

Birdwatching Breaks 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. 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.



Ali Alieslam lives in Tehran, Iran. Ali has had a lifelong interest in the natural history of Iran and has been guiding birding tours on a professional basis for many years. Ali will be leading our birding tour of Iran, taking in many important birding areas of this large country. Ali is also a skilled photographer of wildlife and is fluent in the English language. He has also written articles for OSME and found some notable 'firsts' for the country which have included Black-naped Monarch.



Chris Bradshaw lives in North Yorkshire. He is a vastly experienced bird-watcher 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.



Nikolay Dilchev lives in Sofia, Bulgaria and, in the summer months, at his lodge situated close to the River Danube in eastern Bulgaria. Nikolay has been leading tours in his native country for more than twenty years and is highly respected within the ornithological world. He and his wife Dora jointly operate Pandion D, one of the oldest and established birding companies in Bulgaria.



Gorka Gorospe lives in Pamplona, Spain. Gorka is a freelance guide and researcher and is active in promotional work for nature-related tourism. Gorka has almost thirty years of experience watching birds and wildlife in NE Spain including the Pyrenees, Ebro Delta and the extensive steppes around Zaragoza. He is also a member of the Spanish rare birds committee and an advisor to various organisations including tourist boards, ecotourism projects and Birdlife International.



Phil Gregory lives with his wife Sue in Northern Queensland, Australia. Phil has been interested in birds since the demise of the steam trains when he was about 11. Born in Southampton, England he first came to Australia in 1977, but got sidetracked, and spent the next twenty years living and birding in Nigeria, Zambia, the Falkland Islands and Papua New Guinea. He is currently working on a field guide to the Birds of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. He is a well-known tour leader and is one of Australia's foremost birders. He is also one of the most experienced New Guinea guides with over 40 tours led there since 1998. Special interests include field identification, vocalisation, taxonomy and

distribution. He has been guiding occasionally since his African days and became full time in 1998 when he sidestepped the joys of being an international school principal which he found was seriously impeding his birding. He now leads several tours a year throughout the Pacific Region and has recently resumed his tour leading in Africa. Phil will be leading our tours to the Solomon Islands, Fiji and in 2016 Papua New Guinea.



Harriet Kemishiga lives in Kampala, Uganda. Harriet is Uganda's only female bird guide and one of the directors of Harrier Tours. Her passion for wildlife and birds started when she was a little girl growing up with her grandfather at the edge of Kibale National Park. Harriet has successfully guided many birding trips in Uganda and Rwanda since 2003. She has also worked for the avian vocalisation centre recording sounds of rare species that have not been recorded to science. Harriet is probably one of the best birding guides within Africa today with an incredible knowledge of birds and sounds within her native Uganda.



Ricardo Miller lives in Kingston, Jamaica. Ricardo has always been interested in nature and wildlife but his specific interest in birds started in 2002 when his professor convinced him to do a Masters project studying columbid game bird populations in Jamaica. He served as President of BirdLife Jamaica from 2010-2012 and a Director at Large of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB) during the same period. Now with 10 years birding experience, Ricardo is about as good as they get, but he will be the first to point out that he does not know half as much as he needs to. He has seen 195 different bird species in Jamaica (and counting) and hundreds more in South, Central and North America. He understands that birds do not exist in a vacuum and has expanded his repertoire to include butterflies and other insects, plants, natural history and the rich Jamaican culture. Ricardo is lots of fun, witty and has a cool personality.



Ass Ndiaye lives in Dakar, Senegal. Ass has worked with Birdwatching Breaks since we initiated tours to Senegal in the mid-1990s. Ass is a skilled birder with a happy knack of locating unusual birds. He has a particularly good eye for raptors and owls. Ass lives with his wife and young son and is an avid follower of football, particularly the English Premier League.



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.



Marc Rabenandrasana lives near Antananarivo in Madagascar. Marc is a biologist and holds a M.Sc. in biodiversity and tropical ecosystems. He worked with BirdLife International for 15 years identifying priority areas for conservation. Marc has worked as freelance tour guide since 2001 and now operates his own company.



Jane Stylianou lives in Nicosia, Cyprus. Jane has been interested in birds since the age of five and has continued birdwatching since moving to Cyprus in 1985. She has worked as a Development Officer for BirdLife Cyprus for over four years and is currently carrying out field work and doing conservation-based projects on a freelance basis. Together with another local birder, Jane operates Cyprus Birding Tours.