



Wings, Wine, & Wonders of SICILY

22 September–4 October 2013

We first visited Sicily in 2007 and were at once mesmerized by island's rugged beauty. After multiple trips, we have since fallen in love with a Sicily that most of the world has yet to experience. Inhabiting this spectacular landscape is one of the most diverse peoples on the planet, and reflected in the island's dynamic history is a culture that is uniquely Sicilian. The warm, inviting hospitality; the incredible Mediterranean seafood; the endemic island wines; and the fascinating archaeological wonders; all of these contribute to an experience that is truly magical. We are excited to introduce you to the Sicilian people, combined with Sicily's geographical position as a hub for migratory birds, to offer you an adventure you will remember forever. We look forward to seeing you in Sicily this fall!



Your host and lead guide, Stephen Shunk

TOUR SUMMARY

What follows are a basic summary and itinerary for our adventure to Sicily in September 2013. Once we have received your registration materials, we will send you more detailed descriptions of the activities and necessary preparations for the trip. It is important to note that birding is only part of the tour, and we will spend plenty of time eating, drinking, shopping, sightseeing, etc., to enjoy the full Sicilian experience. The pace will be relatively slow, although there will be plenty of opportunities for long walks and even some rugged hikes for those who choose them.

Leading our tour from the Italian side, we are thrilled to introduce you to one of the best naturalists we have met anywhere, Sicilian native Andrea Corso. Andrea has seen more birds in Italy than anyone in the world, and he literally wrote the book on the birds of Sicily, *Avifauna di Sicilia*. But Andrea's knowledge goes far beyond the island's birdlife. He knows the archaeology, architecture, and viticulture; he will take us to the best gelato and the freshest seafood; and he will entertain us with colorful stories and music of his homeland. Having Andrea as our local guide makes this trip truly world-class.



We will take a minimum of five and a maximum of eight people on the tour, and we will travel in a comfortable passenger van. Your tour fee includes transportation from Falcone-Borsellino Airport in Palermo, Sicily; two meals per day (usually breakfast and one large meal, either *pranzo* or *cena*, what we typically call lunch and dinner); 12 nights lodging in comfortable hotels, inns, or villas; the interpretive and hospitality skills of two guides, one American and one Sicilian, throughout the tour; service-related gratuities; and entry fees to parks and preserves. Not included are light meals, snacks, and *café* during the day; alcoholic beverages; and souvenirs.



Birding objectives will take us in search of Sicilian specialty birds, which are generally species with limited ranges or those that are difficult to find elsewhere. We will also visit productive wetlands and areas of concentrated migrant birds. We will encourage you to carry binoculars on most outings, whether or not birds are the objective, so that you can become familiar with the common species of Sicily. A few of the specialty birds will include Sicilian Rock Partridge (Italy's only endemic bird), Bonelli's Eagle, Audouin's Gull, Callandra Lark, Blue Rock Thrush, Dartford Warbler, and Cirl Bunting. Common species, in the appropriate habitats, will include Greater Flamingo, Common Redshank, Black-headed Gull, European Robin, Blue Tit, Hooded Crow, Black Redstart, Sardinian Warbler, Stonechat, Spotless Starling, and Chaffinch. At the end of this tour summary is a complete list of the birds we found on our first formal tour to Sicily in 2009.



TRAVEL TO SICILY

Many major airlines fly to Rome, and most schedules from the U.S. arrive at Fiumicino (FCO) airport sometime in the morning. You can attach the next leg of the tour, from Rome to Palermo (PMO), to your Rome itinerary, but this often adds an exorbitant cost to the ticket. We recommend that you purchase a separate round-trip ticket via one of many small European air carriers, which do not show up on a search through Orbitz or Expedia. A few of these airlines include Wind Jet, Air One, Meridiana, and Blu-Express. One place to search for flight options is <http://www.bestofsicily.com/> (also one of the best general resources for “all things Sicilian”), although if you do a little Googling, you will find other low-cost airlines.



TENTATIVE ITINERARY

Our tour route will take us to Sicily's most memorable and spectacular destinations, including the temples at Segesta, the beaches of San Vito lo Capo, the pasticcerie at Erice, and the wetlands of Vendicari. The itinerary below is a sample of how our days might look, but it could easily change, depending on where our local guide, Andrea, decides to take us.

Sun., September 22 — Meet in early afternoon at Palermo airport, Sicily; most flights from the U.S. get you to Rome in the morning, with plenty of time to transfer for the short flight to Palermo. Travel west to scenic San Vito lo Capo, with some very casual sightseeing and birding; night in Custonaci.



Mon., September 23 — Lazy morning at the villa, with casual birding on the grounds, followed by birding at Zingaro Reserve and other coastal areas; relaxed afternoon on the coast, followed by evening meal, *cena*, at our hotel in Custonaci; night in Custonaci.

Tue., September 24 — Morning birding at Trapani, followed by afternoon at Erice; possible visit to a Marsala winery in Marsala itself; *cena* and night in Custonaci.



Wed., September 25 — Travel east to Cefalu, with birding stops en route and tour of the temples at Segesta; *pranzo* and shopping in Cefalu; evening drive and birding en route to night in Castelbuono.

Thu., September 26 — All day birding Madonie Park; casual afternoon with optional spa treatment at our villa outside Castelbuono; *cena* and night in Castelbuono.



Fri., September 27 — All day birding Madonie Park, followed by *pranzo* and explorations at Cefalu; night in Castelbuono.

Sat., September 28 — Travel south to Siracusa, with various birding stops en route; *cena* and night in Siracusa.

Sun., September 29 — All day birding and sightseeing in and around Cava Grande della Cassibile; *cena* and night in Siracusa.

Mon., September 30 — All day birding and exploring around Vendicari Wetlands and parts south, *pranzo* in Ortygia; night in Siracusa.

Tue., October 1 — Birding en route to Mt. Etna; *cena* and night in Randazzo.

Wed., October 2 — All day birding and sightseeing at Mt. Etna; night in Randazzo.

Thu., October 3 — Birding and sightseeing loop to Capo d'Orlando and Messina; *cena* and evening in Randazzo.

Fri., October 4 — Casual morning exploring Linguaglossa, where we will enjoy early *pranzo* and return to Palermo for noon departures.

NOTE: If you can spare the time, we recommend you arrive a few days early into Rome. This will give you ample time to adjust to the time change and to explore one of the world's greatest cities. If you are interested a guide in Rome, for birds and more, contact us for more information.

TOUR FEE

Approximately \$4,500 U.S. per person, double occupancy. Add approximately 15% for single occupancy. A non-refundable \$95 deposit is required to hold your space, with 50% of the balance due on April 1, and the balance due July 1. We will settle on a firm tour cost by April 1; this will depend in part on the exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and the Euro.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at steve@paradisebirding.com or by phone at 541-408-1753. We look forward to hearing from you!

