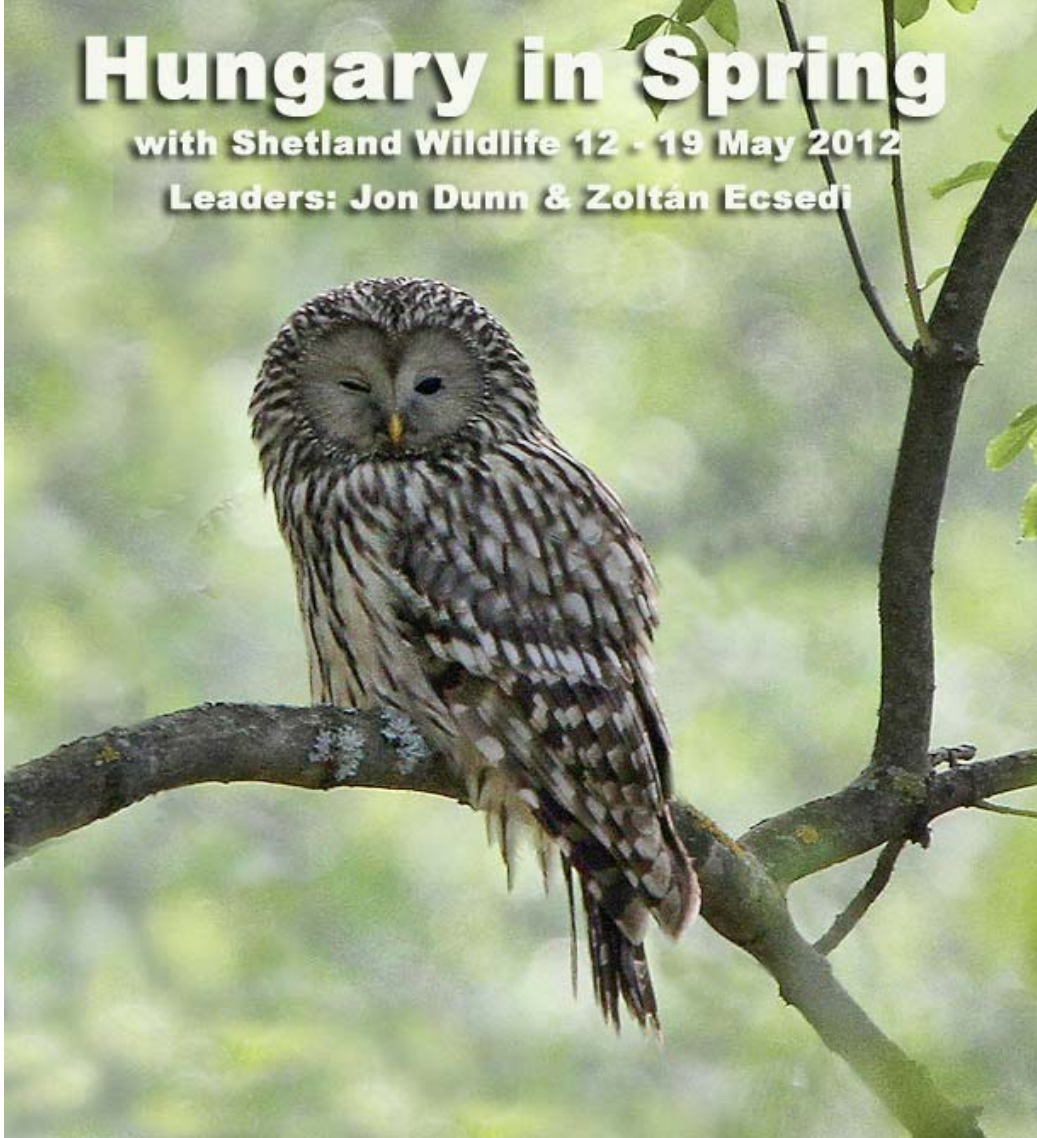


Hungary in Spring

with Shetland Wildlife 12 - 19 May 2012

Leaders: Jon Dunn & Zoltán Ecsedi



Saturday 12 May

Our group met first thing at Heathrow, and after a smooth flight to Hungary we were met at Budapest airport by Zoltán Ecsedi, our local guide and mentor for the coming week. With our luggage swiftly transferred into our minibus we were away from Budapest and out into open countryside. On the short drive to our picnic site all eyes were keenly scanning the fields, noting many Common Buzzards but also Bee-eaters and nesting Ravens.

