

Poland's Mammals: In Search of the Eurasian Lynx!

Naturetrek Tour Report

21st – 28th April 2026



Grey Wolf



Eurasian Lynx



Pygmy Owl



Brown Bear

Tour report by Jan Kelchtermans
Photos by Simon Pugsley



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Jan Kelchtermans and Mark Kaptein (leaders) with five Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Tuesday 21st April

The start of this journey from Kraków went remarkably smoothly. The fifth and final group of Naturetrek clients for this tour arrived at Kraków Airport without any significant delays or long waits at customs. The drive to the Bieszczady region took about five hours, and led us through an ever-changing Polish landscape. Wide motorways gradually gave way to smaller secondary roads. Urban areas transitioned into quiet villages, where traditional wooden houses could still be seen scattered among vast fields and meadows. The characteristic Orthodox churches also regularly drew attention along the way.

As we approached the sparsely populated Subcarpathian region, the first outlines of the Bieszczady National Park appeared on the horizon. The journey already yielded some nice observations. Along the route we saw several Hooded Crows, White Storks, an active Rook colony, and multiple groups of Roe Deer lingering at the edges of the fields.

The first evening excursion, however, was somewhat less successful. We only caught a distant glimpse of a single Bison on the opposite bank of the River San, on Ukrainian territory. In addition, we encountered a solitary Wild Boar, and upon arrival at the hotel, we spotted a Northern White-breasted Hedgehog.

Still, there was no reason for disappointment. With seven nights ahead, there would undoubtedly be plenty of further opportunities to discover remarkable nocturnal wildlife. The journey had only just begun.

Day 2

Wednesday 22nd April

The first morning of the day turned out to be rather unremarkable. There was no sign of the resident Wolf pack: no howling, no movement. The only real highlight during the early dawn survey was a sighting of a White-backed Woodpecker, an iconic species which remains relatively common here.

After the short night, everyone was given some free time during the day to recover from the morning excursion and breakfast. Around 4.00pm, we gathered again for a late, warm lunch. Shortly before 4.30pm, we set off toward an extensive mountain meadow, deep within a densely forested area. To get there, we first descended into a valley, where we took position at a viewpoint overlooking a Beaver pond. Due to the clear weather, the first Beavers took their time appearing. The dry weeks beforehand had left their mark: the water level was visibly lower. Two young Beavers foraged among the dense aquatic vegetation and initially required a trained eye to spot, but eventually everyone managed to see them. After that, activity increased steadily, and both the parents and the young were regularly visible. Some animals disappeared through an overflow in the dam into a lower marsh area, while others dived underwater to carry gnawed plant material back to their lodge, via a hidden underwater entrance.

Collared Flycatchers called, and the sounds of Black Woodpecker and Cuckoo also echoed through the forest. The Beaver-created aquatic landscape attracted a wide variety of bird species. Both resident and migratory birds made use of this rich habitat. Among others, we recorded Goosander, Mallard, Teal, Stonechat, White Wagtail, Chiffchaff and Reed Bunting.

When Mark, who was scanning a bit further away, suddenly waved for us to come quickly, we knew something special was happening. This time, it was not a group of grazing Bison, but a magnificent Wolf still wearing its thick winter coat. The animal had likely descended from the surrounding forests into the open meadow complex. The Wolf even lay down briefly in a typical dog-like posture, as if barely concerned by our presence. It did not stay long, however. Because we were relatively exposed, it soon chose to retreat back into the forest. Fortunately, everyone got a clear view of the animal, and a few documentary photos could be taken before it disappeared back up the slope. For a while, the alarmed barking of Roe Deer could be heard as the Wolf moved through the area. Only with thermal cameras could we still follow it; the forest was too dense to relocate it visually. The same applied to a solitary Bison moving through the area.

The return to the vehicle involved a steep uphill walk. By now it was completely dark, which made the hike considerably more demanding. Everyone, however, reached the starting point without issues. After eating our packed meal, the evening session began. Via the San River, we drove to a dirt road leading to a higher observation point with a radio mast. Hardly had we turned onto the road when we encountered a female Brown Bear with two cubs crossing right in front of us. The young were at barely five meters from the vehicle: it was a spectacular encounter. Less than a hundred metres further on, another surprise followed: two Grey Wolves on the track. These animals were more cooperative than the Bears had been. They repeatedly returned to the road, staying in view for extended periods. It formed a strong opening to an otherwise remarkably quiet evening.

