

HUNGARY GEESE TOUR



RØDHALSET GÅS FOTO: SAKER TOURS

DETAILED ITINERARY:

Day 1.

After arrival to Budapest we will visit the Kiskunság National Park for a few hours and later travel to Balmazújváros which is located in the eastern part of the famous Hortobágy National park where we stay for the first 4 nights of the tour. **Night in Bíbic Nature Lodge:**

<https://www.bibiclodge.com/>

Day 2-4.

The Hotel is located in the city but still on the edge of the national park overlooking a soda lake and a steppe area so often thousands of geese visible from the veranda of the restaurant. So with some luck we might see a Red-breasted Goose still before our first breakfast! At the end of October and the beginning of November the vast hordes of geese arrive to the Hortobágy from the north. They more or less substitute the Cranes which by this time moving south although a few thousand will certainly be around! During our three days stay, we will focus on seeing the vulnerable Red-breasted Goose and Lesser White-fronted Goose. If luck is on our side and we see them easily we will also have time to visit other type of habitats of the Hortobágy and in its close surroundings.

All this takes place in the tranquil environment of the beautiful steppe landscape. In the large



KEJSERØRN HORTUBAGY. Foto: Saker Tours

Greater White-fronted Geese flocks we will also have the chance to find Greyleg, Barnacle Goose and Taiga Bean Goose. At the various wetlands we will see White-tailed Eagles spread panic amongst the large gatherings of waterbirds, often causing them to take flight in huge swarming flocks.

The rich rodent population of the grasslands supports a healthy number of predators. Among the many Common Buzzards we will see Rough-legged Buzzard, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Hen Harrier from the north and if we lucky a long staying Long-legged Buzzard can still be around. Best of all however is the magnificent Saker - surely Europe's most enigmatic falcon. If we really lucky even the scarce Greater Spotted Eagle can be seen.

On the edge of the steppe on freshly cut alfalfa fields Great Bustards are gathering in post-breeding flocks by this time of the year. In the vast reed beds the calls of Bearded Tits can often be heard and usually they are easy to see as well. In November we also have the chance to see some wintering birds but their appearance is unpredictable. These could include Twite, Lapland Bunting and Snow Bunting. Fieldfares and Great Grey Shrikes are more common.

One day we will visit a Long-eared Owl roost - sometimes over 100 of these splendid birds have arrived by November. Other species we may find include Great and Pygmy Cormorants, Great Bittern, Eurasian Wigeon, Gadwall, Common Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Northern Showeler, Common Pochard, Water Rail, Common Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Grey Plover, Northern Lapwing, Common Snipe, Black-headed, Common, Caspian and Yellow-legged Gulls and Common Kingfisher. If our time allows we will make a short visit to a nearby woodland

where we have the chance to find Black, Green, Great Spotted, Lesser Spotted and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers.

Day 5.



MURLØBER. FOTO: SØREN SKOV

This morning we will leave the Hortobágy region behind and drive to the Bükk Hills where we try to track down some wintering Wallcreepers in abandoned quarries. In small numbers they winter in this area. If we have a modicum of luck we might also come across Alpine Accentor. We will have the first chance to see woodpeckers as well. Late afternoon we will drive to the Zemplén Hills where we have 2 nights. **Night in Komlóska:** <https://www.solyomvar.hu/english/>

Day 6.

