

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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BULGARIA

THE WESTERN RHODOPES AND BLACK SEA COAST

3 – 12 June 2010

Holiday participants

Richard King
Marion Hession
John and Sarah Barney
Karin and Brennan Auger

Leaders from the Neophron team

Assen Ignatov and Vladimir Trifonov

www.neophron.com

Neophron Tours is the tourist company and commercial arm of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB)/BirdLife Bulgaria. Through its activity the BSPB raises funds for urgent field actions and conservation projects throughout the country.

Hosts at the Hotel Yagodina: Assen and Mariya Kukundjiev, www.yagodina-bg.com.

Our hotel in Sozopol: Kalithea Hotel, www.hotelkalithea.com/en/.

On the return journey to Sofia we stayed one night at Bashtina Kashta (Father's House), www.fhhotel.info, in the Conservation Village of Koprivshtitsa.

Report by Assen Ignatov, with edits, additional text (in grey) and formatting by Helen Crowder.

Front cover photo of wallcreeper in Trigrad Gorge, and other photos edged red by Assen Ignatov. Photos edged blue by Brennan Auger.

Photo of *Haberlea rhodopensis* on p.12 by Mihaela Yordanova of Neophron.



As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of this one was put towards a local conservation project. Our contribution of £35 per person went to the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, the BirdLife partner in Bulgaria, to assist the management of the Poda Nature Protected Site which we visited during the week. The conservation contribution, by bank transfer, was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust and a £200 donation from the Wildlife Outreach Network, resulting in a donation to BSPB of £450.

The total amount of conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays since 1991, as at August 2010, is £66,727.

Bulgaria, 3 – 12 June 2010

Day 1, 3 June: Sofia to Western Rhodopes

Vlado and I arrived at Sofia Airport's Terminal 1 to collect Richard and Marion from their Gatwick flight, and fortunately John and Sarah, who had arrived from the UK the previous evening by train, were also there to meet us. So after 10 minutes we moved to Terminal 2 for Karin and Brennan who had flown in from Germany. Now assembled, the group boarded the Opel Vivaro minibus which was parked outside the airport door and we were soon on our way towards the Western Rhodopes like last year.

On the outskirts of Sofia, we pointed out some deserted white stork nests on top of lamp posts as usual! We are driving with no stops with the good idea of having lunch at Pazardzik in a traditional Bulgarian restaurant. The soup and the salad were delicious. A few migrating buzzards passed overhead and a crested lark walked on the edges of the road. When we turned left from the main road after Pazardzik we had to stop - everybody wanted to see their first red-backed, woodchat and lesser grey shrikes. This first stop was on Besseparski Hills - very good for raptors and a site for many endemic plants. We watched a long-legged buzzard hunting, even so late in the day, and nearby was a very close singing black-headed bunting and many crested larks. On the second stop on the crossroad to Peshtera we saw calandra lark, the shrikes and a cuckoo. Just beyond Krichim, our third stop on the road entered an attractive gorge where we scanned the cliff face and quickly picked up a blue rock thrush, and a variety of birds - red-rumped swallow, crag martins, a common buzzard, kestrel, pallid and alpine swifts. A good birdwatching stop but we hadn't time to linger, knowing that there was a further 60-70 km drive along the mountain road.

Day 2, 4 June: Yagodina – Trigrad Gorge

We assembled at 8am for our first tasty and sustaining breakfast at the Hotel Yagodina. Our destination today was Trigrad Gorge; target species, the wallcreeper. It was a short drive to the gorge where there is a known wallcreeper nest in the rock face just by the entrance to the road tunnel. We waited in the small layby while peregrine, crag martin and swifts were all seen flying above. A male wallcreeper was spotted on a distant rock face and came towards us, with raptors in attacking flight, straight to the nest. Very good and close views were had several times.



Closely related to the nuthatch, the wallcreeper's long probing bill is developed for finding insects among the vegetation of the rock face, and its strong feet for climbing and clinging on.



