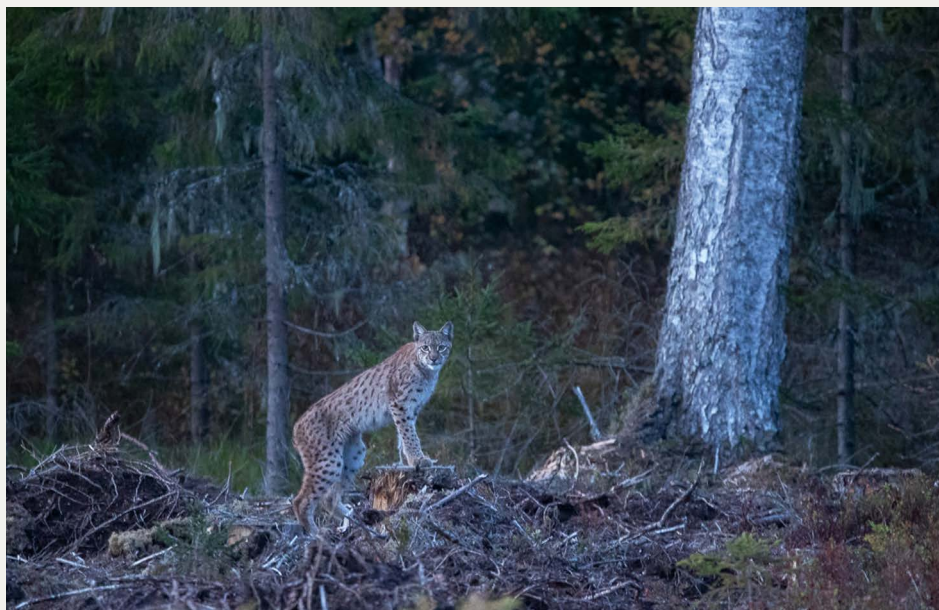


ESTONIA LYNX



"Lynx is notoriously difficult to see, being quiet, nocturnal and unassuming. Last time we put in many hours, as the local guide checked fields with thermal imaging binoculars. We saw lots of other wildlife as we searched, then suddenly there it was - we saw one! It felt well worth the effort!" Roy Atkins

Dates Sun 28 Sep - Sun 5 Oct 2025

Price £3,575

Deposit £715 Single Supp £200

Leaders Roy Atkins and local guide

Flights Scandinavian Airlines, scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Tallinn
Inbound: Afternoon, Tallinn-Heathrow
(Outbound and inbound via Stockholm)

Weather Should still be warm, 15-25°C, but nights can be cooler, even dropping to 0°C. We are outdoors in the evenings and driving with open windows, so warm clothing required. Weather can be changeable, it may be sunny but can be rainy and windy

Walking Maximum 1-2km on easy terrain, with possibility of a longer optional 5km trail. The bear hide involves a 1.5km walk

Meals All included from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 8. Breakfasts mostly at the hotels. Each day we'll have a warm meal in our hotel or a restaurant (which may be lunch or dinner depending on our schedule) and a second meal as a picnic

Insects Mosquitoes can be a nuisance in the forest and there may also be midges and deer flies - so a good insect repellent is essential

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite, apart from the night in the bear hide

Hide The group shares a hide, which has chairs, bunk beds, sleeping bags/pillows and a compost toilet. Please note that we shall need to sit in silence and keep still for long periods

Group 6

NaTourEst: Eurasian Lynx
Janne Pölluaas: Common Cranes
Andrew Dodd: Brown Bear, Raccoon Dog
Toter Alter Mann: Nutcracker
Roy Atkins: Pygmy Owl

A chance to see the elusive Eurasian Lynx, plus Brown Bear, Elk and Raccoon Dog. Thousands of migrant birds - geese, waders, raptors, passerines and Common Cranes.

- Good chance of Eurasian Lynx - locating them with thermal imaging binoculars
- Night in Brown Bear hide with chance of other species such as Raccoon Dog
- Autumn migration with lots of Common Cranes passing through
- Good chance to hear wolves howling and with luck we might even see them
- Chance of other mammals - Elk (Moose), deer, Red Fox and maybe Wild Boar
- Short tour of Tallinn on our final morning – depending on flight times
- Ural and Pygmy Owls, Hazel Grouse, White-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers

1-3 Arriving in Tallinn we travel to Lahemaa, the largest and oldest National Park in Estonia, offering landscapes of coast, smaller meadows and fields, alternating with old-growth forest. September marks the time when many mammals become more visible again, after the warm summer months.

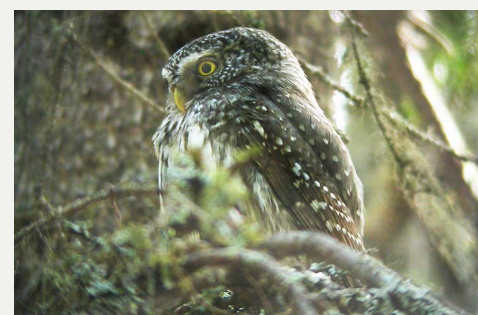
Estonia has a healthy population of 550-600 Lynx and the chance to see one during the tour is good. Seeing Eurasian Lynx is the biggest aim of this holiday - but finding them involves a lot of driving, with the local guide scanning with thermal imaging binoculars. We'll drive smaller roads checking roadside meadows and fields where the mammals like to hunt - but be aware we may have to go out every night, as this is your best chance of seeing one. We shall ensure we have enough down-time during the day.



