

Dragonfly Tour

Mid-June – Mid-July

With its 68 dragonfly species on record, Bulgaria boasts a remarkable Odonata diversity, given that the registered dragonfly species in Europe are 130. Here we come across dragonflies from the sea level to the high mountain zones.

We will start our tour from the southwestern part of Bulgaria, where we will be staying for two nights in the picturesque town of Melnik. We will explore the Struma valley and some small wetlands in the foot of the mountains around, looking for Goblet-marked Damselfly (*Erythromma lindenii*), Common Clubtail (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*), Keeled Skimmer (*Orthetrum coerulescens*), Balkan Goldenring (*Cordulegaster heros*) and *Selysiotthemis nigra*.

Then we will drive eastwards via the spectacular Trigrad Gorge in the Western Rhodopes, which is in fact the Bulgarian Wallcreeper stronghold, and the Smolyan lakes where we could find Dawny Emerald (*Cordulia aena*) and Four-spotted Chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*). Our base for the next two days will be in the Eastern Rhodopes. There we will expect to find Balkan (*Somatochlora meridionalis*) and Bulgarian Emerald (*Somatochlora borisii*), Eastern Specter (*Caliaeschna microstigma*) and *Epallage fatime*.

On the sixth day of the tour we will reach the Black Sea coast, where the first area to explore will be the wetlands around the city of Bourgas. We will be looking for Goblet-marked Damselfly (*Erythromma lindeni*), Southern Darter (*Sympetrum meridionale*), Eastern Willow Spreadwing (*Lestes parvidens*), Southern Skimmer (*Orthetrum brunneum*) and other more common species.

While in the area we will dedicate a day to the rivers, ponds and marshes of the Strandzha Mountain. Some of the key species to be seen there: *Calopteryx virgo meridionalis* (Beautiful Demoiselle), Balkan Emerald (*Somatochlora meridionalis*), Migrant Spreadwing (*Lestes barbarus*), Bulgarian Emerald (*Somatochlora borisii*), Turkish Goldenring (*Cordulegaster picta*).

Next we will drive to the northern Black Sea coast, where we will be exploring the coastal lakes of Durankulak and Shabla, as well as the smaller wetlands around Cape Kaliakra. The target species there are: Lesser Emperor (*Anax parthenope*), Robust Spreadwing (*Lestes dryas*), Dark Spreadwing (*Lestes macrostigma*). En-route we will stop at the Kamchia river mouth to search for Small Redeye (*Erythromma viridulum*), Dainty Bluet (*Coenagrion scitulum*), Broad Scarlet (*Crocothemis erythraea*) and Red-Veined Darter (*Sympetrum fonscolombei*) and in Varna Botanical garden for Eastern Specter (*Caliaeschna microstigma*) and Turkish Goldenring (*Cordulegaster picta*).

Finally we will visit the Srebarna nature reserve and other small wetlands in the Danube region, where we will try to find species like Green-Eyed Hawker (*Aeshna isosceles*), River Clubtail (*Gomphus flavipes*), Blue-eyed Goldenring (*Cordulegaster insignis*), Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*), Small Red-eyed Damselfly (*Erythromma viridulum*), Blue Emperor (*Anax imperator*) and possibly Small Spreadwing (*Lestes virens*).

The transfer for departure on the last day could be either to Varna or Sofia Airport.

Itinerary:



- Day 1 Arrival at Sofia Airport and transfer to Melnik
- Day 2 Melnik region
- Day 3 Transfer to the Western Rhodopes
- Day 4 Transfer to the Eastern Rhodopes with a stop at the Smolyan lakes
- Day 5 The Eastern Rhodopes
- Day 6 Transfer to the southern Black Sea coast
- Day 7 The Bourgas wetlands
- Day 8 The Strandzha Mountain
- Day 9 Transfer to the northern Black Sea coast with a stop at the Kamchia river
- Day 10 Shabla and Durankulak lakes
- Day 11 Srebarna Nature Reserve
- Day 12 Danube wetlands and transfer to Varna or Sofia
- Day 13 Departure



Lesser Emperor



Green-Eyed Hawker