

Socotra

2024 Tour Leaflet



Socotra Golden-winged Grosbeak © Michael Mills

19 – 26 March 2024

Socotra 2024



AFRICA IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- More than 10 endemic birds
- Fascinating landscapes
- Unusual plant life

Socotra Sunbird © Michael Mills



TOUR LEADER: MICHAEL MILLS



Michael's incredible focus, dedication and ability to locate and show Africa's toughest birds is probably unequalled on the continent. He has led dozens of tours across Africa and his experience in locating birds on just the softest of calls or briefest of views impresses those who travelled with him.

DATES (PRELIMINARY)

2024	19 – 26 March
2026	17 – 24 March

PRICE

Per person sharing	TBA
Single supplement	TBA

***Includes ground costs. Budget USD 1000 for the flight from Abu Dhabi to Socotra.**

BOOK ONLINE

Visit www.birdingafrica.com
Deposit (\$150) by credit card
Email info@birdingafrica.com



Socotra Scops Owl © Michael Mills

The iconic island of Socotra is a bucket-list destination for many nature and outdoor enthusiasts. With more than 10 endemic birds on offer, the island is of special interest to birders—although it is impressive landscapes and unusual plant life that are the main draw-card. Join our week-long tour to sample the delights of Socotra.

Although this tour has a strong bird focus, the relatively low avian diversity means that

there is plenty of time to look at the other interesting animal- and plant-life. The scenery is spectacular too, and there will be good chances for photography.

The tour is timed to coincide with the peak time for wildlife; spring, and the end of the rains. The weather will vary from warm to hot along the coast, to cooler in the highlands, with some rain expected.

ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

We will stay in the same hotel each night of the tour, and do day trips to various parts of the island. Accommodation is of international standard, with private ablutions and air conditioning.

Meals are more basic, with a strong seafood component. Please advise if you are vegetarian and what foods you enjoy, so that we can cater for you.

Water is not safe to drink so we supply complimentary bottled water.

WALKING AND FITNESS

These tours require a moderate degree of fitness. Most walks will be easy and last no more than three hours. In some areas the terrain is steeper and rockier. Please note that we will be taking one pelagic trip, weather permitting.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum 9 participants.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

There is only one flight per week to Socotra that doesn't go through war-torn Yemen, and that is a weekly flight from Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. You should arrive in Abu Dhabi by the night before this flight, and can depart from the night of the return flight.

Please note that the exact tour dates are currently preliminary, as they are linked to these weekly flights, and the firm dates for the flights will only be confirmed closer to the time.

Please email michael@birdingafrica.com a copy of your proposed flight details for approval before paying for your tickets.



Spectacular plants and landscapes of Socotra © Michael Mills

TOUR OUTLINE

This 8-day tour, including the travel days from and to Abu Dhabi, gives us a full six days to explore Socotra and surrounds. One day will be dedicated to a pelagic trip, during which we will search for Persian Shearwater and Jouanin Petrel. Other seabirds on offer include Masked Booby and Brown Noddy. Coastal birds include a variety of gulls and terns, including Sooty Gull, and Socotra Cormorant.

The remaining five days will be spent on land, without a set itinerary but with the aim of finding all breeding landbirds, including all the endemics.

We'll visit the highlands of the interior specifically for the scarce endemic Socotra Bunting and Socotra Starling, both most numerous here. Overhead we'll be watching for Socotra Buzzard.

The remaining endemics can be found at lower altitudes. Of these, Socotra Cisticola is the most localised, mostly found in patches of salt bush along the coast. Socotra Scops Owl occurs in wooded areas, especially palm groves. Socotra Golden-winged Grosbeak prefers rocky mountain sides, whereas Socotra White-eye, Socotra Grey Shrike and Socotra Warbler can be found almost

anywhere there is denser vegetation. Socotra Sparrow is ubiquitous. We'll visit Wadi Ayhaft National Park and various other sites in search of these.

Several non-endemic landbirds occur too, many represented by endemic subspecies. Most important of these are Forbes-Watson's Swift and Somali Starling. There is also an incredibly healthy population of Egyptian Vultures, who will join us for most of our field lunches. Arid areas along the coast hold Black-crowned Sparrowlark, Cream-coloured Courser, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse and, after dark, Nubian Nightjar (scarce). Long-billed Pipit occurs throughout.

The steep mountains of the island give rise to numerous rivers that end in coastal wetlands, many of which should hold water during our visit. These can be productive for migrant waterbirds, including a variety of ducks, herons and waders. African rarities such as Yellow Bittern and Indian Pond Heron may be found too. Palm groves along the rivers hold small numbers of White-browed Coucal, and Bruce's Green Pigeon prefers the better-wooded valleys.



INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE

- services of Birding Africa tour leader and local guides
- entry fees and activities as per itinerary
- ground transport on Socotra
- accommodation and all meals starting with dinner on the first night and ending with lunch on the last day
- bottled water in the vehicle where not potable, and one soft drink per meal
- general tips

QUESTIONS?

Please email the office, info@birdingafrica.com, to reserve a place or ask questions (you can also cc michael@birdingafrica.com and callan@birdingafrica.com who are both involved in the planning of this tour).

BOOKLET AND CHECKLIST

Birding Africa provides:

1. this tour leaflet with detailed itinerary
2. the tour information pack, emailed to you
3. the tour booklet with checklists, on the tour

HOW TO BOOK

1. Complete our easy online booking form.
2. Secure your booking deposit by credit card on our 3D secure online payment site (\$150).
3. Settle the balance by bank transfer 150 days before the tour. We will email you a reminder and the banking details.

