LONG EARED OWLS OF SERBIA

5 days
LONG EARED OWLS OF SERBIA

Countries visited
Serbia

Tour Highlights
• Experience the biggest gathering of Long-Eared Owls in the world
• Kikinda town, the World Owl Capital
• Visit Fantast Castle, where Long-eared and Short-eared Owls winter
• Backo Gradite, which houses a medium sized Long-eared Owl roost of up to 150 birds.
• Slano Kopovo Nature Reserve which attracts up to 20,000 birds a day
• And of course, the Serbia food and hospitality

Places visited
Belgrade • Ecka • Zrenjanin • Kikinda • Fantast Castle • Slano Kopovo Nature Reserve

What's included
• Transfers to and from airport
• Accommodation
LONG EARED OWLS OF SERBIA

- Breakfast and some other meals. See meal plan
- Tour leader and local birding guides
- Transport
- Park and site entry fees

All accommodation subject to availability. Final accommodation choices will be confirmed after booking.
Your Itinerary Explained

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Place visited</th>
<th>Meals</th>
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The first part of the text in each day is the itinerary schedule and will explain what you will normally see/do during this day of your itinerary.

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The part of the day’s text in italics (and comes after the three dashes “---”) is background information on the places or sites on that day of your itinerary. It is not part of your itinerary and may mention places that will not be visited on your itinerary. If you have any questions please ask us. Travel times where noted are only meant as a guideline.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1  Belgrade - Ecka

Arrive at Belgrade where you will be met by a Travel The Unknown representative. Transfer to Kastel Ecka, your base for the duration of your stay in Serbia. Overnight in Ečka.

Day 2  Kikinda

Travel to Kikinda town, the World Owl Capital. This unique site is a town square which hosts the largest Long-eared Owl roosting site of approximately 750 birds. Additional Long-Eared Owl roosts will be visited in the near surroundings of Kikinda where you will have the opportunity to take close up photographs of the owls. You will be also looking for urban dwelling Short-eared Owls, Little Owls and Syrian Woodpeckers, as well as stopping to spot Hen Harriers and Great Grey Shrikes. Dinner in a local restaurant in Zrenjanin. Overnight in Ečka.

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**Kikinda** is the most populated town of long-eared owls, and unusually the owls choose to live in close proximity to humans. Kikinda also has a number of short-eared owls, little owls and kestrels in residence. This tiny town in the Pannonian Plain is a must visit for any enthusiastic birder.
### Day 3 | Backo Gradite - Fantast Castle - Becej

Visit Backo Gradite which houses a medium sized Long-eared Owl roost of up to 150 birds. Since 2006, Night Herons have also overwintered here - a very unusual case of successful winter stays of a typical long distant migrant. Next travel to Fantast Castle, passing one of the largest carp fishponds in Serbia where you will look for Pygmy Cormorants and other wildfowl. At Fantast Castle, look for wintering Long-eared and Short-eared Owl as well as signs of Little and Barn Owls in the stables of a local farm. Stop at Bečej for dinner in local restaurant. Overnight in Ečka.

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**Fantast Castle** was built by Bogdan Dunderski in 1919, to quash a rumour that he was not bankrupt. Dunderski was a lover of horses, and at one point had 1,400 racehorses stabled. The castle is named after Fantast, the finest horse bred at Dunderski’s stables. The castle became one of the most famous in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, however it was heavily bombed and seized by the Communists after 1945. Today, a majority of the original furnishings have still not been returned. Fantast Castle is also home to long-eared and short-eared owls who winter there, along with little and barn owls who nest in the stables.

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### Day 4 | Slano Kopovo Nature Reserve

After breakfast, travel to Slano Kopovo Nature Reserve, an area of vast alkaline grasslands, shallow salty lakes and reedbeds. This is the most famous site for Common Crane migration in Serbia as it attracts up to 20,000 birds a day. Several thousand White-fronted Geese and various ducks will also be present. Every winter, several Red-breasted Geese stop here on the way to Black Sea coast, and Saker Falcons can be seen on the hunt. In the evening, have dinner in Novi Bečej. Overnight in Ečka.

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**The Slano Kopovo Nature Reserve** is a salt marsh in the province of Vojvodina. More than 200 bird species, 73 of which nest and breed at the reserve, have been recorded here. Each year, up to 20,000 cranes migrating for the winter use the shallows of Slano Kopovo as a resting place during their journey. This fantastic event is enhanced by the sight of several thousand ducks and geese and threatened species such as the Saker and Red-Footed Falcons. The reserve has a mix of boggy and saltwater wetlands and dry grasslands, making it a haven for birds.

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### Day 5 | Belgrade - Departure

After breakfast, depart to Belgrade airport for your flight home.

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