

WILDLIFE TRAVEL



Holidays 2020



all our profits are donated to the Wildlife Trusts

Wildlife Travel 2020

Welcome to our holiday programme for the year ahead, and news of 2021. We are looking forward to what promises to be another exciting year of Wildlife Travelling, and raising more money for nature conservation: since 1988 we have **donated more than £220,000** to the Wildlife Trusts.

New destinations for 2020

There is a big world out there, and every year our leaders are exploring new destinations, with an eye on adding them to our holiday programme. The results of these explorations can be seen in this year's brochure, with new trips to **Armenia** and **Colombia** (postponed from 2019), and two new destinations in southern France, the **Dordogne** and the **Cevennes**, which we will be travelling to by train, as part of our commitment to providing flight-free holidays.

We have also been designing new itineraries with our trusted local guides, with our first visit to **Ethiopia** planned for February 2020, a new winter itinerary to **Poland** to search for Eurasian Lynx and new itineraries in **Southern Ecuador** and **Chile** both planned for 2021.



Old favourites

There is always room for our regular, favourite holidays, destinations that year in, year out offer some wonderful wildlife watching. 2020 will see us return to the flower-rich hillsides of **Cyprus**, to the beautiful island of **Lesvos** at a great time for bird migration and spring flowers, along with our regular visits to the **Burren** in western Ireland and the rainforests of **Costa Rica**.

You will notice that our autumn 2020 holidays have been left with the prices yet to be fixed. With the current uncertainty around currency exchange rates, we have decided not to put a price on those, particularly the more expensive, long-haul holidays, until after autumn 2019. We will be publishing more details for those holidays in our early 2020 newsletter.

Morocco at Christmas

We still have spaces on our 2019 Christmas break to Morocco, 21st-28th December 2019, staying at the wonderful (and award-winning) Atlas Kasbah hotel. A relaxing week of warm hospitality, interesting culture and, of course, great wildlife.

Contact us to reserve your spaces!



Why travel with us?

We are very proud of the many repeat travellers who travel with us time after time and recommend us to their friends. Don't just take our word for it: here is how recent Wildlife Travellers described their holidays:

*“better than I could have imagined...
the ideal leader, helpful, really
knowledgeable, patient and enthusiastic.”*

Galapagos 2019

*“the whole experience was excellent,
well led, full of activity and
wide ranging in content...
we always recommend you to friends and
hope to travel with you again soon.”*

The Gargano 2019

*“a lovely holiday in lovely company...
excellent leaders, the hotel was brilliant,
fabulous food.
[the trip] fulfilled all expectations and
exceeded them.”*

The Vercors 2019

*“lots to see, hear, discover and learn...
hotel very atmospheric, leaders first class”*

“a lot of fun was had by all!”

Morocco 2019

“a special and beautiful place”

Danube Delta 2019



Remember

Unlike most holiday companies, we do not reserve the right to pass on to you any additional costs if and when currency or other rates change: **the price given on confirming the holiday is the price you pay.**

Your holiday is covered under ABTA regulations, through your booking with Sunvil: **you and your money are fully protected.**

Along with offering high-quality wildlife tourism, our aim is to raise funds for nature conservation. **ALL our profits are donated to the Wildlife Trusts**, with none of our distributed profits paid to shareholders.



Photo credits: all Philip Precey except: Mike Symes (p9, Lake Kerkini and Sidirokastro, p11, Elk); Laurie Jackson (p12, Dordogne; p13, Transylvania & Vercors); Chris Donnelly (p12, Lesbos); Rosemary Parslow (p14, Scilly); Marek Borkowski (p10, Eurasian Lynx); Tertius Gous (p10, Gelada; p15, Gemsbok); Mladen Vasilev (p10, Red-breasted Goose); NatourEst (p11, Capercaillie); Martin Hrouzek (p13, Lady's Slipper); Wilderness Explorers (p15, Giant Otter); Roger Rodriguez (p 15, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager); Xavier Muñoz (p16, Jocotoco Antpitta); Claudio Vidal (p16, Araucaria forest); Anna Asatryan (p20, Armenia).

Flight-free Holidays

We know that many of our travellers are increasingly interested in 'flight-free' holidays, whether as a way of reducing their carbon footprint, to avoid the not-always-enjoyable time spent in airports, or just because they don't like flying. As part of our commitment to responsible travelling, we aim to provide as many opportunities for 'flight-free' travel as possible, both in the UK and further afield.

Holiday closer to home: UK holidays

Of course, you don't need to go anywhere near an airport to find some amazing wildlife: you don't have to leave the country at all. We have always been very keen to introduce our travellers to some of the spectacular wildlife right here on our doorstep.

Over the years we have travelled to all corners of the UK, from our regular spring visit to the **Isles of Scilly** in the expert company of the islands' BSBI recorder and all round natural history expert Rosemary Parslow, to the seabird colonies and Arctic flora of Shetland. Our close links to UK conservation means that we have been able to get some real 'behind the scenes' access and spend time with expert guides, whether it's learning about the Great Bustard reintroduction project in Wiltshire, watching wild Beavers going about their business in the company of

Devon Wildlife Trust or enjoying a 're-wilding safari' with local ecologists at the famous Knepp Estate in **Sussex**.

