

**Holiday Highlights**  
**Hungary**  
**3 – 8 November 2011**

**Leaders:** Attila Steiner and Roy Atkins

**Guests:** Lynn & Steve Osborne, Peter & Carolyn Lambert, Pauline Potheary, Sue Cable, Diana Taylor, Jenny Davis, Jenny Gilson and Sybille Ellis

**Travel Day**

Everything works like clockwork with the flight from Gatwick arriving in Budapest almost to the minute at the expected time. Attila, our Hungarian guide and Tibor, our driver, are waiting for us as are Jenny and Sybi who have been enjoying the sights of Budapest for the last couple of days. We make a stop about twenty minutes down the road for an evening meal as it is already almost 8:00pm. The food is very good indeed and well fed many of us snooze on the remainder of the journey to our hotel about an hour and a half away.

**Day 1:** The day dawns with beautiful sunshine though rather cold and after breakfast we are about to meet up at the van when Steve spots a woodpecker in the Walnut tree in front of the rooms. It is showing well and clearly a Great Spotted Woodpecker but we check it carefully as Syrian Woodpecker is also often seen here - then Lynn points out that there is another woodpecker in the same tree! We are amazed to discover that this is indeed a Syrian Woodpecker and we have a great opportunity to compare these two very similar species. Soon everyone has gathered and we enjoy excellent scope views before it finally flies - a great start to the day.

We have an arrangement for one of the rangers, Gabor, from the Hortobagy National Park to come out with us this morning as he knows the most likely spots for us to find the Great Bustards. As we drive to his house we pass lots of Common Cranes in the fields and many Common Buzzards as well as several Hen Harriers, Kestrels and a Great Grey Shrike. We pick up Gabor and continue out into the reserve along dirt tracks passing several large flocks of Common Cranes which look fabulous in the morning light. They seem very nervous and tend to fly if we stop to look at them and sometimes even as we drive past. There are many more Common Buzzards and Hen Harriers and we glimpse a Merlin as it dashes away low over the fields. Roy spots a Rough-legged Buzzard which lands in the fields and we jump out to have a look through the scopes at this bird getting good flight views as even at a distance it doesn't like us being there. More Cranes fly past and large numbers of Roe Deer are feeding quietly in the fields.

The whole area is incredibly flat with steppe grassland and small areas of cultivation and scattered areas of scrub and woodland - but you can see for miles!

We arrive at a spot where Gabor thinks the Great Bustards might be and get out and walk to a spot where we can scan a large field of Rapeseed. A quick scan reveals at least twenty Great Bustards at the back of the field, a lovely sight with the sun on them and we can see the detail of their plumage and watch as some of them seem to display to each other flapping around and cocking their tails. We enjoy prolonged views of these while flocks of White-fronted Geese fly over and we find at least four more Rough-legged Buzzards, two more Hen Harriers, a Kestrel, a big flock of Rooks, Hooded Crows, Tree Sparrows and a flock of Stock Doves.

We drive round to the village to drop off Gabor then head round to the fishponds area stopping near the visitor centre where we enjoy lunch at some picnic tables. It seems quite quiet with few birds but after we have eaten we walk round to check a spot where a Pine Bunting was found a couple of days ago. This would be an astonishing sighting as it is only the second sighting ever in Hungary!! As we walk along the tracks we find Fieldfare, then in a small wet area we add Great White Egret, Grey Heron, Mallard, Teal and get wonderful close views of a Pygmy Cormorant while Great Cormorants fly overhead. We scan the area where the bunting was seen earlier and find no sign of it just picking up a few Chaffinches and Linnets in the trees and bushes. A distant Sparrowhawk skims the tree tops and we are still enjoying the close views of Pygmy Cormorant and Egrets when a small flock of birds flies into the tree a little way away - there are a couple of Yellowhammers, some Chaffinches and Linnets and yes, there it is, a Pine Bunting!! This is even a Hungary tick for Attila!! We are delighted despite the subtlety of the plumage - the bird looking rather like a Yellowhammer with no hint of any yellow in the plumage and it is interesting to see it with Yellowhammers for comparison. Two local birders appear and chat with Attila - they have been looking for hours!! It shows very well and we spend a while watching it before it flies a little further away and we decide to continue on our way to check some of the fishponds.

