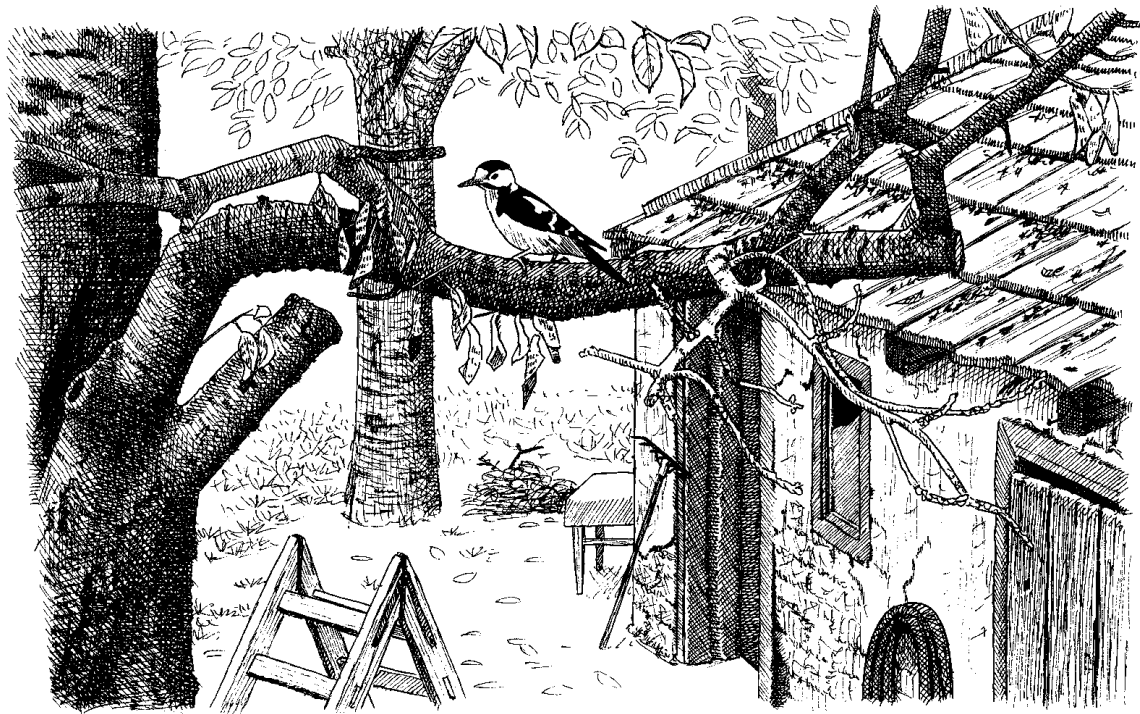


# *Honeyguide*

**WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

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**Eastern Hungary**  
**17 – 24 September 2005**

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Holiday participants

Sue Burge	Oxford
Peter Burge	
Dave Wilkins	Essex
Chris Ebden	Northants
Angela Turner	Norfolk
Pauline Skillings	
Malcolm Crowder	Norfolk
Helen Crowder	
Mary Parrilla	Richmond, Surrey
John Rumpus	Kent
Rosemary MacDonald	Isle of Man
Mary Seal Coon	Norfolk
Bill Hudson	Norfolk
Keith Ball	Cheshire
Joyce Ball	
Jenny Loring	Newcastle

Leaders

Gerard Gorman	Hungary
Chris Durdin	Norwich

Our hotel: the family-run Nomad Hotel, Noszvaj [www.nomadhotel.hu](http://www.nomadhotel.hu) where Shandor (Alexander) was our main English speaking host, replaced half way through the week by his sister Barbara.

Report by Chris Durdin.

Woodpecker illustrations are by Szabolcs Kokay from Gerard Gorman's *Woodpeckers of Europe* (Bruce Coleman Books) and reprinted here with their kind permission. Other illustrations by Rob Hume. Cover: Syrian woodpecker

This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The usual conservation contribution this year of £25 per person, £400, was given to Iván Demeter of MME, the Hungarian Birdlife partner to support its saker falcon protection. This was supplemented in two ways. Firstly, by gift aid through the new Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. Secondly, by a donation of £200 from Roger Jordan and friends in the Wildlife Outreach Network based in Essex, totalling £691. This first donation to MME brings the total given to various conservation projects to £38,645 since the start of Honeyguide in 1991. A thank-you letter from MME appears at the end of this report.

## Eastern Hungary 17 – 24 September 2005

### Saturday 17 September – Gatwick-Budapest-Noszvaj

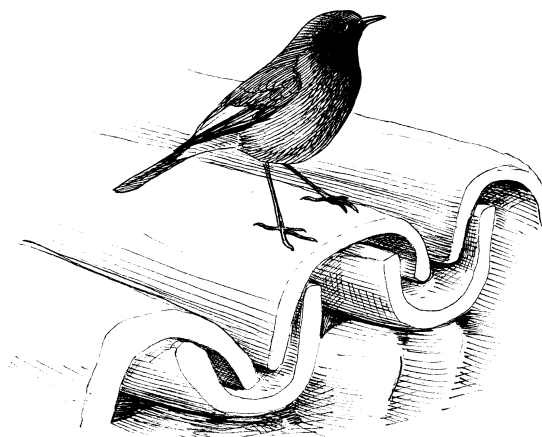
The easyJet flight was ready to leave on time, but air traffic control delays caused a 30-minute delay, most of which was clawed back on the smooth flight to Budapest. Holiday leader Gerard Gorman was at the airport to meet and greet. Most of the group called at the exchange to get a few forints, at a better rate than at Gatwick, then suitcases were swiftly loaded into the trailer of the bus and we were away.

The Budapest ring road was about as scenic as London's North Circular but we were soon past the trolley buses and Tesco adverts and onto the motorway, heading east. Roadside scrub was often dominated by false acacia and into the open plains with endless fields of sunflowers and maize. It was getting gloomy – the more so with cloud and light rain – as we ended our two hour journey, all rather birdless save the odd buzzard, kestrel and magpie.

