

Wild Japan in Winter

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London.
Day 2	Arrive Tokyo and overnight.
Day 3/4	Kawayu.
Day 5/6	Rausu.
Day 7	Yorouchi.
Day 8	Fly Tokyo and overnight.
Day 9/10	Nagano.
Day 11	Tokyo.
Day 12	Fly London.

Departs

January and February.

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code JPN01).

Grading

A/B. Slow paced walks, but caution recommended due to very cold and snowy conditions.

Focus

Birds and Mammals.

Highlights

- Watch Japanese Cranes dancing in the snow.
- Stunning views of Steller's Sea Eagles and White-tailed Eagles in Rausu.
- Excellent chance of Blakiston's Fish Owl.
- 'Snow Monkeys' bathing in hot springs.
- Beautiful winter landscapes in Hokkaido.
- Fascinating insight into Japanese culture.
- Excellent photographic opportunities.



From top: Steller's Sea Eagle, Red-crowned (Japanese) Cranes and Blakiston's Fish Owl (P Stanbury).



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Introduction

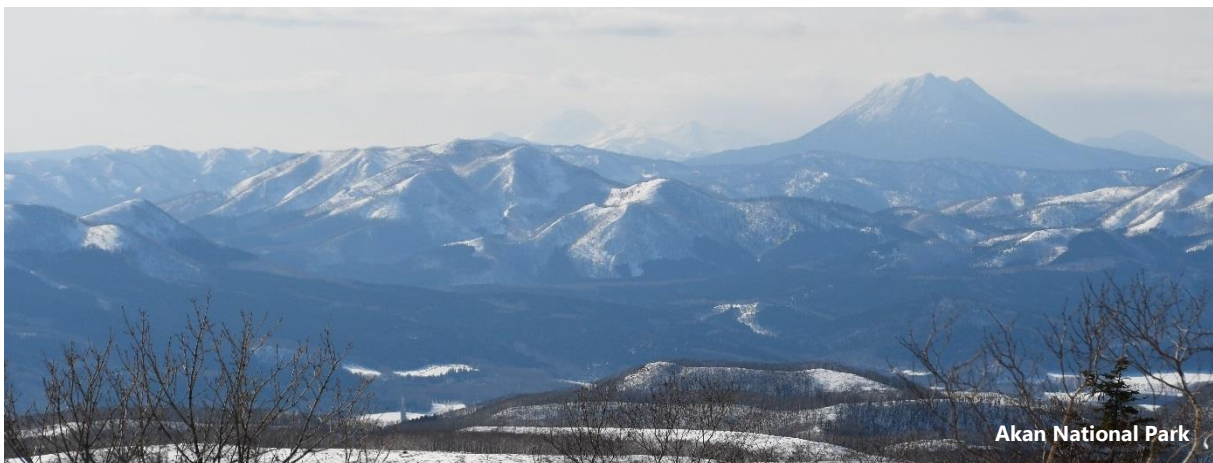
Travelling in the depths of the Japanese winter, this exciting 12-day tour aims to showcase Japan's most incredible wildlife spectacles, from flocks of striking Steller's Sea Eagles, to elegant dancing Red-crowned (Japanese) Cranes and Japanese Macaques bathing in hot water springs. Although not a dedicated photographic holiday, we will endeavour to see these key species at close quarters, affording some fantastic photographic opportunities, the likes of which you will not find anywhere else in the world!

It is impossible to visit Japan without immersing oneself in its unique culture and traditions, and throughout our time here, we will have the opportunity to experience many of these first hand; staying in traditional Japanese-style inns (ryokans), bathing in the natural hot water springs (onsens) and sampling the delicious cuisine on offer.

Arriving in Tokyo, we transfer to a comfortable city hotel offering fabulous views of this huge and bustling capital. The following morning we fly a short distance north, to Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido. Here, amongst the snow-covered mountains, fields and icy rivers, we will search for the beautiful Red-crowned (Japanese) Crane, enjoying their graceful courtship displays and surrounded by the sound of their trumpeting cries, which resonate through the frosty morning air.

