



SAKERTOURS



Great Snipe in the Hortobágy National Park (János Oláh)

HUNGARY, SLOVAKIA & TRANSYLVANIA GT **with SAKERTOURS** **4th – 15th May, 2019**

Leader: János Oláh

It was the 8th time we have been running this classic birdwatching tour which was elaborated by Sakertours. Even after so many years this itinerary seems to be unbeatable in the region and a favourite for our guests! This year we managed to find a great selection of special birds yet again but in rather unseasonal and difficult circumstances. This birding adventure gives a superb insight of the fantastic sceneries in the countries visited: Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. From 2020 this tour now linkable with either our new Austria-Slovenia-Croatia tour or the revised Danube Delta tour giving the Ultimate Eastern Europe Birding Tour to any overseas visitors (see ultimatesakertours.com)! In 2019 we recorded 217 species in ten fully days of birding while covering almost all major bird habitats of the Carpathian Basin. Conditions this year were exceptionally difficult as we have experienced the coldest and wettest spring for the last 60 years. It was very cold indeed, daytime temperatures ranging from a mere 0C to 23C. A very strange May and I have certainly not experienced anything like this in the last 25 years since birding in this region. Needless to say a lot of breeding birds were very slow to arrive (or not at all) while migration was also different from other years. I am proud of all our participants who put up with the difficulties in 2019 and sailed through the tour with great enjoyment!

This year's highlights included superb male Western Capercaillie, Little Crake, Great Bustard, Western Barn Owl, Ural, Eagle, Scops and Tengmalm's Owls, nine species of woodpeckers including superb views of White-backed Woodpeckers; a good variety of raptors including Short-toed, Eastern Imperial and Lesser Spotted Eagles, European Honey Buzzard, Red-footed Falcon and Saker. We have also seen goodies like Ferruginous Duck, Great Snipe, Jack Snipe, Wallcreeper, Sombre Tit, Bearded Reedings, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Common Rock Thrush, Icterine, Barred and River Warblers and Ortolan Bunting. The 11 mammal species seen on the tour included Carpathian Brown Bears, European Badger and Chamois. Our bear experience was just fantastic!



A huge male Carpathian Brown Bear seen on the tour (János Oláh)

4th May (Saturday)

The tour has started in Budapest Liszt Ferenc Airport and we did a little twist to our published program as we were expecting a major weather change the next day or possibly even on the first afternoon! In the prospect of rain (a lot of it) we quickly drove to the Hortobágy National Park where we were hoping to drive into a remote location which would not be accessible in conditions are wet. We soon arrived to Balmazújváros and changed into 4x4 transport – it was still not raining – and drove into a wetland area to look for migrant snipes. It is always tricky to go straight into birding on a tour but our plan was working fine this time, and we enjoyed excellent looks of several Great Snipes which was our number one target for the afternoon. We also had Jack Snipe and several breeding Common Snipes as well as a fine juvenile Eastern Imperial Eagle, great looks of breeding plumages Red-throated Pipits and even managed to see Common Grasshopper Warbler. A nearby wetland also held breeding plumaged Marsh Sandpiper and Spotted Redshanks in amongst all other waders. Although this little change of plan made our first afternoon a long one, we were all happy that we could execute this 'snipe mission' successfully before the rain arrived. It took us another two hours to drive to the Zemplén Hills where we arrived for a late dinner and a quick checklist. We were proved right about the weather though as it has now started to rain...



Red-throated Pipit was seen on our first afternoon while 'sniping' in the Hortobágy NP (János Oláh)

