

Portugal: Birding, Nature & Culture | Trip Report October 6 – 16, 2025 | with Naturalist Journeys



Local guide: António Cotão

With our NJ host Elissa Fazio, and our clients, Trina, Lynn, Kathy, Connie, Gary, Lou, Debbie, Susan, Stu, and Pam.



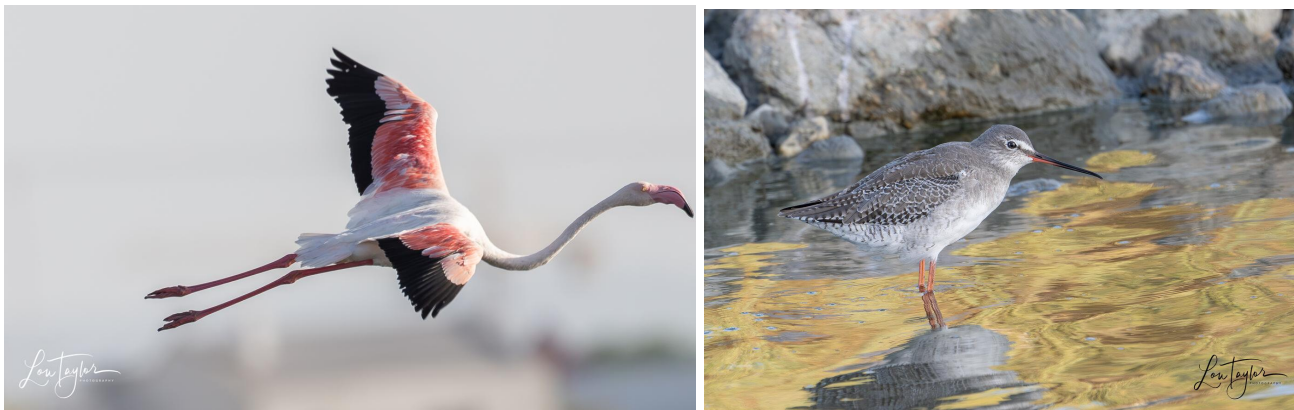
Group photo at the Mértola Main Church, taken by our local cultural guide, Fernando.

By António Cotão

Mon., Oct. 6: Arrivals | Meet-up | Salinas do Brito

The day our guests arrived at our first hotel in Alcochete. There, later on this day, our group met for the first time for an optional birding walk around the hotel towards the salt pans of Brito.

On this short birding walk, we had our first sightings of Flamingos, shorebirds, seagulls, and the fairly common, but always challenging, Zitting Cistolas and Sardinian Warblers. The group enjoyed close looks of Greater Flamingos, both first winter and adult individuals, feeding, as well as of Spotted Redshanks, Black-winged Stilts, and Pied Avocets, among a few other waders. We had our first challenge on gull identification, unveiling a couple of Mediterranean Gulls, among the far more common Black-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls.



A Greater Flamingo in flight (left) and a Spotted Redshank (right), by Lou Taylor.

