



Red-crowned Crane

Amazing Hokkaido, Japan

Destination: Hokkaido, Japan
Focus: Bird photography, some landscapes
Grading: Moderate walks only
Group size: 7 - 14 persons

Time: 18 - 28 February 2018
Price: 4550 € per person
single supplement 835 €



Steller's Sea Eagle

Experience the magic of Hokkaido

This beautiful wintery island offers great photography opportunities. Amazing numbers of very approachable birds can be found. It is almost unbelievable how many Steller's Sea Eagles and White-tailed Eagles you can see at the same time or how close to swans you can get!

Birds are the main target in this tour but also the landscapes in north Japan are like fairytale. Imagine Swans in the misty lake, mountains in morning light or simple Japanese trees in the middle of the fields. All this makes Hokkaido very popular destination amongst photographers.

Experience also Japanese culture with extremely polite people, wonderful food and onsens (Japanese bath). Something what you will never forget!

This will be our 9th photography tour to the northernmost island of Japan - Hokkaido.

For 2018 we added one day in the last destination Nakashibetsu because clients liked it so much! We also upgraded some of the hotels. There is also a new cruise in Nemuro and visit in Blakinston's Fish Owl place in Rausu!

Highlights: Red-crowned Crane, Steller's Sea Eagle, Blakiston's Fish Owl, White-tailed Eagle, Whooper Swan, Black Kite, Japanese landscapes, Red Fox and Sika Deer

Notice - No hide photography!

For more information:

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ITINERARY

Day 1 - This tour will start from Kushiro airport, Hokkaido on **18th of February 2018 at 8 PM**

We will meet you at the Kushiro airport and drive approximately 30 minutes to Tsurui. After a Japanese dinner it's time for a good rest. This is beautiful and comfortable wooden Japanese style hotel with spa facilities and with excellent food. Location of the hotel is very good for all the Japanese crane locations.

Day 2 - TSURUI

Relaxed start with breakfast. We spend the whole day in Red-crowned Crane feeding station near by Hotel. In this place it is possible to take also low-angle photos of these beautiful cranes. We continue taking photos until it will be dark. Lunch can be bought from local shop. In the evening Japanese dinner at the accommodation.

Day 3 TSURUI - AKAN - NEMURO

Start with early pre-breakfast excursion to the Otowa bridge where Red-crowned Cranes can be photographed at their roosting site. Open river can be steaming in cold weather and the trees can be covered with thick frost. This is good place for Cranes in river landscape images, especially in clear mornings.

After breakfast we pack our luggage and drive over the mountain to the Akan Red-crowned Crane feeding station. There might be also some White-tailed Eagles visiting the site, especially when the Cranes are fed with live trout. Other species possible today will be Steller's Sea Eagle, Black Kite and Whooper Swan. There is a small café in Akan crane center where it would be possible to have a lunch. Late afternoon drive from Akan to Nemuro. In the evening Japanese dinner at our hotel.

Day 4 NEMURO

After the breakfast we photograph the Eagle feeding session at 9.00 at Lake Furen. Previous winters approximately 100 Steller's Sea Eagles and White-tailed Eagles have gathered on the ice right next to a restaurant at lake Furen. There will be good opportunities to photograph flying eagles and Black Kites from the restaurant's parking place. Birds often pass the parking place at a very short distance! Good chances for flight photography here and with long lens one can get some good action shots of fighting eagles on ice or air! With the luck also fox might visit at the feeding site.

Today there is possibility to have lunch at Sushi restaurant in Nemuro (at your own expense). Very recommended Japanese experience!

In the afternoon we will do weather permitting couple of hours cruise for seabirds off shore of Ochiishi harbor.

Possible species to see and photograph are Spectacled Guillemot, Ancient Murrelet, Least and Crested Auklet. Maybe we will encounter some Divers as well and Black Scoters, White-winged Scoters etc.



Day 5 NEMURO- RAUSU

After the breakfast we pack our luggage and photograph the eagle feeding session one more time at the Lake Furen. After that we will continue our journey to Rausu.

On the way to Rausu it's possible to photograph Scaups, Harlequin Ducks, Goosanders, Mergansers, Glaucous Gulls etc. in the harbors. Lunch from the roadside shop and dinner at the accommodation.

