

Squiver

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JAPAN WILD & WHITE DAY-TO-DAY SCHEDULE

Winter is the perfect time to visit Japan. Its breathtaking, snow-covered landscapes are the perfect backdrop for us to photograph Japan's unique wildlife.

During this spectacular trip we will visit the famous snow monkeys, while they enjoy a hot steam bath in volcanic hot springs and play in the snow. We will travel to the northern island of Hokkaido (the Alaska of Japan), where we will photograph rare and beautiful red-crowned cranes while they perform their gracious winter dances, large flocks of whooper swans floating in misty lakes covered with ice and beautiful mountains in the background, and white-tailed and Steller's sea eagles, as they sit on the pack ice that has drifted over from Siberia.

Join us on a truly unique adventure, which combines extremely photogenic wildlife with an incredibly beautiful landscape: Japan in winter.

Day 1

Today everyone leaves for their international flight to Japan.

Day 2

Arrival at Tokyo Narita airport. You will be taken with a hotel bus to our luxury hotel in Tokyo. Please make sure your flight lands before 18.00 hrs so you can join us for the welcoming dinner and meet the rest of the group and the team that will accompany on this amazing trip: Marsel van Oosten, Daniëlla Sibbing and Arif Iqball. Marsel is an award-winning professional nature photographer, Daniëlla is a videographer and responsible for the organization of all Squiver photo trips, and Arif is an American living in Japan for over 10 years, who has studied Japanese and knows a lot about the Japanese culture, loves photography and will be our interpreter during this trip. And we will need him: the Japanese hardly speak any languages other than Japanese! If your flight arrives early, you can spend some time sight-seeing the streets of Tokyo.



Overnight in a luxury hotel in Tokyo, dinner included.

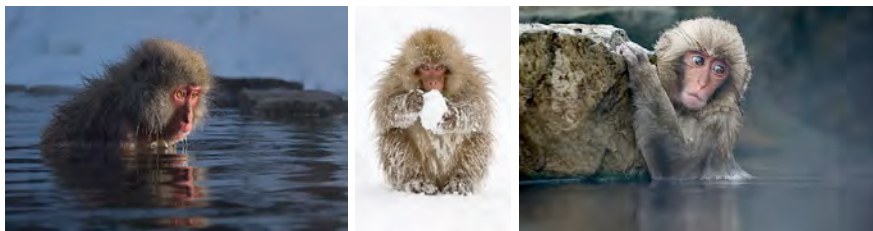
Day 3

After your short encounter with Tokyo, we will be picked up by our bus after breakfast and taken to our first location: the snow monkeys close to Nagano. The bus trip will take between 5 to 6 hours and we will stop on our way for a typical Japanese lunch, which generally consists of soup with soba noodles and rice, accompanied with some tempura vegetables or a shrimp.



The bus will drop us off in Jigokudani, a mountainous area, where a 40-minute walk will bring us to our simple traditional Japanese ryokan right near the entrance to the monkey park. A ryokan is a traditional Japanese guesthouse or inn. They date back to the Edo-era (1603-1868) and offer travelers a room with tatami mats, a communal bath and other public areas where visitors can relax in their yukatas (a type of bathrobe, also known as a kimono). Most ryokans are still practically the same as in the old days. The traditional Japanese bedrooms with their mats may not be entered with regular shoes. You take off your shoes at the entrance of the hotel, where you will receive special slippers to wear in the hotel. Inside your room you often have a second pair of slippers to be worn specifically in your bedroom or the bathroom. A ritual that you will get accustomed to quickly, because we will encounter this at various locations. In the evening we will be served a traditional Japanese meal.

Overnight in a traditional Japanese ryokan in Jigokudani, all meals included.

