

Butterflies of Hungary

Holiday Report 27 June 4 July 2015

Led by Gabor and Andi Orban and Julian Dowding



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Introduction

Our holiday was based in the Aggtelek and Bükk National Parks of north-east Hungary. Both areas are renowned for their abundance of butterflies and other wildlife. Aggtelek National Park was founded in 1985 and also contains the largest stalactite cave in Europe near the village of Jósvafő. The Baradla cave is 26 km long, of which 8 km is in Slovakia and has been designated a World Heritage Site. Bükk National Park was created in 1976 and is Hungary's largest national park, comprising an area of 43,129 hectares. It is situated in the northern mountains, between Szilvásvárad and Lillafüred and lies a little to the south of Aggtelek. Its limestone mountains which rise to around 900m are covered in Beech and Oak forests, with scattered Birch and Sallow. The mountains have a variety of microclimates and surface geological formations, sheltering a rich fauna and flora in a variety of habitats. Its important geological features include various karst formations within its limestone mountains - particularly caves - which were once inhabited by pre-historic people. Our aim therefore was to spend a relaxing week in these two areas, enjoying the butterflies and other wildlife found there.

The 9 guests joining us on this holiday were Paul and Nancy, John and Elaine, Val, Gill, Tony, Peter and Richard. The butterfly guiding, was led by Gabor and Andi Orban and Julian Dowding.





What follows is the programme for the week, followed by a daily diary, gallery and species lists.

Day 1, Saturday 27th June: Arrival in Budapest and transfer to Aggtelek National Park

Day 2, Sunday 28th June: Eastern part of Aggtelek NP,

Day 3, Monday 29th June: Northern part of Aggtelek NP,

Day 4, Tuesday 30th June: Aggtelek & Western edge of Hortobágy

Day 5, Wednesday 1st July: Little Hortobágy, transfer to Bükk

Day 6, Thursday 2nd July: Hor Valley, lower Bükk

Day 7, Friday 3rd July: Western & Central Bükk

Day 8, Saturday 4th July: Return to UK







Day 1, Saturday 27th June. Arrival in Budapest and transfer to Aggtelek National Park.

We arrived at Budapest airport around lunchtime and were met by Gabor and Andi. They'd already collected Nancy and Paul who'd flown in on an earlier flight from the US. With our guests collected, we were soon in the minibus, winging our way northeast towards Aggtelek National

Park in the north of the country, bordering Slovakia. Conditions were cloudy but warm.

Stop 1. We made a stop for fresh cherries and refreshments at a roadside service station. Here we found time to look at a few butterflies and moths including an emerging Goat Moth on Oriental Elm which Tony pointed out and some Yellow-tailed moths on a variety of plum. We also watched distant Imperial Eagles and at close quarters, Crested Lark and White Wagtail.

Stop 2. After the drive, we arrived at our hotel in Aggtelek National Park at around 5.30pm, dropped off our cases in our rooms and soon sat down to our first Hungarian meal of chicken and soup.

Stop 3. We made a brief foray into the hay meadow across from the hotel after dinner. It was full of flowers and thus offered much potential for butterflies but by



then the temperature was falling and the light was failing. However we did find Heath and Weaver's Fritillaries, Short-tailed Blue and Mazarine Blue, Chestnut Heath and Marbled White.





Day 2, Sunday 28th June. Eastern part of Aggtelek National Park.

Stop 1. The day started cloudy but warm and so by breakfast time, some of us had already spent an hour in the meadow by the hotel, such was the allure! Butterflies and birds were already busy. We watched a male Golden Oriole fly overhead and a Turtle Dove which was perched on the wires. A Quail made its "Whet your lips" call from a meadow beyond and Peter found some nice burnet moths and bumble bees. Gillian and Tony also found Heath Fritillaries and Marbled Whites.

After a very good Hungarian breakfast of scrambled eggs, cereal, fruit, salad, cheeses, sausages and tea or juice we assembled for a chat to outline what we would do during the day and then made our way to the minibus, where Gabor pointed out a calling Wryneck.

Stop 2. En route to our next location, we passed a young fox and soon Gabor was telling us all about the incredible local cave system named after the stream, which over time became known as Aggtelek. At one time this was thought to be the longest cave system in the world until the discoveries in the New World. We also passed a few White Stork nests, now with fairly large young which were easy to see from the bus. Other birds seen at the road included Common Buzzard and Red Backed Shrike.

After about 10km, we parked up and disembarked and were immediately greeted by a host of butterflies. The area was a flowery meadow bordered by woodland of mainly Oak and Beech. Below, a much wetter meadow also held some splendid Aurelian treasures and we ended up spending about 3 hours there. It would have been very easy to stay much longer, such was the floristic abundance and wealth of butterflies. Three really good Blues were found here, the first by









Peter - Alcon Blue (*Phengaris alcon*) on the drier slopes - followed by Scarce Large Blue (*Phengaris teleius*) and Mountain Alcon Blue (*Phengaris rebeli*) on the lower wet meadows.



Other butterflies included Small Skipper, Heath Fritillary, False Heath Fritillary, Pearly Heath, Great Banded Grayling, Peacock, Chestnut Heath, Ringlet, Green-underside Blue, Large Copper, Small Copper, Scarce Copper, Small Blue, Woodland Brown, Woodland Grayling, Peacock, Red Admiral, Dark Green Fritillary, High Brown Fritillary, Marbled and Lesser Marbled Fritillary (the underside was carefully inspected for a clear yellow patch), Brimstone, Small Copper and Meadow Brown. Tony also found White Admiral and Knapweed Fritillary larva. Flowers in the meadow included Crested Cow-wheat, the larval food-plant of the numerous Heath Fritillaries, lots of Salvias, Gentians, Knapweeds, and Thistles. Other insects of note included Macaronius Owlfly.

Stop 3. We eventually left the meadows and continued our way along a woodland track, finding Green Hairstreak, more Woodland Browns, Spotted Fritillary, Silver Studded Blue, Map and Idas

Blue. An area of Privet blossoms was alive with Sloe Hairstreaks and Rose Chafer Beetles. Lowflying Pale Clouded Yellows dashed past and Peter showed immense patience in trying (and eventually succeeding) to find and photograph one which had settled.

