



***Carnival of Cranes & Geese, plus Bustards,  
Dotterels, Raptors, Owls & Woodpeckers  
3 National Parks: Kiskunsag, Hortobagy & Bukk Hills- 8 Days***



***Spectacular Birdwatching in Hungary***

This *8-day long Bird Watching in Hungary Tour* is a relaxed-paced trip with set departure and concentrates on the Autumn/Fall migration, a very special season on the Great Hungarian Plains. The number of **Common Cranes** can exceed 100-thousand, plus there are tens of thousands of different Geese which creates a real Carnival feeling especially during the late afternoons and evenings. Depending on the month of your visit you can enjoy views of rare species as well such as **Red-breasted Geese** and **Lesser White-fronted Geese**.

A long list of other interesting species wait for us at the lowlands and hills of Hungary. We spend time first at two flat areas, the less known, but unbeatable **Kiskunsag National Park** and the famous **Hortobágy 'Puszta'**. Kiskunsag is the best for **Great Bustards**, **Stone Curlews** and a wide range of **Hérons, Egrets and waterbirds**, plus a great variety of raptors such as **Saker Falcon** or **Imperial Eagle**.

At Hortobagy you can enjoy grandstand views of crane migration from watchtowers or alongside fishponds and fields. A nice addition can be to find a large trip of **Dotterels** in the grassland.

There is always a good number of **Bean and Greater White-fronted Geese** plus at the fishponds many interesting other birds such as **Ferruginous Duck**, **Pygmy Cormorant** and vast numbers of waders, herons, egrets and wildfowl.

***The evenings are highlighted by thousands of trumpeting cranes flying low overhead. It is an unforgettable experience!***

We also visit the **Bükk Hills** which is characterized by vast beech woods and open limestone meadows with different karst forms produced by erosion.

It is a perfect area for bird watching in Hungary, where raptors soar above the valleys and dense deciduous woodlands provide a home for woodland species such as owls and woodpeckers including **Ural Owl**, **Long-eared Owl**, **Black**, **White-backed**, **Grey-headed**, **Green**, **Great Spotted**, **Middle Spotted**, **Lesser Spotted** and **Syrian Woodpecker**.





A friendly, relaxing atmosphere and professional guiding is guaranteed by a guide-couple who lives and guides half year here in Hungary and **other East European destinations**, other half year in **Costa Rica** and other parts of **Latin America!**

**Surely once you visit this place you definitely want to return soon!**



**Carnival of Cranes & Geese Hungary Tour highlights include:**

- Around 100-thousand Common Cranes in the area
- Tens of thousands of Geese
- Visiting a huge oxbow lake of River Tisza with a large number of attractive bird species
- Special flower-rich meadows and incredible Autumn/Fall foliage season
- A strong population of Great Bustards
- Trip of Dotterels
- Visiting channels, alkaline lakes, ponds and rivers for various dragonflies & special birds like Bearded Tit, Ferruginous Duck, Squacco Heron and many more
- Watching East European raptor specialities such as Saker Falcon, Eastern Imperial Eagle and many more
- Several Woodpecker & Owl species possible including Black & White-backed Woodpeckers plus Ural & Long-eared Owls, the latter in large numbers

*Please note: this set-departure tour is also available as a private or custom tour on request.*

*We also can tailor-make this tour according to your needs.*

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### Day 1 - Arrival and Orientation

After arrival to Budapest Airport we can start either with a quick 1-1,5-hour-long transfer to Kondor EcoLodge or start to travel through the upper part of the Kiskunsag National Park checking out habitats and finding the first birds, perhaps even **Great Bustards**.

We arrive to our home, the charming Kondor Ecolodge late afternoon, depending also on arrival time of your flights. If time permits we show you the first garden species and you can also try one of our garden photography and wildlife watching hides.

Every evening we discuss what we plan to do next day. Please note that the following itinerary is a sample, depending on the interest of the group, local weather and bird news we can exchange the order of the days or activities within a day.



### Day 2 - Upper Kiskunsag National Park

Today we venture out making a driving-walking full day discovery at excellent habitats of the Northern and Middle part of the Kiskunsag National Park. We have excellent local knowledge regarding where to find different sought-after species with a good chance to be able to observe by each member of the group.

Kiskunsag grassland is the typical habitat for **Great Bustard** with the largest population not just in Hungary, but second largest in all Europe as well! Today we travel to the grassland area where we have a good chance of enjoying the view of the enormous males which is quite an unforgettable experience!

We also will look around from the top of an ancient man-made hill to check a perfect hunting area for some great raptors such as **Eastern Imperial Eagle** or **Saker Falcon**. We also can add **Eurasian Kestrel**, **Hooded Crow**, **Eurasian Skylark** and **Eurasian Curlew**.

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**Long-eared and Little Owl** usually can be found at farmhouses. We can eat our picnic at a small lovely local cafeteria where we could add some delicious cakes or handcrafted icecream to our fulfilling lunch.

