

# Hungary in Autumn

21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> October 2007

## Trip Report

### Leaders:

Attila Steiner, Hungary

Mike Read, Hampshire

### Introduction

We enjoyed another excellent tour to this eastern European country despite the weather, which perhaps reduced the number of species that we actually encountered. However we did see two species that Travelling Naturalist groups had not seen before on an autumnal trip to this area (White Pelican and Turtle Dove) and we ended up with a grand total of 112 species of birds. Highlights amongst these must surely include numerous sightings of White-tailed Eagle and tens of thousands of Common Cranes in the Hortobagy, Goshawk chasing Feral Pigeons and good views of a Ural Owl in the Zemplen Hills plus Saker Falcon and Eastern Imperial Eagles on the journey from and back to Budapest. The Long-eared Owl roost in Hortobagy village and in Balmazujvaros provided further highlights, as did three species of ‘Spotted’ woodpecker in 5 minutes in the Zemplen Hills and prolonged views of Grey-headed Woodpecker in the Bukk Hills.

With at least two Goon fanatics in the group, humour was on-going! In fact there were times when we couldn’t watch the birds for laughing. The wine tasting evening somehow seemed to add to the humour too!

Our guide Attila and our driver Laci were excellent and deserve our grateful thanks for a super tour.

### DAILY DIARY

#### Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October

Our flight departed from Gatwick on time and landed a little ahead of time. We met John who had flown out from Ireland and our guide Attila after which we began the journey towards the Hortobagy. Before leaving the general area of the airport we had seen Black-billed Magpie and Common Kestrel. Once we had negotiated the Budapest traffic, we were soon driving along the M3 and heading east under overcast skies. As we went, we saw numerous Common Buzzards and these continued sporadically throughout the journey; overall we probably saw in excess of 40 individuals. There were also Collared Doves, Wood Pigeons, a lone Turtle Dove (an unusually late bird), small groups of Starlings, a hunting Marsh Harrier and a flock of European Goldfinches seen. We paused at a service station along the M3 and found a pair of Eastern Imperial Eagles perched on an electricity pylon, a small flock of Northern Lapwings flew over a group of about 10 Roe Deer. In the car park was a female Black Redstart, a group of a dozen Crested Larks and in a flock of House Sparrows were at least 5 Tree Sparrows.

Heading onwards we encountered more Common Buzzards, another Kestrel as well as flocks of Rooks and Jackdaws. At one point we stopped to check a row of pylons and were rewarded with distant views of a Saker Falcon. At Tisza To (lake) we added Great Crested and Little Grebes, Pygmy and Great Cormorants whilst among the numerous ducks we could identify Teal, Mallard, Gadwall, Shoveler, Wigeon and Tufted Duck. Soon we arrived at our hotel and an hour later we enjoyed a fine evening meal after which we headed to our rooms for a well earned nights sleep.

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

Before any of us had left our rooms to head in for breakfast, numerous groups of Greylag Geese could be heard flying over. As we left the hotel later a few Tree Sparrows were in the shrubs opposite the drive and flocks of Rooks were flying past. During the journey to Nagyiván we saw a few Common Buzzards, many Common Cranes, a Sparrowhawk and a male Hen Harrier. We paused to pick up our Hortobágy National Park guide, Gabor and saw a Serin or two and then out on the nearby reserve area we were pleased that the first birds of note that we saw were 7 Great Bustards. In the same area we also added a few Hen and Marsh Harriers, a passing Saker was glimpsed while in the bushes were Chiffchaff, at least a dozen Blue Tits and 3 Goldcrests. Gabor also located a further group of 14 Great Bustards but these were only seen by a few of the group. As we left the reserve and headed back towards the village to drop off Gabor, we saw a Common Snipe, a female Hen Harrier and 3 Reed Buntings.

Between Nagyiván and Hortobágy we saw a couple of male Hen Harriers, a Skylark which landed not too far from the road and a large flock of Tree Sparrows. In Hortobágy village itself we saw at least a dozen Long-eared Owls roosting in a tree or two and while we watched and photographed these birds, 2 Hawfinches flew past. After a visit to the local museum/visitor centre, we drove about 5 km out of Hortobágy to a lovely restaurant for a lunch of various hearty soups. From here, we took the road towards Nadudvar seeing our first herd of Hortobágy Grey Cattle along the way. Raptors during the drive included Marsh Harrier, Common Buzzards and a couple of Common Kestrels as well as 3 Great Grey Shrikes. After some fairly close views of Common Cranes we drove to where a large group of cranes could be seen feeding in a field. Here we were able to park and get good 'scope views of the birds. Also noted at this point were Greenfinches, Goldfinches, a pair of Common Stonechats and a hunting Weasel.