We ate lunch surrounded by Stonechats, Crested Larks, and Lesser Grey Shrikes; best of all though were the prolonged views of Eastern Imperial Eagle – Zoltán's picnic site just happened to be a mere field away from a small copse of trees in which this magnificent species was nesting, and we enjoyed watching an adult bird return to the nest carrying some lunch of it's own.

Flushed with this early success, we pressed on then for the Hortobágy National Park, making regular stops as we went. The further east we went, the more varied the birdlife became, and we began to regularly pick up Red-footed Falcons, White Storks and numerous Great White Egrets in the roadside fields.

With rain forecast for the following day, we decided to make the most of the fine weather and make a concerted effort for one of the more elusive but largest and most

charismatic of eastern Hungary's avifauna – the spectacular Great Bustard. Zoltán took us deep into the heart of the Hortobágy, and before long we found ourselves watching a succession of these beautiful birds as they displayed and moved around their large territory. With Common Cranes also viewable in the same field of view, this was a great taster for the coming days.

We reached our hotel in the heart of the Hortobágy National Park in the late afternoon; by the time we gathered for the first of many epic and delicious dinners the week would bring, everyone was reporting having seen and/or heard Golden Orioles, Nightingales, and the somewhat less tuneful Great Reed Warblers in the hotel grounds. With such great birding on our doorstep, would we be able to drag ourselves out into the field the next day?!

Sunday 13 May

Of course, we were up early and raring to go on our first full day in the Hortobágy National Park, and we couldn't wait to get started. This was to be a day jam-packed with a roll-call of the Hortobágy's wetland species, impressive both for the sheer diversity of the species we recorded, and for the dramatic numbers in which we saw them.

We spent the morning exploring the Hortobágy fish ponds, and from the very start they were teeming with birds. One small pond alone held 14 Spoonbills, 5 Little Egrets, 6 Great White Egrets, 1 Night Heron and 3 Squacco Herons. Meanwhile, Ferruginous Ducks and Pygmy Cormorants flew overhead, and the calls of Bearded and Penduline Tits chimed in the reeds.

From here we caught the narrow-gauge railway to carry us deeper into the fish-pond complex, marvelling as we went at the clouds of Squacco and Night Herons that we passed in the ditches on either side of the track. Reaching the small railway's terminus, we struck out along a boardwalk into the reeds; overlooking a larger lake dominated by vast flocks of Coots we began to find other, scarcer fare – Common Sandpiper, Ferruginous Ducks and White-tailed Eagle. Better yet was soon to come as we found both Moustached Warbler and Little Crake sharing the same small pond beside the path. In the background a large mixed flock of marsh terns swirled over the water, with Black, White-winged Black and Whiskered Terns all present.

Flushed with success we retired from here to enjoy the birding at another wetland, a magnificent piece of European LIFE project-funded habitat restoration at Balmazújváros that's managed by none other than our guide, Zoltán! The myriad pools in front of the visitor centre were absolutely teeming with waders, breeding birds and passage migrants alike. Dozens of Black-winged Stilts and Avocets studded the shallow water; the latter forming some 30 breeding pairs on the reserve, an impressive vindication of Zoltán and his team's hard work as the last breeding of the species here was some 20 years previously. Sharp eyes picked out a Temminck's Stint; and while searching for Great Snipe nearby, we managed to find a mere 75 Wood Sandpipers...

Monday 14 May

We started the day with a Long-eared Owl asleep on her nest while Quail called from the surrounding grassland. From a nocturnal bird of prey to a daytime one, and no less spectacular - a pair of mighty Saker and their two chicks at our regular site for the species at Cucca.