But even in the gloom of dusk you could see the flower-filled gardens in Noszvaj and the welcome was warm at the elegant Hotel Nomad. Within half an hour we were at supper. We learnt that there had been a cookery competition that day in the village, with the young pork and cake that featured in our generous and tasty 3-course meal deserved prizewinners. Pears cooked in red wine and baked apples stuffed with walnuts were novel side dishes and paprika on the table a nice Magyar touch. The wine flowed and with 15 of the group of 16 regular Honeyguiders, most of whom had met each at least some of the others on a holiday in the past, we were soon gossiping and joking like the old friends we were.

### Sunday 18 September – Bükk National Park

The lane by the hotel passes by about 10 houses with pretty gardens then to a park with a two-level lake, surrounded by wooded hills. It all makes an ideal pre-breakfast stroll, with black redstarts (*left*),



chiffchaffs and great spotted woodpeckers starting the day for many. A red squirrel crossed the road twice, nuthatches were active in the trees and Chris E found a tree sparrow. Flowers included moth mullein and whorled clary *Salvia verticillata*; dewberries were in fruit by the steps from the hotel.

Breakfast (at 8 o'clock) included bacon and eggs on the hot griddle for many, and we were away at nine for a very local tour to parts of the Bükk National Park. The morning walk started chilly but gradually warmed, taking us through woodland and into grazed limestone grassland. A surprisingly long plant list was soon under way with highlights including long-leaved speedwell, eyebright and crown vetch. By the grassland was a sweep well, like an Egyptian

shadouf, a device for moving water uphill. Just past a deserted bee-eater colony – a must see in the summer – a large mound overlooked a sheltered area for a herd of Hungarian grey cattle. Closer to white than grey, their elegance was enhanced by long, curving horns – the Harley Davidson of cattle, as Gerard put it. They are well-suited to the tough grazing here.

As it warmed as we re-traced our steps, butterflies started to appear, six species in the patch that included brown argus and large but faded silver-washed fritillaries. A hobby caught a dragonfly and soon after was in the air with eight ravens. Dave found a hawfinch and it sat still high in a dead tree for all to see well through telescopes. Indeed this was the first of several, mostly flying around.

The autumnal feel was enhanced by berries, pink on spindle, red on Cornelian cherry and black on wild privet and patches of dwarf elder. A Berger's clouded yellow was, however, more late summer.

A simple but adequate picnic lunch was eaten back near the bus, with buzzards and hawfinches over. A praying mantis munched a grasshopper.

First stop after lunch was by a newish reservoir where new birds included cormorants, herons, great crested grebes and stonechats. We then moved into open farming country known to be the territory of eastern imperial eagle, but several scans and searches of pylons failed to find any.

At the Szomolga hive-stones the richness of the flora was obvious even this late in the season, with Goldilocks aster, the pale yellow scabious *Scabious ochroleuca* and squinancywort. A magnificent caterpillar of spurge hawk-moth was found on cypress spurge. Some took the short downhill scramble to see the large rocks called hive-stones, cone shaped stone towers with cubicles hewn in their sides. Their ancient purpose is disputed by historians.

A quick stop by a sewage farm revealed few birds but as ever much to intrigue botanists, especially prickly cucumber, an American escape related to white bryony, in fine fruit.

Last stop was at the far end of the park back in Noszvaj. A treecreeper appeared all too briefly (so wasn't identified by species as both occur hereabouts), but nuthatches showed well. Best of all there was a super view of a hawfinch (no telescope needed this time) eating maple seeds and Cornelian cherries. Gerard did his best to call up a grey-headed woodpecker without success, but there was a burst of bird activity in the still late afternoon with singing black redstart, great spotted woodpecker, chiffchaff and another hawfinch all close to the hotel to where we walked back.

Supper started with goulash, which here is soup with meat, carrots and paprika, not a stew, with carp and turkey for main course.

Highlights of the day: hawfinch, Hungarian grey cattle, wild sage *Salvia nemorosa*, black redstart, the cave wine cellars we'd passed locally, spurge hawk-moth caterpillar, birds and the red squirrel around the hotel, grassland at the hive-stones and praying mantises.

### **Monday 19 September – Hortobágy National Park**

Most of the group were out in the park by the lake pre-breakfast and highlights included marsh tit, short-toed treecreeper and tree sparrows.

It was about an hour's drive before we crossed lake Tisza, then a further 30 minutes through Tiszafured town and into the western part of the Hortobágy National Park. A pleasant surprise in fields in the later stages of the journey were great white egrets feeding in fields: firstly 20, split between two sides of the road, then a group of 19, then a steady sprinkling of others so one stopped counting. The regular roadside buzzards were now replaced by quartering marsh harriers.

There was a chilly wind as we stopped for our first wetland. Gerard picked out a ferruginous duck as he was first out of the bus, but it seemed to disappear into the many scores of mallards, sprinkled with a few shovelers, wigeons and teals, all in a dullish just-coming-out-of-eclipse plumage. There had been a couple of distant cranes near those great white egrets, but they were outshone by a group of 10 that flew slowly past, battling against the wind. A group of nine spoonbills, dozens of herons, flocks of wild greylag geese, lapwings and curlews added to the mix.

Looking one way was wetland and in the other direction was *puszta*, steppe of grass and, here, reed, with an endless to-ing and fro-ing of marsh harriers. Botanical remnants of the sea once covering this area added interest, namely the sea lavender *Limonium gmelini* and sea aster *Aster tripolium ssp pannonicum*. In places both were in colourful sheets of soft purple; here on the track embankment there were mixed with yarrow and wild sage *Salvia nemorosa*.

We then tried, without success, for stone-curlews on some grazed *puszta* by the village of Nagyvan. Two hobbies landed on the ground and were seen well through 'scopes.

