



Estonian Nature Tours

Trip	: STELLER'S EIDER BREAK
Period	: Fri 24th Feb – Mon 27th Feb 2017
Group size	: 6/7 pax
Focus	: Birds
Grading	: Day walks only, for all ages
Accommodation	: Comfortable hotel with private facilities
Food	: Restaurants
Leader	: Kaarel Võhandu
Extensions	: Cultural/sightseeing extensions available on request
Organizer/Agent	: Estonian Nature Tours, e-mail: info@naturetours.ee

An 4-day fully-inclusive holiday in search flocks of Steller's Eider and other wintering specialities of West-Estonia

Few places in Europe can match Estonia's amazing birdlife at almost any time of year. The most important wintering area for Steller's Eider, Europe's most endangered seaduck, is off the coast of our biggest island, Saaremaa. These eye-catching birds arrive in December and leave around the beginning of April. Come in January and February when congregations may reach 1000 birds or more. This is also a great time for Hawk Owls, an uncommon but regular winter visitor in Estonia.

Stop thinking about it – come to ESTONIA!

Day 1 Arrive in Tallinn, to Saaremaa

Day 2 Saaremaa island

Day 3 To North-West Estonia, Põõsaspea & Leidisoo

Day 4 Departure

Highlights

Birds: Steller's Eider, Long-tailed Duck, Purple Sandpiper, White-tailed Eagle, Goshawk, Black Grouse, Hazel Grouse, Ural Owl, Tengmalm's Owl, Pygmy Owl, Rough-legged Buzzard, White-backed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nutcracker, Great Grey Shrike, Crested Tit, Bearded Tit, Waxwing, Snow Bunting, Parrot Crossbill etc.

Mammals: Grey Seal, Wild Boar & Raccoon Dog (probably), Red Fox, Elk, Roe deer, Red Deer, tracks of Wolf, & Lynx (probably) etc.

1 Fri (24th February) TALLINN, to Saaremaa island

We will pick you up from Tallinn Airport and drive to Virtsu (from Tallinn 160 km) where we take the ferry at 6.00pm. At half past 6 we arrive at Kuivastu harbour on Muhu Island and drive westward. After check-in and a short rest we will eat our first dinner at the guesthouse (Loona Manor Guesthouse or similar).

2 Sat (25th February)

SAAREMAA ISLAND

Today we will have the opportunity to scope Steller's Eiders. To see dense flocks of these magnificent birds we have to drive to the north-westernmost part of Saaremaa. The hot spot for Steller's Eider is located close to Cape Undva. Uudepanga Bay near Undva hosts up to 1000 Steller's Eiders each winter, though often numbers are between 300 and 600. Birds form dense flocks where they behave synchronously, especially when diving. Other sea-ducks will be seen with a chance of divers and waders including Purple Sandpiper. Because of biogeographic reasons Saaremaa is not rich in rarer woodpecker and owl species, but we can see or hear Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nutcracker, Great Grey Shrike and Rough-legged Buzzard on short stops on our way to Undva or after that. After lunch at the guesthouse and a short rest we will go for an owling session. If we are fortunate we can hear and hopefully see Tengmalm's and Pygmy Owl in Viidumäe Nature Reserve (Loona Manor Guesthouse or similar).

3 Sun (26th February)

PÕÕSASPEA, NÕVA & LEIDISSOO FORESTS

After breakfast we will return to the mainland. Depending on winter severity and weather in spring the Suur Väin Strait can be covered with ice, or host large flocks of seaducks. At 10:30am we arrive at Virtsu Harbour and drive to Roosta. After check-in our itinerary takes us to the most north-easterly point, the Põõsaspea. This small north-stretching spit is situated at the migratory crossroad, where every spring and autumn masses of waterbirds coming from Bothnian and the Finnish Bays meet. This is one of the best places for observing the Arctic waterbird migration. Even, in winter, this area usually remains unfrozen and holds flocks of different waterbirds – thousands of Long-tailed Ducks, Goldeneyes, Goosanders and often White-tailed Eagles nearby. Atmospheric pine forests nearby hold Crested Tit, Willow Tit, Goldcrest, Hazel Grouse and Black Woodpecker. We will eat our lunch at the local restaurant. In the afternoon we will go for an owling session before we have our evening meal. Ural Owl often hunt during the afternoon before it is really dark. If rodent numbers further north are low, Estonia can expect higher numbers of Hawk Owls. Dinner at the local restaurant (Roosta Holiday Village).

4 Mon (27th February)

LEIDISSOO, to Tallinn, departure

Today we will visit the heathland forest environment in the early morning. We hope to hear Pygmy Owl or even see Eagle Owl hunting for small mammals at the forest edge whilst other attractions in this area include Capercaillie, Hazel Grouse and some interesting woodpeckers. We will return to Tallinn by early afternoon and have some free time for shopping before we will drive to the Airport to catch your homeward flight at ...

Price: 595 € pp.
Single.suppl. 90 €

Includes:

English-Estonian speaking guide(s) throughout the journey. All meals and all local transport. Entrance fees to protected areas and museums. All overnights on a twin/double shared basis:
www.loonamanor.ee
www.roosta.ee
VAT.

Excludes:

Beverages and sauna. International tickets. Insurance.

Booking and deposits can be made if you click on our Tour calendar. **BOOK HERE** will guide you to our booking system, where it is possible to insert data and also instantly pay by credit card (coming next week). Another possibility is to pay through bank transfer. Automatic invoice and confirmation will be sent to your email address.

CANCELLATIONS

More than 70 days	deposit (20%) only
70-15 days before departure	50% of total tour cost
15 days or less before departure	100% of total tour cost

INSURANCE

It is a condition of joining one of our holidays that you must be fully insured against medical and personal accident risks. Please send to us the name of your insurance provider, the contact telephone number, your policy number, expire date and details of the medical and repatriation cover provided.

Terms and Conditions Instruction: <http://www.naturetours.ee/terms-and-conditions/>

NB! There are many amazing holidays you can't afford to miss... When you would like to travel with your friends we would be happy to give you more information or offer an extra tour with special price whenever you find a suitable time.

Legal contacts:

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