

Limosa *Holidays*

The Travelling Naturalist

SWITZERLAND: SWISS ALPS IN SUMMER June 14th ~ 21st 2008

Tour Report

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Well, unfortunately it had to happen; a Limosa trip to Switzerland had to meet up with poor weather sometime and it just happened to be this year. The spring and early summer before we arrived had not been promising and, with a forecast that did not give much hope for change, the first few days were pretty grim. In the first half of the week, the cold and rain (it would have been snow at higher altitudes) did not dampen spirits and we swapped and changed the itinerary as much as possible, with visits into the Rhone valley and up to Arolla, finding many of the bird and plant species we came for, but the butterflies were non-existent. Finally, on the fifth day the weather broke, or rather gradually got better and we had some wonderful weather at Arolla investigating the alpine meadows on the footpath to Pras Graz, where Nutcrackers performed well, and at La Crettaz, with its abundance of flowers and (at last) butterflies. Following the well-trodden path to Zermatt and the sight of the shark-fin Matterhorn on a gloriously good day, will live long in the memory; though the snow was more extensive than normal, the Snowfinches and Alpine Choughs were very good. Weather-wise, the week was clearly a game of two halves, and it ended a lot better than it had begun. Evolene is a beautiful town, with real Swiss character and charm: the chalets, church and majestic views add a lot to the holiday. This is a trip for those that simply like being outside, savouring the whole place rather than just one element of it; though we missed one or two species (and it seems as if Rock Partridge has now gone from the area) we saw many good alpine birds, flowers and butterflies. I certainly hope you enjoyed your tour to Switzerland as much as I did.

Day 1 - Saturday 14th June We left Heathrow for our short flight to Geneva airport. Having collected the car, we made our way onto the autoroute and followed the northern rim of Lac Lemman, via Lausanne and Montreux, to the start of the Swiss part of the Rhone valley, seeing numerous Black Kites and a few Buzzards en route. Our first stop at Chablais found us a few species, with several species of duck, Reed Warblers, Great Crested Grebes and some young Great Spotted Woodpeckers. Continuing on to Sion, we turned south and wound our way into the Val d'Herens, watching the temperature drop on the gauge in the car. Upon arrival at our charming, the checking into our rooms was swift and easy and gave some time for a brief check of the surroundings before dinner – Serins, Black and Common Redstarts, Ravens and Golden Eagle all seen. Dinner in 'aux Vieux Mazot' was jolly good and most welcome.

Day 2 - Sunday 15th June An unplanned pre-breakfast walk, found a small number of Chamois high on the hillside above the town, as well as wonderfully mimetic Common Redstart. However, you never know in the Alps what the weather will do, and so following breakfast, the very unpromising weather prompted a rapid about face: instead of going up the valley to Arolla, we dropped down into the Rhone. The, by now, persistent rain and low temperature (4°C at Evolene) convinced us we were making the right decision, as did the fact that by the time we reached the Rhone the rain had virtually stopped. Turning east, we made the short drive to an area of shallow pools and arable land near Leuk, called the 'Leukerfeld' – by now we were in German-speaking Switzerland (ja voll!). The first birds as we stepped out of the vehicle were Nightingale and Marsh Warbler – a little different to the alpine birding we had intended to do, but nevertheless very good. Overhead, parties of Common and Alpine Swifts passed by, no doubt also driven out of the mountains by the weather; in the fields were Stonechats and Whinchats, Skylarks and Yellowhammers. Our circuitous walk also produced a total of four Great Reed Warblers, Little Egrets and a young Purple Heron, Tree Sparrows, but only one butterfly, an Amanda's Blue – clearly the cooler weather had affected them too. A brief walk to the bottom of the Feschelbach gorge produced Nuthatch and Crested Tit.