Red-backed shrike (adult male) – a fairly common breeding bird around Yagodina.

Walking up the gorge, Vlado pointed out some plants growing from the limestone cliff, including the Rhodopes endemic *Haberlea rhodopensis*, a pre-glacial relict (photo and more information in plant list), and Balkan endemic plants *Saxifraga sibirica* and *Valeriana montana*. In the gorge we saw leaves of throatwort, *Trachelium rumelianum*, and close to the tunnel, near the wallcreeper nest, Bulgarian figwort, *Scrophularia bulgarica*, both Bulgarian endemics. All of these species are included in the Bulgarian red data book of protected plants.

Going out from the gorge, on the way to the museum of the Bear we saw a black woodpecker, alpine swifts, black redstart, wren, dipper and ravens.



Café lunches and dinner at the hotel usually include salad – fresh, inventive and delicious.



Leaders Assen (left) and Vlado (in the red jacket) with some of the group near Yagodina.

Lunch at the Kaminata café was salad, fish soup and home-made yogurt. Afterwards most of the group walked back to Yagodina along the track, with many flowers and birds including grey-headed woodpecker and bullfinches, while John and I returned by minibus. Downstream of the Trigrad Gorge the river was alive with dippers and there was a young smooth snake on the road, giving an opportunity for a close look.

Day 3, 5 June: Yagodina – Yagodina Cave

On the pre-breakfast walk we watched hobby and ravens, and later, while we were walking in the forest areas, we saw woodlark, goldcrest, firecrest and many orchids, including lesser twayblade, toothed orchid, bug orchid and fly orchid, and also hepatica.

When we arrived at the Yagodina cave it was raining heavily, so a good time to have a coffee or beer, and after the rain had stopped we walked to the south, close to the Bulgarian/Greek border, where we saw marsh orchids and Rhodopean red avens, a Bulgarian endemic protected species.

On the drive back to the hotel about half of the group decided to walk the last 2 km to Yagodina. This produced good views of rock bunting and lesser whitethroat.

Ophrys insectifera, the fly orchid (right), pollinated by male digger wasps, is not only a visual mimic, it also produces a chemical similar to the mating pheromone of the female wasp. In the attempt to mate with the flower (pseudocopulation) the pollen sac breaks off, becomes attached to the male wasp's head or body, and is thereby transferred to the next flower.

This form of olfactory mimicry has only been recognised recently, and other fascinating facts about natural selection are being discovered all the time.

There is more about this evolutionary strategy in orchids on

<http://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com/2009/08/26/orchids-mimic-alarm-pheromones-of-bees-to-attract-wasps/>



Day 4, 6 June: Yagodina – Trigrad Gorge

Today our plan was to follow a footpath from the Devil's Throat cave and follow the main road going north for about 3-4 km. We had very good views of dippers and sombre tit between the drops of very heavy rain.

The following plants were seen: three Red Data Book Balkan endemic species – round-leaved saxifrage, prickly whorlflower and *Haberlea rhodopensis* – as well as green-winged orchid, pinewood orchid and matted globularia.

Day 5, 7 June: Yagodina to Sozopol

A long driving day with stops in Smolyan and Kardjali and lunch on the top of the hill with panoramic views of the Eastern Rhodopes mountains, with almond forest below and singing buntings and flying hawfinches. One quick stop in Rudina village produced good views of white stork, and Spanish sparrows were breeding on the ruins of an old church.



We drove on to Madjarovo with another stop at one of the richest sites from a birdwatching point of view, where notable birds were Egyptian and griffon vultures, blue rock thrush, western rock nuthatch and black stork. An interesting plant near Madzharovo rocks was *Verbascum rorripifolium*, a Balkan endemic species.

To compensate for the long driving day we had some very good quality birds such as masked shrike, olive tree warbler, black kite and Eastern imperial eagle around Topolovgrad, and many white storks roosting on a tree like apples.

