

Tour Report

Poland – Birding in Krakow & the Carpathians

7 - 14 September 2019

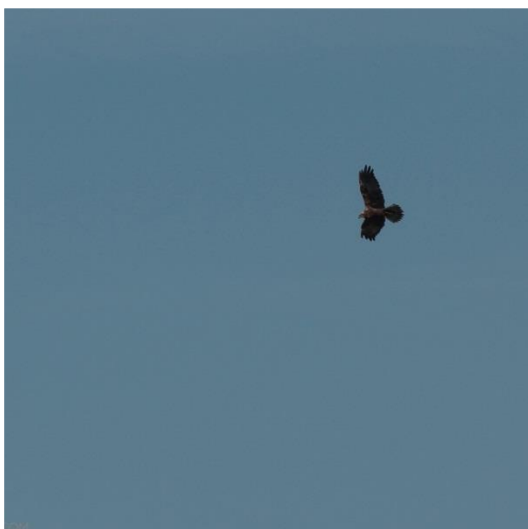
Silver-washed fritillary



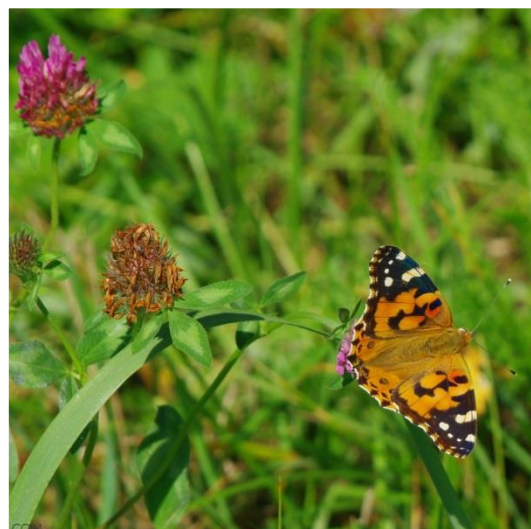
Lesser spotted woodpecker



Marsh harrier



Painted lady



Compiled by: Andrzej Petryna

Tour Leader: Andrzej Petryna with 5 participants

Day 1: Arrive in Kacwin, Pieniny Mts.

Saturday 7 September 2019

The group arrived on time, on an evening flight from London Heathrow. It was already past 8pm, so after meeting in the arrivals hall and a brief introduction, we took a short drive to the nearby hotel, where we ate a late dinner. The transfer to the Pieniny Mountains took approximately two hours, and when we finally reached our small guesthouse in Kacwin, it was almost midnight. We decided to take a proper rest before an early morning wake up and everyone went to their rooms upon arrival.

Day 2: Pieniny Mts.

Sunday 8 September 2019

Weather: sunny, 20 °C

We gathered again early in the morning for a walk in the vicinity of our guesthouse. The local road took us along a small river, the Kacwinanka, towards the Slovakian border. As we walked through the broad valley's gentle grassy slopes, we spotted migrating birds of prey (honey and common buzzards, kestrel, sparrowhawk and lesser spotted eagle), and also a black stork. We also noticed few nutcrackers moving down from the wooded slopes to hazelnut bushes in the valley. In the mild September weather we still met some red-backed shrike, redstart and spotted flycatcher.

After a homemade breakfast back at our guesthouse, we next moved to the northern parts of the Pieniny Mountains, where we observed raptor migration with numerous common buzzards, kestrels, sparrowhawks and marsh harriers flying in circles above the mountain slopes. We also visited Czorsztyn, a manmade reservoir, with some interesting ducks (such as goldeneye), numerous flocks of migrating common mergansers, and a brief view of Caspian gull and Caspian terns.

Day 3: Pieniny Mts.

Monday 9 September 2019

Weather: sunny morning, thunderstorm with strong wind; rain & hail in the afternoon; 14-21 °C

Our pre-breakfast walk along the Kacwinanka River brought us the sighting of willow and crested tits, numerous blackstarts and more sightings of nutcrackers, as well as more migrating birds of prey. We still observed the migration of small passerines – willow warblers, chiffchaffs, blackcaps and fieldfares.