Stop 4. As we moved out of the woodland, we had lunch then crossed another flowery hillside and found Large Blue. Here, Val found a very blue weary looking butterfly. Closer examination showed the markings of Osiris Blue with its straightened row of submarginal ocelli. This was a butterfly we had wanted to see and so we were thankful for Val's sharp eyes. We also found its larval host-plant, Sainfoin. Tony soon found Meleager's Blue - a stunning male in pristine condition - displaying the beautifully scalloped hindwing edges. He followed this with Anomalous Blue, the only one to be seen on the holiday. Great Banded Graylings on the other hand were ubiquitous.

We reached another woodland track, where we found mating 9-Spotted Moths and Richard quickly found Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper. As we continued, Comma and Scarce Tortoiseshell (also known as Yellow legged Tortoiseshell) with bright white apical spots and buff coloured legs were seen. Compared to Large Tortoiseshell, the Scarce was a much more vivid insect, with bright orange colouring and buff coloured legs. More Woodland Browns were seen at the end of the track

Stop 5. Glider glade.

We'd had a really good day in the field but there was one more butterfly we wanted to see; the Hungarian Glider. Gabor proudly informed us that the butterfly had been so named because some renowned Hungarian







entomologists of old had decided to name the butterfly after their country. The butterfly is actually found throughout much of eastern Europe and into Japan but Hungary is a very good place for it. En route to the glade, we stopped for a little avian distraction in the form of a family of Great Spotted Woodpeckers and also a couple of Grey Headed Woodpeckers which flew up into some trees.

Very soon we arrived at a large house and saw a small herd of Fallow Deer in the garden keeping a

watchful eye on us. Right on the edge of the forest, we found the Hungarian Glider, quite at home on Brambles and Nettles. It glided off once, allowing us to appreciate the other aspect of its name, and then returned to its perch for a few photos. A Red Squirrel was also seen at the same spot, peering out from behind the trunk of a tree, before vanishing into the forest. Peter and Julian ambled off down the road beside the forest and found Wood White. They also checked out some Goat Willows in the hope of finding Purple Emperor but none were seen.

We arrived back at our hotel by 5.30pm, giving us plenty of time to freshen up in time for a wonderful dinner of fish soup, stuffed mushrooms with goat's cheese and dill sauce, and Hungarian pancakes with chocolate and apples.







Day 3, Monday 29th June. Northern part of Aggtelek National Park.

Stop 1. After breakfast, we set out in the direction of Jósvafő, passing the iconic Fire Salamander which has been carved into the hills, then over the river and onto the limestone valley and stream. The temperature was already 24°C.

Stop 2. We arrived at a meadow where Maps fluttered by, occasionally landing on the track. We found and investigated a mole carcass which was attracting probing butterflies including Map, Heath Fritillary, Common Blue and Peacock.

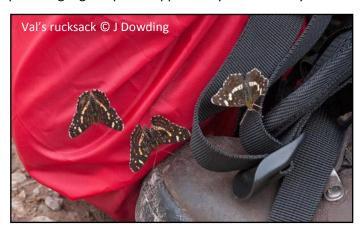


Passing through Beech and Oak woodland Tony helpfully identified Bladdernut Tree. Butterflies included Speckled Wood, Comma, Small White, Map, Silver-washed Fritillary, and an Orange Tip larva. Birdwise, European Nuthatches were heard calling along with Wren and Common Buzzard.

We checked each Silver-washed Fritillary for possible Pallas's Fritillary but none were seen. Our enjoyment was interrupted by the sudden arrival of a rain storm. Hoping that it would peter out, we continued, stopping for a couple of Calopteryx dragonflies, which Peter and Gill photographed. However, the rain didn't stop, so we had to take cover under the trees. Some of the group decided to walk back to the minibus whilst others walked on to the shelter of a picnic hut by a large lake. When the rain abated, steam from the wet vegetation rose over the forest creating an ethereal atmosphere and we made our way back to the meadows.



Stop 3. On the way back, we found a pristine male Purple Emperor, probing some dung and providing a good photo opportunity. Occasionally it would fly away, only to return and settle once



more. There were also plenty of Map butterflies on the wet ground and three of them landed on Val's red rucksack. We all wondered what it might contain to make it so appealing!

After the Emperor, we continued the return leg, seeing several Heath Fritillaries and numerous Maps. The rising temperatures and increasing amount of sunshine had encouraged



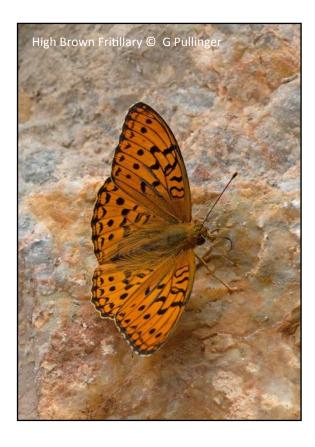


them to come out and play and many were taking minerals or moisture from the now wet track. We also saw Chestnut Heath and Pearly Heath, some nectaring, others on the ground. The number of Map butterflies increased with every step, such that in the end we must have seen hundreds. As we continued walking a Great Banded Grayling whizzed by. It was so large that it could *almost* have been Poplar Admiral but alas no!

By a small glade near the end of the track, Lesser Purple Emperors circled briefly and we watched these for a while before moving on.

Stop 4. We arrived back at the bus and ate lunch at a picnic table by a large children's play area, thankful for the coffee and tea and also for the sunshine. At an adjacent hostel, a number of Silver-washed Fritillaries were showing interest in the doorway and white painted walls, and others alighted on our minibus. Behind the bus, Gill found a large gathering of Maps. The play area and wooden castle also proved very attractive to a good number of Purple Emperors, Scarce Swallowtails, Red Admirals, and both Silver-washed and High Brown Fritillaries.

Stop 5. After lunch, we continued in the direction of a quarry and woodpile. More Maps were found along the way and it seemed that the population must have been at its peak. The roadside meadows in the area are bordered by woodland and trees offering sublime butterfly habitat and here we found Large Coppers and more Mountain Alcon Blues, Brimstone and Comma. The sward produced plenty of Marbled Whites, Scarce Coppers and Lulworth Skipper, the latter found by Richard. Throughout the week, we discovered that finding Lulworth Skipper was something Richard was rather good at, encountering them on at least five separate days!





Moving on, we checked banks of Kidney Vetch and found Small Blue laying eggs on this, its larval host-plant. There was also another Pale Clouded Yellow for us all to see ...but especially Peter.

Continuing along the road, we crept towards a male Lesser Purple Emperor alighting on animal droppings. The orange form of Lesser Purple Emperor *Clytie* was soon spotted too, circling the dung but it proved very difficult to photograph, as did the others we saw further along the road. A Dark Green Fritillary seen nectaring on wayside flowers proved to be a much better subject.





