

HUNGARY, MAY 2009

by Robert and Sonia Adderley

A SHORT BIRDING BREAK BASED IN EGER WITH "HUNGARIAN BIRDTOURS", STAYING AT THE VILLA VOLGY HOTEL IN EGER.

11th MAY

Our flight from Manchester touched down in Budapest at around 6pm, where we were met at the Airport and transported to the Hotel at Eger. Our first Hungarian birds seen from the car on the journey included a Crested Lark and several Common Buzzards.

On arrival at the Hotel the light was fading fast. So we opted to enjoy an evening meal on a very pleasant warm evening, sat in the hotel grounds, where a calling Scops Owl accompanied our meal. The Scops Owl showed in flight briefly being mobbed by a Blackbird, however this highly vocal bird was to become a feature each evening, and was even audible through the night from our room!

For the next 4 days the tour consisted of an optional "before breakfast" early morning start with a visit to a local site at 6.30am, returning to the hotel for breakfast then the rest of the day travelling further a field until teatime. Not only did me and Sonia make all the early morning starts, but I also did my own "early" early morning start each day checking the scrub and Vineyards from the lanes adjacent to our hotel from first light.

12th MAY

VILLA VOLGY HOTEL AREA, EGER – early am.

A very early morning walk around the lanes adjacent to the Hotel, a site which became our "temporary local patch".

Nightingale – 4 Serin – 1 Crossbill – 1 male Cuckoo – 1

Black Redstart – 1 male Blackcap Tree Sparrow.

OSTOROS AREA – early am

Corn Bunting Stonechat Whitethroat Whinchat - 1

Barred Warbler – 1 singing male Nightingale – 1

Red-backed Shrike – 2 Lesser Grey Shrike – 1

River Warbler – 3 Marsh Warbler – 1 Serin – 1

Wryneck – 1 Golden Oriole – 2 Tree Pipit - 1

Turtle Dove – several.



River Warbler, Nightingale, Wryneck and Lesser Grey Shrike at Ostoros.

BUKK HILLS NATIONAL PARK AREA – mid am-early pm.

Raven Black Redstart – 2 Serin - several

Lesser Spotted Eagle – 1 showed well hunting over grassland by the road.

Buzzard – several Red-backed Shrike – 2

Middle Spotted Woodpecker – pair showed well at the nest hole.

Collared Flycatcher – 3 observed (a pair and another singing male).

Bee-eater – 4 Hawfinch – c20 Great Spotted Woodpecker

White Wagtail (Black Woodpecker heard!).



Lesser Spotted Eagle and Middle Spotted Woodpecker in the Bukk.

EGER – pm

White Stork – 1 observed on a nest platform on a Telegraph pole on the edge of e town.

Syrian Woodpecker – 1 observed briefly in flight.

GELEJ FISHPONDS AREA – pm.

Great White Egret – 1 Redshank – 3 Wood Sandpiper – 1

Little Ringed Plover – 3 Temminck's Stint – 1

Great Reed Warbler – 5 Red-necked Grebe – 2

Little Grebe – 1 Hooded Crow Pochard Shoveler

Ferruginous Duck – 17.

Wigeon – 1 Hobby – 1 Marsh Harrier – 3 Bittern – 1

Purple Heron – 2 (sadly one of these birds we found in a moribund state).

Blue-headed Wagtail – 2 Spotted Flycatcher – 1

Crested Lark – 1 Common Sandpiper – 1

Black Tern – c20 Whiskered Tern – 2

White-winged Black Tern – 1 (2nd summer bird).

13th MAY 2009

VILLA VOLGY HOTEL AREA – EGER, early am.

Icterine Warbler – found a somewhat elusive singing male, the bird's song included several bouts of mimicry notably Reed Warbler and Swallow.

Serin – 2 Black Redstart – 2 Turtle Dove.

NOSVAJ WOOD AREA – early am,

Yellowhammer – 3 Great Spotted Woodpecker – 2

Middle Spotted Woodpecker – 3.

Turtle Dove – several Chiffchaff Spotted Flycatcher – 1

Hawfinch – c10 Golden Oriole – 1 Tree Pipit – 1

Black Woodpecker – 1 observed in flight calling.

Also Hoopoe heard calling at this site.

SZOMOLYA – am

Bee-eater – 4+ Red-backed Shrike – 1 Stonechat

Barred Warbler – 1 singing male.



Serin near the Villa Volgy Hotel and Bee-eaters in heat haze at Szomolya.

EGERLOVO AREA – am

Eastern Imperial Eagle – 1 observed in flight.

Buzzard – several Montagu's Harrier – 1 female.

Bee-eater – 3+ Red-backed Shrike – 1

White Stork – 2 observed on nests.

BORSODIVANKA – am

Roller – pair observed.

Red-backed Shrike – 1



Barred Warbler at Szomolya and Roller at Borsodivanka.

RIVER TISZA AREA NEAR NEGYES – late am /early pm.

