

**HUNGARY & THE CZECH REPUBLIC:
BIRDS & MUSIC
FROM BUDAPEST TO PRAGUE**

SEPTEMBER 8–23, 2018



Great Bustard © Balázs Szigeti

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By Balázs Szigeti**

September 9, Day 2

The tour started with some of the participants arriving well ahead of schedule. We used the extra time for shopping for supplies before returning to the airport to greet another arriving couple. All together we headed straight to our hotel at the edge of the small town of Bugyi. We checked into our rooms, sorted out the safe and other details, and proceeded to have lunch in the hotel restaurant.

With some of the group present, we decided to use the rest of the afternoon to explore some of the nearby birding areas, which proved very productive. The area of Apaj Puszta with its marshes, fish farming ponds, and reedbeds held plenty of birds. Highlights included a Black Woodpecker perched on the top of a bare branch giving excellent views. We saw Purple Heron and a rather close Ferruginous Duck in a little channel. Huge flocks of Graylag Geese fed in the marshes along with Eurasian Spoonbills; Great and Little egrets were present as well and often were disturbed by the presence of several White-tailed Eagles in the area whose appearance often put hundreds of birds into flight. A late migrant European Turtle-Dove was also posing well.



European Turtle-Dove © Balazs Szigeti

On our way home, we stopped on the edge of town to search for an enigmatic species, Eurasian Stone-Curlew, and after a short stroll we discovered a small flock of about seven birds hiding in the sparse vegetation of a fallow agricultural field.

We then headed back to our hotel, and after welcoming the remaining tour participants, we gathered for a trip introduction and our first group dinner.



Eurasian Stone-Curlew © Balazs Szigeti

September 10, Day 3

We spent the first full day of the tour in Kiskunsag National Park, starting in the Apaj region south from Bugyi. Our main objective for the morning was finding one of the most characteristic species of the mixed grassland-agricultural land habitat: Great Bustard, the world's largest flying bird species. Fortunately, it did not take long to spot the first individuals walking across the

fields. Soon we were treated to a small flock of bustards in flight, with the birds landing close by, allowing good views for all participants.



White-tailed Eagle © Balazs Szigeti

As we drove further into the park we saw Gray and Purple herons, Eurasian Spoonbills, a huge number of Eurasian Kestrels, and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk. Several White-tailed Eagles were sighted, mostly in the distance, but nevertheless we could appreciate the huge size of this majestic bird. Eventually an adult bird flew overhead, showing its clean white tail and huge yellow bill. These sightings were actually due to Marilyn, who spotted a huge perched bird that had an

obviously big rounded head, almost like an owl. A quick check with the scope revealed it to be a Short-toed Snake-Eagle that took off after a few minutes of observation and circled around our van, showing its beautiful fine markings against its primarily white chest and wing feathers. The wetlands held several Gray Herons, a Purple Heron, Great and Little egrets, a good number of Common Snipe, and Great Crested Grebes. We also found a Northern Goshawk, numbers of Common Buzzards (soon to become a usual sighting, probably being the most common raptor of the area) together with the many Eurasian Kestrels and several Eurasian Marsh-Harriers that were hunting around us at almost every stop.

We became acquainted with the commonest corvids as several Hooded Crows were in evidence, as well as Eurasian Magpies and Rooks. Our stop at a fish farm produced close views of three immature Eurasian Penduline-Tits hopping around the reeds a few meters in front of us. We all had good views of this handsome bird. It was here that we also spotted what would be the trip's only European Roller. The bird was not close, but nevertheless we could see its beautiful bluish-chestnut coloring, both in flight and when perched. We recorded Stock Doves, several flocks of European Starlings, European Stonechat, and handsome Eurasian Tree Sparrows. We spotted a huge gathering of Common House-Martins that were obviously gathering just before migrating. The birds formed a spectacular sight as they perched closely together on the electrical lines, sometimes taking off in a huge flock numbering into the hundreds of birds, if not thousands. It was heartwarming to see that the majority of the birds were this year's young, and we wished them luck on their long journey to their wintering grounds in Africa. Returning to the same spot an hour later, the birds had disappeared, and we assumed they had set off on their long journey to Africa. Nearby, we also found our first Red-backed Shrikes.

We were now traveling further south, and after a forty-minute drive we entered a hidden corner of the national park, near the village of Kunpeszer, the so-called Viper Farm where Tamas



Danube Meadow Viper © Balazs Szigeti

Pechy, ex-director of Birdlife Hungary, and his young daughter welcomed us to tell us about their fantastic conservation efforts aiming at protecting one of the most endangered and valuable reptiles in Hungary: the Danube Meadow Viper. While listening to their lecture, accompanied by a projected slideshow, we had taken our packed lunch in the shadow of the wooden structure of the presentation area. Then it was time to see the snakes themselves. Tamas showed us several adult and some newborn snakes, and we took a huge number of close

photos of this beautiful reptile. The farm was initially bought as a result of a sale of a painting by a famous Hungarian painter that was donated by a raptor specialist from the U.K. Further funding was provided by the European Union Life Program, and we learned that this project is actually the only program in the E.U. that has won the Best of the Best award more than once!

On our way back to the hotel we found another flock of the magnificent Great Bustard, this time a group of more than thirty males together not far from the road. We also spotted three wagtails feeding on the tarmac road front of us, and looking through the scope we found they were Western Yellow Wagtails. We also visited the site where we had seen the stone-curlews the day before, and found only one bird that was seen taking off from the vegetation, calling with its curlew-like call, flying around us in a circle until disappearing in the field behind us.



Great Bustard © Balazs Szigeti

We had an excellent dinner, each of us being provided a half-roasted duck that proved to be a rather big portion for most of us, but nevertheless welcomed by all.

