THE 16th PAN-AFRICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS
12th–17th April 2027 MARRAKECH, MOROCCO

1st CIRCULAR



GENERAL INFORMATION

Morocco stands as a remarkable destination for ornithologists and bird enthusiasts, thanks to its exceptional diversity of landscapes and ecosystems, its strategic geographical position at the crossroads of Africa, Europe, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, and its importance along major bird migration routes. From the wetlands, lagoons and estuaries of its coastlines to the forests and high-altitude habitats of the Atlas Mountains, and from its steppes and agricultural landscapes to the arid environments of the Sahara, Morocco offers outstanding opportunities to study bird diversity, migration, ecology and conservation.

Among Morocco's most remarkable natural assets, its avifaunal heritage occupies a particularly important place. The country supports a rich diversity of resident and migratory birds, including globally threatened species and emblematic birds such as the Northern Bald Ibis. Its wetlands and other natural habitats provide essential breeding, wintering and stopover sites for birds travelling between Europe and Africa. Studying, protecting and restoring these habitats, while strengthening scientific knowledge and promoting sustainable management, are essential to conserving biodiversity and ensuring the long-term survival of bird populations. These efforts also contribute to environmental education, local community engagement and the development of sustainable nature-based tourism.

It is within this context that the 16th Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC 16) will be held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 12 to 17 April 2027, at the Conference Centre of Cadi Ayyad University. Bringing together ornithologists, researchers, academics, students, conservation practitioners, protected-area managers, non-governmental organizations and representatives of public institutions from across Africa and beyond, the congress will provide a major platform for sharing scientific advances, exchanging experiences and strengthening cooperation in bird research and conservation. The programme will address key challenges and emerging opportunities in ornithology, including bird ecology and migration, population monitoring, habitat conservation and restoration, the impacts of climate change, biodiversity policy, and the role of local communities in safeguarding natural heritage.

On behalf of the organizers, GREPOM/BirdLife Morocco and its partners, we are pleased to invite the international and African scientific communities to participate in this important event. Through scientific presentations, plenary sessions, workshops, professional meetings and opportunities to discover Morocco's outstanding natural environments, PAOC 16 will foster dialogue between science, conservation practice and public policy, while encouraging new partnerships and collaborative initiatives across the continent.

Under the motto "Birds unite us – Les oiseaux nous unissent," PAOC 16 aims to strengthen the African ornithological community, promote knowledge-sharing across borders and generations, and advance collective action for the conservation of birds and their habitats. By bringing together diverse expertise, experiences and perspectives in Marrakech, the congress will reaffirm the essential role of birds as indicators of ecosystem health and as a shared natural heritage connecting countries, peoples and continents.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

30 October 2026: Issue of the First Circular and Preliminary Registration

30 November 2026: End of early-bird registration and abstract submission

30 December 2026: Issue of the Second Circular

28 January 2027: Deadline for abstract submission

15 February 2027: Issue of the Third (final) Circular (with detailed arrangements)

11 April 2027 (Sunday): Arrival, registration and icebreaker.

12–13 April 2027 (Monday–Tuesday): Official opening, plenary talks, oral and poster sessions, workshops.

14 April 2027 (Wednesday): Mid-congress excursions (one per participant, see Excursions).

15–16 April 2027 (Thursday–Friday): Oral and poster sessions, workshops and closing ceremony.

