

Itinerary:



Day 1

Arrival at Sofia Airport

Days 2 & 3

The Pirin Mountain

Day 4

The Rila Mountain

Day 5

Transfer to Melnik along the Struma river valley

Days 6, 7 & 8

The Slavianka and Belasitsa Mountains

Day 9

Drive to Sofia; departure

Driving back to Sofia we could possibly check some interesting spots on the western side of Struma river or the Kresna Gorge for the Emperors, Admirals, Blues and Fritillaries.

Butterfly Tour

Late June – July

A 9-day wildlife holiday to Bulgaria's south-western mountain ranges in search of butterflies, birds and alpine flowers.

During the first part of this tour we will explore the Pirin and the Rila Mountains. This is landscape of exceptional natural beauty, boasting high peaks over 2500 m, and fascinating alpine meadows dotted with glacial lakes, dense forests, spectacular rocky gorges and precipitous cliffs.

The Pirin and Rila National Parks hold outstanding biodiversity. They provide refuge to the Brown Bear, the Wolf and the Balkan Chamois. A big variety of attractive birds occur in the alpine and forest areas, including Alpine Accentor, Spotted Nutcracker, Hazel Grouse, Capercaillie. The butterfly fauna there includes Balkan Copper, Balkan Marbled White, Higgin's Anomalous Blue, Phalakron Blue, Amanda's Blue, Meleager's Blue, Yellow-banded Skipper, Balkan Fritillary, Cynthia's Fritillary, Nettle-tree Butterfly, Blue Argus, Mountain Argus, Balkan Clouded Yellow, Clouded Apollo, Lesser Spotted Fritillary, Nicholl's Ringlet, Balkan Clouded Yellow, Cynthia's Fritillary, ringlets, graylings etc.

Many traditional villages in these mountains are turned into open-air crafts and architecture museums, where one can feel what life used to be like a century or two ago. Such is Melnik, the small town where we will be based for the second half of the tour. Along with its unique and attractive architecture, Melnik is also famous for its locally produced wines, which we are going to taste.

Along the Struma valley we will be looking for Eastern Festoon, Little Tiger Blue, Nettle-tree Butterfly, White and Southern Admirals. In the next days we will visit the Slavianka and Belasitsa Mountains. They are former border zones, which for many years have had limited access, and therefore have very rich wildlife. The character and physical appearance of the mountains here change significantly from the wetter high mountain areas to the dry, Mediterranean habitats, which variable flora is matched by a wonderful selection of butterflies, like Krueper's Small White, Chestnut Anomalous Blue, Freyer's Fritillary, Lesser Spotted Fritillary, Woodland Grayling, Eastern Rock Grayling, Great Banded Grayling, Marbled Skipper, Purple Emperor, Southern Festoon, Apollo, False Apollo, Southern Small White Balkan, Green-veined White. In the lowland areas we have good chances to find Little Tiger Blue, Eastern Wood White, Ilex Hairstreak, Large Cooper, Purple-shot Cooper, Lesser Fiery Cooper, Zephyr Blue and, if we are lucky, Eastern Greenish Black-tip.



Poplar Admiral



Little Tiger Blue



Knapweed Fritillary