

Bulgaria in Autumn

Naturetrek Tour Report

5th – 12th September 2022



Spotted Nutcracker at Vitosha



One of the busy little Penduline Tits at Pomorie



Female Little Tiger Blue on her host plant



A very obliging Pied Wheatear at Cape Kaliakra



Eurasian Red Squirrel with a walnut salad



A wonderful European Wildcat near Cape Kaliakra

Images by Paul Greenfield & Mike Crewe



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Summary

For our September week in Bulgaria, the weather remained sunny and very warm, which was great for topping up the suntan, but likely to mean that any passing migrants had no reason to pause on their journey south for the winter. Despite the lack of any 'falls' of migrants, we nevertheless had a great time, both in the foothills of the Rhodope Massif and along the Black Sea coast. The hills provided us with some great raptor viewing, in particular the impressive numbers of Egyptian Vultures that were seen, as well as the huge Griffons that patrolled the skies. Pre-breakfasts at the local bridge proved exciting, too, with parties of Golden Orioles disporting themselves fully in the open, Hobbies raking through the area and stirring things up and a fabulous Black Woodpecker that bolted itself to the side of a nearby poplar tree.

At the coast, waders were present in good numbers on the lakes and saltpans and we particularly enjoyed the dapper Marsh Sandpipers and head-striped Broad-billed Sandpiper that we found. Parties of Penduline Tits busied themselves and seemed always to be on their way to somewhere else, while massive Dalmatian and Great White Pelicans always dominated the scene whenever they turned up. Masses of terns were gathering before migrating and included several Caspian Terns, while one reed-fringed lake gave us some fine views of not one but four Little Crakes – a real treat! The coastline and headlands in the north-east provided a different set of landscapes and gave us lovely, close views of Pied Wheatears (to add to the Northern, Isabelline and Eastern Black-eared Wheatears we'd already seen), while the bushes revealed a small but steady flow of migrants that included some very dapper Red-breasted Flycatchers, along with a nice diversity of warblers. Some raptor movements were taking place too and included a late Black Kite, several Lesser Spotted and Booted Eagles and some slightly bewildering Eurasian and Levant Sparrowhawks, some of which proved to be more easily discernible via the powers of digital photography! Mammals are not a main feature of this trip, but a couple of Eurasian Soudliks and a close encounter with a Wildcat were certainly among the trip highlights.

Finally, we had a morning in the mountains near Sofia, offering yet another dramatic change in scenery. Up amongst the Norway Spruce trees we found frosty Willow Tits, singing Crossbills and – best of all – a plethora of obliging Spotted Nutcrackers. We had shared some great times together and came home with a hatful of great memories – great food, great company and great times in the field!

Day 1

Saturday 3rd September

Though we were delayed an hour taking off, we eventually made good time across central Europe, turned right at Hungary and were soon dropping into Sofia to find a very warm and sunny day. Dancho was waiting for us and we were shortly heading out of the airport and settling in for the fairly long drive to Krumovgrad. A few Magpies and Swallows, along with some sizeable flocks of Wood Pigeons and Feral Rock Doves were noted, but our first 'head-turner' came when we stopped for a coffee break and discovered a Short-toed Eagle hanging over the valley. Back on the road, things gradually picked up as we trundled along. A White Stork was soon followed by several Black Storks and good numbers of Common Kestrels and Common Buzzards were followed by Grey Heron and Great Egret at some ricefields and a few brief Red-backed Shrikes.

Eventually we turned off the main road and headed up into the hills, with some typical Rhodope oak scrub-woodland taking over from the endless agriculture in the lowlands. Birding was paused for a while by some light rain, but it was dry again by the time we reached Krumovgrad and, as we sorted out bags at the hotel, a few Pallid Swifts cruised around the buildings and a Golden Oriole flew straight down the road – not a bad welcome!

