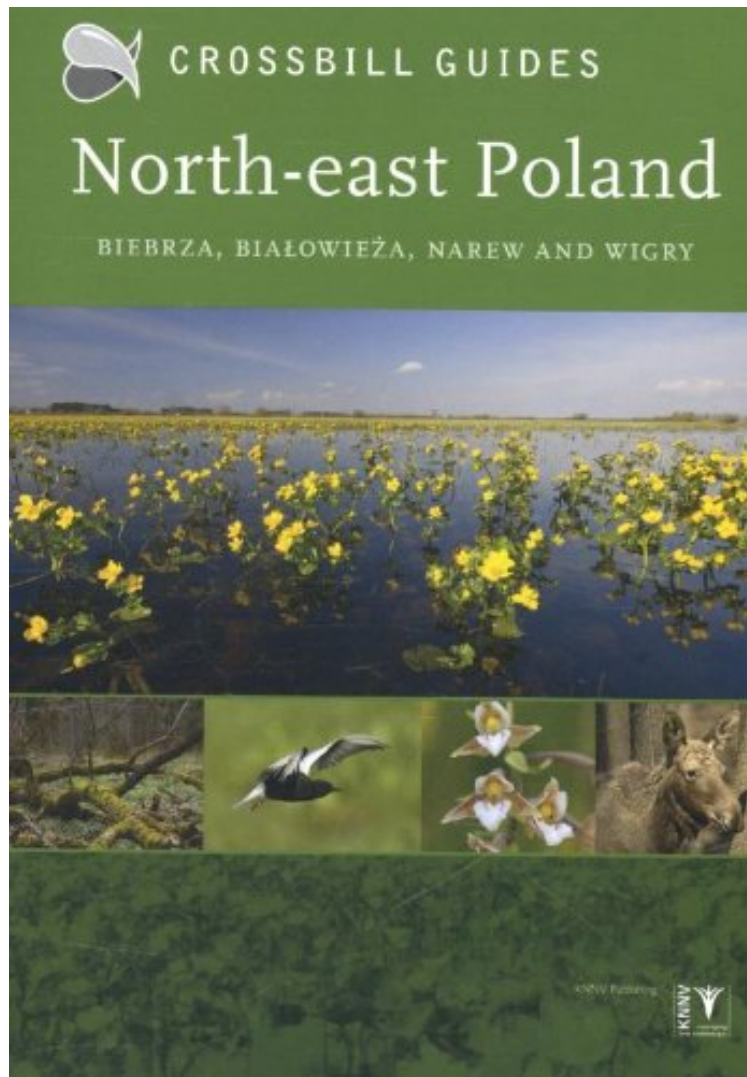


North-east Poland: Crossbill Guides

Dirk Hilbers, Bouke Tn Cate
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Dirk Hilbers, Bouke Tn Cate : North-east Poland: Crossbill Guides before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised North-east Poland: Crossbill Guides:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Poland at its best By Keith Betton The popularity of this corner of Poland has risen greatly in recent years resulting in many British birdwatchers visiting and if you collect the Crossbill Guides you may already have their excellent books on the National Parks of Biebrza Marshes and Bia?owie?a Forest. These were published in 2005, and at least one of them is now out of print. This new volume takes both areas and adds in the Eastern Masurian Lake district and several less known areas such as Augustów, plus two other National Parks - Wigry and Narew. This book follows the same style as others in the Crossbill series - and introductions to the

landscape, geology and habitats are followed by sections on each of the flora and fauna groupings. Then there is a range of 20 routes to explore covering all of the main habitats. These are a mixture of walking trails for a few hours to a full day, to drives on minor roads with recommended stops. Throughout there are maps and numerous photographs and helpful notes to maximise enjoyment of the area. The area covered is easily accessed from the city of Warsaw and from here you travel about 110 miles north-east to visit the rural areas that spread from here to the borders with Lithuania and Belarus. There are numerous small rustic hotels in the region. The Bia?owie?a Forest (pronounced Bja-wo-vie-shah) is world-famous for being one of the last remaining ancient forests of lowland Europe. Of course it is not totally untouched by human intervention, but if you want to feel as if you have stepped back a thousand years or so, then this is the place to go. It is also the final place where the last European Bison lived in the wild. They were exterminated, but a reintroduction programme in the 1950s saw them return, and now there are over 300 individuals roaming the forest. The forests around Augustów and Wigry are also well worth visiting and have bicycle routes to allow easier access. The breeding birds are amazing here with chances of five woodpeckers that you'll never see in the UK - Middle Spotted, White-backed, Three-toed, Grey-headed and Black. Then there are two very special flycatchers - Red-breasted and Collared. Owls are another speciality and your chances to see these are a bit limited without local help, but both Pygmy and Tengmalm's Owls breed here. Other birds you may well come across are Crested Tit, Nutcracker, Goshawk and Short-toed Treecreeper. However to see Hazel Grouse or Capercaillie you need a lot of luck. The Biebrza Marshes (pronounced Bieb-shah) create Poland's largest National Park and this contains a complete river ecosystem. Most birdwatchers head to the Carska Droga road to discover the south basin, but there are other more remote areas too. The Narew National Park is nearby, covering the inland delta of the Narew River. It shares many of the same breeding species but is less visited by birders. Breeding raptors here include Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Spotted Eagle and White-tailed Eagle. Displaying Great Snipe are a real treat and can be seen at specially set up viewing points, while birds like Little Crake, Spotted Crake, Corncrake and Common Crane are birds you might find by chance. You are sure to hear the latter! The number of breeding passerines is impressive with particular targets being Bluethroat, Barred Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Savi's Warbler, River Warbler, Penduline Tit, Great Grey Shrike, Red-backed Shrike, Common Rosefinch and Aquatic Warbler. This whole area is of great interest to all-round naturalists. In addition to the Bison there are good numbers of Elk too, and the great thing about this as with all of the Crossbill Guides, is that it provides something for all naturalists. There is plenty of information explaining how the area has been protected and how the ecosystem works.

This new title in the Crossbill Guides Series cover the famous National Parks of Biebrza and Bialowieza, plus the Eastern Masurian Lake district and several less known areas such as Augustow, Wigry NP and Narew NP. Combined they form one of the top destinations for birdwatchers and naturalists alike. Like any other Crossbill Guide, this title answers two questions: what makes this area so special, and how can I see this for myself. This book describes the flora and fauna, landscape and traditional land use of this region, plus 20 detailed routes and many sites descriptions with concrete indications on where and how to find the birds, wildlife and flora. The Biebrza marshes in North-east Poland are well known as the most pristine lowland river ecosystem. Likewise, Bialowieza National Park is similarly well-known as the last primeval lowland forest left in Europe. These areas together with the many other natural areas nearby, form one gigantic nature-rich region, in which wild bison, wolves and elks roam, and many rare birds, dragonflies, butterflies and wildflowers can be found - and, with this guidebook, be found with relative ease.

"These guides are a splendid acquisition for any trip" - Derek Moore, British Birds
About the Author Dirk Hilbers (The Netherlands, 1976), biologist, is the founder of the Crossbill Guides Foundation and travels the continent to write Crossbill Guides about the most beautiful natural areas of Europe. He has specialized in flora, insects, ecology and land use. Bouke ten Cate (The Netherlands, 1984) is a new author in the Crossbill Guides team. He spend as much time as possible outdoors since his childhood, and has specialised in birds, reptiles / amphibians, and nature photography.