



VIA PONTICA TOURS

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TOUR INFO

SPAIN & BULGARIA

EUROPEAN RARITIES TOUR (SPAIN & BULGARIA)

24 May – 8 June 2017

Suitable period: *April – June*



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On this special tour you can enjoy the large number of top european rarities of birds, but you can also see more than 240 species of birds, including some very rare european subspecies. From the extreme West to the extreme East of Europe you will have the oportunity to observe a great number of birds, but also butterflies, insects, plants, mammals and admire a variety of differents european landscapes and sceneries. See bellow the list of the rarities than you can observe during this trip.

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EUROPEAN RARITIES TOUR (SPAIN & BULGARIA)

Day by day itinerary

SPAIN

Day 1 (24 May)

Meeting in Madrid and transfer to the endorreic lagoons South of the city known as La Mancha Húmeda. Here we will look for some really good birds including *White-headed Duck*, *Marbled Duck* and *Greater Flamingo*. Other species appearing may include *Cetti's Warbler*, *Penduline Tit* and *Bearded Tit*. Arrival to our hotel for a three nights stay.

Day 2 & 3 (25 & 26 May)

We will explore the magnificent landscape of open woodland "dehesas" and scrub in the famous Tietar Valley. Here we will look for *Spanish Magpie*, *Spanish Imperial Eagle*, *Black Stork*, *Great Spotted Cuckoo*, *Black-winged Kite*, *Iberian Flycatcher* and *Black Vulture*.

In the area around we will also enjoy of the awesome *Great Bustards*, moving in the endless grass lands.

Day 4 (27 May)

Last morning in the area looking for better sights on some birds and to enjoy with the variety of birdlife in the famous "dehesas". Afternoon transfer via AVE to Lleida. Arrival to Lleida and transfer to our accommodation in the area:

Day 5 & 6 (28 & 29 May)

Two days to enjoy of birdlife looking for several of the unique birds living in semi-desert of Los Monegros. *Pin-tailed Sandgrouse*, *Black-bellied Sandgrouse*, *Lesser Kestrel*, *Lesser Short-toed Lark*, *Calandra Lark*, *Dupont's Lark* and many more will appear. The rocky slopes and scrubs around will produce *Darford & Spectacled Warblers*, the near-endemic *Black Wheatear* and the elusive *Thekla Lark*.

During the night we will enjoy of a nocturnal safari where we will have incredible views on *Red-necked Nightjar* and *Scops Owl*.

Day 7 (30 May)

Early start and transfer to the Pyrenees, close to La Pobla de Segur, where we will look for the magnificent *Lammergeier* and the European endemic *Citril Finch*. In the afternoon transfer to our last accommodation for an overnight stay.

Day 8 (31 May)

This day we will go to the Tarragona harbour, where we will have a boat waiting for us to enjoy a sea trip. During the trip we will enjoy some of endemic se birds living in the Mediterranean including the wonderful *Audouin's Gull* and the very scarce *Balearic Shearwater*. Other good birds appearing may include *Mediterranean Shag*, *Cory's Shearwater* and the probably future splited Mediterranean form of the *Atlantic Storm Petrel* (*melitensis*). After lunch final transfer to Barcelona International Airport to fly towards Sofia. Transfer to your hotel near Sofia for an overnight stay.

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BULGARIA

Day 9 (1 June)

Early in the morning we will make a transfer to visit the Eastern Rodopes Mountain – the region with the unique breeding colony of *Griffon Vulture* in Bulgaria. We can observe *Egyptian and Black Vultures, Golden and Imperial Eagles, Long – legged Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Black Stork, Rock Nuthatch, Subalpine, Orphean and Sardinian Warblers, Somber Tit* and many other birds. We will go birdwatching on the Krumovitz River Valley. In this very interesting valley we can observe *Egyptian and Griffon Vultures, Black Stork, Stone Curlew, Black-headed Bunting, Bee-eater, Roller, Golden Oriole, Rock Nuthatch, Red-rumped Swallow, Somber Tit, Masked and Lesser Grey Shrikes*, etc. Late in the afternoon we will arrive to our hotel. Diner and overnight.