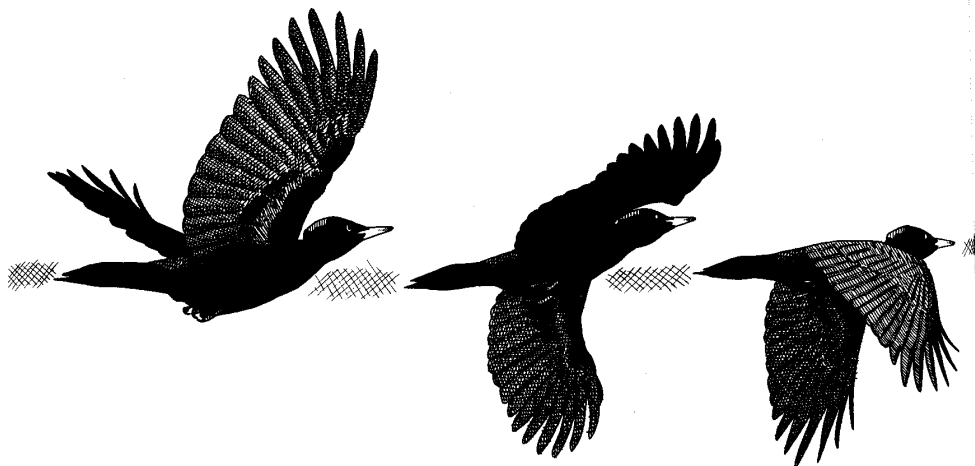
The poor weather meant a picnic wasn't the best idea and Gerard had planned for this by booking us for a lunch of goulash at a café. Some of the group discovered that if you ordered a beer without specifying a small beer then a large one arrived! Next door was small, recently-refurbished national park centre with a modest selection of literature and an excellent choice of wildlife postcards. Outside was a flock of the traditional, dark-coloured sheep called *racka*, several with magnificent spiralled horns.

Rain was threatening as we birdwatched at our next stop, a drained fishpond. Waders included a small flock of spotted redshanks, a single Temminck's stint, several little ringed plovers and avocets. A single pygmy cormorant flew through, and flock of teals and yellow-legged gulls (*Larus michahellis*) added interest. But the rain then started so it was time to head back. Many took the chance to buy chocolate or maps as we filled up with diesel in Tiszafured.

Highlights: cranes, great white egrets, hobby on the ground. Lowlight: primitive toilets at the café!

### Tuesday 20 September – Bükk Hills

It rained all morning. Some strolled to the lake, nonetheless: others looked out from the balcony and were rewarded by a red squirrel scampering along the fence. First stop after breakfast was at a ceramics shop in the next village of Szomolya where the lady owner sold several of her simple yet elegant bowls, decorated in a local style. Stop two was by some Scots pine trees on the road back to Noszvaj. A green woodpecker shot out of a black woodpecker hole and Gerard began to try to whistle up a black woodpecker. They responded almost immediately – indeed before everyone was out of the bus – and not one but three black woodpeckers were flitting around. All the views, perhaps a dozen, were fleeting but plenty close enough to see well without binoculars.



Back in Noszvaj, the next dry option was the 18<sup>th</sup> century manor house built in baroque style by Baron Samuel Szepessy. Overshoes on, the lady in charge gave us a guided tour, with Gerard interpreting. The hall had motifs of vine leaves with the palace of Versailles in two places, perhaps due to a later French owner. Upstairs, the frescos and wall paintings dominated, including mock figures of Roman gods in statue-shapes and elsewhere other gods including Bacchus and Pan. Large original ceramic wood burners were another fine feature, then two trophy rooms of African mammals. We were allowed to take pictures of the varied paintings in the room of birds, including crowned cranes and a toucan. Then into the English-style garden where just about every tree had signs of woodpeckers, including several oval-shaped black woodpecker holes. It was then back to the Nomad Hotel for coffee and an early lunch.

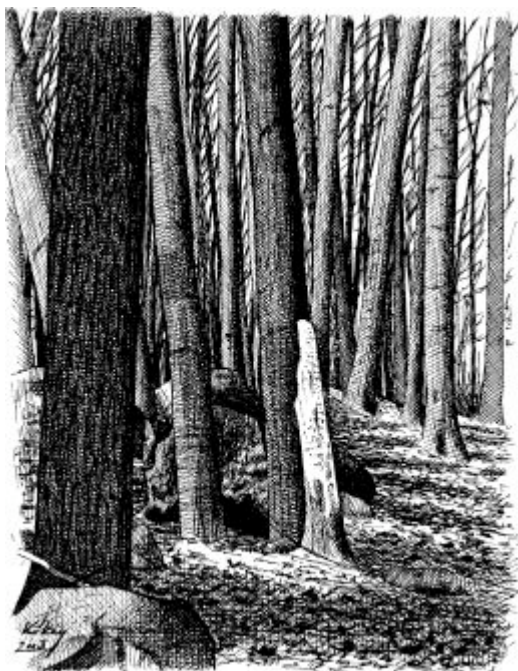
Many took a stroll as the rain had now, at last, stopped. Supper was brought forward to 6.30 as Gerard had heard from a local hunter that red deer stags were bellowing just after dark. Accompanied by two interested Germans staying at the hotel, we drove to a nearby part of the forest, but no luck on this occasion. It was then back for pudding and coffee/tea/green tea.

Highlights: a bit thin today but black woodpeckers, sparrowhawk and red squirrel in the garden, ceramics.

### Wednesday 21 June – Hór Valley

Syrian and great spotted woodpeckers in the same tree for several in the group before breakfast was an excellent start to a fine and sometimes warm day.

The start of the Hór valley was only 20 minutes away. Tibor left us to buy some lunch, re-finding and following us later. Two limestone outcrops from old quarries held good flowers and attracted butterflies, including swallowtail and Queen-of-Spain fritillary, caught and identified by Helen. Yellow monkshood was one of the more striking flowers – the only alpine species all week. A rock bunting was seen briefly by some.



