



GEORGIA: MOUNTAIN AND STEPPE BIRDING IN WINTER

01 – 11 MARCH 2024



Red-fronted Serin is a gorgeous bird and we will be on the lookout for it during the tour (photo Folkert de Boer).

Georgia is a country of mystery, varied landscape, incredible food, and sensational wildlife. This tour, along with our **Georgia: Eagles and Endemics in Fall** tour, will allow you to experience this wonderful country firsthand and we are incredibly excited to now offer these two exciting tours here. Georgia is located between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea, right where Europe and Asia meet which results in a heterogenous mix of birds of Asian and European origin.

Following International Ornithological Congress (IOC) taxonomy (v10.2 in January 2021), the bird list of Georgia is currently 414 species, with many of these being highly sought-after due to their small global range or the issues associated with accessing them in other parts of their distribution. During the tour we will visit several Important Bird Areas (IBAs), sites that have been identified by BirdLife International as holding significant importance for birds. Examples of IBAs we will visit include The Iori Plateau, Alazani Valley, Lagodekhi Nature Reserve, and Kazbegi.

On this tour we will get to grips with four of Georgia's "Big Five"; **Caucasian Snowcock**, **Caucasian Grouse**, **Great Rosefinch** (Caucasian endemic *rubicilla* subspecies), and **Güldenstädt's Redstart**. The fifth species of the "Big Five" is **Caspian Snowcock** and we look for that (and all of the others) during the aforementioned fall tour. In addition to these amazing birds, we will target other species and interesting subspecies, including **Black Francolin**, **Little Bustard**, **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Pallas's Gull**, **Alpine Chough**, **Pine Bunting**, **Mountain Chiffchaff** (local *lorenzii* subspecies and potential split), **Western Rock Nuthatch**, **Krüper's Nuthatch**, **Wallcreeper**, **Spanish Sparrow**, **Red-fronted Serin**, **Horned (Shore) Lark** (*penicillata* subspecies), **Water Pipit** (*coutelli* subspecies), **Twite** (*brevirostris* subspecies), and a range of raptors including **Bearded Vulture**, **Griffon Vulture**, **Cinereous Vulture**, **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, **Steppe Eagle**, **Pallid Harrier**, **Lanner Falcon**, and **Saker Falcon**.



*Great views of **Bearded Vulture** in stunning scenery will be possible (photo Alexander Rukhaia).*

We begin our sensational 11-day tour in Georgia's ancient capital, Tbilisi. After your long flight you may want to relax but we also have the option of some very casual birding in the city where we can catch up with species like **Krüper's Nuthatch**, **Syrian Woodpecker**, **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**, **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, **Common Firecrest**, **Hawfinch**, and others.

The following morning, we then begin our journey east to the remote Kakheti region. This area of plains, steppes, and lakes is one of the most unexplored areas of Georgia and its location, close to neighboring Azerbaijan, makes it an incredibly exciting region to explore. We will visit some of the best lakes in the region where top species reside, like **Pallas's Gull**, **Dalmatian Pelican**, and **Armenian Gull**. The grasslands around the lakes should give us the stunning **Black Francolin**. Georgia is also famed for its birds of prey with rare species like **Eastern Imperial Eagle** and **Cinereous Vulture** being some of our targets in this area. These lakes are also an excellent area for passerines like **Bluethroat**, **Moustached Warbler**, and **Spanish Sparrow**.



*The mighty **Pallas's Gull** is a real standout species of eastern Georgia and a superb bird to see in the Western Palearctic (photo Tim Jones).*

From the Kakheti region we will then head further into the steppes towards the David Gareja Monastery, one of Georgia's most famous historical monuments and right on the border with Azerbaijan. Exciting passerines will again be the target here with significant numbers of **Eurasian Skylark** and **Calandra Lark** likely to be found. We will check these flocks carefully as rarer eastern lark species may be hiding within, maybe something like a **White-winged Lark**! The monastery is an excellent spot to look for **Western Rock Nuthatch** and **Wallcreeper** (a monotypic family and much desired species), and the scrub around it may give up **Chukar Partridge**.