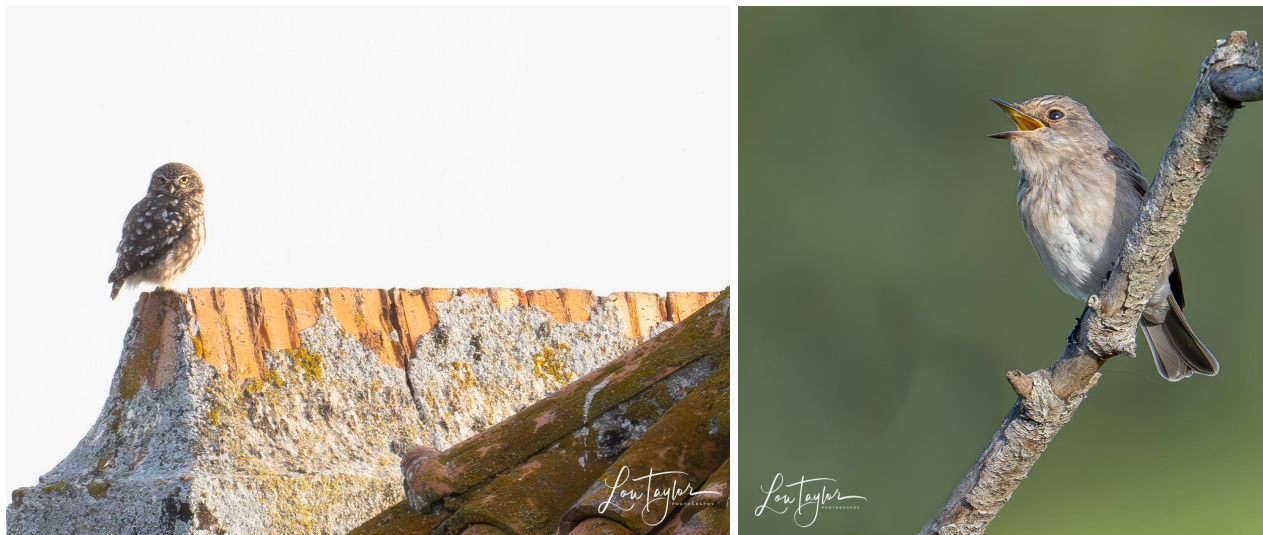
After roughly an hour, we headed back to the hotel, exploring the shore of the Tagus River and keeping an eye on the bushes for warblers and small passerines.

In the evening, we enjoyed our first dinner and welcoming drinks in the Italian restaurant of the Hotel Praia do Sal Resort in Alcochete.

Tue., Oct. 7: Public Park Birding | Lezírias Rice Fields | EVOA Visiting Center

After a delightful breakfast, the morning started with a short birding trip to a public park near a shopping mall, taking full advantage of the first hours of the day to look for passerines.

The stop proved to be very productive, promptly spotting a Little Owl in a ruin nearby as soon as we stepped outside the vehicle. Around the trees and bushes, we managed to get good looks at small and restless passeriformes, such as Spotted Flycatcher, Willow Warbler, Common Waxbill, and the European Robin, Greenfinch, and Serin.



A Little Owl (left) and a Spotted Flycatcher (right) at our first birding spot, by Lou Taylor.

Then, we went off to the Tagus Estuary. En route to the visiting center of EVOA, we saw plentiful White Storks nests on power lines, before cruising and birding along the rice fields of Lezírias, making the necessary stops for birding opportunities. In one of those stops, we followed at a distance a huge flock of Glossy Ibises, estimated at over 12 thousand birds! In addition to those distant Ibises, we had closer sightings of groups of White Storks and Northern Lapwings feeding in the fields, several Western Marsh Harriers flying low, flocks of Yellow-crowned Bishops flying along the reeds, and Whinchat, among various observations of the abundant European Stonechat, and our first Common Hoopoe!

We arrived at the visitor's center, where we had our appreciated lunch, while waiting for the right time to catch the larger number of birds in the center's lagoons during high tide. In an electric golf cart, a member of the staff took us to our first birdwatching hide, on the shallow lagoon, normally ideal for waders. There, we managed to see some Eurasian Spoonbills, Greater Flamingos, and Glossy Ibises, among the fairly large flocks of Black-tailed Godwits, Common Redshanks, Ruffs, Pied Avocets, and Black-winged Stilts. With careful and thorough observation, we were able to discover a few more species, including Kentish Plovers, Common Snipes, and Little Stints.

We moved on to the main lagoon, usually very good for waterfowl. And so it was. We saw a good number of wintering species, namely Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, and a very exciting Marbled Duck. This place was also good for egrets and herons, having seen four species: the Great, Little, Western Cattle Egrets, and the Gray Heron. Among the few passerines around, Pam brilliantly spotted a Greater Whitethroat, after a Common Chiffchaff and a couple of Willow Warblers put us all to the test of identifying leaf warblers.