We will spend the evening at Washinado-yado Japanese questhouse is situated in valley and partly unfrozen river runs on side of it. This is one of the best spots for Blakiston's Fish Owl. On the side of the river there is a little pool where they put few live fish every evening for the owl. Here they use led lighting to give us opportunity to photograph this world's largest owl fishing. Depending on a situation we might use the open restaurant windows or a old bus which is converted to photography hide. We will stay roughly until midnight before heading back to the accommodation.



Day 6 RAUSU

Pre-breakfast boat trip from Rausu to photograph eagles for 2-3 hours. After the boat trip back to the accommodation for the breakfast. Time to empty the cards and charge the batteries.

Afternoon second boat trip to the eagles as late as possible in the afternoon.



Day 7 RAUSU- KUSSHARO

Pre-breakfast boat trip from Rausu to photograph eagles for 2-3 hours. After the boat trip we will go back to the accommodation for the breakfast and for packing.

After check out we start our drive to small village near lake Kussharo.

On the way stop in lake Mashu for some landscape photography and naturally also we will stop for all possible wildlife on the roadside. Lunch from the roadside shops and dinner at the accommodation.



Day 8 LAKE KUSSHARO

Lake Kussharo is great place to photograph Whooper Swans! Swans like to spend the winter here because of the hot springs that keep the water open close to the shores. Optional pre-breakfast Whooper Swan photography session. Back to the Swans after breakfast for couple of hours. Break in the middle of the day at the hotel in order to empty the memory cards and charge the batteries. Afternoon photography session with Whooper Swans at two different locations by the Lake Kussharo until dusk.

There might be also photographable Sika Deer in the area and we have a possibility to photograph also e.g. Japanese Wagtail, Dusky Thrush, Thick-billed Crow, Japanese Bulbul and maybe also Falcated Duck or Spot-billed Duck.



Day 9 KUSSHARO - NAKASHIBETSU

Pre-breakfast Whooper Swan photography session. After breakfast we pack our luggage and make our way to Nakashibetsu. At the hotel there is a bird feeder with Jays, Tits and Woodpeckers visiting and there is also a possibility for Sable and Squirrel. Also Greater Pied Kingfisher might be seen here.

This is a very nice Japanese spa-hotel with very friendly people working and excellent Japanese cuisine. Try also to find time to enjoy Japanese hot bath here. Also some local souvenirs can be bought from this hotel.

In the evening we will look for the largest owl of the world - Blakiston's Fish Owl. There is a feeding place for the owl here and it is possible to take photos through the window with artificial lights. Occasionally Owl can be still around in the next morning light!



Day 10 NAKASHIBETSU

Optional pre-breakfast landscape photography excursion to the nearby mountain area. Another option is to stay in hotel and photograph at the hotel feeder. Photography and relax at the hotel.

Day 11 NAKASHIBETSU - KUSHIRO

Photography at the hotel. After breakfast transportation to the Kushiro airport. This tour ends in Kushiro airport around midday.





For more pictures: [Amazing Hokkaido -gallery in Flickr.](#)

Price includes: Accommodation in Japanese hotels and lodges in double rooms in Hokkaido for 10 nights (18.-28.2.2017). Japanese breakfast and dinner. Transportation in Hokkaido with a minivans. Boat trips mentioned in the program (4 boat trips) and admission fees to the Crane feeding and Blakinston's Fish owl sites. Guiding by Jari Peltomäki in Hokkaido

Accommodation: good standard accommodation. Some hotels Japanese style with Tatami and onsen.

Distances: The key photography areas are in the same area – so there won't be too much driving involved. During the 11 days photography tour we normally drive 1000 – 1500 kilometers in Hokkaido. Minivans for transportation.

Food: Japanese style, a lot of fish and seafood! Lunch mainly from the roadside shops and dinner at the accommodation

Leader: Finnature guide, 12 clients or more
2 Finnature guides.

Please notice that program is weather dependent and may change due to weather conditions.

Booking: www.shop.finnature.com

Official Package travel trader (Organiser) and Travel agent
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