

PANDION Wild Tours & Pelican Birding Lodge

TOURS IN BULGARIA, GREECE AND ROMANIA

2016



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*



TOURS IN BULGARIA, GREECE AND ROMANIA

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Red-breasted Geese

WINTER BIRDING TOUR

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 16th – Sat 23th January 2016

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**, **Bit-tern**, **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 Wood-pecker**, **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 **Nut-cracker** 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 and when 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





SPRING BIRDING TOUR BULGARIA AND GREECE

12 DAYS TOUR

Fri 22nd April – Tues 3rd May 2016

DAY ONE

Landing at Sofia Airport and transfer to Pirin Mountains N.P. Accommodation in Bansko for one night. During the transfer visit Rila Monastery for sightseeing and observation of **Pallid Swift**, **Black Redstart**, etc.

DAY TWO

Visit the high mountains of Pirin N.P., hike from 1500 m to 1900 m altitude, following the mountain road between Banderitsa and Vikhren chalets. We expect to see **Nutcracker**, **Ring Ouzel**, **Crossbill**, **Firecrest**, **Goldcrest**, **Duncock**, **Alpine Chough**. In the afternoon we travel to Kerkini Lake, in Greece. We'll spend two nights in the small village of Khrizokhorafa, next to Kerkini Lake. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY THREE

Today, we'll visit Kerkini Lake. We expect to see **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Pigmy Cormorant**, **Little Bittern**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Spoonbill**, **Little Egret**, **Great White Egret**, **Night Heron**, **Squacco Heron**, **Red-necked** and **Black-necked grebes**, plus many shorebird species. Night at local hotel.

DAY FOUR

We leave the Kerkini Lake region and travel east, and after about 200 km we reach the region of the village of Keramoti, situated at the Mediterranean seashore. We'll visit the local lagoons Eratino and Aglasmatos, where we expect to see **Avocets**, **Black-winged Stilt**, and more shorebird species. Accommodation for one night at a local hotel in Keramoti.

DAY FIVE

After breakfast we are ready to leave the region, but before that we'll try to find and see the local specialty, **Spur-winged Lapwing**. After that we travel again to the east and by early afternoon we reach the Porto Lagos Lagoons. We'll first visit Alikes, Lafrouda and Almira lagoons, where we have another possibility to find **Spur-winged Lapwing**, **Gull-billed Tern**, reed warbler species and more shorebird species. In the late afternoon we arrive at the village of Fanari, where accommodation in a local hotel for two nights follows.

DAY SIX

Today we'll continue our birding tour, visiting the Lagos, Xirolimni, Aliko, and

Ptelea lagoons. We expect to see more shorebird species, reed warbler species, **Caspian Tern**, **White Pelican**, and **White-winged**, **Black** and **Whiskered Tern**, **Gull-billed Tern**, etc.

DAY SEVEN

After an early breakfast we travel to the north, cross the town of Komotih and the Bulgarian border, and after about 2.5 hours we arrive at the Bulgarian city of Krumovgrad, where accommodation for three nights follows. The town is situated in the ancient volcanic region of the Eastern Rodopi Mountains.

DAY EIGHT

Today we'll visit the vulture feeding site of Potochnitsa. This is an open and very rocky area. We expect to see **Egyptian Vulture**, **Griffon Vulture**, **Black Kite**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, migrating harriers, and many small birds such as **Alpine Swift**, **Subalpine**, **Sardinian**, **Orphean**, and **Barred** warblers, **Whitethroat** and **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Woodchat**, **Red-backed** and **Lesser Grey shrikes**, etc. In the afternoon we visit the rocky river valley of Dolna Kula, where we expect to see **Black Stork**, **Black-headed Bunting**, **Ortolan Bunting**, **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear**, **Cirl Bunting**, **Rock Thrush** and **Blue Rock Thrush**, **Rock Nuthatch**, **Short-toed Eagle**, **Booted Eagle**, and many others. Later when it gets dark, we'll try to find **Scops Owl**. Packed lunch for the day. Night at Krumovgrad hotel.