Moving further east we will enter the land of the raptors with several great species present, including **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Rough-legged Buzzard**, **Lanner Falcon**, **Saker Falcon**, and **Pallid Harrier**. Interesting passerines are present here too, with **Isabelline Wheatear**, **Rock Sparrow**, **Great Grey Shrike**, **Greater Short-toed Lark**, **Lesser Short-toed Lark**, and **Corn Bunting** being some of the standout species. We should also find large groups of **Little Bustard** here, part of the world's largest wintering concentration of this species, plus the fantastic **Goitered Gazelle**.



Eagle Gorge is a beautiful place and full of great birds (photo Alexander Rukhaia).

From the steppes we head west, stopping in the famous Eagle Gorge, for species like **Griffon Vulture**, **Black Stork**, **Red-fronted Serin**, and **Wallcreeper**, and the beautiful Lagodekhi Forest in the northeast corner of Georgia. Here we can find the prized **White-backed Woodpecker**, plus other species like **Black Woodpecker**, **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**, and common passerines.

It will then be time to turn north towards the famous Kazbegi region. Here is where we will focus on four of Georgia's "Big Five" birds, plus species like **Wallcreeper**, **Red-fronted Serin**, **White-winged Snowfinch**, **White-throated Dipper**, **Alpine Accentor**, **Alpine Chough**, **Bearded Vulture**, **Golden Eagle**, and the interesting Caucasian subspecies of **Twite**, **Water Pipit**, and **Horned (Shore) Lark**. We may also see the endemic **Eastern Tur**, a striking goat-antelope found only in the Greater Caucasus Mountains, **Red Fox**, and **Grey Wolf**, with the timing of our visit well suited for seeing all three species. Sadly, eventually, we must then make our way south, back towards Tbilisi where the tour ends.

Itinerary (11 days/10 nights)**Day 1. Arrival in Tbilisi, optional birding in and around the city**

Welcome to Georgia's capital, Tbilisi. You will be met at the airport by your guiding team made up of your Birding Ecotours tour leader and our expert Georgian local guide. After arriving on your morning flight, you will be transferred to your comfortable city hotel to freshen up and relax after your long journey.

We have the option to get straight into discovering Georgia's amazing birds with some optional visits to a range of local birdwatching sites around the city (you can choose to just relax in the hotel if you would prefer that, or maybe plan on arriving in Tbilisi the day before the tour starts for some additional acclimatizing). The first site we plan to visit is the Ponichala Reserve. Here we will get to grips with several stunning woodpeckers including **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**, **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, **European Green Woodpecker**, and **Syrian Woodpecker**.

We should also have little trouble finding common and widespread European species here, like **Common Blackbird**, **Common Buzzard**, **Rock Dove** (wild, not just feral birds), **Hooded Crow**, **Northern Raven**, **Common Wood Pigeon**, **Eurasian Jay**, **Eurasian Magpie**, **European Robin**, **European Goldfinch**, **European Greenfinch**, **Brambling**, **Mistle Thrush**, and **Long-tailed Tit**. The river that flows through the park is worth checking carefully as **Armenian Gull**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, and **Western Osprey** can all be found here.



*The beautiful **Krüper's Nuthatch** can be found near Tbilisi (photo Eleni Galinou).*

We can also drive to a local pine woodland just outside the city. Here we stand a good chance of finding the rather special **Krüper's Nuthatch**, a potential early tour highlight. Additional common

species will also be present with **Goldcrest**, **Common Firecrest**, **Hawfinch**, **Common Chaffinch**, **Great Tit**, **Eurasian Blue Tit**, and **Coal Tit** being the most likely species.

