

# THE TRAVELLING NATURALIST

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## BELARUS

### Forest Birds of Deepest Belarus

3 - 10 May 2015

#### TOUR REPORT

Leaders: Barrie Cooper & Attila Steiner



Azure Tit with nest material © Barrie Cooper

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Several prolonged and excellent views of Zzure Tits
- Prolonged and excellent views of three-toed woodpecker and grey-headed woodpecker
- Prolonged and excellent view of a male bluethroat
- Eight species of woodpecker
- Aquatic warbler
- Good views of great snipe lekking

## DAILY DIARY

### Sunday 3 May

All the group arrived in good time before departure for our direct flight to Minsk. On arrival, we were met by Attila and Katia (our local assistant and translator). After a meal in the airport restaurant we set off for the four hour journey to Turov.

### Monday 4 May

*Mainly sunny, 20 degrees*

#### **Alshany, Ledzets & Turov Meadows**

After a later than normal breakfast, we gathered outside the hotel to see the two White Stork nests in the town square and the statue of terek sandpiper – a legacy of our leader's conservation work in Turov. To the experienced eye it was obvious that there has been little rainfall and snow during the winter and spring in this part of Belarus because the meadows were surprisingly dry. A few yellow wagtails and lapwings were the most obvious birds, but a serin drew attention with its distinctive song and two jawfinches flew over. We drove to the river at Alshany and the first birds we saw as we got out of the bus were a pair of azure tits. They entertained us off and on throughout the morning and were nest building in an old metal container. We managed to see them displaying to each other followed by brief copulation and fine views were had of the pair.

We had a very productive morning with too many species to list here but willow tit, wood warbler, great reed warbler, golden oriole, fieldfare, cuckoo, thrush nightingale, hoopoe, red-backed and great grey shrikes were notable and one of the group found our first spotted flycatcher. A pair of the white-headed race of long-tailed tit showed very well. A singing wryneck perched in a prominent position on the end of a branch to give as good a view as you are likely to get with this species. As we were walking back for lunch, one of the group spotted a penduline tit and closer examination revealed a pair building their amazing nest in a willow. Further investigation of a persistent tapping was a male lesser spotted woodpecker excavating a cavity in a willow to give yet another excellent, prolonged view of a good species. Meanwhile, another pair of zzure tits were flitting around and showed very well at the top of some reeds. Several species of butterfly were seen during the morning, the most interesting being swallowtail and Queen of Spain fritillary. It had been an amazing morning and we had probably walked less than a third of a mile during that time. An excellent picnic lunch prepared by Katia was interrupted by a male black redstart and a serin, while the azure tits were a regular distraction.



Wryneck © Barrie Cooper

The afternoon was time to look for some raptors and prolonged views of a Lesser Spotted Eagle was first on the menu. A distant Goshawk was joined by another one and a few small groups of Common Cranes passed by. Eventually, our main target appeared - a Greater Spotted Eagle. Once again we were treated to

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prolonged views of a good species and this culminated in it dropping like a stone with talons out into the distant forest. Satisfied, the group got into the bus only to be immediately called out again as the eagle reappeared with its trophy – a small mammal that led to conjecture as to what it could be, was it a weasel?

Our final destination was Turov Meadows but before we got there a musk rat swimming in a roadside canal became our first mammal of the trip. At the meadows garganey is always a welcome species, however the dryness resulted in far fewer waders than usual. But we did see a variety of ruff and a few black-tailed godwits and wood sandpipers. As we walked out to the great snipe lek it was obvious that there was a passage of yellow wagtails with grey-headed seen as well as the more usual blue-headed. It seemed like yellow wagtail city and it was a wonderful sight. However, two terek Sandpipers on a sandy spit in the river were another target successfully found. The lack of water meant the grass was unusually low at the lek making it very easy to see the great snipe and we had excellent views of them displaying. At least twelve different individuals were seen but there may have been more. As we walked back to the bus it was time to enjoy the yellow wagtail spectacle once more and then back to the hotel for dinner. It had been an excellent first day.