Left – distinctive silhouettes of black kite (top) and Eastern imperial eagle (below) in the same patch of sky.

Day 6, 8 June: Sozopol – Lake Atanassovo and Poroi Reservoir

Sozopol, located on a small rocky peninsula south of Burgas, is the oldest settlement on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Founded by Greeks more than 2½ thousand years ago and named Apollonia after a venerated god, the town was an important trading post. By the first century AD it had been renamed Sozopolis (city of salvation), reflecting the acceptance of Christianity. Ruled variously by the Byzantine, Bulgarian and Ottoman empires, Sozopol was assigned to the newly independent Bulgaria in the 19th century. Almost all of its Greek population was exchanged with Bulgarians from Eastern Thrace (part of modern day Turkey) after the Balkan wars in 1912/13. Today, the town is a popular but still charming beach resort, known for its narrow, winding cobbled streets and ancient timber houses, and each September it hosts the Apollonia festival, one of the biggest arts events in Bulgaria.

Ecologically, this stretch of the Black Sea coast forms part of an important migration route, the Via Pontica, for birds on passage between northern Europe and the Middle East and Africa, resulting in a huge amount of species stopping to refuel and passing through.

After breakfast we stopped close to the petrol station at the southern part of Lake Atanassovo where there were lot of avocets and spoonbills. Before Poroi village we had olive tree warbler and then above the reservoir many bee-eaters, isabelline wheatears, ruddy shelducks and black-headed yellow wagtails.

On the way back we stopped at Vaya (Burgas) Lake for little bitterns and both white and Dalmatian pelicans and at the end of the day we had a pleasant walk in the old town of Sozopol before dinner.

Day 7, 9 June: Sozopol – Alepu, Ropotamo River and Strandza

After breakfast the bus took us south to the dunes overlooking Alepu Marsh, just beyond Sozopol, where there were antlion larvae burrowing in the sand and black-headed yellow wagtails.

We drove a little further down the coast to Ropotamo for a boat trip down river to the Black Sea, parking in the shade of mature oak. It was a relaxing way to watch herons, cormorants and a few kingfishers. Lunch was under the shade of the small port for the boats with many swallows above our heads and fish below in the water. Interesting plants seen here include sea wormwood, Jacob's rod, sea holly, jurinea, sweet myrrh and sea woundwort.

Back on the bus, we headed inland to the Strandza Mountain region. Investigation of the butterflies in a roadside field produced cardinal and great-banded grayling plus several chequered skippers. We were lucky to hear a white-backed woodpecker and to see plenty of wood nuthatches, a short-toed treecreeper and many interesting flowers, including yellow yarrow, maidenhair spleenwort, bellflower, Thracian thistle, rockrose, oriental beech and Pontic rhododendron.

Rhododendron ponticum is a very successful, ecologically damaging invasive alien over much of western Europe, including Britain, but is in decline in its native habitat. Strandza Nature Park is unique in Europe in its combination of beech forest and rhododendron understory but is under threat from, *inter alia*, inappropriate management and excessive building development.

Day 8, 10 June: Sozopol – Poda Protected Area and Lake Vaia

We drove north towards Burgas, stopping at the Poda protected area, and then revisited Lake Vaia to see little bitterns and both species of pelicans again. From there we drove to the Izvorska and Fakiiska rivers and had close views of a white-tailed sea eagle in flight above ibises and spoonbills.



Two white and two Dalmatian pelicans with the industrial city of Burgas in the background



A little owl in the window opening of an unfinished building near Burgas

Day 9, 11 June: Sozopol to Koprivshtitsa

The Conservation Village of Koprivshtitsa preserves a 19th century atmosphere, with its many wood and stone houses of the period, but it has a turbulent past as it was here that the first shot of the April Uprising against the Ottoman occupation was fired in 1876. The National Festival of Bulgarian Folklore takes place here every 5 years, gathering musicians, artists and craftsmen from across Bulgaria. From a practical point of view, it is both a convenient and interesting place to overnight before the last leg of the return journey to Sofia.

