

**EUROPEAN CONSERVATION ACTION NETWORK - EuCAN CIC**

**CONSERVATION WORKING HOLIDAY TO ESTONIA**

**Saturday June 4th – Wednesday June 15th 2016**

**Background information and outline programme**

This is the first time EuCAN has collaborated with the Estonia Fund for Nature (ELF) so this is a very exciting opportunity.

**Estonia, raised bogs and Capercaillies:** Estonia has a vast expanse of raised bogs and mires as well as forest, and many of these delicate ecosystems are becoming degraded due to drainage and encroachment of the coniferous forest. A programme for the re-instatement of the raised bogs is under way and one of the first steps in this is to make an assessment of the populations of the protected Capercaillies which frequent the marginal land round the edges of the mires. The Capercaillie is a very rare species in the UK, only just hanging on in the ancient Caledonian forests in Scotland, but in parts of northeastern Europe it is more abundant. It is an extraordinary bird with a very strange song!

We will be part of a major effort this summer to carry out surveys through the forests to count Capercaillies and to look for evidence of breeding.

There will be a maximum of 15 in our team – we hope that our selection procedure will enable us to put together a varied group with a wide range of experience and age. The participants will have to make their own way to Estonia and meet in the capital Tallinn at a prearranged pick-up point. Travel via Riga in Latvia and by bus to Tallinn is recommended.

**Will you join us? Is this project for you?** No previous experience of this work is required and our hosts will give us an induction session so that the participants are able to separate the different members of the grouse family they might see – Capercaillie, Black Grouse, Red Grouse and Hazel Hen (this bird is common in Estonia but not found in the UK and rare in much of Europe.

We think this will be a great opportunity to acquire some basic surveying skills as well as to learn about the natural history, ecology and conservation challenges of this fascinating and remote EU country.

The survey work is likely to be fairly arduous and perhaps hot (and probably accompanied by clouds of mosquitoes unless we are very lucky). There will be a lot of walking across flat but not necessarily easy terrain. We will take a break after each two days surveying and explore the wildlife, history and culture of Estonia.

Suggestions for our non-survey days have been:

Bearwatching: <http://natourest.ee/brown-bear-2/brown-bear-hide-rent/>

Lahemaa NP: <http://www.visitestonia.com/en/holiday-destinations/national-parks/lahemaa>

Tartu (second city of Estonia): <http://wikitravel.org/en/Tartu>

Narva-Jõesuu - a resort popular with Russians:[http://www.visitestonia.com/en/holiday-destinations/the-coastline/narva-joesuu?site\_preference=normal](http://www.visitestonia.com/en/holiday-destinations/the-coastline/narva-joesuu?site_preference=normal" \t "_blank)

We also have contacts involved in butterfly conservation in Estonia and hope to spend a day exploring interesting butterfly habitats. We will also set up some light traps to study the moth fauna.

There will also be at least one free day when participants will be able to choose their own activity.

Our anticipated programme will be

June 4th – arrival at Tallinn, transfer to the Matsu Talu Guesthouse outside Tudulinna.

June 5th – introductory day and induction session in Capercaillie surveying.

June 6th/7th, 9th/10th and 12th/13th – survey work.

June 8th, 11th, 14th days for exploring; one of these days will be a day ‘off’.

June 15th Return to Tallinn and departure.

**Equipment List**

There are washing and drying facilities in the gîte, so it should not be necessary to bring 7 of each piece of clothing! I suggest that you bring one medium sized case/bag (if there is a choice between a giant case and two smaller ones, bring the two smaller ones!).

Your passport, International Health Card, money, camera etc should be in a small haversack to carry separately from the rest of your luggage. You will also be able to use this bag during the stay to carry packed lunches, binoculars, water bottle, id books, etc.

Please photocopy your passport (in black and white – it is illegal to make a colour copy of a passport apparently) and keep the copy in your main bag – that will make it much easier if anything happens to the original!

Cash – the nearest cash machine will be some distance away so it will probably be necessary to pick up euros before you arrive or in Tallinn on the way through.

Just in case anything goes astray, I would recommend that you label each case/bag with your name, mobile phone number (beginning 0044..) and home address on it.

**\*\*Identification Books**. It is useful to have a library of id books (in English) which covers as wide a range of animal and plant groups as possible. We shall transport these in the minibus. To avoid duplication and to minimise the weight, I have listed below the books we are taking in the minibus, although some of these may be redundant at this time of year!

