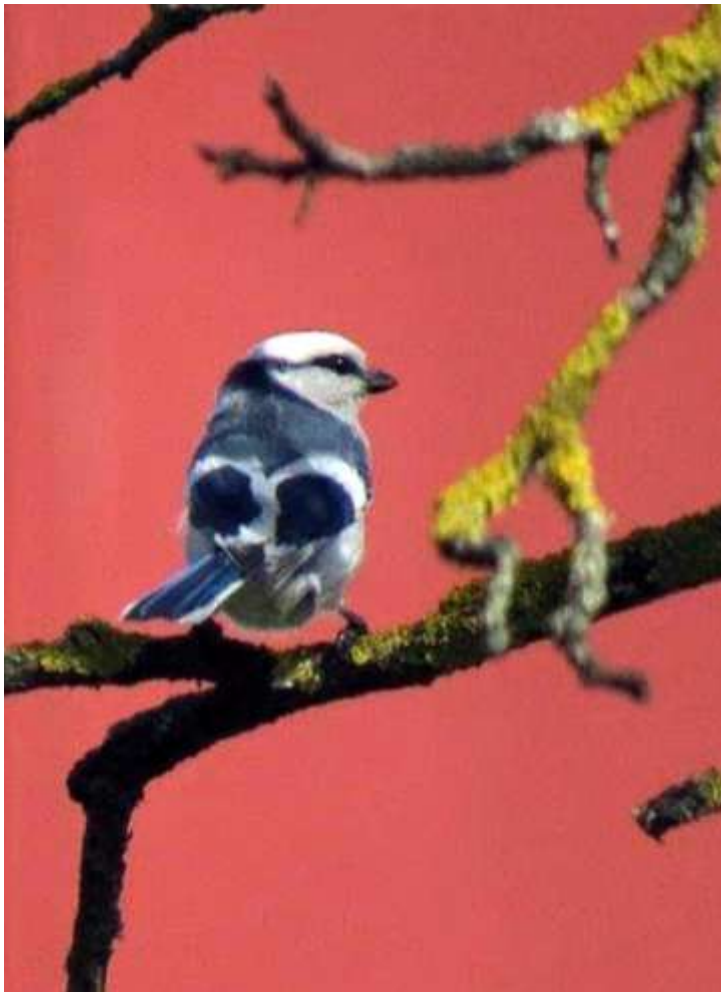


ORNITHOLIDAY'S TOUR TO BELARUS
Europe's Last Great Wilderness

26 April – 04 May 2013



Leaders: Gabor Orban and Paul Rogers

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A Personal Diary

Friday 26th April

It is a very early start for our flight to Vienna from Heathrow's Terminal 1, our flight is second on the departure schedule. A favourable tail wind means we land some 15 minutes ahead of time, this is just as well as we have a tight connection for our ongoing flight to Minsk. It is a rush but we do make it, although Vienna Airport claims the shortest connection time in Europe of only 25 minutes.

At Minsk immigration is straight forward and our luggage awaits us at the carousel. Changing money can be a long winded affair, so we change Euros for the group, pounds sterling are not so easy, and for a short time I am a Belarus Roubles millionaire. Gabor our guide for the tour, Andrea his partner, Anna our interpreter and guide and last but not least, Tibor our driver are waiting for us at the arrivals hall.

Soon luggage is loaded into a trailer and we head over the flat landscape in a comfortable Mercedes Sprinter Minibus. It is a fine sunny day as we pass huge co-operatively farmed fields and immense forests. As food on the flights was of miniscule proportions we stop en route to have a bite to eat and a drink.

Our journey to Turov takes over 4 hours, the Pripyat River is "uncontrolled" and fields and meadows are several feet underwater. Our "state run" hotel on the banks of the river has comfortable rooms but the menu is a limited so we walk a short distance to a private enterprise that offers better service and good food. After our meal and a welcome beer we retire for some much needed sleep.

Saturday 27th April

Most of us enjoy a short lie-in and breakfast at 08.00 although a few early risers walk along the banks of the swollen river and find Syrian Woodpeckers, flycatchers and White Storks adding to their already enormous nest.

