

## **Bird-Trip Report from Hungary 11/-17/7-2011.**

This bird report is a description of the birds we have seen at our trip to Hungary and what we have found interesting to pass.

During our stay in Hungary we lived at Farm Lator which is a great place for exploring the surroundings and Small and Large Hortobagy as well. These places are within a short distance from Farm Lator.

Farm Lator is a place for people interested in nature; here you can share experiences and knowledge with other people with the same interest. It is also possible to get a qualified advice and good guidance for trips from the owner of Farm Lator, Rob De Jung. You are also served very well. Every evening we enjoyed a three- parted meal in the lovely garden.

### **Greylag Goose.**

13/7 30 Little Hortobagy.

16/7 About 1000 Hortobagy.

### **Gadwall.**

16/7 1 pair + 5 in the fishponds, Hortobagy

### **Garganey.**

16/7 About 50 in smaller groups, Hortobagy.

### **Mallard.**

16/7 35 Hortobagy, fishponds.

### **Ferruginous Duck.**

16/7 15-20 Hortobagy. A few pairs with juv. have been seen.

### **Quial.**

Spread amounts of about 15-20 Quials heard at different places in open land.

15/7 for example 5 heard at Tizlabadolna.

### **Corncrake.**

1/7 2 singing at Bükk Mountains.

### **Great Crested Grebe.**

16/7 7-9 seen Hortobagy Fishponds.

### **Red-necked Grebe.**

16/7 4 + 1 on its nest, Hortobagy Fishponds, Egyedül.

### **Great Cormorant.**

16/7 40 Hortobagy Fishponds.

### **Pygmy Cormorant.**

13/7 3 south of Szentistvan.

15/7 1 just north of the village Tizlabadolna.

16/7 About 25 seen at Hortobagy-Halastavak.

### **Little Bittern.**

16/7 1 Seen in one of the fishponds near a birding hide + 1 heard.

### **Black-crowned Neight Heron.**

16/7 75 between Halsato 5 og 10 (A distance about 1,5 km.). After this point 29 seen on our way to the last train station at Hortobagy-Halasto.

### **Squacco Heron.**

16/7 About 45 between Halasto 5 og 10. After this point 15 seen on our way to the last train station at Hortobagy-Halasto.

### **Little Egret.**

13/7 Little Hortobagy, 5 by the wet area just southeast of Szentistvan + 2 at Tisababolna.

15/7 18 between Halasto 5 og 10. After this point 32 seen on our way to the last train station at Hortobagy-Halasto.

### **Great White Egret.**

Often seen in the open land, alone or in small groups;

13/7 Little Hortobagy 19

16/7 55 between Halasto 5 og 10. After this point 15 seen on our way to the last train station. In the lake north of this train station we counted 125 Great White Egrets.

### **Grey Heron.**

Spread out in the open country.

13/7 Little Hortobagy about 15.

16/7 About 25 seen between Halasto 5 og 10. After this point 15 seen on our way to the last train station.

### **Purple Heron.**

13/7 1 by a little lake at Little Hortobagy + 2 d. 16/7 the same place.

16/7 1 at Tisacege in a ditch + 1 in Felnalom

13 between Halasto 5 og 10. (A stretch of 1,5 km.) After this point 48 seen on our way to the last train station.

### **White Stork.**

Counting nestlings.

Counting conducted by driving through 9 random cities.

Juvenile birds were checked in the nests through binoculars. In some places there were already juveniles who had flown from the nest and were sitting in the immediate vicinity of the nests. These were also counted.

#### **Gelei;**

10 nests with 5,2,4,3,4,5,3,4,3,3 juv. in each; Average = 3,6 juv.

#### **Mezőcsat;**

10 nests with 2,3,3,4,2,5,5,5,2,4 juv. in each; Average = 3,5 juv.

#### **Arokte;**

2 nests with 2,1 juv in each = Average = 1,5 juv.

#### **Iszacege;**

7 nests with 3,3,3,4,4,4,3 juv. in each; Average = 3,4 juv.

#### **Telekahara;**

1 nest with 4 juv.

#### **Egyek;**

9 nests with 3,2,2,4,5,2,5,2,5 juv. in each; Average = 3,3 juv.

#### **Hotobagy;**

4 nests with 5,4,4,1 juv. in each; Average = 3,5 juv.