Lunch was made in Leuk itself, some investigating the church found a wall of skulls, before we headed to the top of the Feschelbach gorge, and a rather anticipated encounter with a special species. After a short wait, as we scanned the vertiginous gorge, David called that he had found one, only for it to disappear – rats! However, we were not to be disappointed for long, as first one then two flew up and down the cliffs beside the torrent below; at one stage a male did a sort of display flight, hanging stationary in the updraft, hovering, and slowly flapping its wings – quite amazing and destined to be one of the moments of the trip. Once we had been sated, and our mind turned to other species, around the gorge itself we found several singing Bonelli's Warblers, a couple of Rock Buntings, Mistle Thrush and an eye-to-eye view (for those sat at the front of the bus) of a Honey Buzzard. Returning to Evolene, the temperature dropped from 18C at Sion to 9C at Evolene and it was still raining. Dinner was had at 'le Mosset' – which means Goshawk in the local patois!

Day 3 - Monday 16th June We awoke ever hopeful of a change in the weather, but were disappointed: though it threatened to clear up, with brief glimpses of blue sky, the clouds soon rolled in and it rained lightly pretty much all day – and the temperature hardly rose above 10C. A small pre-breakfast gathering was lucky in that a very distant black blob was indeed a male Black Grouse – better than nothing perhaps. Having bought provisions for the day, we set off for Arolla and some alpine birding and botanising, almost running over three Marmots on the way up. As we walked across the meadows towards the snout of the Tsijiore Nouve glacier, we were treated to few typical birds of the upper treeline – here made by the Arolla pines: Bonelli's Warblers sang, as did Wrens, Dunnocks, Lesser Whitethroats and Lesser Redpolls; a singing Willow Warbler was a bit of a surprise; a large flock of over 100 Alpine Choughs swirled and whistled overhead. The flowers were a major distraction and it was lovely to see the gentians in bloom, as well as Alpine Pasque Flowers, Birds-eye Primrose, White Cranesbill, and many more. New birds were Spotted Nutcracker, Water and Tree Pipit, Ring Ousel, but perhaps the star was the splendid Alpine (Willow) Tit that came and called around us. The walk back to the vehicle for lunch was equally enjoyable.

Following the picnic lunch, we had a welcome cup of hot chocolate, tea or coffee, before driving towards the snout of the Lower Arolla glacier. The rain was steady by now and the temperature was dropping quickly; we managed to see more Water Pipits, Lesser Redpolls, but the calling Citril Finch failed to show. Returning to Evolene, we stopped at Les Hauderes and saw two Dipper on the river (obviously), and quite a few Crag Martins, including a lovely group sheltering from the rain on the side of an old chalet. At Evolene, our final stop produced a pair of Red-backed Shrikes, before arriving at the hotel. Dinner at 'le Mosset' again.

Day 4 - Tuesday 17th June Following persistent and heavy overnight rain, that threatened to dampen our spirits once and for all, we dropped down into the Rhone valley once more to try and find some less wet weather to bird in. Arriving at Marais de Grone, it was still raining but only very lightly, and so we did not get too wet as walked along the busy cycle path to the hide; birding was slow, but we eventually picked up some new species, including Marsh Tit and Spotted Flycatchers. At the reed beds we saw and heard more Marsh Warblers, plus Cuckoos, Black Kite and a nice Peregrine Falcon overhead. We then visited the Leukerfeld again, and as the weather improved we enjoyed more Marsh Warblers and a nice Nightingale, heard Quail, and saw four species of dragon-/damselfly and one species of butterfly – an Amanda's Blue. From below the Feschelbach gorge, where we had lunch, looking up we saw numerous Honey Buzzards, four Peregrines, a Hobby, Ravens, and Common Buzzards; looking down we picked up more species of butterfly, including Safflower, Small and Large Skippers, Marbled Whites and a rather grotty Painted Lady. It was too close to resist seconds of Wallcreeper, so we drove 'up top' and had yet more views of the pair of this fabulous bird – we reckon we knew where it's nest was and as the male approached the site it again hung in the wind. Butterflies were pretty much in evidence and several new species included Large Wall Brown, Turquoise Blue and Blue-spot Hairstreak. It was soon time to leave, and approaching Evolene it was obvious that it had rained here all day. Dinner was at 'aux Vieux Mazot', and was enjoyed by all – especially David as he seemed to have struck up a very friendly relationship with Madam.....

