

Sakertours eNewsletter

14th edition, 2025

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Diving White-tailed Eagle for a fish (Photo: Beat Rüegger)

Dear Nature Photographers, Birders, and Wildlife Enthusiasts,

2025 was an amazing year when we could work in full capacity. In this action-packed year we had countless amazing wildlife experiences with our clients and worked hard to show you the best of our homeland. Nowadays, we run tours for a wide range of nature enthusiasts.

On our birdwatching tours, we try to see as many species as possible, while our photography tours are more relaxed. However, all of our itineraries are perfectly crafted, and our goal is to see you enjoying the tour!

In this newsletter, we're thrilled to share a short recap of our tours and give you a glimpse of what's coming in 2026. Please take a look at our tour calendar on our website, as we've not only uploaded all the 2026 tours but also added some exciting tours for 2027.

Whether you love birds, mammals, butterflies, or simply being in nature, we hope this newsletter will inspire your next adventure. Enjoy reading, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

Yours sincerely,
János Oláh
Managing Director



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managing director



LATEST NEWS

↓ HIDE PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR IMPROVEMENTS

At Sakertours, we are dedicated to providing the ultimate wildlife photography experience across our exclusive hides in Hungary and Romania. Every year, we refine and expand our offerings to help you capture unforgettable moments in nature.



Short-eared Owl with prey (Photo: Ali ALIESLAM)

What we are offering to our guests in 2026?

- A network of well-designed, comfortable photo hides
- Expert, English-speaking field guides with exceptional local knowledge
- Nature-friendly accommodations and guesthouses for a relaxing stay



Pine Marten from Transylvania (Photo: Beat RÜEGGER)

In 2026, we'll continue to run our most popular wildlife photography tours in both Hungary and Romania. Each year brings something new and unexpected — that's part of the magic!

In 2025, our guests photographed Short-eared Owls in Hortobágy National Park, Pine Martens in Transylvania, and diving White-tailed Eagles in the Danube Delta — just a glimpse of what nature can surprise us with.

We guarantee that participating in any Sakertours photo tour will be an unforgettable experience.

Usually a lot of our tours are booked well in advance but we still have places in 2026 for a few tours like our **Brown Bear Photo Tour in Summer** or the **Danube Delta Photo Tour also in Summer!**

Both combine comfort, action, and unforgettable experiences in remote European nature.

Book your wildlife photography tour today on our website!

Tour operators are also welcome — we're happy to design custom trips tailored to your needs. Contact Marianna or Zoli for a personalised offer.



Mating Red-footed Falcons (Photo: Ali ALIESLAM)

↓ BIRD AND WILDLIFE WATCHING TOUR IMPROVEMENTS



SakerTours' website now clearly showcases our full range of birdwatching, mammal-watching, and nature tours. This also includes our carefully designed butterfly-watching tours across Eastern Europe.

What we are offering to our guests in 2026?

- The highlight of our 2026 season will once again be the **Eurasian Lynx Watching Tour** in Transylvania, running **7–13 March**. To give you the best possible chance of observing this magnificent and elusive species, we've selected the optimal period in March and paired the tour with one of our expert local guides.

- If you're looking for birdwatching adventures, we warmly recommend our all-time favorite — the **Hungary and Transylvania Grand Tour**.

Other fantastic options include:

- the **Danube Delta – Dobrudja in Spring and Autumn**
- or our short-break tour to see the **Red-breasted Goose in the Hortobágy National Park**.

Each of these tours offers a great experience for every keen birdwatcher!



What an incredible view of a Eurasian Lynx! (Photo: Gothárd F. ALPÁR)



- In recent years, we've also become specialists in **Butterfly Watching Tours** across Eastern Europe. While we mostly work with our partners at Mariposa Nature Tours, who offer an excellent selection of European trips — we also run a few butterfly tours of our own. Check our website if you are interested!

Actually we're currently developing a short **Butterfly Weekend** in Transylvania, which will be available soon! If butterflies fascinate you, join us — or let us design a custom tour just for you!

Book your wildlife watching tour today through our new website!

Professional tour operators are welcome to collaborate with us to design custom tours tailored to your needs. Contact Marianna or Zoli at the office for a personalized offer.



Butterfly Highlights from 2025 (Photo: János OLÁH)

2025 IN REVIEW

↓ HIDE PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE HORTOBÁGY NATIONAL PARK



Our bird photography tours in Hungary are mainly hide-based, giving you the perfect setup for unforgettable shots. Each hide has been carefully designed and refined over the years to offer the best possible photo opportunities. And **in winter, they're fully heated** — so you can enjoy a full day of photography in comfort!

