

# TURKEY

The best of this regions special birds, from the high mountains to the coastal deltas, plus a never to be forgotten visit to the Cappadocia with its 'fairy chimneys' and underground cities!

- \* Fabulous scenery from desert to high mountains and deltas
- \* Caspian Snowcock, Red-fronted Serin and Crimson-winged Finch
- \* Desert birds - Menetrie's Warbler, See-see Partridge and Iraq Babbler
- \* Astonishing eroded landscape of Cappadocia
- \* Ruppell's Warbler, White-throated Robin, Kruper's Nuthatch
- \* Optional visits including underground city
- \* Over 200 species including relict population of Northern Bald Ibis



**1-2** Black-headed Bunting, Masked Shrike, Ruppell's Warbler, Western Rock Nuthatch, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Cretzschmar's Bunting, Roller, Black-eared Wheatear and many more, are all possible roadside birds as we travel around this exciting country.

The scenery is constantly changing, so expect plenty of stops as we head to the Cukurova Delta where Graceful Prinia, Penduline Tit and Rufous Scrub-Robin can be found. There may still be passage waders and marsh terns moving through, Broad-billed Sandpiper is a possibility, plus Greater Flamingo, White-spectacled Bulbul



*"In the gradually increasing light of dawn high in the Taurus mountains, our excitement mounts, as we hear the curlew-like whistles of that enigmatic bird - the Caspian Snowcock. With excellent opportunities to see them, plus delightful Red-fronted Serin, Crimson-winged Finch, White-throated Robin, Finsch's Wheatear and more, this is birding at its best!"*

Roy Atkins

and impressive White-throated Kingfisher.

**3-4** We travel east to Gaziantep and the surrounding sandstone hills. Bare outcrops of rock break up the skyline and walking through olive groves and scrubby maquis, we'll be on the lookout for

Eastern Rock Nuthatch, Upcher's Warbler, Cinereous Bunting and the beautiful White-throated Robin. Snake-eyed Lizards and impressive Agamas scurry from our feet, Long-legged Buzzards circle overhead and Sombre Tits call from the olive trees.

**5-6** We move on to Birecik - famous home of one of the last remnant populations of Northern Bald Ibis. Almost lost forever, this population is now receiving considerable help and is gradually increasing again, nesting on dry cliffs above the river Euphrates, many in the nest-boxes that are provided for them! Pied Kingfishers are found along the river and Little Swifts and Bee-eaters nest in the banks.

South of the town the rich soils make for good agricultural land, but to the north the dry, stony hillsides, with rocky crags and maquis, are more akin to the dry landscapes of Syria and provide a selection of birds found nowhere else in the Western Palearctic - Desert Finch, Pale Rock Sparrow, Bimaculated Lark, See-see Partridge, Menetrie's Warbler and Dead Sea Sparrow to name a few. We'll search for Iraq Babbler - a very recent colonist of this area, which has bred for the last few years and the incredibly scarce Pallid Scops Owl, though it is proving harder to find these days at its daytime roost in the town.

**7-8** Heading back west we simply could not visit this part of Turkey without pausing to take in the bizarre scenery of Cappadocia. The soft volcanic ash from which the hills and valley sides are formed, erodes into a mass of tall pinnacles and fins of rock, forming what has to be one of the most extraordinary landscapes you will ever witness. Centuries ago people carved their dwellings out of these 'fairy chimneys' and into the cliff-faces, making an already fascinating landscape even more astonishing. They carved churches and entire underground cities that housed thousands of people!

Our two night stay here allows time for sight-seeing, including perhaps a visit to an underground city, or even a balloon ride, before we meet up again to walk through one of the valleys where Golden Orioles, Alpine Swifts, Rock-Thrush, Lesser Grey Shrike, Western Rock Nuthatch, Syrian Woodpecker and Rock Sparrow are all likely in the pleasant warmth.

**9-11** Heading south we come to the Taurus Mountains and the mountain village of Demirkazik where we stay for the next three nights. This is where an adventure begins as we make a very early start in search of the enigmatic and elusive Caspian Snowcock. This is one of the most sought after birds of the Western Palearctic and this is the easiest place to see them, as we are taken to the best

"With its 'fairy chimneys' and scenic valleys, Cappadocia is a wonderful combination of bizarre scenery, astounding archaeology and fabulous birding – it's bound to be a highlight of your trip." Roy Atkins



area by tractor and trailer! We need to be in sight of the scree slopes before the birds withdraw further up the hillsides for the day and the bumpy ride will be well worth the effort, when we hear their curlew-like whistles in this stunning scenery and search for them as they scuttle through the boulder scree.

