

ITINERARY

MOROCCO

September 6-21, 2021

Canary Islands Extension

September 20-26, 2021



The critically endangered Northern Bald Ibis, or Waldrapp, is one of the main targets of our tour. We've seen these fascinating birds very well on recent tours. Photograph by participant Myles McNally.

We include here information for those interested in the 2021 Field Guides Morocco tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

For those with a yen for something different, Morocco can't be beat. Although it lies just a short step across the Strait of Gibraltar from mainland Europe, the contrast with that continent is extraordinary. From the scenic Atlantic coast via the forested Atlas Mountains to the very edge of the great Sahara desert, Morocco is magnificent at any season. Blessed with the richest birdlife in northwest Africa, the country deservedly ranks as one of the Western Palearctic's truly great birding destinations. Specialties of the region include Eleonora's Falcon, Barbary Partridge, Double-spurred Francolin, Levillant's Woodpecker, Moussier's Redstart, African Desert and Tristram's warblers, African Blue Tit, Desert Sparrow, and the critically endangered Waldrapp (Northern Bald Ibis). For those with an interest in regional races and forms, this is an exciting area, too. In fact, a number of birds here may yet be elevated to full species—among them the distinctive forms of Long-legged Buzzard, Yellow and White wagtails, and Chaffinch.

Upon departing Casablanca, our tour begins near the capital of Rabat, where the coastal plain harbors Spotless Starling, Common Bulbul, European Stonechat, and Southern Gray Shrike (the dark *algeriensis* form) in open country. A chain of wetlands in the area form important stop-off points for many migratory shorebirds; these may be seen here alongside Marbled Teal, Western Swamphen, Red-knobbed Coot, and Yellow-legged and the localized Audouin's gulls. As we move inland, up into the Atlas Mountains, the marvelous scenery provides a splendid backdrop for a different set of birds, including distinctive subspecies of a number of typical Palearctic birds.



Dropping down to the east of the Atlas chain, we find ourselves on the edge of the world's largest desert—the Sahara. The rugged landscape of barren hills and stony desert (or *hamada*) is in stark contrast to the awesome beauty of the massive red sand dunes we shall see at Merzouga. Many sought-after birds are confined to the desert edge, and we'll make several excursions to search the area for Cream-colored Courser, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Fulvous Babbler, African Desert Warbler, and Trumpeter Finch, as well as many of the fourteen species of larks and seven species of wheatears that also occur in Morocco. A pelagic trip out of Agadir should provide a nice change of scenery as well as a few interesting seabirds, plus from Agadir we visit the Souss Massa in search of the Critically Endangered Northern Bald Ibis

(or Waldrapp), with just around 700 birds (est. 2019) in Morocco (nearly the entire world's population). Finally, we finish the tour in Marrakech with a visit above tree-line to Oukaimeden in search of crossbills and Hawfinch and both species of chough.

A long history of settlement by an array of different peoples, including the Moors and Berbers, as well as strong French and Spanish influences, has produced a country that not only has a wonderfully diverse birdlife but an exciting and varied culture, too. Morocco is not a wealthy country; hotels vary, but in the main they are good and come as a pleasant surprise to most visitors. This coupled with the country's often spectacular and ever-changing landscape, its distinctive Moorish cuisine, and a people noted for their traditions of hospitality and warmth, should make this a tour to remember!

