

# WILDWINGS SPRING TOUR TO HUNGARY

1st - 7th May 2013

Trip Summary and Species List by tour leader Gerard Gorman

In 2013 the newly designed WildWings spring birding tour to Hungary took in the Kiskunsag region to the SE of Budapest and the Zemplen Hills in the NE of the country. The Kiskunsag (some of which is a National Park), is part of the Great Hungarian Plain and lies between the Danube and Tisza rivers. We spent our first three nights in this mosaic of marshes, ponds, grasslands and farmlands and found most of our target species without too much trouble. The Zemplen Hills (a Landscape Protection Reserve) are mostly covered in deciduous forests with adjacent orchards, vineyards and meadows. We spent our last three nights here and had to work harder (as one does in woodlands) but again located the key birds. We also stopped at various sites between these two great areas. The weather was generally kind, though we experienced a storm during our second night in the Kiskunsag - this did not affect our birding. Everyone had a personal highlight (Imperial Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Red-footed Falcon, White-winged Black Tern, Ural Owl, Eagle Owl, Bee-eater, Roller and Penduline Tit were all mentioned), but White-backed Woodpecker was voted overall 'bird of the trip' on the final night, closely followed by Great Bustard. Besides these special species we also enjoyed seeing birds, such as Turtle Doves, Red-backed Shrikes, Serins, Hoopoes and Golden Orioles, which are rather scarce in the UK but still common in Hungary. In addition to birds, we did not neglect other wildlife, seeing Eastern Hedgehog, Roe Deer, Common Suslik, Brown Hare, Noctule Bat, Grass Snake, Sand Lizard, Green Toad, Yellow-bellied Toad and Common Spadefoot, amongst others. Butterflies included both Common and Scarce Swallowtails and Camberwell Beauty. Each member of the group contributed to finding the birds and hence to a successful tour, and I would like to thank everyone. I should also mention our experienced driver Istvan who did a tremendous job throughout and was very much part of the 2013 team.

