



**OMAN BIRDING TOUR:  
ENDEMIC BIRDS OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA**

**05 – 16 NOVEMBER 2025  
04 – 15 NOVEMBER 2026**



*Arabian Babbler is a charismatic species endemic to the Arabian Peninsula.*

Oman is well-known among international birdwatchers, and for good reason. This peaceful country offers some of the best birdwatching in the Arabian Peninsula, with a high diversity of species and many specials possible in a relatively short timeframe. The tour begins in northern Oman, starting in the capital, Muscat, and then travels west into the breathtaking heights of the Al Hajar and Jebel Akhdar mountains. We finish the tour in coastal Salalah, the most southerly city in Oman, from where we venture into Oman's true desert interior, a stark contrast to the diverse and unexpectedly lush habitats around Salalah. Throughout the journey, we will target species endemic to the Arabian Peninsula, as well as rare seabirds, and interestingly, African species near the eastern edge of their range, and many European and Asian migrants.

Some of the key targets on this varied tour include the enigmatic **Omani Owl** and **Forbes-Watson's Swift**, along with many species endemic to the Arabian Peninsula, such as **Arabian Partridge**, **Arabian Scops Owl**, **Arabian Eagle-Owl**, **Desert Owl**, **Arabian Green Bee-eater**, **Arabian Babbler**, **Tristram's Starling**, **Arabian Wheatear**, **Arabian Sunbird**, **Yemen Serin**, and **Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak**. We also seek range-restricted species like **Sand Partridge**, **Arabian Warbler**, and **Palestine and Nile Valley Sunbirds**, as well as wintering migrants like **Plain Leaf Warbler** and **Eversmann's Redstart** to name just a few. During our Oman birding tour, we will explore the foothills and heights of several different mountain ranges, from the rugged Al Hajar and Jebel Akhdar mountains in the north, with their dramatic canyons and ancient terraced farms, to the Dhofar mountains in the south, where mist-covered hills and unique vegetation create a striking change in the scenery. Due to the Khareef monsoon season, the Dhofar slopes are transformed into a lush, green oasis for part of the year, creating a home for a unique bird community of Arabian, African, and Asian species.



*Desert Owl is a major tour target which we hope to find in southern Oman.*

Away from the mountains and hillsides, we will experience the mesmerizing beauty of Oman's ever-changing deserts, where within oases and alongside towering sand dunes, we will search for desert species like the highly sought monotypic **Grey Hypocolius**, as well as **Sand Partridge**, **Chestnut-bellied**, **Spotted**, and **Crowned Sandgrouse**, **Greater Hoopoe-Lark**, and **Hume's**, **Hooded**, **Variable**, and **Persian Wheatears**. Along the southern coast, we will explore rich coastal habitats teeming with shorebirds, and embark on a pelagic boat trip out of Mirbat, famous for the abundance of seabirds, where we hope to see range restricted **Socotra Cormorant**, **Saunders's** and **White-cheeked Tern**, **Sooty Gull**, **Persian Shearwater**, and **Jouanin's Petrel**, plus marine mammals such as **Sperm Whale** and **Spinner Dolphin**. Oman has long been a popular eco-tourism destination, which means we can enjoy comfortable accommodations and great food throughout, from charming guesthouses nestled in the mountains to luxurious resorts in the south. This will be an unforgettable birding adventure, offering a chance to experience Oman's incredible wildlife and stunningly diverse landscapes.

Although **Crab-plover**, **Sociable Lapwing**, and **Variable Wheatear** are targets on our Oman birding tour, these species can be tough to find and are all much easier to see in the Dubai area. For those interested, we can arrange a two-day stopover in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to try for these three species, along with the impressive **Pharaoh Eagle-Owl**. Please inquire on booking.



*Range restricted **Palestine Sunbirds** are absolutely stunning.*

You can join our **Socotra Birding Tour: Endemic Birds and Dragon Blood Trees** which has been designed to run before and complement this Oman birdwatching tour. On Socotra you will be immersed in an otherworldly landscape filled with unique plants and wildlife, including nine single-island endemics, such as **Socotra Golden-winged Grosbeak**, while witnessing some truly breathtaking scenery.