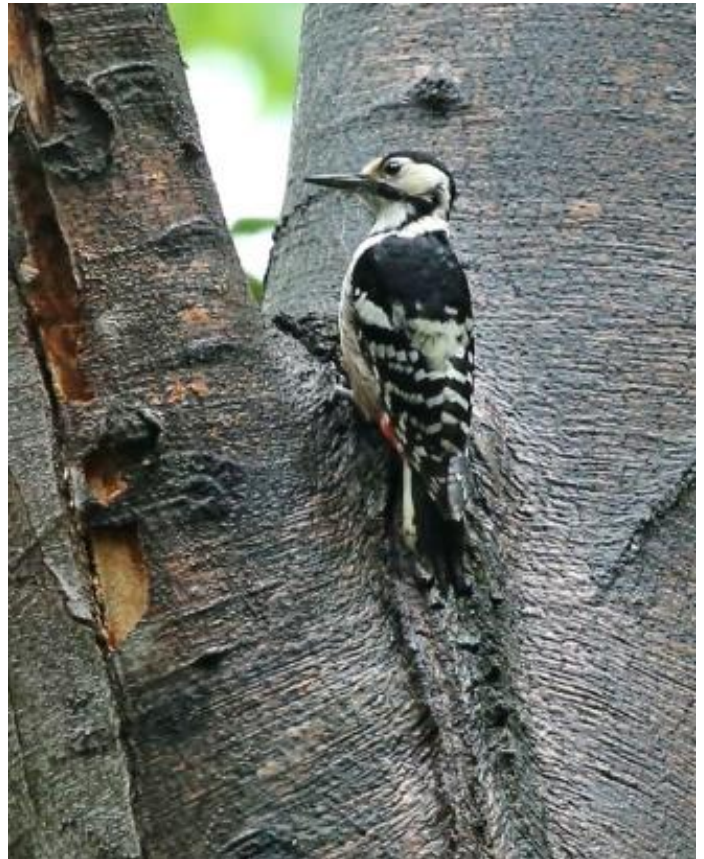
5th May (Sunday)

Today was a full day in the Zemplén Hills. We have now realized why all weather channels were threatening everybody about the arrival of a severe cold and wet weather front. It was a mere 6C, it was raining plus an unpleasant wind made it absolutely horrible! We don't give up so easily though so we decided to visit a deep valley where we were hoping for less wind. The rain was coming in waves and there were short spells when birding was just doable. We had a short walk to a breeding Ural Owl area where we glimpsed the skittish female and had great looks of the youngster in the tree cavity. Another few hundred meters uphill we had an active White-backed Woodpecker hole and from a comfortable distance we waited until we got excellent looks of both male and female birds. These declining and rare woodpeckers are highly prized targets in Europe (still easier in Asia) and it was a relief to see it on the first day of the tour. In this area we also had a fine Black Woodpecker and great looks of several smart male Collared Flycatchers. Despite the weather we had a solid two hours good birding! This was followed by more rain so we took shelter in a nice csárda for lunch. Later in the afternoon we explored more open habitat and managed to track down several Little Crakes and also had Black Kite and White-tailed Eagles. Our best sighting was a family of three Eurasian Eagle Owls as a female and two chicks were sheltering on a cliff-face while we were also battling with the strong wind and rain horizontally getting into our face. Needless to say we were ready to finish the day by late afternoon but considering the conditions we had some excellent birds!

6th May (Monday)

Well, you always hope that weather can change quickly and we certainly had our share of cold, wet and windy weather on our first day. We were hoping that this cold fronts go away quickly. Not this year though and this morning was even worse than our first day with continuous rain until midday! It was pouring down so the first few hours we were birding from the car. We got to see Ferruginous Duck, Stock Doves, Woodlarks, 'white-headed' Long-tailed Tits, Northern Wheatear, a fine Tawny Pipit, Red-backed Shrikes and Eurasian Golden Oriole. We were happy to sit into a warm restaurant for lunch. The afternoon was slightly better with less rain. After lunch we managed to find a Lesser Spotted Eagle and an Eastern Imperial Eagle. Later we attempted

another valley where we saw a White-backed Woodpeckers plus also tracked down a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker while Collared Flycatchers were also entertaining us. We finished this particularly cold day with a most enjoyable wine tasting dinner in the World Heritage Tokaj region.



White-backed Woodpecker male (top left) and female (top right), Eurasian Eagle Owl with chicks (left) and Ural Owl (right) in the Zemplén Hills (János Oláh)

7th May (Tuesday)

We got up early and it was not raining! It was still cold but we had a short pre-breakfast walk around our hotel seeing Wryneck, Lesser-spotted Woodpecker, Long-tailed Tit and Serin. Today we were to leave Zemplén foothill behind and drive to nearby Slovakia. As the weather got slightly better we decided to try yet another area to see Ural Owl before we leave. We did see a female on our first day but better views were required! We met up with our local person Zoltán Petrovics and visited a tranquil valley. First we saw a male Grey-headed Woodpecker and then a fine female Ural Owl showed very well indeed. After this last minute experience we were on our way to the Érc Mountains in Slovakia. As we were getting closer to the Karst region we could see that fresh snow was covering the top of the hills. This is a low area and it was very rare event in May but the last two cold days produced snow here. Well we did not drive as high as the snow but birded the Stósz Pass for a few hours. The weather was really good compared to the last three days and the temperature was up to 12C. Bird activity however was very low in the forest and although we did manage to see European Crested and Willow Tits, Red Crossbill and Eurasian Siskin none of the more scarce species showed themselves. We did hear Eurasian Pygmy Owl briefly but it refused to budge. Early afternoon we continued our way to the Slovensky Raj National Park. It was rather clear sky and two distant Golden Eagles were soon spotted in the sky and a roadside pair of Lesser Spotted Eagles started displaying right in front of us. It was great! We also had a migrating female Montagu's Harrier near Roznava which later turned out to be the only one of the tour. We arrived to our hotel which was surrounded by sub-alpine landscape with pine-covered hillsides. Later in the afternoon some Grey Wagtails, Mistle Thrushes and Willow Warblers showed up near to our comfortable hotel where we had an early dinner. After this fine meal we visited a nearby gorge in the hope of some calling Boreal Owls at dusk. Weather was cold but otherwise perfect for owling and we waited until dusk. Although it was quiet and no Boreal Owls were calling we heard and see two Ural Owls gliding across a narrow valley and some Woodcocks were roding high in the sky.