#### **Just outside Hortobagy;**

1 nest with 6 juv!!

#### **Folyas;**

5 nests with 3,3,4,5,4 juv. in each; Average = 3,8 juv.

Total 171 Juv. seen in 49 nests which provides an average of = 3,5 juv.

(In the period 1952-2001, this figure for comparison in Denmark was only 1,8.)

In Poland 2,1, Lithuania 2,4, Latvia 2,1; Ukraine 2,8 and Croatia 2,3. It is necessary with 2.0 juv. per. pair in total if a population of white storks should be self-perpetuating. This is for sure the case in Little and Big Hortobagy!

We recorded 5 juv. in 9 of the 49 nests. That is 15% of the nests! (Normally it is 2.8%.)

The 6 juv. in one nest is also an unusual sight. It is not every year this can be seen in Europe! It really is a remarkable event with 6 juv. flying the nest.

In Denmark there are only 3 documented records with 6 juv. flying the nest in the period between 1897 and 1978.

(And this despite the fact that we in 1897 still had approx. 3500 pairs of storks in Denmark. (In 1840-ies, we had between 10,000 and 12,000pairs.) Today, 0 pairs!)

We also saw a few major occurrences of white storks, such as 30 + 40 in 2 flocks just southeast of Szentistvan + 15 by Tisababolna d. 13 / 7

15/7 Near Hortobagy we have seen up to 70 white storks nearby a reaper harvesting.

### **Black Stork.**

13/7 4 Little Hortobagy, just southeast of Szentistvan. Flew up from small wetland along with some Great White Egrets.

### **Spoonbill.**

16/7 200+ at Hortobagy fishponds after the first train station. They were at quite a distance and hard to see in a good way because of the heating sun. We saw them in 2 groups.

### **Imperial Eagle.**

13/7 1 circled in a northerly direction southeast of Szentistvan. Seen well in good sunlight.

### **Black Kite.**

13/7 3 at Little Hortobagy southeast of Szentistan + 1 north of the village.

All seen circling above fields, where the harvest was going on.

### **Marsh Harrier.**

Widespread seen in the open land.

16/7 The greatest amount are to be seen in the Hortobagy-fishponds. We saw at least 22 here.

### **Montagu`s Harrier.**

13/7 1 beautiful male seen in Little Hortobagy just southeast of Szentistvan.

16/7 1 male 2 km. east of Kocsuifalu.

### **Common Buzzard.**

Ordinarily seen in the open farmland and fields.

### **Honey Buzzard.**

11/7 1 near the bee-eater colony at Lator Ut, without any reaction from the bee-eaters.

### **Sparrowhawk.**

14/7 1 near the bee-eater colony at Lator Ut a few minutes after the honey buzzard were seen there - and first at this moment the bee-eaters responded with a lot of high alert sounds.

16/7 1 with prey at Tizla-river, at the bathing place.

### **Goshawk.**

11/7 1 We saw a nice male crossing the bee-eater colony at Lator Ut. The bee-eaters reacted loudly when the goshawk arrived.

### **Kestrel.**

Common close to groups of trees in Little Hortobagy og Great Hortobagy. Often seen in flocks.

Breeds almost colonially near groups of trees where many nestboxes are set up.

13/7 8 just southeast of Szentistvan + 15/7 17 Tiszabadolna + 16 Szentistvan.

**Red-footed Falcon.**

13/7 14 seen southeast of Szentistvan in Little Hortobagy +  
15/7 3 males Little Hortobagy at Szentistvan by the acacia-trees.  
16/7 + 4 on wires Mezöcsat (2 males + 1 female + 1 juv.) + ca. 30 Kocsuifalu.

**Hobby.**

13/7 1-2 seen southeast of Szentistvan in the same area as the Red-footed Falcons.

**Saker.**

13/7 2 seen together near the nestbox on mast not far from Szentistvan. At one time they were seen chasing a flock of pigeons in a nicely coordinated teamwork . Seen really nice.  
16/7 1 at the same place late in the afternoon. This time seen resting on a mast.

**Waterrail.**

16/7 3-4 heard at the fishponds, Hortobagy.

**Moorhen.**

16/7 6-7 at the fishponds, Hortobagy.

**Coot.**

16/7 about 15 at the fishponds, Hortobagy.

