

WINTER WILDFOWL TOUR

4 – 11 February 2012

(Tour code: WW)

Leader: Tihomir Stefanov

Price: £885

This tour gives you a chance to see Red-breasted Geese, White-headed Ducks and other wintering geese and ducks on the Black Sea coast. The one week tour will have two main centres, the first on the northern part of the Black Sea coast, and then in the south near Burgas Lakes. Although wintering wildfowl will be our main target, wintering birds on the Black Sea coast include a wide range of raptors (including Spotted and White-tailed Eagles, Goshawk, Rough-legged and Long-legged Buzzards), a good selection of woodpeckers (no leaves for the birds to hide behind!), flocks of larks (including Calandra) and, on the sea, mixed rafts of grebes and divers. The itinerary at each base has not been pre-set, as this allows a flexible approach to each day, taking account of prevailing weather conditions and local information. The weather is likely to be cold, so you should be prepared for this and perhaps some travel delays.

Tihomir (Tisho) is currently working at the National Museum of Natural History in Sofia (www.nmnh.com) as head of the department of Recent and Fossil Fish. His main research topic is taxonomy and phylogeny of the freshwater fish of Bulgaria, but he is also an enthusiastic naturalist and a very keen birdwatcher.

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 and excellent value. The accommodation is comfortable (and well situated for birdwatching!) but not luxurious. The holiday is on a Half-Board basis. 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.

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)

Saturday 4 February

Flight from Heathrow to Sofia, and an internal flight to Burgas. Overnight stay in Sarafovo.

***Sunday 5 February to
Tuesday 7 February***

Drive north to Kavarna for a three night stay. Visit to Durankulak and, weather permitting, Shabla, hoping to see geese including Red-breasted and Lesser Whitefront, Spotted Eagle, Great Black-headed Gull, Calandra Lark, Firecrest, Sombre Tit and Hawfinch.

Wednesday 8 February

Drive south along the coast for a three night stay at Sarafovo. Birdwatching stops on the way.

***Thursday 9 and Friday
10 February***

Birdwatching around Burgas lakes, searching for Dalmatian Pelican, Black-throated Diver, Black-necked Grebe, Pygmy Cormorant, Great White Egret, Ruddy Shelduck, Ferruginous Duck, White-headed Duck, White-tailed Eagle and Slender-billed Gull.

Saturday 11 February

Drive to Burgas airport for the early morning flight to Sofia, then time for some sightseeing before your return flight to Heathrow.

OUR PRICE INCLUDES:

- Return flights from Heathrow to Sofia, and Sofia to Burgas. See separate Note about Flights.
- Airport 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.
- Leader/Interpreter.
- Donation to 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 personal expenses such as gratuities.
- Single room supplement £77.

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Please note that from 1st 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.