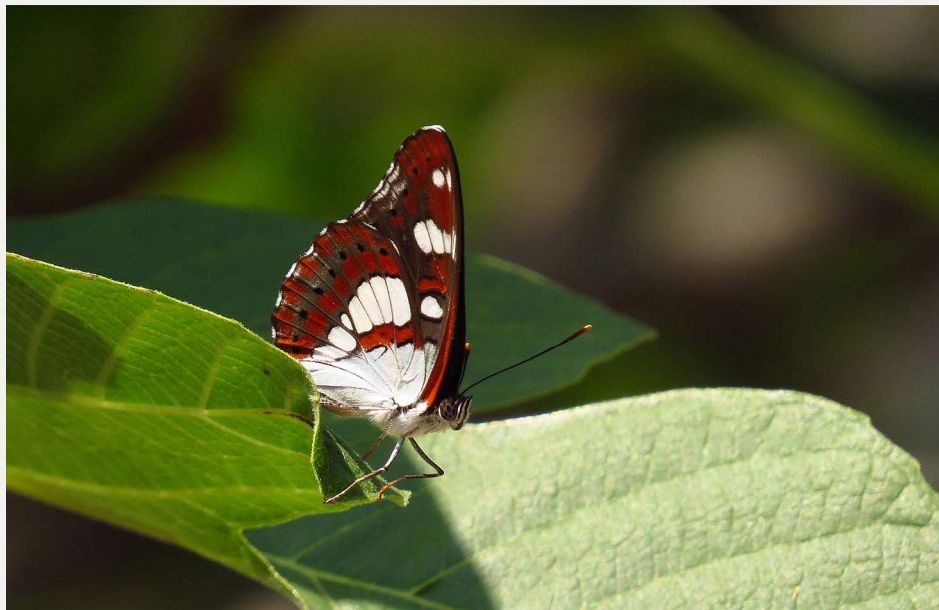


CROATIA AND SLOVENIA



"The astonishing variety of wildlife we saw on our visit last year, including 74 species of butterflies, exciting dragonflies, reptiles and amphibians, as well as a breathtaking show of alpine flowers, make this a great trip for anyone interested in all sorts of wildlife." Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 16 - Sun 24 Jun 2018
Price £2,755
Deposit £550 Single Supp £250

Leaders Roy Atkins plus local guides

Flights Easyjet, scheduled. Speedy Boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Afternoon, Gatwick - Split
Inbound: Evening, Ljubljana - Gatwick

Weather Warm to hot in lower areas in June, around 25°C, with hotter temperatures possible – perhaps 30°C or more. Cooler in the mountains, possibly chilly early in the day, with chance of rain. Bring light rain gear, layers and walking boots, plus lighter-weight footwear

Walking Walks up to 5km are on a variety of tracks, mostly easy, but others more difficult on uneven ground and in places quite steep, for example in the gorge at Paklenica. There may be further steep walks in the mountains, depending where we try to get to and how far we can drive (dependent on snow!)

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 9

Insects Insects are unlikely to be a problem, but bring repellent just in case

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite. Our first hotel only has seven rooms so the last two rooms to be booked will be accommodated at apartments 5mins away

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Western Rock Nuthatch	Blue Rock Thrush
Alpine Accentor	Woodchat Shrike
Snowfinch	Rock Bunting
Sombre Tit	Olm (in cave aquarium)
Grey-headed Woodpecker	Fabulous selection of butterflies
Western Bonelli's Warbler	Many species of reptiles and amphibians
Golden Oriole	
Eastern Orphean Warbler	
Black-eared Wheatear	

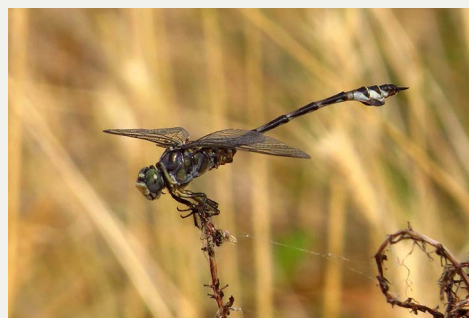
This trip has so much to offer the general naturalist - birds, butterflies, dragonflies, reptiles and amphibians - all in stunning scenery, from the Croatian coastline to the Julian Alps.

- Beautiful scenery, from the Croatian coastline to the mountains of Slovenia
- Crystal-coloured, blue-green lakes and beautiful waterfalls at Plitvice
- Rock Nuthatch, Orphean Warbler, Snowfinch, Sombre Tit, Alpine Accentor and more
- Fabulous variety of butterflies and some exciting dragonflies
- Local guide with extensive knowledge of reptiles and amphibians
- Beautiful alpine flowers high in the Julian Alps
- Visit to the famous karst caves at Postojna

After arrival at Split airport, we drive to our hotel on the Croatian coastline. The rocky coast here is beautiful, with vineyards, vegetable plots, orchards and olive groves and our hotel looks out over habitat with Golden Oriole, Serin, Turtle Dove, Red-backed Shrike and Hoopoe, as well as Italian Wall Lizards and many butterflies.