**Stilt.**

13/7 5 Little Hortobagy +  
16/7 2 at the fishponds north of the last trainstation, Great Hortobagy.

**Collared Pratincole.**

16/7 1 fairly high up in the sky in the central part of the fishponds, Hortobagy. It was chasing insects very intensively and then seen flying northeast before disappearing.

**Little Ringed Plover.**

16/7 2 at the fishponds, Hortobagy.

**Lapwing.**

Common seen in small flocks at many places. Largest flocks:

13/7 ca. 550 Tisababolna +  
16/7 ca. 250 fishponds, Hortobagy.

**Wood Sandpiper.**

Seen regularly in small wetlands in open country in small flocks of 2-3 birds on migration.  
15/7 5 near Tiszababolna +  
16/7 4-5 fishponds, Hortobagy.

**Green Sandpiper.**

Seen regularly in small wetlands in open country in small flocks of 1-3 birds on migration.

**Redshank.**

16/7 2 Hortobagy.

**Blacktailed Godwit.**

13/7 Ca. 200 on their search for food near Tiszabadolna +  
16/7 5 central fishponds, Hortobagy.

**Great Snipe.**

Only seen a few times. One is named;  
15/7 2 ved Tiszabadolna.

**Black-headed Gull.**

Especially Great Hortobagy.  
16/7 around 600 in the central part of the fishponds, Hortobagy.

**Mew Gull.**

Only a few seen.  
16/7 1 Mezösat + 2 Hortobagy.

**Mediterranean Gull.**

13/7 1 adult seen flying just above our heads together with 4 black-headed gulls, Tiszabadolna.

**Yellow-legged Gull.**

Only a few seen at Hortobagy.

16/7 2-3 Hortobagy at the northern lake.

**Caspian Gull.**

Seen regularly, but scarce, in open country.

15/7 2 Little Hortobagy.

16/7 20 had a rest in the field near Telekahara + 35 central parts of the fishponds at Hortobagy.

10-12 Northern part, Hortobagy.

**Common Tern.**

16/7 2 Southern part of the fishponds, Hortobagy + 11 seen in the northern part, Hortobagy.

**White-winged tern.**

16/7 2 Hortobagy, the central part of the fishponds..

**Whiskered Tern.**

13/7 2 Little Hortobagy, south of Szentistvan + 5 near Tiszabadolna

15/7 8 Little Hortobagy north of Tiszabadolna

16/7 46 + 7 + 10 + 17 = In all 80 birds seen in Hortobagy.

**Black Tern.**

Only a few.

15/7 1 Little Hortobagy

16/7 3 Hortobagy fishponds.

**Turtle Dove.**

Seen and heard commonly south of Farm Lator along the road to Saly. But also frequently in the open countryside.

11/7 6 singing + 2 flying over.

12/7 6-8 singing + 5 flying over.

**Wood Pigeon.**

Only a few seen.

**Collared Dove.**

Found commonly, seen in flocks up to 25 birds at many places.

**Tawny Owl.**

15/7 1 heard at Farm Lator in the evening.

**Little Owl.**

16/7 1 by an old farm west of Gelei.

**Swift.**

11/7 25 in Budapest. No notes, but seen in flocks up to 5-10 birds at many places.

**Hoopoe.**

16/7 1 seen in the dry grassland area in the northern part of Hortobagy.

**Kingfisher.**

16/7 1 seen at the Tizla river + 1 in the central fishponds at Hortobagy.

**Bee-eater.**

Colony south of Farm Lator.

We saw between 15 and 20 bee-eaters near the colony over several days. They often sat along the lines east of the colony in flocks up to 10-12 at a time.

13/7 7 seen and heard just southeast of Szentistvan + 5-6 flying over while we were spending time with other guests at Farm Lator.

16/7 about 30-40 bee-eaters at the colony near Kocsuifalu. We saw them from the observation tower but a big group of tourists went straight towards the colony. They did not bring binoculars!

**Roller.**

40 birds seen in all. Mainly at Little and Great Hortobagy.

13/7 3 rollers at Szentistvan at the place with the saker falcons + 5 south of the village + 3 near Tisababolna.

15/7 14 on wires south of Tisababolna + 2 south of Szentistvan + 1 north of Szentistvan + 3 by nestboxes near Gelei + and a family flock of 9 rollers 4 km. from Gelei. This area surely must be the best area for rollers in Hungary. It is obvious that they benefit from the many nestboxes.