As temperatures dropped and the sky cleared further, activity faded. Even the usual species such as Red Fox, Roe and Red Deer, and Hare were barely seen. Yet there was certainly no reason for complaint. With active Beavers during the day, a beautiful Wolf sighting in the afternoon, and encounters with both Brown Bear and Wolf during the evening excursion, this first full afternoon and evening session could only be described as exceptionally successful.

Day 3

Thursday 23rd April

The morning began spectacularly with two Wolves at the very same location where yesterday we first observed the female Bear and cubs. While one of the animals, after a brief glance over its shoulder, immediately decided to retreat, the other Wolf remained present for an extended period. Unfamiliar with a parked vehicle, it watched us attentively from a dense stand of beech trees. At one point, it even snapped at the laser pointer as if it were a fly.

Later in the day, we headed towards an observation point. First, however, we visited the border zone to inspect a site where a Lynx had killed a Roe Deer. Mark guided the group step by step through the story of the attack. He showed where the deer had been seized, where the Lynx had plucked and largely consumed its prey, and also the drag marks leading deeper into a small valley. There, the predator had carefully concealed the remains beneath vegetation, in a clever attempt to keep Ravens and other scavengers away from its meal. Details like these clearly demonstrated how efficient and methodical a Lynx is when hunting and handling its prey. A Hoopoe suddenly taking flight from the roadside verge once again reminded us that we were right in the middle of the migration period of many summer visitors.

Upon arriving at our evening location, we walked through a gently rolling landscape of meadows and forests. A fresh Brown Bear footprint in a muddy cart track confirmed that the area we were exploring was indeed highly promising. We then settled at a viewpoint to scan the surroundings for an extended period. Yet the landscape felt

remarkably empty. Endless slopes, forests, and ridges stretched out before us, but wildlife appeared almost absent. Apart from two Red Deer seen upon arrival, activity remains surprisingly limited. Once again, this highlighted the enormous contrast between day and night in this region. During daylight hours, the landscape seems quiet and deserted, while at night it comes alive with activity, especially when the large carnivores begin to move.

The finest observation of the afternoon ultimately turned out to be ornithological in nature. Shortly after arriving at the parking area, Jan managed to attract a Pygmy Owl almost immediately. The tiny owl responded loudly from close to where the vehicle was parked. That this diminutive owl species could nevertheless be highly territorial soon became very apparent. The owl actively searched for the apparent rival, which it perceived as an intruder within its territory. It frequently adopted an upright posture, making itself appear larger by sitting erect. Particularly noticeable were its rapid head movements, constant scanning of its surroundings, and abrupt turns of the head as it carefully inspected the area. Its fluffed-up feathers, especially around the head and body, as well as its repeated tail-bobbing movements, were equally characteristic. The fixed stare, during which the owl watched us intensely for extended periods, further indicated a heightened state of alertness. We also witnessed several short flights between branches, eventually developing into mock attacks. The owl actively approached us, often launching itself from a perch in a swift, steep dive. Once darkness fell, the clear sky and low-hanging moon provided the perfect backdrop for photographing this species.

The Wolf hotspot from this morning proved, just like the previous evening, exceptionally productive. The young Wolf had clearly not yet lost its lack of fear. The sight of its head resting on its front paws while peacefully gazing in our direction from behind the vehicle undoubtedly ranked among the many highlights of Mark's and Jan's guiding efforts in this region during 2026.

And the evening was far from over. Following the Pygmy Owl earlier on, we were later treated to both Tawny and Ural Owls, observed beautifully both visually and vocally. Illuminated by the beam of Mark's flashlight, both species offered excellent views. The Ural Owl in particular responded vigorously to the imitated call of "oo-hoo-hoooh," with the final note deliberately prolonged.

