

HORTOBÁGY – ZEMPLÉN AUTUMN TOUR 2017 (HUNGARY)

with **SAKERTOURS**

27 September – 3 October 2017



Juvenile Sociable Lapwing was one of the star birds this year (Attila Szilágyi)

Leader: József Kecskés

In the last few years a few migration times has changed. Notable the Cranes usually arrive in large numbers by late September and the Scandinavian Lesser White-fronted Geese only stay for a few days in the Hortobágy. Hence we moved the tour date to late September when the weather is usually nice and also a prime migration period. On the 2017 tour we were testing this new timeframe and the results were very reassuring. Still some of the breeding species were present as well as lots of migrants and even a few of the early arrival ‘wintering’ birds showed up already. The weather was fantastic, a proper ‘indian summer’ with nice warm daytime temperature without wind and rain. We have observed a total of 153 species. Highlights were Lesser White-fronted Goose, Arctic Skua, Slender-billed Gull, a vagrant juvenile Sociable Lapwing, Saker Falcon, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Ural and Eagle Owls and a fine assortment of woodpeckers including Black and the rare White-backed Woodpecker. All in all it was an action-packed short tour to Eastern Hungary with a great selection of goodies!

Wednesday, 27th of September

After meeting up at Budapest with the tour participants the tour started and a short drive took us to the Kiskunság National Park for the first afternoon birding. Less people know this park but it has the same steppe habitat as the famous Hortobágy National Park and the mosaic of habitats are excellent for a few declining species. We had a great start with three Eurasian Stone-curlews and a few Crested Larks. They were trying to be invisible in a cabbage field

but a big truck disturbed them so we could see them perfectly. A nearby gravel pit hold Great Crested Grebes, a Kingfisher, Black Tern, and Little Egret too. Next we drove amongst agricultural fields and grassland patches which is a perfect combo for Great Bustard in the autumn period. And indeed we found a big party of 47 Great Bustards as they fed on a large rape field. We could watch this magnificent creatures as long as we wanted. What a start of a tour! A picnic lunch was very welcome by this stage and the afternoon produced a range of goodies in this very birdy area including Eastern Imperial Eagle (good comparison with White-tailed Eagle when they sat on the same tree), Eurasian Hobby, Black and Green Woodpeckers and a juvenile Red-necked Phalarope. It was time to leave however for the Hortobágy and it was dark by the time we rolled into the newly opened BÍbic Nature Lodge in Balmazújváros on the eastern side of the park.



Lesser White-fronted Geese in the Hortobágy area (János Oláh)

Thursday, 28th of September

After breakfast we scanned the soda pan from the lodge terrace. There were hundreds of ducks included Eurasian Teal, Mallard and Northern Shoveler. Our first major birding destination was the Hortobágy-fishponds complex which is the most-visited area within the park – being the only key site with public access. A pond which is managed by Water Buffalos offer a mixture of reed, open water, muddy and grassy habitats and one of the most favoured area for wading birds. We quickly found a Slender-billed Gull with Black-headed Gulls which is a rarity and only been found a few days ago. Waders were feeding on the mudflat included Ruff, Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Black-tailed Godwit and Common Snipe. There were seven Garganey, some Eurasian Wigeons, Gadwalls, Eurasian Teals, and Mallards on the open water. Meanwhile White-fronted Geese and Greylag Geese arrived to the grassy parts of the pond. Finally a nice Osprey flew away above us – no birding tour without this cosmopolitan bird! But our main quest for the day was to locate the Lesser White-fronted Geese which has just arrived two days ago to the Hortobágy. So with high

hopes we went to the last pond of this system. This huge lake is a perfect roosting place for cranes and geese as well as a major wader feeding areas. We saw Pied Avocets, up to 200 Dunlins and many Common Snipes. Suddenly a big flock of White-fronted Geese took off as two White-tailed Eagles disturbed them. In the very same time the small flock of Lesser White-fronted Geese arrived and landed on the water. We counted 21 birds together of this threatened species, one of the major goal of the tour! We noticed (just a few seconds later) that an Arctic Skua flew in as well – which is a rare bird in this landlocked country! On the walk back we got our first Bearded Reedlings and Penduline Tits in the extensive reed bed. Another great sighting was a flock of 200 Ferruginous Ducks! It was a great morning indeed and a nice lunch at the Hortobágy Csárda was our next port of call. The afternoon programme was grassland birding, particularly looking for falcons. In late September we usually have roosting places for the migrating Red-footed Falcons and we have visited such a roosting place where we saw about 70 juvenile birds. It was magical as they were circling around us but when an adult Saker Falcon landed nearby we were speechless. In the same time we even had two Eastern Imperial Eagles in the opposite direction. Wow! After admiring these beautiful birds we found three Great Bustards in a distance. A superb birding day in the Hortobágy National Park!



