. After High School, she went on a bird identification course and started working with the Uganda Wildlife Authority as a guide based in Kibale National Park and later became a professional bird guide. This will be her third tour for Birdwatching Breaks.



**ARTURO KIRKCONNELL** resides in Cuba and is the country's leading bird guide. Arturo is the leading authority on the birds of Cuba having written and published over 65 scientific papers on the island's unique bird life. He currently works at the Cuban National Museum of Natural History and has been involved in the research of Cuban birds for the last eighteen years.



**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.



**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 in the conservation of New Zealand's unique bird life.



**BALAZS SZIGETI** runs and operates Ecotours Wildlife Tours in Budapest, Hungary. Balazs is a highly experienced birder and has operated several tours to Belarus in recent years. His outgoing personality and infectious appetite for birds and other wildlife makes him an ideal addition to the Birdwatching Breaks team. Balazs will be running our tour to Belarus in 2012, one of the up and coming new destinations in Europe.



**MACHIEL VALKENBURG** operates Central Asia Birding. Born in Holland but residing in Kazakhstan, he has an excellent ear for bird sounds and a keen eye. Nowadays, he also includes butterflies in his areas of expertise and is developing a unique understanding and knowledge in the field of Asian nature. Machiel is a devoted traveller, making trips in Europe, Africa and Asia. The former Soviet Union countries and their avifauna, however, have a special place in his heart. Lately, extensive travelling to Central Asia has resulted in the founding of Central Asia Birding.