

Itinerary:



Day 1

Arrival at Varna Airport. Transfer to Bourgas

Days 2, 3 & 4

Birding at the wetlands around Bourgas

Day 5

Drive to the northern Bulgarian coast through the Eastern Balkan with stops for roadside birding

Day 6

The lakes of Shabla and Durankulak

Day 7

Kaliakra and Yailata steppes and cliffs

Day 8

Drive to Varna and departure from Varna

Early Spring Migration

April

A tour exploring the spectacular spring migration along the Black Sea coast with thousands of pelicans, rare birds of prey and passerines and many other eastern delights! This tour allows you to enjoy the song and displays of resident and early arriving breeders.

This tour starts from the city of Bourgas, lying at the centre of a complex of extensive wetlands that form one of Europe's richest bird areas. The biggest attraction of the Bourgas wetlands are the huge flocks of migrating White and Dalmatian Pelicans stopping and staying there in spring.

Traditional saltpans are still preserved at the shallow lagoons of Atanassovsko and Pomorie lakes. They are of major importance for a great number of birds, including the Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Marsh Sandpiper, Kentish Plover, Slender-billed and Mediterranean Gulls, Gull-billed Tern and many other waterfowl and wader species. The lush vegetation embracing the freshwater lakes of Mandra and Vaya and the surrounding reedbeds also swarm with life – Savi's, Grear Reed and Cetti's Warblers, Penduline Tits, etc. Ruddy Shelduck, Glossy Ibis, Spoonbill, Pygmy Cormorant, Squacco, Night and Purple Herons and many, many others can be spotted around.

As we drive to the northern Bulgarian coast via the Eastern Balkan Range we will stop to look for Black Stork, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Booted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Semi-collared Flycatcher, etc., and watch a lot of migrating raptors, storks, pelicans and passerines. Already on the northern coast, we will visit the two wetlands of Shabla and Durankulak, close to the border with Romania. There we can expect all species of Heron, Little Egret, Pygmy Cormorant, various migrating and summering species of waders, gulls and turns. Pallid Harrier and Citrine Wagtail are also very likely. We will enjoy the earlier arriving breeding birds like the Marsh Harrier, Ferruginous Duck, Little Tern, Whiskered Tern. If you happen to come later in April you will be able to enjoy also the White-winged and Black Terns.

Not very far south the arable agricultural plots give way to colorful wild steppe, spreading up to the sea edge of cape Kaliakra. There we will watch the migration of endless flocks of gulls, terns and herons. The shrubs around produce various species of warblers and flycatchers. Along with the resident Calandra Larks in the steppes we should be able to enjoy the early arriving Stone Curlews. The Isabelline Wheatear finds refuge in the steppe vegetation, while the coastal cliffs are animated by the Mediterranean subspecies of the Shag, Eagle Owl, Long-legged Buzzard. Around the cliffs we may hope to have a glimpse of Eleonora's Falcon. Those arriving on a tour later in April have good chances to see the Pied Wheatears breeding on the cliffs.



Short-toed Eagle



Kentish Plover