September 11, Day 4

This day was dedicated to exploring the area of Tiszaalpar, where alkaline steppe lakes and the oxbow lakes of the country's biggest river, the Tisza, were visited. Before reaching Tiszaalpar, we called in the neat city of Kiskunfelegyhaza and found at least eight Long-eared Owls forming

their traditional winter roosts in a yard surrounded by buildings. We spent at least an hour admiring these fantastic birds at close range. We also examined several of their pellets, which we found in the area, that demonstrated their rather unique diet—all of them holding the entire skeletons of one or two rodents, probably Bank Voles.

The same garden held all three species of the leaf warbler family (*Phylloscopus*): Common Chiffchaff, and Willow and Wood warblers, as well as our first few Black Redstarts. A Lesser Whitethroat was spotted as well among the other migrant warblers, and gave us brief views of its elegant gray plumage. A delicious ice cream cooled us down after all the excitement, as we then drove further to Tiszaalpar to meet our friend Istvan, a ranger of Kiskunsag National Park. We first visited an alkaline lake where most ducks were rather skittish and took off as we approached, but several Northern Shovelers and a few Green-winged Teal remained, along with a flock of Northern Lapwings and a summer plumage Dunlin. We were hoping to find another sought after raptor species, the Saker Falcon. Istvan soon spotted a falcon perched next to its artificial nest box. In Hungary, nest boxes have proved to be the key in protecting the species from falconers who illegally took chicks from their nests. The bird was seen through the scope by some, but we were too close and it took off. Through our binoculars we were able to follow it for some distance. After its northern relative, the Gyrfalcon, the Saker is the world's second largest falcon species. Meanwhile, another alkaline lake gave us distant views of some Red-footed Falcons and as many as fifteen Eurasian Hobbies, all feeding on the numerous dragonflies. On the lake itself we saw several Common Snipe feeding actively together with four Spotted Redshanks in mostly winter plumage, several Eurasian Spoonbills, Great Egrets, and Gray Herons flying elegantly over the reeds. Janet spotted a Reed Bunting bouncing up and down on a reed. Later, a pair of Spotted Flycatchers were seen as well on the electrical lines.



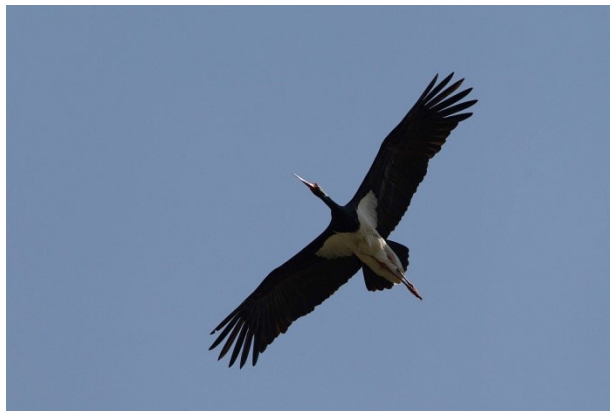
Long-eared Owl © George Pagos



Black Redstart © Balazs Szigeti

Arriving in Tiszaalpar, we sat outside on the terrace of the local restaurant to take our filling of bowls of bean goulash soup, accompanied by a selection of different kinds of strudels that proved to be more than enough for one sitting. We then walked towards the Tiszaalpar marsh a few minutes from the restaurant where a huge amount of waterfowl, waders, and gulls were observed. Pygmy and Great cormorants were in evidence, a Whiskered Tern was seen feeding over the surface of the water, while Black headed and Caspian gulls were everywhere. Eurasian Curlew and Black-tailed Godwits were on the far shore of the lake with some

Spotted Redshanks. Ducks were also represented well, with Garganey, Ferruginous Duck, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, and Northern Pintail all present. Good numbers of Mute Swans were feeding on the lake too. Several families of Great Crested Grebes were noted, and Janet proved her incredible spotting abilities as she called out a perched Common Kingfisher, a welcome sight for everyone. This beautiful little bird was seen on several occasions taking its favorite perch. We also saw an elegant Black Stork soaring above the lake, probably one of the many gathering in the marshes before migrating. Apart of the huge number of Gray Herons and Eurasian Spoonbills, we were delighted to find one of the last Squacco Herons of the season, as well as a small flock of Black-crowned Night-Herons in flight. On our walk back to the bus a Great Spotted Woodpecker was showing well on the top of a tree without leaves, giving some of us good views. The day was closed with observation of a pair of White-tailed Eagles looking over the landscape from atop a dead tree.



Black Stork © Balazs Szigeti

It was time to call it a day, and we headed back to our hotel, where we arrived an hour and twenty minutes before dinner.

September 12, Day 5

This was a transfer day, but with an extra stop. We were heading towards the east of the country, eventually ending up in the Northeast mountains, precisely in Bukk National Park. However, en route we visited the country's first national park, the famous Hortobagy National Park. On our way there we stopped when Christian, our superb driver, spotted two soaring raptors which he thought were huge. We quickly exited the highway and stopped by the first pullout that was close to where the birds were seen. It turned out that it was not two but three Imperial Eagles—a family group—and we all had great views of both adult birds and the nicely marked, creamy-colored immature bird; a great find, especially as this magnificent raptor is one of the flagship birds of successful conservation efforts of Birdlife Hungary, supported by the European Union's Life Program.



Imperial Eagle © Balazs Szigeti

Upon arriving at one of the national park's visitor centers, we ate our packed lunch while taking advantage of the wooden shelter with its nice benches, and used the facilities before we took a little walk first to visit the local bird banding station. There we saw our first European Robin and Eurasian Reed-Warbler being banded and their biometric data taken. We took some close shots of these beautiful songbirds and walked just a few meters to scan a large wetland created long ago for a horde of the ancient domestic Water Buffalo kept here for maintaining the habitat. We saw a great variety of waders at this site, and it was a real effort to sort out the species, as the birds were in dense flocks feeding non-stop. But our effort was rewarded by the first Broad-billed Sandpiper ever seen on this tour. This is a bird with an easterly migration path, rarely seen farther west in Europe. Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stints, Ruff, a huge number of Northern Lapwings, Eurasian Curlew, and several breeding plumage Dunlin were also seen. Close views of the pretty Squacco Heron were obtained, both perched and in flight, and we were delighted to find another Common Kingfisher, this one sitting up in small branches above the water as well as hovering several times in front of us, resembling its more strongly built relative, the Pied Kingfisher.

Next, we called for our private narrow-gauge train that would take us further into the wetland. This train is a renovated version of the old fish farm train that formerly was used to transport fish from the lakes. The national park converted the train into a comfortable small train with coaches, and we enjoyed a twenty-five-minute drive to the main pond of the lake. Right after starting our ride, we spotted some Cattle Egrets feeding just around the Water Buffalo—another first-time species for this tour. Common Terns were also noted over the ponds.

Arriving at the final stop on the line, some of us climbed the look-out tower that overlooked the entire area, while others walked through the marsh on a boardwalk that led to several small blinds that allowed for a closer look at the birds on the lake. Flocks of Spotted Redshanks and Common Snipe were seen and were the most common waders, while further away several hundred Common Cranes were roosting in the shallow water that had already been prepared for the masses of cranes that would arrive in a few weeks during their southbound migration stop-over. This area attracts birders from all over Europe and elsewhere to witness the spectacle of more than 100,000 cranes staging in the area and almost half of this number roosting every night in the very pond in front of us.

Little and Great Crested grebes were also noted, and a good selection of ducks, with hundreds of Graylag Geese were hard to miss. On our way out, we found another Short-toed Snake-Eagle along with the rather common Eurasian Marsh-Harrier.

It was now time to move on towards the mountains, and we arrived with excitement at our next hotel, the superb Nomad Hotel at the southern



Wine Cellar in Nosvaj © Balazs Szigeti

edge of Bukk National Park. Our first evening here was special, as we visited one of Hungary's famous wine makers for a guided walk in their wine cellar—a system of cave-like tunnels dug into the limestone and tufa substrate. Here, we learned about their wine producing methods and saw barrels ranging from small to 14,000-liter capacity. But soon it was time to taste the wine and more! Dinner was a degustation dinner, expertly introduced by Eva the manager: a series of seven courses, with each course accompanied by a select wine. Vegetarian and gluten-free versions were presented in fashion as well. It was a long day full of exciting activities, and by this time we were ready for our beds.

September 13, Day 6

Our first morning in Bukk National Park found us in a rather different habitat and landscape compared to the previous days: down in the lowlands of the flat Hungarian steppes, grasslands, and arable fields. As we were about to board our vehicle, a Eurasian Green Woodpecker landed on a tree in front of us, offering good views of its nice greenish plumage and strong red cap. We were on our way to visit Hidegkut Laposa, a grazed mountain meadow. We were hoping to see any European Bee-eaters that might still be around their nesting wall, but none could be found. Instead we studied some Gray Cattle, a traditional domestic animal with huge horns, and several White Wagtails. We had a nice walk through the meadow, and then on a path through a narrow gorge we encountered a nice Yellowhammer and a huge Great-banded Grayling butterfly, and had a Middle Spotted Woodpecker flying around us (but not showing well). We had coffee in a small meadow while watching a pair of Marsh Tits and admiring a pair of Common Ravens.



Eurasian Green Woodpecker © Balazs Szigeti

We then proceeded to the national park visitor center at the entrance of the Hor Valley. Here, we sat outside of the bar eating lunch and treating ourselves to a cold lemonade. The forest in the valley was rather silent, and we only saw a Eurasian Treecreeper, Great Tits, and brief flight views of Eurasian Jay. Some participants took their own route to explore the mature beech and hornbeam forest before eventually meeting the safari vehicle that would pick up all of us and return us to the bus. On our way out, suddenly our driver started pointing enthusiastically just above us, calling out, “owl!!!” And there it was: a magnificent Ural Owl sitting just above our heads. The bird flew after only a few seconds, but we dismounted the vehicle and kept following the bird until it perched beautifully in a dead birch tree, looking around for prey. The sun was shining on it while all around it was shadow. It was a beautiful experience, with the scope sighted on the “ghost of the forest.” We were thrilled as we arrived back at the hotel. We had an hour to freshen up and gather for dinner, which was accompanied by an authentic Gypsy band that played for us, giving us a taste of an ancient musical tradition so typical of Eastern Europe.

But the day was not over yet! Our friend Peter (the Great), lead member of the Bukk National Park Ranger Service, was waiting for us just two kilometers away, by a small pond where he erected mist nets to capture bats. This site is used by conservationists to monitor the bat fauna of the area (with twenty-six species already having been recorded here). This activity proved a thrilling experience as Peter was taking one bat after another out of the nets and showing us the features of each species in the hand. While we were taking photographs and listening to his explanations, a pair of Tawny Owls started calling, and we all saw them in the beam of the flashlight. The owls came back several times, flying around us, calling in their distinctive way.



Bat monitoring (in the hand!) Balazs Szigeti

What an evening!! And it was not over yet; after seeing Noctule, Gray, Long-eared, Bechstein's, and Naterer's bats, Peter took his night vision camera and soon was pointing to a tree where he said was an Edible Dormouse. We all approached quietly and indeed saw a completely motionless animal on the tree bark—an Edible Dormouse with its long furry tail directly in front of us. From a distance of only a few meters, we enjoyed close views and opportunities to take photographs and even videos. With this, we ended our day and drove five minutes back to the hotel for a good night's sleep.

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September 14, Day 7

Our day started with a bird walk in the vicinity of the hotel. Great and Blue tits were the commonest birds, but one of the first birds we saw was a Hawfinch, showing its enormous beak, as well as a Eurasian Green Woodpecker posed on a tree right next to our van. A nearby garden held several Eurasian Nuthatches, Common Chiffchaffs, Great and Blue tits, a Eurasian Robin, and several Common Chaffinches feeding on the ground. We flushed a small group of European Serins, but could only identify them by size and their distinctive call.

Later, we visited a rather remarkable site just outside the village of Noszvaj, the “Farkasko of Noszvaj,” a cave complex carved into a bank of soft volcanic tufa where poor people lived hundreds of years ago. Today, an artist community has “re-designed” the cave houses, and what was once a place to live is now carved with fine lines, and the surfaces of the walls are neatly marked too. Some of the chambers of the caves are connected, and one could walk around admiring this mixture of centuries-old dwelling place and modern art. One chamber was of particular interest, as little window shapes carved in a wall were arranged in the pentatonic scale, so they resonated in a rather amazing fashion, filling the entire space with a certain vibration, once you find the specific tone with your own voice. We played together with this for a while. After our walk, we boarded our vehicle and drove to Belapatfalva to visit the thirteenth century Cistercian Abbey, where we had our lunch and coffee and then watched an English language

video explaining the history of the church. We heard and briefly saw two Gray Wagtails flying in and out of the little stream nearby and then walked inside the church. The small curved stairs led up to where the organ was installed, and walking up the ancient wooden stairs we found Lesser Horseshoe Bats hanging from the bottom of the stairs. Then we entered the attic of the church to find more bats using the wooden structure of the roof. Among them was a Greater Horseshoe Bat as well, causing great excitement as it took off and flew around only centimeters from our heads!

Then, it was time to go to the area where we would spend the afternoon, the Bukk Plateau, with the aim of perhaps finding Ural Owl. We had special permission to drive into this wild area, now inhabited by a large pack of Gray Wolves, Lynx, and recently even Brown Bears. But before entering the area, a short shopping stop proved to be of interest to all. On the previous evening Peter wore a nice t-shirt featuring a painting of a White-backed Woodpecker by Szabolcs Kokay, a well-known Hungarian bird artist. We all bought some shirts and other souvenirs. Driving through some mature forest stands, we eventually arrived at the plateau and started walking along the paved road. Soon enough we found two Firecrests (close relatives of the North American kinglets) and were surprised to find that they only responded to the play of the Goldcrest call and not to their own. Fast-moving in the foliage in pursuit of food, it was a challenge to see the markings of this bird, but eventually everyone saw the strong white supercilium, the crest, and the moss-green back of this tiny songbird. It was then that Andy and John called out a big grayish bird that was seen flying across the path before disappearing from sight into the woods. Listening to their description, I knew the bird was almost certainly another Ural Owl. We followed the bird and had some brief sightings as it dropped into the grass hunting for voles and mice. Knowing the geography and the behavior of this owl, we moved on to the next open meadow where it would likely soon reappear. There, we waited patiently for some minutes, and sure enough, the bird came into view before too long and sat for some minutes on a fallen branch just half a meter above the ground. We all had superb views of this huge bird as it kept turning its big rounded head or looked down in total “hunting mode.”



Ural Owl © Balazs Szigeti

We were heading back to our hotel but stopped for a bit in the big meadow to scan around for anything else we might find. We also used the moment in this scenic spot to sample the famous Plum Palinka in celebration of our second Ural Owl of the trip. Meanwhile a Great Spotted Woodpecker perched in a nearby tree, and a lot of Chaffinches were sighted atop a distant spruce.

On the way home, while driving through a small village, we spotted a Little Owl about to begin its night activities, and we all had perfect views of the bird perched atop a chimney of the house of a local family—our fourth owl species of the tour and definitely a rare treat for this time of the year.

We then headed back to our hotel for a delicious dinner.



Little Owl © Balazs Szigeti

September 15, Day 8

It was time to say good bye to Bukk, as we were to drive to Budapest today. Leaving the hills behind, we made a short stop at Bogacsi Taroza, a nearby stream-fed lake used for fishing. The north shore of the lake is uninhabited, and despite the high-water level we spotted several bird species. A Ruff was feeding along the shore with Northern Lapwings and some Green-winged Teal. Two White-tailed Eagles were seen sitting on the mud, and later we saw one of them circling above us. There was a flock of Stock Doves here as well.

We decided to venture into the willow thickets to search for migrant landbirds, and as we walked along a little path we saw a small 4x4 vehicle deep in the bush. Approaching, we discovered it was Csaba Fitala, senior ranger of Bukk National Park, whom we have known for years. He was actually banding birds and was more than happy to check the mist nets for us to see if he had caught anything. Indeed, the nets produced a European Robin and a neat Willow Warbler. In his mobile banding station (his vehicle) we could see at close range how the banding process works,

admiring how he takes all biometric data, weight, measures, and the fat reserve the bird has built below its skin as an energy supply during migration.

With this we departed for Budapest, arriving at our hotel in the heart of the Buda Castle World Heritage Site. After taking our rooms in this six-hundred-year-old building, we gathered for lunch and then had a free afternoon in which most of the participants visited different sites of interest in the city, excluding those areas we were to see the next day.

In the early evening we gathered again for a short taxi ride to board the *Pannonia*, a “gastro boat” offering a real culinary and sightseeing experience while cruising on Europe’s second longest river, the mighty Danube. It was an experience to be remembered. Our dinner originally consisted of seven carefully selected courses, but we were surprised with an extra



Our group in Budapest! © Balazs Szigeti

course, and each course was accompanied by a specific wine. After receiving a short introduction to the evening program, we cruised north on the river and then back after sunset, enjoying incredible views of the city’s many attractions illuminated for the night. We saw the modern buildings of the National Theatre and the Palace of Art, the Petofi, Elizabeth and Chain bridges, the Buda Castle and Fisherman’s Bastion, the Statue of Liberty, and of course, the Parliament building—all while enjoying the most amazing cuisine freshly prepared on the boat.



Hungarian Parliament building by night © Balazs Szigeti

A ten-minute taxi drive took us back to our hotel.

September 16, Day 9

Today was dedicated entirely to discovering the attractions of Budapest with a licensed tour guide, Szofi. We gathered at 9:00 AM and drove to the Pest side of the city for a walk around the famous Szechenyi thermal bath. Having seen its baroque style buildings and a quick look inside the main pool, we moved on to view the replica of the Castle of Vajdahunyad while listening to Szofi's explanation about the invading Ottoman empire and Hungary's role in holding off its advance towards Europe.

We then moved to the downtown area to visit Saint Stephen Basilica and do a bit of souvenir shopping. By midday we were ready for lunch at the Strudel House, a five-minute walk from the Basilica. Not only did we sample some of the strudels, we also had the chance to observe in detail how its thin layer of dough is prepared before our eyes.



Orthodox synagogue, Budapest © Balazs Szigeti

Our tour continued with a walk towards the Jewish Quarter, where we walked around the Great Synagogue, the biggest of its kind in Europe, and entered the orthodox synagogue as well. Visiting one of the so called “ruin pubs” is essential on a sightseeing tour of Budapest, especially as we could even see and touch the wooden paper chasse of a Trabant, the ultimate emblem of the communist era.

It was time now to cross the river to the Buda side of the city. First, we drove to the Citadel and enjoyed great panoramic views of the city below us, including Buda Castle, nearly the entire Pest side of the city, and the Danube River. We then walked to the Statue of Liberty. Finally, we were

back in the Castle District, and among the many centuries-old buildings we saw the Palace where the head of the country lives, the National Art Gallery, Matthias Church, and Fisherman's Bastion before we returned to the hotel for an early dinner.

After dinner, we gathered in the lobby to board taxis in advance of a private chamber orchestra in beautiful Hubay Music Hall. Four members of the famous Ferenc Liszt Orchestra performed for us, and it again proved one of the highlights of the tour. The venue, the introduction of each piece (sometimes with an anecdote), and the intimate aspect of this private event made it really special. Following the seventy-minute program, we had a nice chat with the musicians while having a glass of wine. Some of the pieces included Vivaldi: G-dúr symphony, Bach: Air, Michael Haydn: Notturmo, Boccherini: Menuett, Csajkovszkij: Andante cantabile, Chopin: Walzer, Op.64 No.2, and Weiner Leo: Divertimento, Op.20 No.1.

September 17, Day 10

Today was a transfer day, with the aim being the southern Bohemian city of Trebon in the Czech Republic. As we had some extra time at our disposal in the morning, and because the day before we were not able to see the famous Andrassy Boulevard and the Heroes Square due to a massive event, we decided to drive on the longest avenue of the city ending up in Heroes Square to learn about the tribal leaders who conquered the lands of the Carpathian Basin more than 1,100 years ago, and to see the statues of most of the kings and rulers of the country since then.

We then hit the road, and apart from some comfort stops, we paused only to have lunch at a roadside restaurant and to take some group photos with the border signs as we entered first Austria and then the Czech Republic, before arriving in the picturesque city of Trebon. We had already been seeing many Carrion Crows in the fields (this is the western relative of the common Hooded Crows, of which we saw many in Hungary), but just as we entered Trebon, we were lucky enough to have very close views of the much smaller but equally elegant Eurasian Jackdaw as they were feeding in the grass of a roundabout, only three meters from our bus. We checked into our rooms and enjoyed a bit of downtime before gathering for dinner in the restaurant a few steps away from our hotel.

September 18, Day 11

Because the days were much warmer than usual for this time of the year, we decided to start the day in the main city park instead of driving straight to the lakes outside of the city where we intended to do some birding. We were rewarded with super close views of two pretty Blue Tits, while several Eurasian Nuthatches and Great Tits performed well. We also saw European Robin, another Great Spotted Woodpecker, and European Starling very well. We had an unidentified warbler in the thick bush, some Common Wood-Pigeons, Eurasian Collared-Doves, and of course, several Common Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers.

Afterward, on the way to the lakes, our driver again proved his spotting skills pointing to some raptors, which eventually were identified as Red Kites. Great find! Although this bird is known to breed in the area, we've never bumped into them on previous tours. We decided to try to approach the birds closer for better views, and in taking a smaller country road off the highway, we were actually led straight to where they were hunting. Great views of the kites, as well as two

Black Storks, accompanied by fresh apples we harvested from a roadside tree, made our morning.

Arriving at the lakes we found them pretty empty of waterfowl. We saw Caspian and Black-headed gulls, Great Crested Grebes, a solitary female Tufted Duck, several Mute Swans, Mallard, Common Pochard, Gadwall, Eurasian Coot, Common Moorhen, and our first Little Grebes. Our efforts to lure a Water Rail into view succeeded partially, as through the scope we could make out the bill and some parts of the bird as it was skulking along the edge of a reed bed. Some of us glimpsed a rather late Little Bittern as it took off from the reed bed nearby before disappearing again in the reeds further out. We found two Whiskered Terns feeding on the surface of the water too. The weather was very nice, and we enjoyed the atmosphere of the lakes, of which the region had several hundred (!), being one of the most ancient and largest fish farming regions of the Czech Republic and Eastern Europe.



Crested Tit © Balazs Szigeti

Upon entering the spruce forest on the far side of the lakes, we lured several Coal Tits and two superb Crested Tits into view, while remembering an explanation of the relationship between psychedelic experiences of ancient people who consumed the red-capped mushrooms with the white spots on the top—that were seen on the forest floor around us—and the red-capped Santa Claus with the white spot on his hat...

Northern Lapwings, many Great Cormorants, Mallards, and lot of Graylag Geese.

On the way back to Trebon, another lake brought more White-tailed Eagles and some

In the afternoon we announced a free-time activity, with an optional walk in the old streets of the city and its adjacent park. Most of the group joined, and we climbed the tower of the old Town Hall, enjoying panoramic views of Trebon and its surroundings. We walked along the stream that traced around the town's ancient rock wall, looking at the trout for some time, and looked into the yard of the beer brewery that dates back to 1379, and said to be the oldest brewery in the Czech Republic. We spotted another Great Spotted Woodpecker, some pretty Eurasian Blue Tits, a very well performing Black Redstart feeding in the gutter of the old buildings, and had a quick look at the captive Mouflons with their curved horns. (These herbivores are the ancestor of the domestic sheep. They are native to Corsica and Sardinia



Eurasian Blue Tit © Balazs Szigeti

but are now widespread in continental Europe.) Strangely enough, this was our first day recording House Sparrows. At this point, some of us continued exploring the old town, while others returned to the hotel, before we all met again for dinner at a local restaurant.

September 19, Day 12

Today we aimed to visit a World Heritage Site, the medieval town of Cesky Krumlov. On the way, we stopped briefly to check some more ponds on the outskirts of Ceske Budejovice. As we drove into the city, several Rooks were feeding in the grass.

There were not many birds on the first lakes, but the number of European Robins present here was just amazing. We probably saw about fifteen different birds in the first 300 meters of our walk. We did have some very close Great Crested Grebes, both adult and immature birds, and we actually saw how the adults were feeding the immatures with small fish. Later, we had another short but very close encounter with two Little Grebes, while some European Jays kept flying around. The fields and bushes attracted Mistle Thrushes and Fieldfares, and we kept seeing them in flight. A beautiful Eurasian Green Woodpecker posed on a tree trunk just above the ground.

The last lake held good numbers of birds, especially a wide range of ducks, feeding in the shallow water. Apart from Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Graylag Goose, and Mute Swan, Gray Herons and Great Egrets were seen foraging in the water, while another Eurasian Moorhen was seen walking up and down the bank of a small island. The walk back produced more European Robins, good views of Eurasian Nuthatches, and a glimpse of a Common Redstart. Once again on the bus towards our next stop, Cesky Crumlov, Common Buzzards were a common sight in the fields, along with one or two Eurasian Kestrels and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk.

Cesky Krumlov can't be missed on any tour to this region, despite the number of visitors at times. A river forms a horseshoe around the old town, and a castle is built atop of a cliff towering above the old buildings, constructed between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries in Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque styles. The origin of the settlement dates back to 1240.



Cesky Krumlov © Balazs Szigeti

For the first time during the trip, the weather looked a bit worrisome. At first it was raining lightly, but after parking our van, the rain stopped, and after a short walk, we arrived at the gate of the old town. Just as we crossed a little wooden bridge, before reaching the entrance of the town, we spotted our first White-throated Dipper and managed to see it as it was diving in the stream, searching for crustaceans. A beautifully marked Gray Wagtail showed well at the same place. We then entered the old town and saw another dipper as it was feeding, just standing by the artificially created rapid. Wow! We did not even have to wait at all, and there they were.

Satisfied with this sighting, the plan for the rest of the afternoon was explained, and we agreed on a meeting point and time. Then we set off walking towards the little restaurant where we were to have lunch. We called in shortly to the tourist center to grab some maps. Our restaurant was actually an ex-prison, and the decoration left no doubts about how prisoners were treated there, but nonetheless it had a nice atmosphere, and we had some salads, traditional sausages, and some refreshing drinks which were welcomed by everyone. Afterward, we all set out, everyone going on his or her own way to explore this scenic area.

Later, we gathered by the bridge as agreed, and had yet another look at a dipper, but this time from about 10 meters or so, allowing for even greater appreciation of its almost transparent nictitating membrane on its eyes. The membrane has many functions, among them helping the bird in its underwater activities and playing a role during courtship.

Back on the bus, a scenic drive through the rolling hills featured nice spruce forests and hay meadows of the Sumava Mountains, en route to the village of Zdikov, our base for the next two nights. After checking into our rooms, we had a bit more than an hour to prepare for dinner, and soon we were enjoying one of the region's many famous pumpkin soups.

September 20, Day 13

As the weather was still unusually hot, we started the day with a short morning walk just near our hotel. We started by continuing our tradition of feasting on local apple trees, harvesting some for immediate consumption and more for the day. Super delicious! A nearby tree was teeming with migrating chiffchaffs, Willow Warblers, and several chaffinches, and we also spotted a female Eurasian Blackcap that came down to a Rosehip bush. We heard several Red Crossbills and some Eurasian Siskins flying about.

Afterward, we headed to the Boubinski Prales, one of the core areas of the Sumava range, famous for its primeval forest. After some twists and turns due to road construction, we reached the area and promptly spotted a nice flock of feeding Fieldfares in a roadside tree. Our guide was satisfied with our views from the van and finally determined that we could attempt scope views of these handsome birds. As we got out, the birds were flushed by a car on this otherwise abandoned country road. It was disappointing, but we kept our good spirits, and, leaving the vehicle behind, started our walk towards the depth of the forest. A short visit to the national park visitor center provided us with souvenirs and decent bathrooms.