On our way back to the hotel, we scanned the rice fields a few more times and ended up getting a couple of Black-winged Kites and Ospreys, several Eurasian Kestrels, and a Green Sandpiper flying away from a channel near the dirt path.

The dinner tonight was at the fish house across the street from our hotel. The fish was as fresh as you can get, and we could pick our own fish from Grouper, Sea Bass, Salmon, Squid, and more. Marvelous!

Wed., Oct. 8: Hortas' Picnic Area & Mudflats | Quinta da Atalaya | Walk amongst the Cork Oaks of Pancas

The third day of the tour began with a visit to a picnic area, 10 minutes away from the hotel, for a closer look at the mudflats of the Tagus River. As the tide was not ideal, the mudflats provided us with few birds, despite good sightings of Common Ringed Plover, Common Sandpiper, and Bar-tailed Godwit.



A Great Spotted Woodpecker (left), by Lou Taylor; Our group looking for two Tree Pipits on the ground (right), by António Cotão.

The picnic area proved to be much more productive. Everyone had the joy of chasing, with their bins, a Eurasian Wryneck moving constantly from a tree to the ground, and great sights of a Great Spotted Woodpecker on a tree top, discovered by Lynn. We also saw a small family of Eurasian Blue Tits, and the two species of flycatchers, the European Pied and the Spotted Flycatchers. We heard Cetti's Warblers and a Eurasian Wren, but unfortunately, they did not want to show themselves to us.

After a usual morning break, we resumed our birding near Alcochete on a private property, with several cows, a few horses, an old friendly dog...and lots of flies! Birding-wise, it has an excellent diversity of habitats that provide a great variety of species. We walked around their cork oak forest, starting by their freshwater lagoon, where we spotted a couple of Black-crowned Night Herons, some Little

Grebes, Gadwalls, Eurasian Moorhens and Coots, and Yellow-crowned Bishops. Along the walk, the majority of the group managed to see the Eurasian Nuthatch and the Short-toed Treecreeper. We heard some Great Tits, Common Chiffchaffs, Cetti's Warblers, and Blackcaps. But, all saw distant Iberian Magpies, Eurasian Jays, a Common Hoopoe, and, after some persistence and patience, two Tree Pipits that were feeding on the ground among the weeds.

Today for lunch, we headed to a local tiny cafe in Alcochete, where most of us enjoyed sandwiches before some ventured for some of their delicious homemade pastries.



In the afternoon, we tried once more the nearby mudflats with a more favorable tide. That made the difference, and we managed some more shorebird species such as Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Dunlin, Curlew Sandpiper, and good comparison sightings between the two Godwit species - the Bar-tailed and the Black-tailed Godwits. Then, we enjoyed a walk amongst a lovely woodland of cork oaks and pines in the northeast area of Alcochete. It was a pleasant walk, though not very productive bird-wise. Nonetheless, we enjoyed the sights of a big flock of European Goldfinches.

Mudflats in the Tagus River, by Lynn Kieffer.

We had one final stop before heading back to the hotel, and that was the wine tasting at a lovely local winery. In spite of their local challenges with climate conditions and poor soils, the company works hard toward conservation. One of their best-known wines could not fail to catch the eye of any birdwatcher, as it features an image of a barn owl on the label. This is a way of paying tribute to the owl population that helps them control rodents in their vineyards. Many of us enjoyed the wine tasting, while others preferred the olive oil tasting more.

Dinner tonight was at another fish restaurant right by the Tagus River with beautiful views of the Lisbon Metropolitan area.

Thu., Oct. 9: Connection to the Alentejo | Évora City Tour | Bustards on the Road to Mértola

Today was a transfer day to our next region, the Alentejo, combined with a city tour. Leaving the Tagus Region in the morning, we drove East for about 2 hours towards Évora, a Roman-walled city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We were greeted on arrival by our local tour guide, Nuno, who led us a short way through town, while learning about the complex history of the city and region.