The last photo season was exceptionally rewarding, full of memorable moments. A typical season is divided as follows: **(1.) Winter Eagle photography** from December to March, **(2.) local breeder species** from April to July, and **(3.) Common Crane photography** in October.

Crane photography, however, largely depends on the location of the roosting sites; wet conditions in October can sometimes keep the cranes away from the hides.

This year's **Winter Eagle** photography season was exceptional — some photographers even enjoyed **a full day of rare, snowy conditions!**

During this period, we also hope for encounters with Saker Falcons, and our hides often attract these magnificent raptors, Hungary's national bird and our namesake species.

Spring and summer in Hortobágy always provide the richest opportunities, and 2025 was no exception.

In April, the Black Storks were performing beautifully alongside with shorebirds, followed by May, June, and July, when our guests enjoyed species such as Red-footed Falcon, Hoopoe, Little Owl, Roller, Bee-eater, Red-backed Shrike, and many other passerines and woodpeckers at the woodland hide.

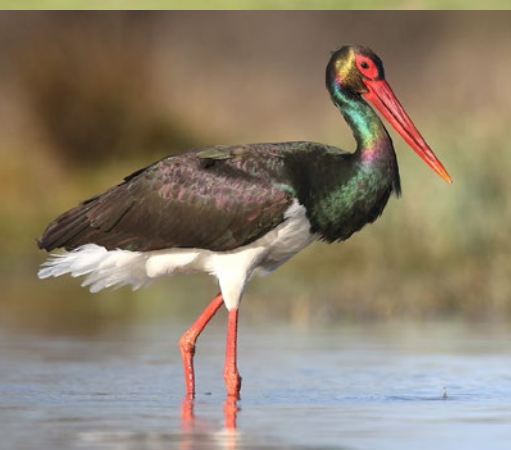
Hortobágy in Autumn/October had a different experience when thousands of Common Cranes arriving each day to the area. However the Crane season was shorter this year, as the birds arrived late at our main roosting lake. Nevertheless, a few lucky photographers captured some truly amazing early-morning moments. October for us always represents the fantastic Common Crane migration!



Come and photograph Hungary's wildlife with us in 2026!



A rare event in the Hortobágy: the chance to photograph eagles in the snow (Photo: Gothárd F. ALPÁR)



If you're passionate about wildlife photography, the Danube Delta is one of Europe's most spectacular destinations. We are offering exclusive photo tours in two main seasons — winter and spring-summer.

1. **Winter Photo Tours: tranquil & adventurous**

Our main focus was on the stunning **Dalmatian Pelicans** in full breeding plumage. Unlike Lake Kerkini, the Delta's pelicans are completely wild and unhabituated, offering a rare chance to capture truly natural behaviour.

January 2025 brought unusually mild weather, but February delivered real winter, with solid ice covered lakes. Photographers enjoyed spectacular subjects such as **Golden Jackals** from hides, hunting **White-tailed Eagles**, fishing **Pallas's Gulls**, and flocks of wintering Little Gulls and Geese, including the striking Red-breasted Goose. Some guests even experienced a dramatic snowstorm — a magical moment that transformed the Delta.

Our night safaris were just as rewarding, producing images of Tawny and **Long-eared Owls**, Wildcats, Raccoon Dogs, Otters, and even the elusive **European Mink** — a critically endangered species rarely seen or photographed.

We are proud to be the only wildlife company running dedicated tours for this remarkable mammal species, and our expertise continues to grow!