Juvenile Red-footed Falcon (János Oláh)

Friday, 29th of September

Following the success of the previous day we concentrated on the woodpeckers and the migrant Dotterels today. Before we left Balmazújváros we managed excellent close up looks of feeding male and female Syrian Woodpeckers. Yet another Saker and a Peregrine Falcon was found on our way to the next area. These two large falcons were sitting about 600 meters apart and allowed terrific comparison for us. They are so differently built, the Peregrine is a stocky bird with short tails while Saker is elongated with long tail. An Eastern Imperial Eagle was seen on the roadside again. Our main destination was the southern grasslands of the

Hortobágy National Park where we had chance to see Dotterels. It was the first time when we saw Red-throated Pipits on the ground and we counted more than 200 birds together! In the Angel House puszta area well hidden away we found a small lonely shepherd's house with a Little Owl on its roof and within minutes 22 Dotterels and 20 Eurasian Golden Plovers appeared on the short grassy field close to the house as well. While we watched these lovely and special waders a female Merlin flew across. Dotterels use the Hortobágy as a major stop-over and moulting area and probably around 200-800 individual pass through. After the successful morning we spent the afternoon in the Debrecen Great Wood. It was woodland birding and the first of this kind on the tour so many new species were encountered on the relaxing walk amongst the huge oak trees. We saw a migrant Firecrest, Long-tailed Tits, Short-toed Treecreeper, Hawfinches, Black, Green Woodpecker, Middle and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers. We left the forest in time to reach a Crane roosting area back in the Hortobágy. Although the sunset was stunning as the last lights painted the sky and the open water to golden and pinkish red the cranes did not land in the roosting place yet. They just flew over us in endless lines. It was a very nice moment of the tour. While we enjoyed this great scenery we also had an Otter and some unidentified waders. That's why we decided we will come back here for better views at another time.



Roosting Long-eared Owl in Balmazújváros (János Oláh)

Saturday, 30th of September

Time passing quickly when birding and the last full day in the Hortobágy area arrived! We started the day with roosting Long-eared Owls. We counted 26 owls and they allowed great looks. We were back to the same fishponds where we finished the previous day. As we got out of the car a small funny and furry weasel welcomed us and we also saw an Otter again. That morning was so beautiful with an amazing sunrise. We observed a Water Rail on the edge of the reed and two Common Sandpipers, three Little Stints, more Pied Avocets, Ringed Plovers on the mudflat. We also had an Eastern Imperial Eagle on the edge of the pond – we

saw this special raptor several times by now. Next we had a local twitch as the park ranger Attila Szilágyi found a juvenile Sociable lapwing near to us! We drove a short distance and found the big flock of Northern Lapwings quickly and within minutes we were looking at the rare Sociable Lapwing! Success! This rare eastern vagrant was voted the Bird of the trip! The rest of the day was spent in the Bihar Plains in the south. There were hundreds of ducks and geese (mainly Greylag Geese) and shorebirds at a nice wetland. It was good to see Temminck's Stint, Wood Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank, Red-necked Phalarope (3 birds together) and Little Ringed Plover. The birding was very exciting there because the White-tailed Eagles chased the other birds all the time and we had to restart the scanning again and again and we found something new every time. It was a relaxing and great way of finishing the birding in the Hortobágy area!



