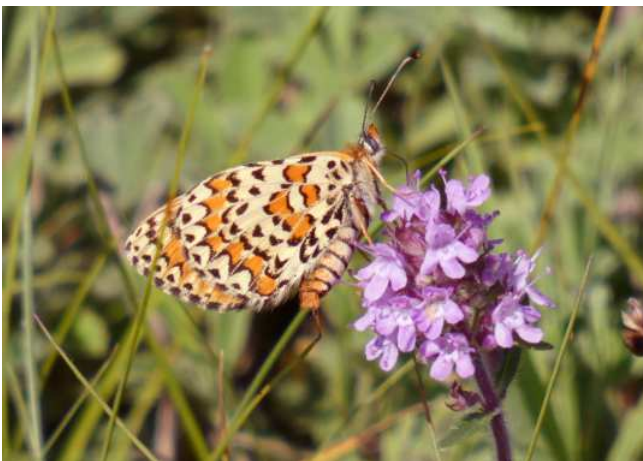


# HUNGARY



*Trip photos (from top): Bird of the trip, the nest-building male Penduline Tit by the Tisza River • A splendid male Squacco Heron on water lilies • The hide at the lodge was good for Hawfinches • Wing-stretching White Stork plus young • A Lesser Spotted Fritillary • Large White-faced Darter on Lake Kolon © Storks by Teresa Stratton; others David Walsh, Limosa*

**Report compiled by tour leader:  
David Walsh**

## Hungary | Birds, Butterflies & Dragons

**Tour leaders:** Gábor Orbán and David Walsh

**with** Bill Branford, Alan Burrows & Liz Laverick, Phil Holms & Janette Ward, Mike Sims, Cheryl & Teresa Stratton.



*The puszta near Bugyi; we saw five imperious male Great Bustards in similar habitat © David Walsh, Limosa*

Limosa Holidays' first early summer natural history tour to the Kiskunság National Park was hugely enjoyable and highly successful, helped by glorious weather throughout the week. As expected, there was high quality birding on this holiday as well as a wide range of other wildlife, and we marvelled at the unspoilt and varied landscapes.

We started by exploring the puszta close to our lodge; it held a breeding colony of Bee-eaters as well as impressive numbers of Rollers, several Lesser Grey Shrikes, Montagu's Harrier and Short-toed Snake Eagle. The highlight of a visit to the north was the privilege of seeing a Red-footed Falcon colony, whilst the west gave us first-class views of Saker Falcon, in typical pose on a pylon. To the east, close to the Tisza river, we found a Penduline Tit constructing its nest and enjoyed the spectacle of a wetland teeming with an array of waterbirds including Pygmy Cormorant; a nearby forest produced Black and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers. On our final day we headed south for a relaxing boat trip before having the thrill of spotting five Great Bustards on a vast area of grassland. During the week we had several unexpected sightings including Long-legged Buzzard, Bluethroat and Collared Pratincole.

Butterflies were numerous, especially in the flower-rich meadows; we saw 45 species including Large Copper, Eastern Baton Blue, Nettle-tree Butterfly, Lesser Purple Emperor, Common Glider, Map, Cardinal, Lesser Spotted Fritillary and Safflower Skipper. The group also made the most of the opportunities to study the dragonflies, a new experience for some; we tallied 22 species including the sought-after Large White-faced Darter, Yellow-spotted Emerald and Dainty Damselfly; the former was abundant at Lake Kolon, perhaps the best site to see it in the whole of Europe.

Kondor Eco-Lodge proved to be an ideal base from which to explore, with early morning strolls into the woods, across the fields and within the grounds highly productive; we also made use of the photographic hides at the garden pond where the views of Hawfinches in particular were incredible! We were served a range of traditional Hungarian dishes, and Gábor and Andrea did everything possible to make us feel at home; Gábor is not simply a 'local bird guide'; he is passionate about Hungarian culture, history and politics, and Andrea is not only an experienced guide but also a wonderful cook!

As a one-centre holiday at a relaxed pace with a rich variety of wildlife on the doorstep and some highly sought-after birds not much further away this trip is hard to beat! I have been privileged to head to the Kiskunság in five consecutive summers now, and look forward to returning in 2020.

## Daily Diary

### Thursday 6th June

Our British Airways flight from Heathrow landed in Budapest at 4.10pm local time, and it wasn't long before we met up with Gábor; I was delighted to be teaming up with him once again for our fifth tour together. Tibor was our driver for the first couple of days and we had a very plush minibus, certainly the most comfortable vehicle I have ever used in Hungary. Our hour-long journey took us along a motorway, then a series of country roads, and at 6.05pm we arrived at Kondor Eco-Lodge, our base for the whole week, situated in the heart of the Kiskunság National Park. There was time to settle in before we reconvened at 7.15pm for drinks in the garden. At dinner we enjoyed pasta and potato soup, followed by chicken schnitzel with rice and potato then curd cheese strudel for dessert. This set the tone for the week: tasty, home-cooked food, beautifully prepared for us by Andrea and her assistant.

### Friday 7th June

*Sunny, gentle breeze, 16-28°C*

Some of the group got up early and took advantage of their first opportunity to watch and photograph the Hawfinches posing right in front of one of the pond hides; they showed regularly every morning and it was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see this usually elusive species 'up close and personal'!

At 8am we met for breakfast. The well-stocked table included cereals, yoghurts, salad, a variety of cold meats and cheeses, pastries, fresh jam, oranges, bananas and apples; we were left to create our own picnic lunches to suit our individual needs.

We set off in the bus at 9am and stopped after just a couple of minutes alongside a field with horses. We scoped a pair of Little Owls before scanning for Sousliks; this charismatic mammal is an important species on the Hungarian plains being a key food source for raptors. Our first butterflies by the track included Chestnut Heath, Little Blue and Queen of Spain Fritillary, then we drifted along slowly in the bus, seeing a close Tawny Pipit perched up on a post. Soon we arrived at a spot where Bee-eaters were breeding in numbers, many using holes in the ground right next to the track; the views were wonderful, the birds allowing close approach. Once past their breeding area we strolled by some disused buildings where we saw our only Wheatears of the trip and were thrilled to see a male Montagu's Harrier hunting over the meadows to our right.



*Rainbow-coloured Rollers and Bee-eaters were both seen well today © David Walsh, Limosa*

Pausing again by a church in an isolated copse, we marvelled at the fields full of Yellow Rattle; we discussed the fact that its abundance is a good indicator of a rich meadow. Gábor talked to us about the success of the nest box programme in helping boost the population of Rollers and, as he did so, we watched one interacting with a Corn Bunting! The first of numerous mystery insects was later identified as a Red-legged Assassin Bug! We watched a traditional horse and cart move along the track before returning to the lodge to enjoy our picnic and relax over a coffee; Gábor and Tibor began their quest to mend the moth trap which we hoped to set up later in the week. A Broad-bodied Chaser at the pond was a nice surprise for those keen to make the most of every minute in the field!

We set off again at 2pm, making a 15 minute drive to the nearest town, Kerekegyháza. The Syrian Woodpeckers were, unfortunately, not in residence today but we found an obliging Spotted Flycatcher. Our next location was an open area offering our first chance of Saker Falcon; we weren't in luck, but had great looks at a Lesser Grey Shrike, another of the main target species on this holiday. It sat up for ages and we saw it song-flighting and fly-catching.

We returned to the area of puszta near the lodge; the views of the Sousliks were certainly my 'best ever'! Gábor said that, like him, they were thoroughly enjoying the warm sunshine after a prolonged period of poor weather in May. From the bus we saw our first Crested Lark and had repeat opportunities to enjoy the Rollers, seen at their very best in the late afternoon light. A little further on we disembarked, finding a single Knapweed Fritillary, numerous Silver-studded Blues and a Broomrape. A bank offered 360 degree viewing – the terrain is so flat that any elevation is a real help – and we found Hobby and Roe Deer before one of the 'Champagne Moments of the week, a Short-toed Snake Eagle giving us a majestic fly past!

We had heard a couple of Quail calling earlier in the day, but weren't expecting to see this species, so one crossing the road in front of the bus was a bonus sighting for a lucky few at the front of the vehicle. We arrived back at 5.40pm; Dainty Damselfly and Grass Snake were seen by those who strolled to the pond, whilst a Balkan Wall Lizard was seen in the garden helping itself to the mealworms put out for the family of Black Redstarts!

We met to do our bird list in the garden at 7pm knowing that we needed to be efficient as the soup would be on the table at precisely 7.30pm! To round off a lovely evening we were given a traditional Hungarian fruit brandy, Pálinka. We were in buoyant mood after an excellent first full day in the field and discussed the abundance of wildlife within just a few kilometres of our base.

### Saturday 8th June

*Sunny, gentle breeze, 15-28°C*

At 6.30am some of the group met up for a pre-breakfast stroll to a clearing in the forest; we heard a Short-toed Treecreeper singing near the lodge and, a little further on, a Black Woodpecker called but only once. What proved to be Niobe Fritillaries were posing by the track, soaking up the early morning sunshine. At the far end of the clearing we reached a hay meadow which the previous morning had been full of butterflies but a tractor was cutting it! We found an Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper and a Latticed Heath moth along the edge of the field, but the birds stole the show. A pair of Woodlarks perched up, then a raptor caught our attention. A Honey Buzzard flew left to right in front of us, flanked by two Golden Orioles; *Bird of the Trip* for some of us, another magic moment to live long in the memory.

Eggy bread had been added to the fare on offer at breakfast. Azure Damselfly and Emperor Dragonfly were noted at the pond prior to our 9am departure. We set off with our new driver, Zoltán, for the hour-long journey to the north of the Kiskunság National Park. Our first port of call was at Hosszúhát, a small man-made hill overlooking an expanse of puszta. As last year, several tractors were working in the area so our chances of finding Great Bustards were small, but with pleasant temperatures and minimal heat haze it was a fine place to while away an hour or so. Three male Whinchats were in song, but we concentrated on scanning for raptors; Buzzards were numerous, and we were pleased to see another male Montagu's Harrier. Butterflies were remarkably plentiful especially in the flatter areas near the road, and we found a stunning male Adonis Blue, our first Lesser Spotted Fritillary and a Safflower Skipper, a lifer for all. My previous visits to the Kiskunság had all been in July and it was fun noting a slightly different mix of insects being a month or so earlier.

For the remainder of the morning we made three well-planned stops and found new things at each one. This section of road remains poorly maintained, and Gábor says every year that the worse the road the better the birds! We noted a gathering of Rooks; this species is important for Red-footed Falcons as we would discover later. At the first stop, a Great Reed Warbler was heard singing, a Nightingale actually showed itself to some, and those looking down found Burnet Companion, pristine Marbled Whites and, best of all, a wonderfully orange male Large Copper. Eastern Bath White and our only Common Whitethroat of the week were noted a little further on. We were still hoping for bustards, but our final stop actually produced something rarer! A Buzzard flew over a wettish area and helpfully flushed the waders which included two Avocets and two Collared Pratincoles, the latter a major surprise; we had reasonable flight views before they settled once again. Idas Blue was seen and photographed, and we had time to compare it with Silver-studded before it was time to declare and head to the nearby town of Bugyi. Here we relaxed outside a wonderful cake shop; the owners kindly allowed us to eat our picnic there, and we supplemented it with various provisions from their establishment including some super ice creams!

Refreshed, we were set up for yet another scan for bustards at Sankhaza; we were rewarded with our first Great Egrets then a Bittern, Gábor's first of the year, and it gave a sufficiently long fly past for everyone to see it. A Green Sandpiper flew over, an early southbound wader, and we found a female Scarlet Darter as we looked for the loud but ultra-elusive Great Reed Warbler. A Hoopoe in a nearby sheep field was a bonus from the bus as we continued our anti-clockwise loop of the northern Kiskunság. Gábor took us to a tower hide overlooking a vast area of fishponds; the tower had a roof, so we had shelter from the sun and the benefit of more breeze. We tried to look in one direction at a time to ensure everyone saw the key species. Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Duck and Yellow-legged Gull were all scoped; the views of Purple Heron were excellent for all, but the Little Bittern which flew across was too quick for most. There was a wide variety of 'supporting cast' species and we did our best to count them.

Rather than retrace our steps we drove on from the hide, turning left along the back of the fishponds. To our right we found a roosting group of 30 Spoonbills, an impressive count. The last pond on the left was shallow with small islands and we spotted a small group of Black Terns as well as 30 Avocets, a Curlew and three Black-tailed Godwits. The views of these, and the ducks we had seen earlier, were excellent once we had parked up and set up the scopes. We then walked along a bank on the opposite side. Our target here was Bluethroat and, by walking a little further along, one was eventually located; it sat up from time to time and most, but not all, of us managed to see it despite our best efforts.



