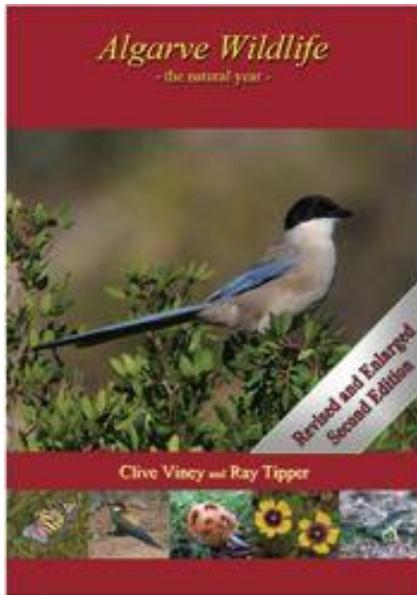


Algarve Wildlife, the natural year

Revised, Enlarged 2nd Edition

by **Clive Viney and Ray Tipper**



Fully revised Second Edition, Hardback 288 pages, published in May 2016

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This beautiful hardback book provides detailed guidance on what to see and where. It is lavishly illustrated with some 600 colour photographs of birds, butterflies, mammals, reptiles, wildflowers and scenic views of the Algarve countryside, together with a map, directions and descriptions of the Algarve's top locations for wildlife and scenic walks. Packed with a wealth of wildlife, wildflower and fungi information, fascinating facts for Algarve visitors and residents alike, *Algarve Wildlife the natural year* is written in clear language accessible to all readers, without losing the scientific accuracy sought by botanists, birdwatchers and other nature-lovers.

- A superbly illustrated, authoritative wildlife diary
- Written and illustrated by local experts drawing on decades of meticulous observation
- 288 pages (convenient A5 format, 21 x 16cm) and more than 600 large colour photographs
- Fortnightly guidance on what to see and where
- A wealth of wildlife and wildflower information
- Packed with fascinating facts for Algarve visitors and residents alike

Reviews

Away from the coastal hotspots is a seldom-seen Algarve - one of peaceful woodlands, flower-filled meadows and quiet river valleys all teeming with fascinating wildlife, from beautiful birds and butterflies to the elusive chameleon and mongoose.

"...an excellent book for all those who come to the Algarve for the first time and are interested in seeing beyond the walls of the resort or the boundaries of a pleasant beach. It is also recommended for those who already know the region but feel they might be losing a good part of it. They are right: this is the book that will help them to notice and to appreciate the immensity of detail that composes the Algarve nature they seek to know better."

Ricardo Tomé, Past President of SPEA (Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves / BirdLife Portugal)

"For many people [the Algarve] is an ideal holiday destination at any time of the year. This book takes a year (beginning in August) and looks at the way wildlife changes through the seasons - analysing each two-week period separately. Although both authors are well-known birders, there is plenty of information here for the all-round naturalist, and separate indexes are given for birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, butterflies, other insects, plants and fungi." (Review of first edition in Birding World)

"After dozens of visits to the Algarve with no real idea of where to look and, most importantly, when to look for particular birds, wildflowers or fungi, I now have a guide that

answers those vital questions. Such a time saver for anyone who has only limited holiday time and wants to use it as productively as possible. The pictures are superb, making identification so much easier. Thanks, Guys; your book is just the ticket (and excellent value too)." **(Review on Amazon)**

"I visit the Algarve often and am very interested in the local natural history. At last there is a book that gives first class information on the local ecology month by month. The book is abundantly illustrated with excellent photos taken by some of the best in the world. I would thoroughly recommend the book to anyone thinking of visiting the Algarve, particularly out of season. Those who only go in August miss the incredible abundance of wildlife in the Spring and the spectacular migrations of birds over Autumn. With this book in hand you will know what to look out for. For some reason it is not for sale at Faro airport! - so buy before you visit." **(Review on Amazon)**

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About the Authors



Clive Viney is the author of *The Birds of Hong Kong and South China*, which is available in English and Chinese and is the standard regional guide. First published in 1977 it is now in its eighth edition.

A keen naturalist, Clive spent most of his working life in Hong Kong where, as a trustee of World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong, he was editor-in-chief of their magazine *About Life*.

Clive has written many articles and provided natural history input to Lonely Planet guides. Closely associated with the Algarve since 1988 and as a member of the Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves he has participated in most of their major surveying projects.