Regardless of whether you feel energetic enough to do this birding or not, we will all enjoy a traditional Georgian meal in the evening (expect plenty of fantastic and interesting food!) and have a walk around old Tbilisi where we can enjoy the best this beautiful city has to offer.

Overnight: Tbilisi

Day 2. Kumisi Lake, Jandari Lake, David Gareji Monastery, and the steppes

Today we will begin our adventure into the remote eastern part of Georgia. We will make an early start, first taking in a traditional Georgian breakfast, and head towards Kumisi Lake. This artificial lake, created during the Soviet era, used to be an important fishing area but those days are now over. However, the birding here is absolutely superb with key European species like the Near Threatened (BirdLife International) **Dalmatian Pelican**, along with **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Armenian Gull**, and the striking **Pallas's Gull**, with Georgia sitting right on the edge of its western range. We should also come across a wide range of interesting wildfowl including **Ruddy Shelduck**, **Garganey**, **Red-crested Pochard**, and more common species like **Northern Shoveler**, **Eurasian Teal**, and **Tufted Duck**.



Dalmatian Pelican is a species of global conservation concern. We will look for it at Kumisi Lake today (photo Philippos Katsiyannis).

Shorebirds (waders) are well represented here as the lake is an important passage site, with **Little Ringed Plover**, **Green Sandpiper**, **Kentish Plover**, and **Common Greenshank** being regular species. We will also keep our eyes peeled for interesting birds of prey like **White-tailed Eagle**,

Western Marsh Harrier, plus scarce species like **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, **Steppe Eagle**, **Pallid Harrier**, and **Cinereous Vulture**. The scrub areas bordering the lake should give us many of the common passerines we found in Tbilisi plus a few different and interesting species like **Calandra Lark** and **Spanish Sparrow**.



*The majestic **Eastern Imperial Eagle** is a scarce species but is possible on this tour.*

From Kumisi Lake we will then move south to the even larger Jandari Lake. This lake is in steppe country, right on the border with Azerbaijan. One of the main features of Jandari is the large gull roost, with sometimes up to 1,000 **Armenian Gull** being present, with far smaller numbers of **Pallas's Gull** often mixed in with them. We will explore the reedbeds adjacent to the lake for some exciting passerines, such as the beautiful **Bluethroat** and secretive **Moustached Warbler**, while the steppe land around the lake should hold significant flocks of **Spanish Sparrow** and **Eurasian Tree Sparrow**. Other interesting passerines here could include **Calandra Lark**, **Crested Lark**, **Siberian Stonechat**, **Black Redstart**, **Rock Sparrow**, **Water Pipit**, **Corn Bunting**, **Great Grey Shrike**, and **Cetti's Warbler**.

From Jandari we will continue east into the heart of the Georgian steppe. This remote area is home to large flocks of **Calandra Lark** and **Eurasian Skylark** and these flocks are worth checking for eastern stowaways like **White-winged Lark** and **Oriental Skylark**.

We then head to one of Georgia's most famous landmarks, the stunning David Gareji monastery. This 1,400-year-old monastery straddles the border with Azerbaijan and is home to some special birds. Inside the ancient courtyard we will look for the striking **Wallcreeper** (a most-wanted monotypic family) and the attractive **Western Rock Nuthatch**. Around the monastery we should come across **Crested Lark**, highly confiding **Chukar Partridge**, **Spanish Sparrow**, **Meadow Pipit**, **Black Redstart**, **Corn Bunting**, and perhaps the characterful **Little Owl**.



*The beautiful **Wallcreeper** is a bird we will hopefully get quite familiar with during our tour. Georgia is one of the best countries in the region for finding this monotypic family.*

After finishing up at the monastery, we will then continue our journey east towards the town of Dedoplistskaro, where we will be based for the next four nights. Along the route we will keep our eyes peeled for any interesting larks or birds of prey as we traverse the steppes.