DAY NINE

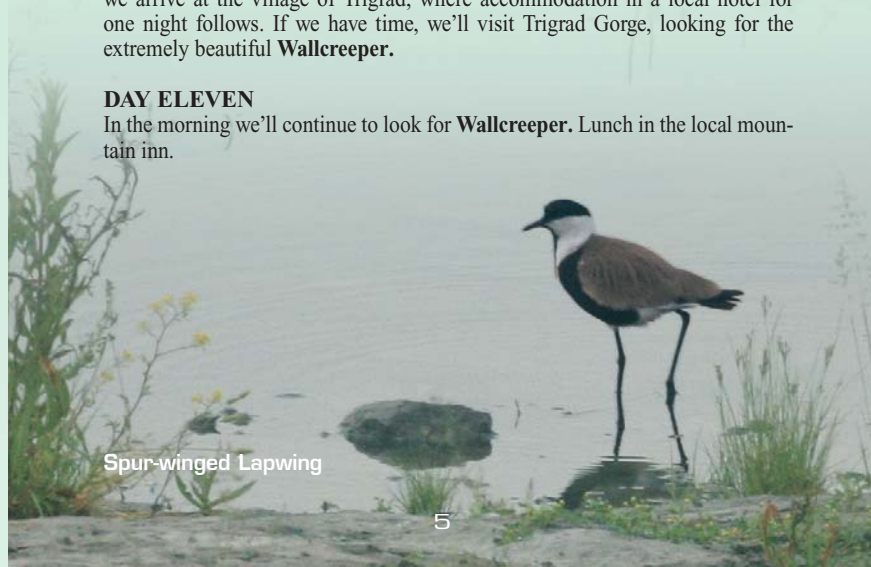
After an early breakfast we'll visit the breeding territory of **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, and we hope to see this impressive bird. During the day we also expect to see **Olive-tree Warbler**, **Olivaceous Warbler**, **Masked Shrike**, **Lesser Kestrel**, **Lesser Spotted Eagle**. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY TEN

We leave the Eastern Rodopi Mountains and we travel west to reach Trigrad Gorge. During the transfer we'll stop a few times and we expect to see **Rock Bunting**, **Woodpecker species**, **Little Owl**, and **Black Stork**. Late afternoon we arrive at the village of Trigrad, where accommodation in a local hotel for one night follows. If we have time, we'll visit Trigrad Gorge, looking for the extremely beautiful **Wallcreeper**.

DAY ELEVEN

In the morning we'll continue to look for **Wallcreeper**. Lunch in the local mountain inn.



Spur-winged Lapwing

A Penduline Tit perched on a thin branch, facing right. It has a black cap, a greyish-brown back, and a white underbelly.

Penduline Tit

Late afternoon we leave the Rodoipi Mountains, driving north. We cross the Thracian Valley and Sredna Gora mountain range, and we arrive at historic museum town of Koprivshitsa. We'll spend our last night at a local hotel. During the transfer we have a good possibility to have last look at **Lesser Spotted, Booted, Short-toed**, and even **Eastern Imperial eagles**. Smaller birds that we expect to see are buntings, shrikes, pipits, **Roller, Bee-eater, Hoopoe**, etc. Final dinner.

DAY TWELVE

After breakfast transfer to Sofia Airport follows. Our tour ends.

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.

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


A Broad Billed Sandpiper standing in shallow water, facing right. It has a long, straight bill and mottled brown and white plumage.

Broad Billed Sandpiper

SPRING BIRDING TOUR

10 DAYS TOUR

Sun 22nd – Tues 31st May 2016

A Yellow Warbler perched on a branch, facing left. It has a bright yellow body, a black cap, and a black throat.

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, Isabelline- and Pied Wheatears, Olive-tree- and Paddfield 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 **Heron** 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

Sat 28th May – Sat 4th June 2016

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 Falcon, 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**.



© L. Andreev & Greenbalkans

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



AUTUMN BIRDING TOUR VIA PONTICA MIGRATION

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 5th – Sat 12th September 2015

Sat 26th Sept. – Sat 3rd October 2015

Sat 3th – Sat 10th September 2016

Sat 24th Sept. – Sat 1st October 2016

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 “*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.





Apollo
Parnassius apollo

JUNE BUTTERFLY TOUR

9 DAYS TOUR

Sat 11th – Sun 19th June 2016

The present butterfly fauna has formed 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*), **Frivaldsky's White-banded Grayling** (*Pseudochazara anthelea amalthea*), **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** (*Hip-*

parchia statilinus), **Freyer's Grayling** (*Hipparchia fatua*), **Oriental Meadow Brown** (*Hyponphele 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*), **Alcon Large Blue** (*Maculinea alcon*), **Turquoise Blue** (*Polyommatus dorylas*), *Polyommatus nepho-hiptamenos*, **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 ploebe*), **Glanville Fritillary** (*Melitaea cinxia*), **Heath Fritillary** (*Melitea 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 nepho-hiptamenos*), **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** (*Coenonympha*



Large Copper
Lycaena dispar

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, a transfer to Krumovgrad town follows. 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.