And some of the lesser-known wildlife spectacles we come across along the way really are up there with some of the finest wildlife watching to be found anywhere. Two highlights of the last couple of years have been the swirling pre-roost gathering of thousands of Jackdaws and Rooks in southern **Norfolk** in winter, which leaves everyone agog every time we see it; and the unforgettable experience of being surrounded by the alien calls of a thousand Greater Horseshoe Bats as they emerge from northern Europe's largest maternity roost in **Devon**. Sometimes you just have to watch and grin... and one of the real highlights of Wildlife Travelling is being able to share those jaw-dropping moments with our travellers.



Let the train take the strain

France is wonderfully accessible by train, combining the Eurostar with the high speed TGV network. In 2020, we will be returning to the beautiful **Vercors**, in the pre-Alps for our annual fix of alpine plants and butterflies, fantastic French cuisine and some awe-inspiring mountain scenery. We are also pleased to add two new French itineraries to our programme: the **Cevennes** in southern France, just north of Montpellier, and the **Dordogne** in the south-west.

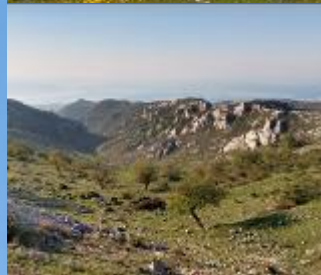
We have focussed our current train trips on those where we can reach our destination the same day. However, with a little extra time and just a hint of a spirit of adventure, it's possible to "make the journey part of the holiday" and enjoy traveling across Europe at a more relaxed pace.

Enjoy the slower pace of life

Whilst it will certainly require a longer time commitment and, in most cases, is more expensive than flying, overland travel can provide a fantastic opportunity to enjoy the scenery as the landscape unfolds before you, with overnight stops along the way adding more interesting sights into your holiday.

For example, a morning departure from London could see you joining us in **Poland** after an overnight stop in Berlin. The orchids of **the Gargano** can be reached by travelling via Paris to Milan for an overnight stop and then on to Bari the next day. Add in a ferry journey or two, and you can also join us in **Estonia**, via Stockholm or Helsinki, as well as our ever-popular visit to **the Burren**, with a ferry taking you to Dublin from Holyhead and then the train across to Galway.

If you are interested in overland travel for your Wildlife Travel holiday, we can provide a 'flight-free' price and help you look at the options for your alternative travel arrangements.



Amazing Orchids

Orchids have an appeal all of their own. They combine an often flamboyant appearance with a certain charisma, bringing a touch of glamour that just doesn't seem to come with most other wild flowers. It doesn't matter how many rare conifers, confusing milkvetches or hard-to-find sundews we look at (and look at them we most certainly do!), for many people nothing grabs the attention quite like a new orchid.

Orchid taxonomy: what's in a name?

It is a common human instinct to want to neatly arrange the world around us, to sort things into boxes. It's certainly a mark of the naturalist to want to classify and put a name to the things we see, the science of taxonomy.

European orchids must be amongst the most studied of all plants, and yet their taxonomy is as confused and confusing as for any group of organisms!

Last April, we visited the Gargano Peninsula, the 'spur' on the 'boot' of Italy, and a place famous (or should that be infamous) for its orchids. Our visit was timed to see the best of them, and we certainly weren't disappointed in the variety on show! "So what orchids did you see?" Well now, there's a question...

Splitters and Lumpers

The answer, as is so often the case, is "it depends what book you read". The recently-published update of the local guide book lists no fewer than 88 orchids, including an amazing 34 'bee orchids' of the genus *Ophrys*, of which nine are described as 'practically endemic'.

Meanwhile, in May 2019 Kew published a new, authoritative field guide to Europe's orchids. Their authors recognise just 22 species of *Ophrys* orchids across the whole of Europe, from the Canary Islands to the Caucasus, with many of the 'species' of the Gargano now recognised as synonyms of more widely distributed Mediterranean species, locally distinct subspecies and some highly variable hybrid swarms. When faced with a hillside covered in orchids, with several 'species' and every variation in between, you can almost see the genes flowing before your eyes!

As one renowned botanist put it, "attempting to separate putative [*Ophrys*] species can rapidly lead to insanity in even the most experienced field orchidologist!". I think we all returned from the Gargano with our sanity intact... but it was a close run thing!



It's all in the DNA

In recent years, DNA studies have revealed some previously unrecognised relationships within our own native orchids, with some very familiar species now carrying less-than-familiar, and sometimes quite surprising new names.

Who amongst us would have guessed that the Frog Orchid, that subtle, often tiny and somewhat inconspicuous, green-flowered orchid of unimproved grasslands is most closely related to the bright purple spikes of the marsh orchids and belongs in the genus *Dactylorhiza*? Or that the nearest cousin of the Green-winged Orchid is the Pyramidal Orchid, and that both should sit together in the genus *Anacamptis*?

DNA work is ongoing, and there is still plenty to learn. A new guide to the orchids of the UK is due out soon, with more surprises in store no doubt.



Where to see orchids

Sometimes it's best not to worry too much about what to call things. After all, if a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, then surely an orchid by whatever name you want to call it is still worthy of spending some time with?