Overnight: Dedoplistskaro

Day 3. Taribana Plains, Chachuna Managed Reserve, and Dali Reservoir

The next three days will see our adventure get even more wild as we leave tarmac roads behind and explore the gravel tracks of the Taribana plains and surrounding areas. Our main area of focus today is the Chachuna Managed Reserve and Dali Reservoir. This is remote country and the bird species on offer here, especially birds of prey, really are spectacular. We begin the journey on the Taribana Plains where we will search for the large numbers of **Little Bustard** which winter in this part of Georgia, and neighboring Azerbaijan, the sight of these birds is sure to be spectacular! Another bird we should keep an eye out for is **Common Pheasant**. This is Georgia's national bird, and it is thought that the subspecies here (*colchicus*) was once endemic to Georgia!

As we move deeper into this region, we will keep our eyes open for the birds of prey of the area. Aside from the Batumi Bottleneck, this is probably the best area for observing raptors in Georgia and species we could come across include **Cinereous Vulture**, **Griffon Vulture**, **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, **Golden Eagle**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Hen Harrier**, **Eurasian Sparrowhawk**, **Northern Goshawk**, **White-tailed Eagle**, **Common Buzzard**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Rough-legged Buzzard**, and **Common Kestrel**, which we will need to check carefully for the much rarer **Lesser Kestrel**, **Merlin**, and **Peregrine Falcon**. However, the real jewel in the

crown will be if we spot the beautiful and Near Threatened (BirdLife International) **Pallid Harrier**.



Pallid Harrier is a highly desired species on our tours, and we will put time into finding it.



Black Francolin is a striking species mostly found in Asia. The population in Georgia, and neighboring Azerbaijan, is cut off from the species main range.

After hopefully having our fill with all these amazing birds of prey we will begin searching for the passerines which inhabit this landscape. **Isabelline Wheatear**, **Rock Sparrow**, and **Corn Bunting** should all be in attendance, perhaps with the rarer **Pine Bunting** joining the latter, and flocks of **Common Linnet**, **Calandra Lark**, **Eurasian Skylark**, and **Spanish Sparrow** should fill the fields. Other interesting species like **Woodlark**, **Great Grey Shrike**, **Hawfinch**, **Yellowhammer** and, possibly, **Red-fronted Serin** are also found here.

We will then head to the Dali Reservoir. The main target here is the striking **Black Francolin**, a member of the pheasant family which has a restricted range in the Western Palearctic. Birds of prey should also feature here too, especially vultures, and a walk to the sandy ravines around the lake should give us yet another sighting of **Wallcreeper**.

On the lake itself we should have little trouble finding wildfowl like **Ruddy Shelduck**, **Mallard**, **Common Pochard**, **Tufted Duck**, and rarer species like **Smew**, **Common Goldeneye**, and **Northern Pintail** can also be found here. After a long day we will head back to Dedoplistskaro, stopping for birding en route, if we see anything that catches our eye!

Overnight: Dedoplistskaro



Western Rock Nuthatch is an attractive species that is a real special of rocky landscapes (photo Alexander Rukhaia).

Day 4. Shiraki Plains and Vashlovai National Park

Today we will head to Georgia's most easterly point, the Vashlovani National Park. This national park sits right on the border with Azerbaijan and the Alazani River, part of the Alazani Valley IBA, snakes right through this beautiful area. We will also visit the Shiraki Plains, another remote area which sits in the wider Iori Plateau IBA.

We will start by exploring the Shiraki Plains and we should come across thousands of **Calandra Lark** and **Eurasian Skylark**. Mixed in with them should be smaller numbers of **Greater Short-toed Lark** and **Lesser Short-toed Lark** and we will again look for **White-winged Lark** and **Oriental Skylark**.

From here we will head into the national park and explore the deep canyon valley for species like **Hawfinch**, **Western Rock Nuthatch**, **Chukar Partridge**, and raptors like those we searched for yesterday. We also stand a chance of seeing the striking, and Endangered ([BirdLife International](https://www.birdlife.org)) **Saker Falcon** in this area.

