

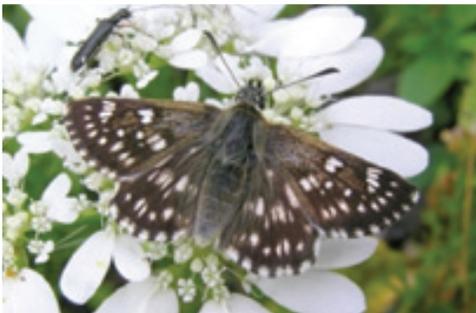
EARLY SUMMER BUTTERFLY & DRAGONFLY TOUR

10 - 20 JUNE (Tour Code: BD)

Leaders: Nick Greatorex-Davies and Tihomir Stefanov

Price: £1,450 (Based on a group of 8 or more. A smaller group will incur a supplement)

EARLY BOOKING DISCOUNT: £50 PER PERSON IF BOOKED BY 30 SEPTEMBER 2017



This 11 day tour will take place in NE Bulgaria, a new area for our B-BS butterfly tours. We shall be combining butterflies with dragonflies. We shall visit several Prime Butterfly Areas: including the Suha Reka, a stronghold of the Scarce Fritillary, and the beautiful Blue Rocks Nature Park near the town of Sliven in the eastern Stara Planina (over 150 butterfly species have been recorded here). During the tour we expect to see well over 100 butterfly species. For dragonflies we shall be visiting several protected wetland sites to look for a wide range of species, including many that do not occur in Britain.



Balkania Travel



Apart from the Scarce Fritillary, other butterfly specialities we shall be targeting include Small Bath White, Grecian Anomalous Blue, Tessellated Skipper and Spinose Skipper.

Among the many other butterfly species we hope to see are: Eastern Festoon, Apollo, Clouded Apollo, Krueper's Small White, Eastern Wood White, Large and Purple-shot Coppers, many blues including: Chequered Blue, Eastern Baton Blue, Blue Argus, Alcon Blue, Large Blue, Zephyr Blue, Idas Blue, Reverdin's Blue, Eros Blue and Turquoise Blue; Purple Emperor, Poplar Admiral, Southern White Admiral, Common and Hungarian Gliders, Large Tortoiseshell, many fritillaries including Cardinal, Twin-spot, Assman's, Nickerl's and Marsh Fritillaries, Lattice Brown, Yellow-banded Skipper, Sandy Grizzled Skipper and Oriental Marbled Skipper.

Among the many dragonfly species we hope to see that are absent or rare in the UK are: Dark Spreadwing, Eastern Willow Spreadwing, Ornate Bluet, Eastern Spectre, River Clubtail, Sombre Goldenring, Balkan Goldenring, Blue-eyed Goldenring, Blue-eyed Hawker, Turkish Goldenring, White-tailed Skimmer and Black Pennant.

Since 2003 we have seen nearly 200 of the 216 butterfly species that occur in Bulgaria (over 150 in 2008), a list will be sent approximately two weeks before departure, or in advance on request.

Nick Greatorex-Davies has been leading butterfly and moth tours for B-BS since 2003. From 1995 to 2006 Nick was co-ordinator of the Butterfly Monitoring Scheme based at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology at Monks Wood, Cambridgeshire, where he worked for 36 years. From a young age his main natural history interest has been British Lepidoptera (including microlepidoptera), and in recent decades European butterflies, supplemented by a strong interest in botany.

Tihomir (Tisho) works at the National Museum of Natural History in Sofia (www.nmnh.com) as head of the department of Recent and Fossil Fish. His main research topic is taxonomy and phylogeny of the freshwater fish of Bulgaria, but he also has a good knowledge of dragonflies. He is an enthusiastic all round naturalist and a keen birdwatcher.

Butterfly nets and several 'pots' for the temporary retention of butterflies are highly recommended. The tour provides numerous opportunities for photographing butterflies and dragonflies.

We shall have at least one moth trap with us providing an extra dimension for those prepared to get up a little earlier! All confirmed records of butterflies, dragonflies and moths will be passed on to the National Museum of Natural History, Sofia.

Bulgaria's beautiful scenery, friendly people and excellent wine and food are additional highlights. The B-BS offers you the benefits of its nearly forty years' experience of organizing tours to Bulgaria. Our tour price includes a donation to a Bulgarian conservation organization. For your financial protection our tour operators for twenty years, Balkania Travel Ltd. are licensed by the UK Civil Aviation Authority, ATOL 4465 and bonded by the International Air Transport Association, IATA number 91-2 7839.

Hotels are comfortable (and conveniently situated!) but not luxurious. Final details and butterfly and moth lists will be sent to participants approximately two weeks before departure.

Projected Itinerary

(which may be subject to adjustment if weather conditions make certain visits likely to be unrewarding, or to make the best of good opportunities presented at the time. There may also be fewer high altitude visits if we have already seen the target species at previous sites).

Sunday 10 June

Travel by scheduled flight from Luton to Varna. Drive north-east to Kavarna on the Black Sea coast for a 2 night stay. Stops at woodland sites just north of Varna on the way, mainly for butterflies.

Monday 11 June

Day spent in the Durankulak and Shabla wetland areas looking primarily for dragonflies. However we expect to see a variety of butterfly species including Large Copper. Both sites are also excellent for waterfowl.

Tuesday 12 June

Travel west to near Siliistra (which is on the shores of the River Danube) for a 3 night stay. On the way visit the Suha Reka Prime Butterfly Area, primary target butterfly, Scarce Fritillary, but we expect to see many other species.

Wednesday 13 June

Day spent in the wetland areas of Sreburna and Maluk Preslavets next to the River Danube, concentrating primarily on dragonflies, but also looking for butterflies in the adjacent woodland, glades and meadows.

Thursday 14 June

Day spent in some of the woodland areas near Sveshtari providing another opportunity to see Scarce Fritillary along with many other butterfly species.

Friday 15 June

Travel to Kotel in the eastern Stara Planina for a 4 night stay, visiting woodlands and limestone areas near Razgrad on the way mainly looking for butterflies.

Saturday 16 June

Day in the meadows and woodland around Zheravna and also visit Kotel Pass.

Sunday 17 June

Day in the Sinite Kamani (Blue Rocks) Nature Park, an area where over 150 butterfly species have been recorded.

Monday 18 June

Day in wetlands near Sliven including the Tserkovski reservoir near Straldzha, a day primarily looking for dragonflies.

Tuesday 19 June

Return to Varna late afternoon for a 1 night stay with stops on the way.

Wednesday 20 June

Early morning visit to wetlands at Varna. Early afternoon return flight to the UK.

Bulgaria 2018

OUR PRICE INCLUDES:

- Return scheduled flights from Luton to Varna, subject to scheduling information and prices not available at the time of going to press.
- Airport taxes, baggage, seat reservation.
- Accommodation in small (often family-run) hotels with en suite facilities on a twin bedded shared occupancy basis.
- Half board.
- Coach for transfers and excursions.
- Specialist British and Bulgarian leaders.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Travel Insurance (Compulsory). Balkania Travel can advise.
- Drinks and personal expenses such as gratuities.
- Lunches (picnics purchased locally at start of the day) £3 -£4.
- Single room supplement (£100).

NOTE: Butterfly nets may be used to help identify butterflies, all of which are released where found.

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Further Information from Dr Annie Kay, B-BS Tours Organiser,
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