*There are few finer falcons than Red-footed: here a male and female pose nicely © David Walsh, Limosa*

We had already seen enough birds for two days let alone one, but the best was yet to come. We spent our final half hour at a copse in the puszta where a number of tourist parties stop. That is significant, because it means that the Red-footed Falcons which use the Rooks' nests to form a colony each year are used to people and allow close approach. We headed quietly through the trees to a point where the sun was behind us and the light perfect, and watched males and females in the tree tops. Being early in the season there were surprisingly few birds around, but nevertheless it was an experience to live long in the memory. There was time to admire the superb White Stork nest before it really was time to declare.

Tired but elated we arrived back at 6.35pm, meeting 45 minutes later to run through the checklists. The draught lager and glasses of red wine went down very well this evening; one particular red became our firm favourite, Egri Bikavér (the Bull's blood of Eger). On tonight's menu was egg soup with cumin, chicken with potato and 'milky cherry pie'; it was much enjoyed as always!

### **Sunday 9th June**

*Mainly sunny, calm, humid in the afternoon, 15-30°C*

We met at 6.30am for another pre-arranged walk and today headed across the road along the track to the right of the hay meadow which was unmown. Some of the group were fortunate to see a Golden Oriole alongside a pair of Rollers! We had close looks at an Eastern Bath White before the garden Lesser Spotted Woodpecker tantalised us as we returned for breakfast.

Having set off at 9am as usual we found a Little Owl perched on 'its' roof before, after half an hour, arriving at Kigyós oxbow lake. We strolled by the tall trees along the southern edge and spent much of the time working out the dragonflies. We compared male Scarce Chaser, Black-tailed and White-tailed Skimmers, admired the pristine Four-spotted Chasers and commented on the abundance of White-legged Damselflies. A Black-crowned Night Heron flew over but the star bird here was the male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker which showed remarkably well. Having seen our first Short-tailed Blue and found a mating pair of Clouded Yellows we continued our anti-clockwise loop, seeing more Pond Terrapins then scoping a Norfolk Hawker: dragonflies really are fantastic creatures close up!

We potted up the channel and found a Lesser Emperor patrolling its stretch of water. Unfortunately some unnecessary habitat management meant the trees where Penduline Tits often nested were no longer there. We soon found other things to look at, with a singing Icterine Warbler – expected – followed swiftly by a Black Woodpecker – definitely unexpected! Incredibly it landed on the side of the track before drinking in a puddle; the views were awesome.

We made use of the facilities at a roadside café then drove down a rough track, past an area which Gábor said had an interesting history, to an enormous area of alkaline lakes at Böddi-szék. There were sheltered picnic tables but to use them we first had to shoo away the flock of sheep escaping the hot sun! The tower hide gave

panoramic views; we found a number of Avocets, several Shelducks and a Spoonbill but little else. There was no sign of the Dark Spreadwing damselflies we had found for the past two years.

We allowed time to investigate ponds alongside the minor road as we retraced our steps. We walked around a small copse which was home to another colony of Red-footed Falcons, enjoying good views of a juvenile Kestrel in one of the boxes. Most of the ponds were dry, but there was some water, and I was considering which way to walk when I became aware of an odd song in the far distance; surely it was a Bluethroat! The group gathered and we got closer; it was indeed a Bluethroat and we watched it song-flighting, some managing scope views of it singing from within the reeds. What a result – it meant that everyone had seen this species after all! We noted a pair of Black-winged Stilts and a Green Sandpiper before heading back. The pond by the road held nothing new, but we did manage a Sparrowhawk in the distance.

We returned to the café for celebratory cold drinks and ice creams. The adjacent meadow held Large Copper and several female Scarlet Darters as well as a female White-tailed Skimmer, and we had a hot ten minutes by the channel next to the car park, seeing Small Red-eyed Damselflies on the vegetation, a perched male Golden Oriole and a Black Stork soaring in the distance.

Gábor had once again saved the best till last today. We drove along a bumpy track through sunflower fields to a spot close to a row of pylons. The Saker Falcons were in residence close to their huge nest box, and we saw both adults and a juvenile; there was very little heat haze so the views were superb, certainly my best ever, and we were pleased to see the birds in flight as well as perched. This is one of Europe's most sought-after raptors and we felt privileged to be in their company.

We returned at 5.50pm and met up an hour later prior to an early dinner. This allowed us to walk up the lane to the clearing we had visited early one morning. We arrived there at 8.40pm and, bang on cue, the Nightjars started churring. Unlike the mosquitoes, they were not especially active, but we had some close flight views, all the more special given that this was a new species for several members of the group. We declared at 9.10pm and headed back at the end of another action packed day!

### **Monday 10th June**

*Sunny, calm, 18-31°C*

The Hawfinches were once again on cracking form from the hide this morning!

We left at 9am as usual and headed east for an hour or so, seeing two Crested Larks by a roundabout along the way, before arriving in a clearing adjacent to an area of woodland at Töserdő. Unfortunately the mosquitoes were a major irritation as we strolled along a track through the forest; the 'May rains then June sun' combination had benefited us in terms of flowers and butterflies, but at a cost. We carried on stoically and had a number of successes. Insects included Nine-spotted, a colourful day-flying moth, as well as first generation Map Butterflies on the ground and Silver-washed Fritillaries high in the canopy. We had cracking views of our first avian target, two inquisitive Middle Spotted Woodpeckers proving very inquisitive: we would see a third later. Further on we came across a showy Black Woodpecker; we had missed this species in 2018 but had two in two days this year. A Tawny Owl was exactly where Gábor hoped it would be to round things off nicely.

We headed across a couple of small meadows, the path having been ploughed up to make life difficult; a singing Icterine Warbler at the far end was very keen to have his photo taken! Eventually we reached a tower overlooking a lake covered in water lilies; from here we watched a range of birds including Squacco Heron. The edge of the flower-rich meadow proved worthy of exploration and we found Southern and Common Emerald Damselflies which were strangely absent elsewhere. The back markers saw a Hairy Dragonfly in the ploughed area then it really was time to make haste for the bus, but our attempts to escape the mosquitoes quickly were thwarted by a string of exciting finds. Lesser Purple Emperor, Nettle-tree Butterfly and Common Glider made an impressive trio, Marsh Frogs were noted by the path then an excited Gábor showed us a green beetle which we discovered later went by the name of Forest Caterpillar Hunter!