Yellow wagtail © Barrie Cooper

## **Tuesday 5 May**

*Overcast in the morning after overnight rain, sunny from midday. 19 degrees*

### **Pripyat National Park & Bielae Fishponds**

We began our day by watching white-winged and black terns near the hotel before the short distance to Prypyat National Park. We entered the forest in the hope of flycatchers and woodpeckers; we were not disappointed. One of the first birds was pied flycatcher followed by nuthatch. Great spotted woodpecker was seen but wasn't top of our wishlist, but a vocal black woodpecker proved to be elusive. Wryneck could be heard but tree pipit was seen very well. We stood on a small bridge where green sandpiper gave flight views while a white-backed woodpecker only gave brief views and wasn't seen by everybody. We moved to another open area of the forest where we heard grey-headed woodpecker and, finally, a male black woodpecker showed very well giving scope views for everyone. A couple of minutes later a three-toed woodpecker flew into a tree so that everyone could see it but, incredibly, it flew into a closer tree about 15 yards from us and, in full view, proceeded to do some excavation on the tree for almost ten minutes. To see this most difficult of European woodpeckers so well and for so long was almost like winning the lottery – absolutely amazing. Even these well-travelled guides had never had such good and prolonged views of three-toed. After the highs of yesterday, for some of us it was even higher. Before we left that place a male lesser-spotted woodpecker also decided to put on a show and perched on a dead branch over our heads. Somewhere within all this woodpecker action, we also had a male collared flycatcher. We left the forest having recorded six species of woodpeckers and two flycatchers, not a bad morning.

We still had time before lunch to visit another site to look out over some forest. On the way there a red-backed shrike was perched on top of a bush close to the road. When we reached our destination, we didn't have to wait long before a greater spotted eagle soared around and then a distant honey buzzard was spotted by one of the group. A few common cranes flew over while a great grey shrike perched on a tree at the edge of a garden. At the edge of the forest, twelve wild boar rooted around in a ploughed field. There were two or three adults with large young. An incredible morning finished with a short drive to a site for our picnic lunch. A close adult white-tailed eagle stopped any immediate thought of food and two more were also seen. A black stork was a nice dessert after lunch while good numbers of butterflies included swallowtail and map.

The afternoon was spent around several fishponds, the first of which held common pochard and tufted duck with a booming Eurasian bittern. The next ponds had various species including little, great-crested and black-necked grebes, gadwall, common goldeneye, water rail, white-tailed eagle, wood sandpiper, little ringed plover, Temminck's stints, Caspian gull and three pairs of splendid smew. A great reed warbler enabled everybody to finally get a view of this species and a black stork flew overhead. Our planned exit from the fishpond complex was not possible due to a locked gate, so we had to make a diversion down another track. This was quite fortuitous because, just a short distance down the track, we were treated to brilliant views of a stunning male bluethroat. This was the white spotted subspecies, and the white spot was quite noticeable. It was a splendid way to finish another excellent day.



Bluethroat © Barrie Cooper

### **Wednesday 6 May**

*Sunny morning, rain in the afternoon, 19 degrees*

#### **Turov & outskirts of Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park**

After checking out of the hotel, we went down the road and had good views of the three species of marsh terns and little tern. We then drove a short distance to a local village and immediately had a downy emerald dragonfly. A pair of black-tailed godwits harassed a marsh harrier but it was a pair of azure tits that really caught our attention and we had several good views while we were there. A singing icterine warbler played a game of hide and seek but eventually showed reasonable well. A singing thrush nightingale out in the open was much more obliging for several minutes. Pied flycatcher was also in the willows next to the river. We then set off on the lengthy drive to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. A picnic lunch was well-timed because heavy rain started as we were packing away. Nearby, our first common gulls of the trip were found. Our drive was interrupted a couple of times, first by a very obliging male Montagu's harrier and then by an even more cooperative female Montagu's harrier that appeared to be catching invertebrates in a field of dandelions. We had made good progress so drive along a road around the edge of the national park to see what we could find. Our first productive stop brought woodlark, wheatear, corn bunting, great grey shrike and a hobby carrying prey. Two foxes were our first of the trip and several different groups of wild boar totalled around thirty individuals during the evening. It was now time to drive to the park and our hotel.

