

Limosa Tour Report

Hungary & Romania:

Bustards & Brown Bears

Apr 27 – May 06 2009



Clockwise from top left:

Hawfinch, Brown Bear, Red-throated Pipit and Collared Flycatcher . For a more extensive selection of photos taken on our Hungary & Romania tours please visit our Gallery feature at www.limosaholidays.co.uk

Tour Leaders: Zoltán Ecsedi
Zoltán Baczó (Transylvania)

Hungary and Romania together make a great combination and offer excellent opportunities to see the special birds of Central and Eastern Europe. We had a classic Carpathian Basin transect tour during the 10 days of which we visited all of the important birding sites. In spite of the extreme drought in spring all specialist species were found in fantastic weather conditions, only one afternoon was rainy in the higher mountains of the Carpathians.

After one day of travelling we spent one whole day in the Hortobágy, where characteristic Hortobágy species, such as **Red-footed Falcon, Stone-curlew, Long-eared Owl, Moustached Warbler, Common Crane, Saker, Glossy Ibis, Ferruginous Duck, Pygmy Cormorant, White-tailed Eagle, Temminck's Stint, Tawny Pipit, Hoopoe** and several other species were "drawn out of a magician's hat" one after another, and a total of 104 species had been observed by the end of the second day. The next day we set off for Transylvania. There, having travelled through lowland wetland habitats as well as the Carpathian Foothills, we got into some higher regions, where patches of snow reminded us of the past winter and the change was welcome after the 30°C hot weather of the previous days. We did not have to miss variety here, either: almost every moment brought some interesting species including specialities like **Capercaillie, Red-necked Grebe, Goshawk, Lesser Spotted and Golden Eagle, Great Snipe** (very rare in Transylvania), **Little Owl, Scops Owl, Tawny Owl, Lesser Spotted, Syrian, Black and Three-toed Woodpecker, Nutcracker, Crested Tit, Red-throated Pipit, Rock Bunting, White-winged Tern, Little Gull, Wallcreeper, Dipper, Ortolan Bunting, Ring Ouzel, Alpine Swift, Thrush, Nightingale, Great Grey Shrike** and many more. And of course I must not forget to mention the seven **Brown Bears** we saw, which, just as in an action-packed theatre play, were walking up and down in front of the hide. Transylvania was simply amazing with its intact habitats and its traditional, landscape-friendly man-made environment. It was a pleasant surprise for us to find that last year many minor roads were rebuilt, which also contributed to an even more convenient and enjoyable tour.

Having arrived back into summer from spring, we spent the last days of the tour again in the Great Hungarian Plain, mainly in the Hortobágy, where we devoted our time to finding bird species missed earlier. Fortunately, species came on time, just as for a meeting: **Great Bustard, Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Imperial Eagle, Montague's Harrier, Aquatic Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Lesser Grey Shrike, Roller, Bluethroat, Collared Flycatcher, Long-legged Buzzard, and Saker** again. A memorable tour, not just because of the nearly two hundred species we saw but also thanks to the delicious meals like the breakfast in Torockó.

Day 1. In sunny though a bit windy weather we left the airport just before 2 o'clock. After two hours' drive we arrived at the Kaba Sugar Factory Ponds, that day's only planned ornithological destination. Rainwater in the abandoned sugar factory ponds offered an excellent habitat for breeding and migrating wildfowl. In the bustle of shorebirds we could identify 350 **Pied Avocets**, 900 **Ruff**, 120 **Dunlins**, and, in much smaller numbers, **Little Ringed Plover, Spotted Redshank, Wood Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Temminck's Stint**, among others. Everywhere in the reed beds skirting the ponds **Great Reed Warblers** and **Savi's Warblers** were singing, fortunately at the top of the reeds. In deeper water ponds **Garganey, Ferruginous Duck, Black-necked Grebe** and **Black Tern** were also seen. It was difficult for us to leave this nice wetland, so we didn't arrive at our hotel until 18:30.

