



Red-crowned Crane

## Amazing Hokkaido, Japan

**Destination:** Hokkaido, Japan

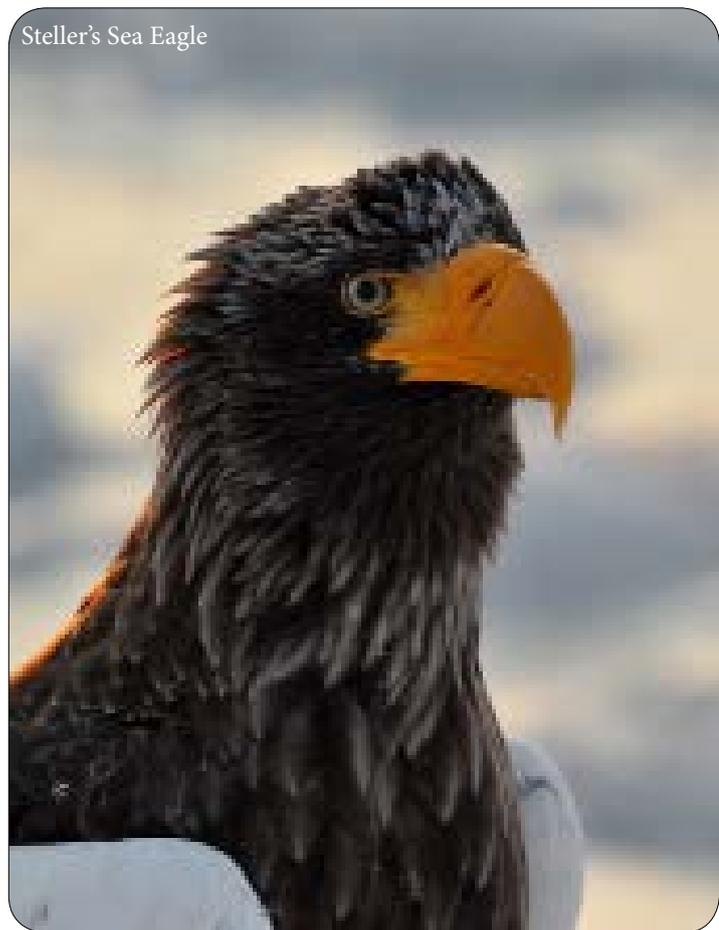
**Focus:** Bird photography, some mammals and stunning landscapes

**Grading:** Moderate walks only

**Group size:** 7 - 14 persons

**Time:** 18 - 28 February 2019

**Price:** 4550 € per person  
single supplement 790 €



Steller's Sea Eagle

### Experience the magic of Hokkaido

The beautiful wintery island of Hokkaido 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 Whooper Swans you can get!

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

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

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

For 2019 we have added one day at the last destination Nakashibetsu because clients liked it so much! We have also upgraded some of the hotels. There is a new cruise in Nemuro and an extra visit in Blakiston's Fish Owl 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, Sable 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 2019 at 8 PM**

We will meet you at Kushiro airport and drive approximately 30 minutes to Tsurui. After a Japanese dinner it's time for a good rest.

### Day 2 - TSURUI

Relaxed start with breakfast. We spend the whole day at Red-crowned Crane feeding station. Here it is possible to take low-angle photos of these beautiful Cranes. We continue taking photos until dark. Lunch can be bought from a local shop. In the evening, enjoy a Japanese dinner at the accommodation.

### Day 3 TSURUI - AKAN - NEMURO

We start with an early pre-breakfast excursion to Otowa Bridge where Red-crowned Cranes can be photographed at their roosting site. The open river steams in cold weather and trees are covered with thick frost. This is an iconic place for Cranes in river landscape images, especially on clear mornings.

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

### Day 4 NEMURO

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

Today there is a chance to have lunch at a Sushi restaurant in Nemuro. This is a recommended Japanese experience!

In the afternoon, weather permitting, we will spend a couple of hours cruising for seabirds offshore 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 as Black Scoters and White-winged Scoters.



### Day 5 NEMURO- KUSSHARO

After breakfast we pack our luggage and photograph the Eagle feeding session one more time at Lake Furen. We will then continue our journey to a small village near lake Kussharo.

