

HUNGARY SMALL MAMMAL TOUR

2 - 10 August 2014

Tour leader: Sándor Boldogh

Tour participants: Gillian Hollamby & David Walker, Donald Kernott

Trip report written by David Walker

We landed at Budapest Airport, collected our luggage, met up with our guide Sandor Boldogh and our travelling companion Donald Kernott, and within five minutes we were looking through a fence at our first mammal, European Sousek, which lives in the grassland around the airport museum. We then set off towards our accommodation for the next three days, the Hotel Nomad at Noszvaj in the Bukk Hills driving past fields of droopy-headed sunflowers, maize and dry, harvested wheat fields with a tea stop and chat about the itinerary.



We came off the motorway and drove down a field track to park by a small ditch with a bridge. The ground was damp and sticky but with a little patience and a good torch we found two Lesser Mouse-eared Bats peering out from their cool hiding place although there were a lot of droppings on the ground. We then drove to a reservoir where we startled a Roe Deer which quickly disappeared. A short stop found lots of Grey Heron, a Spoonbill, Wood Sandpiper and Lapwing with White Wagtail and Yellow Wagtail along the water's edge. We found a blue butterfly and Small Heath and pale Clouded Yellows but they were so active that they were difficult to identify. Finally we arrived at Nomad Pension situated at the head of a lovely valley surrounded by woodland with lots of bird sounds and resident Red Squirrels.



Each evening the mist nets were set up in different locations. The species caught were Common Pipistrelle followed by Barbastelle, Whiskered, Alcatraz's, Serotine, Noctule, Geoffroy's, Natterer's, Leisler's and Bechstein's and Daubenton heard on the bat scanner. Small mammal traps were also set up in different locations with Striped Field Mouse, Yellow-necked and Common Wood Mouse caught.



During the next two days we visited caves and attics in an abbey and several churches and visitor centres for bat roosts of Greater, Lesser and Mediterranean Horseshoe bats, Lesser and Greater Mouse-eared Bats, as well as a fly-over bridge in the middle of Eger for Noctule Bats. We also walked through some woods onto woodland grazed pastures which were alive with many different butterflies, Red Underwing Skipper, Meadow Brown, Common Glider, High Brown and Silver-washed Fritillary, Dryad, Map, Short-tailed Blue, Wood White and Woodland and Great Banded Graylings. Among the flowers there was Proliferous Pink, Deptford Pink and Spiked Rest-harrow. Bee-eaters had left the breeding colony but were filling the skies with their calls.



On our fourth day we packed up and moved to a new hotel in the Aggtelek National Park. On the way we stopped to enjoy a taste of Hungarian wine and then we called into a park centre where there was a children's summer camp and a ringing demonstration with the majority of birds being Great Tits. We also saw a Marsh Tit and a Common Treecreeper. Scanning with the torches in the crevasses under the tiles we found 40-50 Common Pipistrelles roosting. Some of the children took a keen interest in seeing the bats as did some of the adults. We also stopped at an impressive cave at Kecske with a spectacular gathering of Schreiber's and Mediterranean Horseshoe Bats.



Our next stop was down a gravel track towards some settling pools. In the fields were several Great White Egrets, Grey Heron and on the wires were Bee-eaters and Turtle Doves. Parking near the reservoir we scanned round as a White-tailed Eagle took off and flew across the fields to a dead tree. Walking round the reservoir to some pools we scanned through the fence. Black Stork and Garganey flew overhead and Black-winged Stilt, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Ruff, Greenshank and Spotted Redshank were feeding in the shallows. Several butterflies were flying, including Large Coppers, always nice to see. We then headed into the Aggtalek National Park for the next 3 days.



We settled into our new hotel and after dinner met for mist netting on the River Josvafo. Noctules were the main species with Leisler's and Daubenton's Bats also recorded. We returned to the hotel around midnight and turned in after another great day.



Over the next two days we visited more churches, a Forest Hostel (no sign of the hoped for Brandt's Bat but some entertaining Edible Dormice) and caves for all three horseshoe bats, Grey Long-eared and Geoffroy's Bat, visiting small mammal traps and dormouse boxes. A morning in the meadows above Josvafo was excellent for butterflies with the highlight of Meleager's Blue and also Praying Mantis.

