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BIRD WATCHING HOLIDAYS – SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS FOR BIRDING



© Inkaterra

In American and European movies, a “birder” is some kind of nerd with binoculars. But that doesn’t mean Bird Watching Holidays aren’t a cool hobby! My 12-year-old daughter and I love following a bird’s call and trying to spot it in the trees. When we are lucky enough to spot a rare beauty like the Palestine Sunbird (a small, iridescent nectar bird), we literally jump for joy.

Here in the Arab world, birds are a real source of pride and are also very popular pets (especially among men). That’s why I’m happy to introduce you to the world of birdwatching. If you’re more experienced, this article will introduce you to sustainable birding destinations in Asia, South America, and Europe.

BIRD WATCHING AS A CONTRIBUTION TO BIODIVERSITY

Our world is changing dramatically. Habitats are disappearing, and with them animal and plant species. By observing nature, you can learn to appreciate biodiversity. You can also play an active role by reporting bird sightings or taking part in the “Hour of the Garden Birds”. If it becomes known that a species is threatened, steps can be taken to protect the species.

OBSERVING PARROTS IN THE AMAZON



The macaw is the most famous and largest parrot in the Amazon. © Inkaterra

I would love to go to the Amazon Rainforest to see the parrots. Many people love parrots because of their beautiful colorful plumage (and because of the talking parrots in our children’s books). But few people know that parrots are actually very smart and funny – and real chatterboxes. As pets, they can even become real friends.

However, keeping such large birds requires a great deal of knowledge, space, and budget. The most species-friendly way is to visit parrots in their natural habitat. Parrots are very social animals and live in flocks of 20 to 50 birds!

BIRD WATCHING VACATION AT INKATERRA RESERVA AMAZONICA

Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/inkaterra-reserva-amazonica/>) is a wonderful starting point for parrot watching. Inkaterra Hotels are pioneers of sustainability in Peru and have been involved in conservation and heritage preservation for many years.

“In the Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica in the Amazon rainforest, 540 bird species have been registered,” the Green Pearls® partner tells us. Among them are 31 species of Amazon parrots, 16 of which are endangered. For birdwatching, you’ll be accompanied by professional guides and hike the Inkaterra Canopy or the Anaconda Walk through the rainforest.



Peru is home to about 20 percent of the world's bird species (about 1,800). Inkaterra guides offer special birding tours. © Inkaterra

BIRDING IN THAILAND

If you are planning your winter birding vacation now, the best time for birding in Thailand is from October to April ("high season" from November to May). During this time you will see many "winter guests" (the name given to birds that spend the winter here in the warmth).

BIRD WATCHING HELPS LOCAL PEOPLE

As the documentary "[Bird Hides in Thailand: A Community Success Story](https://youtu.be/2VAOc4MNo3c)" (<https://youtu.be/2VAOc4MNo3c>), many Thais have found a new livelihood through birdwatching. Whereas they used to go to the national park to slingshot birds and eat them (because their earnings were not enough to live on), they now maintain water holes to attract birds and show these spots to tourists. Special camouflaged huts are built for bird-watching tourists (in Thailand, these are mostly from China, Japan, and the U.S.) to photograph the birds. Win-win: The income from the tourists improves the lives of the Thais and the birds are no longer hunted.



On Phuket Island, find sustainable lodging in the treetops of the Enchanted Forest at **Keemala** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/keemala/>). @Keemala

“Keemala offers many opportunities for bird watching. Our resort encompasses mangrove forests, swamps and jungles with secondary and mature trees – you can watch the birds right from your villa”. – Keemala

CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR BIRDS

At **Gut Guntrams** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/gut-guntrams/>), near Vienna, Austria, it has also been shown that if you make the environment attractive enough, the birds will come all by themselves. The sustainable vacation homes are located in the middle of an organic farm. “We offer plenty of nesting opportunities,” say the owners. There’s also a large natural swimming pond and winter feeding areas. Both local songbirds (such as the great titmouse, the greenfinch or the great spotted woodpecker) and migratory birds feel at home here. “We are often approached by guests because of the biodiversity,” they say.

BIRDWATCHING HOLIDAYS IN GERMANY

If you want to go birdwatching in Germany, there are several nature reserves where you can do so on your own or with a guided tour.

BIRDING IN THE ERISKIRCHER RIED

Eriskircher Ried is the largest nature reserve on the German side of Lake Constance. It is home to 70 different species of breeding birds. Among them is one of my favorite birds: the kingfisher!



The kingfisher in his element. PICTURE: Bergadder for Pixabay

The kingfisher is the only one of its kind living in Central Europe. It prefers freshwater lakes and rivers, where it feeds on small fish, tadpoles and aquatic insects. During the mating season (February/March), “chase flights” over the water can be observed and the male courts the female by catching small fish and aquatic animals for her and presenting them to her (with a bow!).