Then, for the fourth time during the past five tours, the title of the tour suddenly became reality. Barely a kilometre from the location where an individual had been observed a week earlier, a medium-sized spotted cat unexpectedly appeared in the middle of the road. With ears pricked forward and its gaze fixed on the surroundings, the animal was clearly searching for potential prey. Only when we imitated its call did it turn its attention towards us. Moments later, the Lynx crossed the asphalt road and disappeared into the dense adjoining forest of beech, spruce, and hazel undergrowth.

While driving back and forth along the road, both guides managed to relocate the Lynx several times, but photography proved impossible due to the density of the forest. We therefore switched off the engine and waited patiently, hoping the animal would return to the road. When we heard a series of barking sounds in quick succession, we immediately knew what was happening. Roe Deer give alarm calls when they sense danger, become startled, or detect an intruder. In this case, the cause was undoubtedly the Lynx. Initially, the barking sounded nearby, but it gradually moved deeper into the forest. With the Lynx clearly in hunting mode, our wait-and-see strategy appeared unlikely to succeed. We therefore decided to continue driving.

A further exploration of the border area produced two Wild Boar, but otherwise remained surprisingly quiet. Yet when we were almost back at the place where we had first encountered the Lynx earlier that evening, another surprise awaited us. There it was again, sitting in the middle of the road: our Eurasian Lynx. Apparently, having wandered through the forest for some time, the animal had once again chosen the road as a base for its nocturnal hunting activities. In reality, this made perfect sense. On asphalt, a predator can move almost silently, and stalk its prey without being detected. This is in stark contrast to the forest floor, which is littered with branches and leaves that reveal every movement.

And the strategy appeared successful. With its head slightly turned and its body tense, the Lynx hunted mice along the roadside verge, ready to strike at any moment. Earlier in the evening, we had heard the alarm call of a Roe Deer; now, from nearby, the haunting call of a Tengmalm's Owl echoed through the night. Once again, we were treated to wildlife experiences of the very highest calibre. These were moments that could not be planned, only experienced: it was pure enjoyment.

Remarkably, we saw very little of the more common species this evening. Sightings of Red Foxes, and Roe and Red Deer remained limited. It was not particularly cold, but apparently it was cool enough to make these animals less active later in the evening. Nevertheless, you certainly would not have heard us complaining.

Within a span of barely twenty-four hours, we had managed to observe three large carnivores, and not from great distances, but at close range, naturally and entirely unexpectedly. In just two days, Brown Bears, Grey Wolves, and a Eurasian Lynx had all appeared in front of our lenses. These are experiences that would remain with us forever.

Even on the drive back there was still more to enjoy. We spotted a Polecat and a hybrid between a Wildcat and a domestic cat. With a deeply satisfied feeling, we finally returned to our accommodation at 1.15am. What a night. What a region. And above all, what incredible wildlife.

Day 4

Friday 24th April

After breakfast, we again observed several bird species near the accommodation, before continuing our journey to the second lodge of the trip. Among others, we saw Red-breasted Flycatcher, Goosander, Black Redstart, Grey-headed Woodpecker and Dipper.

On the drive, we made our traditional stop in Cisna to stock up on supplies, including alcoholic drinks since the next accommodation had no bar service. Once the transfer was complete, the necessary shopping had been done, and the car had been refuelled, there was still plenty of free time left fully to enjoy the surroundings and the birds around our new stay.

At 5.00pm we sat down for dinner in the central building, right among the cosy wooden cabins which would be our home for the next few days. After dinner, we headed back into the forest, this time towards an open grassland, approached from above. Along the way, we were again reminded that we shared this landscape with impressive wildlife. Fresh tracks along the path revealed the recent presence of Bison, Wolves, and both Roe and Red Deer. It was clear we were not alone here.

We looked down on a meadow where three species of ungulates were feeding on the young, lush grass: Bison, Red and Roe Deer. The Bison immediately drew attention. Europe's heaviest land mammal was represented by a herd of no fewer than twenty-seven animals, spread across the open terrain. In addition, three more individuals stood higher up on the slope, partly hidden in vegetation.

Not only the large grazers attracted our attention. A reddish animal moving back and forth along an island of hawthorn scrub turned out to be a Fox. While we observed the scene of large herbivores, two forest rangers appeared. First, they approached the herd in a field vehicle, then continued on foot. For us, this was the signal to return to our minibus. On the way back, a Pygmy Owl briefly called.