Our walk through the woods proved nice, as we observed spruce and beech forests of varying ages, until we reached a nice little lake on the edge of the older "primeval" forest. We had lunch

here while enjoying the sight of a very cooperative Eurasian Treecreeper just above our heads and a nice male Gray Wagtail nearby, while small flocks of siskins and crossbills were flying high overhead. Leaving behind one of the members of our group who could not resist the call to make some sketches of the lake and fallen trees, the rest of us headed for a walk into the ancient woods. This walk produced one of the greatest surprises of the trip: the highly-sought Eurasian Pygmy-Owl, an individual that suddenly responded to our persistent whistling. It was a great find, but how to see it? We could hear the bird calling repeatedly high overhead, responding to imitations of its own call, but now it was a task to put the scope on this tiny bird that kept moving back and forth in the canopy. Eventually we all had good scope views, while we also saw and heard probably all the songbird species of this corner of the forest. Crested Tit, Willow Tit, Marsh Tit, and Eurasian Treecreeper were all around, but probably neglected by most of us due to the sight of the tiny owl looking at us with a really angry look.



Eurasian Pygmy-Owl © Balazs Szigeti



Lake amid the "primeval" forest © Balazs Szigeti

Content with this sighting, we walked further, glimpsing a Black Woodpecker and hearing a calling White backed Woodpecker and a tree-tapping Great Spotted Woodpecker, the latter

eventually showing in the scope well. We turned back, managed to show the owl quickly to the member of our party who had stayed back, and walked back to the van, arriving in time to observe a speeding Eurasian Hobby hunting over the forest.

As we descended from the hills, we located fifteen Mistle Thrushes feeding in a meadow, showing the distinctive markings on their breasts, while a few Fieldfares were flying about. Further down, we stopped by a small farm house and found a pair of Northern Wheatears at exactly the same spot as last year, which was remarkable as these birds were surely not breeding here, judging by the habitat. Here, most birds were showing well, including a male and female Eurasian Kestrel, a nicely marked Yellowhammer, a female Common Redstart, several White Wagtails, and both Eurasian Tree and House sparrows. Common Ravens were around the whole day, and we also spotted a Eurasian Sparrowhawk sitting on a tree before taking off after some prey item.



Yellowhammer © Balazs Szigeti

From time to time, migrating Barn Swallows were seen moving south, sometimes in impressive numbers.

Back at the hotel, we had an hour to relax before meeting again for dinner.

September 21, Day 14

This was another transfer day, this time to the capital of the Czech Republic: Prague. Prior to departure, we had an optional bird walk in the morning, taking a slightly different route from the hotel than yesterday. One of the first birds we spotted, just a few meters ahead, was a Eurasian Nutcracker; however, only two of us saw it foraging in the grass before it took off, showing its unmistakable wing and tail patterns for some seconds. We could not relocate the bird again, but were rewarded instead by an extremely tame Eurasian Magpie. It was rather entertaining to see this bird approach us and take food from our hands, while we admired its beautiful iridescent black and blue feathers. More siskins and a small flock of European Goldfinches landed nearby on a distant spruce, and at last we were rewarded with a small flock of Red Crossbills that landed in a tree just above our heads, allowing for close study of their unique bill shape.

Eventually we walked back to the hotel, had another incredibly tasty pumpkin soup and salad, checked out from our rooms, and set off for Prague. It took a little over 3.5 hours to reach Prague and our hotel, with our only stop being for ice cream along the way! We checked in to our elegant hotel in the center of Prague, with plenty of time to freshen up and get dressed for the night ahead. This evening we were to attend the world-famous International Dvorak Festival in the beautiful Rudolfinum (Municipal House). We all looked rather smart in our evening attire as

the night's performance was the closing event, with the Dresden Staatskapelle performed by Manfred Honeck as conductor. It was another highlight of the tour for many despite the thunderstorm that hit Prague at the moment we were exiting our vehicle at the Rudolfinium. We were swept up by both the venue and the incredibly beautiful music. The program consisted of Antonin Dvorak Festival Song Op.113, B 202, Rusalka Fantasy, Suite from the Opera, the Biblical Songs op.99, B185 , I. Darkness and clouds are amassed all about him, II. Hiding place and shield for me Thou art, III. Hear oh God, hear my prayer IV. The Lord is my shepherd, V. God, oh God! A song that is new. After the break we enjoyed Johannes Brahms Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90, I-IV. movement, and an encore still to be specified....



An evening at the Rudolfinium © Balazs Szigeti



Our bus took us home uplifted by the experience and the wonderful evening.

September 22, Day 15

This morning we gathered in the hotel lobby to meet our fantastic local guide, Lucy, who would spend almost the entire day leading a guiding tour of her city and demonstrating her vast knowledge. First, we drove to the castle, which we explored on foot in the morning. We saw the old Royal Palace, St Vitus’s Cathedral, the main entrance gate and wrought arch, the First Courtyard, and St George’s Basilica. We then descended to the downtown area for lunch in a local restaurant, and then continued our tour with a walk through the Jewish ghetto and the old town square before slowly walking back toward our hotel. We paid a quick visit to the famous Charles Bridge with Marilyn, as she was not staying in Prague after the tour finished. We had a little time to digest all the knowledge Lucy shared with us, as well as her good sense of humor, before getting ready to attend our final concert, in the Municipal House, to hear Mozart and Vivaldi pieces accompanied by a rather entertaining affair going on between the lead violinists, which only added to the experience...