## Detailed Itinerary (12 days/ 11 nights)

### Day 1. Arrival in Muscat

This is a non-birding arrival day, with your afternoon arrival at Muscat International Airport ahead of our early start to the Oman birding tour the following morning. We will gather at our comfortable hotel near the airport for an evening welcome dinner.

Overnight: Novotel Muscat, Muscat



*We will look for the energetic and tiny **Delicate Prinia** in the wetlands near Muscat.*

### Day 2. Muscat birding

Oman's bustling capital, Muscat, is located in the north along the Arabian Sea coast. It is an ideal starting point for our tour, with productive wetlands on the city's outskirts and easy access to the Al Hajar and Jebel Akhdar Mountains. We will be based here with some early morning birding within Muscat itself, hoping to see **Egyptian Nightjar** soon after dawn. We will visit sites such as Al Ansab Lagoons, and Wadi Adai Preserve, where we will look for **Garganey**, **Ferruginous Duck**, **Greater Flamingo**, **Pallid Swift**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **White-tailed** and **Red-wattled Lapwings**, **Tibetan** and **Greater Sand Plovers**, **Kentish Plover**, **Marsh** and **Wood Sandpipers**, **Temminck's** and **Little Stints**, **Slender-billed** and **Sooty Gulls**, **Whiskered**, **Lesser Crested**, and **Greater Crested Terns**, **Western Reef**, **Striated** and **Squacco Herons**, **Greater Spotted Eagle**, **Arabian Green Bee-eater**, **Indian Roller**, **Delicate Prinia**, **Clamorous Reed Warbler**, **Purple Sunbird**, and **Citrine** and **Western Yellow Wagtails** among many others. Our expert local guides will be aware of any rarer species reported near Muscat, such as **Sooty Falcon** or **Crab-plover**, and if either are present, we will make a special effort to see them.

During the afternoon, we will visit arable land around Al Barka, to the north of Muscat, in search of our first open country specials, such as **Cream-colored Courser**, **Namaqua Dove**, **Black-winged Kite**, **Tawny Pipit**, **Desert**, **Isabelline**, and **Red-tailed Wheatears**, and **Striolated Bunting**, with another opportunity to see **Egyptian Nightjar**. Afterwards, we will transfer to our remote guesthouse, nestled in the picturesque village of Hadash, offering breathtaking views of the Al Hajar mountains and surrounding hillside. After some time to relax and enjoy delicious Omani cuisine, there will be a chance for night birding as we begin our quest to find the enigmatic **Omani Owl**, alongside **Pallid Scops Owl**, and **Arabian Eagle-Owl**.

Overnight: Hadash Guest House, Ghubrah



*Streaked Scrub Warbler is a very active species, full of character.*

### Day 3. Birding around Nakhl

Continuing our exploration of northern Oman, we will travel the short distance to the Nakhl area, renowned for its historic forts, impressive waterfalls, and spring blooms of apricot and pomegranate blossoms. Here, under the backdrop of the Al Hajar Mountains, we will explore wadis, oases, and date palm groves in search of Arabian Peninsula endemics, such as **Arabian Green Bee-eater**, **White-spectacled Bulbul**, and **Arabian Babbler**, along with **Little Owl**, **Delicate Prinia**, **Streaked Scrub Warbler**, **Pale Crag Martin**, **Hume's Wheatear**, **Blackstart**, **Purple Sunbird**, **Indian Silverbill**, **Desert Lark**, and the non-native **Grey Francolin**. The orchards, gardens, tamarisk thickets, and acacia savanna in this area provide ideal habitats for wintering **Plain Leaf Warbler**, **Eversmann's Redstart**, and **Menetries's Warbler**, which breed in Central Asia during the summer months. While sightings are rare, we will keep our eyes peeled for species like **Black-throated Thrush**, an irruptive vagrant from Russia, and **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse**, which we hope to see drinking at an oasis. Between birding, we can relax in the

comfort of our charming guest house, and in the evening, we will have another opportunity to try for **Omani Owl**, **Pallid Scops Owl**, and **Arabian Eagle-Owl**.