The last long driving day with a stop before Sliven to see a European souslik (ground squirrel) colony and isabelline wheatears. Arriving in Koprivshtitsa fairly late in the day, a stroll by the river in front of the traditionally styled hotel produced two dippers chasing each other.

Day 10, 12 June: Koprivshtitsa to Sofia

An early breakfast, and then departure for Sofia airport.

BIRDS									
Species and days on which they were seen (h = heard)									
Day 1: Sofia to Yagodina Days 2, 3 & 4: Rhodopes mountains Day 5: Yagodina to Sozopol									
Days 6, 7 & 8: Black Sea Coast Area Day 9: Sozopol to Koprivshtitsa									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Podiceps cristatus</i> Great Crested Grebe						x	x	x	x
<i>Podiceps ruficollis</i> Little Grebe					x				
<i>Pelecanus crispus</i> Dalmatian Pelican					x	x		x	
<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i> White Pelican						x		x	x
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> Great Cormorant					x	x	x	x	x
<i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i> Pygmy Cormorant								x	
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> Night Heron						x	x	x	
<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i> Little Bittern						x	x	x	
<i>Ardeola raloides</i> Squacco Heron						x	x	x	
<i>Egretta garzetta</i> Little Egret						x		x	
<i>Ardea cinerea</i> Grey Heron					x	x	x	x	
<i>Ardea purpurea</i> Purple Heron						x	x	x	
<i>Ciconia ciconia</i> White Stork	x				x	x		x	x
<i>Ciconia nigra</i> Black Stork	x				x	x	x	x	
<i>Platalea leucorodia</i> Spoonbill						x		x	
<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> Glossy Ibis								x	
<i>Cygnus olor</i> Mute Swan						x	x	x	x
<i>Tadorna tadorna</i> Shelduck						x		x	
<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> Ruddy Shelduck						x			
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> Mallard					x	x		x	
<i>Anas strepera</i> Gadwall						x		x	
<i>Anas clypeata</i> Shoveler						x			
<i>Anas querquedula</i> Garganey						x		x	
<i>Anas crecca</i> Teal								x	
<i>Aythya ferina</i> Pochard						x		x	
<i>Neophron percnopterus</i> Egyptian Vulture					x				
<i>Gyps fulvus</i> Griffon Vulture					x				
<i>Milvus migrans</i> Black Kite					x				x
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i> Marsh Harrier						x	x	x	
<i>Circus pygargus</i> Montagu's Harrier					x				
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i> Goshawk									x
<i>Accipiter nisus</i> Sparrowhawk						x			
<i>Pernis apivorus</i> Honey Buzzard					x				
<i>Buteo buteo</i> Buzzard	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Buteo rufinus</i> Long-legged Buzzard					x	x			
<i>Aquila pomarina</i> Lesser Spotted Eagle								x	
<i>Aquila heliaca</i> Eastern Imperial Eagle					x				
<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i> White-tailed Eagle							x	x	
<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i> Booted Eagle							x		
<i>Circaetus gallicus</i> Short-toed Eagle			x						
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i> Kestrel	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Falco subbuteo</i> Hobby				x		x	x	x	
<i>Falco peregrinus</i> Peregrine Falcon					x				
<i>Fulica atra</i> Coot						x	x	x	
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i> Moorhen					x	x	x	x	
<i>Himantopus himantopus</i> Black-winged Stilt						x		x	
<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> Avocet						x		x	
<i>Glareola pratincola</i> Collared Pratincole						x			
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i> Lapwing								x	
<i>Charadrius dubius</i> Little Ringed Plover					x	x			
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> Ringed Plover						x			
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> Kentish Plover						x			
<i>Tringa totanus</i> Redshank						x		x	