There are actually very few of our trips where you won't see any orchids at all. So long as there are flowers in bloom, there are likely to be orchids out there somewhere.

For European orchids, our trips to the **Gargano, Cyprus** and the **Cevennes** are particularly rich. Lady's Slipper Orchid is a feature of our regular trip to the **Vercors**, while the **Burren** is home to a mesmerising variety of *Dactylorhiza* forms.

Further afield, **Western Australia** must be high on the 'bucket list' for orchid-ophiles, while the cloud forests of **Colombia** are home to the greatest diversity of orchids in the world.



Recommended reading: *Field Guide to the Orchids of Europe and the Mediterranean*, Kühn, Pedersen and Cribb (2019). Kew Publishing

The Undiscovered Balkans

At the crossroads of Europe and Asia Minor lies a land of high mountain peaks, wooded hillsides and meadows that are alive with colour, sound and, most importantly, wildlife. 'The Balkans' draws in all or part of between 8 and 13 countries (depending whose definition you use), stretching from the Adriatic to the Bosphorus. It is a famously rugged part of the world: indeed, it takes its name from the Ottoman Turkish, meaning 'chain of wooded mountains'. The region is characterised by these long mountain ranges: the Dinaric Alps with their extensive karst landscapes, the Pindos, the Rhodopes and the Balkan Mountains or Stara Planina.

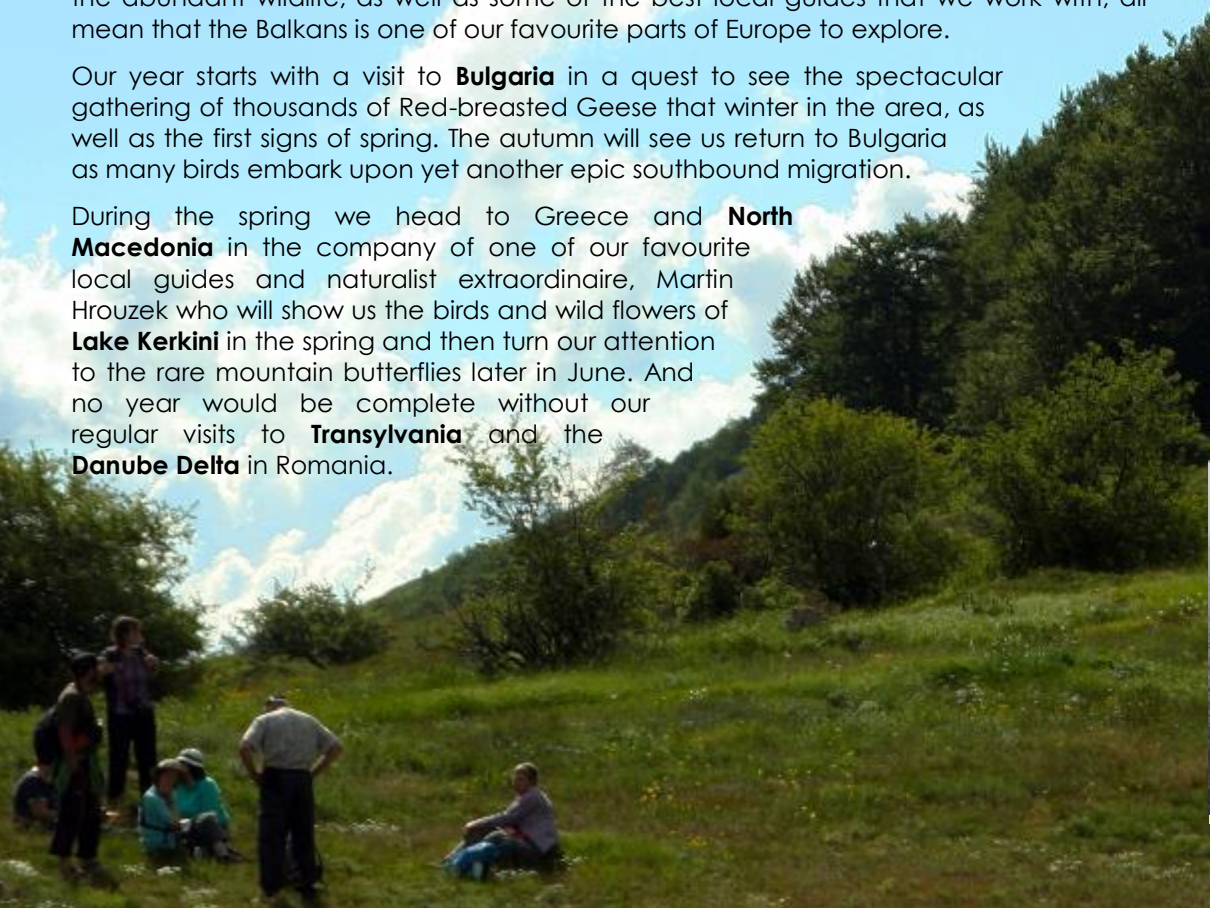
This varied topography along with the influence of the Mediterranean and Black Seas and the great Pannonic plains to the north makes the region a melting pot of alpine, Mediterranean and continental climates. The Balkans also provided one of the important glacial refugia during ice ages. These factors conspire to make a fantastic area for wildlife and the region is recognised as a hotspot of biodiversity. There are over 6,500 species of native plants recorded in the Balkans, and in some areas the rate of endemism is such that more than a third of species are limited to that area.