Eurasian Eagle Owl near Tokaj (Gábor Simay)

Sunday, 01st of October

Next morning we left for the Zemplén Hills, our other main area on the tour. Although in the autumn it is more challenging birding at this location nevertheless we were really up for some great birding and we felt our luck is growing! On the way north we had a few brief stop but only added a juvenile Black-winged Stilt to our list. After one hour drive we arrived to the hills and met with our local guide who immediately took us to see a wonderful Eagle Owl which was roosting on the wall of a huge quarry. Daytime looks of such a beauty in the autumn is not easy! After the good start we had drove to a nearby restaurant for lunch but first we had a short walk along the Bodrog River. A few Hawfinches, Jays, Nuthatches, Coal Tits and some Eurasian Treecreepers were seen there. The weather was still excellent so we had great afternoon in the woods. Windless sunny conditions were ideal to look for the target species: Ural Owl and White-backed Woodpecker. We were not disappointed as our local guide tracked down a faint tapping and finally found a White-backed Woodpecker in secondary bushy vegetation which was a strange habitat for this species. But in the autumn

they are not confined to the old forest habitat. All afternoon was spent to look for the Ural Owl after the success with the rare White-backed Woodpecker. We have not had a sniff of the owl but saw some Willow Tits, Marsh Tits, Siskins, and Yellowhammers. In the very late afternoon a Grey-headed Woodpecker appeared and a distant Tawny Owl called in the beautiful oak forest. Driving back to our hotel we had a surprise found when a nice Nightjar was seen in front of our car on the track. This was followed by a nice dinner, checklist and planning.



White-backed Woodpecker in the Zemplén Hills (János Oláh)

Monday, 02nd of October

It was the day of the woodpeckers! From the morning to the evening we managed to see all 8 resident species of Hungary. Only the migrant Wryneck and the high alpine Three-toed was missing from the European woodpeckers. We started with a walk around the village after breakfast and we had two Lesser Spotted, two Syrian, a Greater Spotted and a Green Woodpecker in the gardens. The birds were very active on that morning because Robin, Hawfinch, Siskin, Nuthatch, Jay, Blackbirds and tits called everywhere. Six Crossbills flew above us and two Grey-headed Woodpeckers fed on the old trees on the edge of the village. Later on we visited potential woods for woodpeckers and owls for the rest of the day. Great Spotted and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers were calling and the huge Black Woodpecker appeared several times throughout the day and we saw yet another White-backed Woodpecker! Unfortunately the Ural Owl remained elusive. The evening meal was taken in a wine cellar where we could sample some of the famous Tokaj wines. This was such a nice farewell dinner!

Tuesday, 03rd of October

On the last morning we left our accommodation early and in the theme of 'Never give up' we devoted of last bit of time and our last morning to check more places for the mighty Ural Owl. At the first stop we checked a nestbox and a Tawny Owl jumped out and disappeared quickly

in the dark forest. This area also holds Ural owl but we had no signs of it. Our final place and forest area was near to an old castle. We took a nice and tranquil forest track up the hill and our well-deserved Ural Owl was finally located – plus a White-backed Woodpecker in the very same time! At first we could not decide which one to look at but fortunately the owl settled on a beech tree close to us and totally relaxed started to sleep so we had endless time to admire this fantastic bird. It was in the very last minute but we got it and what a bird to finish this successful tour! We drove back to Budapest where the tour ended.



Ural Owl in the Zemplén Hills (János Oláh)

SYSTEMATIC BIRD LIST

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*: A few were seen on the fish ponds.

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*: Small flocks were observed every day (the first arrivals).

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*: We saw twenty-one of them at the Hortobágy-fishponds.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*: It was numerous on the ponds and the grasslands.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*: We had several of them on the fish ponds.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*: It was regularly seen on the fishponds.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*: Hundreds of them were seen on the fishponds and wetlands.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*: Seven birds were at Hortobágy-fishpond.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: It was very common throughout the tour.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*: We had several individuals on the tour.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*: Large flocks were observed on the fishponds.

Common Pochard *Aythya farina*: We saw them in big numbers on the ponds.
Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*: Up to 200 were seen of this globally threatened species at Hortobágy-fishponds.
Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*: It was regularly seen on the fishponds.
Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*: Common throughout the tour.
Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: Some of them were observed on the fishponds.
Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*: Seen almost every fishponds during the trip.
Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*: A single bird was seen on Hortobágy.
Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*: Big numbers were seen at the Hortobágy-fishponds.
Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*: Several birds were seen at Hortobágy-fishponds.



