

**Hungary & the Czech Republic:
Birds & Music from Budapest to Prague
September 10-25, 2018**

**Led by:
Balázs Szigeti and several local guides**

Field Report by Balázs Szigeti

Introduction

Three years ago, Victor Emanuel and I co-led VENT's first-ever tour that combined the themes of birds and music. Working with native Hungarian Balázs Szigeti and his company, Ecotours Wildlife Holidays, we designed a Birds & Music program to the marvelous Eastern European countries of Hungary and the Czech Republic.

That tour was one of the most unique trips that either of us had ever been a part of. We absolutely loved it. The birding was superb, and the opportunity to spend time in the great cities of Budapest and Prague offered fascinating cultural highlights. Of course, the addition of the live music component really underscored the diversity of the trip, with a private chamber orchestra in Budapest and a variety of classical performances in Prague.

Now, three years later, this trip has continued to improve and makes for a wonderful addition to our European program of tours.

This year's trip met with very unusual circumstances prior to departure as the VENT tour leader, Rafael Galvez, was unable to travel to Europe due to the effects of Hurricane Irma. A trusted friend and colleague, and a highly competent tour leader, Balázs, working with several of his colleagues, stepped into the role of primary leader. Upon conclusion of the tour, we received the following note from Balázs, which serves as the summary narrative of this Field Report.

--Barry Lyon, Chief Operating Officer, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours

Field Report

"This is just a quick email to let you know the Hungary-Czech Republic Birds & Music tour finished today, and I feel that similarly to previous years, it was a great success.

We had many good birds, and even a very rare bird, a Ruddy Shelduck, in the Czech Republic. We had very good views of Black, Green, Gray-headed, Syrian, Lesser Spotted, Middle Spotted, and Great Spotted woodpeckers; many shorebirds and waterfowl; Short-toed, White tailed, and Imperial eagles; several close views of Great Bustards, both in flight and while feeding; Eurasian Stone-Curlews; and Saker and Red-footed falcons.

The weather was very good almost throughout the trip. We had rain only on the transfer days and a little bit on the last day in Prague, but nothing very serious.

Some of the new elements to the program included a private Gypsy band playing for us in Nomad one evening (I have seen many gypsy bands, and I can confirm this one gave a top quality performance, a true Eastern European musical tradition) and an entertaining hurdy gurdy performance. I also offered an opportunity to observe a bat-catching program only five minutes away from the hotel in Nomad. Everybody except one joined this opportunity and enjoyed it enormously, having seen at least 6 species of bats in the hand of an expert, and to learn about their unique ecology.

Another new aspect of the tour was that we have upgraded the dinner in the wine cellar to a dégustation type of dinner with several courses presented in a very stylish way, obviously offering culinary delights to all. In between courses we even managed to lure in a Tawny Owl that was seen by everyone.

We visited the Hungarian Meadow Viper farm again this year, and yet another special aspect of the local fauna seen well, and with a short lecture by a conservation specialist.”

--Balázs Szigeti

Field List

Birds

Field list order and names are those given by James F. Clements in *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*, 6th edition, Cornell University Press, with all current updates. The primary field guide reference during the tour was *Birds of Europe*, a Princeton Field Guide, by Princeton University Press, second edition, 2009.

Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl

Egyptian Goose
Ruddy Shelduck
Green-winged (Common) Teal
Red-crested Pochard
Common Pochard
Ferruginous Duck

Anatidae

Alopochen aegyptiaca
Tadorna ferruginea
Anas crecca
Netta rufina
Aythya ferina
Aythya nyroca

Pheasants, Grouse & Allies

Ring-necked Pheasant (I)

Phasianidae

Phasianus colchicus

Grebes

Great Crested Grebe

Podicipedidae

Podiceps cristatus

Cormorants & Shags

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocoracidae

Phalacrocorax carbo

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns

Gray Heron
Purple Heron
Great Egret
Little Egret
Black-crowned Night-Heron

Ardeidae

Ardea cinerea
Ardea purpurea
Ardea (Egretta) alba
Egretta garzetta
Nycticorax nycticorax

Hawks, Eagles & Kites

Short-toed Snake-Eagle
Imperial Eagle

Accipitridae

Circaetus gallicus
Aquila heliaca

Eurasian Marsh-Harrier
Eurasian Sparrowhawk
White-tailed Eagle
Common Buzzard

Bustards

Great Bustard

Rails, Gallinules & Coots

Water Rail
Eurasian Coot

Thick-knees

Eurasian Thick-knee (Stone Curlew)

Stilts & Avocets

Pied Avocet

Plovers & Lapwings

Northern Lapwing
Common Ringed Plover
Little Ringed Plover

Sandpipers & Allies

Eurasian Curlew
Black-tailed Godwit
Ruff
Curlew Sandpiper
Temminck's Stint
Dunlin
Little Stint
Common Snipe
Common Sandpiper
Green Sandpiper
Spotted Redshank
Common Greenshank
Wood Sandpiper

Gulls, Terns & Skimmers

Black-headed Gull
Caspian Gull
Whiskered Tern

Pigeons & Doves

Rock (Feral) Pigeon (I)
Stock Dove

Circus aeruginosus
Accipiter nisus
Haliaeetus albicilla
Buteo buteo

Otididae

Otis tarda

Rallidae

Rallus aquaticus
Fulica atra

Burhinidae

Burhinus oedicnemus

Recurvirostridae

Recurvirostra avosetta

Charadriidae

Vanellus vanellus
Charadrius hiaticula
Charadrius dubius

Scolopacidae

Numenius arquata
Limosa limosa
Calidris pugnax
Calidris ferruginea
Calidris temminckii
Calidris alpina
Calidris minuta
Gallinago gallinago
Actitis hypoleucos
Tringa ochropus
Tringa erythropus
Tringa nebularia
Tringa glareola