On the way we will stop in lake Mashu for landscape photography. We will also stop for any other wildlife on the roadsides. Lunch from the roadside shops and dinner at the accommodation.

### Day 6 LAKE KUSSHARO

Lake Kussharo is a 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 Swans after breakfast for a couple of hours. Break in the middle of the day at the hotel in order to empty memory cards and charge batteries. Afternoon photography session with Whooper Swans at two different locations at Lake Kussharo until dusk.

It might be possible to photograph Sika Deer, Japanese Wagtail, Dusky Thrush, Thick-billed Crow, Japanese Bulbul and maybe also Falcated Duck and Spot-billed Duck in the area.

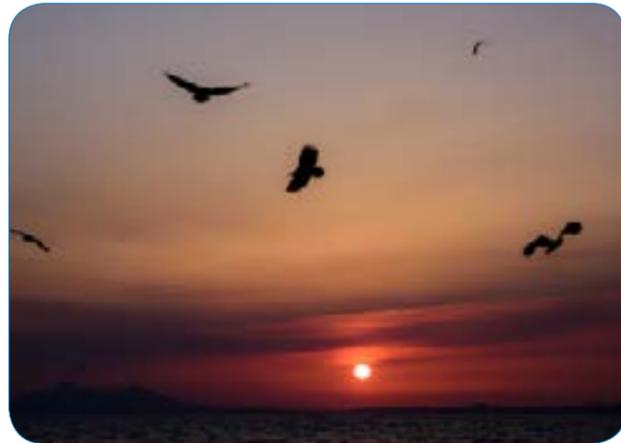
### Day 7 KUSSHARO- RAUSU

Pre-breakfast Whooper Swan photography session.

After breakfast drive to Rausu. Lunch from the roadside shop and dinner at the accommodation.

We will spend the evening at Washinado-yado, a Japanese guesthouse which is situated in a valley with a partly unfrozen river running alongside. 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 a 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 the situation, we might use open restaurant windows or an old bus which is converted into a photography hide. We will stay roughly until midnight before heading back to accommodation.





#### Day 8 RAUSU

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

In the afternoon, a second boat trip to photograph Eagles as late as possible.

#### Day 9 RAUSU - NAKASHIBETSU

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

After breakfast we pack our luggage and make our way to Nakashibetsu. At the hotel is a bird feeder with Jays, Tits and Woodpeckers visiting and there is also possibilities of Sable and Red Squirrel. Greater Pied Kingfisher might be seen here.

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

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



#### Day 10 NAKASHIBETSU

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

#### Day 11 NAKASHIBETSU - KUSHIRO

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



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

**Price includes:** Accommodation in Japanese hotels and lodges in double rooms in Hokkaido for 10 nights (18.-28.2.2019). Japanese breakfast and dinner. Transportation in Hokkaido with minivans. Boat trips as mentioned in the program (4 boat trips/weather permitting) and admission fees to the Crane feeding and Blakiston's Fish Owl sites.

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

**Distances:** The key photography areas are near each other so there won't be too much driving involved. During this 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 roadside shops and dinner at accommodations.

**Leader:** [Jari Peltomäki](#), with bigger groups also [Kaisa Peltomäki](#).

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

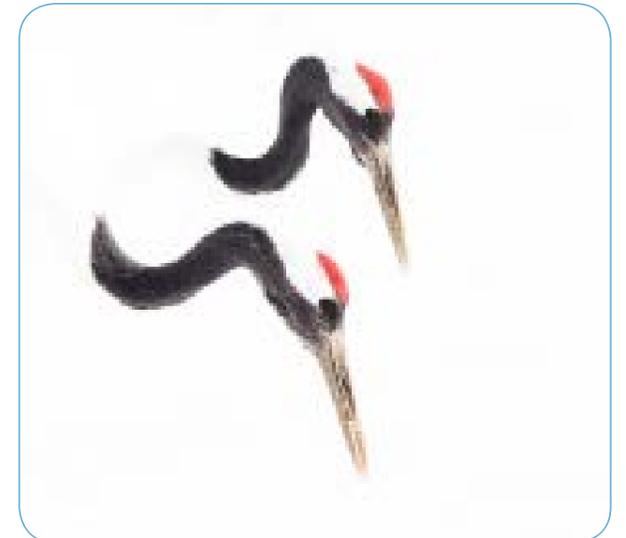
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