### **Thursday 7 May**

*A mixture of rain, cloud and sun, 19 degrees*

#### **Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park**

A wryneck was calling as we left our hotel before we drove a short distance to a site in the middle of the forest. Collared Flycatcher was one of the first birds recorded, swiftly followed by middle spotted woodpecker and hawfinch. Our only red-breasted flycatcher was a female and firecrest and goldcrest weren't particularly obliging. However, a honey buzzard flew low overhead and a white-backed woodpecker showed well. Another short drive to a lake had three hobbies and white-tailed eagle, white-winged and black terns, greylag geese and a booming bittern. Another lake provided good views of a grey-headed woodpecker, singing Savi's warbler and several dragonflies including yellow-faced whiteeye, downy emerald, variable damselfly and spearhead damselfly. A stop for our picnic lunch enabled us to see lesser-spotted eagle, great grey shrike and hear turtle dove. A walk into the forest to see great grey owl at the nest was followed by another walk to see pygmy owl. Hazel hen was also seen, but true to form, it wasn't easy to get good views. Our final destination was to overlook meadows that held thirteen European Bison, several wild boar, a few red deer and a couple of red foxes – quite a mammal fest. Our drive back to the hotel was halted to look over another open area and to our great delight a beaver was walking along the

bank of a canal before it entered the water and then swam away. A great way to finish another excellent day.

### **Friday 8 May**

*Sunny, windy. 18 degrees*

#### **Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Selets Fishponds & Sporovo Reserve**

A stroll along the area around the hotel began with excellent views of two red squirrels that were setting up home in a large hole in a tree. Birds included marsh and willow tits and a very obliging crested tit and a singing spotted flycatcher. Woodpeckers included a great-spotted at its nest and a black flying across an open area. But it was a male grey-headed woodpecker that stole the show by posing on a tree for over ten minutes continuously calling to another male not far away, while a female also put in an appearance. The White Tower is on a viewpoint and a pair of Montagu's Harriers quartered the reedbeds below and swift flew overhead. After lunch, two tawny pipits gave very good views and were joined by a male Linnet. The Selets fishponds had many birds including at least ten white-tailed eagles, two Caspian terns, Caspian gulls, the three marsh terns, little gull and several waders including Temminck's stint, dunlin and ruff with males in a variety of breeding plumages. Our final site before we went to the hotel in Bielaaziorsk was Sporovo Reserve where we had scope views of two aquatic warblers, sedge and Savi's warblers and drumming common snipe.

### **Saturday 9 May**

*Warm and sunny, 21 degrees.*

#### **Sporovo Reserve, Selets Fishponds & Lake Cherny**

A short drive to Sporovo where we were greeted by a singing, but elusive common redstart. A distant Black Stork was with a common buzzard. A female hen harrier gave a good size comparison with a pair of Montagu's harriers before we eventually found our main target - a male citrine wagtail. The bird obligingly sat on the top of a bush for at least ten minutes, although the heat haze slightly spoiled the quality. A drive to another wetland area gave us very good views of great reed warbler and Savi's warbler. There was an emergence of hairy hawk and downy emeralds and at least five hobby were feasting on this abundant food supply. Another short drive was brought to an abrupt halt by an immature goshawk that soared around for several minutes giving us tremendous views and was occasionally mobbed by a male marsh harrier. Another citrine wagtail was seen at that site. The lunch break birds included icterine warbler and spotted flycatcher.



*Grey-headed woodpecker © Barrie Cooper*

Moving onto Selets fishponds where there was much less wind than yesterday. This improved our chances of seeing barred warbler and we were treated to good views. Red-necked grebe, although fairly distant, was a pleasing find. As we made our way to the Black Lake for our final stop, two roe deer were seen, one of which crossed the road in front of us. We failed to see otter at the lake this year and had to be content with species such as Caspian gull and our first moorhen.

### **Sunday 10 May**

#### **Bielaaziorsk to Minsk Airport**

It was an early departure from the hotel for our three and a half our drive to the airport. Beautiful sunshine throughout the journey enabled us to have a pleasant picnic brunch along the way. We had several good sightings of Montagu's harrier, but the highlight was a lesser spotted eagle sitting in a field close to the road. Robert spotted a couple of roe deer, but no elk were seen this year. We said our quick goodbyes to Attila and Katia and that was the end of a wonderful wildlife trip to Belarus. This country really is a secret paradise for wildlife.