Day 2. Birding before breakfast in the hotel garden brought us a beautiful sighting of **Wryneck** and **Nightingale**. After breakfast, at 8 AM we left for the northern parts of the Hortobágy National Park. Soon we arrived at Magdolna-puszta, where we took much pleasure in the long observation of a **Red-footed Falcon** colony; in squabble, 15 pairs occupied the nestboxes provided for them and the disused **Rook** nests. Some kilometres further, in the Daru-Karinkó puszta we saw a pair of **Eurasian Stone-curlew**, then, at the edge of another, tiny **Red-footed Falcon** colony a **Long-eared Owl** blinked at us from one of the nestboxes. After some kilometres' drive we arrived at a wetland (Nagy-Vókonya) managed by special breeds of livestock (Racka sheep, Mangalica pig, Hungarian Grey Cattle, etc.), where, besides several shorebirds and wildfowl species we could see **Bearded Reedlings** and **Moustached Warblers**. Before a delicious lunch at an inn near the Tisza River we popped in at Dinnyés-lapos to see 12 over-summering **Common Cranes** and a **Tawny Pipit** at close range. After a tasty and substantial lunch, we had some rest in Darassa by watching birds of prey in an observation tower. Besides distant **White-tailed Eagles**, we saw **Common Buzzards** and **Western Marsh Harriers** in good numbers, then an adult male **Saker** circled near and just above us in the cloudless, dark blue sky. We could not wish for more! We finished the day at the Derzsi Fishponds, in the observation hide near the largest heronry on the Hortobágy. On the way there, we were lucky to see an adult **White-tailed Eagle** hunting nearby. The heronry and the neighbouring reed bed were bustling with life: **Pygmy Cormorants, Spoonbills, Great and Little Egrets, Squacco Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons** and **Purple Herons** were coming and going near the colony. From the dead reed bed we heard **Great Bittern** and **Little Crane**, in the distance a **Black Stork** was circling. Just when we were about to leave John spotted two **Glossy Ibises** gliding into the colony in front of our observation hide. A great day on the Hortobágy!

Day 3. In the early morning we left the Hortobágy and started our day-long travel to Transylvania. Our first brief stop was at the Hungarian/Romanian border and then at Élesd Reservoir. Here, among the many **Great Crested Grebes** we saw two **Red-necked Grebes** and met a flock of migrating **Black and White-winged Black Terns**. On one of the islets an adult **Yellow-legged Gull** was loitering. Other notable birds were **Ortolan Bunting, Northern Wheatear, Whinchats** and a pair of **Great Grey Shrike**. Later we had a picnic stop near Körösfő at an oak forest edge. After the picnic we searched through the forest edge and found **Yellowhammers, Hawfinches** and **Marsh Tits**, while a **Lesser Spotted Eagle** also circled above our head. After another few hours of driving we had a well earned break at Radnót Fishponds where we saw a larger flock of marsh terns again, with all three species being represented, **White-winged Black Terns** in the largest number, and some **Whiskered Terns**, as well as **Little Gulls** of various age. A **Kingfisher** also flew over us. We stopped off at a tiny village called Lőrincfalva, where we had a brief view of a **Syrian Woodpecker**. After about an hour we were on our way again for the last leg of our journey towards Székelyudvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc). We arrived in time for a nice dinner and our first taste of the famous Blueberry brandy!

Day 4-6. We had three full days around eastern Transylvania blessed with excellent weather, though it was a bit rainy and windy on the highest peaks. The main target was the **European Brown Bear** and one afternoon we were lucky enough to see not less than seven of these magnificent creatures! It was simply superb. Our birding around the Hargita Mountain produced **Eurasian Three-toed**

Woodpecker, Eurasian Nutcracker, Ring Ouzel, Water Pipit, Firecrest, Crested Tit and other high mountain birds. In the Békás Gorge we saw two different **Wallcreepers**. Additional bonus at Békás was a **Northern Goshawk, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, a White-throated Dipper**, two **Alpine Swifts** and some **Grey Wagtails**. On the way from Békás Gorge we stopped at Bucsin Pass, where we were lucky to flush a female **Eurasian Capercaillie**, although the weather had become a bit rainy and windy by that time. A short visit to a nearby fishpond system produced **Purple Herons, marsh terns**, a nice adult **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, a very rare **Great Snipe**, a number of summer-plumaged **Red-throated Pipits** and a fantastic selection of different forms of **Yellow Wagtails**. All in all, we had an action-packed and bird-filled time around Hargita with some real specialities!

