



ORNITRAVEL

Lake Van is the largest lake in Turkey and the second largest in the Middle East. It is also the largest sodium water lake in the world. It covers an area of 3713 square kilometers. The Bendimahi Delta near Lake Van and Lake Ercek are among Turkey's most important wetlands. During our excursions we will discover the various landscapes of the area: volcanoes with crater lakes and lava flows, sparse hillsides and lush wet meadows. In the higher areas there is an abundance of wild flowers and tulips. Our holiday resort is situated on a peninsula at the shore of Lake Van. There is a long pebble beach and crystal clear water - ideal for swimming after an exciting birding day.

Ornitour Lake Van, Mount Ararat

Desert Finch and Grey-necked Bunting



Citrine Wagtail

Day 1: Arrival

Flight to Ankara, Istanbul or Izmir. One overnight stay.

Day 2-15: Flight to Van, Rock Valley

After arrival in Van transfer to our Holiday Resort Lake Van. Here you can make observations at any time between fruit trees, at a brook estuary or at the fresh-water lake nearby. First field trip in a rock valley (Egyptian Vulture, Eagle Owl).

Bendimahi Delta, several days of field trips

In the nearby Bendimahi Delta we walk along the reeded river to its estuary. In addition to Marbled Ducks, Ferruginous Ducks, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Caspian Terns and Little Terns sometimes Great Black-headed Gulls can be seen, but often also Great White Pelican, Eurasian Spoonbill or Saker Falcon. Field trip along the lakeshore and into rock areas.

Bendimahi Waterfalls

Irania and Lichtenstein's Desert Finch at the impressive Bendimahi waterfalls. We proceed to a 'stork village' and to chalybeate springs with carbonated mineral water. Continue through lava



Great White Pelicans, Bendimahi Marsh

fields towards Mount Tendurek (Common Cranes, Bluethroats).

Deli Çay and Mount Süphan

At the estuary of a small brook Black-bellied Sandgrouse can often be seen. Drive to the tarn and into the subalpine region of Mount Süphan.

Bendimahi Marsh

Early morning departure to the Bendimahi Delta. In the marshy meander areas White-headed Ducks, Little Crakes, Moustached Warblers. Field trip through lush garden oases from Ercis to the shore of Lake Van. Observations near the Seljuk cemetery at Çelebibağ.

Ahtamar Island, Mountains at Gevaş

Boat trip to Ahtamar Island to the famous Armenian church (Saker Falcon, Black-crowned Night-Heron). Continue towards Tatvan. Mountain hike on a steep pass.

Çatak, Van Castle

Near Çatak walk along a wild river in a valley with old walnut trees. Climb up the cliff to the Tuşpa ruins (Red-billed Chough and others), burial chambers with Urartian cuneiform tablets (Van).

Hoşap and pass at Cuh

Walking-tour to Hoşap Castle, situated picturesquely on a ledge above the river. At the pass at Cuh at 2700 metres the rare Iris paradoxa and a ball-shaped Allium grow. Towards the south, within the scrub forest interspersed with rocks, a unique community of birds can be found: Common Rosefinch, Twite, Radde's Accentor and Grey-necked Bunting.

Ishak Paşa Palace, Mount Ararat, Aralık

At the Tendurek Pass at 2700 metres: Lesser Spotted Eagle, Griffon Vulture, Snow Finch, Cinereous Vulture and Twite. Mount Ararat towers majestically over us. Near the picturesquely situated Ishak Paşa Palace we can see Mountain Rock Thrush, Pale Rock Sparrow and others. In the wetlands at the foot of Mt. Ararat Citrine Wagtail, Montagu's Harrier and Great Bittern.

Murat Valley

Down at the river delta (Eurasian Oyster-catcher) we proceed towards Ağrı. From the road we may be able to see the breeding



Desert Finch

area of Demoiselle Crane without disturbing it. In the Murat Valley a colony of Rose-coloured Starling at a scree near the river was formerly found.

Nemrut, Ahlat

Drive to the uniquely beautiful scenic crater lake at Mount Nemrut (Radde's Accentor, Red-fronted Serin, and Velvet Scoter as a 'glacial relic'). Visit to the Seljuk cemetery of Ahlat with huge tombstones and mausoleums.

Erçek Lake, City of Van

Field trip at the shallow sodium-rich lake with many flamingos, Ruddy Shelducks, Common Shelducks and Black-winged Stilts. Visit to the city of Van.

Day 16: Departure

Transfer Van airport. Return flight.

Date:

29.05.-13.06.2010

Price p.p. incl. flights, transfers, airport taxes and fuel surcharge:

£1,290 (double room) / £1,410 (single room)
(Flights from London, Manchester and Dublin via Turkish Airlines)

Price p.p. without flights and transfers:

£1,090 (double room) / £1,210 (single room)

Tour includes:

- All bus rides during the trip
- 15 x accommodation in en-suite DR/SR
- Full board (packed lunch)
- Tea & drinking water in the holiday resort
- Birding guide
- Entry fees
- Breach of warranty certificate

Note:

- An English guided Culture & Hiking tour runs parallel to this tour for non-birding partners.

Number of participants: 8-14 persons

Weather conditions: Continental steppe climate. Showers till June possible.

Private-Tours, small groups:

1-7 persons from £1,070 (without flight)

Extension week possible either here, at Lake Bafa, the Goksu Delta or in Cappadocia

Price p.p. (incl. full board; without tours):
£175 (double room) / £235 (single room)

Recommended airports (for guests without flight): Van (60 kms), Ağrı (150 kms), Muş (180 kms). Flights from Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and Antalya to Van available. **Airport transfers** can be arranged. Ask for details.

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