We started by walking through the walls and into the city, heading to one of the main highlights of the city, the Roman Temple, also known as the Temple of Diana. After hearing the history and legends of the Temple, we witnessed the welcome rituals for the freshmen performed by the senior students - the “Harry Potters” as Nuno called them.



Our group and guide Nuno by the Roman Temple (left), by António Cotão; Évora main street market (right), by Lou Taylor.

Next, we moved on to the Cathedral of Évora, a massive 12th-century Gothic building with beautiful cloisters and intricate Baroque details at the front of the church. Our brave group embraced the challenge of climbing the narrow, spiral steps to the rooftop of the church for panoramic views of the city and its surroundings. Despite being on a city tour, birding was still on, and we managed to see some individuals of the colony of Eurasian Jackdaws, as well as Eurasian Magpies, Eurasian Crag Martins, and Black Redstarts, among other common city birds.

After a good look around the cathedral, we wandered down one of the market streets with plenty of shops selling local products, including many cork items! Then, we walked into the main square, Giraldo Square, learning about the different quarters - Moorish, Christian, and Jewish, and made our way to the final destination - the Church and famous Chapel of Bones – a chapel made entirely of bones!

After lunch at a local restaurant with an amazing inner terrace, we had some time to go shopping in the local street shops. Then, we were back on the road, driving southeast towards Mértola. Later, already in the rolling plains of the Alentejo, we made a comfort stop and managed our first sights of the Great Bustard! A very effective break. We resumed our journey along a scenic countryside road that led us to Mértola, a picturesque hilltop town in the heart of Guadiana Valley Natural Park.

After a long day of travelling, our driver, João, negotiated some final, tight roads to deliver us safely to our family-owned hotel by the Guadiana River with fantastic views of the town and castle across the river. Tonight, we walked to our dinner on a short little adventure, in near darkness, along the quiet street of cobblestones.

Fri, Oct. 10: Walk above the Guadiana River in Bombeira | Mértola City Tour | Birding from the Hotel

On our first day in the Guadiana Valley Natural Park, we had a morning of birding and an afternoon of another city tour, this time in Mértola.

In the morning, we headed to the other side of the Guadiana River, where we had a walk above and along the river in Bombeira, the name of the local wine that some of us had tried the night before. Unfortunately, the walk didn't offer us the birds we were looking for. Nonetheless, the sights over the river and cliffs were beautiful, and the walk was very quiet and pleasant.



Morning birding along the Guadiana River, by Lynn Kieffer.

En route to our next birding location, we had a Short-toed Eagle perched on a high electricity pole, as usual in this region. Nearby, we had our next stop, a private reservoir, which in its turn was very fruitful. We got a great variety of waterfowl, including Common and Red-crested Pochards. There were several Northern Lapwings and Common Snipes along the shores, and around us, a huge flock of Corn Buntings and several small groups of Spanish Sparrows, which, despite the close distance, were not very cooperative. Things got even more interesting once we spotted birds of prey in the sky, starting with a large one - a Golden Eagle. In fact, two! And, some minutes after, another two birds of prey, a bit smaller this time, a couple of Bonelli's Eagles. That was exciting! Just before leaving, and after adding a Hoopoe to our day, we heard an Iberian Green Woodpecker! It was close. But, unfortunately, it didn't want to show up for us. Tight on time, we had to give up on it and head to lunch.