After breakfast with coffee and tea we head west and stop at a flooded meadow. Here are many Ruffs, several Black-tailed Godwits, Northern Shoveler and a male Garganey. A juvenile White-tailed Eagle patrols the distant waters, hopefully we will have better views of this massive raptor.

A tributary of the River Pripyat has a raised flood bank which allows easy flat walking and good views over the surrounding area. Here are our first Black Redstarts and White Wagtails on the edge of a make-shift car park. Soon we are watching and admiring one of the countries gems, Azure Tit, in fact a pair nesting in a rusting iron tank. They make frequent visits to their unlikely, but safe, nest site much to the admiration of the group. It is a species that makes an unforgettable impression, nearby a pair of Long-tailed Tits of the white-headed, *caudatus* race almost go unnoticed.

A Thrush Nightingale sings lustily from a thicket but fails to put in appearance. However, our frustration is short lived as Olga finds a most obliging individual on a muddy patch at the base of a willow tree, it sits long enough for us all to enjoy through the telescopes, a rare event. A Eurasian Wryneck calls from high in a tall line of poplars but is only seen in flight. This situation continues after our picnic lunch when we walk the flood bank in the other direction. A Great Reed Warbler and a Savi's Warbler sing from a small bed of reeds but the stiff breeze keeps them well hidden. A male Penduline Tit is busy adding the finishing touches to an elaborate nest but will the female be impressed by this one or another nest he will build. The nest swings violently in the wind but the builder is undeterred and frequently pokes his head out for us to view through the telescopes.

By the Turov Bridge are a few mud banks above the level of the water, here are many Ruffs of various colours, some displaying and posturing to the attendant females. Black-tailed Godwits look superb in their brilliant breeding dress contrasting with the black and white of a Eurasian Oystercatcher. A flock of Black-headed Gulls rest on the open water along with a few Little Gulls, which do have black heads, these smart

birds will soon move further north. Many terns fly above the grey waters, most are Common but here are also Black, striking White-winged and Little Terns. Marsh Frogs constantly “serenade” us as we search through the mass of birds.

European Bison is one species high on everyone’s “must see” list. The nearby forest sometimes produces a sighting but not today, instead we take a short walk into the forest. Soon we hear the distinctive call of a Black Woodpecker and a short period of play-back entices this impressive bird to investigate, the woodpecker list is up and running. Our walk is aborted when we hear news of nearby bison - we will return here tomorrow morning.

In the middle of a grassy field on the edge of a village sits a group of five European Bison or Wisent, including a most impressive bull, they are busy chewing the cud and not as active as we would have hoped. At the end of the day we drive to check out the breeding areas of Terek Sandpipers, alarmingly they are several feet under water. The untamed River Pripyat floods every year but not to this extent and not in early spring, this is a once in a life time occurrence. Will the Great Snipe leking area be underwater as well?

Sunday 28th April

A few of us walk along the river before breakfast, Common, Black and White-winged Terns are present in good numbers, Yellow Wagtails bob along the muddy edges whilst Pied Flycatchers and Wood Warblers feed high in some tall willow.

We return Atshani Forest, a vast area of mature Scot’s Pine and Birch trees. At first the path is dry but soon we are glad of our wellington boots as we wade through mud and water. Wood Warblers seem to be on every other tree. The air is filled with their spinning songs, some are disputing territories and others already building nests. The 1.5km walk takes us over streams dammed by Beavers to a huge ancient pine believed to be at least 350 years old, amidst its enormous boughs is balanced a beehive of medieval design. On the smaller trunks are Short-toed Treecreepers, a Eurasian Nuthatch and a Great Spotted Woodpecker. Returning along the same route we have excellent views of a Three-toed Woodpecker perched high above our heads in a tall dead Birch Tree.

Our intended picnic site is feet under water and only occupied by a White Wagtail, a boat trailer is a suitable make-shift substitute. A tractor is turning over the fertile soil in a large field on the edge of another forest. The disturbed insects attract several White Storks and three Lesser Spotted Eagles, here Geoff spots our one and only Eurasian Curlew of the tour. Light rain greets us as we walk to the Bechanskya-Buba Forest. We park on the edge of a village which is now virtually deserted, with only a few of the traditional wooden houses inhabited by elderly couples and the orchards are now abandoned - ideal for Eurasian Wrynecks.