Overnight: Hadash Guest House, Ghubrah



*Gorgeous **Purple Sunbirds** are satisfyingly common across northern Oman.*



*Clamorous **Reed Warbler** is a bird of wetlands and oases.*

#### Day 4. Birding the Jebel Akhdar mountain range

Departing our accommodation early, we will travel southwest to the Jebel Akhdar mountain range, a protected nature reserve, and stunning area renowned for its network of wadis, terraced orchards, and magnificent views. While here, we will spend time at Jebel Shams, the highest mountain in Oman at 9,840 feet (3,000 meters), and visit the Al Nakhur Canyon – so impressive, it is often referred to as the Grand Canyon of Arabia. This area has a mild Mediterranean climate, and the higher altitudes receive more rainfall than much of northern Oman, creating a relatively lush, green landscape. One of our major targets here is the strikingly plumaged, yet elusive, **Sand Partridge**, but the raptors we could see are equally exciting, with **Lappet-faced, Griffon, and Egyptian Vultures**, and **Bonelli's Eagle** all possible. We will search the open rocky areas, shrublands, juniper forests, and cultivated areas for songbirds such as the Arabian subspecies of **Great Grey Shrike, Pale Crag Martin, Asian Desert Warbler, Eastern Orphee Warbler, Blue Rock Thrush, Desert Lark, and Hooded, Red-tailed, Hume's** and if we are lucky, **Variable Wheatears**. Our accommodation for the night is another beautiful guest house nestled amidst spectacular mountain vistas. This will be our final chance to look for **Pallid Scops Owl** and the rare and mysterious **Omani Owl**, which can be hard to see, but for which we will put all our effort into finding.

Overnight: Tilal Al Qatara, Mashūq



*The endemic Arabian subspecies of **Great Grey Shrike** is easily seen in Oman.*

#### Day 5. Mountain birding and transfer to southern Oman

Being our final morning in northern Oman, we will be sure to take in the magnificent mountain views over a delicious breakfast before departing and slowly making our way back to Muscat. Since we will be starting the day in the heights of the Jebel Akhdar mountain range, we may

continue with some high altitude birding to seek more of the species targeted the previous day. **Sand Partridge**, **Lappet-faced Vulture**, and **Variable Wheatear** are big tour targets and are most likely found here, so we may try again for these species, if needed. However, our schedule is flexible, and we may choose to leave the mountains earlier to spend more time in the diverse lowlands, depending on what species we still want to target, or if, for example, **Crab-plover** has been reported in the wetlands close to Muscat. In the late afternoon, we will board a domestic flight to Salalah in southern Oman as this is the quickest way to get to our next destination. On arrival in Salalah, and after a short transfer, we will check into our plush hotel, which will be our accommodation for the next three nights.

Overnight: Salalah Gardens Hotel, Salalah



*Stunning **Indian Rollers** are common in northern Oman lowlands.*

## Day 6. Exploring Salalah

Located in southwest Oman between the Dhofar mountains and Arabian Sea, Salalah is milder than much of Oman, and experiences a monsoon climate, making the region lush and fertile. The area has a mesmerizing, unique feel, reminiscent of the tropical East African coast, yet it is only a short distance from the arid desert landscapes which cover much of Oman. Its location and climate combine to make it one of the most bird-diverse regions in the Arabian Peninsula, with a mix of fascinating Arabian, Asian, and African specials. We will use Salalah as our main base for the rest of the trip to explore this diverse and exciting region.