Laridae

Chroicocephalus
ridibundus
Larus cachinnans
Chlidonias hybrida

Columbidae

Columba livia
Columba oenas

Common Wood-Pigeon
European Turtle-Dove
Eurasian Collared-Dove

Owls

Tawny Owl
Long-eared Owl

Kingfishers

Common Kingfisher

Bee-eaters

European Bee-eater

Rollers

European Roller

Woodpeckers

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Middle Spotted Woodpecker
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Black Woodpecker
Eurasian Green Woodpecker
Gray-headed Woodpecker

Falcons & Caracaras

Eurasian Kestrel
Red-footed Falcon
Eurasian Hobby
Saker Falcon

Shrikes

Red-backed Shrike
Northern (Great Gray) Shrike

Crows, Jays & Magpies

Eurasian Jay
Eurasian Magpie
Eurasian Jackdaw
Rook
Carrion Crow
Hooded Crow
Common Raven

Larks

Eurasian Skylark
Crested Lark

Columba palumbus
Streptopelia turtur
Streptopelia decaocto

Strigidae

Strix aluco
Asio otus

Alcedinidae

Alcedo atthis

Meropidae

Merops apiaster

Coraciidae

Coracias garrulus

Picidae

Dendrocopos minor
Dendrocopos medius
Dendrocopos major
Dryocopus martius
Picus viridis
Picus canus

Falconidae

Falco tinnunculus
Falco vespertinus
Falco subbuteo
Falco cherrug

Laniidae

Lanius collurio
Lanius excubitor

Corvidae

Garrulus glandarius
Pica pica
Corvus monedula
Corvus frugilegus
Corvus corone
Corvus cornix
Corvus corax

Alaudidae

Alauda arvensis
Galerida cristata

Swallows

Bank Swallow (Sand Martin)
Barn Swallow
Common House-Martin

Tits, Chickadees & Titmice

Coal Tit
Crested Tit
Marsh Tit
Willow Tit
Eurasian Blue Tit
Great Tit

Long-tailed Tits

Long-tailed Tit

Nuthatches

Eurasian Nuthatch

Treecreepers

Eurasian Treecreeper
Short-toed Treecreeper

Wrens

Eurasian Wren

Dippers

White-throated Dipper

Kinglets

Goldcrest
Firecrest

Leaf Warblers

Willow Warbler
Common Chiffchaff

Sylviids

Eurasian Blackcap

Old World Flycatchers

European Pied Flycatcher
Spotted Flycatcher
European Robin
Black Redstart
Whinchat

Hirundinidae

Riparia riparia
Hirundo rustica
Delichon urbicum

Paridae

Periparus ater
Lophophanes cristatus
Poecile palustris
Poecile montanus
Cyanistes caeruleus
Parus major

Aegithalidae

Aegithalos caudatus

Sittidae

Sitta europaea

Certhiidae

Certhia familiaris
Certhia brachydactyla

Troglodytidae

Troglodytes troglodytes

Cinclidae

Cinclus cinclus

Regulidae

Regulus regulus
Regulus ignicapilla

Phylloscopidae

Phylloscopus trochilus
Phylloscopus collybita

Sylviidae

Sylvia atricapilla

Muscicapidae

Ficedula hypoleuca
Muscicapa striata
Erithacus rubecula
Phoenicurus ochruros
Saxicola rubetra

European Stonechat
Northern Wheatear

Thrushes & Allies

Eurasian Blackbird
Fieldfare
Song Thrush
Mistle Thrush

Starlings

European Starling

Wagtails & Pipits

Western Yellow Wagtail
Gray Wagtail
White Wagtail
Tawny Pipit
Meadow Pipit
Tree Pipit

Buntings & New World Sparrows

Yellowhammer
Reed Bunting
Corn Bunting

Finches, Euphonias & Allies

Common Chaffinch
Eurasian Siskin
European Goldfinch
Eurasian Linnet

Hawfinch

Old World Sparrows

House Sparrow
Eurasian Tree Sparrow

Mammals

Rabbits & Hares

European Hare

Squirrels

Eurasian Red Squirrel

Rats & Mice

Striped Field Mouse

Saxicola rubicola
Oenanthe oenanthe

Turdidae

Turdus merula
Turdus pilaris
Turdus philomelos
Turdus viscivorus

Sturnidae

Sturnus vulgaris

Motacillidae

Motacilla flava
Motacilla cinerea
Motacilla alba
Anthus campestris
Anthus pratensis
Anthus trivialis

Emberizidae

Emberiza citrinella
Emberiza schoeniclus
Emberiza calandra

Fringillidae

Fringilla coelebs
Spinus spinus
Carduelis carduelis
Carduelis cannabina
Coccothraustes
coccothraustes

Passeridae

Passer domesticus
Passer montanus

Leporidae

Lepus europaeus

Sciuridae

Sciurus vulgaris

Muridae

Apodemus agrarius

Dormice

Edible Dormouse

Horseshoe Bats

Lesser Horseshoe Bat

Greater Horseshoe Bat

Noctule Bats

Lesser Mouse-eared Bat

Greater Mouse-eared Bat

Common Pipistrelle

Weasels

Eurasian Otter

Dogs

Red Fox

Deer

Roe Deer

Gliridae

Glis glis

Rhinolophidae

Rhinolophus hipposideros

Rhinolophus

ferrumequinum

Vespertilionidae

Myotis blythii

Myotis myotis

Pipistrellus pipistrellus

Mustelidae

Lutra lutra

Canidae

Vulpes vulpes

Cervidae

Capreolus capreolus