

## THE SECOND HULA VALLEY BIRD FESTIVAL, ISRAEL 2012

Booking now, prices held for 2012!

The Hula Valley, located in the northern part of the Rift Valley, is home to nearly 300 bird species that migrate, winter or are resident in the area. This includes 20 globally threatened species and 16 near threatened. It is also close to other key birding sites in Northern Israel. This major new event for birders is organised by the same team as the proven Eilat Spring Migration Festival. Join us for a fantastic week's birding with world class bird guides, with all your birding excursions included and for the keener photographers, there is a very special photography package on offer too.

The first event was held in November 2011 and was judged a great success by all who attended, from 12 countries around the world. Over 200 species of birds were recorded and 15 species of mammal including Wolf and Jungle Cat. This week suits birders of all levels, whether you are looking for a high species list or simply want to enjoy one of the bird spectacles of the Palearctic region. Opportunities for photography are superb with many hides on the main reserve.

Hula itself comprises of fields, wetlands, fishponds and savannah foothills and boasts two important reserves, both of which will be on offer daily from our comfortable hotel, with morning and afternoon guided birding excursions. You can also explore some of this area yourself, on bicycles, electric golf carts or join the mobile-hide tour. Up to 30,000 Common Cranes will be present in addition to waterfowl, pelicans and a large selection of raptors including Greater Spotted, Eastern Imperial, White-tailed and Bonelli's Eagles plus Saker. There will also be excursions to other key birding sites such as the Golan Heights (Gamla Nature Reserve), Mount Hermon, Beit Shean Valley, Carmel Coast (Ma'agan Michael) and the En Afek Nature Reserve. Some of the many highlights from 2011 included Long-billed Pipit, Namaqua Dove, Black Francolin, Dead Sea Sparrows, Crimson-winged Finch and Sombre Tit to name a few. A family of Black-winged Kites were a particular favourite too.

Our base for the week will be the very comfortable Pastoral Hotel, all rooms with private facilities, set in lawned and landscaped grounds with a bar, restaurant, pool and spa. An excellent base for the region.

WildWings leader Mark Andrews attended the first, hugely successful event in 2011 and said "Hula Valley rivals any major bird and wildlife spectacle in the world you can think of, I will never forget the sight of 30,000 Cranes coming in to roost".

Availability is limited, the 2011 event sold out weeks before it started so early booking is suggested.

Full details of this event, included expected bird species, 2011 report, photos and video can be found at the special website [www.hulabirdfestival.org](http://www.hulabirdfestival.org)

### Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Tel Aviv and transfer to Festival hotel. Hula Valley birding excursion 1400 until dusk. Opening ceremony.

Days 2-7: 0600-1200 Hula Valley excursion.  
0600-1600 Full day excursion to Sea of Galilee and Beit Shean Valley or Golan Heights to Mount Hermon or Carmel Coast & En Afek (depending on day).

Hula Valley excursion 1400-dusk. Plus morning and afternoon shuttles to Agamon Hula Park for those who wish to explore on their own.

Day 8: Early morning at leisure, a last chance to bird! Transfer back to Tel Aviv airport for late afternoon flights back to UK.

### Holiday Information

Dates: 11th – 18th November 2012

Leaders: Jonathan Meyrav and team.

Cost: The basic cost is £1179 per person sharing a twin room

Single supp: £229 per person.

Deposit: £200 per person (plus full payment for flights if required)

Price includes:, Return group transfers to festival hotel from Tel Aviv (Ben Gurion) Airport, accommodation on a half board basis (breakfast and evening meal) in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities, welcome and closing ceremonies, services of IOC staff and local bird guides, daily choice of guided birding excursions or shuttle services as itinerary, optional evening activities, lectures etc, pre-trip information, day by day bird checklist.

Price excludes: Return economy class flights UK- Tel Aviv (see below), travel insurance, lunches, drinks and items of a personal nature.

### Flight options

London Heathrow – Depart 22.30 10<sup>th</sup> November arrive Tel Aviv 05.15 11<sup>th</sup> November return from Tel Aviv at 17.15 arriving back into Heathrow at 20.55 18<sup>th</sup> November, currently from £429 return.

Manchester – no flights currently scheduled on the required days.