Today we plan to visit several wadis and wetlands on the outskirts of Salalah including the UNESCO world heritage site of Al-Baleed Archaeological park, and the beautiful Ayn Korr

Nature Reserve, and we will likely return to the hotel to relax during the hottest part of the day. Throughout the day, we will target several species with restricted global ranges, such as **Abyssinian White-eye**, **Tristram's Starling**, and **Graceful Prinia**, as well as more widespread African species such as **Spotted Thick-knee**, **Spur-winged Lapwing**, **Diederik Cuckoo**, and **African Silverbill**, here at the eastern limit of their range. Other major targets will include migratory waterbirds like **Cotton Pygmy Goose**, **Yellow Bittern**, **Abdim's Stork**, **Small Pratincole**, and **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, though we should also encounter more common species such as **Greater Flamingo**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Purple Heron**, **Indian Pond Heron**, **Broad-billed, Curlew**, **Marsh, Green, and Wood Sandpipers**, and **Temminck's and Little Stints**. The raptors in this area are interesting too, and we will keep an eye out for **Greater Spotted Eagle**, **Steppe Eagle**, **Crested Honey Buzzard**, and **Western Marsh Harrier**. We will conclude our afternoon birding along the coast west of Salalah, staying until dusk to try for **Desert Owl**, which becomes active just after nightfall.

Overnight: Salalah Gardens Hotel, Salalah



*We hope to find the beautiful **Small Pratincole** in Oman.*

### Day 7. Birding the slopes of the Dhofar mountains

We will continue to use Salalah as our base, as we will explore the wooded wadis, dry scrub, and rocky hillsides of the slopes of the Dhofar Mountains to the north and east of the city. We are likely to see a long list of species, but our most important targets in the foothills are three of Oman's most sought-after species, found only here, in Yemen, or Saudi Arabia – **Arabian Partridge**, **Arabian Sunbird**, and **Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak**. Additionally, **Arabian Warbler**, **Rüppell's Weaver**, and **Palestine Sunbird** are also high on our list, being near endemics to the Arabian Peninsula and with a restricted distribution in Africa. Other species we will target include

**Steppe Eagle, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Eurasian Hoopoe, Singing Bush Lark, Red-tailed and Isabelline Shrikes, Desert Wheatear, Blackstart, African Silverbill, Long-billed Pipit, and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting.** After another delicious meal, we will go owling, searching for two Arabian endemics. Our main target is **Arabian Scops Owl**, which is much more common in southern Oman compared to northern Oman, and we have another chance for the impressive **Arabian Eagle-Owl**.

Overnight: [Salalah Gardens Hotel, Salalah](#)



*The beautiful Arabian Green Bee-eater is an Arabian Peninsula endemic and should be seen frequently throughout the tour.*

### Day 8. Oman desert birding

This will be a much-anticipated day as we venture north from coastal Salalah, to the true desert interior of Oman around [Mughshin](#). Our birding will be in stark contrast to the previous days spent exploring wadis and wooded hillsides, as we now immerse ourselves in the vast openness of shifting sand dunes. Although we have a long drive from Salalah (around three and a half hours) we will make frequent stops as the key birding sites are along the route.

Our big targets are a trio of sandgrouse, with **Chestnut-bellied, Spotted, and Crowned Sandgrouse** all regularly seen in this area. We will also look for the highly sought-after nomadic **Grey Hypocolius**, along with **Arabian Lark**, an endemic species to the Arabian Peninsula, **Nile Valley Sunbird, Cream-colored Courser, and Egyptian Nightjar**. This is an exciting place to birdwatch as a vast number of migratory species pass through or spend the winter here, including the rare IUCN Critically Endangered **Sociable Lapwing** as well as **Black-throated Thrush, and Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin**. While we would be fortunate to encounter any of these three species, we will certainly be looking out for them all. More commonly, we may see migratory **Pallid**

**Harrier, European Nightjar, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Eurasian Hoopoe, Pied and Desert Wheatears, Bluethroat, Spotted and Red-breasted Flycatchers, Menetries's Warbler, Asian Desert Warbler, Red-backed, Red-tailed, and Isabelline Shrikes, Rosy Starling, and Tawny, Tree, and Red-throated Pipits.** Resident species here include **Golden Eagle, Greater Hoopoe-Lark, Great Grey Shrike, and Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** and we will have our eyes peeled for these too. This is likely to be a long day as we will maximize our time in this special landscape, though we will ensure that there is opportunity to rest sufficiently and avoid the hottest part of the day, as far as is possible.