Pygmy Cormorants in the Hortobágy area (János Oláh)

Great Egret *Egretta alba*: It was very common everywhere during the tour near the wetlands.
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: One appeared on Apaj and three more on Hortobágy.
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: Small numbers were recorded nearly at all the visited wetlands.
Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*: Some late juveniles were seen on the fishponds.
White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*: Only the leader saw a single bird in the village centre of Bodrogkeresztúr in the early morning hours.
White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*: Daily on the Hortobágy.
Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: A single bird in the Hortobágy area.
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*: It was seen every day on the Hortobágy.
Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*: It was very common on the grasslands and agricultural fields.
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*: We saw this species mainly in the villages.
Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*: It was very common throughout the tour.

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*: We saw 7 different birds on the tour!

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: Fairly common throughout the tour.

Red-footed falcon *Falco vespertinus*: Up to 70 juvenile were counted at the roosting place in the Hortobágy area.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*: One bird gave fantastic looks on the first day and one more on the Hortobágy. Both of them were juveniles.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*: A female was seen on the third day.

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*: We saw one adult bird in nice grassland habitat on the second day and two more appeared on pylon at the next two days.



Saker Falcon on pylon and Snipe (János Oláh)

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*: One adult was recorded on a pylon only 600 meters far from a Saker Falcon.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*: One bird was observed on a beautiful sunny morning in the Hortobágy area.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*: Several were on the fishponds and on the Bihar Plain.

Common Crane *Grus grus*: Huge flock were seen on the grasslands and above the fishponds.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*: We had great view of 47 birds in the Kiskunság NP and three more individual in the southern part of Hortobágy National Park.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*: It was seen on the fishponds and Bihar Plain. A total of 144 were seen.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: A single bird was seen at Polgár-fishponds on our last Hortobágy day.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus Oedicnemus*: Three were seen on our first day.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*: We saw three different birds on three different places on the Hortobágy and Bihar Plain.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*: Up to 10 were observed on the fishponds.

Eurasian Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*: About twenty birds were seen with dotterels on the third day.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*: One appeared on Apaj and three more on the Hortobágy.

Eurasian Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*: We had excellent view of 22 individuals on the Hortobágy.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*: Fairly common near the wetlands and grasslands.

Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*: This bird was a big surprise in the Hortobágy area.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*: Three of them were seen on the fourth day on Elep-fishponds.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: A single bird seen in flight at Hortobágy-fishponds.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*: Up to 1000 were seen on the fishponds.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris Temminckii*: Only one showed itself on the Bihar Plain.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*: We saw them in big numbers on Hortobágy-fishponds.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*: Several sightings on the fishponds.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*: We had two in the Kiskunság and three more on the Bihar Plain.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*: Small groups were seen on the fishponds.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*: Several birds were seen on grasslands and bigger flocks were on the drained fishponds.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*: Some were seen on the drained fishponds and on the Bihar Plain.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*: Several sightings.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: Only a single bird on the Bihar Plain

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Two individuals fed on the fishpond's mud at Elep fishponds.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*: Another surprise bird at the Hortobágy-fishponds while we watching the Lesser White-fronted Geese.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*: Common in the Hortobágy.

Slender-billed Gull *Larus Genei*: Another great rarity seen in the Hortobágy area.

Common Gull *Larus canus*: Numerous individuals were seen on the fishponds.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*: Some of them were on the fishponds.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*: It was common everywhere around the fishponds and wetlands.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*: Three juvenile birds were seen.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*: Some of them were observed on the fishponds.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* f. *domestica*: A very common resident throughout the tour.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*: Up to 150 were counted in the Hortobágy area.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*: Big flock were seen.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*: Very common in the villages.

Eurasian Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*: We had a fantastic view of a roosting bird in the Zemplén.

Ural Owl *Strix uralensis*: It was a last minute bird on the tour. Excellent views!

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*: Heard twice and seen by the leader in the Zemplén.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*: Just one was seen in the Hortobágy area.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*: Twenty-six were counted on a roosting place in the Hortobágy area.

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*: One individual was seen at dusk in the Zemplén. It was a great view as it came back five times in front of the car lights.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*: One was seen in the Kiskunság NP and two more on the Hortobágy.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*: Several sightings on the tour.



