

CROATIA AND SLOVENIA



"I am very excited about the great variety of wildlife we may see on this trip - not just some great birds, but mammals, fabulous reptiles and amphibians, plus butterflies and flowers too. It is a great trip for anyone interested in all sorts of wildlife."
Roy Atkins

Dates Sat 17 - Sun 25 Jun 2017
Price £2,495
Deposit £450 Single Supp £200

Leaders Roy Atkins plus local guides
Flights Easyjet, scheduled. Speedy boarding and extra legroom included
Outbound: Afternoon, Stansted - Ljubljana
Inbound: Afternoon, Split - Stansted
Weather Warm in lower areas, around 25°C – perhaps 30°C. 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 Walking is mainly easy on good tracks and trails, though slightly trickier in the gorge at Paklenica. Some slightly steeper walking in mountains 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. Good quality small hotels and family run lodges with traditional food and some excellent breakfasts. One hotel with small wine cellar!
Group 12

This trip has so much to offer for the general naturalist - birds, butterflies, an exceptional selection of reptiles - all in stunning scenery from the Julian Alps to the Croatian coastline

- Beautiful scenery from mountains of Slovenia down to the Croatian coastline
- Beautiful waterfalls and crystal coloured, blue-green lakes at Plitvice
- Rock Partridge, Black-headed Bunting, Rock Nuthatch, Orphean Warbler
- Fabulous variety of butterflies including several alpine species
- Probably more reptiles and amphibians than any other trip we run!
- Beautiful alpine flowers high in the Julian Alps
- Visit to the famous karst caves at Postojna

1 After arrival in Ljubljana airport we drive to our hotel beside Lake Bohinj, a fairytale location among the craggy peaks of the Julian Alps.

2 Walking the north side of Lake Bohinj through pastures, Beech woods and Norway Spruce, we may see Grey-headed Woodpecker, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Dipper and Red-backed Shrike, while nearby forests hold Red-breasted Flycatcher and we'll look for Yellow-bellied Toads. Butterflies are numerous with Marbled Fritillary, Blue-spot Hairstreak, Woodland Brown and Chequered Skipper possible.

In the afternoon we shall visit Pokljuka plateau. This forested karst plateau at 1,100m to 1,400m holds Common Crossbill, Firecrest, Crested Tit and Ring Ouzel. We'll look out for Black Salamander and Alpine Newt and Smooth

and Aesculapian Snake are possible.

3 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 a rich array of alpine plants. Golden Eagles hunt for Alpine Marmot and we'll search for Alpine Accentor, Water Pipit, Alpine Swift, Alpine Chough, Snowfinch and elusive Wallcreeper. Chamois watch from the ridges and butterflies may include Brassy Ringlets, Alpine Heath, Alpine Blue, Mountain Fritillary and Poplar Admiral. A short stop as we descend may produce Horvath's Wall Lizard, one of the rarest lizards of Europe and if time permits, we shall stop by the beautiful, emerald-coloured Soca River for photographs.

Just some of what we hope to see:

Rock Partridge	Black-eared Wheatear
Alpine Accentor	Blue Rock Thrush
Sombre Tit	Rock Thrush
Western Rock Nuthatch	Wallcreeper
Grey-headed Woodpecker	Collared Flycatcher
Western Bonelli's Warbler	Golden Eagle
Black Woodpecker	Many species of
Golden Oriole	butteflies, reptiles
Eastern Orphean Warbler	and amphibians
Olm (in cave aquarium)	





"The scenery and beauty of the two countries we are visiting will be as much a part of this holiday as the wildlife. We visit the snow-capped Julian Alps and the Croatian coastline, plus the stunning Plitvice Lakes and the caves at Postojna - look them up on the internet and you'll see why we just couldn't leave them out!" Roy Atkins

4 At Postojna the famous caves are a UNESCO World Heritage site. The 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 take the guided walk to enjoy the astonishing features of this amazing place. Bizarre looking, pink Olms live here in inaccessible underground lakes - but we can still see these aquatic and blind, cave salamanders, as they do keep a few for people to see in an aquarium here.

