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BIRDWATCHING IN SAGRES

THE LAND OF BIRD MIGRATION

Sagres peninsula, in the far southwest of Portugal, is one of the country's most interesting regions for birdwatching. With more than 250 species recorded over time, the area is also the most iconic place in Portugal to witness the autumn migration of soaring birds, passerines and seabirds, among others.



Bird migration in Sagres

The most relevant ornithological phenomenon that occurs in Sagres peninsula is the post-breeding migration. Due to its geographical location, the area concentrates high numbers and diversity of migrant birds, from August to November. These birds are mainly soaring birds and passerines, but also other bird groups like nocturnal birds. Most of these birds are leaving their European breeding grounds on their way to wintering areas in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The coastline and nearby valleys lead them to Sagres peninsula, where they congregate, and may use it as a stopover site. From here, migrants can head East along the South Coast, presumably to Gibraltar, or try their luck crossing around 400 km of open ocean, to reach the nearest African grounds. Some of the movements are also dispersals. The peninsula also constitutes an important flyway to seabirds in transit between North Atlantic, South Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea.

Many of the birds coming to Sagres are juveniles or immatures, and the chance of spotting a rarity or more scarce species is also something to keep in mind.

PROMOTORS



ORGANIZING ENTITIES



CO-FINANCED



PARTNERS

VILA DO BISPO TOWNHALL (CMVB) is promoter of Sagres Birwatching Festival since its first edition, and actively works for the promotion and management of the county's natural and cultural heritage. Website: www.cm-viladobispo.pt/ - Email: geral@cm-viladobispo.pt - Tel.: (+351) 282 630 600

VICENTINA is a non-profit organization, based in Bensafrim. It's social mission is local development, by teaching and training local population, and improving the cultural, social and material conditions of local communities in the its area of influence. Website: www.vicentina.org - Email: vicentina@vicentina.org - Tel.: (+351) 282 860 120

SPEA - Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds is an environmental and scientific non-profit association, with the mission to work for the study and conservation of birds and habitats, promoting sustainable development in order to guarantee the viability of natural heritage for future generations. SPEA is part of BirdLife International, developing conservation projects, and promoting birdwatching in Portugal. Website: www.spea.pt - Email: spea@spea.pt - Tel.: (+351) 213 220 430

ALMARGEM is a non-profit association based in Loulé, which has as standards the study and divulgation of the most significant historical, cultural and natural values of the Algarve; the uncompromising safeguard of these same values and the suggestion of realistic propositions for their recovery and qualification; and the promotion of activities pursuing an integrated and nature respectful local development. Website: www.almargem.org - Email: almargem@mail.telepac.pt - Tel.: (+351) 289 412 959

CONTACTS

ACCOMODATION www.cm-viladobispo.pt | Turismo | Alojamento
RESTAURANTS www.cm-viladobispo.pt | Turismo | Restaurantes
ACTIVITIES (Birdwatching)
Cape Cruiser Boat tours www.capecruiser.org | (+351) 919 751 175
Magic Moments Photography www.magicmoments.pt | (+351) 917 362 163
Mar Ilimitado Boat tours www.marilimitado.com | (+351) 916 832 625
Walkin' Sagres Walking tours www.walkinsagres.com | (+351) 925 545 515
VILA DO BISPO FIRE DEPARTMENT Vila do Bispo (+351) 282 639 285
VILA DO BISPO MUNICIPALITY Open: Monday to Friday | (+351) 282 630 600 | www.cm-viladobispo.pt
VILA DO BISPO CULTURAL CENTRE (Library and Internet)
Open: Monday to Friday (+351) 282 630 300
HEALTH CENTRES
Sagres (+351) 282 624 173
Vila do Bispo (+351) 282 639 179
PHARMACIES
Farmácia de Sagres (+351) 282 624 850
Farmácia de Vila do Bispo (+351) 282 639 166
POLICE GNR Posto Territorial de Vila do Bispo (+351) 282 639 112
SAGRES TOURISM OFFICE
Open: Tuesday to Saturday | (+351) 282 624 873 | turismo.sagres@turismodoalgarve.pt
NATIONAL INFORMATION SERVICE (+351) 118
NACIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICE (+351) 112
TRANSPORT
Trains www.cp.pt | (+351) 808 208 208
Buses www.eva-bus.net | (+351) 289 899 700 (Faro) | (+351) 282 762 944 (Lagos)