We walk on towards the ponds passing a large one that is completely drained and bird-less then arrive at a tower that overlooks another very large pond. This is almost completely drained as well but sadly there is little here either despite a small area of water out in the middle. There is a small flock of Caspian Gulls but little else then suddenly Attila spots a small bird flitting around the willow beside us - it is a Wood Warbler!! This is completely

unexpected as they have normally left for southern climes a good two months ago!! We are delighted to get great views as it flits around in the trees and bushes joined by a Chiffchaff for a little while which looks very dull in comparison.

We walk to a small train platform where we wait for the train that Attila has arranged for us to catch to the far end of the complex of ponds. While we wait we watch a Marsh Harrier quartering the far reed-bed and see a tiny baby Water Buffalo with its mother. The train arrives and what an amazing old thing it is. We board the little carriages and rattle loudly along the track until we reach the furthest station where we get off and walk round to a small hide overlooking the large pond at the far end. Out on the water are a few ducks including Mallards, Teal and a Shoveler amongst a flock of geese including White-fronted Geese and Greylags. There are more Great White Egrets and a few Grey Plovers fly through. The gulls include several Caspian Gulls and a couple of Common Gulls and Black-headed Gulls. We pick out a White-tailed Eagle in a distant tree looking enormous next to the surrounding Magpies and Hooded Crows - it looks tail-less as the white tail is lost against the background of white cloud! A couple of Hen Harriers pass in the distance but there is little else moving so we walk a little further down the track to try and find reed-bed birds. We flush a couple of Reed Buntings and then try playing a bit of Bearded Tit call with no response. We swap to Penduline Tit and almost immediately a bird calls back and soon appears in the tops of the reeds. It is rather elusive never showing for long but we get several sightings of this lovely male before we become distracted by the first Common Cranes coming in to roost.

And now starts the most astonishing show. After a small trickle soon it starts to become a torrent as hundreds and hundreds of Common Cranes start flying in. Many fly in from our left but even larger numbers appear in the far background. Flocks of tens, hundreds and soon thousands appear and sometimes we can see big flocks spiralling down to land while flock after flock are appearing in the distance behind them. The noise is incredible and we cup our ears to get the full effect and now it is just a constant loud background noise of calling cranes as more and more come in. Gulls and geese are also coming in to the pond to roost and a big flock of Hooded Crows appears and stays a while. Amongst the gulls we find Yellow-legged Gulls and a very smart adult Baltic Gull (Baltic race of Lesser Black-backed Gull with a very dark mantle). But it is hard to be distracted from the cranes for long as wave after wave continue to appear - it just doesn't stop!! Every time we think the numbers are beginning slow down another huge flock appears and we wonder how on earth anyone could possibly estimate how many birds have come in. Yesterday's estimate from the National Park staff

was 28,000 birds and this seems a completely reasonable number but it could easily be several thousand out and we would never know!! It is simply breath-taking and we are thrilled by the whole experience - but there is a lovely finale when a flock of around sixty birds flies right over our heads and across in front of the moon! It really is a beautiful sight and a wonderful way to finish then with the light fading fast we head back to the train and rattle our way back to the centre where the van is parked - what a great first day it has been!

**Day 2:** It is another beautiful day as we set off in the direction of the Hortobagy National Park making our first stop to pay for our entrance fees. The centre has a small herd of Racka Sheep and they are very photogenic with their long spiralled horns so we have a look at them before we move on. There are also a few birds of interest with a nice flock of Tree Sparrows in the bushes and Common Cranes flying around in the distance. Flying overhead is a group of four Crested Larks that drop into the field the other side of the track and while we try to locate them we find a superb male Black Redstart that puts on a very nice show for us.

We pause further along the road to check a small pool where there are dozens of Teal and Mallard plus a couple of Shoveler. We see a Marsh Harrier here and more Common Cranes in flight plus flocks of White-fronted Geese. We make short pauses en route to enjoy a perched Rough-legged Buzzard and a Great Grey Shrike on the wires, another Marsh Harrier and a couple of Hen Harriers as well as many Common Buzzards. Looks like it is going to be a good raptor day today! The next stop is at a large fish pond which is almost completely drained and has a few Caspian Gulls, four Common Snipe, two Curlews and as we look at these a fabulous White-tailed Eagle flies overhead.