Overnight: Dedoplistskaro

Day 5. Shiraki Plains, Black Mountain, and Samukhi Valley

Today we will once again explore the Shiraki Plains but focus more on its eastern reaches. The vast flocks of **Calandra Lark** and **Eurasian Skylark** will dominate the landscape, but we will also pay close attention to raptors in the area, with **Steppe Eagle**, **Greater Spotted Eagle**, and **Lesser Spotted Eagle** potentially being new species for the tour. Hopefully, by now, we will also be familiar with **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, **Hen Harrier**, **Pallid Harrier**, **Merlin**, **Peregrine Falcon**, and **Saker Falcon** but if not, all these can be found here.



*Large and significant flocks of the globally threatened **Little Bustard** gather in eastern Georgia during winter (photo Alexander Rukhaia).*

From the plains we head towards the Samukhi Valley via a place known as Black Mountain. One of the main target birds here is the striking **Finsch's Wheatear**, which winters in small numbers

in the area. We should also come across more large flocks of **Little Bustard**. A real goal for us in this area will also be to find the small herds of the Vulnerable (IUCN) **Goitered Gazelle** which are present here. This incredibly rare species has declined massively and number under 50,000 across its entire global range. The Georgia and Azerbaijan populations are cut off from the main range of this species, which occurs from Iraq in the west to eastern China to the east.

After another long and exciting day of birding, we will return to our hotel for one final night in the wilderness of eastern Georgia.

Overnight: Dedoplistskaro

Day 6. Eagle Gorge, Alazani River Valley, Lagodekhi Forest, and Signaghi

Today we will say goodbye to the wild east and begin our journey back towards Georgia's heartland. Along the route we will stop at several interesting sites for both scenery and birds. Our first stop is the excellently named Eagle Gorge where we will make a short walk to a viewpoint overlooking the Alazani River Valley. Here we will find a few pairs of **Griffon Vulture** and **Black Stork**, which return to this area early from their wintering grounds. As this is the beginning of the spring migration, we may also see a few migrating **Black Kite** overhead and the scrub here may give up **Red-fronted Serin**, **Rock Bunting**, and perhaps an early migrant like **Northern Wheatear**.



*The gorgeous and localized subspecies of **Great Rosefinch** is a highly prized species and one that we will target on this wonderful tour of Georgia (photo Folkert de Boer).*

From here we head towards the Lagodekhi Nature Reserve which reaches up into the Greater Caucasus Mountains. Here we will take a walk through some of the oldest primary forest in

Europe. Despite being in the shadow of the Greater Caucasus, this forest is lush and varied with many relict species like those found in subtropical forests.

This fascinating wilderness is home to the highly sought-after **White-backed Woodpecker**, a species which spreads across Eurasia but is not found west of central Europe. Other woodpeckers can be found here including **Black Woodpecker**, **European Green Woodpecker**, **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**, and **Great Spotted Woodpecker**.



White-backed Woodpecker is a striking bird and one of several woodpeckers we could see.

Other interesting species of this forest include **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **White-throated Dipper**, **Redwing**, **Eurasian Bullfinch**, and **Mountain Chiffchaff**, which is of the local *lorenzii* subspecies and a potential future split into a full species. After we have enjoyed this ancient forest and its birds we will continue to Tbilisi, stopping at the ancient town of Signaghi en route to take in its history and sensational views of the Greater Caucasus Mountains.

Overnight: Tbilisi

Day 7 - 9. Ananuri Fortress, The Terek River Valley, and Stepantsminda

Today we will once again leave Tbilisi, except on this occasion we will head north towards the wondrous Greater Caucasus Mountains. Our first stop is the Ananuri Fortress which overlooks the azure waters of the Zhinvali Reservoir. This is yet another beautiful spot to watch the superb **Wallcreeper** and we may also find the equally desirable **Alpine Accentor** lurking within the grounds of the fortress.