Stop 6. At the quarry, numerous groups of puddling butterflies indulged themselves, including Green - veined Whites, Small Whites, High Brown and Dark Green Fritillaries. We also saw a Raven. Unfortunately, the skies clouded over and the rain started to fall again. We made a vain attempt to wait it out at a nearby village known for its butterflies, but the weather would not relent so we headed back to the hotel around 5pm. In spite of the rain it had been a good day with many new species seen.

For dinner we had beef stew and pork, and traditional Cottage cheese called Strapachka. For pudding we had a chestnut puree and cream.



Day 4, Tuesday 30th June. Aggtelek and transfer to western edge of Hortobágy.

We awoke and were greeted by a sunny morning. Temperatures were already 22°C and we were quietly confident about our prospects for the day ahead. A party of schoolchildren who'd been rather taken by our enthusiasm for butterflies presented us with some butterfly biscuits they'd baked. It was a lovely gesture and one which we hoped augured well for the rest of the week.

Stop 1. After breakfast, we set off on a trail behind the hotel leading to some meadows. Birds and butterflies were well on the wing with a Black Redstart family singing and feeding in the grounds. A juvenile Song Thrush was spotted too. As we walked, a beautiful Hungarian Glider came floating past, not stopping too long but alighting briefly on one of the sweetly scented Lime trees. Pearly Heaths were also attracted along with a host of male Meadow Browns. In the short sward (which had been 'thoughtfully' strimmed), there were still Marbled Whites and Chestnut Heaths. Peter as always was pleased to see Pale Clouded Yellow flying by. In the distance Ravens were seen and heard along with Green Woodpecker.









We quickly reached an uncut meadow full of butterflies where innumerable Marbled Whites and Heath Fritillaries were by now busily feeding on the nectar of abundant flowers. A pair of mating Great Banded Graylings caused a bit of a stir and were photographed. In among all the smaller fritillaries, Julian and Gabor identified Twin Spot Fritillary. This was a fantastic find and the species was only seen once more during the week. Like a number of Fritillaries, this butterfly displayed a wonderful violet flush when viewed from above at certain angles.

Stop 2. We moved to a dry limestone hillside in the hope of finding different species. On animal droppings, Safflower Skipper and our first Assman's Fritillaries were seen. Gabor explained the differences between the latter, Nickerl's and Heath Fritillaries. Soon therefore, we were able to add Nickerl's to our species lists as well. Tony meanwhile had wandered off - as he does - and turned up Green Hairstreak, Short-tailed Blue, Sloe and Ilex Hairstreaks! We also found Scarce



Copper, Small Copper, Dark Green Fritillary, Chapman's, Common and Chequered Blues.

Stop 3. We returned to the hotel for lunch and liberated a Large Tortoiseshell from the restaurant, before loading our bags onto the bus.

Stop 4. Our next location was a brief stop at a small car park where we looked in vain for Poplar Admiral. There were however a number of Silver-washed Fritillaries and Lesser Purple Emperors, including the orange form 'clytie' again.

Stop 5. At a small village, we investigated the small river, washes and fords for puddling butterflies. Lesser Purple Emperors were seen, not in large numbers, along with Pale Clouded Yellow and a number of Essex and Small Skippers.

One spot hosted seven Pale Clouded Yellows, a number of Wood Whites and also a gorgeous male Spotted Fritillary. A dry flowery bank was home to a couple of Meleager's Blues, including a brightly coloured female. Back on the mud, Shorttailed and Small Blues appeared. In the village, Wall, Swallowtail and Scarce Swallowtail were seen, the latter literally floating down the road and smelling the roses. Peter and Richard staked out a fresh looking dog poo and were rewarded





with a nice 'clytie'. Birds seen included Serin, Swallow, Tree Sparrow, Goshawk and White Wagtail.

Stop 6. We continued the drive to our second hotel, located near the River Tisza and passed a number of Great White Egrets and saw Rollers perched on distant wires. A Common Buzzard was also seen on hay bales, and more Great Whites. Near the hotel, a small ferry crosses the Tisza and here we found Map, Holy Blue, Small White, Speckled Wood and Comma.

Stop 7. Arriving at our destination, the owner Clara and her son warmly welcomed us and showed us to our rooms. We were soon enjoying some well - deserved drinks together in the garden. These included their home-made pálinka, with both grape and pear varieties. Dinner was a sumptuous meal of roast duck, wild boar, stew, veg, rice and cabbage salad. For dessert we had cherry pie.

Day 5, Wednesday 1st July. Transfer to Hotel via Little Hortobágy Plain.

We set off at 9.15 am, after a truly memorable breakfast. There was wall-to-wall sunshine and the thermometer was already reading 22°C.

Stop 1. Our first stop was the island reached by the ferry across the river. Here huge riverine Poplars have created a magical forest. Butterflies included Holly Blue, Map, Green-veined White, Speckled Wood, Queen of Spain, Sooty Copper, Small Copper, Brown Argus, Red Admiral, and ultimately Lesser Purple Emperor. We walked to a lake on the island and found more butterflies on the flowery bank around the edges. Birds seen included, Kingfisher, Pygmy Cormorant, Purple Heron, and Goldfinch and the woods echoed delightfully to the fluting sounds of the Orioles and Blackcaps.

On the way back we saw a single Common Tern and two Lesser Purple Emperors, flitting around a muddy patch under the Willows. These were accompanied by Holly Blue and a fly-by Silver Washed Fritillary of the form *Valezina*, which John pointed out.

Stop 2. We continued towards Little Hortobágy and on the way spotted a female Roller perched upon the overhead wires. Soon after, Gabor pointed out some Bee-eaters. Red backed Shrikes, Spotted Flycatcher and Marsh Harriers were also seen.

Once we'd entered the national park, Gabor explained why the Great White Egret was chosen as its symbol. He told of how once there had been tens of thousands of







birds but that in the 19th century, the fashion for women to wear the birds' plumes in their hair and hats had caused them to virtually die out. This problem was compounded by changes in land use, notably drainage of the marshes. Common Cranes also suffered in this way. Eventually Hungarian conservationists did something about it and this saw the creation of the reserve and the return of 1000's of Great Egrets and Common Cranes.



Stop 3. Soon we saw the Great White Egret, easily spotted due to its size and stature. Gabor mentioned that the Crane migration here from Sept-Oct is also spectacular, with thousands of birds moving through. A Lesser Grey Shrike was spotted as we passed along the dirt road through the reserve. At a point near some power lines, we stopped to watch a Saker Falcon which Elaine had noticed. Another three Sakers were then seen and we were able to view these through a telescope.

