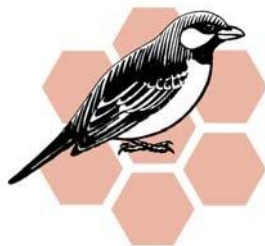




**Baltic Wildlife**  
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# Honeyguide

**WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

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Latvia  
20 – 27 May 2018

### Participants

John Rumpus  
Rosemary Macdonald  
Marion Hession

### Guides from Baltic Wildlife

Arnis Zacmanis and Edmunds Račinskis  
In Riga: Laura Zukovska-Supe

In Smārde we stayed at Valguma Pasaule <http://valgumapasaule.lv>  
and in Kolka we stayed at the Hotel Zitari.

Photos in this report are by group members John Rumpus and Rosemary Macdonald.  
Plant list by Rosemary Macdonald; bird list by Marion Hession; others JR/MH.

Cover: church in Kolka by Rosemary Macdonald.  
Below: group members in the field.



As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price was put towards a local conservation project, in this case for the Latvian Owl Research Society. Owl researcher Peteris Daknis joined the group for an evening visit to Kanieris Lake on 22 May. The conservation contribution of £40 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, resulting in a donation of £150. This and other recent donations has brought the total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 to £124,860 (July 2018).



The weather during the trip was generally unusually warm for May in Latvia. This meant hot days with low bird activity around midday, although morning and evening hours were more productive, with some last migrants in Cape Kolka – passerines and birds of prey.

## DIARY

### 20 May, Day 1

Transfer and check-in to hotel Valguma Pasaule.  
Afternoon in Ķemeri National Park, Dunduri meadows.  
Free time birding around Valguma Pasaule.

Birds we found in Dunduri fields in the afternoon/evening: red-backed shrike, whinchats, two white-tailed eagles, a pair of whooper swans, great egrets, marsh harrier, common rosefinch, icterine warbler.

### 21 May, Day 2: local walk, Kanieris Lake, Ķemeri NP.

Morning walk at Hotel Valguma Pasaule.  
At Kanieris Lake in the morning we found pochard, bean goose, greylag geese, black-necked grebes, red-necked grebe, a cormorant colony, two bitterns in prolonged flight over reedbed, marsh harriers, black terns and great reed warblers.

During coffee break at Ragaciems beach we added shelduck and yellow wagtails.

At Ķemeri forest lunch: red-breasted flycatcher, firecrest and icterine warbler singing.

Afternoon in Dunduri meadows and elsewhere in Ķemeri National Park. On the afternoon walk at Ķemeri bog there were wood sandpipers with chicks, cranes, curlew.



Male pied flycatcher  
Valguma Pasaule, 21 May



21 May: bean goose, Smarde, red-necked grebe, Kanieris Lake.

### 22 May, Day 3: Ķemeri National Park

Ķemeri NP administration centre, woodpecker place etc. Lake Kanieris, lunch packs in the field, other places in the National Park.



Wood sandpiper, Ķemeri bog, 21 May; group members at Ķemeri bog.

Dunduri fields in the morning: golden oriole, black stork, red-backed shrike, lesser spotted woodpecker drumming. Kalnciems meadows: corncrake calling a couple of metres away, river warbler.

Evening trip with owl researcher Peteris Daknis around Kanieris lake. Pygmy owl in excellent close-up, roding woodcocks, eagle owl calling somewhat distant and shy.



### 23 May, Day 4

Transfer to Kolka with stops along the coastline. In Engure town at the harbour: black redstart, serin.

Engure Lake, east shore: shoveler, garganey, teal, redshank, black-tailed godwit, ruff, little gull, common gull, greylag geese with young, greenish warbler in song.

Coast at Mersrags town: hobby landing on beach in front of us; flocks of yellow wagtails.



Mersrags beach, 23 May: great white egrets, cormorants and grey heron.

### 24–26 May, Days 5–7: Kolka

Late migration of honey buzzards: around 20 per day, also 30-40 sparrowhawks, some common buzzards. Quail heard and seen in a meadow 15 kilometres from Kolka. Woodcocks and nightjars: several vocalising and one seen in the evening. A stock dove appeared from a nest hole in a pine. High numbers of red-breasted flycatchers in the surrounding areas.



Cranes, near Kolka, 25 May.

A raccoon dog was seen crossing the road by one participant. Many species of butterflies (see photos and lists).