We arrive at Hortobagy village to find the visitor centre shut. We decide to have a quick look round the trees here as sometimes there are a few Long-eared Owls roosting. It does not take long to find our first one and then in the same bushes a second then a third! We set up the scopes and enjoy great views of these and wondering if there might be more we start checking more trees, finding several more in a big Oak nearby - these ones right over our heads! We are photographing these when a couple of birders appear and tell us there are more in the car park so we go and have a look - one tree has at least seven birds and the next at least twenty three!! There are a few more in another tree and we enjoy ridiculously close views of these gorgeous looking birds as they stare back at us or sleep on unbothered by our presence. By the time we decide that it is time to go we think we have found around 40 owls here!!

We head next for another fish pond area where we hope to find a Greater Spotted Eagle that has been wintering here for 12 consecutive years. This year it has been joined by a young bird which doubles our chances of finding one! We have not been there long when Attila picks out a large bird in a very distant tree and we are very confident this is a Spotted Eagle it is just a very long way away so we decide to drive a bit closer. We have started along a very rough track and wonder whether Tibor is going to go much further when Roy spots a big bird perched in a tree much closer... it is the second Spotted Eagle and we suspect that Tibor is very relieved! We enjoy great views of this impressive bird before it takes flight chased by a couple of Rooks. It perches for a little while and we decide to back track and try to get into a better position but when we find it again it almost immediately flies. This time we get very prolonged flight views and what a superb bird it is to watch as it powers along above the trees and away across the fields. At the same time there are many other raptors in view with at least six Buzzards in the air, a Hen Harrier and up to four Marsh Harriers, a Kestrel and then a Peregrine flies through then we spot at least three White-tailed Eagles circling high above the trees - what an astonishing collection of raptors from one spot!

We decide to enjoy our lunch here in the warmth of the sunshine but before we have even finished our first sandwich the Spotted Eagle is back and flying again along the top of the woodland. It is very strange that it seems intent on grabbing branches as it passes, sometimes plucking clusters of Alder 'cones' in its talons before dropping them to the ground moments later. Sometimes it tilts sideways to make a grab and is fabulous to watch. It is very odd behaviour but allows us fantastic views of this impressive bird before it finally settles deep amongst the branches and almost out of sight.

We head next round to the other side of the fishponds here and make a judgement on which side of the pond to walk to have the sun behind us before parking up and setting off along one of the tracks. We can't see much of the pond as we walk due to the tall reeds but we can hear a lot of geese out on the water. The view to our right is rather lovely with the sun catching the reed tops and a real autumnal feeling to the fields with the stubbles and round hay bales waiting to be collected. There are distant flocks of Common Cranes flying past and the occasional Buzzard or Marsh Harrier. We arrive at a small opening in the reeds and realise that the goose flock is far bigger than we had expected - there are huge numbers out there and an extremely rough estimate by Roy is of around 15,000 birds!! It is an amazing sight but even more so when most of them take flight in a raucous cacophony of sound wheeling round in a big arc then gradually landing back on the water - we have no idea what upset them but we are

certain that it isn't us. The vast majority of them are White-fronted Geese but there are a large proportion of Greylags too, but despite a very careful search through the flock we are surprised to find no other species amongst them - not even when after a second fly round a lot of them land much closer allowing a much better check to be made. There have been recent reports of Red-breasted Geese amongst this flock but if they are here we can't find them. There are also quite a few ducks here including many Mallard and Teal plus a Pintail and a scattering of Wigeon. Behind us in one of the ditches we find a few Marsh Frogs and as we walk back to the vans we hear a Penduline Tit calling but fail to find it.

We suddenly realise we are getting a little late for our intended crane roost watch and we make a dash for the large fishpond where the largest crane roost in the area has been. This pond is not very easy to watch as even from the embankment the reeds are in the way but the hope is that at least we will see the cranes coming in to roost over our heads and get much closer views of the birds in flight than at yesterday's roost. This certainly works to a degree with a large number of cranes coming in over us though the majority come from the far side. The sunset creates a lovely peachy coloured sky and many of the flocks look just beautiful against this lovely backdrop. It is a spectacular sight again and impossible to estimate how many thousands of birds come in over the hour or so that we are here.