Sedge Warbler – 1 Great Reed Warbler – 1 Cuckoo - 4

Savi's Warbler – 2 Little Egret – 6 Purple Heron – 1

Little Owl -1 Spotted Flycatcher – 1

Great White Egret – 2 Corn Bunting Night Heron – 1

Black Stork – 3

Marsh Harrier – 1 Wheatear – 3 Crested Lark – 3

Blue-headed Wagtail – 2 Bee-eater - 1

MEZOKOVESD AREA – pm.

Marsh Harrier – 3+ Crested Lark – 1

Turtle Dove – several

Eastern Imperial Eagle – 1 observed stood on the nest distantly and later in flight.

nearby Fishponds area –

Great Reed Warbler – 7 Night Heron – 3

Red-necked Grebe – 1 Little Ringed Plover

Penduline Tit – 1



Savi's Warbler at Negyes, Great Reed Warbler and Eastern Imperial Eagle at Mezokovesd.



Night Heron at Mezokovesd.

VILLA VOLGY HOTEL AREA - EGER, evening ..

Serin – 1 Black Redstart – 1 Tawny Pipit – 1

Red-backed Shrike – 1

Syrian Woodpecker – 1 showed well. After brief flight views yesterday, we finally obtained good views of this species enabling us to see the facial pattern properly. The somewhat "Redshank like" call was also distinctive.



Syrian Woodpecker, Tawny Pipit and Red-backed Shrike near our hotel in Eger.



14th MAY 2009

VILLA VOLGY HOTEL AREA – EGER, early am.

Serin – 3 Tawny Pipit – 1 Whitethroat – c10 Whinchat – 2 Raven – 2 Stonechat – several
 Spotted Flycatcher – 1 Golden Oriole – 3 Cuckoo - 1
 Black Redstart – 2 Swift – 6 north Tree Sparrow.



Golden Oriole – Villa Volgy Hotel area.

HORTOBAGYI NATIONAL PARK AREA – late am – late pm,

One of the premier sites in Hungary. Most of the speciality species seen today were under the expert guidance of a Park Ranger, as the areas where Great Bustards and Aquatic Warblers breed are not open to the public without an accompanying Ranger.

Great White Egret – c50+ White Stork – c25

Roller – 3.

Greylag Goose Lesser Grey Shrike – 3 Spoonbill – c20

Red-Footed Falcon – c30 observed including a breeding colony.

Pygmy Cormorant – 8

Ferruginous Duck – c20 Pochard Wheatear

Night Heron – 2 Blue-headed Wagtail Crested Lark

Stone Curlew – 1

Stonechat Marsh Harrier – c50+ Purple Heron – 6



Red-footed Falcons at Hortobagyi.

Saker Falcon – pair observed at a nest box on a pylon, with at least 1 chick visible in the nest. Also another different bird observed elsewhere in the Park.



Saker Falcons on the nesting pylon in the Hortobagyi.

Great Bustard – 12 birds observed (9 males and 3 females).

White-tailed Eagle – 2 Immatures observed sat on an old Barn roof.

Little Owl Golden Oriole – 4 Temminck's Stint – 1

Wood Sandpiper – 1 Ruff – 7 Black-winged Stilt – 2

Avocet – c20 Corn Bunting Black Redstart

Black Tern – 2 Whiskered Tern – 2

Cuckoo – c10 Squacco Heron – 5

Grasshopper Warbler – 1 Savi's Warbler – 1

Great Reed Warbler – 1 (Quail heard)

Aquatic Warbler – 2 displaying birds showed well.



Great Bustard – male at Hortobagyi.



Pygmy Cormorant and Squacco Heron at Hortobagyi.





Aquatic Warbler at Hortobagyi.

A superb day's birding which was sadly over all too quickly, the Hortobagyi is one of those areas that we could have easily spent a full week exploring.

15th MAY 2009

Sadly our last day!

VILLA VOLGY HOTEL AREA – EGER, early am -

A last walk around our patch!

Golden Oriole – 2 Serin – 2 Black Redstart

OSTOROS AREA – early am.

Barred Warbler – 1 singing male River Warbler – 3

Red-backed Shrike – 3 Golden Oriole – 3

Wryneck – 1 Cuckoo – 1 Hawfinch – several

Corn Bunting Stonechat

BUKK HILLS NATIONAL PARK AREA – am.

Lesser Spotted Eagle – 1.

Red-backed Shrike – 2 Bee-eater – 8 Hawfinch – c10

Lesser Whitethroat – 1

White-backed Woodpecker – 2 birds, an adult and a juvenile showed well adjacent to their nest hole, discovered by our group.



White-backed Woodpecker in the Bukk Hills.



White-backed Woodpecker in the Bukk Hills. The scarcest of the European Woodpeckers and a great bird on which to end our Holiday!

After our final morning birding in the Bukk Hills, we returned to the Villa Volgy Hotel in Eger early afternoon to collect our luggage. We were then driven back to Budapest Airport where we caught our return flight at 6.50pm arriving back in Manchester at around 9pm.

We found Hungary a wonderful country, with friendly people and fantastic Birding, hopefully we will get to make a return visit one day...

During our short holiday we saw a total of 127 species with another 8 additional species heard.

Robert and Sonia Adderley, June 2009

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