Travelling off the beaten track

The beautiful landscapes, good food, interesting local mix of cultures and, of course, the abundant wildlife, as well as some of the best local guides that we work with, all mean that the Balkans is one of our favourite parts of Europe to explore.

Our year starts with a visit to **Bulgaria** in a quest to see the spectacular gathering of thousands of Red-breasted Geese that winter in the area, as well as the first signs of spring. The autumn will see us return to Bulgaria as many birds embark upon yet another epic southbound migration.

During the spring we head to Greece and **North Macedonia** in the company of one of our favourite local guides and naturalist extraordinaire, Martin Hrouzek who will show us the birds and wild flowers of **Lake Kerkini** in the spring and then turn our attention to the rare mountain butterflies later in June. And no year would be complete without our regular visits to **Transylvania** and the **Danube Delta** in Romania.



Wildlife of the Balkans

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Balkans, and one that soon becomes apparent, is the richness of the wildlife: the variety and the sheer numbers. Meadows full of flowers, clouds of butterflies, great flocks of birds. The traditionally managed countryside, extensive grazing and small-scale farming is like a world that time forgot.

There are a number of interesting habitats to explore from rich limestone karst and vast rolling steppe to extensive lagoons, riverine forests and wetlands associated with the many rivers. Juniper scrub and woodlands of oaks, hornbeams and beeches give way to conifers at higher elevations, including endemic conifers such as the Bosnian Pine *Pinus heldreichii* and Bulgarian Fir *Abies borisii-regis*.

Good numbers of mammals still roam the landscape, with Roe Deer and Balkan Chamois, Brown Hare and Souslik in turn supporting their predators. With some persistence and a little luck it is possible to find Golden Jackal, Brown Bear and Wild Cat, while the elusive Eurasian Lynx and Wolf have some of their healthiest populations in these mountains.

The Balkans equal Iberia for bird diversity, with the Black Sea coast forming part of the Via Pontica migration route. Special birds of the region include Eastern Imperial Eagle, Dalmatian Pelican, Pygmy Cormorant and the striking Masked Shrike. The herpetofauna is also significant with over 100 species of reptiles and amphibians.

The invertebrate diversity is understandably rich, and the butterflies are, of course, spectacular, with hundreds of species to choose from. The mountains offer sanctuary to ringlets and rare blues, whilst a bewildering array of fritillaries, graylings, skippers and coppers are among the many special species of the woods and meadows of the region.



Recommended reading: **Border: A Journey to the Edge of Europe** by Kapka Kassabova (2017), a fascinating book about the Balkans and winner of the Stanford Dolman Travel Book of the Year 2018

Holiday Programme 2020

Wildlife Travel holidays are operated by **Sunvil Holidays** (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218, AITO, www.sunvil.co.uk), protecting your booking. Full details for all our trips, including a complete itinerary, together with details of travel, accommodation and leaders, can be found on our website, or contact us for a booking pack or to provisionally reserve a place.

POLAND: Eurasian Lynx and winter wildlife

18th-25th January 2020. Leader: Philip Precey

A wintery week in the primeval forests and marshes of Poland in the company of Marek Borkowski, whose long experience of the area will give us the best possible chances of finding European Bison, Wolf and even Eurasian Lynx. Last winter, Marek's visitors had a 100% success rate with lynx sightings.

£2095, full board, single room supplement £180

ETHIOPIA: the Rift Valley to the Bale Mountains

1st-15th February 2020. Leader: Philip Precey

Our time in Ethiopia, 'the Roof of Africa' will be a truly wildlife-filled experience in an unusual country, combining endemic birds, unrivalled scenery, unique mammals including Ethiopian Wolf, Gelada Baboon and Beisa Oryx, and fascinating cultures: a long-awaited trip not to be missed!

£4815, full board, single room supplement £350

BULGARIA: winter wild goose chase

15th-22nd February 2020. Leader: Mike Symes

In winter, almost the entire world population of Red-breasted Geese gathers with vast wintering flocks of other geese on the western shores of the Black Sea. We will seek out the flocks, as well as exploring the wetlands around Bourgas and the Strandzha Mountains to spot the first signs of spring.

£1595, full board, single room supplement £120

MOROCCO: natural history, mountains and coast

29th February to 7th March 2020

Leaders: Charlie Rugeroni and Chris Kirby-Lambert

Our ever-popular spring visit to Morocco, from the Atlantic coast to the Anti-Atlas mountains, in search of spring flowers and wildlife, based at the award-winning Atlas Kasbah eco-lodge, "one of the best places we have stayed in the world."

£1645, full board, single room supplement £165

COSTA RICA: easy birding and natural history

12th-27th March 2020. Leader: Mike Symes

Costa Rica is a natural history paradise, from the western Pacific habitats to the eastern Caribbean slope, as discovered by those who have travelled with us on our previous 11 visits to this beautiful, biodiverse country.

"wonderful... a holiday I will remember for many years" 2017

£4850, full board, single room supplement £750



SOUTHERN MOROCCO: easy birding tour

17th-29th March 2020

Leaders: Mike Russell and Laurie Jackson

A birding exploration of the varied habitats of southern Morocco, from the wetlands of the Atlantic coast and the Souss Valley, to the larks and wheatears of the rocky desert, the sand dunes of Erg Chebbi and the High Atlas snow line.