After breakfast we continued our exploration of the Pieniny, this time visiting higher parts of the mountains. Unfortunately, our scenic trip was interrupted by a violent thunderstorm with rain and hail. The storm eventually calmed down but the strong wind made further observations quite challenging. Nevertheless, we visited Dunajec River, where some little and yellow-legged gulls were spotted.

Day 4: Tatra Mts.

Tuesday 10 September 2019

Weather: sunny, 10 °C at the top of Kasprowy Wierch

The morning was chilly. During our pre-breakfast walk we admired the snow-dusted slopes of the Tatra Mountains at the Slovakian part of the border. A few more nutcrackers and a brief contemplation of tits plus a swallow migration, were the main attractions this morning. After breakfast we headed to the Tatra Mountains, the highest part of the Carpathians, where we took a cable-car to the top of Kasprowy Wierch (1,987m above sea level). Apart from the stunning views from the top, we enjoyed close and lengthy observations of alpine accentor and water pipit.

Our next stop today was a vast raised bog area at the foothills of the Tatra. This very interesting habitat with specific plants (including sundew, cranberry, Labrador tea and bog billberry) was a good place to observe red-backed and great grey shrikes, as well as numerous migrating birds of prey.

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Day 5: Transfer to Niepołomice Forest via fishponds near Oświęcim**Wednesday 11 September 2019**

Weather: light showers until 12pm; afternoon sunny, 24 °C

An early walk this morning rewarded us with a nice view of white-throated dipper and a family of foxes. After breakfast we moved towards Niepołomice Forest near Kraków, with a stop on the way at large fishponds in the Oświęcim area. The place appeared to be a very interesting spot with numerous ducks, black storks, common cranes, Eurasian bitterns, whiskered terns, spotted crakes, and waders such as black-tailed godwits, ruffs, curlew sandpipers, Temminck's stints, and dunlins.

Later in the afternoon, after a 1.5-hour transfer, we reached our next hotel, located at the edge of the large Niepołomice Forest. After dinner we discussed our plans for the next three days.

Day 6: Niepołomice Forest**Thursday 12 September 2019**

Weather: sunny, 23 °C

Today we visited the closest vicinity to the hotel, a large area of deciduous, coniferous and mixed forest, searching mostly for woodpeckers. Exploration of different habitats resulted in fantastic observations of great spotted, middle spotted, white-backed, black and green woodpeckers, along with other interesting birds including crested tit, the eastern race of long-tailed tit and European pied flycatcher. It was also a good time for butterflies, with comma, red admiral, painted lady, and silver-washed fritillary spotted by members of the group.

After dinner we looked for Ural owl, breeding in the Niepołomice Forest. During a very atmospheric evening we listened to at least three Ural owls calling above our heads.

Day 7: Niepołomice Forest & Zator fishponds**Friday 13 September 2019**

Weather: sunny, 23 °C

Another early morning walk brought us very good sightings of middle spotted woodpecker and green woodpecker. Walking along the forest tracks we eventually came across a very interesting place with a beaver dam and old fallen trees with distinctive bite marks at the bottom of the trunks.

For the rest of the day we decided to visit, once again, the fishponds near Oświęcim, where our list of waterbirds extended by black-necked grebes, spotted redshanks, common snipe, garganeys, gadwalls, Eurasian wigeons and kingfisher. Also some birds of prey were spotted, including numerous marsh harriers and common buzzards.

Day 8: Niepołomice Forest & transfer to the airport**Saturday 14 September 2019**

Weather: sunny, 24 °C

On the last morning we visited clearings in the middle of the forest, accompanied by roars and grunts of rutting red deer stags. The highlight of this morning was lengthy observations of lesser spotted woodpecker. Summery weather and high temperatures provided fantastic conditions for butterflies, and we noticed plenty of brimstone, comma, painted lady, peacock, silver-washed fritillary, red admiral and small copper.

After check-out and lunch at our hotel we headed back to Kraków. Our tour finished in the afternoon at Balice airport.

