



**ITALY: BIRDING AND SIGHTS OF THE ROMAN  
EMPIRE**

**1 - 18 JUNE 2018**



**Common Kingfisher** (photo Andrea Bonetti) may be seen on this trip.

Italy is a must-visit country to most travelers – this is where both the Roman Empire and the Renaissance began, and no other Western country can quite compete with the incredible historical depth of this one. Even if you are not a history buff, your jaws will still drop open when you first set eyes on the beautiful cities of Florence, Venice, and Rome. Combined with the art and history, Italy also has some of Europe's most magnificent scenery.

We acknowledge the fact that many people will want to visit Italy at some stage or another, and we hereby present you with the opportunity of combining birding with seeing the main sights and also experiencing the culture of modern Italy.

This is a tour in which we divide our time between the mountains, estuaries, and other birding sites, and also enjoy the culture and history of this unique country.

*Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually 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.*

## **Itinerary (18 days/17 nights)**

### **Days 1 – 2. Rome**

We will have two full days to explore Rome, one of the great cities of the world, and its major majestic monuments.

Overnight: Rome

### **Day 3. Birding the Via Appia, transfer to Viterbo and birding the Veio Regional Natural Park**

In the morning we will be walking and birding along the ancient Roman road called “Via Appia”.

Late in the morning we will depart to the province of Viterbo for birding in the Veio Regional Natural Park.

In the afternoon we will visit the ancient town of Sutri.

Overnight: Viterbo or surroundings

### **Day 4. The necropolises of Tarquinia and Cerveteri**

Today we'll visit the fascinating Etruscan necropolises of Tarquinia and Cerveteri (in Tarquinia we'll also visit the local museum). We can stop along the road for birding.

Overnight: Viterbo or surroundings

### **Day 5. Orvieto and birding Fiume Tevere Regional Park, transfer to Arezzo**

We'll depart for the province of Arezzo, stopping at the magnificent hill town of Orvieto (we'll visit the cathedral and the underground city). Later we will be birding in the Fiume Tevere Regional Park.

Overnight: Arezzo or surroundings.

### **Day 6. Arezzo, Sansepolcro, and Anghiari**

The town of Arezzo boast an intriguing medieval center and a few imposing Romanesque churches, which we'll explore this morning.

In the afternoon we'll go to the Upper Tiber Valley, visiting the renaissance and medieval towns of Sansepolcro with its fabulous museum and Anghiari, famous for the Battle of Anghiari between Florence and Milan in 1440.

Overnight: Arezzo or surroundings

### **Day 7. Birding the Foreste Casentinesi National Park and visiting the La Verna Sanctuary**

Walking and birding in the Foreste Casentinesi National Park, which includes the largest and best preserved woodlands and forests in Italy, will hopefully allow us to add a number of special birds to our bird list.

Later we'll visit the Franciscan sanctuary in the La Verna Mountain.

Overnight: Arezzo or surroundings

### **Day 8. Florence**

Today we'll visit Florence by train. The city's world-famous cathedral, Ponte Vecchio, Palazzo Vecchio, and Basilica di Santa Croce, and last but not least the incomparable Uffizi museum, will keep us enthralled all day.

Overnight: Arezzo or surroundings

### **Day 9. Visit to Siena and the Val d'Orcia**

We'll visit the city of Siena and the Val d'Orcia area and enjoy some stops along the road for birding.

Overnight: Arezzo or surroundings

### **Day 10. Birding the Regional Park of Lake Trasimeno and visit to Cortona**

While birding in the Regional Park of Lake Trasimeno, we will take a boat trip to its main island. We will also learn something about bird ringing at the local ringing station.

Later in the day we will enjoy a visit to the medieval village of Cortona.

Overnight: Arezzo or surroundings

### **Day 11. Visiting Ravenna on the way to Comacchio**

Today we depart for Comacchio in the province of Ferrara. On the way we will stop at Ravenna and marvel at its overwhelming Byzantine churches.

Comacchio, the site of the annual International Birdwatching and Nature Tourism Fair, is situated on the delta of the Po River, one of the premier birding sites of Italy. We will start our birding here today in the Parco della Salina de Cervia, the Cervia salt pans.

Overnight: Comacchio

### **Day 12. Birding the Po Delta**

We will have a full day to explore the magnificent Po Delta. We will be birding in particular in the wide open, peaceful spaces of the Comacchio Lagoons Nature Reserve south of the old town and in the Punte Alberete flooded forest, a seductive landscape including a forest adapted for growth in a wet environment, underwater meadowlands, ponds, and the typical flora and fauna of swamp areas. Both are part of the vast Po Delta National Park.

Overnight: Comacchio

### **Day 13. Birding the Valli di Comacchio Lagoons by boat, transfer to Venice**

After an exciting boat trip in the morning for birding in the Valli di Comacchio Lagoons, we will depart for Venice.

Overnight: Venice, or at the Venetian Lagoon

### **Days 14 – 15. Venice**

For two full days we will explore the wonderful city of Venice – the Piazza San Marco, the Rialto Bridge, the Doge's Palace, Saint Mark's Basilica, and the Grand Canal. We will also make visits to its main islands with a typical local boat.

Overnight: Venice, or at the Venetian Lagoon

### **Days 16 – 17. Dolomiti Bellunesi National Park**

We will bird for two days in Parco Nazionale Dolomiti Bellunesi, Italy's most popular national park. This park is home to magnificent landscapes brimming with rare flora and fauna. Birding in the most beautiful parts of the park, taking short walks, will be an unforgettable experience.

### **Day 18. Departure**

Today we'll transfer back to Venice for our international flights home.

**Duration:** 18 days  
**Group size:** 4 – 8  
**Date:** 1 – 18 June 2018  
**Start:** Rome  
**End:** Venice

**Price:** Approximately €7827 per person sharing, subject to group size, timing, and other factors

**Single supplement:** To be announced

#### **Price includes:**

17 B&B in 3-star hotels and Agriturismo farmhouse or villa accommodation, double occupancy  
17 dinners  
3 wine tasting visits as per itinerary  
4 half-day guided tours (of Arezzo, Siena, Uffizi or Florence, Venice)  
Boat tours as per itinerary  
Museum tickets (Museo Civico Sansepolcro, Leggenda della Vera Croce in Arezzo, Uffizi)  
Bus for the group from the pick-up at the airport to departure  
Guide and driver

#### **Price excludes:**

International flights  
Lunches  
Personal insurance  
Alcoholic beverages  
Gratuities  
Laundry  
Personal expenses such as gifts