Red-breasted Flycatcher male was showing well in Slovakia (János Oláh)

8th May (Wednesday)

Before breakfast we were out again in the forest. It was like winter: very cold (just zero celsius) and silence. Birds were not active and certainly no owls were heard. We got a few Fieldfares and Mistle Thrushes but soon returned for breakfast and decided to leave this area and go to lower elevation. This was a good move and the weather was also looking sunny! A lovely beech woodland near Zadiel gave us a superb singing male Red-breasted Flycatcher as well as Wood Warbler and more Fire Salamanders. Following our success we drove back towards the Zemplén Hills and at various roadside stops we managed to find four Short-toed Eagles, one Lesser Spotted Eagle, many Common Buzzard, a displaying European Honey Buzzard, several Eurasian Sparrowhawks and an immature White-tailed Eagle. A brief stop in the Zemplén Hills gave us displaying Barred Warblers and some excellent looking Southern Festoon butterfly. We arrived to the Hortobágy National Park by late afternoon and although the weather was nice and sunny we would not have a chance to enter those 'snipe' areas we did on the first afternoon. But this burden was not something we had to worry about and leisurely visited a fantastic Red-footed Falcon colony with flying, calling, mating birds all around us. Magical experience in the best available light and in reasonable temperature – a little taste how May weather should normally be!



Fire Salamander (left), Southern Festoon (right) and male Red-footed Falcon (János Oláh)



Female Red-footed Falcon (János Oláh)

While watching the Red-footed Falcons we also spotted a female Long-eared Owl with two chicks in one of the abandoned Rook's nest. This was a great bonus with the falcons as we could enjoy the orange eyes and the long ear tufts just as long as we wanted! It was not easy to drag ourselves away from this idyllic spot but we still had something to do for the day. First we tracked down a Little Owl and later we managed to see two Barn Owls. It was a travel day though with many good birds.

9th May (Thursday)

This was a full day in the World Heritage Hortobágy National Park, and indeed what a day it was! We recorded 116 species on this day alone though most of the afternoon was rained out again. Our superb day started with a fine male Saker. We had excellent prolonged scope looks of this majestic raptor. Unfortunately the weather forecast was not looking good for the afternoon so we tried to jam in as much as we could into the morning session. A quick visit to Hortobágy Fishponds produced a long list of new birds like Squacco Herons, many Pygmy Cormorants, breeding plumaged Ruffs, lots of Dunlins, lovely Little Gulls some of them in breeding dress as well as superb selection of three marsh terns: Black, White-winged and Whiskered. We also had displaying male Bluethroats and many singing Savi's Warblers. There were very few migrants in the bushes though - but it was not surprising following all those very cold and wet days. After this action-packed visit we drove to a puszta area where we soon located two male Great Bustards and they even gave us an excellent show of their 'foam bath' display. Fantastic! Following this spectacle we picked up a few Red-crested Pochards in amongst c. 150 Ferruginous Ducks and while working our way through the 'reedbed birds' we had excellent looks of Bearded Reedlings and briefly Moustached Warbler was seen too. After a quick lunch we drove to the northern part of the national park bumping into a migrating flock of nine European Bee-eaters. This colour blast we certainly needed as the weather started to deteriorate again and it was getting darker and greyer. No wonder why the Bee-eaters were just sitting on wires doing nothing. We also watched a male Syrian Woodpecker attending its freshly excavated breeding hole in a wooden pylon – we could do this from the comfort of a roofed