From here we are around two hours from Stepantsminda, which is tucked away deep in the Greater Caucasus Mountains and where we will spend the next few days. All being well, we will arrive late morning and will have a traditional Georgian lunch before beginning our birding for the afternoon. We will visit the Terek River and it is here we will look for two of Georgia's "Big Five", **Güldenstädt's Redstart** and the Caucasian endemic *rubicilla* subspecies of **Great Rosefinch**.

We have timed this tour to coincide with peak snow levels which will push birds down from the higher areas of the mountains and tours later in the season stand a high chance of missing **Güldenstädt's Redstart** as a result of the birds moving higher out of range.



*The beautiful **Güldenstädt's Redstart** is one of Georgia's "Big Five" and a top target for our tour (photo Alexander Rukhaia).*

In the area around Stepantsminda there are several other interesting species with localized subspecies adding to the appeal. Here we should come across **Ring Ouzel** (*amicorum* subspecies), **Horned (Shore) Lark** (*penicillata* subspecies), **Water Pipit** (*coutelli* subspecies), **Twite** (*brevirostris* subspecies), **Common Linnet**, **Red-fronted Serin**, **Red-billed Chough**, **Alpine Chough**, **White-throated Dipper**, **Grey Wagtail**, **Brambling**, **Eurasian Bullfinch**, **Rock Bunting**, **Eurasian Siskin**, **Fieldfare**, **Red (Common) Crossbill**, and other interesting passerines. Birds of prey include three giants of the region, with **Bearded Vulture**, **Griffon Vulture**, and **Golden Eagle** all present.

Over the next two days we will once again target Georgia's "Big Five" with two new species, the Near Threatened (BirdLife International) **Caucasian Grouse** and the mystical **Caucasian Snowcock**, an endemic of the Greater Caucasus Mountains. To find these two iconic birds we will head to the beautiful Kuro Gorge close to Stepantsminda, where we can also once again, find our

two target birds from yesterday, **Güldenstädt's Redstart** and **Great Rosefinch**. The presence of four of Georgia's "Big Five" is what makes this part of the country such an incredible place for birding. We will also enjoy similar species to the previous day in the area.



Mount Kazbek is one of many stunning scenes we will enjoy (photo Alexander Rukhaia).

Aside from birds, we also have a chance of seeing the majestic **Eastern Tur**, This goat-antelope is a Near Threatened (IUCN) species with less than 25,000 left in the wild and another species which is endemic to the Greater Caucasus Mountains. We have also timed our tour to maximize our chances of seeing (European) **Grey Wolf**, which, in Georgia, numbers only about 1,000 animals. Due to the high amount of snow, these often-elusive canids come to the area around Stepantsminda to find food and with luck we may just get a sighting.

In Stepantsminda we may also take a walk up to the stunning Gergeti Trinity Church, which sits high above the village and makes a stunning end to our time in the Greater Caucasus Mountains.

Overnight (three nights): Stepantsminda

Day 10. Trusso Gorge, Jvari Pass, Gudauri, Mtskheta, and the return to Tbilisi

Today we will make the journey back out of the mountains towards Tbilisi, stopping en route for birding along the way. Our first stop is the Trusso Gorge which sits at the southern edge of the huge Mount Kazbek, a dormant stratovolcano and the third highest peak in Georgia at an impressive 16,581 feet (5,054 meters).

Once again, we should come across a range of mountain passerines like **Red-fronted Serin**, **Red-billed Chough**, **Alpine Chough**, **Water Pipit**, **Twite**, **Grey Wagtail**, and **Black Redstart** but

being at a lower altitude we may also find **Mountain Chiffchaff**, **Common Chaffinch**, **Siberian Stonechat**, and **Blue Rock Thrush**. We then continue down the mountains and once again try to spot **Ring Ouzel**, **Horned (Shore) Lark**, **Water Pipit**, **Twite**, and we may get the bonus of a stunning **White-winged Snowfinch**, a beautiful passerine of the mountain areas of Europe and Asia but very rare in this part of Georgia.

