

BBFS High Flyers Autumn Migration Tour 2008 14th–28th September

Trip Précis by Dave Carroll

BBFS Tour Leader Sandy Saunders

Bulgarian Guide Petar Iankov

Participants

Colin Lucas, Tricia Taylor, Ted Jackson, Cynthia Jackson, Harry Jevons, Beryl Scott, Sue Bird, Roger Bird, Dave Carroll and Helen Womack.



Itinerary

- 14th Balkan Holidays flight from UK to Burgas airport through Balkania Travel Ltd for British–Bulgarian Friendship Society Tours. Arrived at Hotel Sv.Petar and Pavel, Pomorie.
- 15th Black Sea shore and Pomorie Lake pre-breakfast. Pomorie Lake/salt pans, Atanasovo Lake (Ramsar site), Vaya Lake (Ramsar site), 'the pig farm', Mandra Lake (freshwater reservoir), Chengene Skele, Pomorie.
- 16th Black Sea shore and Pomorie Lake pre-breakfast. Kableschkovo, Poroy Woods and Reservoir, Atanasovo Lake.
- 17th Black Sea shore and Pomorie Lake pre-breakfast. Pomorie Lake (south and salt museum), Atanasovo Lake, Pomorie Lake (west).
- 18th Black Sea shore and Pomorie Lake pre-breakfast. Sunny Beach, Cape Emine, Irakli Bay, Cheshmata Well.
- 19th Black Sea shore and Pomorie Lake pre-breakfast. Atanasovo Lake (north-east), Vaya Lake (north & west), Mandra Lake, Izvorska, 'the pig farm', Poda - Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds-managed protected area with conservation centre.
- 20th Black Sea and Pomorie Lake pre-breakfast. Pomorie Lake (south), Dyulino Pass, Goritza Forest, Yatata, Pobiti Kamuni, Balchik. Arrived at Hotel Monaco, Kavarna.

- 21st Kavarna pre-breakfast. Shabla Tuzla, Kamen Bryag, Kaliakra, Bolata Valley.
- 22nd Kavarna pre-breakfast. Durankulak Lake (north, middle and disused fish farm), Shabla Tuzla, Tyulenovo, Ruslaka.
- 23rd Kavarna pre-breakfast. Balgarevo (north) steppe, Svetinikloa (east), Kamen Bryeg (Yalite), Bolata Valley (Zelnka).
- 24th Kavarna pre-breakfast. Balchik (western raptor watchpoint), Shabla Tuzla, Bolata Valley.
- 25th Kavarna pre-breakfast. Obrochishta, Albena (Bolata Forest), Balchik, Balchik Tuzla, Gorun, Tyulenovo, Bolata Valley.
- 26th Kavarna pre-breakfast. Cape Kaliakra, Bolata, Rusalka.
- 27th Kavarna pre-breakfast. Balchik (west) Yatata, Mouth of Kamchia River, Kamchia Sands, Pomorie
- 28th Pomorie, a roadside raptor watch, BSPB Poda. Six of Group to 'pig farm' and Mandra Lake. From Burgas airport a 3¼ -hour flight to UK.

| List of Birds Logged | Max day count | Days found |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Black-throated Diver <i>Gavia arctica</i> | 3 | 3 |
| Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> | 8 | 7 |
| Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> | 40 | 8 |
| Red-necked Grebe <i>Podiceps grisegena</i> | 3 | 5 |
| Black-necked Grebe <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i> | 40 | 14 |
| Yelkouan Shearwater <i>Puffinus yelkouan</i> | 25 | 2 |
| Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> | 100s | 14 |
| Shag <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> | 50 | 5 |
| Pygmy Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i> | 30 | 5 |
| White Pelican <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i> | 200+ | 9 |
| Dalmatian Pelican <i>Pelecanus rufescens</i> | 20+ | 3 |
| Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> | 12 | 4 |
| Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i> | 2 | 2 |
| Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> | 8 | 1 |
| Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i> | 39 | 6 |
| Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i> | 30 | 11 |
| Great White Egret <i>Egretta alba</i> | 8 | 5 |
| Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | 50+ | 13 |
| Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i> | 150 | 9 |
| White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i> | 2 | 4 |
| Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i> | 39 | 4 |
| Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i> | 100+ | 8 |
| Ruddy Shelduck <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> | 1 | 3 |
| Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> | 100+ | 9 |
| Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> | 7 | 1 |
| Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> | 416 | 8 |
| Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i> | 6 | 5 |
| Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> | 100+ | 10 |
| Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> | 20+ | 6 |
| Garganey <i>Anas querquedula</i> | 12 | 3 |
| Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i> | 30+ | 7 |
| Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i> | 50+ | 5 |
| Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i> | 4 | 3 |
| Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i> | 30 | 13 |
| Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i> | 3 | 5 |