Map butterfly, cemetery near Vidale, 26 May; northern chequered skipper, Sliteres lighthouse, 25 May; small copper, Mersrags beach, 23 May.

## 27 May, Day 8

To Riga with birding on the route. Near city of Talsi in western part of Latvia: in one thermal a lesser spotted eagle, black kite and honey buzzard. One more lesser spotted eagle on the way to Riga.

Goshawks were vocalising near quite an urban nest in Riga. Male goshawk observed for about 10 minutes sitting nearby.

Walk around the old town with Laura – visiting churches, Freedom Monument (Statue of Liberty), Dome Square, lunch in traditional Latvian style.

### Holiday highlights

- Marion My first ever common quail (after listening and looking on many previous 'heard only' occasions) and finding a beaver swimming in the lake alongside our accommodation must both feature highly.
- John Pygmy owl as it was a first for me, and we had an excellent, close and prolonged view. Also the number of both spotted and pied flycatchers seen at Hotel Valguma Pasaule during the pre-breakfast walks. The on-tap coffee and biscuits were also appreciated.
- Rosemary The large numbers of yellow wagtails and the wonderful lilac trees in the villages.

### WILDLIFE LISTS

<b>BIRDS</b>								
H = heard								
May 2018	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Tundra Bean Goose		/						
Greylag Goose		/		/				
Mute Swan	/	/	/	/		/		/
Whooper Swan	/		/			/		
Shelduck		/		/				
Gadwall				/				
Wigeon				/				
Mallard	/	/	/	/				/
Shoveler				/				
Garganey				/				
Teal				/				
Pochard		/						
Tufted Duck				/				
Common Scoter					/			
Long-tailed Duck					/		/	
Goldeneye		/	/	/	/	/		
Common Merganser		/	/	/			/	
Red-breasted Merganser					/			
Quail					/			
Black-throated Diver							/	
Little Grebe								/
Red-necked Grebe		/						
Great Crested Grebe		/					/	
Black-necked Grebe		/						
Black Stork			/					
White Stork	/	/	/	/		/	/	/
Great Cormorant		/		/				
Bittern		/	H	H				
Grey Heron	/	/	/	/				
Great White Egret	/	/	/	/				/
Honey Buzzard					/	/	/	
White-tailed Eagle	/		/					
Black Kite								/
Marsh Harrier		/						/
Sparrowhawk					/	/		/
Northern Goshawk								/
Common Buzzard	/		/		/		/	/
Rough-legged Buzzard					/			
Lesser Spotted Eagle					/			/
Kestrel					/	/		

May 2018	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Hobby				/				/
Corncrake			H					
Coot		/						
Common Crane	/	/	/		/	/		/
Northern Lapwing	/		/	/		/	/	
Little Ringed Plover			/					
Oystercatcher				/				
Common Sandpiper		/	/					
Green Sandpiper	/	/				/		
Wood Sandpiper		/		/				
Common Redshank		/		/		/		
Curlew		H		H				
Black-tailed Godwit				/				
Ruff				/				
Common Snipe			/		/			
Woodcock			/			/		
Black-headed Gull	/	/	/	/	/	/		/
Little Gull				/				
Common Gull				/				
Herring Gull		/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Great Black-backed Gull					/			
Black Tern		/						
Common Tern		/	/	/				
Stock Dove					/			
Woodpigeon	/	H	/	/	/	/	/	/
Cuckoo	/	H	/	H	H	/	H	
Eagle-Owl			H					
Pygmy Owl			/					
Long-eared Owl			H					
European Nightjar						/		
Swift		/	/		/	/	/	/
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker			H					
Great Spotted Woodpecker		H						
Black Woodpecker						/		
Grey-headed Woodpecker			/					
Red-backed Shrike	/		/		/	/		
Golden Oriole	H		/					
Jay			/					
Magpie	/			/	/	/	/	/
Jackdaw		/		/				/
Carrion Crow								/
Hooded Crow	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Raven		/	/				/	/
Skylark	H		/		/		/	/
Woodlark						H		
Barn Swallow	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
House Martin		/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Willow Tit			H					
Crested Tit			/					
Great Tit		/	H	/		/		
Blue Tit		/	/					/
Nuthatch			/				/	
Treecreeper		H						
Wren		H				H	H	
Firecrest		/						
Willow Warbler		H		H		H		
Common Chiffchaff		H	H	H		H		/
Wood Warbler		/				H	H	H
Greenish Warbler				H				
Icterine Warbler		H		H				/
Sedge Warbler	/	/	/	H				
Reed Warbler	H	/		H			/	
Great Reed Warbler		/				/		
Grasshopper Warbler			H					H
Blackcap		H	H					