This woodland is completely different from the one this morning being dominated by wonderful mature Beech and Hornbeam Trees, their green buds yet to fully break. There is also a prolific understory of brambles and Wood Anemones and Lesser Celandines and there are few Wild Boar here. As the rain eases and the skies brighten so the bird activity increases, first a Middle Spotted Woodpecker, then a Grey-headed Woodpecker drum on dead branches high in the trees. A male Collared Flycatcher flits a little lower in the branches, a Hawfinch feeds on the forest floor and a Golden Oriole utters its clear fluty notes but remains hidden. However, the star sighting is of a White-backed Woodpecker, now the sun is shining and the forest transformed into shades of bright green new leaves and white flowers that dot the rich brown fallen leaves. The bird perches in a close tree before flying down to pose on a tree stump, before searching a fallen branch, they are wonderful views of a bird that is often difficult to find. Back at the vehicle a Eurasian Wryneck calls but not from the old gnarled apple trees but from the top of concrete power pole, not what we expected but it brings to an end a great session for woodpeckers.

In the late afternoon we visit a small ringing station in Turov, here we see two newly ringed Common Redshanks that are released to return to the wetlands. The small project is in much need of financial support and later in the tour we donate some of our excess Roubles to the cause. The Director of the station takes us to a new area where the Great Snipe are leking, surprisingly it is a small area by the side of a waterway where there is rank vegetation but the rest of the area is scraped down to the wet soil by a number of large tractors, preparing for further development. We stand on the bank of the small river waiting expectantly for the first birds to arrive just after 18.30. A couple of birds fly in but are lost amongst the tall vegetation.

Almost unnoticed by the site are two small canvas hides, suddenly a figure emerges from one. Immediately we are bombarded with abuse in English from a Dutch photographer, demanding we leave the area. The response of the group is immediate and angry, outlining his irresponsibility and lack of concern when disturbing a threatened species. As the light fades more birds fly into the area and we have the privilege of watching them display. Recent research from radio tagged birds in Sweden have discovered that Great Snipes travel 4,200 miles from Sub-Saharan Africa to their breeding grounds in two days without stopping and at a speed of 60 miles per hour. Surely such a species demands more respect from a selfish photographer. An added bonus comes in the shape of a Terek Sandpiper flying in front of us to land at the water's edge for us to watch through the telescopes. It is a great end to a fruitful and occasionally frustrating day.

Monday 29th April

The pre-breakfast walk adds European Serin and Common Linnet to the bird list and over the water fly, Common, Black, White-winged, Little and Whiskered Terns. "Quite a decent turn out" as Keith quips!

Gabor's partner Andrea is not well so we explore the vast fishpond system at Beloe with the help of Anna. Tibor our driver knows the way but once there we explore the area by "instinct". The area is good for ducks and a regular spot for Smew and it is not long before we find a pair, then another, then a trio and then a few lone males. In all we see in the region of 50 of this attractive bird. A Bluethroat sings from the top of a post and then from a wire while six White-tailed Eagles circle above some distant trees, possibly just leaving their roost. On the open waters are many Great Crested Grebes some pairs displaying, they look superb in the bright sunshine but surely they cannot all breed here. Amongst the numerous Mallard are a few Common Goldeneye, Tufted Duck and Gadwall, as we watch the calls of Eurasian Hoopoe and Common Cuckoo fills the air.

The banks that separate the ponds are good vantage points, a recently drained pond attract lots of Black-headed Gulls and a few of the much larger Caspians. Waders are in short supply but a muddy patch is attractive to a few Ruff, Common Greenshanks and Spotted Redshanks. Our picnic is a relaxed affair on the edge of some pines. The newly felled trees make ideal tables and chairs. Another series of lakes and ponds are only a short drive away, here are several pairs of Black-necked Grebes their flamboyant ear tufts shining golden in the brilliant sunshine. A Great Reed Warbler eventually appears from the depths of a reed bed along with an inquisitive Bluethroat. Common Goldeneyes are in good numbers on a large lake, maybe some will stay to breed. Several Tree Frogs of various sizes hop across the track to seek the safety of some dead flower stems.