<i>Tringa ochropus</i> Green Sandpiper							x			
<i>Larus cachinnans</i> Yellow-legged Gull							x	x	x	x
<i>Larus melanocephalus</i> Mediterranean Gull							x			
<i>Larus ridibundus</i> Black-headed Gull							x		x	
<i>Larus minutus</i> Little Gull							x			
<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i> Whiskered Tern							x		x	
<i>Chlidonias niger</i> Black Tern							x			
<i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i> White-winged Black Tern							x			
<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> Gull-billed Tern							x			
<i>Sterna hirundo</i> Common Tern							x	x	x	x
<i>Sterna albifrons</i> Little Tern							x			
<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> Sandwich Tern							x		x	
<i>Columba livia</i> Rock Dove feral	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
<i>Columba palumbus</i> Wood Pigeon	x			h				x	x	x
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i> Turtle Dove	x					x	x	x	x	x
<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> Collared Dove	x					x	x	x	x	x
<i>Cuculus canorus</i> Cuckoo						x	x		x	x
<i>Otus scops</i> Scops Owl			h						h	
<i>Athene noctua</i> Little Owl							x			
<i>Strix aluco</i> Tawny Owl		h								
<i>Apus apus</i> Swift	x					x	x	x	x	x
<i>Apus pallidus</i> Pallid Swift	x		x	x					x	x
<i>Apus melba</i> Alpine Swift	x	x	x	x	x					x
<i>Alcedo atthis</i> Kingfisher								x	x	
<i>Merops apiaster</i> Bee-eater						x	x	x	x	
<i>Coracias garrulous</i> Roller							x			
<i>Upupa epops</i> Hoopoe						x	x	x	x	x
<i>Jynx torquilla</i> Wryneck							x		x	
<i>Dryocopus martius</i> Black Woodpecker			x	x	x					
<i>Picus viridis</i> Green Woodpecker			x	x		x	x	x		
<i>Picus canus</i> Grey-headed Woodpecker			x	x	x					
<i>Dendrocopos minor</i> Lesser Spotted Woodpecker								x		
<i>Dendrocopos major</i> Great Spotted Woodpecker				x			x			
<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i> Syrian Woodpecker							x			
<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i> White-backed Woodpecker									h	
<i>Alauda arvensis</i> Skylark						x	x		x	
<i>Lullula arborea</i> Woodlark				x		x	x			
<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i> Calandra Lark	x									
<i>Galerida cristata</i> Crested Lark	x					x	x	x	x	x
<i>Riparia riparia</i> Sand Martin						x				
<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i> Crag Martin	x	x	x	x	x					
<i>Hirundo rustica</i> Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Hirundo daurica</i> Red-rumped Swallow	x	x	x	x	x					x
<i>Delichon urbica</i> House Martin	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Anthus pratensis</i> Meadow Pipit						x	x			
<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i> Yellow Wagtail							x	x	x	x
<i>Motacilla alba</i> White Wagtail	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i> Grey Wagtail	x	x	x	x						x
<i>Lanius collurio</i> Red-backed Shrike	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Lanius minor</i> Lesser Grey Shrike	x					x				
<i>Lanius senator</i> Woodchat Shrike	x					x	x			
<i>Lanius nubicus</i> Masked Shrike						x				
<i>Cinclus cinclus</i> Dipper	x	x	x	x						x
<i>Prunella modularis</i> Dunnock			x	h						
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i> Robin	x	x	x					x	x	x
<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> Nightingale	h					h	h	h	h	h
<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> Black Redstart				x	x	x				x
<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> Redstart		x								
<i>Saxicola torquata</i> Stonechat										x

