

PANDION Wild Tours & Pelican Birding Lodge

TOURS IN BULGARIA, GREECE AND ROMANIA

2014
2015



TOURS IN BULGARIA, GREECE AND ROMANIA

Dear wildlife lovers, we will be really happy to take you on a virtual journey to Bulgaria using as a vehicle this catalogue of ours.

Our tour agency, “**Pandion Wild Tours**”, has endeavoured for already 23 years to welcome nature lovers from almost all European countries, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, USA, Canada and Japan. We are the oldest and most experienced company for wildlife touring in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria is a little country but there is no other like it in Europe: with such a great biodiversity within its small area! More than **250 endemic species of plants** exist in Bulgaria along with many more rare and beautiful European ones. A **very rich bird fauna**, with some of the rarest representatives of European birds. In autumn, during migration, you may enjoy really unforgettable sights watching scores of thousands of migrating large birds of prey, storks and pelicans, hundreds of thousands of smaller migratory birds. And all of them following for millennia one and the same route called from ancient times *Via Pontica* flyway. In winter, you will be able to watch spacious Dobroudzha fields covered not with white blanket of snow but having become reddish with thousands of **Red-breasted Geese**.

Of mammals one can watch **Wolf, Jackal, Brown Bear, Wild Cat**, small steppe predators and rodents, and almost all species of **European bats**.

Rare reptiles and amphibians.

Exceptional diversity of moths and butterflies, many of them extremely rare representatives of European lepidopterans.

Dragonflies: Almost all of the insects of this order are rare European species.

You certainly will be happy to watch also rare European representatives of **Spiders, Coleoptera** and many other animals.

At the same time you will have the chance to get acquainted with one of the most ancient cultures in the world, namely the rich culture of ancient Scythians – our ancestors, the **Thracians**.

For those who do not like to travel too much, we can offer **family holidays, ornithological and botanical vacations** as well as such for those of you who are interested in butterflies, dragonflies, reptiles and amphibians, in our family lodge **Pelican Birding Lodge**.

And at the end, let us mention the traditional **Bulgarian cuisine and the wonderful wine**, of which you can enjoy during your stay in Bulgaria.

Be welcome to Bulgaria!

Sincerely yours
Nikolay Dilchev



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TOUR CALENDAR

PANDION

16 th –23 rd Feb. 2014	15 th –22 nd Feb. 2015
19 th –25 th Apr. 2014	18 th –23 rd Apr. 2015
25 th Apr. – 6 th May 2014	24 th Apr. – 5 th May 2015
3 rd –10 th May 2014	2 nd –9 th May 2015
23 rd May – 1 st June 2014	22 nd – 31 st May 2015
25 th May – 1 st June 2014	24 th –31 st May 2015
30 th May – 8 th June 2014	29 th May – 7 th June 2015
14 th –22 nd June 2014	13 th –21 st June 2015
14 th –22 nd June 2014	13 th –21 st June 2015
27 th June – 5 th July 2014	26 th June – 4 th July 2015
28 th June – 6 th July 2014	27 th June – 5 th July 2015
12 th –19 th July 2014	11 th –18 th July 2015
6 th –13 th Sept. 2014	5 th –12 th Sept. 2015
27 th Sept. – 4 th Oct. 2014	26 th Sept. – 3 rd Oct. 2015
11 th –16 th Oct. 2014	10 th –15 th Oct. 2015

PELICAN Birding Lodge Tours

25 th May – 1 st June 2014	24 th –31 st May 2015
25 th May – 5 th June 2014	24 th May – 4 th June 2015
7 th –15 th June 2014	6 th –13 th June 2015
28 th June – 6 th July 2014	27 th June – 5 th July 2015
30 th Aug. – 10 th Sept. 2014	29 th Aug. – 9 th Sept. 2015

CONTENT

Wild Tours

Winter tour.....	2
Brown bear & large mammals.....	4
Spring birding tour Bulgaria and Greece.....	5
Sea Botanical Tour.....	8
Spring Birding Tour.....	11
Wallcreeper & Vultures.....	14
Reptiles and Amphibians of Bulgaria.....	16
June Butterfly tour.....	18
Spiders of Bulgaria.....	21
Dragonflies of Bulgaria.....	24
Mountain Botanist tour.....	26
July Butterfly tour.....	29
Autumn birding tour <i>Via Pontica</i> migration.....	32
Autumn birding tour <i>Via Pontica</i> migration.....	32
Brown bear & large mammals.....	4

Birds of Dobrudza.....	35
Birds of Dobrudza & Danube Delta.....	37
Dragonflies of Dobrudza.....	40
Butterflies of Dobrudza.....	42
Birds of Dobrudza & Danube Delta.....	37



Red-breasted Geese

WINTER BIRDING TOUR

8 DAYS TOUR

Sun 16th – Sun 23rd February 2014

Sun 15th – Sun 22nd February 2015

The main wintering grounds for the **Red-breasted Goose** are located in North-Eastern Bulgaria. For the last 35 years almost the entire stock of the species has spent the winters within the borders of Bulgaria. There is a chance to watch – in the flocks of tens of thousands of **White-fronted**- and **Red-breasted geese** – the extremely rare **Lesser White-fronted Goose**. During this tour we, hopefully, will see more than 100 species of other birds, among them the **Dalmatian Pelican**, **White-headed Duck**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Smew** and many other.

DAY ONE

Landing at the airport of Sofia. A brief sightseeing in the city, dinner at a local restaurant and transfer by the night train, sleeping compartment, to the southern Black-sea coastal city of Bourgas.

DAY TWO

We arrive at Bourgas railway station early in the morning. Our hotel is at a distance of some 25 km from the station in the seaside town of Pomorie where we will put up for one night. After breakfast our birdwatching tour will begin with a visit to the fresh-water lakes of Bourgas. We expect to see **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **White-headed Duck**, **Bittern**, **Great White Egret**, **White-tailed Sea Eagle**.

DAY THREE

Transfer to the Northern Black-sea coast. We'll have a lunch stop at a forest restaurant in a hilly area, which descends in rolling hills down to the very seashore. On the hills, on the upside of the road there are beautiful oak forests. Interesting birds to watch there are: **Great Spotted-**, **Middle Spotted-**, **Lesser Spotted-**, **Green-**, **Grey-headed-** and **Black Woodpecker**, **Short-toed Treecreeper**. Accommodation at hotel "Our Home" for 4 nights. The hotel is situated in the town of Kavarna.

DAY FOUR

After breakfast a visit to the nature reserve of Kaliakra. This is a real steppe for, as far as the eye can see, there is only a grassy plain. The

coast is rocky, with reddish-orange limestone cliffs. Here we will have the first chance to watch thousands of **Red-breasted geese**. We hope also to see **White-fronted Goose**, **Calandra Lark**, **Whooper Swan**, **Tundra Swan** and other species.

DAY FIVE

A trip to Dourankoulak Lake and its surrounding areas. A large sandy beach separates the lake from the sea. Here one can observe the greatest concentration in Europe of **Red-breasted Goose**. Other interesting and likely sightings are **Lesser White-fronted Goose**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Rough-legged Buzzard**, and other species.

DAY SIX

A trip to Shabla Lake and its surroundings. This area is also of great importance for migrating and breeding birds. The same encounters with birds are likely to happen as on the Day Five.

DAY SEVEN

Last day of birdwatching in the region. The same encounters with birds are likely to happen as on the Day Five. After dinner follows a transfer to the local railway station, where we board the night train (sleeping car) to Sofia.

DAY EIGHT

The train arrives early in the morning at Sofia railway station. After an early breakfast our van will climb up at an altitude of about 2000m a.s.l. in Nature Park Vitosha Mountain. Hopefully, there we will watch **Nutcracker** and some other, resident species of birds. After the birdwatching follows a snack and transfer to Sofia airport.

Land only price: **730 EUR**

Group size: **5–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **140 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **2–4 + leader**

Land only price: **820 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

Dalmatian Pelican





BROWN BEARS & LARGE MAMMALS & BIRDS

6 DAYS TOUR

Sat 19th April – Thurs 24th April 2014

Sat 18th April – Thurs 23th April 2015

Sat 11th October – Thurs 16th October 2014

Sat 10th October – Thurs 15th October 2015

DAY ONE

Arriving at Sofia airport and transfer to the Central Balkan Range; accommodation for five nights at a hotel, property of the local forestry. The hotel is outside a small local town and only a couple of minutes away from the first line of the forest trees. A spectacular view of the majestic Balkan Range from there. After an early dinner, we will have to be at specially secured observation hides, from where we expect to see **Brown Bears, Row Deer, Wild Boar and Red Deer** and some other, smaller mammals. With some luck we may even see **Wolves**. Our guides will take us back to the hotel by 9 or 10 o'clock p.m.

DAYS TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE

Every morning after breakfast, we'll visit different sites for bird-watching in the surrounding area. The open areas in the foothills of the Balkan Range and the closeness of the forest, allows for spotting some very interesting birds like **Syrian-, Great Spotted-, Lesser Spotted-, Middle Spotted-, Green-, Grey-headed-, Black-** and, with some more luck, the **White-backed Woodpeckers, Honey buzzard, Red-backed Shrike**, and many others. Every evening after dinner, we'll be again in the hides for watching mammals.

DAY SIX

After breakfast transfer to Sofia (airport) follows, where our tour will be over.

Land only price: **730 EUR**

Group size: **3–6 + leader**

Single room supplement: **60 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1 + leader**

Land only price: **1320 EUR**

Individuals: **2 + leader**

Land only price: **895 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



SPRING BIRDING TOUR BULGARIA AND GREECE

12 DAYS TOUR

Fri 25th April – Tues 6th May, 2014

Fri 24th April – Tues 5th May, 2015

DAY ONE

Arriving at Sofia, Bulgaria's capital city. Accommodation in a local hotel. Depending on the time at our disposal, we may visit the Nature Park "Vitoshka Mountain" where, hopefully, we may watch **Nutcracker, Crossbill, Ring Ouzel** and other species of birds.

DAY TWO

After breakfast, we'll visit Strouma river gorge, where we hope to see **Blue Rock Thrush, Subalpine Warbler, Woodchat Shrike, Black-headed Bunting** and many other species of birds. Late in the afternoon, we'll arrive at the small town of Melnik and accommodate in a local hotel for three nights.

DAY THREE

Today, we are going to make observations in the countryside around the very town of Melnik. It is situated in a valley surrounded by tall sandstone rocks of strange shapes: reminding pyramids, chimneys, etc. We will see, hopefully, **Scops Owl, Cirl- and Ortolan Buntings, Golden Oriole, Roller, Calandra Lark**. A visit follows to a rocky and dry area called "Roupite". There, we expect to see **Bee-eater, Long-legged Buzzard, Honey Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Ortolan Bunting, Rock Nuthatch** and many other species of birds.

DAY FOUR

This day we will visit the Boutkovo Lake (Kerkini in Greek). We'll set out early in the morning and cross Bulgarian-Greek border. In the immediate vicinity, there are the forest ecosystems and the sub-alpine belt of Belasitsa Mountain. The species we will expect to see in this area are: **Pygmy Cormorant, Dalmatian Pelican, Spoonbill, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Black Kite, Penduline Tit, Little Bittern**.