Our final stop in the mountains will be near the Guadauri ski center where we should once more find **Alpine Accentor**, raptors like **Golden Eagle** and **Bearded Vulture**, and large flocks of raucous **Alpine Chough**. From here, we will continue our descent back towards Tbilisi, stopping at the ancient town of Mtskheta for one last look at the stunning Greater Caucasus Mountains.



White-winged Snowfinch moves to lower elevations during the winter and can, with luck, be found during the tour, though it is not common in Georgia (photo Alexander Rukhaia).

We will arrive back to Tbilisi with fantastic memories of a wonderful tour around this beautiful country. Here we will have our final traditional Georgian meal and your tour leader and guide will be on hand to discuss species identification and help you decide your “Bird of the Trip”, with so many on offer this will be a hard yet hopefully enjoyable task!

Overnight: Tbilisi

Day 11. Departure from Tbilisi Airport where the tour ends

A non-birding day. After our final traditional Georgian breakfast, we will depart our hotel for Tbilisi International Airport, with departures from the airport taking place in the morning.

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes must use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 11 days / 10 nights
Group Size: 6 - 8
Dates: 01 - 11 March 2024
Start: Tbilisi International Airport, Tbilisi, Georgia
End: Tbilisi International Airport, Tbilisi, Georgia
Prices: €4,175 per person sharing – based on 6 - 8 participants (2024)
Single Supplements: €305 (2024)

In the event of fewer than six participants signing up to the tour there will be the option of a surcharge to guarantee departure. The amount of the surcharge will depend on how many participants are signed up to the tour and will occur if all participants agree.

Price includes:

All accommodation (Day 1 until Day 10 as described above, or similar)
Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 11)
Drinking water – please bring a refillable water bottle
Expert tour leader
Local bird and wildlife guide fees
Birdwatching site entrance fees (including all national park fees), and travel permits
All ground transport and tolls/taxes while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

Flights to and from Tbilisi International Airport, Tbilisi, Georgia
Expenditures due to flight cancellations/delays or other causes beyond our control (force majeure)
Visa fees if visa required
Departure tax
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls etc.
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing excursions
Soft/alcoholic drinks
Personal travel insurance
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))

Useful Information

During this winter Georgia tour we will be driving around in a comfortable vehicle. This tour does involve longer walks than on many of our other tours due to the nature of the environment we will be birding in, including on some rough/steep terrain. Altitude should not be a major factor during much of the tour, but during our time in the Greater Caucasus we will be at around 6,500 feet (2,000 meters) above sea level which you may need to consider as we will be undertaking walks at this altitude. We will obviously take as much time as is needed as we walk about, to ensure everyone is able to get around safely.

The start of our tour in Tbilisi will see daytime temperatures range from 54 – 64°F (12 – 18°C), we then head east to the steppes and plains around Dedoplistskaro. Here we can expect the weather to be noticeably more varied than in Tbilisi and temperatures could be as low as 41 – 48°F (5 – 8°C) but as high as 66 – 73°F (19 – 23°C). Finally, we head to the Greater Caucasus Mountains at Stepantsminda. Due to the altitude of around 6,500 feet (2,000 meters), the weather here is expected to be colder, around 32 - 41°F (0 - 5°C) and the chance of snow is high. This weather could prove to be a good thing for us as it makes the birding far easier if the snow level is lower as it pushes the key target birds down from the higher peaks. By pushing the tour to later in the year reduces the chances of seeing species like **Güldenstädt's Redstart**, something to consider when looking at tour dates if that species and others of the high mountains is of major importance to you.

Georgian food and hospitality are both excellent and all your accommodation will have private bathrooms and will be well appointed in a local style. We will be in the heart of this traditional and fascinating country where the wildlife is abundant, even in the villages and towns and is sure to help contribute to what is to be an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime bird holiday.