




## Western Sahara Rare Wildlife Tour


**Destination:** Western Sahara, Morocco


**Season:** February-March

 Rare mammals like Sand Cat, Fennec Fox, Saharan Striped Polecat all possible

 Private Jeep safaris throughout the trip – with expert local safari guides

 Long nights spotlighting for elusive and rare nocturnal mammals

 Desert camping in the Sahara with beautiful and spectacular starry skies

 Pharaoh Eagle Owls & other rare desert birds such as Cream-coloured Courser

### Dates:

Next group tour: 12<sup>th</sup> March – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

### Private / Tailored Tour information:

This tour can be booked anytime of the year, however there is a peak of activity in spring February-April when sightings of our key species is higher than other times of year.

The group tour is run annually, however you can book private tours for any number of people you wish (up to a maximum of 5 people) and we can provide all prices for any group size including private tours for just 1 person.

We also have flexibility for the duration of trip you would like to book.

Some of our clients prefer to book longer trips to Northern Africa or would like to add in other locations around this stunning region. There are many other wonderful things to see and do in Northern Africa and we have a range of other African destinations for wildlife holidays, including safaris including extensions to Tunisia for ungulates or other African destinations such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Gabon, South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and many other countries. All are combinable with this tour if you wish to know more we can provide further information and a sample itinerary for you to have a look over.

Trips for any group size and any duration are possible, please enquire further for more information on our tailored African Safari Holidays.

For our tailored tours of longer durations or including other activities please contact us and we will prepare a tailored itinerary and quote for you at the soonest.

### Prices (2024 season):

Group Tour (7 nights)

£2,095 per person (4-5 people)

\*single supplement £100 for Dakhla hotel nights only.

### Overview

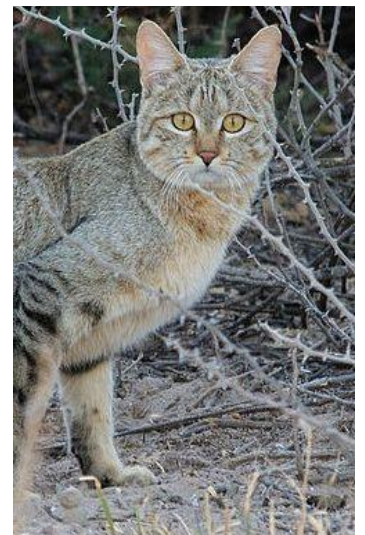
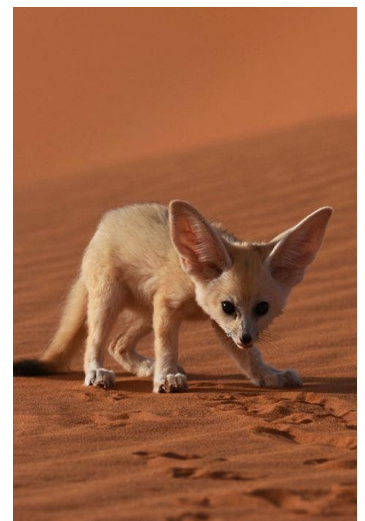
**Day 1:** Dakhla

**Days 2-3:** Saharan Desert Campsite

**Days 4-6:** Saharan Desert House

**Day 7:** Dakhla

**Day 8:** Home





# Tour Information

## Introduction

This tour focuses on the elusive desert wildlife of the wonderful and remote Western Sahara. There is a special focus on the rare and iconic nocturnal mammals of this part of the world and so there are some very long (but productive and rewarding) nights of spotlighting throughout the trip.

Some of our targeted species are among the rarest and most elusive nocturnal creatures in the world, animals such as African golden wolf, Fennec & Ruppell's Foxes, African wild cat, Sand Cat, Saharan Striped Polecat & Desert Hedgehog are all possible.