Drawing ourselves away from the cranes we will head to the coast and slowly make our way along the rocky headlands overlooking the Sea of Okhotsk, stopping frequently to scan the bays and harbours for flocks of seabirds that may include Spectacled Guillemot, Ancient Murrelet, Pelagic Cormorant, Harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Duck and Glaucous-winged Gull. Our destination is the fishing port of Rausu on the edge of Shiretoko National Park, home to the highest concentration of Steller's Sea Eagles in the world. Drawn by the rich waters of the Okhotsk Sea, the mighty Steller's Sea Eagle - one of the largest eagle species in the world - gathers here in impressive numbers providing a wonderful natural spectacle.

The woodlands of this frozen landscape also harbour interesting wildlife, and in the evening we will wrap up warmly and head out in search of another avian heavy weight, the magnificent Blakiston's Fish Owl, a specialist hunter of aquatic habitats and one of the world's largest and rarest owl species in the world.



Returning to Tokyo, we next travel by bullet train to Nagano Prefecture, where we have the opportunity to visit Hell Valley and observe Japanese Macaques, or 'Snow Monkeys', bathing in their favourite hot water springs. We will also visit Nagano's magnificent Zenkoji Temple, one of Japan's largest and most important Buddhist temples and home to the first Buddhist statue ever to be brought into Japan, back in the 6th century.

We return to Tokyo for a final night in the capital before flying to London the following morning. Our minds filled with memories of dancing cranes, bathing macaques, delicious food and hospitable inhabitants ... the 'land of the rising sun' is sure to have left its mark!

For those wishing to extend their time in Japan, there is the opportunity to fly south to the island of Kyushu, home to one of the most spectacular gatherings of cranes in the world. Attracted by the mild climate, more than 15,000 Hooded Cranes are joined at this time of year by several thousand White-naped Cranes as well as a few Common and Sandhill Cranes, while the island's coastal wetlands attract Black-faced Spoonbill, Saunders's Gull, Chestnut-eared Bunting and White-cheeked Starling.

Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

Depart London

We depart London late-morning on a British Airways overnight flight, direct to Tokyo's Haneda Airport.

Day 2

Arrive Tokyo

As we approach the sprawling metropolis of Tokyo, providing the weather is clear, those individuals with a window seat should be able to enjoy dramatic views of the snow-capped volcanic cone of Mount Fuji, one of the most revered mountains in the world and Japan's highest at 3,776 metres. After passing through immigration and collecting our bags, we will transfer for approximately 30 minutes into central Tokyo, to the Shinagawa district where we check into a comfortable modern hotel, offering fabulous views of the surrounding city.

After checking in and freshening up, the afternoon is free to explore the city or relax after the long flight. You may like to join your tour leader, however, on a birdwatching trip to the Kasai Rinkai Park which overlooks Tokyo Bay and can be reached in about 40 minutes by train. Here we will look for an interesting variety of birds including Dusky Thrush, Daurian Redstart, Black-faced Bunting, Brown-eared Bulbul and Japanese White-eye. Returning to Shinagawa we will head out for an evening meal in a nearby restaurant, enjoying our first taste of the Japanese cuisine that is sure to be such a feature of this holiday.

Meals: No meals included.

Day 3

Fly Kushiro, overnight Kawayu

Red-crowned (Japanese) Cranes



After a good night's sleep in the capital, we take the Tokyo's fast and efficient train service back to Haneda Airport and fly north for approximately 90 minutes to the island of Hokkaido. Unlike the more temperate climes of Tokyo, at this time of the year Hokkaido is typically much colder and on landing we will likely find ourselves immersed in a far more wintry landscape. Leaving the small airport of Kushiro behind, we drive

north, passing Kushiro Wetlands National Park to our east and continuing through a harsh landscape of snowy agricultural fields, marshes, coniferous and stunted deciduous forests. Our destination is the small town of Kawayu, located in the heart of the Akan National Park about 100 kilometres from Kushiro, but enroute we will stop at Tsururumidai, where we should get our first views of Red-crowned (Japanese) Cranes. This stunning bird, standing nearly 1.5 metres tall and with a wingspan approaching 2.5 metres, was believed to have been hunted to extinction in the early 20th century. However, in 1926, a group of approximately 20 birds was discovered in the marshes around Kushiro, and after concentrated conservation efforts they now number more than a thousand birds. Whilst the cranes can be seen year round, the best time to see them is in the winter months when they gather at various feeding spots, often performing extravagant dances involving jumps, head flicks and wing beats.

