

# WILDLIFE TRAVEL

18th to 25th October 2024 (1 week)

## Hungary

easy birding and autumn wildlife

A LONG  
AWAITED  
RETURN

**A week spent in Hungary catching the south-bound bird migration, searching out resident bird life, including Great Bustard, woodpeckers and owls, and enjoying the other local wildlife.**

This holiday is timed to catch the best of the south-bound bird migration. On the plains of the Hortobágy, thousands of Common Crane gather to feed up before they continue south. A highlight of the trip is sure to be the bugling of impressive flocks of these stately birds flying overhead on their way to their roosts. The wetlands are also filling up with large numbers of ducks and geese including, occasionally, the rare Lesser White-fronted Goose. Taking boat rides on the atmospheric River Tisza, we will explore the heart of the unique 'Puszta' region, justifiably famous for its wildlife and culture.

As well as the southbound migrants, we will also look for some of the impressive resident birds of the area: Great Bustard, Europe's heaviest bird, strut out on the plains where Saker and Eastern Imperial Eagle hunt around the Sauslik colonies; in the forests of Bükk National Park woodpeckers could include White-backed and Black and we will listen out for calling owls in the evenings, hopefully including the ghostly Ural Owl: we may even be lucky enough to hear the local wolf pack proclaiming their territory.

There is more to the area than the exciting birding. In the Hortobágy, we will visit a rewilding project, where Przewalski's Horses roam free. In the Bükk National Park, we will visit a bat roost with a licensed bat worker, who will be mist-trapping the animals to better understand their ecology. And we will also have the opportunity to visit a local wine cellar and to sample the local produce.



**Price**  
£2,565

**Single Room Supplement**  
£200

**Full board**

**Day 1** flight to Budapest and Kiskunság National Park  
**Day 2-4** Hortobágy National Park  
**Day 5-7** Bükk National Park  
**Day 8** return to UK

**Leaders**  
Mike Russell and local guides

**Group size**  
min 4, max 12

relaxed birding,  
general wildlife



## ITINERARY

**Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.**

**Day 1, 18th October.** Our flight takes us to Budapest from where we will drive to **Kiskunság National Park** for a visit to superb Great Bustard habitat where we hope to get good, close views of these magnificent birds.

We then continue on to the Hortobágy region: Hungary's 'Great Plains' and home to its first National Park. On arrival at Hortobágy village we check into our hotel for the first of four nights.

**Days 2-4, 19th to 21st October.** These three days are spent in the **Hortobágy National Park** taking in the fishpond systems, including the well known Hortobágy Halastó (Great Fishpond Nature Trail). We will take a narrow gauge train to take us along the huge ponds to look for Pygmy Cormorant, several species of waders, Bearded Reedling, Penduline Tit and White-tailed Eagle. Thousands of White-fronted and, with luck, Lesser White-fronted Geese may also be present, with Red-breasted Geese numbers also increasing in the area in recent years.

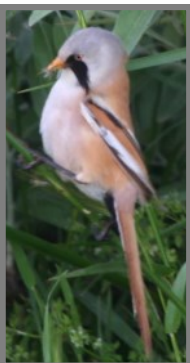
We visit typical steppe habitats for raptors including the mighty Saker Falcon and Rough-legged Buzzard. Dotterel might be still present on their staged migration. We will look for Stone Curlew and Great Bustard near Nagyvíván, as well as a large daytime roost of Long-eared Owls.

Some of the evenings will be spent experiencing the spectacle of **masses of migrating Cranes** flying low overhead into their night roost. In the mornings, there is the chance to start with a short, atmospheric ferry crossing of the misty river with Cranes flying overhead, and Kingfishers over the water.

On one day, we will visit the Przewalski's Horse project, where we will take a 'safari' ride into the enclosures to see these beautiful animals. We will also learn about the Auroch genetical "recreation" project,

**Day 5, 22nd October.** After our final birdwatching in Hortobágy, we head towards the **Bükk Hills**, stopping at some good sites along the way to search for Saker Falcon and Eastern Imperial Eagle. The journey north is also interesting from a cultural perspective. On arrival in Nosvaj, we settle in to the lovely Nomad Hotel.

**Days 6-7, 23rd to 24th October.** In the Bükk National Park we visit the largely untouched parts of the forest to search for woodpeckers including the elusive White-backed, Black, Grey-headed and Lesser Spotted. We will also look here for Ural Owl. We stroll through picturesque valleys and visit an abandoned quarry to search for woodland birds, keeping our eyes open for Rock Bunting.