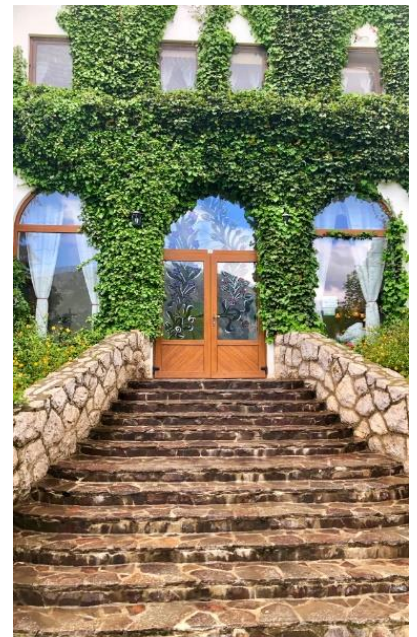
balcony so the rain was not so much of a problem here. Slightly further away yet another superb wetland area delivered some requested birds like Common Goldeneye and breeding plumaged Red-necked Grebes as well as excellent looks of Eurasian Penduline Tit. In fact this wonderful place held four species of breeding plumaged grebes together and a fine male Little Bittern also put up an appearance. By the time we finished here the rain settled in properly and we finished the day in a nearby woodland where we managed to find a Marsh Tit and a Short-toed Treecreeper. It was a full day of birding indeed and we did very well considering the dire conditions.



'Foam display' of Great Bustard (top left), male Saker Falcon (top right), a stretching male Bearded Reedling (left) and a fine Eurasian Penduline Tit (right) (János Oláh)

10th May (Friday)

Our next day was a travel day to Transylvania! We still had some birding to do on the Hungarian side of the boarder and after breakfast we quickly tracked down two singing male Marsh Warblers before arriving to the a superb wetland area in the Bihar area. It was overcast but the weather was not bad at all, probably the best day so far. The wetland was packed with birds and we counted 316 Pied Avocets, 50 Eurasian Spoonbills and also added a few new birds to our list like Northern Pintail, Common Ringed Plover, breeding plumaged Curlew Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint and Mediterranean Gull. Another short hop and a border crossing found us in the vast reservoirs of Élesd and we spent a few hours birding until lunch. There were lots of birds here, definitely more than usual and it must have been because of the unusual cold weather. It was grebe heaven and we counted 260 Great-crested Grebes, 16 Red-necked Grebes and many Black-necked Grebes. We also found two Black-throated Loons, a male Goldeneye, many Tufted Ducks, about 70 Little Gulls and about 10 really low flying Alpine Swifts allowing excellent looks! Fine Ortolan Buntings entertained us while having packed lunch.