Knapweed Fritillary
Melitaea phoebe

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.

Eastern Festoon
Zerynthia cerysi



JULY BUTTERFLY TOUR

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 9th – Sat 16th July 2016

The present butterfly fauna has been formed 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 Koprivshitsa 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 Koprivshitsa 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** (*Limenitis populi*), **Purple Emperor** (*Apatura iris*), **Heath Fritillary** (*Melitaea athalia*), **Woodland Grayling** (*Hipparchia fagi*), **White Admiral** (*Limenitis 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*).



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** (*Araschnia 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 mannii*), **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 schiffernuelleri*), *Aricia anteros*, **Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper** (*Pyrgus armoricus*), **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** (*Limnitis 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
Limnitis reducta



Ladybird spider
Eresus kollari
male

SPIDERS OF BULGARIA

9 DAYS TOUR

Sat 11th – Sun 19th June 2016

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 “Zlatnitsa 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 xinpingswangi* 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, 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 *Zodariion 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 Kozhuh, 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.

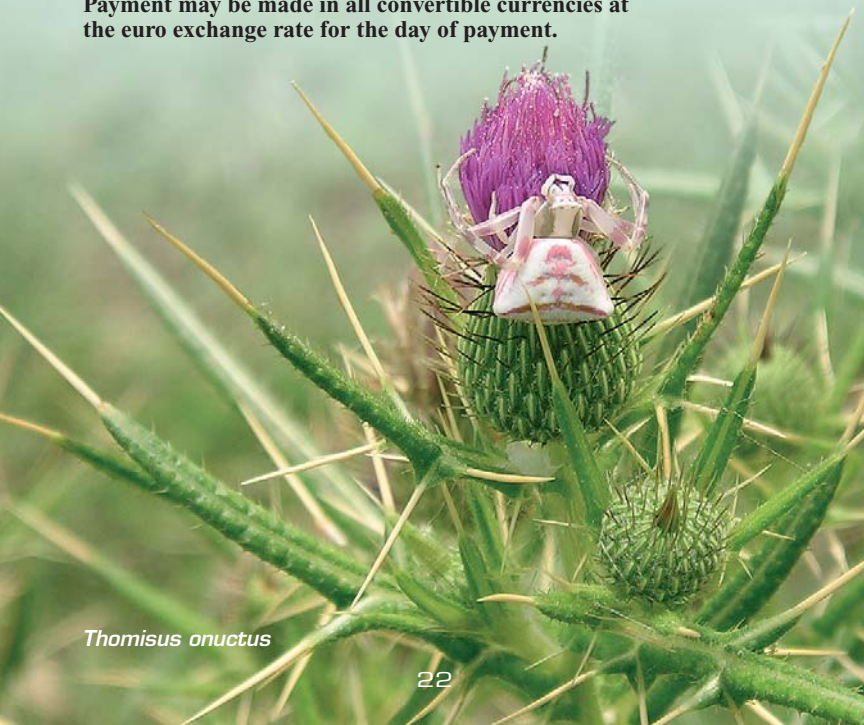
THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

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 oncutus

Corduliochloa borisi



DRAGONFLIES OF BULGARIA

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 11th – Sat 18th June 2016

The exceptional diversity of Dragonflies in Bulgaria is determined by the geographic location of the country and its specific climatic conditions. Species of Dragonflies occurring in the country are 70. Mountain ranges in South Bulgaria give shelter to relic species, which have survived the last Ice Age. The peats are attractive habitat for *Somatochlora arctica*, *Leucorrhinia dubia* and *Somatochlora metallica*. Some of the high mountain streams are overflowing with species of the genus *Cordulegaster*, while the lower reaches of the rivers are the kingdom of *Calopteryx*, *Onychogomphus forcipatus* and *Ophiogomphus cecilia*. There, however, *Corduliochloa borisi* is the indisputable favourite in the preferences of Bulgarian and foreign nature lovers because the species has been described for the science from South Bulgaria. The Black Sea coast combines river habitats with wetlands in which one can observe clustering of scores and hundreds of *Lestes macrostigma* or the fast flying around *Somatochlora meridionalis* and *Caliaeschna microstigma*.

