

**TRANSYLVANIA BIRDING TOUR 2018**  
with **SAKERTOUR**  
25 May – 1 June 2018



Eurasian Pygmy Owl (Sándor Borza)

**Leader: Sándor Borza**

Transylvania is getting a popular tourist destination in Central Europe especially for its great scenery and wildlife. Undoubtedly May and June is the most productive period to visit this fantastic region however early spring and late spring can be very different. We choose to run this tour late in the season so we can look for some high altitude birds, especially the *balcanica* race of the Shore Lark. A wide range of other birds also possible on this tour but might be easier on our early May tours (especially owls). On this particular tour we cover mostly forest and rocky habitats with some interesting special birds. In 2018 we have visited some impressive mountain areas and superb mature forests as well as really scenic limestone valleys and gorges. Our 2018 tour recorded a long list of goodies. We have seen 9 species of woodpeckers and 5 species of owls, despite the tour being in a late spring date. There were lots of birds everywhere as many species already had their young out. We recorded a total of 151 species (4 heard-only) during this 8 days trip with only 6 and a half day birding. Most of our special targets were seen. The weather was variable to say the least but mountains are like this. The beginning of the week was rather cold and windy with several heavy showers. On the last days of the tour we got some warmer daytime temperatures and somewhat more clear sky.

This year's highlights were Western Capercaillie, Grey Partridge, Ferruginous Duck, Little Bittern, a nice selection of raptors such as Lesser Spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, European Honey Buzzard, Eurasian Hobby, some spectacular owls like Ural Owl, Eurasian Pygmy Owl and Eurasian Scops Owl, nine species of woodpeckers, Shore Lark, European Bee-eater, Wallcreeper, Crested and Sombre Tit, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Red-breasted and Collared Flycatchers, Rose-coloured Starling, Ortolan and Rock Bunting. We have also seen wild Carpathian Brown Bears.

### **Friday, 25th of May**

The group members were picked up at the Bucharest International Airport and we headed to the first destination of the tour: towards the Bucegi Mountains. It is only a two-hours drive to the mountains although traffic can be difficult nowadays when people trying to escape from the lowlands for the weekend. After we arrived to our hotel based on the edge of some mature forest, we had a short rest and an early dinner. This was followed by an optional post dinner excursion to look for Ural Owl. This enigmatic owl does breed in these forests but unfortunately 2018 was not a good owl year and we did not find any nests in this area. We could not locate any Ural Owls but seen three Tawny Owls.

### **Saturday, 26th of May**

We had an early pre-breakfast walk around the hotel. It was a nice walk and we observed several Firecrests, Goldcrests and a Grey Wagtail. The best species of the walk was a Red-breasted Flycatcher. We could watch a fantastic male bird for a few minutes. We walked back to the hotel and had breakfast at 07:30 what became our regular breakfast time during the trip.

After breakfast while packing we saw a pair of Grey-headed Woodpeckers in the car park. We drove to the higher parts of the Bucegi Mountains to look for some special birds, especially for the Shore Lark. We slowly climbed to about 2000 meter altitude where we reached a grassy highland which is the habitat of the 'Caucasian' Shore Lark (*balcanica* race). It took some time but fortunately we could find one pair of these scarce and very localised birds and they allowed great looks. We also had many displaying Water Pipits and Eurasian Skylarks in this grassy high altitude habitat. A nice lunch was followed by more birding in the area but slightly lower. We had Short-toed Eagle, Willow and Crested Tit, Bullfinch and a few Siskin. After this successful excursion we returned for an early dinner again. We did not give up on the Ural Owl with yesterday's blank and we were out again after dinner. It was different to the previous night and this time we were fortunate to find three birds by spotlighting. It was a great first day with many great special birds.



Male Red-breasted Flycatcher (left) and female Grey-headed Woodpecker in the Bucegi Mountain (Sándor Borza)



'Caucasian' Shore Lark by tour participant Stephen Bolger.