Brown Bear



Grey Wolf



Tawny Owl



Ural Owl

Shortly afterwards, we again encountered the rangers. This time they were dealing with a recently shot Bison, attached by a rope to their vehicle. While one of them tried to free himself from the mud using a pulley attached to a tree, Mark struck up a conversation with his colleague. From the conversation, it became clear that part of the now roughly nine-hundred-strong population was suffering from pink eye disease, a contagious eye infection. To prevent further spread, sick animals were selectively culled. It was a stark reminder that wildlife management was not only about protection, but sometimes also about difficult choices in the interest of the health of the population as a whole.

When a Fire Salamander crossed our path, Mark carefully picked the animal up from the road to show it to the participants. A Brown Bear with cubs also crossed our path. We were even able to get out of the vehicle and briefly follow the cubs on the slope.

During the long evening session, we were lucky again: we saw Wolves twice more. The first was chewing on a deer leg in a meadow next to the road. As soon as we illuminated it with a spotlight, it calmly walked further into the field, the leg still firmly in its mouth.

Further on, we discovered two more Wolves, presumably from the same pack. They were near a Beaver lodge in a fenced meadow with mobile electric fencing. The animals immediately took off: the way one of the Grey Wolves hit the electric fence in the process and literally jumped with all four paws off the ground was as bizarre as it was hilarious to see!

Day 5

Saturday 25th April

The morning began quietly. Before breakfast, those who wished took a short independent excursion around the accommodation. Only after breakfast was a guided outing scheduled, led by one of the two guides. We drove about an hour to a beautiful location along the meandering River San. There we took a walk, primarily aimed at observing birds. However, due to the steadily advancing spring and the fact that woodpeckers breed relatively early, it turned out not to be easy to get good views of these species. The period in which they were actively drumming and calling had by now given way to much more discreet breeding behaviour.

Fortunately, Jan already knew this site from earlier visits. During one of those explorations, he had managed to locate the nest of a pair of White-backed Woodpeckers. And luck was on our side again today: both the male and female regularly showed themselves at the nest cavity, resulting in excellent observations. The advanced spring was also evident in other ways. Several summer visitors had already arrived and could be both heard and seen. Species such as Wood Warbler, Common Whitethroat and Blackcap were among the most notable sightings of the morning.

But even without birds, this walk was worthwhile. We moved through an almost untouched forest landscape along a wide, gently flowing river, which wound gracefully through the scenery. There were no managed trails, no tourist crowds, and hardly another soul in sight. It was a place where silence and nature still prevail.

After the walk there was some free time, after which we gathered in the dining hall for a late lunch. Because the weather was particularly pleasant, we decided to head out again in the late afternoon. The goal: spotting animals in the warm, golden light of the hour just before sunset.

That decision quickly proved to be a success. When we turned into a remote side road with hardly any traffic, we suddenly spotted a Brown Bear. The animal was standing among the vegetation along a small stream that ran parallel to the road. As we slowly drove past, we kept a close eye on it. When we stopped and carefully reversed the vehicle, we expected it to bolt at any moment. But that did not happen. The Brown Bear remained there, fully focused on us as it took time to assess the situation. And so a remarkable moment unfolded: human and animal observing each other attentively for several seconds, bathed in the soft evening light of the Carpathians. Moreover, the Brown Bear seemed completely at ease in what it perceived as a safe situation. It calmly resumed foraging while we were able to take plenty of photos. When it moved slightly further upstream through the vegetation, we followed along the macadam road.

A little further on, we parked the rental car and took position on a slightly elevated viewpoint overlooking the river. Hoping the Brown Bear would reappear, we waited patiently, and it reemerged almost immediately. Unperturbed, it continued grazing on the riverside vegetation, slowly but steadily moving in our direction. Only when it was very close did it notice us. It immediately took off, running, and crossed the river, disappearing into the dense vegetation on the slope. What a spectacular start to the evening!

And the spectacle continued. A little further on, we crossed a mountain pass and reached a viewpoint. There we were once again surprised: on the opposite, densely forested ridge, we suddenly spotted two Wolves. This was a completely unexpected sighting, and moreover under exactly the same cherry tree where a Lynx had been seen during a Naturetrek tour in February 2018.