DAY ONE

Our tour starts in the morning in Sofia with a transfer to the Eastern Rodopi Mountains. This part of the Rodopi Mountains is not high. In contrast to the western and central part of the mountains its relief is predominantly low-mountainous and hilly. The average altitude above the sea level is only 320 m and at many places the country is rocky and covered with basalt. This is an area checkered with craters of ancient volcanoes. During the transfer we will stop several times by the river Maritsa and by small dams in order to observe species like *Ophiogomphus cecilia*, *Orthetrum albistylum*, *Gomphus flavipes*, *Coenagrion ornatum*, *Libellula fulva*, *Crocthemis erythraea*. Accommodation for three nights at a local hotel in the town of Kroumovgrad.

DAYS TWO AND THREE.

We are going to visit a multitude of small lakes and rivulets surrounded by meadows and broad-leaved groves. At many places the ground is rocky covered with basalt from ancient volcanic eruptions. We expect to see *Epallage fatime*, *Calopteryx virgo*, *Aeshna isoceles*, *Coenagrion scitulum*, *Lestes vi-*

rens, Chalcolestes parvidens, Corduliochloa borisi, Caliaeschna microstigma, Onychogomphus forcipatus, Chalcolestes viridis, Cordulegaster picta, Lestes barbarus, Erythromma lindenii, Enallagma cyathigerum, Chalcolestes parvidens. Packed lunch for the two days there.

DAY FOUR

Today, what lies ahead of us is a trip towards the central part of the Rodopi Mountains. During the transfer we will notice how, along with the raising altitude, the landscape also changes. Rocks and grassy vegetation yield its place to bushes, then follow low broad-leaved grooves, then come well developed broad-leaved grooves, then they turn into well developed forests and the latter, on their part, turn into mixed forests and finally, at an altitude of about 1200 m asl there appear the coniferous forests. During the transfer, we will stop several times to observe *Somatochloa meridionalis, Aeshna affinis, Orthetrum coerulescens*, *Orthetrum brunneum, Cordulegaster picta, Aeshna juncea, Libellula quadrimaculata, Cordulia aenaea, Coenagrion hastulatum, Lestes sponsa*. Accommodation for a night in a local little hotel in the high-mountain village of Gela. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY FIVE

Today, during our transfer, we are going to visit the Trigrad Gorge. What astounds every visitor of this part of Bulgaria are the huge rocks raising straight upwards reaching a height of and above 200 m. Visitors will also be impressed by the deep rocky gorges. Strange looking trees of the local subspecies of the Black Pine (*Pinus nigra*) grow right out of the rock cracks, without even a trace of soil... The river that has pierced through the magnificent Rodopi Mountains runs along the gorge forming meanders and waterfalls along its way. Here is the cave in which the mythical Orpheus has entered in the search of his beloved Eurydice. This is the best place in Europe where one can watch the exceptionally beautiful bird Wallcreeper reminding a huge red butterfly in flight. Lunch at the little restaurant in the local mountain hut. Here we can taste the tastiest trout within the borders of Bulgaria. After lunch we leave the gorge and in 45 km ride arrive at a local hotel where we accommodate for the night. During the transfer we will hopefully see *Cordulegaster heros, Lestes dryas, Sympetrum flaveolum, Aeshna cyanea*.



Cordulegaster bidentata



*Odalisque
Epallage fatime*

DAY SIX

A new and not so long transfer lies ahead of us. We are leaving Rodopa Mountains and set off for the Pirin Mountain National Park. During the transfer with the minivan we will climb up to about 1450 m asl and visit few somewhat marshy mountain meadows, where we hope to see *Cordulegaster bidentata, Sympetrum pedemontanum*. Later on and at a lower altitude we will try to find out species like *Caliaeschna microstigma, Somatochlora meridionalis, Cordulegaster heros*. Late in the afternoon we arrive at the little town-museum Melnik. Accommodation at a local hotel for 2 nights.

DAYS SEVEN

The entire day shall be spent not far from the hotel, making observations around the local small lakes and marshes. We will also visit the volcanic area of Kozhoukh Planina Mount. This is a basalt hill at the foot of which hot mineral water gushes out. Hopefully, we will see there *Sympetrum depressiusculum, Selysiothemis nigra, Aeshna isocetes, Anax parthenope, Onychogomphus forcipatus, Libellula fulva, Sympetrum fonscolombii, Erythromma viridulum* and perhaps a few more species. Packed lunch for the day.