From here we drove to Balmazújváros where we visited another Long-eared Owl roost where this time we encountered at least 60 birds. Many were seen at very close quarters and as our attention attracted the local children, they walked a little too close beneath the trees and caused a number of the birds to fly into some more distant trees. To the east of this town we searched unsuccessfully for a couple of waders that had been seen but we did see a couple of Meadow Pipits and a passing Goshawk that was carrying prey into a distant woodland. We then drove to the north west of Balmazújváros where we anticipated seeing many cranes passing overhead towards their roost. However, it seemed they had found better feeding elsewhere or perhaps the cold wind had forced them to another part of the Hortobágy that morning. Large numbers were seen flying in the distance but very few came close to us. Also in the distance we saw 3 White-tailed Eagles which then disappeared into their woodland roost. As the evening began to close in and a few spots of rain began to fall, we headed back to the welcoming warmth and food of our own 'roost'.

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October**

Before leaving the hotel, one client had seen a Syrian Woodpecker and a gathering of 53 Great Tits. The latter birds were either on to some good feeding or were leaving a nearby roost. As we drove east along route 33 there were numerous birds encountered. These included 15 – 20 Curlews, a couple of Kestrels, 3 male and 1 female Hen Harriers, numerous Common Cranes, 3 Great White Egrets and a few Pygmy Cormorants. The latter 2 species were seen as we drew closer to the fish ponds. We also saw at least 7 Roe Deer.

We drove to the major ponds area and as our train ride was over an hour away, we walked down to a viewpoint where we could overlook one of the lakes. Along the track we saw more Pygmy Cormorants and Great White Herons flying into the strong and increasing wind. In the bushes were occasional Blue Tits and a Common Chiffchaff but as we neared the lakeside viewpoint, we were pleased that there were trees and shrubs that could offer us some shelter. On the water we noted a few Mallard, Gadwall and 8 Ferruginous Ducks, a few Great Crested Grebes, a family group of Mute Swans plus dozens more Pygmy Cormorants and a few of their larger relatives, 'Great' Cormorants.

During the walk back we encountered a Common Tree Frog and a Fire-bellied Toad and one lucky client glimpsed a Penduline Tit.

At 11 a.m. we boarded the train that was to take us out to the furthest fish pond a few kilometres away. The ride was interesting and from our open-sided carriages we saw numerous Common Teal and Coots. A Marsh Harrier flew parallel with us for some time and it may have been this that spooked (or was it the noise of our train?) a group of Grey Herons and Great White Egrets and a White Pelican. This latter bird flew along with us for some time even though it was flapping quite hard to make headway into the wind! A few people glimpsed a Common Kingfisher at one point.

We reached the end of the train journey but still had to walk a few hundred metres to reach the only roofed hide in the area. As we neared the hide it began to rain and we were soon really grateful to reach the hide. The rain blew in any open windows but we needed them open to be able to see the birds assembled before us. These included good numbers of Greylag Geese and amongst them may have been the hoped-for group of Lesser White-fronted Geese but as the birds were all facing into the wind (and directly away from us) we were unable to find them. (We were not familiar with the finer points of identifying 'grey geese' by their tail-ends!!) The White Pelican was also roosting some distance out and there were several of the more common species of ducks including Mallard, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Shoveler and Pintail. Waders were represented by just two species; there were 9 Avocets and at least 35 Spotted Redshanks and both species flew past quite closely when they were spooked by a passing Marsh Harrier. The rain had eased considerably by the time we had finished our picnic lunches and began the return walk to the train and during this rather hasty 'retreat' we saw a pair of Serins. We then headed for Hortobagy for a well-deserved cuppa!

As the rain had stopped by now, we took a short stroll nearby and down by the river and had brief but close views of a hunting female Sparrowhawk. As we passed the open-air theatre a couple of White Wagtails flew off and a little while later a group of 8 Fieldfares flew over. The Buzzards, White-tailed Eagle and White Storks in a large aviary attracted some interest and these were birds that had been injured, brought to the local vet and were deemed unfit to be re-released. Good to get such close views of these usually elusive and shy birds.