DAY FIVE

Following an early breakfast, we will set off for crossing Pirin Mountain via the mountain pass called "Popovi Livadi", then the border with Greece, and will finally arrive at the small Aegean seaside town of Keramoti. During the transfer, we will make several stops for a brief rest and for watching birds. Accommodation in a local hotel for 3 nights.

Penduline Tit

**DAY SIX**

Today, what lies ahead of us is to make some observations in the area around river Nestos mouth. About half of river Nestos' catchment area is covered with forests. Nestos Delta is one of the most important sites for breeding, passage and wintering of waterbirds, passerines and raptors. We expect to see **Dalmatian Pelican, Graylag Goose, Ferruginous Duck, Spur-winged Plover, Greater Flamingo, Mediterranean Gull, Squacco- and Purple Heron, Ferruginous Duck, Osprey and Great White Egret.**

DAY SEVEN

We will visit the rocky canyon of river Nestos. It is quite possible to spot, **Alpine Swift, Griffon Vulture, Peregrine Falcon** and other **falcons, Woodpeckers, Red-rumped Swallow**, and other species of birds.

After lunch, we will visit the bay of Porto Lagos where we hope to see in the reedbeds **Pygmy Cormorant, Ruddy Shelduck, Ferruginous Duck, Warblers, Bearded Tit.** In the woods, birdwatchers can spot the **Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk, Whitethroat-, Lesser Grey-, Masked- and Woodchat Shrike.**

Nestos Gorge is a passage for herons and waders like **Slender-billed Curlew, Little Stint, Temminck's Stint, Marsh Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Glossy Ibis**, and raptors like **Lesser Kestrel and Red-footed Falcon, White-tailed Eagle.**

DAY EIGHT

We are on our way to the southern part of Rodopi Mountains. During the transfer, we will stop for a while in some places in Porto Lagos we have not visited before, and then we will visit the area around the mouth of river Hebros (Maritsa in modern Bulgarian). We expect to see **Marsh Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Glossy Ibis, Sombre Tit, Sardinian- and Subalpine Warblers, Short-toed- and Booted Eagle.** We will be accommodated for two nights in a local hotel in the hamlet of Dadya.

DAY NINE

Today we will visit the forests around the village Dadya as well as the platform for feeding up of raptors, the **Black Vulture** in particular.

We expect to see **Lesser-spotted Eagle, Black Vulture, Griffon Vulture, Egyptian Vulture** as well as some smaller species of birds. Packed lunch for the day. Night in the village hotel.

DAY TEN

After an early breakfast, we'll set off for Bulgarian border and cross it near the town of Ivaylovgrad. Then we will continue to the town of Kroumovgrad, where we shall accommodate for 2 nights in a hotel. After lunch we are going to visit a rocky valley, where we expect to see **Black Stork, Booted- and Short-toed Eagles, Long-legged Buzzard, Scops Owl, Rock Nuthatch, Rock- and Blue Rock Thrushes, Roller, Bee-eater, Red-rumped Swallow, Lesser Grey- and Woodchat Shrikes, Cirl-, Black-headed-, and Ortolan Buntings.**

DAY ELEVEN

The next visit is to a rocky region close to our hotel. The area is of ancient volcanic origin. This part of the Rodopi Mountains is well known as one of Europe's most important regions for birds of prey. We will spend all day birdwatching around and, hopefully, will see **Golden-, Booted- and Short-toed Eagles, Long-legged Buzzard, Black-, Egyptian- and Griffon Vultures**, and many species of smaller birds like **Pallid Swift, Roller, Bee-eater, Sombre Tit, Cirl-, Black-headed- and Ortolan Buntings, Barred-, Subalpine-, Sardinian-, and Orphean Warblers.**

DAY TWELVE

After an early breakfast we set off for Sofia where our tour will come to its end.

Land only price: **1190 EUR**

Group size: **5-15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **150 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1-4 + leader**

Land only price: **1350 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

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Broad Billed Sandpiper

*Paeonia peregrina*

SEA BOTANICAL TOUR

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 3rd May – Sat 10th May 2014

Sat 2nd May – Sat 9th May 2015

DAY ONE

Our tour begins with landing at the airport of Bourgas city and the immediate transfer to the little seaside town of Kiten. Kiten is in immediate vicinity to Nature Reserve “Ropotamo”, which encompasses forests, sand dunes, part of the sea shore, lakes and marshes on Ropotamo riversides, the river itself in its lower reaches and its mouth where it flows into the Black Sea. This area is exceptionally rich in rare European plant and animal species. We put up at a local hotel for three nights.

DAY TWO

Today, we will visit the Nature Park “Strandzha Mountain”. Typical for this region are the oak forests, those of **Oriental beech** and the mixed deciduous forests. All those forests have a rich undergrowth of extremely rare and interesting species like **Slender False-Brome** (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), **Sword-leaved Helleborine** (*Cephalanthera longifolium*), **Eastern Sowbread** (*Cyclamen coum*), **Daphne pontica**, **Cherry laurel** (*Laurocerasus officinalis*), **Common medlar** (*Mespilus germanica*), **Primrose** (*Primula acaulis* spp. *rosea*), **Strandzha’s oak** (*Quercus hartwissiana*), **Oriental Durmast** (*Quercus polycarpa*), **Pontic Rhododendron** (*Rhododendron ponticum*), **Thracian woundwort** (*Stachys thracica*), **Oriental trachystemon**, **Borage** (*Trachystemon orientalis*).

In the afternoon, we are going to visit the sand dunes in the reserve Ropotamo, where we expect to see **Cionura** (*Cionura erecta*), **Dog strangling vine** (*Cynanchum acuta*), **Galilea mucronata**, **Yellow hornpoppy** (*Glaucium flavum*), **European Venus’ looking glass** (*Legousia speculum-veneris*), **Summer Snowflake** (*Leucojum aestivum*), **Violet Limodore** (*Limodorum abortivum*), **Flax** (*Linum capitatum*), **Maresia nana**, **Silene euxina**, **Thracian tulip** (*Tulipa thracica* (*syn. hageri*)).

DAY THREE

Today, we will have a bit more walking on a rough terrain. The passage will be some 8 km long along the Black Sea rocky coast. The views are really beautiful: the blue sea with small bays on the left and the oak forests on the right. We expect to see species like **Peacock anemone** (*Anemone pavonina*), **Rockrose** (*Cistus incanus*), **Sage-Leaved Cistus** (*Cistus salvifolius*), **Sea Kale** (*Crambe maritima*), **Sea Holly** (*Eryngium maritimum*), **Wild Jasmine** (*Jasminum fruticans*), **Limonium** (*Limonium gmelinii*), **Butterfly orchid** (*Orchis papilionaceae*), **Serapias** (*Serapias vomeraceae*), *Verbascum bugulifolium*, *Verbascum phoeniceum*.

DAY FOUR

Today, we will have ahead of us the transfer to the northern Black-sea coastal town of Kavarna. During the trip we will stop for a sight-seeing tour in the seaside town-museum of Nessebar. Originally, it was a Thracian settlement, later when ancient Greeks settled in the Balkans they took it on concession from Thracians and developed it further as a rich Black-sea town and port. Then Thracians, already called Bulgarians, took it back after the first Bulgarian state was founded. After the sightseeing is over, we’ll continue with our trip to the north crossing the Balkan range which. We will have lunch in a small restaurant in the village of Goritsa. Late in the afternoon we’ll arrive at the small town of Kavarna located almost on the very sea shore. Accommodation in a local hotel for three nights.

DAY FIVE

Today, we will again make a walk along the seaside but instead of forests around us, we will see low shrubs and steppe. We will visit the Archaeological Reserve of “Yaylata”. The traverse is about 4 km long almost along the very edge of the rocky coast. The area is rich of rare steppe, eastern species like **Yellow Yarrow** (*Achylea clypeolata*), **Milk-Vetch** (*Astragalus gladiatus*), **Broom** (*Chamaecytisus jankae*), **Myrtle spurge** (*Euphorbia myrsinites*), **Siberian statice** (*Limonium gmelinii*), **Golden-flowered Onosma** (*Onosma taurica*), **Fern Leaf Peony** (*Paeonia tenuifolia*), *Paeonia peregrina*, **Southern Scandix** (*Scandix australis*), **False Vetch** (*Astragalus monspessulanum*), **Bladder Senna** (*Colutea arborescens*), **Blue Hound’s Tongue** (*Cynoglossum creticum*), *Peucedanum arenarium*, *Silene caliacrae*.

DAY SIX

This day our walk will include a traverse of about 3-km length, from the beach of Kavarna to the village of Bozhourets in the south. We will concentrate again on steppe species of plants.

We’ll hope to see species like **Pontic Wormwood** (*Artemisia pontica*), **Lesser honeywort** (*Cerinthe minor*), **Silver berry** (*Eleagnus angustifolia*), *Hya-cinthella leucophaea*, *Matthiola odoratissima*, **Fern Leaf Peony** (*Paeonia tenuifolia*), **Stachys atherocalyx**.

After lunch, there will be another passage (about 5-km long). We expect to see *Adonis volgensis*, *Centaurea napulifera*, *Chamaecytisus jankae*, **Star of Bethlehem** (*Ornithogalum comosum*), **Balsamic Sage** (*Salvia tomentosa*), **Clary Sage** (*Salvia sclarea*).

DAY SEVEN

Today, we are going to visit the steppe areas of the Nature Reserve “Kaliakra”. The passage will be about 4-km long.

At the very cape, there was a settlement in ancient times, like the one we saw at the reserve “Yaylata”. In antiquity, it was the capital of the ancient local lord Dobrotitsa. We will expect to see species like *Bellevalia sarmatica*, *Chamecytissus jankae*, *Goniolimon besserianum*, *Haplophyllum suaveolens*, *Iris pumila*, *Jurinea ledeborii*, *Jurinea stoechadifolia*, **Eastern Skullcap** (*Scutellaria orientalis ssp. pinnatifida*), *Silene caliacrae*, **Feather Grass** (*Stipa capitata*).

DAY EIGHT

After breakfast, we may make the last observations in the area depending on the spare time at our disposal, before the transfer to the city of Bourgas, where our tour started and now comes to an end.

Land only price: **720 EUR**
Group size: **5–15 + leader**
Single room supplement: **120 EUR**
Deposit: **150 EUR**
Individuals: **1–4 + leader**
Land only price: **810 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Pontic Rhododendron
Rhododendron ponticum



Ruddy Shelduck

SPRING BIRDING TOUR

10 DAYS TOUR

Fri 23rd May – Sun 1st June 2014

Fri 22nd May – Sun 31st May 2015

Bulgaria, with its biodiversity, is indeed a unique land. Within its borders and during certain periods of the year, one can watch at one and the same time both Mediterranean species of birds and birds that nest in the far-away Siberia. We will visit many marshes and lakes, the riversides of the majestic river Danube, and the ancient Black Sea as well as the extremely diverse habitats of Sakar and Rodopi Mountains.

Apart from the beautifully looking **Golden Oriole**, **Bee-Eater**, **Roller**, **Hoopoe**, **Wallcreeper** we expect to see such rare European species like **Dalmatian** and **White Pelicans**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Ruddy Shelduck**, **Ferruginous Duck**, many species of **Waders** and **Plovers**, **Black-** and **White-winged Terns**. Also, large birds of prey like **Golden Eagle**, **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, **Spotted Eagle**, **Short-toed Eagle**, **Booted Eagle**, **White-tailed Sea Eagle**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Honey Buzzard**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Masked Shrike**, **Sombre Tit**, **Isabeline-** and **Pied Wheatears**, **Olive-tree-** and **Paddifield Warblers**, **Semi-collared Flycatcher**, **Balkan-**, **Black-headed-**, **Yellow Wagtails** and many others. We will see about, and more likely over, 200 species of birds. During the entire tour conditions for taking pictures of species from the flora and fauna of the country will be good enough.