Day 2

Sunday 4th September

Everyone was up for a pre-breakfast walk down to the main bridge over the river in town and it certainly proved to be an enjoyable walk. Goldfinches and Greenfinches were busy in the trees as we approached the bridge, but these were soon forgotten as a parade of Black Storks began to drift over, following the course of the river. Grey Herons and Little Egrets were also moving out from overnight roosts and remaining pools of water held Grey and White Wagtails and a Green Sandpiper. All was calm until a great, black shape sailed by and landed in a nearby willow – a Black Woodpecker! Great scope views were enjoyed before it mooched away into a more covered spot. Spotted Flycatchers sallied out from low branches and we found an amazing group of seven Golden Orioles sitting in full view on the top of a dead tree; even better, a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was with them!

On the opposite side of the bridge, a couple of juvenile Ortolan Buntings were an unexpected bonus, but quickly dropped as a Hobby came in to the same tree they were! The Hobby gave great views as it careered through, scattering things left, right and centre. A great start to the day and a good way to build up an appetite for breakfast! After breakfast, we began a circuit of the local area, starting with another bridge stop a little further down the road. Bee-eaters and Corn Buntings flew beside the bus as we arrived at the bridge and our first Griffon and Egyptian Vultures had been seen briefly – there would be more to come. At this second bridge, we found some sizeable flocks of Goldfinches and Linnets, while raptors seemed always to be in the air. Two Egyptian Vultures showed very well, a Lesser Spotted Eagle put in a brief appearance with a Common Buzzard and a Hobby had a contretemps with a Sparrowhawk, in the process disturbing a mass of Wood Pigeons. Two Turtle Doves were a treat to see, a Red-backed Shrike posed nicely and a Common Snipe was found. We rounded off with the first butterflies of the day, then headed on up the hill towards the raptor feeding station.

There was little activity on the ground at the feeding station, which was a pity, but there was still plenty of action in the area with a good number of Ravens and surprising numbers of Egyptian Vultures around. We took a leisurely stroll back down the hill, through very dry, scrub-woodland and found Balkan Green Lizards and a nice array of butterflies that included Brown Argus, Cardinal, Meadow Brown, Purple Hairstreak, Great Banded Grayling and some unexpected Lattice Browns. Lunch was looming and we headed for a picnic table beside a spring in the shade of some tall Oriental Planes, with Red-rumped Swallows greeting us on arrival. Marsh Frogs were plentiful and provided a little entertainment, while a really nice find was of a Nose-horned Viper curled up beneath a small overhang.

Heading back down and taking another road, we spent most of the afternoon on a high rocky section, overlooking another dry riverbed. Our intended quarry proved very elusive here, but we nevertheless found plenty to enjoy. Yet more vultures cruised overhead and Bee-eaters were constant companions the entire time that we were there, with at least 120 counted soaring around together at one point. A Hoopoe put in a brief

appearance and searching for it resulted in the discovery of a busy group of Eastern Black-eared Wheatears in an array of plumages and an Isabelline Wheatear. Kestrels were very vocal and active and, as we took a walk back along the road, Crag Martins appeared nearby and we added the wonderful Little Tiger Blue and colourful Broad Scarlet to our lists.

Day 3

Monday 5th September

It was to be a long day in the saddle today, as we spent a fair chunk of time birding our way down through the Rhodope foothills before heading through Burgas and onward to our hotel at Pomorie. A repeat, pre-breakfast visit to the bridge proved less productive than yesterday, but it did provide us with a Syrian Woodpecker in the 'oriole tree'. The Green Sandpiper was still present, a Hobby was still patrolling the trees and two Black Storks gave us a fly-by.

After breakfast, we were soon all packed up and heading out of town, retracing yesterday's route to Studen Kladenets then continuing across the dam and following the river Arda eastwards. We made several stops at little stakeouts that Dancho had lined up for us, with each producing its own suite of goodies. Eastern Black-eared Wheatears showed well at rocky outcrops within the forested slopes and we even enjoyed two feeding on Terebinth berries in the woodland with a Spotted Flycatcher and a couple of Common Redstarts. Further on, a sharp bend in the river was home to many Great Cormorants and a few Mallards, but it was the rocks above us that provided the best treats, which included a Blue Rock Thrush and – after a tense search – a Western Rock Nuthatch. The skies provided great entertainment, too, with plenty of Griffon Vultures, a Short-toed Snake Eagle and plenty of Common Buzzards and Ravens around.

