

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.



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.



Anders Faugstad Mæland lives in central Norway and has been a birder from a young age. Anders has established himself as a professional guide in Norway and taken part in a wide variety of ornithological surveys and biodiversity projects. He was the main ringer and migration counter at Jomfruland bird observatory from 1997-2011 before setting up Norwegian Birding. Anders has an intimate knowledge of his native Norway and its abundant wildlife especially the far north of the country.



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.



Isdeen Omolere lives in Puerto Novo, Benin with his wife and family. Isdeen has a good knowledge about the birds residing in Benin and is slowly building up a good knowledge of the countries birdlife. His background is in forestry although he has always had a fascination with birds from a young age. His travels have taken him to Europe and South America on business.



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.



Ian 'Sav' Savile lives on the North Island of New Zealand having originally been brought up in London. His birding experience in New Zealand is also extensive, having travelled throughout the country on birding trips, as well as concentrating a lot of time on his 'local patch' - the Manawatu Estuary, where he has found many rarities among the common visitors. Sav moved to Hawkes Bay in early 2014, with the Ahuriri Estuary and surrounds now being his 'local patch'.



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.