In the extensive hornbeam woods, Gerard showed us the fine pattern of markings on dead trees left by feeding white-backed woodpeckers (*illustrated, left*). The birds themselves didn't show.

Tibor's purchases for our picnic were enjoyed in an open valley where meadow saffron was growing. A brilliant large copper butterfly seemed to slow down with the sun in and was much photographed.

The next stretch of hornbeam forest had many rocky outcrops and was left unmanaged with many fallen trees and much standing dead wood. Still no woodpeckers, but the fungi were magnificent. Interesting plants included vast amounts of the birthwort assarabacca and perennial honesty with its elongated seed capsules rather than the round ones of the garden honesty.

We had a guest speaker before supper, Iván Demeter of MME, the Hungarian BirdLife partner. It was a great pleasure to hear how nest protection and artificial nests had led to growing numbers in Hungary of both saker falcons and eastern imperial eagles, and how growing international collaboration is underway to share this expertise through eastern Europe.

Highlights: large copper, two woodpeckers including Syrian, little owl, the variety of butterflies, tonight's dinner, excellent views of three woodpeckers, the woods, fungi.

#### **Thursday 22 September – saker falcons, Lake Tisza and the edge of the Hortobágy**

Good views of black and grey-headed woodpeckers before breakfast on a sunny morning started the day well.

Today's first stop, in open farmland near Poroszlo south of the motorway, was to see in practice what we'd heard last night. A wooden nest box on a pylon had one saker by it and another in it. We walked closer for better telescope views and one flew, showing its large size, wide wings and general impression of power; the other then took its place in view on the pylon. Other sightings included tree sparrows on the unharvested sunflowers, tuberous pea and our first painted lady. Then Gerard found an eastern imperial eagle soaring on its typically flat wings. Finally, there were two ringtail hen harriers as we returned to the bus and scraped the mud off our boots.

Tibor and Gerard left the rest of us by Lake Tisza as they went to buy our picnic. Coots, mallards, mute swans and great crested grebes were no surprise, plus the odd moorhen, little grebe and cormorant. Two juvenile whiskered terns hunted over the lilies. The edge of the lake here was lined with the alien shrub false indigo *Amorpha fruticosa*, a wild pea introduced to boost honey production, but now an invasive menace in wetlands in eastern Europe. In a small reedbed behind us, a high-pitched note alerted us to a penduline tit, then to three or four, but all juveniles without the adults' black face markings. Gerard returned and soon located a white-tailed eagle flying in the distance. A kingfisher flashed past.

Lunch was in a rather non-descript bit of farmland – with a substantial pumpkin crop – where one of Hungary's three pairs of long-legged buzzards has a territory. We didn't see it, but a few more cranes came by, whinchat and stonechat were found and a stoat crossed the road several times.

A call to the local warden revealed stone-curlew had just been seen at Nagyiván, where we'd searched before, and he kindly appeared with his bike to point out where seven were gathered. Gerard got his hands muddy to show us some young fire-bellied toads and found an edible frog. Spiny cocklebur, crested lark, three or more hovering red-footed falcons and eastern hedgehog added to the mix.

A walk into an open area on the edge of the Hortobágy failed to locate any great bustards, not helped by long vegetation caused by Hungary's exceptionally wet summer. Scores of tree frogs did their rather partridge-like calls and posed for photos.

The final stop, also within the Hortobágy National Park, was at a nesting colony of red-footed falcons. Despite nestboxes, numbers have dropped to some 30 pairs, of which a dozen or so birds were still around. A splendid male came over us, then some juveniles were found on the ground, and finally a group of six adults and juveniles on telegraph wires and posts.

### **Friday 23 September - Bükk Hills**

There was tricky choice between travelling back to the Hortobágy or a more local day, and with yesterday's and tomorrow's travelling in mind, a local day it was, with several local stops. The first of these, in the open countryside of the Bükk Hills on a hot and still day, led to the bizarre finding of petunias growing by the road: plainly an escape, but then so to were many of the field weeds, including thorn-apple here and amaranths in various places. There were good views of a hen harrier, a chance to recap on many of the flowers we'd been seeing and a goldcrest in a small Scots pine plantation. Next stop was in the known territory of an imperial eagle. While we searched, without luck, Tibor went off to buy lunch.

The third stop was a gentle walk into a patch of open scrub in what was generally a wooded area. Butterflies were responding to the warmth with many Queen-of-Spain fritillaries and mostly washed out looking silver-washed fritillaries. A brick red, boldly marked spider eating a wasp was later identified as *Araneus quadratus* – the scientific name from the four bold spots on the abdomen.

Tibor had discovered a problem with the bus, namely the connection to the lights on the trailer, needed for the return the next day, but he'd also found a solution and went off to get it fixed having dropped us near in one our favourite places from earlier in the week, the butterfly-rich quarry at the start of the Hór Valley. After picnicking, we had a go at catching butterflies as energetically as the heat would allow. The blues didn't look quite right for common or Adonis blue, and after some head scratching we confirmed Chapman's blue and caught sight of the silver studs on the underside to clinch the other mystery blue as silver-studded. Queen-of-Spain fritillaries were abundant. Some had had a glimpse of a rock bunting here earlier in the week but this time we all had a close view, albeit of a female.

One of Gerard's better jokes was how most nationalities give a gentle, floaty name to butterfly, like *papillon* (French), *farfalla* (Italian) and *mariposa* (Spanish) but how typical of the Germans to call them *schmetterling*, which sounds like a missile. He then turned his hand for the first time to butterfly catching and proved most adept, but even he couldn't get one of the fast flying great banded graylings. "The Germans were right", he dryly remarked.

