



Black Grouse Lek

Photographic tour with tour leader Danny Green

7th - 11th April 2027

Trip Overview

Group size:

The trip accommodates a maximum of 5 guests.

Cost includes:

Airport transfers, accommodation, local transportation, all meals, and use of hides.

Cost excludes:

International flights, sundry items, alcohol and personal travel insurance.

Accommodation:

Our hotel type accommodation is clean and comfortable, and based on accommodation in a twin room basis in typically clean and comfortable Scandinavian guest house. Single room supplements may be available on request but limited.

Level of fitness:

Photographing lekking Black Grouse involves arriving in your hide the evening before and awaiting their arrival at dawn for early morning photography. All these hides are tent based so there will be an inevitable degree of discomfort and adventure. In each hide there is a mattress and sleeping bag which makes it very comfortable. There is no toilet inside these small hides. With some walking to access the hides this is a tiring trip.

LEVEL 3



Trip Overview

We have been running tours to Norway for many years now and are always on the lookout for new destinations to add to our trip programme. This can be one of the most challenging aspects for us as a company and we pride ourselves on being able to deliver these unique experiences. One of the most amazing sights and sounds of late spring is to be woken before dawn by the sound of a lekking Black Grouse. We are delighted to be able to offer this unique experience by working with Floris Smeets who has been photographing these wonderful birds for many years now.

The trip is a fantastic opportunity to experience and photograph at close quarters the dramatic poses, antics and displays of these amazing birds as they look to establish and undertake breeding rights for the season ahead. You will stay overnight in small, carefully prepared canvass hides ready for the birds' early morning antics. This must be done to avoid any disturbance of these sensitive birds and will take a certain amount of endurance to do so. This trip really is fantastic experience and adventure.



Itinerary



Day 1: The group will fly out to Oslo Gardermoen Airport from our chosen destinations. We will then be greeted by Floris and transferred to our accommodation which will be around a 3 hours' drive. This accommodation will be our base for the duration of the trip. We will have dinner and will then do the short transfer for our first night into the Black Grouse hides and spend the first evening in the hides.

Day 2: We will all be in our chosen hides on this first morning photographing. Hide etiquette is so important throughout this trip and one mistake by us could cost the group the mornings photography but might do so for the rest of the trip. Once you are in the hides you cannot leave until one of the leaders comes to get you. After our first morning it will be a case of heading back to our accommodation for a well-earned breakfast and then spend the rest of the day relaxing or sleeping. An early dinner will be provided as we will then transfer to the Black Grouse hides to spend our second evening there. Food and drinks will be provided for the long nights, and the hides are made comfortable with a mattress and a sleeping bag which you can rent from Floris if you don't want to take one, a good sleeping bag is not cheap as you would need a winter tog rating and can pay over £300 for good one of these but you have it then as they last for years.

Itinerary

Day 3: So, after our first couple of nights/early mornings in the hides we will then relax and switch round again for our third night and morning. By this time, you will be in a good routine, and we can then take stock of what we have achieved so far. The days are important to rest and relax and maybe spend some time looking at what images we have achieved and see what we could do different.

Day 4: We will each spend four evenings/mornings in the Black Grouse hides. The small hides will be in slightly different positions so we can change round to give us a different perspective and so then varying our portfolios. This will be a tiring trip, but the effort is worth it because of the opportunities and images that will be afforded to us.

Day 5: After our last morning in the hides, we will have a breakfast and then transfer back to Oslo for our late afternoon flights home.



Things to bring

Our accommodation is clean and comfortable with all bedding and towels provided, so you simply need to bring yourself. Please let me know if you have any special dietary requirements. In terms of clothing, you'll obviously need plenty of warm and weatherproof clothing. Much of your time will involve sitting in a cold canvass hide through the night and into the early mornings for Black Grouse and Capercaillie. The following are very much recommended - you will need to bring high rubber- or neoprene boots (Wellies or Muck Boots are perfect). The Black Grouse lek is on a large bog system, so when the snow is melting, things can get quite wet. Warm winter boots such as Sorels, can get completely soaked if the snow melt happens during this week. Keeping warm feet, hands and head should be your priorities. Good waterproof over-trousers (lined ones are best as they'll keep you warmer especially with a normal pair of trousers and some thermal leggings underneath as well). For the top half it's very much a question of having several layers – like a thermal type of vest, t-shirt, thin jumper, fleece and then a waterproof down coat that is built for keeping out the wind chill. You'll know your own cold thresholds, but it really is a question of build it up in layers. A good hat, some fingerless mittens and then some warm waterproof gloves to go over the top (the former so that when you come to photograph your fingers can still work the camera). Hand and Foot warmers are a good idea too and nowadays you can buy some excellent battery-operated heated clothing.

The temperatures we could be working in can range from 0 to -15, it is also a dry cold so sometimes feels colder than those temperatures when we encounter them in the UK. We are using Tents/Canvass Hides and not wooden hides for this trip so there are no toilet facilities in the hides or heaters. Men will have to use a pee bottle and for the women we recommend you bring a "Travel John" urinal. You can bring your own sleeping bag which needs to be a good winter tog rating one so not a cheap summer one as it will not do the job or if you don't want to bring your own because of the weight or hassle in bringing one then you can rent one from Floris for 500 NOK (£40) for the whole trip. Please let me know if that is what you want to do. I will also take an inflatable pillow so I can make myself as comfortable as possible to sleep and some thermal type slippers of putting on once I am in the hides. A good thermos flask is recommended to last through the night.



Camera equipment

In terms of camera kit, you'll need a tripod, the longest lens you have (300mm, 500mm or 600mm + convertor would be my recommendation/choice) and then some supplementary lenses for other opportunities such as a 24-70mm for landscapes and then maybe an intermediate zoom (70-200 or 100-400) so that you don't miss anything in terms of opportunity. For the Black Grouse anything from a 400mm to 800mm will work, since the birds will be standing at different distances. Some will be close, and some will be further away, so lots of scope but you have room to have two cameras out at the same time.



Useful Contact Information

My contact number for the build up to and for the duration of the trip is:

Danny: +44 (0) 07951 945433



Please don't hesitate to contact me even if you think it is a minor question, I'm here to help.



Address

4 Deer Park Drive, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7HB

Tel: 01952 411436

Email: mark@natures-images.co.uk

Web: www.natures-images.co.uk

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