## SPECIES LISTS

### BIRDS – AVES

#### **GROUSE, PHEASANTS & allies – Phasianidae**

**Hazel Grouse** *Tetrastes bonasia* 1 male calling and flying high in the canopy before settling down for scope views in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix* 2 sitting on the roadside and showing well near Turov; 4 on the way to Selets Fishponds

#### **GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS - Anatidae**

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* A flock of 7 at Lake Liadskoye in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP and 2 adults with goslings at Lake Sporovo

**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor* Seen most days

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera* Good numbers at Bielae Fishponds

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* Seen every day

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* Seen on Turov meadow, at Bielae and Selets Fishponds

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula* A few on Turov meadow and at Bielae Fishponds

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* 2 on Turov meadow and 8 at Selets Fishponds

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* Many at Bielae Fishponds and 6 at Selets Fishponds

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula* Sizeable flocks at both Bielae and Selets Fishponds

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula* 10+ at Bielae Fishponds, a female with a chick in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Smew** *Mergellus albellus* 4 pairs seen well at Bielae Fishponds

#### **GREBES - Podicipedidae**

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 2 at Lake Chorniy near Belaaziorsk

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* 1 at Selets Fishponds

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Many at Bielae and Selets Fishponds

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* 4 at Bielae Fishponds

#### **STORKS - Ciconiidae**

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* 3 at Bielae Fishponds and one at Selets Fishponds

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* Seen every day, a common farmland bird

#### **HERONS & BITTERNs - Ardeidae**

**Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* Heard at Bielae Fishponds and Sporovo Reserve

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Seen most days

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Seen most days in good numbers

#### **CORMORANTS - Phalacrocoracidae**

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Seen at Turov, Bielae and Selets Fishponds

#### **HAWKS, EAGLES & allies - Accipitridae**

**European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* 1 seen in Pripyat NP and 1 above the ancient forest in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* 1 seen near Alshany

**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* Several seen in the Turov region and at Bielae Fishponds, 2 at Lake Liadskoye in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP and at least 10 at Selets Fishponds

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* Common, seen every day

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* 1 female at Sporovo Reserve

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* Observed on 3 days with close views of hunting birds from the van

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* Only 1 seen on the way to the airport

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* 1 distant bird at Ledzets and 1 immature giving good views at Sporovo Reserve

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* Common, seen on most days

**Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina* 1 in Ledzets, 1 in Pripyat NP, 1 in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP and 1 sitting on the ground on the way to the airport

**Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* 1 in Ledzets seen very well and 1 in Pripyat NP

### **FALCONS & allies - Falconidae**

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* 3 seen near Alshany and 1 en route

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* Seen on 3 days, 5 birds hunting for dragonflies at Sporovo Reserve

### **RAILS, CRAKES & COOTS - Rallidae**

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Only 1 seen at Bielaaziorsk

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* Seen at Bielae and Selets Fishponds

### **CRANES - Gruidae**

**Common Crane** *Grus grus* Seen on 4 days in the Turov region and in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

### **OYSTERCATCHERS – Hematopodidae**

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* Up to 6 seen at the Pripyat river in Turov

### **PLOVERS & LAPWINGS - Charadriidae**

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* Seen every day in good numbers

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* Observed in the Turov region on 2 days

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* Seen at Bielae and Selets Fishponds

### **SANDPIPERS, SNIPES & allies - Scolopacidae**

**Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* About 15 birds seen on the lek at Turov

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* Displaying birds heard or seen in Turov and Sporovo Reserve

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* Common breeder in the Turov region

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Common breeding bird on Turov meadow, seen daily

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* 1 seen at a roadside pond in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* 2 at Bielae Fishponds and 1 in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Commonly seen at wetlands and ponds

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* 2 seen at the Pripyat River in Turov

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Seen on 3 days at various sites

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* A flock of up to 20 birds at Selets Fishponds

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax* Seen in smaller numbers than usual due to the extreme dry winter and spring and lack of water on Turov meadow

### **GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS - Laridae**

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Seen every day

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus* Adults and immatures seen at Selets Fishponds

**Mew Gull** *Larus canus* 5 at a roadside stop near fishponds

**Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans* Seen at Bielae and Selets Fishponds as well as at Lake Chorniy near Belaaziorsk

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* 2 seen well at Selets Fishponds

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* Seen in the Turov region and at Selets Fishponds

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* Seen every day

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* 1-2 birds seen on 3 days only

**White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* Seen most days

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* Seen most days

### **PIGEONS & DOVES - Columbidae**

**Rock Dove (i)** *Columba livia feral* Common, seen every day

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas* Observed in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Common Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus* Common, seen every day

**European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* 1 heard only in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* Common in towns