Gill, Julian, Peter, Richard and Val went in search of one of the specialities of the area, namely, Lesser Fiery Copper. In the heat, these tiny tangerine jewels were lively but we quickly found and photographed them. A Swallowtail also put in an appearance together with Painted Ladies, Small Heaths, Silver-studded Blues, Idas and Common Blues. Missing from the list were Bath White and Oriental Marbled Skipper but it wasn't long before Richard and Peter had found these too.

Stop 4. While travelling across the plain we made impromptu stops for Rollers - quite spectacular in





their stunning blue and turquoise livery - and a Red-footed Falcon.

Stop 5. Arriving at a small area in the shade, we homed in on a family party (or two) of Common Kestrels. While we ate lunch, we realised that the adult birds were teaching their young to fly. We also had good views of a Long - eared Owl which decided to treat Val and Gill to a fly-by, whooshing just a foot or so above their heads.

Butterfly-wise, two European Swallowtails posed very nicely for photos, as did Queen of Spain



Fritillaries. One of the Swallowtails was egglaying on the poisonous plant, Hemlock.

Stop 6. After lunch we made a roadside stop to watch two Imperial Eagles circling high above a field to our right. As we homed in with our bins, we had wonderful views of one of them plucking some prey in its talons.

Stop 7. We moved on to our next area of discovery, passing at least a dozen White Storks and male and female Marsh Harriers, in

a newly mown field. When we arrived in Szentistvan we stopped to look at the Great White Storks and their nests and also for a quick look at the Hungarian Trianon memorial. For Hungarians, the memorial symbolises the loss of nearly two thirds of Hungary's land after the disastrous Treaty of Versailles following the Great War. One half of her total population was also displaced along with the loss of all her seaports. Millions of Hungarians saw borders arbitrarily redrawn around them,

without plebiscites, ignoring President Wilson's lofty goal of national self-determination. Naturally, Hungarians including Gabor and Andifeel very strongly about this.

Stop 8. Our last stop was a meadow and stream. Marbled White, Silver-studded Blue, Idas Blue, Common Blue, Grizzled Skipper, Scarce Swallowtail, Wood White, Marbled Fritillary, Holly Blue, Small Copper and Berger's Clouded Yellow nectared on the plentiful Salvias and Vetches. Peter added Small Tortoiseshell.

Birds seen included Linnet, Tree Sparrow, Redbacked Shrike and Golden Oriole. Paul and Nancy were really keen on these avian distractions. As we approached Nozvaj, Peter spotted two Golden Orioles in fruit trees below the road. It was a good sighting, because they normally hide themselves away but here they were right in the open.





Stop 9. We arrived at our hotel, and as was the norm, once we'd been shown our rooms we had a relaxing drink or two in the garden. This was followed by a sumptuous dinner of chicken, pork ribs, fish pasta parcels and cherry pudding dessert.

Day 6, Thursday 2nd July. Hor Valley, lower Bükk.

Today Peter woke with a tooth problem so had to visit a dentist. Whilst this was happening, Gabor explained a bit about the region and its wildlife including some of the birds. He mentioned that the grounds behind the hotel were very good for butterflies and that the hotel garden itself could

boast at least 7 of the 10 species of woodpeckers found in Hungary.

Stop 1. Not wanting to leave without Peter, we went for a walk behind the hotel, with instructions for him to meet us there on his return. Searching the leafy track leading into the hills, we saw the first Nettle Tree Butterfly of the trip, and Tony soon found a White Admiral, giving everyone a chance to photograph it. The insect was laying eggs on a variety of Honeysuckle. Another new species was Common Glider. Some of these were very definitely *gliding* low over the ground and about our feet, enjoying the patches of sunlit ground. Even in flight, the three white bars which distinguish them from their congener, Hungarian Glider, were clearly visible. It was a productive spot which brought in many butterflies, including Silver-washed Fritillary, Red Admiral, Peacock, Meadow Brown, Map and Holly Blue.

Stop 2. After collecting Peter, we drove through the village of Bogács which is famous for its thermal baths, and continued to our destination, stopping first for views of Lesser Spotted Eagle. The bird was spotted from the vehicle, so we parked up and got out to take a closer look. At first it was soaring but quite suddenly it stooped, dropping like a stone onto the hillside. It reappeared shortly after and began gaining height, having missed its quarry. It stooped again







and rose, but this time we could see it clutching something in its talons.

Arriving at the beautiful Hor valley, we took the opportunity to have refreshments (an espresso or ice cream), before setting off up the track.

Stop 3. As we walked past the cliff faces and Beech and Oak forested slopes we soon found good nectar plants including Danewort (also called Dwarf Elder). Lots of butterflies and moths were using the plant, including 9-Spotted Moths and Silver-washed Fritillaries. On the ground, several large puddles were a magnet for insects. We had great views of High Brown Fritillary and each one was carefully checked in case Niobe was hiding amongst them. Comma, Pearly Heath, Large Tortoiseshell, Chequered Blue, Large Wall Brown, Wood White, Great Banded Grayling, Silverwashed Fritillary, Peacock, Red Admiral, Blue-spot Hairstreak and Common Glider all came down to drink or take minerals. On the flowers, Marbled Fritillaries were seen along with Marbled White, Chestnut Heath, Large White, Green-veined White, Small White and Rose Chafer Beetle.

Paul and Nancy had particularly wanted to see Rock Bunting, and Gabor was able to find one for them, sitting in one of the smaller trees lining the path. A Marsh Tit was also seen.

Stop 4. We continued along the track, passing many butterflies along the way and found a convenient log on which we could all sit for lunch. A timber lorry appeared and was photographed by John. The driver was angry that he'd been photographed, probably because he shouldn't have been there. Gabor defused the situation. The area is a protected reserve and logging is illegal. A little further along we saw Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell.

Stop 5. Eventually we reached a meadow nestled against a beautiful rock face. The meadow was busy with butterflies, mostly Small Blue and Common Blue. A Grey Headed Woodpecker was seen too but we didn't linger, as it was by now quite hot, and we favoured the dappled light and cooler air of the forest path. As we climbed higher, we came across more Woodland Grayling, which here outnumbered Great Banded Grayling.









Pressing onwards and upwards, Peter stopped to photograph one of the Tabonid flies. We also added some moisture to the path and immediately attracted Chequered Blue, Short-tailed Blue, and High Brown and Dark Green Fritillary.

