



**Birds & Wildlife at
Ecotours Kondor EcoLodge
Kiskunsag NP, HUNGARY**

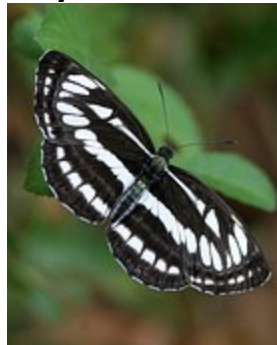


Easy Tour with one centre



**BIRDS, MAMMALS, BUTTERFLIES, MOTH, DRAGONFLIES,
WILDFLOWERS of the Hungarian Steppes, Lakes & Rivers**

We offer an unique place as a base to stay to discover the special birds, mammals, butterflies, dragonflies, botanical and other natural values of the "Hungarian Puszta". Traditional thatched-roofed houses, home-made food, wine cellar, tranquil forest and garden with attractive species makes Kondor EcoLodge a perfect base for a great wildlife holiday. 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!**



Day 1

After arriving at Budapest airport, we will be met by our Ecotours guide who also will be our host at **Kondor EcoLodge**. We could reach our accommodation within 1-1,5 hour drive from the airport, but it would be hard to miss stopping at some of the **Upper Kiskunsag** habitats on the way. Depending on your flight schedule we either stop at a wetland forest with several woodpecker species including **Black, Middle- and Lesser-spotted Woodpeckers, Collared Flycatcher, Black Stork** and some nice butterfly species should be around as well such as **Map, Short-tailed & Eastern Short-tailed Blue, Essex Skipper**. Or we drive through a typical grassland habitat with our first songbirds such as **Corn Bunting, Stonechat, Whinchat** with a great variety of raptors around as well. During the way at our stops you will be treated by coffee, cappuchino, tea and some other goodies.

We arrive to our lodge in the **middle of the Kiskunsag National Park** to leave enough time to look around in the garden, rest a bit and prepare for a great dinner.

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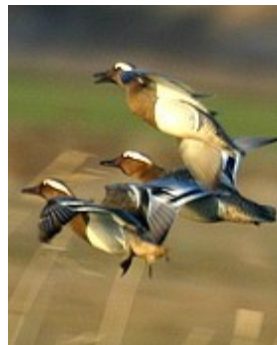


Accommodation throughout the holiday: Kondor EcoLodge, Szabadszallas, Balazspuszta90, centre of Kiskunsag National Park www.kondorecolodge.hu

Days 2-6

Our first full day will be spent at and around our accommodation, leisurely discovering the wildlife surrounding us. The air is full with thrills and songs of nesting **Chaffinches, Goldfinches, Greenfinches, Swallows, Chiffchaffs, Black Redstarts, Stonechats, Blackcaps, Mistle Thrushes, Willow Warblers. Tree Sparrow** and **Common Redstart** is also a possibility, both have been breeding species in the garden recently. You won't be bored by the flute of **Golden Orioles** or bubbling sounds of **Bee-eaters** or female **Cuckoos** around. Various resident woodpeckers in or nearby the garden include **Lesser and Great Spotted Woodpecker, Wryneck** and **Green Woodpecker**, but even **Black Woodpecker** is possible.

Most of the above mentioned species are at or around the garden, but with different walks we can find many more interesting things around even without using a vehicle! Trails and rural, sandy dirt-roads meander through a flat area dotted by small forest patches, grasslands and a lake. The surrounding area is very good for **Rollers** and **Bee-eaters**, in fact they are one of the most common birds around! **Syrian & Black Woodpecker** is in the area & **Turtle Dove** occurs as well. We should find **Tawny Pipit, Red-backed & Lesser Grey Shrike** within a mile. **Hoopoe, Tree Pipit, Corn Bunting, Whinchat, Nightingale, Crested Lark** and **Yellow Wagtail** all has good populations here as well. It is not uncommon to hear and see **Hawfinch, Garden Warbler, Linnet** or **Spotted Flycatcher** either. The nearby extensive sand dunes covered with different *Stipa* species in the central part of the National Park are ideal for **Wood Lark** populations.



Kiskunsag has an unusual mixture of habitats with sanddunes, special forest steppes, mainly oak and juniper and sand steppes or sand 'puszta' plus alkaline, salt lakes. Thus it is an **endemic hotspot for plant and wildflower species**. If you visit during second half of May or early June you can discover these various habitats and try to find a wide variety of different interesting members of the local flora, most of the following species will be in flowers. **Endemics:** *Onosma arenaria*, *Plantago schwarzenbergiana*; **Near endemics:** *Festuca vaginata*, *Stipa borysthena*; **Some of the other species:** *Alkanna tinctoria*, *Artemisia santonicum*, *Astragalus dasyanthus*, *Cephalantera rubra*, *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, *Pseudovina-Festuca pseudovina*, *Festuca rubra*, *Filipendula vulgaris*, *Fumana procumbens*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Iris spuria*, *Iris sibirica*, *Matricaria recutita*, *Ophrys insectifera*, *Ophrys scolopax* ssp. *cornuta*, *Orchis militaris*, *Green-winged Orchid-Orchis*

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morio, *Potentilla arenaria*, *Pulsatilla pratensis* ssp. *hungarica*, *Thymus pannonicus*/
Thymus glabrescens



During the evenings we offer short night walks to listen **Scops Owl** and **Tawny Owl**. **Little Owl** usually can be found at nearby farms during the day as well. But the highlight of the after dinner programs is surely the **Nightjar-walk** when you can hear and with some luck also witness up-close the display flight of these fascinating birds.