We stopped for lunch in another wooded section, with spectacular Cardinals and Silver-washed Fritillaries for company and a few more Marsh Frogs and Balkan Wall Lizards too. As we dropped lower down and the landscape opened out, we found ourselves in more open country. A couple of detours gave mixed results – Masked Shrike failed to show, as did Lesser Kestrels, but we were very pleased with the Eastern Imperial Eagle that gave a fabulous and prolonged fly-by. Two petrol station stops gave us fabulous views of Booted Eagles and a couple of Lesser Spotted Eagles, while smaller fry included plenty of Bee-eaters and Sand Martins, a good scattering of Red-backed Shrikes, Crested Larks, Turtle Doves and Red-rumped Swallows and a couple of Rollers. Time was getting on by the time we reached Pomorie and got checked in to our hotel, so it was a quick turnaround and dinner, before turning in to dream of what tomorrow might bring.

Day 4

Tuesday 6th September

Another bright and sunny day dawned as we headed out a short distance on the bus to the Pomorie Salt Museum area. The views across the saltpans from here were great and offered us our first smorgasbord of wetland birds. Nearby wooden posts were adorned with Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls, Sandwich and Whiskered Terns and Pygmy Cormorants, while the muddy shores provided feeding opportunities for Redshank, Grey Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Little Ringed Plover and Wood Sandpiper. On the other side, an area of worked saltpans attracted a feeding party of Black-tailed Godwits and a scattering of Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts, Ruff and Marsh Sandpipers. Nearby trees had attracted two each of Willow Warbler and Tree Pipit – the latter particularly appreciated.

After breakfast, we began a circuitous route around the lakes that surround Burgas, beginning with Lake Burgas and then Lake Mandrensko. This provided us with a spectacular array of birds; the first stop revealed large numbers of Great White Pelicans, Great Crested Grebes and Common Pochard, together with busily feeding terns, coots, ducks and waders a-plenty. An eye on the sky also turned up Short-toed Snake Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Lesser Spotted Eagle and Marsh Harrier – though some were rather too distant for full enjoyment.

A short walk through a scrubby area brought perched Red-backed Shrikes, Common Whitethroat, Hobby and Bee-eaters and along a reed fringe we found a smart little juvenile Penduline Tit. A rather distant White-tailed Eagle drifted along the edge of a pond and we found several Cone-headed Grasshoppers. Time was passing and we headed for a restaurant lunch at Kraymorie, which saw voluminous amounts of fish, squid and garlic potatoes loaded onto our plates!

Back at the wetlands, Dancho took us to a great little spot along a dirt track that provided a nice window into a marshy corner of Lake Mandrensko. This proved to be a great example of ‘wait and see’ birdwatching, as we thought we had exhaustively searched the marsh, but continued to have new birds popping up seemingly from nowhere! A loafing flock of mostly Black-headed Gulls and Great and Pygmy Cormorants filled much of the corner, with Wood Sandpipers feeding on the mud and Garganey and two Ferruginous Ducks fossicking amongst the Water Chestnuts. At least four Caspian Terns and a Little Tern were nice bonuses and all seemed calm until an adult White-tailed Eagle dropped in with a fish! A little mayhem soon settled, however, when the birds seemed to realise that the eagle already had its lunch and some of the gulls even seemed to fancy trying to steal a bite for themselves! A further two White-tailed Eagles passed through, as did a Montagu’s Harrier and we rounded the spot off with a couple of juvenile Collared Pratincoles.

Dancho had another surprise up his sleeve as we walked up a small hill to look down on a collection of reed-fringed pools. Squacco Herons and Whiskered Terns were immediately apparent among the coots and Mallards and a juvenile Purple Heron hunted at one end. We then found not one but four Little Crakes feeding quite happily in full view and showing really nicely in the full sun. A perfect way to end a hugely bird-filled day and we headed back to base, although by a rather circuitous route as holiday traffic and an accident in town caused some hold ups.