Canary Island Extension. In 2021, we are running an extension to the Canary Islands. The extension may be taken as part of the Morocco tour or as a separate trip. The Canary Islands are an autonomous unit of Spain located off the southwest coast of Morocco. The archipelago consists of seven large volcanic islands (Tenerife is the largest) and many small islands and islets. The importance of the Canary Islands for birders is found in the five or six (depending on taxonomy) endemic species, along with several near endemics, and a host of endemic subspecies. Endemic species include Bolle's and Laurel pigeons, Tenerife and Gran Canaria blue chaffinches, Canary Islands Chiffchaff, and Fuerteventura Stonechat. Near endemics include Plain Swift, Berthelot's Pipit, and Canary, all of which are found only on the Canary Islands, Madeira, and the Azores. The list of endemic subspecies is extensive, but includes several curiosities like Houbara Bustard and Black-bellied Sandgrouse; certainly, many of these will be split in the not-so-distant future. Further, there are around 600 plants endemic to the Canary Islands! Our exploration of the Canary Islands will involve visiting four of the islands (Tenerife, La Gomera, Gran Canaria, and Fuerteventura) while targeting all the endemic and near endemic species, along with most of the important subspecies.

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (if you are getting a two-dose vaccine, this means you must receive your second dose two weeks prior to departure). Having a vaccinated group will greatly diminish but not eliminate the possibility of the group and individual participants being adversely affected by COVID-19. **We are requiring all of our staff guides to be vaccinated.** Note too that many travel destinations are or soon will be requiring proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Most walks are on flat ground, and are a mile or less. There is one long walk of about 5 miles into coastal sand dunes in the Agadir area, and another of about 2 miles on a moderately hilly trail at Oukaimeden. In the High Atlas Mountains, trails may be steep. **In the desert, walking is on flat ground, but during the heat of the day (sometimes) with potential high winds and sand.** We may walk through areas with rocks and thorny vegetation. On the Canary Islands extension, walks are generally about half a mile; trails are not very steep, but may be rough with stones and other obstacles.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** On the main tour, we will have a pelagic trip that lasts about 6 hours; on the extension, we'll be travelling from island to island by ferry and short flights. Smoking is not allowed in the van; however, Moroccans are allowed to smoke in most public places, and while we will try to avoid this as much as possible, we will not be able to completely avoid cigarette smoke. In the Sahara, we'll travel in 4WD land-rovers, and the roads may be rough and dusty.
- **PACE:** We'll have early starts, usually by about 6 am. In general, the days are long; starting early and ending at dusk with a few night options. Stamina is key on this tour.
- **ELEVATION:** We will reach a maximum elevation of about 8500 feet on this tour on one day only.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will vary depending on location, from 62-80 F in the northern coastal areas, to hot in the Sahara with highs reaching a possible 125 F. The high plains can be rather cold and windy. Rain and possible sandstorms may occur, again depending on location. In the Canary Islands, temps should range from highs in the low 80s, to lows in the upper 60s F.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions. **YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO SHARE A SEAT FOR SOME PART OF THE MOROCCO TOUR AND BE IN A MIDDLE SEAT FOR SHORTER DRIVES ON THE CANARY ISLANDS EXTENSION.**
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use indoor restrooms, but even these can be quite primitive by modern standards, and they are not always clean (mainly on the Morocco tour, but this has gotten better over the years). On occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

In some areas where we need to be out early in order to find special birds, we may have a few simple picnic breakfasts of sweet bread and fruit with instant coffee prepared with hot water (you may want to bring your own tea bags if you have a preference). Moroccans generally have simple breakfasts (Continental-style), so we will try to supplement where possible or have a mid-morning snack. Dinners and most lunches will always be at our hotel (usually buffet).

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with Jesse.

Itinerary for Morocco

Day 1, Mon, 6 Sep. Departure from the US. Participants joining the tour from the US will need to leave today in order to arrive in Casablanca on Tuesday, September 7.

NOTE: If you would like to have time for cultural sites in Casablanca, like a visit to Rick's Café or the Hassan II Tower and Mosque (one of the largest and most beautiful mosques in the world), then it would be best to arrive a day early and overnight in Casablanca. Our office will be happy to make arrangements for you. If you prefer to arrive early and stay at an airport hotel we can recommend a hotel for you near the airport as well.