Another elusive nocturnal animal we will have some time dedicated to is the Pharaoh Eagle-Owl, but other birds found during the day will also be searched for, rarities in the region include cream-coloured courser, crowned sandgrouse, cricket warbler & Dunn's lark. The large flocks of desert sparrow also contain the beautiful Sudan golden sparrow.

The tour will involve some stunning desert camping and after dark the beautiful and spectacular starry skies are among some of the best in the world.

All in all this tour is a great overview of the Western Sahara's fascinating and unique wildlife, much of which is very difficult to see elsewhere. Because of the very long hours of spotlighting, which will see us return to the campsite in the early morning we will rest until the mid to late afternoon, to allow sufficient time for rest and also missing out the hottest part of the day when wildlife is not very active. But by making ourselves somewhat nocturnal for this trip we will be rewarded with good chances of sightings of some of the Western Palearctic's rarest and most unusual mammals.

Our very top targeted species include Fennec & Ruppell's Foxes, Sand Cat, African Wildcat, Desert Hedgehog, African Golden Wolf and Saharan Striped Polecat, alongside a wide variety of smaller creatures such as jerboas. The tour will start and end in the coastal town of Dakhla, from where we'll search the nearby coastline for species including West African Crested Tern and Audouin's Gull.

Below is our itinerary for our group tour, it is completely tailorable for any private tours and if you wish to add in more things, locations or days or even take some things out or reduce the trip duration please just let us know and we will send over tailored itinerary options for you to have a look over.

## Itinerary

### Day 1 Dakhla

### Arrival

#### Accommodation:

Hotel Albaraka  
(3\* Hotel)

#### Food:

No meals are included today.

#### Transportation:

Private Vehicle

Most flights arrive in Dakhla via Casablanca and arrive in the early morning where we will be met by our local guide and transferred to a comfortable tourist hotel nearby.

### Days 2-4 Dakhla Bay & Desert Campsite

### Wildlife Watching & Travelling

#### Accommodation:

Desert Camp  
(campsite)

#### Food:

Breakfast on day 2 will be served at the hotel with all other meals being prepared by our camp cook at the campsite.

#### Transportation:

Private Vehicle & Walking.

On our first morning, we will go for birdwatching along the nearby coastline; we hope to see many migrant waders in the shores of Dakhla Bay, as well as osprey, West African crested tern (recently split from royal tern), Audouin's and slender-billed gulls and greater flamingo.

Several species of cetacean are occasionally seen offshore and so we will keep a look out for these in the distance. Some Pelagic bird species are often seen too, such as pomarine skua, razorbill or European storm petrel.

After lunch, we will be ready to move inland and towards our first desert location. Some of the highlights we hope to see along the way this afternoon include birds such as cream-coloured courser, crowned and spotted sandgrouse, cricket warbler, black-crowned sparrow-lark and Dunn's lark.

The flocks of desert Sparrows could contain one or two gorgeous Sudan golden sparrows as well, we will pay close attention to these as they fly by.

We will then arrive at our campsite, we will spend two nights here, at this campsite which has been specially set up for us, in the heart of the desert. The tents will be fairly basic, but any lack of luxury or comfort, will be highly



rewarded by the vast wilderness of the landscape, and by the "wow factor" of spectacular starry skies once darkness falls.

Night drives will be the major feature of this tour, so in order to compensate for this and give clients and guides sufficient time to rest, on most days we will not begin our activities until the early afternoon.

After dark we will have long night drives looking for various nocturnal wildlife, including all of our highly targeted nocturnal mammals.

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## Days 5-6 **Western Sahara**

## *Wildlife Watching & Travelling*

### Accommodation:

Permanent Desert Home (Basic House)

### Food:

All meals will be prepared by our camp cook.

### Transportation:

Private vehicle.

After breakfast on day 4, we will leave our camp and head to our next wildlife watching destination. We will stay here for three nights and our accommodation will be a permanent desert house. This house is the only permanent accommodation option in the area and, while comfortable, is still very basic. It will offer more in the way of facilities than our previous tented accommodation (while still being rustic and remote).

