

## PRESS RELEASE / DRAFT

For the first time, Serbia will be presenting its offer on the Birdwatching fair in Rutland. With over 300 species that occur regularly and 260 breed, the country is continually becoming more and more popular to birdwatchers and wildlife enthusiasts alike.

In the past few years, more birdwatchers are coming from abroad to see the owls. Last year, the small town Kikinda, at the far north-east of the country, had been proclaimed for the world capital of owls. During the winter period at the center of the town you can count over 700 owls! In entire Serbia, Long-eared Owls are so common that no one thought that they can be interesting for birdwatchers!

At the stand number 56, marque 4, will be representatives of NTOS and incoming touroperator Magelan (BirdwatchSerbia.rs). The offer will include weekend programs, and 7-10 programs for touroperators as well as autumn and spring program to visit Serbia together with "The Urban Birder" David Lindo which astonished with Serbia started promoting it.

In Saturday, August 18th, David will have a presentation about his birdwatching experiences in Serbia. At the presentation will also be journalist and a writer Mike Unwin who was the first official birdwatcher in Serbia in 2004.

Serbia is located only 2.5 hours away from London, in the Central and Southeastern part of Europe, through which, in the length of 588 km, flows great Danube River. Thanks to the Danube, and many wetlands and in Pannonian plain on the North there are many great sites for birdwatching.

The Republic of Serbia is a landlocked country covering the southern part of the Pannonian Basin and the central part of the Balkan Peninsula. It has typical continental climate of warm summers and cold winters. Depending on your particular interest Serbia is good for birdwatching any time of the year. March/May – spring migration, May/June – breeding in full swing, August/September – autumn migration and November/February – wintering wildfowl and Long-eared Owl wintering roosts.

So far, 379 bird species have been recorded in Serbia. Of these, 333 occur regularly and 260 breed. Among the breeding species, there are five species of global conservation concern: Ferruginous Duck, Imperial Eagle, Great Bustard and Corncrake. Other Serbian species include Pygmy Cormorant, Black Stork, Glossy Ibis, Spoonbill, Griffon Vulture, Saker Falcon, Common Crane, Collared and Semi-collared Flycatchers.

Many key sites in Serbia are recognized as areas of international conservation importance. An extensive network of nature reserves ensures that most of these areas are easily accessible to the visitor. Come and discover Serbia as another excellent birding destination in the Balkans.

Birdwatching in Serbia has a great potential because of the preserved nature, large number of waterfowl and their habitats. During the crisis in the '90s Serbia wasn't very well visited destination and for a large number of tourists it is still undiscovered. This undiscovered treasure in the heart of Europe has much to offer for true nature admirers. This potential was recognized by leading incoming tour operator in Serbia, Tourism agency Magellan Corporation, which first began promoting birdwatching activities in Serbia and bringing tourist groups from abroad on birdwatching in Serbia. In 2005 they brought the first Birdwatch journalists, and in cooperation with leading organizations for the protection and study of birds in Serbia they organized the first conference for birdwatching in Serbia and birdwatching fair. They also took part in numerous conferences during 2009 and presented the economic importance of developing birdwatching as part of the tourism offer. As a result of that, in recent years, on many localities a birdwatching towers have been made, and in many localities there is constant monitoring and protection, and more and more young people are interested in involvement in the birds protection.

Due to the fact that most of the location for birdwatching are close to the airport (100 km from Belgrade airport - there are more than 70% of excellent sites for bird watching in Serbia), it is possible to arrange a short weekend trips. On most good sites for bird watching there is adequate housing so for successful observation it is only necessary to ensure car transportation, a good guide and accommodation in the vicinity of the site (0-20 km).

For longer programs, we recommend two to three locations where you go on a tour within a distance of 50 km from the accommodation. Our programs always adapt to the interests and wishes of customers providing visit to various locations, accommodation ranges from a private (very clean) to the hotel with 3 or 4 \*, and air-conditioned mini-buses of 8-20 seats.

Through the implementation of programs Magellan is trying to work closely with professional and responsible local partners who provide quality services and work to preserve the environment. We want to provide tourists with quality service and a chance to see and feel the magic of Serbia. In addition to the extremely diverse avian world, except for bird watching tours, tourists can also enjoy a rich cultural legacy, experience Belgrade nightlife or meet and get acquainted with local people as well as their customs, taste the traditional cuisine, see Serbian way of life and traditional hospitality for which Serbia is becoming world famous.