Day 10 (2 June)

After breakfast we will make a long transfer to the Black Sea coast. We will stop at several places for birdwatching. We will cross the Mountains of Sakar and Strandja – the largest Natural Park in Bulgaria. We can observe many birds and especially *Lesser Spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Booted Eagle, Black Kite, Olive-tree Warbler, Masked and Woodchat Shrikes, Isabelline Wheatear, Black – headed Bunting, Spanish Sparrow* etc. Late in the afternoon we will arrive in a small and comfortable hotel near the Black Sea Cost. We will spend two nights there.

Day 11 (3 June)

We will visit the lakes around Burgas – Mandra and Atanassovo. On these lakes we can observe many birds and especially *White-tailed Eagle, Lesser spotted Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Short – toed and Booted Eagles, Goshawk, Marsh Harrier, Pygmy Cormorant, Squacco, Night, Purple and Grey Herons, Little and Great Egrets, Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis*, etc. In the afternoon we will visit the Ropotamo River reserve. In this reserve we can observe many water birds, *Woodpeckers, Semi-collared Flycatcher, Short-toed Treecreeper*, etc.

Day 12 (4 June)

We will continue our tour with a transfer to the north part of the Black Sea coast. We will stop on the Pomorie Lake. At this place we can observe *Avocet, Shelduck, Sandwich and Little Terns* and many other birds. After lunch we will stop for birdwatching in Goritza forest. At this place we can observe *Semi-collared Flycatcher, Woodpeckers*, etc. Late in the afternoon we will arrive at our hotel on the Black Sea coast. We will spend there two nights.

Day 13 (5 June)

We will visit the lakes Durankulak and Shabla – the wintering places for the world population of Red-breasted Goose. We can observe many birds and especially *Red-footed falcon, Red-necked Grebe, Little Bittern, Whiskered and White-winged Terns, Collared Pratincole, Paddyfield Warbler, Pied Wheatear*, etc. After lunch in a local fish restaurant on the shore of the lake we will go birdwatching on the steppe. We will visit a breeding place of the *Eagle Owl*. If we are lucky we can observe the *Pallid Harrier* a very rare breeding bird on the steppe. We will observe a *Peregrine Falcon, Red-footed Falcon, Mediterranean Shearwater, Mediterranean race of European Shag, Rose-coloured Starling, Calandra and Short-toed Larks* and many other birds. Late in the afternoon we will return to the hotel for the second overnight.

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Day 14 (6 June)

On this day we will visit the biosphere reserve “Srebarna” a site included in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We can observe the colony of endangered *Dalmatian Pelican*, *Ruddy Shelduck*, *Red-necked Grebe*, *Squacco Heron*, *Whiskered Tern*, *Lesser Spotted Eagle*, *Black Kite*, *Marsh Harrier* and if we have a luck - *White-tailed Eagle*. We can observe also *Lesser Spotted Eagle*, *Honey Buzzard*, etc. After a short transfer we will stop at a typical Danube Valley Marshes. We can observe *Black-necked Grebe*, *Pygmy Cormorant*, *Little Bittern*, *Penduline Tit*, *Bearded Reedling*, etc. Late in the afternoon we will arrive to our hotel in the region of Russenski Lom Natural Park.

Day 15 (7 June)

After breakfast we will visit the Russenski Lom Natural Park – a beautiful valley with many rock monasteries and rock cliffs. There we can observe *Lesser-spotted Eagle*, *Long-Legged Buzzard*, *Black Stork*, *Hoopoe*, *Somber Tit* and many woodpeckers. Late in the afternoon, after many stops for birdwatching we will arrive in the town of Sofia.

Day 16 (8 June)

Early departure flight to Madrid (Spain) for your connection flights. Arriving in Madrid around 9:20 in the morning.

Group size: 4-14 persons 2 865 EUR

Deposit: 200 EUR

Single room supplement: 380 EUR

Price includes: Transport with comfortable bus and coach with A/C, accommodation in good hotels with private facilities, full board, professional guide, all entrance taxes and the flights Barcelona-Sofia and Sofia-Madrid.

The price does not include: Airfares, travel insurance, alcohol drinks and cigarettes, room service, telephone calls.