As well as cranes there are also large numbers of geese coming in to roost and again these are all White-fronted and Greylags. The geese continue to come in long after the last cranes have landed and we are amazed at how many there must be - but the real surprise is that with a clear sky and three quarter moon flock after flock of Mallards fly out! They are apparently heading out to the fields where they like to feed during the night if there is a bright enough moon - something few of us have ever witnessed and over about a ten minute period a few hundred ducks fly out and away.

With darkness now falling fast we head back to our hotel and a tasty evening meal and a run through the checklist to finish the day.

**Day 3:** Today we are heading out to the north and the Bukk Hills but there are a few spots we want to check en route and the first of these is Lake Tizsa where we pull in and scan through the masses of birds out on the water. We feel incredibly lucky with the weather this week as it has been glorious and today there is not a cloud in the sky - just flocks of cranes flying over as we check through huge flocks of Greylag and White-fronted Geese and large flocks of Mallards and Teal with a few Shoveler, Wigeon and Teal. There are lots of Great Cormorants and at the back of the lake plenty

of Herons and Great White Egrets and a few Pygmy Cormorants. Lynn is on form and picks out a Black-necked Grebe out in the middle of the lake then minutes later a Canada Goose with the Greylags. This is actually a considerably better bird than you might expect!! It is only the second Attila has ever been seen in Hungary being a very rare bird here. We are thrilled when a Goshawk flies over us giving us an excellent if rather brief view and in the distance several Buzzards are circling - it looks like it could be another good raptor day. We add Little and Great-crested Grebes, Mute Swan, Coot and Caspian Gull to the list before we set off again in the direction of the hills.

We make a couple of brief further stops - the first to have a look at a Little Owl on a roof top which looks great through the scopes then further on we stop to scan the pylons where there is a Saker Falcon nest box. Sure enough the Saker itself is perched on the next pylon and despite the distance looks fabulous through the scope - a really pale headed bird. There are loads of Common Buzzards circling in the background and Kestrel too then Lynn spots a Great Grey Shrike on the wires. We glimpse a Sparrowhawk that flies out of the hedge as we pass then find a Red Fox in one of the fields and a few Roe Deer.

We arrive at the Bukk Hills and before we get to the quarry we are going to we make a stop at an Abbey which has had Wallcreeper on the walls in the past! There is no sign today though a Nuthatch behaving very like one could have caught out the unwary! There is a lovely flock of white-headed race Long-tailed Tits in the woodland along with Marsh, Great and Blue Tits and a very clean looking Treecreeper... but better still is the Middle Spotted Woodpecker that flies in and shows very well.

Next we head up to the quarry, parking up and enjoying our lunch before we take the walk to the quarry itself. The autumn colours are spectacular with beautiful yellow Aspens and rusty coloured Oak while other bushes and trees add further splashes of brilliant orange and scarlet to the scene. Just before we reach the quarry a Grey-headed Woodpecker flies off ahead of us - but Sue, who is taking her own time gets excellent views of it as she passes the same spot! Sometimes perhaps we go too fast! Once in the quarry we scan the cliffs and scrubby slopes for any signs of life - but in particular for Wallcreepers which winter here. We are confident we will find one eventually as the first was seen here a week ago but after some time all we have seen is a single Raven! We add Black Redstart finding at least two or three birds and then Lynn brilliantly spots two small birds high on the scrubby slopes which turn out to be Alpine Accentors. We have barely got the scopes on them when there is a clattering of falling rocks and we spot six Mouflon dashing across the slope - the males in particular looking

superb with bright coloured coats and white patches plus large curved horns like big sheep. They dash across the face of the quarry pausing towards the edge and looking back at us. By the time they disappear into the surrounding woodland the Alpine Accentors have vanished! A Black Woodpecker flies out of the trees then we get great views of a Green Woodpecker that seems to think it is a Wallcreeper and is working the cliff face just like one!