May 2018	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Garden Warbler								/
Common Whitethroat								/
Lesser Whitethroat		/						
Spotted Flycatcher		/		/		/		
Pied Flycatcher		/	/	/		H		
Red-breasted Flycatcher		H		/				
Robin		H				/		
Thrush Nightingale			H			H		
Black Redstart				/				
Common Redstart	/	H	/		/			
Northern Wheatear	/				/			
Whinchat	/		/		/	/	/	/
Blackbird		/	/	/			/	
Song Thrush						H	H	
Mistle Thrush		/						
Starling	/	/	/	/			/	/
Dunnock			H					
Yellow Wagtail		/		/	/			
White Wagtail	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Meadow Pipit	H				/			/
Tree Pipit		/				/		
Yellowhammer	/		/	/		/		H
Reed Bunting		/						
Chaffinch	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	H
Rosefinch		/						
Greenfinch		/	/	H				
Common Crossbill						/		
Siskin		/	/	H		/	/	
Serin				/				
Bullfinch			/					
Hawfinch				H		/		
House Sparrow				/				
Tree Sparrow			/	/			/	/
Goldfinch				/				/



Above: male marsh harrier over a field of oilseed rape, 22 May.

Right: goshawk, Riga, 27 May.

Below: yellow wagtail, grey-headed Scandinavian form *thunbergi*, Mersrags beach, 23 May.

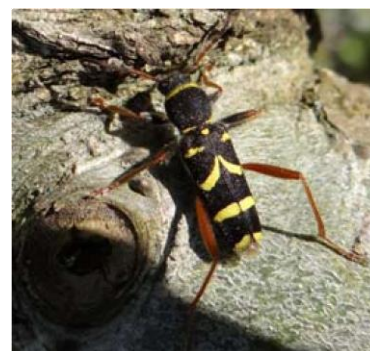




MAMMALS, REPTILE, AMPHIBIANS AND FISH				
Frog IDs are always tricky: these are the best fits from photos.				
Beaver	Brown hare	Wild boar	Moor frog and Pool frog	Perch
Fox	Raccoon dog	Roe deer	Sand lizard	Rudd
BUTTERFLIES				
Black-veined white		Brimstone	Red admiral	Wall brown
Large white	Small white	Small copper	Map	Large wall brown
Green-veined white		Holly blue	Speckled wood	Chequered skipper
Orange tip		Camberwell beauty	Small heath	Northern chequered skipper
MOTHS				
Speckled yellow		Latticed heath	Black-veined white	Common heath
				Cream wave
DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES				
Club-tailed dragonfly		Black-tailed skimmer	Beautiful demoiselle	Red-eyed damselfly
Four-spotted chaser		Emperor	Common blue damselfly	White-legged damselfly
OTHER INVERTEBRATES				
Hornet	a raft spider <i>Dolomedes fimbriatus</i>		'Millwall' bug <i>Graphosoma italicum</i>	Black-headed cardinal beetle
Rose chafer	a red bug <i>Crysomela populi</i>		Wasp beetle <i>Clytra arietis</i>	Cardinal click-beetle



Black-tailed skimmer, Kanieris Lake, 21 May; club-tailed dragonfly, Dunduri meadow, 22 May.



Latticed heath moth and *Dolomedes fimbriatus* at Dunduri meadow; wasp beetle near Kolka.