The restaurant stays open especially for us tonight; Monday is normally their night off. As usual the service is efficient and the beers most welcome. After the checklist we outline the plans for tomorrow and pastures new, or perhaps waters new.

Tuesday 30th April

Tibor had seen a Beaver in the river a few days ago. We meet in front of the hotel and just before 7.00 am, a Beaver swims right in front of us before disappearing into a hole beneath a bridge. Charles has walked in the opposite direction and sees a Golden Oriole, we see Tree Sparrow, European Serin and a White-backed Woodpecker in the gardens of some new houses on the river bank.

Breakfast is still at 08.00, no rules are to be broken here but we are loaded and ready for our three hour drive by 09.00. Geography lessons about flood plains now become a reality and the vast acres of water are far greater than we imagined in those distant school days. Birds are at a premium and only Western Marsh and Montagu's Harriers fly over the fields but some of the group do see a European Green Woodpecker fly across the road.

In a village we collect two Rangers, who work in a nearby reserve, which is reached by a sandy track. Again it is an extensive coniferous forest with open areas of grassland, ideal habitat for our target bird, Great Grey Owl. After a few hundred metres our guides stop and point to a bundle of twigs half way up a Scots Pine. A pair of yellow eyes in the centre of two barred facial discs appears above the rim of the nest, an incubating Great Grey Owl. Slowly and quietly we move to an area where we can see the whole head of this magnificent bird, these are magical moments. Only a Grass Snake diverts our attention for a minute or two.

The deep sand proves a serious problem for our minibus. Whilst the problem is resolved we take the opportunity to have lunch to save some time. Once under way again we visit the nest site of a Tengmalm's Owl but the bird does not appear. Part of the Sporovo Reserve is the last location for today; this area is the breeding area for the vast majority of the world's Aquatic Warblers. Squeezed into our "wellies" we wade into a marsh full of large tussocks of sedges, ideal habitat for flying Aquatic Warblers but not for two legged humans. Several Whinchats perched on the tops of dead *Phragmites* stalks raise our hopes, a smaller bird does eventually appear but it is at a distance. Keeping our balance and viewing through binoculars is a tricky business and viewing through telescopes from the roadside and terra firma seems a better option. Other birds do appear and some of us have good views of this highly specialised breeder. A last surprise is an American Mink hunting along the banks of a drainage ditch; the species invaded Belarus in the early 1990's, now the native European Mink is an endangered species in the country.

The drive to our comfortable hotel is a short one and dinner served quickly.

Wednesday 1st May

We awake to rain for our early morning visit to another part of the Sporovo Reserve. Here a board walk penetrates deep into the marsh and normally provides a dry access and easy viewing. Today, the boards are several inches under water and the wind and rain mean viewing is anything but easy. Birds are hidden deep in cover and only a European Reed Bunting and a Whinchat are seen. Some you win some you lose, this morning we lost.

An excellent late breakfast is some comfort but again tea and coffee are at a premium. Today we transfer to Belovezhskaya Puscha, a National Park. As today is Labour Day and a public holiday we are unable to visit the Seleti Fishponds, as all is locked and bolted. As we travel Western Marsh Harriers hunt over some of the cereal fields and several pairs of Stock Doves feed on the edge of the long straight roads.

To the north of the park, near Zelezie, is an area where Great Spotted Eagles breed and an extensive marsh where they hunt. Here are over a dozen Great Egrets, several Grey Herons, a single Garganey and many Mallard. The constant calls of Common Cuckoo and drumming Common Snipe provide an auditory background to our searching. Common and Lesser Whitethroats flit in the roadside willows but there is no sign of sought after raptor, certainly the cool conditions are no help to our cause. In order to make the most of our chances we picnic on the side of the dirt road, we comment that this certainly would not be possible back home. A trio of Common Buzzards give rise to false hopes and just when we are about to leave a distant dot becomes bigger as it flies close, amazingly it is a Great Spotted Eagle, it flies close enough for us to appreciate its huge wing span and upperwing details. Departure is delayed when David finds a Large Tortoiseshell butterfly waking from its winter hibernation, although in a poor state it is the focus of many lenses when it lands on my jacket.