We eventually have to give up on the Wallcreepers and make our way back to the van where we decide to drive further up the road and have a look for more woodpeckers. We have not gone far when a black and white woodpecker flies across the road so we get out to check which species it is. We soon locate two birds in the same tree - one a Great Spotted Woodpecker the other a Middle Spotted. There is also a mixed tit flock here with Great, Blue and Marsh all flitting through the trees as well as at least two Nuthatches and Attila suggests we should look out for Lesser Spotted Woodpecker as they sometimes accompany these tit flocks. A minute later he has found one! We get first a brief view then later a much better view of this lovely little bird and this really makes Jenny's day being the bird she has said she wanted to see since the start of the holiday and with today being her birthday it has worked out extremely well that we find one for her today. A little further up the road and a Grey-headed Woodpecker flies across and playing the call we get a few more fly over views and a difficult view in a tangle of branches. With the light now beginning to fade we head back and snooze for most of the journey back to the hotel, then after our evening meal we finish the day with a very decorative Russian style birthday cake and a round of 'Happy Birthday!'

**Day 4:** Another glorious day with sunshine and blue skies greets us as we set off in the direction of Hortobagy National Park. A short stop to check a couple of birds on the wires produces three Corn Buntings, two on the wires then one right beside the road in a small bush that eventually shows very well. We make a stop to scan one of the marshy pools we checked the other day and again find a big flock of Teal as well as a few Shoveler and a nice Little Grebe. A couple of Marsh Harriers are quartering the reed-bed in the background and we get out to play a bit of Bearded Tit call though sadly we get no response.

As we travel there are ridiculous numbers of Common Buzzards - they seem to be everywhere!! We then make a stop at the visitor centre at Hortobagy Village where we have a look round the shop and small exhibition and then soon we are on our way again, heading now to meet up with one of the rangers - he has seen Dotterel recently and is going to take us to the spot where they have been. We arrive at a wide expanse of short grassland and

Tibor carefully negotiates the occasional hollows along the way as we go further and further into this wide open landscape. We pass Hen Harriers and Common Buzzards then make a stop to scan the surrounding short turf finding no sign of any Dotterel but in the distance are at least three Rough-legged Buzzards and a couple more Hen Harriers. We move on stopping and scanning at intervals and at one stop we also take a short walk in search of Lapland Buntings but perhaps they have not arrived yet. We feel like we are out in the middle of nowhere and are amazed that there are dwellings out here. As we are scanning yet another area of open grassland the ranger suddenly asks for quiet... he has heard something. No-one else can hear anything but he points and we walk in the direction of whatever he has heard. We reach a slightly higher point and scan with our binoculars and astonishingly there in the distance are three Dotterel!! We are delighted and as we watch them through the scopes a flock of Golden Plover also appear and fly around above us before alighting a little way off. We decide that we should get a bit closer and after a short walk we look again and are delighted by what a difference it has made - the heat haze has vanished and we enjoy wonderful close up views of these delightful birds.

Well pleased with these prolonged views we walk back to the van and wend our way back out of this wilderness. It is amazing to look at the barns and small houses that are out here. One small house in particular looks very primitive with a thatched roof coming right down to the ground. It has a tiny brick chimney but we can't help smile at the sight of the TV aerial - even right out here you have to have TV! We pass a beautiful male Hen Harrier as we drive and pause to watch him quartering the rough ground then after dropping the ranger back at his car we drive a little way down the road and eat our lunch. The sun is positively warm as we sit around eating and drinking coffee, watching the flocks of Common Cranes that keep flying overhead. They are a lovely sight and the constant background call is lovely too. We find a European Tree Frog though he doesn't like all the attention and shoots straight down a vole hole! There are a few Tree Sparrows but little else bird-wise.

Our next target is Long-legged Buzzard and we drive to the small area of open grassland and woods that is the regular site for this scarce Hungarian species - less than ten pairs nest in the whole country! We pause to watch large flocks of geese flying out from one of the fishponds knowing that there is almost certainly a Red-breasted Goose amongst them but they are silhouettes and it is pointless checking them. Soon we arrive and park up to scan the area. Within moments Attila has found a distant Long-legged Buzzard perched in the tree tops then he finds a second perched on one

of the heron wells. Despite the distance the scopes allow us to pick out all the identification features, the creamy head, beige chest and dark belly while one of them starts preening and fans its orange tail in doing so - perfect! After enjoying these and also spotting yet more distant Rough-legged Buzzards and Hen Harriers we decide to head to the nearby town to check out the famous Long-eared Owl roost there.

We soon arrive and walk down one of the side streets to a spot where you can see a tall tree in the grounds of a small college. In seconds we have spotted several owls and also in the Conifer trees nearby but the most visible ones are round in the next street where about eight are perched very close to the road and allow a very close approach. They look absolutely superb through the scope - completely filling the view. We wander round finding more owls in the fading light - finding at least fifteen or more in the big tree, eight in these smaller trees and at least another six at the end of the street plus more in the Conifers making a total of around 35 owls. They make a wonderful finish to the day and we walk back to the van for the drive back to the hotel and our evening meal.

After our evening meal we go through the checklist before doing our usual round-up of the holiday - hearing what people have chosen as their species of the trip, place of the trip and if they have a 'magic moment'. Several species are chosen as species of the trip including Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Dotterel and Green Woodpecker but it is the wonderful Long-eared Owls at the two roosts that steal the pole position with four votes compared to three for Common Crane. The favourite place is a split between the Hortobagy Fishponds and the quarry in the Bukk Hills - despite the fact that we didn't see any Wallcreepers there. Magic moments however are a bit more varied with people choosing seeing the Dotterel, the sudden appearance of Mouflon in the quarry, both guides choosing the moment when the Spotted Eagle was flying through the tree tops grabbing branches. The Crane roosts however steal the show with people choosing both of them for different reasons but by far the most mentions are for the wonderful moment at the end of the first crane roost. Just when things were coming an end, and having had no cranes come in over our heads for the whole show, suddenly a group of sixty or so cranes came flying in from behind us passing almost over us, but not quite, instead passing in front of the moon. Peter sums it up saying that it almost brought a tear to the eye is was so beautiful and that it felt like an encore to the main event - a special moment indeed.

**Day 5:** Those out and about before breakfast find a Chiffchaff in the hotel grounds which is a nice surprise and as we are gathering around the van before we leave the Syrian Woodpecker makes a final appearance and shows well in the large trees by the car park - a nice finish to our time here.

We start by driving to a large area of scattered woodland and fields where a pair of Eastern Imperial Eagles nest, spotting several Common Buzzards, a Rough-legged Buzzard and a couple of Hen Harriers en route. We park and get out to scan the trees and almost immediately Roy finds two adult Eastern Imperial Eagles perched in a large Poplar nearby. Through the scopes you can see every detail of their plumage including the lovely pale nape and white feathering on the scapulars. They are magnificent looking birds and we are all watching excitedly when one chooses to take flight looking even more majestic as it circling round above the trees the white markings on the back showing up very well now - superb!

A huge flock of geese appears in the background and flies off in the direction of Tizsa Lake so we decide to head back to the lake and see whether we can find anything in amongst them. We arrive to find thousands of geese here but the sun is behind them making them silhouettes and it is a little frustrating that we have no way of checking through them for Red-breasted Geese (two were seen here a couple of days ago). There are plenty of the usual ducks and lots of Cormorants, Mute Swans etc but nothing new. Four White-tailed Eagles are patrolling the far shore perching on the tree stumps in the water or flying lazily along the shoreline. We get great views of a Hen Harrier that passes right in front of us and rather enjoy watching the Guinea Fowl as they bath in the cow dung in the field nearby - lovely!!

From here we head back towards the Hortobagy to the rare breeds centre where we have promised everyone a chance to see the famous Woolly Pigs. It is therefore with great excitement that we get out of the vans and head into the centre to have a look at all the interesting breeds of animals and birds that evolved here over the years. There are Frizzly Geese with curly feathers on their bodies, a variety of different breeds of chickens and even some Frizzly Pigeons - it seems the Hungarians rather like frizzly things! Then we arrive at the delightful Woolly Pigs (Frizzly Pigs?!) There are some that are 'blonde' and look all the world like sheep! They really do have curly wool all over them and look really cute, perhaps a little cuter than the ginger coloured ones in the pen next door. In the next pen are some 'Swallow-bellied' Woolly Pigs which are dark with white bellies and these are full sized adults and densely woolly. Well impressed we move on to have a look at the heron well. This has a pool of water in the bottom and several Marsh Frogs are swimming around or sat on fallen branches, as well as a single Red-

bellied Toad. We move on to take a look at the Hungarian Grey Cattle including two enormous bulls that look very majestic with huge horns. In one of the barns there are goats, donkeys and different kinds of sheep including various varieties of Racka Sheep, white, black and brown - though I suspect there is more to it than that!

