PRIMEVAL FOREST & MARSHES

8 DAYS

białowieża forest & biebrza marshes

Let our most experienced local guides take you to the best sites of the Białowieża Forest and Biebrza Marshes in the height of each season. Visit places you wouldn't find on your own and spend plenty of quality time out in the wilderness.
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8 DAYS IN THE BIAŁOWIEŻA FOREST & BIEBRZA MARSHES

HIGHLIGHTS
✓ Visit the Primeval Białowieża Forest and Biebrza Marshes
✓ See European Bison, Elk (Moose) and other mammals - depending on the season
✓ Watch the rare birdlife of Poland’s most precious National Parks
✓ Boat cruise along the river for watching Beavers
✓ Experience the traditional Eastern Poland with an experienced and enthusiastic local guide
✓ Visit Warsaw old town

OUTLINE ITINERARY
Day 1: Pick up from Warsaw Airport and transfer to the Białowieża Forest
Days 2/3/4: Wildlife watching in the Białowieża Forest
Day 5: Transfer to the Biebrza Marshes, several stops en route.
Days 6/7: Wildlife watching in the Biebrza Marshes
Day 8: Transfer to Warsaw, walk and lunch in the Old Town
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THIS TOUR RUNS AT THE TOP TIME OF EACH SEASON:

APRIL - MAY
The best time for flooded meadows with Marsh Marigolds as well as Ruffs and other waders in breeding plumage. Very good for large mammals like Bison, Elk and Beaver. Best time for early migrants such as Collared Flycatcher, Bluethroat, Marsh Terns as well as some Woodpeckers and Owls. No mosquitoes in April!

JUNE
The best time for late birds like Thrush Nightingale, Aquatic Warbler, Corncrake, Red-backed Shrike, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Barred & River Warblers, Rosefinch. Still a good time for large mammals like Bison, Elk, Beaver and others. Explosion of wildflowers, butterflies, dragonflies and other invertebrates.

JULY - AUGUST
Outburst of wildflowers, butterflies, dragonflies and other invertebrates continues. Only some birds are still active and mostly at dawns. Last months to see Storks and other birds before they leave. Bison mating season starts and large Bison herds can be found at glades. Perfect months for Beaver watching at our boat cruise but other mammals can be more difficult to find and therefore we will focus on dusks and dawns more, as the days can be hot.

SEPTEMBER
High activity of Woodpeckers and Owls, migration of waders, birds of prey and Cranes, Bison, Red Deer and Elk have their rutting season and males of Deer and Elk wear impressive antlers. This is also the best time of the year for numerous fungi. The foliage starts turning yellow but most of it still remains green.

OCTOBER
The best time for picturesque autumn colours and wildlife in mist. Good for Bison, Beavers (during our evening boat trip), Elks (Moose) with antlers, large flocks of Cranes. Not many birds left at this time but the stunning autumn colours make up for it and there is more time to focus on mammal and landscape photography.
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ITINERARY
DAY 1

The tour starts in Warsaw. Participants arrive at Warsaw F. Chopin Airport Okecie (WAW) at their own expense. If you fly into Warszawa Modlin (WMI), you should account for ca. 2 hrs to get to WAW airport.

13.00 (at the latest) pick up from Warsaw F. Chopin Airport Okecie (WAW) and transfer to Białowieża Forest. After ca. 4 hrs drive we will check in a comfortable guesthouse/hotel in the Białowieża village.

After a hearty Polish dinner the guide will introduce you to the area and talk about the plans. For the next three full days (Days 2 to 4) we will be exploring the Białowieża Forest and the surrounding areas.

If time allows, our guide will offer a short evening walk already on the 1st day so that you can get accustomed to the area and possibly see some wildlife!
DAY 2

BISON SAFARI

At dawns and dusks we will go after wild European Bison, trying to get you close to these magnificent animals.

There are over 500 Bison living in the wild here and we have probably the best local knowledge on where to find them. We will transfer in our minibus through the forest and go for a few short walks and visit a number of different lookout sites in a more safari style. We may see individual old bulls, small herds of younger animals or large mixed herds of cows with calves. We have seen wild Bison on all our previous trips so far and have had some really close encounters, especially in the early spring and autumn.

At middays, we will take you further into the wild. You will see some of our favourite trails that wind through a variety of different habitats deep in the centre of the Białowieża Forest. Species seen on such walks include some of the rare woodpeckers, birds of prey or mammals such as Bison, Red Deer or even Wolves and Lynx.
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DAY 3

PRIMEVAL FOREST RESERVE

On one of the days in the Białowieża Forest our expert nature guide will invite you for a walk through the only accessible part of the Strict Protection Area of the National Park in Białowieża, the Man and Biosphere Reserve and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is a must-see for every visitor in Białowieża.

