



ecotOURS
WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS



Spotted Redshank © Csonka Peter

Professionally guided birdwatching, photography and specialized wildlife holidays in Eastern Europe

Birds, Mammals, Butterflies & Moths, Dragonflies, Plants



Ural Owl

- Hungary
- Albania
- Belarus
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Montenegro
- Poland
- Romania
- Czech Republic
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Ukraine
- Turkey
- Mongolia
- Ghana
- Ethiopia

PROFESSIONAL GUIDES, SELECT HOTELS, GOOD FUN!

THE LEADING BIRDING and wildlife tour company in Eastern Europe



Our Tours and Us

We are a small company based at the heart of the region in Budapest. We are English speaking Hungarians, born and bred here, and our company is driven by our wish to preserve the rich heritage of this region. We started guiding birding groups in the early 90's, and since then became the preferred ground agent in Hungary and probably of Eastern Europe for birders and naturalists from the UK.

We believe it is not only because we show the most sought after species at each destination, but also because of the friendly, joyful atmosphere and the excellent organization our clients enjoy on our holidays. We are keen to adjust our itineraries and the pace of each tour to the needs of each group. We are proud of the very high number of returning customers, who probably trust us to organize their holiday for the many extra features given with regard to accommodation, transport, on-board catering, etc. In short, we show all birds and wildlife of the region with a relaxed pace and great spirit, enjoying the best local food and wines. Join us with your local bird society, your family and friends or book individually on our website sign-up tours. If you are looking for an easy paced birding and natural history holiday or to find some specific birds of the region then Ecotours Wildlife Holidays will be happy to help you.



Proprietor,
Principal Guide
Balázs Szigeti



Tour Manager,
Principal Guide
Attila Steiner

When choosing accommodation we aim to combine a quality service that allows perfect relaxation and offers tasty local cuisine, with the best possible location to minimize driving. Most lodges, inns and small hotels we use have local character in natural surroundings, sometimes run by a family or the national park.

DESTINATIONS

We have an unrivalled network of local guides in a variety of countries throughout Eastern Europe's national parks. Rangers, local conservation experts working with us from the famous forests and marshes of Poland and Belarus to the mountains of Slovakia, in the steppes and lakes of Hungary, amongst the rolling hills of Transylvania and the lagoons and vast wilderness of the Danube Delta in Romania. We are at home in the undiscovered areas of the most stunning European landscapes from the rocky slopes of Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and Albania, whilst in Bulgaria and Turkey we guide tours in quest of most eastern specialities.

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EUROPE



Penduline Tit.
Szigeti Balázs



Great Grey Owl



Azure Tit
© Tom Lindors

Best time:

End of April, May and winter for birds and mammals

Poland

The famous Biebrza Marshes and the primeval forest of Białowieża. Superb in Spring and early Summer, usually a 9 day holiday with two bases. Highlights: Great Snipe, 10 Woodpecker species, Pygmy Owl, Hazel Grouse, Greater and Lesser Spotted Eagle, Citrine Wagtail, Aquatic Warbler, Nutcracker, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Thrush Nightingale and Scarlet Rosefinch.

Best time: *End of April, May*



European Bison



Nutcracker
© Csonka Peter

Slovakia - Czech Republic

One of the most forested countries of Europe. Spring is especially good for all woodpeckers of Europe and Ural, Pygmy and Tengmalms Owl, plus Crested Tit, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Hazel Grouse, Nutcracker, Common Crossbill.

Best time: *End of April to June*



Tengmalm's Owl



Red-breasted Flycatcher © Csonka Peter



Three-toed Woodpecker



Great Bustard



Imperial Eagle © Csonka Peter

Hungary

Surely some of the very best all season birding in Europe. In Autumn and Winter, Hungary offers not only many desirable species, but the spectacular migration of hundreds of thousands of Common Cranes, Dotterel trips of up to 100, over 1500 Red-footed Falcons gathering, large daytime roosts of Long-eared Owls in picturesque villages, flocks of Great Bustard plus Stone Curlew in the fields, Saker Falcon, Eastern Imperial Eagle and the majestic White-tailed Eagle in the wide open skies. Perfect in Spring for songsters and breeding birds and in Summer for other wildlife including more than 100 butterfly species, several special dragonflies, up to 22 species of bats and small rodents including Lesser Mole Rat. We select cosy hotels with real local character, delicious Hungarian cuisine and world famous wines.