### **Sunday, 27th of May**

This was a travel day as we had the longest drive of the tour. After breakfast we left for the so called Island Mountains (Muntii Apuseni) which is an isolated ridge within Transylvania. It is not as high as the main Carpathian mountain chain but does have a few peaks above 1800 meter. It took us a few hours to reach this area but we had a few stops en route where we could observe Garden Warbler, Nuthatch, Marsh Warbler and other common birds. We finally arrived to a nice limestone valley in the Torockó region and started birding around a huge rock wall where we could see several Red-rumped Swallows and a few Crag Martins. Both of these species are breeders in the area but this is their most northern distribution in Europe. Later we arrived to our traditional guest house, where we had a great culinary experience with lots of local food. We were rather tired but we still gave a chance for Eurasian Scops Owl. We could hear two birds calling, but unfortunately we couldn't find the owls. As we had more chances we decided to quit and go to bed.

### **Monday, 28th of May**

We had an optional pre-breakfast birding to look for some special breeding birds like Corncrake and River Warbler. Unfortunately could not manage to see them, they remained heard-only. We saw a few Whinchats and some singing Marsh Warblers. After a nice breakfast back into the hotel we headed to a hidden valley to look for the very localised Sombre Tit. They are rare in this area but a few pairs breeding every year. Unfortunately we only had a poor view of this rare breeder this time but we observed a pair European Honey Buzzards and we had a great view of the declining and scarce Grey Partridge. After lunch and a short siesta we climbed up to the nearby rocky habitat. The bottom of the limestone walls have some scree and grazed grassland which is the habitat of the colourful Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush. We managed to get good looks of this beautiful but sadly declining species. The European population is fast dwindling away due to habitat change in the breeding areas and in the wintering grounds. We also had Alpine

Swift and both Ortolan and Rock Buntings. A really scenic place to bird with fantastic views of the surrounding valley.