As the rain had started again, we felt it was time to make a slightly early return to the hotel.

### **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

We left the hotel after seeing a Blackbird and a Great Spotted Woodpecker and headed to Nagyivan to pick up our National Park guide Gabor. The journey there and then to near Nadudvar had us looking at a range of birds including Common Buzzards, Hen Harrier, Common Cranes and Corn Buntings. Once we reached our destination, we set off on what might have been about a 3 km walk each way. However, our main target species was very helpful by appearing after we had only walked half that distance. First of all a group of 16 Dotterels flew around and landed a hundred yards in front of us then a second flock of about the same number landed to their left. 'Brilliant' we thought but then a third and even larger group (23 birds) flew around and landed some distance away! Wow, 55 Dotterels without too much effort. After all this excitement, lunch seemed to be calling so we headed to Puspokladany and enjoyed another fine soup.

We then took a brief walk and managed to find about 350 Greylag Geese, 2 White-tailed Eagles, 4 Grey Herons, a few Great White Egrets, Marsh Harrier, Common Buzzard and a couple of Crested Larks. We still had a little time to spare so we went to Tisza To and birded while we enjoyed a cup of coffee etc. The 'smaller' side of the lake seemed to hold most birds perhaps because it was more sheltered. Here we found some Great Crested and Little Grebes (at least 6 of the latter species) and also a couple of Black-necked Grebes in a strange autumn plumage. Also present were the same duck species that we had seen as we arrived on Sunday as well as Pygmy and Great Cormorants, Mute Swans and a few Common Gulls.

This completed another day in this super National Park and so we headed back to the hotel.

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October**

After our final breakfast at this hotel, we loaded our luggage into the trailer and had time for a quick look at a couple of Syrian Woodpeckers before we left. As the drive to the Zemplen Hills is fairly short, we had time for some more birding in the Hortobagy National Park and after obtaining our permits, we had a quick look at the 10 or more Long-eared Owls roosting close to the museum. At the main fish ponds we walked out to the promontory to see what was about. Small birds in the bushes included Blue Tit, Robin, Wren, Chiffchaff and Goldcrest while a Water Rail or two squealed from the reed beds. Great White Egrets and Grey Herons stood around the edge of the lake in small numbers while out on the water were a few duck species, a family of Mute Swans as well as Pygmy and Great Cormorants. As we began the walk back, a Marsh Harrier hunted the reeds while groups of Common Cranes passed overhead. Just before our departure we had fine views of a Black Redstart while 6 Redwings landed in one of the willow trees.

Our next stop was at the fish ponds at the start of the Tisacsege road. These produced some good birds including about 100 Spotted Redshanks and a single Common Redshank. There were many Dunlins feeding out on the mud where a few Caspian Gulls, Common Gulls and Great White Egret were standing about doing mostly nothing. Our final good sighting here was a juvenile White-tailed Eagle that flew past carrying some unidentified item of prey. From here we drove to the River Tisza just beyond Tisacsege and as we got out of the bus, a group of Long-tailed Tits and a Nuthatch were found. After another fine lunch in the adjacent restaurant we had the opportunity to watch a pair of Black Redstarts and a Great Spotted Woodpecker. As this latter bird took off, it was promptly seized by a Sparrowhawk that had been perched in a nearby tree unseen by us (and the woodpecker obviously!!)

We now began our journey towards the Zemplen Hills and as we set off, groups of Common Cranes could be seen as well as the usual raptors. When we reached Debrecen we went to some woodlands for a walk although the weather was, once again, not at its best! The hoped-for woodpeckers were not seen however we did have a few more Redwings here along with a Song Thrush or two. Chiffchaff and Great Tits also put in an appearance but perhaps best of all were the fabulous autumn colours that graced every step we took. Even the overcast lighting could not subdue the brightness of the yellows and golden browns. After a cuppa we headed on to our next hotel and, with the light now gradually fading, there were times when the chatter within the bus went rather quiet. Some were obviously inspecting the inside of their eyelids including the TN leader! We arrived in good time and were soon settled in and preparing ourselves for another fine Hungarian evening meal.