Our final stop before reaching Kawayu is Lake Kussharo, a beautiful caldera lake lying on the migratory path for Whooper Swans. Whilst the lake is likely to be frozen at this time of the year, in certain areas, due to the presence of natural warm water springs, the water remains free of ice and this inevitably attracts the swans which congregate on the lake's shore. In the late afternoon, with the sun setting behind the mountains to the west, it makes for a lovely setting to observe and photograph the swans.



Whooper Swans

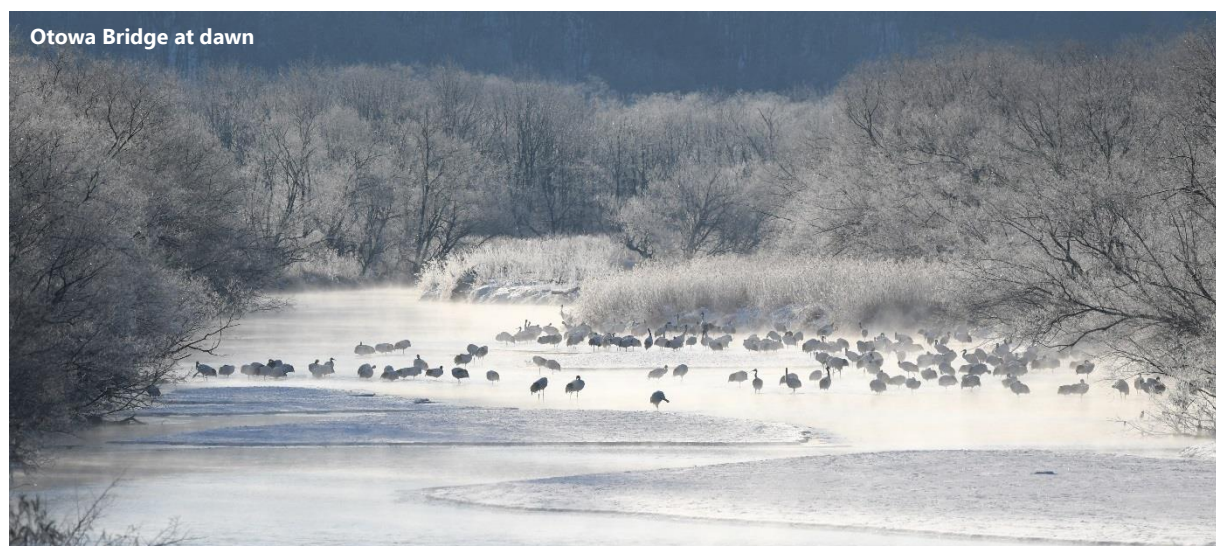
Our hotel is only a short distance from Lake Kussharo and after checking in to our rooms and freshening up, we will meet in the evening for a traditional Japanese meal, with our local guide explaining the various dishes available and the dining etiquette that comes with such a feast. Whilst many of us will no doubt retire to our rooms after dinner, for those whose body clocks have yet to adjust to the new time zone, the hotel has an excellent range of natural hot spring baths to enjoy.

Meals: Breakfast and dinner only.

Day 4

Kawayu

We will make an early start this morning, leaving the hotel at around 0530 hours to drive south for approximately one and a quarter hours to the Otowa Bridge, which crosses the Setsuri-gawa River near the village of Tsurui. In the winter the river serves as an important roosting site for Red-crowned Cranes and in the early morning mist, with the hoar frost covering the riverside trees, it is a magical place to observe and photograph these majestic creatures. It is not unusual to find White-tailed Eagles and even the occasional Steller's Sea Eagle roosting in the surrounding forests and we may also try a nearby site for Ural Owl (if they have been seen recently).



From the bridge we will drive a short distance to Tsurui Ito Crane Sanctuary, arriving in time for the morning feed. Whilst the cranes are completely wild, to aid their recovery and minimise conflict with local farmers, designated feeding sites have been established across Hokkaido where volunteers distribute grain and sometimes fish to help supplement the cranes feeding. These sites offer the best opportunities to view the cranes and we will have plenty of time to observe the cranes flying in, feeding and, with luck, demonstrating their graceful courtship displays and dances, filling the crisp morning air with their calls.