Day 5

Wednesday 7th September

Another pre-breakfast visit to the salt museum provided us with a similar mass array of birds as yesterday. Marsh Sandpiper numbers had increased however and there was a mass gathering of the four common martins and swallows on the wires. Distant waders tempted us but better views would come later and, as we were departing, a quick check of the trees revealed at least 10 Willow Warblers and a Lesser Whitethroat present.

After breakfast, we took a short drive to nearby Lake Pomorie and viewed from the beach side. The wooden posts were again laden with Pygmy and Great Cormorants and an array of gulls and terns, while a scan through the parties of Great Crested Grebes turned up a good scattering of Black-necked Grebes. A nice chance encounter here came from a party of 10 Penduline Tits, which settled close to us for view minutes to feed on the reed seedheads and provided some nice photo opportunities. A Common Reed Warbler popped

up briefly, too. Looking out into the open bay, careful scanning turned up several Red-necked Grebes on the sea, while a couple of Arctic Skuas were busy harassing feeding terns. Over the lagoon, a juvenile Peregrine chanced its arm (or wing?) at catching a wader and careered about seemingly to no avail for a while. Small parties of migrating Grey Herons and Great Egrets drifted through and reminded us that active migration was certainly under way.

Driving to the west side of the same lake, we got a chance to scan through the birds that had been just out of reach earlier. Wood Sandpipers were plentiful here, as were Common and Little Ringed Plovers. A little further along, a sandy/muddy spit proved popular with waders and steadily working through them, we turned up plenty of Dunlin, Kentish Plovers and Curlew Sandpipers, a Broad-billed Sandpiper and two Collared Pratincoles, the latter including a nice, scaly-looking youngster. A White-tailed Eagle had shown briefly on arrival but soon moved on, while a Short-toed Snake-eagle decided to hang around on a pylon for a while. At the farthest end of our walk, we found a close and very smart, juvenile Temminck's Stint, followed by Northern Lapwings, Grey Plover and a Curlew, among others. On the way out to our picnic lunch, we chanced upon a lone Alpine Swift with a group of Common Swifts.

For lunch, we found a nice picnic spot with shade and a good view of more saltpans at Lake Atanasovsko. This area was popular with the local Greater Flamingos, as well as many Pied Avocets and yet more Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stints and another Temminck's Stint. An Osprey passed our way and two Common Shelducks were present. From here, we drove round to the Poda Nature Conservation Centre where we spent the afternoon. Scanning from the centre itself, we found a huge raft of Coots and Northern Shoveler out in the bay, backed by loafing gulls and terns, the latter including at least eight Caspian Terns. Our second Osprey of the day turned up and eventually caught itself a late lunch. A few Common Pochard and Gadwall were amongst the Coots and, with a great deal of imagination, we stared sceptically at a very distant Slender-billed Gull! Sam's keenness for reptiles came to the fore with the discovery of several Dice Snakes, a Smooth Snake and a couple of European Pond Terrapins.

Day 6

Thursday 8th September

It was to be largely a travel day today, so it was a day not so much of quantity but of quality. Most of us began with a pre-breakfast stroll along the beach, though it turned out that the yoga clubs and fishermen were already out in force and there was little in the way of birdlife along the front. We just about made it to the saltpans for a quick scan before heading back for breakfast, followed by some very prompt packing and departure. Our first stop came at the edge of town to check a different section of the Lake Pomorie complex. The lake itself was rather quiet here but for the usual suspects, but the reedbed edge and bushy fringes were nicely busy with a range of birds, including at least 10 Penduline Tits, several Lesser Whitethroats, Common Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, chattering Red-backed Shrikes, a lone Spanish Sparrow and several Tree Sparrows.