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October**

A female/juvenile Black Redstart was on the hotel roof as we departed for our day in the Zemplen Hills. During the journey to Boldogkovar (which apparently translates somehow as 'Gladstone Castle') we noted Great Grey Shrike, Buzzards, a Sparrowhawk, Ravens, Linnets, Yellowhammer and Crested Lark. As the light and autumn colours were combining well, we paused for a few photos of the cattle before taking a walk in a small valley nearby. Here, many birds were seen including 6+ Goldcrests, Great and Coal Tits, Eurasian Treecreeper, Goldfinches, Common Buzzard, Sparrowhawk and at least 4 Hen Harriers that were probably passing through the area. Best of all here were the 70 or more Siskins that were feeding in 2 or 3 Alder trees close to the road. They seemed to be rather approachable and everyone had good views of them.

From here we drove up to the castle itself and as we approached we saw a Goshawk chasing some of the feral pigeons. It failed to secure a meal and for a brief while, it landed on one of the castle walls and we were able to get 'scope views. In the conifer trees close to the castle we saw Nuthatch and Great Spotted Woodpecker and along the ramparts were at least 3 more Black Redstarts. After some more quick photos of the autumn colours it was time to head off for our lunch in Haromhuta. Once replete we headed up the adjacent valley to search for birds. We hoped for Ural Owl close to a field that had seen the attention of wild boars in the recent past but of the owl there was no sign. We did

hear Jays calling in alarm as if an owl was about but our searches revealed nothing. Marsh Tit was the only bird seen here but the sunshine and the glorious autumn-coloured beeches more than compensated.

A few kilometres towards our next destination we paused so that Attila could check a small stream for dippers. Immediately he found a Ural Owl right beside the road but it flew into cover. After some diligent searching and some cautious manoeuvring, we were all able to secure excellent views of this lovely bird. The search for dippers was quickly forgotten. The afternoon was drawing to a close now so we made a dash to Tokaj quarry in the hope of seeing eagle owl departing at dusk. I don't know if we were a little late or if the owl was! In the end, we felt that we should head on back to the hotel 'eagle-owl-less'.

### **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October**

We began our day out in good style with a visit to some woodlands close to Erdobeny. The up-hill walk through the mixed forest was once more enhanced by superb autumn colours. The birds performed well too! At first we could hear a woodpecker tapping and as we imitated the sound, it showed itself and it proved to be a Great Spotted Woodpecker. A few moments later we heard and then saw a group of Nuthatches and Tits (Great, Marsh and Long-tailed) in the trees above us and as we checked, we located first a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and then its Middle Spotted 'cousin'. Both of these latter birds gave excellent views. A Common Treecreeper was also seen. As we wandered onwards, a Black Woodpecker was glimpsed flying through the trees but unfortunately not everyone saw it. As we returned towards the bus, we added a calling Bullfinch and 2 or 3 Common Crossbills to the list. Once on board we began the drive towards the town and managed to find a group of small birds in the fields and hedgerows. These included Chaffinches, Linnets, Tree Sparrows and Yellowhammers. Further along the road we noted a Great Grey Shrike or two.

It was now time for lunch so we drove to a location where there was some open grassland and some picnic tables. We took a short walk to begin with and soon found a couple of Mistle Thrushes, a few Fieldfares and a Song Thrush. Jays were frequently seen as they flew around collecting acorns, a pair of Common Ravens were often heard calling and a small group of Hawfinches flew over. As we returned to prepare for our picnics, a few local people were getting back to their cars following some time spent collecting fungi from the woods.

After lunch we drove towards Sarospatak seeing more Mistle Thrushes, Fieldfares and a Sparrowhawk as we went. Just outside the town we walked along a track to a quarry where we once again had a fruitless search for eagle owl. However we did encounter a good few smaller birds including Goldcrests, Chiffchaff, 4 species of Tits and we heard the calling of a Dunnock. Our next stop was overlooking the flood plain near Szegilong where we had really good views of 3 more Hawfinches that flew around for a while before disappearing into some trees below us. Out in the meadows we could see a number of Roe Deer and a Fox was out hunting in broad daylight. Hooded Crows were frequent, 2 Grey Herons flew into the area and a passing Hen Harrier was also noted.

We returned to the hotel for an earlier-than-usual dinner as we were heading out to a wine cellar in the nearby town of Mad (you don't have to be mad to work there apparently!). We sampled various types of white wine ranging from a lovely dry wine through to one that was almost honey-sweet. The latter wine was a top quality one that was never bottled but was used for blending. By the way, I don't really remember if we tasted 5 or 6 wines; I lost count after three!!

### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October**

We left the hotel at 08.30 and set off towards Miskloc and, eventually, Budapest. During the early part of the journey we saw numerous Common Buzzards, a few Starlings Great White Egrets and Roe Deer as well as a Fox and a juvenile Peregrine. After travelling for some time along the motorway, we turned off and headed for the Bukk Hills National Park via Bogacs. Two Imperial Eagles were perched on electricity pylons with one bird being much closer than the other. On the pylon beyond

the furthest bird we found a Saker falcon and further away still was a Common Raven. A Bullfinch was calling from the nearby hedgerow and a Great Grey Shrike was seen chasing a Goldfinch. A nearby reservoir held more Great White Egrets, a Great Crested Grebe, a couple of Pochards and a good number of Mallard. We then headed for the hills and took a short walk in a wooded gorge. Here we encountered a couple of Rock Buntings but unfortunately not everyone saw them. A few Black Redstarts were more co-operative as they hopped from rock to rock and as we wandered on through the trees we found Great, Marsh and Long-tailed Tits. As we searched a rocky slope, a Grey-headed Woodpecker flew across the valley and almost immediately we saw a more distant Black Woodpecker flying over the top of the ridge and disappearing from view. The Grey-headed Woodpecker flew back across the valley and eventually landed in the top of a dead tree and gave good views for some time.

After lunch in Bogacs, we completed the journey to Budapest airport seeing further Common Buzzards (perhaps as many as 50) and another Imperial Eagle as we went. Arriving in good time for the homeward flight, the clients bade farewell to the leaders (Mike was staying on in Hungary for some photography) and our driver, Laci who took two clients into Budapest for a further 3 day city break.

