



BIRDS

Learn more about the species in the beautiful nature surrounding Areias do Seixo.



◆ Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

The commonest and most widespread Portugal's bird of prey. It is quite large with broad, rounded wings, and a short neck and tail. When gliding and soaring it will often hold its wings in a shallow 'V' and the tail is fanned. Birds are variable in colour from all dark brown to much paler variations, all have dark wingtips and a finely barred tail. Their plaintive mewing call could be mistaken for a cat.

Degree of Difficulty: 6

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/36762>



◆ Pied wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)

A delightful small, long-tailed and rather sprightly black and white bird. When not standing and frantically wagging its tail up and down it can be seen dashing about over lawns or car parks in search of food. It frequently calls when in its undulating flight and often gathers at dusk to form large roosts in city centres. It is quite common all over Portugal but specially between October and March in the southern part of the country. Gardens and small lakes and creeks are a perfect location for watching them.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round, but more common between October and March

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/77358>



◆ Red-rumped swallow (*Cecropis daurica*)

Its long and easy flight clearly sets it apart from the restless agitation of the other swallows. Its long nest entrances are also a distinguishing feature. It has a shining blue back and a golden colouration on its chest and on the sides of its head, making it a wonderful sight in the gardens and skies of this part of the country. Right by the lake, specially in spring, they can be spotted flying close to the water to drink whilst in flight.

Degree of Difficulty: 7

Colour status: Green

Season: March to October

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/76894>



◆ Long-eared owl (*Asio otus*)

The long-eared owl is medium-sized owl, smaller in size than a woodpigeon. It often looks long and thin, with head feathers (known as ear tufts even though they are not ears), which it raises when alarmed. It is buff-brown with darker brown streaks, and deep orange eyes. It is the hardest nocturnal bird of prey to spot in Portugal and it lives and nests in dense in woods, occupying abandoned crow nests.

Degree of Difficulty: 10

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round, specially conspicuous in Spring

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/36311>



◆ European stonehatch (*Saxicola rubicola*)

The black head, bright orange chest and white throat are a giver when this little sparrow-sized bird is perched on a fence or a shrub on open areas. This is one of the easiest and more identifiable birds one can spot in the fields and dune complexes in the south and centre of Portugal. The males are much more conspicuous than the females, but both can be easily spotted all year round.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/77569>



◆ Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

The wren is a tiny brown bird, although it is heavier, less slim, than the even smaller goldcrest. It is dumpy, almost rounded, with a fine bill, quite long legs and toes, very short round wings and a short, narrow tail which is sometimes cocked up vertically. For such a small bird it has a remarkably loud voice. It is common and present during the entire year in Portugal, and it prefers dense woods and shrubs.

Degree of Difficulty: 6

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/29699>



◆ Serin (*Serinus serinus*)

Serins are small finches with short stubby bills and forked tails. Both sexes have streaky yellow brown upper parts, paler streaked under parts and lemon yellow rumps. Males have bright yellow heads with darker patches on the crown and below the eye, females and juveniles are much duller. It is one of the most spotted birds in the Portuguese spring as the males fly up to the very top of the trees and sing their full song uninterrupted and with their wings stretched to the back. They are very common in pine woods and can be found all over the year, although in winter there is the arrival of hundreds of migrants as well.

Degree of difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/29473>



◆ Blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

A colourful mix of blue, yellow, white and green makes the blue tit one of the most attractive and most recognisable garden visitors. In winter, family flocks join up with other tits as they search for food. They are very common in pine and oak woods and can be found all through the year in Portugal.

Degree of Difficulty: 6

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/42178>



◆ Great tit (*Parus major*)

The largest Portuguese tit - green and yellow with a striking glossy black head with white cheeks and a distinctive two-syllable song. It is a woodland bird, which has readily adapted to man-made habitats to become a familiar garden visitor. It can be quite aggressive at a bird-table, fighting off smaller tits. In winter it joins with blue tits and others to form roaming flocks which scour gardens and countryside for food. It is very abundant in pine and oak woods and can be spotted all over the year in Portugal.