A short drive then into a nearby village and we had added a beautiful Syrian Woodpecker attending it's nest to the list. Species of the open steppe followed in quick succession before lunch as we found our first Tawny Pipits and Rollers, both species giving us excellent views as they came close to us - and in the short grass surrounding a Hoopoe nest-site we saw our first Souslik, a ground squirrel that's the favoured prey of the magnificent Long-legged Buzzard; and shortly afterwards we had seen the buzzard as well, quartering the grassland in its hunt for Souslik. New birds were coming thick and fast for many of the group by this stage.

Lunch back at the Balmazújváros wetland was excellent both for the delicious food on offer and the birding - and where we had found 1 Temminck's Stint previously we now found 6 individuals! Numbers of Dunlin had also increased significantly, and we had repeat views of summer-plumaged Ruff, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank and Black-tailed Godwit as well as the every-present Avocets and stilts, and yet more Whiskered, Common and White-winged Black Terns. Wood Sandpipers meanwhile had reduced to a mere single bird after yesterday's largesse!

After lunch we headed out to a site in an otherwise anonymous area of grassland – once again, Zoltán proved the depth and detail of his local knowledge. Who could have guessed at a casual glance that there were Great Snipe to be found here? But there were, and we saw them.

Of course, we weren't the only birders out and about, and news came through to us from our network of local observers of a party of Dotterel elsewhere on the plains, so a quick drive to the site provided us with point-blank views of these beautiful migrating waders; and the added bonus of another displaying Great Bustard. En route, we saw more Rollers, Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrikes, and Red-footed Falcons - the good birds coming thick and fast now. Amidst such a plethora of good birds, it was hard at dinner to single out a contender for 'bird of the day', but consensus settled on one of two White-tailed Eagles we saw during the course of the day – this one being spectacularly mobbed by a disgruntled Marsh Harrier, this otherwise large bird of prey being quite dwarfed by the eagle it was so intent upon bothering.

Tuesday 15 May

This was our last full day in the Hortobágy before we headed to the Zemplén Hills and we finished as strongly as we had started 3 days ago... The habitat here changes radically from year to year, and where 2 years ago I watched Broad-billed Sandpipers and Little Stints feeding on the edges of a large wetland, today started with us watching singing Marsh and Great Reed Warblers, and Bluethroat – the wetland now a damp reedbed dotted with small areas of scrubby trees. Nearby though a small lake delivered the eagerly anticipated dusky Black-necked Grebes and pristine Mediterranean Gulls, and yet more dapper mahogany-coloured Ferruginous Ducks.

We'd enjoyed our last visit to a Red-footed Falcon colony so much we decided to visit another for more chances to take some photos – en route, we bumped into more White-tailed Eagles, and a mammal tick for the week – a Beech Marten. Our date

with the falcons amidst the flowering acacias fulfilled, we headed to the River Tisza for lunch and birding along the banks of the river itself. A family of Short-toed Treecreepers and a singing Icterine Warbler were in the trees bordering the restaurant, and after lunch the good birds just kept coming thick and fast...

We drove alongside the damp woodlands that bordered the River Tisza, and in no time had spotted a soaring Black Stork above the trees; showy singing Wrynecks and Great Reed Warblers; and then a ridiculously confiding River Warbler that rewarded our fieldcraft in stalking close to it with prolonged views as it sang in the dappled green light of the understory. (Bird of the day for Jon, and some wishful thinking about how much he'd like to find one of these singing in the plantation near his house on Whalsay!)

Bee-eaters and Long-eared Owls distracted us as we headed back to the Hortobágy fishponds in the late afternoon, arriving in time to watch a pair of Golden Orioles building their nest, and continuing the nest-building theme, a male Penduline Tit putting the finishing touches to his nest suspended in a willow tree. We watched as the male returned to the nest with some more material that he added carefully to this seemingly delicate yet so strong structure.

A Savi's Warbler put on an uncharacteristically good show as he sang, and then it was time to look for more migrant waders – locally scarce passage species like Ringed Plover, Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper were all very well-received, but we especially enjoyed seeing now fewer than 4 Broad-billed Sandpipers while a Bluethroat serenaded us from the reeds nearby. All this and many more herons of all sizes and hues – we revelled one last time in the diversity and abundance of the Hortobágy's birdlife.

