



Dear Ranavirus Symposium Participants,

The starting date of the 4th Symposium is approaching fast. We would like to let you know some details about the field trips that are planned for Saturday, June 10th, Saturday. You can choose one of the two field trips. Please let us know which, if any, you would like to participate in by May 22nd, so that we can book the right size bus(es). Fees can be paid at the registration desk in cash.

OPTION No. 1 (a full-day trip)

**Kiskunság National Park,
Meadow Viper Conservation Centre
30 EUR/person,
ca. 8:30 AM – 6 PM (including lunch)**



Starting in Budapest, we will take an hour long bus ride to the Hungarian Meadow Viper Conservation Centre. You can learn more about this flagship EU Life Project via the following link: <http://www.rakosivipera.hu/en/>

Bálint Halpern, manager of the LIFE project at the Reptile and Amphibian Division of the Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society (also known as BirdLife Hungary) along with **Tamás Péchy**, founder and leader of the Conservation Centre, will be our expert guides. Here is a longer video about this project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSavSQRlsSk>

The morning program will take approx. 2 hrs, and will be followed by a 20 min. ride to a local Restaurant/Resort for lunch. Before having our 3 course menu, we will be able to enjoy a “Puszta-program”, which is a local horse show. See the attached separate PDF to learn more on this program and the menu offered. For those of you with special dietary needs, the restaurant will serve food accordingly. Please send us a message if this is necessary.



In the afternoon, we will travel on to the Upper-Kiskunság Plain (Felső-Kiskunsági Puszta), where we will do some bird watching, so be sure to bring your camera or binoculars. This is a vast sodic lowland plain of the Great Hungarian Plain, the former flood area of the Danube River, with a calcareous-sodic (what we call solonchak-solonetz type) soil, second in size only to Hortobágy. It presents a nice variation of sodic meadows, grazing lands, sodic terraces and 'blind' sodic flats with a typical vegetation consisting of various salt-resistant and halphyte species. The vast untouched land is home to the largest and steadiest population of the great bustard (*Otis tarda*) in Hungary. In the sodic grasslands traditional extensive animal husbandry is still alive with the typical ancient Hungarian domestic animals, including grey cattle and racka sheep.

Most of the protected area can only be visited with special permission. Along the one-kilometre 'Réce (Duck) Study Trail', however, we will have the opportunity to freely observe the animal population and nesting birds of the sodic plains and the reeds. The two lookouts at the two ends of the trail offer special views of the plain.

OPTION No. 2 (a half-day trip)

Duna-Ipoly National Park,

Sas-hegy (Eagles's hill) Protected Area, Buda hills Nature Reserve Area

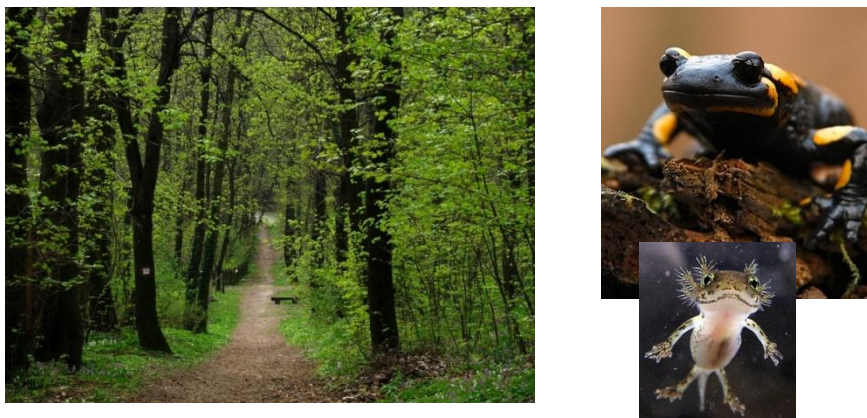
15 EUR/person, cca. 8:30 AM – 1 PM (no meal included)

During this short field trip, you will stay within Budapest and learn about its natural habitats on its hilly Buda side. If you are lucky, you will be able to see/catch some representatives of the local herpetofauna. Your expert guide during the whole trip will be **Judit Vörös**, head of the Herpetology Collection at the Hungarian Natural History Museum.

In the first 2 hours you will explore the Sas-hill nature trail. This enclosure within the city holds some unique flora and fauna elements on its dolomite slopes, and it offers a beautiful overview of the city. Most notable is a population of the northernmost subspecies of the European snake-eyed skink (*Ablepharus kitaibelii*) and a minute population of the strictly protected Caspian whipsnake (*Hierophis caspius*). These are both very hard to spot. Here is a video about the trail: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXfYVJjK2o>



Later in the morning, in the forests of Buda outskirts, you will visit a hidden population of the fire salamander (*S. salamandra*). If the weather is rainy, then you can sample the adults for Bd with Judit Vörös. Otherwise, you will meet only the larvae.



We hope, that all of you will find at least one of the options interesting enough. Please do not forget to let us know which one. Email Tibor Papp (kabafalvi@gmail.com) if you have any questions about the trips.

Looking forward to hearing from you and then to meeting you in Budapest soon,

Mária Benkő, Balázs Harrach, Tibor Papp

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