The bus restored to full health, we moved onto a short walk and an uphill scramble towards bee stones or 'bee's nest rocks' as the sign said, an interesting cultural relic. Made of ignimbrites, volcanic rocks, they also have man-made holes, and a Bronze Age settlement is known to have been here so presumably they date from then, though the "cultic or economic purposes" of the holes are not explained. Ravens passed over with extraordinarily noisy wings and there were yet more Queen-of-Spain fritillaries.

Two photostops were then made, the first of which was for the attractive yellow churches of the villages in this area. The second was the much-admired wine cellars leading into the limestone hills that here are such an intriguing feature. Though an old tradition it remains a current enthusiasm too. Somehow, and initially without Gerard's translating skills, an invitation to view and taste came about. Behind the locked door of our host's cellar were three rooms, each going farther back into the hills, the first of which had a small but very functional bar, and room enough to squeeze in all of us. It was super example of impromptu hospitality and very drinkable local wine too.

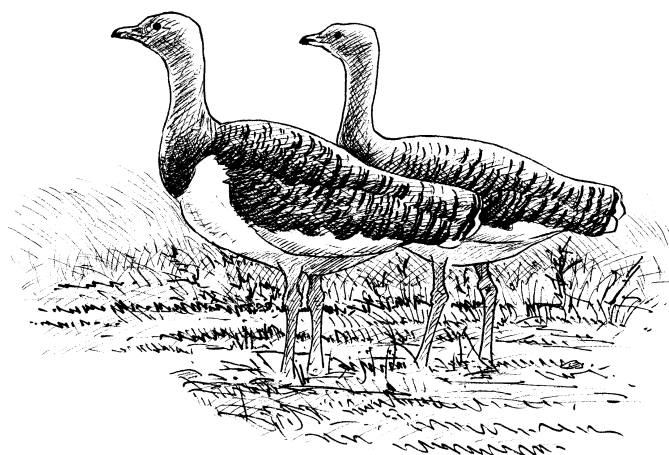
It was warm enough on our earlier than usual return for two of the party – Chris D and Malcolm – to swim in the hotel’s outside pool. The meal tonight was a barbeque outside, followed by four games of table football!

Highlights: Syrian woodpecker, Gerard catching butterflies, great banded grayling, sunshine, views at last of marsh tit, fritillaries (Queen-of-Spain and silver-washed), hen harrier, the hospitality at the wine cellar, nice views of buzzards, studs on the silver-studded blue butterflies, rock bunting.

### Saturday 24 September – Noszvaj to Budapest

Several woodpeckers, including middle spotted, were seen before our slightly earlier breakfast at 7.30. We were away before nine o’clock and soon heading west. We didn’t find an imperial eagle in its territory at our stop along the motorway, but great grey shrike and crested lark were seen well. We were also able to see many of the plastic insulators put on pylons by MME to prevent raptor electrocutions that our funds were going to support.

Into Budapest – it needs a bypass! – and then out on the south side is the Kiskunsag National Park. Great bustard is Hungary’s national bird and Gerard’s perseverance to find some led to some distant groups of six on one side of the road and 15 on the other. We had our picnic here. Then it was into Budapest for a bus tour, firstly the busier half of Pest taking in a photostop for the Parliament building and a drive around Liberty square, then across the Danube to Buda and past Castle Hill, looking onto the Parliament and university buildings from the other side. Then back to the airport for a smooth journey home.



Highlights of the week: black woodpecker; three nuthatches; two great spotted woodpeckers with a Syrian woodpecker; nuthatches; Syrian woodpecker; walnut tree with nuthatch, great spotted and Syrian woodpecker; company of the group; black redstarts; little owl; Syrian woodpecker; good views of several species; red-footed falcon; woodpeckers and cranes; saker; local birds round the hotel; the Hortobágy; great white egret.

### Plant list

This list concentrates on plants in flower in this September visit; a longer list than, perhaps, we might have expected. Some common species were not noted e.g. bramble. A surprisingly high proportion are species found in guides to the wild flowers of Britain and northern Europe: we use *The Wild Flowers of Britain and Northern Europe* by Fitter, Blamey & Fitter (Collins). One flower was only in *The Alpine Flowers of Britain and Europe* by Christopher Grey-Wilson & Marjorie Blamey (Collins) marked Alpine flora; one tree from *Mediterranean wild flowers* by the same authors; a few were in *The Concise Flowers of Europe* by Oleg Polunin (Oxford) and are marked Polunin. Trees and shrubs are lumped together at the beginning, apart from species that occur in other families in the list e.g. peas.

Marked in bold are selected species of particular note or appeal to a UK-based botanist.

F – fruit or seeds rather than in flower

A – established aliens – as many of the field weeds were

L – leaves only

#### Trees and shrubs (incomplete and excludes obviously planted trees)

*Acer campestre*

field maple



<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	hornbeam	
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	hazel	
<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	smoke bush	Polunin
<i>Cornus mas</i>	Cornelian cherry	
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	dogwood	
<i>Eleagnus angustifolia</i>	oleaster	A, Mediterranean flora
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	spindle-tree	
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	wild privet	
<i>Quercus cerris</i>	Turkey oak	
<i>Quercus robur</i>	pedunculate oak	
<i>Staphylea pinnate</i>	bladder-nut	

### Flowering plants – Dicotyledons

#### AMARANTHACEAE – amaranths

*Amaranthus* sp: there were lots of this difficult group of established aliens as field weeds. A

#### ARISTOLOCHIACEAE – birthworts

*Arasum euroaeum* asarabacca L

#### ASCLEPIADACEAE – milkweeds

*Vincetoxicum europaeum* swallow-wort

#### BALSAMINACEAE – borage family

*Impatiens glandulifera* Himalayan balsam

#### BORAGINACEAE – borage family

*Anchusa officinalis* alkanet  
*Echium vulgare* viper's bugloss  
*Pulmonaria officinalis* lungwort L  
*Symphytum officinale* comfrey

#### CAMPANULACEAE – bellflowers

*Campanula rotundifolia* harebell  
? *Campanula rapunculus* rampion bellflower  
*Campanula trachelium* nettle-leaved bellflower (bats-in-the-belfry)