We enjoyed our lunch in a local cafe in town, just before our city tour in Mértola. Our guide, Fernando, greeted us with a smile and a great sense of humor. We started right away by visiting a typical model home for a local family of 5 to 7 people in the early 20th century - it was really tiny! Then, we went up to the Church. Originally a mosque from the Moorish times until the 12th century, when it was converted into a Catholic Church after the Portuguese Reconquest. At first glance, they are not noticeable, but once our guide points them out, the signs of different religious influences and so many transformations are all there. Next, we visited the excavated ruins just behind the Church and beneath the castle, which used to be a Moorish neighborhood. We learned how the Moors adapted to the place, using the Roman infrastructure already existing there, and got to understand the different purposes of the place over the centuries and different civilizations. Finally, we headed to the Castle. A castle of Moorish influence, which was, once again, built reusing materials and infrastructure from the ancient Roman defenses of the city. The braver members of the group ventured on the climb up to the keep of the castle.



Mértola Church during our cultural tour, by Lou Taylor.

After a fascinating but tiring tour, the group was treated to an ice cream in the oldest cafe in town. And, what we least expected, vultures! A small group of Eurasian Griffons was gliding low over the town and brought with them a Cinereous Vulture. Funny enough, a few minutes later, rain! A small, angry cloud decided to present us with some rather heavy rain, maybe angry at us for eating ice cream in October.

The rest of the afternoon was free with optional birding in the hotel garden to seek Common Kingfisher - the most wanted bird in the group. A few people joined for that quest, and we saw not only one, but three! We also had beautiful looks at a small group of Spanish Sparrows preparing to roost nearby.

Dinner tonight was at a local traditional and family-owned restaurant in town with big portions but delicious food.

Sat., Oct. 11: Alentejo Rolling Plains! | Eagles & Vultures

We started the day walking out the hotel's entrance road, which turned out to be a charming and productive walk, where, this time, the whole group got to see the Kingfisher! But, we got Eurasian Blackcaps, Eurasian Crag and Western House Martins, Barn Swallows, and most excitingly, a couple of Blue Rock Thrushes, and a lovely group of the always-cute, Long-tailed Tits. Always with Mértola in the background. What a beautiful start!

The day was dedicated to exploring the rolling plains of Castro Verde, and so we hit the road. Our first stop was not very successful, though we had good looks of Iberian Gray Shrike and Northern Wheatear, accompanied by the ever-present Zitting Cisticolas and European Stonechats. Then, along the road, we spotted two Great Bustards, which made our driver improvise a turn around at a crossing road. It was worth it, as they were much closer this time. A few minutes later, on a quick, comfort stop, we got another group of Eurasian Griffons gliding overhead.



Two Great Bustards (left), and the ever-present Zitting Cisticola (right), by Lou Taylor.

Our last stop before lunch was a private property, which the owner allows our groups to enter. He is very keen on protecting the wildlife, and, in particular, the colonies of Lesser Kestrel and European Rollers in his property - two species that, unfortunately, we were too late in the season to see on this trip. However, this property was very productive. A few minutes after entering it, three Black-bellied Sandgrouses flew across in front of the vehicle, though too fast for the majority of the group to see. We headed to their private reservoir, and there we saw plenty of things. Little and Great Crested Grebes were diving in the water, Common Greenshanks, Glossy Ibises, Common Snipes, and a Ruff were feeding on the shores. In the skies, there was again a group of Griffons with a Cinereous Vulture behind them, Common Ravens, Common Buzzards, and a distant Red Kite. In the trees around us were Corn Buntings, European Goldfinches, Spanish Sparrows, and a Spotted Flycatcher. Also, it was a very busy place for dragonflies, and we managed to identify three species: the Blue Emperor, the Red-veined Darter, and the Violet Dropwing.

After some toasted bread sandwiches for lunch in the town of Castro Verde, we visited a special inhabitant - a family of Long-eared Owls who roost in a tree along the street. Gorgeous! We then scanned the region for better sights of the species already seen and in search of the Spanish Imperial Eagle. Eventually, we stopped at another reservoir, which has territories of different eagles nearby. While waiting for some activity in the skies, we checked the reservoir and got, among others, some Green Sandpipers and a Kingfisher. Around us, we saw Thekla's Larks, Eurasian Linnets, and, near the end, a male Hen Harrier. And that was the only raptor we got there.