Finally, at our last dinner, we reminisced about some of the trip’s magical moments, including birds seen and places visited during the previous two weeks, and said farewell, hoping that our roads will cross again sometime, somewhere in the future.



A day in Prague with Lucy
© Balazs Szigeti

BIRDS:

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	
Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl	Anatidae	
Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	
Graylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	X
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	X
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	X
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	X
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	X
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	X
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	X
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	X
Green-winged (Common) Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	X
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	X
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	X
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	X

Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	
Pheasants, Grouse & Allies	Phasianidae	
Gray Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	
Ring-necked Pheasant (I)	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	X
Grebes	Podicipedidae	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	X
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	X
Eared Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	
Storks	Ciconiidae	
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	X
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	
Cormorants & Shags	Phalacrocoracidae	
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	X
Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pygmaeus</i>	X
Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns	Ardeidae	
Great Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	
Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	X
Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	X
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	X
Great Egret	<i>Ardea (Egretta) alba</i>	X
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	X
Cattle Egret		X
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	X
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	X
Ibises & Spoonbills	Threskiornithidae	
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	X
Osprey	Pandionidae	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	
Hawks, Eagles & Kites	Accipitridae	
European Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	X
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>	
Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	X
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	
Eurasian Marsh-Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	X
Northern (Hen) Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	X
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	X
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	X
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	X
Rough-legged Hawk	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	X
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	
Bustards	Otididae	

Great Bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>	X
Rails, Gallinules & Coots	Rallidae	
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	X
Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>	
Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	
Eurasian (Common) Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	X
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	X
Cranes	Gruidae	
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	X
Thick-knees	Burhinidae	
Eurasian Thick-knee (Stone Curlew)	<i>Burhinus oediconemus</i>	X
Plovers & Lapwings	Charadriidae	
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	X
Black-bellied (Gray) Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	
European Golden-Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	
Eurasian Dotterel	<i>Charadrius morinellus</i>	
Stilts & Avocets	Recurvirostridae	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	
Sandpipers & Allies	Scolopacidae	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	X
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	X
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	X
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	X
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	X
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	X
Broad Billed Sandpiper		X
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	X
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	X
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	X
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	X
Gulls, Terns & Skimmers	Laridae	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	X
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	
Mew (Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	
Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	X
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	

Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	X
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	X
Pigeons & Doves	Columbidae	
Rock (Feral) Pigeon (I)	<i>Columba livia</i>	X
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	X
Common Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	X
European Turtle-Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	X
Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	X
Owls	Strigidae	
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	X
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	X
Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>	X
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	X
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	
Eurasian Pygmy Owl		X
Kingfishers	Alcedinidae	
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	X
Bee-eaters	Meropidae	
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	
Rollers	Coraciidae	
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	X
Hoopoes	Upupidae	
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	
Woodpeckers	Picidae	
Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	
Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>	X
White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>	H
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	X
Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>	
Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides tridactylus</i>	
Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>	X
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	X
Gray-faced Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>	
Falcons & Caracaras	Falconidae	
Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	X
Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	X
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	X
Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>	X
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	
Shrikes	Laniidae	
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	X
Northern (Great Gray) Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	X
Lesser Gray Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	
Crows, Jays & Magpies	Corvidae	
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	X
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	X
Eurasian Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	X
Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	X

Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	X
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	X
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	X
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	X
Bearded Reedling	Panuridae	
Bearded Reedling (Tit)	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	
Larks	Alaudidae	
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	
Sky Lark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	
Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	
Swallows	Hirundinidae	
Bank Swallow (Sand Martin)	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	X
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	X
Common House-Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	X
Chickadees & Tits	Paridae	
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	X
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>	X
Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater</i>	X
Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	X
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	X
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	X
Penduline-Tits	Remizidae	
Eurasian Penduline-Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	X
Long-tailed Tits	Aegithalidae	
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	
Nuthatches	Sittidae	
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	X
Treecreepers	Certhiidae	
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	X
Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	
Wrens	Troglodytidae	
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	
Dippers	Cinclidae	
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	X
Kinglets	Regulidae	
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	X
Leaf-Warblers	Phylloscopidae	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	X
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	X
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	X
Reed-Warblers & Allies	Acrocephalidae	
Moustached Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>	
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	
Eurasian Reed-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	X
Great Reed-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	
Grassbirds & Allies	Locustellidae	
Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	
Sylviids, Parrotbills & Allies	Sylviidae	
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	X

Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	
Barred Warbler	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	
Greater Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	X
Old World Flycatchers	Muscicapidae	
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	X
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	X
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	X
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	X
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	X
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	X
Thrushes & Allies	Turdidae	
Fieldfare		X
Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	X
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	X
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	X
Starlings	Sturnidae	
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	X
Accentors	Prunellidae	
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	
Wagtails & Pipits	Motacillidae	
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	X
Gray Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	X
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	X
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	
Buntings & New World Sparrows	Emberizidae	
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	X
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	X
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	
Siskins, Crossbills & Allies	Fringillidae	
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	X
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	X
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	
Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	
European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	X
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	X
Old World Sparrows	Passeridae	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	X
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	X

Mammals	
Voles	Cricetidae
Bank Vole	<i>Myodes glareolus</i>
Hedgehogs	Erinaceidae
Northern White-breasted Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus roumanicus</i>
Rabbits & Hares	Leporidae
European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>
Squirrels	Sciuridae
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>
European Souslik	<i>Citellus citellus</i>
Dormice	Gliridae
Edible Dormouse	<i>Glis glis</i>
Hazel Dormouse	<i>Muscallinus avellanarius</i>
Dogs	Canidae
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>

Stoats & Weasels etc.
Stoat
European Weasel

Pigs
Wild Boar

Deer
Red Deer
Roe Deer

Mustelidae
Mustela erminea
mustela nivalis

Suidae
Sus scrofa

Cervidae
Cervus elaphus
Capreolus capreolus