**Black Woodpecker.**

12/7 2 seen flying over in Bükk Mountains near the Ural Owl site.

15/7 1 heard from the garden at Farm Lator.

**Green Woodpecker.**

Heard and seen regularly during walks from Lator Ut towards Saly and back.

**Grey-headed Woodpecker.**

Seen and heard at several times from Farm Lator in the afternoon. Additionally other birds were seen;

11/7 1 heard + 1 female seen very well on our 10 km. walk north of Farm Lator.

16/7 by 1 Mezöcsat + 1 by Iszacege.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker.**

Seen and heard regularly near Farm Lator.

**Syrian Woodpecker.**

16/7 1 seen very well 2 km. south of Gelei. In acacia-trees along the road in the open land.

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker.**

Seen and heard regularly at Farm Lator.

13/7 1 seen in a garden near memorial at Lator Ut.

14/7 3 seen in the forest with hornbeam just southwest of Farm Lator.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.**

11/7 1 heard on a 10 km. walk north of Farm Lator +

13/7 1 seen and heard in a forest at Little Hortobagy.

**Wryneck.**

13/7 1 seen along the road between Szentistvan og Tisababolna.

**Skylark.**

Seen individually or in small flocks frequently in open country, among other:

13/7 5 Little Hortobagy

16/7 8 Northern part of Hortobagy.

**Crested lark.**

Seen only in small numbers.

13/7 3 Little Hortobagy in open grassland.

15/7 3 Near Szentistvan, Little Hortobagy, near a grain store.

16/7 2 Hortobagy.

**Short-toed Lark.**

13/7 1 seen well and heard calling at Little Hortobagy in the open grassland.

**Sand Martin.**

16/7 10-12.000 on wires at the village Halasto, Great Hortobagy.

**Barn Swallow.**

Common seen most places.

**House Martin.**

16/7 75 nests on a building in Halasto, Hortobagy.

**Tawny Pipit.**

16/7 1 seen foraging at the northern Hortobagy near Folyas.

**Meadow Pipit.**

Only a few seen and always alone in Little and Great Hortobagy.

No notes.

**Tree Pipit.**

1 or 2 heard calling in the Bükk mountains. No notes.

**White Wagtail.**

Single individuals seen on a dozen locations in the vicinity of villages. No notes.

**Yellow Wagtail.**

frequently seen in Little og Great Hortobagy. Most seen:

15/7 22 North of Tizlabadolna.

16/7 75 Great Hortobagy.

**Grey Wagtail.**

12/7 1 flying over at Bükk Mountains while we were looking for butterflies.

**Nightingale.**

Heard at several places with its high and harsh notes, especially around Lator Ut and by Hortobagy.

**Redstart.**

14/7 1 heard complaining in the woods southwest of Farm Lator.

**Black Redstart.**

Just a few notes written, but one of the characteristic birds in the small villages. Among others:

11/7 3 seen in Lator Ut

13/7 2 Zentistivan + several other places.

16/7 1 singing Gelei.

**Wheatear.**

13/7 2 seen outside Szentistvan. +

17/7 2 Budapest Airport, seen from the airplane!

**Stonechat.**

Relatively frequently in the open country, among other;

12/7 Lator Ut 1 male + 1 female ner the bee-eater colony. Alarm call.

15/7 2 males Tisababolna.

16/7 1 pair with juveniles ( 4 ) Kocsuifali + 6 birds 2 km. east of Kocsuifalu.

**Song Thrush.**

Regular seen in the Bükk woods. No notes.

**Blackbird.**

Commonly seen in the villages.

**Blackcap.**

We could still hear them singing at many places, especially in Bükk forests.

**Whitethroat.**

Only a few. Record;

16/7 4 set Hortobagy.

**Sedge Warbler.**

15/7 At least 4 singing Little Hortobagy along channels with swamps in the open landscape.

**Oliveaceous Warbler.**

13/7 1 singing Little Hortobagy in a willow-bush surrounded by marshy thickets and reed vegetation. Heard good; especially I noted its high "Hi-dyy-dyy-dyy-dyy." in between the ordinary harsher and chattering song. The song is a rising and falling song, not unlike the song of the Reed Warbler.