DAY ONE

Landing at Sofia Airport and transfer to Rodopi Mountains. We will have several breaks to relax and rest a bit and have a look at the first representatives of Bulgarian bird-fauna, namely **Red-backed Shrike**, **Black-headed Bunting**, **White Stork**, **Honey Buzzard**, etc. At dusk, we will put up at a small family hotel in Trigrad village.

DAY TWO

After breakfast, we'll pack up and head for a magnificent Trigrad gorge. This exceptionally beautiful area is 1200 m above sea level. WELCOME TO THE LAND OF THE WALLCREEPER. This is simply the best and the most accessible place in Europe or maybe in the world to see this marvellous bird, which reminds an enormous butterfly in flight. It is here, where we hope to see this wonderful bird. After lunch in the local mountain hut, we will travel to the rocky area of Krumovgrad town. The world of the large birds of prey lies before us. Accommodation for 2 nights at local hotel.

DAY THREE

The next visit is to a rocky region close to our hotel. The area is of ancient volcanic origin with stony ground, huge rocks scattered around, small stunted shrubs and almost complete lack of wild-growing mature trees. Hopefully, we'll see **Golden-, Eastern Imperial-, Booted-, and Short-toed Eagles, Long-legged Buzzard, Black-, Egyptian-, and Griffon Vultures** and many species of smaller birds like **Pallid Swift, Rock Nuthatch, Rock-, and Blue Rock Thrushes, Roller, Bee-eater, Red-rumped Swallow, Lesser Grey and Woodchat Shrikes, Sombre Tit, Cirl, Black-headed and Ortolan Buntings, Barred-, Subalpine-, Sardinian-, and Orphean Warblers.**

DAY FOUR

Long but necessary transfer follows, this time to the lowlands along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. We will stay for 2 nights at a local hotel in Pomorie town. While still on the move, we will have plenty of time for stops to look for specialties like **Eastern Imperial Eagle, Masked Shrike, Olive-tree Warbler, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Montagu's Harrier.**

DAY FIVE

In the morning, we will be in the area around the Bourgas lakes (Ramsar and IBA sites), with the extensive reed-beds on their lakesides. There are flooded meadows, marshes, low hills, and oak forests in the surrounding countryside. These diverse habitats make this region one of the best in Europe for wetland and other species of birds. There we can spot **Pygmy Cormorant**, all European species of **Hérons and Egrets, White Pelican, Slender-billed-, Mediterranean-, and Little Gulls, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Grey-headed-, and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers, White-tailed Sea Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Short-toed Eagle.**

DAY SIX

We head north along the Black Sea coast. The next 2 nights we will spend at a local hotel in Kavarna town. Two nice wooded valleys can be seen from the hotel. Very good opportunities to watch **Golden Oriole, Bee-eater, Roller, Syrian Woodpecker, Hobby, Levant Sparrowhawk.** On the way north we will stop at an oak forest, where we will concentrate on spotting woodpeckers and **Semi-colored Flycatcher.** Lunch at the local restaurant.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast, follows a visit to Dourankoulak Lake. Here we will be most interested to spot **Paddyfield Warbler, Collared Pratincole, Ferruginous Duck, Gull-billed-, and Caspian Terns, Red-footed Falcon.** After the packed lunch we'll visit Kaliakra steppe reserve region for **Calandra-, and Short-toed Larks, Isabeline-, and Pied Wheatears and Stone Curlew.** This is also the region, where sometimes the **Rosy Starlings** appear during their periodic invasions.

About 4 p.m. we drive inland and will cross Dobrudza steppes to reach the Danube river valley. Accommodation for 2 nights at Pelican Birding Lodge, situated in Vetren village, Silistra district.

DAY EIGHT

Today we will visit the Managed Reserve "Lake Srebarna". The reserve is under the aegis of UNESCO as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Her-

itage. Its extensive reed-beds give perfect shelter for globally threatened with extinction **Dalmatian Pelican, Ferruginous duck, Pygmy cormorant, Red-necked-, and Black-necked Grebes, Herons, Marsh Harrier, Penduline Tit** to breed. The **Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk, Goshawk** breed in the broad-leaved forests around the lake. The **Ruddy Shelduck** also breeds in the banks of the small dry valleys around the lakes.

DAY NINE

Driving west along the Danube we'll visit a marshland for watching **Whiskered-, White-winged-, and Black Terns, Red-necked-, Black-necked-, Little-, and Great Crested Grebes.**

We will stay overnight at the Etara: an open air ethnographic museum, at the Balkan Range. Here is one of the last opportunities on this trip to see the **Dipper,** and some more **Woodpeckers.**

DAY TEN

After breakfast, we will set off for Sofia where our tour will come to its end.

Land only price: **895 EUR**

Group size: **5-15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **150 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1-4 + leader**

Land only price: **985 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Eastern Imperial Eagle

WALLCREEPER & VULTURES

8 DAYS TOUR

Sun 25th May – Sun 1st June 2014

Sun 24th May – Sun 31st May 2015

DAY ONE

Landing at Sofia airport and transfer to Trigrad village. Accommodation at the family guest house for 2 nights. Dinner. Along the road we will have a few stops with good opportunities to spot **Rock Bunting, White Stork, Honey Buzzard, Hoopoe, Syrian Woodpecker, Red-backed Shrike**, etc.

DAY TWO

After the breakfast, we'll visit the magnificent Trigrad Gorge. One can hardly imagine the gorge beauty if one does not see it with one's own eyes. This exceptionally beautiful area is 1200 m above sea level. WELCOME TO THE LAND OF THE WALLCREEPER. This is simply the best and the most easily accessible place in Europe or maybe in the world, to see this marvellous bird, which reminds an enormous butterfly in flight. Other possible birds for the day: **Black-, Grey-headed-, Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Alpine-, and Pallid Swifts, Red-rumped Swallow, Crag Martin, Peregrine, Nutcracker, Hobby**, etc.

DAY THREE

After breakfast, we will travel to Eastern Rodopi Mountains. The area is dry and very rocky. The world of the large birds of prey lies before us. Accommodation for 5 nights at a local hotel in Krumovgrad town. There are good opportunities to watch **Black-, and White Storks, Spanish Sparrow, Lesser Grey Shrike, Scops Owl**.

DAYS FOUR, FIVE, SIX, SEVEN

The next four days we'll visit different sites in the region of Krumovgrad town. Rocky gorges, small woods and shrubs, river beds. The area is of ancient volcanic origin with stony ground, huge rocks scattered around, small stunted shrubs and almost complete lack of wild-growing mature trees. This part of the Rodopi Mountains is well known as one of Europe's most important regions for birds of prey. We will spend all four days birdwatching around and hopefully will see **Golden-, Eastern Imperial-, Booted-, Lesser spotted-, and Short-toed Eagles, Long-legged Buzzard, Black-, Egyptian-, and Griffon Vultures** and many species of smaller birds like **Pallid Swift, Rock Nuthatch, Rock-, and Blue Rock Thrushes, Roller, Bee-eater, Lesser Grey-, Masked-, Red-backed-, and Woodchat Shrikes, Sombre Tit, Cirl-, Black-headed-, and Ortolan Buntings, Barred-, Subalpine-, Sardinian-, and Orphean Warblers**.



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14

Griffon & Black Vultures



Wallcreeper

© M. Lane

DAY EIGHT

After an early breakfast, we travel to Sofia town, where our tour is over.

Land only price: **695 EUR**

Group size: **5–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **120 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1–4 + leader**

Land only price: **790 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

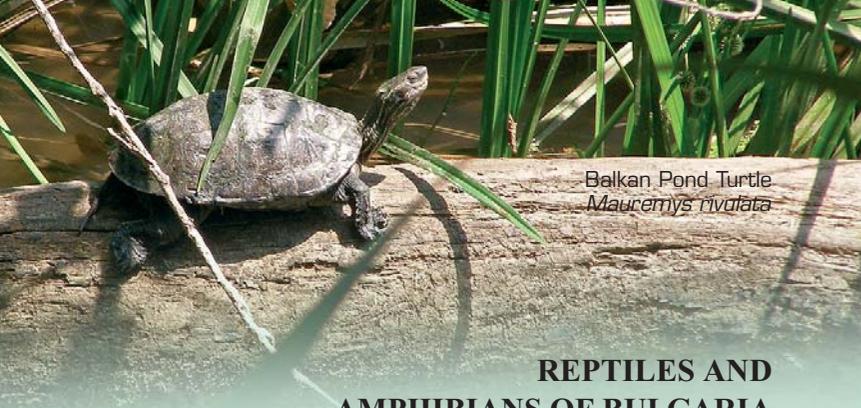
airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Egyptian Vulture

15



Balkan Pond Turtle
Mauremys rivulata

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF BULGARIA

10 DAYS TOUR

Fri 30th May – Sun 8th June 2014

Fri 29th May – Sun 7th June 2015

As a land of a great biodiversity (second in Europe by it) Bulgaria is exceptionally rich in rare and endemic plant and animal species, amphibians and reptiles included. This tour offers the participants the opportunity to see some of the rarest and interesting European reptiles and amphibians. The tour will be conducted in Southern Bulgaria low mountains: Eastern Pirin, Rodopi, Sakar and Strandja Mountains, and along the Black-sea coast.

DAY ONE

Landing at Bourgas city airport (Southern Black-sea coast) and setting off immediately for the small seaside town of Kiten further south. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAYS TWO & THREE

During these two days, we will explore the southern Black Sea coast and Strandzha Mountain Nature Park. Some species, we hopefully, will see are: the **Reddish Whip Snake** (*Platyceps collaris*), the **Firebellied Toad** (*Bombina bombina*), the **Snakeeyed Skink** (*Ablepharus kitaibelii*), the **European Glass Lizzard** (*Pseudopus apodus*), the **Meadow Lizzard** (*Darevskia praticola*), the **Kotschy's Gecko** (*Cyrtodactylus kotshii danilevskii*), the **Blotched Snake** (*Elaphe sauromates*).

DAY FOUR

Transfer to Eastern Rodopi Mountains. We will have several stops on the way and will look for reptiles and amphibians. Arrival late in the afternoon. Accommodation at a local hotel in Ivailovgrad town, for three nights.

DAYS FIVE & SIX

The next two days we will explore different sites in the area of Mandritsa Village. The species we expect to see are the **European Glass Lizzard** (*Pseudopus apodus*), the **Snakeeyed Lacertid** (*Ophisops elegans*), the **Worm Snake** (*Typhlops vermicularis*), the **Sand Boa** (*Eryx jaculus*), the **Dahl's Whip Snake** (*Coluber najadum*), the **Blotched Snake** (*Elaphe sauromates*), the **Montpelier Snake** (*Malpolon insignis*).