DAY EIGHT

After lunch a transfer to Sofia follows where our tour will come to its end. Depending on the flights' schedule if we will have some time available at our disposal we will visit the world renowned Rila Monastery – a monument of the World Culture Heritage under the aegis of UNESCO.

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.

*Paeonia peregrina*

SEA BOTANICAL TOUR

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 30th April – Sat 7th May 2016

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 fruticosum*), **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. 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** (*Achillea clypeolata*), **Milk-Vetch** (*Astragalus gladiatus*), **Broom** (*Chamaecytisus jankae*), **Myrtle Spurge** (*Euphorbia myrsinites*), **Limonium** (*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*), *Hyalanthella 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 *Bellevallia 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**

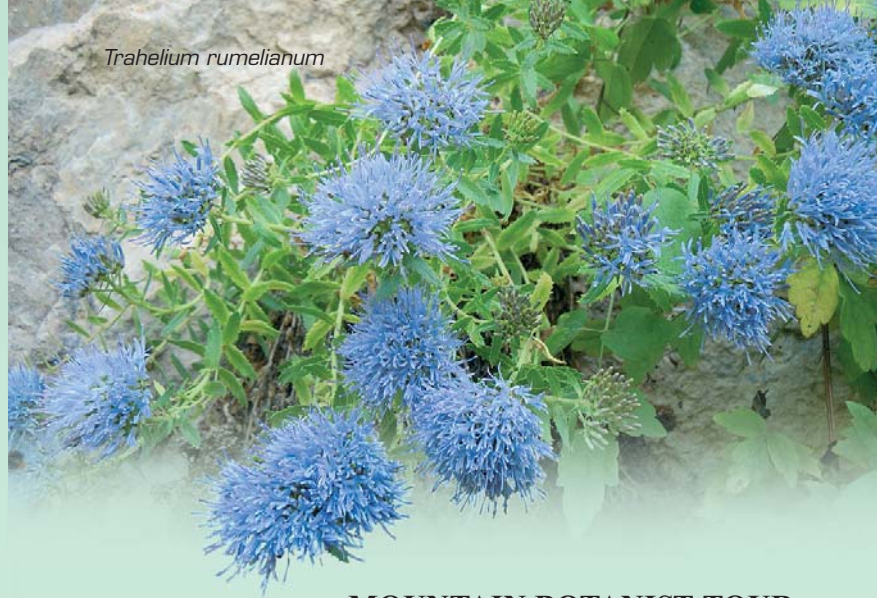
THE PRICE INCLUDES:

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.



Trachelium rumelianum

MOUNTAIN BOTANIST TOUR

9 DAYS TOUR

Sat 2nd – Sun 10th July 2016

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*), *Gentianaella 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*.



Pontic Rhododendron
Rhododendron ponticum

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 absinthoides*, *Campanula trachelium*, **Green Foxglove** (*Digitalis viridiflora*), **Heart-flowered Marsh-orchid** (*Dactylorhiza codigera*), **Heldreich's Maple** (*Acer heldraichii*) 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 reihenbachii*, *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 absinthoides*.

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 hoiffelii*, *Silene lerchenfeldiana*, *Bartsia alpina*, *Gentiana punctata*, *Aquilegia aurea*, *Iris reihenbachii* 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 deltoideus*, *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 Triglav 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 deltoideus* 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

PELICAN BIRDING LODGE

BULGARIA

Pelican Birding Lodge is located in the village of Vetren, close to the town of Silistra. 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 22nd – Sun 29th May 2016

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-, 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

Today, we will be leaving the Danube riverside and set off east for the Northern Black Sea coast. During the transfer we will stop at certain places and will try to observe **Ortolan Bunting**, **Cirl Bunting**, **Black-headed Bunting**, **Lesser Grey Shrike**, **Great Grey Shrike** and some other species. Around noon we'll arrive at the little Black Sea town of Kavarna and accommodate ourselves at a local family hotel for 3 nights. We'll have lunch and go out for making observations in the countryside surrounding the town, not far from the seas shores. The vegetation is predominantly grassy and shrub-like, here and there there are little groves of low broad-leaved trees. The rocks around are of soft, yellowish-white limestone, and some of them run straight down to the sea from a height of 150–200 m. The area is very suitable for various species of woodpeckers, **Hawfinch**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, If lucky, we can also see during the day the local pair of **Eurasian Eagle Owl**.