We will have access to spectacular areas for nocturnal creatures, and we will continue with long night drives in search of wildlife. Both in the Desert House and our campsite, we hope to see Ruppell's and fennec foxes, African golden wolf, sand cat, African wildcat, desert hedgehog and Saharan striped polecat (Libyan striped weasel).

Nocturnal birds too, so, good chance of finding Pharaoh eagle-owl, either at night or at a day roost.

We will use our journey from the camp to the desert house as a spotlighting drive (the area in between is one of the very best for Sand Cat), so, we will not arrive at our accommodation until approximately 02:00 am on Day 5.

We will then rest until the mid-late afternoon on day 5 and repeat with night drives on the following two days here.

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## Day 7 **Dakhla**

## *Travelling*

### Accommodation:

Hotel Albaraka (3\* Hotel)

### Food:

Breakfast will be served in the camp with lunch en route and dinner in the hotel back in Dakhla.

### Transportation:

Private vehicle.

This is our last full day in the Western Sahara and once we leave the house we will make our way back to Dakhla. In the evening once we arrive we will enjoy a relaxing final dinner and will recall the great selection of encounters with exciting species.

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## Day 8 **Home**

## *Departure*

### Accommodation:

NA

### Food:

Breakfast will be at the hotel and no other meals included today.

### Transportation:

Private vehicle.

This morning you will be taken to the airport to catch your return flight home.

### **Your tour and all Royle Safaris services end upon transfer to the airport**

Please note that the itinerary stated above is correct as our planned intentions for the tour.

However adverse weather conditions and other local considerations can necessitate some modifications of the itinerary during the course of the tour; any changes will be made to make the best of the time, weather conditions and other constraints forced upon us and all changes will be made in conjunction with our terms and conditions.



### Tour Inclusions

Absolutely everything mentioned in the above itinerary is included (except where it is expressly mentioned as an optional extra).

- All accommodation as mentioned above or of a similar standard as mentioned (camping is included here, all camping equipment will be provided) – sharing required when in desert.
- All meals as mentioned in the itinerary; ***please note that some lunches and dinners may not be included when staying in cities in this itinerary.***
- Bottled mineral or purified (boiled) water will be provided throughout and on request.
- Private AC vehicles for all transfers.
- English speaking local drivers and guides with years of experience in working in the areas we are travelling and all fuel, tolls and taxes associated with driving.
- All camp crew including a cook are included.
- Local naturalist experts guides where needed for all wildlife watching activities and spotlighting drives.
- All fuel, tolls, taxes and other expenses relating to driving.
- All wildlife watching and cultural activities as mentioned in the itinerary.
- Entrance fees and permits to reserves, National Parks and other wildlife watching locations in this itinerary.

### Tour Exclusions

Nearly everything you will need is included in the price you have already paid for the tour. However there are some things not included.

- International flights to and from the tour start and end points.
- Travel insurance including any fees that result from emergency medical or evacuation needs.
- Visa fees for entering the country(s).
- Vaccinations and any medication are not included.
- Any food other than the meals provided and mentioned in the above itinerary; ***please note that some lunches and dinners when staying in cities may not be included in this itinerary.***
- Some meals will include a drink (such as juice, tea & coffee at breakfast) but most soft drinks and alcohol are an extra expense.
- Any items of a personal nature are not included, such as souvenirs, medication, toiletries, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips are also not included. There is no hard and fast rule for tipping in Morocco. However we would appreciate it, if you have been happy with the service of the guides and drivers then please tip a little something at the end of the complete excursion. For local guides we hire for individual activities please tip individually and also if there are tip boxes in restaurants, camps, lodges and hotels then these are generally used for tipping all of the staff.
- Any departure taxes which may be due when leaving are not included (but may be included in the cost of your flights).

**Please refer to our Terms & Conditions (<http://www.royle-safaris.co.uk/terms-conditions/>) before booking any trips – email or paper copies of Terms & Conditions can be provided if needed**