DAY SEVEN

Today we'll make a transfer to Eastern Pirin Mountain and we'll make a few stops on the way. Late in the afternoon we will arrive at the town of Melnik. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAYS EIGHT & NINE

We will spend these two days in exploring different sites. We will make short transfers. Apart from the common species, here we expect to find also some rare ones: the **Syrian Spadefoot Toad** (*Pelobates syriacus*), the **Yellowbelly Toad** (*Bombina variegata*), the **Balkan Stream Frog** (*Rana graeca*), the **Kotschy's Gecko** (*Cyrtodactylus kotshii bibroni*), the **Balkan Green Lizzard** (*Lacerta trilineata*), the **Erhard's Wall Lizzard** (*Podarcis erhardii*), the **Leopard Snake** (*Zamenis situla*), the **Four-lined Snake** (*Elaphe quatuorlineata*), the **Cat Snake** (*Telescopus falax*). We can also find both species of tortoises: the **Hermann's** (*Testudo hermanni*) and the **Spur-thighed** (*Eurotestudo graeca*) as well as the **Balkan Terrapin** (*Mauremys rivulata*).

DAY TEN

Transfer to Sofia airport where our tour is over.

Land only price: **870 EUR**

Group size: **5–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **150 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1–4 + leader**

Land only price: **960 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Dahl's Whipsnake
Coluber najadum

Comma
Polygonia c-album



JUNE BUTTERFLY TOUR

9 DAYS TOUR

Sat 14th June – Sun 22nd June 2014

Sat 13th June – Sun 21st June 2015

The present butterfly fauna has formed itself as a consequence of diverse climatic conditions, relief, soil texture and vegetation as well as the presence of refuges where, during the ice age, relic species have been preserved or endemic species have formed. This fauna of Bulgaria is the richest one among all European countries, outside the Mediterranean zone: currently **215 species** have been reliably registered for our country.

DAY ONE

The tour starts at Bulgarian capital city of Sofia with a transfer to the little old-time town of Melnik. Accommodation at a small local hotel for 3 nights. While travelling to Melnik, there will be a short stop in Kresna Gorge. Likely species to be seen are **Krueper's Small White** (*Pieris krueperi*), **Iolas Blue** (*Iolana iolas*), **Eastern Baton Blue** (*Pseudophilotes vicrama schiffermuelleri*), **Southern White Admiral** (*Limenitis reducta schiffermulleri*), **Jerusalem Fritillary** (*Melitaea ornata*), **Nettle Tree Butterfly** (*Libythea celtis*), **Friwaldsky's White-banded Grayling** (*Pseudochazara anthelea amatheia*), **Balkan Marbled White** (*Melanargia larissa*), **Sandy Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus cinarae*), **Little Tiger Blue** (*Tarucus balkanicus*), *Hemaris croatica*.

DAY TWO

Walk and observations in the area of the town of Melnik and Rozhen Monastery. We'll look for the following species: **Plebeius sephirus**, **Hungarian Glider** (*Neptis rivularis*), **Cardinal** (*Argynnis pandora*), **Nettle Tree Butterfly** (*Libythea celtis*), **Lattice Brown** (*Pararge roxelana*), **Eastern Rock Grayling** (*Hipparchia syriaca*), **Gatekeeper** (*Pyronia tithonus*).

DAY THREE

Observations in the area of an extinct volcano known as Kozuh Hill – a rocky and very dry place. More interesting species likely to be seen there are: **Powdered Brimstone** (*Gonepteryx farinosa*), **Freyer's Purple Emperor** (*Apatura metis*), **Scarce Tortoiseshell** (*Nymphalis xanthomelas*), **Tree Grayling** (*Hipparchia statilinus*), **Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*), **Oriental Meadow**

Brown (*Hyponephele lupina*), **Russian Heath** (*Coenonympha leander*), **Oriental Marbled Skipper** (*Carcharodus orientalis*), **Inky Skipper** (*Erynnis marloyi*), **Mediterranean Skipper** (*Gegenes nostradamus*), **Little Tiger Blue** (*Tarucus balkanicus*), **Large Copper** (*Lycaena dispar*).

DAY FOUR

Driving to Trigrad village for observations. On the way to Trigrad, the first stop is in Popovi Livadi meadows. Species to observe are **Apollo** (*Parnassius apollo*), **Clouded Apollo** (*Parnassius mnemosyne*), **Black-veined White** (*Aporia crataegi*), **Common Brimstone** (*Gonepteryx rhamni*), *Lycaena candens*, **Alcon Large Blue** (*Maculinea alcon*), **Turquoise Blue** (*Polyommatus dorylas*), *Polyommatus nephohiptamenos*, **Heath Fritillary** (*Melitaea athalia*), **Balkan Fritillary** (*Boloria graeca*), **Ottoman Brassy Ringlet** (*Erebia ottomana*), **Eastern Large Heath** (*Coenonympha rhodopensis*), **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Scarce copper** (*Lycaena virgaureae*), **Mazarine Blue** (*Polyommatus semiargus*), **Large Blue** (*Maculinea arion*), **Idas Blue** (*Plebeius idas*), **Northern Brown Argus** (*Aricia artaxerxis*), **Knapweed Fritillary** (*Melitaea phoebe*), **Glanville Fritillary** (*Melitaea cinxia*), **Heath Fritillary** (*Melitaea athalia*), **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (*Boloria silene*), etc. Accommodation at a local hotel for 2 nights.

DAY FIVE

Observations in the vicinity of Trigrad village. More interesting species likely to be seen in the area: **Apollo** (*Parnassius apollo*), **Mountain Small White** (*Pieris ergane*), **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Large Blue** (*Maculinea arion*), **Alcon large blue** (*Maculinea alcon*), **Blue Argus** (*Aricia anteros*), **Zephyr Blue** (*Plebeius sephirus*), **Higgins's Anomalous Blue** (*Polyommatus nephohiptamenos*), **Esher's Blue** (*Polyommatus esheri*), **Poplar Admiral** (*Limenitis populi*), **Marsh Fritillary** (*Euphydryas aurinia*), **Balkan Heath** (*Coenonympha rhodopensis*), **Woodland Ringlet** (*Erebia medusa*), **Bright Eyed Ringlet** (*Erebia oeme*), **Chequered Skipper** (*Carterocephalus palaemon*).

DAY SIX

Today, after breakfast, we leave the Trigrad Gorge and head east. We will make some observations in the surroundings of "Smoljanski ezera" lakes, located at an altitude of 1500m asl. Species likely to be observed there are **Scarce Copper** (*Lycaena virgaureae*), **Holly Blue** (*Celastrina argiolus*), **Large Ringlet** (*Erebia Euryale*), **Arran Brown** (*Erebia ligea*), **Eastern Large Heath** (*Coenonym-*



Balkan Copper
Lycaena candens

pha rhodopensis), **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (*Boloria euphrosyne*), **Weaver's Fritillary** (*Boloria dia*), **Marbled Fritillary** (*Brenthis daphne*), **Marsh Fritillary** (*Euphydryas aurinia*), **Amanda's Blue** (*Polyommatus amandus*), etc. After lunch, follows transfer to Krumovgrad town. This town is located in Eastern Rodopi Mountains. This part of the mountains differs radically from their central part. It is of volcanic origin, with huge crags and rocks all over the area as far as the eye can see. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAY SEVEN

Observations in the area. The landscape is very unusual and at places resembles the moon surface. The high-water river Arda cuts across the area. We are in the real crater of an extinct volcano: everything around is covered with basalt. The view is so gorgeous that you will remember it for life. More interesting species likely to be seen there: **Eastern Wood White** (*Leptidea duponcheli*), **Southern Small White** (*Pieris mannii*), **Kreuper's Small White** (*Pieris kreuperi*), **Small Bath White** (*Pontia chloridice*), **Lesser Fiery Copper** (*Lycaena thersamon*), **Little Tiger Blue** (*Tarucus balkanicus*), **Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*).

DAY EIGHT

Today, we'll visit the town of Madzharovo and its surroundings, and the area along Arda River valley. This place differs somewhat from the one we visited the previous day – there is more greenery and small deciduous woods where the oak trees dominate. And yet the huge basalt cliffs are still around us. More interesting species likely to be seen: **Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow** (*Colias erate*), **Blue Argus** (*Aricia anteros*), **Southern White Admiral** (*Limenitis reducta schiffmulleri*), **Cardinal** (*Argynnis pandora*), **Twin-spot Fritillary** (*Brenthis hecate*), **Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea didyma*), *Melitaea punica*, **Knapweed Fritillary** (*Melitaea phoebe*), **Glanville Fritillary** (*Melitaea cinxia*), **Lattice Brown** (*Pararge roxelana*), **Eastern Rock Grayling** (*Hipparchia syriaca*), **Tree Grayling** (*Hipparchia statilinus*), **Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*), **Balkan Marbled White** (*Melanargia larissa*).

DAY NINE

After an early breakfast, follows transfer to Sofia. And here our tour ends.

Land only price: **795 EUR**

Group size: **5–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **150 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1–4 + leader**

Land only price: **885 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Ladybird spider
Eresus kollari
male

SPIDERS OF BULGARIA

9 DAYS TOUR

Sat 14th June – Sun 22nd June 2014

Sat 13th June – Sun 21st June 2015

In the world as a whole and in Bulgaria in particular, spiders occur everywhere: in the plains, in the forests, in the mountains, caves, water bodies, and even on the snow-covered peaks of high mountains. So far, more than 1000 species from Bulgaria are known to scientists, while in the world their total number is about 40 000. Bulgaria is a land of significant species abundance, **endemic species of spiders here number 95.**

DAY ONE

Arriving at Bulgarian capital city of Sofia. Accommodation in a hotel located at the foot of Nature Park Vitosha Mountain for 2 nights.

DAY TWO

A visit to Vitosha Mountain. The first stop will be at the area of the Park called “Zlatnite Mostove”. We will try to find spiders of the group **Orb-web Builders** (**Araneoidea**) who weave their webs among the boulders of the “stone river”. After that we'll observe **Wolf Spiders** (**fam. Lycosidae**), and hopefully the Bulgarian endemic one, known as **Drensky's Pardosa** (*Pardosa drenskii*), **Money Spiders** (**fam. Linyphiidae**), **Comb-footed Spiders** (**fam. Theridiidae**).

DAY THREE

A transfer to South Bulgaria follows. First stop on our way is the Rila Monastery and a site called Kirilova poliana. The monastery is under UNESCO's aegis as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. It is located at the foot of the National Park “Rila Mountain”. We expect to see **Funnel-web Spiders** (**fam. Agelenidae**). From that site, Bulgarian endemic species *Inermocoelotes xipingwangi* has been collected and described. We may also observe **Orb-web** and **Crab Spiders** as well as some other species. After the lunch that we will have in a local restaurant, we'll set off for another national park, namely Pirin Mountain

We will visit the surroundings of the village Dobarsko. We expect to find and see **Wolf Spiders**, **Crab Spiders** and other species. In the late afternoon, following a short transfer to the town of Bansko follows. Accommodation for two nights at a local hotel.

Argiope lobata**DAY FOUR**

Today, ahead of us is a climbing up (by our minivan) to 1900 m asl. We will reach the mountain chalet “Vihren”. There we will observe high-mountain spiders, **Wolf Spiders**, **glacial relics**, **Money Spiders** and species that live under stones on the banks of the mountain lakes. We may also observe the Balkan endemic species *Zodarion pirini*, and the Pirin Mountain endemic *Tegenaria altimontana*.