It is now almost lunch time and so after taking some pictures of the famous nine arch bridge we set off for the restaurant where we having lunch, a traditional Goulash Soup followed by delicious chocolate pancakes.

After we have eaten it is time to start heading towards the airport but we still have enough time to make a stop en route. We drive to a reservoir which appears at first sight to be almost devoid of birds but careful scanning reveals quite a lot of ducks - almost all Mallards but three Pochard are with them and a few Teal. There are five Great Crested Grebes with a single Little Grebe and several Herons perched in the tree stumps in the shallow edge. Best however are two Green Sandpipers that Attila finds pottering along the shore. We enjoy a coffee and two Jays fly past behind us as we drink, but with time now flying past we feel we had better be on our way. We watch the sunset deep red on the horizon as we head down the motorway towards Budapest and our flight home.

**Birds**

Black-necked Grebe  
Little Grebe  
Great Crested Grebe  
Great Cormorant  
Pygmy Cormorant  
Great Egret  
Grey Heron  
Mute Swan  
Greylag Goose  
White-fronted Goose  
Canada Goose  
Mallard  
Wigeon  
Teal  
Pintail  
Shoveler  
Pochard  
White-tailed Eagle  
Eastern Imperial Eagle  
Greater Spotted Eagle  
Marsh-Harrier  
Hen Harrier  
Rough-legged Buzzard  
Long-legged Buzzard  
Common Buzzard  
Goshawk  
Sparrowhawk  
Kestrel  
Merlin  
Peregrine Falcon  
Saker Falcon  
Pheasant  
Water Rail (heard)  
Coot  
Common Crane  
Great Bustard  
Northern Lapwing  
Grey Plover  
Golden Plover  
Dotterel  
Greenshank  
Green Sandpiper  
Curlew

Common Snipe  
Black-headed Gull  
Caspian Gull  
Yellow-legged Gull  
Lesser Black-backed Gull (Baltic race)  
Common Gull  
Feral Pigeon  
Stock Dove  
Collared-Dove  
Long-eared Owl  
Little Owl  
Kingfisher (heard)  
Black Woodpecker  
Great Spotted  
Woodpecker  
Syrian Woodpecker  
Middle Spotted  
Woodpecker  
Lesser Spotted  
Woodpecker  
Grey-headed Woodpecker  
Green Woodpecker  
Crested Lark  
Meadow Pipit  
Wren  
Robin  
Alpine Accentor  
Black Redstart  
Fieldfare  
Blackbird  
Chiffchaff  
Wood Warbler  
Goldcrest  
Bearded Tit (heard)  
Long-tailed Tit  
Penduline-Tit  
Blue Tit  
Marsh Tit  
Great Tit  
Nuthatch  
Trecreeper  
Great Grey Shrike  
Jay  
Magpie  
Raven

Rook  
Hooded Crow  
Jackdaw  
Starling  
House Sparrow  
Tree-Sparrow  
Chaffinch  
Goldfinch  
Greenfinch  
Siskin  
Linnet  
Reed Bunting  
Corn Bunting  
Yellowhammer  
Pine Bunting

**Mammals**

Roe Deer  
Brown Hare  
Red Fox  
Mouflon

**Domestic Animals of Interest**

Racka Sheep  
Hungarian Grey Cattle  
Mangalica 'woolly' Pigs  
Water Buffalo  
Frizzly Geese  
Frizzly Pigeons

**Butterflies and Dragonflies**

Red Admiral  
Peacock  
Common Darter  
Ruddy Darter

**Amphibians and Reptiles**

Fire-bellied Toad  
Marsh Frog  
European Tree Frog  
Common Toad