Based on their size, morphological features, and the fact that a nearby den was historically known to be their den, we quickly concluded that this was the local alpha pair. Their behaviour seemed to confirm this as well. They had likely just emerged from their den, as both animals were busy scratching and grooming their fur.

But then we made a mistake. A few days earlier, a laser pointer proved to be a useful tool for indicating a young Wolf to the group. This time, however, it backfired. Instead of responding curiously to the moving light point, the Grey Wolves noticed the laser beam and were visibly startled. In a fraction of a second, they scattered, each running in a different direction. The incident once again illustrated how shy, alert and wary Grey Wolves could be. A subtle change in their environment had been enough to make them instantly reactive.

A little further on, along an asphalt road towards the Ukrainian border, we encountered a large bull Bison calmly grazing by the roadside. On the way back, we still saw it in the same spot. When it suddenly disappeared into the forest, it kicked out powerfully with a hind leg. Other Bison were present as well, though they remained mostly hidden by dense hazel scrub, which severely limits visibility. The absolute highlight, however, was a Wildcat, at exactly the same location where we had seen a Eurasian Lynx two weeks earlier. At first, we only saw the head and part of the body. Only when the animal moved further, crossed the road, and walked onto a forest track did all its typical morphological features become visible: a sturdy build, an unstriped coat, broad head, and especially a thick tail with three black rings at the end, with a black tip.

But that is not all. The well-known Wolf hotspot we passed again delivered more wonderful sightings. In an open field, we discovered three peacefully sleeping Wolves, while a fourth member of the resident pack crossed the road. For Mark, this was a perfect and harmonious highlight of another successful day. These were also the final sightings after many encounters with this pack over the past five weeks, the period during which both guides had been continuously active in the area for Naturetrek. It felt like a true privilege.

A restless Otter, which preferred to remain mostly hidden, was also spotted on the return journey, in an extensive network of terraces around a well-known Beaver pond. The animal was highly mobile and kept diving underwater as soon as Mark illuminated it. After Brown Bear, Wolf, Bison and Wildcat, this was the fifth of the six flagship species characteristic of this area, all in a single evening. Together with the top sighting of the Lynx earlier, and still with two full days ahead of us, we returned to our accommodation extremely satisfied a little later.

Day 6

Sunday 26th April

We started the morning excursion a little later, after the longer night yesterday. Early risers, however, had the opportunity to explore the surroundings of the accommodation on their own. In any case, breakfast at the new lodge was always a celebration. Fresh eggs, homemade sausages, yogurt with fruit and grains, as well as the well-known *bagnai* as a sweet option! We had absolutely delicious breakfasts here.

After breakfast, we drove towards the border with Slovakia. On an abandoned forest road, we parked the vehicle and began a short walk to a remote Beaver lodge. When we reached the hidden valley, it immediately became clear what an enormous impact Beavers have on the landscape of the Bieszczady region. They create water bodies and pools that play an important role in the ecosystem: these wet zones attract numerous species, from amphibians and insects, to birds, Otters, and even larger predators. At the same time, the dams retain water during dry periods and help reduce flooding. As a result, the landscape not only looks more natural, but is also much more diverse.

In the evening, we headed to a place deep in the forests where forest rangers had been working two days earlier to dissect the sick Bison. Mark, who had already done a research walk in the afternoon, noted that the remains of the carcass were scattered along the forest edge. And it was not just one, but two Bison. With Brown Bears having come out of hibernation a month earlier, and actively searching for food, it felt almost inevitable that they would find this spot. The clear feeding traces on the carcasses, left during the previous night, only confirmed that assumption.

Roughly an hour and a half before sunset we positioned the bus so that we had a perfect elevated view of the carcasses. Mark quickly placed two additional camera traps so that we could ensure enough footage of what was, for Brown Bears and Wolves, nothing less than a gigantic all-you-can-eat buffet in the middle of the forest. For us, the smell was anything but pleasant, but for the many insects that swarmed to it, it clearly was. And flies in turn attracted birds. Our attention was mainly drawn to a Collared Flycatcher, which skilfully hunted flies from a birch tree.