GOOD CONDUCT

- 1 The welfare of the birds must always be first, and the habitat should always remain as found
 - 2 Do not disturb in any way the behaviour of birds
 - 3 Respect the rights of land owners and of other observers
 - 4 Promote local development
- If you use a tour guide, make sure that they are licensed for the purpose, and favour local guides, in order to stimulate the local economy
- 5 Share information with other observers

Portugal Aves (<http://www.worldbirds.org/v3/portugal.php>)

Noticiário Ornitológico
(<http://www.spea.pt/pt/publicacoes/newsletters/noticiario-ornitologico>)

Portuguese Rarities Committee
(<http://www.spea.pt/pt/observar-aves/comite-portugues-raridades/>)

Ringin Central - CEMPA (cempa@incb.pt)

6 If you find an injured or debilitated bird, you should immediately contact

SOS Environment and Territory 808 200 520

Rehabilitation Centre RIAS (Olhão) (+351) 927 659 313

7 In case of fire call 112

1 CABRANOSA

Located next to Cabranosa geodesic landmark, and known amongst the birdwatchers as "P1", it is the highest vantage point in the peninsula, and probably the most well known observation spot in the country. It can be reached from the road to Cape S. Vicente, following a dirt road to the North, after restaurant "O Vigia". The best spot to watch raptors, and other soaring birds, but also passerines that seek refuge in the nearby shrubs. Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata* breeds in the surroundings. The pine woods to the North can produce interesting forest birds, like Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*.

2 VALE SANTO

Coastal plateau area, with short bushes. It can be reached by car from the road to Cape S.Vicente, turning North on the only asphalt road before the cape, or by foot from Cabranosa area or the Treeline. Resident birds, typical of more open habitats like Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*, Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* and Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae* can be found here. During the post-breeding migration season, it is the place to look for more scarce migrants like Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* or Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*.

3 HEDGE

Line of pine trees along the route to Cabranosa, where passerines and others, like nocturnal raptors. Birds can use these trees for refuge and rest before or after a long journey. A good barometer for the passerine migration scenario.

4 CAPE S.VICENT

The main seawatching point. Along the autumn migration it is possible to watch practically all the continental breeding species. Observing in the first hours of daylight is recommended.

5 PONTA DA ATALAI

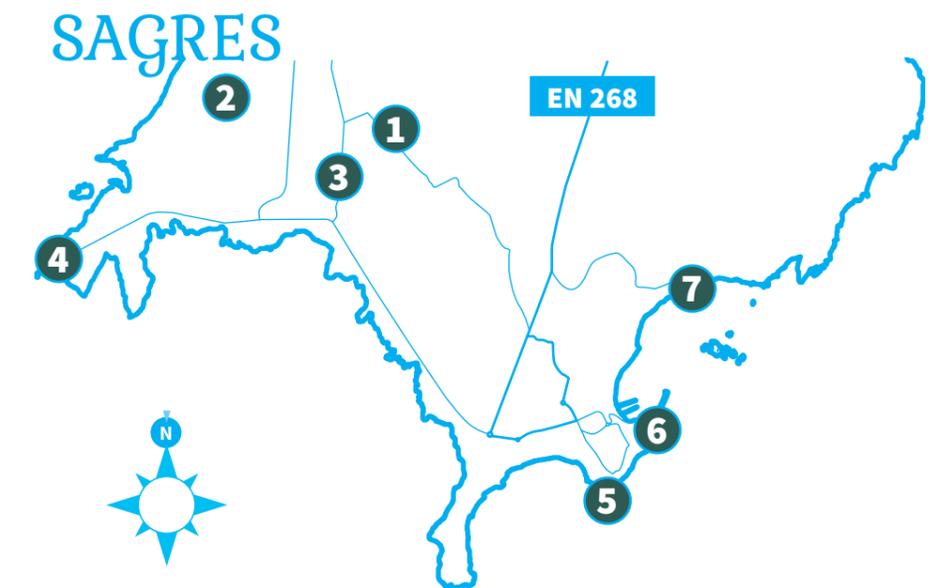
Alternative seawatching point. Allows observations of seabirds flying along the South coast of the peninsula. Because it is sheltered from North winds, it represents a more pleasant spot in days when this kind of winds blow strong. The surrounding shrubland is a good place to look for migrant passerines. It can be reached from the town of Sagres, turning South, direction "Pousada".