Wednesday 16 May

Today was the day that we transferred from the Hortobágy up into the Zemplén Hills, via the ancient oak woodlands on the outskirts of Debrecen and the rare and localised Short-toed Larks at Újfehértó. In previous years this has been a fabulous transition from the wetland and steppe habitats of the Hortobágy to the hilly, wooded habitats of the Zemplén; a transition packed with woodland species, and of course those Hungarian subspecies Short-toed Larks. Sadly this year the weather conspired heavily against us – it was the only day of the week in which it rained heavily, and that adjective fails to do justice to just how much water was falling from the skies!

The oak woodlands were dripping with water, and it seemed as if the birds were feeling jaded by this unseasonal deluge too – while we managed to see most of the species we'd hope for in the woods, and missed nothing we wouldn't see in the coming days in the hills, the birds were clearly feeling overwhelmed by the downpour and only the Marsh Tits seemed truly at home in the saturated understory!

Despite some impressive off-road driving by our driver on the muddy tracks at Újfehértó, the rain and cool wind proved too much for the Short-toed Larks this year, so we pressed on undaunted to our comfortable hotel in Komlóska where a warm welcome, hot showers and several courses of delicious food awaited us. Meanwhile we remained warmed by the memory of our first stops of the day before the rain set in – a return visit to our family of Sakers, where some nifty fieldcraft had got us into position for brilliant views of the adult birds as they perched on nearby pylons surveying their territory; and a return to the steppe where we'd previously seen

Dotterel – 5 birds remained, and we added a pair of prehistoric-looking Stone Curlews as they skulked in the short grass near an immense thatched barn.

Thursday 17 May

Our first full day in the woods provided birding thrills a-plenty. Great views of nesting Grey Wagtails and roosting Tawny Owl were just appetisers for the main course of nesting Middle Spotted and Black Woodpeckers, seasoned with stellar views of White-backed Woodpecker and Collared Flycatcher, and leavened with a territorial Ural Owl...

The Middle Spotted Woodpeckers were amazingly obliging, coming and going regularly with food for their young, leaving the nest-hole each time with faecal sacs to dispose of away from the nest. Their comings and goings kept us all enthralled; and amazingly, a pair of dapper Collared Flycatchers were nesting just a metre above them in a cavity in the same tree! A day-roosting Tawny Owl was next on the agenda; harder to see this year than Ural Owl, and the latter species was our next target.

These impressive large owls are one of Jon's personal favourites, and are always keenly anticipated by our groups. Whereas the species had a poor breeding year last year (not that this stopped our excellent local guides from finding us one!), this year, in complete contrast, Ural Owls were having an excellent year and were much easier to come by. Our guides led us deep into the woods, and with a little manoeuvring we all got good views of an adult high in the tree canopy near to an occupied nest site.

We enjoyed fabulous views of White-backed Woodpeckers just before our lunch stop – an incredibly confiding bird that flew to a dead snag above our heads, and proceeded to drum repeatedly for us. Such views were, we knew, exceptional.

We finished the day with an expedition deeper still into the woods for something very special indeed – and arguably the birding experience of the week for many of us, guides included. We followed a track high up into the wooded hills to a clearing where a large hole in a beech tree hinted at the occupants – one of the most enigmatic and charismatic of European bird species, Black Woodpecker. We settled down on the far side of the clearing and waited patiently. Presently an adult Black Woodpecker swooped through the canopy and landed at the nest hole – at which point the hitherto silent young began clamouring for food, thrusting their heads into the open, gapes wide as they jostled for the adult's beakful of larvae.

The adult attended them for some minutes before vanishing again as quickly as it had come. The young dropped back into the nest cavity, and all was silent again – and we all began to breathe once more having held our collective breath throughout this incredible encounter. One of our party had tears in their eyes – a sentiment we could all relate to, not least Jon who'd wanted to see breeding Black Woodpeckers ever since he'd read Heinz Sielmann's natural history classic "My year with the woodpeckers".

The walk back down to our bus wasn't without incident of its own, with Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Honey Buzzard both being seen, but it was the Black Woodpeckers who'd stolen the show today. The Zemplén Hills were living up to our expectations.

