

SLOVAKIA and HUNGARY

(Birds, Bears and Butterflies)

Saturday 13th May – Saturday 20th May

This high-quality *BIRDSEEKERS* tour to the wild and beautiful region of Eastern Europe is aimed at the all-round naturalist. What will be immediately apparent as we travel here is the endless unspoilt countryside, ranging from spectacular snow-laden craggy mountains rising above deep glacial valleys and dense pine forests, to flower-filled meadows and ancient Beech forests. The tour begins in the High Tatra Mountains, where amidst some of the most beautiful scenery imaginable we hope to see the largest carnivore in Europe, the huge European Brown Bear. A good selection of forest and alpine birds are also present including Hazel Grouse, Wallcreeper, Spotted Nutcracker and various owls and woodpeckers. From here we move into Hungary and a wonderfully situated hotel, where the nearby Bukk Hills provides the butterfly enthusiast with numerous species in the flower-filled meadows and hedgerows. There are also many good birds including Great Bustard, White-backed Woodpecker, Eastern Imperial Eagle and Saker Falcon, plus numerous dragonflies and amphibians which will provide a welcome distraction during our exploration of the sunny limestone slopes, ponds and mixed forests that are so rich in wildlife.



European Brown Bear

Our Tour Itinerary

Day 1 The day begins with a flight from London to Budapest, Hungary. From here we will follow the majestic Danube River through this wonderful city to the famous Danube Bend. A late afternoon walk from our delightful hotel will provide a gentle introduction to some of the local species, such as nesting White Storks and Red-backed Shrikes, whilst both Black Redstart and Serin sing from village rooftops or nearby fence posts.

Days 2 - 4 This morning we will travel north into Slovakia and our hotel for the next 3 nights situated beside a large lake with spectacular views of the snow-clad High Tatra Mountains. Birds along the way could include some mountain species such as Ring Ouzel and Common Crossbill, with some time spent raptor watching for species such as Golden Eagle and Goshawk. The immediate vicinity of our wonderfully situated hotel includes wild meadows and forested hills which is perfect habitat for Corncrake, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Marsh and River Warblers, whilst the distinctive song of Scarlet Rosefinch can be heard nearby. On one day we will walk with a local Slovakian guide along the forested mountain tracks in the Tatra National Park searching for some of the special birds that breed here including Hazel Grouse, Three-toed, Black and White-backed Woodpeckers and Spotted Nutcracker, whilst we will need to take a cable car to around 2000m to reach the alpine meadows where Water Pipit and Alpine Accentor breed. With Capercaillie, Pygmy, Tengmalm's and Ural Owls breeding in these immense forests and the occasional Black Stork flying over, we are sure of some great sightings. Possibly the highlight of our stay would be finding the sought-after Wallcreeper at a spectacular gorge, whilst an evening visit to a comfortable hide could provide us with a sighting of the huge European Brown Bear. Although elusive the population is expanding, giving us a very good chance of observing the largest carnivore in Europe in a natural setting, and we should also find their tracks, territorial markings on tree bark and can even see their wintering caves. There are also Wolves and good numbers of the very elusive Lynx present in these areas, although we should count ourselves extremely fortunate to catch a glimpse of them, whilst Wild Boar, Marmot and Chamois are more easily observed.

Days 5 - 7 Today we will travel to north-eastern Hungary, making several stops en-route before arriving at our picturesque accommodation