Stop 6. At the top of the track we reached an opening in the forest and wandered into a couple of meadows, full of tall flowery vegetation which held a few Large Coppers. A track behind the also hosted Common Glider and the by now ubiquitous Silver-washed Frits. At least a dozen of these large fritillaries were seen on the walls of a small building taking minerals. Bird -wise, we had good views of Honey Buzzard.

By about 2.30pm, we decided to make the return journey down the woodland path to a café where refreshments awaited, along with Nancy and Paul, who'd chosen the time to take a break. On the way, we could hear plenty of Nuthatches and Treecreepers in the trees around us and came upon Woodland Grayling again.

Stop 7. When we reached the puddles we'd passed on the way up, they were now alive with Berger's and Pale Clouded Yellows, Scarce Swallowtails, whites of all descriptions, Meleager's and Short-tailed Blue, High Brown





Fritillary, Red Admiral, Grizzled Skipper, Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow and Common Gliders. Richard also found our first Cardinal of the holiday.



It had been a great day in the field, so we treated ourselves to refreshments at the café before returning to our hotel, in preparation for another sumptuous 5 course meal, including, zucchini or beef soup, chicken with chilli sauce, a baked sliced potato dish, and a lovely chocolate hash dessert. After dinner, we made the most of the very welcoming garden and bar, sharing the day's experiences over a drink or two.

Day 7, Friday 3rd July. Western & Central Bükk.

After another sumptuous breakfast and with the thermometer reading 22°C, we set off towards the Bükk Hills via Eger, the famous old town which has the most northerly minaret of the old Ottoman Empire and a fabulous fortress and Christian Basilica. The town is renowned for resisting the Ottomans but eventually the walls were breached. Even so, it was only occupied for 90 years, which compares favourably with other towns that suffered the same fate for at least 150 years.

After Eger, we passed a farm which breeds the famous Lipizana horses. They thrive on hard limestone hillsides with little vegetation and as a result, are favoured for their strength and hardiness. Eger, paradoxically, mean 'rich lands', because the farming is so good there.

Stop 1. Our first stop was a small track lined with a high bank and woodland on one side and on the other, a bank with grassland behind it. Marbled Whites and Meadow Browns abounded and soon Nancy was watching a pair of beautiful Brimstone butterflies. They were pleased to see Peacock butterflies too and Julian explained how he thought that it was perhaps the most beautiful European butterfly, and that, if it were not for the fact that it was a relatively common species, people would travel to the ends of the earth to see them.





We decided to investigate a patch of wayside Cranesbills which were attended by a number of small Lycaenid butterflies flitting over and landing upon them. These proved to be our first

Geranium Arguses. As the sun warmed the area, many more species appeared. Maps as ever, were ubiquitous and joined by Large, Small and Green-veined Whites. Wood Whites were a little less common, but eventually this butterfly began to put in more appearances along the track.

As the track rose and turned a corner, we arrived at a very good flowery meadow, with patches of



thistles. Peter was soon photographing both Marbled and High Brown Fritillaries which were to be found amongst the profusion of Silver-washed. Richard, Gill and Peter also found Scarce Coppers darting among the flowers. Two Lesser Marbled Fritillaries were seen too, along with Queen of Spain, and Heath and Assman's Fritillaries. At one point, a beautiful Heath Fritillary landed on Val's hand and posed for a photo.

Another patch of Cranesbills produced more Geranium Arguses. Other butterflies included Green Hairstreak, Large and Small Skipper.

Returning back down the track, Val spotted an interesting chocolate - brown coloured Lycaenid with chequered

wing fringes. It appeared to have all the hallmarks of Brown Argus but a

quick check of the forewings revealed an incomplete series of orange lunules, stopping short of the wing tips, which were in themselves rather pointed looking. She'd found Mountain Argus. This caused a little debate later, since compared with UK specimens, the underside ocelli were rather large. However, the field guides revealed that it is only the British specimens which have the reduced ocelli.

Stop 2. We continued our drive to Bükk National Park and arrived at a charming little village that had something of an alpine feel to it, with a collection of timbered houses and a







wonderful little bar and café. With temperatures rising, and seizing the opportunity for a little break, we had coffee and lingered there for perhaps half an hour, before moving on through the village and taking a downhill track leading through the forest. Elaine was quick to find another Brimstone dancing about some of the flowers in one of the village gardens. We then passed a little graveyard and entered the woodland track.





The first butterflies in evidence were five or six Silver-washed Fritillaries puddling on the track, along with White Admiral and Commas. The woodland is predominantly Beech and Oak, with a few other trees such as Willow and Sallow interspersed here and there. Birds either seen or heard on the way included Nuthatch, White-backed and Middle-spotted Woodpeckers and Marsh Tit.

The track was almost completely shaded for nearly a kilometre. It passed alongside a small stream which would occasionally disappear underground and then reappear. Wherever the sun lit damp patches of mud, we found butterflies, though it has to be said these were invariably Silver-washed. However, these were at times seen in very large numbers, with one patch attracting at least 15 all at once. Occasionally we would find White Admiral, Comma or Common Glider amongst them.

Stop 3. As we drew close to the bottom of the track it became sunnier, and flowery meadows appeared. Elaine found Mountain Alcon Blue, feeding on a beautiful pink pea-like flower. Scarce Copper, Queen of Spain, Marbled Fritillary, Pearly Heath and others were seen. One patch of bright yellow composite flowers was covered in Maps and Heath Frits, and there amongst them was our first Cardinal of the day.





It was by now around 1.30pm, so we opted for lunch. A spot by some muddy puddles provided the location. An interesting High Brown Fritillary of the form *Cleodoxa* was spotted along with Cardinal, Lesser Purple Emperor, Purple Emperor, False Heath Fritillary, innumerable Maps and Wood Whites. Unfortunately, the track was used by people driving cars and one of these disturbed the butterflies, as well as squashing a number of them.

Stop 4. After lunch, we continued our walk and at one point, John found a female Large Copper ovipositing. The tiny egg was located near to the mid-rib of the Broad-leafed Dock upon which it had been laid. Balkan Coppers were present too, along with Small Coppers. There was also a probable Titania's Fritillary which moved off far too quickly for photos. In the other direction, a field of thistles was literally covered in Queen of Spain, Heath Fritillary and Meadow Browns. In amongst them, we found more Large Coppers and did our best to get some photos. The butterflies were taking nectar from tall thistles at about head height. This would normally be most convenient for photography but the butterflies were incredibly active, skipping from one flower to the next every few seconds, so it was in fact quite a tricky task for us.