The Eriskircher Ried is also a designated breeding area for the song oriole (the males are bright yellow) and the black kite. This is a relatively common bird of prey that likes to live and hunt in watery areas.

Tip: There are two bird-watching platforms from which you can take good photographs.

The Eriskircher Ried nature reserve is very close to the **Naturresort Gerbehof** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/naturresort-gerbehof/>) in Friedrichshafen. Here you can spend a wonderful birdwatching vacation in the midst of meadows, orchards and forests and relax in nature.

RARE BIRDS IN THE TENNENLOHER FOREST NATURE RESERVE

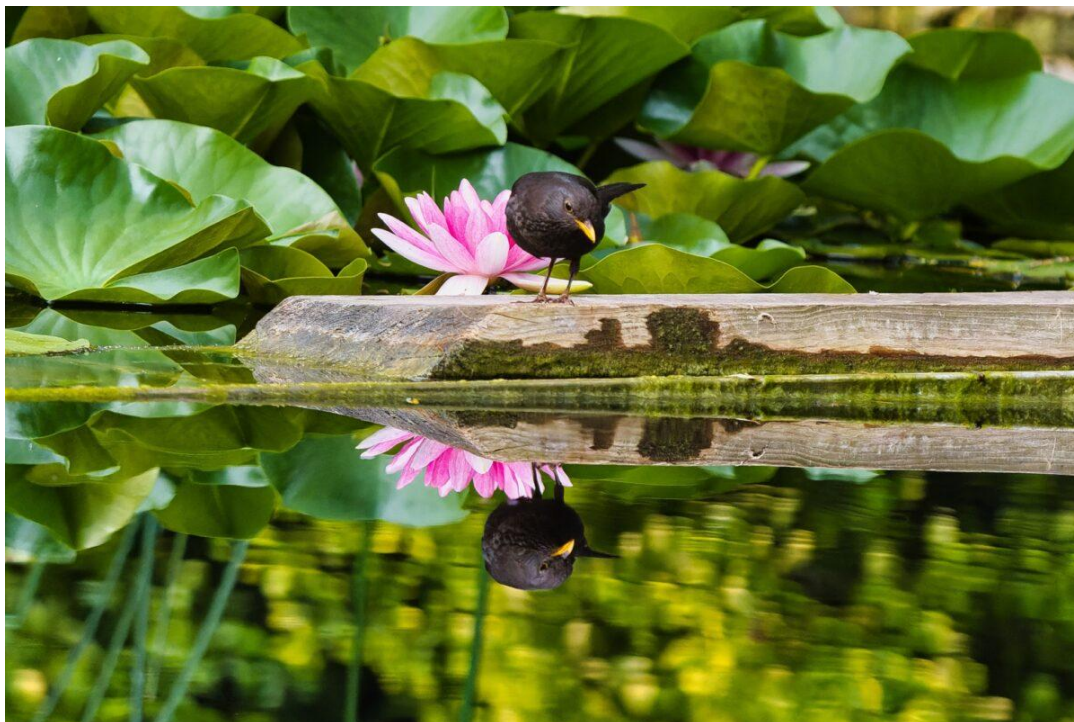
In Middle Franconia, our Green Pearls® partner, the **Creativhotel Luise** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/creativhotel-luise/>) (Erlangen), recommended the Tennenloher Forst nature reserve for birdwatching. The nature reserve is mainly known for its wild horses, but the sandy ecosystem also provides a habitat for some rare birds.

These include the endangered nightjar. Birdwatchers recognize the nightjar by its unusual song (it sings or “purrs” for up to several hours without interruption). The nightjar lives alone and shows no interest in companionship (except during mating season). Moreover, because it does not come out until after dusk, it used to be considered somewhat suspicious by humans, who suspected it of sneaking into stables at night to steal goat’s milk.

OBSERVING SONGBIRDS AND BIRDS OF PREY IN SOUTH TYROL

A great destination for bird watching on vacation is South Tyrol (<https://green-travel-blog.com/sustainable-destination-south-tyrol-green-travel-guide-italy-i/>). Due to the altitude differences in the Italian Alps and the different habitats, more than 500 bird species live here.

“Here you can hear them chirping from early morning until late at night,” says LA VIMEA (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/la-vimea/>), in Naturno. The vegan hotel is set in large gardens and has a natural swimming pond with water lilies.