DAY FIVE

Today, a transfer to the southern parts of Pirin Mountain lies ahead of us. We will visit the Kresna Gorge where we may see **Six-eyed Spiders**, **Wolf Spiders**, **Crab Spiders**, **Jumping Spiders** (fam. **Salticidae**) and other species. We may possibly come across the **Ladybird Spider** (*Eresus sp.*) and the **Nursery-web Spider** (*Pisaura mirabilis*). The second stop will be at Kamenitsa village where we will observe spiders in **Kermes Oak** (*Quercus coccifera*) woods called also “pseudo-maquis”. In the late afternoon, we’ll put up at a local hotel in the town-museum of Melnik for 2 nights.

DAY SIX

Today, we will make observations in the immediate vicinity of the small town of Melnik and in the surroundings of Rozhen Monastery. We may find and observe attractive species like the orb-weaver species of the following genera: *Aranea*, *Argiope*, *Cyclosa*, *Singa* and some others. After lunch, we will visit the site of the extinct volcano Kozhukh, inhabited also by some interesting species. Hopefully, we will see the **Four-spotted Uroctea** (*Uroctea durandi*) and the **Big Wolf Spider** (*Lycosa praegrandis*).

DAY SEVEN

Today, a trip to the neighbouring Rodopi Mountains lies ahead of us. We will climb by the van to an altitude of about 2000 m asl, to the hilly area called Popovi livadi to watch mountain spiders. A transfer to the Trigrad Gorge follows, where we will observe spiders who weave their web on the rocks and we will also visit the cave “Diavolskoto Garlo” (the Devil’s Throat) to observe **Cavernicolous Spiders**. We will put up for dinner and sleep in a family hotel in the very hamlet of Trigrad. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY EIGHT

After breakfast, we leave this marvelous corner of the holy Rodopi Mountains and set off for Sofia. However, on our way to the capital city we will stop and visit another, not less fine and impressive landmark of the Mountains: the rock complex called Choudnite Mostove. In this part of the mountains, we will conduct the last observations of high-mountain spiders for this tour. In the late afternoon we arrive in Sofia and accommodate for the last sleep in a local hotel. A parting dinner follows and our tour ends up.

DAY NINE

After breakfast our tour is over.

Land only price: **795 EUR**

Group size: **5–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **150 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1–4 + leader**

Land only price: **885 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Ladybird spider
Eresus kollari
female

*Thomisus onuctus*



DRAGONFLIES OF BULGARIA

9 DAYS TOUR

Fri 27th June – Sat 5th July 2014

Fri 26th June – Sat 4th July 2015

DAY ONE

Arrival at Bulgaria's capital city Sofia. We then travel by minibus to Koprivshitsa, a scenic village in Sredna Gora Mountain Range. Koprivshitsa is a small town-museum with typical for the time of Bulgarian Revival architecture. The town is a historical, sacred place for Bulgarian people, related with the beginning of the April Uprising in 1876 against the Turkish oppressors. Accommodation for 2 nights in a local hotel.

DAY TWO

We have a day in and around Koprivshitsa, visiting some local watercourses. Sightings may include **Ornate Damselfly** (*Coenagrion Ornatum*), **Southern Emerald Damselfly** (*Lestes barbarus*), **Yellow-winged darter** (*Sympetrum flaveolum*) and *Cordelegaster heros*. Packed lunch for the day. We spend a second night at Koprivshitsa.

DAYS THREE & FOUR

We travel to Eastern Rodopi Mountains, town of Krumovgrad. We'll spend three nights at Krumovgrad. The area is rugged, everything around is covered with basalt: a remainder of ancient volcanic activity. We will visit various ponds and streams in the Eastern Rodopi Mountains, looking for *Somatochloa meridionalis*, *Corduliochloa borisi*, *Caliaeshna microstigma*, **Southern Emerald** (*Lestes barbatus*) and **Small Emerald Damselflies** (*Lestes virens*), **Southern Migrant Hawker** (*Aeshna affinis*), *Cordulegaster picta* and **Southern Darter** (*Sympetrum meridionale*), *Epallage fatime*. Packed lunch for both days.

DAY FIVE

We will move to Central Rodopi Mountains and visit the Smolyan high-mountain lakes. There, we expect to see **Damselfly Emerald** (*Lestes sponsa*), **Downy emerald** (*Cordulia aenea*), **Yellow-winged darter** (*Sympetrum flaveolum*), **Common Hawker** (*Aeshna juncea*), **Southern Hawker** (*Aeshna cyanea*). We will spend the night at the high-mountain village of Gela, in a local hotel. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY SIX

Today, we will make a transfer to the town of Dospat and will have the chance to visit the Trigrad Gorge. We can look for **Northern Damselfly** (*Coenagrion hastulatum*), **Migrant Hawker** (*Aeshna mixta*), **Apollo** (*Parnassius apollo*), **Wallcreeper** (*Tichodroma muraria*). Lunch at a local mountain hut.

DAYS SEVEN & EIGHT

Transfer to Southern Pirin Mountain follows. We put up at a local hotel, in the small town of Melnik, for two nights. The following two days we will be visiting small lakes, ponds and marches as well as the valley of river Strouma, expecting to see the **Banded Darter** (*Sympetrum pedemontanum*), *Cordulegaster heros* and *Cordulegaster bidentata*, *Chalcolestes parvidens*, *Selysiothemis nigra*, *Onychogomphus forcipatus*, **White-Tailed Skimmer** (*Orthetrum albistylum*), **Southern Skimmer** (*Orthetrum brunneum*), and both **Southern Darter**, (*Sympetrum meridionale*), and **Marshland Darter** (*Sympetrum depressiusculum*). Packed lunch for both days.

DAY NINE

Today, we'll travel back to Sofia, possibly with a break for lunch. In Sofia our tour comes to an end.

Land only price: **790 EUR**

Group size: **5–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **120 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **2–4 + leader**

Land only price: **880 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

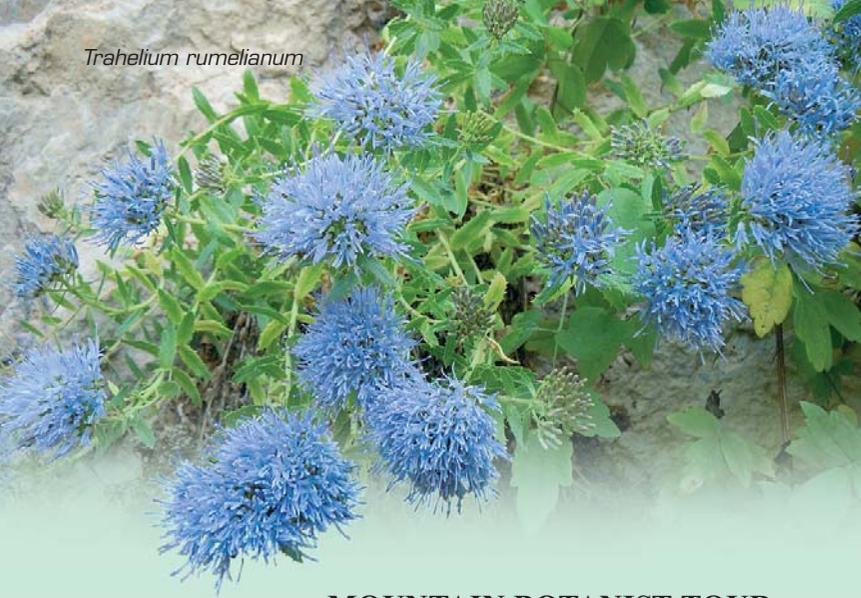
THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Corulegaster bidentata



MOUNTAIN BOTANIST TOUR

9 DAYS TOUR

Sat 28th June – Sun 6th July 2014

Sat 27th June – Sun 5th July 2015

DAY ONE

We will start our floristic excursion from the nature reserve of Bistrishko Branishte, situated in Vitosha Mountain Nature Park. This reserve comprises a very old spruce forest as well as areas above the tree line, in the sub-alpine zone of the mountain at an altitude of about 2000 m asl. The walk is a very easy and pleasant one. There are many rare and endemic plants like *Lilium Jankae*, **Narcissus-flowered Anemone** (*Anemone narcissiflora*), **Lesser Twayblade** (*Listera cordata*), **Globe Flower** (*Trollius europaeus*), *Gentianella bulgarica*, *Senecio pancicii*, **Lesser Bladderwort** (*Utricularia minor*), **Great Yellow Gentian** (*Gentiana lutea*), **Common Sundew** (*Drosera rotundifolia*). Accommodation for 2 nights in a local hotel. The hotel is located at the foot of the Nature Park “Vitosha” and is surrounded by flowered meadows and forests.

DAY TWO

Today, we are about to visit the Nature Reserve “Golo Bardo”. The reserve consists of low-altitude limestone hills covered mainly by grassy vegetation. This countryside is rather dry but the limestone provides unique conditions for the growth and development of a number of rare and endemic plant species like **Marsh Helleborine** (*Epipactis palustris*), *Himantoglossum caprinum*, **Pyramidal Orchid** (*Anacamptys pyramidalis*), *Satureja coerulea*, *Campanula bononiensis*, *Rhodax canus*, *Dorycnium herbaceum*, *Delphinium orientale*, *Astragalus onobrychis*, *Scrophularia canina*, *Anthyllis aurea*, *Centaurea chrysolepis*, *Centaurea orientalis*, *Centaurea immanuelis-loewii*, *Euphorbia barrelieri*, *Anthericum ramosum*, *Allium saxatile*, *Asphodeline taurica*, *Onosma visianii*, *Achillea ageratifolia*, *Achillea clypeolata*, *Potentilla cinerea*, *Paronychia kapela*, *Edrajanthus serbicus*.

DAY THREE

After breakfast and a brief visual inspection of the meadows we set off for the National Park “Rila Mountain”.

During the transfer, we will visit the famous Rila Monastery. This monastery is under the aegis of UNESCO as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. We will make a short walk to an altitude of 2000 m asl where, hopefully, we will see *Hamaecytisus absentooides*, *Campanula trichocalicina*, **Green Foxglove** (*Digitalis viridiflora*), **Heart-flowered Marsh-orchid** (*Dactylorhiza codigera*), **Heldreich’s Maple** (*Acer heldraihii*) and many other species.

Late in the afternoon, we arrive at Bansko town, located at the foot of Pirin Mountain National Park. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAY FOUR

Today, we will begin our botanical observations by riding with the minivan to an altitude of about 1500m asl. The walk is easy and pleasant up to about 1800m asl and follows the track to the mountain chalet the name of “Vihren”. We will see there the oldest tree in Bulgaria, the 1400-years old Balkan endemic species **Bosnian (White-bark) Pine** (*Pinus heldreichii*) along with other endemic species like *Verbascum davidovii*, *Dianthus petraeus ssp. Petraeus*, *Iris Reihembachii*, *Saxifraga exarata*, **Starry saxifrage** (*Saxifraga stellaris*), *Linum capitatum*, *Pedicularis orthantha*, *Daphne oleoides*, *Asineuma kelerianum*, **White Helleborine** (*Cephalanthera damasonium*), **Red Helleborine** (*Cephalanthera rubra*), *Veronica kellereri*, *Aquilegia aurea*, *Rhinanthus javorkae*, *Hamaecytisus absenthoides*.