#### CAPRIFOLIACEAE

*Sambucus ebulus* dwarf elder/danewort  
*Sambucus nigra* elder

#### CARYOPHYLLACEAE – pinks

*Dianthus deltooides* maiden pink  
*Myosotea aquaticum* water chickweed  
*Silene alba* white campion  
*Silene vulgaris* bladder campion  
*Spergularia media* greater sea spurrey  
*Saponaria officinalis* soapwort

#### CISTACEAE – rock-roses

*Helianthemum nummularium* common rock-rose

#### COMPOSITEAE (ASTERACEAE) – daisy family

*Achillea millefolium* yarrow  
? *Artemisia maritima* sea wormwood L  
*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* ragweed  
*Aster tripolium ssp pannonicum* sea aster  
*Aster linosyris* goldilocks  
*Carduus crispus* a thistle  
*Carlina vulgaris* carline thistle  
*Centaurea scabiosa* greater knapweed  
*Cichorium intybus* chicory  
*Cirsium oleraceum* cabbage thistle  
*Cirsium eriophorum* woolly thistle

<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	Canadian fleabane	A
? <i>Erigeron mucronatus</i>		
<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	field eryngo	L
<i>Inula conyza</i>	ploughman's spikenard	
<i>Matricaria perforata</i>	scentless mayweed	
<i>Mycetis muralis</i>	wall lettuce	
<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	tansy	
<b><i>Telekia speciosa</i></b>	<b>large yellow ox-eye</b>	
<i>Xanthium spinosum</i>	spiny cocklebur	A
<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>	rough cocklebur	A
CONVOLVULACEAE – bindweeds		
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	hedge bindweed	
CRASSULACEAE – stonecrops		
<b><i>Sedum (telephium) maximum</i></b>	<b>an orpine or livelong with pale yellow flowers</b>	
	<b>Polunin</b>	
CRUCIFERAE (BRASSICACEAE) – crucifers		
<b><i>Lunaria rediviva</i></b>	<b>perennial honesty</b>	<b>F</b>
CUCURBITACEAE – cucumber/gourd family		
<i>Echinocystis lobata</i>	prickly cucumber	A, F
DIPSACACEAE – scabious/teasle family		
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	field scabious	
<b><i>Scabiosa ochroleuca</i></b>	<b>yellow scabious</b>	
EUPHORBIACEAE – spurges		
<i>Euphorbia cyparissius</i>	cypress spurge	
GENTIANACEAE – gentians		
<i>Centaurium erythraea</i>	common centaury	
GERANIACEAE – cranesbills & storksills		
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	herb Robert	
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	bloody cranesbill	
GUTTIFERAE – St John's-worts		
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	perforate St John's-wort	
LABIATAE (Lamiaceae) – labiates		
<i>Ballota nigra</i>	black horehound	
<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	wild basil	
<i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i>	red hemp-nettle	
<i>Lamium album</i>	white dead-nettle	
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	spotted dead-nettle	
<i>Lyocopus europaeus</i>	gypsywort	
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	water mint	
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	marjoram	
<i>Salvia verticillata</i>	whorled clary	
<b><i>Salvia nemorosa</i></b>	<b>wild sage</b>	
LEGUMINOSAE (FABACEAE) – peas		
<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	false indigo	A, F (not in the field guides)
<i>Coronilla varia</i>	crown vetch	
<i>Genista tinctoria</i>	dyer's greenweed	
<i>Lathyrus tuberosus</i>	tuberous pea	
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	lucerne	
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	ribbed melilot	
<i>Robinia pseudacacia</i>	false acacia	A, F
<i>Trifolium arvense</i>	haresfoot clover	
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	tufted vetch	
<i>Vicia lutea</i>	yellow vetch	

LYTHRACEAE			
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	purple loosestrife		
MALVACEAE – mallows			
<i>Althaea officinalis</i>	marsh mallow		
OXALIDACEAE – wood-sorrel family			
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	wood-sorrel		L
PAPAVERACEAE – poppies			
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	greater celandine		
PLUMBAGINACEAE – sea-lavenders			
<b><i>Limonium gmelini</i></b>	<b>a local sea lavender</b>		
POLYGALACEAE - milkworts			
<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	common milkwort		
PRIMULACEAE – primrose family			
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	scarlet pimpernel		
RANUNCULACEAE – buttercup family			
<b><i>Aconitum anthora</i></b>	<b>yellow monkshood</b>		<b>alpine flora</b>
<i>Consolida regalis</i>	forking larkspur		
<i>Nigella arvensis</i>	love-in-mist		
ROSACEAE – rose family			
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	agrimony		
<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>	dropwort		
<i>Fragaria moschata</i>	hautbois strawberry		fruit & flowers
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	herb Bennet		L
<i>Rubus caesius</i>	dewberry		fruit & flowers
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	wild service tree		
RUBIACEAE – bedstraws			
<i>Asperula cynanchica</i>	squinancywort		
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	woodruff		L
SCROPHULARIACEAE – figwort family			
<i>Euphrasia</i> sp.	eyebright		
<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	common toadflax		
<b><i>Melampyrum nemorosum</i></b>	<b>a cow-wheat, with purple bracts</b>		
<i>Odonites verna</i>	red bartsia		
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	common figwort		
<i>Verbascum blattaria</i>	moth mullein		
<i>Verbascum nigrum</i>	dark mullein		
<i>Verbascum phlomoides</i>	orange mullein		
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	germander speedwell		
<b><i>Veronica longifolia</i></b>	<b>long-leaved speedwell</b>		
SOLOANACEAE – nightshades			
<i>Datura metel</i>	large-flowered thorn-apple	A, Polunin	
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	thorn-apple	A	
<b><i>Physalis alkekengi</i></b>	<b>bladder cherry, Chinese lanterns</b>	<b>F, Polunin</b>	
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	bittersweet		
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	black nightshade		
UMBELLIFERAE (APIACEAE) – umbellifers			
<i>Bupleurum falcatum</i>	sickle hare's-ear		
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	pignut		
<i>Daucus carota</i>	wild carrot		
<i>Saniluca europaea</i>	sanicle		L

