



VIA BOLLANA, 10 – 48015 CERVIA (RA) – ITALY

## **Spend seven days with us in the Po Delta Park** **Emilia-Romagna, Italy**

**1<sup>st</sup> day:** Flight London/Bologna or London Forli, Hotel accommodation

### **2<sup>nd</sup> day: In the kingdom of the Hawk and the White Stork**

Visit to the Campotto valleys, a flooded area of about 1200 hectares mentioned in the Ramsar Convention as Area of International Importance (1971). They are basins of fresh waters lying between the river Reno and the Idice and Sillaro streams, close to the little town of Argenta.

The drainage of the marshland operated by man has designed the morphology of territory now characterised by networks of drainage canals and basins for water expansion.

Several species of birds find here the ideal place to live and reproduce such as for example the Wiskererred Tern (*Chlidonas hybridus*), the Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*) or the magnificent Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*).

Here it is possible to visit the Museum of the Valley of Argenta (relating to the naturalistic aspects of the area) or the interesting Museum of Saiarino with its water-scooping machine.

Not far from here it is possible to visit the oasis of the bends of Porto, a fresh water basin of more than 50 hectares fringed by *Phragmites* reedbeds, where the Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), the Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) and the Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*) build their nests. This is also an important site for the reintroduction of several typical species of the Delta, such as the White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) and the Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> day: Birdwatching in the flooded woods**

The area situated in the North part of Ravenna is characterized by several natural environments such as plain-woods, lagoons, pinewoods, flooded woods and fresh water marshlands, ideal habitat for several species of birds. Punte Alberete is the last example of flooded woodland on the lower Padana plain. Here it is possible to walk along a nature path that crosses the flooded wood populated with ash and willow and continues among reed beds, ponds and wet meadows. Along the path you can easily observe extraordinary species such as Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Purple Herons (*Ardea purpurea*), Ferruginous Ducks (*Aythya nyroca*) and Red-crested Pochards (*Netta rufina*). A little further to the North, it is possible to reach the Mandriole valley, where a high observation tower allows to admire the great egret-heron nesting colony settled between the reeds and the willows.

The S. Vitale pinewood is situated at few steps from the flooded wood: a path leads from here to the shores of Piallassa Baiona, a wide brackish lagoon in which it is possible to observe Coots (*Fulica atra*), Little Grebes (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) and Great Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*) together with a number of rare, protected species, such as the Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) and the Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), which nest among the tufts of the glassworts.

### **4<sup>th</sup> day: Prints into the sky**

Tour in the Northern part of the Po Delta Park in an area situated between the two mouths of the river Po, those of Goro and Volano. The inlet of Goro covers a surface of about 2000 hectares. It's just sixty centimetres deep and is separated from the sea by sand shoals and dunes. A special tour by 5-sit boats along the river branch of Po di Volano will allow to go through the reeds silently and carefully to discover the hided birds. Furthermore it is possible to make a stop and walk along a path inside the Porticino -Canneviè valleys, observing the brackish valley, rich in alophyte



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vegetation and in numerous species of birds, among which the Black-winged Stilts (*Himantopus himantopus*), ducks and hundreds of Coots (*Fulica atra*). It is also possible to continue the visit along the eastern bank of the Bertuzzi valley to observe large flocks of Greater Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) together with Greater White Herons (*Egretta alba*), Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*), Little Egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) and Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).

#### **5<sup>th</sup> day: History and Nature**

The first part of the day is dedicated to the visit at the historical town of Ravenna, ancient capital of the Roman Empire still full of magnificent monuments and splendid Byzantine mosaics.

During the second part of the day interesting visit to Cervia saltpains, salt basins lined by banks where salinity reaches very high values and where only few particular species of flora and fauna can find a place to live. Here the limicolous birds find their ideal habitat. Interesting is the Blackwinged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), the Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), the Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), the Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*), the Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and many others.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> day: Flying on waters**

The Comacchio valleys are the most important damp complexes of the Delta Park made up of dunal bars, mounds and artificial banks bounding basins of fresh or brackish waters. Strategic place and ideal habitat for rare species of birds in their flow of migrations, but also fundamental spot for the animal species which here live and reproduce. It is possible to admire the naturalistic landscape of the valleys through a boat trip; from the boat, that leads to some ancient fishing buildings, you can easily observe the Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), the Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), the Slender-billed Gull (*Larus genei*) and the Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*).

It is also possible to walk along the Fossa Channel bank and reach the Zavelea valley. Here the observation tower allows to observe the marsh, with wide reed beds where the Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) nests and muddy strands where the Little Terns (*Sterna albifrons*), the Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*), the Gull-billed Terns (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) and the very rare Collared Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*) nests.

The day ends with a sunset evening visit to the lagoon city of Comacchio, famous as "the little Venice" for the presence of canals and bridges.

**7<sup>st</sup> day:** Departure

#### **Period:**

September-October 2006

March-June 2007

#### **Individual participation tariff from:**

£ 307,00 (Minimum 7 Pax)

£ 255,00 (Minimun 15 Pax)

Half-Board in Farm holiday accomodation

#### **Individual participation tariff from:**

£ 277,00 (Minimum 7 Pax)

£ 225,00 (Minimun 15 Pax)

Bed & Breakfast in Hotel accommodation



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**Individual participation tariff from:**

£ 184,00 (Minimum 7 Pax)

£ 132,00 (Minimum 15 Pax)

Bed & Breakfast in Hostel accommodation

**Tariff includes:**

Farm holiday, Hotel or Hostel accommodation based on twin occupancy, qualified naturalist guide (GAE), motor –ship excursions (inlet of Goro and Comacchio valleys), tickets for Monuments of Ravenna, Travel Insurance, VAT.

**Tariff does not include:**

Flight to Bologna or Forlì and whatever is non expressly indicated and all items of a more personal nature such extra drinks, laundry, souvenirs and tips.

**Hire charge:** quotation on request.

**For information and reservation:**

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