## PLANTS

TREES AND SHRUBS	
Norway spruce	<i>Picea abies</i>
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>
Sallow	<i>Salix</i> sp.
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosus</i>
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>
Horse chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>
Bird cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
FERNS AND GRASSES	
Ostrich fern	<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>
Cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Bog cotton grass	<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>
WILD FLOWERS	
Pink family – Caryophyllaceae	
Nottingham catchfly	<i>Silene nutans</i>
Greater stitchwort	<i>Stellaria holostea</i>
Wood stitchwort	<i>Stellaria nemorum</i>
Buttercup family – Ranunculaceae	
Meadow buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
Lesser spearwort	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>
Marsh marigold	<i>Caltha palustris</i>
Globeflower	<i>Trollius europaeus</i>
Wood anemone	<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>
Yellow anemone	<i>Anemone ranunculoides</i>
A pasque flower (probably eastern)	<i>Pulsatilla sp patens?</i>
Hepatica	<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>
Poppy family – Papaveraceae	
Common field poppy	<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>
Greater celandine	<i>Chelidonium majus</i>
Hemp family – Cannabaceae	
Wild hop	<i>Humulus lupulus</i>
Nettle family – Urticaceae	
Stinging nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Cabbage family – Cruciferae	
Warty cabbage	<i>Bunias orientalis</i>
Lady's smock (cuckoo flower)	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>
Large bittercress	<i>Cardamine amara</i>
Swedish cress (Swedish thale-cress)	<i>Arabidopsis suecica</i>
Sundews – Droseraceae	
Round-leaved sundew	<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>
Great sundew	<i>Drosera anglica</i>
Heath family – Ericaceae	
Ling	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>
Bilberry	<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>
Crowberry	<i>Empetrum nigrum</i>
Cowberry	<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>
Bog rosemary	<i>Andromeda polifolia</i>
Bog myrtle	<i>Myrica gale</i>
Labrador tea	<i>Rhododendron tomentosum</i> (formerly <i>Ledum palustre</i> )
Rose family – Rosaceae	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
Raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>
Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmari</i>
Silverweed	<i>Potentilla anserin</i>
Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>
Trailing tormentil	<i>Potentilla anglica</i>

Rose family (cont'd)	
Hoary cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla argentea</i>
Wild strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>
Water avens	<i>Geum rivale</i>
Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
Cloudberry	<i>Rubus chamaemorus</i>
Dwarf serviceberry	<i>Amalanchier lupulina</i>
Pea family – Leguminosae/Fabaceae	
Hairy tare	<i>Vicia hirsuta</i>
Birdsfoot trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
A milk-vetch	<i>Oxytropus</i> sp.
Wood-sorrel family – Oxalidaceae	
Wood-sorrel	<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>
Spurge family – Euphorbiaceae	
Dog's mercury	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>
Cypress spurge	<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>
Leafy spurge	<i>Euphorbia esula</i>
Milkwort family – Polygalaceae	
Common milkwort	<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>
Geranium family – Geraniaceae	
Meadow cranesbill	<i>Geranium pratense</i>
Wood cranesbill	<i>Geranium sylvaticum</i>
Dock family – Polygonaceae	
Common sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
Redshank	<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>
Violet family – Violaceae	
Field pansy	<i>Viola arvensis</i>
Wild pansy	<i>Viola tricolor</i>
Carrot family – Apiaceae/Umbelliferae	
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>
Ground elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
Wood sanicle	<i>Sanicula europaea</i>
Wintergreen family – Pyrolaceae	
Common wintergreen	<i>Pyrola minor</i>
Primrose family – Primulaceae	
Birdseye primrose	<i>Primula farinosa</i>
Chickweed wintergreen	<i>Trientalis europaea</i>
Water violet	<i>Hottonia palustris</i>
Bogbean family – Menyanthaceae	
Bogbean	<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>
Borage family – Boraginaceae	
Alkanet	<i>Anchusa officinalis</i>
Labiata family – Lamiaceae/Labiatae	
White dead-nettle	<i>Lamium alba</i>
Yellow archangel	<i>Lamium galeobdolon</i>
Ground ivy	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
Bugle	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>
Nightshade family – Solonaceae	
Henbane	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>
Figwort family – Scrophulariaceae	
Germander speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>
Bedstraw family – Rubiaceae	
Hedge bedstraw	<i>Galium mollugo</i>
Woodruff	<i>Galium odoratum</i>
Honeysuckle family – Caprifoliaceae	
Fly honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera xylosteum</i>
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
Daisy family – Compositae	
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>
Coltsfoot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum sect. vulgare</i>
Mountain everlasting	<i>Antennaria dioica</i>

Lily family – Liliaceae	
Lily of the valley	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>
May lily	<i>Maianthemum bifolium</i>
Star of Bethlehem	<i>Ornithogalum angustifolium</i>
Solomon's seal	<i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i>
Herb paris	<i>Paris quadrifolia</i>
Ransoms	<i>Allium ursinum</i>

Iris family – Iridaceae	
Yellow flag	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>
Frogbit family – Hydrocharitaceae	
Frogbit	<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>
FUNGUS	
'Chicken of the Woods' = sulphur polypore	<i>Laetiporus sulphureus</i>



Warty cabbage, alkanet and birdseye primrose.