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| Short-toed Eagle <i>Circaetus gallicus</i> | 12 | 12 |
| White-tailed Eagle <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i> | 4 | 3 |
| Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> | 25 | 14 |
| Pallid Harrier <i>Circus macrourus</i> | 2 | 3 |
| Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i> | 1 | 3 |
| Goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i> | 20 | 14 |
| Levant Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter brevipes</i> | 30 | 7 |
| Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i> | 100s | 13 |
| 'Steppe' Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i> | 10s | 3 |
| Lesser Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila pomarina</i> | 1000+ | 10 |
| Greater Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila clanga</i> | 2 | 2 |
| Steppe Eagle <i>Aquila nipalensis</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Booted Eagle <i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i> | 7 | 7 |
| Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> | 2 | 7 |
| Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> | 50 | 14 |
| Red-footed Falcon <i>Falco verspertinus</i> | 100 | 5 |
| Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i> | 15 | 12 |
| Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Saker <i>Falco cherrug</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i> | 38 | 4 |
| Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Water Rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i> | 2h | 6 |
| Corn Crane <i>Crex crex</i> | 2 | 1 |
| Little Crane <i>Poranza parva</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Spotted Crane <i>Porzana porzana</i> (seen by Guide only) | 1 | 1 |
| Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> | 10 | 6 |
| Coot <i>Fulica atra</i> | 100s | 6 |
| Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i> | 8 | 3 |
| Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> | 70 | 11 |
| Stone-curlew <i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i> | 2 | 2 |
| Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i> | 5 | 9 |
| Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> | 20 | 9 |
| Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> | 15 | 7 |
| Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> | 4 | 2 |
| Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> | 100+ | 4 |
| Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> | 14 | 1 |
| Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> | 18 | 3 |
| Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i> | 60 | 9 |
| Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> | 10 | 7 |
| Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> | 62 | 9 |
| Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i> | 2 | 3 |
| Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> | 60 | 11 |
| Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> | 4 | 7 |
| Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> | 15 | 3 |
| Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> | 2 | 1 |
| Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> | 50 | 7 |
| Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i> | 40 | 7 |
| Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> | 5 | 3 |
| Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i> | 3 | 5 |
| Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i> | 3 | 3 |
| Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i> | 50 | 7 |
| Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | 2 | 5 |
| Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> | 2 | 1 |
| Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> | 500+ | 14 |
| Little Gull <i>Larus minutus</i> | 100s | 14 |

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| Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i> | 100s | 14 |
| Slender-billed Gull <i>Larus genei</i> | 2 | 1 |
| Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i> | 100s | 14 |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Gull-billed Tern <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> | 38 | 2 |
| Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> | 100+ | 14 |
| Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> | 20 | 12 |
| Little Tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i> | 3 | 4 |
| Caspian Tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> | 3 | 3 |
| Whiskered Tern <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i> | 30 | 8 |
| Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i> | 50 | 8 |
| White-winged Black Tern <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Arctic Skua <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> | 2 | 1 |
| Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i> | 10s | 14 |
| Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i> | 2 | 3 |
| Wood Pigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i> | 2 | 4 |
| Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> | 20 | 13 |
| Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> | 5 | 9 |
| Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i> | 2 | 5 |
| Eagle Owl <i>Bubo bubo</i> | 2 | 2 |
| Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i> | 1h | 1 |
| Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i> | 2 | 10 |
| Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i> | 20 | 14 |
| Alpine Swift <i>Apus melba</i> | 95 | 9 |
| Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i> | 4 | 10 |
| Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i> | 25 | 10 |
| Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i> | 1 | 3 |
| Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i> | 4 | 6 |
| Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i> | 1 | 4 |
| Grey-headed Woodpecker <i>Picus canus</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Green Woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i> | 2 | 8 |
| Great-spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i> | 2 | 7 |
| Syrian Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i> | 3 | 7 |
| Middle-spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos medius</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Lesser-spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos minor</i> | 2 | 2 |
| Calandra Lark <i>Melanocorypha calandra</i> | 150 | 4 |
| Lesser Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella rufescens</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Crested Lark <i>Galerida cristata</i> | 12 | 9 |
| Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i> | 7 | 6 |
| Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i> | 40 | 10 |
| Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i> | 100s | 13 |
| Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | 100s | 14 |
| Red-rumped Swallow <i>Cecropis daurica</i> | 10 | 7 |
| House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i> | 100+ | 14 |
| Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i> | 28 | 7 |
| Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i> | 10 | 12 |
| Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i> | 50+ | 9 |
| Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava flava</i> | 95 | 14 |
| 'Black-headed' Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i> | 2 | 4 |
| 'Grey-headed' Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava beema</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> | 6 | 6 |
| White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i> | 500 | 14 |
| Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> | 3 | 6 |
| Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> | 4h | 4 |
| Black Redstart <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> | 2 | 4 |
| Common Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> | 7 | 9 |
| Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i> | 15 | 12 |
| Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i> | 2 | 2 |

