

## **SPRING BIRDWATCHING TOUR**

**13 – 20 April 2012** (Tour code: SB)

**Leader: Assen Ignatov and Norman Sills**

**Price: £965**

*A little driving – a lot of birds!*

Our idea for this tour was to focus on just two bird-rich areas, two quite different habitats but not too far apart, so as to increase your observation time and reduce your time in a bus. The time will be divided between the Burgas lakes and the area around Madzharovo and the Studen Kladenets dam.

Our Bulgarian tour leader, Assen Ignatov, works for the National Museum of Natural History. ([www.nmnhs.com](http://www.nmnhs.com)) He is a very experienced and knowledgeable guide, as well as being a gifted artist and excellent photographer.

Norman Sills is leading his first tour for us. He joined the RSPB staff in 1971. From 1973 to 1996 he was the Warden and then Site Manager of Titchwell Marsh in north Norfolk, which he set up on behalf of the RSPB. He then ran out of reasons for working with heavy earth-moving machinery, so moved to Lakenheath Fen reserve on the Norfolk/Suffolk border! This was a square mile of arable farmland in 1996 but now it's a wetland – mainly reed-bed – with over 800 pairs of reed warblers, 18 nests of marsh harriers, 100 pairs of bearded tits and two pairs of cranes. He retired at the end of May 2011.

Bulgaria's beautiful scenery, friendly people and excellent wine and food are additional highlights. The BBFS offers you the benefits of over thirty-five years' experience of organising tours to Bulgaria. For your financial protection our tour operators, Balkania Travel Ltd. are licensed by the UK Civil Aviation Authority and bonded both by the CAA, ATOL 4465 and IATA, number 91-2 7839. Our tour price includes a

donation to the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds or other conservation organisation in Bulgaria.

The hotels are comfortable (and well situated for your natural history tour) but not luxurious. The holiday is on a Half-Board basis. Final details and bird lists will be sent to participants with their tickets approximately two weeks before departure.

***Projected Itinerary*** (which may be subject to adjustment)

- Friday 13 April*** Flight from Heathrow to Sofia and Sofia to Burgas. Stay for three nights at Sarafovo.
- Saturday 14 April*** Visit Atanassovo and Pomorie lakes, and the Green Balkans Visitor Centre, looking for Slender-billed Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Dalmatian and White Pelicans, Penduline Tit, Bearded Tit, waders including Avocet, waterfowl and migrants such as Lesser Spotted, Booted and Short-toed Eagles.
- Sunday 15 April*** Visit Mandra lake and the BSPB Poda Reserve and Conservation Centre for observation of Spoonbill, Purple Heron, Glossy Ibis, waterfowl and waders including Black-winged Stilt.
- Monday 16 April*** Drive inland to Madzharovo area via Sakar mountain, for a three night stay. Observations along the way might include Black Kite, Hawfinch, Imperial Eagle and Black Stork.

- Tuesday 17 April*** Visit the vulture feeding area around Studen Kladenets, looking for Black, Egyptian and Griffon Vulture, Rock Nuthatch and other species.
- Wednesday 18 April*** Visit the area of Krumovgrad including the Dolna Kula rock formations, looking for Hoopoe, Yellow Wagtail, Syrian and Middle-spotted Woodpeckers.
- Thursday 19 April*** Return drive to Sarafovo, looking out for Montagu's Harrier, Booted Eagle and Long-legged Buzzard on the way. Final overnight stay and farewell dinner.
- Friday 20 April*** Early return flight to Sofia and time for some sightseeing before your return flight to Heathrow.

## **OUR PRICES INCLUDE:**

- Return flights from Heathrow to Sofia and Sofia to Burgas. See separate Note about Flights.
- Airport departure taxes.
- Half Board.
- Accommodation in small, friendly (often family-run) hotels with en suite facilities on a twin bedded shared occupancy basis.
- Coach for transfers and excursions.
- Specialist British and Bulgarian leaders.
- Donation to the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds or other conservation organisation.
- All reserve entrance fees.

## **NOT INCLUDED:**

- Lunches (about £4 - 5).
- Travel Insurance (Compulsory). Balkania Travel can advise.
- Drinks and other personal expenses such as gratuities.
- Single room supplement (£70)

Published July 2011

Please note that from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011, Balkania Travel Ltd. will have a new address: Office 3.08 Avanta Harrow, 79 College Road, Harrow, Middlesex. HA1 1BD. The phone numbers will remain the same.