We resumed our way back to the hotel, and on our way, there was finally a Spanish Imperial Eagle! An immature flying away, but relatively low. However, the challenges of a narrow road made it difficult to stop the vehicle and allow everyone to have a proper look at the bird. That was a real pity.

The dinner was again in town, this time, inside the old town, in a restaurant that belongs to a local environmental non-governmental organization working on environmental conservation and assessments with the local community. So, in a different setting, at a dinner with a meaningful purpose, our group enjoyed the meal on the restaurant's beautiful terrace on a quiet, warm evening.

Sun., Oct. 12: São Domingos Mines | East Bank of Guadiana River | Iberian Lynx Lookout

Our Sunday morning started with a birding walk in a garden and an old mine complex in São Domingos. We enjoyed a quiet walk looking for woodpeckers and some songbirds, and ended up seeing, among others, Iberian Magpies, Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Thekla's and Crested Larks, Common Hoopoes, Willow Warblers, and Chiffchaffs. We continued walking and entered the old mines of São Domingos, a former copper mine complex closed in the 1960s. There, we chased a Dartford Warbler we heard, but

never managed to see. Nonetheless, we saw a Blue Rock Thrush, a Greater Whitethroat, an Iberian Gray Shrike, two distant Red Kites, and two European Red-rumped Swallows, just to name a few.

Today, for lunch, we had pizzas at an isolated but very popular restaurant. From there, we went exploring the Eastern bank of the Guadiana River, an area that combines Mediterranean shrubs with the cliffs and bluffs of the river's valley. In a beautiful natural setting, we started by seeing several Fallow Deer on a hunting property, and then, we enjoyed a quiet walk, listening to the songs of nature and of a few bird species. Soon enough, we got a few Red-legged Partridges and some Thekla's Larks. But the target species were much harder to find. Eventually, after some other species already seen before, a Dartford Warbler patiently allowed itself to be seen through the branches of a small bush. It was a game of mutual patience, which resulted in the observation of this difficult species by all members of the group.

We finished our day at the Iberian Lynx lookout, which is also a perfect raptor lookout. No luck unfortunately. Though some Eurasian Griffons showed up for us. The try for the Lynx gave us sights of Red Deer, however, in a private hunting reserve.

On our final dinner in this region, we walked again to the same restaurant from the first night in Mértola.



Our group in the Iberian Lynx lookout, by António Cotão.

Mon., Oct. 13: Transfer to Tavira in the Algarve | Saltpans Birding | Pinewoods & Freshwater Lagoon of Aldeia Nova

Today, we moved on to the southern region of Portugal - the Algarve. On this transfer day, we had an initial stop at the Vascão River. We did a short walk along the shore's vegetation, looking for any birding opportunity. We heard several species and managed to see the majority of them, including Eurasian Jay, Eurasian Blue Tit, Eurasian Blackcap, Sardinian Warbler, and European Robin. But, didn't get any new species.

We resumed our transfer and arrived in the Algarve for a birding section near the biggest salt pans of the region, by the Guadiana River, and with Spain in the background. And so, we got back to shorebirds. In some of the tanks near us, we saw Black-winged Stilts, Pied Avocets, Black-bellied Plovers, Ruffs, Little Stints, Caspian Terns, and a few more species. Whereas, in the marshlands between us and Spain, we had a Great Egret, a Western Marsh Harrier, and an Osprey.



After a quiet and fulfilling lunch, our next birding destination was only 5 minutes away. A sandy pinewood natural reserve with a freshwater lagoon. A few yards in, and we detected Crested Tits and Short-toed Treecreepers. Soon enough, the Iberian Green Woodpecker started taunting us from afar. And the same seemed to be happening with the Great Tit. Walking around the pond, we eventually managed to see through the reeds, which was quite rewarding. Two Audouin's Gulls were bathing among some Lesser Black-backed and Yellow-legged Gulls. Then, a group of diving ducks - Common Pochards and a few Ferruginous Ducks, one of the most threatened duck species in Europe. We completed the loop accompanied by Spotless Starlings, Common and Iberian Magpies, and Eurasian Jays, but the Iberian Green Woodpecker never came closer.