Friday 18 May

Another day dawned fine and sunny up in the Zemplén Hills, and we were out bright and early for second helpings of some species, and first encounters with others. Zoltán led us to another Ural Owl site, where we enjoyed good and prolonged views of an uncharacteristically confiding female in the canopy. As the woods were steeply sloped, we found ourselves almost at eye-level with her – a magical encounter for us all.

With the sun came the raptors, and a stop in open grassland yielded a succession of good sightings of good species overhead – Lesser Spotted and Short-toed Eagles, and while we were seeing both Quail and Corncrake in the hay meadows, a Black Kite treated us to a close fly-by.

We dived back into the woods again before our lunch, heading to a Grey-headed Woodpecker nest-site – distracted en route by a confiding Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. After a patient wait in the aqueous green light of a beech wood the parent Grey-headed Woodpecker returned to the nest, announcing its presence with calls that echoed from afar through the wooded valley. As we walked back to the bus we found several newly emerged Clouded Apollo butterflies, a new species for many of us.

A picnic lunch was notable for yet another White-tailed Eagle – our 11th of the week – and then we spent a pleasant afternoon watching two Eagle Owl families before retiring to our hotel and some celebration drinks on the sun-drenched terrace outside. Of course, we couldn't stop birding or adding species to the trip list... and keen eyes picked up a soaring eagle coming towards us high over the hills – proving, to our immense satisfaction, to be a Golden. If that weren't pleasing enough, brief views of a Black Stork soon followed – and half an hour later, exceptionally close views of the same bird as it flew low over the terrace – almost close enough to touch!

Saturday 19 May

It was, as ever, with enormous regret that we bid farewell in the morning to the village of Komlóska, our base during our time spent in the Zemplén Hills. We had one last ace up our sleeve on the drive back to the airport at Budapest, and we had scheduled in a stop for some last new species – we drove to an isolated range of hills for a few hours birding in the late morning sunshine. Here, above an old abandoned stone quarry we found Rock Bunting, and overhead Peregrines. More butterflies were added to our trip list – jewel-like Chequered Blues and Queen of Spain Fritillaries - but after finishing on these high notes we had to reluctantly call it a day, and make for Budapest and our flight back home, 173 species of birds and countless happy memories to the good.

PLEASE NOTE!

We will be repeating this trip in 2013 and the departure will run from 11 – 18 May.

If you'd like to join Jon and Zoltan, please refer to our page at www.shetlandwildlife.co.uk/holidays/overseas

Systematic List of birds seen in Hungary 12th-19th May 2012

Common Quail – 2 birds heard calling 14/5; 2 birds seen 18/5 Zemplén

Common Pheasant – common and seen daily

Greylag Goose – seen daily in Hortobágy (max flock c.400 nr fish ponds 14/5)

Mute Swan – seen daily 12-14/5

Common Shelduck - 2 birds recorded 15/5, Hortobágy

Gadwall – odd birds seen around Hortobágy

Mallard – seen on all but one day, common

Northern Shoveler – scarce, recorded 13-15/5, max 3 birds

Garganey – seen daily in Hortobágy, common

Common Teal* – seen only on 15/5, Hortobágy fish ponds

Common Pochard – seen daily in Hortobágy

Tufted Duck – seen only on 15/5, 4 birds

Ferruginous Duck – locally common, seen daily in Hortobágy 12-15/5, max 10+ birds 13/5

Little Grebe – seen occasionally in Hortobágy, single birds 12/5 & 15/5

Great Crested Grebe – seen regularly in Hortobágy 13/5-15/5

Black-necked Grebe – 5+ pairs on 15/5

Black Stork – single bird 15/5 River Tisca, seen daily in Zemplén Hills, peak count 3 on 18/5

