

# Autumn in the Balearic Islands

Mallorca is the largest of the Balearic Islands. It is situated 160 kilometres off the Spanish mainland and is a noted autumn migration hot-spot. The island has several species of interest, notably Eleonora's Falcon, Audouin's Gull and the endemic Balearic Warbler. Early October is an optimum time to visit and migrants may appear in large numbers. Our base is in the north-east of the island at Puerto Pollensa, giving easy access to the main birding sites.

■ Please note that it is possible to fly into Mallorca from several UK airports thus avoiding the London hubs.

**Day 1:** On arrival at Palma-de-Mallorca Airport we head westwards towards Saint Elm and Isla Dragonera. The island holds a substantial colony of Eleonora's Falcons numbering over 70 pairs, plus smaller numbers of the near-endemic Audouin's Gull. Sections of pine interspersed with rocky outcrops attract the Mallorcan race of Common Crossbill, Firecrest, Gull Bunting and Blue Rock Thrush. Later in the day we transfer to Puerto Pollensa, which is our base for the next seven nights.

**Days 2-7:** S'Albufera is probably the island's most famous birding area. Along the entrance track we should find roosting Black-crowned Night Herons, Western Cattle and Little Egrets. The extensive reedbeds are home to Purple Heron, Little Bittern, Western Marsh Harrier, Western Swamphen, Bluethroat, the skulking Moustached Warbler, Cetti's Warbler and the endangered endemic subspecies of Common Reed Bunting. Open waters often have increasing numbers of Marbled Duck, Gadwall, Red-crested Pochard and Red-knobbed Coot. Migrant shorebirds from further north are attracted to muddy sectors along with resident Black-winged Stilts. In the surrounding fields we may come across Eurasian Stone-curlew and migrating European Bee-eaters.

The Boquer Valley has rocky sides whilst the valley bottom has bushes and shrubs attracting migrants. Our main target is the endemic Balearic Warbler a skulking inhabitant of the valley. We may encounter various migrants in favourable wind conditions

## Dates

**TOUR A: Saturday October 2nd –**

**Saturday October 9th 2021**

**TOUR B: Saturday October 1st –**

**Saturday October 8th 2022**

Leader: Simon Papps

Group size: 8

Birds: 80–100

plus Rock Dove, Eurasian Hoopoe, Blue Rock Thrush, Eurasian Wryneck, Eurasian Crag Martin, Greater Short-toed Lark, Sardinian Warbler, European Serin, Gull Bunting and Northern Raven. Overhead there is a good possibility of Alpine Swift and Booted Eagle.

On one day an early start is needed as we head inland to Embalse de Cuber – a noted haunt of Cinereous and Griffon Vultures which regularly patrol the mountain sides. Other species we may encounter include Eleonora's and Peregrine Falcons and passerine migrants heading south. Pallid Swifts are often present overhead whilst Thekla Larks reside on the rocky hillsides. Around the reservoir we may encounter migrant passerines with recent visits producing Blackcap, Common and Iberian Chiffchaffs and European Reed Warbler. Cala San Vicente is another migration hot-spot where a check of trees and scrub can be productive for migrants.

The Formentor Peninsula is a beautiful area reached by a narrow and twisting road which eventually leads to a scenic view-



**Cinereous Vulture** *Photo: Simon Papps*

point overlooking the sea. The peninsula is famous for Eleonora's Falcons which prey on tired migrants at this time of the year. Offshore we may see Scopoli's and Balearic Shearwaters along with the Mediterranean race of European Shag. Casas Vellas is an area of fig and olive groves which attracts a wide range of migrants including Mediterranean, Spotted and Pied Flycatchers, Common Redstart, Common Crossbill and Firecrest. The Arta Peninsula is close by and this is another area for migrants which may include Western Osprey, Tawny Pipit and Thekla Lark.

Salinas de Levante are situated in the south of Mallorca. This area of salt pans is a premier site for waders. The southern sector is usually productive for Greater Flamingo, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Ruff, Kentish Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper and Little Stint. Further south the lighthouse allows seawatching opportunities for shearwaters and gulls which may include Audouin's Gull and passing Sandwich Terns and Great Skuas. The scrub around the lighthouse often hosts migrants with recent visits recording European Turtle Dove, Whinchat and Northern Wheatear

plus resident Eurasian Stone-curlews which form small flocks in October.

**Day 8:** Depending on flight times it may be possible to revisit areas around Puerto Pollensa. Most flights depart in the afternoon with arrival later in the day into the UK.

## Prices

Ground Price: £1595

Single room: £ No Charge

Deposit: £150

\*Air Fare: £150

This holiday is fully inclusive of accommodation, meals, transport and permit fees, guidance, tips and taxes.

**Not included:** drinks, insurance, baggage charges, seat upgrades and items of a personal nature.

\* Please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights