

**Hungary & the Czech Republic:  
Birds & Music from Budapest to Prague  
September 10-25, 2017**

**Led by:  
Balázs Szigeti and several local guides**

**Field Report by Balázs Szigeti**

## **Introduction**

Three years ago, Victor Emanuel and I co-led VENT's first-ever tour that combined the themes of birds and music. Working with native Hungarian Balázs Szigeti and his company, Ecotours Wildlife Holidays, we designed a Birds & Music program to the marvelous Eastern European countries of Hungary and the Czech Republic.

That tour was one of the most unique trips that either of us had ever been a part of. We absolutely loved it. The birding was superb, and the opportunity to spend time in the great cities of Budapest and Prague offered fascinating cultural highlights. Of course, the addition of the live music component really underscored the diversity of the trip, with a private chamber orchestra in Budapest and a variety of classical performances in Prague.

Now, three years later, this trip has continued to improve and makes for a wonderful addition to our European program of tours.

This year's trip met with very unusual circumstances prior to departure as the VENT tour leader, Rafael Galvez, was unable to travel to Europe due to the effects of Hurricane Irma. A trusted friend and colleague, and a highly competent tour leader, Balázs, working with several of his colleagues, stepped into the role of primary leader. Upon conclusion of the tour, we received the following note from Balázs, which serves as the summary narrative of this Field Report.

--Barry Lyon, Chief Operating Officer, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours

## **Field Report**

"This is just a quick email to let you know the Hungary-Czech Republic Birds & Music tour finished today, and I feel that similarly to previous years, it was a great success.

We had many good birds, and even a very rare bird, a Ruddy Shelduck, in the Czech Republic. We had very good views of Black, Green, Gray-headed, Syrian, Lesser Spotted, Middle Spotted, and Great Spotted woodpeckers; many shorebirds and waterfowl; Short-toed, White tailed, and Imperial eagles; several close views of Great Bustards, both in flight and while feeding; Eurasian Stone-Curlews; and Saker and Red-footed falcons.

The weather was very good almost throughout the trip. We had rain only on the transfer days and a little bit on the last day in Prague, but nothing very serious.

Some of the new elements to the program included a private Gypsy band playing for us in Nomad one evening (I have seen many gypsy bands, and I can confirm this one gave a top quality performance, a true Eastern European musical tradition) and an entertaining hurdy gurdy performance. I also offered an opportunity to observe a bat-catching program only five minutes away from the hotel in Nomad. Everybody except one joined this opportunity and enjoyed it enormously, having seen at least 6 species of bats in the hand of an expert, and to learn about their unique ecology.

Another new aspect of the tour was that we have upgraded the dinner in the wine cellar to a dégustation type of dinner with several courses presented in a very stylish way, obviously offering culinary delights to all. In between courses we even managed to lure in a Tawny Owl that was seen by everyone.

We visited the Hungarian Meadow Viper farm again this year, and yet another special aspect of the local fauna seen well, and with a short lecture by a conservation specialist.”

--Balázs Szigeti

## **Field List**

### **Birds**

Field list order and names are those given by James F. Clements in *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Cornell University Press, with all current updates. The primary field guide reference during the tour was *Birds of Europe*, a Princeton Field Guide, by Princeton University Press, second edition, 2009.

#### **Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl**

Egyptian Goose  
Ruddy Shelduck  
Green-winged (Common) Teal  
Red-crested Pochard  
Common Pochard  
Ferruginous Duck

#### **Pheasants, Grouse & Allies**

Ring-necked Pheasant (I)

#### **Grebes**

Great Crested Grebe

#### **Cormorants & Shags**

Great Cormorant

#### **Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns**

Gray Heron  
Purple Heron  
Great Egret  
Little Egret  
Black-crowned Night-Heron

#### **Hawks, Eagles & Kites**

Short-toed Snake-Eagle  
Imperial Eagle

#### **Anatidae**

*Alopochen aegyptiaca*  
*Tadorna ferruginea*  
*Anas crecca*  
*Netta rufina*  
*Aythya ferina*  
*Aythya nyroca*

#### **Phasianidae**

*Phasianus colchicus*

#### **Podicipedidae**

*Podiceps cristatus*

#### **Phalacrocoracidae**

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

#### **Ardeidae**

*Ardea cinerea*  
*Ardea purpurea*  
*Ardea (Egretta) alba*  
*Egretta garzetta*  
*Nycticorax nycticorax*

#### **Accipitridae**

*Circus gallicus*  
*Aquila heliaca*

Eurasian Marsh-Harrier  
Eurasian Sparrowhawk  
White-tailed Eagle  
Common Buzzard

**Bustards**

Great Bustard

**Rails, Gallinules & Coots**

Water Rail  
Eurasian Coot

**Thick-knees**

Eurasian Thick-knee (Stone Curlew)

**Stilts & Avocets**

Pied Avocet

**Plovers & Lapwings**

Northern Lapwing  
Common Ringed Plover  
Little Ringed Plover

**Sandpipers & Allies**

Eurasian Curlew  
Black-tailed Godwit  
Ruff  
Curlew Sandpiper  
Temminck's Stint  
Dunlin  
Little Stint  
Common Snipe  
Common Sandpiper  
Green Sandpiper  
Spotted Redshank  
Common Greenshank  
Wood Sandpiper

**Gulls, Terns & Skimmers**

Black-headed Gull  
Caspian Gull  
Whiskered Tern

**Pigeons & Doves**

Rock (Feral) Pigeon (I)  
Stock Dove

*Circus aeruginosus*  
*Accipiter nisus*  
*Haliaeetus albicilla*  
*Buteo buteo*

**Otididae**

*Otis tarda*

**Rallidae**

*Rallus aquaticus*  
*Fulica atra*

**Burhinidae**

*Burhinus oedicephalus*

**Recurvirostridae**

*Recurvirostra avosetta*

**Charadriidae**

*Vanellus vanellus*  
*Charadrius hiaticula*  
*Charadrius dubius*

**Scolopacidae**

*Numenius arquata*  
*Limosa limosa*  
*Calidris pugnax*  
*Calidris ferruginea*  
*Calidris temminckii*  
*Calidris alpina*  
*Calidris minuta*  
*Gallinago gallinago*  
*Actitis hypoleucos*  
*Tringa ochropus*  
*Tringa erythropus*  
*Tringa nebularia*  
*Tringa glareola*

**Laridae**

*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*  
*Larus cachinnans*  
*Chlidonias hybrida*

**Columbidae**

*Columba livia*  
*Columba oenas*

Common Wood-Pigeon  
European Turtle-Dove  
Eurasian Collared-Dove

### **Owls**

Tawny Owl  
Long-eared Owl

### **Kingfishers**

Common Kingfisher

### **Bee-eaters**

European Bee-eater

### **Rollers**

European Roller

### **Woodpeckers**

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker  
Middle Spotted Woodpecker  
Great Spotted Woodpecker  
Black Woodpecker  
Eurasian Green Woodpecker  
Gray-headed Woodpecker

### **Falcons & Caracaras**

Eurasian Kestrel  
Red-footed Falcon  
Eurasian Hobby  
Saker Falcon

### **Shrikes**

Red-backed Shrike  
Northern (Great Gray) Shrike

### **Crows, Jays & Magpies**

Eurasian Jay  
Eurasian Magpie  
Eurasian Jackdaw  
Rook  
Carrion Crow  
Hooded Crow  
Common Raven

### **Larks**

Eurasian Skylark  
Crested Lark

*Columba palumbus*  
*Streptopelia turtur*  
*Streptopelia decaocto*

### **Strigidae**

*Strix aluco*  
*Asio otus*

### **Alcedinidae**

*Alcedo atthis*

### **Meropidae**

*Merops apiaster*

### **Coraciidae**

*Coracias garrulus*

### **Picidae**

*Dendrocopos minor*  
*Dendrocopos medius*  
*Dendrocopos major*  
*Dryocopus martius*  
*Picus viridis*  
*Picus canus*

### **Falconidae**

*Falco tinnunculus*  
*Falco vespertinus*  
*Falco subbuteo*  
*Falco cherrug*

### **Laniidae**

*Lanius collurio*  
*Lanius excubitor*

### **Corvidae**

*Garrulus glandarius*  
*Pica pica*  
*Corvus monedula*  
*Corvus frugilegus*  
*Corvus corone*  
*Corvus cornix*  
*Corvus corax*

### **Alaudidae**

*Alauda arvensis*  
*Galerida cristata*

**Swallows**

Bank Swallow (Sand Martin)  
Barn Swallow  
Common House-Martin

**Tits, Chickadees & Titmice**

Coal Tit  
Crested Tit  
Marsh Tit  
Willow Tit  
Eurasian Blue Tit  
Great Tit

**Long-tailed Tits**

Long-tailed Tit

**Nuthatches**

Eurasian Nuthatch

**Treecreepers**

Eurasian Treecreeper  
Short-toed Treecreeper

**Wrens**

Eurasian Wren

**Dippers**

White-throated Dipper

**Kinglets**

Goldcrest  
Firecrest

**Leaf Warblers**

Willow Warbler  
Common Chiffchaff

**Sylviids**

Eurasian Blackcap

**Old World Flycatchers**

European Pied Flycatcher  
Spotted Flycatcher  
European Robin  
Black Redstart  
Whinchat

**Hirundinidae**

*Riparia riparia*  
*Hirundo rustica*  
*Delichon urbicum*

**Paridae**

*Periparus ater*  
*Lophophanes cristatus*  
*Poecile palustris*  
*Poecile montanus*  
*Cyanistes caeruleus*  
*Parus major*

**Aegithalidae**

*Aegithalos caudatus*

**Sittidae**

*Sitta europaea*

**Certhiidae**

*Certhia familiaris*  
*Certhia brachydactyla*

**Troglodytidae**

*Troglodytes troglodytes*

**Cinclidae**

*Cinclus cinclus*

**Regulidae**

*Regulus regulus*  
*Regulus ignicapilla*

**Phylloscopidae**

*Phylloscopus trochilus*  
*Phylloscopus collybita*

**Sylviidae**

*Sylvia atricapilla*

**Muscicapidae**

*Ficedula hypoleuca*  
*Muscicapa striata*  
*Erithacus rubecula*  
*Phoenicurus ochruros*  
*Saxicola rubetra*

European Stonechat  
Northern Wheatear

**Thrushes & Allies**

Eurasian Blackbird  
Fieldfare  
Song Thrush  
Mistle Thrush

**Starlings**

European Starling

**Wagtails & Pipits**

Western Yellow Wagtail  
Gray Wagtail  
White Wagtail  
Tawny Pipit  
Meadow Pipit  
Tree Pipit

**Buntings & New World Sparrows**

Yellowhammer  
Reed Bunting  
Corn Bunting

**Finches, Euphonias & Allies**

Common Chaffinch  
Eurasian Siskin  
European Goldfinch  
Eurasian Linnet

Hawfinch

**Old World Sparrows**

House Sparrow  
Eurasian Tree Sparrow

**Mammals**

**Rabbits & Hares**

European Hare

**Squirrels**

Eurasian Red Squirrel

**Rats & Mice**

Striped Field Mouse

*Saxicola rubicola*  
*Oenanthe oenanthe*

**Turdidae**

*Turdus merula*  
*Turdus pilaris*  
*Turdus philomelos*  
*Turdus viscivorus*

**Sturnidae**

*Sturnus vulgaris*

**Motacillidae**

*Motacilla flava*  
*Motacilla cinerea*  
*Motacilla alba*  
*Anthus campestris*  
*Anthus pratensis*  
*Anthus trivialis*

**Emberizidae**

*Emberiza citrinella*  
*Emberiza schoeniclus*  
*Emberiza calandra*

**Fringillidae**

*Fringilla coelebs*  
*Spinus spinus*  
*Carduelis carduelis*  
*Carduelis cannabina*  
*Coccothraustes*  
*coccothraustes*

**Passeridae**

*Passer domesticus*  
*Passer montanus*

**Leporidae**

*Lepus europaeus*

**Sciuridae**

*Sciurus vulgaris*

**Muridae**

*Apodemus agrarius*

**Dormice**

Edible Dormouse

**Horseshoe Bats**

Lesser Horseshoe Bat

Greater Horseshoe Bat

**Noctule Bats**

Lesser Mouse-eared Bat

Greater Mouse-eared Bat

Common Pipistrelle

**Weasels**

Eurasian Otter

**Dogs**

Red Fox

**Deer**

Roe Deer

**Gliridae**

*Glis glis*

**Rhinolophidae**

Rhinolophus hipposideros

Rhinolophus

ferrumequinum

**Vespertilionidae**

Myotis blythii

Myotis myotis

Pipistrellus pipistrellus

**Mustelidae**

Lutra lutra

**Canidae**

*Vulpes vulpes*

**Cervidae**

*Capreolus capreolus*