£2485, full board, single room supplement £300

CYPRUS: spring wildlife on Aphrodite's island

23rd-30th March 2020

Leaders: Philip Precey & Phil Saunders

We first visited Cyprus back (way back!) in 1991, and we are looking forward to returning once again, our 33rd holiday to this friendly, wildlife-rich country. Late March is an ideal time to enjoy wild flowers and migrant birds under warm sunshine.

£1485, full board, single room supplement £125

GARGANO: spring flowers in southern Italy

15th-22nd April 2020. Leaders: Kieron Huston & Dom Price

The Gargano Peninsula is a mountainous chunk of limestone, rising up 1000m above the surrounding Italian plains and jutting out into the Adriatic. We will spend a relaxed week exploring the area, famous for its diversity of orchids, multi-coloured irises, wild tulips and showy peonies,

£1675, full board, single room supplement £110

TURKEY: spring natural history on the Lycian coast

22nd-29th April 2020. Leader: Philip Precey

A holiday with something for everyone: spring flowers from the coast to the mountains and cedar forests, endemic herptiles, exciting bird life and some wonderfully atmospheric archaeological sites. We will spend our week in the company of expert local botanist Cenk Durmuskahya.

£1745, full board, single room supplement £85

POLAND: Bierbrza Marshes and Bialowieza Forest

25th April to 2nd May 2020. Leader: Mike Russell

We will visit the vast floodplain wetlands of Bierbrza Marshes, and the primeval Bialowieza Forest, where we will look for Aquatic Warbler and Great Snipe, woodpeckers, owls, Elk and European Bison. We travel with Marek Borkowski, one of Poland's finest wildlife guides and a leading conservationist.

£1995, full board, single room supplement £195

ESTONIA: easy birding of the Baltic spring

26th April to 3rd May 2020. Leader: Mike Symes

A spring visit to the forests and bogs, coastal wetlands and islands of Estonia, with spring migration in full swing. The coastline is alive with migrating wildfowl, with Black Grouse and Capercaillie lekking and woodpeckers drumming in the forests. We will also look for European Beavers and Elk.

£1770, full board, single room supplement £140



SUSSEX: spring in southern England

27th April to 1st May 2020. Leader: Laurie Jackson

From our base at the foot of the South Downs, we will seek out spring wildlife, including Early Spider Orchids, Duke of Burgundy butterflies and Nightingales. Our Sussex sojourn wouldn't be complete without a visit to Knepp Wildland, the famous re-wilding project in the heart of the county.

£785, half board, single room supplement £165

LESVOS: spring on an Aegean island

2nd-9th May 2020. Leaders: Laurie Jackson & Nic Clough

We will explore the lovely island of Lesvos, one of the largest in the Aegean. The island is justifiably famous for its birdlife and we have timed this holiday to catch the peak of the northwards spring migration, as well as the wonderful carpets of spring flowers among the olive groves and chestnut forest.

£1655, full board, single room supplement £145

THE DANUBE DELTA: Europe's greatest wetland

9th-17th May 2020. Leader: Charlie Rugeroni

The Danube Delta is a sanctuary for huge numbers of birds, from pelicans and herons to warblers, woodpeckers and White-tailed Eagles. Our home for a week is a floating hotel, giving us perfect access to the numerous side-channels, oxbow lakes and extensive reedbeds.

£1895, full board, single room supplement £250

DORDOGNE: relaxed spring wildlife by train

17th-24th May 2020

Leaders: Laurie Jackson & Kelly Thomas

After travelling by train to Bordeaux, we will spend a week exploring the limestone 'causses', woodlands and lush river valleys of south-west France: butterflies, dragonflies and orchids will keep us entertained, as well as some great food!

£1865, full board, single room supplement £185

BURREN: wild flowers and ancient sites

24th-31st May 2020. Leader: Charlie Rugeroni

We return to the dramatic limestone scenery and unbeatable hospitality of this corner of western Ireland. We will enjoy an abundance of wonderful wild flowers, visit tall sea cliffs with their seabird colonies, encounter mysterious ancient monuments and enjoy great food!

£1235, half board, single room supplement £80

LAKE KERKINI & MACEDONIA: spring natural history

26th May to 2nd June 2020. Leader: Jonathan Leadley

We return again for a week in this little-known and unspoiled corner of the Balkans, exploring the warm hillsides and sheep-grazed steppe of Northern Macedonia, rich in butterflies, reptiles and wild flowers, and the wetlands of Lake Kerkini in northern Greece, with its abundant birdlife.

£1725, full board, single room supplement £110



THE CEVENNES & GRANDS CAUSSES by train 4th-11th June 2020.

Leaders: Philip Precey & Chris Kirby-Lambert

A relaxed week of wild flowers and country walks, exploring the rolling limestone plateaux of the Grands Causses, with their deep cut gorges, and the rugged granite landscapes of the Cevennes, where vultures soar and orchids abound.

£1865, full board, single room supplement £140

SLOVAKIA: wild flowers and natural history

4th-11th June 2020. Leader: Kieron Huston

A week spent in this little-visited corner of central Europe, focussing on the diversity of wild flowers, from Carpathian forests to the Pannonic plains, the limestone karst to the subalpine meadows of the High Tatras. The region is also rich in butterflies, with fritillaries, blues and coppers at every turn.

£1615, full board, single room supplement £120

ARMENIA: wild flowers of the Caucasus

6th-16th June 2020. Leader: Laurie Jackson

Set amongst the mountains of the southern Caucasus, Armenia is characterised by its rugged landscape, interesting history and diversity of habitats. Our trip takes us on an exploration of this fascinating country and its rich flora, in the company of expert local botanist Anna Asatryan.

£2585, full board, single room supplement £130

THE VERCORS: wild flowers of the pre-Alps by train

12th-19th June 2020

Leaders: Charlie Rugeroni and Sarah Lambert

This trip combines impressive landscapes, marvellous diversity of wild flowers and wildlife, with good accommodation and great French food. *"I enjoyed [the trip] so much, I will seriously consider doing it again next year"* (Vercors 2019)

£1825, full board, single room supplement £110

TRANSYLVANIA: meadows, mountains and bears

15th-22nd June 2020. Leader: Philip Precey

A week spent amongst some of the last remaining traditionally managed hay meadows and wood pastures in Europe, visiting the Saxon villages of Viscri and Crit, the limestone gorge and valleys of Piatra Craiului National Park and the high alpine meadows of the Carpathians.

£1695, full board, single room supplement £175

DORSET: summer wildlife of coast and heath

15th to 19th June 2020. Leader: Phil Saunders

A midsummer visit to the idyllic Isle of Purbeck, in search of the area's rare wildlife: Silver-studded Blues and Lulworth Skippers around Portland, cliff-nesting auks and a chance of Bottle-nosed Dolphins at Durlston Head, rare dragonflies, Dartford Warbler and all six native reptiles on the heaths.

£865, half board, single room supplement £180



ISLES OF SCILLY: spring flowers and natural history

20th-27th June 2020. Leader: Rosemary Parslow

A return to these iconic islands, to enjoy the best of the late spring flowers and nesting seabirds in the company of Isles of Scilly expert extraordinaire Rosemary Parslow. Based in a comfortable guesthouse in Hugh Town, on St Marys, there can be no better introduction to the islands' natural history.

£1250, half board, single rooms limited, contact us

NORTH MACEDONIA: Balkan butterflies

25th June to 2nd July 2020. Leader: Laurie Jackson

Our second visit of the year to North Macedonia, heading higher into the mountains in search of some of the more than 200 species of butterflies that can be found in the unspoilt countryside and varied landscapes of this small country. A rewarding, easy-going and butterfly-filled week is promised.

£1575, full board, single room supplement £110

DEVON: rare mammals and summer wildlife

15th-19th July 2020. Leader: Mike Symes

This short break will introduce us to some of Devon's most famous residents: the re-introduced European Beaver, Greater Horseshoe Bats at northern Europe's largest colony and Hazel Dormouse. Local experts will tell us more about the conservation of these wonderful mammals.

£745, half board, single room supplement £100

SOUTH AFRICA: wildlife of the Cape Floral Kingdom

24th Aug to 4th Sept 2020. Leader: Charlie Rugeroni

The Cape Floral Kingdom boasts around 8,600 species of plants in an area roughly the size of Scotland, of which two thirds grow nowhere else. We will travel from Mediterranean 'fynbos' to semi-desert and temperate rainforest, enjoying big game, whales and penguins, alongside the unique flora.

£price to be confirmed, full board

BULGARIA: easy birding on the Black Sea coast

19th-26th September 2020. Leader: Phil Saunders

A relaxed birding tour of the Black Sea flyway, one of the busiest migration routes in Europe, rivalling those of the Straits of Gibraltar and the Bosphorus, as the birds of northern Europe are funnelled through the bottle-neck between the coast and the mountains, on their way south.

£price to be confirmed, full board

THE ALGARVE: easy birding in southern Portugal

28th September to 5th October 2020. Leader: Mike Russell

A relaxed week of 'easy birding' on the Algarve. Resident birds include Greater Flamingo and Azure-winged Magpie, migrating raptors and storks circle overhead as they head southwards, while bustards strut on the plains of the Alentejo and shearwaters and storm petrels skim the waves offshore.

£price to be confirmed, full board



GUYANA AND SURINAME: rainforest spectacular
8th-25th October 2020. Leader: Laurie Jackson

A visit to one of the world's last great wildernesses, the unspoilt rainforests and savannah of Guyana, home to a host of parrots and hummingbirds, monkeys and Giant Otters. We will visit the impressive Kaieteur Falls and little-visited Suriname, where we hope to see Amazon River Dolphins.

£price to be confirmed, full board

NAMIBIA: Etosha, Skeleton Coast & Namib Desert
November 2020 (dates tbc). Leader: Philip Precey

The breath-taking scenery of Namibia will be the backdrop as we enjoy spectacular game-viewing at Etosha National Park, travel down the famous Skeleton Coast, visit the world's oldest deserts, home to Gemsbok, elephants and the bizarre *Welwitschia*, and discover the rich marine life of Walvis Bay.