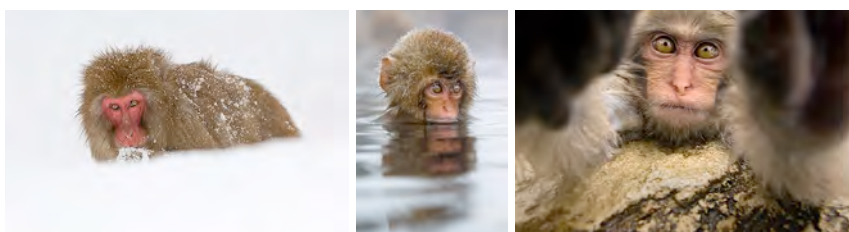


Day 4 and 5

We have two full days to spend with the monkeys. Because our ryokan is right at the entrance of the nature park, we can be with the monkeys as long as we want and make maximum use of our time here. When it's cold, the monkeys will enjoy a warm bath (almost 40 degrees Celsius) in the natural hot springs. But they spend quite a lot of time outside the spring as well, playing in the snow and with each other, maintaining social order in the group with grooming rituals and screaming loudly when they are agitated, frightened or angry. Because there often are many babies in the group, there is always something to watch which will give you great photo opportunities.

Overnight in a traditional Japanese ryokan in Jigokudani, all meals included.

Day 6



After another morning visit to the monkeys our bus will bring us back to Tokyo, where we will arrive late afternoon. We stay at a very comfortable hotel, this time in a different part of the city. We end the evening with a delicious meal.

Overnight in a luxury hotel in Tokyo, all meals included.

Day 7

After breakfast, we walk to the nearby train station, where we will take the monorail to Tokyo Haneda airport. From Tokyo we will fly to Hokkaido, the most northern island of Japan. Because of its northern location and the many mountains, Sapporo has become a famous area for winter sports. In 1972 the Olympic winter games were held here. Hokkaido is a relatively empty island, with beautiful nature. Because of its northern position, it can be very cold, so be prepared for cold wind and temperatures well under 0 degrees Celsius.

In the afternoon we will arrive at Nemuro Nakshibetsu airport, where our bus will be waiting for us. We can enjoy the beautiful white mountain landscapes and lakes on our way to our hotel in Rausu, where we will spend 2 nights.

Overnight in comfortable hotel in Rausu, all meals included.

Day 8

We will start our day with a chartered boat cruise, that will take us to the pack ice that drifted from Kamchatka (Russia) to Hokkaido. They form the perfect landing spots for white-tailed eagles and Steller's sea eagles, looking for fish. The pack ice is a beautiful setting for photography of the impressive eagles.

In the afternoon there is a photography workshop focusing on composition



Overnight in comfortable hotel in Rausu, all meals included.

Day 9

In the morning there is another opportunity to go on a boat cruise (optional activity) to try our luck and improve our shots from yesterday.

Today we will hop on the bus and drive towards Lake Kussharo. Here we will spend the afternoon photographing beautiful whooper swans, which spend their winter in the open areas of the frozen lake. The open areas are usually formed by hot water from natural springs flowing into the lake. This results in a mystical mix of fog and white birds, with very stunning snow-covered mountains in the background. A dramatic and fairytale-like landscape!

Overnight in a comfortable hotel at Lake Kussharo, all meals included.

Day 10

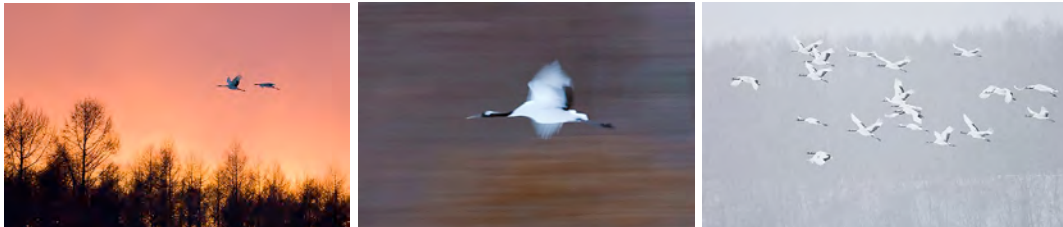
We spend a full day at Lake Kussharo to photograph the swans as they graciously fly by, float on the water, or trumpet loudly, fighting for a spot near the waters edge.