This is a great area to see a host of other high altitude birds including Crimson-winged Finch, White-winged Snow-Finch, Alpine and Radde's Accentors, Alpine Chough and the strikingly marked, local race of Shorelark. Wild Goats can often be picked out on the skyline, while the lower slopes hold the beautiful White-throated Robin, Finsch's Wheatear, Chukar, Rock and Cretzschmar's Bunting and delightful Red-fronted Serins, with Golden Eagle and even Lammergeier possible overhead.

**12-13** Dropping down from the mountains we head for the sunshine and warmth of the Mediterranean coast, perhaps pausing en route in old pine woodlands to search for Kruper's Nuthatch, olive groves for Olive-tree Warbler,



Black-eared Wheatear and Sombre Tit, or to scan for raptors which may include Long-legged and Honey Buzzards. We may even find a Spur-thighed Tortoise!

Nearer to the coast we'll look out for White-spectacled Bulbuls, but it is Gosku Delta that is likely to provide the highlights of this area, with a great selection of birds including Purple Swamphen (of the grey-headed form caspius) Squacco and Purple Herons, White-winged and Whiskered Terns, Ruddy Shelduck, Greater Flamingo, Ferruginous and Marbled Duck, Slender-billed Gull, Spur-winged Plover and stunning Citrine Wagtails. Evening and early morning are the best time to find calling Black Francolins and we may get a second chance to see White-throated Kingfisher.

**14** We drive back to Adana for our flight back to Istanbul and on to London

Sat 4 - Fri 17 May 2013 £2,195

**Deposit** £400 **Single Supp** £200  
**Leaders** Roy Atkins and Julian Sykes  
**Flights** Turkish Airlines, scheduled  
 Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Istanbul-Adana  
 Inbound: Afternoon, Adana-Istanbul-Heathrow

**Days 1-2** Fly from London to Adana via Istanbul  
 Birding around Adana and the Cukurova Delta  
 2 nights Adana

**Days 3-4** Travel to Gaziantep, birdwatching in the area  
 2 nights Gaziantep

**Days 5-6** Travel to Birecik, birdwatching in the area  
 2 nights Birecik

**Days 7-8** Drive to Cappadocia, sightseeing and birding  
 2 nights Cappadocia

**Days 9-11** Travel to and birding in Taurus Mountains  
 3 nights Demirkazik

**Days 12-13** We head south for birding in Gosku Delta  
 2 nights Gosku

**Day 14** Drive back to Adana for flights home

**Weather** Very variable in different regions, hot on the coast but much cooler in the mountains, especially early morning when gloves and scarves may be needed (10-30°C).

**Walking** Mostly easy walking up to 2 miles on good tracks, but some steeper slopes in the mountains

**Meals** All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 14

**Insects** Mosquitos can be a nuisance in a few places so bring repellent

**Accom** Twin and single rooms with private facilities

**Group** 12

**Just some of what we hope to see ...**

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|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Caspian Snowcock     | Eastern Orphean Warbler   |
| Black Francolin      | Menetrie's Warbler        |
| See-see Partridge    | Ruppell's Warbler         |
| Squacco Heron        | Eastern Bonelli's Warbler |
| Greater Flamingo     | Krupers Nuthatch          |
| Northern Bald Ibis   | Rock Nuthatch             |
| Lammergeier          | Eastern Rock Nuthatch     |
| Long-legged Buzzard  | White-spectacled Bulbul   |
| Pallid Scops Owl     | Iraq Babbler              |
| Purple Swamphen      | Dead Sea Sparrow          |
| Marbled Duck         | Pale Rock Sparrow         |
| Syrian Woodpecker    | White-winged Snowfinch    |
| Bimaculated Lark     | Red-fronted Serin         |
| Citrine Wagtail      | Crimson-winged Finch      |
| White-throated Robin | Cretzschmar's Bunting     |
| Finsch's Wheatear    | Black-headed Bunting      |
| Graceful Prinia      | Cinereous Bunting         |

**Roy Atkins:** Spur-winged Plover, Asia Minor Souselik, Red-fronted Serin, Bald Ibis, Cretzschmar's Bunting  
**Jane Atkins:** White-throated Kingfisher, Cappadocia