White Stork – ubiquitous, seen daily, max 10+ birds 13/5

Eurasian Spoonbill – seen daily in Hortobágy, max 14 birds in one flock 13/5

Little Bittern – seen daily 13-16/5 at Hotel Trofea lake

Black-crowned Night Heron - seen daily in Hortobágy, max 5 birds 16/5

Squacco Heron – abundant at Hortobágy fish ponds 13/5 & 15/5; max 10+ on 13/5

Grey Heron – common – seen daily 13-17/5, max 13 birds 14/5

Purple Heron – seen almost daily in Hortobágy area

Great White Egret – very common – seen daily 12-16/5, max count 29 birds 13/5

Little Egret – scarcer than Great White Egret, seen daily 12-15/5, max 3 birds 15/5
Hortobágy fish ponds

Pygmy Cormorant – scarce, seen daily in Hortobágy

Great Cormorant – scarce, singles recorded 12/5 & 15/5

Common Kestrel – common, and seen daily 12-17/5

Red-footed Falcon – locally common in Hortobágy, seen daily 12-16/5 including 2
breeding colonies

Eurasian Hobby – singles seen 13/5 & 14/5

Saker – 2 adults and 2 young seen at Cucca, 14/5; same 2 adults also at Cucca 16/5

Peregrine Falcon – 2 birds en route to Budapest, 19/5

White-tailed Eagle – seen 13-15/5 & 18/5; 11 birds in all, max 5 birds 15/5

Black Kite – one individual seen 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Eurasian Marsh Harrier – extremely common, seen daily

Common Buzzard – common, and seen daily except 13/5

Long-legged Buzzard – single bird seen Hortobágy at close range, 14/5

European Honey Buzzard – 4 birds seen in Zemplén Hills 2 on 17/5 & 2 on 18/5

Golden Eagle - single bird seen 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Lesser Spotted Eagle – single birds recorded 17/5 & 18/5, near Tokaj

Eastern Imperial Eagle – single bird on breeding territory, en route from Budapest
12/5

Short-toed Eagle – 2 birds, Zemplén Hills, 18/5

Great Bustard – 6 birds at Nagyiváni, 12/5; single bird Hortobágy 14/5

Corncrake - heard almost daily in Zemplén Hills, 3 individuals seen 18/5

Little Crake – male and female seen together, at Hortobágy fish ponds, 13/5

Common Moorhen – seen daily in Hortobágy 13-16/5

Common Coot - seen daily in Hortobágy, flock of 500+ Hortobágy fish ponds

Common Crane – 5 birds seen 12/5, Nagyiváni

Stone Curlew – 2 birds, Hortobágy, 16/5

Black-winged Stilt – 20+ 13/5 & 14/5

Pied Avocet – seen daily 13-15/5, max 44 birds 13/5

Northern Lapwing – common, seen daily 12-16/5

Little Ringed Plover – scarce, only seen on 13/5 & 14/5, max 3 birds 13/5, Hortobágy

Ringed Plover - 3 birds recorded, 15/5, Hortobágy fish ponds

Dotterel – a trip of 14 birds recorded on 14/5; 5 remained on 16/5, Hortobágy

Grey Plover - 3 birds recorded 14/5, Hortobágy fish ponds

Great Snipe - 3 birds recorded 14/5, Hortobágy

Common Snipe – single recorded 14/5, Hortobágy

Black-tailed Godwit – scarce, seen 12/5 & 14-15/5, Hortobágy, max 3 birds 14/5

Eurasian Curlew – small numbers on 13/5 & 14/5, max 12 13/5, Hortobágy

Spotted Redshank – pair recorded 13-14/5, Hortobágy

Common Redshank – common, seen daily, 13-15/5, Hortobágy

Common Greenshank – scarce, recorded 13/5 (single) & 14/5 (2 birds), Hortobágy

Wood Sandpiper – seen daily, 13-15/5, Hortobágy, max 75 birds 13/5

Common Sandpiper – 2 birds recorded 13/5, Hortobágy fish ponds

Little Stint – only seen on 15/5, 8 birds, Hortobágy fish ponds

Temminck's Stint – seen 13/5 & 14/5, max 6 birds 14/5, Hortobágy

Dunlin - seen daily in Hortobágy 13-15/5, max 200 birds 15/5 Hortobágy fish ponds