Best time:

Mid April to June for breeding birds. June & July for birds, butterflies and dragonflies. August to October for massive bird migration and premigration gathering of several interesting species. November to March for wintering birds in the mountains and steppes



Bluethroat, Szigeti Balázs

Floating hotel in the Danube Delta



European Brown Bear, Szigeti Balázs



Romania

With the biggest population of Brown Bears, Wolves and Lynx in Europe, Transylvania offers outstanding birding and wildlife. Our holidays feature bearwatching opportunities from professional and secure hides with a very high success probability. Wallcreeper, Ural Owl and Eagles star in the gorges, valleys and mountains. The famous Danube Delta is no doubt the best area for birding at leisure, being on a high quality floating hotel in the middle of the wilderness. Fall asleep to the chorus of frogs, wake up with Pelicans nearby while you are having breakfast on-board. Whilst surrounded by an amazing number of waterbirds, Black and Grey-headed Woodpeckers fly overhead, Penduline and Bearded Tits commute over the reeds and Rollers whilst Hobbies put on aerial shows.



Wallcreeper, Szigeti Balázs

Best time: Mid April to June for birds and Bears, August & September for massive bird migration and bearwatching



White Pelican © Daniel Petrescu



Bulgaria

The Spain of the East! With more specialities than its Western rival, Bulgaria offers better value for money while being relatively undiscovered and extremely rich in wildlife and birds. The infrastructure is now surprisingly good. Highlights: autumn migration, wintering masses of Red-breasted Geese and White-headed Ducks, Vultures, Pelicans, Isabelline, Pied and Black-eared Wheatear, Black-headed Bunting, Paddyfield, Olive-tree and Balkan Warbler, Semi-collared Flycatcher, Sombre Tit, Western Rock Nuthatch, Masked Shrike and Rose-coloured Starling, Levant Sparrowhawk, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Eleonora's Falcon.



Best time:

Mid April to June for breeding birds, August & September for massive migration, November to February for Red-breasted Goose and wintering birds

Pied Wheatear. Szigeti Balázs

Slovenia, Croatia

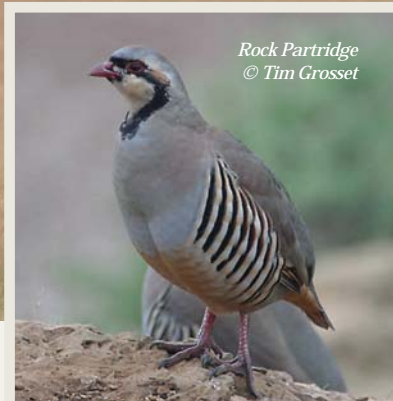
The scenic Karst landscapes and the variety of habitats in a small area offers very pleasant birding and wildlife watching. Highlights include Rock Partridge, Wallcreeper, Ptarmigan, White-winged Snowfinch, Griffon Vulture, Corncrake, Rock Thrush, Pygmy Owl, Pallid Swift, Eastern Olivaceous, Eastern Subalpine and Eastern Orphean Warbler, Sombre Tit and many woodpeckers.

Best time: Mid April to June



Common Crossbill

Rock Thrush © Csonka Peter



Rock Partridge
© Tim Grosset

Montenegro, Albania

If you want to step back in time, Montenegro or Albania are the places to go. Quality accommodation and roads, yet rural lifestyle prevails amongst Europe's most scenic regions with some real birding highlights: Pygmy Cormorant, Dalmatian Pelican, Levant Sparrowhawk, Rock Partridge, Scops Owl, Water Pipit, Rock Thrush, Western Rock Nuthatch, Sombre Tit and Black-headed Bunting.

Best time: Mid April, May



Ukraine

Ukraine is a young, relatively unknown country that was formed after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. It has a safe and stable democracy. The Black Sea coast with the Crimean Peninsula are one of the most important migration stop-overs for many water birds and waders. Huge steppes, extensive marshes, coastal lagoons, rolling limestone hills provide wonderful landscapes and rich habitats for migrants and breeding birds. Large flocks of White Pelicans, Broad-billed and Marsh Sandpipers, Pallas's and Slender-billed Gulls are not an uncommon sight. Breeding birds include such Eastern specialities as Demoiselle Crane, Saker and Red-footed Falcon, Pied Wheatear, Paddyfield Warbler, Rose-coloured Starling and Black-headed Bunting.



Red-footed Falcon,
Szigeti Balázs

Best time:

Mid April to June for breeding birds,
August, September for massive bird migration



Rose-coloured Starling © Sergey Yeliseev

ASIA



Masked Shrike, Szigeti Balázs

Turkey

A huge country that offers a wonderful selection of varied habitats, birds that are not found further west, a rich cultural heritage, excellent food and friendly people. The Bosphorus is probably the most important bird migration hot spot in Europe with thousands of storks, Lesser Spotted Eagles, Honey Buzzards, Short-toed Eagles and Levant Sparrowhawks moving through on a daily basis, while you are seated above the fabled metropolis of Istanbul.