## BIRDS

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* - Seen on 1 day and heard on another.  
Great-crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* – Seen on 2 days. Some pairs in display.  
Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* - Seen on 1 day. In superb breeding plumage.  
Common Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* - Seen on 1 day.  
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* - Seen on 3 days.  
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* - Seen on 3 days.  
Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* - Seen on 3 days. Common.  
Great White Egret *Egretta alba* - Seen on 4 days. Common.  
Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* - Seen on 1 day.  
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* - Seen on 1 day.  
Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* - Seen on 1 day. A great spot!  
Common Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* - 4 birds seen, 3 together in flight display. Heard 'booming' on other days.  
Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* - Seen on 1 day.  
Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* - Seen on 2 days, including 6 birds on May 6th.  
White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* - Seen on 5 days, including many on village roadside nests.  
Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* - Seen on 3 days.  
Greylag Goose *Anser anser* - Seen on 3 days. Common and already with goslings.  
Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* - Seen on 1 day.  
Gadwall *Anas strepera* - Seen on 1 day.  
Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* - Seen on 5 days. Common.  
Garganey *Anas querquedula* - Seen on 3 days, including in flight display.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* - Seen on 1 day.  
Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* - Seen on 1 day. Including superb gaudy drakes.  
Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* - Seen on 3 days.  
Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* - Seen on 2 days. One of Europe's rarest ducks seen well.  
Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* - Seen on 3 days. Including inflight display.  
White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* – An adult seen on 1 day.  
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* - Seen on 7 days. Common. Some close views.  
Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* - Seen on 3 days. Including a male by our Kiskunsag hotel.  
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* - Seen on 5 days.  
Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* - Seen on 7 days. Common.  
Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* - Seen on 1 day.  
Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* - Seen on 2 days. A target species seen well.  
Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* - Seen on 7 days. Common.  
Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* - Seen on 3 days.  
Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* - Seen on 2 days.  
Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* - 3 different birds seen on 1 day. Another key target seen well.  
Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* – Heard on 2 days.  
Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* – Seen on 6 days.  
Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* - Heard on 1 day.  
Corncrake *Crex crex* - Heard on 2 days. Despite some effort, would not reveal themselves!  
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* – Seen on 2 days. Rather skulking in Hungary.  
Common Coot *Fulica atra* - Seen on 3 days.  
Great Bustard *Otis tarda* - Seen on 2 days: a total of 10 individuals, on ground and in flight.  
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* - Seen briefly on 1 day.  
Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* - Seen on 7 days. Common.  
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* – Birds in breeding plumage seen on 1 day.  
Common Curlew *Numenius arquata* - Seen on 1 day.  
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* - Seen on 2 days.  
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* - Seen on 1 day.  
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* – Passage flocks seen on 3 days.  
Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* - Flocks seen on 2 days: males in various plumage colours.  
Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedipnemus* - 2 birds seen on 1 day, one on nest amongst cattle.  
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* - Seen on 2 days. Locally common.  
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* - Seen on 2 days. Locally common.  
Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* – Breeding adults seen on 1 day.  
Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* - Seen on 4 days. Including large colony.  
Common Gull *Larus canus* - Seen on 1 day.  
Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* - Seen on 2 days.  
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* - Seen on 4 days. Locally common.  
White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* - Seen 3 days, in stunning summer plumage.  
Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* - Seen on 1 day.  
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* - Seen on 2 days, including at colony.  
Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* - Seen everyday.  
Stock Dove *Columba oenas* - Seen on 2 days, others heard.  
Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* - Seen everyday.  
Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* – Seen on 5 days. Locally common.  
Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* - Seen everyday.  
Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* – Seen and heard on 6 days. Common.  
Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* – Seen on 1 day. Adult with 2 chicks showed well.  
Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* – Seen on 1 day.  
Ural Owl *Strix uralensis* – An adult seen on 1 day.  
Little Owl *Athene noctua* - Seen on 2 days, heard on others.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* – Seen on 5 days. At colony and passage flocks.  
Eurasian Roller *Coracias garrulus* – Seen on 5 days. Roadside bird in Kiskunsag.  
Hoopoe *Upupa epops* – Seen on 6 days, for example, by Kiskunsag hotel.  
Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* – Seen on 3 days. Others calling.  
Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius* – Seen on 2 days. Others heard.  
White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* – Seen on 1 day. A pair near nest-hole.  
Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* – Seen on 3 days, heard on others.  
Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus* – Seen on 5 days, for example, by hotel in Zemplen.  
Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* – Seen on 1 day. Others heard.  
Grey-faced Woodpecker (Grey-headed) *Picus canus* – Seen well on 2 days, 5 birds in total.  
Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* – Seen everyday. Often at roadsides.  
Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* – Seen everyday.  
Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* – Flocks seen on 1 day.  
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* - Seen everyday. Common.  
House Martin *Delichon urbica* - Seen everyday. Common.  
White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* – Seen everyday. Common.  
Yellow Wagtail (Blue-headed race) *Motacilla flava* – Seen 6 days. Locally common.  
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* – Seen on 1 day.  
Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* – Seen briefly and heard singing on 1 day.  
Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* – Seen on 2 days. One in display by the Eagle Owl.  
Wren Troglodytes *troglodytes* – Seen on 1 day, heard on another. A woodland bird in Hungary.  
Eurasian Robin *Erithacus rubecula* – Heard on 1 day. A woodland bird in Hungary.  
Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* - Seen on 3 days, heard on others. Common.  
Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* – Seen on 6 days. Locally common, often urban.  
Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* – Seen on 5 days. Males in smart breeding plumage.  
Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* – Seen on 5 days. A roadside bird.  
Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* – Seen on 3 days.  
Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*. Seen on 6 days.  
Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* – Seen on 2 days.  
Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* – Seen on 1 day.  
River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* – Singing bird seen on 1 day.  
Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* – One heard, but would not show.  
Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* – Singing birds seen on 2 days.  
Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon* – Seen on 1 day.  
Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* – Seen on 3 days. Locally common.  
Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* – Seen on 1 day.  
Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* – Seen on 1 day, others heard.  
Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* – Seen on 4 days. Locally common.  
Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* – Seen on 3 days, others heard. Common.  
Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* – Seen on 4 days, others heard.  
Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* – Seen on 2 days, in song flight display.  
Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* – Seen and heard on 1 day.  
Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* – Seen on 5 days, others heard. Common.  
Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* – Seen on 3 days, others heard.  
Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* – Seen on 2 days, others heard.  
Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* – Seen on 1 day.  
Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* – Seen on 1 day. A very good find.  
Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* – Seen on 3 days.  
Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* – Seen on 3 days including smart males.  
Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus* – Seen well on 1 day.  
Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* – Seen well on 1 day.  
Marsh Tit *Parus palustris* – Seen on 1 day.

Coal Tit *Parus ater* – Seen on 1 day.  
Great Tit *Parus major*- Seen on 6 days. Very common.  
Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus* – Seen on 3 days.  
Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* – Seen on 2 days. Mostly white-headed form.  
Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* – Seen on 2 days.  
Common Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* – Seen on 1 day. Others heard.  
Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* – Seen and heard on 1 day.  
Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* – Seen on 6 days. Locally common.  
Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* – Seen on 4 days, for example, by Kiskunsag hotel.  
Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* – Seen on 5 days.  
Black-billed Magpie *Pica pica* – Seen on 6 days.  
Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* – Seen on 5 days.  
Rook *Corvus frugilegus* – Seen on 6 days.  
Hooded Crow *Corvus corone* – Seen on 6 days.  
Common Raven *Corvus corax* – Seen on 2 days.  
Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* – Seen on 6 days.  
Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* - Seen and heard on 6 days. Locally common.  
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* - Seen on 6 days.  
Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* - Seen on 6 days.  
Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* - Seen on 6 days.  
Eurasian Serin *Serinus serinus* - Seen on 5 days. Singing at both hotels.  
Eurasian Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* - Seen on 5 days.  
Common Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* - Seen on 6 days.  
Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* - Seen on 5 days.  
Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* – Seen on 2 days. Locally common.  
Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* – Seen on 4 days.  
Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*- Seen on 2 days.  
Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* – Seen on 5 days. Often on roadside wires.