DAY FIVE

Today, we will climb with the minivan to an altitude of about 1800m asl. We’ll fetch with us the packed lunch and set off for the high-mountain lake named “Okoto” which is at an altitude of 2050m asl. There we’ll see *Primula minima*, *Dianthus microlepis*, *Isoetes lacustris*, *Jovibarba hoifelii*, *Silene lermenfeldiana*, *Bartsia alpina*, *Gentiana punctata*, *Aquilegia aurea*, *Iris reihenbahii* and many other plant species. Late in the afternoon we descend with the vehicle to lower altitudes where we expect to see, *Neotia nidus-avis*, **Broad-leaved Helleborine** (*Epipactis helleborine*), *Centaurea managetae*, *Chondrilla urumovii* and some other species.

DAY SIX

Today, we will move to the Rodopi Mountains in the bosom of which the next hotel where we will be accommodated has snuggled itself. During the transfer, we’ll follow the river Mesta (Nestos). We hope to find *Campanula lanata*, *Jovibarba heuffelii*, *Genista rumelica*, *Campanula scutellata*, *Stachys angustifolia*, *Dianthus pinifolius*, *Dianthus deltooides*, *Dianthus superbus*, *Sempervivum leucanthum*, *Verbascum orientale*, *Gladiolus imbricatus*, *Thalictrum lucidum*, *Moenchia mantica*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Dactylorhiza calopisii*, *Orchis ustulata*, **Violet Limodore** (*Limodorum abortivum*), *Rosa caesia*, *Euphorbia seguierana*, *Centaurea stenolepis*, *Allium scorodoprasum*, *Ornithogalum sphaerocarpum*. We will put up at the hotel “Dabrash” for 2 nights.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast, we will visit the magnificent Trigrad gorge. One can hardly imagine the gorge beauty if one does not see it with one’s own eyes. This exceptionally beautiful area is 1200 m above sea level. Species to see: *Haber-*

lea rhodopensis, *Petkovia orphanidea*, *Sideritis scardica*, *Minuartia rhodopaea*, *Malcolmia serbica*, *Morina persica*, *Trachelium rumelianum* and many other species. Late in the afternoon, we return to our hotel for dinner and spending the night.

DAY EIGHT

Today, what lies ahead is to leave the beautiful Rodopi Mountains and make out our way northwards, crossing Thracian lowlands and continuing to Sredna Gora Range. During the transfer, we will visit a nature reserve called “Beglika”, where we have good chances to see *Viola rhodopaea*, *Astragalus centralpinus*, *Potentilla fruticosa*, *Scabiosa rhodopaea*. While crossing the lowlands we will see many meadows dappled with beautiful flowers, **fields planted with oil-bearing rose**, *Campanula lanata*, *Dianthus deltooides* and many other plants. Our last night will be spent in Koprivshtitsa, a little mountain town from the time of Bulgarian National Revival

DAY NINE

After breakfast, a transfer to Sofia follows, where the tour will end. Depending on the spare time at our disposal we can carry out last observations on mountain meadows.



Centaurea emanuelis-loewi

Land only price: **795 EUR**
 Group size: **5–15 + leader**
 Single room supplement: **150 EUR**
 Deposit: **150 EUR**
 Individuals: **1–4 + leader**
 Land only price: **885 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Aquilegia aurea

Eastern Festoon
Zerynthia cerysi



JULY BUTTERFLY TOUR

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 12th July – Sat 19th July 2014

Sat 11th July – Sat 18th July 2015

The present butterfly fauna has formed itself as a consequence of diverse climatic conditions, relief, soil texture and vegetation as well as the presence of refuges where, during the ice age, relic species have been preserved or endemic species have formed. This fauna of Bulgaria is the richest one among all European countries, outside the Mediterranean zone: currently **215 species** have been reliably registered for our country.

DAY ONE

The tour starts at Bulgarian capital city of Sofia with transfer to the small mountain town of Koprivshtitsa located at the foot of Sredna Gora Range. During the transfer, we will carry out our first observations. Accommodation for 2 nights at a local hotel.

DAY TWO

Observations will be held at several places near Koprivshtitsa town. Species likely to be seen on the meadows around the town in the morning are **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Mazarine Blue** (*Cyaniris semiargus*), **Chestnut Heath** (*Coenonympha glycerion*). Later during the day we'll visit another locality. Species likely to be observed are **Scarce Copper** (*Lycaena virgaureae*), **Poplar Admiral** (*Limnitis populi*), **Purple Emperor** (*Apatura iris*), **Heath Fritillary** (*Melitaea athalia*), **Woodland Grayling** (*Hipparchia fagi*), **White Admiral** (*Limnitis reducta*), **Freyer's Purple Emperor** (*Apatura metis*), **Hungarian Glider** (*Neptis rivularis*), **Knapweed Fritillary** (*Melitaea phoebe*), **Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea didyma*), **Twin Spot Fritillary** (*Brenthis hecate*), **Arran Brown** (*Erebia ligea*), **Almond Ringlet** (*Erebia albertanus*), **Large Blue** (*Maculinea arion*).

Large Tortoiseshell
Nymphalis polychloros



DAY THREE

Transfer to the Eastern Rodopi Mountains, town of Kroumovgrad. While on the way there, we'll make several stops for making some observations. Species likely to be observed there are **Large Copper** (*Lycaena dispar*), **Lesser Fiery Copper** (*Lycaena thersamon*), **Purple-Shot Copper** (*Lycaena alciphron*), **Lesser Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea trivia*), **Map Butterfly** (*Arashnia levana*), **Marbled White** (*Melanargia galathea*), *Plebeius sephirus*, *Hipparchia syriaca*, **Lattice Brown** (*Kirinia roxelana*). Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAY FOUR

Observations in the vicinity of Arda River Valley. The most interesting species likely to be seen there are **Sandy Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus cinarae*), **Southern Small White** (*Pieris manni*), **Krueper's Small White** (*Pieris krueperi*), **Eastern Wood White** (*Leptidea duponcheli*), **Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow** (*Colias erate*), **Lesser Bath White** (*Pontia chloridice*), **Little Tiger Blue** (*Tarucus balcanicus*), **Eastern Baton Blue** (*Pseudophilotes vicrama schiffneruelleri*), *Aricia anteros*, **Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus armoricanus*), **Yellow Banded Skipper** (*Pirgus sidae*).

DAY FIVE

Observations in the vicinity of Madzharovo Town. In the morning we will visit a rocky area near Arda River. The most interesting species we can possibly observe there are, **Grecian Copper** (*Lycaena ottomana*), **Balkan Marbled White** (*Melanargia larissa*), **Mountain Small White** (*Pieris ergane*), *Aricia anteros*, *Plebeius sephirus*, **Amanda's Blue** (*Polyommatus amandus*).

DAY SIX

Transfer to Central Rodopi Mountains. While on the way there, we will make observations at several places on both sides of the road. The most interesting species we possibly can observe are *Cartherocephalus palaemon*, **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Woodland Ringlet** (*Erebia medusa*), **Large Ringlet** (*Erebia euryale*), **Bright Eyed Ringlet** (*Erebia oeme*). Accommodation at a local hotel at Gela village for 1 night.

DAY SEVEN

Making observations in the vicinity of Trigrad Village. The most interesting species we can possibly observe there are **Amanda's Blue** (*Polyommatus*

amandus), **False Eros Blue** (*Polyommatus eroides*), **Scotch Argus** (*Erebia aethiops*), **Eastern Large Heath** (*Coenonympha rhodopensis*), **Clouded Apollo** (*Parnassius apollo*), **Mountain Small White** (*Pieris ergane*), **Escher's Blue** (*Polyommatus escheri*), *Polyommatus admetus*, **Ripart's Anomalous Blue** (*Polyommatus ripartii*), **Marsh Fritillary** (*Euphydryas aurinia*), **White Admiral** (*Limenitis camilla*), **Black Ringlet** (*Erebia melas*). Late in the afternoon transfer to Dabrash hotel and accommodation for 1 night.

DAY EIGHT

After breakfast, transfer to Sofia airport follows, where our tour comes to its end.

Land only price: **720 EUR**

Group size: **5–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **120 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1–4 + leader**

Land only price: **810 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Little Tiger Blue
Tarucus balcanicus



Southern
White Admiral
Limenitis reducta

White Pelican

AUTUMN BIRDING TOUR VIA PONTICA MIGRATION

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 6th – Sat 13th September 2014

Sat 5th – Sat 12th September 2015

Sat 27th September – Sat 4th October 2014

Sat 26th September – Sat 3rd October 2015

Every autumn thousands of birds perform their annual migration and follow irreversibly one and the same route. A route bearing from ancient times the name of "Via Pontica". Every year along Bulgarian Black-sea coast migrate scores of thousands of **Storks, Pelicans**, larger and smaller **birds of prey** and hundreds of thousands of **songbirds, waders, plovers** and other birds. We can see more than 150 species of birds, among them the **Broad-billed-**, and **Marsh sandpiper, Temminck's Stint, Red-necked Phalarope, Bee-eater, Hoopoe, Roller, Golden oriole, Caspian Tern, Pied Wheatear, Pallid-**, and **Montague's Harrier, Levant Sparrowhawk, Long-legged Buzzard, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Booted eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Red-footed Falcon**, etc.

DAY ONE

Landing at Varna Airport (Northern Black-sea coast) then transfer to the village of Vetren, municipality of Silistra. Accommodation at Pelican Birding Lodge for 2 nights. The village is located in immediate vicinity to the majestic river Danube and the worldwide-renowned Managed Reserve of the Biosphere "Lake Srebarna", which is under UNESCO's aegis as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Dinner follows and night at the Lodge.

DAY TWO

On this day, we are going to visit the reserve Srebarna and besides, we will climb the surrounding hills in order to watch the migration of large and small species of birds. We expect to see **Bee-eater, Hoopoe, Roller, Golden Oriole, Levant Sparrowhawk, Long-legged Buzzard, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Booted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Red-footed Falcon, Dalmatian Pelican, Pygmy Cormorant** and many other species. Packed lunch for the day. Dinner at the Pelican Birding Lodge.

DAY THREE

Ahead of us lies a transfer to the Northern Black-sea coast. During the trip we'll make several stops for watching birds, mainly migrating birds of prey. Being at the coast we'll be watching birds in the steppes of the reserve Kaliakra. The coast is rocky with abrupt, white and reddish-orange cliffs falling away from over 200m into the clear bluish-green depths of the sea below. Interesting bird species to watch there: **White Pelicans, Black Storks, Lesser Spotted-, Booted-, and Short-toed Eagles**, the four species of European **Harriers, Long-legged Buzzard, Red-footed Falcons**. Thousands of small birds. Accommodation at a local hotel for 2 nights.

DAY FOUR

Today, we will visit the lake Dourankoulak. A large sandy beach separates the lake from the sea. The lake is one of the most important wetlands for migrating and breeding birds. We expect to see again a multitude of large **birds of prey, Pelicans, Black Storks** and many other smaller migrants.

DAY FIVE

Today, what lies ahead of us is the transfer to the Southern Black-sea coast. We will cross the Stara Planina Mountains (Balkan Range) which, in this last part of its, sweeps down and touches the sea. On the hills, on the upside of the road, there are oak forests. Interesting birds to see there are: **Great Spotted-, Middle Spotted-, Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, Green- and Grey-headed Woodpeckers, Black Woodpecker, Short-toed Treecreeper**. In the late afternoon, we will be arriving at the town of Pomorie, where we will be accommodated at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAY SIX

This day will start with a visit to the local salt-works where, hopefully, we will be able to see some representatives of waders and plovers. Then we will visit the Bourgas lakes and their surroundings. We shall witness spectacular sights to remember for life: tens of thousands of **Pipits, Wagtails, Larks**, thousands of **Pelicans, Honey Buzzards and Buzzards, Lesser Spotted Eagles**. Hundreds of **Red-footed Falcons, Kestrels, Levant Sparrowhawks**, a lot of **Short-toed Eagles, Booted Eagles**, and – if we have a good luck – **Pallid Harrier, Saker, Steppe Eagle, Spotted Eagle**.