We will take lunch in a nearby restaurant before retracing our steps back north, to Akan National Park where we will spend the remainder of the day visiting Mount Iō and Lake Mashū. Akan National Park, was designated in 1934 and covers an area of 905 square kilometres, comprising a mixed habitat of sub-arctic coniferous forest, large caldera lakes and volcanoes. Traditionally mined for sulphur, the area is now protected and provides refuge to a range of mammals including Sika Deer, Red Fox and Brown

Bear. Whilst the latter will be hibernating at this time, we stand a good chance of seeing the other mammal species as we visit two of the park's most iconic landmarks.

Only a short distance from our hotel, Mount Iōzan (Iōzan means "Sulphur Mountain") is a small active volcano approximately 500 metres in height and with over 1,500 sulfurous vents that can frequently be found steaming and hissing away. The volcano's lava dome was believed to have been formed around 1,700 years ago, a relatively short history for a volcano and today the volcano still warms the natural springs found in Kawayu and at our hotel.

Lake Mashū, located directly to the east of Kawayu, is widely regarded to be one of Japan's most beautiful lakes and currently vies for the position of 'clearest lake in the world'. Volcanically formed around 32,000 years ago, it is surrounded by steep crater walls with no significant inlets or outlets. A pair of White-tailed Eagles hold territory in the area and it is not unusual to see them gliding past at eye-level. Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers, Eurasian Nuthatch and Marsh Tit also live in the fringing woodlands.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 5

Rausu

This morning we drive east, first to the port of Shibetsu, where we will scan the harbour for Harlequin and Long-tailed Ducks, Black Scoter and possible White-tailed Eagles, before following the coastal road north to the small fishing town of Rausu, located on the edge of the Shiretoko National Park. The route should afford us with good views of the Okhotsk Sea and, where possible, we will stop to scan the sea for flocks of seabirds that may include Spectacled Guillemot, Ancient Murrelet, Pelagic Cormorant, Glaucous-winged Gull and further rafts of sea ducks.



With a population of just over 5,000 inhabitants, primarily supported by the fishing industry, at first glance Rausu is not unlike many other small fishing towns located throughout Japan. However, unlike most fishing towns, Rausu is also home to up to a thousand wintering Steller's Sea Eagles, which can be

seen with ease in the town and surrounding areas. Whilst Rausu has always been an important wintering site for Steller's Sea Eagles, with the birds attracted by the rich waters of the Okhotsk Sea, it is likely that they have profited from the operations of the town's fishing fleet - and more recently tourist boats - feasting on the discarded bycatch in a similar manner to the way gull species follow trawlers elsewhere in the world.



Arriving in Rausu in the early afternoon, providing the weather conditions allow, we will take to the water for an hour for eye-to-eye encounters with the numerous Steller's Sea Eagles and their smaller cousins the White-tailed Eagles that winter here. The crew often throw fish overboard encouraging eagles, of both species, to swoop down alongside the boat at point blank range. After enjoying this spectacle for a while, the captain usually positions the boat next to the harbour

breakwater for eye-level encounters with more Steller's Sea Eagles sitting and feeding on the high snow-covered wall. The birds are often wonderfully close and the opportunities for frame-filling photos of these powerful raptors is just superb!



Arriving back on land, we travel a short distance to our hotel, just outside the town, where we check-in and have the chance to freshen up, before enjoying an early dinner and then heading out to a site where we have an excellent chance of seeing the magnificent Blakiston's Fish Owl, the largest and one of the rarest owls in the world. Arriving at dusk, we will have a maximum of three hours in a heated hide (with open windows) overlooking a floodlit stretch of river where the owls frequently hunt. As with anything in the natural world, it is impossible to predict, when, or indeed, if an owl will turn up, but the hide has a very high success rate at this time of the year and if we are patient then we should be lucky.

Meals: Breakfast and dinner only.

Day 6

Rausu

This morning we have an early start, as we join another boat trip out of Rausu. The early morning trip provides a very different experience and typically offers the opportunity to watch the Steller's Sea Eagles leaving their roost sites and flying out to sea. It is a quite remarkable sight to see literally dozens of these majestic birds flying overhead in the early morning light and we should again be treated to some fabulous views and photographic opportunities as the birds home in on our vessel. If the pack-ice is

within reach then we will head out to it and enjoy the spectacle of the eagles, and other birds, within this icy seascape. The arrival of the pack-ice is notoriously difficult to predict, however, and if it has not come far enough south at the time of our visit, or if the region's fickle weather conditions close in, we will enjoy the spectacle of the eagles close to Rausu. Whether or not the pack-ice is within reach you are assured of some memorable encounters with this majestic raptor and many breathtaking photographic opportunities!