Ray Tipper began his birding on the North Kent Marshes at the age of eleven. He left Britain in 1973 spending most of the next 22 years in Hong Kong. As a trustee of WWF he was intimately involved with its renowned Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve. It was in Hong Kong that Ray turned to bird photography, which quickly became his major interest. He gained associateship of the Royal Photographic Society in 1990, and his photographs appear in journals and books throughout the world.

Ray leads specialist birdwatching tours all over the world and since 1997 has led some 80 tours in Europe, North and Central America, Asia and Madagascar. He spends much of his time in the Algarve, where his intimate knowledge of its birds has been recognised by his appointment as a member of the Portuguese Rarities Committee.

Sample pages

Algarve Wildlife



Southern Wild Tulip *Tulipa australis*

Pink Catchfly *Silene colorata*

Orchids set the heart aflutter, and now is the time to seek out those that are first to flower – Sombre Bee Orchid *Ophrys fusca*, Omega Ophrys *Ophrys omegaifera*, Bumblebee Orchid *Ophrys bombylifera*, Yellow Bee Orchid *Ophrys lutea* and Mirror Orchid *Ophrys speculum*. Most are distinctive and a glance at Sue Parker's Wild Orchids of the Algarve should readily confirm identification.



Pond Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus peltatus*

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In wet areas, the unusual Buttonweed or Brass Buttons *Cotula coronopifolia*, an introduction from South Africa, is in flower; and on water so is Pond Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus peltatus*. Special flowers to look for are the pretty Common Grape Hyacinth *Muscari neglectum*, the afternoon flowering miniature iris Barbary Nut *Gynandris sisyrinchium*, and Purple Crocus *Romulea ramiflora* - a real gem.



Sombre Bee Orchid *Ophrys fusca*



Barbary Nut *Gynandris sisyrinchium*



A distinctive butterfly that is fairly easy to see in the hills is the Spanish Festoon. Brimstones have now joined their more distinctively coloured cousins the Cleopatras, and other species on the wing include the gorgeous Swallowtail, Red Admirals emerging from hibernation and the unobtrusive Small Heath.



Spanish Festoon



Cleopatra

Although many of the salt pans will be drained down, it is worth seeking out the standing water to find busily feeding groups of Greater Flamingos, Eurasian Spoonbills and Black-tailed Godwits.

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Algarve Wildlife

Threatened in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The Algarve Rockrose *Tuberaria major* is another local endemic that occurs in the same area but is even less common. This plant is listed as Endangered, again due to destruction of habitat.

An unmistakable and beautiful orchid (when fully open) is the very rare Violet Limodore *Limodorum abortivum*, which can be looked for in the wooded hills of the central Algarve. In some areas Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* tend to flower later than other species.



Violet Limodore *Limodorum abortivum*

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Reinforcements of Golden Orioles are arriving and European Bee-eater colonies are fully active. Common Cuckoos call, and in a few places the bizarre Great Spotted Cuckoo will still be seeking out its host species, which in the Algarve include Iberian Azure-winged Magpies and Southern Grey Shrikes. The Magpie is its preferred foster parent but until recently this has been an uncommon bird this far south.



Golden Oriole

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Fly Agaric *Amanita muscaria*. These attractive woodland fungi contain hallucinogenic toxins.

Although many species of mushrooms and toadstools have already disappeared, in woodland it is hard to miss the scarlet-red Fly Agaric *Amanita muscaria*. This is the toadstool of children's books and Christmas cards, but be warned: this magic mushroom is poisonous. It contains muscarine, which can cause nausea, vomiting and possibly coma. Crumbled in milk, it is used to kill flies, hence its name.

In woodlands, trees are adorned by obvious and often-photogenic oyster mushrooms of several species *Pleurotus* spp. Oyster mushrooms are so called because the cap is often similar in shape to an oyster shell. Many people assert that oyster mushrooms actually taste like their bivalve namesakes; certainly the texture is similar to that of cooked oysters.



Oyster Mushroom *Pleurotus ostreatus* cannot be identified simply by its shape and the colour of the cap. Most but not all have eccentric stems, while the upper surface ranges from cream through various shades of olive brown to slate blue. As with all fungi you intend to eat, accurate identification is crucial. If in doubt, leave it out.



Wall Brown



Red Admiral

Butterflies, now scarcer, are restricted to migrants and commoner species such as Large White, Small White, Clouded Yellow, Small Copper, Wall Brown, Speckled Wood, Painted Lady and Red Admiral.