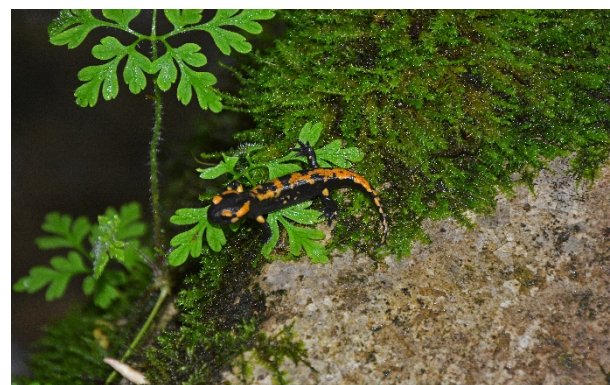
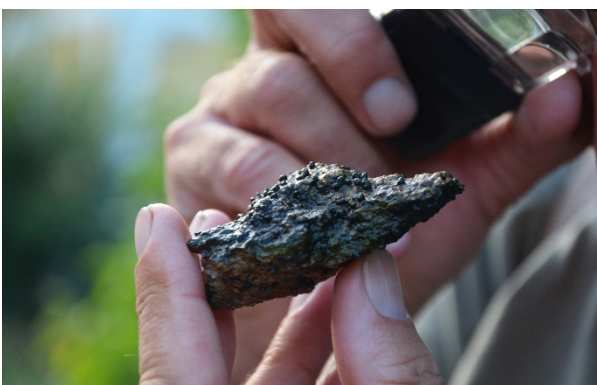


One afternoon we visited the Aggtelek Caves, a recently discovered World Heritage site with impressive stalactites, stalagmites and many interesting shapes and views.



We spent one day on the Slovakian side of the karst landscape with Lesser Spotted Eagle en route and walking along the wooded Szadeloi Gorge with Dipper and Lesser Purple Emperor before going high into the hills at Dedinky. Here we checked behind shutters on several of the summer houses and were really lucky to find both Northern Bat and Parti-coloured Bat. We finished this day with another mistnetting session over a stream at Kecovo where we caught a Grey Long-eared Bat, several more Leisler's and lots of Noctule Bats.

Our final morning at Josvafo saw us at the lake above the village where we found good numbers of Fire Salamanders and then Dice Snake and the endangered Carpathian Spring Snail in the river outside our hotel.



The rest of the day was spent driving back to Budapest stopping off at a threatened Mediterranean Horseshoe roost on the way and then on to a short stop at Hortobagy. The birds were great with Great White Egrets, Marsh Harrier, Roller and two Saker Falcons on the drive before getting a boat ride onto the river Tisza looking for birds and Beaver. Little Egret, Squacco Heron and Pygmy Cormorants plus Whiskered, Black and Common Terns were seen and we were lucky enough to see the back end of a beaver and a tail splash but despite sitting in the best spot for an hour there were no further signs. Whilst waiting on the river until nearly dark we were joined by several more bats which included Pond Bat.

After dropping Donald off at his hostel in Budapest we drove on to Tiszaalpar for our two day extension and in the hope of seeing Blind Mole Rat.

Our accommodation was a forest lodge with several Serotine and Soprano Pipistrelle roosting behind the cladding over the balconies. The next morning we drove to a disused military area near Baga where we met the Warden and several other interested parties with a mole rat that had been caught two days before as part of an ongoing DNA project. We were given a quick life history of the mole rats and their ecology before it was released back into its run. It took less than five minutes for the mole rat to repair the burrow and disappear back into its secret world.



We spent the afternoon birding around the area including a great wetland near the Hostel with lots of herons, Spoonbills and a variety of wildfowl including Ferruginous Duck. In the evening Common Spadefoot and Green Toads were found in the grounds and a couple of House Mice were trapped. A pre-breakfast walk the next morning produced brief views of Black Woodpeckers and lots of Golden Orioles before we departed to explore a reserve set up especially for the rare endemic and endangered Long-lasting Pink. We returned to Tiszaalpar for yet another massive lunch before packing up our gear and making our way back to Budapest airport. We managed to fit in a last look at the European Sousek and also found some Crested Larks around the entrance road before our departure.

This was an extremely interesting and enjoyable trip with an expert guide who not only knew the bats, mammals and birds but was also really enthusiastic about sharing his knowledge with us.

Final Species Totals: Mammals 40 (inc 23 Bats), Butterflies 48, Birds 118.

SPECIES LIST

Mammals

European Hare	<i>Lepus europeus</i>
Mediterranean Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>
Greater Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>
Lesser Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>
Schreiber's Bat	<i>Miniopterus schreibersi</i>
Serotine Bat	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>
Northern Bat	<i>Eptesicus nilssonii</i>
Leisler's Bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>
Common Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>
Nathusius's Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>
Western Barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>
Grey Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>
Parti-coloured Bat	<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>
Alcathoe Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis alcathoe</i>
Bechstein's Bat	<i>Myotis bechsteini</i>
Lesser Mouse-eared Bat	<i>Myotis blythi</i>
Pond Bat	<i>Myotis dasycneme</i>
Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>
Geoffroy's Bat s	<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>
Greater Mouse-eared Bat	<i>Myotis myotis</i>
Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>
Natterer's Bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>
Eurasian Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>
Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>
Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>
European Souselik	<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>
European Beaver	<i>Castor fiber</i>
Edible Dormouse	<i>Glis glis</i>
Common Vole	<i>Microtus arvalis</i>