surrounded by flower filled orchards and vineyards, where Syrian and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers and the elusive Hawfinch can be found. Over these next few days we will visit the Bukk National Park for Eastern Imperial and Lesser Spotted Eagles, European Honey Buzzard and a variety of dragonflies and amphibians, including Fire Salamander. These hills rise gently up to a maximum height of 960 metres, so no strenuous walks are necessary to fully appreciate the extensive flora and fauna to be found here. Walks through the vast Oak, Hornbeam and Beech forests will be enlivened by the delightful Red-breasted Flycatcher, whilst the sound of Corncrakes and Icterine and Barred Warblers will be a constant backdrop to our walks across flower and butterfly filled meadows. The south facing slopes are excellent for a wide variety of butterflies, including Southern Festoon, Berger's Clouded Yellow, Lesser Fiery Copper, Hungarian Glider, Map Butterfly, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Woodland Ringlet and Orbed Red-underwing Skipper amongst others. There will also be a day trip to the famous Puzsta, or Hungarian steppe, a dry semi-natural grassland interspersed with wetlands and reed-fringed ponds, where a variety of attractive species can include numerous egrets and herons, as well as Great Bustard, Long-legged Buzzard, Red-footed and Saker Falcons, European Roller, European Bee-eater, Eurasian Hoopoe and Lesser Grey Shrike. Further searching could reveal Pygmy Cormorant, flocks of Black and White-winged Terns, Glossy Ibis, Ferruginous Duck and Penduline Tit.

Day 8 After some final birding in this wonderful area we will depart for our early afternoon flight from Budapest back to London where the tour concludes later today.

Leaders: Birdseekers Leader plus local expert guides

TOUR PRICE **£1145.00** per person

Single supplement £125.00

Deposit: £100.00

Maximum group size: 14 Excluding leaders

Included in cost: Return flight from Heathrow to Budapest, Hungary, accommodation in twin rooms en-suite, all meals including packed lunches, transport throughout the tour in air-conditioned coach and services of the leaders.

Not included: Insurance, drinks, items of a personal nature and optional tips for the local guides.

BIRDSEEKERS

HOLIDAYS FOR BIRDWATCHERS



BOOKING FORM

PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS THROUGHOUT

Tour name.....Dates.....

Surname	Initials	Mr/Mrs/Miss	First Name (That by which you wish to be known on trip)	Date of Birth (Insurance purposes only)

Address for Correspondence:	
Postcode:	
Telephone: (Home)	(Work)

Passport Details: * (Please fill in forenames as they appear on your passport)					
Surname	*Forename(s)	Passport No.	Place of Issue	Date of issue	Expiry date

Please make the above reservations

I/We enclose £..... **Deposit** (Please see tour description for amount)

I/We enclose £..... **For travel insurance**

TOTAL £.....

I confirm that I have read the terms and conditions as set out in the brochure and agree and accept them on behalf of all persons named above.

SIGNATURE **DATE**

Please make your cheque payable to 'BIRDSEEKERS' and return, together with completed booking form to the address overleaf.

PLEASE TURN TO BACK OF FORM AND COMPLETE ALL RELEVANT SECTIONS

Other Details:

Accommodation required (please tick) single twin double

I would be prepared to share twin-bedded accommodation yes no

What type of passport do you hold? This must have at least six months to run after the return date of your holiday. British Citizen Other (please state)

Do you have any special dietary requirements (vegetarian, diabetic, other?) yes no

If yes give details.....

Do you have any medical conditions I should know about? Or is there anything else which may prohibit full participation of the tour? yes no

If yes give details

Insurance:

For details of insurance please refer to relevant section at back of brochure

Do you want me to provide your travel insurance? yes no

IMPORTANT: If you answered no above, I will require a copy of the alternative policy you intend to use

(Wish List!)

Please fill-in if there are any particular species of bird or other form of wildlife that you would like to see on this tour. We cannot guarantee anything, but it helps to let us know if you have any target species.

Birds:	Other Wildlife: / Sites etc:
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

Other countries you would like to visit?.....

Other interests: Butterflies, Mammals, Flowers, Whales, Photography?.....

Please return this form with enclosed cheque to:
BIRDSEEKERS, 4a Plymouth Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon, PL7 4JR
Tel/Fax: 01752 342001 e-mail: Bird@birdseekers.freeserve.co.uk.

www.birdseekers.co.uk

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.
Bookings are welcome right up to the last minute, please ring for details of any vacancies.

Steve Bird trading as BIRDSEEKERS