Day 7. It was time to start our travel back to Hungary. After a short birding stop at the Küküllő River, where we had an excellent view of a recently arrived **Thrush Nightingale**, we continued our way to Segesvár (Sigishora) where we visited the Citadel. This is also known as Vlad the Impaler's (alias Dracula) place. We spent an exciting hour in the town seeing the sights as well as several **Common Redstarts**. Later we moved towards our next port of call, the picturesque world heritage village of Torockó (Rimetea) at the foot of the Székelykő Mountain. When we entered the limestone valley our first stop and picnic at Kő-köz produced a magnificent singing **Rock Bunting**, perched on the top of a big tree. Then a very short drive to our accommodation. Just in front of our guesthouse there was a nesthole of a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**. Before dinner we took a walk in the terraced fields below the crags. Here we managed to find several **Common Rock-thrushes, Tawny Pipits** and **Rock Buntings** again. Once we had **Common Rock-thrushe** and **Rock Bunting** on the same bush - and a **Northern Wheatear** next to them!! The beautiful evening sunlight on the limestone Székelykő, the far-carrying ship bells in the distance and the tiny village with only the rooftops visible, created a wonderful atmosphere. Just after a delicious dinner we went out owling, and at the church garden a family of **Tawny Owl** were active all night long. We heard four **Eurasian Scops Owls**, but we only saw one briefly. Such an excellent day again!

Day 8. After some exciting before-breakfast birding (**Golden Oriole, Fieldfare**) and an unforgettable, substantial breakfast, a half an hours' drive took us to the entrance of the Turda Gorge. We were welcome by some interesting species: two **Golden Eagles** changing on the nest, **Alpine Swifts** flying in flocks, **Corn Bunting** singing at two meters' distance from us, and some **Barred Warblers** performing a concert. A fantastic site, where we took our group photograph among the special steppe plants called *Crambe tataria*. We had a few hours of uneventful drive back to Hungary and spent our picnic lunch at Élesd Reservoir while listening to the song of **Ortolan Buntings**. After we crossed the border we stopped at an extensive wetland managed by water buffalo. Uncountable number of waterbirds again: 60 **Eurasian Spoonbills**, a **Eurasian Bittern** booming, **Common Cranes, Black-tailed Godwits, 800 Ruffs**, etc. Just the place where you would like to stay all day long! Before we occupied our rooms back at our Hortobágy hotel, we had a great view of a male **Little Bittern**. Perfect end of the day.

Day 9. Our final full day of birding on the tour was rather busy and we still had a few Hortobágy specialities to find! After breakfast we set off for the southern Hortobágy - the endless Nagyiváni-puszta - to find the open steppe specialists. Very soon after we arrived we found 11 **Great Bustards** and a **Roller** in the nearby windbreak. On the way to the vast salt meadow we heard and saw four male **Bluethroats** singing very near each other. In spite of the windy weather we had a good sighting of three **Aquatic Warblers** and one **Grasshopper Warbler**. In the Hortobágy Fishponds migration was in full swing: the willow bushes were alive with **Pied Flycatchers**, a **Garden Warbler**, a **Marsh Warbler**, an **Icterine Warbler** (found by Terry) and some **Wood Warblers**. The ten-minute-long view of the **Eurasian Penduline-tit** whistled in at two metres from us was an unbelievable sight for all of us. After we had our meal in an inn, we continued finding the still missing species and saw **Red-backed Shrikes**, a **Grey Partridge**, a close flying male **Montagu's Harrier**, a **Lesser Grey Shrike** and a **Long-legged Buzzard** hunting low in the air. In Balmazújváros we visited a **Syrian Woodpecker** territory and had an excellent view of the male bird. On the way back to the lodge we had just stopped to see a **Saker** family, when the female bird landed on a dusty road near us and dust-bathed for a long time. I think the Hortobágy bade farewell to us in a notable way with this unrepeatably day.

Day 10. Our final day still had a few surprises! After breakfast we visited the Great Wood in Debrecen. Because of the dry weather in spring the forest was very difficult to work and birds such as **Black, Green and Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Hawfinch** and **Collared Flycatcher** were mostly heard-onlys. So we decided to visit the drinking trough deep in the forest and found it alive with birds. At first we saw a male **Collared Flycatcher**, then **tits, Hawfinches** and **finches** arrived every minute. We had our picnic lunch in a parking lot next to the M3 highway and near an **Eastern Imperial Eagle** territory, but unfortunately we could see the birds only from a long distance and said goodbye to this birdwatching tour. After this there was nothing else left but to get to the airport in time to catch our afternoon flight back to London.