Degree of Difficulty: 6

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/45953>



◆ Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

A large and conspicuous waterbird, the cormorant has an almost primitive appearance with its long neck making it appear almost reptilian. It is often seen standing with its wings held out to dry. Regarded by some as black, sinister and greedy, cormorants are supreme fishers which can bring them into conflict with anglers and they have been persecuted in the past. If you see a great black bird flying a couple of meters from the sea surface you are likely in the presence of a great cormorant.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

Colour status: Green

Season: mostly from September to April, but juveniles can be spotted in Spring and in Summer as well.

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/31619>



◆ Cirl bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*)

Its song makes it extremely identifiable, as well as the male's face coloration of a bright yellow with two clear black stripes and a black throat. The Cirl bunting is not much bigger than a robin and is can be spotted on the edge of pine woods and in agricultural mosaic-type areas. It is a highly territorial bird that can be spotted in Portugal all through the year.

Degree of Difficulty: 6

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/29456>



◆ Spotless starling (*Sturnus unicolor*)

The spotless starling is quite similar to the blackbird, although it is slimmer and a bit smaller. It is very commonly spotted on the wires in telephone posts and on the gardens jumping frenetically beak-on to the grass to capture small worms and insects. It is a close relative to the common starling but it is endemic from the Iberian Peninsula and Southern France. It is a resident species and so it can be spotted all year round.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/81026>



◆ Yellow-legged gull (*Larus michahellis*)

The yellow-legged gull has only recently been recognised as a species in its own right, having previously been considered to be a race of herring gull. Adults have darker grey backs and wings than herring gulls, but are paler than lesser black-backed gulls. They have more black in the wing tips than herring gulls and smaller white 'mirrors'. The legs are bright yellow, there is a red ring around the eye and the bill is yellow with a large red spot. In non-breeding plumage, the head is less streaked and whiter than herring gulls. Juvenile yellow-legged gulls are very similar to juvenile lesser black-backed gulls, but tend to be whiter-headed and start to gain a grey 'saddle' on their backs quickly as they moult to first winter plumage. Immature birds gain adult-like characteristics as they mature over the course of five years with the legs turning yellow and dark grey feathers replacing the brown and black immature feathers. It is a very common marine bird species in Portugal.

Degree of Difficulty: 2

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/71724>



◆ Common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Moorhens are blackish with a red and yellow beak and long, green legs. Seen closer-up, they have a dark brown back and wings and a more bluish-black belly, with white stripes on the flanks. There is a couple living in the lake by the hotel and can be spotted all year round. They are quite elusive but in spring the mating rituals can be spotted from a considerable distance.

Degree of Difficulty: 7

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round, specially conspicuous in Spring

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/26611>



◆ Cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Slightly smaller but much rarer than the little egret, they often spend time close to livestock and grab insects and worms that their hooves disturb. Cattle egrets have yellow or greyish legs and a yellow beak, compared to the black legs (with yellow feet) and black beak of the little egret. Here, they can be spotted by the small lake near the garden, feeding on the red swamp crayfish, toads and frogs, specially in early summer.

Degree of Difficulty: 7

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round, but more abundant in early and mid Summer

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/84827>



◆ Carrion crow (*Corvus corone*)

The all-black carrion crow is one of the cleverest, most adaptable of our birds. It is often quite fearless, although it can be wary of man. They are fairly solitary, usually found alone or in pairs. The closely related hooded crow has recently been split as a separate species. Carrion crows will come to gardens for food and although often cautious initially, they soon learn when it is safe, and will return repeatedly to take advantage of whatever is on offer.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/81915>



◆ Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Kingfishers are small unmistakable bright blue and orange birds of slow moving or still water. They fly rapidly, low over water, and hunt fish from riverside perches, occasionally hovering above the water's surface. They are vulnerable to hard winters and habitat degradation through pollution or unsympathetic management of watercourses. They are a resident species in Portugal and can be spotted all year round, although they are quite hard to spot. They are in some danger due to decreasing numbers around Europe.

Degree of Difficulty: 8

Colour status: Yellow

Season: all year round, but more conspicuous from August to April

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/54112>



◆ Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

The males live up to their name but, confusingly, females are brown often with spots and streaks on their breasts. The bright orange-yellow beak and eye-ring make adult male blackbirds one of the most striking garden birds. One of the most common birds in Portuguese's towns and cities, its mellow song is also a favorite. It can be spotted all year round and all over the territory.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/55179>



◆ House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Noisy and gregarious, these cheerful exploiters of man's rubbish and wastefulness, have managed to colonise most of the world. The ultimate avian opportunist perhaps. Very easy to spot and to identify, this is a common presence all over Portugal as well.

