

Europe

31 Wild boar Germany

Over the past couple of years, Germany's wild boar population surged so dramatically that the tusked beasts became something of a menace – invading buildings, destroying crops and occasionally even attacking people. Still, if you've not seen one, there's never been a better time, though they can be elusive. Hikers on a self-led walking trip through the romantic landscapes of Central Franconia, between the Main and Danube rivers have spotted them in the forests there, along with deer, buzzards and polecats.

● *Six nights' B&B in the Hotel Die Post in Schillingsfurt, and maps, from £527pp incl rail travel from London with Russell Hafter Holidays (01946 861 652, walking-in-germany.co.uk).*

32 Killer whales Spain

Every summer, the fishermen of Tarifa in Andalucia have to compete with visiting killer whales for their catch. On the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society's new trip, you follow orcas as they hunt bluefin tuna in the Strait of Gibraltar. There's a very good chance of seeing them, as well as pilot whales and dolphins. When you're not assisting the cetacean experts, you can visit Roman sites or chill on the beach with the windsurf dudes.

● *The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (01249 449500, wdcs.org). Five-night group trips in July and August, from £1,250pp B&B inc hotel, flights, transfers and four whale-watching trips.*

33 Elk and beaver safari Sweden

Sweden has the world's highest density of elk, and on this weekend adventure in the Bergslagen woods, your expert hosts guarantee sightings of the "kings of the forest" as you track them on foot, mimicking their call. Then, at dusk, you quietly canoe Lake Skarsjön, seeking beavers. It's back to basics: stay in a lakeside hut, bathe in the stream, chop campfire wood and forage for lingonberries for your wilderness dinner.

● *Nature Travels (01929 463774, naturetravels.co.uk). Two-night half-board tours depart Fridays, May-Sept, from £268pp. Ryanair flies Stansted-Stockholm. Bus/train to Skinnskatteberg (where tour departs) is £12.50 one-way.*

34 Amphibians and reptiles Portugal

The mudflats and sandbanks of the Sado estuary, just south of Lisbon, swarm with all manner of slimy and cold-blooded inhabitants. From the plodding Spanish terrapin, to spiny-footed lizards, marbled newts, west Iberian painted frogs and the Montpellier snake there's plenty to keep an eye out for; voles, otters, bats, polecats and dolphins thrive here too, and it's one of the best bird-watching spots in Portugal.

● *Island Holidays (0800 253 534, islandholidays.co.uk) has a seven-night guided group trip departing March 15 from London from £1,395pp inc accommodation, flights and meals.*

35 Chasing butterflies Croatia

Croatia is the naturalists' latest darling, and this new group tour, run with the charity Butterfly Conservation, reveals why. Staying in comfortable hotels, see exquisite creatures around the turquoise lakes and waterfalls of Plitvice, the limestone gorges of Paklenica, and the seldom-visited Velebit Mountains, with dramatic coastal scenery en route. The names flutter off the tongue: cleopatra, little tiger blue, southern festoon and the great sooty satyr.

● *Nature Trek (01962 733051, naturetrek.co.uk). Seven nights from June 7, £1,295pp inc flights, transfers, all meals and lepidopterist (butterfly expert) guide.*

36 Bike with bison Poland

Track Europe's last few remaining bison in northeastern Poland on a seven-night cycling tour. Three nights are spent in Bialowieza Forest – a remnant of the vast, primeval tree masses that once cloaked the continent – where bison roam freely.

There is a bison reserve and the animal trail includes a punt in the remote Narew Marshlands, known as the Polish Amazon, home to beaver, otter, elk and martens.
● *Departs June-September, from £825pp with Explore (0844 499 0901, explore.co.uk), inc flights, transport, seven nights' B&B and guiding.*

37 Gawp at puffins Iceland

Iceland is seabird central. Drive the Snaefellsnes Peninsula as part of a self-guided tour: it has huge colonies of birds nesting on the cliffs either side of the peninsula, with puffins a highlight. You'll also take in Lake Myvatn, where there are whooper swans, geese and breeding ducks, and you can whale-spot en route, as well as visit Namaskaro's steam vents, the Arctic char-laden Laxa River and Dimmu Borgir with its weird and wonderful lava formations.

● *Seven nights from £1,095pp inc flights and car hire, departures May to September with Scantours (020 7554 3530; scantours.co.uk).*

38 Company of wolves Spain

Most of Spain's 3,000 wolves prowl the obscure Sierra de Culebra, and wildlife guru Julian Sykes' tours have all yielded sightings. You stay in a rustic hotel run by a wolf enthusiast who gets updates on their location from rangers. At dawn and dusk you seek our lupine friends; in between