2. **Spring-Summer Photo Tours: calmness, colours & breeding**

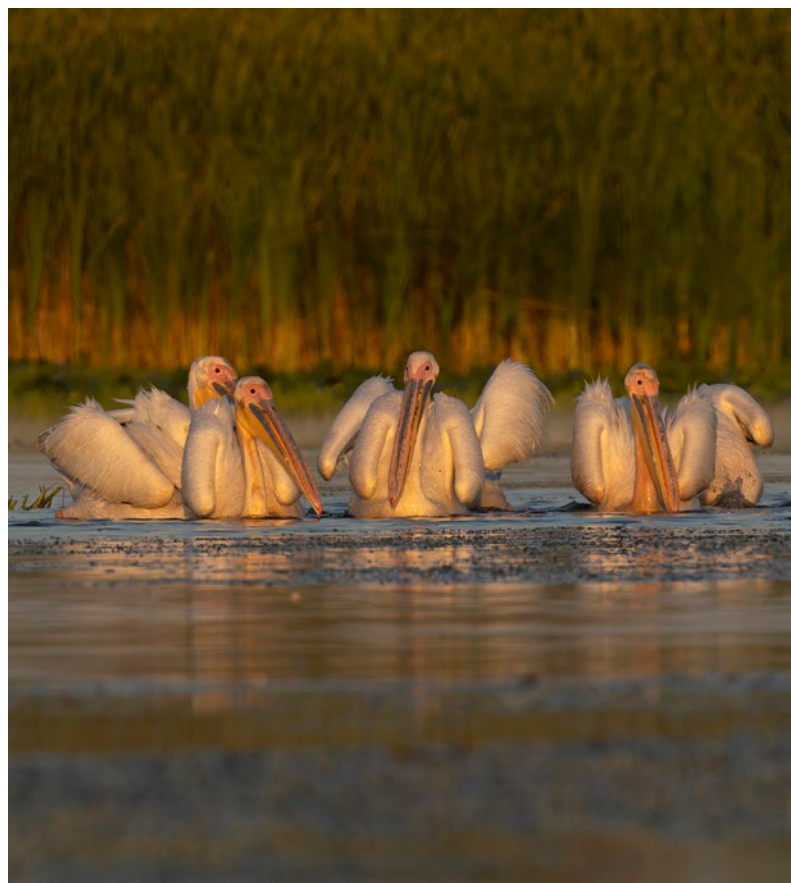
In the first half of the season, we explored not only the Delta wetlands but also the coastal lagoons and steppe areas, where we set up drinking hides in the Măcin National Park. These hides are perfect for photographing Turtle Doves, Hawfinches, **Levant Sparrowhawks**, Black-headed Buntings, European Rollers, Bee-eaters, Little Owls, and even European Ground Squirrels. As summer progresses and the floating vegetation emerge, our tours focus exclusively on the vast wetland zones, accessible only by boat.

Highlights of 2025 included **White-tailed Eagles** diving for fish (which we provide for close-action shots), Black-necked Grebes nesting in colonies, **Great White Pelicans** fishing, Whiskered Tern colony life, and the elegant Purple and **Squacco Herons** hunting in golden light.

Whether you're an experienced wildlife photographer or an enthusiastic beginner, our Danube Delta photo tours offer the perfect blend of adventure, comfort, and world-class photography opportunities.



Dalmatian Pelicans in winter (Photo: Zoltán BACZÓ)



Great White Pelicans in Summer (Photo: Zoltán BACZÓ)



↓ BROWN BEAR AND BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY IN TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA



These tours were created for photographers who dream of capturing **Brown Bears**, **Eurasian Lynx**, and other forest wildlife from comfortable, well-positioned hides. Led by our expert local team from Harghita, these tours offer rare chances to photograph Europe's most elusive mammals in their natural environment.

1. Eurasian Lynx Photo Tours: patience & luck

Start of the season in February with this exclusive tour. In 2025, we enjoyed one of our best seasons yet, thanks to an exceptionally active male **Lynx** regularly visiting our area. We photographed him twice, and with a bit more endurance in the cold, there could have been even more encounters. Yes, you need to be prepared for long waits and this tour is not for beginners. Even with body warmers and comfortable hides, photographers must remain quiet and patient for long hours. **It's a true test of focus** — but the reward of capturing a wild Lynx in natural light is beyond compare.

2. Spring Wildlife Photography in Transylvania: awakening nature

From mid-April to early May, our focus shifts to **Brown Bears** and **Capercaillies**! This is a different experience, a true wildlife photography with both mammals and birds.

During this period, Brown Bears are highly active and providing incredible photo opportunities. Guests could photograph this time such species like Pine Marten, Capercaillie, Lesser Spotted Eagles, Dipper, Ural and Pygmy Owls, and several Woodpecker species — making 2025 spring a fantastic time to explore Transylvania's diverse wildlife.