Our hotel is just inside the entrance to the Park and as it is a public holiday full of local visitors. Our rooms are comfortable and spacious. Once settled in we take a walk into the woodlands that surround the buildings. A singing Yellowhammer causes a little confusion, first because it is in ancient woodland and secondly because it has run out of "cheese". We have no such problems with a male Great Spotted Woodpecker that perches in full view at the top of a dead snag.

Thursday 2nd May

There is good birding immediately outside the hotel and here we find Common Redstart, European Serin, Song Thrush and Hawfinch, although a European Green Woodpecker calls it is not seen.

After breakfast we are joined by Anton, a local Ranger and ornithologist. He navigates us to a stretch of woodland full of old oaks and stately pines, "Woodpecker heaven!" Gabor exclaims. However, it is not a woodpecker that first catches our eye but a male Collared Flycatcher, then another, then another, they seem to be everywhere. A male Brambling steals their thunder as it defends a territory from Common Chaffinches, it is a stunning bird so different from the ones we see in the UK in the winter, fawn feathers have abraded to reveal a jet black head.

Walking through this woodland is a real treat, made even more enjoyable when a European Pygmy Owl responds to play back and sits right above our heads. We are pleased to see it but not the flock of passerines

that mob it, in all there are seven species including many Wood Warblers and even a Hawfinch. The owl moves to give us interrupted views and hopefully some great photographs. A Middle Spotted Woodpecker joins it and searches the branch it is sitting on, as it raises its red crest it flushes the owl. Anton hears a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and it investigates play back by flying into a dead tree just above us, this is the last of the 10 European woodpeckers seen by some of the group, no mean achievement. An area of Norway Spruces is inhabited by a pair of Firecrests that display and raise their crown feathers, which gives the species its name. Huge fallen trunks are festooned in mosses, lichens and fungi when bathed in rays of sunshine they are most photogenic.

After such a fruitful morning we relax over late morning tea and biscuits. Once refreshed we return to Zelezie passing a Hen Harrier quartering a newly ploughed en route. Lunch is a pleasant affair in the garden of a research worker, not only is it a traditional setting, it also a tasty traditional lunch of the Belarusian version of hot borsch soup. The tree trunks in a nearby woodland have many holes, some used by Tengmalm's Owls but despite trying eight or more we cannot find any occupants. It is a similar story when we explore a denser area for Hazel Grouse; a Eurasian Treecreeper is our only consolation. As the afternoon draws to a close we return to the open marsh in the hope of finding mammals. After a short time Steve and Jeff bring off a double act pointing out a female Elk, or Moose in North America. The huge beast is remarkably well-hidden amongst the willow carr and we have to wait patiently until we have good views of her. Further down the road is a Northern Goshawk perched in a small stunted birch.

Returning through the park Tibor spots a Hazel Grouse feeding at the side of the road, unfortunately it scurries away before everyone can see it but still it is a good end to a memorable day.

Friday 3rd May

Our last full day of the tour starts with a traditional breakfast of chocolate covered frozen yoghurt followed by ravioli, suffice to say it was not a great hit! Our early morning walk is abandoned due to heavy rain and the wet weather continues, so we visit the shop in the museum next door for a few souvenirs. There is little on offer except fridge magnets, it is difficult to spend much money here.

It looks like a day in the bus driving the park roads in search of mammals. Soon a Roe Deer buck gets us off to a promising start, a few miles further on a female Wild Boar with several stripy piglets quickly heads for the safety of the forest. As the rain ceases and the clouds lift we take the opportunity to stretch our legs and look for Bison but it is a male Montagu's Harrier that appears first. A male Red-backed Shrike is a recent arrival along with a vocal Eurasian Wryneck. A Red Fox searches the long grass for likely prey but there is no sign of Bison and a Golden Oriole sings from a small copse where David finds some Herb Paris amongst the Wood Anemones.