DAY SIX

Today, we are going to visit the steppe reserve Kaliakra and the rocky Canion called Bolata. Kaliakra is a rocky limestone cape whose yellowish-orange rocks run straight down into the Black Sea emerald waters. Vegetation is predominantly grassy with small shrubs scattered here and there. The air above the steppe literally vibrates with the unceasing songs of **Calandra Lark** and **Greater short-toed Lark**. This habitat is also very suitable for **Isabelline Wheatear**, **Eurasian Stone-curlew**. On almost every shrub one can see alighted **Black-headed Bunting**, or **Lesser Grey Shrike**, or **Red-backed Shrike**. Bolata in turn is a not very large, rocky limestone canyon with a rivulet running on its bottom forming a small marsh and after it runs further and flows into a little bay in the sea. The side walls of the canyon are perforated by a multitude of caves which give shelter to quite a number of mammals, reptiles and birds like **Eurasian Eagle Owl** for instance. Lunch at a local restaurant.

DAY SEVEN

Today, what lies ahead of us is a visit to the coastal lake Dourankoulak. This is a very important wetland for breeding and migratory birds. The lake is separated from the sea by a sand bar (or beach) about 5 km long. The shoreline of the lake proper is about 25 km long. Some of the most interesting species we expect to see there are **Paddyfield Warbler**, **Collared Pratincole**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Gull-billed Tern**, **Caspian Tern**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Red-footed Falcon**.

After lunch we will visit the reserve Yaylata where we expect to see **Pied Wheatear** as well as other steppe species. In this area one of the most frequent visitors is the **Rosy Starlings**.
Packed lunch for the day.



Paddyfield Warbler

© J. Lidster

DAY EIGHT

The last observations of birds in the area will be made after breakfast and then a transfer to Varna Airport or Bucharest Airport will follow where our tour will come to its end.



Caspian Tern

© J. Lidster

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**

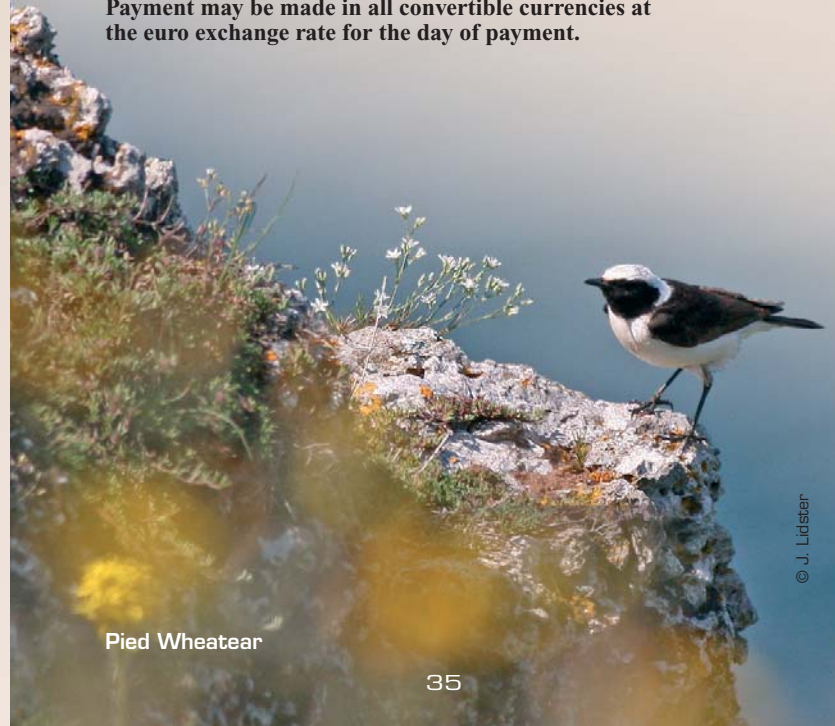
THE PRICE INCLUDES:

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



DANUBE DELTA & BIRDS OF DOBRUDZA

12 DAYS TOUR

Sun 22nd May – Thurs 2nd June 2016

Sat 27th Aug – Wed 7th Sept 2016

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 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, 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- 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, 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 drive 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.