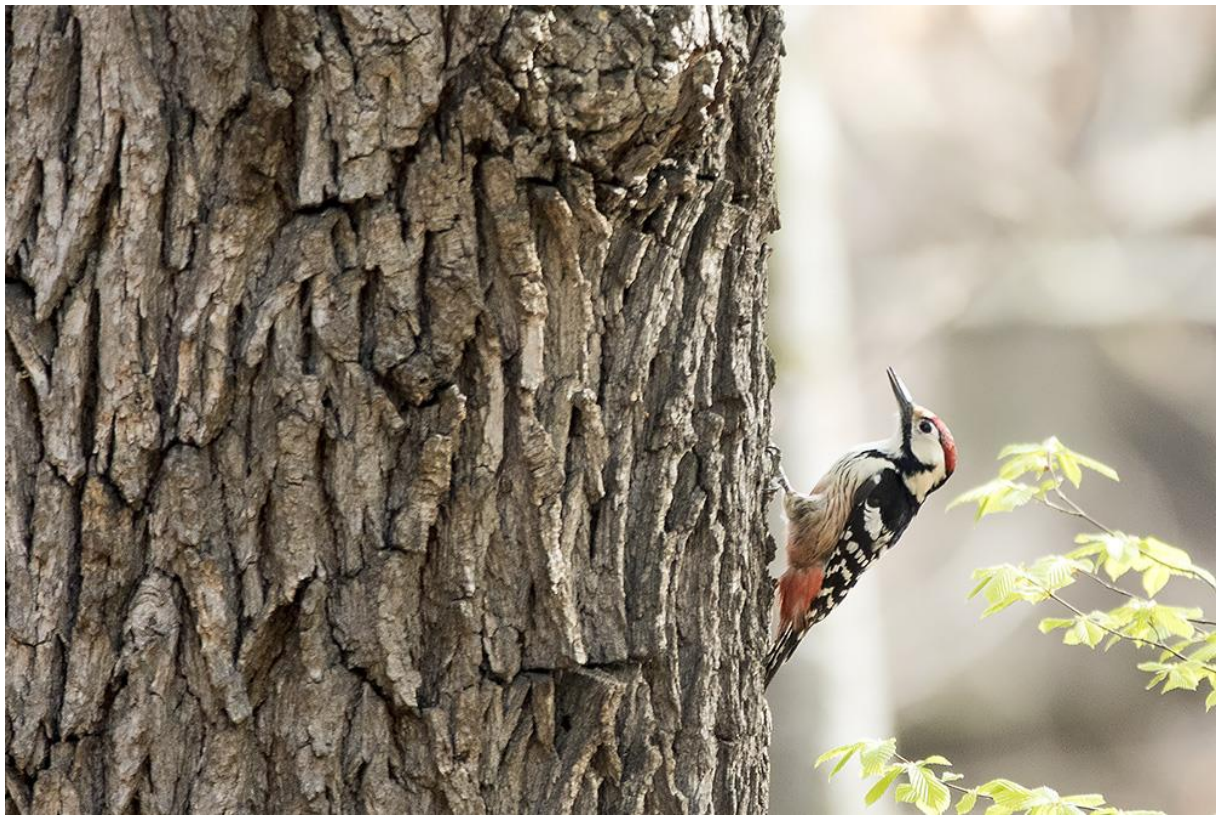


Singing Ortolan Bunting near Torockó (top; Sándor Borza), Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (left) and Lesser Spotted Eagle by tour participant Stephen Bolger.

### **Tuesday, 29nd of May**

At night the screaming of Little Owl could be heard. We did another pre-breakfast birding, this time in the hotel garden. This gave several new birds for the trip list including Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Wryneck and Fieldfare. Sadly we had to say goodbye to this really tranquil and unique region and we left for the Hargita Mountains. We were planning a few stops however and in about two hours were close to Segesvár (Sighisoara) where a fantastic beech forest was waiting to be explored! We had great birding in this woodland where we connected with the rare breeder White-backed Woodpecker as well as Middle Spotted Woodpecker and several Collared Flycatchers. Roadside fishpond stops produced a few waterbirds like Little Egret, Common Shelduck, Garganey, Northern Shoveler, Common Greenshank, Little Gull and Black Tern. We also connected with our first Lesser Spotted Eagle

of the tour. The Carpathian range is one of the strongholds of this species in Europe with about 2000 breeding pairs! Late afternoon we arrived to Székelyudvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc) which was our base for the next three nights.



Male White-backed Woodpecker (Sándor Borza)

### **Wednesday, 30th of May**

This morning we started the day early again. We visited the central park of Székelyudvarhely first where we had amazing views of Collared Flycatcher and Syrian Woodpecker. We had also had a flying Kingfisher above the Küküllő river but Eurasian Scops Owl was only heard briefly. After the breakfast we headed to the fantastic Békás (Bicaz) Gorge to look for Wallcreeper. This is one of the key targets of the tour and Transylvania is a great place to see it! We had two short stop on the way to the gorge. First a fine Lesser Spotted Eagle was sitting by the roadside and allowed great and close looks. Our second stop was more planned as a few days ago Rose-coloured Starlings showed up in the Gyergyó (Gheorgheni) Basin and we certainly wanted to see them. We arrived to Gyergyóújfalu village which was the breeding place of the invading Rose-coloured Starling. We found dozens of these stunning birds on the streets everywhere. Later it turned out we were very lucky as they only were around for a few days in late May and did not actually breed at this location! Finally we arrived to the gorge and we choose a good observation point for scanning the huge rock walls. We obtained several good flying views of the Wallcreepers, at least two different individual. Also seen them once climbing the wall. The bridge area gave us good views of Dippers. We were back into the Gyergyó Basin in the afternoon. These very cold basins with regular – 30C in winter have a wide range of relict plants from the last ice age. Also one of the only few sites where Common Rosefinch breeds in Transylvania. We quickly located a singing male from the car, and got pretty good looks. On the way back towards Székelyudvarhely we saw a Northern Goshawk and Great Grey Shrike. In the late afternoon we visited one of the special Brown Bear hides we operate and we great looks of these majestic mammals. We had six different bears in front of the hide. That was a

great experience of the tour! The day was not over yet as after dinner we were back in the central park of town again. This time we nailed the Eurasian Scops Owl and we got great looks in the spotlight. It was a very long day but with some excellent birds and mammals!



Rose-coloured Starlings were seen on the tour but later they disappeared and did not breed (Sándor Borza). Eurasian Scops Owl was seen well (tour participant Stephen Bolger).