## SPECIES CHECKLIST

### BIRDS

<b>Little Grebe</b>	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Seen on 21 <sup>st</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup> at Tisza To
<b>Great Crested Grebe</b>	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	First seen on 21 <sup>st</sup> at Tisza To where we also saw the species on 24 <sup>th</sup> . Also noted on various fish ponds on 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> and close to Bogacs on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Black-necked (Eared) Grebe</b>	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	2 seen in autumn plumage at Tisza To on 24 <sup>th</sup>
<b>(Great) Cormorant</b>	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>	Noted on each of the first 5 days at Tisza To and at various Hortobagy fish ponds and close to Bogacs on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Pygmy Cormorant</b>	<i>Phalacrocorax pygmaeus</i>	Noted on 21 <sup>st</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> at Tisza To and at various Hortobagy fish ponds
<b>Grey Heron</b>	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Noted on 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> at various Hortobagy fish ponds then seen along the M3 on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Great White Egret</b>	<i>Egretta alba</i>	Noted on 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> in the Hortobagy and on the latter day, seen on the way to Tokaj. Also at least 20 were noted on 28 <sup>th</sup> as we headed for the airport
<b>White Pelican</b>	<i>Pelicanus onocrotalus</i>	Just a single bird seen at the Hortobagy fish ponds on 23 <sup>rd</sup> (This was the first <i>Travelling Naturalist</i> record of this species in the Hortobagy)
<b>White Stork</b>	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	A single bird stood on a nest late on 26 <sup>th</sup> in Tolcsva was our only sighting
<b>Mute Swan</b>	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Seen on 4 days at Tisza To and various Hortobagy fish ponds
<b>Greater White-fronted Goose</b>	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	15 seen flying over Nagyivan on 22 <sup>nd</sup> and 1 flew over our accommodation early on 24 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Greylag Goose</b>	<i>Anser anser</i>	Seen on each of the first 4 days in good numbers
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>	<i>Anas penelope</i>	2 or 3 at Tisza To on 21 <sup>st</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> and also seen on 23 <sup>rd</sup> at Hortobagy fish ponds
<b>Gadwall</b>	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Seen on 4 days in the Hortobagy area including at Tisza To
<b>Common Teal</b>	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Noted on 4 days in the Hortobagy
<b>Mallard</b>	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Noted on each of the first 5 days and also near Bogacs on 28 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Northern Pintail</b>	<i>Anas acuta</i>	About a dozen seen on the Hortobagy fish ponds on 23 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Northern Shoveler</b>	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Small numbers seen in the Hortobagy on 4 days
<b>Common Pochard</b>	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	2 on 23 <sup>rd</sup> and 3 on 24 <sup>th</sup> on Hortobagy fish ponds and Tisza To respectively then 2 were near Bogacs on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Ferruginous Duck</b>	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	8 on 23 <sup>rd</sup> & a few on 25 <sup>th</sup> at one of the Hortobagy fish ponds
<b>Tufted Duck</b>	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Seen on 21 <sup>st</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup> at Tisza To where, on the latter day, there was just a single bird
<b>White-tailed Eagle</b>	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	3 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 on 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2 on 24 <sup>th</sup> and 1 on 25 <sup>th</sup> around various Hortobagy fish ponds
<b>Hen (Northern) Harrier</b>	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Lots of sightings with at least 10 seen on 22 <sup>nd</sup> and there were numerous sightings every day after that
<b>Western Marsh Harrier</b>	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1 at Tisza To on 21 <sup>st</sup> then 8 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> and other sightings on the following 3 days
<b>Eurasian Sparrowhawk</b>	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Seen every day except 21 <sup>st</sup> with a high count of at least 3 on 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Northern Goshawk</b>	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	1 carrying prey on 22 <sup>nd</sup> near the eastern end of the Hortobagy then 2 on 26 <sup>th</sup> with one of them seen chasing feral pigeons then perching on the tower of Boldogkóvár (castle)
<b>Common Buzzard</b>	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Common. Seen every day with 40+ during the drive to Tiszafüred on 21 <sup>st</sup> and at least 50 seen on 28 <sup>th</sup> including during the motorway journey to the airport
<b>Rough-legged Buzzard</b>	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Just a single bird well seen on 24 <sup>th</sup> as we watched the Dotterels
<b>(Eastern) Imperial Eagle</b>	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	2 seen perched on a pylon on the way to the Hortobagy on 21 <sup>st</sup> then seen close to Bogacs on 28 <sup>th</sup> and another seen closer to Budapest later that day
<b>Common Kestrel</b>	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Noted on the first 5 days in small numbers then seen during the journey to Budapest on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Merlin</b>	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	A single, distant bird seen briefly on 22 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Saker</b>	<i>Falco cherrug</i>	1 on 21 <sup>st</sup> fairly close to Tiszafüred, 1 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> on the Nagyiván Reserve and another on 28 <sup>th</sup> near Bogacs
<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> near Nadudvar and a juvenile seen just after we left the motorway to head for Bogacs on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Common Pheasant</b>	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Noted every day in small numbers
<b>Common Crane</b>	<i>Grus grus</i>	Noted on 4 successive days from 22 <sup>nd</sup> with many seen on every part of the Hortobagy on our first full day there
<b>Water Rail</b>	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	Just heard calling on 25 <sup>th</sup> during our second 'railway walk'
<b>Eurasian Coot</b>	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Noted in good numbers on 21 <sup>st</sup> and 3 successive days from 23 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Great Bustard</b>	<i>Otis tarda</i>	7 found by our local guide on 22 <sup>nd</sup> were seen by everyone but only a few people saw the other 14 birds during that same walk. The wind was strong and cold!
<b>Pied Avocet</b>	<i>Recurvirostra avocetta</i>	3 seen by everyone and a further 6 only seen by one leader at the fish ponds on 23 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>(Northern) Lapwing</b>	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Noted on 5 days including on the way from and to Budapest
<b>Eurasian Dotterel</b>	<i>Eudromias morinellus</i>	At least 55 seen on 24 <sup>th</sup> near the Angel's House