DAY SEVEN

During all that day we will walk around Bourgas salt-works, where we will stop at several spots to watch birds. We expect to see both local non-migratory species like the **Bearded Tit**, and many species of **waders and plovers** as well as a lot of migrants like **Pelicans, Honey Buzzards and Buzzards, Lesser Spotted Eagles, Short-toed-, and Booted Eagles, Red-footed Falcons, Levant Sparrowhawks**.

DAY EIGHT

The final birdwatching round in the region will be followed by a transfer to Varna airport and departure.

Land only price: **720 EUR**

Group size: **5–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **120 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **1–4 + leader**

Land only price: **810 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Booted Eagle

PELICAN BIRDING LODGE

BULGARIA

Pelican Birding Lodge is located in the village of Vetren, close to the town of Siliistra. Vetren is situated at two kilometres from the River Danube, and close to the internationally important Managed Nature Reserve “Lake Srebarna”, a UNESCO heritage site.

The environs along the Danube attract a wide range of birdlife throughout the year. Lake Srebarna is world-famous for a colony of the world-threatened Dalmatian Pelicans, and many other interesting and rare species, which prefer a wetland habitat.

The lodge has been purpose-built in a local and traditional architectural style. It has 7 en suite rooms with hot water, heating, air conditioning, television and internet access. The lodge also has a large “mehana” (tavern), where you can relax and consume your drinks and meals, or just sit down and relax after a day out.

Pelican Lodge is situated in a beautiful natural setting, offering you tranquillity, a warm Bulgarian welcome, and a range of outdoor holiday activities. Close to the Lodge is a small wood, which abounds with bird song throughout the year. The gardens and woodlands are important not only for birds, as they attract butterflies, damsel and dragonflies, mammals and rare plants, too. In nearby areas, the calls of European Jackals are regularly heard. Vetren village is an ideal starting point for cycling in the beautiful surroundings or for enjoying freshwater fishing along the Danube and inland lakes. Other possibilities are visits to archaeological and historical sites, local folklore, traditional Bulgarian cuisine and world-famous wines, and other local drinks.



Dalmatian
Pelican



BIRDS OF DOBROUDZA

8 DAYS TOUR

Sun 25th May – Sun 1st June 2014

Sun 24th May – Sun 31st May 2015

DAY ONE

Landing at Varna airport and transfer to the village of Vetren, located in the immediate vicinity of the Danube and the world famous Managed Reserve “Lake Srebarna”. It is under the aegis of UNESCO as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Accommodation at Pelican Birding Lodge for 5 nights.

DAY TWO

All day long we'll be in the region, making observations around Srebarna lake reserve. Possible bird species for the day: **Dalmatian Pelican, Ferruginous duck, Pygmy Cormorant, Herons and Egrets, Marsh Harrier, Penduline Tit, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk, Goshawk, Ruddy Shelduck**. In the afternoon, we will visit the Danube river proper. Birds likely to be seen there: **Dalmatian Pelicans, Herons, Woodpeckers.**

DAY THREE

After breakfast, we set off for the rocky canyon of the Souhata Reka. The cliffs forming the canyon are perforated by a great number of rock niches and caverns, which today are inhabited by interesting bird species like the **Black Stork, Short-toed Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Booted Eagle**. We are going to see smaller birds like **Roller, Hoopoe, Bee-eater, Golden Oriole, Barred Warbler** and many other species of birds. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY FOUR

Today, we will visit the quite new Nature Reserve “Nova Cherna”. It gives shelter to such interesting species of birds like **White-winged Black-, Black-, and Whiskered Terns, Red-necked- and Black-necked Grebes**, almost all of the European herons and egrets, **Great Reed Warbler** and many other species. During the trip to the marsh, we will visit some other, smaller water bodies where, hopefully, we will see **Ruddy Shelduck**, and in their vicinity **Booted Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Lesser-spotted Eagle**.

DAY FIVE

It is time to visit the rocky valley (canyon) of river Roussenski Lom. This area is a nature park, and its beautiful riverside terraces, tall cliffs, caves, rock formations, high biodiversity and many historical monuments make it an exceptionally

interesting destination for visitors. We will hopefully see **Black Stork**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Egyptian Vulture**, **Honey Buzzard** and many other species of birds.

DAY SIX

Today, we will leave the Danube riverside and head east for the Northern Black Sea coast. During the transfer, we'll stop for watching birds and, hopefully, we will see **Black-headed**-, and **Ortolan Bunting**, **Lesser Grey Shrike**. Around noon, we'll have already arrived at the coast and will immediately head for the Nature Reserve "Kaliakra". "Cape Kaliakra Steppe Nature Reserve" is a coastal headland. Inland, the sky above the rolling steppe is dotted with slow-flapping **Calandra**-, and **Short-toed Larks**. The habitat also suits **Isabeline**-, and **Pied Wheatears** and **Stone Curlew**. We hope to see also **Rosy Starlings**. Accommodation at Kavarna town hotel for 2 nights.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast, follows a visit to Dourankoulak Lake follows. It's a very important wetland area for the breeding, migrating and wintering birds. Here, we will be most interested to spot **Paddyfield Warbler**, **Collared Pratincole**, **Ferruginous Duck**, **Gull-billed**- and **Caspian Terns**, **Red-footed Falcon**, **Long-legged Buzzard**. In the afternoon we will visit Yaylata archaeological reserve to look for **Isabeline**- and **Pied Wheatears**.

DAY EIGHT

After a final observation round in the region, a transfer to Varna airport follows, where our tour is over.

Land only price: **690 EUR**
Group size: **5-15 + leader**
Single room supplement: **120 EUR**
Deposit: **150 EUR**
Individuals: **1-4 + leader**
Land only price: **750 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.

Pied Wheatear



© J. Lidster

BIRDS OF DOBRUDZA & THE DANUBE DELTA

12 DAYS TOUR

Sun 25th May – Thurs 5th June 2014

Sun 24th May – Thurs 4th June 2015

Sat 30th Aug – Wed 10th Sept 2014

Sat 29th Aug – Wed 9th Sept 2015

DAY ONE

Landing at Varna airport and transfer village of Vetren, located in the immediate vicinity of the Danube and the world famous reserve "Lake Srebarna". The reserve is under the aegis of UNESCO as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Accommodation at Pelican Birding Lodge for 5 nights.

DAY TWO

All day long we'll be in the region, making observations around Srebarna lake reserve. Possible bird species for the day: **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Ferruginous duck**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Hérons** and **Egrets**, **Marsh Harrier**, **Penduline Tit**, **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Goshawk**, **Ruddy Shelduck**. In the afternoon, we will visit the Danube River proper. Birds likely to be seen there: **Dalmatian Pelicans**, **Hérons**, **Woodpeckers**.

DAY THREE

After breakfast, we set off for the rocky canyon of the Souhata Reka. The cliffs forming the canyon are perforated by a great number of rock niches and caverns, which today are inhabited by interesting bird species like the **Black Stork**, **Short-toed Eagle**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Booted Eagle**. We are going to see smaller birds like **Roller**, **Hoopoe**, **Bee-eater**, **Golden Oriole**, **Barred Warbler** and many other species of birds. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY FOUR

Today, we will visit the quite new Nature Reserve "Nova Cherna". It gives shelter to such interesting species of birds like **White-winged Black**-, **Black**- and **Whiskered Terns**, **Red-necked**- and **Black-necked Grebes**, almost all of the European **herons** and **egrets**, **Great Reed Warbler** and many other species. During the trip to the marsh, we will visit some other, smaller water bodies where, hopefully, we will see **Ruddy Shelduck**, and in their vicinity **Booted Eagle**, **Honey Buzzard**, **Lesser-spotted Eagle**.



© J. Lidster

**DAY FIVE**

It is time to visit the rocky valley (canyon) of river Roussenski Lom. This area is a nature park, and its beautiful riverside terraces, tall cliffs, caves, rock formations, high biodiversity and many historical monuments make it an exceptionally interesting destination for visitors. We will hopefully see **Black Stork, Long-legged Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Egyptian Vulture, Honey Buzzard** and many other species of birds.

DAY SIX

Today, we will leave the Danube riverside and head east for the Northern Black Sea coast. During the transfer, we'll stop for watching birds and, hopefully, we will see **Black-headed- and Ortolan Bunting, Lesser Grey Shrike**. Around noon, we'll have already arrived at the coast and will immediately head for the nature reserve "Kaliakra". "Cape Kaliakra Steppe Nature Reserve" is a coastal headland. Inland, the sky above the rolling steppe is dotted with slow-flapping **Calandra- and Short-toed Larks**. The habitat also suits **Isabeline- and Pied Wheatears and Stone Curlew**. We hope to see also **Rosy Starlings**. Accommodation at Kavarna town hotel for 2 nights.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast, follows a visit to Dourankoulak Lake follows. It's a very important wetland area for the breeding, migrating and wintering birds. Here, we will be most interested to spot **Paddyfield Warbler, Collared Pratincole, Ferruginous Duck, Gull-billed- and Caspian Terns, Red-footed Falcon, Long-legged Buzzard**. In the afternoon we will visit Yaylata archaeological reserve to look for **Isabeline- and Pied Wheatears**.

DAY EIGHT

We'll head north (180 km) along the Black Sea coast and cross the border with Romania and in about 3 hours driving we arrive at the village of Murigiol, where our Romanian colleagues will be waiting for us. Our trip continues by boat transfer to the center of the Danube Delta, where our hotel is located. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights. During the transfer, we'll see many **Herons**, hopefully flocks of **White Pelicans** and other water birds.

DAYS NINE & TEN

For the next two days we'll travel only by boats, following the existing net of channels in the Delta. We expect to see **Caspian Tern**, flocks of **White Pelican**, all of the European species of **Herons & Egrets, Graylag Goose, White-tailed Eagle, Red-footed Falcon, Grey-headed- and Black Woodpeckers, Spotted and Little Crake** and many other species of birds.

DAY ELEVEN

Today, we will travel back to Bulgaria. Our trip starts by boat. We'll make our last birdwatching from the boat and we'll have the opportunity to see the species from the previous two days. In the late afternoon, we will arrive at our hotel in the town of Kavarna, where we'll have our last dinner and night there.

DAY TWELVE

After breakfast and depending on the flight schedule we can make one last birdwatching stroll in the region, and then follows a transfer to Varna Airport where our tour comes to its end.

Land only price: **1150 EUR**

Group size: **5-10 + leader**

Single room supplement: **220 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **2-4 + leader**

Land only price: **1300 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Levant Sparrowhawk

© J. Lidster



Rosy & Common Starling

© J. Lidster

DRAGONFLIES OF DOBROUDZA

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 7th June – Sat 14th June 2014

Sat 6th June – Sat 13th June 2015

This tour will take us to one of the less known parts of Bulgaria: Dobroudza. We will visit the last natural wetlands that have survived along the Danube river-side and the Black Sea coast. Our goal will be to watch more than **40 species of Dragonflies**. The tour also gives the chance to watch more than **100 species of birds** and many butterflies typical for Southeast Europe. For your facility's sake, we have designed the tour to be spent entirely around two places.