A superb trip where most of our targets were seen well! Many thanks for all the group members for making the trip so easy to lead. I hope everybody had a great time as well as wonderful birding and non-birding experiences and found Hungary and Romania an interesting destination to travel. And don't forget the Brown Bears and the pancakes!

Zoltán Ecsedi, Limosa, June 2009

Systematic list of species recorded

(A total of 193 species was recorded by the group)

Eurasian Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

A single female was flushed at the Bucsin Pass but it was only the briefest glimpse for some of us.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

A male was seen well in the Hortobágy at Hort.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* (H)

We heard one in the Hortobágy.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Flocks of 250–500 were seen in the Hortobágy.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

One seen in Transylvania at Sinpaul fish ponds.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

One was seen at Kaba Sugar Factory Ponds and another one at Földes.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

A few were in the Hortobágy at Nagy-Vókonya and in Transylvania on the fish ponds, and small flocks at Földes.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

A few were in the Hortobágy at Nagy-Vókonya and in Transylvania on the fish ponds, and small flocks at Földes.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

It was very common in Hungary and Transylvania.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Small numbers recorded in Hungary and Transylvania.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

One male was seen in the Hortobágy in Nagy-Vókonya and one male near Földes.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Small numbers recorded in Hungary and Transylvania.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

A small number in the Hortobágy, near Kaba and Földes.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Common in the Hortobágy and near Kaba.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

It was relatively common near Kaba, in the Hortobágy and at Sinpaul fish ponds in Transylvania, max. 20 ind. per day.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A small number was seen near Kaba, in the Hortobágy and on the Sinpaul fish ponds in Transylvania.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Two were seen well near Élesd.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

It was common in Transylvania (Élesd, Sinpaul fishponds) and in the Hortobágy.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Two were seen well near Kaba.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

One was seen at Derzsi fishponds in the Hortobágy.

European White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Still a very common breeder in villages in Hungary and Transylvania. 27 were migrating over Bicz Gorge.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Two were seen in the Hortobágy, when they were flying into the heronry at Derzsi fishponds (thanks John for spotting them).

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

At least 80 at the heronry on the Derzsi fishponds, and 60 near Földes.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* (H)

A few heard in different wetlands in the Hortobágy, in Transylvania and near Földes.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

A nice male heard and seen perfectly near Trófea Hunting Lodge in Nádudvar.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

15 at the heronry on the Derzsi fishponds, and a few were seen in Transylvania and in the garden of Trófea Lodge.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Six individuals were seen in the Hortobágy at the heronry.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Common in Transylvania and Hungary.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

It was seen daily in small numbers in the Hortobágy and a few seen in Transylvania.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

It was common everywhere in Hungary near the wetlands and even the dry grasslands. A small number were seen in Transylvania.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

A few were seen in the Hortobágy and near Földes.

Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*

About 100 were seen at the heronry on the Derzsi fishponds.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common in the Hortobágy.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

About 15 pairs in the colony at Magdolna-puszta, 12 in Transylvania, and about 50 were seen in the Hortobágy on 5th of May. It is one of the birds of the tour!

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Two were recorded in the Hortobágy.

Saker *Falco cherrug*

A pair with one chick at a breeding site and a nice circling male over our head in the Hortobágy. Another one of the birds of the tour!

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Five distant immatures and one close hunting adult were seen in the Hortobágy.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Small numbers were seen in Transylvania, and it was very common in Hungary, especially in the Hortobágy, where the daily maximum number was 50 individuals.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

A female was seen during our journey from the airport and a nice flying male just next to the road at Darassa in the Hortobágy.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two were seen in Transylvania.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Only one was seen in Transylvania. It flew over our head at the Gyergyói Basin.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

It was very common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

We saw one excellent pale individual in the Hortobágy near Darassa.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

Three were seen well in Transylvania. One was as close as 10 meters from us.

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

We recorded 3 adults near the M3 motorway on the last day.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Two adults were seen in Transylvania at the Turda Gorge.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

11 males were seen on the Nagyiváni-puszta, in the Hortobágy.

European Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* (H)

Two heard in the Hortobágy.