6 PORTO DA BALEEIRA

Fishing port, where in adverse weather conditions, birds like Razorbill *Alca torda* can take refuge. It constitutes the best spot to look for vagrant gulls. During the winter, rarities like Glaucous Gull *Larus glaucooides* or Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus* have been recorded. Can be reached by crossing the town of Sagres.

7 MARTINHAL

The only permanent wetland of the peninsula. Constitutes a stopover site for waterbirds, mainly waders. Rarities like White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* have been recorded. Can be reached from the road to Vila do Bispo, turning East, direction "Martinhal".



Soaring birds

GRIFION VULTURE *Gyps fulvus*

1 2

The most emblematic and numerous migratory raptors in Sagres. With a wingspan larger than 2m, these majestic birds appear in the skies of Sagres mainly during October. They take advantage of the ascending thermal columns, circulating sometimes in flocks of a few hundreds.

EGYPTIAN VULTURE *Neophron percnopterus*

1 2

Much scarcer than Griffon Vulture, only a few tens of Egyptian Vulture per year reach Sagres, in their journey to Africa, the majority juveniles or immatures. These birds usually appear in small flocks (1-5), mainly throughout September and early/mid October.

BOOTED EAGLE *Hieraetus pennatus*

1 2

One of the most common migratory raptors in Sagres. Present throughout the whole migration season, with passage peaks in the second half of September and first half of October, when it is frequent to watch flocks of dozens of these birds.

SHORT-TOED EAGLE *Circaetus gallicus*

1 2

Common migrant that passes throughout the whole migration season. With one passage peak in the first half of October and another one in the first half of November. May gather in large flocks.

BLACK STORK *Ciconia nigra*

1 2

Rather scarce, but regular migrant. Only a few reach Sagres, and it can be an exciting sight. Isolated individuals or small flocks can appear from mid September to late November, with no well defined peaks.



Migrant passerines

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

1 2 3 5 7

Emblematic transaharian migrant, usually seen isolated in the ground. Present throughout most of the migration season, although more abundant in September and October. Long course migrant, that can come so far as from Iceland or Greenland.

SPECTACLED WARBLER *Sylvia conspicillata*

1 2

An example of a transaharian passerine migrant that not only passes through, but also breeds in Sagres, namely in Cabranosa area. Present between March and early October.

SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*

1 2 3 5

Very conspicuous transaharian migrant. Breeds around the Mediterranean basin. It can be spotted almost during the entire season, but mostly during September and early October.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

2

One of the most abundant passerine migrants in Sagres. Breeds mostly in Northern and Central Europe. Along September and October they are a little bit everywhere in the area.

ORTOLAN BUNTING *Emberiza hortulana*

2

An example of a scarce migrant. Breeds along most of Europe, but breeding in Portugal is confined to highlands in the North. Can reach Sagres in variable but small numbers, during September and early October, and can be easily overlooked.

Seabirds

NORTHERN GANNET *Morus bassanus*

4 5

The region's most easily recognizable seabird, by its huge wingspan, and conspicuous patterns. Breeds in Northern Europe, and during the first half of the season most are juveniles and immatures (dark). From mid October onwards, most of the Gannets present are adults (predominantly white), with passage rates sometimes reaching a few thousands per hour.

