

JAPAN



"A winter visit to this wonderful country offers iconic wildlife, from Japanese Macaques in hot springs and resplendent dancing Red-crowned Cranes, to the world's most magnificent raptor - Steller's Sea Eagle. From Honshu to Hokkaido, every day will be stacked with incredible sights and sounds." Julian Sykes

Dates Fri 12 - Sun 28 Jan 2018
Price £7,495
Deposit £1,450 **Single Supp** £1,050

Leaders Julian Sykes plus local guide
Flights Japan Airlines, scheduled
 Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Tokyo
 Inbound: Morning, Tokyo-Heathrow
 Internal: Tokyo-Kagoshima-Tokyo, Tokyo-Kushiro-Tokyo

Weather From mild in Kyushu, with a chance of rain and cold in the mountains of Honshu, to very cold in east Hokkaido. Plenty of layers recommended and outer layers should be wind and waterproof

Walking Easy to moderate, beside farm roads, on even tracks, or in the case of the one mile walk to Japanese Macaque site, potentially over snow and ice. Trekking poles are helpful for anyone with mobility issues and ice-grippers recommended for all

Meals All included from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 17

Insects Not a problem

Accom Twin and single rooms, mixture of western and Japanese style, all with private toilet. The majority of rooms have a private shower, apart from two hotels where some rooms have use of a communal hot spa (onsen), instead of a private shower. An Onsen is a natural hot spa bathing facility, which is a traditional part of Japanese culture. Ensuite rooms allocated to first bookings

Group 12

Just some of what we hope to see:

Japanese Macaque	Red-crowned Crane
Japanese Serow	White-naped Crane
Red-faced Cormorant	Hooded Crane
Ancient Murrelet	Blakiston's Fish Owl
Falcated Duck	Japanese Woodpecker
Steller's Sea Eagle	Japanese Grosbeak

Mark Brazil: Red-crowned Cranes, Blakiston's Fish Owl, Matsumoto Castle, Hooded Cranes, Steller's Sea Eagle, Japanese Macaque

A cross-section of Japan including Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido, with cranes galore, hordes of swans and flocks of eagles, along with Japanese Macaques, Japanese Serow and Japanese Deer.

- Marvel at the antics of Japanese Macaques as they bathe in a hot spring
- Watch both Steller's and White-tailed Eagles at close range
- A crane fest, with Red-crowned, White-naped, Hooded and Sandhill
- Good chance of Blakiston's Fish Owl - the world's largest....
- Endemics galore - Japanese Serow and Japanese Woodpecker
- Ancient Murrelet, Least and Crested Auklets, Red-faced Cormorant all possible
- Visit Matsumoto, one of Japan's last remaining historic castles

1-2 After an overnight flight we arrive in Tokyo and head straight to our hotel for some much needed rest, ahead of gathering for dinner.

3-4 We travel inland to the mountains of Honshu, to our hotel - a traditional Japanese Onsen. On our way we shall stop at Lake Suwa to scour the flocks for Smew, Bewick's and Whooper Swans, with chances of Dusky Thrush and the near endemic Brown-eared Bulbul. At the beautiful Matsumoto Castle we look for Eastern Spot-billed and possibly Falcated Duck.

Next day, we walk through the forest to the hot spring visited by the endemic Japanese Macaques. These famous 'Snow Monkeys' pass through the valley, with many of them visiting to warm up. We'll scour the slopes for Japanese Serow and keep

