

Wolves and Vultures in the Eastern Rhodopes

October – March

The Eastern part of the Rhodope Mountains is limited by the valleys of the big rivers Arda and Maritsa in southern Bulgaria, near the border with Greece. This area hosts exceptional biodiversity – a result of the impact of the Mediterranean and continental climate. It is the realm of the Wolf packs, as here is one of the densest populations of the Wolf in Bulgaria. The most spectacular birds of the region are the vultures – Griffon and Black Vultures. The Golden Jackal, Wild Cat and Otter are also common.

As you know, wolves are extremely difficult to watch, unless you are really lucky. To experience better the area and its wildlife you will be taken to explore tracks and signs of the wolf's presence and hear wolf howling. You will learn about the wolves' status, behavior, hunting strategies and main prey.

You will be introduced to the local staff of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds who run the Vulture Visitor Centre in the town of Madzharovo and support the local vulture populations by regularly bringing carcass to the feeding tables. This became necessary because of the decline of stock breeding in the last 2 decades, which was driving the vultures towards extinction.

Other mammals likely to be seen during the tour: Fallow Deer, Wild Boar, Roe Deer, Red Fox, Badger, Brown Hare, Stone Marten, Wildcat.

Main species of birds to be seen during the tour: Griffon Vulture, Black Vulture, Eastern Imperial Eagle, White-tailed Eagle and other resident species of birds such as Golden Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Chukar, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Syrian Woodpecker, Rock Nuthatch, Sombre Tit, etc.

Itinerary:



Day 1

Arrival at Sofia Airport and drive to the Eastern Rhodopes

Days 2–4

Day walks in the area, preferably early in the morning and late in the afternoon

Day 5

Watching vultures and other birds of prey at the Vulture feeding spot

Day 6

Drive to Sofia and departure



Grey Wolf



Griffon Vultures



Fallow Deer