Hawfinch

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 **Hérons & Egrets**, **Graylag Goose**, **White-tailed Sea 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 bird-watching 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:

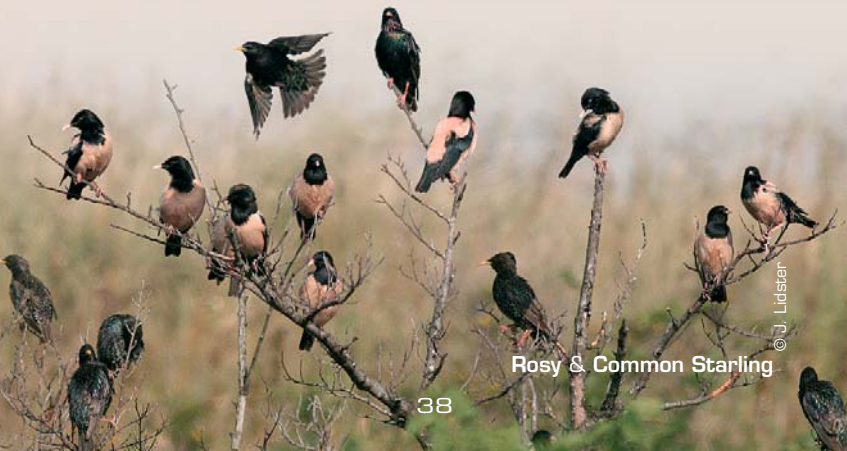
airfare, travel insurance, drinks and all items of personal nature.

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© J. Lidster

Levant Sparrowhawk



© J. Lidster

Rosy & Common Starling

Lesser Spotted Fritillary
Melitaea trivia



BUTTERFLIES OF DOBROUDZA

10 DAYS TOUR

Fri 24th June – Sun 3rd July 2016

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 part of the country 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** (*Glaucopteryx 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 Tulenov. 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 staitinus*), **Woodland Grayling** (*Hipparchia fagi*), **Gatekeeper** (*Maniola thionus*), *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 Gyor. 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 daphnice*), **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

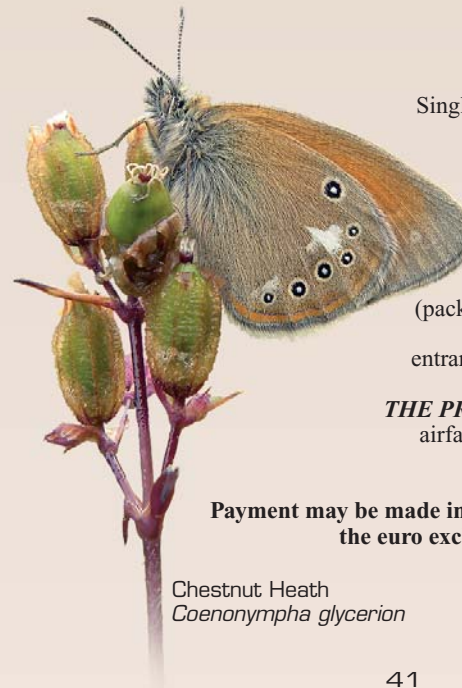
These two days will be dedicated to the forested land called "Loudogorie". More than **120 species of butterflies** have been discovered in this region. This land is known as the cradle of the ancient Thracian civilization, which is the oldest European civilization. We expect to see **Tufted Marbled 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** (*Satyrion w-album*), **Baton Blue** (*Scolitantides vicrama*), **Great Banded Grayling** (*Hipparchia circe*), **False Grayling** (*Hipparchia arethusa*), **Nickerl'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.



Chestnut Heath
Coenonympha glycerion

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**

DRAGONFLIES OF DOBROUDZA

8 DAYS TOUR

Sun 5th – Sun 12th June 2016

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 Vetren village, municipality of Silistra, where the tourists will be accommodated for 5 nights at 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 the Garvan Marshland. We will be looking for **Norfolk Hawker** (*Aeshna isoceles*), **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 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 species of birds 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 "Kalinok". 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 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 flavolum*), **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**

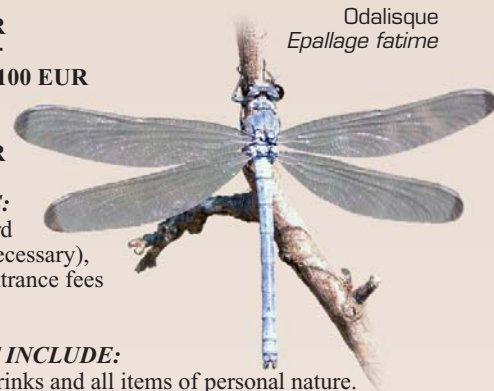
THE PRICE INCLUDES:

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.



WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

8 DAYS TOUR

Sat 30th April – Sat 7th May 2016

Sat 21st – Sat 28th May 2016

The tour will be carried out in close proximity of the majestic river Danube and the Nature Reserve Srebarna, which is under UNESCO's aegis being a Monument of the World Nature Heritage. During the entire sojourn we will be accommodated at the Pelican Birding Lodge.

The chief attraction will be the taking of photos from two hides positioned in such a way as to enable us take shots in the morning and in the afternoon. Hides are erected in close vicinity to a colony of **European Bee-eater**. The colony proper is located in a little valley covered with grassy vegetation and with scattered shrubs and little grooves. At a distance of about 200 m from the colony there is a village fountain. This fountain is a real crowd-puller for the thirsty birds from the valley, and they are not so few species: all species of woodpeckers with the exception of the Three-toed Woodpecker, the **Black-headed, Ortolan** and **Corn Buntings**, the **Lesser Gray, Woodchat** and the **Red-backed Shrike**, the **Golden Oriole, Roller, Hoopoe, Turtle Dove, Common Whitethroat** and **Lesser Whitethroat, Barred Warbler, Hawfinch**, etc.

Only at several minutes drive by a car from the Lodge is the Srebarna Reserve where we will have the chance to photograph the **Dalmatian** and the **White Pelicans** (mainly in flight), **Penduline Tit, Great Reed Warbler** and many other species.

The rich biodiversity in the area will also offer opportunities for macro photography. There are very good opportunities to take shots of the **Golden Jackal**.

The weather in May is not so hot in Bulgaria, we expect daily temperatures around 25 Celsius, mornings will be cooler.

FIRST DAY. Landing at Bucharest or Varna Airport and transfer to the village of Vetren, municipality of Silistra, where we will be accommodated at the Pelican Birding Lodge for 7 nights.

DAY TWO TO SIX. Six days wildlife photographing in the area.

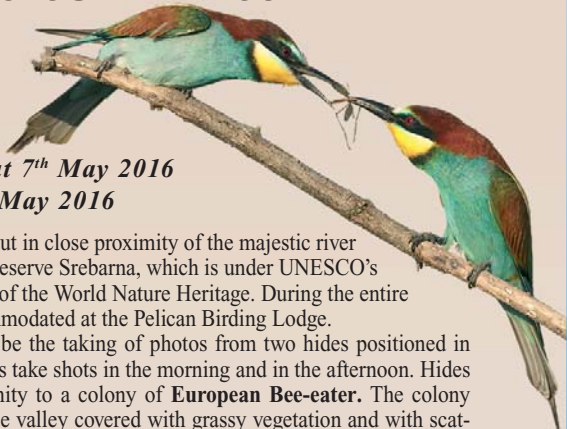
DAY EIGHT. Depending on the flight schedules – last photographing in the area and transfer to the respective airports.

Land only price:

Group size: 2–3 + leader	1350 EUR	Single room supplement	120 EUR
Group size: 4–6 + leader	1200 EUR	Deposit	150 EUR

THE PRICE INCLUDES: Ground transport, Full board (packed lunch), accommodation, guide, hide, chairs.

THE PRICE DOESN'T INCLUDE: insurance, photo equipment, flight, alcohol.



How to reach the lodge:

The lodge is situated in north-east Bulgaria, at 440 km from Sofia, 160 km from Varna and 210 km from Bucharest (Ro) international airports. If you travel from Sofia, you follow the international highway Sofia-Ruse-Tutrakan-Silistra. 15 km before Silistra town, you turn to the left, following the road sign pointing towards the village of Srebarna, pass it by and after 5 km driving you will be reaching the village of Vetren. From Bucharest you follow the international highway Bucharest(Ro)-Ruse(BG)-Tutrakan-Silistra. After Ruse you reach Vetren Village, following the instruction above. From Varna town you follow the international highway Varna-Dobrich-Ruse. 5 km before Silistra town you turn to the left, following the road sign pointing towards the town of Ruse. After about 16 km you turn right, following the road sign pointing towards the village of Srebarna, and after 5 km driving the village of Vetren follows.

CONTACTS:

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