### **CUCKOOS - Cuculidae**

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* Heard or seen every day

### **OWLS - Strigidae**

**Great Grey Owl** *Strix nebulosa* 1 female on the nest in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Eurasian Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium passerinum* 1 seen looking out of a natural nesthole in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**SWIFTS - Apodidae**

**Common Swift** *Apus apus* Seen in Kamianets and Bielaaziorsk

**HOOPUES - Upupidae**

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* Seen or heard on 4 days

**WOODPECKERS - Picidae**

**Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla* One watched for over 5 minutes calling at Alshany, others heard on 4 days

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos minor* 1 male seen excavating a nesting hole at Alshany, another male seen well in Pripyat NP

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos medius* 1 seen and several others heard in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**White-backed Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos leucotos* 1 seen briefly in Pripyat NP, 1 male drumming and finally showing well in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major* Seen or heard on 4 days

**Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius* 1 giving scope views in Pripyat NP, 1 heard and another seen overflying in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus* 1 male seen calling at a nest hole and a nearby female in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**SHRIKES - Laniidae**

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio* 1 female at Alshany, 3 males in Pripyat NP, 3 birds in Sporovo Reserve

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor* Singles seen on 4 days

**OLD WORLD ORIOLES - Oriolidae**

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus* 1 male seen in flight at Alshany, 1 in Sporovo Reserve

**CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES - Corvidae**

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* Seen every day

**Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica* Seen on most days

**Western Jackdaw** *Coloeus monedula* Common in villages and towns, seen on most days

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus* Common, seen on most days

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix* Common, seen on most days

**Northern Raven** *Corvus corax* Common, seen every day

**TITS & CHICKADEES - Paridae**

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris* Heard in Pripyat NP and seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus* Seen at Alshany and in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater* Heard and seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**European Crested Tit** *Lophophanes cristatus* 1 showing briefly in Pripyat NP and another giving great views in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Great Tit** *Parus major* Common, seen every day

**Eurasian Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus* Common, seen most days

**Azure Tit** *Cyanistes cyanus* Two pairs seen well at Alshany and another pair in Kremnoe village on the dyke of Pripyat River

**PENDULINE TITS - Remizidae**

**Eurasian Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus* 2 seen building a nest in Alshany, 1 at Biela Fishponds and 1 at Selets Fishponds

**LARKS - Alaudidae**

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* Several seen on the roadside in the Turov region

**Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea* 2 perched on a roadside wire in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* Common, seen every day

**SWALLOWS & MARTINS - Hirundinidae**

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* Seen at the Pripyat River and at Selets Fishponds

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Common, seen every day  
**Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum* Common, seen every day

#### **LONG-TAILED TITS AND BUSHTITS - Aegithalidae**

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus* The white-headed race seen at Alshany and Turov

#### **OLD WORLD WARBLERS - Sylviidae**

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* Common, seen or heard every day  
**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* Common, seen or heard most days  
**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* Common, seen or heard most days  
**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* Heard or seen at Alshany, Bielae Fishponds, Sporovo Reserve and Selets Fishponds  
**Aquatic Warbler** *Acrocephalus paludicola* 2 seen well at Sporovo Reserve  
**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Seen in Alshany and in Sporovo Reserve  
**Eurasian Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* Heard singing at Selets Fishponds  
**Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides* Heard and finally seen well at Sporovo Reserve  
**Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* Common, seen or heard every day  
**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* Heard or seen most days  
**Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria* 1 male seen well at Selets Fishponds  
**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* Seen or heard on 4 days  
**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis* Common, seen most days

#### **CRESTS & KINGLETS - Regulidae**

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus* 1 seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP  
**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus* 1 heard in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **WRENS - Troglodytidae**

**Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* Heard in Pripyat NP and seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **NUTHATCHES & WALLCREEPER - Sittidae**

**Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea* Seen in Pripyat NP and in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **STARLINGS - Sturnidae**

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* Common, seen every day

#### **THRUSHES - Turdidae**

**Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula* Seen most days  
**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* Fairly common, seen most days  
**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* Heard or seen most days  
**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* Seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **OLD WORLD CHATS & FLYCATCHERS - Muscicapidae**