Day 2, Tue, 7 Sep. Casablanca to Skhirat. Those arriving a day early will rendezvous in the hotel reception at 1 p.m., and we'll drive to our hotel in Skhirat (around an hour and 30 minutes) with a stop at the airport to collect folks arriving today. Those arriving today should plan their arrival no later than 11:45 a.m. We will enjoy some afternoon shorebirding on the beach if the tide is in our favor. Night at La Kasbah, Skhirat.



*The colorful Levallant's Woodpecker is near-endemic to Morocco, so we'll make an effort to find this regional specialty.
Photograph by participant Myles McNally.*

Day 3, Wed, 8 Sep. Rabat area and Lac du Sidi Bourhaba. NOTE: We may switch Day 3 and 4 depending on the day of the week our outing to Loukus River begins; we want to avoid market day at Moulay Bouselham. After an early breakfast in the hotel we will depart around 6:00 a.m. Our early start will give us the best chance for finding one of Morocco's rarest inhabitants—the Double-spurred Francolin. This rare, elusive gamebird (the Moroccan subspecies is quite distinct from those in tropical West Africa) is now confined solely to Zaers, an area of scrubby hill forest that lies about an hour's drive from Rabat. Here, its dwindling population was "guess-timated" way back in 1988 to be "at most a few hundred birds." It has almost certainly decreased further since then. We would be extremely lucky to spot one, but it has happened on a couple of our trips. As we search for francolin, we may be lucky with other birds such as Barbary Partridge, Black-shouldered and Black kites, Short-toed Eagle, Common Wood-Pigeon, Stock Pigeon, Wood Lark, Spotted and Eurasian Pied flycatchers, European Greenfinch, Great and African Blue tits, Black-crowned Tchagra, and Eurasian Jay.

After lunch, we will drive to Lac de Sidi Bourhaba. The narrow, ribbon-like shape of this shallow freshwater lake makes it a good spot to observe waterfowl, especially Great Crested Grebe and dabbling ducks such as Northern Shoveler, Mallard, and Common Teal, while Common and Ferruginous pochards and Marbled Teal are among the scarcer species sometimes to be seen. Raptors such as Western Marsh-Harrier, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, and Eurasian Hobby patrol the wooded rim of the lake, and the rare Eleonora's Falcon is occasionally found hawking overhead—eyes to the sky! We will return to Skhirat in the late afternoon. Night at La Kasbah, Skhirat.

Day 4, Thu, 9 Sep. Loukus River and Moulay Bouselham. Another 5:30 am breakfast and 6 am departure. We will drive 2h 30m Moulay Bouselham for a chance at Marsh Owl. Afterwards, we stop at Loukus River near Larache. This can potentially be very good birding for marsh birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. We may find good numbers of Eurasian Spoonbills or Glossy Ibis. This is also a site for Marbled Duck. We will lunch near Larache and check out the gull action. We will return to the hotel in the late afternoon. Night in Skhirat.

Day 5, Fri, 10 Sep. Rabat to the Middle Atlas. Today we leave the coast and head due east, driving inland across a landscape of wide, rolling agricultural plains towards Fez. From there, the road begins to climb up into the beautiful

Middle Atlas range, where we shall spend the night at a hotel in Ifrane. Along the way we may encounter such species as Booted Eagle and Thekla Lark, while birding in the oak forest of El Jabaa may reveal Great Spotted Woodpecker, European Robin, Mistle Thrush, Eurasian Blackbird, Firecrest, Coal Tit, Eurasian Nuthatch, and Short-toed Treecreeper. The Seebohm's form of Northern Wheatear, which may itself be given specific status, can be found in the area. Night at Perce Neuge, Ifrane.