As we search there will be plenty of other wildlife to entertain us. There are large numbers of Roe Deer and Brown Hare to be seen and we are very likely to see Raccoon Dogs, foxes, Mountain Hare and perhaps Badgers and Wild Boar. Elk is another target species of the trip and we may see birds such as Woodcock and owls including Long-eared, Ural and Pygmy Owl.

During our mornings we shall visit the coast and forest in search of birds, although if we have been late the night before, we won't leave until after 10am and there will be time in the afternoon to catch up on sleep. We may focus on forest birds such as Hazel Grouse, Nutcracker and woodpeckers or head to the coast.

On the coast there'll be migrating water birds with large flocks of duck, including Wigeon, Teal



"The night in the bear hide was very special and atmospheric - and we were really lucky to see a mother bear with cubs in broad daylight, making for some great photo opportunities. There were also Raccoon Dogs and birds. The hide was comfortable but basic, but was still a highlight for many of the guests, because of all the things we saw." Roy Atkins



and Pintail, Goldeneye and perhaps Greater Scaup. Velvet and Common Scoters with a few Long-tailed Duck maybe passing the headlands with Red- and Black-throated Divers. Waders may include species such as Golden Plover, Ruff, Greenshank and Spotted Redshank and the first flocks of White-fronted, Bean and Barnacle Geese should be arriving. White-tailed Eagle are common plus the chance of Peregrine and Marsh and Hen Harriers. In the afternoons we'll take the opportunity to catch up on some rest, before our evening excursions in search of that elusive cat!

4 The Alutaguse area has large tracts of forest and raised bog - the core area in Estonia for Brown Bears. In September bears are feeding up, making them easier to see and we shall spend the night in a spacious hide with bunk beds, sleeping bags, pillows and a compost toilet.

Bait is put out to attract the bears and we hope for very good views from the hide, while sensitive microphones make it possible to hear what is going on too. Birdfeeders attract Marsh, Willow and Crested Tit, plus the continental race of Nuthatch. Raccoon Dogs may also come to the bait as well, or even a fox.

5-7 Matsalu National Park is a huge river delta area with fields, reedbeds, bays and a coast with small islands. Considered one of the most important bird migration areas in Europe, millions of migrating birds pass through.

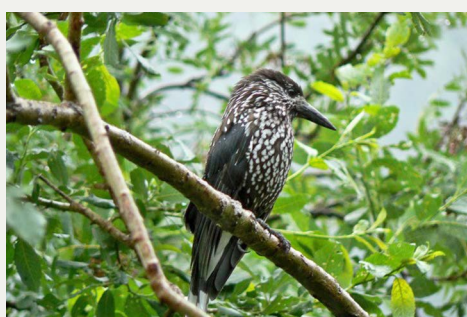


If we have had success with the mammals, we'll have more time for morning birding. Some mornings it can be impressive, with thousands of passerines on the move, including many we don't think of as migrants in the UK. This all depends on the weather and the most intense activity sometimes takes place just after sunset. The huge fields of Matsalu are perfect for cranes and geese and the marshes are good for waders, which we can see from the famous birdwatching tower:

Western Estonia is good for mammals too, with good populations of Elk. We shall continue the search for Lynx here, but one quiet evening we shall drive to a wolf-pack territory, with the aim of hearing them howling. They will often respond to a howl so we may try that! They are vocal on calm nights and there is something very special about hearing them, even if you don't get to see them - and we would need enormous luck to see them!

We also intend to drive to Cape Põõsaspea, one of the top migration hotspots in northern Europe. On good days, thousands of migrating duck, scoters, geese and other birds pass this spot.

8 Depending on flight times, we hope to have the chance of a look around the beautiful city of Tallinn, before heading to the airport for our flight home.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-3** Fly to Tallinn, via Stockholm. Explore Lahemaa NP and the local area in search of Lynx and other wildlife
3 nights Sagadi Manor Hotel
- Day 4** Travel to Alutaguse area - the centre for Brown Bears in Estonia and a night in a basic but comfortable hide
1 night Brown Bear watching hide
- Days 5-7** Explore the Matsalu area, with lots of migrating birds and more mammals
3 nights Altmõisa Guest House
- Day 8** A morning walk around Tallinn, time permitting, before our flight back to the UK, via Stockholm

Just some of what we hope to see:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Eurasian Lynx | White-backed Woodpecker |
| Brown Bear | Bean Goose |
| Grey Wolf (hear) | Hazel Grouse |
| Elk | White-tailed Eagle |
| Raccoon Dog | Common Crane |
| Wild Boar | Nutcracker |
| Ural Owl | Great Grey Shrike |
| Pygmy Owl | Crested Tit |
| Woodcock | Willow Tit |
| Black Woodpecker | A great variety of migrants |
| Grey-headed Woodpecker | |