

Tour Report Poland – Birding in Krakow & the Carpathians

7 – 14 September 2018

Red-backed shrike



Camberwell beauty



Red squirrel



Krakow



Compiled by Andrzej Petryna

Tour Leader: Andrzej Petryna with 12 participants

Day 1: Transfer to Kacwin in Pieniny Mts.

Friday 7 September 2018

Weather: Full sunshine, 23°C

After collecting the group at the airport, we headed south towards the Carpathians. It took two and a half hours in Friday's intensive traffic to get to our small hotel at Kacwin near the Slovakian border. Because we left the airport in the late afternoon, there was no time to stop for any birdwatching on the way, so the only birds seen this day were the urban species spotted from our minibus. After a late dinner which began at 9pm and some Slovakian beer, we discussed the plans for our next days in the Carpathians, and generally about the trip.

Day 2: Pieniny Mts.

Saturday 8 September 2018

Weather: Sunshine & showers, from 14-24°C

We took an early morning walk along Kacwinka River Valley to Slovakia, with gentle grassy slopes and small crop fields around, and a mixed spruce-beech forest at the top. Welcomed by singing black redstart on every rooftop, we spotted a lot of birds feeding on weeds, intensive migration of jay, some dippers at the river and nutcrackers calling from the spruce tops.

After breakfast we spent the whole day in the southern part of the Pieniny Mountains, looking for raptor migration at the subalpine meadows. The weather (some showers) was not perfect for raptors, but ten lesser spotted eagles, merlin, hobby and others were spotted, as well as great grey shrike and whinchat. We also had a walk in Carpathian forest, with crested tit, ring ouzel, black woodpecker, red squirrel, yellow-bellied toad, Camberwell beauty and Autumn crocus on the way. We also found a wolf dropping at the path.

In the dusk we had a walk in search of owls, but (probably due to changeable weather) we had no results.

Day 3: Pieniny Mts.

Sunday 9 September 2018

Weather: Sunshine with some clouds, 12-20°C

An early morning walk towards the Slovakian border brought us much better views of birds at close distances, which was important for the keen bird photographers in the group. We had good views of grey wagtail, too. We also spotted red fox and roe deer at the slopes.

We explored the northern part of Pieniny Mountains today, around the highest peak, Three Crowns. On the way we stopped at Czorsztyńskie Lake, overlooked by two medieval castles at opposite sides. We found numerous flocks of goosander and ducks at the lake. A visit to the rocky part of the mountains afforded the next opportunity for watching the birds of prey migration and one of the late serin was also spotted. As the weather in the afternoon was hot and sunny, we saw swallowtail, silver-washed fritillary and common blue butterflies. On the way back we stopped at the rear end of Czorsztyńskie Lake. At the small sandy islets, we found our first waders, with Temminck's stint and ruff being spotted. It was also a good place for raptor spotting with species seen including osprey and lesser spotted eagle. Driving back to the hotel we stopped at Dębno to see the unique wooden church from the 15th century, a UNESCO Heritage Site with original wall paintings and other art pieces from medieval times.

As usual, we tried owl searching in the forest, with no results, though a very faint, distant, single call of pygmy owl was heard. We had an atmospheric walk with bats around us and a fantastic starry sky above us.

Day 4: Tatra Mts.

Monday 10 September 2018

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Weather: Sunny, 12-22°C; 6°C at Kasprowy Wierch Peak

Today we didn't have an early morning walk because we set off earlier than usual for our trip to the Tatra Mountains. We began our day with a cable-car ride to Kasprowy Wierch Peak (1,990m above sea level). Although a little bit misty from time to time at the top, it showed us a stunning panorama of the Tatras, and also good views of Alpine accentor, water pipit and chamois on the slopes. After two hours at the top, we drove through Chochołów (a village with beautiful wooden architecture in a local style) to the huge raised bog area. It was a good place to see some birds of prey, as well as great grey shrike and a family of red-backed shrike. During a walk in the damper part of the bog, typical raised bog flora was seen – bog myrtle, sundew, bog bilberry and cranberry.

On the way home we stopped at a typical sheep farm where registered, original smoked sheep cheese is produced.

Day 5: Transfer to Niepołomice Forest; Zator fishponds

Tuesday 11 September 2018

Weather: Rain until noon, 18-20°C

After a pre-breakfast walk with close views of nutcracker, we left our small, cosy hotel with fantastic home cooking and friendly staff, and headed north, to the area of Niepołomice Forest to the east of Kraków. On the way we stopped at a large area with fishponds near Zator. All the ponds were still full of water, so there was no chance to see waders, but there were a lot of birds at the surface. We found a set of grebes (crested, little, black-necked), but pochard, ferruginous duck and red-crested pochard were also spotted. Night heron in juvenile plumage and bittern were also seen flying over the reeds, and four black storks were circling right above us during our picnic lunch.

We reached our hotel late in the afternoon. After dinner, we discussed the programme for the last days of the trip.

Day 6: Niepołomice Forest

Wednesday 12 September 2018

Weather: Full sunshine, 19-29°C

Starting with a pre-breakfast walk, we visited the different parts of Niepołomice Forest, a large area of deciduous and mixed forest to the east of Kraków. It is the breeding area of numerous woodpeckers, and we spotted black, green, lesser spotted, middle spotted and great spotted woodpeckers. During walks in the forest's different habitats, we also saw short-toed treecreeper, and crested tit, long-tailed tit (eastern race) and willow tit.