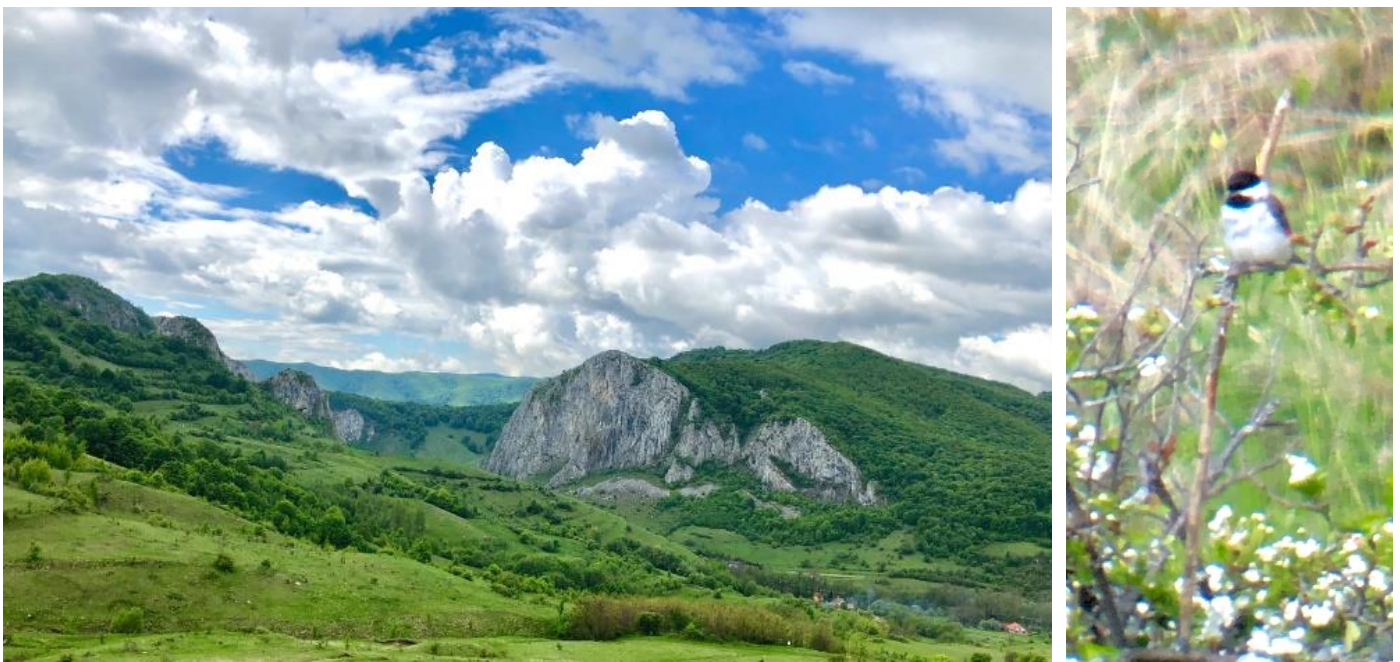


Low flying Alpine Swift (left), our lovely hotel in Transylvania and male Rock Bunting (János Oláh)

When we arrived to the Torockó Valley in Transylvania it was late afternoon but it was still not raining. We made a little climb on a boulder strewn slope which was a welcome move after sitting for a few hours. It was very productive too as we had excellent views of the breeding Golden Eagles as well as tracked down a pair of Common Rock Thrush and even managed to find a singing male Rock Bunting. Great stuff! We settled into our lovely hotel and after a fine dinner we tried to see Eurasian Scops Owl but despite hearing about 10 different birds none of them were in striking distance, neither the calling Corncrakes!

11th May (Saturday)

Next morning we were up early and made a lovely walk in this picturesque landscape and most importantly we found our number one target, the rare Sombre Tit (rare here as it is the most northern spot in its European distribution). The track was rather muddy however following the huge amount of rain in recent days (and at night) but it could not stop our enthusiasm. Other goodies in this area included European Honey Buzzard, Green Woodpecker, Eurasian Crag Martin, Wryneck, Tree Pipit, Whinchat, Great Grey Shrike and Ortolan Bunting. We left this fantastic area behind and penetrated further into Transylvania.



Landscape in the limestone valley of Torockó (left) and a record shot of Sombre Tit (János Oláh)

Our next stop was near Segesvár (Sighisoara) where we finally – after many attempts – managed to find Middle Spotted Woodpecker and were treated by great looks of a Ural Owl family. The rather dark female was majestically sitting right above the track and later we could also find two young birds sitting high in the canopy. By now the distant thundering got more intense and the storm was really on our tails. We drove to our final destination near Székelyudvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc) and arrived by dinner to the Hargita Bear Lodge. Following the thunderstorms we experienced all afternoon the weather settled by the evening so we decided to go owling after dinner. We had no luck in Slovakia and without any confirmed breeding site for Boreal Owl this spring our only chance was to follow the lead of a calling male heard a few days ago high up on the Hargita Mountain. We arrived to the right elevation just before dusk and after a little bit of ‘fishing’ we heard a Boreal Owl calling in a distance. Nervous minutes followed, but finally after some work we fixed the calling male in the torchlight allowing great looks for everybody! It was a somewhat unexpected but great result for our efforts. We were back to the lodge for our well-deserved rest still before midnight. It was a full day again with some localised and hard to find birds. After one week of winter the weather was also improving now and it was almost like April with daytime temperatures up to 18C. We were now really hoping for spring!



Female Ural Owl (left) and chick (right) and a roosting Boreal or Tengmalm's Owl (János Oláh)

12th May (Sunday)