We began our drive north but detoured into a small valley that terminated in Poroy Reservoir. Crested Larks were present on the edge of the village as we dropped down into the valley, which was alive with feeding Bee-eaters and hirundines. Raptors were here in good numbers, too and, after noting a few Common Buzzards and Marsh Harriers, we found a couple of hunting Montagu's Harriers, one of which was tussling with a Sparrowhawk. Careful searching and checking also turned up a juvenile Long-legged Buzzard, while a Short-

toed Lark and an adult Woodchat Shrike were also noted and a flotilla of Great White Pelicans cruised overhead.

We made a couple of woodland stops in the Goritza Hills, one before and one after lunch. The first stop provided us with a lone Sombre Tit and a very dapper Red-breasted Flycatcher, while parties of Chaffinches came down to drink at a spring. Woodland Grayling was new for our lists here and a female Praying Mantis was a nice find. Our second woodland visit gave us a number of very smart Wood Warblers among the tall Hungarian Oaks, as well as a Short-toed Treecreeper and a couple of Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

Continuing northward, we eventually passed through Varna and had one more stop to make. A line of outcropping limestone cliffs provides a home for a pair of Eurasian Eagle Owls and after some tense searching, we eventually located what was probably the female of the pair, sitting in a cosy-looking nook. This was certainly a fabulous end to our day and we continued to Kavarna and our charming little hotel.

Day 7

Friday 9th September

There was a very different feel to the day today as we spent our time seeking out migrants along the coast. We started before breakfast outside the hotel, on top of the ridge and looking down into the treetops in the broad valley beneath us. Our vantage point gave us some great views of treetop birds that are often tougher to get a look at from below and these included a number of Hawfinches and a couple of Golden Orioles. Bee-eaters were everywhere it seemed, perched in the trees and sailing around both above and beneath us, while Barn Swallows and House Martins did the same.

After a filling breakfast, we headed north along the coast to Durankulak Lake. We pulled up a little short of our destination when Dancho spotted a passing Black Kite – and it proved to be a good move! Almost as soon as we got off the bus, a pale morph Booted Eagle was found with the kite and we soon found ourselves immersed in a wonderful ‘raptorfest’ as several Steppe Buzzards (the migratory form of Common Buzzard) passed by, a swirling kettle of six Eurasian Sparrowhawks showed up and a Pallid Harrier breezed through – not to mention the appearance of an Osprey, a Hobby and several Common Kestrels! As well as all the activity in the sky, Willow Warblers, Lesser Whitethroats and Spotted Flycatchers were in the trees and we also enjoyed Turtle Dove and Corn Bunting here. Eventually we pressed on to the lake, where a Little Owl was seen at the car park and John flushed out Spotted Crake, but otherwise it was rather quiet here. A check of the recently ploughed field on the way out however proved more productive as we found several Whinchats and Yellow Wagtails, an Isabelline Wheatear and a Tawny Pipit, while three Purple Herons flew by in the background.

Our final stop before lunch was at a camp site at the north end of the site. It was pretty windy here and a check of the sea didn’t turn up much, but looking for a quiet spot out of the wind proved worthwhile as we enjoyed great views of Red-backed Shrike, Spotted and Red-breasted Flycatchers, Syrian and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers and a flock of Spanish Sparrows. Due to the windy conditions, we shifted our picnic lunch to a nearby guesthouse who were happy to entertain us with beer and a good hotpot of soup. Sam’s rummagings unearthed two Bi-coloured White-toothed Shrews in the garden and a Cardinal was enjoyed in the hand before it was set free from the covered eating area.

Our afternoon began with a visit to Shablenska Lake, which proved tricky to view but which held a number of wetland birds, including Black-tailed Godwits, Ruff and a Whiskered Tern. Walking out to the beach, we found a steady passage of Common Terns taking place and a few European Shags passing by, but it was the nearby campground that provided the best birding with plenty of Red-backed Shrikes, Willow Warblers and Spotted Flycatchers present, along with a few Red-breasted Flycatchers and a sooty black, Eurasian Red Squirrel that was seeking a place to bury a walnut. Working back towards our hotel, we stopped at Karmen Bryag and walked out onto the steppe grassland and limestone cliffs. Pied Wheatears were our main target here and we found three of these little charmers still around. On the way out, we briefly spotted a Tawny Pipit and then we chanced upon a busy collection of birds in a roadside run of bushes that included Common and Lesser Whitethroats, Blackcap, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and a typically shy Nightingale. A final stop was made just a few miles from our base to search for Stone-curlews; sadly this was to no avail, but we did enjoy a Hoopoe, several Crested Larks and Northern Wheatears and a mass of the yellow-flowered *Sternbergia colchiciflora*.