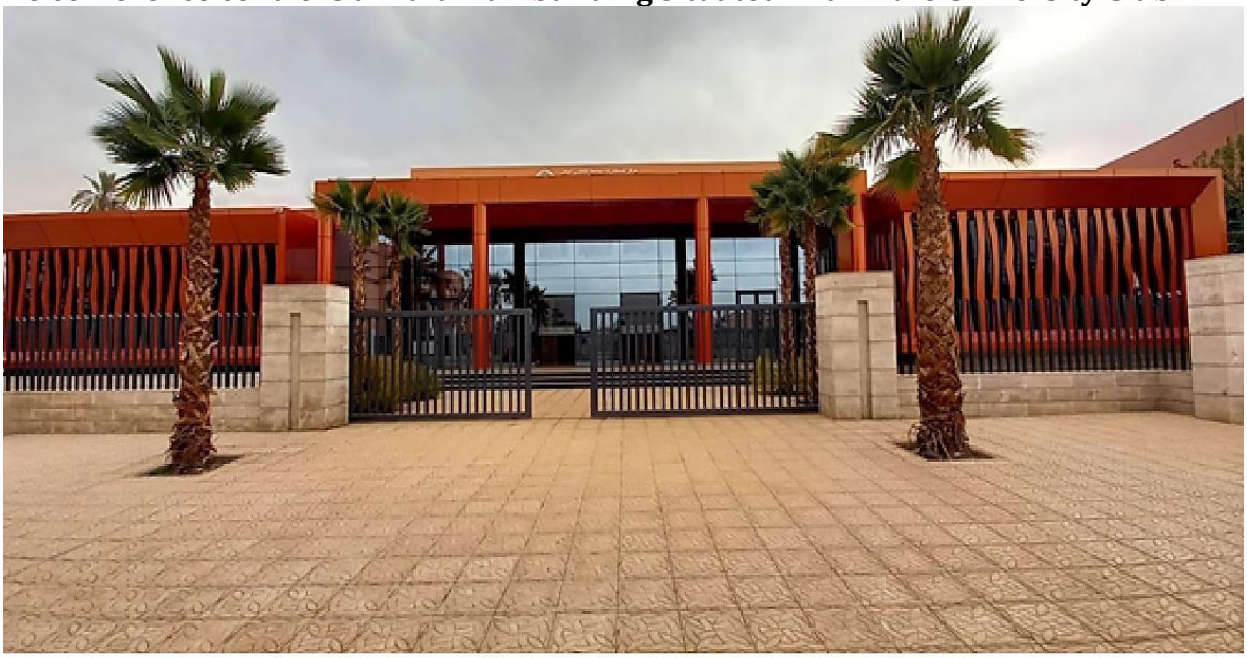
PRELIMINARY INTEREST FORM

Please register your interest by filling the form below : http://paoc.africa/

https://paoc.africa/

The indoor sessions with keynote talks and regular lectures will take place in the Conference Centre of the Cadi Ayyad University Club. They are scheduled for 12–13 April (Monday and Tuesday) and 15–16 April (Thursday and Friday).

The conference centre is a multi-hall building situated within the University Club



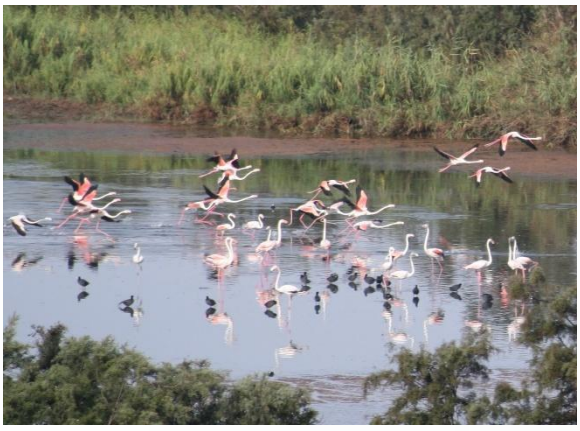


The Conference Centre of the Cadi Ayyad University Club
149 Street Ibn Zohair, Marrakech 40000, Morocco
Tel. +212-623-512698

EXCURSIONS



A mid-congress excursion to several iconic ornithological and historic sites on the Atlantic coast and in the High Atlas Mountains, Morocco.



Four suggested excursions:

1- **Souss-Massa National Park ;**
2- **Toubkal National Park;**
3- **Essaouira Archipelago Natural Park;**
4- **Historic and cultural sites in Marrakech.**



DURATION

One day, Wednesday 14 April 2027, departing from Marrakech. Each participant joins one of the excursions listed above.
The times and departure points for each excursion will be announced at a later date.