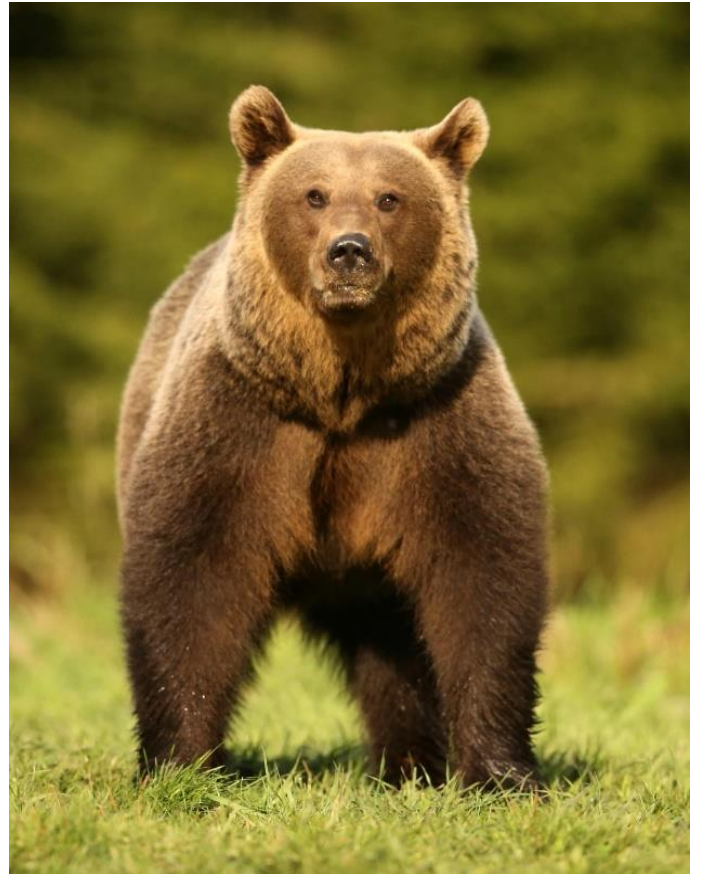
Following a late night out we were a little bit tired but after breakfast we returned to the higher elevations of the Hargita Mountain for the morning session. Weather was looking good and we were very hopeful. Birding however was rather slow and it was sometimes particularly difficult to walk along the track as there was severe wind damage from winter with many trees fallen across the track and we still had to walk in snow. However we soon found a few nice Ring Ouzels and this was followed by Spotted Nutcracker and we also had European

Crested Tit, Willow Tit, Firecrest and Red Crossbill. There was no sign of any Western Capercaillies, Eurasian Pygmy Owls nor any Three-toed Woodpeckers albeit searching for them in exact territories! After a longish walk we were returning to our vehicle in the late morning and I must say we were not particularly concentrating on the track at this stage when suddenly we flushed a female Western Capercaillie from the side of the track. It was sitting down very close to us trusting her superb camouflage. Those who were in the front had good flight looks but unfortunately those in the back had not seen it. On the way down from the mountain we had another stop in a Three-toed Woodpecker area for the last time. There was no sign of any woodpeckers, the forest was quiet and by now the wind was also picking up. As we were walking on a track we heard a singing Boreal Owl! It was in the middle of the day – they often do it in the peak of breeding – and we knew it will carry on only for a few seconds. So we ran into the forest towards the calling bird but it stopped singing before we could pin it down to an exact tree. We realized we were very close to the area where we finally managed to see the one last night (likely to be the very same individual). Luckily our local guide Szabi proved very useful and after some minutes of searching he spotted the roosting Boreal Owl for us and we could watch it for 30 minutes when we eventually managed to drag ourselves away. What a fantastic bird to see in daylight!



Spotted Nutcracker in the Hargita Mountain (János Oláh)

The afternoon was yet again an exciting adventure as we dedicated this afternoon for visiting one of our superb hides for Carpathian Brown Bears. On the way to the hide we checked one more Eurasian Pygmy Owl territory without any success. We were in position for the bears in the late afternoon and after about an hour waiting we spotted the first individual which was followed by others and by the end of the day we definitely saw at least four different individuals! It was mating time so we were extremely lucky to see a huge male bear – those who never visit the hides in normal circumstances – as he was following a nice pale-coloured female around. Magical experience to see such mammals in the wild and it is certainly a highlight of our GT tour even though it is a birdwatching tour. Nowadays more and more birders interested to see mammals as well and we are happy to look for them as well. We left the hide still in daylight and drove back to the Eurasian Pygmy Owl territory by dusk. We were patient but no owl was showing. We did see another Eurasian Woodcock over the clearing.



Carpathian Brown Bears in Transylvania seen from one of the Sakertours Hides (János Oláh)

13th May (Monday)

Our first stop this morning was in the Gyergyó (Gheorgeni) Basin in a lovely meadow area scattered by bushes. This is the breeding area of Common Rosefinch though our chances on this GT tour usually small as they are late arrivals. First we had great views of a Great Grey Shrike along the dirt track we drove and when we arrived to the birding spot we immediately heard a singing Common Rosefinch as we got out of the car. We soon had great looks of this immature (non-red) male bird in a budding willow tree while Garden Warblers and Long-tailed Tits were also around. From here we continued to the Békás (Bicaz) Gorge in the Hagymás (Hásmas) National Park. Set in beautiful scenery we birded this fantastic gorge. Our first excitement was a party of 7 Northern Chamois on a distant hillside and then we found our main target, the mighty Wallcreeper. What a unique bird and it was very high on some participants 'whish-list'. This time of the year they have fantastic black throat and we certainly had good looks, seeing them foraging as well as in flight. Other goodies included Peregrine Falcon, White-throated Dipper and Grey Wagtail.