Eventually, we returned back up the forested track, passing more Silver-washed Frits, and a number of grounded Oberthur's and Large Grizzled Skipper. On our return, we had a Purple Emperor fly-by, and also a Lesser Purple Emperor visitation upon Peter. He, Richard and Julian also managed to find and photograph female Purple-shot Copper.

The walk back up through the shady woodland was eventually rewarded by refreshments at the local café, before our journey back to the hotel in time to prepare for a dinner of Hungarian Goulash. This was served outside, to the sounds of a Hungarian Gypsy band.

Day 8, Saturday 4th July. Return to the UK.

Our holiday had come to an end. As usual, breakfast was a fabulous buffet with all types of wonderful locally produced food. We spent a short while on the track behind the hotel gardens, before driving back to Budapest Airport for our flights home. A quick stop by the airfield 'museum' gave us an opportunity to have a look at a colony of Sousliks (Ground Squirrels) scurrying across the short cropped grass and hiding behind the wheels of some of the aircraft. At the airport we said our goodbyes, leaving Paul and Nancy who had a very long journey back to America to stay on for a tour of Budapest and a visit to one of the horse farms, and Peter, who was staying overnight with Gabor and Andi.

Summary

It had been a wonderful holiday in great company, with 96 different butterfly species seen during the week. Even though this was a butterfly holiday, it should be stated that birdlife was also excellent, with 77 species recorded.

Acknowledgements

Greenwings would like to thank all their guests on this holiday for their good humour, enthusiasm and help throughout the trip, and also for their assistance in compiling the species lists and the use of their photos in the gallery.