Day 5 - Wednesday 18th June With the weather not quite as nice as expected, and as Janet was feeling under-the-weather, we delayed our visit to Zermatt for one more day, and drove up to Arolla instead. As the weather gradually improved (as it turned out it was a glorious day in the mountains), we walked above Arolla towards Pras Graz: Nutcrackers did us proud as did a singing Rock Bunting; a very fine Golden Eagle glided past at a close level, though the Red-billed Chough did the opposite it called to help as find it; a fine male Wheatear was also found. However, having been deprived of sunny and warm weather, it was the stunning scenery, plants and butterflies that stole most of our attention: on the butterfly front, we found our first Green Hairstreaks, Little Blues, Alpine Grayling and Grizzled Skippers. Lunch at Hotel du Glacier was lovely as ever, with fine omelettes for all, then we dropped down to a fantastic meadow at La Crettaz, where we mooched for an hour or so taking in yet more new butterflies and plants. Our list of butterflies expanded rapidly, with Provencal, Small Pearl-bordered and Heath Fritillaries, Apollo and Clouded Apollo, Geranium Argus, Mountain Clouded Yellow to name a few; the plants were superb and of note were Burnt-tipped, Broad-leaved Marsh and Fragrant Orchid, Alpine Sainfoin, Pasque-flowers and so on and so on....It was hard to tear ourselves away, but as we wanted to check on Janet we did, and some spent the late afternoon exploring the meadows below Evolene. Dinner at 'aux Vieux Mazot'.

Day 6 - Thursday 19th June With the day dawning crystal-clear, it was with some anticipation that we headed for Zermatt. Arriving at Tasch, we first caught the train to Zermatt, crossed the road, with little time for sight-seeing, and were soon on our way up to the Gornergrat. As we pulled out of the station, the iconic Matterhorn came into full view, and with no cloud cloaking it we marvelled at its beauty. The train passed through larch and Stone pine forest, into open moorland, then up to the snowline – this year lower than in previous years, no doubt due to the heavy winter snow and cold spring. We managed to see our first Snowfinches from the train, but once we arrived we had excellent views of several, as they fed amongst the crowds and then returned to an obvious nest on the side of the observatory – we confirmed this later, listening to the chattering young from below. The good weather had certainly brought out the masses, and we jostled for position a bit to photograph the Alpine Choughs and the magnificent panoramic views – from Monte Rosa in the east, past the Breithorn, with several mountaineers on its summit, to the Matterhorn.

Having had our fill of the views, we filled our stomachs in the restaurant (practising our German accents on the locals), then tried to get the last photo of the Snowfinches before dropping back to Zermatt. Foregoing the 'pleasures' of the tourist traps, we walked out of town to view a meadow, finding a singing Ortolan Bunting and several clouded yellows. With time pressing on we drove back to Evolene, where we could not fail to notice how lovely and unspoilt the town is compared with Zermatt. Dinner at 'le Mazot'.

Day 7 - Friday 20th June In contrast to yesterday, we did very little driving today. Having bought lunch, we drove up through the lovely villages of La Sage and La Forclaz, then spent the morning walking up towards the Mont Mine and Ferpecte glaciers. Even at c.1900m the weather was still very warm, and so birdlife was relatively quiet, though we did manage to see a couple of new butterflies – Mountain Dappled and Green-veined Whites. On our descent, we stopped above Les Hauderes to hunt for a certain woodpecker; once again we missed out, but instead we saw a Eurasian Treecreeper and various orchids (including Small White).

Following a picnic lunch at the hotel, we had a brief siesta (some even had time for an ice cream) then walked to Lannaz and back: on the way we had cracking views of a singing Firecrest, poor views of a Goldcrest, Lesser Redpolls, Whinchats, and two fine Goshawks – first a female soaring and mobbed by a Kestrel, then a male gliding and hunting through the trees on the far side of the valley. It had a been a warm and sunny day and we were fairly tired by the time we reached the hotel. Dinner, surprise surprise, was at le Mazot.