Wallcreeper in Békás Gorge (János Oláh)

On our last afternoon in the Hargita area we were working on some unfinished businesses which we carried from Hungary because of the horrendous weather. One of the special target was River Warbler. They are late arrivals and they do not sing if the weather is not warm. Two singing birds were tracked down by our local helpers while we were in Békás Gorge so after lunch we visited the area where they were heard. It was a lovely valley with meadows and some bushy streamside vegetation. As soon as we arrived to the spot we heard one singing though it was not the real proper long singing but more short bits of phrases. Definitely just arrived and setting up territory. To cut the story short we had to work really hard but finally had scope looks of this skulker. Supporting cast included Lesser Spotted Eagle, Thrush Nightingale and Yellowhammers. This evening we had yet another owling session after dinner and this time we quickly got good looks of Eurasian Scops Owl. Today was our first day when the temperature was up to 23C and this was the highest on the entire tour!

14th May (Tuesday)

Our Transylvania part of the tour was over and today was the longest drive of the day, all the way back to the Hortobágy National Park. And surprise surprise they were forecasting rain and cold weather arriving today again. The two days spring was over. We decided to go and try our luck for the last time with a pre-breakfast try for Western Capercaillie up on the Hargita Mountain. It was windy and rather cold again, we could feel the weather is changing again! We drove up to the mountain and our extra effort was working this time as there it

was, a male Western Capercaillie standing on the road! Big smiles around we could watch it for a minute before he flew off into the dark coniferous woodland of the mountain. We were back for breakfast and packing and soon were on our way towards Hungary.



Male Western Capercaillie (left) and its habitat (János Oláh)

The rain arrived by the afternoon and after the border crossing we had two brief stops at some wetlands sites. The first gave us Little Stint while the second stop produced 17 Black Storks and about 100 Great White Egrets and 140 Eurasian Spoonbills. We were back to the cold and rainy Hungarian Great Plain. Normally if we ever have cold spells on the spring tours it is in the mountains but this year the lowlands were the worst!

15th May (Wednesday)

Our final day of the tour was originally planned to be spent close to the airport looking for some missing birds but we had to change plans – not for the first time on the tour – because of the weather. There was massive rain predicted for the west reaching the east by noon. So we decided to go birding in the Hortobágy until we can and if the heavy rain arrives we just drive back to the airport. Not as it was not raining in the Hortobágy as well from the early morning, but it was umbrella birding type, not downpour. We did manage to find some missing birds to our list. Although our first trial for Eurasian Stone-curlew was unsuccessful, we did manage to get great looks of Water Rail and also found two European Rollers, Lesser Grey Shrikes and even a migrant Icterine Warbler for the delight of some overseas participants! Some non-expected new birds to our list were two Glossy Ibises and a Western Cattle Egret. The heavy rain arrived by lunch and we decided to leave for Budapest airport. All in all it was a great tour despite of the very unusual and absolutely horrendous, wet and cold weather almost all along the entire tour! It was a great and hard working group and I hope they had a good time on this three country journey in Eastern Europe!

After summarizing the points the TOP5 birds of the trip were:

1. Boreal Owl
2. Western Capercaillie
3. Red-breasted Flycatcher
4. Western Barn Owl
5. Rock Bunting

BIRDS – list of bird species recorded on the 2019 tour

C = Commonly seen, more than 10 individuals

'Numbers' = Actual number seen on the tour

H = Heard only

LO = Leader only

NL = Non-leader

1	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	C
2	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	C
3	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	C
4	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>	C
5	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	C
6	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	C
7	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	C
8	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	C
9	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	3
10	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	6
11	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	4
12	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	C
13	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	C
14	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	C
15	Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	6
16	Western Capercaillie	<i>Tetrao urogallus</i>	3 (1m, 2f)
17	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	C
18	Black-throated Loon	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	2
19	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	C
20	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	C
21	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	C
22	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	C
23	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	C
24	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	C
25	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	2
26	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	C
27	Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	H
28	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	1 (male)
29	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	C
30	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	C
31	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	1
32	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	C
33	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	C
34	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	C
35	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	C
36	Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmeus</i>	C
37	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	C
38	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	5
39	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	4
40	Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>	8
41	Eastern Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	2