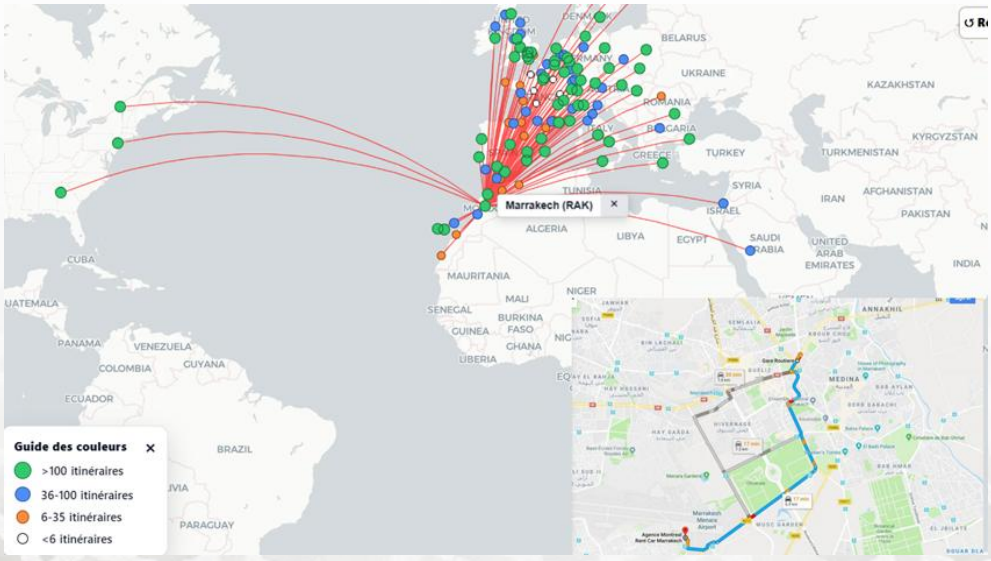


RECOMMENDATIONS

Please bring your binoculars, telescopes, sun protection (hat, sunscreen) and comfortable walking shoes.
A packed lunch will be provided
The meeting points will be announced the day before the excursions.



Marrakech is the fourth-largest city in the Kingdom of Morocco. It is one of the four Imperial cities of Morocco and is the capital of the Marrakech-Safi region. The city is situated west of the foothills of the Atlas Mountains.
Marrakech was founded in 1070 as the imperial capital of the Almoravid Empire. The Almoravids established the first major structures in the city and shaped its layout for centuries. The red rammed-earth (pisé) walls of the city and its ochre-colored buildings have given the city the nickname of the "Red City" or "Ochre City". The Medina of Marrakech has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985. Today it is one of the busiest cities in Africa and serves as a major economic center and tourist destination.
https://www.visitmorocco.com/fr/voyage/marrakech
Marrakech is served by the Menara International Airport and by Marrakech railway station, which connects the city to Casablanca and northern Morocco.



ESTIMATED REGISTRATION FEES

*Note that all the registration fees here are estimates, and the final registration fees and methods of payment will be posted in the Second Circular.
The registration fee for the scientific sessions covers the icebreaker, coffee breaks and congress materials (program and abstract book).

Category	Early Bird Fee	Regular Fee
Academics & Researchers	**510€**	**600€**
Students	**250€**	**300€**
Field Trip	**00€**	**00€**

PRESENTATIONS

Oral: Depending on the final numbers, the time of regular oral presentations will be specified in the Second Circular. Slides should be prepared in MS PowerPoint (.ppt, .pptx) or PDF formats.
Posters: Portrait A0 format (84 × 119 cm) will be displayed throughout the entire meeting and presented during dedicated poster sessions.

CONFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

Publication of selected papers is planned in the Bulletin de l'Institut Scientifique, Rabat, or in another journal to be confirmed in the Second Circular.

An abstract book containing the conference programme, the plenary sessions, the various symposia, and all oral and poster presentations

will be distributed at registration.

