

Saker eNewsletter

COVID-19 Edition, 2020



It was great to enjoy displaying Ruffs in the Hortobágy (Photo: János Oláh)

Dear Birders and Wildlife Photographers!

It is a strange year and a strange newsletter! As a result of Covid-19 this year was certainly a milestone for all humans and effected everybody who like travelling. We could not possibly imagine that the world could shut down like this for an entire year – but it did!

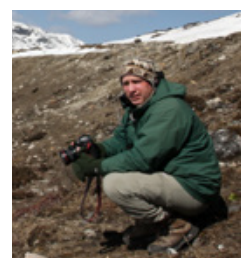
We had virtually no foreign guests in 2020 from March but certainly had plenty of time to test, try and rethink our accumulating ideas!
I call 2020 a `test year` and it was indeed in many ways!

We do hope it is coming to an end now and just as I am writing this chapter the news about the vaccine emerged. I hope our newsletter will find you in good health and even if you have not managed to visit us in 2020 the images and ideas will cheer you up a bit.

Let's start planning 2021 even though the future is still not certain at this moment!

Below you will find fresh images from 2020 as we could go and test our own tours. We had a really special year for guides indeed with an unprecedented long holiday. We have been fine-tuning some tours, hides and places as well as invented new tour(s) and built new hides!
Please enjoy reading and we very much hope to see you in 2021!

Yours sincerely,
János OLÁH
managing director



COVID - 19 informations and rescheduled tours for 2021

Many questions continuously come up in our minds and most probably in your minds as well regarding 2021!

Sakertours has been working hard to reschedule your 2020 tours to 2021 and in most cases we could find the way to fulfill all requests. We already communicated to you that nobody who has booked tours with us for 2020 lost their deposits or any part of it. Unlike some other companies we have not charged our clients anything for 2020.

Moreover we keep ALL our 2020 prices for the rescheduled 2021 tours regardless what price increase 2021 will bring – and it will certainly bring as we can already experience.

So be assured we do everything we can to keep our clients happy!

In the time of writing - November 2020 - we still have no idea how things would go in spring 2021.

For the moment we act like all planned, scheduled and rescheduled tours will be running and made the necessary pre-bookings for hotels, lodges, transports, guides etc.

So in case travelling will be allowed in Europe we hope to see you!

In case there are any problems with the April or May 2021 tours we will inform you about all possibilities and solutions in March 2021.

You are very welcome to send us a mail or call us if you have any questions.

See you in 2021!



A male Red-footed Falcon enjoying the first ray of sunlight back in April 2020 (Photo: János Oláh)

↓ HIDE PHOTOGRAPHY TOURS

In 2020 we only managed a few tours before the world came to a total stand still.

We had some brave clients in late spring and summer plus many local talented photographers have been visiting us from Hungary and neighboring countries.

In early autumn we had a few bear photography tours and many guests for the Crane season in the Hortobágy National Park.

So what have we been doing? Lets see in chronological order what has happened in 2020:

The eagle winter season was great as usual and our **Saker Falcon** photography continued to be popular.

It is still far from being a guaranteed subject but in the 90 days long winter season we had a total of 35 days when Sakers were photographed! If you interested in a hide by hide statistic just send us a mail!

Later in summer we have rebuilt our first eagle hide which was operating from 2006 to 2011. We are eager to test it in the coming weeks and hopefully some of you can also enjoy this hide!

In late **March** and **April** we could test some new ideas for Dipper on our `Bears and Birds tour` in **Transylvania**. We could also have the first proper test to our new **Western Capercaillie Hide** and enjoy some great moments! Also we had several pairs of **breeding Ural Owls** and all in all this tour in April was just like we imagined it would be! We are also going to open a new Bear hide in 2021 for photographers!

Meanwhile in the **Hortobágy** our egret-stork hide was just as amazing as ever with many great moments from **displaying Black Storks to displaying Ruffs!**

Our shorebird hide was also positioned at a new site fairly early in the season. It was a great location and we do hope it will be a regular place in future too.

It was good for ducks like Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Garganey, Eurasian Teal, Ferruginous Duck and Common Shelduck. Later it was a great place to photograph Egrets, Black-winged Stilts, Northern Lapwing, Wood Sandpiper, Common Redshank and various migrant waders.

Best of all was the amazing Ruff displaying period! It is usually best from 1-10 May.

In such year like 2020 we could spend some time in our **Great Bustard hide**. Not an easy subject to photograph it but late April offered us the best results so far and clearly the more time you spend in a hide the more results you get! It is a great experience to watch these amazing birds as the huge males are filling their gular sacks and displaying to the females.