### **Thursday, 31st of May**

This was our last full day of the tour. We had yet another early breakfast in the hotel and left for the higher parts of the Hargita mountain. A local Sakertour guide joined us (Szabolcs Kovács) to help in finding the specialities here. When we were going up the mountain a Brown Bear crossed the road, and we could see it very well! Seeing them in the hide last night was great, but an unexpected encounter in the forest is different! As we got to the higher parts of the mountain into proper spruce forest we saw our first Ring Ouzel of the trip. Unfortunately only some of us managed to get a poor flying view of a Three-toed Woodpecker. This was unlucky indeed! We tried to relocate the woodpecker for some time but we 'only' found a Eurasian Pygmy Owl as it flew very close to us. We could watch this fantastic bird for more than 10 minutes just from several meters. What a great bird and certainly a tour highlight! Later we continued walking on this secluded trail and we found Spotted Nutcrackers and we flushed a female Western Capercaillie. Though she did not give very good looks to all. We had a tasty lunch on the top of Hargita Mountain (about 1800 meters altitude) which was accompanied with Common Crossbills and the Common Redstart. Szabolcs informed us that several tours managed to see Tengmalm's Owl at dusk on the mountain about 10 days ago so we decided to try our luck. Unfortunately the weather deteriorated and we had heavy rain and hail, so this programme was abandoned. It was frustrating.



Eurasian Pygmy Owl (tour participant Stephen Bolger)

### **Friday, 1st of June**

We had to wake up early and start our drive towards Bucharest because some participants had an early departure time. We soon had a Little Owl by the roadside. Later we made just one longer stop en route to the airport. It was Homoródszentpál fishponds which is a bigger fishpond system with an impressive birdlist. We only had a short visit by managed to find Ferruginous Duck, Little Bittern, Gadwall, Black Tern and Savi's Warbler. Some of us even managed to see Bearded Reedlings in flight above the reedbed. We also had first-class looks of

Common Cuckoo. Later we continued to the airport but still picking up Lesser Grey Shrike as the last new bird for the tour. One of the participant was delivered to the airport and we have visited a nearby park with others who still had time until their flight. We had two new birds for the trip: Pygmy Cormorant and Great White Egret. However the much hoped-for Levant Sparrowhawk did not show up. It is an occasional breeder in this park but we were not lucky this time. After this last birding we drove to the airport and it was time to say goodbye for all participants. We had an enthusiastic group and we certainly had some unforgettable moments and some excellent bird and mammal sightings in this fantastic region.



Group taking landscape photos in the Bucegi Mountains and Collared Flycatcher (tour participant Stephen Bolger).





Lesser-spotted Eagle (Sándor Borza)

### SYSTEMATIC BIRD LIST

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

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

Species which were recorded only by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

**Western Capercaillie** *Tetrao urogallus*: A female was flushed from the trail in the Hargita region.

**Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*: It was seen several times on the tour.

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*: Two pairs were observed near Torockó.

**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*: There were several individuals in the wetlands.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*: One pair was seen on the fishpond near Radnót.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*: We saw four birds on the last fishpond system near Homoródszentpál.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*: Common around most of the wetland sites.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*: One was seen in the Radnót-fishpond.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*: Several birds were observed in the wetlands.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*: Several birds were observed in the wetlands.

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*: We had great views of a family at Szentpál-fishpond.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*: Dozens were seen in the fishpond systems.

**Pygmy Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*: One bird was seen in Bucharest.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*: Common throughout the trip.

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*: A pair was seen in flight at Szentpál-fishpond.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Several birds were observed in the wetlands.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*: Common in the wetlands.

**Great White Egret** *Egretta alba* (LO): One bird was seen in Bucharest.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*: Several birds were recorded in the wetlands.

**European White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*: Common. Mostly nesting in villages.

**Lesser-spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina*: Few birds were observed on the tour. We had a great view of one individual in the Hargita region.

**Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*: We had one individual in the Buceg region.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*: The most frequently seen birds of prey and many were seen in the wetlands.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*: A few were seen on the tour.