£price to be confirmed, full board

MADEIRA: subtropical gardens & autumn wildlife
November 2020 (dates tbc). Leader: Charlie Rugeroni

An autumn visit to this Portugese island, famous for its mild climate and numerous gardens with subtropical planting from around the world. We will visit the lush green *Laurisilva* forests and mountain heathlands, home to endemic plants and birds, and take an optional whale-watching boat trip.

£price to be confirmed, full board

COLOMBIA: from the Andes to the Caribbean
November 2020 (dates tbc). Leader: Laurie Jackson

Colombia is one of the most biodiverse countries on the planet, with a diversity of habitats to match. We will travel from the alpine 'paramo' of the Andes to the cloud forest of the Magdalena Valley, the isolated Santa Marta Mountains and the tropical dry forests of the Caribbean lowlands.

£price to be confirmed, full board

CHILE: Pumas and Penguins in Patagonia
30th November to 13th December 2020. Leader: tbc

Torres del Paine National Park, in southern Patagonia, is well known as 'the' place to see Pumas in the wild, and we will join local trackers, to give us the best chances of some memorable sightings. We also visit Tierra del Fuego, home to King Penguins, Magellanic Plover and abundant marine life.

£price to be confirmed, full board

CYPRUS: wildlife and Christmas sunshine
22nd-29th December 2020

Leaders: Philip Precey & Laurie Jackson

Spring arrives early in the eastern Mediterranean, and we will spend our week exploring the quiet Cypriot countryside in search of bulbs, the first orchids of the season and other wildlife, while enjoying the mild weather and blue skies.

£price to be confirmed, full board



Looking ahead to 2021

It may seem a long way off, but we are already filling our diary with plans for 2021. As well as the following holidays, we also have new trips to the **Scottish Highlands** and to the rainforests of **Panama** planned, and are looking to return to **Southern Greece**, the **Canary Islands** and **Sardinia**. If any of these holidays would be of interest, do let us know and we can provisionally reserve you places.

BOTSWANA: Victoria Falls, Chobe and Okavango **12th-21st March 2021. Leader: Laurie Jackson**

A luxurious safari exploration of the pristine wilderness habitats of northern Botswana, to enjoy some of the most spectacular wildlife to be found anywhere in Africa or beyond. From the 'smoke that thunders' and White Rhinos in Zambia to the African Wild Dogs and Pel's Fishing Owls in the Okavango Delta: an ever popular trip, not to be missed.

GALAPAGOS: cruising in Darwin's footsteps **April 2021, with Fausto Rodriguez**

We return to the 'Enchanted Islands', with our itinerary taking us to the eastern islands of the archipelago: Espanola, home to almost all the world's nesting Waved Albatrosses; Genovesa, with its tree-nesting Red-footed Boobies and friendly fur-seals; and San Cristobal, where Charles Darwin first set foot on the islands that made his name.

ECUADOR: wildlife of southern Ecuador **April 2021, with Xavier Munoz**

In previous years we have visited the cloud forest of the Choco region, explored the high Andes in search of Spectacled Bear, and visited the wonderful rainforest lodges of the Amazon basin. This new itinerary takes us south, to the dry forests of the Tumbesian region and the cloud forests of the Tapichalaca and Podocarpus reserves.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: wild flowers and wildlife **September 2021, with Mark Hanger**

The south west of Western Australia is a vast botanical garden: forests, shrublands and heath are home to over 4000 species, 80% of which grow nowhere else. Mid-spring is the time when the flowers are at their best. Banksias, grevilleas, myrtles, kangaroo paws and a bewildering diversity of orchids combine to create a truly remarkable flora.

CHILE: alpine flowers and Araucaria forests **December 2021, with Claudio Vidal**

For anyone who has travelled with us to Chile, it will come as no surprise that it is **one of our favourite destinations**. In 2021 we will continue our exploration of this amazingly varied country in search of the spectacular alpine flora of the high Andes, including beautiful, **rosette-forming Violas**, as well as the wonderful '**monkey puzzle tree**' Araucaria forests.



Responsible Travel

As responsible travellers, we need to ensure that all our holidays provide positive gains to the local environments and communities that we visit, particularly when we fly to the destination, as the detrimental effects of air travel are increasingly accepted.

We endeavour to always travel responsibly and to engage with local people and communities wherever practical. We try to stay in locally-owned and often family-run hotels, and to eat locally-produced food. We try, where possible, to include opportunities for our travellers to visit local markets and artisans, ensuring that our visit has positive economic value to the community, while avoiding items made of exploited wildlife products.

We encourage both our travellers and our local agents to consider their impact on our destinations and to limit the use of single-use plastics and other resources.

Carbon and climate

Aviation is recognised as a major source of damaging carbon emissions: there is no doubt that our flights have a negative impact on the climate. We have therefore been 'off-setting' all our flights as a matter of course since 2005, rather than as an 'optional extra': if you fly with us, your flights are 'carbon balanced' automatically.

We are keen to ensure that we do much more than 'just' carbon off-setting. The most significant driver of biodiversity loss has been, and continues to be, land-use change and habitat loss. This land-use change, particularly deforestation, is also a very significant source of carbon emissions. Since 2007, our flight carbon emissions have been mitigated through the **World Land Trust's certified 'carbon balancing' scheme**: the amount of CO₂ generated by the flights our travellers take is calculated, and these emissions are then offset these by investing in reforestation and protecting areas of high biodiversity forests in the tropics, particularly in Ecuador, a country we have a long and happy history of visiting: our carbon balancing has contributed **more than £42,000** to biodiversity conservation so far.

