

Birding and culture in Southern Germany



European Bee-eater



28 May – 6 June 2021
\$2,570 – \$3,120



Eurasian Hoopoe

Day 1 - Arrival

After transfer from the airport, we check into our hotel 'Haus Goethe' in the medieval town of *Staufen*. Welcome with coffee and cake and introduction to the trip with our guide. On a first walk we explore the surroundings of the old city, looking for **Green Woodpecker**, **Red Kite**, **Yellowhammer**, and **Cirl Bunting**. Evening exploration of the medieval town, dinner in one of Germany's oldest restaurants with seasonal white asparagus on the menu.

BirdingTours and OOS' **Dr. Stefan Gleissberg** have designed this unique 10 days/9 nights tour exclusively offered to OOS members. Join us to explore diverse birds, landscapes and cultures in the Three-Country-Corner where Germany, France, and Switzerland meet. The mild climate here already attracted neolithic people, and we will often encounter traces of roman and medieval cultures.

Expert guide **Christoph Hercher** will help us find the colorful Bee-eater, the unique Hoopoe, Alpine Swift, Melodious Warbler, Cirl Bunting, Ring Ouzel, Spotted Nutcracker, Citril Finch, Common Crossbill, Red Kite and Black Kite, White-throated Dipper, Common Nightingale, Crag Martin, Stonechat, Green Woodpecker, Wryneck, Hobby, Honey Buzzard, and many more.





Day 2 - Kaiserstuhl Mountain, Hoopoe and Bee-Eater

After breakfast, we board our tour bus and drive into the heart of the *Kaiserstuhl* ('Emperor's Chair'), a volcanic mountain range situated in the middle of the Rhine plain. The Kaiserstuhl is Germany's warmest region and home to sub-mediterranean flora and fauna, including various orchids and the Western Green Lizard. Our walk takes us through flower meadows and hollow-ways between walls of loess, a soft sediment that is a witness of glacial retreat. Our aim is the unique **Hoopoe** and the colorful **European Bee-Eater**. Views across the Rhine plain flanked by the two sister mountain chains of the Black Forest and the Vosges. Dinner in a small charming tavern in the village of Ihringen. Hiking distance: 5 miles. Return to Staufen.

Day 3 - Feldberg, Black Forest

Take the funicular to the *Schauinsland* at 4,200 feet and enjoy the vista. Our bus picks us up for a drive to the *Feldberg*, the highest peak of the Black Forest at 4,900 feet. When the weather is right, we may see as far as to the Swiss Alps to the south. This is a refuge of uncommon species such as **Ring Ouzel**, **Common Raven**,

Nutcracker, **Three-toed Woodpecker**, **Citril Finch**, and **Water Pipit**. Target birds include the **Crag Martin**, a rare cliff nester. Hiking distance: 6 miles. Return to Staufen and dinner in a winemaker's pub.



Ring-Ouzel

Day 4 - Upper Black Forest

In the morning, we explore high elevation meadows, forests, and mountain streams where we look for **White-throated Dipper** and **Gray Wagtail**. We'll take the funicular up to the *Belchen*, the third-highest peak at 4,600 feet for wide views and look for montane birds such as **Common Raven**, **Nutcracker**, and various pipits. Transfer to 2nd accommodation in the Black Forest.



Red Kite

Day 5 - High Rhine, Switzerland

After breakfast, we descend from the higher elevations of the southern Black Forest to the *Hochrhein* (High Rhein valley) that borders Switzerland. We explore birding hotspots and old river towns. At the *Klingnau Reservoir*, we look for waterfowl like the **Red-crested Pochard**, **Tufted Duck**, and **Common Merganser**, along with **Mute Swan** and



Common Kingfisher

Great Crested Grebe. We explore the old riverside city of *Bad Säckingen* with its gothic cathedral, parks, and museum with artifacts going back to the region's prehistoric past. A leisurely walk across the wooden covered bridge, built in 1700, brings us to the Swiss side of the river. We continue to nearby wetland hotspots at *Wehramündung* and *Altrhein Whyllen*, for more opportunities to spot various waterfowl and wetland birds, and maybe **Black Kites** and **Common Kingfisher**. Depending on time, we may visit a Roman Amphitheatre across the river. On our way back to our accommodation, we enjoy dinner in a rustic fisherman hut (fresh trout on the menu) at a small bog lake.



Day 6 - Alsace (France)

After breakfast, we head across the river to *La Petite Camargue*, a wetland and nature preserve to look for **Common Nightingale** and **Kingfisher**. We continue north to visit the historic towns of Colmar and/or Sélestat. Free time for lunch on your own and to roam the streets and visit museums. Arrive at 3rd accommodation at a hotel in Saint-Hippolyte, and high tea in a French restaurant.

Day 7 - Alsace (France)



After breakfast, we explore a nearby charming village with its medieval wall, observe **White Storks** on their nest on the roof of the church, along with other human-adapted birds such

as **Jackdaw**, **Black Redstart**, **Barn Swallow**, and **Common House-Martin**. We venture out through vineyards to a nearby hillside, looking for **Blackcap**, **Greater Whitethroat**, **Stonechat**, **Linnets**, **Serins**, and **Cirl Bunting**. Options for the afternoon include a visit to the *Château du Haut-Kœnigsbourg*, a fully restored castle with stunning views of the Rhine Valley. Possibility for **Common Raven**. For dinner we visit a traditional French restaurant near our hotel.

Day 8 - Freiburg



We make our way across the river to visit the nature preserve and wetlands of *Taubergiessen*. On a boat ride, we explore the riparian forests and look for **Kingfisher**, **Marsh Warbler**, and **Reed Warbler**. In the afternoon, we head towards Freiburg, founded in 1120 by the house of Zähringen, with its towering gothic cathedral. Free afternoon in the city, but not until we find the large **Alpine Swifts** that share the skies with **Common Swifts**. Hiking distance about 2 miles. In the evening we return to our first accommodation in Staufen.

Day 9 - Black Forest foothills and Three-Country-Point

We explore the *Markgräflerland* in the foothills of the Black Forest close to Switzerland and France, with traces of history going back to the Neolithic. In this cultural landscape, where Romans grew wine and cherry orchards abound, we look for **Common Redstart**, **Melodious Warbler**, **Little Owl**, **Wryneck**, and **Cirl Bunting**. We visit a project of the NABU, Germany's Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union, that helps the local population of Little Owls to thrive. Part of our trip fee supports the project. Wine tasting at an organic vineyard concludes the day. Hiking distance: 3 miles.



Day 10 - Departure

After our farewell breakfast, we checkout and depart to Frankfurt Airport. On the way, a short walk to find **Turtle Dove**, **Melodious Warbler**, and **Red-backed Shrike**.

Birding and Culture in Germany



Dates:

- 28 May – 6 June 2021
- 10 days / 9 nights
- 6 – 14 participants (OOS members only)

Included:

- 9 nights in three locations
- 9 breakfast, 9 dinner, welcome coffee and cake
- All entry fees (funiculars, boat ride, castle)
- All on-site transportation
- Airport pick-up and drop-off
- Donation for bird conservation
- Custom checklists

Excluded:

- Airfare (birdingtours can book your flight)
- Lunches

Prices:

11 – 14 participants:

- \$2,570 per person (double room)
- Single room supplement: \$220

6 – 10 participants:

- \$3,120 per person (double room)
- Single room supplement: \$110



Red-backed Shrike

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White Stork



Eurasian Golden Oriole



European Goldfinch