Day 8 - Saturday 25th June The week's end was completely the opposite to its start, with wonderfully clear and sunny weather. A well-drilled, prompt start enabled us to visit Les Grangettes, a site at the eastern end of Lake Geneva. As soon as we got out of the van, Golden Orioles were singing and mewing, and all eventually had flight views (some saw them perched in the trees); other new birds for the trip were over 30 Red-crested Pochard, Yellow-legged Gull and Common Tern, plus a Reed Bunting sang and was seen briefly by some. Marsh and Willow Warblers sang from the wet scrub and many Black Kites flew over. Time, as ever, pressed on and so did we; after a brief stop for lunch near Geneva we moved onto the airport and our flight home.

As ever, each will take away their own memories from such a trip, but as usual I suspect that the scenery will live longest in the memory. Thanks to all. Cheese anybody?

Switzerland species lists 14th – 21st June 2008

This is the combined list for the whole group. I've reduced some place names to codes, with the dates given in the main report, except for sites where birds were seen on more than one day: Les Chablais (LC); Marais des Grône (MdG); Les Grangettes (LG); Leukerfeld (Le); Feschelbach gorge (FG); Val d'Herens (Vd'H); Evolène (Ev); Gornergrat (G); Lannaz (La); Ferpecte (Fe); Arolla (Ar).

Black Grouse *Lyrurus tetrix*

Careful searching of the slopes above Ev found one on 16th and despite more searching was never seen again

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

One heard calling at Le on 15th and 17th

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Two at LC on 14th; one at MdG on 17th; many at LG

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Several at LC on 14th; and a couple seen in flight at Le on 15th with eight on 17th; many at LG on 21st

Northern Shoveler *Anas platyrhynchos*

Two drakes at LC on 15th

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

A grand total of 37 was seen at LG on 21st

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Five at LC on 14th and many at MdG on 17th; several at LG on 21st

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Three males and seven females at LG on 21st

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Three at LC on 14th – one on a nest; over 300 noted at LG on 21st

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

One immature found by Hugh at LC on 14th

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Clearly breeding at LC on 14th, where c.10 birds seen; several at Le on 15th; two at MdG on 17th; many at LG on 21st

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

An immature at Le on 15th showed very well before slinking off into the reeds

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

At least two at Le on 15th, were a surprise

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Over 30 at LG on 21st – though rather distant

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Quite common and widespread. Noted on all days, with breeding noted at FG on 15th

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

One chased a Kestrel at FG on 17th

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

One above MdG and a family at FG on 17th

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

One from the front seats of the vehicle approaching the top of FG on 15th, but up to ten seen in much better weather on 17th

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Too many to count near Lake Geneva on 14th; one at MdG on 17th; two noted on 19th; many at LG on 21st

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

One above Arolla on 18th, mobbed by Crows and a Kestrel, was nice; presumably the same bird flew across the valley whilst we had our lunch and was also soaring over EV on the last morning

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Noted in small numbers: mostly 1s or 2s, but max. 5 on 14th en route from Geneva

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Noted on four dates, the best was that above Arolla on 18th, but the pair above Ferpeclé on 20th were good also

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

Common at Rhone Valley wetland habitats: seen at LC on 14th, Le on 15th, many at MdG on 17th

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

One at LC on 14th and one at LG on 21st

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Heard at Le on 17th

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Numerous at LG on 21st

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Two at Le on 15th, turned into nine when viewed distantly from the top of FG, but had increased to ten on 17th; many at LG on 21st

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

At least ten over the lake at LG on 21st

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Only noted in Swiss lowlands en route on 14th and 21st

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Only noted in small number on four days

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Noted along the Rhone Valley on 14th and 21st

Eurasian Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

One was heard purring at Le on 15th

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Seen or heard on five dates, most often in alpine areas

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

Most pleasing were the small parties moving low along the Rhone valley on 15th, totalling c.20 birds some very close – should be called ‘Subalpine Swift’

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Seen commonly, daily and widely, with large flocks over Evolène once the weather had warmed up – presumably feeding on the flying ants

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

One heard at Le on 15th

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Noted (seen or heard) on six dates

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

1-2 seen or heard on three dates and at various places but never seen very well

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A pair seen nest-building at Ev on 16th, with the pair and another male on 18th