<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> Wheatear						x			x
<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i> Isabelline Wheatear						x	x		x
<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i> Black-eared Wheatear						x			
<i>Monticola solitarius</i> Blue Rock Thrush	x					x			
<i>Turdus merula</i> Blackbird	x	x	x	x			x	x	x
<i>Turdus philomelos</i> Song Thrush	x						x		x
<i>Turdus viscivorus</i> Mistle Thrush				x					x
<i>Cettia cetti</i> Cetti's Warbler							x	x	x
<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i> Reed Warbler							x	x	x
<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i> Great Reed Warbler							x	x	x
<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i> Olive-tree warbler							x		
<i>Hippolais pallida</i> Olivaceous Warbler						x	x	x	x
<i>Sylvia nisoria</i> Barred Warbler						x			
<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> Blackcap	x	x	x	x			x	x	x
<i>Sylvia communis</i> Whitethroat	x								x
<i>Sylvia curruca</i> Lesser Whitethroat				x					x
<i>Regulus regulus</i> Goldcrest		x	x	x					
<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i> Firecrest		x	x	x					
<i>Phylloscopus collybitus</i> Chiffchaff		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i> Wood Warbler				h					
<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> Long-tailed Tit		x					x		
<i>Remiz pendulinus</i> Penduline Tit							x		x
<i>Parus palustris</i> Marsh Tit		x	h						
<i>Parus lugubris</i> Sombre Tit				x	x				
<i>Parus ater</i> Coal Tit		x	x	x	x				
<i>Parus major</i> Great Tit	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Parus caeruleus</i> Blue Tit			x	x					
<i>Parus cristatus</i> Crested Tit		x							
<i>Sitta europaea</i> Nuthatch					x	x	x		
<i>Sitta neumayer</i> Rock Nuthatch						h			
<i>Tichodroma muraria</i> Wallcreeper		x		x					
<i>Certhia familiaris</i> Treecreeper					x				
<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i> Short-toed Treecreeper							x		
<i>Emberiza citrinella</i> Yellowhammer				x					
<i>Emberiza cirlus</i> Cirl Bunting				h	x	x	x		
<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i> Black-headed Bunting	x					x	x	x	x
<i>Emberiza hortulana</i> Ortolan Bunting	x				x	x			
<i>Emberiza calandra</i> Corn Bunting	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Emberiza cia</i> Rock Bunting		x	x						
<i>Fringilla coelebs</i> Chaffinch		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Serinus serinus</i> European Serin			x	x					x
<i>Carduelis chloris</i> Greenfinch			x	x			x	x	x
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i> Goldfinch	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Acanthis cannabina</i> Linnet	x	x		x	x				x
<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i> Bullfinch		x	x	x					x
<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i> Hawfinch	x				x	x	x		
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> Starling	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i> Golden Oriole					x	x	x	x	x
<i>Passer domesticus</i> House Sparrow	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Passer montanus</i> Tree Sparrow	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i> Spanish Sparrow					x	x	x	x	x
<i>Garrulus glandarius</i> Jay	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Pica pica</i> Magpie	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i> Nutcracker		h	h						
<i>Corvus monedula</i> Jackdaw					x	x	x	x	x
<i>Corvus frugilegus</i> Rook						x		x	
<i>Corvus corone cornix</i> Hooded Crow	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
<i>Corvus corax</i> Raven	x		x	x			x		x
<i>Panurus biarmicus</i> Bearded Tit						x			

TOTAL = 164 species seen

OTHER ANIMALS

Mammals

Red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*
 Eastern hedgehog *Erinaceus concolor*
 Mole *Talpa europea*
 Pine Marten *Martes martes*
 Stoat *Mustela erminea*
 Wildcat *Felix sylvestris*
 Bottle-nosed dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*
 Souslik *Spermophilus citellus* (with wheatear, right)