**European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*: We recorded three birds on the tour.



European Honey Buzzard (Sándor Borza)

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*: A widespread and common raptor.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*: We had a great views in the Hargita region.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*: Several birds were observed on the tour.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*: One bird was seen in the Hargita Mountain.

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*: We had two brief sights in the Hargita region.

**Corncrake** *Crex crex*: One bird was seen well near Torockó.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*: Few birds in the wetlands.

**Common Coot** *Fulica atra*: Few birds in the wetlands.

**Blck-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*: A few were seen in the Radnót fishpond.

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* (LO): One bird was seen on the tour.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*: One bird was seen on the tour.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*: One bird was observed in the fishpound system of Radnót.

**Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans*: Common around wetlands.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*: Common bird around wetlands.

**Little Gull** *Larus minutus*: We had a flock of immature birds.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus*: We had small flocks in the wetlands.

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*: A few dozens were seen in the wetlands.

**Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*: Common.

**Common Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*: Common in the tour.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*: Very common.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*: Common but the best views were at Szentpál Fishponds.



Common cuckoo (Sándor Borza)

**Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco*: We had flight views in the Bucegi region.

**Ural Owl** *Strix aluco*: We could find two birds in the Bucegi region.

**Eurasian Scops Owl** *Otus scops*: We had good looks in Székelyudvarhely.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*: We had great views in the Hargita region.

**Eurasian Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium passerinum*: One of the best bird of the tour! We could watch one very close for several minutes. What an experience!

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*: We recorded them a couple of times during the trip.

**Alpine Swift** *Apus melba*: We had several flocks on the tour.

**Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*: One flying bird was seen in Székelyudvarhely.

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*: We checked a colony where we had a great views of this beautiful bird.

**Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*: We saw one in Torockó.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos minor*: We had exceptionally great views in Torockó village.

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos medius*: We had one observation in the Hargita region.

**Syrian Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos syriacus*: One indivisual was observed in the park of Székelyudvarhely.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*: Common along the tour.

**White-backed Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos leucotos*: We had one sighting near Segesvár.

**Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides trydactylus*: Just a brief sighting in the Hargita Mountain for some. Frustrating!

**Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus*: We had a great look of one pair in the Bucegi area.

**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*: There were several observations on the tour.

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*: We saw several birds in the Bucegi Mountain.

**Woodlark** *Lullula arborea* (**H**): One was heard near Torockó.

**Shore Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*: We had good views of the *balcanica* race in the Bucegi Mountain. Major target on the tour!

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*: Common.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cercropis daurica*: Several birds were seen near Torockó village.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*: Very common especially in villages.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*: They were seen a few times on the tour.

**Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*: Several birds were seen near Torockó village.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*: Quite common at all kind of wetlands.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*: A common bird around farmlands and wetlands as well. Mostly *flava* and *dombrowski* types.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*: Frequently seen around bridges at mountain streams.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*: Common in the Hargita region.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*: We had few individuals in the higher parts of Bucegi Mountain.

**European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*: A few birds were seen on the tour.

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos* (**H**): A few were heard in bushy areas on the tour.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*: Common bird in the towns.

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*: One bird was seen in the top of Hargita Mountain.



Common Redstart was seen in the Hargita area (Sándor Borza)

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*: We saw several birds on the tour.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*: We had good views in the Torockó region.

**European Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola*: Quite common bird on the tour.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*: We had two observation during the trip.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*: We could see them lot of times during the trip.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*: They are shy when breeding and had a short view in the Hargita region.

**Eurasian Blackbird** *Turdus merula*: Common bird on the tour.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*: Fairly common bird on the tour.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* (H): There was one calling bird in the Buceg region, but we didn't see it.

**Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*: One pair was observed near Torockó.

**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti* (NL): Three tour participants observe one bird.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*: We heard several singing males and saw one bird well.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*: In bushy and forested areas it was a quite common species.

**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*: Fairly common bird on the tour.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*: We could hear in the suitable habitat and few were seen as well.

**Bearded Reedling** *Panurus biarmicus* (NL): Part of the group seen them in the reedbed of Homoródszentpál fishponds.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*: Common bird in the pine forests of Transylvania.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*: Common bird in the pine forests of Transylvania.

