

Cape Verde Pelagics

The Ultimate Western Palearctic Seabird Experience

March 2026



An unforgettable pelagic seabirding experience based on the volcanic island of Fogo, where rich waters of the tropical east Atlantic meet the mountainous landscape of the Cape Verde archipelago. This exclusive 6-day package offers the opportunity to encounter some of the most exhilarating seabird spectacles in the North Atlantic.

For the very first time, this dedicated pelagic birding package offers a unique opportunity to observe and photograph the endemic and migrant seabirds of the Cape Verde Archipelago, many of which are difficult, if not impossible, to see anywhere else in the Western Palearctic.

Four Full-Day Pelagics

Boarding our vessel in São Filipe, our full-day pelagic trips venture offshore into the pristine waters surrounding Fogo, Brava and the Rombos Islands. We will spend time chumming for *Pterodromas* in the windy areas to the north of the islands where large concentrations of **Cape Verde Petrels** are likely, and **Black-capped Petrel** is a possibility. We will dedicate considerable effort to the far south in the wind shadow of Fogo where we should encounter large numbers of passage **Leach's Storm-petrels**, local breeding **White-faced Storm-petrels**, and have our best chance of encountering the highly elusive **Cape Verde Storm-petrel**. Motoring and chumming through the channel between Fogo and Brava, we will encounter **Boyd's Shearwaters**, **Cape Verde Shearwaters**, and **Bulwer's Petrels** as we head west to the renowned seabird and cetacean feeding areas of the Codamosto Seamount. As we pass through the channel between Brava and the Rombos Islands, we will enjoy breathtaking views of towering cliffs which play host to breeding colonies of **Brown Booby**, **Red-footed Booby** and **Red-billed Tropicbird**.

Expected highlights include:

- **Cape Verde Storm-petrel** – endemic to Cape Verde
- **White-faced Storm-petrel** – ssp. *P. m. eadesi* endemic to Cape Verde
- **Cape Verde Shearwater** – endemic to Cape Verde
- **Boyd's Shearwater** – endemic to Cape Verde (previously also bred in Bermuda)
- **Cape Verde Petrel** – endemic to Cape Verde

- **Black-capped Petrel** – one of the most sought-after *Pterodromas* in the Western Palearctic
- **Leach's Storm-Petrel** – abundant wintering and passage migrant
- **Bulwer's petrel** – abundant local breeder
- **Red-billed Tropicbird** – abundant local breeder
- **Brown Booby** – abundant local breeder
- **Red-footed Booby** – increasing local breeder (Brava)

Other potential passage and vagrant species include **Manx Shearwater**, **Cory's Shearwater**, **Barolo Shearwater**, **Desertas Petrel**, **Zino's Petrel**, **Magnificent Frigatebird** and **Bridled Tern**.



Black-capped petrel *Pterodroma Hasitata*



Cape Verde storm-petrel *Hydrobates jabejabe*



White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina*



Cape Verde Petrel *Pterodroma feae*

White-tailed tropicbirds – Ilheu de Cima

Since 2020 **White-tailed Tropicbirds** have made several breeding attempts on the cliffs of Ilheu de Cima, the second largest of the Rombos Islands, 15km west of Fogo. The lone pair raised a chick for the first time in 2024, and repeated the feat in 2025 with another successful breeding year. If the pair return once again in 2026 we will dedicate time during our full-day pelagics to visiting the nest site as we pass by Ilheu de Cima, drifting offshore with the aim of observing the birds commuting to and from the nest site. Due to the nest being tucked inside a deep crevice it is not visible from the sea, and the birds will likely be incubating an egg through the latter half of March. Seeing these birds is not guaranteed, but through close communication with the Ilheu de Cima wardens who monitor the White-tailed Tropicbird nest camera, and some considerable effort on site, we will maximise our chances of observing this true Western Palearctic mega!



White-tailed tropicbird with chick (Projecto Vito)

Cetaceans

The deep tropical waters surrounding Fogo host an array cetacean species which we hope to encounter. **Pantropical Spotted Dolphin** and **Short-finned Pilot Whale** are regularly seen, whilst the possibility of **Rough-toothed Dolphin** and several species of beaked whale is high, and the list of other potential species is extensive.