USEFUL INFORMATION

ACCOMMODATION

Each participant is responsible for his or her own hotel accommodation. Marrakech has a very wide range of hotels and other types of accommodation such as youth hostels and guest houses. We advise you to make your booking through recognized websites such as www.booking.com. It is strongly recommended to choose accommodation close to the event location.

DOCUMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS TO ENTER MOROCCO

Each visitor to Morocco must have a valid passport and a visa, if required. Foreign participants whose countries are subject to visa requirements should contact the Moroccan Embassy or Consulate in their country. Be sure to allow sufficient time to apply for your visa before your departure date.
Here is the list of countries whose nationals are exempted from the visa to enter Morocco on this link:

https://www.consulat.ma/fr/liste-des-pays-dont-les-ressortissants-sont-dispenses-du-visa-dentree-au-maroc

https://fr.diplomatie.ma/visiter-le-maroc-formalit%C3%A9s-et-proc%C3%A9dures-pour-les-visiteurs-internationaux

ARRIVING IN MARRAKECH

Participants can take direct flights from their home countries to Marrakech-Menara Airport or connect through Mohammed V International Airport in Casablanca.
The Marrakech-Menara airport is located approximately 6 km south of the city centre. To reach your hotel, you can take the airport bus (line 19) to the city centre and then a taxi. You can also take a taxi directly from the airport to your hotel. Do not hesitate to contact your hotel: many offer an airport shuttle, either free or at a negotiated rate.

It is recommended to have a small amount of cash with you upon arrival, or to have euros or US dollars. Taxis and buses do not accept credit cards.

National currency of Morocco

The local currency is the Moroccan dirham (MAD). Approximate rates: 1 USD ≈ 9 MAD and 1 EUR ≈ 11 MAD.
You can find the current exchange rate on websites such as:

https://countryeconomy.com/currencies/morocco
https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=10&From=USD&To=MAD

OTHER DETAILS

The electrical outlets used in Morocco are two-pin (types C and E) and operate at 220 V / 50 Hz. Adapters can be hard to find, so it is best to bring your own.
April in Marrakech is mostly sunny. Average rainfall for the month is about 30–40 mm; minimum temperatures average around 12 °C and maximums around 26 °C. Temperatures are generally cool in the morning and evening and warmer during the day. It is recommended that participants on the excursion bring all the necessary equipment for a field trip (walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, a warm layer, binoculars and telescope). Participants are also asked to inform the organizers in advance of any medical or dietary problems they may have.