VERBENACEAE

*Verbena officinalis* vervain

VIOLACEAE – violets

*Viola arvensis* field pansy or heartsease  
*Viola riviniana* (probably) common dog violet

**Monocotyledons**

LILIACEAE – lilies

**Colchicum autumnale** meadow saffron  
*Convallaria majalis* lily of the valley F  
*Polygonatum multiflorum* Solomon’s seal F

ORCHIDACEAE – orchids

*Epipactis helleborine* broad-leaved helleborine L  
and the leaves of two other helleborine species also found (maybe violet and red)

**Ferns**

*Asplenium trichomanes* Maidenhair spleenwort  
*Phyllitis scolopendrium* Hart’s-tongue fern

**Butterflies** (20 species)

Swallowtail  
Green-veined white  
Small white  
Berger’s clouded yellow \*  
Small tortoiseshell  
Comma  
Painted lady  
Red admiral  
Peacock  
Silver-washed fritillary  
Queen-of-Spain fritillary  
Great banded grayling  
Meadow brown  
Speckled wood (northern type)  
Wall  
Small copper  
Large copper  
Silver-studded blue  
Brown argus  
Chapman’s blue  
Common blue? (not re-confirmed after the similar silver-studded and Chapman’s blues were identified)

\* the possibility of Eastern clouded yellow  
*Colias erate* was not considered as this species isn’t in the Mitchell Beazley guide.  
*C. erate*, Berger’s clouded yellow (*C. australis*) and Clouded yellow (*C. hyale*) all occur in Hungary.

**Moths**

Hammingbird hawk-moth  
Spurge hawk-moth caterpillar  
Large hawk-moth caterpillar

**Other notable invertebrates**

Roman snail  
A spider: *Araneus quadratus*  
Violet carpenter bee  
Praying mantis  
Blue-winged grasshopper  
Red-winged grasshopper  
‘Carabinieri’ beetle  
Southern hawkker  
Common darter  
Ruddy darter  
Blue-tailed damselfly sp.  
Red damselfly

**Amphibians and reptiles**

Agile frog  
Tree frog  
Edible frog  
Common toad  
Fire-bellied toad  
Wall lizard  
Green lizard

**Mammals – wild**

Red squirrel  
Hare  
(Wild boar – tracks)  
Stoat  
Eastern hedgehog  
Roe deer  
(Vole sp.)

**Mammals – domestic**

Hungarian grey cattle  
Puli (a small Hungarian cattle/sheep dog)  
Racka sheep

## Birds

**Little grebe:** seen on two days  
**Great crested grebe:** seen on two days  
**Pygmy cormorant:** one in the Hortobágy on 19/9  
**Cormorant:** seen on two days  
**Grey heron:** seen on two days  
**Purple heron:** 1 in the Hortobágy 19/9, 2 in the Hortobágy 22/9  
**Great white egret:** common in fields around the Hortobágy  
**Spoonbill:** 9 in the Hortobágy 19/9, 3 in the Hortobágy 22/9  
**Black stork:** 1 on 19/9  
[White stork: they'd all left but in Nagyiván we saw many nests, heard how the national stork survey is done by postmen, that there were 30 pairs on this village and one nest had the most extraordinary productivity with seven young fledged]  
**Mute swan:** Lake Tisza on 19/9 and 22/9  
**Greylag goose:** wild rather than feral here and seen on both Hortobágy days 19/9 and 22/9  
**Wigeon:** Hortobágy 19/9  
**Teal:** Hortobágy 19/9  
**Mallard:** seen on three days  
**Shoveler:** Hortobágy 19/9  
**Ferruginous duck:** one flew off as we got out the bus in the Hortobágy 19/9 and wasn't re-found  
**White-tailed eagle:** an immature at Lake Tisza 22/9  
**Marsh harrier:** large numbers in the Hortobágy  
**Hen harrier:** two ringtails on 22/9 and one ringtail on 23/9  
**Sparrowhawk:** seen daily  
**Buzzard:** seen daily  
**Eastern imperial eagle:** 1, farmland near Poroszló, 22/9  
**Kestrel:** seen on three days and the travelling days near the motorway  
**Red-footed falcon:** on 22/9 in the Hortobágy, three feeding at Nagyiván then 12 or 15 still at the colony  
**Hobby:** 1 18/9, 2 19/9 when two were seen on the ground at Nagyvan  
**Saker:** 2 at their pylon nestbox on 22/9  
**Pheasant:** recorded on 19/9 and 22/9  
**Coot:** 100s on Lake Tisza and recorded two other days  
**Crane:** on 19/9, records of 2, 10, 12 and 4; also seen on 22/9  
**Great bustard:** not seen until the return day 24/9 when 21 of Hungary's national bird in Kiskunsag National Park south of Budapest.  
**Little ringed plover:** 8 on a drained fishpond in the Hortobágy on 19/9  
**Lapwing:** recorded on both Hortobágy visits 19/9 & 22/9  
**Snipe:** 19/9, Hortobágy  
**Curlew:** recorded on both Hortobágy visits 19/9 & 22/9  
**Spotted redshank:** on the drained fishpond in the Hortobágy on 19/9  
**Redshank:** 19/9, Hortobágy  
**Green sandpiper:** 1 on the drained fishpond in the Hortobágy on 19/9  
**Wood sandpiper:** on the drained fishpond in the Hortobágy on 19/9  
**Common sandpiper:** on the drained fishpond in the Hortobágy on 19/9  
**Temminck's stint:** 1 on the drained fishpond in the Hortobágy on 19/9  
**Stone-curlew:** 7 at Nagyiván in the Hortobágy on 22/9  
**Avocet:** 2 on the drained fishpond in the Hortobágy on 19/9  
**Black-headed gull:** recorded on both Hortobágy visits 19/9 & 22/9  
**Yellow-legged gull** *Larus michahellis*: recorded on both Hortobágy visits 19/9 & 22/9  
**Whiskered tern:** 2 juveniles at Lake Tisza 22/9  
**Feral pigeon:** recorded on five days  
**Woodpigeon:** recorded every day  
**Stock dove:** flocks on the farmland visited on 22/9  
**Collared dove:** recorded daily, especially in the villages  
**Little owl:** 1 in one of the Bükk Hills villages on 21/9  
**Kingfisher:** 1 at Lake Tisza 22/9  
**Hoopoe:** 1 on 21/9 in the Hór valley  
**Lesser spotted woodpecker:** heard on three mornings in Noszvaj