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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									
1	Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>					✓			
2	Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>			✓		✓		✓	
3	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>							✓	
4	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>							✓	
5	Eurasian wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>							✓	
6	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓	
7	Common pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>					✓		✓	
8	Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		✓			✓		✓	
9	Common goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>		✓						
10	Common merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>		✓						
11	Common pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>						✓	✓	
12	Red-necked grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>					✓		✓	
13	Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		✓			✓		✓	
14	Black-necked grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>							✓	
15	Black stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>		✓			✓			
16	Eurasian bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>					✓			

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17	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>			✓		✓		✓	
18	Great egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>					✓		✓	
19	Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			✓		✓		✓	
20	European honey buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>		✓	✓					
21	Lesser spotted eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>		✓						
22	Eurasian sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		✓		✓	✓			
23	Western marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		✓			✓		✓	
24	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Water rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					✓			
26	Spotted crane	<i>Porzana porzana</i>					✓			
27	Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>							✓	
28	Eurasian coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					✓		✓	
29	Common crane	<i>Grus grus</i>					✓			
30	Northern lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			✓		✓		✓	
31	Common ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>					✓		✓	
32	Little ringed plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	✓							
33	Black-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>					✓			
34	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>					✓		✓	
35	Curlew sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>					✓		✓	
36	Temminck's stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>					✓		✓	
37	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>					✓		✓	

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38	Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>							✓	
39	Spotted redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>							✓	
40	Black-headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓	
41	Little gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>			✓					
42	Mew gull	<i>Larus canus</i>					✓			
43	Caspian gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>		✓						
44	Yellow-legged gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>			✓				✓	
45	Caspian tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>		✓						
46	Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>					✓		✓	
47	Whiskered tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>					✓		✓	
48	Common wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
49	Eurasian collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>						✓		
50	Tawny owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>				✓				
51	Ural owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>						✓		
52	Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		✓					✓	
53	Middle spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>						✓	✓	
54	Lesser spotted woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>								✓
55	Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	White-backed woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>						✓		
57	Black woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>						✓		
58	European green woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

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59	Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓				✓	
60	Red-backed shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
61	Great grey shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>				✓	✓			
62	Eurasian jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
63	Eurasian magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Spotted nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
65	Western jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>			✓	✓			✓	✓
66	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>			✓	✓			✓	✓
67	Hooded crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>				✓			✓	
68	Northern raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
69	Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>		✓	✓	✓				
70	European crested tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>			✓					
71	Marsh tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>						✓		
72	Willow tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>			✓					
73	Eurasian blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
74	Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
75	Eurasian skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>				✓				
76	Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
77	Common house martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
78	Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>						✓		
79	Willow warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			✓					

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80	Common chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
81	Sedge warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>					✓			
82	Eurasian blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			✓	✓				
83	Common whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>							✓	
84	Eurasian nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			✓			✓	✓	
85	Eurasian treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>						✓		
86	Common starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓
87	Common blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>			✓	✓			✓	✓
88	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
89	Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>					✓			
90	Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>					✓			
91	Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		✓						
92	European robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>						✓	✓	
93	European pied flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>						✓		
94	Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
95	Common redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>		✓	✓					
96	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			✓					
97	Northern wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>							✓	
98	White-throated dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>				✓	✓			
99	House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>						✓	✓	
100	Eurasian tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>			✓					

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101	Alpine accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>				✓				
102	Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓						
103	White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓	✓					
104	Tree pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>				✓				
105	Water pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>				✓				
106	Common chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
107	Eurasian bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>						✓		
108	European greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			✓					
109	European goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
110	Eurasian siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>			✓					
111	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
112	Common reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>					✓		✓	
113	Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		✓			✓			
114	Eurasian reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>							✓	
	MAMMALS									
1	Red deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>								✓
2	Row deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>				✓				
3	Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		✓	✓	✓				
	REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS									

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1	Viviparous lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>					✓			
2	Yellow-bellied toad	<i>Bombina variegata</i>		✓						
3	Common toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>			✓					
4	Common frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>					✓	✓		
	BUTTERFLIES									
1	Small white	<i>Pieris rapae</i>								
2	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>								
3	Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>								
4	Red admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>								
5	Peacock butterfly	<i>Inachis io</i>								
6	Silver-washed fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>								
7	Painted lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>						✓		✓
8	Small copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>								✓
	OTHER INSECTS									
1	Hornet	<i>Vespa</i>					✓	✓	✓	
2	Meadow grasshopper, erythristic form	<i>Chorthippus parallelus</i>				✓				
	DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES									
1	Ruddy darter						✓			

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2	Red-veined darter								✓	
3	Emperor dragonfly							✓		

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