

Birds of Polana and Kiskunság

*From extinct volcano
to puszta*

Farms on puszta have similar bird communities



Enigmatic Carpathians
small-scale farming and well preserved mountain forests

KISKUNSAG

This National park is located only 1 hour south of Budapest and comprises a great variety of habitats and is extremely rich in birds. Major habitats are various grasslands on saline soil called puszta. There are also canals, shallow lakes, woods and farms thus creating one of the bird richest areas of Europe. Typical birds are Roller, Bee-eater, Great Bustard, Red-footed Falcon or Lesser Grey Shrike.

POLANA

is an extinct volcano crater in the western Carpathians. It is found just 2 hours by bus from Budapest airport in central Slovakia. High elevations are covered with spruce mountain forest while beech grows below and the large valley at the bottom is dotted with dozens of small farms. It has high breeding densities of mountain birds like Ring Ouzel, Pygmy Owl and Three-toed Woodpecker.



This tour brings a brand new blend of water and plain habitats, combined with an ancient Carpathian forest and a submontane landscape of exceptional beauty. It may look a somewhat old-fashioned combination but these areas are largely unknown to foreign visitors. We will be allowed to stay right in the middle of everything. Walking, as well as driving, has been restricted to a necessary minimum. The range of birds possible to see here is fascinating and the landscapes will make you feel as if you have travelled fifty years back in time. What we are most enthusiastic about is the authentic atmosphere of all the places we visit. You could put the Pygmy Owl or Great Bustard, Firecrest or Avocet, Three-toed Woodpecker or the Roller on your trip list.

Pygmy Owl elusive but
often found in Polana Mts.



Great Bustard
over 600 thrive in Kiskunsag - the best
local population of eastern Europe





Red-necked Grebe one of the many water birds



Bee-eaters on a morning walk

FACT FILE

Hungary | Slovakia

8 days | 2 hotels

season: **20 - 27 April 2013**

ground price: £760 / €945
single room: £90 / €110

guide: Gábor Orbán and Martin Hrouzek

airport: Budapest, Hungary

group size: 6-16

number of species: 160 - 180

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

D1 Arrival at Budapest

D2 Polana Mts.

D3 Polana Mts.

D4 Polana Mts. and transfer to Kiskunsag

D5 Kiskunsag plains

D6 Kiskunsag plains and lakes

D7 Kiskunsag and Tisza river

D8 Departure from Budapest



Roller has its strongest population in Hungary at Kiskunság



Lesser Grey Shrikes occur both at Kiskunsag and Polana

Natron lakes on puszta are like magnets for myriads of birds



Small farm in Polana Mountains



HIGHLIGHTS

Hazel Grouse (common but always elusive)
Pygmy Cormorant
Great Bustard
Pygmy, Tengmalm's and Ural Owl
Red-footed Falcon and Saker
Lesser Spotted and Imperial Eagle
Spotted and Little Crake
Roller, Bee-eater and Hoopoe
Three-toed and White-backed Woodpecker
Nutcracker and Ring Ouzel
Lesser Grey Shrike
Barred and Moustached Warbler
Rural landscapes
Mountain spruce primeval forest
Genuine puszta grasslands and natron lakes
Souslik and possibly Hamster
Varied birdlife right outside the hotels

GUIDES AND HOTELS

Gábor Orbán

Owner of ECOTOURS Hungary, a long established wildlife tour operator to Europe and Latin America. Gábor will accompany you on our bird tours to Hungary, Belarus and several other destinations. He also runs with his friend Andrea, a traditional Kondor lodge in Kiskunság area south of Budapest where our Polana and Kiskunság tours are based. Gábor has travelled widely all around the world, most extensively to Latin America where he has his second home in the winter.

Martin Hrouzek

is 40 and has guided several dozens of birdwatching tours since the mid nineties. He runs Arnika Travel, based in the Czech Republic since 2011.

Hotel in Polana Mts., Slovakia

mid-sized new hotel of 3 star standard perfectly set on a meadow near woods and great for early morning walks.

Kondor lodge, Kiskunság, Hungary

Traditional lodge with fantastic birds within half a mile.



*Red-footed Falcon
the graceful raptor of steppes*



*Genuine puszta
large open saline grasslands*



Primeval forest spruce kingdom at 1400m

Images were kindly provided by:

Miloš Balla, Slovakia

Petr Kunčík, Czech Rep.

Roland Jansen, Netherlands

Přemysl Vaněk, Czech Rep.

Martin Hrouzek, Czech Rep.

Gábor Orbán, Hungary

Published by:

Ecotours & Kondor EcoLodge Ltd.

6080 Szabadszallas, Balazspusztá 90., Hungary

www.ecotours.hu

ecotours@t-online.hu

+36-30-6459318 or +36-20-8014742 (Apr - Oct)

+52 1 998 126 3073 (Nov - Apr)

skype: gabornewmex



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