Day 8

Saturday 10th September

Our penultimate day began with another stint behind the hotel, overlooking the wooded valley. As yesterday, there were Bee-eaters and hirundines a-plenty, though they took a little while to get going in slightly cooler and cloudier conditions. The Hawfinches were present too and it was interesting to note that a number of them were eating the leaves of the Honey-locust trees. After breakfast, we drove out to Cape Kaliakra in search of migrants and found a nice mix of the expected and the unexpected. Fish traps were attracting large numbers of Common and Sandwich Terns at the first stop and a couple of Ravens drifted high overhead. We also found at least three Pied Wheatears here, but we were to find even more at the next stop, where at least six were bouncing around the stone walls with several Northern Wheatears. Near the point itself, good numbers of European Shags of the distinctive race *desmarestii* were loafing with a few Great Cormorants on the rocks, but the open sea seemed rather quiet, so we moved back from the immediate cape to check out more bushy areas for migrants.

Just along from the car park, some small elms held at least three Red-breasted Flycatchers and two Lesser Whitethroats, but it felt like there should be more somewhere, so we let the birds guide us and soon found ourselves walking down a quiet track away from the tourists. We picked this track simply because a Common Redstart had flown down it and it proved to be a great little spot. The redstart disappeared for a while, but a careful scan soon revealed Turtle Dove, plenty of Red-backed Shrikes, a distant Long-legged Buzzard and two Woodlarks. There was great excitement when a Levant Sparrowhawk flew over, but all paled in the face of a wonderful European Wildcat that approached remarkably close to us, before melting away into the undergrowth.

Time conspired against us and soon we were heading back to the hotel for lunch. This was quickly followed by a drive to Varna Airport, where we said goodbye to our driver, Stoyen but then had a two-hour delay to our departure due to heavy rain in Sofia. We were rather later than planned arriving in Sophia but at least the weather had cleared out and we took our final dinner together before retiring for the night and preparing for tomorrow.

Day 9

Sunday 11th September

We set out a little earlier today, to make best use of what time we had available on our final day. After a 7:00am breakfast and packing of the bags, we headed out of the city and up the long, cobbled road into the mountains at Vitosha. The birds soon made it clear that we were in new habitat, as species more familiar to us popped up – Robin, Blackbird, Coal Tit, Eurasian Treecreeper, Common Chiffchaff – but there were other goodies too, including the one we had come for, Nutcracker. Indeed, the Nutcrackers could barely have been better, with perhaps 10 birds in all, though it was difficult to keep track as they continuously patrolled back and forth and called throatily from the tops of the spruce trees. A few Whinchats, Willow Warblers and Common Whitethroats were noted and glimpses of a Ring Ouzel were had by some. Overhead, a few Crag Martins and Common Swifts joined the usual Barn Swallows and House Martins and Honey Buzzards were seen, though they were mostly a little distant. A very vocal Willow Tit was nice to see up close, as were two Black Redstarts. Being in a completely new habitat, we also found time to take a look at the plants and insects here and there was certainly plenty of new things to enjoy, including *Poecilimon thoracicus*, a fabulously colourful bush-cricket.

With time pressing on, we headed down the hill, back through the city and made it to the airport in good time for our afternoon flight back to London.

I should like to thank everyone for being great fun to travel with and for contributing to a wonderful and exciting trip. Let's do it again soon!