<b>Eurasian Curlew</b>	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	At least 15 seen on 23 <sup>rd</sup> beside route 33 and also seen on 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Spotted Redshank</b>	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	35 or more on the big fish pond on 23 <sup>rd</sup> and at least 100 on a smaller, drained pond a couple of days later
<b>Common Redshank</b>	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	A single bird seen in with the previous species on 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Common Greenshank (Common) Snipe Dunlin</b>	<i>Tringa nebularia</i> <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> <i>Calidris alpina</i>	2 seen on the main fish pond on 23 <sup>rd</sup> Singles seen on 3 successive days from 22 <sup>nd</sup> At least 75 were feeding in the drained fish pond on 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Common/Mew Gull</b>	<i>Larus canus</i>	3 on Tisza To on 24 <sup>th</sup> and a few were on the drained fish pond the following day
<b>Caspian Gull</b>	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	We have assumed that all the 'herring gull' sized gulls were of this species due to location and the difficulty of proper viewing due to the weather conditions. Noted on 6 days
<b>Black-headed Gull</b>	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Also noted on 6 days, the first 5 of the tour and the day we journeyed back to Budapest
<b>Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon Stock Dove Wood Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba livia</i> <i>Columba oenas</i> <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Noted every day. Common Just noted on 22 <sup>nd</sup> when 3 were seen Noted on 6 days but only in very small numbers
<b>Turtle Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	1 unusually late bird seen during the journey from Budapest on 21 <sup>st</sup>
<b>(Eurasian) Collared Dove Ural Owl</b>	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> <i>Strix uralensis</i>	Common. Noted every day Excellent views of one in the Zemplen Hills. Typically, it was found a few miles from where we had spent some considerable amount of time searching for one in known haunts! Typical of birding really.
<b>Long-eared Owl</b>	<i>Asio otus</i>	At least a dozen in the village of Hortobagy on 22 <sup>nd</sup> and a further 60 – 65 birds were in Balmaujvaros later that day. There were at least 10 in the same Hortobagy tree on 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Common Kingfisher</b>	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	A couple were glimpsed at the main fish ponds on 23 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Lesser Spotted Woodpecker</b>	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	1 was well seen in woodlands close to Erdobenyé on 27 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Middle Spotted Woodpecker</b>	<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>	Heard calling on 26 <sup>th</sup> then well seen a few seconds after the previous species
<b>Syrian Woodpecker</b>	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>	1 seen at the hotel on 23 <sup>d</sup> then a couple seen there 2 days later
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b>	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Noted on 4 successive days from 24 <sup>th</sup> with one being seen at the same time as the other 2 'spotted' species
<b>Grey-headed Woodpecker</b>	<i>Picus canus</i>	1 well seen for a prolonged period of time in the Bukk Hills NP on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Crested Lark Eurasian Sky Lark</b>	<i>Galerida cristata</i> <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Seen every day in small numbers except 27 <sup>th</sup> Just a single bird seen on the Hortobagy on 22 <sup>nd</sup> . It is one of the commonest breeding birds here but for some reason they mostly eluded us
<b>White Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>	2 on 23 <sup>rd</sup> in Hortobagy village and 2 on 26 <sup>th</sup> near Boldogkovar
<b>Meadow Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Seen in small numbers on 3 days in the Hortobagy NP
<b>Northern (Great Grey) Shrike</b>	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	Fair numbers seen on 6 days in widely spaced locations
<b>(Winter) Wren</b>	<i>Troglodytes troglodyte</i>	Seen in small numbers on 4 successive days from 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Hedge Accentor (Dunnock)</b>	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Heard on 27 <sup>th</sup> close to Boldogkovar