Syrian Woodpecker and Middle Spotted Woodpecker can be spotted in the village near to our hotel where Hawfinch and Black Redstart are also plentiful. On the Bükk Plateau we have a good chance to see Willow Tit, Fieldfare, Great Grey Shrike, and when checking the muddy roadside, the presence of a newly established Wolf pack is often revealed.

On one evening, we will join the ranger of the National Park, a licensed bat worker, for a bat mist netting session and also visit a cave where many swarming bats are possible, before a late dinner.

We will also enjoy an evening at a vineyard which has a 'unique cellar'. A professional short guided tour, will be followed by a tasting of several of the (very good) local wines in the dining room of the cellar, accompanied by great food.

**Day 8, 25th October.** We return to Budapest airport for our morning flight home.

### **Accommodation and meals, transport and weather**

We will stay for four nights at the comfortable St Hubert Guesthouse in Hortobágy village, before moving on to the wonderful **Nomad Hotel** in the Bükk Hills, at **Nosvaj**, for the last three nights. The hotel has a pleasant garden and the food is excellent. All rooms have en-suite facilities with bath and/or shower.

Meals provided during the stay will have an emphasis on local cuisine. Lunches will be mostly picnics. Requests for special diets can be accommodated.

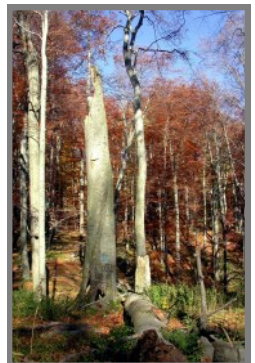
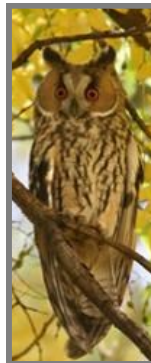
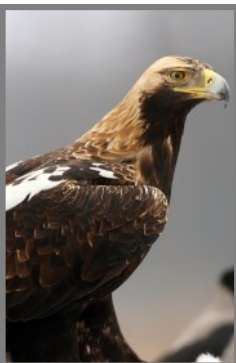
Transport will be by small bus. When we visit the Przewalski horse project, we will travel in safari type vehicles and also travel in a narrow gauge train in the Hortobágy. The local boat trips will be by small, open boats.

The weather should be pleasant and mostly dry at this time of year, but rain, wind or cold weather are always a possibility.

### **Leaders and local guides**

**Mike Russell** is a Director of Wildlife Travel and has led more than 35 of our holidays since 2006, from Mull to Sri Lanka, including a previous Wildlife Travel holiday to Hungary and many other autumn trips within Europe for bird migration. Never far from his binoculars, Mike will help you to enjoy the many wildlife encounters that we are sure to encounter at this time of year.

Mike will be joined by local guides from Ecotours Wildlife Holidays and between them, our guides and leader will provide you with an excellent introduction to the wildlife of Hungary and ensure you have an enjoyable holiday.



## Flights

The group flights will be from London Gatwick with Easyjet.

18th October depart London Gatwick 06.40, arrive Budapest 10.10

25th October depart Budapest 10.40, arrive London Gatwick 12.25

Hungary is one hour ahead of the UK.

## Passport and Entry Requirements

**Please note that travel rules may be changed by either the UK or Hungarian government at any time.** For up to date information, check [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/hungary](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/hungary)

Your passport must be issued less than 10 years before the date you enter the country (check the 'date of issue') and valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date').

If you hold a British passport, you can travel to the Schengen area, including Hungary, for up to 90 days in total in any 180-day period without a visa.

## Health and fitness

On most days, we are out and about for much of the day, albeit walking a relatively slow pace and making several stops each day. It is necessary to walk on rougher ground and up some slopes, although none of the walking is strenuous. Walking boots are essential. Assistance with getting into and out of the small boats is given. Early starts and/or late finishes may be necessary, to maximise our chances to see the wildlife. Precautions against insect bites is advised.

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## TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

### **DEPOSIT £650 PER PERSON, BALANCE DUE BY 25/07/2024**

**INCLUDED:** Return flight from London Gatwick to Budapest, as above. Local transport as specified in itinerary. Seven nights' accommodation full board (lunch Day 1 to breakfast Day 8, with picnic lunches). Services of leaders. **NOT INCLUDED:** Refreshments. Entrances (optional). Gratuities. Insurance. Covid tests and associated costs.

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## WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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*Directors: Brian Eversham, Laurie Jackson, Philip Precey, Michael Russell, Tim Upson  
Wildlife Travel Ltd. Reg. No 2237697; (for Registered Charity numbers, please contact us)*

**Photos:** All photographs Ecotours Wildlife Holidays except Bearded Reedling, White-fronted Geese, Hungarian cattle (Philip Precey)

A trip report from our 2016 visit to Hungary can be found on our website.