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Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; h = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	September 2022								
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	1			✓	✓	✓			
2	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>					2		1		
3	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>				10+					
4	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>				3	200+		1		
5	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>				3	6				
6	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>				1	1				
7	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
8	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				✓	✓	✓	10		
9	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>				✓	5				
10	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>				2					
11	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>							8		
12	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>					1		8+		
13	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>				1	10	2	2	2	✓
14	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	6	✓	✓						
15	[Feral] Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>							1		
17	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		2	✓	✓	2
18	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>		2	15	1	1	1	50+	1	
19	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					h		h		
21	Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>							1		
22	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>				10+	1				
23	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>				✓	✓				
24	Little Crake	<i>Zapornia parva</i>				4					
25	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>				✓	✓				
26	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegna</i>					8				
27	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				✓	✓	✓			
28	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>					8				
29	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>			✓	✓	✓				
30	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>					1	3			
31	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>				6	10	✓			
32	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>				6	✓	1			
33	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					30+				
34	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>				2	4				
35	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>				✓	✓		✓		
36	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>				10+	✓	✓	✓		
37	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>					20+				
38	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>				2	1				
39	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>					1				
40	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>			2	30+	30+	✓	✓		
41	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>				2	2+				
42	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>				10+	3+		5		
43	Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris falcinellus</i>					1				
44	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>					50+				
45	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>				1	2				
46	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>					20+		1		
47	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>				6+	15+		1		
48	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		1		1	2				

	Common name	Scientific name	September 2022								
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
49	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>					2				
50	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		1	1		1				
51	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>				✓	✓				
52	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>				5+	10+	13			
53	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>				✓	✓	✓			
54	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>				2+	12+				
55	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>				2	2				
56	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>					1				
57	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
58	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>				1					
59	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>			2	✓	✓	✓	✓		
60	Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>				1	1			1	
61	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
62	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>				1					
63	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>				4+	8+				
64	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
65	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>				1	20+	1	1		
66	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>				4	✓	✓	✓	✓	
67	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>				20+	✓	✓	1		
68	Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>					2				
69	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	5	30+	4						
70	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	1								
71	Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmaeus</i>				✓	✓	✓			
72	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
73	European Shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>					1		✓	✓	
74	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>					2				
75	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>				8					
76	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1	10+	✓	✓	✓	✓	3		
77	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>				1			3		
78	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	1	2		2	6+				
79	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
80	Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>				✓		25			
81	Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>			2	✓	✓	✓			
82	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>					2		2		
83	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>		15+	1						
84	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>									5
85	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>		✓	✓						
86	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	1		1	1	1		2	1	
87	Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>		1	2	2		1			
88	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>			3				1		
89	Eastern Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>			1						
90	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>		1							
91	Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>							1	2	
92	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		3		1	1	2	6		1
93	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	10		1	4+	6+	4+	✓	✓	
94	Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>							1		
95	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>				1		2	2		
96	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>							1		
97	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>				4	1		1		
98	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>						1	1	1	
99	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ☺

	Common name	Scientific name	September 2022									
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
100	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>		2						1		
101	Eurasian Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>						1				
102	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		1			1			3	1	
103	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>			2							
104	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1	3	1	1	2			1		
105	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
106	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>		1	h					1		
107	Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>			1					5	✓	
108	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			1			2			h	2
109	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>			1							
110	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		3+	h		h	h		2	1	
111	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
112	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		2	1	1				1	1	
113	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		1			1					
114	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	6+	✓	✓	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
115	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>			1			1				
116	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1	9+	2	1				6	2	
117	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
118	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
119	Spotted Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>										10
120	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
121	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
122	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	3	25+	✓		1	10+		2	2	
123	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>										12+
124	Sombre Tit	<i>Poecile lugubris</i>						1				
125	Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>										2
126	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓				2				
127	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
128	Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>				1	10+	10+	15+			
129	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>									2	
130	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>		h	✓		1	5	✓			
131	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>						1				
132	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
133	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		✓	✓	✓						✓
134	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
135	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
136	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>		6+	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
137	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>				h				h		
138	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>						6+				
139	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		1		2	10+	4+	20+	1	4	
140	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			1					1	3	
141	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>								1		
142	Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>					2					
143	Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>				h						
144	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		h				1	2+	1	2	
145	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>					1	6+	6+	✓		
146	Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>			1	2		3	6+	✓	2	
147	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>										✓
148	Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>			1							
149	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>						h				
150	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>										2