Double-spurred Francolin is a rare sight in Morocco due to hunting pressure and habitat loss, but we'll try to find them at Zaers, a forested area near Rabat. We've had good luck on recent tours. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Day 6, Sat, 11 Sep. Ifrane to Midelt. Situated at an elevation of around 5000 feet, the area north of Ifrane is known as the Lakes Region (though completely dry in 2018 & 2019). Actually, it comprises a varied cross section of birdy habitats including oak and cedar woodlands and high stony plateaus (or “causes”), as well as many seasonal lakes. We'll be looking for any of the species that we missed yesterday, and in particular for the lovely Moussier's Redstart—a northwest African endemic, the dazzling males are a real delight, unmistakable in their black, white, and rosehip-red dress. If we haven't been successful earlier in the tour, we have further chances today to search for Levaillant's Woodpecker. On the whole, Morocco is not noted for its large mammals, but Barbary Ape (the only primate in North Africa) is locally common here.

Later, we will drive south from Ifrane and as we descend from the mountains and the countryside becomes increasingly arid, we'll look out for Black and Red-rumped wheatears, arriving at Midelt in the late afternoon. Night at Taddart, Midelt.

Day 7, Sun, 12 Sep. Midelt to Merzouga. If necessary (depending on previous evening success), we'll make a very early start this morning, aiming to travel out from our hotel at Midelt to arrive at the barren, high plains near Zeida before daybreak. Set at an elevation of just under 5000 feet, it will likely be chilly or even cold here first thing. But it's only as the sun begins to rise that we have a real chance to try and locate the object of our desire, the secretive Dupont's Lark. With its tell-tale “rusty swing” song ceasing immediately after sunrise, this lark remains one of the most difficult of all Palearctic birds to see—though quite how they manage to conceal themselves so successfully behind the scant, low scrub seems positively baffling!

Having returned to our hotel in Midelt for breakfast, we'll then continue our journey south, passing through increasingly stark mountain scenery where we'll make a special stop to search a scrubby valley for Tristram's Warbler—yet another very localized bird. We'll then drop down into the surprisingly lush valley of the Ziz, before approaching the edge-of-desert town of Erfoud, where we may well spot our first White-tailed Wheatears, a characteristic bird of the desert wadis and oasis villages. We will lunch on the way and afterwards make a short detour to look for Scrub Warbler near Goulmima.

Our destination this evening is the base of the large dune system, Erg Chebbi, the western most extension of the Sahara, located near the town of Merzouga. Night in Merzouga.

Day 8, Mon, 13 Sep. The edge of the Sahara; Merzouga. Our journey into the Sahara desert today promises to be one of the highlights of the tour. We'll want to start early, setting off by 4WD land rover vehicles, so as to be birding before the heat starts to build. One of our first targets will be to find Greater Hoopoe-Lark, and with luck we may see their extraordinary display flights, often performed just after dawn. We'll also be on the lookout for Cream-colored Courser, Bar-tailed Lark, and the elusive African Desert Warbler. Our ultimate goal is a scattered desert settlement that stands in the lee of an island of towering red sand dunes, Erg Chebbi. The largest and most spectacular dune system in all Morocco, Erg Chebbi has been the setting for many desert movies and is home to many classic desert birds. We'll be hoping to see Brown-necked Raven and that most reclusive of desert dwellers, the handsome Desert Sparrow. If we are fortunate, a pair or two will be here for us to enjoy as we sip a glass of fresh mint tea at the local cafe.

After returning to the hotel for lunch, we'll take a longer break (bring those swimming suits) and set out again in the late afternoon. This will be a long day (with a late dinner). Night in Merzouga.



The lovely Cream-colored Courser is a desert-dwelling relative of the shorebirds. We'll look for these birds on the edge of the Sahara near Boulmane Dades. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Day 9, Tue, 14 Sep. Auberge Derkaoua to Boulmane Dades. Our route west from Erfoud is marked by a string of ancient earth-walled villages and alluring palm-fringed oases. Colorful European and Blue-cheeked bee-eaters are among many roadside birds to watch for as we pass. Beyond the settlement of Jorf, long lines of six-foot-high earthen "volcanoes" (locally called *khettara*) march across the scrubby desert to create a bizarre, almost lunar landscape. In fact, they are nothing more sinister than an ancient and highly ingenious system of underground irrigation wells, one that's virtually unique in the world. As we pause for the obligatory photo-op here, Desert Wheatear, Southern Gray Shrike (the pale desert form, *elegans*), and the odd passerine migrant are possible.

