



WildWings

Hungarian Bird Festival

Superb birding and value for money!

Client quotes: "I would recommend Gerard without question" J.S. "Gerard was brilliant at fitting in everyone's wishes" D&J.M May 2011

We pioneered the Bird Festival concept over fifteen years ago and are now delighted to offer the fourth spring bird spectacular in Eastern Hungary based at the famous Hortobagy region. This amazingly low priced event will be hosted by Gerard Gorman, the acknowledged expert on Hungary and author of the definitive books of the region, such as *The Birds of Hungary* (Helm), *Woodpeckers of Europe* (Bruce Coleman Books) and *Birding in Eastern Europe* (Wildsounds) and his team of local guides. His main interest lies in the Picidae (woodpeckers). His latest book is *The Black Woodpecker* and he is currently working on a guide to all the world's woodpeckers. Each day from our group hotel there will be optional daily guided excursions to all the top bird watching areas led by a team of expert local birding guides. Or you can do your own thing (on foot or by rented bike) or do a combination of the two during the week. This event will suit keen beginners and experienced observers alike.

Hungary is a fascinating land-locked country that lies at the very heart of Europe, in the Carpathian Basin. It is a land rich in folklore and also famous for its full-bodied wines and hearty food. Hungary is a member of the EU.

The main focus of this trip will be the rich diversity of bird life that occurs in spring. Most visiting breeding species will have returned to supplement the wealth of resident birds and these are also joined by passage waders.

From the Hungarian capital, Budapest, we shall travel to the the famous Hortobagy a largely unspoilt region of "puszta" (grassland steppe), fishponds and marshes, most of which lies within a national park. Specialities here include Great Bustard, Aquatic Warbler, Eastern Imperial and White-tailed Eagles plus Saker Falcon, with many other exciting birds such as Pygmy Cormorant, Little Crake, Long-legged Buzzard, Red-footed Falcon, Collared Pratincole, Caspian Gull, Common Crane, Whiskered and White-winged

Black Terns, Ferruginous Duck, Roller and Lesser Grey Shrike. An hour away, forests hold Ural Owl and Black, Grey-headed, White-backed and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers. Syrian Woodpeckers are around our hotel. Warblers include River, Moustached, Icterine and Barred Warblers to name a few. All these species and much more were seen during the first event and surprises included Terek Sandpiper and Black-winged Pratincole. Mediterranean and Little Gulls plus Eagle Owl were also seen in 2009. All the specialities were seen again in 2010 and 2011.

Our accommodation will be in Tiszacsege on the edge of the Hortobagy, simple but clean with en suite rooms. There will be daily up-dated information boards listing the key bird sightings.

Itinerary:

Day 1: Depart London Luton at approx 0815, arrive Budapest. Transfer to festival hotel by road (approx 2 hours) for your seven night stay. Welcome briefing.

Days 2 - 7: Six full days to bird the Hortobagy region, on foot, by rental bike or optional guided birding excursions by bus and car. Also longer day trips to the Bukk and Zemplen Hills other sites for upland and forest birds. Group evening log call every night.

Day 8: Transfer back to Budapest in the afternoon for your evening flight back to London Luton, arrive approx 1955.

Planned optional excursion programme (subject to change)

Most days: all day off-road trip by 4x4 around the Hortobagy for 3 persons plus guide/driver.

Most days: all day bus trip around the Hortobagy region for larger group.

Most days: half-day guided trips by bike along the River Tisza.

2 days: half-day trip by bus for Aquatic Warbler and Great Bustard in the Hortobagy.

2 days: day-trip to the Bukk and/or Zemplen Hills by bus (2 hours each way) for forest woodpeckers and Ural Owl.

2 days: half-day trip by bus for Saker, Eastern Imperial Eagle and other raptors in the Heves grasslands.

1 day: boat-trip on Lake Tisza for reedbed birds and heronries.

In addition, longer trips will be offered by car for any rarities that may have been found further afield.

Trip Information

Dates: 12th – 19th May 2012

Leaders: Local English speaking guides.

Cost: The basic cost is £699 per person based on sharing a twin room (a supplement of £50pp will apply if 9 or less clients)

Single supplement: £99 per person*
Deposit: £250 per person
Group size: Minimum 10 plus the leader/s.

Price includes: Return economy class flights including pre-paid taxes, group transfers airport/hotel/airport, accommodation in rooms with private facilities with breakfast (*single rooms may have to share a bathroom between two rooms), reserve permits, bird checklist and services of leaders in Hungary.

Price excludes: Travel insurance, lunches, dinners and drinks (approx £120+pp), optional birding excursions (£9 - £35), bike hire (approx £10 per day) and other items of a personal nature.

Birds: Expected no of species 160+.

The previous trip summaries and species list are on our website or available from us.