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Widespread in forested areas and seen each day in small numbers

Common Magpie *Pica pica*

Widespread in small numbers and now even in the highland areas including Arolla

Eurasian Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

Three seen at Arolla on 16th, but pretty flighty – others heard; the best views were on 18th above Arolla, when at least 12 were noted; two from the train near Zermatt on 19th

Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

Noted on six dates: two were at the bridge at FG on 15th – strange....but the 120 over the TN the next day were not so; part of the same flock were above Arolla on 18th; many at the Gornergrat on 19th

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Common, widespread, and noted daily, generally in small numbers

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

Seen on five dates, mainly 1s and 2s, but ten at FG on 17th

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Heard at Euseigne on 15th; two at MdG on 17th

Willow Tit *Poecile montana montana*

Oneshowed quite superbly above Arolla on 16th, calling and it and its mate came very close as there were probably young somewhere; heard above Ar on 18th; two heard near La on 21st

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Common in mountains and seen and or heard daily in moderate numbers

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

Seen on five dates, from outside our hotel at Ev, pinewoods at Ar and above Les Hauderes on 20th

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common, widespread and seen daily, with big feeding parties noted at several sites

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Not especially common; only seen on 15th; heard at LG on 21st

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Five dates; the best being at the FG on 15th and 17th

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Surprisingly few; noted on five days in small numbers

Northern House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Noted on all days

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Noted on three dates. The first were at Le on 15th; heard at Ar on 16th; several at the lower FG on 17th

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Seen and heard at Le on 15th and 17th

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

One was heard calling at La Crettaz on 18th

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Recorded at all Rhone Valley wetland areas, LC, Le, MdG and LG

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Very good views this year, with at least five singing at Le on 15th and 17th; three singing at MdG on 17th; one singing at LG on 21st

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Two heard at Ar on two dates, 16th and 18th – quite surprising; those at LG on 21st were not

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Noted on five days, common and widespread though most often heard not seen

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*

Noted on six dates at various locations, and with some great views, with perhaps the first at FG on 16th being the best, though one at La Crettaz on 19th was also excellent

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Noted on daily at most sites visited, but more often heard than seen

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Noted on just two dates, with the only views at Ferpecte on 20th

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

A high alpine species in Switzerland — at or above the tree-line — heard on three dates, with good views at Ar on 19th

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

A lovely male was singing in roadside larch on the walk to La on 20th

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Heard on three dates; largely in coniferous woodland, with one seen at the hotel on 20th

Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Heard on four dates

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Three at the lower FG on 15th; also noted at Ar, MdG and the hotel

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*

At Feschelbach gorge on 15th, the first worryingly fleeting views by David, were soon brushed aside by the euphoria of seeing two birds directly below the bridges – the male performing a wonderful floating/hovering flight near the (presumed) nest site. We could not resist 'seconds' on 17th and were not disappointed. Got to be bird of the trip

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Seen and heard on two days, the first at Ar on 16th the other above Les Hauderes on 20th

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Noted on five dates, always in Rhone valley lowlands

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce this year and seen only twice: a male at the Tsijiore Nouvelle on 16th; two chasing about above Ar on 19th

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Widespread in small — moderate numbers noted daily

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Widespread in smaller numbers than usual and noted on six dates

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Noted on two dates, but most often heard or at best seen fleetingly, at Ar and Ev

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Widespread, seen almost daily, in small numbers; numbers of cute young seen, with the best at Ar on 16th

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Kept hearing them singing, throughout the week at various locations, but proved difficult to pin down

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Seen and heard at Le on 15th and 17th, and at the lower FG on the same dates; also heard at MdG on 17th

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Common, widespread and seen and heard daily

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A male was seen every day at the hotel, singing its heart out – indeed we wondered if it ever had time to feed; another was seen at La Forclaz on 20th

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Seen on five dates in a range of habitats; meadows above pinewoods and in the village at Ar, valley bottom farmland and roadsides at Le, and flower-rich hay meadows at La Crettaz, meadows at Zermatt

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Seen at Le on 15th and 17th, with young being fed on the first date