Supporting conservation around the world

As well as donating **all our profits to the Wildlife Trusts**, we do our best to ensure that, wherever possible, we also contribute positively to the work of nature conservation organisations in our destination countries. Our groups have supported local conservation and research in Tasmania, Ecuador and South Africa amongst others.



For more information on the **World Land Trust's** carbon balancing programme, visit their website at www.worldlandtrust.org/what-we-do/carbon-balanced/

Meet the Leaders

Our leaders all have a background in nature conservation and ecology, and a wealth of wildlife knowledge between them, from birds and butterflies to botany and geology. Of course, they don't just provide natural history expertise: our leaders also ensure that you have a safe, enjoyable and rewarding time.

Kieron Huston has worked for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust for more than 20 years, where he is currently White Peak Regional Manager. Kieron is an excellent naturalist, with a particular interest in botany and invertebrates. He has travelled widely in Europe, leading holidays for us since 2008.

Kieron will lead our 2020 trips to the Gargano and Slovakia.

Laurie Jackson has worked in nature conservation for 15 years, for the Wildlife Trusts and, most recently, for Buglife. An ecologist and experienced trainer, Laurie has led more than 20 holidays for us since 2013, from the Isles of Scilly to Chile.

Laurie will be leading our 2020 visits to Armenia and Colombia, as well as Morocco, Lesvos, Guyana and Sussex.

Chris Kirby-Lambert is a professional ecologist, specialising in entomology and has worked in UK invertebrate conservation for the past eleven years. He is an excellent all-round naturalist, whose passion for travel and for wildlife has taken him to over 30 countries.

Chris will be joining us in 2020 in Morocco and the Cevennes.

Sarah Lambert is an experienced and enthusiastic botanist and freelance ecologist, based in Peterborough. Since 2012 she has been BSBI recorder for South Lincolnshire, and particularly enjoys helping people develop their plant identification skills. Sarah joined our leading team in 2019.

Sarah will be leading in the Vercors in June 2020.

Jonathan Leadley has worked for Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for 11 years, where he is currently Northern Regional Manager, overseeing 30 nature reserves and two working farms. A keen birdwatcher, Jono has led previous Wildlife Travel trips to Norfolk, Yorkshire, Argentina and Costa Rica.

Jono will be leading our 2020 visit to Kerkini and Macedonia.

Rosemary Parslow has been a life-long conservationist and a nationally-renowned botanist and naturalist. For more than 20 years she has been BSBI recorder for the Isles of Scilly and is author of both the New Naturalist guide and the award-winning 2017 New Flora of the islands.

Rosemary will be leading our 2020 visit to the Isles of Scilly.



Philip Precey joined the Wildlife Travel team in 2007 after 10 years working for the Wildlife Trusts. Philip will be familiar to many of our travellers, having led more than 65 holidays to destinations from Norfolk to New Caledonia.

2020 will see Philip leading in Ethiopia, the Cevennes and Poland, as well as returning to Cyprus, Turkey and Romania.

Dominic Price is a conservationist, botanical trainer and author of two best-selling wildlife guides. After previously working for Plantlife, Dom set up The Species Recovery Trust to focus on the long-term conservation of some of our most endangered species. Dom joined our leading team in 2019.

This year, Dom will be leading our group in the Gargano.

Charlie Rugeroni is a garden designer and all-round naturalist, who previously worked for Butterfly Conservation and English Nature. Charlie has led over 30 previous holidays for us, from his native Gibraltar to Morocco and Costa Rica.

Charlie will be leading our 2020 holidays to Morocco, the Burren, the Vercors and South Africa's Cape floral kingdom.

Mike Russell is a Director of Wildlife Travel and has been leading our holidays since 2001. His travels have taken him from Hungary and Andalusia to Brazil and Botswana. Mike worked for Sussex Wildlife Trust for over 30 years, and is currently chairman of Sussex Ornithological Society.

Mike's 2020 trips will include Morocco, Poland and Portugal.

Phil Saunders is a professional ecologist based in Dorset, with a particular interest in birds and invertebrates. Phil has travelled extensively through Europe and Asia, having previously studied bird populations in Cyprus and Uzbekistan. Phil joined Wildlife Travel's leading team in 2018.

Phil will be leading 2020 trips to Cyprus, Dorset and Bulgaria.

Mike Symes has worked for Devon Wildlife Trust for 14 years, most recently on the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project. An excellent naturalist, Mike has led for us since 2015, from Tanzania and Estonia to his home county of Devon. He is keen to share his enthusiasm for wildlife with our travellers.

2020 will take Mike to Costa Rica, Estonia and Devon.

Kelly Thomas is an all-round naturalist who works as Senior Reserves Ecologist for the RSPB, based in Bedfordshire. Kelly has combined her passions for travel and wildlife through volunteering with conservation projects in South Africa, Australia and Costa Rica. Kelly joined our team in 2018.

Kelly will be joining our group in the Dordogne in 2020.





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to
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