During the afternoon we continue with a visit of a fishpond system where from a lookout tower we can check the birds around us. Some of the species we hope to see here are **Pied Avocet, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Common Snipe, Eurasian Curlew, Pygmy Cormorant, Black-necked Grebe, Little Grebe, Gray Heron, Ringed Plover and European Kingfisher. Marsh Harrier** is quite common and sometimes it is dwarfed by **White-tailed Eagle**. It is also a good site to find **Reed Bunting** or even **Bearded Tit**.

Beside the birds the local ancient breeds of **Great Gray Hungarian Cattle** and **Water Buffalos** can be interesting.

On the way back to our Kondor Ecolodge we can make a small detour to visit an area where a pair of **Saker Falcons** had a successful breeding earlier during the year, so we can give a chance to find them.

Finally, we return to Kondor Ecolodge and prepare for a tasty home-made dinner.



**Day 3 - East Kiskunsag - Oxbow Lakes, Floodplain Forests & Hortobagy National Park**  
Before breakfast we can find several species right in the garden such as resident **Great Tit**, **European Greenfinch**, **Common Chaffinch** but **Woodlark** and **Brambling** possible as well. The best surprise however can be the largest Woodpecker of Europe, **Black Woodpecker**.



Today after breakfast we drive about 1 hour to East to the floodplains of River Tisza and its several oxbow lakes which are also perfect birding spots. Alongside the river and its oxbow lakes, we will visit a so-called “gallery forest” or riparian forest where the old trees provide a perfect Woodpecker Paradise. We should find **Lesser**, **Middle**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, but will look for **Grey-headed & Black Woodpecker** as well. The forest is home for **Tawny Owls** as well.



Later we visit another nearby site where we will look down from the top of an ancient earth-fortress to the surrounding vast area with meandering oxbow lakes full of birds. It is a paradise for **Great White & Little Egret**, **Great & Pygmy Cormorant**, **Black-necked & Little Grebe**, **Squacco Heron**, **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, **Eurasian**

**Spoonbill**, **Common Snipe**, **Common Kingfisher** and of course plenty of ducks, including **Ferruginous Duck**, **Shoveler**, **Garganey**.

We always see a couple of raptors hunting around, sometimes even **White-tailed Eagle** or **Saker Falcon**. With a short walk we can visit the edge of a little lake and a marshy area. We have a good chance here for **Bearded Reedling**, **Great Reed Warbler**, **Savi's Warbler**, **Sedge and Reed Warbler**. **Night Heron** and **Kingfisher** are usually here as well.

We will have a picnic lunch here with might be **Wryneck & Syrian Woodpecker** around. After filling ourselves up we will have a long journey across the Great Hungarian Plain which we will brake at Lake Tisza, part of the Hortobagy National Park. It is a good place to catch up with any of the lakeside birds we might have missed before. Also gives a proper restroom possibility and stretch our legs. Another shortstop is a roadside site which during the afternoon can be good for spotting raptors flying around. Both **Eastern Imperial Eagle & Saker Falcon** possible here.

Finally, we arrive to our next family-owned small hotel is at the Western edge of the National Park. You will surely remember here not just the food but the evening crossing of **Common Cranes** as well.

#### **Day 4 - Full Day Birding at Hortobagy National Park**

Any of the mornings at Hortobagy can be like in a fairy tale with **Common Cranes** in the mist and some gagging Geese. The garden of our simple accommodation is regularly full with plenty of **Tree Sparrows** and we can find a **Goldcrest** or a **Little Owl** as well.

After breakfast we drive to the headquarter of the NP, get our permits and tickets, shortly visit an exhibition and the famous Nine-arched Bridge over the Hortobagy River. Later on we drive to a village where on a few trees scattered around some gardens we found dozens of **Long-eared Owls**.



After that we visit a huge grassland area on some deteriorated roads searching **Dotterels**. We might have our picnic literally in the middle of the Puszta which word has 2 meanings: one is a huge open grassland and the other is emptiness. Well, here it is easy to understand both explanation for sure. Let us hope that it will not be totally empty and we can find a nice trip of



**Dotterels**, sometimes over 30 or even 60 in a group. Usually we have excellent views through the scopes.

Sometimes close to Nadudvar we have very good views of **Great Bustards** as well. Our final big goal is to witness the evening arrival of **Cranes** to their night roosts. With

a less than a mile-long-walk on a dirt road we can reach the edge of a marshy area where with a bit of luck we can witness thousands of **Cranes** coming continuously with an incredibly coloured sky as a background. Let us hope neither wheather nor mosquitoes can not really spoil the magical moments with the trumpeting noise all over. This can be an unforgettable spectacular, a real **Carnival of Cranes** for sure.