Best time:

April, May, for breeding birds, August, September for spectacular raptor migration



Long-legged Buzzard

Southern Turkey has productive wetlands, Mediterranean woodlands and shrub and scenic snow-covered mountains. Target species include Dalmatian Pelican, Eleonora's Falcon, Spur-winged Plover, White-throated Kingfisher, Finsch's Wheatear, White-throated Robin, Olive-tree Warbler, Ruppell's Warbler, Kruper's Nuthatch, Masked Shrike, Red-fronted Serin and Cretschmar's Bunting.



Black-headed Bunting, Szigeti Balázs

Mongolia

The land of vast steppe grasslands, nomadic horsemen and yurts, where once Genghis Khan ruled his vast Mongol empire, yet it has even more to offer. From the endless Gobi desert to the slopes of the Altai Mountains covered with beautiful evergreen forests, this country provides unspoilt scenery, stunning landscapes and a mouth watering array of species including Swan Goose, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Upland Buzzard, Amur Falcon, Altai Snowcock, White-naped and Demoiselle Crane, Oriental Plover, Relict Gull, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Mongolian Lark, Blyth's Pipit, Kozlov's Accentor, Henderson's Ground Jay and Saxual Sparrow. Accommodation is in comfortable hotels and in Ger camps, the traditional Mongolian way.

Best time: June



Oriental Plover
© Heipee

AFRICA



Ghana

Ghana offers superb birding opportunities in the “Gold Coast” of West Africa, with sunshine, spectacular scenery, very friendly people, abundant wildlife and hundreds of exotic bird and butterfly species. The tour explores many superb habitats from the coastal wetlands, through lush broad-leaved Upper Guinea forests to the dry savannah of the Sahel.

The list of sought-after species is long and includes the enigmatic Yellow-headed Picathartes or Rockfowl, Long-tailed Hawk, Pel’s

Fishing Owl, Black Bee-eater, Standard-winged Nightjar, Brown-cheeked Hornbill, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Blue Cuckoo-shrike, 24 species of bulbuls, many colourful sunbirds and starlings. In addition, Mole National Park offers a good selection of African savannah mammals.

Saddle-billed Stork, Szigeti Balázs



Best time: November to March



Yellow-headed Picathartes
© Kókay Szabolcs



African Elephant, Szigeti Balázs

Ethiopia

Culturally, historically and scenically Ethiopia is one of the most extraordinary countries in Africa; the land of superlatives, where Simien Wolves roam the mountains and Lammergeiers rule the skies. Dominated by the breathtaking highlands and filled with the richest historical heritage of the entire continent, Ethiopia is one of the most desirable and enigmatic destinations in Africa. Ethiopia’s 9 national parks and 4 wildlife sanctuaries are renowned for their diverse fauna and flora. The extraordinary and unique wildlife includes many endemic and regionally endemic species, which we regularly see on our holidays:

Wattled Ibis, Blue-winged Goose, Harwood’s Francolin, Rouget’s Rail, Spot-breasted Lapwing, White-collared Pigeon, Yellow-fronted Parrot, Black-winged Lovebird, Ruspoli’s Turaco, Banded Barbet, Abyssinian Woodpecker, Sidamo Lark, Erlanger’s Lark, White-tailed Swallow, Abyssinian Longclaw, Abyssinian Black Wheatear, Sombre Rock Chat, Rüppell’s Black Chat, White-winged Cliff Chat, Ethiopian Cisticola, Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher, Abyssinian Catbird, White-backed Black Tit, Abyssinian Oriole, Thick-billed Raven, Stresemann’s Bush-crow, White-billed Starling, Yellow-throated, Salvadori’s and Brown-rumped Seedeater, Black-headed Siskin, Ankober Serin, and mammals such as Gelada Baboon, Mountain Nyala, Soemmering’s Gazelle and Simien Wolf.



Stresemann's Bush-crow



Superb Starling

Best time: October to February



Simien Wolf

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

Ecotours Wildlife Holidays also offers more specialised wildlife tours. Of course we are happy to stop and admire any natural history during our birding tours, however often it is limited by the main focus of such tours.

That's why we have started to run specialised tours focusing on one or another aspect of natural history. For example: butterflies and moths, dragonflies and wild flowers, bats and mammals in general. These tours are very popular as they give the opportunity to learn in depth about some particular aspect of wildlife or just to admire it. The tours are guided by local experts in their field, of bat conservation, lepidopterists with many years of experience in conservation. Often these holidays directly contribute to conservation efforts, such is the case of our Butterfly Monitoring holidays organized by Butterfly Conservation. More than 100 species of butterflies, around 20 species of bats and at close range...