Walking along a muddy track in the hope of Hazel Grouse whilst it is still dry we see a Wild Boar dash across the path and a group of Bison. Unfortunately they quickly disappear out of sight before everyone can see them, how disappointing and to make matters worse we do not find any grouse. Soon the rain returns and it is a wet return to the vehicle. An open grassy area provides grazing for a small herd of Red Deer hinds that soon trot off into the trees.

Still it rains but an elevated wooden viewing platform provides us with a dry place for our last picnic lunch and the hot drinks are much appreciated. The muddy tracks dictate that we stay on the tarmac roads to continue our search. Our perseverance is rewarded when we find a group of Bison sheltering in a narrow strip of woodland, nervously they watch us in the bus, the trunks of Silver Birch framing their heads. Slowly they move out into an open meadow and just as slowly we get out of the bus and enjoy the sight of 22 cows and calves; with only about 400 present in the country this is a sizeable herd and a real privilege for us. It is a great end to a day that promised little but delivered much.

We are back at the hotel in good time to dry out and pack for our early departure in the morning.

Saturday 4th May

It is almost a five hour drive back to Minsk so we leave at 06.30 taking a packed breakfast with us. Again it is wet so we do not have the frustration of a long drive in bright sunshine. Driving through the forest we pass more Red Deer and a young bull Bison, a fine farewell. We arrive at the airport in good time to say farewell

and thanks to Gabor and his team, to change back excess roubles and enjoy a cup of coffee. We make good time to Vienna and have plenty of time to make our onward connection to Heathrow and grab a snack and a drink.

At London luggage quickly arrives on the carousel and we say farewell to new found friends before heading off on the final stages of journeys home.

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people I must thank, Tibor for his safe and patient driving, Andrea and Anna for their guiding and preparing our picnics, to several local guides for their expertise and to Gabor for his organisation and knowledge of Belarus. Most importantly I must thank you for your camaraderie, your punctuality, your good humour and patience. It was a pleasure to share the delights of this “new country”, hopefully we will meet up again in the not too distant future and share some of these experiences. Thank you so much for travelling with us. Many thanks to Rob Grimmond for allow me to use his photographs in this report.

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July 2013

Itinerary and Weather

- 26th April International flight from LHR to Minsk via Vienna and onwards to Turov
Fine and sunny maximum temperature 75°F
- 27th April Pipyatsky National Park and Turov
Fine and sunny max temp 78°F
- 28th April Turov area – Atshani Forest, Bechanskaya- Buba Forest.
Fine sunny morning, rain and showers in afternoon max temp 75°F
- 29th April Turov and Beloe Fishponds
Fine and sunny max temp 72°F
- 30th April Turov – transfer to Beloozersk via Sporovo Reserve
Dry with brief sunny periods max temp 72°F
- 1st May Beloozersk and Sporova reserve – transfer to Belovezhskaya
Rain in morning, cloudy afternoon with brief sunny periods max temp 70°F
- 2nd May Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park – Zelezie
Fine and sunny morning cloud and drizzle in late afternoon max temp 70°F
- 3rd May Belovezhskaya Puscha National Park
Wet and rain with very brief dry periods max temp 61°F
- 4th May Belovezhskaya to Minsk – International Flight to LHR via Vienna
Rain, dry in London.



Time for a picnic lunch



A drier picnic place

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR

No of days recorded	Location	Abundance Scale (max. seen on 1 day)
1 2h means seen on 1day and heard on 2 other days	T = Turov, Pripyat River Atshani & Bechaskaya-Buba Forests, Beloe Fishponds S = Sporovo Reserve B =Belovezkaya Puscha N P & Zelezie area	1 = 1 - 4 2 = 5 - 9 3 = 10 - 99 4 = 100 - 999 5 = 1,000+