Degree of difficulty: 2

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/55221>



◆ Common kestrel (*Falco tinunculus*)

A familiar sight with its pointed wings and long tail, hovering above farms or a roadside verge. The common kestrel is an abundant species in Portugal near large urban areas or agricultural fields. It preys on small rodents, large insects, reptiles and even rabbits. It can also be spotted resting on the branches of high trees. It can be spotted all year round as it is a resident species, and it breeds in the entire territory.

Degree of Difficulty: 7

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/59756>



◆ Southern grey shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*)

The southern grey shrike is the largest of the Portuguese shrikes. They are very territorial so you're unlikely to see more than one at once. Shrikes are often 'mobbed' by other birds which recognise them as dangerous predators. Keep an eye out for a medium-sized, long-tailed bird sitting at the top of a tree. The black mask and grey plumage are distinctive. The most amazing feature of this bird is that it stores its prey in barbed wire or spines, impaling them alive while looking for more prey. It can be spotted outside the pine woods, on the dunes on the way to Seixo beach.

Degree of Difficulty: 6

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/30172>



◆ Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

The sanderling is a small, plump, energetic wading bird. It has a short straight black bill and medium length black legs. It is pale grey above and white underneath, and there is a black mark at its shoulder where the folded wing meets the body. It does not breed in Portugal, but is a winter visitor and passage migrant in spring and autumn, journeying to and from their high Arctic breeding grounds. It is one of the most abundant birds in these shores and can be easily spotted patrolling the rocks in search of small shells and crayfish.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Colour status: Green

Season: all year, but best between September and March

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/118538>



◆ Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

A highly coloured finch with a bright red face and yellow wing patch. Sociable, often breeding in loose colonies, they have a delightful liquid twittering song and call. Their long fine beaks allow them to extract otherwise inaccessible seeds from thistles and teasels. In winter they can join in the hundreds and the large flocks are an amazing site. It is present all year round in Portugal.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/45855>



◆ Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)

The hoopoe is an exotic looking bird that is the size of a mistle thrush. It has a pinkish-brown body, striking black and white wings, a long black downcurved bill, and a long pinkish-brown crest which it raises when excited. It can be found all through the year in Portugal, as it also breeds here, although it is less common in the winter. It prefers not so dense woods so here in the hotel you won't find it in the older pine woods, rather in the younger one farther from the beach.

Degree of Difficulty: 6

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/76893>



◆ Black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

The black redstart is a small robin-sized bird that has adapted to live at the heart of industrial and urban centres. In Portugal it inhabits gardens, woods and everywhere where worms can be found. Its name comes from the plumage of the male, which is grey-black in colour with a red tail. It is a very nervous bird and it is identifiable when it wags its tail electrically when perched on a tree trunk or a post.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/76848>



◆ Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Smaller than a redshank, turnstones have a mottled appearance with brown or chestnut and black upperparts and brown and white or black and white head pattern, whilst their underparts are white and legs orange. They spend most of their time creeping and fluttering over rocks, picking out food from under stones. It doesn't breed in Portugal, but it spends the whole winter here and can be spotted all year round going to and from its arctic breeding sites.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round but specially between September and March

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/108566>



◆ Collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Collared doves are a pale, pinky-brown grey colour, with a distinctive black neck collar (as the name suggests). They have deep red eyes and reddish feet. Their monotonous cooing will be a familiar sound to many of you. Although you'll often see them on their own or in pairs, flocks may form where there is a lot of food available. Here in the Areias do Seixo there is a couple nesting on the pine woods, which can easily be spotted in spring in the large pines in the garden. Its song is its most identifiable feature at a distance, a three syllable "roo-roo-rooooo".

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Colour status: Green

Season: All year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/37443>



◆ Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Its twittering and wheezing song, and flash of yellow and green as it flies, make this finch a truly colourful character. Nesting in a garden conifer, or feasting on black sunflower seeds, it is a regular garden visitor, able to take advantage of food in rural and urban gardens. Although quite sociable, they may squabble among themselves or with other birds at the bird table. Like the other finches in Portugal, it joins in big numbers in the winter around agricultural areas, and it can be found in Portugal all year-round.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

Colour status: Green

Season: all year round

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/31730>