As ever in the winter months, Common Chiffchaffs, Meadow Pipits and White Wagtails are easy to find, but with the cessation of the autumn passage the diversity of birdlife has reduced. Inland, perhaps because of the disturbance caused by hunters and their dogs, birds are more skittish. Flocks of feeding finches dominate. Goldfinches, Greenfinches, Linnets and European Serins are common, and Common Chaffinches have come down from the hills and the north in large numbers. With patience, you should be able to find wintering Siskins. Rare and beautiful Bullfinches occur, and in hard winters Bramblings are occasionally seen.

Most people regard swallows and martins, collectively called hirundines, as summer visitors. In fact, in the Algarve, Barn Swallows and House Martins reappear at their nest sites by the end of January and Red-rumped Swallows arrive a few weeks later. Crag Martins are with us throughout the year. Sand Martins are migrants that favour freshwater wetlands. Swallows and martins leave their nest sites by the end of September but migrants pass through at other times. Late in the year hirundines seen almost anywhere in the Algarve are likely to be Crag Martins. However, in some years, at first light in early December, there are huge gatherings of Red-rumped Swallows and House Martins on overhead wires along the Rio Séqua at Tavira. Are these birds very late or very early migrants? Or are they birds that have not needed to visit wintering grounds in sub-Saharan Africa because of global warming and the resultant increase in aerial plankton?



Clouded Yellow



Common Chiffchaff

Inland, Spotted Starlings, Woodlarks, Skylarks and Corn Buntings move around in flocks, and smaller species such as Long-tailed Tit, Rock Bunting, Blackcap and Dartford Warbler are easier to see than usual. In cultivated areas, particularly towards the eastern side of the Algarve, Common Waxbills sometimes occur in large flocks. This tiny species is readily identified by its red bill and occurs in any habitat with ready access to a good supply of wild seeds. It is a Sub-Saharan species that was introduced to Portugal in 1964; thereafter it quickly became established and rapidly expanded its range.



Tree Sparrow



Linnet

In gatherings of feeding sparrows and finches, it is easy to pick out the startlingly yellow male European Serins, the dapper male Spanish Sparrows and the shy Tree Sparrows. Even the very scarce Rock Sparrow can occasionally be found in these mixed flocks, but most of the sparrows will be House Sparrows. The commonest finches in these mixed feeding parties are Goldfinches, Greenfinches and European Serins with smaller numbers of Linnets and Siskins. Common Chaffinches are widespread but tend not to mix. Bullfinches and Hawfinches occur but are seldom seen.



Common Kestrel

Maggies used to be scarce in the Algarve but in recent years they have become common in the east. At this time of the year they appear in flocks (wedding parties) prior to pairing. In the hills, look out for pairs of soaring Common Ravens. These large black crows are, in fact, uncommon in the Algarve but they also occur at Castro Marim and on the Sagres Peninsula.

Common Buzzards and Common Kestrels occur in fair numbers. Booted Eagles winter at Quinta do Ludo, where there is also a reasonable chance of seeing other birds of prey such as Marsh Harrier, Osprey and Black-shouldered Kite. Some winters, Hen Harriers wandering from the north are widespread. Occasionally on the marshes, as there is now an extensive menu to choose from, a Peregrine Falcon will put in an appearance.

The salt pans are always worth visiting for a good range of wetland species, but for shorebirds it may be necessary to spend time seeking out areas with just the right level of water. High tide forces many shorebirds to seek roosting and feeding areas inland. Black-tailed Godwits can be numerous and counted by the hundred. Parties of wintering Red Knot are scarce but can be found on the wetlands around Tavira.

At the margins of saltmarshes and along overgrown edges of salt pans look out for Bluethroats, which, in some years, can be quite common; it is here, also, that a spring of Eurasian Teal might be flushed.



Bluethroat

Most of us make New Year's resolutions but how many make New Year's lists? Keeping lists of birds or butterflies or even wildflowers seen as the year unfolds can be absorbing and a great stimulus for getting out and about more often. It is interesting and even useful to compare one year with another. Hangover permitting, getting out on New Year's Day and listing what is found is a fun way to start the year. Once the sun is well up, take on a coastal walk that covers a range of habitats.

A good place to visit for a large number of species in varied habitat is Quinta do Ludo and the adjoining Quinta do Lago. At the start of the year, large numbers of duck and waterfowl are guaranteed plus birds of prey and such specialities as Glossy Ibis, Purple Swamp-hen and perhaps an overwintering Little Bittern.