We'll continue on toward Tinejdad (lunch nearby) and in the late afternoon we'll arrive at the small town of Boulmane Dades, which will be our base for the next two nights. Night in Boulmane Des Dades.

Day 10, Wed, 15 Sep. The Tagdilt track. We'll want be out early today to come to grips with one of Morocco's most productive areas of *hamada*, or stony desert, known simply to birdwatchers as the "Tagdilt track." By doing a mix of both driving and walking, we'll investigate this high arid plain for several of Morocco's elusive larks: Desert, Thekla, Greater and Lesser short-toed, Temminck's, and the bruising Thick-billed. Desert Wheatears are common, and we may even be treated to a Red-rumped Wheatear's classic rendition of a kettle coming to the boil! Mammals are generally scarce on the barren plateau, but the Fat Sand Rat (yep, that's really its name!) is common and a major prey item of the resident Long-legged Buzzards. In the afternoon we will drive up the Dades Gorge for striking views and impressive geology along with the chance of finding Bonelli's Eagle. Night in Boulmane Des Dades.

Day 11, Thu, 16 Sep. Boulmane Dades to Agadir. A very long day. We will check out early and begin our long drive to Agadir. We will make a stop briefly to see Ait-Benhaddou (largest active csar in Morocco). From lunch onward it is pretty much a straight shot towards Agadir, but always scanning and watching for sandgrouse or Barbary Falcon. We expect to arrive to our hotel in Agadir around 6 pm. (In the case that everything goes as planned, we may make an attempt to visit the Oued Massa this evening for Northern Bald Ibis. If so, then after check-in to our hotel, we will depart quickly and drive 45m to 1-hour south of Agadir along the coast. We will not return until 9 pm or so.) Night in Agadir.

Day 12, Fri, 17 Sep. Oued Massa and Oued Souss. We will leave early (circa 5:30 a.m.) and drive to Oued Massa, about an hour to the south of Agadir, where we will have a picnic breakfast. This shallow, reed-fringed waterway and the surrounding bushland can be excellent for resting migrants, but there're also several very localized resident birds here, including Barbary Partridge, Laughing Dove (a relative newcomer to Morocco), and the secretive Black-crowned Tchagra, whose curious fluting whistles betray its skulking presence. Another special resident is the delicate Plain Martin, which hawks insects over the baked-mud houses, date palms, and fig trees that are so characteristic of the villages in this part of Morocco. However, the target of today's birding is the rare Waldrapp or Northern Bald Ibis. We will spend the morning birding here and searching out the bald ibis and anything else of interest and then return to Agadir for lunch. In the late afternoon and evening we will bird the Oued Souss in Agadir for shorebirds and a few possible night birds. Night in Agadir.

Day 13, Sat, 18 Sep. Agadir Pelagic trip. As always with boat trips, we never know what we'll find offshore. Sea conditions vary, but we will keep our eyes open for Cory's Shearwaters, Northern Gannet, jaegers, and skuas. September is a good time to find migrant seabirds and is also a time when young of the year from nearby seabird colonies may appear. Sizable seabird colonies exist not so far from the Moroccan coast, and with some luck we might stumble across Little or Balearic shearwaters. Yet other sought after species are possible, and with bird-rich waters nearby, there ought to be some birds to see (maybe even a whale or two). We'll keep our fingers crossed and our eyes peeled. Generally, the pelagic lasts from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. We'll travel about maybe 10-15 km from shore. Lunch is on board and upon returning to the dock, we will head to Marrakech (about a 3-hour drive) and get checked into our next hotel. Night in Marrakech.