CORY'S SHEAWATER *Calonectris diomedea*

4 5

Breeds mostly in the Macaronesian islands, and around the Mediterranean, wintering in the South Atlantic. Birds crossing Sagres waters can be feeding, dispersing, or migrating in the first half of the season (when it is very abundant). Juveniles leave the nest in late October and in November the species is already seldom seen.

GREAT SHEARWATER *Puffinus gravis*

4 5

(Pelagic trip advised)

Breeds in the South Atlantic during the austral Summer, migrating to the North Atlantic afterwards. Present in the area mostly from August to November, with higher concentrations in the first half of the season. Can be common offshore, but rarely seen from land.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER *Puffinus mauretanicus*

(Pelagic trip advised)

4 5

Critically Endangered (CR) seabird, that breeds exclusively in the Balearic islands. Non-breeders are present throughout the year, but the higher passage rates occur occasionally during September and October, when birds are returning to breeding colonies, from their post-breeding concentration sites, more to the North.

WILSON'S STORM PETREL *Oceanites oceanicus*

(Pelagic trip advised)

4 5

This species breeds in South Atlantic and the entries of individuals in the area suggest that they appear isolated or in small flocks, mainly in August and September. A species with pelagic habits, rarely sighted from land.

Resident birds

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

1 2 4

Known as the fastest bird in the world, the Peregrine Falcon is a typical inhabitant of the cliffs around Sagres and inland coastal areas.

LITTLE BUSTARD *Tetrax tetrax*

1

A small population of this species is present all year round in the pastures and fields of Vale Santo and surrounding area, where it can be seen with relative ease. Outside the breeding season the birds usually disperse and concentrate in flocks, being harder to spot.



BLUE ROCK THRUSH *Monticola solitarius*

4 5

Blue Rock Thrush is a cliff-dweller, well distributed along the entire SW coastline. It has a conspicuous silhouette, and isolated individuals can be regularly seen flickering around or perched in the cliffs.

AZURE-WINGED MAGPIE *Cyanopica cyanus*

1 3

These unmistakable birds are characteristic of South Iberia, and can be seen all year round in the more forested areas of Sagres peninsula like Vale Santo pine wood or Cabranosa. Tends to form larger flocks during non-breeding season.

CHOUGH *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

1 2 4

A small population of a few tens of pairs breeds in the cliffs around Cape S. Vicente (to the North and to the East), where birds also stay overnight. Flocks can be seen coming out of the dorms in the morning and back in late afternoon, or feeding in open ground or farmland. The nearest population is around 300 kms to the North.



LEGEND (PHOTO)

Paco Gómez (1), O. Pehmann (2 e 3), Jorge Meneses (4, 13 e 14), Eran Finkle (5), Mark Medcalf (6), Juan Emilio (7 e 9), Mike Sway (8), Pierre Dalous (10 e 17), Andreas Trpte (11), Pedro Geraldes (12), JJ. Harisson (15), Juan la Cruz (16 e 18), Mário Mata (19), Malt Uhl (20).

Migration calendar for soaring birds in Sagres Peninsula

1 AND 2 STAND FOR THE 1ST AND 2ND HALF OF THE MONTH

	AUG		SEP		OCT		NOV	
	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	
<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>								
<i>Ciconia nigra</i>								
<i>Gyps fulvus</i>								
<i>Aegypius monachus</i>								
<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>								
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>								
<i>Aquila chrysaetus</i>								
<i>Aquila adalberti</i>								
<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>								
<i>Aquila pennata</i>								
<i>Aquila fasciata</i>								
<i>Milvus milvus</i>								
<i>Milvus migrans</i>								
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>								
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>								
<i>Circus pygargus</i>								
<i>Buteo buteo</i>								
<i>Pernis apivorus</i>								
<i>Accipiter nisus</i>								
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>								
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>								
<i>Falco subbuteo</i>								
<i>Falco eleonora</i>								
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>								
<i>Falco columbarius</i>								
<i>Corvus corax</i>								