

ALMERIA



"Almeria is home to some of Europe's rarest birds, such as Trumpeter Finch, White-headed Duck and Red-knobbed Coot, with a supporting cast of Bluethroat, Black Wheatear, Black-bellied Sandgrouse and Audouin's Gull, plus many more. I can think of few better places to enjoy some sunshine and great birding this winter." Mark Denman

Dates Mon 26 - Sat 31 Jan 2015

Price £995

Deposit £175 Single Supp £100

Leader Mark Denman

Flights EasyJet, scheduled
Outbound: Afternoon, Gatwick-Almeria
Inbound: Morning, Almeria-Gatwick

Weather Nearly always dry and sunny, but possibility of showers and can be cold, especially in the mountains (5°-15°C)

Walking Some short easy walks up to 1½ miles

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 6
Simple well-prepared hotel fare

Insects Biting insects are very uncommon, but may be possible around wetlands at dusk

Accom A large, good quality tourist hotel with swimming pool
Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 7

Day 1 Fly to Almeria, transfer to Roquetas
5 nights at Hotel Playacapricho

Days 2-5 Birdwatching and wildlife exploration

Day 6 Transfer to Almeria for our flight home

Just some of what we hope to see:

Balearic Shearwater	Black-bellied Sandgrouse
White-headed Duck	Thekla Lark
Bonelli's Eagle	Lesser Short-toed Lark
Red-knobbed Coot	Bluethroat
Slender-billed Gull	Black Wheatear
Audouin's Gull	Trumpeter Finch

Simon Eaves: Trumpeter Finch
Roy Atkins: Bonelli's Eagle

South-east Spain's great birding, with a chance of rarities - good reason to be in Europe's best winter climate.

- A short flight from Britain for a winter mini-break
- This place should be famous; always great birds
- White-headed Duck, Trumpeter Finch, Bluethroat
- Flamingos, Slender-billed Gull and winter waders
- Some great first overseas birding
- Lagoons, steppes, seacliffs and wild rocky sierras
- Leave the British weather well behind

Arriving in Almeria, we settle in to our hotel before dinner.

2-5 Right on our doorstep is the Parque Natural de Roquetas, where the extensive salinas hold Greater Flamingo, Little Egret and Water Rail. It's a great spot for wintering Bluethroat and the reed beds hold Little Bittern, Fan-tailed Warbler and Purple Gallinule. Marsh Harriers hunt the reserve and we know just where to find the rare Red-knobbed Coot. Waders here include Spotted Redshank, Black-winged Stilt and Little Stint and in the midst of a sea of greenhouses, Canada de las Norias holds the critically endangered White-headed Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Black-crowned Night Heron, Penduline Tit and perhaps a surprise or two!

The prospect of Trumpeter Finch lures us to Cabo de Gata, since Almeria is virtually the only place in Europe to see these nomadic birds with their curious nasal calls. Amolderas Reserve is a beautiful arid steppe. Flocks of Lesser Short-toed Lark roam here, as Thekla Larks sing from the tops of bushes, with a supporting cast of Dartford Warbler, Little Owl and dashing Southern Grey Shrikes, there's so much to look at in this special and declining habitat.

Spoonbill, Black-necked Grebe and Greater Flamingo may be at the salinas at Cabo de Gata. This is a great place to see Slender-billed and Audouin's Gull, along with waders such as Avocet, Kentish Plover and Black-tailed Godwit.

Stone Curlew lurk in the sparse desert habitat and we'll see Crested Lark, Hoopoe and delightful flocks of the diminutive noisy Serin. We'll search for the Black-bellied Sandgrouse that inhabit the area and with handsome Yellow-legged Gulls on the beach, we'll scan for passing Gannets and Mediterranean Shearwaters. One of the many highlights of the holiday will be a trip into the snow-capped Sierra Nevada where Golden Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Goshawk and Peregrine are all possible and Rock Sparrow, Ring Ouzel and Chough may be encountered.

The pines and Olive trees of the mountains hold Firecrest, Crossbill and Crested Tit and the areas of rocky scree are home to Black Wheatear, Blue Rock Thrush and Crag Martin.

6 After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight home.