Overnight in a comfortable hotel at Lake Kussharo, all meals included.

Day 11

The morning starts with a last session with the swans, but we will have to say goodbye to this wonderful winter wonderland. We travel towards another highlight of the trip: the cranes. Our bus drives to the village of Tsurui, known for its many breeding grounds and feeding spots for cranes. We will make sure we are in time for a good spot to photograph the cranes in flight, while they return to their overnight roosting spot in the river.

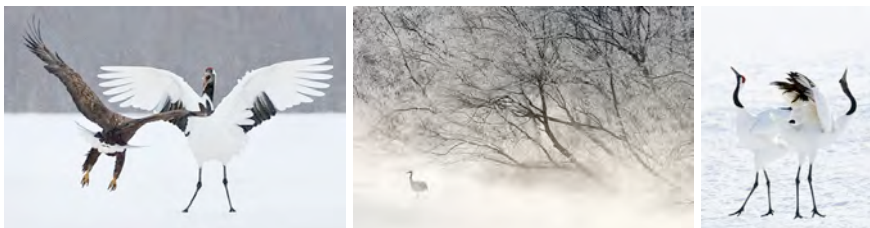


Overnight in a comfortable hotel in Tsurui, all meals included.

Day 12 and 13

The next two days we will spend to fully enjoy photographing these magnificent birds at different locations. We will begin the day before sunrise at their roosting spot in the river. After the morning shoot we will return to the hotel for breakfast and to get warm again.

Because the Japanese red-crowned cranes were almost extinct, there are various locations on Hokkaido where they are being fed to help them to survive the winter. This has resulted in a large colony of birds. It's a real challenge to photograph white-tailed eagles going after the same fish as the cranes and observe these beautiful birds as they fight with one another. The cranes have a complicated and loud mating ritual, which is beautiful to watch.



Overnight in a comfortable hotel in Tsurui, all meals included.

Day 14

Unfortunately this is our last day on Hokkaido. We will have another morning session at the river and get onto our bus to drive to Kushiro airport for our flight back to Tokyo. We will return by monorail to our hotel, which is located at walking distance from the station. We end our fantastic trip with a delicious meal at a "Kill Bill"-style restaurant.

Overnight in a luxury hotel in Tokyo, all meals included.

Day 15

After breakfast in the hotel, the hotel bus will take you back to Tokyo Narita airport for your international flight. You will leave with thousands of beautiful pictures of an incredibly beautiful Japan in winter and loads of amazing memories to reflect on.

Participation fee & additional information

The participation fee for this trip is €4950 per person, based on sharing. The group consists of a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 11 participants. The group is lead by 3 people: Marsel van Oosten, Daniëlla Sibbing and a guide/interpreter. If there is an uneven amount of guests, the interpreter will share a room with one of the guests. A single room is available on most locations on request. A single supplement is €750. If you would like to share a room but we cannot find a roommate for you, we will have to charge you the single supplement. You can download our terms & conditions from our website: www.squiver.com/TermsAndConditions.pdf

The fee excludes your international flight to Japan and drinks, but includes all transportation in Japan, Hokkaido, internal flights, entrance fees, accommodation and meals as described in this itinerary.

In a PDF of our 2009 Japan trip (www.squiver.com/japan.pdf) you can find additional information on the wildlife, what to bring, and background information on Japan/Hokkaido.

Please let us know if you have any questions after reading this day-to-day schedule.

Advised photo equipment

At the snow monkeys a wide angle is probably the lens you will use most, as well as a 70-200. Flash is also helpful to brighten the dark faces. For the cranes I have used mainly a 200-400, sometimes with a 1.4 or 1.7 TC. The same goes for the sea eagles. At the swans I used practically every focal length, from wide angle to super tele. It is wise to bring a couple of spare batteries for your camera(s) as most batteries get drained quickly when used in cold conditions. Other equipment to bring with you is of course a tripod. If you have any specific questions on what equipment to bring, please contact us.