The rest of the day will be spent exploring Rausu and the coastline to the south. In the harbour at Rausu, we can hope to find Harlequin Ducks, Common Goldeneye and Goosanders, whilst Rausu River often attracts Brown Dipper, Whooper Swans and Pintail, with the occasional eagle found bathing in the



Blakiston's Fish Owl

freshwater. The windswept Notsuke Peninsular to the south of Shibetsu is also worth exploring and attracts Snow Bunting and Sika Deer, plus plenty of wintering ducks and auks.

Depending on which evening we are booked in for, it may be that the Blakiston's Fish Owl hide visit will be this evening, or we can simply enjoy a relaxing meal back at our Rausu hotel.

Meals: Breakfast and dinner only

Day 7

Yoroushi

This morning we will take a walk close to our hotel, hoping to encounter Eurasian Nuthatch, Japanese Pygmy-Woodpecker, Dusky Thrush, Willow Tit and Brown Dipper. We will then drive south, travelling back along the coastline, stopping for anything of interest, before heading back in land to the small village of Yoroushi, where we spend our final night in Hokkaido at the delightful Dai Ichi Onsen.

Arriving in time for lunch, we will enjoy a fabulous meal of the finest local produce, before venturing out on foot to explore the lodge grounds, passing through mixed woodland and along a picturesque stretch of river, where we can again hope to see Brown Dipper, Crested Kingfisher and with luck, Solitary Snipe. For those who would rather remain within the warmth of the lodge, from the comfort of the restaurant and foyer area, one can keep an eye on the hotel's bird feeders, which frequently attract such species as Brown-eared Bulbul, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Japanese Tit, Hawfinch and Marsh Tit, as well as Hokkaido Red Squirrel.

As dusk falls and the temperature plummets, we will gather by the fire in the hotel foyer and through a series of large windows, we will await the arrival of the hotel's most famous residents, a pair of Blakiston's Fish Owls that hold territory in the valley and often visit the hotel's small pond in search of fish. It is a slightly artificial set-up, but if the owls do arrive, the views can be incredible and you can observe these magnificent birds at very close range. We should hopefully be able to enjoy watching Red Fox whilst we wait for the appearance of an owl. At some point, we will have to tear ourselves away to enjoy a

sumptuous meal, but the hotel staff are usually very helpful and will alert us if the owl arrives whilst we are eating.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 8

Tokyo

We have a few hours this morning to enjoy the comfort and warmth of the hotel, have a final look for the Solitary Snipe in the river or perhaps venture into their thermal baths, before leaving mid-morning to drive back to Kushiro for our mid-afternoon flight back to Tokyo.

On arrival we will once again aim to take advantage of the excellent rail service to travel into the city for our overnight near Tokyo's main railway station. Tokyo offers a fabulous variety of restaurants, both western and Japanese and depending on the preferences of the group, the tour leader will propose a nearby restaurant for the evening meal, but you are also very welcome to do your own thing if you wish.

Meals: Breakfast only

Day 9

Nagano



in the gardens we will look for Dusky Thrush, Varied Tit, Daurian Redstart and Bull-headed Shrike.

Today we enjoy a far more leisurely start to the day. You will have a free morning to explore the city independently or join the tour leader for a walk around the grounds of the nearby Imperial Palace. Although we are unable to enter the palace itself, the moat surrounding the complex and the manicured gardens within are interesting to explore both historically and ornithologically. Waterfowl on the moat include Eastern Spot-billed Duck and the beautiful Falcated Duck, whilst

In the early afternoon we will return to Tokyo's main railway station to catch our Shinkansen (Bullet Train) to the city of Nagano, approximately 240 kilometres north-west of the capital. Travelling at speeds of in excess of 300 kilometers per hour, the journey only takes 90 minutes as we are whisked through the Japanese countryside, passing numerous towns and villages enroute.

On arrival we will walk the short distance to our modern city hotel located just across the road from the railway station and then venture out for dinner.

Meals: Breakfast only.

Day 10

Nagano

Nagano is the capital city of Nagano Prefecture in the Chūbu region of Japan and dates back to the 7th century when the Zenkoji Temple was relocated to this site in 642 AD. Throughout history the area was hotly contested by numerous clans, with several major battles taking place nearby and today, the city serves as an important pilgrimage site for millions of pilgrims visiting the Zenkoji Temple. The surrounding mountains, often described as the Japanese Alps, attract their fair share of winter sports enthusiasts and the snow-covered mountains also provide refuge to one of Japan's most famous wildlife inhabitants, the hot spring bathing Japanese Macaques, or 'Snow Monkeys'.

This morning we drive up into the mountains around Nagano and make our way to the locality known as Jigokudani, which literally translates as 'Hell Valley.' Following a picturesque two kilometre trail that snakes through the dense coniferous forest, we eventually find ourselves in the valley of the Yokoyu River, and it is here amongst the steaming hot springs that two large troops of Japanese Macaques reside. The most northerly of all non-human primates, the



Japanese Macaque has grown larger and developed a thicker coat than similar macaque species found elsewhere in the world, and it is these adaptations that allow them to live in temperatures as cold as minus 20 degrees Celsius. However, being a highly intelligent animal, the macaques of this area have taken to bathing in the hot springs to warm themselves and alleviate the extreme cold. It is a quite remarkable sight to see these wild animals displaying such human-like behaviour, with the joy taken from the experience only too evident on their faces!



In the afternoon, after we have enjoyed plenty of time with the macaques, we will travel back to Nagano and visit the Zenkoji Temple, where we have a guided tour of the complex, learning about the temple's history and fascinating customs, including 'The Key to Salvation', which sees visitors following a pitch-black tunnel beneath the altar, before hopefully finding the metallic form of a large key which signifies your salvation. The grounds of the temple are also home to an

interesting variety of birds including Dusky and Pale Thrushes, Bull-headed Shrike, Japanese Grosbeak and Brambling.

Meals: Breakfast only.

Day 11

Tokyo

This morning we will travel by coach for an hour and a half or so to the snowy deciduous forests of Karuizawa. The scenic drive will take us through a landscape of snow-covered hills and fields, through numerous tunnels and past several volcanic cones. At Karuizawa we will explore the so-called 'Bird Park', an area of beech forest alongside a fast flowing stream. The park has become well known over the years for its winter birding and species to look out for include Japanese Waxwing, Japanese Grosbeak, Varied Tit, Japanese Accentor, Meadow Bunting, Japanese Green Woodpecker, Oriental Greenfinch, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Brown Dipper and if very fortunate, the beautiful (but very elusive) Copper Pheasant. Those who would prefer not to join the birding walk can explore the cafes and shops of the Karuizawa mountain resort a short distance away.



Around mid-afternoon we will return to Tokyo by coach and spend our final night in Japan at a comfortable airport hotel, ready for tomorrow's early flight home.

Meals: Breakfast only.

Day 12

Fly London

This morning we transfer the short distance to Tokyo airport, from where we take a direct mid-morning British Airways flight to London, arriving later that day.

Optional extension to Kyushu to visit Izumi Crane Reserve (typically offered post tour, but sometimes offered pre-tour).

Day 12 – 14

Izumi

Returning to Tokyo's Haneda Airport, we fly south to Kyushu for a 3-night stay on Japan's south westernmost main island and arguably it's most beautiful. In contrast to the cold, harsh landscape of Hokkaido, Kyushu enjoys a sub-tropical climate, with extensive forest cover, rocky volcanic peaks and sweeping sandy beaches. This rich landscape and milder climate attracts one of the most spectacular gatherings of cranes in the world.



Up to 15,000 Hooded Cranes are joined by lesser numbers of elegant White-naped Cranes - and a handful of Common and Sandhill Cranes – which gather on the coastal wetlands and reclaimed ‘polders’ close to the town of Izumi creating a spectacular audible and visual spectacle. The wintering area of the cranes is also a renowned winter birding area in its own right where a range of waterfowl are joined by such species as Chestnut-eared, Rustic and Meadow Buntings, Russet Sparrow, Eastern Rook and Buff-bellied Pipit. Black-faced Spoonbill and Saunders’s Gull are also regular at this time of year, whilst inland the woodlands and reservoir around the Kogawa Dam are home to Mandarin Duck, Red-flanked Bluetail, Slaty Bunting, Crested Kingfisher and White-bellied Green Pigeon.