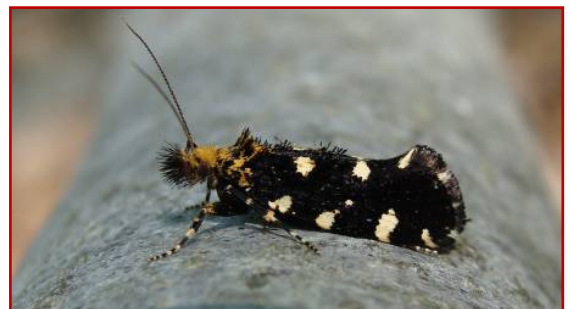
Butterflies

Swallowtail (larva)
 Scarce swallowtail
 Black-veined white (right)
 Large white
 Small white
 Bath white
 Wood white
 Clouded yellow
 Small copper
 Holly blue
 Common blue
 Long-tailed blue
 Red admiral
 Painted lady
 Queen of Spain fritillary
 Comma
 Map
 Cardinal
 Great banded grayling
 Meadow brown
 Wall brown
 Small heath
 Speckled wood
 Chequered Skipper (right)
 Grizzled Skipper



Moths

Euplocamus anthracinalis (right)
 A Tineid moth of damp woodland.
 The larvae feed on bracket fungi
 and decaying wood.



Amphibians

Tree frog *Hyla arborea*.

Marsh frog *Rana ridibunda*.

Pond terrapin *Emys orbicularis*

Reptiles

Balkan wall lizard *Podarcis taurica*
 Dice snake *Natrix tessellata*
 Grass snake *Natrix natrix*
 Smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* (right)



PLANTS

List of the key plants, in alphabetical order, which were seen during the
Honeyguide tour in Bulgaria 3 - 12 June 2010

RDB=Bulgarian Red Data Book species **Balk E**=Balkan Endemic **Bulg E**=Bulgarian Endemic

Bulgaria has an abundance of endemic plant species owing to its location (it has some species characteristic of central Europe, Asia and the Mediterranean), the varying climate, complex topography and the geological history of the Balkans, which received a relatively 'mild' icing during the last Ice Age, allowing a number of plants which died out elsewhere to survive.

Haberlea rhodopensis (right) is one of those pre-glacial relict species, the genus name that of the Hungarian botanist Haberle and the species name from the Rhodopes mountains, where it was first discovered in 1834.

Research has shown that the plant, while not native to desert habitat, can survive desiccation for 31 months and when moistured, resume normal growth. This 'resurrection' ability enabled its survival during harsh conditions and has aroused scientific interest in its potential as a source of bioactive compounds.



Trigrad/Yagodina area		
<i>Achylea clypeolata</i>	Yellow yarrow	Balk E
<i>Ajuga laxmanii</i>	Bugle	
<i>Ajuga pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal bugle	
<i>Alyssum desertorum</i>	Desert madwort	
<i>Alyssum stribrnyi</i>		Balk E, RDB
<i>Arenaria rhodopaea</i>	Rhodopean sandwort	Bulg E, RDB
<i>Campanula patula</i>	Spreading bellflower	
<i>Cirsium appendiculatum</i>	Balkan thistle	Balk E
<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	Crocus	
<i>Dactylorhiza baumaniana</i>	Marsh orchid	
<i>Dianthus petraeus</i> ssp. <i>petraeus</i>	Rock pink	
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's bugloss	
<i>Geranium macrorhizum</i>	Rock crane's bill	
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Bloody crane's bill	
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	
<i>Geranium phaeum</i>	Dusky crane's bill	
<i>Geranium sylvaticum</i>	Wood crane's bill	
<i>Geum rhodopaum</i>	Rhodopean red avens	Bulg E, RDB
<i>Globularia cordifolia</i>	Matted globularia	
<i>Haberlea rhodopensis</i>		Balk E, RDB
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	Hepatica	
<i>Hypericum montbretii</i>	St. John's wort	
<i>Inula aschersoniana</i>		Balk E
<i>Lamiaeum galeobdolon</i>	Yellow archangel	
<i>Lamium garganicum</i>	Dead nettle	
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow vetchling	
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	Hawkbit	
<i>Linum capitatum</i>	Flax	
<i>Listera ovata</i>	Lesser twayblade	
<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged robin	
<i>Micromeria dalmatica</i> ssp. <i>bulgarica</i>		Balk E
<i>Minuartia rhodopaea</i>		Bulg E, RDB
<i>Morina persica</i>	Prickly whorlflower	
<i>Onobrychis alba</i>	White sainfoin	
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	Fly orchid	
<i>Orchis coriophora</i>	Bug orchid	