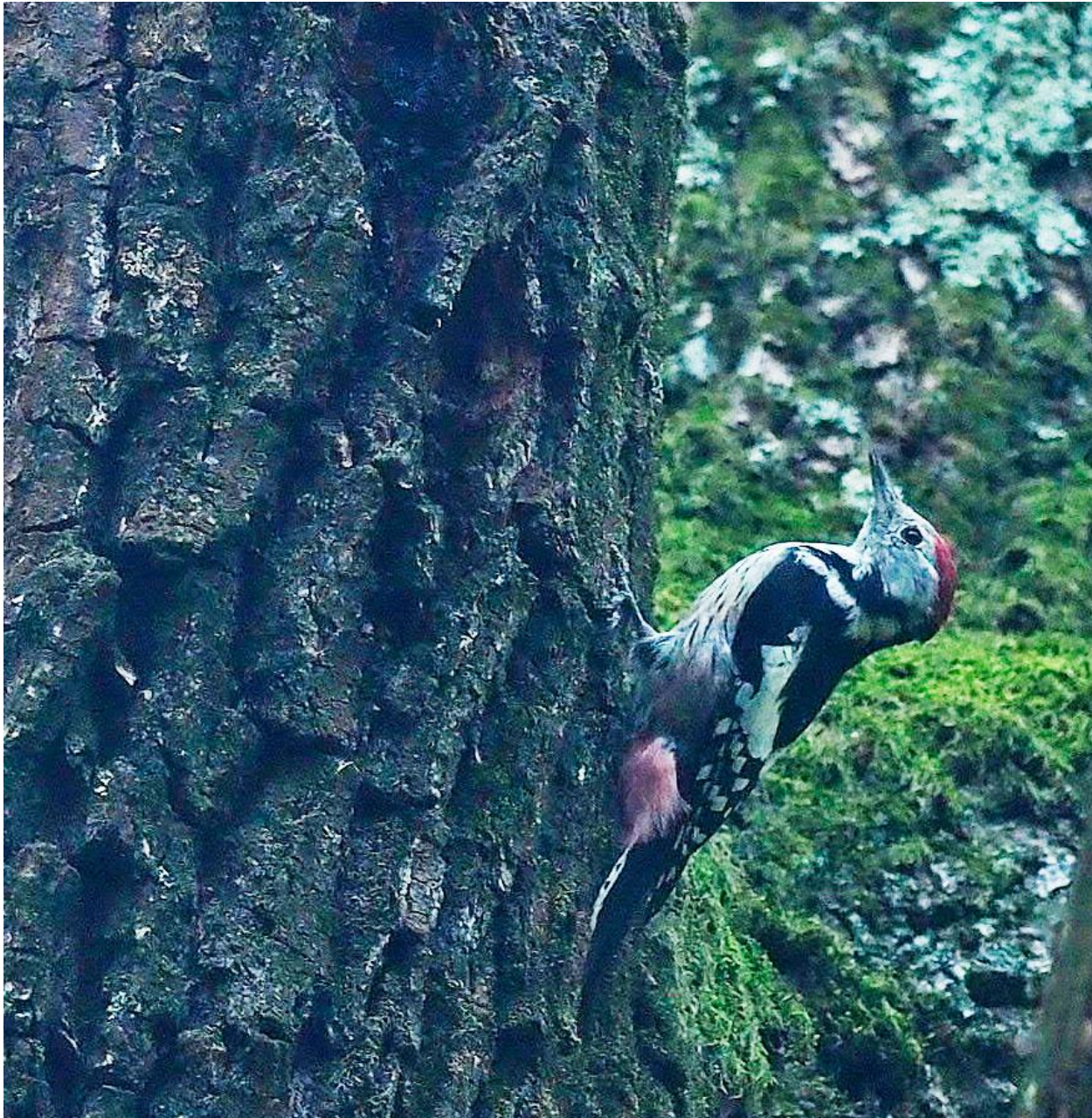
We will try to find as many woodpeckers today as we can. The Zemplén Hills are great for this group of birds and we have a chance to see Black, Lesser Spotted, Middle Spotted, Great Spotted, White-backed and Grey-headed Woodpeckers in the forests while Green and Syrian Woodpeckers near the settlements. We will also look for raptors like Eastern Imperial Eagles and Northern Goshawk.

In the protected tranquil old forests of the Zemplén valleys lives the surprisingly big-headed, small-eyed and long-tailed Ural Owl. It is not easy to find this enigmatic bird in the autumn but we have a chance. This evening we will visit a well-known family wine cellar in the Tokaj

World Heritage area where we can sample the famous Tokaj Wine. As King Louis XIV the Sun King described the Tokaj wine: 'Vinum Regum Rex Vinorum', in other words the king of wines and the wine of King's!

Day 7.

After a last morning birding in the Zemplén area we will travel back to Budapest airport where the tour ends.



MELLMFLAGSPÆTTE: FOTO: SØREN SKOV