

Nada Tosheva - Executive Director at BSPB (BirdLife in Bulgaria)

Title I am Nada Tosheva, and since 2007 I am the Executive Director of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB, BirdLife in Bulgaria). I am leading a team of 22 dedicated staff who inspire BSPB members involved in species recovery and monitoring, site conservation and protection, public awareness and citizen science projects. Always interested in natural sciences, the turbulent events of 1989 saw me choosing the History Department of the Sofia University, turning the pages of European and Balkan history. My love for nature however remained and after graduating at the University I joined the Wilderness Fund Society, which at the time was supporting the survival of the Balkan population of the Brown Bear. Living behind the Iron Curtain I used to discover the world with the wild swans and ugly duckling of Hans Christian Andersen; I traveled thousands of miles with the wild geese of Nils Holgersson. So the birds were always around me and I was well prepared for them. As my grandmother used to say, "The first time you see a Stork do not forget to take off your martenitza (a special spring adornment made of red and white yarn) and hide it under a stone. And remember never ever destroy a Stork nest because our home may be blighted", or how she used to warn me, "If you see a big flock of swallows and if they fly close to the land, it is going to rain". When I was 12 years old, I thought I saw the most beautiful bird in the world - the Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*. The same year in a small wetland close to my place I saw a Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*, a White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* and a Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* flying off together. I was sure this was the greatest wonder ever! Through the years my knowledge about birds has deepened, but one thing I will constantly remember is that people and birds will always be bound together, sharing the same emotions like love, hate, fear, pride, sadness, and hope. This blog post is from BirdLife's European Newsletter. To register for the letter, please [click here](#).