<i>Orchis morio</i> ssp. <i>picta</i>	Green-winged orchid	
<i>Orchis pinetorum</i>	Pinewood orchid	
<i>Orchis tridentata</i>	Toothed orchid	
<i>Ornithogalum montanum</i>	Mountain star of Bethlehem	
<i>Petasites hybridus</i>	Butterbur	
<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	Greater butterfly orchid	
<i>Rhinanthus vagneri</i>	Rattle	
<i>Salvia argentea</i>	Silver sage	
<i>Saxifraga rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved saxifrage	
<i>Saxifraga stribrnyi</i>		Balk E, RDB
<i>Scrophularia bulgarica</i>	Bulgarian figwort	Bulg E, RDB
<i>Scrophularia scopoli</i>	Figwort	
<i>Seseli rhodopaeum</i>		Bulg E, RDB
<i>Sideritis scardica</i>	Mountain tea	Balk E
<i>Stachys recta</i>	Yellow woundwort	
<i>Stachys alpinus</i>	Alpine woundwort	
<i>Symphitum otomanum</i>	Comfrey	
<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	Wall germander	
<i>Trachelium rumelianum</i>	Throatwort	Balk E, RDB
<i>Valeriana montana</i>		RDB
<i>Verbascum nobile</i>	'Noble' mullein	
<i>Veronica jaquinii</i>	Speedwell	

The cliffs near Madzharovo

<i>Verbascum rorripifolium</i>		Balk E, RDB
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Black Sea coast (Poda protected site, Alepu marsh, Ropotamo river complex)

<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Black (common) alder	
<i>Artemisia maritima</i>	Sea wormwood	
<i>Artemisia santonicum</i> ssp. <i>patens</i>		
<i>Asphodeline lutea</i>	Jacob's rod	
<i>Calystegia soldanella</i>	Sea bindweed	RDB
<i>Chondrila juncea</i>	Rush skeleton weed	
<i>Cionura erecta</i>		
<i>Eryngium maritimum</i>	Sea holly	RDB
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Common ash	
<i>Fraxinus oxycarpa</i> (<i>F. angustifolia</i>)	Caucasian ash, Narrow leaved ash	
<i>Iris pseudocorus</i>	Yellow iris	
<i>Jurinea albicaulis</i> ssp. <i>kilaea</i>	Jurinea	Balk E
<i>Lemna gibba</i>	Duckweed	RDB
<i>Opopanax bulgaricum</i>	Sweet myrrh	Balk E, RDB
<i>Periploca graeca</i>	Silk vine	
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common reed	
<i>Platanus orientalis</i>	Oriental plane	RDB
<i>Quercus cerris</i>	Turkish oak	
<i>Quercus frainetto</i>	Hungarian oak	
<i>Silene euxina</i>		Balk E
<i>Smilax excelsa</i>	Greenbrier	
<i>Stachys maritima</i>	Sea woundwort	RDB
<i>Tamarix tetrandra</i>	Tamarisk, Salt cedar	
<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	Bullrush	

Strandza Nature Park – Protected site 'Marina reka'

<i>Achillea clypeolata</i>	Yellow yarrow	Balk E
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair spleenwort	
<i>Campanula persicifolia</i> -		
<i>Carduus thracicus</i>	Thracian thistle	Bulg E
<i>Cistus incanus</i>	Rockrose	
<i>Fagus orientalis</i>	Oriental beech	
<i>Quercus polycarpa</i>		
<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	Pontic (Black Sea) rhododendron	RDB
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>		