42	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	4
43	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	9
44	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	C
45	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	1f
46	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	2
47	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	C
48	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	C
49	Great Bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>	2m
50	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	1
51	Corn Crake	<i>Crex crex</i>	H
52	Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>	5
53	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	1
54	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	C
55	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	C
56	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	C
57	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	C
58	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	C
59	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1
60	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	1 (LO)
61	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	C
62	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	4
63	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	C
64	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	C
65	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	7
66	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	5
67	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	C
68	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	6
69	Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	3
70	Jack Snipe	<i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>	3
71	Great Snipe	<i>Gallinago media</i>	4
72	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	8
73	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	C
74	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	C
75	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	1
76	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	C
77	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	8
78	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	2
79	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	C
80	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	C
81	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>	2
82	Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	C
83	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	3
84	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	C
85	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	C
86	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	C
87	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	C
88	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia f. domestica</i>	C
89	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	C

90	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	C
91	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	C
92	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	C
93	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	C
94	Western Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	2
95	Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>	1
96	Eurasian Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	3 (if, 2juv)
97	Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>	8
98	Eurasian Pygmy Owl	<i>Glaucidium passerinum</i>	H
99	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	2
100	Boreal Owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	1 (male)
101	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	6
102	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	10
103	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	C
104	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	2
105	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1
106	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	9
107	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	8
108	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	7
109	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>	2
110	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>	3
111	Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>	1 (male)
112	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	10
113	White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>	5
114	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>	5
115	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	2
116	Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>	1 (male)
117	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	C
118	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	C
119	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	8
120	Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>	1 (male)
121	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	4
122	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	C
123	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	2
124	Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	7
125	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	C
126	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	C
127	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	C
128	Spotted Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	4
129	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	C
130	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	C
131	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	C
132	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	C
133	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	C
134	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	7
135	Sombre Tit*	<i>Poecile lugubris</i>	2 (pair)
136	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	3
137	Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>	8

138	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	C
139	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	C
140	Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	5
141	Bearded Reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	8
142	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	10
143	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	C
144	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	C
145	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	C
146	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	C
147	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	14
148	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	C
149	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	C
150	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	1
151	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	1
152	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	C
153	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	10
154	Moustached Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>	1 (LO)
155	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	C
156	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	C
157	Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	2
158	Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	1
159	Common Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	2
160	River Warbler	<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	1
161	Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	C
162	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	8
163	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	3
164	Barred Warbler	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	2
165	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	9
166	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	C
167	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	3
168	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	2
169	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	H
170	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	4
171	Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	2
172	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	7
173	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	1
174	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	C
175	Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	3
176	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	C
177	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	C
178	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	C
179	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	11
180	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	5
181	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	5
182	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	3
183	Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	1
184	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	3
185	Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	5

186	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	1 (male)
187	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	C
188	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	C
189	Common Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	2 (pair)
190	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	10
191	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	C
192	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	5
193	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	6
194	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	C
195	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	C
196	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	1
197	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	C
198	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	6
199	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	C
200	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	1
201	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	11
202	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	5
203	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	C
204	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	C
205	Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	H
206	Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	2
207	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	C
208	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	C
209	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	C
210	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	C
211	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	C
212	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	2 (pair)
213	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	C
214	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	C
215	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	4 (3m, 1f)
216	Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	6
217	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	C



Water Rail in the Hortobágy National Park (János Oláh)

MAMMALS – list of mammal species recorded on the 2019 tour

C = Commonly seen, more than 10 individuals

'Numbers' = Actual number seen on the tour

H = Heard only

LO = Leader only

NL = Non-leader

1	European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	C
2	Northern White-breasted Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus roumanicus</i>	2
3	Coypu	<i>Myocastor coypus</i>	3
4	Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	1
5	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	2
6	Brown Bear (Carpathian)	<i>Ursus arctos</i>	4
7	Eurasian Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	1
8	Least Weasel	<i>Mustella nivalis</i>	1
9	European Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	C
10	Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	4
11	Northern Chamois	<i>Rupicapra rupicapra</i>	7



Carpathian Brown Bear (János Oláh)



SAKERTOURS

Sakertours Eastern Europe
Hungary, Slovakia and Romania birdwatching and bird photography tours

www.sakertour.com and www.ultimatesakertours.com

sakertour.office@gmail.com



Sakertours Eastern Europe: Hungary, Slovakia & Transylvania GT 2019
sakertour.com & ultimatesakertours.com