The middle part of the day was spent in and around the picturesque town of Tiszaalpár. After a pit stop, and a thought-provoking history lesson next to a monument illustrating the break-up of Hungary in times past, we picnicked on benches in the churchyard, Gábor providing coffee and tea which was most welcome! A singing Serin failed to show, but we enjoyed watching a Mallow Skipper on the lavender as we made our way to a viewpoint with a wonderful panoramic view of the adjacent wetland. We walked down towards a track which headed out to give us closer looks at the water. At the start I heard an Eastern Olivaceous Warbler but its song was drowned out by a close Reed Warbler. This was soon forgotten as we heard, then saw, a Penduline Tit, which flew across to its nest! For several minutes we watched its intricate construction, a once-in-a-lifetime moment for several of us; unsurprisingly it was voted *Bird of the Trip* at the end of the week.

It was well worth the hot walk out towards the marsh. The spectacle of birds on the water and in the trees had to be seen to be believed. We found several adult and juvenile Black-crowned Night Herons, perched and in flight, compared Great and Pygmy Cormorants side-by-side, and enjoyed fly pasts by Mediterranean Gulls and Whiskered Terns. Four Black-necked Grebes were distant but gave respectable scope views; even further away were a soaring Black Stork and a gliding Honey Buzzard.

We returned to our chosen café for a relaxing ice cream before resisting the offer of a city tour, instead heading back to the lodge, arriving at 5.30pm with 90 minutes to freshen up. We celebrated the birthday of one of our number with a fine cake. We discussed another day of spectacles, champagne moments and super variety.

### **Tuesday 11th June**

*Sunny, calm, 18-30°C*

Before breakfast an exploratory clockwise walk produced Short-toed Treecreeper and Map Butterfly near the lodge then Short-toed Snake Eagle and a singing Tree Pipit at a previously undiscovered clearing.

Our 9am departure was delayed by five minutes as we watched a Cardinal perching upside down in the shade! Today was to be a relatively local day, and we drove along a track to the left of the 'Souslik field'. Our bus provided excellent viewing and we enjoyed two Hoopoes, the first of three Tawny Pipits, point blank Bee-eaters, Rollers and Red-backed Shrikes, a highly impressive combination! Eventually we decided to stroll. A large bird deep in the grass proved to be a White Stork and not Great Bustard: wishful thinking on my part! We had super views of three Lesser Grey Shrikes perching up nicely for us.

Eventually we finished our cross-country excursion and arrived at a proper road! We parked up and the group were offered the chance to stroll along the Peszéradacs trail or drive round in the bus to the far end where a meadow would provide the opportunity to look for butterflies. The trail had been out of bounds in 2017 following a tornado but was open once again; as Gábor explained to us, it was designed to be representative of the variety of dry and wet woodland of the Kiskunsag. Those who walked the trail were braced for mosquitoes after yesterday's experience so we didn't linger in any one spot for long, but we did manage to see a singing Nightingale, our first Wood White, an Eastern Green Lizard and another Lesser Purple Emperor. Having met up with the remainder of the group we scanned an area of fields to the north. A Grasshopper Warbler was in song and several Whinchats were perching up. The avian highlight was a fine male 'Blue-headed' Yellow Wagtail which allowed us to note all its distinctive features. Then we turned our attention to the array of butterflies in the meadow. I had no sooner announced that the species were all ones we had seen before when I found Eastern Baton and Green-underside Blues, both new for the trip! A Glanville Fritillary at this spot was identified in retrospect from photographs.

It was hotting up, but there was time to look for the Golden Oriole which was calling nearby; we had several flight views at close range. I wanted to check that a singing warbler was Garden not Barred so waited around and, by doing so, located a singing Wryneck! We would need to return, but not before we had enjoyed our picnic at a café. The pond held a range of common dragonflies including egg-laying Emperors, as well as Edible Frogs and a Tree Pipit coming to bathe. Refreshed, we returned to the previous spot and relocated the Wryneck; a Marsh Warbler in song was an unexpected bonus!

We drove a short distance to an area of heathland with small copses. Gabor had one target here, White-tailed Eagle, and we had to persevere for a while, doing our best to scan from areas with shade. Eventually we had prolonged views of a juvenile then, even better, of an adult right overhead! A Hobby whizzed by as we returned, and we were pleased to see Swallowtail, Cardinal and more Safflower Skippers.

Feeling chuffed we drove on, stopping briefly at a spot where Gábor explained the significance of a typical 'Transylvania Gate' at the entrance to a house. How best to spend the rest of the afternoon? I suggested to Gábor that we visited the Bösztörpuszta where there was another tower hide from where we had seen Eastern Imperial Eagle in 2018. We didn't see any eagles, but enjoyed the vista and found a fine male Montagu's Harrier; those who preferred looking for butterflies found a smart White-letter Hairstreak. There was time to search one more area adjacent to a nearby channel and the very last scan produced the rarest bird of the entire trip, a fabulous Long-legged Buzzard which conveniently flew right past us having been spotted in the distance!

We were back at base by 6pm; dinner tonight was yellow pea soup followed by pork casserole and pasta. Despite the heat we had enjoyed another wonderfully varied day with a rich variety of wildlife close to home.

### **Wednesday 12th June**

*Sunny, gentle breeze, 18-31°C*

We had breakfast at 7.30am today to allow us to leave at 8.15am. Our journey to Lake Kolon took exactly an hour, longer than expected, largely because progress on the sandy tracks was very slow. The recent rains meant the trackside bushes had grown up considerably so there was barely enough room for our minibus to fit between them.

Osh, our guide for the morning, explained how the open water on a small fraction of Lake Kolon has been recreated in recent years; the 'lake' had simply become a large reedbed. We then boarded a silent electric boat and spent 90 minutes slowly touring the lake. We saw more birds than I was expecting, a Great Reed Warbler perching up nicely, four Whiskered Terns flying over, a group of Pygmy Cormorants sitting in a dead tree and, best of all, a number of Squacco Herons allowing close approach. The variety and number of dragonflies was staggering. Lake Kolon is internationally renowned for Large White-faced Darters and our trip clearly coincided with the species being present in peak numbers. We also had super views of another speciality, Yellow-spotted Emerald; several were seen flying close to the boat and we saw others when back on dry land. Male Scarlet Darters were the pick of the 'supporting cast'.