Morning birding in the Vascão River, by António Cotão.

Our final birding was at the salt pans of Tavira, just near the hotel. Our driver, João, dropped us off at a warehouse, as António wanted to show us Eurasian Thick-knees that are usually around. We stepped out, set the scopes, and there they were! We walked along the salt tanks and got better sights of, at least, nine Thick-knees. Further along, five species of gulls were all resting in the same tank. They were close enough to see the distinctive features on all the winter adults, particularly in Audouin's, and between Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls. We got close looks at other species too, including Common Ringed and Black-bellied Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, White Storks, and the lovely Greater Flamingos.

Just a few minutes away, the 4-star hotel and former tuna factory awaited us. Once checked in and settled down, we enjoyed a buffet dinner at the hotel's restaurant. After dinner, some of us joined António for a night walk on a quest for Chameleons. Despite being slightly late in the season for them, the temperatures had been quite reasonable, and so, we decided to give it a try. We didn't manage Chameleons, but it was a fun experience nonetheless.



A Eurasian Thick-knee, by Lou Taylor.

Tue., Oct. 14: Tavira Saltpans | Golf Course Birding

The morning started with an optional earlier start birding around the hotel.

To take full advantage of the high tide in order to get sights of shorebirds and seagulls near the shore and in the saltpans, we headed straight to the mudflats near the hotel. Right on time to get some Eurasian Oystercatchers, Eurasian Whimbrels, and Bar-tailed Godwits feeding along the tiny mud area left.

Next, we visited the western Tavira's saltpans to dedicate some more time to shorebirds and seagulls. Shortly after we arrived, we spotted a Slender-billed Gull, the gull species that was missing! We stepped out of the vehicle and scoped it. A few minutes later, we heard a Water Rail, and some of the members might have actually seen it very briefly. We then focused on the groups of shorebirds on the salt tanks on the opposite side. After reviewing all the species, we managed to improve sightings of Eurasian Oystercatchers, Kentish Plovers, and Curlew Sandpipers, and include a new species to the trip, the Red Knot.

Then, we hit the road to our next birding destination - a golf course! As we started birding along the trail that ran parallel to the golf course, António spotted, in a distant salt tank, a Red Phalarope, which, through the scopes, everyone managed to follow for a few moments. Accompanied by the usual suspects - Sardinian Warbler, Zitting Cisticola, and Stonechats - we got a Booted Eagle flying overhead. Nice catch! Along the fairway, we got a few Greenfinches, Goldfinches, and European Serins singing from the trees' canopies, and Iberian Magpies and Common Hoopoes enjoying the easy food on the irrigated grass. At the end of the trail, we reached a large freshwater lagoon. There, we got several waterfowl species previously seen, plus a new one - the Eurasian Widgeon. But we kept scanning for birds in the

reedbeds. Eventually, Lynn, one of our expert spotters, detected a Squacco Heron on our side of the lagoon. That was a great find! Then, Kathy, another great spotter, managed to see a Water Rail, which unfortunately went into the reeds before anyone else got a glimpse of it. Birds kept surprising us, and soon after, one of the most wanted species there - the Little Bittern. Right before we finished, we saw Black-headed Weavers.



Our incredible photographer, Lou Taylor (top left), by António Cotão; A Little Bittern (top right), and a Common Hoopoe (left), by Lou Taylor.

Back at the hotel, the quick buffet was just the perfect dinner for a very early start the next morning.

Wed., Oct. 15: Pelagic! | Birding in Sagres

Today was the pelagic day! Forcing us to a very early start to make our way to the southwesternmost point of mainland Portugal (and all Europe). The group was smaller, though, as some people decided to have a rest day and enjoy the amenities of the hotel and wander in the beautiful town of Tavira.

