

How can tourism play an important role in Portuguese seabird conservation?

Title

Since January, the Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds ([SPEA; BirdLife in Portugal](#)), together with [Marlin Boat Tours](#) are performing a monitoring scheme of birds at sea.

At [Cabo Raso Marine Important Bird Area](#) (IBA) located west of Lisbon, at the Berlengas Island IBA northwest of Lisbon or during a 5-6 days trip along the coast line, tourists have the opportunity to enjoy a bird watching adventure and give their contribution to the monitoring of several seabirds, including breeders, winters or migrants species. Such data is crucial to assess the number of seabirds that are currently frequenting Portuguese coastal waters and identify main factors that are affecting seabird survival. For instance, recent data identifies Portuguese waters as the most important wintering area to the critically endangered [Balearic Shearwater](#). However, another recent study raises concerns in terms of by-catch in the fisheries industry. This highlights the need to implement a proper seabird monitoring scheme.

On-board a comfortable 15m sailing boat, tourists are invited help count birds, while learning the methodology to monitor birds at sea. Each trip is full of amazing surprises and great photo opportunities are provided, especially during pelagic or multiple days trips when chum (a kind of salmon) is used to attract birds to the boat. Experienced bird experts are available on-board to help detect and identify the seabirds.

Only with the support of tourists, SPEA and Marlin Boat Tours can continue this important monitoring. The survey agenda and trips prices are available on SPEA's website www.spea.pt. SPEA kindly invites everyone who would like to offer a contribution to the daily or weekly surveys.

If you need any more information, please contact [Nuno oliveira](#), Marine Program Assistant at SPEA.