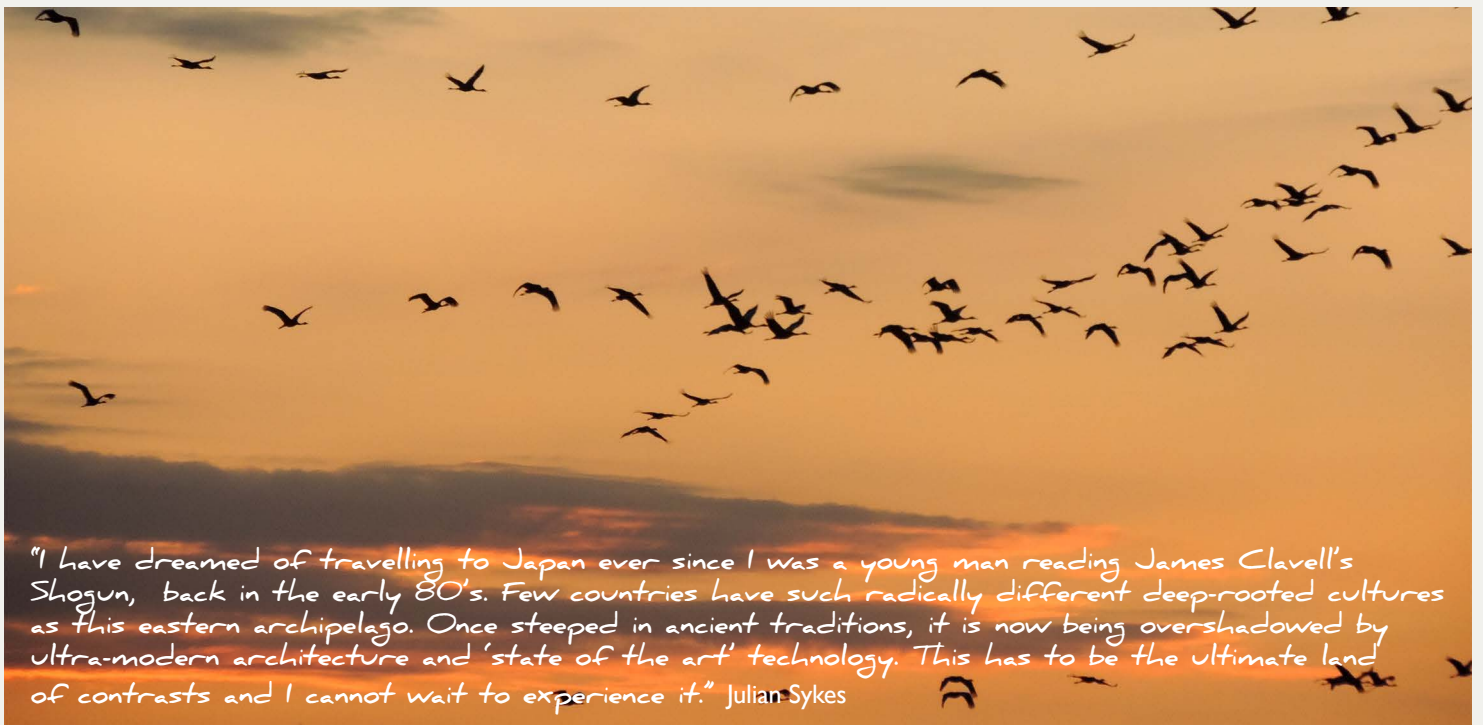
watch for Golden and Mountain Hawk Eagles flying overhead.

5-6 A full day walking through the beautiful Karuizawa forest and visiting the nearby Myogi Lake, set in dramatic montane scenery.

We search here for endemic forest species such as Japanese Pygmy and Japanese Woodpecker; Japanese Bush Warbler and Japanese Grosbeak and if we're lucky, we may find a Copper Pheasant.

In the nearby Myogi Valley we look for Mandarin Duck and the now well established Hwamei, while the nearby river should hold Japanese Wagtail. Along the farmland edges we may find Green Pheasant, Oriental Greenfinch and Rustic Bunting. Late afternoon we fly to Kagoshima.





"I have dreamed of travelling to Japan ever since I was a young man reading James Clavell's Shogun, back in the early 80's. Few countries have such radically different deep-rooted cultures as this eastern archipelago. Once steeped in ancient traditions, it is now being overshadowed by ultra-modern architecture and 'state of the art' technology. This has to be the ultimate land of contrasts and I cannot wait to experience it." Julian Sykes

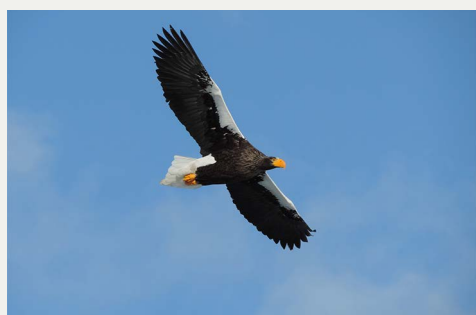
7-8 Japan in winter is not complete without a visit to Arasaki, for perhaps the most spectacular crane gathering in Asia. Up to 10,000 Hooded Cranes, 1000's of White-naped Cranes, along with Sandhill and Common Cranes, plus sometimes something rarer is found. Spoonbills are usually seen here, while in the estuaries, flocks of Wigeon and Falcated Duck are found, with possibly American Wigeon. We look for Long-billed Plover at a renowned spot.