Overnight: Qatbit Hotel, Mughshin (please see the “Accommodation Note” below).



*Greater Hoopoe-Lark – a unique species that we hope to find in the desert near Mughshin.*

### Day 9. Desert birding and return to Salalah

We will begin with some early morning birding in the hotel gardens, which serve as a major migrant trap and have previously turned up some interesting vagrants, such as **Hume’s Leaf** and **Upcher’s Warblers**. Afterwards, we will continue targeting species mentioned for Day 8 by exploring the desert around Mughshin, before starting our journey back to Salalah, stopping at various agricultural areas along the way. Given the nomadic nature of desert species, we may not see all our targets listed for Day 8, but we will certainly spend time seeking them during the time we have for desert birding, especially for exciting species such as **Grey Hypocolius, Sociable Lapwing, and Arabian Lark**. We will aim to arrive at our comfortable resort hotel in the late afternoon, allowing time to relax before the evening meal.

Overnight: Salalah Gardens Hotel, Salalah

### Day 10. Khor Rori and the Sumhuram Archaeological site

Departing Salalah, we will travel east to explore some lush wadis, with our main destination being the large Wadi Darbat. Here, we have another chance for **Arabian Partridge**, **Arabian** and **Palestine Sunbirds**, and **Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak**, along with several African species including **Bruce's Green Pigeon**, **Diederik Cuckoo**, **Grey-headed Kingfisher**, **Black-crowned Tchagra**, **African Paradise Flycatcher**, and **Rüppell's Weaver**. Furthermore, **Arabian Scops Owl** and **Arabian Eagle-Owl** are sometimes seen at day roosts here, so we will watch for what would be a special sighting of these owls.

Following a picnic by the wadi, we will explore Khor Rori area and the ruins of the Sumhuram Archaeological site, which border Wadi Darbat. This area is ideal for open ground species, such as **Bonelli's Eagle**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **Isabelline Wheatear**, **Siberian Stonechat**, **Blackstart**, and **Striolated Bunting**. The extensive beach and tidal lagoon, where the wadi meets the Arabian Sea, can be productive for wading species and other interesting waterbirds, species such as **Red-knobbed Coot**, **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, **White-winged Tern**, and **Eurasian Spoonbill**. We will finish our day by visiting a site for another Arabian endemic, **Yemen Serin**, and then visit a wooded wadi to see a magnificent stand of African baobab trees, which are very rare outside of Africa. Depending on our previous success over recent days, we may go night birding for **Arabian Scops Owl** and **Arabian Eagle-Owl**. We will overnight in the coastal town of Mirbat, east of Salalah, to position ourselves well for the boat trip the following morning.

Overnight: Wyndham Garden, Mirbat



*The beautiful Eurasian Hoopoe is widespread across Oman.*

### Day 11. Mirbat pelagic and Djebel Samhan Nature Reserve

For some, this may well be the tour highlight. Early in the morning, we board a boat from Mirbat harbor, an activity renowned among international birders due to the number of rare seabird species possible on this pelagic trip. Our main targets will include species restricted to the Red Sea and northern Indian Ocean, such as **Socotra Cormorant**, **Saunders's** and **White-cheeked Terns**, **Sooty Gull**, **Persian Shearwater**, and **Jouanin's Petrel**. The sheer numbers of seabirds are a delight, and it is not uncommon to encounter large flocks of **Red-necked Phalarope** too. Other species we hope to see include **Bridled Tern**, **Caspian Gull**, **Wilson's** and **Swinhoe's Storm Petrels**, **Red-billed Tropicbird**, **Flesh-footed Shearwater**, **Masked** and **Brown Boobies**, among many others, and marine mammals, such as **Sperm Whale**, **Spinner Dolphin**, and **Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin**.



