

2020 Ornithology Camp Učka Nature Park, Croatia

Because of COVID-19 we are not sure if this event will take place this year

(updated 06/06/20)

The Ornithology camp will be open from August 2020 to October 2020

It is a legal requirement in Croatia to have travel insurance

About the Ornithology Camp

The Ornithology Camp in the Učka Nature Park, Croatia is a project run by BIOM a Croatian NGO. It has been collecting data about migrating birds for over 10 years and starts in the middle of August and runs for 8 weeks every year. The birds are trapped in [mist nets](#) and then collected to be measured, weighed, rung and then released. In 2014 a project was started to restore the surrounding disused meadows that are a haven for meadow flowers, butterflies and insects. These meadows have become overgrown with [Blackthorn \(Prunus spinosa\)](#) and while we are there, we help clear more blackthorn ready to be burnt in the winter. [More...](#)

How to attend

To attend the camp you need to contact [BIOM's Volunteer co-ordinator](#) to make sure there is a place available. Before doing this you may want to read up on how to get to the bird camp from the UK so you have some dates in mind.

How to get there

This is not an exhaustive list of how to get to Učka Nature Park, Croatia, but after traveling into Učka many times this is the easiest way. TJ Phelps.

Fly direct from Stansted to Rijeka Flights with Ryanair are twice a week	Fly direct from Bristol to Pula Flights with Easyjet are twice a week
Rijeka is the nearest town to the camp in Učka and you are able to catch a bust to Mošćenička Draga (MD) where you can get picked up to go to the camp.	Pula is a little more distant (90k) from the camp in Učka, but you are able to catch a bust to Mošćenička Draga (MD) where you can get picked up to go to the camp.

When you get to [Rijeka airport](#) (that's on the island of Krk) there is a bus service to the main [Bus Station](#) in Rijeka.

Costs 50 kuna and takes about 40 mins.

Get tickets from ["Ticket Office"](#) on the left as you emerge from departures gate.

You may want to stay in Rijeka or Pula overnight before you set off for the bird camp and you will want to stay a night on the way back to clean up before your return.

The [Botel Marina](#) is a boat converted into a small floating guest hotel. It comfortable and reasonably priced and has various room options including dormitories.

It's [270 metres from the bus station](#) and conveniently situated for the centre of Rijeka.

You can also book online.

The nearest pick up for the Učka Ornithology Camp is a very small village called Sveta Jelena [pronounced Sveta Yelena] this is about 5 km from the bird camp and is the easiest place for one of the BIOM team to pick you up. Sometimes you can get picked up from Mošćenička Draga (MD) [pronounced Mosh-chen-ich-ka Draga]

Bus 32 and then 32A goes to Sveta Jelena via Mošćenička Draga (MD)

It's a Zone 4 ticket and an "open return" will cost 30 kn

You can buy tickets from this [Souvenir Shop](#) located off [Adamičeva ul.](#)

The bus stop is located on [Adamičeva ul about 65 metres](#) from the [Souvenir Shop](#).

Bus 32 from Rijeka (it's a bendy bus) and will take you to [Lovran](#) where you [change to a smaller bus](#).

[Timetable for Bus 32 / 32A](#) shows that only certain buses got further than [Lovran](#).

[Sveta Jelena](#) is not shown on the [Timetable](#) but is between [Mošćenice](#) and Brseč.

If you have to wait there is a Konoba (Tavern) called [Konoba Slamnjaki](#) where you can have a drink. It's open from 12:00 noon to midnight every day but not Monday.

While in the [Ornithology Camp](#) the cost of food will be covered by BIOM.

You will also need to print and sign a [BIOM Volunteer contract](#).

For more information contact

Tena Miličević (BIOM Volunteer coordinator Croatia) tena.milicevic@biom.hr

Trevor Phelps (UK Volunteer support) tjphelps@gmail.com

Kit list

1. Rucksack (that you are comfortable walking with and will go in the hold of the plane)
2. Daypack (small backpack that you can take on the plane)
3. Hiking tent - (2 man is best)
4. Sleeping bag (lightweight)
5. Sleeping mat (to go under your sleeping bag - a must have, an inflatable one is best)
6. Plate, mug, knife, fork & spoon.
7. Head torch & hand torch, + spare batteries.
8. Binoculars
9. Cloths etc apart from the usual make sure you have.
 - a. Lightweight rain coat. (Pak-a-mac type of shower-proof coat)
 - b. Waterproof over trousers
 - c. Hat (for the sun)
 - d. Swimming trunks/costume (as we might get to visit the beach)
 - e. Light walking boots or shoes
 - f. Sandals or light shoes to wear in camp or on the beach.
 - g. Washbag
 - h. Medium/Large size towel
 - i. Gardening gloves (to help with the planned meadow conservation work)

Cloths worn on the plane over keep to wear on return trip

Ornithology Camp 2015 Nature Park Učka



The Project - The bird camp is a project run by BIOM a Croatian NGO. It has been collecting data about migrating birds for over 10 years and starts in the middle of August and runs for 8 weeks every year. The birds are trapped in [mist nets](#) and then collected to be measured, weighed, rung and then released. In 2014 a project was started to restore the disused meadows that are becoming overgrown with blackthorn. These meadows are a haven for wildlife especially butterflies.

The Daily routine - There is always someone from BIOM in camp to lead the project. The day starts early before it get light, between 05:00 - 05:30 when we walk to the nets to open them up for the day. As soon as the nets are opened they need to be checked every hour until about 11:00. At this time the nets are closed again to avoid the midday heat before being opened up again at 15:00 until dark. Checking the nets every 45 mins is to avoid the birds becoming stressed by being in the net too long.

During the midday down time there are lot of things to do, we try and organise a working party to clear some of the meadow of blackthorn. This is a new project started in 2014 and I am personally keen to see the results this year of our first year's efforts.

If you are keen to walk, watch birds or butterflies or just relax it is a great environment to be in. The camp is just off a forest track that is 4.3 km from Sveta Jelena where there is a bar and a further 5.8 km to Mošćenička Draga where there's a beach and a few bars. It is also possible to walk further up the mountain track to one of the higher points on the Učka mountain range. Where you can see a great view of the Istrian peninsula, plus delights such as the Golden eagle, Blue throated rock thrush and the occasional Chamois.

However sometime you can get a lift down to Mošćenička Draga for a swim and a beer while provisions are being purchased for the camp.

Just remember you are a self funded volunteer so make sure you enjoy your time in Croatia. As a volunteer you can do as much or as little as you want, but the more you engage the more you get out of it. I can't tell you how good or bad it is, but the fact that I first went in 2012 and have returned every year since rather indicates how I feel about it.

PS The toilet facilities are basic, however the view is exceptional and you never have to lock the door. :-)



Trevor Phelps

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