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Two at TN on 16th; one male above Ar on 19th; several from the train down from the Gornergrat on 19th

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Two at MdG on 17th

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Two on stream at the bottom of FG on 15th; two, an adult and a juvenile at Les Hauderes on 16th

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Widespread, common and seen daily

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Seen on three dates: the first day at Chablais; two at Le on 15th; several there on 17th ; a couple at LG on 21st

White-winged Snowfinch *Montifringilla nivalis*

Excellent views, with at least ten noted on 19th: five at the Gornergrat itself – with young being fed on the side of the observatory; five at least from the train down

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*

Though two were seen from the train down from Go on 19th (so should be Alpine Descentors), they were virtually untickable.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Seen and heard above Ar on 16th and 18th, and seen and heard above Fe on 20th

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Four dates, at various stream sites, but proved tricky to see very well, the best being at Fe on 20th

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Noted daily and widely in good numbers

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Several excellent views of singing birds at Ar on 16th and 18th; also noted at La Crettaz and at Fe

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Some distant and a few close birds at Ar on 16th; above Ar on 18th; at Go on 19th

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common, widespread and seen/heard daily

European Serin *Serinus serinus*

Seen daily in good numbers, with the best being those around the hotel each day

Citril Finch *Serinus citrinella*

One sang/called distantly at Ar on 16th, but we simply could not locate it

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Noted on six dates, with several bright birds seen especially at Ev and Ze

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

All records came from the hotel, most often heard or seen in flight, but a family of eight fed in the tree tops on 20th

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common and widespread; seen daily

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Most often seen and heard in flight, we had very good views of several birds; at Tsjiore Nouve on 16th and Fe on 20th

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Seen on four dates, with the best views at Ar on 19th

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Two flew over the hotel calling on 16th and others heard on 18th

Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Three were seen roadside on 16th, and one heard at Fe on 20th and that was all!

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Just one, seen en route on 14th

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

Seen or heard daily, but never seen well

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*

Good views at FG on 15th and 17th, but perhaps the best view was at Ar on 18th

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

A fine male sang atop a spruce at Zermatt on 19th

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Only seen and heard on the last day at LG, where one or two males were noted in scrubby reedbeds

Butterflies

Despite the poor weather of the first four days (and virtually non-existent butterflies) we did well to catch up with the following 55 species

Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*

Apollo *Parnassius apollo*

Clouded Apollo *Parnassius mnemosyne*

Black-veined White *Aporia crataegi*

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Small White *Artogeia rapae*

Green-veined White *Artogeia napi*
 Mountain Green-veined White *Artogeia bryoniae*
 Peak White *Pontia callidice*
 Mountain Dappled White *Euchloe simplonia*
 Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*
 Mountain Clouded Yellow *Colias phicomone*
 Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*
 Moorland Clouded Yellow *Colias palaeno*
 Berger's Clouded Yellow *Colias alfacariensis*
 Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*
 Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*
 Blue-spot Hairstreak *Satyrrium spini*
 Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*
 Little Blue *Cupido minimus*
 Geranium Argus *Eumedonia eumedon*
 Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*
 Mazarine Blue *Cyaniris semiargus*
 Amanda's Blue *Agrodiaetus amanda*
 Chapman's Blue *Agrodiaetus thersites*
 Turquoise Blue *Plebicula dorylas*
 Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*
 Duke of Burgundy *Hamearis lucina*
 Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*
 Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*
 Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*
 Comma *Polygonum c-album*
 Marbled Fritillary *Brenthis daphne*
 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Clossiana selene*
 Knapweed Fritillary *Melitaea phoebe*
 Spotted Fritillary *Melitaea didyma*
 False Heath Fritillary *Melitaea diamina*
 Heath Fritillary *Mellicta athalia*
 Provencal Fritillary *Mellicta deione*
 Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*
 Alpine Grayling *Oeneis glacialis*
 Arran Brown *Erebia ligea*
 Almond-eyed Ringlet *Erebia alberganus*
 Silky Ringlet *Erebia gorge*
 Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*
 Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*
 Large Wall Brown *Lasiommata maera*
 Northern Wall Brown *Lasiommata petropolitana*
 Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera*
 Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*
 Safflower Skipper *Pyrgus carthami*
 Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages*
 Chequered Skipper *Carterocephalus palaemon*
 Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*
 Large Skipper *Ochlodes venatus*

Switzerland selected plant list

This list constitutes a small number of those plants seen, but hopefully includes many of the special plants we saw during the week.