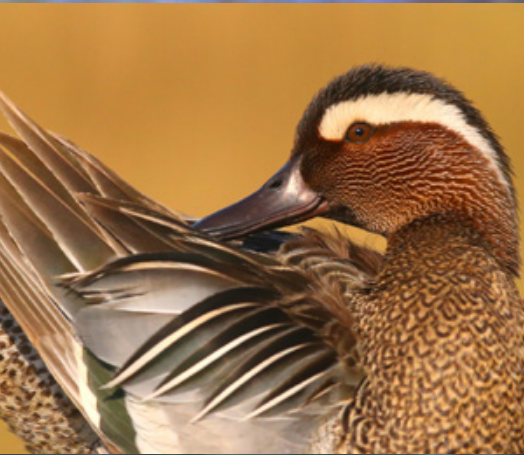
A male Saker Falcon in front of our photo hide (Photo: Attila Szilágyi)



Displaying Caparcaillie from Transylvania (Photo: Zoltán Baczó)



Displaying Great Bustard from Hortobágy (Photo: János Oláh)





A superb looking female Red-footed Falcon (Photo: János Oláh)



Fishing group of White Pelicans (Photo: János Oláh)



Common Cranes leaving the roosting site (Photo: János Oláh)

May and **June** we had our standard hides for great birds like **Red-footed Falcons, Rollers, Bee-eaters, Hoopoes, Lesser Grey Shrikes, Little Owls** and a selection of waterbirds in the Hortobágy..

We put more work and effort into our Pygmy Cormorant Hide area. Here we have a second hide - **a reedbed feeding station** - and the two hides side by side offer the best variety of species for photographers. Main targets in this place were the Pygmy Cormorant, Ferruginous Duck, Little Bittern, Water Rail, Little Crake, Savi's Warbler, Moustached Warbler, Bearded Tit!

We also fine-tuned our **Wryneck photography** in the Zemplén Hills where our expert Zoli Petrovics was working tirelessly on delivering this amazing woodpecker for photographers! Now we have a great setup for this species and it is our prime target on our June **photography extensions to the Zemplén Hills**.

June and **July** are about the **Danube Delta!** It was very restricted to move around in Romania in May but finally in June we made it to the delta and spent several days to recce out new sites, new subjects and simply enjoy this special place. Once you have been to the delta in our purpose-built photo-boat you will certainly want to go back! It is fun, it is special, it is atmospheric and the amount of wildlife is bewildering!

Finally **autumn** has arrived and our well tested September **bear photography tours** were just as good as in the last few years!

In the **second half of September** the **Cranes arrived in the Hortobágy National Park in Hungary**. This was our second year with the **'One day Hortobágy Crane Photography Tour'**

It was excellent for most days again and it looks like the period between **20th September to 10th October** is the best for such short tours!

You can have more informations about bird photography news from the various regions where we operating tours:

Bird Photography and Birdwatching in the Hortobágy, Hungary 

Birdwatching and Bear Photography in Transylvania, Romania 

Birdwatching and birdphotography in the Danube Delta, Romania 

Click on the link above to reach the site you like .

Please visit our **PHOTO TOUR CALENDAR** for dates, availabilities and extra informations!



However we haven't had any birding or wildlife tours running in 2020 we developed **two NEW tours** for the future.

These wildlife watching tours will be focusing primarily to observe mammals in Romania. They will be soon in our website.

Developing **Mammal-watching** tours were long planned but never got around to do it in the past years.

In 2020 due to the pandemic situation finally we were able to organize and run our first Mammal Tour in Romania. You can read the trip report [HERE](#).

It was a great tour with lots of fun but hard work as well. We have recorded an amazing 46 mammal species including the critically endangered European Mink and goodies such as Grey Wolf, Wildcat, Lesser Blind mole-rat just to name but a few.

Of course there are many exciting species we did not connect in 2020 but hope to see them on future tours like Eurasian Lynx, Romanian Hamster, Mehely's Horseshoe Bat, Steppe and/or Marbled Polecat...



The highlight in Transylvania was a pack of 4 Wolves by a fresh Red Deer kill (Photo: János Oláh)



An unforgettable highlight on our first Mammal watching tour was this beautiful European Mink in the Danube Delta (Photo: Zoltán Gergely Nagy)

Please visit our [BIRDWATCHING TOUR CALENDAR](#) for dates, availabilities and extra informations!

Once the borders opened up in late spring we made another trial tour to our brand new **“Hungary, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia”** birding holiday what you can find on our website.

When we have created our **“Ultimate tours by Sakertours”** holidays we have designed this wonderful combination of **Alps and Adria birding tour** linkable with Hungary, Slovakia and Transylvania thus creating a 19 days long birding holiday!..

Visiting these countries you can see such goodies like Eleonora’s Falcon, Rock Partridge, Citril Finch, Western Bonellis Warbler, Melodius Warbler, Olive-tree Warbler, Black-eared Wheatear, Eastern Orphean Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Griffon Vulture and many others.

You can find more informations in our website.
The 2021 birding dates are online.



Western Bonelli's Warbler (Photo: János Oláh)



Eleonora's Falcon is a Mediterranean specialty (Photo: János Oláh)



Woodchat Shrike (Photo: János Oláh)



Rock Partridge, another specialty of the region (Photo: János Oláh)



Citril Finch (Photo: János Oláh)

Please visit our **BIRDWATCHING TOUR CALENDAR** for dates, availabilities and extra informations!



A flock of Snow Bunting from the Hortobágy National Park (Photo: János Oláh)

With best wishes for Christmas and the
New Year from everyone at **SAKERTOURS**

Stay Safe and Healthy
See you in 2021

