

Book Reviews - Recensioni

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Barnagaud J.-Y., Issa N. & Dalloyau S., 2019. Where to watch birds in France. Pelagic Publ., Exeter, UK, 336 p., £ 25.00.

More than 300 birding sites, 466 maps, over 400 occurring bird species are synthesized in this new book published by Pelagic Publishing, specialized in naturalistic subjects (see: www.pelagicpublishing.com). In France 357 species regularly breed or winter. France, as other Mediterranean countries, has a very rich avifauna, one of the richest of Europe; you may find from Mediterranean to alpine species at different altitudes and habitats.

This is more than a touristic guide, it is a naturalistic guide to the best French sites where it is possible to observe birds. The authors have written this book for bird-watchers and ornithologists, giving them the possibility to visit splendid landscapes and observe through their binoculars common and rare birds. The continental France and the island of Corsica are divided into 14 regions, where the authors highlight 312 best birding sites, chosen for ease of access and particular presence of bird species. Naturalists visiting France will find in this book practical information and a series of detailed descriptions of tours, best explained in the maps. Each site is treated with abundance of details, showing that the authors have run across the regions many times. For each site the authors give the number of days needed to visit, a short description of the habitat and the best way to reach the most interesting areas where to watch birds. In addition, they suggest also the

best season to observe birds and give the necessary information to locate the site in the maps. Rarely it is possible to find a naturalistic guide with this abundance of information on the roads to drive or to walk and the bird species that may be observed. The novelty of this book is that all the sites are geolocated in a file that can be downloaded from the publisher's website and loaded onto any GPS device. This increase certainly the chance to find them. For each group of birding sites a list of key species is reported with the season of presence.

In the last pages of the book there is a section that provides details of 30 species generally included in the wish-list of birders. My favourite are Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*, Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*, Roseate Tern *Sterna dougalii*, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata*, and Corsican Nuthatch *Sitta whiteheadi*, an endemic species of Corsica, one of the most interesting Mediterranean birds, once considered related to the North American Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*, but instead discovered to be a Mediterranean relict, related only to Algerian Nuthatch *Sitta ledanti*, living on the Algerian Kabylie.

A final checklist of all the species and subspecies of annual occurrence in France concludes the book. In this long table are also reported the seasons of presence and the level of abundance. Everybody who has planned a naturalistic trip to France must place in the luggage this book!

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