

# Sunday Interview

By **Mumphrey Carter**

PHOTOGRAPHS:

SEBASTIA TORRENS

**B**ETWEEN 25,000 and 30,000 bird-watchers from all over Europe, but in particular Britain, come to Majorca every year and five local ornithological experts have recently published the ultimate guide for bird watchers in English.

The "Birding Tourist's Guide Majorca" is a private initiative which has been put together by Mates Rebas, Josep Manchado, Jose Luis Martinez, the excellent photographer Sebastia Torrens and M. Carmen Oriola, who are all members of the Balearic environmental group GOB, and translated by British ornithologists Nick and Elizabeth Riddford.

The full colour publication which is available from major book stores in Palma or on line goes a long way towards plugging a current hole because it provides the

■ **THE colourful Bee-Eater is just one of over 200 species of bird which can be spotted here in Majorca.**

ever growing band of bird-watching enthusiasts - not just holiday-makers from Britain, Germany, Scandinavia, Holland and elsewhere but also local watchers and those from mainland Spain - with a guide to making the most of their bird-watching in Majorca.

The guide, which has been published with the full support of the Balearic Ministry for Tourism, details what birds can be seen on the island throughout the year and the best localities in which to seek them out.

The guide, which is full of excellent photographs features 17 key bird-watching sites and 26 routes, some to be covered on foot and others by car, through all the habitats the island has to offer. It also goes in to detail about the terrain, the fauna and flora.

Josep Manchado told the *Bulletin* this week that Majorca "is like a giant aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean on which birds from Northern Europe and Africa land at various times of the year."

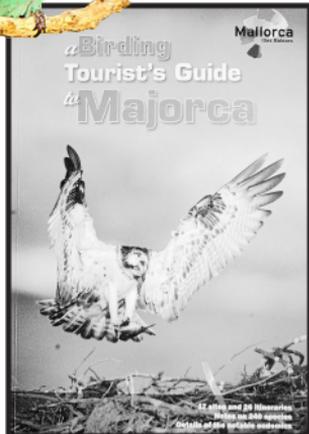
## RICH IN BIRD LIFE

"People sometimes find it hard to believe just how rich the island's bird life is," he added.

The guide includes detailed information on more than 240 species of birds (their local status, when they occur, their levels of abundance, the best sites in which to see them, supporting details on behaviour, etc.), which is further summarised in a series of check-lists.

But, what is particularly interesting and helpful is that the book also incorporates a clear, easy to follow map for each itinerary, backed up by GPS coordinates of the start point, and tables indicating the most emblematic and typical species to be found at each locality.

It also has a section dedicated to "does and don'ts" - a



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code of conduct for bird-watchers during their stay in Majorca and offers additional tourism information for each of the sites selected (tourist information offices, recommendations, points of interest, contact numbers and addresses for organisations providing necessary or useful services, facilities or help, etc.).

In short, it is the complete guide for any bird-watcher coming to Majorca and features routes and sites all over



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■ **THE five authors of the book: Mates Rebas, Josep Manchado, Sebastia Torrens, M. Carmen Oriola and Jose Luis Martinez.**

# WIN A COPY OF A NEW BOOK IN ENGLISH ABOUT BIRD WATCHING IN MAJORCA



■ **THREE Greater Flamingos and the famous Black Vulture.**

the island from the coast to the very peaks of the Tramuntana mountains.

But, apart from publishing the book in English to help the tens of thousands of foreign bird-watchers which flock to the island every year, Manchado believes that it is going to increase the number of bird-watchers and help promote the island further as one of the most exciting places in Europe to watch birds.

## ROBIN

"It's an all year activity and there are a number of hotels, especially in the north east of the island near the world famous Albufera Natural Park, which cater especially for bird-watcher during the low season," Manchado said.

"What is more, bird-watchers invest a vast amount of money in their equipment, their telescopes and cameras etc. and need to move about the island so they are relatively big spenders.

"The other advantage of Majorca is that it has so many attractions for the family, if they are not all inter-

ested in bird-watching. The ornithologists can head off bird-watching while the rest of the family can enjoy themselves too," he added.

The Albufera Natural Park is possibly the most extensive and bird-rich wetland to be found on any Mediterranean island and is regularly used by biologists from Britain's main universities, in particular Oxford.

But, Manchado explained that Majorca is attracting both more bird-watchers and birds.

"The changing climate has led to a number of birds which would migrate to Majorca staying and beginning to breed here.

"For example, the Robin was a regular visitor from its breeding grounds in Northern Europe but we've noticed that Robins are now beginning to breed here.

"The same goes for the Hoopoe from Africa and more recently the Little Egret, also from Africa.

"Everybody recognises the Egret because they are the white birds which travel around on the backs of cattle and buffaloes in the wildlife documentaries picking off the parasites.

"Well, they've begun breeding in Majorca and you can

see them on the backs of the sheep," Manchado explained.

"The small Parakeet parrots have also begun breeding in parts of Palma and Manchado explained that that, along with the fact the city is cleaner, has led to the disappearance of all the swallows which used to descend on the capital," he added.

## WIN A COPY

The new guide is going to be used by the Ministry for Tourism to promote the island as a bird-watching destination at the various travel trade fairs this year but the *Bulletin* has three copies to give away to the three first correct answers received by email at [editorial@majorca-dailybulletin.es](mailto:editorial@majorca-dailybulletin.es) to this simple question.

Which red-breasted bird from Northern Europe is starting to breed here in Majorca?

For further information about the book visit: [www.birdingmajorca.com](http://www.birdingmajorca.com) which is in English and Spanish.

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