When Ravens began calling nearby, we knew that carnivores were likely in the area. Not long after, a young Brown Bear suddenly appeared from the forest. Its gaze and the way it pricked up its ears toward us made it immediately clear that our presence was not particularly appreciated. Yet it made no move to leave. Its noticeably round belly revealed that this was likely not its first visit to this site. Before it pulled a few pieces of intestines from the carcass and ate them a bit further away, sheltered behind a tree, it carefully inspected the trunk of a pine where a piece of bark had recently been torn off. Jan was reminded of something a local forest ranger from Bieszczady once told and showed him. The man lived next to a hill where a Brown Bear continued to use a winter den to this day. According to him, Brown Bears ate resin to get their digestive system going again after a long hibernation. Perhaps a larger Bear had done the same here earlier, and that is exactly what the young Brown Bear was now so carefully investigating. Who knows?

The way the young Brown Bear kept looking in one particular direction clearly showed it was not alone. But apparently its companions were less bold in showing themselves in full daylight. Unfortunately, the arrival of a 4WD in the meadow where we were positioned brought the Brown Bear sighting to an early end. Although we showed our permit, which granted us access to forest roads closed to the general public, we were politely but firmly

asked to leave the location. A second vehicle, presumably also carrying a wildlife enthusiast, was treated less kindly and was sent away more forcefully.

To avoid jeopardizing future visits in coming years, we decided to explore elsewhere. When we passed the same location again shortly afterwards, we saw a second young Brown Bear walking across a ploughed field. This individual appeared slightly larger than the first young animal we observed earlier. Photos Mark received the next day on his phone from the camera trap confirmed this assumption. The first cub had indeed not been alone, but had been accompanied by a sibling and his mother. Based on other camera trap images, different Brown Bears and even a Wolf also visited the carcasses during the rest of the night.

The route westwards mainly yielded the usual common species. In addition, we once again encountered the solitary Bison bull which had been around for several days, at his usual spot in a meadow along a stretch of road known among the guides as the “Lynx loop.” Due to the quiet course of the evening, we returned to our accommodation earlier than usual. By 11.00pm the excursion was over, and we could look back on a successful evening in the field.

Day 7

Monday 27th April

The morning started promisingly with a loudly calling Wryneck. First, the bird landed on a small patch of grass, after which it continued to let its characteristic song resound from a pruned bush along the driveway. Its plumage was masterfully camouflaged: a refined mix of grey, brown, black, and white tones, which made it almost invisible against tree bark. The resident pair of Lesser Spotted Eagles also showed themselves again on and around a tree that served as a permanent lookout post.

Afterwards, we headed towards a well-known Beaver platform. At the parking lot, it was immediately noticeable that the shallow pool, where Yellow-bellied Toads had been found every time over the past two weeks, had completely dried up. So, there was no trace of these special amphibians. The walk then took us once again through a beautiful mixed forest of beech and spruce, where Firecrest and Grey-headed Woodpecker, among others, could be spotted. While searching for Yellow-bellied Toads in another pool, we eventually did find another amphibian: Alpine Newt. Two stops later, we visited locations where Red Squirrels had regularly been observed in the past, but there too, results were lacking. Even in the spruces at the entrance, there was no trace of the agile rodent with its reddish-brown fur, striking ear tufts, and large bushy tail. Tracking down this acrobatic tree dweller proved surprisingly difficult this year. Remarkably, finding Brown Bears, Grey Wolves, and Eurasian Lynxes currently seemed easier than spotting a Eurasian Red Squirrel. Who would have thought? The same applied to the Nutcrackers, which were nowhere to be seen today.

Hoping to run into a Brown Bear again, we headed in the evening to the same remote road, which stretched for kilometres between an open landscape on one side and a river on the other. But the Bear did not show itself. The same applied to the alpha Wolf pair we had observed from a vantage point the day before yesterday. At the time, they appeared to be inspecting a potential den, perhaps the place where the pregnant female might give birth to her pups.

Since we still wanted to make a strong sighting at dusk, we drove on to a location where Bison are regularly seen. There, we had more luck. At the bottom of a meadow, a group of animals was resting peacefully. As we approached

them cautiously, Mark suddenly pricked up his ears when he heard Roe Deer barking, often an indication that a large predator might be nearby.