We have a wide range of wildflower guides and floras; Collins Tree Guide, Bird Guide and new Fungi Guide, Reptiles and Amphibians, Spiders; Butterflies of Europe by Tolman & Lewington and the ‘Collins Guide’ edition of this one; Butterflies of Europe by Tristan Lafranchis; Chinery’s Butterflies and Dayflying Moths of Britain and Europe, and Dragonflies by Dijkstra and Lewington; the Field Guide to the Moths of Britain and Ireland (of limited use as there are 10,000 moth species in Europe and ‘only’ 2500 in the UK!), several European Moth guides and the new(ish) UK Micromoth id book; guides to European Grasshoppers and Bushcrickets and to European Bats; Michael Chinery’s ‘Insects of Britain and Western Europe’ and the more recent ‘A comprehensive guide to Insects of Britain and Ireland’ by Paul Brock. All these books will be transported in the van with the moth trap, generator etc. I also have cd’s of the birdsongs of Europe, bats’ calls and amphibian songs. Let me know what else you might have that you could bring. If you have a bat detector, please bring it.

**Checklist of equipment to bring:**

**\*\*Passport** (Make sure that your passport has at least 6 months on it and keep it with you, not buried in your main suitcase!). You will also need a photocopy of your passport or your drivers licence as ID to carry with you everywhere.

\*\***International Health Card** (this has replaced the E111 certificate and can be obtained free via the internet -do not apply through the private company that makes you pay £10! Passengers in minibuses in the EU have to carry one with them).

\*\*Mobile phone/phone charger/euro adapter. Bring your own plug adaptor for phone and battery charging. N.b. It might be worth checking with your phone company that you have a roaming facility on your phone. If your phone takes photos as well, it will be extra useful to record droppings, tracks etc.

\*\*If you have a spare mobile phone, please bring it so that our hosts can give us Estonian sim cards for local communication between us.

\*\*If you have a GPS gadget, please bring it to make recording easier.

\*\*Notebook and pencil.

\*\*Phrase book – please bring your own so that you have no excuse for not trying the language! Binoculars – essential.

Camera (+battery charger), handlens and telescope, if you have them.

You will not need to bring bedding or sleeping bags.

Toilet things – including a towel, night clothes, sun block and sunhat (we may as well be optimistic!).

Wet weather gear – waterproof coat and overtrousers. Spare pair of trousers for working in.

You will need wellies for working in wet places, please write your initials inside each boot and bring them in a strong plastic bag!

A set of smarter clothes and shoes for going out in the evenings.

Bring a warm jumper as the evenings may well be cold.

A small personal 1st Aid Kit – with plasters and a small roll of micropore tape, waspeeze, mosquito repellent (preferably without DEET), antiseptic wipes, a roll of bandage, a medium wound dressing and two prs of disposable gloves. We will be bringing a full 1st Aid Kit as well. We will bring tick hooks but you will need to buy your own (from the local vet!)

A torch.

Plastic box for packed lunch. We can pick up plastic bottles for drinks after we arrive.

**Insurance** Third party liability insurance is covered by EuCAN’s insurers but you will need to take out your own travel insurance if you do not have a permanent arrangement. You need to bring your European Health Card in case you need medical treatment in Europe but the Personal Health Insurance should cover that too.

**Registration form** I will be sending out an enrolment form for you to complete before the visit, so that we have all the necessary dietary and medical info.

**Payment** We have been running wildlife holidays to raise money for our company; the profit made on the holidays to La Brenne and Hungary in 2014 and 2015, and the proceeds of the contract work we do through the year, will enable us to subsidise this conservation working holiday. We are also being helped by a generous contribution from our hosts towards the accommodation costs.

This visit costs £325 as long as we can raise a team of 15 including the two of us. It is easiest for us if you make all your payments by BACS. Account Name: EuCAN Community Interest Company;

Sortcode: 08.92.99 , account no. 65472987

We would like all the people who are selected for this visit to have joined the CIC beforehand – ie minimum of £10 if you are working or £5 minimum if you are out of work.

See: <http://www.eucan.org.uk/about-us/cic-membership/> This is a one-off payment.

Further details will be sent out nearer the time. Expressions of interest (link on the EuCAN website) should be emailed to me at nigel@eucan.org.uk by mid-March when the selection of the group will take place. Participants who are selected will be asked to fill in and sign a registration form for the visit..

**Nigel Spring**

*EuCAN CIC is registered in England and Wales as a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee.*

*Registered Company no. 7513162. Registered Office: 346, Mundens Lane, Alweston, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5HU.*

The aims of EuCAN CIC are

* to encourage and facilitate cultural exchange and the exchange of environmental ideas and skills between the UK and other countries (particularly within the European Union).
* to promote practical conservation volunteering both in the UK and abroad
* to promote the conservation of the physical and natural environment by promoting biodiversity.
* to encourage sustainable development in the rural economy through environmentally sensitive farming and food production.
* to promote the research and development of systems of conservation management and agriculture which are both economically viable and environmentally sustainable.
* to provide education and training related to these activities and to disseminate relevant information and guidance to the public at large.

**www.eucan.org.uk**