Little Crake *Porzana parva*

One male was heard in the Hortobágy at Derzsi fishponds.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

We saw it in small numbers in Hungary and in Transylvania at the fish ponds.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

Common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

12 over-summering birds were recorded in the Hortobágy and two near Földes.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

We had two on the Daru-Karinkó puszta near Balmazújváros.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

At least 100 were seen in Hungary, and one in Transylvania.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

350 were seen at the Kaba Sugar Factory Ponds.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Fairly common near the wetlands and grasslands in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

It was fairly common near Élesd and near Kaba.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*

One was flushed at Sinpaul fishpond and gave us a prolonged view. It is a very rare bird in Transylvania.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Four were flushed on Sinpaul fishponds in Transylvania.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

We saw it in small numbers in Hungary.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Six were on the Derzsi fish ponds, and one near Földes.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

We saw it in great numbers in Hungary, most of them in nice summer plumage.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

We saw it in small numbers in Hungary and near Élesd.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Just a few were seen near Kaba and at Nagy-Vókonya.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Large flocks of 40-80 were seen in Hungary and in Transylvania as well.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

A few were seen in Transylvania and in Hungary.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

One was at Nagy-Vókonya in the Hortobágy, and two were seen on Sinpaul fishponds in Transylvania.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Two were seen near Kaba and another two at Nagy-Vókonya.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

More than 100 in a flock in the Hortobágy and at Kaba.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

250-900 were seen in one day in Hungary and a smaller number in Transylvania.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

We saw one adult near Élesd in Transylvania.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

A few were seen in the Hortobágy.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Common, mainly in the Hortobágy and near Kaba, and Földes.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

We had 80 on the Hortobágy fish ponds, and a few in Transylvania.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*

Small flocks were seen in Transylvania, near Földes and in the Hortobágy.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Small flocks (6-40) were seen in Hungary and in Transylvania.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Present in small numbers (15-50 ind.) in Transylvania, near Földes and in the Hortobágy.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

20-20 were seen near Kaba and at Élesd (Alesd).

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Common.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Six were seen at Sinpaul fish ponds in Transylvania.

Common Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Fairly common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Fairly common in Hungary, and in lower numbers in Transylvania.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common in the villages.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Common speciality in the wetlands, daily 5-10 ind.

Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops*

Four were heard in Torockó and one was seen very briefly.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

A family of four were seen well in Torockó.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

One seen in Transylvania.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

One was seen in the Hortobágy.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

Two were seen at Bicz Gorge, one in Torockó and 18 at Turda Gorge in Transylvania.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Only two were seen during our last picnic lunch near the motorway.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

One recently arrived bird was seen on the Nagyiváni-puszta in the Hortobágy.

Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Several ind.s seen in Hungary and one in Transylvania as well.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

One held a territory in the Trófea Lodge garden.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

A superb male was seen in Torockó.

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius* (H)

Two were heard in the Debrecen Great Wood.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*

One briefly at Lőrincfalava in Transylvania, and a nice male gave a prolonged and excellent view for us in Balmazújváros, Hortobágy.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Just a few were seen in the woods in Hungary and Transylvania.

Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus*

One female was seen very well on the Hargita Mountain.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*

One seen and more heard in Transylvania.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* (H)

One heard at Körösfő in Transylvania.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Just a few had arrived in the Hortobágy, two males were seen.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

Just had arrived in the Hortobágy, one male was seen.

Northern Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Two were seen in Transylvania, on their new breeding grounds.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Fairly common in Transylvania and in Hungary too. Every morning we heard one singing male from the Trófea Lodge window.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common in the Carpathians.

Common Magpie *Pica pica*

Common everywhere.

Eurasian Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

One was seen in the Carpathians.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Very common in Transylvania and in the Hortobágy.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Very common in Transylvania and in the Hortobágy.

Hooded Crow *Corvus corone*

Very common in Transylvania and in the Hortobágy.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

A few were seen in the Carpathians.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

A few recorded in Transylvania and in the Debrecen Great Wood.

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

We saw 3 in the Carpathians.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Fairly common in the Carpathians.

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

We heard and saw at least 8 in the Carpathians.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

It was common in the Debrecen Great Wood.

Eurasian Penduline-tit *Remiz pendulinus*

A male was seen from 2 meters on the Hortobágy fish ponds.

Common Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

High numbers were recorded at Élesd (Alesd) Reservoir.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Very common.

[Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* (OL)

One was seen only by the leader in front of the Turda Gorde in Transylvania. It is a very rare bird!]