**Winter Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* (H): Heard two times on the tour.

**Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides*: Only one bird was seen well near Homoródszentpál.

**River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* (H): Unfortunately we just heard one singing bird, but it remained out of sight in dense thicket.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobenus*: We had several sightings in the smaller reed patches of channels.

**Eurasian Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*: One observation at Homoródszentpál.

**Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*: We had several sightings of this species.

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*: Very common in all types of reeds.

**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*: A common bird in the more forested areas.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* (H): Two birds were heard only on the tour.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*: A few were seen during the trip.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*: We had a great view of an adult male in the Bucegi Mountain.

**Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula collaris*: Superb looks in the central park of Székelyudvarhely.

**White-throated Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*: We had several sights of this magnificent bird.

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*: We had several sights on the tour.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*: A few sightings.

**Crested Tit** *Lophophanes cristatus*: Such a wonderful little bird. Seen a few times.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*: Very common in the Delta, a few were seen elsewhere.

**Sombre Tit** *Parus lugubris*: One bird was seen for a moment in the bushy vegetation near Torockó. Essentially a leader-only.

**Coal Tit** *Pariparus ater*: Fairly common bird in the pine forests of Transylvania.

**Eurasian Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*: We had only one observation on the tour.

**Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europea*: We saw several birds in different places.

**Eurasian Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*: We had one observation on the tour.

**Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria*: We had good views in the Békás Gorge. Great bird!

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*: A very common bird outside in Transylvania.



Red-backed Shrike (Sándor Borza)

**Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor*: Uncommon bird in Transylvania, we had only one observation on the last day.

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*: One bird was seen in the Hargita region.

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*: Common bird in the woods.

**Common Magpie** *Pica pica*: Very common throughout.

**Spotted Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*: One was seen in the Hargita Mountains.

**Eurasian Jackdaw** *Coloeus monedula*: Common everywhere.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*: We found few colony en route.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix*: Common.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*: We could see almost every day.

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*: Extremely common in the whole area.

**Rose-coloured Starling** *Pastor roseus*: The biggest surprise of the trip! This year we had an invasion in some parts of Transylvania in late May because of the large number an *Orthoptera* species. We saw many flocks in the Hargita region. They did not stay and breed however so the entire invasion was just a few days in late May. They all disappeared by the first week of June.

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*: We heard almost every day and we could see two birds well.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*: Very common.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*: Fairly common.

**Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*: Common in forested areas.

**European Serin** *Serinus serinus*: Fairly common bird.

**European Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*: Recorded many times on the tour.

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*: Recorded many times during the trip.

**Eurasian Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*: We saw several birds on the higher forest areas on the tour.

**Common Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*: We had records almost every day.

**Eurasian Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*: We could see several individual in the Bucegi region.  
**Common Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*: We had a fantastic view in the Hargita Mountains.  
**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*: One male bird was seen very well in the Hargita region.



Male Common Rosefinch (Sándor Borza)

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*: We had several sights of this magnificent bird!  
**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*: Quite common in Transylvania.  
**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*: It was only seen in the Torockó area.  
**Rock Bunting** *Emberiza schoenicus*: We had a few good looks in the Torockó region.  
**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*: Very common in Transylvania.

#### **MAMMALS:**

**Brown Hare** *Lepus europeus*: A few were seen in Transylvania.  
**Red Squirrel** *Sciurus vulgaris*: Several sightings in the mountains.  
**Northern White-breasted Hedgehog** *Erinaceus roumanicus*: One individual was seen in the park of Székelyudvarhely.  
**Roe Deer** *Capreolus capreolus*: Several were seen on the tour.  
**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes*: One was seen on the tour.  
**Stoat** *Mustela erminea*: One was seen on the tour.  
**Brown Bear** *Ursus arctos*: A total of six individual were seen from our special hide. We also had seen a mother with two cubs from the van in the Hargita region.



Brown Bear (Sándor Borza)



OTHERS:

**Stag Beetle** *Lucanus cervus*: Several were observed near Torockó.

**Hungarian Glider** *Neptus rivularis*: Several were observed near Torockó.



Rose-colored Starlings were observed in the Gyergyó Basin on the tour this year! They were present as a certain Orthoptera species was in huge numbers (Gábor Simay).