Wood Pink *Dianthus sylvestris*
 Globeflower *Trollius europaeus*
 Wolfsbane sp. *Aconitum lycoctonum ranunculifolium*
 Narcissus-flowered Anemone *Anemone narcissiflora*
 Alpine Pasque Flower *Pulsatilla alpina apiifolia*
 Spring Pasque Flower *Pulsatilla vernalis* (in seed)
 Pyrenean Buttercup *Ranunculus pyrenaicus*
 Woad *Isatis tinctoria* (in seed)
 Mountain Houseleek *Sempervivum montanum*
 Musky Saxifrage *Saxifraga moschata*
 Purple Saxifrage *Saxifraga oppositifolia*
 Livelong Saxifrage *Saxifraga paniculata*
 Alpine Rose *Rosa pendulina*
 Mountain Avens *Dryas octopetala*

Alpine Avens *Geum montanum*
 Water Avens *Geum rivale*
 Golden Cinquefoil *Potentilla aurea*
 Purple Milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus*
 Large Yellow Restharrow *Ononis natrix*
 Mountain Clover *Trifolium montanum*
 Alpine Clover *Trifolium alpinum*
 Brown Clover *Trifolium badium*
 Alpine Birdsfoot Trefoil *Lotus alpinus*
 Common Kidney-vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*
 Horseshoe Vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*
 Mountain Sainfoin *Onobrychis viciifolia*
 Alpine Sainfoin *Hedysarum hedysaroides exaltatum*
 Wood Cranesbill *Geranium sylvaticum*
 White Cranesbill sp. *Geranium (sylvaticum) rivulare*
 Cypress Spurge *Euphorbia cyparissias*
 Long-spurred Pansy *Viola calcarata calcarata*
 Wild Pansy *Viola tricolor subalpina*
 Round-leaved Wintergreen *Pyrola rotundifolia*
 Alpenrose *Rhododendron ferrugineum*
 Bearberry *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*
 Birdseye Primrose *Primula farinosa*
 Auricula *Primula auricula*
 Pink Rock-jasmine *Androsace carnea*
 Spotted Gentian *Gentiana punctata* (leaves only)
 Spring Gentian *Gentiana verna*
 Trumpet Gentian *Gentiana acaulis*
 Pyramidal Bugle *Ajuga pyramidalis*
 Meadow Clary *Salvia pratensis*
 Alpine Toadflax *Linaria alpina*
 Small Toadflax *Chaenorhinum minus*
 Rock Speedwell *Veronica fruticans*
 Alpine Bartsia *Bartsia alpina*
 Aristate Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus cf aristatus*
 Southern Butterwort *Pinguicula leptoceras*
 Alpine Butterwort *Pinguicula alpina*
 Mountain Valerian *Valeriana montana*
 Spiked Rampion *Phyteuma spicatum*
 Round-headed Rampion *Phyteuma orbiculare*
 Bearded Bellflower *Campanula barbata*
 Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*
 Alpine Aster *Aster alpinus*
 Catsfoot (Mountain Everlasting) *Antennaria dioica*
 Alpine Moon-daisy *Leucanthemopsis alpina*
 Alpine Coltsfoot *Homogyne alpina*
 Knapweed *Centaurea alpestris*
 Golden Hawksbeard *Crepis aurea*
 St Bruno's Lily *Paradisea liliastrum*
 St Bernard's Lily *Anthericum liliago*
 Martagon Lily *Lilium martagon*
 Scented Solomon's Seal *Polygonatum odoratum*
 Lily of the Valley *Convallaria majalis*
 Burnt Orchid *Orchis ustulata*
 Broad-leaved Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza majalis*
 Small White Orchid *Gymnadenia (=Leucorchis) albida*
 Fragrant Orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*
 Common Twayblade *Listera ovata*

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