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# JAPAN IN WINTER

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## Dancing Cranes, Enormous Owls and Majestic Sea-Eagles

From the bustling metropolis of Tokyo to the snowy wastes of Hokkaido this tour takes in the best of Japanese winter birding. We visit the crane centres at Arasaki and Akan, the forested hillsides of the Japanese Alps, the wetlands around Kaga and the pack ice off the Shiretoko peninsula. We hope to see monkeys bathing in hot springs surrounded by snow, sea eagles sat upon the pack ice and the magnificent Blakiston's Fish Owl coming in to feed outside our bedroom windows. This is a great opportunity to visit a fascinating and beautiful country with expert and experienced guides.

### **Key Species**

Steller's & White-tailed Eagle, Red-crowned, Hooded, White-naped and Common Cranes, Blakiston's Fish Owl, Harlequin Duck, Spectacled Guillemot, Saunders's Gull, Pygmy Woodpecker, Japanese Grosbeak, Ryukyu Minivet



Blakiston's Fish Owl, Steller's Sea-Eagle, Snow Monkey bathing in hot springs  
Photos: Phil Gregory

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### COUNTRY INFORMATION

#### **Difficulty**

This is not a difficult tour and is suitable for anyone with moderate standard of fitness.

It will be extremely cold in Hokkaido where temperatures of - 20 degrees are not unusual and some walking through ankle high snow can be expected.

#### **Accommodation**

Accommodation will vary from western style hotels in Tokyo to onsens (comfortable hotels with an opportunity to soak in the hot springs around which they are built) to traditional Japanese minshuku with sliding walls and tatami mats with

*Please contact us for further information.*

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## 2011-Itinerary

Day 1 - Feb 5th: Arrive in Japan. Meet with guides for dinner at hotel.

Day 2 - Feb 6th: Japanese Alps where the hotel feeders are a big attraction. Japanese and Pygmy Woodpeckers, Japanese Grosbeak, Japanese Waxwing, Japanese Accentor, Crested Kingfisher and Copper Pheasant are amongst possible birds.

Day 3 - Feb 7th: Full day birding the Japanese Alps

Days 4 - Feb 8th: Snow Monkeys and hot springs and onto the wetlands of Lake Kahokugata

Days 5 - Feb 9th: Katano-Kamo Wetlands with hundreds of wintering ducks and geese including Baikal and Falcated Teal and Smew.

Days 6 - Feb 10th: After early birding around Kaga we fly to Izumi

Day 7 - Feb 11th: A visit to the Arasaki crane centre where thousands of Hooded and White-naped Crane winter and are sometimes joined by Common, Sandhill, Demoiselle and Siberian White.

Day 8 - Feb 12th: Full day birding the Arasaki area. A great area for pipits, buntings etc. we will also visit sites for wintering gulls inc. Saunder's and perhaps Great Black-headed.

Day 9 - Feb 13th: Lake Mi-ike a good site for Mandarin Duck, Ryukyu Minivet and Scaly Thrush.

Day 10 - Feb 14th: Travel to Hokkaido

Day 11 - Feb 15th: Early morning at Crane centre for Red-crowned Cranes before traveling to Rausu on the Shiretoko peninsula for Blakiston's Fish Owl and Steller's Sea-Eagle.

Day 12- Feb 16th: Weather permitting a Rausu harbour boat trip will allow us close-ups of Sea-Eagles on the pack ice. Later we will visit the Notsuke Peninsula for sea ducks and spectacular Whooper Swans at well known feeding site nearby.

Day 13 - Feb 17th: Lake Furen. A great birding centre with excellent sea watching potential with Least and Crested Auklets, Common Murre, Spectacled and Pigeon Guillemot and a variety of gulls all possibilities. Ducks and swans are also usually good here.

Day 14 - Feb 18th : Full day birding Lake Furen area

Day 15 - Feb 19th: Return to Narita and onward flights.

**Cost:** 2010 land cost ex Tokyo  
AUD6840.00

single supplement AUD 430.00  
(not always available)

**2011 costs TBA**

This does not include any flights.  
We will arrange internal flights for  
you as a group.

Please enquire if you would like  
any extensions to this tour

Red-crowned Cranes  
displaying on Hokkaido  
Photo: Phil Gregory