After dinner, we went to the forest to look for Ural owl, which breeds here. We heard at least three birds, one of them was calling 50m from us, but we didn't manage to see it. There were some rutting red deer stags calling around us.

Day 7: Niepołomice Forest; Oświęcim fishponds

Thursday 13 September 2018

Weather: Sunny, 20-29°C

After another early morning walk at the edge of the forest, with stunning views of crested tit as well as short-toed treecreeper and middle spotted woodpecker, we drove to the only fishpond without water that I managed to find. It proved a good decision – there were plenty of birds at the edge of water in the muddy fishpond. It was also a good chance to see the waders – ruff, wood sandpiper, spotted redshank, as well as Caspian gull, black stork and night heron in adult plumage.

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On the way to our hotel we stopped at other fishponds, which were filled with water, giving us more sightings of ferruginous duck and osprey.

Day 8: Transfer to Kraków airport

Friday 14 September 2018

Weather: Sunny with showers, 19-22°C

During our last pre-breakfast walk on the forest edge, we spotted black woodpecker close by, and also red deer stags rutting in the meadow.

After breakfast we left the hotel and drove to Kraków. Some of the group visited the Old Town, but some of the group managed a spot of final birdwatching, walking around the park in Kraków. Our trip finished at the airport.

A total of 125 bird species were spotted, six mammals (including chamois, red squirrel and American mink), and 17 species of butterflies were also noted.

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Checklist



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	BIRDS	AVES								
1	Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>					✓		✓	
2	Northern shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>			✓		✓			
3	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			✓		✓		✓	
4	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓		✓		✓		✓	
5	Eurasian teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>			✓		✓		✓	
6	Red-crested pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>					✓			
7	Common pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>					✓		✓	
8	Ferruginous duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>					✓		✓	
9	Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>			✓		✓		✓	
10	Common merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>			✓					
11	Common pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		✓			✓		✓	✓
12	Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>					✓		✓	
13	Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			✓		✓		✓	
14	Black-necked grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>					✓			
15	Black stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>					✓		✓	

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16	Eurasian bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>					✓			
17	Black-crowned night heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>					✓		✓	
18	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
19	Great egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>			✓		✓		✓	
20	Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			✓		✓		✓	
21	Western osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			✓				✓	
22	Lesser spotted eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>		✓	✓					
23	Eurasian sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
24	Western marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>					✓		✓	
25	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
26	Water rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					✓		✓	
27	Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>					✓		✓	
28	Eurasian coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					✓		✓	
29	Northern lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>							✓	
30	Little ringed plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>			✓					
31	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>			✓			✓		
32	Temminck's stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>			✓					
33	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>							✓	
34	Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			✓				✓	
35	Green sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>							✓	
36	Common redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>			✓				(H)	

58	Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
59	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>		✓						
60	Eurasian hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		✓		✓		✓		
61	Peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>						✓		
62	Red-backed shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>				✓				
63	Great grey shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>		✓	✓	✓				
64	Eurasian jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
65	Eurasian magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
66	Spotted nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>		✓	✓		✓			
67	Western jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
68	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓			✓	✓			
69	Hooded crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
70	Northern raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
71	Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>		✓	✓	✓				
72	European crested tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>		✓				✓	✓	
73	Marsh tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		H			✓	✓	✓	
74	Willow tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>		✓	✓					
75	Eurasian blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓		H	✓	✓	✓	✓
76	Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
77	Eurasian penduline tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>						✓		
78	Eurasian skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		✓		✓	✓			

79	Sand martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>			✓		✓	✓		
80	Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
81	Common house martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓							
82	Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>					✓		✓	
83	Willow warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>							H	
84	Common chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
85	Sedge warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>					✓			
86	Eurasian reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>					✓		✓	
87	Eurasian blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	H		✓
88	Garden warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>								✓
89	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		H						H
90	Eurasian wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H	H			✓	H	✓
91	Eurasian nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>						✓	✓	✓
92	Eurasian treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓
93	Short-toed treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>						✓	✓	
94	Common starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
95	Ring ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>		✓						
96	Common blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
97	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
98	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>								✓
99	Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

100	Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>						✓		
101	European robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	H		✓	✓	✓	
102	Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
103	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		✓						
104	Northern wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			✓					
105	White-throated dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
106	House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
107	Eurasian tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>						✓	✓	
108	Alpine accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>				✓				
109	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>					✓			
110	Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓	✓				✓	
111	White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
112	Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓						
113	Tree pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		✓						
114	Water pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>				✓				
115	Common chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
116	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>								H
117	Eurasian bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>					✓			
118	European greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			✓	✓	✓			
119	Common linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
120	Red crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>		✓						

121	European goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
122	European serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>			✓					
123	Eurasian siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓
124	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
125	Common reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>					✓		✓	
	MAMMALS									
1	Red deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>						H		✓
2	Row deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓	
3	Tatra chamois	<i>Rupicapra rupicapra tatrica</i>				✓				
4	Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
5	Red squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>		✓					✓	
6	American mink	<i>Neovison vison</i>					✓			