2-3 We spend time exploring Paklenica National Park, with its river-carved canyons and attractive landscape, home to Western Rock Nuthatch, Crag Martin, Sombre Tit and Blue Rock Thrush, though Rock Partridge is difficult at this time of year.

The area is fabulous for reptiles and our local guide will astonish with his ability to catch species such as Western Green and Italian Wall Lizard and even snakes for close up



views. Butterflies are everywhere, including Southern White Admiral, Great Banded Grayling, Blue-spot Hairstreak, Chequered Blue and many more - last time we saw over 70 species on this trip! Nearby Pag Island has Black-eared Wheatear; Bee-eaters, Woodchat Shrike, Montagu's Harrier and exciting dragonflies such as Bladetail and Black Pennant. If time permits, we shall visit a lake where herons and egrets, Zitting Cisticola, Avocet and Pygmy Cormorant may be found.

4 We play at being tourists next, as we head to Plitvice Lakes, a valley situated between high forested mountains where, one below another, lie a string of beautiful lakes and tarns of crystal blue-green colour. Fed by many small streams, they spill into each other in foaming cascades, their unique beauty earning them a place in the UNESCO World Heritage List.





"The scenery and beauty of these two countries are as much a part of this holiday as the wildlife. The snow-capped Julian Alps are stunningly beautiful and the rocky Croatian coastline has a different beauty of its own. We also visit the stunning Plitvice Lakes and the caves at Postojna - look them up and you'll see why we just couldn't leave them out!" Roy Atkins

We shall walk the trails with the many tourists, but it is well worth the diversion and we can look out for Green-eyed Hawker and Beautiful Demoiselle and a few woodland birds.

5 We head next to another UNESCO World Heritage site - the amazing caves at Postojna. A fantastic web of tunnels, passages, galleries and astonishing diversity of Karst features attract many visitors and we'll take a 5km journey by electric cave train, deep into this underground world. Once here, we shall follow our guide past thousands of stalactites, stalagmites and other incredible features. Bizarre looking pink Olms live here in inaccessible underground lakes, but we can enjoy the privilege of seeing these blind, aquatic, cave salamanders, as they keep a few in an aquarium here.

6-8 We'll explore Mt Nanos, standing like a secret garden above the surrounding plain and full of flowers and butterflies. Poplar Admiral, Great Sooty Satyr, Scarce Large Blue and many more are found here and crags and woodlands are home to Woodlark, Rock Bunting and Rock Thrush. Reptiles found in this area include Western Green Lizard, Dalmatian Wall Lizard, Western Whip Snake or perhaps even Nose-horned Viper; among other species. In the afternoon we drive to our hotel near Lake Bohinj, a beautiful location in the Julian Alps.

The Julian Alps and surrounding areas are a beautiful mix of habitats and we may start by walking on the north side of Lake Bohinj, through pastures where butterflies abound.

Heath and False Heath. Fritillary, Black-veined White, Woodland Ringlet, Southern Comma and many other species are possible. Beech and Norway Spruce hold Grey-headed Woodpecker, Western Bonelli's Warbler and Hawfinch and in the afternoon we shall visit Pokljuka plateau, a forested karst plateau at 1,100m to 1,400m, where Common Crossbill, Firecrest and Crested Tit are possible. There are flowers such as Aconite-leaved Buttercup and Round-headed Rampions and we'll check small pools for Alpine and Italian Crested Newts.

Mangart Pass at 2,070m is the highest road in Slovenia, a unique opportunity to get high into an alpine habitat, offering stunning views of the surrounding mountains and fabulous alpine plants. We shall be surrounded with a display no alpine gardener could ever compete with, filled with Alpine Forget-me-not, Mountain Avenas, Spring Gentian, Purple Coltsfoot, Alpine Clematis and many other beautiful species. Golden Eagles hunt for Alpine Marmot here and we'll search for Alpine Accentor, Water Pipit, Alpine Swift, Alpine Chough and Snowfinch. A short stop as we descend may produce Horvath's Wall Lizard, one of the rarest lizards of Europe.

9 We drive to Ljubljana for our flight back to London.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Fly to Split airport then drive to our hotel on the Croatian coast. Spend a day at Paklenica National Park. Also have a day around Pag Island and Lun Peninsular
3 nights at Hotel Rajna and Dinko's Apartments
- Day 4** Travel north and visit the stunningly beautiful waterfalls and blue-green Plitvice Lakes - a UNESCO World Heritage site
1 night at Tourist Center Marko
- Day 5** We cross in to Slovenia and visit the famous caves at Postojna, which are also a UNESCO World Heritage site
1 night at Hotel Jama
- Days 6-8** Explore Mt Nanos, before heading to our hotel near Lake Bohinj. Take a walk by Lake Bohinj and visit Pokljuka plateau.
Visit high alpine zone at Mangart Pass
3 nights at Hotel Jezero
- Day 9** Travel to Ljubljana for flight back to London

Roy Atkins: Southern White Admiral, Bladetail, Alpine Chough, Edelweis, Western Green Lizard
Balazs Szigeti: Plitvice Lakes