**Grashopper Warbler.**

16/7 1 singing 4 km. from Gelei.

**Savi's Warbler.**

15/7 1 singing near Tizlabadolna

16/7 1 singing 4 km. from Gelei

+ 3 central in the fishponds.

**Reed Warbler.**

Not frequent, but some in the Great Hortobagy.

16/7 8 heard singing on our way to the last fishponds.

**Great Reed Warbler.**

Heard regularly. 5-6 birds noted along the way, among others:

13/7 3 singing at a lake in Little Hortobagy.

**Chiffchaff.**

Heard and seen at many places, Relatively common. Only a few notes, at least this one;

11/7 4 singing on a 10 km. walk north of Farm Lator.

**Spotted Flycatcher.**

Common. Especially in gardens and open woodlands in most places. In the local area is seen;

11/7 6 on a 10 km. walk north of Farm Lator.

12/7 3 Lator Ut. + 14 / 7 5 Lator Ut. + 15 / 7 4 Lator Ut.

**Great Tit.**

Common. The young of the second litter seen at several places. Just flown the nest.

**Blue Tit.**

No notes. But relatively common.

**Marsh Tit.**

Seen in the garden of Farm Lator + a few other places.

**Coal Tit.**

11/7 2 singing on a 10 km. walk north of Farm Lator.

**Long-tailed Tit.**

15/7 4-6 A little family group seen just south of Lator Ut.

**Bearded Tit.**

Only heard at the fishponds in Great Hortobagy

16/7 heard at 12 different locations in the central and northern part of the fishponds

**Penduline Tit.**

Very numerous near the fishponds in Great Hortobagy. Heard all the time.

16/7 At least 70 seen and heard along the path we were walking! (Distance of 5 km.)

A family group of 19 Penduline Tits was seen at the last train station Hortobagy Halasto Konda.

**Nuthatch.**

Very common seen and heard, particular in Bükk forests.

**Red-backed Shrike.**

Relatively common. Seen in the open countryside around Lator Ut. and in Bükk Mountains.

We have observed about 75 Red-backed Shrikes on the trip. Some is mentioned.

12/7 4 Bükk Mountains.

13/7 3 near Szentistvan Tiszababolna.

**Lesser Grey Shrike.**

Only observed in Little and Great Hortobagy.

13/7 4 at Szentistvan while we watched the Saker falcons + 4 just east of Szentistvan.

15/7 1 +2 +1 north of the village Tizlabadolna + 5 + 3 by Ustincse north of Ustincse.

16/7 5 at Gelei + 1 by Tiszacege + 8 Kocsuifalu

**Magpie.**

Only a few. However we have seen 8 Magpies at the same time in Little Hortobagy.

**Rook.**

Only a few. However we have seen 65 ca.2 km. east of Kocsuifalu + 135 southeast of Szentistvan.

**Hooded Crow.**

Relatively common seen. Only in small groups.

16/7 45 at Little Hortobagy.

**Starling.**

Many large flocks.

15/7. 5-6000 at Lille Hortobagy. Most of the flocks we checked for potential Rose Starling. But we did not have the luck.

**Golden Oriole.**

Seen and heard oftenly in many places, including

14/7 5 birds around Lator Ut.

**House Sparrow.**

Frequent throughout. Occasionally in large flocks.

**Tree Sparrow.**

Few in number. But seen nesting around Lator Ut.

**Chaffinch.**

Common in the forests around Farm Lator.

**Linnet.**

Scarce. But some seen around the bee-eater colony south of Lator Ut.

12/7 2, and 1 were singing.

**Goldfinch.**

Relatively common in many places. Especially in the country. Some mentioned:

13/7 9 between Szentistvan and Tiszababolna.

**Greenfinch.**

Scarce. No notes.

**Serin.**

Seen and heard in every village. At times, 2-3 in each location.

**Hawfinch.**

Very common in the woods around Farm Lator.

11/7 16 seen on a short walk from Farm Lator to Lator Ut.

14/7 18 in the woods near Farm Lator. Some juv. had flown out of their nest just recently.

**Reed Bunting.**

M16/7 Most frequently in Great Hortobagy near the fishponds, up to 45 observed this day.

**Yellowhammer.**

Seen regularly in the open countryside. No notes.

**Corn Bunting.**

Seen regularly in the open countryside. No notes.