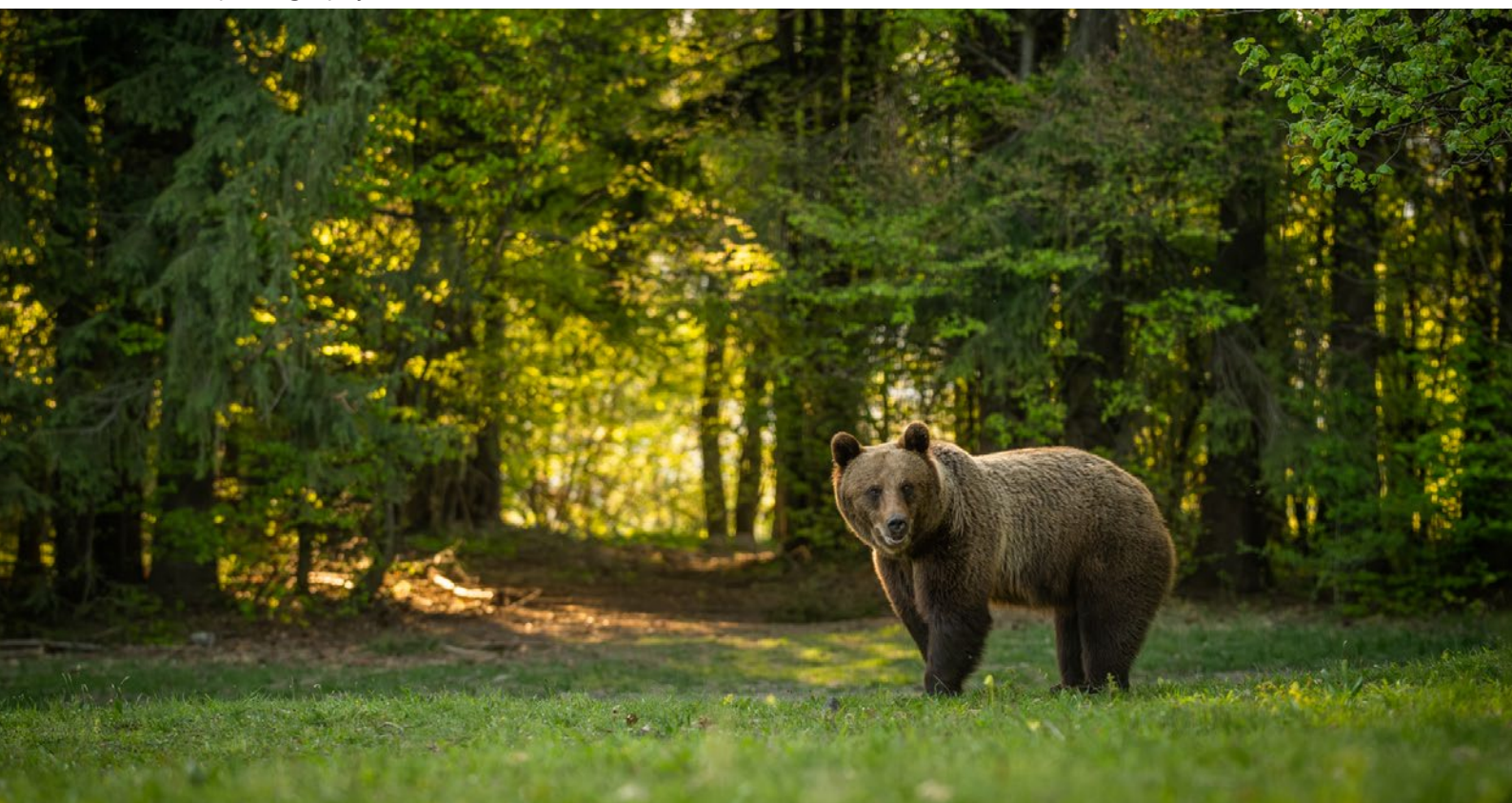
3. Summer Bear Photography: special light & action

Early-summer brings perfect light and plenty of activity. Our hides were positioned for golden evening and early-morning backlight, ideal for creative silhouette and portrait shots. This was also the best season to capture **Bear cubs** with their mothers, offering heartwarming and dramatic moments.

4. Autumn in Transylvania: bears cubs & birds

By late August and early September, Brown Bears grow their thick winter fur and look truly majestic. Families remain active and visible, providing fantastic close-up encounters.

We also photograph beautiful mountain birds such as the Lesser Spotted Eagle and Hazel Grouse, adding variety to your late-season portfolio!



We have opened a new Bear hide in 2025 for you! (Photo: Gotthárd F. Alpár)



BIRDWATCHING TOURS IN 2025

Our journey began with a deep passion for observing, monitoring, and protecting the birds of the Carpathian Basin. This long-standing dedication allows us to offer unique birdwatching experiences that go beyond the ordinary.

Sakertours knowledgeable guides are eager to introduce you to the rich birdlife of our region, including some of the rarest species found in the country. **Please respect our conservation efforts by keeping the exact locations of these birds private and not sharing them online.** Join us for an unforgettable adventure and discover our extraordinary birdlife!