Balearic Shearwater is a critically endangered seabird that can be found in the waters off the coast of Morocco. We'll watch for these and other pelagic species on a trip out from Agadir. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Day 14, Sun, 19 Sep. The High Atlas. We'll hope for good weather today as we conclude our tour with a full day's birding in the High Atlas Mountains. A winding alpine road climbs south from Marrakech to reach the upland meadows at

Oukaimeden, a winter ski resort. At an elevation of some 8500 feet and with the towering peak of Jebel Toubkal (13,500 feet) as a backdrop, this will quite literally be the high spot of our trip. If the weather is clear, the birding up here can be every bit as exhilarating as the crisp mountain air, with White-throated Dipper, Blue and Rufous-tailed rock-thrushes, Red-billed and Yellow-billed choughs, Eurasian Linnet, Crimson-winged Finch (rare), and Rock Bunting among those we shall be looking for today. Night in Marrakech.

Day 15, Mon, 20 Sep. Departure. We will leave the hotel mid-morning for our two-and-a-half-hour drive to Casablanca to meet international flights and thereby avoid the possibility of cancellations if we were using local domestic carriers. **DO NOT BOOK A DEPARTURE FOR EARLIER THAN NOON (12 PM).** If an overnight is necessary (or preferable), our office will be happy to assist you with arrangements.

Day 16, Tue, 21 Sep. Arrival home.



One of many lark species we'll watch for is Thekla's Lark, which is similar to another common species, the Crested Lark. We'll get practice in separating the two species on the tour. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Financial Information

FEE: \$4575 from Casablanca

DEPOSIT: \$450 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: May 9, 2021

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional*): \$425 (Singles are limited during our stay in Merzouga.)

LIMIT: 10

Special Note: Tour fees may be subject to change due to the global economic effects of COVID-19.

We have published the itinerary and price for this tour with the understanding that during these uncertain times we are likely to encounter unforeseen changes. Some of our tours may incur higher costs due to increases in currency exchange rate fluctuations or COVID-19 related fees imposed by countries and/or suppliers. Travel and hospitality companies all over the world have been adversely affected by the pandemic, and there is no guarantee that all of the lodging and transportation we have booked for this tour will still be available at the time of departure. We hope to maintain our services as indicated in our itinerary as well as our published tour fee. However, if changes are required we will make every effort to maintain the quality of the itinerary as it is published with the most appropriate substitutions available. Should any necessary changes or other unforeseen causes result in an increase in service rates to us, we reserve the right to pass on those increases in fees to the tour participant.



The Tenerife Blue Chaffinch is endemic to the island of Tenerife; there is another blue chaffinch endemic to the island of Gran Canaria. We'll seek both species when we visit these interesting islands. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Itinerary for Canary Islands Extension

Day 1, Mon, 20 Sep. Arrival in Tenerife. Today will be a long travel day for most, unless you are joining the extension from the Morocco tour or another European city. Please plan to arrive in Tenerife (the Tenerife South Airport is the most convenient to our hotel, and the airport code is TFS) on or before September 20. Hotel accommodations and dinner are covered on the night of September 20, and dinner will be at your leisure. Please contact your tour manager if you would like more information. Upon arrival at the hotel in Tenerife, please check for a message from the leader regarding the meeting time for breakfast on September 21, our first meal together as a group. Night on Tenerife.

Day 2, Tue, 21 Sep. Birding on Tenerife. We will visit the Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*) woodland within the Corona Forestal Nature Reserve to find Tenerife Blue Chaffinch (*Fringilla teydea*). Also, this day we will visit Teide National Park and the Teide Volcano, the highest mountain in Spain (at 3,718 meters, but it's rather a stretch considering we are not on the mainland!). We will finish the day along the southern coastline and visit several more wetlands and drylands. Other birds we will have a chance of seeing include the local variety of Common Buzzard (subsp. *insularum*), Eurasian Kestrel (*canariensis*), Southern Gray Shrike (*koenigi*), Eurasian Blue Tit (*teneriffae*), Berthelot's Pipit (*berthelotii*), and Plain Swift. Night on Tenerife.

