

Tour Report

Poland - Winter Wildlife Photography

12 - 18 December 2021

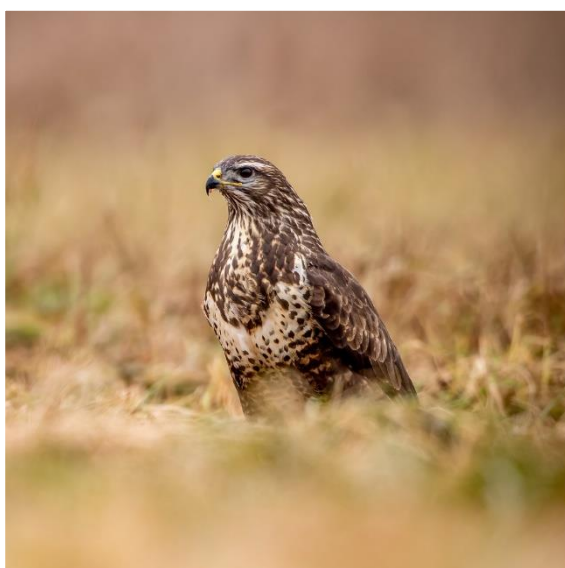
European bison



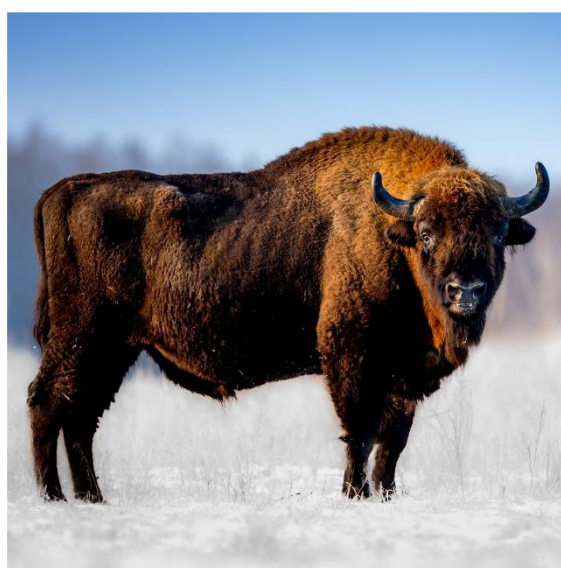
Eurasian jay



Buzzard



European bison



Compiled by Sean Weekly

Day 1: Sunday 12 December 2021

Weather: mostly clear skies -2°C

I met two of the guests at the departure lounge and enjoyed a coffee and a chat. They had previously done a trip with me so it was nice to catch up with them. I then met the rest of the group at the gate and introduced myself. Everyone was in good spirits and excited about the week ahead.

The plane was on time and boarding was smooth. Nice mild weather outside Heathrow so the cold weather in Poland certainly hit us on arrival - there was thick fog in Krakow and temperatures of -2°C! Once we arrived, we then had a three-hour drive to our hotel.

We arrived safely and were briefed about the week by our guide Marian over dinner. He was kind enough to show us some of his bison photos to inspire us before we then retired to our rooms.

Day 2: Monday 13 December 2021

Weather - Mostly Clear -1°C

We had an early start this morning for breakfast before heading off to the raptor hide for four of us at 06:00 under darkness. The other four were heading to locate the bison for a 07:00 start.

In the raptor hide, we could hear a white-tailed eagle calling from the woodlands and enjoyed encounters with two Eurasian jays, a couple of common buzzards and a diving white-tailed eagle in the morning. Magpie, four jays, lesser spotted woodpecker and raven were all fairly active throughout the day. We then had three common buzzards that turned up in the afternoon but sadly the light had gone and it was too dark for photos. But still a nice encounter. The second group did their first bison safari and had a very successful day.

Day 3: Tuesday 14 December 2021

Weather - Fairly cold day with some light frost -2 °C

One group went to the goshawk hide. The goshawk appeared at 14:45 so the light was sadly not its best but they all got some lovely photos and enjoyed seeing the goshawk. It was a first for them all so they were all very pleased. They also had numerous sightings of Eurasian jay, crested tit and lesser spotted woodpecker.

I joined the second group for the bison safari. After around 45 minutes of driving, we found our first bison. It was a lone male so tricky to approach and get close enough to for good images - he was quite weary and headed off to the cover of the forest. It was a great sighting nonetheless and gave us our first sighting of the day.

The rest of the day was very productive with numerous different encounters with the bison. We came across three females in an open meadow resting, which we were able to get close to and get some lovely images of. After spending a few hours at this location, we then moved on further into the national park. We came across a fairly big herd of bison ranging from males, females and a few calves. We then spent the rest of this session with the herd, picking out individuals to photograph.

Day 4: Wednesday 15 December 2021

Weather - Cloudy, with light rain 6 °C

It was the second group's day in the raptor hide, they had a great day with lots of visits from the jays, woodpeckers and buzzards. They had a total of three eagles come to visit the hide, sitting in the tree opposite

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for a total of four hours but sadly did not come in to feed at all. However, a few of the guests did manage to get some shots of them in flight.

Day 5: Thursday 16 December 2021

Weather - Cloudy, with light rain 5 °C

Today was our last day of photography and I decided it would be nice if the whole group could do the bison safari together. So, we took two vehicles to make sure we could fit everyone in. I drove one vehicle and our local guide drove the other.

After a short drive, we came across three lone males in a local village on some garden grounds. It was a perfect spot for some tight portraits of the bison in the rain, as we were able to get fairly close to them. We then spent most of the day with two individual females in an open meadow concentrating on some nice low-level portraits in the grass.

After a lunch break and coffee stop, we went on a woodland walk through the forest looking at various fungi and flora. We were also extremely fortunate to see some fresh wolf tracks and a small family of wild boar that ran across the footpath. It was a great end to an awesome trip.

Day 6: Friday 17 December 2021

Weather - Light cloud, 0 °C

It was an early start leaving at 05:45 to start our four-hour journey by minibus to get back to Warsaw airport before our flight back to the UK.

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Checklist



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
	BIRDS	<i>AVES</i>					
1	White-tailed eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>		✓		✓	
2	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		✓		✓	
3	European bison	<i>Bison bonasus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>			✓		
5	Eurasian jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	✓	✓	

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