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Location	Abundance Scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME		
Mute Swan	6	T	B	3	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	
Whooper Swan	1		B	1	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	
Greylag Goose	2	T		3	<i>Anser anser</i>	
Mallard	9	T	S	B	3	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Gadwall	1	T		2	<i>Anas strepera</i>	
Northern Shoveler	4	T		3	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	
Eurasian Teal	1	T		1	<i>Anas crecca</i>	
Common Pochard	1	T		3	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	
Tufted Duck	1	T		2	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	
Common Goldeneye	3	T	B	3	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	
Smew	1	T		3	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>	
Hazel Grouse	1		B	1	<i>Tetrastes bonasia</i>	
Great Crested Grebe	4	T		4	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	
Black-necked Grebe	1	T		2	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	
Great Cormorant	3	T		3	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	
Great Bittern	-	2h	T	S	1	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>
Great Egret	7	T	S	B	3	<i>Egretta alba</i>
Grey Heron	8	T	S	B	3	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
White Stork	9	T	S	B	3	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Black Stork	3	T		B	1	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
White-tailed Eagle	4	T		B	2	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
Lesser Spotted Eagle	2	T		B	1	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>
Greater Spotted Eagle	1			B	1	<i>Aquila clanga</i>
Western Marsh Harrier	8	T	S	B	2	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Hen Harrier	1			B	1	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Montagu's Harrier	3	T	S		1	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
Common Buzzard	7	T	S	B	2	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	2		S	B	1	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Northern Goshawk	1			B	1	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
Common Kestrel	2	T		1	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	
Common Moorhen	2	T		1	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	
Eurasian Coot	1	1h	T		2	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Common Crane	5	T		B	2	<i>Grus grus</i>
Eurasian Oystercatcher	3	T		1	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	
Northern Lapwing	9	T	S	B	4	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Common Sandpiper	3	T		B	1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Terek Sandpiper	1	T		1	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	
Common Redshank	5	T		3	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	
Spotted Redshank	2	T		3	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	
Common Greenshank	1	T		2	<i>Tringa nebularis</i>	
Bar-tailed Godwit	7	T	S	B	3	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Eurasian Curlew	1	T		1	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	
Great Snipe	1	T		2	<i>Gallinago media</i>	
Common Snipe	4	T	S	B	2	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Ruff	4	T		4	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	
Black-headed Gull	8	T	S	B	3	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
Common Gull	3	T		3	<i>Larus canus</i>	
Caspian Gull	4	T	S	3	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	
Little Gull	1	T		2	<i>Larus minutus</i>	
Little Tern	3	T		3	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	

Common Tern	5		T		B	3	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Black Tern	5		T			3	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
White-winged Tern	4		T			3	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Whiskered Tern	2		T			2	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	6		T	S	B	3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Stock Dove	3				B	3	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Common Wood Pigeon	8		T	S	B	3	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	4		T	S		1	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Common Cuckoo	3	4h	T	S	B	1	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Great Grey Owl	1			S		1	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>
Eurasian Pygmy Owl	1				B	1	<i>Glaucidium passerinum</i>
Eurasian Hoopoe	1	1h	T	S		1	<i>Upupa epops</i>
Common Kingfisher	-	1h	T			1	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Black Woodpecker	1	2h	T		B	1	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>
European Green Woodpecker	1	2h		S	B	1	<i>Picus viridis</i>
Grey-headed Woodpecker	1	1h	T		B	1	<i>Picus canus</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	5		T		B	1	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Middle Spotted Woodpecker	2		T		B	1	<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>
Syrian Woodpecker	3		T			1	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>
White-backed Woodpecker	2		T			1	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>
Lesser Woodpecker	1				B	1	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>
Three-toed Woodpecker	1	1h	T		B	1	<i>Picoides tridactylus</i>
Wryneck	4	1h	T		B	1	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
Common Skylark	7		T	S	B	2	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Crested Lark	1		T			1	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
Woodlark	1			S		1	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
Barn Swallow	9		T	S	B	3	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Common House Martin	4		T		B	2	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Meadow Pipit	2			S		1	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Tree Pipit	3		T	S	B	1	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
White Wagtail	8		T	S	B	2	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Yellow Wagtail	8		T	S	B	3	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
European Robin	3	1h	T		B	1	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Thrush Nightingale	2	2h	T		B	1	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>
Bluethroat	1		T			1	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>
Common Redstart	2				B	1	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
Black Redstart	5		T		B	2	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Northern Wheatear	1		T			1	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Whinchat	6		T	S	B	3	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
Song Thrush	2	1h	T		B	1	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Mistle Thrush	2		T		B	1	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Fieldfare	3		T		B	1	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
Eurasian Blackbird	5		T	S	B	1	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Garden Warbler	1		T			1	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
Blackcap	3	3h	T		B	1	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Common Whitethroat	3	4h	T	S	B	2	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	4		T	S	B	1	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
Savi's Warbler	0	2h	T	S		1	<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>
Sedge Warbler	0	3h	T	S		1	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
Aquatic Warbler	1			S		1	<i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>
Great Reed Warbler	1	1h	T			1	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
Willow Warbler	4	2h	T	S	B	1	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Wood Warbler	5	1h	T		B	3	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>
Common Chiffchaff	2	3h	T		B	1	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Firecrest	1				B	1	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>
Goldcrest	-	2h			B	1	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
Winter Wren	1				B	1	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	2		T		B	1	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Pied Flycatcher	5		T		B	2	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>
Collared Flycatcher	3	1h	T		B	3	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>
Great Tit	6	1h	T		B	2	<i>Parus major</i>
Coal Tit	1	1h	T		B	1	<i>Pariparus ater</i>
Eurasian Blue Tit	4		T		B	2	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>