Broad-billed Sandpiper - 4 individuals, 15/5 Hortobágy fish ponds

Curlew Sandpiper – single recorded 15/5 Hortobágy fish ponds

Ruff - seen 13/5 & 14/5 in Hortobágy

Black-headed Gull – common, seen daily 12-16/5, Hortobágy

Common Gull - single bird recorded 15/5, Hortobágy fish ponds

Mediterranean Gull – 5 birds seen on 15/5, Hortobágy

Little Gull – seen on 13/5 (2 birds) & 14/5 (single bird), Hortobágy

Caspian Gull – locally common 12-16/5, Hortobágy

Whiskered Tern – common, 12-16/5, Hortobágy

Black Tern – scarce, small numbers seen on 13/5 (2 birds) & 14/5 (single bird), Hortobágy

White-winged Black Tern – locally common, seen 13-14/5, Hortobágy

Common Tern – singles recorded daily 13-15/5, Hortobágy

Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) – common, seen daily

Stock Dove – 3 individuals seen in Zemplén Hills, 18/5

Common Woodpigeon – common, seen daily

European Turtle Dove – common, seen and heard almost daily

Eurasian Collared Dove – common, seen daily

Common Cuckoo – very common, seen and heard in double numbers daily, hepatic female seen 15/5

Ural Owl – individuals seen 17/5 & 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Eagle Owl – 2 young, 1 adult, seen at 2 sites on 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Long-eared Owl – recorded 14/5 & 15/5, max 4 birds 15/5, Hortobágy

Little Owl – singles seen 12/5 & 15/5, Hortobágy

Common Swift – seen in small numbers throughout week, singles and pairs

European Roller – recorded 14-16/5, max 4 birds 14/5

Common Hoopoe – recorded 14/5, 16/5 & 18/5; max 4 birds 14/4

European Bee-eater – locally common, seen on most days

Eurasian Wryneck – recorded 14-16/5 & 18/5, max 6 birds 15/5 River Tisca

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker – seen on 2 days in Zemplén Hills, 17/5 & 18/5

White-backed Woodpecker – 3 birds seen (2 more heard) in Zemplén Hills, 17/5

Middle Spotted Woodpecker – 4 birds recorded, 2 on 17/5, 2 on 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Syrian Woodpecker – single at nest, 14/5, Hortobágy

Great Spotted Woodpecker – common, recorded daily 13-18/5

Black Woodpecker - seen on 2 days in Zemplén Hills, 17/5 & 18/5, max 3 birds 17/5

Green Woodpecker – daily singles 13-16/5 & 18/5, max 2 birds 15/5

Grey-headed Woodpecker - 18/5 only, Zemplén Hills

Red-backed Shrike – extremely common, seen daily, max 30+ birds 15/5

Lesser Grey Shrike – recorded 12/5 & 14-16/5, max 5 birds 14/5

Eurasian Golden Oriole – very common and seen and heard daily

Eurasian Jay – seen and heard daily in Zemplén Hills 16-18/5, max 3 birds 18/5

Common Magpie – common, seen daily

Eurasian Jackdaw – common and seen daily in Hortobágy 12-16/5

Rook – common and seen daily in Hortobágy 12-16/5

Hooded Crow – common and seen almost daily

Common Raven – singles recorded 12/5 (en route from Budapest) and 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Marsh Tit – individuals only on 16/5 (Debrecen) & 17-18/5, Zemplén Hills

Coal Tit – singles 17-18/5, Zemplén Hills

Great Tit – common in latter half of the week away from Hortobágy

Eurasian Blue Tit - common in latter half of the week away from Hortobágy

Eurasian Penduline Tit – pairs recorded 13/5 & 15/5, one male seen at nest, Hortobágy fish ponds

Common Sand Martin – scarce, <5 daily, recorded 13-15/5 Hortobágy

Barn Swallow – very common, seen daily

Northern House Martin – common, seen daily, max 30 birds 17/5, Tokaj

Long-tailed Tit – seen daily in singles or pairs 13-17/5

Crested Lark – common, and seen almost daily

Eurasian Skylark – very common, recorded almost daily

Grasshopper Warbler – single heard singing, 12/5, Hortobágy

River Warbler – singing individuals heard and seen 15/5, River Tisza & 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Savi's Warbler – locally common, seen and heard 13-15/5, Hortobágy; max 3 birds 15/5