<b>(Common) Blackbird</b>	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Seen on 5 successive days from 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Fieldfare</b>	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	8 on 23 <sup>rd</sup> in Hortobagy village and also seen on 27 <sup>th</sup> in the Zemplen Hills
<b>Redwing</b>	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	6 seen on 25 <sup>th</sup> during our walk at the main fish ponds
<b>Song Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1 or 2 seen on 25 <sup>th</sup> in the company of the previous species and a single bird was noted in the Zemplen Hills on 27 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	At least 3 noted at our picnic site in the Zemplen hills on 27 <sup>th</sup>
<b>(Eurasian) Robin</b>	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Small numbers seen every day except 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Black Redstart</b>	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	1 on the way to the Hortobagy on 21 <sup>st</sup> then seen in small numbers on 4 days from 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>(Common) Stonechat</b>	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	A pair was seen not far from Nadudvar on 22 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Common Chiffchaff</b>	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	3 seen n 25 <sup>th</sup> at the main fish ponds but one or two seen on 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Goldcrest</b>	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Seen in small numbers on 6 days
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	5 or 6 seen on 25 <sup>th</sup> at Tiszacsege on 25 <sup>th</sup> then seen on each of the next 3 days
<b>Eurasian Penduline Tit</b>	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	Just a single brief sighting by one member of the group on 23 <sup>rd</sup> at the fish ponds
<b>Marsh Tit</b>	<i>Parus palustris</i>	Heard or seen on 4 successive days from 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Coal Tit</b>	<i>Parus ater</i>	A single bird seen on 26 <sup>th</sup> near Boldogkovar and then noted the following day near Sarospatak
<b>Great Tit</b>	<i>Parus major</i>	Noted every day except 21 <sup>st</sup> including 53 in one tree at our hotel in Tiszafured.
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	Noted every day except 21 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Eurasian Nuthatch</b>	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	1 at our lunch stop at Tiszacsege on 25 <sup>th</sup> then seen on the next 3 days
<b>Eurasian Treecreeper</b>	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Single birds seen on 26 <sup>th</sup> near Boldogkovar and then seen on 27 <sup>th</sup> near Edobenyé
<b>Eurasian Jay</b>	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	3 on 21 <sup>st</sup> during the journey to the Hortobagy then seen on 3 days from 26 <sup>th</sup>
<b>(Black-billed) Magpie</b>	<i>Pica pica</i>	Common. Seen every day
<b>(Western) Jackdaw</b>	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Common. Seen every day
<b>Rook</b>	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Common. Seen every day
<b>Hooded Crow</b>	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Common. Seen every day
<b>Common Raven</b>	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Less often seen than the other 'crows' with sightings on 5 days
<b>Common Starling</b>	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Common. Seen every day
<b>Corn Bunting</b>	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	At least 15 seen on 24 <sup>th</sup> on the way to Angel's House
<b>Yellowhammer</b>	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Noted on each of the final 3 days
<b>Rock Bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	Just a couple seen in the Bukk Hills on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Eurasian Reed Bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	At least 3 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> then seen in similar numbers on the following 3 days
<b>Common Chaffinch</b>	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Noted every day except 21 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Brambling</b>	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Just a couple seen on 26 <sup>th</sup> in the Zemplen Hills and heard on another couple of occasions
<b>European Serin</b>	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	2 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> at Nagyian then 2 the following day at the fish ponds
<b>European Greenfinch</b>	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Just seen in small numbers on 4 days
<b>Eurasian Siskin</b>	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	At least 70 seen near Boldogkovar on 26 <sup>th</sup> and then heard the following day
<b>European Goldfinch</b>	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Noted every day except 24 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Common Linnet</b>	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Just seen on 26 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup> in the Zemplen Hills
<b>Common/Red Crossbill</b>	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Heard calling at the end of our walk near Erdobenyé on 27 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Eurasian Bullfinch</b>	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Just heard on 27 <sup>th</sup> near Erdobeny and in the Bukk Hills the following day
<b>Hawfinch</b>	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	2 seen briefly in Hortobagy village on 22 <sup>nd</sup> then at least 8 seen on 27 <sup>th</sup> at our picnic spot (5) and as we looked over the flood plain near Szegilong
<b>House Sparrow</b>	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Seen every day
<b>Tree Sparrow</b>	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Common. Seen every day in good numbers

**MAMMALS**

<b>Red Fox</b>	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	1 on 22 <sup>nd</sup> in the Hortobagy, 1 on 27 <sup>th</sup> near Szegilong and 1 seen close to the M4 on 28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Weasel</b>	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>	1 well seen not far from Nadudvar on 22 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Wild Boar</b>	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Sadly we did not actually see (or taste!!) this species however there were plenty of signs in the Zemplen Hills on 26 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Roe Deer</b>	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	Seen every day except 26 <sup>th</sup> . Herds of Roe in Britain are unknown; they only occur in family groups but in Hungary we saw groups of a dozen or so!

**AMPHIBIANS**

<b>Fire-bellied Toad</b>	<i>Bombina bombina</i>	Seen on 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> at the fish ponds
<b>Common Spadefoot Toad</b>	<i>Pelobates fuscus</i>	One of the sub-species <i>horizontalis</i> (dead on road!) noted on 23 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Common Tree Frog</b>	<i>Hyla arborea</i>	2 on 23 <sup>rd</sup> at the fish ponds and 1 on 24 <sup>th</sup> out in the middle of the plains far from water!
<b>Marsh Frog</b>	<i>Rana ridibunda</i>	1 seen on 24 <sup>th</sup>

**BUTTERFLIES**

<b>Small White</b>	<i>Artogeia rapae</i>
<b>Eastern Bath White</b>	<i>Pontia edusa</i>
<b>Speckled Wood</b>	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>
<b>Small Tortoiseshell</b>	<i>Aglais urticae</i>
<b>Peacock</b>	<i>Inachis io</i>
<b>Red Admiral</b>	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>

Mike Read, November 2007

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