*We hope to find the range-restricted **Saunders's Tern** on our Oman pelagic trip.*

After a great lunch back on dry land, we will explore the mountain steppes of Djebel Samhan Nature Reserve, an area protecting vast expanses of the Dhofar mountains. This reserve is one of the last strongholds of the IUCN Critically Endangered Arabian **Leopard**, an endemic subspecies with fewer than 150 individuals left in the wild. While spotting one would be incredibly rare, the breathtaking views of the mountainous terrain offer plenty of other rewards. Our main avian target here is **Arabian Wheatear**, another species restricted to the Arabian Peninsula, which is seen regularly in the rocky hillsides in the nature reserve. Other targets include **Arabian Partridge**, **Fan-tailed Raven**, and a variety of eagles, with **Verreaux's**, **Eastern Imperial**, **Short-toed Snake**, **Steppe**, **Booted**, and **Greater Spotted Eagles** all possible, plus **Rock Hyrax**. On our way back to our relaxing hotel, we visit a stretch of dramatic coastal cliffs, where we hope to see the rarely seen **Forbes-Watson's Swift**, a species with a unique distribution, isolated to coastal

habitats in southern Arabia, Socotra, and East Africa. Migratory **Pallid Swift** are much more common this time of year, so we will carefully scan flocks to identify the rarer **Forbes-Watson's Swift**.

Overnight: Wyndham Garden, Mirbat

### Day 12. Tour concludes, departure from Salalah

Our birding this morning will be flexible, dependent on the success of the previous few days. We may choose to revisit one of the areas near Salalah for better views of **Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak** or **Yemen Serin**, for example, or make another attempt at finding the rare **Sociable Lapwing**. Alternatively, we might decide to explore new areas to the west of Salalah, where coastal birding could offer a chance to encounter rare migrants such as **African Sacred Ibis**.

After lunch, the tour will conclude at Salalah International Airport. However, those interested in a short two-day stopover in the UAE to try for **Crab-plover**, **Pharaoh Eagle-Owl**, **Sociable Lapwing** and **Variable Wheatear**, will continue to Dubai.

Overnight: Not included



*We hope to see the iconic **Crab-plover** in Oman, but are offering a two-day post tour extension in UAE to give a much better chance of seeing this species.*

*Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually only slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other*

*factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling and other factors.*

<b>Duration:</b>	12 days
<b>Group Size:</b>	5 - 8
<b>Dates:</b>	05 – 16 November 2025 04 – 15 November 2026
<b>Start:</b>	Muscat International Airport, Muscat, Oman
<b>End:</b>	Salalah International Airport, Salalah, Oman
<b>Prices:</b>	US\$6,570 per person sharing – based on 5 - 8 participants (2025) US\$7,290 per person sharing – based on 5 - 8 participants (2026)
<b>Single Supplements:</b>	US\$810 (2025) US\$900 (2026)

**Price includes:**

Domestic flight between Muscat and Salalah on Day 5.  
Expert tour leader and local guides  
Meals (from an evening meal on Day 1 until lunch on Day 12)  
Accommodation based on two sharing (Day 1 to Day 11, as shown)  
All entrance fees to national parks, nature reserves, etc.  
All land-based transport and tolls while on tour  
Pelagic boat trip  
Airport and hotel transfers

**Price excludes:**

International flights to Muscat International Airport at the start of the tour  
International flights from Salalah International Airport at the end of the tour  
Visas if required  
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions, including the UAE optional excursion  
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.  
Personal insurance  
Gratuities (please see our [Tipping guidelines for birding tours](#))

**Accommodation Note:**

The tour uses very good accommodation throughout, except for the one night in the desert near Mughshin where we are limited to basic accommodation as it is the only option available. While more basic than other hotels we use, this hotel is equipped with air conditioning and has private bathrooms. Staying here will allow us to access the desert at optimal times before the heat sets in, and we will have comfortable accommodation in Salalah both before and after this night.