Northern House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Very common.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

A few were seen in Hungary.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Small numbers, but it was common in Hungary and Transylvania.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Common, especially in the Hortobágy.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Several seen at Kalonda Pass and in Torockó.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

One singing male was seen well in the Nagyiváni-puszta.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Fairly common in the Hortobágy, and a few were seen in Transylvania as well.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Common in Hungary, a few in Transylvania.

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

Six were seen very well in the Hortobágy (Derzsi fish ponds, Nagy-Vókonya).

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*

Three, mainly singing males, were on the Nagyiváni-puszta, Hortobágy.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Very common in the Hortobágy and on the Sinpaul fish ponds.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Common in the Hortobágy, max 20 a day.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

We saw one at the Hortobágy fish ponds.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* (NL)

One was seen by Terry on the Hortobágy fish ponds among the migratory warblers and flycatchers.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Only one was seen on the Hortobágy fish ponds.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Fairly common, mainly heard.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

A small number were seen in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Fairly common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

One was seen on the Hortobágy fish ponds among the migratory warblers and flycatchers.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Four were seen perfectly in front of the Turda Gorge in Transylvania.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

A few were seen everywhere in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

A few were seen everywhere in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*

Fairly common in the Hortobágy.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Three were seen very well in the Hargita Mountains.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Fairly common in the Carpathians.

Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Heard and seen in the Carpathians.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Several were seen in Transylvania and in the Debrecen Great Wood.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*

A pair was seen at Bicaz Gorge.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Two were seen in the Carpathians.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Five were seen in the Hargita Mountains.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Fairly common in Hungary and in Transylvania, rare in the Hortobágy.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

A few breeding pairs were seen in Transylvania.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Fairly common in the Carpathians.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Fairly common in the Carpathians.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecola*

Common in the Carpathians.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

One was seen properly near the Küküllő River at Székelyudvarhely.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Common in Hungary, rarer in Transylvania. Excellent views in the Trófea Lodge garden.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

At least 5 were recorded in the Hortobágy.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

We saw it in small numbers in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Several were seen in Transylvania.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

It was seen in small numbers in Hungary (on passage) and in Transylvania (breeding).

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Fairly common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

A few were seen in the Hortobágy and in Transylvania

Common Rock-thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

A pair was seen very well at Torockó.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa sriata*

We saw three in Hungary.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

We saw a female and a male on the Hortobágy fish ponds.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*

One nice male was seen in the Debrecen Great Wood.

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Four were seen in the Carpathians.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Heard and seen in the Carpathians.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

The nominate race is common in Hungary and in Transylvania. On the Sinpaul fish ponds we saw one *thunbergi*, two *feldegg* and several '*dombrowskii*'. We recorded '*superciliaris*' as well in Transylvania.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

We saw a few in Transylvania.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Fairly common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

One was seen well at Dinnyés-lapos (Hortobágy), and two more in Transylvania.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Common in Transylvania.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

22 were seen very well on the Sinpaul fish ponds.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

One summer plumaged ind. was seen at higher elevations in the Hargita Mountains.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common.

European Serin *Serinus serinus*

A few were seen in the Hortobágy.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Common.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common.

Common Linnnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Fairly common in Transylvania.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Four were seen in the Carpathians.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A few were seen in Transylvania and in the Debrecen Great Wood.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Fairly common in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Fairly common in Transylvania and in the Debrecen Great Wood.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*

Two singing males were seen at Kő-köz and at Torockó.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

At least 4 were seen at Élesd (Alesd), in Transylvania.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Fairly common in the Hortobágy, a few were seen in Transylvania on the fish ponds.

Mammals

Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*

Seen almost every day in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*

One was seen in Transylvania.

Brown Bear *Ursus arctos*

Seven were seen nicely just before dark. Superb experience.

Western Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*

Seen almost everyday in Hungary and in Transylvania.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

We saw it in the Carpathians.

Common Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*

Two were seen flying at Torockó.

Thanks to Terry for the following butterfly list:

Orange-tip
Comma
Swallowtail
Scarce Swallowtail
Lesser Fiery Copper
Small Copper
Large Copper
Southern Small White
Pale Clouded Yellow
Chalk-hill Blue
Adonis Blue
Common Blue
Chequered Blue
Glanville Fritillary
Queen of Spain Fritillary
Marsh Fritillary
Green-veined White
Grizzled Skipper
Small Heath
Wall Brown
Speckled Wood
Map Butterfly