Grey-headed Woodpecker (Jáno Oláh)

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*: We had a fantastic view of two birds on our second day close to the accommodation.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*: This huge woodpecker was seen many times!

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*: Regularly were seen on the tour.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*: We had fantastic view of male and female together in Balmazújváros.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos*: We saw this rare bird twice in the Zemplén.

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius*: Two were seen in Debrecen Great Wood and more in the Zemplén.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*: We saw the first one in the Debrecen Great Wood. We had three more in the Zemplén.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*: Several were seen mainly near to the roadside.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*: We saw some on the grasslands.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*: One was seen on the Hortobágy.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: We had small groups every day on the tour.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*: We heard them regularly and a few seen.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*: More than 200 were counted on the Hortobágy. We had the best view on the “Dotterels grassland”.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*: It was common throughout the tour.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*: Only a few were seen.

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*: It was common on the tour.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*: We heard them every day in migration and we saw a few.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecola*: It was common.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*: Daily sightings near to the lodge and farms.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*: Only one was observed on the Hortobágy.

European Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*: We saw some on the roadside bushes.

Winchat *Saxicola rubetra*: Only two sightings.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*: Fairly common throughout the tour.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*: It was common.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*: We saw them everywhere include the fishponds, woodlands and parks.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*: Some late individuals were seen.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*: We saw them every day on the Hortobágy.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*: One was seen on the Hortobágy-fishponds.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*: Only one juvenile was on the Elep-fishponds.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*: One was seen on the Hortobágy-fishponds.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*: Several were seen on the fishponds and alleys.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*: Some sighting on Apaj and Hortobágy.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*: Some of this friendly-looking birds came very close to us many time in the forests.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*: We saw one in the Debrecen Great Wood.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: Lots of them were on the bushes on the bank of the fishponds.

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*: We had fantastic view of a big flock when they fed on the bank at Elep-fishponds only 3 meters away from us. Later we saw them on other fishponds too.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*: We saw small flocks near to the woodlands.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*: Common in Debrecen Great Wood and Zemlén.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*: Some of them were seen several times in the Zemlén.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*: We saw the first one on the Hortobágy in migration while we spent our lunch in the famous Hortobágy Csárda. It was common in the Zemlén.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*: It was common throughout the tour.

Great Tit *Parus major*: It was common throughout the tour.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*: We had many sightings in the woodlands.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*: It was common in the Zemlén.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*: Two were seen in Debrecen Great Wood.

Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*: We heard them on every fishponds and we had some great views too.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*: Some late juvenils were seen on the Hortobágy.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*: Numerous sightings.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*: They were everywhere in the Zemlén.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*: A very commonly encountered bird throughout the tour.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*: Very common in Hortobágy.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*: We had huge flock on the tour.

Hooded Crow *Corvus corone*: A very commonly encountered bird throughout the tour.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*: Two were seen on pylons on the Hortobágy. Later on it was common in the Zemlén.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*: It was very common in every habitat.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: It was common around human settlements.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*: Easy to see them in the villages and reedbeds around fishponds.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*: It was common throughout the tour.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*: It was frequently seen near human settlements.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*: It was frequently seen near human settlements.



Hawfinches drinking (János Oláh)

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*: Small flocks were seen mainly in the villages and around the fishpond.

European Serin *Serinus serinus*: We saw some on the Hortobágy and the Zemplén too.

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*: A flock of 200 was seen in the Hortobágy.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*: We saw them on various habitats like fishponds, parks and woodlands. Great bird!

Common crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*: Six birds were seen in the Zemplén.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*: It was unusually hard to see them on the Hortobágy but we saw them many times in the Zemplén.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*: It was very common on the fishponds.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*: We had a small group on the Hortobágy.

Mammals:

Roe deer *Capreolus capreolus*: We saw them many times on agricultural fields as well as in the woodlands.

Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*: Many sightings on the tour.

Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*: They were seen in Debrecen Great Wood and the Zemplén.

Weasel *Mustela nivalis*: We observed one funny individual at Elep-fishponds.

Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra*: One was seen twice at Elep-fishponds.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*: Some were seen in the Zemplén