DAY ONE

The tour starts at at Vetren village, municipality of Silistra, where the tourists will be accommodated for 5 nights in the Pelican Birding Lodge. The village is located very close to the majestic river Danube and the world-renowned Managed Nature Reserve "Lake Srebarna". The reserve is under the aegis of UNESCO as a Monument of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

During this first day of your stay there we will visit the lake Malak Preslavets and Garvan Marshland. We will be looking for **Norfolk Hawker** (*Aeshna isocoetes*), **Emperor Dragonfly** (*Anax imperator*), **Blue-eyed Hawker** (*Aeshna affinis*), **Darters** (*Sympetrum*) and **Skimmers** (*Orthetrum*), **Small Redeye** (*Erythromma viridulum*), **Blue-eye** (*Erithromma lindenii*), **Eastern Willow Spreadwing** (*Lestes parvidens*), **Winter Damselfly** (*Sympecma fusca*), **Blue-eyed Goldenring** (*Cordulegaster insignis*), **River Clubtail** (*Gomphus flavipes*) and **Common Clubtail** (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*).

DAY TWO

Today, a longer trip lies ahead of us but we shall stop at many places for observing wildlife. We will visit a Mountain Pass at situated at the foot of the majestic Balkan Range, in order to see **Balkan Goldenring** (*Cordulegaster heros*), **Odalisque** (*Epallage fatime*), **Eastern Specter** (*Caliaeshna microstigma*) and **Balkan Emerald** (*Somatochlora meridionalis*) as well as many others.

DAY THREE

Today, we will ride in the minivan for only about 10 to 15 km. We will visit the surroundings of the reserve "Lake Srebarna". Here, more than **40 species** of dragonflies have been discovered and we will try to find the greater part of these species. We will also watch interesting bird species like the **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**.

DAY FOUR

Today, again a bit longer trip lies ahead of us but we will be rewarded by seeing beautiful natural landmarks. We will visit the Nature Park "Roussenski Lom". Our main goal for the day will be riverine species of dragonflies: **Common Clubtail** (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*), **Snaketail** (*Ophiogomphus cecilia*), **Small Pincertail** (*Onychogomphus forcipatus*), **Ornate Blue** (*Coenagrion ornatum*), **Small Bluetail** (*Ischnura pumilio*) and some others. Also, we can see some rare bird species in the park like the **Black Stork**, the **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Egyptian Vulture**.

DAY FIVE

Today, after a short trip, we are going to visit the protected site named "Kalimok". Almost all sites of our today's programme are marshes and reed beds as well as small groves around them. Hopefully, we may see species like **Darters** (*Sympetrum*) and **Skimmers** (*Orthetrum*), **Lesser Emperor** (*Anax parthenope*), **Robust Spreadwing** (*Lestes dryas*), **Migrant Spreadwing** (*Lestes barbarus*), **Small Spreadwing** (*Lestes sponsa*), **Blue-eyed Goldenring** (*Cordulegaster insignis*), **River Clubtail** (*Gomphus flavipes*).

DAY SIX

Today, we will travel to the east, to the Black Sea coast. We will cross the vicinities of the town of Devnya and visit the saline parts of Varna Lake. We will be looking for the **Dark Spreadwing** (*Lestes macrostigma*), **Red-veined Darter** (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*), **Southern Skimmer** (*Orthetrum brunneum*), **Turkish Goldenring** (*Cordulegaster picta*), **Eastern Specter** (*Caliaeshna microstigma*) and the **Balkan Emerald** (*Somatochlora meridionalis*). Accommodation at a local hotel in the town of Kavarna for 2 nights.

DAY SEVEN

We will visit the lakes Shabla and Dourankoulak. Both these lakes are immediately by the seashore – actually they are separated only by a strip of beach. We will be looking for the **Dark Spreadwing** (*Lestes macrostigma*), **Red-veined Darter** (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*), **Yellow-winged Darter** (*Sympetrum flavellum*), **White-tailed Skimmer** (*Orthetrum albistylum*). Here we can watch the rare European species **Paddifield Warbler**.

DAY EIGHT

Today, after the last observations in the area of the steppe reserve "Kaliakra" and the rocky valley of Bolata our tour will come to its end (depending on the time of departure).

Land only price: **695 EUR**

Group size: **4–15 + leader**

Single room supplement: **100 EUR**

Deposit: **150 EUR**

Individuals: **2–3 + leader**

Land only price: **770 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

ground transport, full board (packed lunch, where is necessary), accommodation, guide, entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at the euro exchange rate for the day of payment.



Odalisque
Epallage fatime

Lesser Spotted Fritillary
Melitaea trivia



BUTTERFLIES OF DOBROUDZA

10 DAYS TOUR

Fri 27th June – Sun 6th July 2014

Fri 26th June – Sun 5th July 2015

DAY ONE

Arriving at Varna Airport and transfer to the seaside town of Kavarna. Accommodation at a local hotel for 3 nights.

DAY TWO

Today, we will visit the surroundings of the town of Kavarna and the town of Balchik. This region is of exceptional interest to nature lovers: limestone rocks, white and very soft. More than **100 species of butterflies** are known from this region as well as so many species of moths. We will also watch many species of dragonflies. The better known species, which we expect to see, are: **Lulworth Skipper** (*Thymelicus acteon*), **Sandy Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus cinarae*), **Large Copper** (*Lycaena dispar*), **Baton Blue** (*Scolitantides vicrama*), **Green-Underside Blue** (*Glaucoopsyche alexis*), **Large Blue** (*Phengaris arion*), **Zephyr Blue** (*Plebeius sephirus*).

DAY THREE

A visit to lakes Shabla and Dourankoulak, the steppes and the seaside cliffs near the village of Tulenovo. A limestone land again. Cliffs of more than a 100-m height sink directly into the sea below. The species we expect to see are **Lesser Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea trivia*), **Nickerl's Fritillary** (*Melitaea aurelia*), **Lesser Purple Emperor** (*Apatura ilia*), **Tree Grayling** (*Hipparchia stathinus*), **Woodland Grayling** (*Hipparchia fagi*), **Gatekeeper** (*Maniola tithonus*), **Plebeius thersites**, **Iolas Blue** (*Iolana iolas*).

DAY FOUR

Today, we will leave the Black Sea coast and will head for the west crossing Dobroudzha on the way. At some moment of our trip we will reach a canyon cut into the limestone rock and called "Souhata Reka". We will concentrate our efforts in finding of the **Fritillary** (*Euphydryas maturna*), **Clouded Apollo** (*Parnassius mnemosyne*), **Large Copper** (*Lycaena dispar*), **Lesser Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea trivia*), **Argynnis hecate**, **Yellow-banded Skipper** (*Pyrgus sidae*), **Clouded Yellow** (*Colias croceus*), **Pearly Heath** (*Coenonympha arcania*), **Chestnut Heath** (*Coenonympha glycerion*) and other species. Accommodation for 6 nights at Pelican Birding lodge, Vetren village, located in the immediate vicinity to the Danube and the world-renowned Managed Reserve of the Biosphere "Lake Srebarna".

DAY FIVE

Today, we will visit the forest named Karakouz, and the Dry Valleys of Kana Gyol. We will be looking for more than **50 species of butterflies**, among them the **Southern White Admiral** (*Limenitis reducta*), **Scarce Tortoiseshell** (*Nymphalis xanthomelas*), **Red-band Fritillary** (*Melitaea didyma*), **Grayling** (*Hipparchia semele*), **Lesser Spotted Fritillary** (*Melitaea trivia*). This countryside is rich of medieval rock churches (dated mostly the 10th century AD) as well as Thracian sanctuaries from the 6th century BC.

DAY SIX

Our today's goal is a visit to the wetlands along the Danube riverside: the lakes Srebarna, Garvan, Malak Preslavets with their adjacent wetlands and the dry hills with bushes and riverside forests. We expect to see **Lesser Purple Emperor** (*Apatura ilia*), **Mallow Skipper** (*Carcharodus alceae*), **Clouded Yellow** (*Colias croceus*), the **Bath White** (*Pieris daphidice*), **Lesser Fiery Copper** (*Lycaena thersamon*), **Chestnut Heath** (*Coenonympha glycerion*), **Ringlet** (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), the **Dryad** (*Hipparchia dryas*), **Knapweed Fritillary** (*Melitaea phoebe*), the **Map** (*Araschnia levana*), **Common Glider** (*Neptis sappho*).

Freyer's Purple Emperor
Apatura metis



DAYS SEVEN & EIGHT

These two days will be dedicated to the forested land called "Loudogorie". More than **120 species of butterflies** have been discovered in this region. This land is known as the cradle of the ancient Thracian civilization, which is the oldest European civilization. We expect to see **Tufted Marbled Skipper** (*Carcharodus flocciferus*), **Southern Festoon** (*Zerynthia polyxena*), **Clouded Apollo** (*Parnassius mnemosyne*), **Pale Clouded Yellow** (*Colias hyale*), **Purple-Shot Copper** (*Lycaena alciphron*), **Balkan Copper** (*Lycaena candens*), **Common Zebra Blue** (*Leptotes pirithous*), **Eastern Short-tailed Blue** (*Cupido decoloratus*), **Dutch Alcon Blue** (*Phengaris alcon*), **Northern Wall Brown** (*Pararge petropolitana*), **Russian Heath** (*Coenonympha leander*), **Freyer's Purple Emperor** (*Apatura metis*), **Freyer's Fritillary** (*Melitaea arduinna*), **False-heath Fritillary** (*Melitaea diamina*).

DAY NINE

Today, we will visit the Nature Park "Roussenski Lom". The local river meanders along the bottom of the canyon. We expect to see **Eastern Festoon** (*Zerynthia cerisy*), **Swallowtail** (*Papilio machaon*), **Orange Tip** (*Euchloe cardamines*), **Eastern Dappled White** (*Euchloe ausonia*), **White-letter Hairstreak** (*Satyrjum w-album*), **Baton Blue** (*Scolitantides vicrama*), **Great Banded Grayling** (*Hipparchia circe*), **False Grayling** (*Hipparchia arethusa*), **Nicker's Fritillary** (*Melitaea aurelia*), **High Brown Fritillary** (*Argynnis adippe*), **Weaver's Fritillary** (*Boloria dia*) and some other species.

DAY TEN

After breakfast, a transfer to Varna Airport follows, where our tour comes to an end.

Land only price: **750 EUR**
Group size: **4-15 + leader**
Single room supplement: **120 EUR**
Deposit: **150 EUR**
Individuals: **2-3 + leader**
Land only price: **840 EUR**

THE PRICE INCLUDES:
ground transport, full board
(packed lunch, where is necessary),
accommodation, guide,
entrance fees for all nature reserves.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:
airfare, travel insurance, drinks and
all items of personal nature.

Payment may be made in all convertible currencies at
the euro exchange rate for the day of pay

Chestnut Heath
Coenonympha glycerion



How to reach the Lodge

The lodge is situated in north-east Bulgaria, Silistra town district, 440 km from Sofia and 170 km from Varna international airports. From Sofia you follow the international highway Sofia-Ruse-Tutrakan-Silistra. From Varna you follow the international highway Varna-Dobrich-Silistra-Ruse.

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