Unfortunately, Mark was the only one who caught a brief glimpse of a Wolf. Presumably, we had just missed a patrolling pack. After all, the Roe Deer were located across the road, opposite the spot where the Bison were lying. Hoping to find the Wolves further along, we turned onto another road leading north. However, the Wolves did not show themselves again. What we did encounter, however, was a herd of Bison bulls. We cautiously sneaked closer. As soon as the animals spotted us, they seemed to hesitate about their next move. Raised tails and nervously turning heads betrayed the fact that tension was rising, yet they remained standing in place for quite some time. Only at the very last moment did they decide to take to their heels. With thunderous force and amid the crunching of breaking branches, the mighty animals disappeared into the adjacent forest. An impressive moment at dusk!

Where we had seen Bison a little earlier and the characteristic barking of Roe Deer had echoed through the landscape, Bison were now grazing on both sides of the road. Two different herds were feasting on the young, tender grass shooting out of the ground throughout the meadows.

Afterwards, we decided to make one more detour towards the region where the forest rangers would rather not have had us. At a location a little further on, where we had already seen Bison and a female Brown Bear with cubs during earlier tours, we picked up a Raccoon Dog with our thermals. However, the animal did not choose the open terrain, but the shelter of the forest, after which it disappeared without a trace.

As a result, we arrived back at the accommodation slightly earlier than planned. Later in the evening, a glimmer of hope emerged when Mark located two Raccoon Dogs near a resting herd of Bison, barely a few minutes from our accommodation. However, anyone who rushed to catch a glimpse of the animals was sadly disappointed. By the time we arrived, the Raccoon Dogs had already disappeared. This was by no means a disaster. Raccoon Dogs could be observed elsewhere as well, and we had already spotted Bison several times on this trip. Moreover, the final evening and the encounters with the various Bison herds had already provided more than enough beautiful moments.

Looking back, we could only conclude that this trip had been a great success. After all, all six of the iconic mammals we came for had showed themselves, and often even multiple times: Brown Bear, Wolf, Lynx, Bison, Wildcat and Otter. We could hardly have wished for a better final report.

Day 8

Tuesday 28th April

With a drive of about four hours ahead of us, and the often-busy traffic around Kraków in mind, we left our accommodation as early as 6.30am. After driving for about an hour and a half, we left the Bieszczady behind us for good. The landscape, which had enchanted us with vast forests, hills, and tranquility, gradually gave way to more buildings, traffic, and urbanization. This marked the end of yet another particularly successful trip in the beautiful Bieszczady Mountains, for the leaders, the fifth in a row!

Guides and participants looked back on an unforgettable period with more than satisfaction. We said goodbye to each other at Kraków airport. Everyone flew back home with a backpack full of beautiful memories of an exceptional part of Poland.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek email list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers.

naturetrek.co.uk/e-newsletter-signup

Scan to
sign up!



Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, Bluesky and X and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers, exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



[instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays](https://www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays)



[facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays](https://www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays)



naturetrek.bsky.social



x.com/naturetrektours (formerly Twitter)

Species lists

Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	April 2026							
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Beaver	<i>Castor fiber</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Northern White-breasted Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus roumanicus</i>	✓							
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Bison	<i>Bison bonasus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	✓		✓					
Eurasian Lynx	<i>Lynx lynx</i>			✓					
European Wildcat	<i>Felis silvestris</i>					✓			
Chinese Raccoon Dog	<i>Nyctereutes procyonoides</i>							✓	
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Wolf	<i>Canis Lupus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
Brown Bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓		
European Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	✓		✓			✓	✓	
Stone Marten	<i>Martes foina</i>								
European Polecat	<i>Mustela putorius</i>			✓					
Eurasian Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>					✓			

Amphibians & reptiles

Common name	Scientific name
Fire Salamander	<i>Salamandra salamandra</i>
Alpine Newt	<i>Ichthyosaura alpestris</i>
Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>
Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>
Sand Lizard	<i>Lacerta agilis</i>
Viviparous Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>

Birds

Common name	Scientific name
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>
Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Tengmalm's Owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>
Eurasian Pygmy Owl	<i>Glaucidium passerinum</i>
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>
Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>
Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>
European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>
Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>
Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>
Common whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>
Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>