PLACES TO VISIT IN MARRAKECH













ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

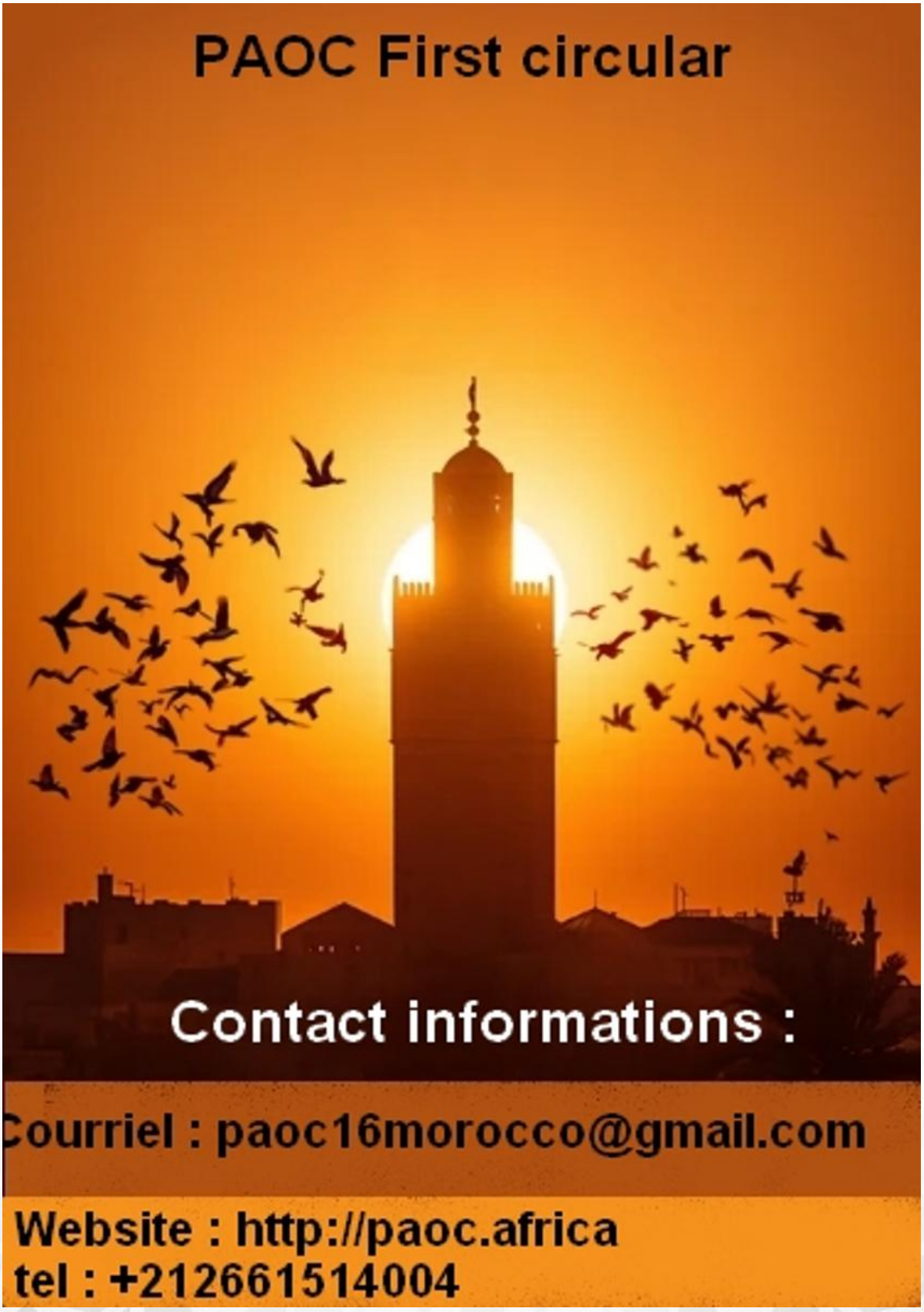
Proposed Honorary Committee for PAOC16

- The Director-General of the National Agency for Water and Forests (ANEF)
- The Minister for Energy, Mines and Sustainable Development
- The President of the Marrakech-Safi Regional Council
- The President of Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech
- Dean of the Semlalia Faculty of Sciences
- Director of the Scientific Institute, Mohamed V University, Rabat

- **Chair of PAOC 16:** Dr. Wenceslas Gatarabirwa
- **PAOC 16 Secretary** : Mr Tim Dodman/ BirdLife International
- **Scientific Director:** Dr Samuel Dayo Osinubi
- **National Coordinators of the Congress :** Prof. Lahcen Chillasse & Prof. Imad Charkaoui
- **Administrative Manager:** Prof. Mohamed Dakki, Honorary Chair of GREPOM
- **Congress Secretariat**: Dr Khadija Bourass & Dr Hassan Hassani
- **Head of Registrations, Protocol and Hospitality**: Prof. Rhimou El Hamoumi
- **Finance Manager:** Prof. Oumnia Himmi & Imane Bencherqi
- **Head of Partnerships and Sponsorship**: Prof. Lahcen Chillasse
- **Head of Logistics**: Prof. Mustapha Laghzaoui (GREPOM's Marrakech-Safi Unit)
- **Head of Communications and Public Relations:** Dr Hassan Hassani
- **Head of Birdwatching Excursions and Outings**: Prof. Mohammed Aourir
- **Head of IT and Audiovisual:** Mr Mohamed Ameziane

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

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Marrakech, 12–17 April 2027