Striped Field Mouse
Yellow-necked Mouse
Wood Mouse
House Mouse

Lesser Mole-rat

Apodemus agrarius
Apodemus flavicollis
Apodemus sylvaticus
Mus musculus
Spalax leucodon
(*Nannospalax montanosyrmiensis*)

Birds

Little Grebe
Great Crested Grebe
Great Cormorant
Pygmy Cormorant
Little Bittern
Night Heron
Squacco Heron
Little Egret
Great Egret
Grey Heron
Purple Heron
White Stork
Black Stork
Eurasian Spoonbill
Mute Swan
Greylag Goose
Gadwall
Teal
Mallard
Garganey
Shoveler
Pochard
Ferruginous Duck
White-tailed Eagle
Short-toed Eagle
Honey Buzzard
Marsh Harrier
Sparrowhawk
Common Buzzard
Lesser Spotted Eagle
Kestrel

Tachybaptus ruficollis
Podiceps cristatus
Phalacrocorax carbo
Phalacrocorax pygmeus
Ixobrychus minutus
Nycticorax nycticorax
Ardeola ralloides
Egretta garzetta
Ardea alba
Ardea cinerea
Ardea purpurea
Ciconia ciconia
Ciconia nigra
Platalea leucorodia
Cygnus olor
Anser anser
Anas strepera
Anas crecca
Anas platyrhynchos
Anas querquedula
Anas clypeata
Aythya farina
Aythya nyroca
Haliaeetus albicilla
Circaetus gallicus
Pernis apivorus
Circus aeruginosus
Accipiter nisus
Buteo buteo
Aquila pomarina
Falco tinnunculus

Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>
Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchacus</i>
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>
Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>
Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martiuso</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>
Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus syriacus</i>
Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus medius</i>
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus minor</i>

Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa sriata</i>
Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalus caudatus</i>
Marsh Tit	<i>Parus palustris</i>
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>

Goldfinch
Serin
Greenfinch
Hawfinch
Yellowhammer
Corn Bunting

Carduelis carduelis
Serinus serinus
Carduelis chloris
Coccothraustes coccothraustes
Emberiza citrinella
Emberiza calandra

Butterflies

Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper
Red-underwing Skipper
Lulworth Skipper
Large Skipper
Swallowtail
Scarce Swallowtail
Large White
Small White
Green-veined White
Eastern Bath White
Clouded Yellow
Pale Clouded Yellow
Wood White
Lesser Purple Emperor
White Admiral
Common Glider
Comma
Map
Painted Lady
Red Admiral
Peacock
Silver-washed Fritillary
Queen-of-Spain Fritillary
High Brown Fritillary
Glanville Fritillary
Heath Fritillary
Marbled White
Woodland Grayling
Dryad
Great Banded Grayling
False Grayling
Meadow Brown
Small Heath

Pyrgus amoricanus
Spialia sertorius
Thymelicus acteon
Ochlodes sylvanus
Papilio machaon
Iphiclides podalirius
Pieris brassicae
Pieris rapae
Pieris napi
Pontia edusa
Colias crocea
Colias hyale
Leptidea sinapis
Apatura ilia
Limenitis camilla
Neptis sappho
Polygonum c-album
Araschnia levana
Vanessa cardui
Vanessa atalanta
Inachis io
Argynnis paphia
Issoria lathonia
Argynnis adippe
Melitaea cinxia
Mellicta athalia
Melanargia galathea
Hipparchia fagi
Minois dryas
Britensia circa
Arethusana arethusana
Maniola jurtina
Coenonympha pamphilus

Chestnut Heath
Speckled Wood
Wall Brown
Large Wall Brown
Duke of Burgundy
Small Copper
Large Copper
Short-tailed Blue
Eastern Short-tailed Blue
Silver-studded Blue
Idas Blue
Brown Argus
Meleager's Blue
Chalk-hill Blue
Common Blue

Coenonympha glycerion
Pararge aegeri
Lasiommata megera
Lasiommata maera
Hamearis lucina
Lycaena phlaeas
Lycaena dispar
Everes argiades
Everes decoloratus
Plebejus argus
Plebejus idas
Aricia agestis
Meleageria daphnis
Lysandra corridon
Polyommatus icarus

Others

European Green Lizard
Sand Lizard
Viviparous Lizard
Aesculapian Snake
Dice Snake
Fire Salamander
Fire bellied Toad
Common Spadefoot
Common Toad
European Green Toad
Common Frog
Marsh Frog
Carpathian Spring Snail
Preying Mantis
Large Conehead

Lacerta viridis
Lacerta agilis
Zootoca vivipara
Zamenis longissimus
Natrix tessellata
Salamandra salamandra
Bombina bombina
Pelobates fuscus
Bufo bufo
Bufo viridis
Rana temporaria
Pelophylax ridibundus
Bythinella pannonica
Mantis religiosa
Ruspolia nitidula