



**VIA PONTICA TOURS**  
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## TOUR INFO

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### **BULGARIA**

#### ***SPRING BIRDWATCHING TOUR (12 DAYS)***

**DATES:** 12 – 23 May 2017, 26 May – 6 June 2017

**Suitable period:** May - June



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On this intensive tour we will expect to see more than 200 bird's species. We will visit most of the interesting places for birdwatching in Bulgaria: Eastern Rodope and Balkan Mountains, Black Sea Coast, Danube River and many more.

We expect to observe Imperial and Lesser Spotted Eagle, Griffon Vulture and Levant Sparrowhawk among many birds of prey; Dalmatian and White Pelicans, Black Stork, Pygmy Cormorant, Black, Syrian and White-backed Woodpeckers, Roller, Rock Nuthatch, Paddyfield, Barred, Olive-tree and Eastern Bonelli's Warblers, Masked and Lesser Grey Shrikes, Semi-collared and Red-breasted Flycatchers, Sombre Tit, Black-headed Bunting and many more birds. We will also the chance to observe many butterflies, dragonflies and plants.

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### Day 1

Arrival at the Sofia Airport and transfer to the hotel in Vitosha Mountain. After accommodation in the hotel we will go birdwatching in the more than 100 year-old forest. *Common Crossbill, Coal Tit, Goldcrest, Firecrest, Nutcracker, Black Woodpecker, Pallid Swift.*

### Day 2

After breakfast we will travel to the South part of Bulgaria. We will spend the time exploring the Kresna Gorge and the Struma River Valley. This gorge is a part of the famous bird migratory corridor called Via Aristotelis. In Tissata natural reserve, a landscape with predominantly Mediterranean Flora we can observe many birds, and especially *Rock and Blue Rock Thrushes, Somber Tit, Red-rumped Swallow, Syrian Woodpecker, Barred, Subalpine and Orphean Warblers, Lesser Grey, Red-backed and Woodchat Shrikes* and many other species.

Late in the afternoon we will arrive in the town of Melnik. Melnik is a picturesque historic village famous for its locally produced wines. Overnight in a hotel – architectural museum.

### Day 3

On this day we will cross the Mountain of Pirin. In the middle of the day we will arrive at the Rodope Mountain. We will stop to observe *Black Woodpecker, Crested Tit* and many other birds. Late in the afternoon we will arrive at our hotel close to the the Trigrad Gorge. Accommodation, diner and overnight in a local hotel.

### Day 4

After breakfast we will visit the famous Trigrad Gorge. This spectacular gorge is one of the best places to watch the *Wallcreeper* in Europe. We can observe also *Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Pallid and Alpine Swifts, Crag Martin* etc. In the afternoon we will continue our tour along the Rodope Mountains. We will make a several stops for birdwatching. Late in the afternoon we will arrive in our hotel close to the Studen Kladenetz Dam. We will spend two nights there.

### Day 5

Early in the morning we will go to the region with the unique breeding colony of *Griffon vulture* in Bulgaria. We will visit also the feeding place when 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. In the afternoon we will visit the Krumovitzta 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 return to our hotel.

### Day 6

On this day 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 to the Black Sea Cost. We will spend two nights there.

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### Day 7

After breakfast 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*, *Short-toed Treecreeper*, etc. Late in the afternoon we will return to our hotel.

### Day 8

On this day 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 in an open-air restaurant we will stop for birdwatching in Goritza forest. In 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 9

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 a lunch in a local fish restaurant on the board 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 a second overnight.

### Day 10

On this day we will go to the region of Dobrudja – the unique preserved natural steppe in Bulgaria. 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 are lucky *White-tailed Eagle*, etc. Picnic lunch. After a short transfer we will stop to 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 11

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 to an ancient historical small village. Overnight in a hotel – typical Bulgarian house from XVIII century.

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### **Day 12**

Early in the morning we will continue our tour to the town of Sofia (about 200 km). Depending on your departure time we will stop for birdwatching around Sofia.

**Group size:** 4-14 persons 955 EUR  
**Individual:** 2-3 persons 1 195 EUR  
**Deposit:** 200 EUR  
**Single room supplement:** 200 EUR

**Price includes:** Transport with comfortable bus and coach, accommodation in good hotels 3 and 4 stars with private facilities, full board, professional guide and entrance taxes.

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