



## **Balkan Winter Raptors**

**Day 1** - On arrival at Sofia airport we will transfer to Madjarovo village (approx 3 hours) for overnight accommodation, dinner and planning the next few days' photography.

**Days 2-3** - Both days will be spent in a specially prepared hide, again at a regularly baited mountain setting, photographing Griffon Vultures. They can visit in large numbers here so there's the chance for group shots, plenty of interactive behaviour as well as individual portraits. The site is regularly visited by other species interested in the bait, and these include Raven, Black Vulture, White-tailed and even Imperial Eagles. In the afternoon of Day 3 we will head north (approx 3 hours drive to Mirkovo village where we will be based for the remainder of the trip.

**Days 4-7** - The prime focus for these four days will be Golden Eagle photography from specially prepared hides, 25-35m away from a regularly baited mountainous setting, allowing for memorable opportunities to photograph these majestic wild birds and their natural behaviour. One of the hides is also regularly visited by a Goshawk offering excellent close-up opportunities of this normally very elusive bird. With an additional hide regularly visited by large numbers of Ravens(also offering great in-flight opportunities) and a woodland hide for local specialities that should include Hawfinch, Sombre Tit and hopefully Lesser Spotted Woodpecker there are plenty of options and we'll review personal priorities on a nightly basis to give you the best opportunity to achieve your targets for the trip.

**Day 9** Transfer to Sofia airport (approx 3 hours) for return flights.

### **Recommended Kit:**

You will need to provide your own photographic equipment - a 300mm lens (with convertors) should meet your needs (especially on a cropped sensor) but obviously there are also certain advantages of anything longer. A stable tripod is a must. There may be some interesting landscape and other environmental opportunities along the way so bring some alternative options in terms of lenses for this as well.

Registered Office:

4 Deer Park Drive, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7HB

Tel: 01952 411436

E-Mail: [sales@natures-images.co.uk](mailto:sales@natures-images.co.uk)

[www.natures-images.co.uk](http://www.natures-images.co.uk)

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### **Additional information:**

Please note that the hide based days will be long and surprisingly tiring - we have to be in the hides before first light at around 07.00 a.m. and can only leave once it is dark - generally not before 07.00 pm., although if there is unfavourable weather conditions such as fog or heavy rainfall and when it is sure that the eagles will not see us leave we can exit before this time. A flexible schedule will allow some breaks in this for you if you wish during the week.

Registered Office:  
4 Deer Park Drive, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7HB  
Tel: 01952 411436  
E-Mail: [sales@natures-images.co.uk](mailto:sales@natures-images.co.uk)  
[www.natures-images.co.uk](http://www.natures-images.co.uk)  
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