Azure Tit	1		T			1	<i>Cyanistes cyanus</i>
Crested Tit	-	1h			B	1	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>
Marsh Tit	1				B	1	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
Willow Tit	1	1h	T			1	<i>Poecile montanus</i>
Long-tailed Tit	2		T		B	1	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Eurasian Penduline Tit	1	1h	T			1	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>
Eurasian Nuthatch	2		T		B	1	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Eurasian Treecreeper	1				B	1	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Short-toed Treecreeper	2		T		B	1	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
Red-backed Shrike	1				B	1	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Eurasian Jay	6		T	S	B	1	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Common Magpie	6		T	S	B	1	<i>Pica pica</i>
Western Jackdaw	5		T	S		3	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
Rook	8		T	S	B	4	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Hooded Crow	6		T	S		4	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
Common Raven	9		T	S	B	3	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Common Starling	9		T	S	B	3	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Golden Oriole	2	1h	T		B	1	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
House Sparrow	7		T	S	B	3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Tree Sparrow	6		T	S		3	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Common Chaffinch	9		T	S	B	3	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Brambling	1				B	1	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>
Common Linnet	2		T		B	1	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
European Goldfinch	3		T			2	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
European Greenfinch	6		T		B	2	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>
European Serin	3	1h	T		B	1	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
Hawfinch	2		T		B	2	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
Yellowhammer	7		T	S	B	2	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
Reed Bunting	5		T	S		2	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>

MAMMALS

European Red Squirrel	1		T			1	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>
Eurasian Beaver	1		T			1	<i>Castor fiber</i>
American Mink	1			S		1	<i>Mustela vison</i>
Red Fox	1				B	1	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Eurasian Wild Boar	2				B	2	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
Red Deer	2				B	3	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>
Roe Deer	3		T		B	1	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>
Elk (Moose)	1				B	1	<i>Alces alces</i>
European Bison (Wisent)	3		T		B	3	<i>Bison bonasus</i>

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

Marsh Frog	Green Toad	Fire-bellied Toad	Common Frog
European Tree Frog	Edible Frog	Grass Snake	

BUTTERFLIES

Holly Blue	Wood White	Green-veined White	Orange Tip
Brimstone	Comma	Peacock	Map
Large Tortoiseshell			

This list represents those species seen by party members of this tour.



Green Toad



European Tree Frog



Map



Brambling



European Pygmy Owl



Great Grey Owl



Black Stork



White Storks and Tree Sparrow



Smew



European Bison



Eurasian Beaver

Front cover: Azure Tit

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