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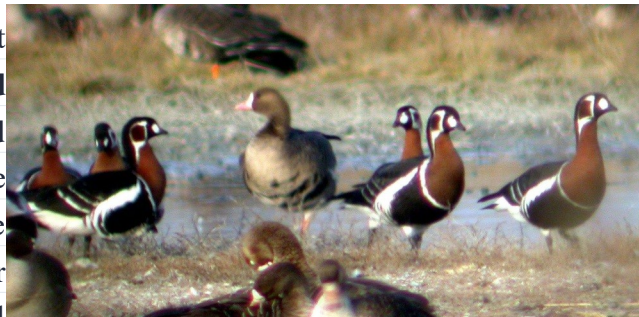


### **Day 5 - Full Day Birding at Hortobagy National Park**

This day we dedicate to explore the Hortobagy fishponds, including the famous Hortobágy Halastó. The ponds attract many waterbirds including **Pygmy Cormorant, Ferruginous Duck, Little Egret** and many more. Some songbirds can be around as well such as **Black Redstart and Stonechat. White-tailed Eagle** is regularly checking out the edges of the water bodies. The reedbeds are home to **Penduline Tits and Bearded Reedlings** as well so we will try hard to locate them for you.

We will walk among different lakes and channels, visiting a few lookout towers. From the top of these it is easy to check out large number of **Greyleg Geese** mixed with some **White-fronts and Tundra Geese**. We can have stunning views of **European Kingfisher, Hen Harrier and Great Grey Shrike** as well. End of October, beginning of November brings the first **Red-breasted and Lesser White-fronted Geese** as well to add some special colours.

At the end of our walk we check out the last fishpond which usually offers **Black-winged Stilt, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-tailed Godwit** and some more species. Soon as the end of the day approach more and more **Cranes** should arrive in bigger and bigger waves and we will have again a beautiful



evening with picturesque sky around with masses of **Cranes** flying overhead.

### **Day 6 - Birding at Hortobagy and Transfer to Bukk National Park**

After breakfast we visit Northern Hortobagy, another typical Puszta grassland habitat to experience. It is a good site to have **Little Owl** and couple of raptors including **Rough-legged Buzzard** which we can compare with a **Common Buzzard**.



Later on we head towards the Bükk Hills and en route we stop alongside the River Tisza and search **Syrian and Black Woodpecker** but can find **Great Spotted and Green** as well.

We have a great picnic here and after that we use an interesting ferry to cross River Tisza on the way to Bukk which is one of a kind experience like time traveling.

Upon arrival to the foot of the Bukk Hills we shortly visit the beginning of the Hor Valley before we arrive to our last hotel at Noszvaj.

### **Day 7 - Full Day Birding Bukk National Park & Karstic Meadows**

We spend the full day in the Bükk National Park and visit beech woods, scenic valleys, old quarries and limestone meadows for raptors, woodpeckers, owls and woodland passerines.



Pre-breakfast walks around our hotel should be very productive. Several species of woodpeckers including **Grey-headed Woodpecker, Common Treecreeper, Common Crossbill, European Hawfinch** are all can be found in this area of orchards and oak forests.

Later on we drive up to different points of the Bukk Hills. Where-ever we search birds we can walk among beautifully coloured beech trees. We should find several **woodpeckers** including lot of **Great Spots**, but also **Black, Middle-spotted** and perhaps **Lesser Spotted** as well. The



hardest one is usually the secretive and localized **White-backed Woodpecker** but we know some of its favourite areas.



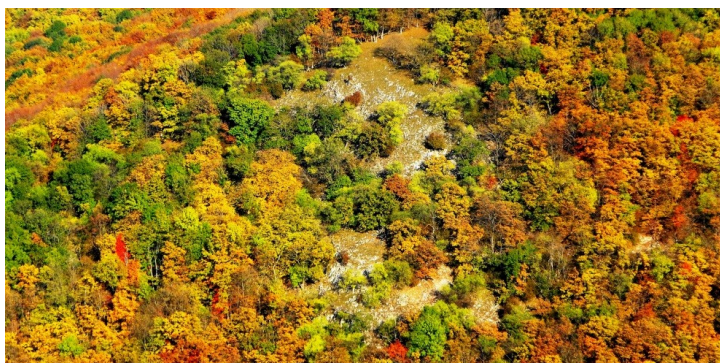
After picnic in the forest we drive up to the Bükk Plateau to explore extensive oak and beech woods, an excellent area for **Hawfinch, Common Treecreeper** and **woodpeckers**, including to have a second chance for the elusive **White-backed**. We visit the most famous forest with a nice

walk. Here giant beech trees die naturally, hence the name “Ancient Woods”. During October **Hawfinch, Mistle Thrush and Brambling** is quite common here as well. During November **Wallcreepers** come down from the Slovakian hills to winter at limestone walls of Bükk Hills.



During our walk in this enchanting forest with all the glamour of the autumn colours of the foliage with some luck we can even find a beautiful **Ural Owl**.

This would be a very nice finish of a lovely day in gorgeous forests.



### **Day 8 - Departure**

After our last morning birding we have our breakfast and depending on your flight schedule can bird a bit more or travel back to Budapest. If there is time and interest we can do a drive through sightseeing tour as well, stopping at the most interesting

parts of this lovely city. **After a lovely week spent together we hope to have a chance to organize another successful tour for you either in Eastern Europe or Latin America!**

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