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| Isabelline Wheatear <i>Oenanthe isabellina</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Northern Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> | 10 | 9 |
| Pied Wheatear <i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i> | 3 | 2 |
| Black-eared Wheatear <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Ring Ouzel <i>Turdus torquatus</i> | 3 | 2 |
| Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i> | 25 | 11 |
| Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i> | 5 | 8 |
| Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> | 20 | 2 |
| Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i> | 5 | 4 |
| Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i> | 10 | 6 |
| Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i> | 2 | 2 |
| Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i> | 2 | 1 |
| Eastern Olivaceous Warbler <i>Hippolais pallida</i> | 2 | 3 |
| Lesser Whitethroat <i>Sylvia curruca</i> | 10 | 12 |
| Common Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i> | 4 | 8 |
| Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> | 98 | 8 |
| Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i> | 1 | 4 |
| Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> | 1 | 2 |
| Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> | 30 | 13 |
| Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i> | 15 | 12 |
| Red-breasted Flycatcher <i>Ficedula parva</i> | 15 | 12 |
| Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i> | 2 | 2 |
| Semicollared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula semitorquata</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Bearded Tit <i>Panurus biarmicus</i> | 1h | 1 |
| Long-tailed Tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> | 10 | 4 |
| Sombre Tit <i>Poecile lugubris</i> | 5 | 1 |
| Willow Tit <i>Poecile montanus</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Marsh Tit <i>Poecile palustris</i> | 5 | 1 |
| Blue Tit <i>Parus caeruleus</i> | 10 | 12 |
| Great Tit <i>Parus major</i> | 15 | 12 |
| Eurasian Nuthatch <i>Sitta europaea</i> | 18 | 3 |
| Common Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Short-toed Treecreeper <i>Certhia brachydactyla</i> | 3 | 4 |
| Penduline Tit <i>Remiz pendulinus</i> | 1h | 2 |
| Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i> | 3 | 5 |
| Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i> | 45+ | 14 |
| Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i> | 1 | 5 |
| Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> | 10 | 11 |
| Magpie <i>Pica pica</i> | 18 | 14 |
| Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i> | 90 | 14 |
| Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i> | 12 | 3 |
| Hooded Crow <i>Corvus corone</i> | 7 | 11 |
| Raven <i>Corvus corax</i> | 2 | 3 |
| Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> | 1000s | 14 |
| House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i> | 100s | 13 |
| Spanish Sparrow <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i> | 100s | 4 |
| Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i> | 10 | 5 |
| Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> | 50 | 11 |
| Greenfinch <i>Carduelis chloris</i> | 10 | 6 |
| Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | 50 | 13 |
| Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i> | 40 | 6 |
| Linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i> | 28 | 8 |
| Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i> | 15 | 6 |
| Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i> | 24 | 2 |
| Cirl Bunting <i>Emberiza cirlus</i> | 6 | 2 |
| Rock Bunting <i>Emberiza cia</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Corn Bunting <i>Miliaria calandra</i> | 90+ | 11 |

The total of bird species recorded on this trip was a remarkable 214, plus three distinct racial forms named in the above list. The successful 14-day tour included 22 raptor species, 29 types of waders and seven woodpeckers, as well as many of the region's specialities.

Mammals – Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* (two together on 19th September), Bottle-nosed Dolphin, Harbour Porpoise, Red Squirrel, Brown Hare, Coypu, and bat (one in flight and one at rest).

Amphibians and Reptiles – Tree Frog (heard), Green Toad *Bufo viridis*, Horned Terrapin, Balkan Green Lizard and Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca*.

Butterflies and Moths – Swallowtail, Scarce Swallowtail, Small White, Eastern Bath White, Clouded Yellow, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Cardinal, Spotted Fritillary, Great Banded Grayling, Easter/Rock Greyling, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Wall Brown, Small Copper, Brown Argus and Common Blue. Hummingbird Hawkmoth and Large Yellow Underwing.

Other species noted – Stag Beetle *Lucanus cervus* (d.), Locust, Preying Mantis, Hornet and Autumn Crocus *Colchicum autumnale* in flower.



On the last day of the tour, 28th September, a spectacular movement of 2000 raptors was observed during a one hour migration watch, with Lesser Spotted Eagles and buzzards the most numerous birds of prey migrating along the Black Sea flyway. The above photo includes two Short-toed Eagles. Photo: *Helen Womack*.

Many thanks to all those involved in making this such a tremendous tour.