This trip takes you back in time a few thousand years, when most of Europe was covered with a similar forest. The dense forest of huge, centuries-old trees that host thousands of creatures on the verge of extinction. Our expert guide will share his great knowledge with enthusiasm that will change your view of nature. This excursion will awaken and educate. You will feel as if you have been transported into a BBC wildlife documentary.

You will also have a chance to see some of the rare woodpeckers like Black, White-backed or Three-toed as well as other birds, depending on the season. All our guides are experienced birders and will point out everything that there is to see.
DAY 4

WOLF TRACKING, BIRDWATCHING AND A LOT MORE

Our guide will take you for a few more walks in the Białowieża Forest and the surrounding areas to show you season’s best at a variety of habitats.

Early spring you will have a chance to watch the Three-toed and White-backed Woodpeckers, Hazel Grouse or Pygmy Owl while late spring is the best for Thrush Nightingale, Collared and Red-breasted Flycatchers, Rosefinch or the numerous Marsh, Barred and River Warblers.

In summer you will spend some time at the shores of the lakes where Black Stork, White-tailed or Lesser Spotted Eagles can be seen. Finally, autumn brings the numerous colourful fungi and rutting season of Bison, Red Deer and Elk.

But there is so much more to see: wildflowers, plentiful frogs and toads, snakes and lizards, butterflies, dragonflies and underwater invertebrates. Your days will start early and finish late - all to give you a full experience of the unscathed nature of north-eastern Poland.
TO THE BIEBRZA MARSHES

After the usual hearty Polish breakfast, we will set off for a few hours journey to the Biebrza Marshes. Driving through the countryside you will see some traditional wooden architecture and we will also have a chance to stop at one of the many colourful villages for a short walk and a full eastern Poland experience.

In spring and summer we will visit a few small ponds with abundant White-tailed Eagles, Marsh Harriers, Black and Red-necked Grebes and a lot more (the usual frogs, toads and insects). We will end the day with a short walk in the Biebrza National Park and try to spot our first Elk (all seasons) or one of the rarest birds in the world - the famous Aquatic Warbler (spring and summer) at one of the largest peat-bogs of Europe.

We shall arrive at our guesthouse/hotel in the Biebrza area on time for a substantial dinner after which we will again have a short talk about the plans for the next days.
DAY 6 - MORNING

ELK SAFARI

This early morning we will go for an Elk (Moose) safari driving through the willow shrub and vast fens. We may also have a short walk to one of the wooden hides overviewing the marshes. There are over 1000 Elks in this area and our guides know the wetlands like the back of their hands. We have had some fantastic close encounters with Elks on most previous trips, especially in early spring.

After a hearty Polish breakfast we will continue visiting the best sites that Biebrza has to offer at a given season. We may take a walk in the bog alder forest for woodpeckers or scan the vast marshes for White-tailed, Lesser and Greater Spotted Eagles, Hoopoe, Black Stork and other common birds. We may also pay a short visit at a picturesque raised bog with its variety of rare flora.

We shall get back for an earlier (but still plentiful) dinner on this day and in the evening we will set off for a Beaver safari.
DAY 6 - EVENING

BEAVER SAFARI

In the evening we will set off for a boat trip to watch Beavers. When the time is right, just about sunset, we will board our stable flat-bottomed boat for a gentle cruise down the river. You will spend a good hour or more on the water having chances to spot several Beavers as they swim across the river, get out to the shores to mark the territory, groom their fur and feed on twigs.

We have run this very popular trip for several years now and never missed a Beaver sight! It actually became a highlight of the whole tour for many of our previous participants.
DAY 7

RED BOG TREK, WOLF TRACKING, BIRDWATCHING AND A LOT MORE

This morning our guide will take you into the restricted area of the Biebrza National Park, the famous Red Bog Reserve, home for one pack of Wolves and plenty of other wildlife. You will learn the advanced tracking skills and see some of the most stunning landscapes. We will spend some time on the glacial sand dunes at the edge of the marsh where snakes and lizards are often found and we will have our packed lunch in the heart of the National Park overviewing the vast marshland.

In spring and autumn we may change the red bog trek for a drive around a few other sites in the Biebrza National Park where a lot more is likely to happen - the spectacle of lekking Ruff and Snipe, breeding White-winged Terns, Black-tailed Godwits or spawning frogs and flocking Cranes.
This morning, after our usual substantial breakfast (don’t worry, you will get used to it by the end of the holiday) we will set off for a ca. 3 hours journey back to Warsaw. We plan to arrive at Warsaw by 12:00, have a short walk in the Old Town and sit at a small restaurant for a traditional Polish lunch.

The tour ends when we arrive in Warsaw. Participants book a hotel there and flights home at their own expense. Around 16:00 we will drive you to the WAW airport or drop you off at a hotel, if you stay in Warsaw.