Great Reed Warbler – very common, recorded daily 13-16/5, Hortobágy

Moustached Warbler – 2/3 individuals seen 13/5, Hortobágy fish ponds

Sedge Warbler – common, seen and heard daily 12-15/5, Hortobágy

Eurasian Reed Warbler – common, seen and heard daily 13-15/5 in Hortobágy

Marsh Warbler – singing individuals noted on 15/5 & 18/5

Icterine Warbler – singing individual noted 15/5, River Tisza

Common Chiffchaff – seen and heard daily in Zemplén Hills 16-18/5

Wood Warbler – singing individuals recorded 13-14/5 & 17-18/5, Hortobágy & Zemplén Hills

Blackcap – common, seen almost daily

Barred Warbler – 2 individuals seen 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Lesser Whitethroat – individuals seen on 13/5 & 15/5, Hortobágy

Common Whitethroat – individuals seen on 12/5, 15/5 (Hortobágy) & 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Bearded Reedling – locally common in reedbeds in Hortobágy, 5 individuals recorded 13/5

Goldcrest – individuals recorded 17-18/5, Zemplén Hills

Northern Wren – individuals recorded 17-18/5, Zemplén Hills

Eurasian Nuthatch – seen daily in Zemplén Hills 16-18/5, max 4 recorded 18/5

Short-toed Treecreeper – recorded once on 15/5, River Tisza

European Starling – ubiquitous, seen daily

Eurasian Blackbird – common, seen almost daily, max 12 birds 14/5

Song Thrush – common, seen daily 14-18/5

Mistle Thrush – recorded once on 17/5, Zemplén Hills

European Robin – seen 16-18/5, Zemplén Hills

Common Nightingale – very common, seen and heard almost daily

Bluethroat – singles recorded 12-13/5, 2 males 15/5, Hortobágy

Black Redstart – common, and seen daily 14-18/5, max 10 birds 18/5

Whinchat - single bird recorded 18/5, Zemplén Hills

European Stonechat – common, seen daily

Northern Wheatear – locally common, recorded 12/5 (4 birds), 15/5, 16/5 (4 birds) & 18/5

Spotted Flycatcher – common, recorded daily 14-18/5

Collared Flycatcher – individuals seen on 17/5 & 18/5, Zemplén Hills

House Sparrow – ubiquitous, seen daily

Eurasian Tree Sparrow – very common, seen daily

Yellow Wagtail – common, seen daily 12-17/5

Grey Wagtail – recorded on 17/5 (3 birds) & 18/5 (single bird), Zemplén Hills

White Wagtail – common, seen daily 12-18/5

Tawny Pipit – two individuals seen, 14/5 Hortobágy; single bird 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Chaffinch – common, seen daily

European Serin – common and recorded 13/5 & 15/5 (Hortobágy) and 17-18/5 in Zemplén Hills

European Greenfinch – common and seen almost daily

European Goldfinch - common and seen almost daily

Common Linnet – seen on 3 dates, 13/5 & 15/5 Hortobágy & 18/5, Zemplén Hills

Hawfinch – 4 individuals seen Hortobágy 15/5, common and seen daily 17-18/5 Zemplén Hills

Corn Bunting – very common, seen daily

Yellowhammer – 2 individuals recorded Hortobágy 15/5; also recorded 17-18/5, Zemplén Hills

Rock Bunting – single recorded, quarry en route to Budapest, 19/5

Reed Bunting – common and recorded 14-16/5 in Hortobágy

Additional species noted:

Mammals

Beech Marten
Souslik
Water Vole
Musk Rat
Red Squirrel
Fox
Roe Deer
Brown Hare

Reptiles

Green Lizard
Common Lizard

Amphibians

Marsh Frog

Butterflies

Chequered Blue

Common Blue

Silver-studded Blue

Green-veined White

Orange-tip

Pale Clouded Yellow

Brimstone

Speckled Wood

Small Heath

Large Wall Brown

Scarce Swallowtail

Southern Festoon

Common Glider

Large Skipper

Map

Queen of Spain Fritillary

Miscellaneous

Hornet