Bat watching and small mammal tours

We were one of the first companies to develop bat watching and small mammal tours. Our holidays offer hands-on views of 15-20 bat species, several rarely recorded mice and shrews, three species of dormice and Lesser Mole Rat. We visit huge house-dwelling bat colonies, wonderful caves, and use mist-netting at drinking and feeding-sites or in swarming caves. Our local guides are National Park rangers with expert knowledge and many years of experience in monitoring and protecting bats and their habitats.

To see most bat and rodent species (and minimize disturbance) the best time is from the end of July till beginning of September.

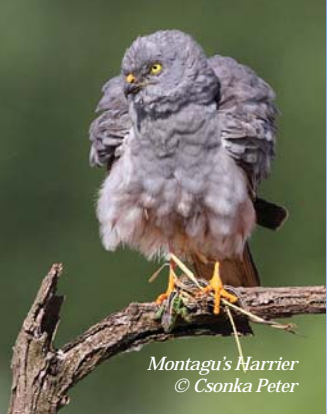


Butterfly, Moth, Dragonfly tours

Hungary and Central Europe boast an exceptional wealth of butterflies, moths and dragonflies. During a week dedicated to butterflies or moths it is not unusual to see 100 species of butterflies and several hundreds of moth species. Regularly seen specialities include Hungarian and Common Glider, Poplar Admiral, Pallas's and Scarce Fritillary, Southern Festoon, Large Copper, Large and Zephyr Blue, Eastern Pale and Berger's Clouded Yellow to name but a few. It is fairly usual to record above 100 species of macro moths during one night.

Best time for a butterfly holiday is the Summer, first part of July being the most productive period, while the whole summer is good for dragonflies.





Montagu's Harrier
© Csonka Peter



Hawfinch
© Nehézy
László



Caspian Gulls © Csonka Peter

Bird and Wildlife photography

We have comfortable and well placed hides for raptor, water bird and songbird photography in the top habitats of Hungary. The hides are run by local conservationists and nature photography enthusiasts. Our hides offer great photo opportunities for professionals and amateurs alike.

Possible targets include 8 heron species, Pygmy Cormorant, Ferruginous Duck, Bee-eater, Roller, Red-footed Falcon, Hawfinch, Middle Spotted, White-backed, Black and Syrian Woodpecker, Brambling, Barred and Wood Warbler etc.



A list of some of the highlights, which we regularly show during our tours:

- Lesser White-fronted Goose
- Red-breasted Goose
- Ferruginous Duck
- Hazel Grouse
- Rock Partridge
- Pygmy Cormorant
- Dalmatian Pelican
- White Pelican
- White-tailed Eagle
- Pallid Harrier
- Levant Sparrowhawk
- Lesser Spotted Eagle
- Greater Spotted Eagle
- Eastern Imperial Eagle
- Red-footed Falcon
- Saker Falcon
- Corncrake
- Little Crake
- Great Bustard
- Dotterel
- Great Snipe
- Marsh Sandpiper
- Terek Sandpiper
- All three Marsh terns
- Eagle Owl
- Pygmy Owl
- Ural Owl
- Great Grey Owl
- Long-eared Owl
- Tengmalm's Owl
- Grey-headed Woodpecker
- Black Woodpecker
- Syrian Woodpecker
- White-backed Woodpecker
- Three-toed Woodpecker
- Thrush Nightingale
- Bluethroat
- Pied Wheatear
- River Warbler
- Moustached Warbler
- Aquatic Warbler
- Paddyfield Warbler
- Barred Warbler
- Olive-tree Warbler
- Red-breasted Flycatcher
- Semi-collared Flycatcher
- Sombre Tit
- Azure Tit
- Penduline Tit
- Western Rock Nuthatch
- Wallcreeper
- Lesser Grey Shrike
- Rose-coloured Starling
- Masked Shrike
- Spotted Nutcracker
- Common Rosefinch
- Hawfinch
- Black-headed Bunting



- Brown Bear
- Bison
- Elk
- Lesser Mole Rat
- Forest Dormouse
- Parti-coloured Bat
- Geoffroy's Bat



WHY TRAVEL WITH US?

- quality of our tours
- friendly, joyful atmosphere
- excellent local guides with superb local knowledge
- conservation minded company
- ten years experience
- select hotels, slow pace



Swarovski Hire

Travel light and enjoy a superb quality optic on any of our holidays! You can hire top quality Swarovski telescopes during your holiday with us, for a small fee. Enjoy closer, personal views of whatever we see. Pick up on arrival and hand back before you leave.

For more information contact us directly.



photo: Dr. Kovács Gábor



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