Photo gallery and species lists overleaf























































































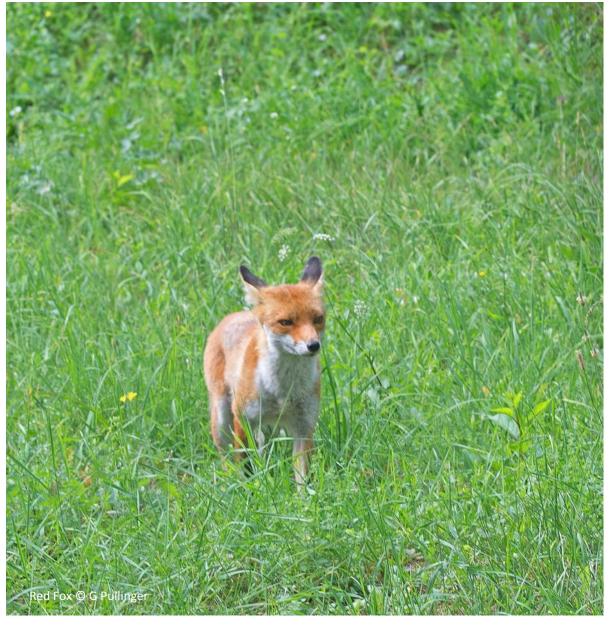


































































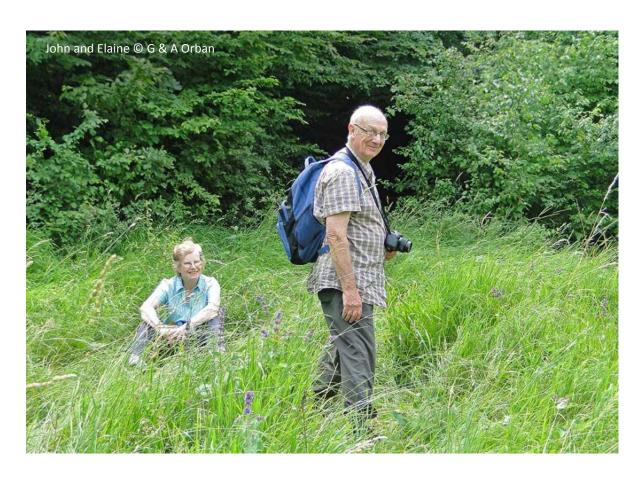




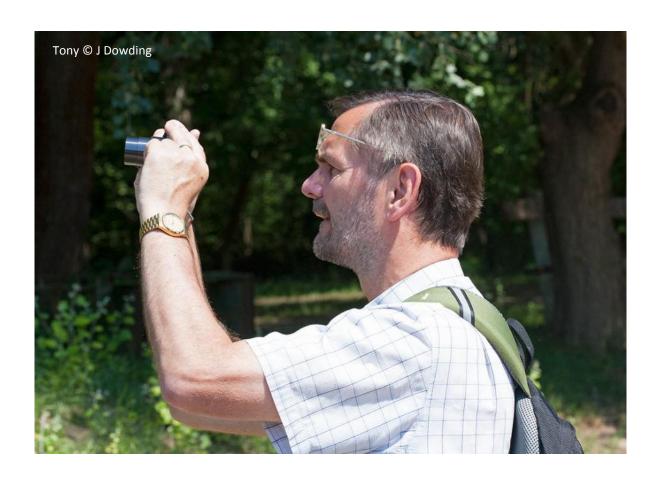




























































































	species checklist 27 J	une - 4 July 2015	Sat 27 th	Sun 28 th	Mon 29 th	Tue 30 th	Wed 1 st	Thu 2 nd	Fri 3 rd	Sat 4 th
	Butterflies			Jun day	Jun day	Jun day	Jul day	Jul day	Jul day	Jul day
		T	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Common name	Scientific								
	Skippers	Family Hesperiidae								
1	Grizzled Skipper	Pyrgus malvae			✓	✓	✓	✓		
2	Large Grizzled Skipper	Pyrgus alveus							✓	
3	Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper	Pyrgus armoricanus			✓				✓	
4	Safflower Skipper	Pyrgus carthami			✓	✓				
5	Marbled Skipper	Carcharodus lavatherae				✓				
6	Oriental Marbled Skipper	Carcharodus orientalis					✓			
7	Dingy Skipper	Erynnis tages				✓		✓		
8	Lulworth Skipper	Thymelicus acteon			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9	Essex Skipper	Thymelicus lineola	✓	✓	✓	√	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Small Skipper	Thymelicus sylvestris	✓	✓	✓	√	✓	✓	✓	
11	Large Skipper	Ochlodes sylvanus			√				√	
	Swallowtails, Apollos, Festoons	Family Papilionidae								
12	Swallowtail	Papilio machaon gorganus				√	✓	√	√	
13	Scarce Swallowtail	Iphiclides podalirius			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		5 1 5 1	1							
4.4	Whites & Yellows	Family <i>Pieridae</i>	-			nests				
14	Black-veined White	Aporia crataegi								
15	Large White	Pieris brassicae	1	√	√	√	√	√	√	
16	Small White	Pieris rapae	✓	√	√	√	√	√	√	✓
17	Green-veined White	Pieris napi		✓	✓	✓	√	✓	✓	
18	Bath White	Pontia daplidice			larvae		✓			
19	Orange Tip	Anthocharis cardamines								
20	Wood White	Leptidea sinapis		✓	✓	✓	√	√	√	
21	Pale Clouded Yellow	Colias crocea		V	V	/	√	√	✓	
22	Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow	Colias erate					✓ _{TP}	√		
23	Brimstone	Gonepteryx rhamni		✓	✓	✓		√	✓	
	Blues, Hairstreaks, Coppers	Family <i>Lycaenidae</i>								
24	Sloe Hairstreak	Satyrium acaciae		✓	✓	✓	✓			
25	Ilex Hairstreak	Satyrium ilicis				✓		✓		
26	Blue Spot Hairstreak	Satyrium spini						✓		
27	Green hairstreak	Callophrys rubi		✓		✓			✓	
28	Small Copper	Lycaena phlaeas		✓		√	✓		✓	
29	Large Copper	Lycaena dispar rutilus		✓	✓			✓	✓	
30	Scarce Copper	Lycaena vigaureae		✓	✓	√			✓	
31	Sooty Copper	Lycaena tityrus					√			
32	Purple-shot Copper	Lycaena alciphron							✓	
33	Lesser Fiery Copper	Lycaena thersamon					✓			
34	Short-tailed Blue	Everes argiades		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
35	Eastern Short-tailed Blue	Everes decoloratus				✓				
36	Small Blue	Cupido minimus		✓	√	✓	√			
37	Osiris Blue	Cupido osiris	√	√						
38	Holly Blue	Celestrina argiolus			✓	✓	√	√	✓	
39	Green Underside Blue	Glaucopsyche alexis		√						1
40	Mountain Alcon Blue	Phengaris rebeli		✓					√	
41	Alcon Blue	Phengaris alcon	1	√	√			l	1	
	<u> </u>	Phengaris arion		/	/		1	 	+	+

			Sat 27 th	Sun 28 th	Mon 29 th	Tue 30 th	Wed 1 st	Thu 2 nd	Fri 3 rd	Sat 4 th
	Butterfli	es cont'd	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jul	Jul	Jul	Jul
	Common name	Scientific								
43	Scarce Large Blue	Phengaris teleius		✓					✓	
44	Chequered Blue	Scolitatndes orion				✓		✓		
45	Silver-studded Blue	Plebejus argus		√	✓		✓	✓		
46	Idas Blue	Plebejus idas		√						
47	Zephyr Blue	Plebejus pylaon		√						1
48	Geranium Argus	Aricia eumedon							√	
49	Brown Argus	Aricia agestis			✓		✓		✓	
50	Mountain Argus	Aricia artaxerxes						√	✓	1
51	Mazarine Blue	Cyaniris semiargus	√	√	√					
52	Chapman's Blue	Polyommatus thersites				√		✓		
53	Common Blue	Polyommatus icarus		√	√	√	√	✓		✓
54	Adonis Blue	Lysandra bellargus								+
55	Meleager's Blue	Meleageria daphnis		✓		√		✓		+
	Wicicager 3 Diac	Wicieageria aapinns	+							+
	Aristocrats	Family Nymphalidae			-		-			+
56	Nettle-tree Butterfly	Libythea celtis						✓	√	+
57	Purple Emperor	Apatura iris			√			1	· /	+
58		'	+		· ·		√	<u> </u>	· ·	+
59	Lesser Purple Emperor White Admiral	Apatura ilia Limenitis camilla	+		· ·		+ -	/	· ·	+
60			-		 		-	V	· ·	√
61	Common Glider	Neptis sappho	-	✓		✓	1	\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \	, v	+
	Hungarian Glider	Neptis rivularis	-	V ✓	✓	V ✓	✓	✓	√	
62	Red Admiral	Vanessa atalanta		V /	 ∨	∨	V ✓	V	V ✓	
63	Peacock	Inachis io		∨ ✓	V ✓	V	∨ ✓	'	V /	
64	Painted Lady	Vanessa cardui		-	V	√	· ·	1	'	
65	Large Tortoiseshell	Nymphalis polychloros						'		
66	Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell	Nymphalis xanthomelas	_	✓	✓	√				
67	Small Tortoiseshell	Aglais urticae				√	√	√	√	
68	Comma	Polygonia c-album		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
69	Map Butterfly	Araschnia levana		✓	✓ _{100s}	✓	✓	√	√	✓
70	Cardinal	Argynnis pandora						√	✓	
71	Silver-washed Fritillary	Argynnis paphia		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
72	Dark Green Fritillary	Argynnis aglaja		✓	?	✓		✓	✓	
73	High Brown Fritillary	Argynnis adippe		✓	✓			✓	✓	
74	Queen of Spain Fritillary	Issoria lathonia	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
75	Twin Spot Fritillary	Brenthis hecate				✓				
76	Marbled Fritillary	Brenthis daphne		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	\perp
77	Lesser Marbled Fritillary	Brenthis ino		✓						✓
78	Weaver's Fritillary	Clossiana dia	✓	✓		✓			✓	\perp
79	Spotted Fritillary	Melitaea didyma		✓		✓		✓	✓	
80	False Heath Fritillary	Melitaea diamina		✓				✓	✓	
81	Heath Fritillary	Melitaea athalia		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
82	Nickerl's Fritillary	Melitaea aurelia				✓				
83	Assman's Fritillary	Melitaea britomartis		✓		✓			✓	
	formerly Satyridae	Family Nymphalidae								1
84	Marbled White	Melanargia galathea		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
85	Rock Grayling	Hipparchia alcyone				✓				
86	Woodland Grayling	Hipparchia fagi		√				√		\top
87	Great Banded Grayling	Brintesia circe		√	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1
88	Meadow Brown	Maniola jurtina	√	√	✓	√	✓	√	√	