**Middle spotted woodpecker:** heard or seen on three mornings in Noszvaj  
**Great spotted woodpecker:** seen every morning in Noszvaj  
**Syrian woodpecker:** seen on three mornings in Noszvaj, sometimes sharing a tree with great spotted woodpeckers  
**Black woodpecker:** seen by someone on all six days, notably three together on the wet day near to Noszvay on 20/9 and one in the park seen exceptionally well by several in the group on the morning of 21/9  
**Green woodpecker:** seen by someone on all six days  
**Grey-headed woodpecker:** seen or heard on five days, but most notably 2 in the park at Noszvaj on 22/9  
**Crested lark:** not recorded until the return journey to Budapest, at a filling station/rest stop  
**Skylark:** recorded on three days  
**Swallow:** recorded on four days  
**House martin:** recorded every day  
**White wagtail:** recorded on four days  
**Grey wagtail:** seen every day in the park at Noszvaj  
[Red-throated pipit: Gerard heard one fly over in farmland at lunchtime on 22/9  
**Wren:** recorded on two days  
**Robin:** recorded on three days  
**Black redstart:** seen every day on the hotel and houses at Noszvaj and were singing too  
**Whinchat:** in farmland at lunchtime on 22/9  
**Stonechat:** recorded on three days  
**Wheatear:** recorded just on 22/9  
**Blackbird:** recorded daily  
**Song thrush:** recorded on five days, especially at Noszvaj  
**Chiffchaff:** recorded on five days, especially at Noszvaj  
**Goldcrest:** heard and poorly seen in some pines in the Bükk Hills on 23/9  
**Marsh tit:** recorded on five days, especially at Noszvaj  
**Coal tit:** recorded on one day 23/9 at Noszvaj  
**Great tit:** recorded daily  
**Blue tit:** recorded daily  
**Long-tailed tit:** recorded on 21/9 and 23/9  
**Penduline tit:** 4 juveniles at Lake Tisza on 22/9  
**Nuthatch:** recorded daily, especially at Noszvaj where they were very active and easily seen  
[Treecreeper: 1 treecreeper on 21/9 likely to have been this species given the location in the Hór valley forest]  
**Short-toed treecreeper:** recorded twice at Noszvaj, including in song  
**Red-backed shrike:** 1 on 22/9 in the Hortobágy  
**Great (northern) grey shrike:** none until the return journey when there was one on a wire at a filling station/rest stop and two or three in Kiskunsag National Park south of Budapest  
**Jay:** recorded daily  
**Magpie:** recorded daily  
**Jackdaw:** on 22/9 at the red-footed falcon colony only  
**Rook:** recorded on both Hortobágy visits 19/9 & 22/9  
**Hooded crow:** recorded on five days  
**Raven:** recorded on four days, including a flock of 20 on the walk at Varhegy  
**Starling:** recorded on five days, in thousands out on the open plain on 19/9 and 22/9  
**House sparrow:** recorded daily  
**Tree sparrow:** recorded daily, especially at Noszvaj  
**Chaffinch:** recorded on five days  
**Greenfinch:** recorded only on 21/9  
**Goldfinch:** recorded on five days  
**Siskin:** recorded on 21/9 and 22/9  
**Linnet:** recorded only on 21/9  
**Hawfinch:** recorded on five days, and were regular at Noszvaj  
**Yellowhammer:** heard or seen on three days, all in the Bükk Hills  
**Rock bunting:** seen on both visits to the old quarry at the start of the Hór valley walk  
**Reed bunting:** recorded only on 22/9 in the Hortobágy  
**Corn bunting:** recorded only on 22/9

Total: 104 species



## Magyar Madártani és Természetvédelmi Egyesület

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**To: Chris Durdin**

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E-mail: [honeyguide@tesco.net](mailto:honeyguide@tesco.net)

Date: 15-11-2005

Subject: Acknowledgements

Dear Mr. Durdin,

On behalf of MME BirdLife-Hungary I would like to express our gratitude to your company, Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays for the donation of 691 GBP, kindly offered and successfully transferred to MME in order to support the Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) conservation efforts of MME.

MME has been working for the conservation of the species since the early 1980s, with considerable success. Our efforts greatly contributed to the unprecedented increase of the Hungarian Saker population from a mere 13 known pairs in 1980 to 140 breeding pairs recorded in the country in 2005. Conservation work executed by MME included the organisation of nest guarding, construction of artificial nests, insulation of dangerous electric poles, regular information exchange with stakeholders and public awareness raising.

Every support is very helpful to our activities, and also your donation will be used for direct conservation actions for the Saker. We are pleased to see that a private company offering bird tours supports the nature conservation efforts in an area visited by its tours. We are convinced that carefully lead, "sustainable" bird tours (with no adverse effects on the observed animals) and the support of local conservation show a good example of cooperation between bird-tourism and nature conservation – it is a way to follow.

Kind regards,

Ivan Demeter

Project co-ordinator

MME BirdLife-Hungary



Az MME a BirdLife International tagszervezete Magyarországon

„A természet szolgálatában”<sup>®</sup>