At the coast, we could encounter Temminck's Cormorant and Vega and Black-tailed Gulls. The surrounding forests support Japanese Green Pigeon and Ryukyu Minivet. Farmland supports flocks of White-cheeked Starling, Eurasian Tree and Russet Sparrows and sometimes Daurian Jackdaw, while rice fields hold both Buff-bellied and Red-throated Pipits.

9-10 We have a travelling day with a return to Kagoshima, bound first for Tokyo then for Kushiro in east Hokkaido.

The next day we enjoy the sights and sounds of 'dancing' Red-crowned Cranes, plus look for Ural Owl at their day roosts. Red Foxes are sometimes found here, while watching for some local Japanese Deer and White-tailed Eagle is relatively common in this area; who knows our first Steller's could also be seen.

11-12 East Hokkaido boasts dramatic volcanic scenery and at the



beautiful lakes of Mashu and Kussharo we have time to enjoy some photographic opportunities.

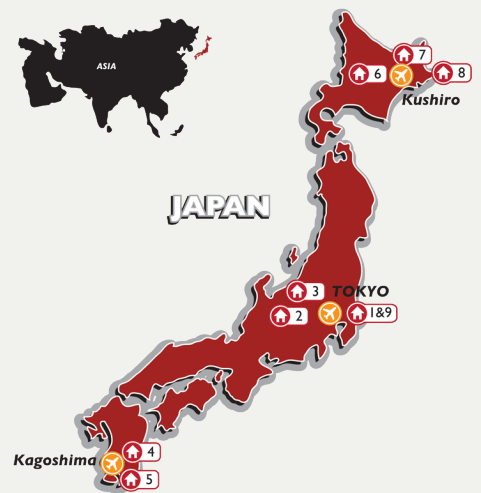
Along the coast, we look for seaduck including the gorgeous Harlequin and Long-tailed Ducks and Black and Stejneger's Scoter, with grebes and divers too.

Inland along the rivers, we look for Crested Kingfisher and Brown Dipper, with also the chance of Solitary Snipe. However, this is all about the world's largest owl and in the comfort of our on-site hotel we shall spend our evenings watching for the fabled Blakiston's Fish Owl – definitely worth staying up for!

13-15 From our base in south east Hokkaido we head for Lake Furen, where large numbers of Steller's and White-tailed Eagles gather on the ice, making for a great spectacle and potential tour highlight.

Following this, we explore the coastline and capes with a cruise offshore (weather permitting) in search of seabirds such as Ancient Murrelet, Crested and Least Auklets, Spectacled Guillemot and Red-faced Cormorants. There are gulls here, with Slaty-backed, Glaucous and Glaucous-winged, with the headlands occasionally hosting Rough-legged Buzzard, Snow Bunting and Asian Rosyfinch.

16-17 We complete our circuit of Hokkaido by returning to Kushiro for our flight to Tokyo, for our final night in Japan, before returning to the UK.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2 Overnight flight from London to Tokyo
1 night Excel Hotel Tokyu
- Day 3 Drive to Kambayashi Onsen, via Lake Suwa and Matsumoto Castle
1 night Hotel Senjukaku
- Days 4-5 Visit hot springs for Snow Monkeys, then Karuizawa and Myogi
2 nights Otowanomori Hotel
- Day 6 Flight from Tokyo to Kagoshima
1 night Kirishima Royal Hotel
- Days 7-8 Visit Mi-ike and Sendai River areas then on to Arasaki
2 nights Hotel Toko
- Days 9-10 Travel day plus visit to Tsurui and Kushiro Marsh - 2 nights Hotel Taito
- Days 11-12 Lakes Mashu and Kussharo, then Yoroushi for Blakiston's Fish Owl
2 nights Yuyado Daichi Hotel
- Days 13-15 Nemuro via Lake Furen for Steller's Sea Eagle, boat trip Cape Nosappu
3 nights Nemuro Kaiyotei Hotel
- Day 16 Fly to Tokyo - 1 night Excel Hotel Tokyu
- Day 17 Flight back to the UK