In 2025 we have organized the following tours:

• Hungary & Slovakia in Spring

This easy combination of famous Hortobágy wetlands with Slovakia wild forests always surprise us with some great birds. In 2025 Spring we saw 10 species of Woodpeckers, 8 Owl species and such diurnal raptors like Saker Falcon or Imperial Eagle and displaying Great Bustards!

• Danube Delta in Spring

This tour was organized in the second half of May and has never disappointed since we run it! The highlight of our Spring tour in the Delta beside the classic species was the unforgettable flock of **380+ Broad-billed Sandpipers** among them days later Romania's first White-rumped Sandpiper found by Daniel Balla! Well done Dani!

• Danube Delta in Autumn

Our late August–early September tour offered an incredible chance to witness migration in action. Guests enjoyed sightings of migrating Purple Herons, Bee-eaters, Honey Buzzards, Montagu's Harriers, and waders like Broad-billed Sandpipers and Black-winged Pratincoles — a truly memorable tour filled with remarkable species.

• Red-breasted Goose Special Winter Birding Tour

2025 winter started really well and all our November groups could enjoy some really spectacular views of Lesser White-fronted Goose and Red-breasted Goose alongside with Common Cranes, Saker Falcon or Great Bustards and Wallcreeper!!



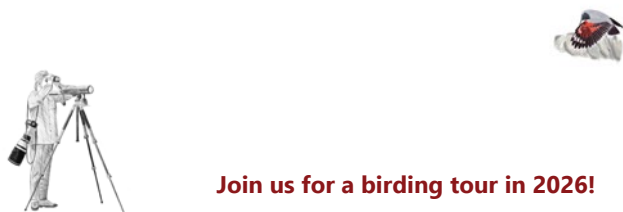
Ural Owls were regularly seen in 2025 (Photo: Gábor SIMAY)



Broad-billed Sandpiper — May Sightings (Photo: Zoltán G. NAGY)



Fantastic Redbreasts from Hungary (Photo: Dániel BALLA)



Join us for a birding tour in 2026!





European Mink from March 2025 (Photo: Róbert BALOG)



Bukovina Blind Mole-rat on a new tour (Photo: János OLÁH)



Romanian Hamster was seen in 2025 again (Photo: János OLÁH)

Mammal watching in Romania has become a real attraction thanks to Sakertour's pioneering work. We are proud of this and highly motivated to give you our best every year!

Romania is one of Eastern Europe's finest destinations for mammal watching, offering a remarkable diversity of species and habitats. Over the years, we've continuously refined our itineraries to give you the best possible chance to observe some of the most elusive and rare mammals in their natural environment.

In 2025 we have organized the following tours:

- **European Mink Tour in March:** After several unsuccessful attempts in autumn, we decided to run the same tour in March—and it proved to be far more successful. March appears to be the ideal month to spot the elusive European Mink. Join us on our European Mink tour in 2027 for a unique wildlife experience and a rare opportunity to observe one of Europe's most elusive mammal.

- **Mole-Rat Special Tour in April:** A rather special tour to find four different Mole-rat species in Romania. The Lesser Blind Mole-rat (*Nannospalax leucodon*), Hungarian Blind Mole-rat (*Nannospalax hungaricus*), Bukovina Blind Mole-rat (*Spalax graecus*) and the Méhely's Blind Mole-rat (*Spalax antiquus*). The World first, when all main targets live under the ground! But we made it with hard work and lots of patience we finally saw all four species! This unique tour isn't annual, but **we plan to try again in 2027!**

- **Romania Mammal Tour in Autumn:** Sakertour's flagship mammal-watching tour is one we strive to make better and better every year, and all our guides are excited to lead the next one.

The 2025 tour was fantastic again where we have recorded **54 species** of mammals. Yet again we saw Romanian Hamster, European Mink and Forest Dormouse in the Dobrudja and Delta area while bears, bats and dormouse in Transylvania. And yet again (for mammal family collectors!) Zsolt Hegyeli did get Northern Birch Mouse for the third year in a row!

This is Sakertour's most successful mammal watching tour and a real must for mammal watchers.

Join us to a mammal tour in 2026!





A stunning male Eurasian Lynx photographed in March 2025 (Photo: Gotthárd F. ALPÁR)

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



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We would like to say **thank you** to all of our guests, team members and guides for the nice selection of images: Ali Alieslam, Tímea Ambrus, Zoltán Baczó, Dániel Balla, Róbert Balog, Fritz Dallenbach, Alpár-Ferenc Gotthárd, Szabolcs Kovács, Zoltán Gergely Nagy, Joan Paullussen, János Oláh, Beat Rüegger, Attila Szilágyi, János Székely, Gábor Simay, Attila Tanács, Hanne Wahlström