**European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* Seen in Pripyat NP and in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP  
**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* 1 singing male of the white spotted nominate race seen well at Bielae Fishponds  
**Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia* Heard every day and seen well at the Pripyat River  
**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* Seen on most days in villages and towns  
**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Heard in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP and Sporovo Reserve  
**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* Common, seen on 4 days  
**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* 1 seen along the road in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP  
**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* Seen in Alshany, Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP and Sporovo Reserve  
**European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* Seen or heard most days in the forests  
**Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* Seen well in Pripyat NP and in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP  
**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* 1 female showing briefly in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **OLD WORLD SPARROWS & allies - Passeridae**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Common, seen most days  
**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* Common, seen most days

### **WAGTAILS & PIPITS - Motacillidae**

**Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* Race *flava* seen every day, race *thunbergi* seen at Turov

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* 2 males seen at Sporovo Reserve

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* Common, seen every day

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris* 2 seen at a roadside stop on the way to Sporovo Reserve

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* Seen at Sporovo Reserve

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* Common, seen or heard most days

### **FINCHES & allies - Fringillidae**

**Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* Common, seen every day

**European Serin** *Serinus serinus* Common, seen most days

**European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris* Common, seen most days

**Eurasian Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* Heard in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* Common, seen most days

**Common Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina* A smart male seen at a roadside stop on the way to Sporovo Reserve

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Recorded in Pripyat NP and Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

### **BUNTINGS, NEW WORLD SPARROWS & allies - Emberizidae**

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra* 4 seen singing on roadside wires near Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella* Common, seen every day

**Common Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus* Common, seen most days

### **MAMMALS – MAMMALIA**

#### **RABBITS & HARES - Leporidae**

**Brown Hare** *Lepus europaeus* 5 involved in a lot of chasing and fighting en route near Pinsk

#### **SQUIRRELS - Sciuridae**

**Eurasian Red Squirrel** *Sciurus vulgaris* 2 seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **BEAVERS - Castoridae**

**Eurasian Beaver** *Castor fiber* 1 seen sitting on the bank of a river and then swimming in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **MICE, RATS, VOLES & GERBILS - Muridae**

**Muskrat** *Ondatra zibeticus* 1 seen in a roadside canal near Alshany and 1 at Selets Fishponds

#### **WOLVES & FOXES - Canidae**

**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes* 3 in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP, 1 at Sporovo Reserve

#### **PIGS - Suidae**

**Wild Boar** *Sus scrofa* 12 in Pripyat NP, over 60 including sows with piglets in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **BOVIDS - Bovidae**

**European Bison** *Bison bonasus* 13 animals seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

#### **DEER - Cervidae**

**Red Deer** *Cervus elaphus* More than 10 seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Roe Deer** *Capreolus capreolus* 2 seen en route to Bielaaziorsk

### **AMPHIBIANS – AMPHIBIA**

**Fire-bellied Toad** *Bombina bombina* Heard on several days at wetlands

**Green Toad** *Bufo viridis* Heard at Bielae Fishponds

**Common Tree Frog** *Hyla arborea* Heard at Alshany

**Common Frog** *Rana temporaria* Seen at various forest sites

**Marsh Frog** *Rana ridibunda* Common at wetlands

## BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS – LEPIDOPTERA

**Swallowtail** *Papilio machaon* Seen in the Turov region

**Large White** *Pieris brassicae* Common

**Small White** *Pieris rapae* Probably overlooked

**Green-veined White** *Pieris napi* Common

**Orange Tip** *Anthocaris cardamines* Common

**Brimstone** *Gonepteryx rhamni* Common

**Holly Blue** *Celastrina argiolus* Seen in Pripyat and Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Peacock Butterfly** *Inachis io* Common

**Comma** *Polygonia c-album* Seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Map Butterfly** *Araschnia levana* Spring brood, fairly common

**Queen of Spain Fritillary** *Issoria lathonia* Seen at Alshany and Sporovo Reserve

**Speckled Wood** *Pararge aegeria* Commonly seen

## DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES – ODONATA

**Siberian Winter Damselfly** *Sympecma paedisca* Seen at Bielae Fishponds

**Common Bluetail** *Ischnura elegans* Seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Variable Bluet** *Coenagrion pulchellum* Seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Spearhead Bluet (Northern Damselfly)** *Coenagrion hastulatum* Seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP

**Hairy Hawker** *Brachytron pratense* Only a few at Sporovo Reserve

**Downy Emerald** *Cordulia aenea* Seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP and Sporovo Reserve

**Yellow-spotted Whiteface** *Leucorrhinia pectoralis* Seen in Belovezhskaya Pushcha NP