The blackbird is one of the best-known bird species and a popular guest in the garden. It feeds on insects, aphids, earthworms and snails. © LA VIMEA

If you are lucky, you may see the Tree Hawk with its striking orange-red “pants” on the hiking trails around LA VIMEA. The Alpine region is known to be very popular with birds of prey, whose populations have declined drastically in recent centuries. Among the well-known birds of prey in South Tyrol are the buzzard, the sparrowhawk, the goshawk and, of course, the famous golden eagle. The golden eagle (also known as the “King of the Skies”) circles over its mile-long territory, hunting large prey such as marmots and foxes.

WATERFOWL IN THE LAGHETTI ROSSI NATURE RESERVE

On the Italian-Slovenian border, La Subida Country Resort (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/la-subida-relais/>) offers another wonderful starting point for birdwatching. The nearby Laghetti Rossi nature reserve is well-known for its waterbirds and is a popular stopover on the Alpe-Adria hiking trail.

STORKS ON KORČULA

If you come to Croatia for birdwatching, the Donje blato fields on the eastern side of the island of Korčula are popular. These are large flooded fields where storks, herons, wild geese and wild ducks are at home. Wild geese can be seen here from November to January.



The white stork usually has a seasonal marriage. IMAGE: Schauhi for Pixabay

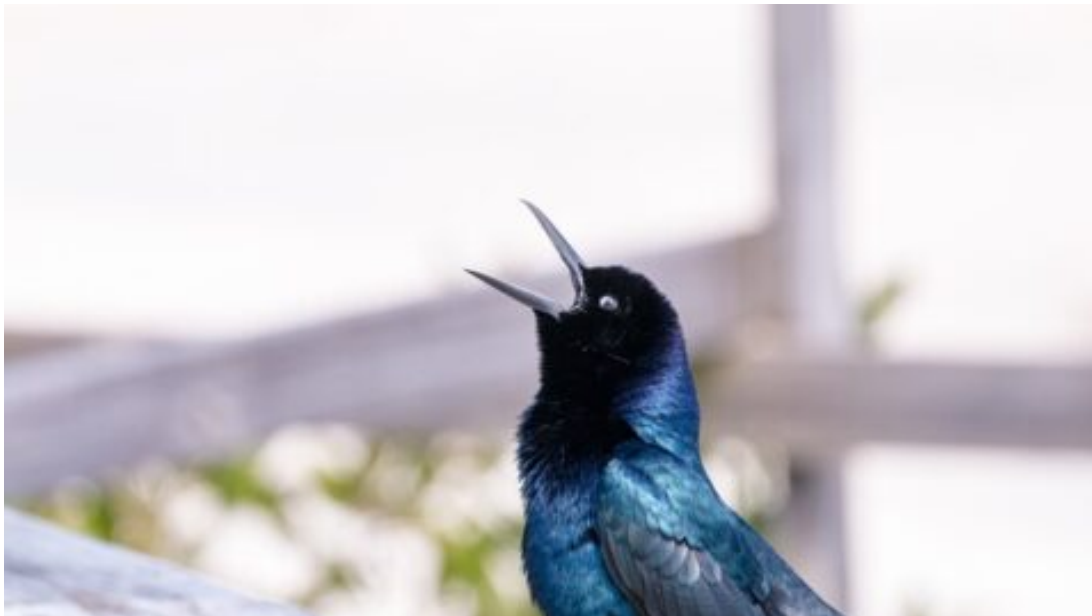
Croatia is also home to the white stork, also known as the “rattling stork”. It is estimated that there are about 1,500 breeding pairs of this protected bird species on the Adriatic. Storks are an imposing sight – their wingspan can reach two meters! “Bird watching has become a popular leisure activity,” says **ECO-APARTHOTEL THE DREAMERS’ CLUB** (<https://www.greenpearls.com/hotels/eco-aparthotel-the-dreamers-club-korcula/>).

BIRD WATCHING – A SUSTAINABLE HOBBY

I hope I could inspire you a little bit for birding. Birds are very interesting and often graceful and beautiful creatures. Their mating behavior is very special. Like no other animal, the males court their bride with a colorful display of feathers and try to win her over with dance and song. (You can think about whether it was the same in your partnership or vice versa) 😊

Birds give their all when it comes to taking care of their offspring in the nest! If you come too close to their nest, even the smallest birds will do everything in their power to defend their young, despite your enormous size. They’ll scream, they’ll puff themselves up – and if you haven’t gone by then, they’ll even give you a slap on the head! In my opinion, birds offer a lot of action and a wonderfully sustainable and nature-oriented hobby that you can start right in front of your window – but it’s also worth travelling for!

Finally, in this article, I recommend an app that I use for bird identification:



Bird Call App – Birding for Beginners

Raven, pigeon, sparrow... you know them. But what kind of bird is this one? Especially when you're traveling, it's often fascinating to know what birds are there. In the smartphone age, there are wonderful ways to find out with an app. Who's beeping? After testing ... Continue reading



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