	Common name	Scientific name	September 2022								
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
151	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachyactyla</i>						1			
152	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
153	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		2	✓			h	1+	✓	3
154	Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>									1
155	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		5+	2	1		1	12	2	
156	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>									3
157	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>				h	h		1		
158	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>						1	3+	3	
159	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>							2	1	2
160	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			2				2	1	
161	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>			1						
162	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>							6+		3
163	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			3				3	3+	
164	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>		1					2		
165	Eastern Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>		6	3				3	3+	
166	Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>							3	5+	
167	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>							10+	✓	
168	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>					✓	✓	✓		
169	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
170	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>									3
171	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
172	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓	✓						1
173	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	h	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
174	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>							2		
175	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			2	2		h			
176	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		6+	✓			✓			1
77	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>							10+	10+	
178	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			4			1	2+		
179	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓				h			
180	Common Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>									6+
181	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	1	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
182	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		10+	✓			✓	✓		
183	Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>		2							
184	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>		1							

Mammals

	Common name	Scientific name										
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1	European Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>								✓		✓
2	European Souslik	<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>			✓							
3	Bicoloured White-toothed Shrew	<i>Crocidura leucodon</i>								✓		
4	European Wildcat	<i>Felis silvestris</i>									✓	
5	Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>		✓								

Reptiles & Amphibians

	Common name	Scientific name	September									
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1	Yellow-bellied Toad	<i>Bombina bombina</i>		✓								

	Common name	Scientific name	September 2022								
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	Eastern Tree Frog	<i>Hyla orientalis</i>		h						h	
3	Marsh Frog	<i>Pelophylax ridibundus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
4	Tortoise sp.	<i>Testudo sp.</i>		✓							✓
5	European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbiculatus</i>					✓				
6	Balkan Green Lizard ¹	<i>Lacerta trilineata</i>		✓		✓	✓				
7	Balkan Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis tauricus</i>	✓		✓				✓	✓	
8	Caspian Whip Snake	<i>Dolichophis caspius</i>					✓				
9	Dice Snake	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>					✓				
10	Nose-horned Viper	<i>Vipera ammodytes</i>		✓							

Butterflies

	Common name	Scientific name	September								
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Common Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>				✓					
2	Mallow Skipper	<i>Carcharodus alceae</i>		✓		✓	✓				
3	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		✓							
4	Small White	<i>Artogeia rapae</i>					✓				
5	Eastern Bath White	<i>Pontia edusa</i>		✓	✓	✓					
6	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
7	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>		✓	✓						
8	Purple Hairstreak	<i>Favonius quercus</i>		✓	✓						
9	Little Tiger Blue	<i>Tarucus balkanicus</i>		✓							
10	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓			
11	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>				✓	✓	✓			
12	Queen of Spain Fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>		✓	✓						
13	Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>			✓			✓			
14	Cardinal	<i>Argynnis pandora</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓	
15	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		✓							✓
16	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>		✓					✓		
18	Woodland Grayling	<i>Hipparchia fagi</i>						✓			
19	Great Banded Grayling	<i>Brintesia circe</i>		✓	✓			✓			
20	Lattice Brown	<i>Kirinia roxelana</i>		✓							
21	Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
22	Oriental Meadow Brown	<i>Hyponephele lupina</i>		✓							

Dragons & Damselflies

	Common name	Scientific name	September								
			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Eastern Willow Spreadwing	<i>Chalcolestes parvidens</i>					✓				
2	Common Bluetail	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>				✓	✓	✓			
3	Lesser Emperor	<i>Anax parthenope</i>		✓							
4	Southern Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum brunneum</i>		✓							
5	Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>				✓					
6	Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>				✓					
7	Southern Darter	<i>Sympetrum meridionale</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓			
8	Broad Scarlet	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>		✓							

Footnote

1. Recent genetic studies suggest that Balkan Green Lizard as currently described, consists of more than one species. If a taxonomic split is accepted, then eastern Bulgarian animals become *Podarcis diplochondrodes* ('Eastern Balkan Green Lizard').