Pantropical Spotted Dolphin *Stenella attenuata*



Gervais' Beaked Whale *Mesoplodon europaeus*

Nighttime excursion to a Cape Verde Petrel courtship site

A rare and unmissable opportunity to visit a **Cape Verde Petrel** courtship site in the foothills of Pico do Fogo, where we will witness the haunting calls and aerial displays of these enigmatic *Pterodromas* under the breathtaking Cape Verdean stars. Viewing through a thermal imaging camera is not essential, but is highly recommended. Also our best opportunity to see **Cape Verde Barn Owl**.



Inland Tour to the Calderas and Cloud Forest

A full-day land excursion will take us up to the Calderas of Fogo, an otherworldly volcanic crater home to an extraordinary village community some 2000m above sea level, and the site of the first Cape Verde Petrel colony to be discovered and studied. We will spend time in the coffee plantations and cloud forests of Fogo's northern slopes in search of the endemic **Cape Verde Swamp Warbler**, and witness much of the magnificent conservation work carried out by Projecto Vito in preserving Fogo's endemic flora and unique island ecology. Along the way we will have the opportunity to see several other endemic and speciality bird species present on Fogo, including **Cape Verde Swift**, **Iago Sparrow**, **Grey-headed Kingfisher**, **Black-crowned Sparrow-lark**, **Alexandra's Kestrel**, and **Brown-necked Raven**.



Clifftop Accommodation with Breathtaking Views

Our base for the trip is a clifftop, self-catering apartment in the quaint town of Sao Filipe overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, offering exceptional land-based seawatching opportunities and stunning panoramic views towards the island of Brava. The eight double-bedrooms are divided between three self-contained apartments, each with their own spacious kitchen and living room facilities. Bedrooms include options of either en-suite or shared bathroom facilities. Clothes washing facilities are also provided. Our apartment is situated on the northern edge of the town, only a six-minute drive from Fogo Airport, and a six-minute drive from Porto Vale Cavaleiros where we board our pelagic vessel each day. All transport to and from both the airport and harbour is provided.



Our Vessel

An exciting new partnership with Fogo-based NGO Projecto Vito and their vessel, Vénus, and her crew, has been essential to the development of the Cape Verde Pelagics model. Vénus is a spacious and stable boat, capable of speeds in excess of 20kts enabling us to cover vast areas on our full-day pelagics. The walk-around cabin allows easy access to the bow which offers an excellent platform for photography. The spacious cabin with padded seating provides shelter from the sun or sea spray when required, along with access to an onboard toilet.



Meal Arrangements (not included in trip cost)

On our first day in Fogo, time will be allocated for visiting one of Sao Filipe's small local supermarkets to purchase any supplies that you'll require for breakfasts, packed lunches and snacks for our days at sea. Evening meals each day will be at one of the local restaurants in Sao Filipe. Eating out in Fogo is very reasonably priced and you can expect to spend approximately 12 euros for a meal and drink. There is the option to purchase food for evening meals from the supermarket which can be prepared at our accommodation, if preferred. Bottled water and snacks will be provided onboard all pelagics.

Trip Details

Two separate trips will be run in March 2026:

2nd Mar – 8th Mar 2026 & **9th Mar - 15th Mar 2026**

- Group Size per trip: **7 participants**
- Base: **São Filipe, Fogo, Cape Verde**
- Price: **£1695**
- Includes:
 - Four full-day pelagic trips
 - Nighttime excursion to Cape Verde Petrel courtship site
 - Full-day land tour of Fogo to the Calderas and cloud forest
 - 6 nights' clifftop self-catering accommodation
 - Expert and local guiding throughout
 - Daily transfers to and from the quay
 - Airport transfers (Fogo only)
 - Bottled water and snacks during full-day pelagics

What's not included

- Any flights or connecting travel to and from Fogo
- Any overnight accommodation that may be required whilst travelling to Fogo
- Meals and drinks (except for bottled water during pelagics)
- Travel insurance

Contact

To register your interest and request booking information email scottreid@windshearbirding.com