Arriving in Sagres harbor, we had a putative Spotted Sandpiper, spotted by a very enthusiastic British birder. In the rush, a quick look at it made us almost certain of that American species. However, later, checking with the Portuguese Rarities Committee, the decision was unanimous for a Common Sandpiper.

Anyway, we got outfitted, were given a quick briefing on the target seabirds, heard the skipper's instructions, and headed to the zodiac boat for our adventurous boat trip. The first quarter of the trip was unproductive bird-wise, but once we got further into the Atlantic Ocean, we started having Northern Gannets quite frequently. Our skipper started following seabird rafts, and, eventually, some Cory's and Balearic Shearwaters were spotted among the many Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. At least three Great Skuas joined us throughout the different stops we made. We made a longer stop using the chumming technique to attract Petrels, and, within a few minutes, European Storm-petrels joined us, and so did a few Wilson's Storm-petrels. On our way back, we spotted a group of Common Dolphins that we followed for a few moments. Reaching the harbor, we managed to see some Great Cormorants and a few European Shags perched on the isles. And, the cherry on top of the cake, was a first-winter Red-footed Booby sitting on a buoy. The bird was reported a few days before and has been closely followed ever since. It was the third record ever for Portugal!



The group and our guide António in the Zodiac boat for the pelagic in Sagres, by Elissa Fazio.

Before lunch, we drove to the famous Saint Vincent Cape for a few minutes of contemplation and a group photo. The minute we arrived at the restaurant for lunch, António spotted a group of Egyptian Vultures gliding over. Unfortunately, the birds flew too fast for everyone to see them up close.



Some members of the group with our NJ host, Elissa Fazio, at the Saint Vincent Cape in Sagres.

After the lunch break, we explored some fields in the Sagres Peninsula, looking for, among other species, the small community of Little Bustards. Unfortunately, we had no luck with those. But, we enjoyed a birding section that started with a Little Owl on a ruin, had a group of Red-billed Chough up close on the ground, and ended with a few birds flying around us, including Eurasian Skylarks and Eurasian Linnets.

The day was getting long, and the hotel was still far away. So, soon, we hit the road back to Tavira. Our last night in the Algarve was spent, once more, at the restaurant of the hotel.

Thu., Oct. 16: Mudflats near the Hotel | Woodpeckers!! | Transfer to Lisbon

On our final day of the trip, we spent the morning birding before the transfer to Lisbon. We started by visiting the mudflats near the hotel one last time. One of the species we wanted to try for was the Bluethroat. It took some persistence, but eventually we managed to see three of them. With that goal accomplished, it was time to give a second try to the woodpeckers. And so, we headed to the Pinewoods we had visited a few days ago. Just a few minutes in, we heard an Iberian Green Woodpecker. This time we had to get it! While approaching it, another species decided it was time to show up too - the Great Tit, finally. This common species was present in many of the locations we visited, but never close enough to be seen by the group. Now, we have finally gotten good sightings of it. We turned our focus to the woodpeckers again, and we heard a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Well, that was new too. Eventually, a second one joined us for a few minutes, allowing everyone to see both of them very well.

Finally, the Iberian Green Woodpecker, by Lou Taylor. →



Time was starting to run out quickly, and yet no Iberian Green Woodpecker. Until we started walking back to the vehicle, and one decided to perch just some feet away from us. At last, we were rewarded with a great sight of this beautiful woodpecker!

By the end of the afternoon, we reached Lisbon. After a final closing gathering where we shared some of the best moments and species, we headed for our final celebratory dinner as a group, in a nearby, local, family-owned restaurant. Many of us had early flights the next morning, so we said our goodbyes tonight.

Fri., Oct. 17: Departures

Our flock dispersed today, some of us catching flights home, while others stayed on to explore Portugal and beyond.