

Holidays with Birdwatching Breaks

Our holidays are friendly and exciting and run by professional guides with a passion for birding and natural history. Our guides have a professional background from bodies like the RSPB or other conservation organisations. On overseas tours we use local ornithologists who are highly experienced in the country they operate and work in. Our groups are based on a ratio of eight clients to one leader.

All tours have inspection trips before we offer them to our clients

We cater for all abilities of birders from beginners to those with more experience and clients who wish to visit more adventurous countries around the globe in their quest for birds. Our tours range from short breaks in Europe to weeks in Scotland and Eastern Europe. Generally speaking, African and Asian tours are up to 15 days and those to Australia and South America of 16-28 days duration. To participate in our tours you need to have a reasonable degree of fitness for the tour you select. If you wish to know more about a tour we have bird lists and tour reports or, in the case of inspection trips, a general informa-

tion package. You can access these by visiting www.birdwatchingbreaks.com or simply contact us by phone or mail. On booking your Birdwatching Breaks holiday we send you all the relevant information including flight details, accommodation, maps, what to take with you, health and visa regulations, titles of field guides and where to obtain them.

A typical day with Birdwatching Breaks

Naturally we spend most of our time in the field but this does vary on each tour. In temperate climates we generally have breakfast early and take a packed lunch with us for the day. Returning in the evening, we try to allow you at least one hour before dinner to shower and freshen up. In Africa, Australasia, parts of Asia and South America, birds are most active at dawn, hence we start birding at this time. We usually arrange coffee or tea before going out and come back mid-morning for brunch. In countries with a hot climate we take a siesta in the middle of the day or travel between sites. We return to birding late afternoon when bird activity starts again. To balance early starts we try to return earlier in the evening. Before dinner, we have drinks and go through the daily log of birds observed.

Where to stay

We endeavour to stay in hotels, lodges and family homes as close as possible to areas of birding interest. Wherever possible, we stay in accommodation reflecting the character and atmosphere of the country we are visiting rather than 'standard type' hotels. Rooms have private facilities unless otherwise stated. In some locations without a tourist infrastructure, facilities may be shared or, in areas without permanent accommodation, a chemical toilet and bush shower are used. Hotels around the world are phasing out single rooms and accom-



Bee-eaters Photo: *Pandion Wildlife Tours*



Levant Sparrowhawk in Armenia *Photo: Vasil Ananian*

modating clients in double/twin rooms. This has, in effect, pushed up the price of a single room quite considerably. If you are a single traveller, please consider sharing a room. If you have ticked twin-bedded room on your holiday booking form but we are unable to find you a suitable roommate, a single room supplement will apply. Food is important to our clients and is on a half-board basis of breakfast and evening meal with a packed lunch in the field. We try to ensure food is based upon the cuisine of the country we are visiting. On occasions where half-board is not available, you can choose from a la carte menus. If this is the case, we make an allowance for evening meals.

What the tour price includes

Tour prices are fully inclusive of accommodation, meals, guidance, entry permits into reserves, tips and taxes. Not included in your tour price are air fares which are quoted separately with our best estimate of the fare. Also not included are credit card and baggage charges (where applicable), drinks, laundry and telephone bills, visa

fees and travel insurance and items of a personal nature and any relevant fuel surcharges.

Flights

Because of fluctuating fuel prices it is becoming very difficult to obtain accurate quotes for airfares. Tour prices are broken down into two elements – the basic cost of the tour, which includes everything except the cost of the international and internal flights, and secondly our best estimate of the air fares when the tour was costed. Please advise us if you wish us to book your flights. When we send invoices for the tour, we will only charge you the exact airfare and hope that many of these will be near the price currently quoted in our 2018 brochure.

Arranging your own flights

You should arrive at least one hour before the main group or be booked onto the same flight. On departure, flight times should be after or at the same time as the group. Birdwatching Breaks are not respon-

sible for your own flight arrangements and you must ensure you have adequate travel insurance in place to cover your flights.

Flying from regional airports

On some occasions flights from regional airports and those which connect with the London hubs cost more than London/London flights. Whilst we are happy to arrange these for you, where possible, the additional charge will be passed on to you.

Your money paid to Birdwatching Breaks

Air holidays and flights in our 2018 brochure are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is 4324. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA ensures you are not stranded overseas and will arrange to refund you for any monies paid in advance to Birdwatching Breaks. Visit the ATOL website www.atol.org.uk for further details. With regards to land-based holidays in Scotland, your money is kept in a Trust Account held by Barclays Bank PLC and withdrawn after the completion of your holiday. Birdwatching Breaks comply with all current European Union legislation regarding holidays.

Credit cards

We accept most major credit cards with the exception of American Express. Credit card payment is ideal for late bookings and airline seats which we have to secure quickly if departure is imminent.

Passports and visas

You must be in possession of a current passport with a minimum of six months to run after your chosen holiday has ended. If you are applying for a new passport, the quickest and most efficient process is through your local high street post office. This process, in some cases, may take up to eight weeks. With regard to visas, many countries particularly in the underdeveloped world require you to have a visa in order to enter the country. Birdwatching

Breaks will supply you contact addresses, email and phone numbers in order for you to obtain the correct visa. This should be done when you receive your final documentation from us around 12 weeks before departure. If you are a non-UK national, British Subject or live overseas, you are responsible for obtaining your own visa from your country of residence.

Health

The majority of tours in Europe do not require compulsory vaccinations when entering from the UK. We do recommend that your injections are current for polio, hepatitis A and tetanus. Travel to Africa, Asia and parts of South America require protection against yellow fever (if coming from an infected country), typhoid, diphtheria and tuberculosis. The threat of malaria around the globe also makes a course of anti-malaria tablets a necessity. We will advise you in our final documentation of the health requirements you need to enter the country. We would also recommend you consult your doctor/surgery to confirm the current requirements.

Travel insurance

It is a legal requirement that you have adequate travel insurance. On your booking form we require proof of travel insurance before we process the final documentation. Insurance covers and protects you whilst on tour and also if you have to cancel prior to holiday commencement through illness or accident. If you are over 65 (in some cases 70) you are subject to additional insurance premiums.

Foreign Office advice

The Foreign Office Advice website is at www.fco.gov.uk or on television information pages. Generally speaking this is good, sound advice but on occasion it may be inaccurate or harsh in its message. If you cancel through advice from the Foreign Office, your insurers may not cover the claim of your cancellation with Birdwatching Breaks.