

Socotra

2026 Tour Leaflet



Socotra Scoops Owl © Michael Mills

17–24 March 2026

Socotra 2026



AFRICA IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- Ten endemics & specials
- Spectacular landscapes and 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

2026	17 – 24 March
2031	14 – 21 March

PRICE

Per person sharing	TBA
Single supplement	TBA

***Includes ground costs. Budget USD 1200 for the flight from Abu Dhabi, plus visa.**

BOOK ONLINE

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



Socotra Golden-winged Grosbeak © Michael Mills

The iconic island of Socotra is a bucket-list destination for many nature and outdoor enthusiasts. With 10 endemic and special 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 and snorkelling on coral reefs.

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 light rain possible.

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 or have any special dietary requirements.

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

WALKING AND FITNESS

These tours require a moderate to low 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 are only two flights per week to Socotra that don't go through warm-torn Yemen, and that is a bi-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 flights, and the firm dates for the flights will only be confirmed closer to the time.

Please email info@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 allows a full six days to explore Socotra. We also plan to visit Abd el Kuri island to see Abd el Kuri Sparrow. Safety issues related the Somali piracy make this security dependent, but if feasible we'll make the sea crossing by boat (7 hours each way) and camp on the island for a night. Alternative arrangements will be made for those not wishing to visit Abd el Kuri.

One morning will be dedicated to a pelagic trip, during which we hope to see Persian Shearwater and Jouanin's Petrel. Other seabirds may include Masked Booby, Brown Booby and Red-billed Tropicbird. Coastal birds include a variety of gulls and terns, and Socotra Cormorant.

The remaining days will be spent on land, with the aim of finding all breeding landbirds and endemics. We'll visit the Dixem highlands specifically for the scarce endemic Socotra Bunting and Socotra Starling, both most numerous here. Overhead we'll be watching for Socotra Buzzard, and Socotra Warbler is most numerous here too. The rest of the endemics can be found at lower altitudes: Socotra Cisticola, Socotra Scops Owl,

Socotra Golden-winged Grosbeak, Socotra White-eye, Socotra Grey Shrike and Socotra Sparrow. We'll visit Wadi Ayhaft and various other sites.

Several non-endemic landbirds occur too, some represented by endemic subspecies, including Forbes-Watson's Swift and Somali Starling. There is an impressive population of Egyptian Vultures, who will join us for most of our field lunches. Arid areas along the coast hold Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Cream-coloured Courser, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse and, after dark, Nubian Nightjar (rare). Palm groves along the rivers hold small numbers of White-browed Coucal, and Bruce's Green Pigeon prefers the better-wooded valleys. Long-billed Pipit occurs throughout.

The steep mountains of the island give rise to numerous rivers that end in coastal lagoons (khors). These can be productive for migrant waterbirds, including a variety of ducks, herons and waders. African rarities such as Yellow Bittern, Indian Pond Heron, Pin-tailed Snipe, Pheasant-tailed Jacana and Cotton Pygmy Goose may be found too.



Socotra Buzzard © Michael Mills

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 breakfast on the last day
- Bottled water in the vehicle/s, 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
2. Our Tour Information Pack, emailed to you
3. Our Tour Booklet, including bird list, 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.