Regarding garden butterfly species depending on how advanced is the Spring we can see some late **Southern Festoons** with some luck or the first **Common Gliders** as specialities. **Cardinal, Swallowtail, Scarce Swallowtail, Comma, Peacock, Painted Lady** all common species. But during our daily trips there are many other species possible to find, ranging from various blues **Short-tailed, Eastern Short-tailed & Common Blue** through fritillaries, such as **Queen of Spain** or **Silver-washed Fritillary** till **Lesser** or even **Freyer's Purple Emperor**.



Those who interested in further Lepidoptera species would be delighted to see that during the evenings our special Robinson moth trap and even our large white walls of our buildings attract several different species of moth. Plus during our daily outings we can find some further species. Kiskunsag has several specialities, some are very localised, others relatively common. Depending on location and timing some of the possibilities are: **Narrage tessularia pannonicus, Semiothisa/Diastictis artesiarica, Eucrostes Indigenatus, Rhyparioides Metelkana, Orthosia Schmidtii, Aspilates formosarius pannonicus, Coleophora eupepla, Coleophora pilicornis, Metzneria ehikeella, Oprossamma wertheimsteini, Zygaena laeta, Porphyrina pannonica, Oxytripia orbiculosa, Staurophara celsia, Peppered Moth (Biston betularius), Tephronia sepiaria, Cucullia tanacetii, Spurge Hawk, Bedstraw Hawk, Goat Moth (Cossus cossus).**

Close to the Kondor Ecolodge it is easy to observe different mammal species as well, such as **Roe Deer, Brown Hare, Eastern Hedgehog, Red Fox** and funny-looking **European Souslik** which looks like as a ground squirrel.

Other mammal species are either a bit further away or much harder to get a glimpse, such as **Russian/Eversmann's Polecat, Southern Birch Mouse, Root Vole, Otter** and **Badger**. With our professional **Bat-detector** we can find some bat species as well.

Next days will be spent by visiting different types of habitats finding various sought-after bird species, find attractive wildflowers, colourful butterflies and rare dragonflies.

One of the typical habitats of Kiskunsag is the flat, perfect plain of the "puszta" which has several different types ranging from dry grassland till marshy meadows.

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Kiskunsag grassland is the typical habitat for **Great Bustard** with the largest population not just in Hungary, but all Europe! On one of the days we can 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! This area is also home for **Stone Curlew, Tawny Pipit, Lesser Grey Shrike, Wheatear** and a perfect hunting area for some great raptors such as **Imperial Eagle, Red-footed Falcon, Saker Falcon**. Certain species adapted to the agricultural fields and nest at the edge of these areas. This is where we can search for an occasional **Black-winged Pratincole** among the **Collared** ones. **Long-eared** and **Little Owl** usually can be found at farm houses.



During the days we will check the most important natural alkaline lakes which generally have very high salt and other mineral concentration. Different species can be found at gravel pits filled with water and alongside the canals connecting River Tisza or River Danube with drier areas. Floodplains of River Tisza and its several oxbow lakes are also perfect birding spots.

This is where we will look for some more breeding birds such as **Avocet, Redshank, Black-winged Stilt, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Kentish Plover, Pygmy Cormorant, Black-necked Grebe, Little Grebe, Squacco Heron, Purple Heron, Night Heron, Spoonbill, Common Snipe, Kingfisher**.

It is usually easier to hear than to see **Bittern, Corncrake, Spotted Crake** and **Little Crake**, but we should be able to get a glimpse of some of these species as well.

Beside the numerous **Marsh Harriers** we should find **Montague's Harrier** as well, but **White-tailed Eagle** or **Saker Falcon** cause much bigger alarm among the flocks of **Ferruginous Duck, Shoveler, Garganey, Red-crested Pochard**. **Terns** will be represented by **Common** and **Whiskered Tern** and during "wet years" **Black** and **White-winged Black Terns** are present as well. Alongside **Black-headed** and **Yellow-legged Gulls** there are nice colonies of **Mediterranean Gulls**. Reedbeds are teeming with **Penduline Tit, Bearded Reedling, Great Reed Warbler, Savi's Warbler, Moustached Warbler, Sedge** and **Reed Warbler**. Alongside the rivers at the so called "gallery forests" or riparian forests we should find **Lesser** and **Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker** and **Black Storks**, plus plenty of **Golden Orioles**.



Depending on timing alongside the rivers and lakes there are always different really great dragonfly species to find such as **Migrant Spreadwing/Southern Emerald Damselfly, Lesser Emperor** and **Emperor Dragonfly, Lilypad Whiteface, Common, Spotted & Ruddy Darter, Norfolk Hawker, Four-spotted Chaser, White & Black-tailed Skimmer**.

Day 7 We cross once again the Upper Kiskunsag area, stopping at the best habitats to say goodbye to the Puszta before reaching the airport.

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