Day 3, Wed, 22 Sep. Tenerife to La Gomera. We will take the earliest ferry available from Los Cristianos (Tenerife) to San Sebastián de La Gomera. During the crossing, we have chances of seeing several species of seabirds like Cory's Shearwater and the Atlantic version of the Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis atlantis*). We will be searching especially for Barolo (Macaronesian) Shearwater. Another possibility is to spot some marine mammals like Short-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) or other species of dolphins. La Gomera is a beautiful green island. We will drive to the laurel forest, as this is the habitat of the Laurel Pigeon (*Columba junoniae*) and Bolle's Pigeon (*Columba bollii*). Other species that we might see include the local subspecies of Eurasian Sparrowhawk (*granti*), Goldcrest (*teneriffae*) and Common Chaffinch (*canariensis*). In the afternoon, we will take the ferry back to Tenerife. Night on Tenerife.

Day 4, Thu, 23 Sep. Tenerife to Gran Canaria. We will take an early flight to Gran Canaria and visit the Nature Reserve of Inagua. Here we will look for the endemic Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch (*Fringilla polatzeki*) within the Canary Island Pine forest. Other species that we will possibly encounter include Canary (*Serinus canarius*) and Great Spotted Woodpecker (*thanneri*). In the afternoon we will take a flight to Fuerteventura. After collecting the van at the airport we will make our way to the hotel. Night on Fuerteventura.



The Canary Islands are home to a number of endemic species; for example, the island of La Gomera, seen here from our 2018 tour, has two endemic pigeons and a number of endemic subspecies of other birds. Photograph by guide Jesse Fagan.

Day 5, Fri, 24 Sep. Fuerteventura. The island of Fuerteventura is the only place on earth where you can see Fuerteventura Stonechat (*Saxicola dacotiae*). Fuerteventura is also very good for the observation of desert birds like Houbara Bustard (*fuertaventurae*), Cream-colored Coarser (*exul*), Stone Curlew (*insularum*), Black-bellied Sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) and Trumpeter Finch (*amantum*). Furthermore, there is a good population of the local subspecies of Egyptian Vulture (*majorensis*) and Raven (*canariensis*). The Eurasian Kestrel (*dacotiae*) and Eurasian Blue Tit (*ultramarinus*) belong to a different subspecies than those present on Tenerife and La Gomera. In addition to the birds, we will have a chance to see Barbary Ground Squirrel (*Atlantoxerus getulus*). We will spend one morning birding in the semi-desert of Tindaya and we will spend the remaining afternoon searching for other avian specialties. Night on Fuerteventura.

Day 6, Sat, 25 Sep. Fuerteventura. We'll spend the morning birding the island of Fuerteventura, cleaning up on any misses. We will have plenty of time left after birding to pack up and prepare for flights tomorrow. Night on Fuerteventura.

Day 7, Sun, 26 Sep. Departure Day. Feel free to schedule your departure from Fuerteventura for anytime today.

NOTE: Because we will be hopping from island to island on the extension, it is important to come to the tour with a relaxed attitude, as flights and ferry schedules change regularly. The guide will do his best to shield you from as much of the stress as possible and show you all the fascinating endemics of the islands.

Financial Information: Canary Islands Extension

FEE: \$2850 from Tenerife

DEPOSIT: \$450 per person (If taken without the Morocco 2021 tour)

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: May 9, 2021

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional*): \$300

LIMIT: 6

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over the world have been adversely affected by the pandemic, and there is no guarantee that all of the lodging and transportation we have booked for this tour will still be available at the time of departure. We hope to maintain our services as indicated in our itinerary as well as our published tour fee. However, if changes are required we will make every effort to maintain the quality of the itinerary as it is published with the most appropriate substitutions available. Should any necessary changes or other unforeseen causes result in an increase in service rates to us, we reserve the right to pass on those increases in fees to the tour participant.