5 We'll explore magnificent Mount Nanos, standing like a secret garden above the surrounding plain and full of amazing flowers and butterflies. Poplar Admiral, Assmann's Fritillary, Alpine Mountain Argus, Great Sooty Satyr, Large Grizzled and Large Chequered Skipper are found and crags and woodlands are home to Golden Eagle, Chamois and even Lynx! On the high plateau we'll look for Woodlarks, Rock Bunting and Rock Thrush, with Rock Partridge also possible. Reptiles found in this area include Western Green Lizard, Dalmatian Wall Lizard and Western Whip Snake among many others.

6 We move on to Plitvice Lakes, a valley situated between high forested mountains where, one below another, lie a string of sixteen beautiful lakes and tarns of crystal blue-green colour. Fed by many small streams as they spill into each other in foaming cascades and thundering waterfalls - their unique beauty earning them a place in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

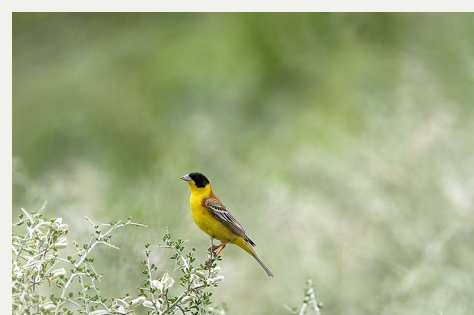


Among the old trees and amazing waterfalls we hope to find Collared Flycatcher, Middle Spotted, Grey-headed and Black Woodpeckers. Fire Salamander, Italian Crested Newt, Edible Frog and European Tree Frog are possible and we'll walk the trails and take a boat ride before driving south towards the Mediterranean coast line.

7 Paklenica National Park, with its river-carved canyons and attractive landscape, is home to Sombre Tit, Western Rock Nuthatch, Crag Martin, Blue Rock Thrush and Black-eared Wheatear. Olivaceous, Eastern Orphea, Subalpine and Sardinian Warblers provide a soundtrack as we look for Rock Partridge, Wryneck and Golden Oriole. Butterflies are everywhere including Swallowtail, Festoon, Southern White Admiral and many whites, blues and hairstreaks. Thirty one amphibian and reptile species have been recorded here, including the colourful Dalmatian Algyroides.

8 The Croatian coastline is beautiful - with typical Mediterranean landscape of vineyards, vegetable plots, orchards and olive groves. Species around the Lun Peninsular include Rock Partridge, Black-headed Bunting, Stone Curlew, Kentish Plover, Montagu's Harrier, Bee-eater and Spanish Sparrow amongst old salt pans, wet meadows and marshy shoreline.

9 We travel to the airport with bird watching on the way if time allows and travel home.



Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 Flight to Ljubljana airport then head to our hotel near Lake Bohinj
3 nights Hotel Jezero
- Day 2 Exploring the north side of Lake Bohinj and a visit to Pokljuka plateau
- Day 3 Visit to the breathtaking high alpine habitat of Mangart Pass
- Day 4 Travel to Postojna and visit the famous caves - a UNESCO World Heritage site
2 nights Hotel Rakov Skocjan
- Day 5 Discovering the flora and fauna of magnificent Mt Nanos
- Day 6 Travel to Plitvice Lakes - a UNESCO World Heritage site
3 nights Hotel Rajna
- Day 7 A full day at the stunning Paklenica National Park
- Day 8 Exploring the Lun Peninsular on the beautiful Croatian coast
- Day 9 Travel to Split for our flight home

Balazs Szigeti: Bee-eater, Plitvice Lakes, Alpine Accentor, Black-eared Wheatear, Alpine Chough, Black-headed Bunting