Two dragonflies to brighten the day: Yellow-spotted Emerald (David Walsh) and Scarlet Darter (Bill Branford)

Having thanked Osh we drove to a tower hide and screen, both of which provided a vista across the reeds and an area of open water. Hobby and Ferruginous Duck were the pick of the birds, Silver-washed Fritillary and Short-tailed Blue afforded good views, and the increasingly 'hooked on dragonflies' group was able to compare Azure and Variable Damselflies at close range. We tried for Syrian Woodpecker and thought we were in luck when we obtained a response, but it proved to be a juvenile Great Spotted! Around 1pm we headed off to enjoy our picnic at a place where we could also buy drinks and ice creams. Refreshed, we explored a nearby forest track where we found our only Southern Darter of the week; a female Scarce Chaser perched in a tree proved highly instructive.

For our final stop we drove to Soltzentimre Puszta, a large undisturbed area of grassland, arriving at around 3.30pm with the afternoon light lovely, the heat haze reducing and the temperature dropping. From a bridge we watched Banded Demoiselles, our 18th species of odonata today. I was focused on one species, and strode ahead to a tower hide with excellent panoramic views. Instant success, with five male Great Bustards out in front! The group took turns to look at them through the scopes; we watched them on and off for an hour or so. Although they were relatively distant, the setting was super and it really was wonderful to enjoy this 'must see' species on our very last afternoon! The nest boxes nearby were being used by both Kestrels and Red-footed Falcons.

We eventually dragged ourselves away from the bustards and left at 5pm, arriving back at base 40 minutes later, allowing plenty of time to get sorted prior to reconvening at 7pm. Our final dinner together was pork soup followed by pasta and cabbage. Limosa Holidays provided complimentary liquid refreshment and it was great to have the opportunity to say a proper thank you to Gábor and Andrea and reflect on our week not only in terms of the wildlife but also the tasty food and fine hospitality we had all enjoyed so much.

#### Thursday 13th June

*Sunny, breezy, 19-32°C*

After our final breakfast together we strolled along the road then turned right at a small copse which took us down a track to the left of the main hay field. It heads towards an area where, in the past, a lake had formed, Lake Kondor, historically one of the major wetlands in the Kiskunság. In most recent years it has, unfortunately, been dry, and Gábor gave us the background to this. The verge to our right was teeming with butterflies and we found another Knapweed Fritillary as well as our second Green-underside Blue of the week. A family of Red-backed Shrike allowed close approach.

Shortly before 11am we declared and headed back, looking at the special orchid which is found in the lodge grounds. We had a couple of hours to pack, have lunch, settle our accounts and look at the moths from the trap which Gábor had put out overnight. The latter was great fun. We didn't attempt to put a name to all of them, but even with our limited knowledge we were able to identify magnificent insects such as Poplar and Small Elephant



Hawk-moths, Cream-spot Tiger and Puss Moth. Twitter messages to friends helped us add Four-spotted Footman, Oblique Striped and others and we made use of photographs to increase our list still further after the trip.

Mugs, T-shirts, prints and badges duly purchased, at 1.30pm we bade farewell to Gábor and Andrea for the hour-long journey back to the airport. Unfortunately our flight home was delayed by a couple of hours which was irritating and not in keeping with the rest of our tour which had gone like clockwork.

Many thanks to the group for your company, willingness to share your knowledge and learn new things, and the enthusiastic way in which you 'bought in' to all aspects of the Hungarian experience. Thanks to Gábor for all his expertise, to Andrea and her team at the lodge, and to our drivers. Finally, I am grateful to my friends back in the UK for patiently helping us identify various moths and mystery bugs!

## ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED

(137 species)

### **Greylag Goose *Anser anser***

c300 at Apaj fishponds 8/6; c30 at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

### **Mute Swan *Cygnus olor***

c50 at Apaj fishponds 8/6; a pair with cygnets at Kigyós 9/6; c30 at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

### **Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***

Two at Apaj fishponds 8/6; c40 at Böddi-szék 9/6.

### **Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata***

Two at Apaj fishponds 8/6 were a surprise.

### **Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***

Seen on three dates, max. c50 at Apaj fishponds 8/6.

### **Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina***

c15 at Apaj fishponds 8/6 included some resplendent males.

### **Common Pochard *Aythya farina***

An impressive count of c50 at Apaj fishponds 8/6; also 10 at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

### **Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca***

We had good views of 10 at Apaj fishponds 8/6, and subsequently saw two from the tower hides at Töserdő 9/6 and Lake Kolon 12/6.

### **Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix***

Two along the road near Bugyi 8/6 were glimpsed by a lucky few.

### **Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix***

This species seemed more numerous than usual this year; birds were heard on five dates, and one was seen from the bus as it crossed the track at Kunpuszta 7/6.

### **Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

Noted in small numbers every day.

### **Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis***

Two at Apaj fishponds 8/6.

### **Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

Six at Apaj fishponds 8/6; five at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6; one at Lake Kolon 12/6.

### **Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***

Four in summer plumage at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6 were distant but still much enjoyed through the scopes.

### **Black Stork *Ciconia nigra***

We had flight views of one from the restaurant at Kigyós 9/6 and another four in the Tiszaalpár area 10/6.

### **White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***

Seen daily in small numbers, with some memorable sightings of birds feeding in newly mown hay fields and on their enormous nests, most notably the one with chicks at Apajpuszta.

### **Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

We found a roosting group of 30 at Apaj fishponds 8/6; singles were noted at Böddi-szék 9/6 and Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

### **Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***

One at Bankhaza near Bugyi 8/6 gave a sufficiently long flight view to allow everyone to see it; it was Gábor's first of 2019 and fully deserving of its 'write-in' status.

### **Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus***

Singles were seen in flight from the tower hide at Apaj fishponds 8/6, along Kigyós channel 9/6 and at Lake Kolon 12/6, but views were brief and not everyone saw them.

### **Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Two in flight at Kigyós 9/6 were seen fleetingly. At least 10 gave excellent views both in flight at perched at Tiszaalpár 10/6; we saw both adults and immatures.

**Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides***

Three from the tower hide at Töserdő 9/6, with a further five at Tiszaalpár wetlands later the same day; four from the boat on Lake Kolon 12/6 allowed close approach.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Recorded on five dates, max. c30 at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea***

Noted on four dates, max. 10 at Apaj fishponds 8/6; we had some close views of birds in flight.

**Great Egret *Ardea alba***

Up to three seen on five dates.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Five at Apaj fishponds 8/6; two in the Tiszaalpár area 10/6.

**Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmaeus***

Six from the hide at Töserdő 10/10 with c20 at Tiszaalpár wetlands later the same day; c10 at Lake Kolon 12/10 with close views of perched birds from the boat.

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

One at Apaj fishponds 8/6; c50 at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

**European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus***

We saw two singles; one, memorably, close to the lodge early on 8/6, flanked by two Golden Orioles, and another, much more distantly, at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

**Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus***

We had a prolonged close view of one at Kunpuszta 7/6, one of the highlights of the tour; the same bird was seen close to the lodge early on 11/6.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

One distantly on the return drive from Böddi-szék 9/6.

**Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

Seen daily in small numbers; we had some excellent views of both male and females.

**Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***

Two males were seen over Kunpuszta 8/6, with one there 11/6 and a further single from the Hosszúhát 'hill' 8/6. The number and quality of sightings made this species *Bird of the Trip* for some of the group.

**White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla***

Our perseverance was rewarded on the afternoon of 11/6, when a relatively distant immature was followed by an adult right overhead; its presence was first revealed to us by the loud call.

**Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus***

We visited Böszötrpuszta on 11/6 hoping for Eastern Imperial Eagle; no luck with that species, but on the final scan as we were about to depart, a mystery raptor was picked up in the distance. It got closer and eventually flew right past us: Long-legged Buzzard! Definitely the most unexpected sighting on the whole tour, and a Kiskunság lifer for Gábor.

**Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

Seen daily in small numbers.

**Great Bustard *Otis tarda***

At 3.56pm on our last afternoon the species we had been looking for at several places over the course of the week finally gave itself up! Five males were well-watched from the tower hide at Soltzentimre Puszta; oblivious to our presence they strolled, preened and fed. The views were more distant than some of the group had had elsewhere, but in the circumstances they were totally memorable!

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

One at Töserdő 10/6; a pair with young from the bridge at Soltzentimre Puszta 12/6.

**Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra***

c50 at Apaj fishponds 8/6, then c20 at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

Two were seen briefly on the reedy pools near Böddi-szék 9/6.

**Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

c30 at Apaj fishponds 8/6, with similar numbers on the alkaline lakes at Böddi-szék 10/6.

**Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus***

Seen daily, with birds already in sizeable post-breeding flocks.

**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata***

One at Apaj fishponds 8/6.

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa***

Three at Apaj fishponds 8/6.

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus***

Singles heard at Bankhaza near Bugyi 8/6 and seen on a reedy pool near Böddi-szék 9/6.

**Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus***

Double figure counts at Apaj fishponds 8/6 and Böddi-szék 9/6.

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola***

Two were found whilst we were scanning for bustards near Bugyi 8/6; initially they remained hidden on the ground, but a Buzzard helpfully spooked them allowing everyone to get very passable flight views. The species is rarely seen in the Kiskunság so Gábor in particular was suitably excited!

**Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***

Hundreds at Apaj fishponds 8/6 and Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6; smaller numbers on two other dates.

**Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus***

One scoped at Apaj fishponds 8/6; three gave a wonderful flypast at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

**Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis***

10 from the tower at Apaj fishponds 8/6, with similar numbers on the alkaline lakes at Böddi-szék 9/6 and at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6; we scrutinised several but couldn't turn any into Caspian!

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

Surprisingly scarce; one at Apaj fishponds 8/6, three more at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6.

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***

We had wonderful views of 50+ in total on 10/6 in the Töserdő/Tiszaalpár area; four more were seen from the boat at Lake Kolon 12/6.

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

Five on the 'far side' of Apaj fishponds were found on our loop drive and, by stopping to watch them, we found several other trip ticks!

**Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia***

Seen on four dates as we drove through urban areas.

**Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus***

Common and widespread; seen every day.

**European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***

One of the great joys of spending a week in the Kiskunság is seeing and hearing this species on a regular basis; we were even able to hear it purring from our rooms at the lodge!

**Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Seen daily in suitable locations.

**Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

Heard daily, and seen on three occasions during the week.

**Tawny Owl *Strix aluco***

Gábor's local knowledge helped us locate one as we strolled through the Töserdő forest 10/6; our views were awesome!

**Little Owl *Athene noctua***

This was the first species to be scoped on the tour, with two at the 'Souslik field' on the Kunpuszta 7/6; we had further sightings during the following two days at places Gábor clearly expected to find them!

**European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus***

We enjoyed listening to two birds churring in the clearing close to the lodge at dusk on 9/6; one of the males gave us an impressive flypast.

**European Roller *Coracias garrulus***

"Just another Roller" – who would have thought that would be our comment after the first couple of days, such had been the quality and frequency of our views. We noted Rollers on every single day of the tour.

**Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

One was heard at Kigyos fishing lake 9/6; another was seen briefly at Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6. Surprisingly absent from the lodge garden this year.

**European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster***

We recorded this species every day; notable highlights included wonderfully close views of birds adjacent to their nests along the track on the Kunpuszta, and the sizeable group coming in to roost as we were waiting for the Nightjars.

**Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops***

This popular species was seen on five dates, and heard on two others; our best views were from the bus along the Kunpuszta track on 11/6.

**Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla***

One was coaxed in at the far end of the Peszéradacs trail 11/6, but it was far from co-operative!

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocoptes medius***

We had superb views in the Töserdő forest 10/6, finding two not far down the trail and another towards the end.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor***

One was heard in and around the lodge on three dates, but we had no need to track it down having had prolonged close views of a male in poplars adjacent to the Kigyós fishing lake on 9/6.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***

Noted on five dates; more often seen than heard.

**Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius***

Another candidate for *Bird of the Trip*! We had incredible views of one at the Kigyós channel on 9/6, with the bird actually perching on the side of the track before drinking in a hidden puddle. The following day we had great looks at another, in an open area along the Töserdő forest track. Earlier in the week one had been heard briefly close to the 'Nightjar clearing' near the lodge 8/6.

**European Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis***

Singles seen at Kigyós 9/6 and heard at Töserdő 10/6.

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

Noted daily, max. 10 in and around the Kunpuszta 11/6.

**Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus***

We saw fewer on this June tour than I had done on my previous trips in July, with the Rooks still in situ at the main site. Nevertheless the views were equally stunning, with frame-filling perched males and females seen in perfect light at Apajpuszta 8/6; five were seen at a second colony near Böddi-szék 9/6, with two others at Soltzentimre Puszta 11/6. Probably the species I look forward to seeing the most as I prepare for this trip each year!

**Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

Singles at Kunpuszta 7/6 and 11/6, with another from the tower hide at Lake Kolon 12/6.

**Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug***

The views we had of this magnificent falcon were undoubtedly my best ever; a pair and a recently fledged juvenile were seen perched and in flight close to their nest box 9/6, the pristine pale fringes to the juvenile's flight feathers enjoyed to the full through the scopes.

**Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio***

Seen in small numbers every day; we had some excellent views of both males and females.

**Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor***

This is another of the high quality specialities present in the Kiskunság and we were not disappointed. One on 7/6 was followed by a total of four on 11/6 including three together on the Kunpuszta. We had views of birds perched on bushes and wires as well as others fly-catching.

**Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus***

Heard daily, glimpsed most days and seen well on at least three occasions: two escorting a Honey Buzzard close to the lodge 8/6, a male near the Kigyós café 9/6 and one at the far end of the Peszéradacs trail 11/6.

**Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius***

We saw three singles during the week.

**Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica***

Seen daily in small numbers.

**Western Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula***

First noted in Kerekegyháza 7/6 and seen on three subsequent dates.

**Rook *Corvus frugilegus***

Seen on four dates, often in large flocks. This species is important in the Kiskunság because the Red-footed Falcons make use of the Rookeries once the host species has finished.

**Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix***

Common and widespread.

**Coal Tit *Periparus ater***

Singles in and around the lodge garden on two dates.

**Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus***

Noted on six dates with most sightings in and around the lodge garden.

**Great Tit *Parus major***

Seen every day in small numbers.

**Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus***

There was no sign at Kigyós this year, which meant it was even more thrilling to find one constructing its amazing nest at the start of the track out into the Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6. Voted *Bird of the Trip* by the group.

**Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus***

One was glimpsed briefly by a single observer from the Apaj fishponds tower hide 8/6.

**Woodlark *Lullula arborea***

A pair was seen beyond the clearing close to our lodge early on 8/6.

**Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis***

Noted most days, with a number of birds in song.

**Crested Lark *Galerida cristata***

One on the Kunpuszta 7/6, two by a roundabout en route to Töserdő 10/6.

**Sand Martin *Riparia riparia***

Just two, at Apaj fishponds 8/6.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Common and widespread throughout the week.

**Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum***

Seen in all the expected locations.

**Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus***

At least three at Kigyós 9/6 with one at Töserdő the following day.

**Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

Noted daily; more often heard than seen, but we had good views in the lodge garden.

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus***

Recorded on five dates; we had to wait until our boat trip at Lake Kolon 12/6 before one of the songsters gave itself up by perching atop a reed!

**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

Singles noted on four dates, with views obtained at Apaj 8/6 and Töserdő 10/6.

**Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus***

Numerous in all suitable habitat, with the highest numbers at Lake Kolon 12/6.

**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris***

One found singing at the far end of the Peszéradacs trail 11/6 was a surprise; it remained 'heard-only', but we enjoyed its wonderful range of mimicry.

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida***

We located one in song at the start of the track out into the Tiszaalpár wetlands 10/6, but conditions weren't ideal to enjoy it at its best.

**Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina***

A singing male along the Kigyós channel 9/6 was unco-operative, but another the following day, in trees at the far end of the Töserdő forest path, gave stunning views!

**Common Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia***

One in song close to the cemetery at the end of the Peszéradacs trail 11/6 showed briefly.

**Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides***

Heard singing on five dates; some of the group were fortunate to obtain a glimpse on two of those.

**Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla***

Noted daily, but very few were seen.

**Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin***

Singles were heard singing on 8/6 and 11/6; our attempts to clinch the identification of the latter, at the end of the Peszéradacs trail, led us to find Golden Oriole, Wryneck and Marsh Warbler!

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca***

One was heard singing beyond the meadow adjacent to the Kigyós café 9/6.

**Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis***

One singing along the road en route to Bugyi 8/6 was unexpected given the species' apparent absence on my previous July tours.

**Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes***

Heard singing in the Töserdő woods 10/6.

**Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea***

Seen every day; a conspicuous presence in the lodge garden.

**Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla***

Noted on four dates; regularly heard, but rarely seen, close to the lodge.

**Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

Seen daily, and we counted several hundred on the Kunpuszta 11/6.

**Common Blackbird *Turdus merula***

Noted daily.

**Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos***

Seen on 9/6 and heard on three other dates.

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata***

Seen on four dates, first in Kerekegyháza 7/6 whilst searching in vain for Syrian Woodpecker.

**European Robin *Erithacus rubecula***

Just two singles, near the lodge 7/6 and in Töserdő woods 10/6; Robin is very much a woodland species in Hungary.

**Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica***

This species was a proper 'write-in' being a trip first. We twitched a male at the far side of Apaj fishponds 8/6, but it wasn't easy to see, so we were thrilled to find our own in an area of reeds behind the pools on the way back from Böddi-szék the following day; personally this moment was one of the highlights of the week!

**Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos***

Noted on six dates, with a number of birds still in song, the result of it being a late spring? We had views near Bugyi 8/6, at Kigyós 9/6 and along the Peszéradacs trail 11/6.

**European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca***

One eagle-eyed member of the group had a brief sighting of a male at Kigyós 9/6.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros***

Seen on five dates, most often in the lodge garden where adults were feeding young.

**Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra***

Three singing males at the Hosszúhát 'hill' 8/6; two in the field beyond the Peszéradacs trail 11/6.

**European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola***

First seen on the Kunpuszta 7/6, and noted on two subsequent dates.

**Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe***

A pair showed well 7/6 in the same Kunpuszta spot as in previous years.

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Noted on six dates; considerably scarcer than Tree Sparrow.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus***

Seen in good numbers every day.

**Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

10 in the northern Kiskunság 8/6 were mostly perched up on crops. We also saw several the following day, but the best sighting was of a male near the cemetery at the far end of the Peszéradacs trail 11/6; we could clearly note the distinguishing features of the nominate race.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

Seen daily in small numbers.