We will be based for 3-nights in a comfortable ‘western style’, but simple, hotel in the town of Izumi.

Meals: Breakfast only.

Day 15

Fly Tokyo

We have a further morning to enjoy the birdlife of Kyushu before travelling to Kagoshima Airport where we fly back to Tokyo, for a final night in the capital at a comfortable airport hotel.

Meals: Breakfast only.

Day 16

Fly London

This morning we transfer the short distance to Tokyo airport, from where we take a direct mid-morning British Airways flight to London, arriving later that day.

Meals: Breakfast only.

Tour Grading

In terms of physicality, this is a relatively straightforward wildlife holiday with no overly demanding walks involved. The longest walk is to see the ‘Snow Monkeys’ and this is approximately two kilometres in length along a snowy forest trail, with a series of steep steps at the end. We will have plenty of time to walk the trail, however, and the tour leader will be on hand to assist if needed. Throughout the holiday we will be exposed to very cold temperatures (as low as minus 20 degrees C at night), and it will be snowy and icy underfoot. Please take this into consideration when booking.

It is not uncommon for flights to be delayed in the winter and therefore, rather than pushing connection times, we have simply allowed extra nights in Tokyo. This makes the tour itinerary slightly more cumbersome, but should allow us some leeway in the event of bad weather. From time to time we will take also advantage of Japan’s excellent rail network and this will mean carrying/wheeling your bag for a few hundred metres at a time through the railway stations, across roads, and then to the nearby hotels. Please take this into consideration when packing.

If you have any questions about travelling, please do not hesitate to contact us in the Naturetrek Office and we will happily to advise you accordingly.

Accommodation

During our time in Tokyo, Nagano, and Izumi (if undertaking the extension) we will stay in 'western style' rooms, with private bathroom facilities. Although small (space is at a premium in Japan!), the rooms are typically very clean and comfortable.

During our first four nights on Hokkaido, we will stay in traditional Japanese Inns (ryokans), which typically offer more spacious rooms, with private bathrooms, but lack a western-style bed. Instead, we sleep on futons, which are essentially rolled up mattresses that are stored away during the day time and then set up for sleeping by the hotel staff in the evenings. Most people find the futons very comfortable, but you obviously need to be mobile enough to get yourself down to the floor and back up again!



For our final night on Hokkaido, we will stay in a comfortable lodge with good-sized rooms and western style beds, but lacking a bath or shower. The rooms have a private toilet and wash basin, but you are encouraged to wash in the excellent on site hot water springs (onsens). We appreciate that this is a little unusual by western standards, but the lodge is otherwise very comfortable and one of the best places in the world for observing Blakiston's Fish Owl.

Onsens are an important part of Japanese culture and the ones on Hokkaido are regarded as being amongst the best available. They are typically single sex and follow a policy of not allowing swimwear which may put some people off, but if you can throw aside your inhibitions, they are a delightful way to unwind at the end of a cold day in the field!

Food

Dining in Japan is a fascinating experience and we will have the opportunity to enjoy a fabulous variety of dishes, many of them based on local ingredients of the finest quality, including a large amount of seafood. However, such dishes are not to everyone's taste and whilst on Hokkaido alternative options will be very limited, when in Tokyo, Nagano and Izumi there are western options available and therefore on these evenings we have not included dinner in the cost of the tour.

Breakfasts are included throughout the holiday, but the majority of lunches are not (please see individual days). There will typically be the opportunity to purchase lunch each day at a convenience store or supermarket, allowing participants to opt for sandwiches/pastries or more traditional Japanese cuisine. We suggest allowing around £250 to £300 per person for the extra meals on the main tour and approximately £150 for the Kyushu extension.

Extra expenses

In addition to the meals not included in the tour cost and outlined in the above itinerary, drinks are also excluded as is laundry, any locally paid airport taxes and all items of a personal nature. Tipping is not expected in Japan.

Flights

Flights for this tour are based on departures from London and we typically take a direct flight from Heathrow to Tokyo. For anyone interested in regional flight options or connections, please contact the Naturetrek office.

Your safety & security

You have chosen to travel to Japan. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/japan prior to travel.

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.