About Your Guides

Jesse Fagan (a.k.a. the Motmot or just “Mot”) has been passionate about birds since his teens, when he had an encounter with a flying Pileated Woodpecker. He has birded throughout the United States, including spending seven years in Texas, and since 1995 has been birding and for a time living in northern Central America. He is a co-author of the recently published [*Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America*](#) (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), a field guide to the region which includes the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Belize.

In addition, Mot has birded in or led tours to Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, France, Morocco, and Madagascar. He also enjoys leading many of the Field Guides tours in the Caribbean. He likes to think he can bird anywhere at any time and still show you the birds, but most importantly, a good time. Jesse holds a B.S. and an M.S. in mathematics from Texas Tech University. He is currently living in Lima, Peru.

“Jesse is a fantastic guide. He really knows calls, infinitely patient in getting everyone on the difficult birds, fun to be with.” L. F. Colombia: Bogota, the Magdalena Valley, and Santa Marta.

We will have a **local driver/translator** with us during the Morocco tour. During the Canary Island extension we will have a local driver on La Gomera and Gran Canaria, and your leader(S) will drive during our time on Fuerteventura and Tenerife.

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

A NOTE ON ALTITUDE: Please note that we will reach a maximum elevation of about 8500 feet on this tour (on one day only). We will take it easy, but you should be well aware of the symptoms of altitude sickness and consult your physician regarding your own preparation for such elevations.

DOCUMENTS: A **passport** valid for six months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Morocco and Spain (Canary Islands). We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. You will be issued a **tourist card** upon arrival in Morocco; please keep this in your passport, in a safe place, as you will need the tourist card to depart Morocco.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Moroccan consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

As noted above, all participants and your Field Guides guide(s) will be required to have completed a full course of vaccination at least two weeks prior to the tour. Be sure to share proof of such vaccination with our office and bring a physical copy of your vaccination proof on tour.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: If possible, we recommend coming in a day early to adjust to the time change and collect any luggage that may have been delayed. **On the final day of the main tour, do not book a departure flight earlier than noon (12PM) from Casablanca.** Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to

purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees. **Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

LUGGAGE: Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase/duffel per person and a carry-on (there are several opportunities for laundry on this tour). Also, be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$4575 for one person in double occupancy* from Casablanca. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 14, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 15, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to Casablanca, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$425. (Singles are limited during our stay in Merzouga and some participants may have to share a room.) Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

*If you have a trusted friend, relative, or significant other with whom you wish to share a room on tour, please let us know and your tour manager will make that assignment. However, due to recommendations from the CDC, Field Guides is not currently pairing roommates who do not know each other, and the single supplement will apply if you do not have a roommate. As of this writing (April 5, 2021) we are reviewing these CDC recommendations carefully and often and will let you know if that changes.

The **Canary Island Extension** fee is \$2850 for one person in double occupancy* from Tenerife. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 6, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 7, all ground transportation, entrance fees, ferries, internal flights and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to Tenerife and from Fuerteventura, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, lunch on September 21, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the extension is \$300. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

*If you have a trusted friend, relative, or significant other with whom you wish to share a room on tour, please let us know and your tour manager will make that assignment. However, due to recommendations from the CDC, Field Guides is not currently pairing roommates who do not know each other, and the single supplement will apply if you do not have a roommate. As of this writing (April 5, 2021) we are reviewing these CDC recommendations carefully and often and will let you know if that changes.

TOUR LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please [contact our office](#). Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$450** per person, or see our Payment Options at <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/>. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by May 9, 2021**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Please note that if you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will require **proof of travel insurance**. Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

Field Guides reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. If you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will **require proof of travel insurance**. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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