	Butterflies cont'd		Sat 27 th	Sun 28 th	Mon 29 th	Tue 30 th	Wed 1 st	Thu 2 nd	Fri 3 rd	Sat 4 th
			Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jul	Jul	Jul	Jul
89	Ringlet	Aphantopus hyperantus		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
90	Small Heath	Coenonympha pamphilus			✓	✓	✓			
91	Pearly Heath	Coenonympha arcania		✓		✓		✓	✓	
92	Chestnut Heath	Coenonympha glycerion		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
93	Speckled Wood	Pararge aegeria		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
94	Wall Brown	Lasiommata megera				✓			✓	
95	Large Wall Brown	Lasiommat maera						√		
96	Woodland Browm	Lopinga achine		√						

	Burnets & notable moths		Sat 27 th Jun	Sun 28 th Jun	Mon 29 th Jun	Tue 30 th Jun	Wed 1 st Jul	Thu 2 nd Jul	Fri 3 rd Jul	Sat 4 th Jul
	Common name	Scientific	day 1	day 2	day 3	day 4	day 5	day 6	day 7	day 8
1	Transparent Burnet	Zygaena purpurea		✓		✓				
2	5-spot Burnet	Zygaena trifolii		✓		✓				
3	6-spot Burnet	Zygaena filipendulae		✓					✓	
4	Crepuscular Burnet	Zygaena carniolica		✓			✓			
5	Forester Moth	Adscita sp.		✓	✓					
6	9 Spotted Moth	Amata phegea		✓	✓	✓				
7	Silver Y	Autographa gamma		✓						
8	Pale Prominent	Pterostoma palpina		larva						
9	Spotted Sulphur	Acontia trabealis					✓			
10	Large Emerald	Geometra papilionaria			✓					
11	Billowing Burnet	Zygaena ephialtes					✓			

		Birds seen or heard during week	
	Common name	Scientific	
1	Pygmy Cormorant	Phalacrocorax pygmeus	✓
2	Great White Egret	Egretta alba	✓
3	Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	✓
4	Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea	✓
5	White Stork	Ciconia ciconia	✓
6	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	✓
7	European Honey-buzzard	Pernis apivorus	✓
8	Eurasian Marsh Harrier	Circus aeruginosus	✓
9	Northern Goshawk	Accipiter gentilis	✓
10	Common Buzzard	Buteo buteo	✓
11	Lesser Spotted Eagle	Aquila pomarina	✓
12	Imperial Eagle	Aquila heliaca	√ 2
13	Saker Falcon	Falco cherrug	√ 4
14	Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	√ 10+
15	Red-footed Falcon	Falco vespertinus	✓
16	Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus	✓
17	Coot	Fulica atra	✓
18	Common Tern	Sterna hirundo	✓
19	Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus	✓
20	Feral Pigeon	Columba livia domestica	✓
21	Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto	✓
22	European Turtle Dove	Streptopelia turtur	√ + ▷
23	Common Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus	√ + ▷
24	Long-eared Owl	Asio otus	✓
25	Common Swift	Apus apus	✓

27	European Bee-eater	Merops apiaster	√ + ♪
28	European Roller	Coracias garrulus	√
29	Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis	✓
30	Grey-headed Woodpecker	Picus canus	√ + ♪
31	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos major	√
32	White-backed Woodpecker	Dendrocopos leucotos	✓
33	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	Leiopicus medius	>
34	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos minor	√
35	Skylark	Alauda arvensis	✓
36	Crested Lark	Galerida cristata	✓
37	Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	✓
38	House Martin	Delichon urbica	✓
39	Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava	✓
40	White Wagtail	Motacilla alba	✓
41	Grey Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea	✓
42	European Robin	Erithacus rubecula	√ + ▷
43	Black Redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros	✓
44	Common Redstart	Phoenicurusphoenicurus	✓
45	Blackbird	Turdus merula	✓
46	Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	✓
47	Great Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus arundinaceus	>
48	Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	√ + ▷
49	Garden Warbler	Sylvia borin	>
50	Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	>
51	Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	✓
52	Collared Flycatcher	Ficedula albicollis	>
53	Marsh Tit	Parus palustris	✓
54	Great Tit	Parus major	✓
55	Nuthatch	Sitta europaea	√ + ▷
56	Eurasian Treecreeper	Certhia familiaris	√ + ▷
57	Short-toed Treecreeper	Certhia brachydactyla	✓
58	Golden Oriole	Oriolus oriolus	√ + ▷
59	Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	√ + ▷
60	Red-backed Shrike	Lanius collurio	✓
61	Lesser Grey Shrike	Lanius minor	✓
62	Eurasian Jay	Garrulus glandarius	✓
63	Magpie	Pica pica	✓
64	Hooded Crow	Corvus corone	✓
65	Common Raven	Corvus corax	√ + ▷
66	Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	✓
67	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	✓
68	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	✓
69	Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	√ + ▷
70	European Serin	Serinus serinus	✓
71	Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	✓
72	European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	✓
73	European Greenfinch	Carduelis chloris	√+♪
74	Hawfinch	Coccothraustes coccothraustes	✓
75	Corn Bunting	Emberiza calandra	√
76	Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrniella	✓
77	Rock Bunting	Emberiza cia	✓

	Amphibian	s and Reptiles				
1	Common name	Scientific				
2	Slow-worm	Anguis fragilis	✓			
3	Grass Snake	Natrix natrix	✓			
4	Green Lizard	Lacerta viridis	✓			
5	Common Frog	Rana temporaria	✓			
	Ma	mmals				
1	Brown Hare	Lepus europaeus	✓			
2	Red Squirrel	Sciurus vulgaris	✓			
3	Roe Deer	Capreolus capreolus	✓			
4	Fallow Deer	Dama dama	✓			
5	Red Fox	Vulpes vulpes	✓			
6	Souslik	Spermophilus citellus	✓			
	Dragonflies					
1	Beautiful Demoiselle	Calopteryx virgo	✓			
2	Blue-tailed damselfly	Ischnura elegans	✓			
3	White-Tailed Skimmer	Orthetrum albistylum	✓			
4	Broad Scarlet	Crocthemis erythraea	✓			
5	Southern Skimmer	Orthetrum bruneum	✓			
6	Emperor Dragonfly	Anax imperator	✓			
	Other in	vertebrates				
1	Rose Chafer	Cetonia aurata	✓			
2	Hornet	Vespa crabr	✓			
3	Macaronius Owlfly	Libelloides macaronius	✓			
4	Stag Beetle	Lucanus cervus	✓			
5	Lesser Stag Beetle	Dorcus parallelipipedus	✓			
6	Dor Beetle	Geotrupes stercorarius	✓			
7	Four-banded Longhorn Beetle	Leptura quadrifasciata	✓			