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris***

We had excellent views of this species on both visits to the Kunpuszta, with two 7/6 and three 11/6; our best sightings were on posts when using the minibus as a hide.

**Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis***

Singles were seen on three dates and heard on two others, mostly in clearings near the lodge; birds occasionally visited the garden to make use of the ponds.

**Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs***

Noted daily; more often heard than seen.

**Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***

The stunningly close views of males and females from the lodge hides were undoubtedly one of the week's highlights, and it was great that everyone in the group eventually 'connected'.

**European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris***

Recorded every day, but only in very small numbers.

**Common Linnet *Linaria cannabina***

Two juveniles were seen at Kunpuszta 11/6.

**European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis***

Seen daily in small numbers.

**European Serin *Serinus serinus***

Surprisingly we found just one, a singing male near the churchyard at Tiszaalpár 10/6, but it remained hidden.

**Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra***

First seen at Kunpuszta 7/6; we noted this species in suitable habitat on five dates, with a number of males in song.

**Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella***

Two singing males were present in woodland clearings near the lodge throughout the week.

**Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus***

At least five at Apaj fishponds 8/6; singles at Töserdő 10/6 and Lake Kolon 12/6.

**BUTTERFLIES (45 species)**

Common Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Small White *Pieris rapae*

Green-veined White *Pieris napi*

Eastern Bath White *Pontia edusa*

Pale Clouded Yellow *Colias hyale*

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

Common Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*

White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrrium w-album*

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

Large Copper *Lycaena dispar*

Short-tailed Blue *Cupido argiades*

Little Blue *Cupido minimus*

Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*

Green-underside Blue *Glaucopsyche alexis*

Eastern Baton Blue *Scolitantides vicrama*

Silver-studded Blue *Plebejus argus*

Idas Blue *Plebejus idas*

Adonis Blue *Polyommatus bellargus*



Top: two fritillaries, Niobe and Cardinal sunning themselves; bottom, Safflower Skipper – a lifer for some – and Eastern Bath White © Cardinal by Bill Branford and others by David Walsh, Limosa

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*  
 Nettle-tree Butterfly *Libythea celtis*  
 Lesser Purple Emperor *Apatura ilia*  
 Common Glider *Neptis sappho*  
 Northern Comma *Nymphalis c-album*  
 Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*  
 Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*  
 Peacock *Aglais io*  
 Map *Araschnia levana*  
 Cardinal *Argynnis pandora*  
 Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia*  
 Niobe Fritillary *Argynnis niobe*  
 Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia*  
 Glanville Fritillary *Melitaea cinxia*  
 Knapweed Fritillary *Melitaea phoebe*  
 Lesser Spotted Fritillary *Melitaea trivia*  
 Common Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*  
 Common Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*  
 Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*  
 Chestnut Heath *Coenonympha glycerion*  
 Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus armoricanus*  
 Safflower Skipper *Pyrgus carthami*  
 Mallow Skipper *Carcharodus alceae*  
 Essex Skipper *Thymelicus lineola*  
 Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*  
 Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus*

**DRAGONFLIES** (22 species)

Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*  
 Common Emerald Damselfly (Common Spreadwing) *Lestes sponsa*  
 Southern Emerald Damselfly (Migrant Spreadwing) *Lestes barbarus*  
 Blue-tailed Damselfly (Common Bluetail) *Ischnura elegans*  
 Variable Damselfly (Variable Bluet) *Coenagrion pulchellum*  
 Azure Damselfly (Azure Bluet) *Coenagrion puella*  
 Dainty Damselfly (Dainty Bluet) *Coenagrion scitulum*  
 Small Red-eyed Damselfly (Small Redeye) *Erythromma viridulum*  
 White-legged Damselfly (Blue Featherleg) *Platycnemis pennipes*  
 Norfolk Hawker (Green-eyed Hawker) *Aeshna isoceles*  
 Emperor Dragonfly (Blue Emperor) *Anax imperator*  
 Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope*  
 Hairy Dragonfly (Hairy Hawker) *Brachytron pratense*  
 Yellow-spotted Emerald *Somatochlora flavomaculata*  
 Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*  
 Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*  
 Scarce Chaser *Libellula fulva*  
 Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*  
 White-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum albistylum*  
 Large White-faced Darter (Yellow-spotted Whiteface) *Leucorrhinia pectoralis*  
 Southern Darter *Sympetrum meridionale*  
 Scarlet Darter (Broad Scarlet) *Crocothemis erythraea*

**MAMMALS**

European Sousek *Spermophilus citellus*  
 European Hare (Brown Hare) *Lepus europaeus*  
 Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*  
 European Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*

**AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES**

Fire-bellied Toad *Bombina bombina*  
 Edible Frog *Pelophylax esculentus*  
 Marsh Frog *Pelophylax ridibundus*  
 European Pond Terrapin *Emys orbicularis*  
 Eastern Green Lizard *Lacerta viridis*  
 Balkan Wall Lizard *Podarcis tauricus*  
 Eastern Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*

**MOTHS**

Fox Moth *Macrothylacia rubi*  
 Little Emerald *Jodis lactearia*\*  
 Riband Wave *Idaea aversata*  
 Oblique Striped *Phibalapteryx virgata*  
 Purple Bar *Cosmorhoe ocellata*  
 Latticed Heath *Chiasmia clathrate*\*  
 Pale Oak Beauty *Hypomecis punctinalis*  
 Light Emerald *Campaea margaritata*  
 Poplar Hawkmoth *Laothoe populi*  
 Hummingbird Hawkmoth *Macroglossum stellatarum*\*  
 Small Elephant Hawkmoth *Deilephila porcellus*  
 Puss Moth *Cerura vinula*  
 Swallow Prominent *Pheosia tremula*  
 Chocolate-tip *Clostera curtula*  
 Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra*  
 Cream-spot Tiger *Arctia villica*  
 Nine-spotted *Amata phegea*\*  
 Poplar Grey *Acronicta megacephala*  
 Pale Shoulder *Acontia lucida*\*  
 Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica*\*  
 Clay Fan-foot *Paracolax tristalis*  
 Purple-barred Yellow *Lythria purpuraria*\*  
 \*=day-flying moths; others only seen in the moth trap.



**OTHER SPECIES**

Red-legged Assassin Bug *Rhynocoris erythropus*

Forest Caterpillar Hunter *Calosoma sycophanta*

*Epipactis bugacensis* (orchid in lodge garden)