

South and Eastern Poland Spring 2008



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Sandwich Bird Tours

SOUTH AND EASTERN POLAND .

With Sandwich Bird Tours

10th -21st May 2008



Leaders: Eustace Barnes, John van der Dol and Marcin Stanczyk

Participants

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Photos by Sheila Seed and Brian summerfield
Cover photo of Pygmy Owl by Brian



ITINERARY

Day 1: Flight from London to Krakow. Afternoon exploring nearby woodlands before heading to the city for dinner.

Day 2: Early morning woodland walk. After breakfast we headed for nearby fishponds and in the afternoon drove to the Pieniny mountains.

Day 3: Day exploring Pieniny mountains.

Day 4: Drove to the Bieszczady region.

Day 5 : Bieszczady region.

Day 6 : Bieszczady region.

Day 7 : After breakfast we drove north to Zwierzyce near Zamosc.

Day 8 : Explored nearby steppe to see Spotted Sousek and then drove north to Bialowieza.

Day 9 : All day in the Bialowieza Forest. Evening visit to Great Snipe lek in Narew valley.

Day 10 : Morning visit to Bialowieza forest followed by Siemianowka Lake.

Day 11 : All day in the Biebrza marshes.

Day 12: We drove back to Warsaw and catch a flight to London where the tour concluded.

DAILY DIARY

Day 1: Our tour began with a short and uneventful flight to Krakow on which most of us slept. On arrival we headed for our hotel situated in the Wolski forest near the old city of Krakow. In the afternoon we walked trails behind the hotel through mature beech forests. We quickly picked up the pretty little Collared Flycatcher and numerous Wood Warblers. We began our quest for all of Europe's woodpeckers and enjoyed great views of the Middle-spotted and Black Woodpeckers. This began an excellent run of sightings of these spectacular birds which was to result in our seeing all of Europe's woodpeckers. In the late afternoon we headed for the city centre for a pleasant meal around the old square and the end of a very pleasant day.



Day 2: Rising early, most of the group took a pre-breakfast stroll through the nearby Wolski forest. After breakfast we then headed for the beautiful Zator fishponds to the west of Krakow where we immediately found a River Warbler and managed good views of this regional speciality. On the lakes we found Black-crowned Night Heron, Great White Egret, Black-necked Grebe and numerous Garganey. We were also lucky to see an early singing male Scarlet Rosefinch and listen to several Little Bitterns booming. One of the ponds was drained, providing good conditions for waders. We picked up Wood Sandpiper, Spotted

Redshank, Redshank, Greenshank and Black-tailed Godwits. This was more or less the only site we found migratory waders. After a nice lunch we drove through the prosperous south to the Pieniny mountains. On the way we enjoyed some stunning landscapes.



Day 3: A short walk from the hotel produced a Three-toed Woodpecker, a Nutcracker and a Black Stork along with other open country birds. In the Pieniny mountains we drove to a high point looking towards the snow covered Tatras across flower rich meadows from which we enjoyed a long walk along the Slovakian border through some tranquil sub-boreal forests. The splendid vista of the Tatra mountains and sub-alpine meadows certainly met our landscape expectations. We came up with our first Ring Ouzels, Willow Tits and several more Three-toed Woodpeckers. We also saw an adult Adder on the main path and were all able to see it well. In the puddles we found good numbers of Fire-bellied Toads and Carpathian Newts while the wider rides through the forest held small numbers of Camberwell Beauties. In the afternoon we drove to a large area of flat boreal forest in search of Pygmy Owl but were unlucky and only heard a single bird. We then returned to our pleasant hotel and enjoyed a welcome meal.



Day 4: After an early walk in the area we drove to the Bieszczady region in the far south-east of Poland. This area had been a stronghold for resistance fighters during Nazi occupation and as a consequence during subsequent Communist domination was cleared of settlement. This left a huge area rapidly returning to dense beech forest, quickly making it one of the most important areas for wildlife in Europe. We stopped on the way to watch a good many Lesser-spotted Eagles and a couple of Golden Eagles as well as Black Storks and Northern Grey Shrikes. The flower rich meadows that punctuate the carpet of beech forests produced Whinchat, Stonechat and both Red-backed and Northern Grey Shrikes. On arrival we headed up to a beaver dam situated in a forested valley hoping to see Bison. Throughout this area there was sign of Bison but we failed to find any. It seems that after winter the herds

fragment into small family groups and are much harder to see.



Day 5: An early morning walk near the hotel produced great views of Nutcracker and a pair of Black Woodpeckers. This area of dense spruce and fir with some beech was very rich in woodland species with both Willow and Marsh Tits quite common. After breakfast we headed for Solinka on the Slovakian border for a pleasant walk through the mixed forests. This area was good for Woodpeckers, Black Stork, the white-headed form of Long-tailed Tit, Crossbill, Hawfinch and a few more Lesser-spotted Eagles. In the afternoon we visited another meadow in search of Bison but found only Roe Deer, Foxes and Lesser-spotted Eagles. Our walk started by some old cast iron charcoal burning ovens. These smoking monsters were attended by a couple of drunken charcoal burners. They were in need of more drink and offered us a ton of charcoal (not theirs) in exchange for a ride into town to buy more Vodka. One of this carbonated team was dubbed Jonny Vodka and together with his side kick made our visit quite memorable. We had thought that Glenn Fiddich might suit but it sounded a little too refined and perhaps something like Ethan Ol might have been more appropriate. The arrival of their boss ended any offer of a huge barbeque and they duly staggered back off into the smoke. In the nearby meadow there were a number of Whinchats, Northern Grey Shrikes and a calling Corncrake. Owing to the cold spring we were to hear only another three calling Corncrakes during the entire trip which was very surprising. Our evening walk found us walking a muddy road where we noticed the fresh tracks of many mammals in the soft mud. Two brown bears had left huge prints alongside those of a number of Wolves, a single Bison and innumerable deer.



A charcoal burner in the Bieszczady forest

Day 6: The pre-breakfast walk again produced Nutcracker, a pair of very noisy Black Woodpeckers and a number of Red-backed Shrikes and Whinchats. After breakfast we visited another meadow high above the San river. A really stunning location which gave us great views of White-backed and Grey-headed Woodpeckers. We also watched a pair of Lesser-spotted Eagles displaying and a great many buzzards. This species hunts by hovering to a far greater extent than those in Britain as it feeds on voles rather than Rabbits. The muddy track along which we walked was covered with and criss-crossed by innumerable mammal tracks. There was clearly a herd of Bison close by along with Red and Roe Deer and a pack of Wolves but we only managed to see a few deer. In the evening we headed south to Solinka again and walked along narrow gauge railway line through old growth beech forest. We found a Nutcracker perched in a short larch all managed good views. We then found several White-backed and Grey-headed Woodpeckers and again all the group had good views. We ended up at an old railway maintenance hut and had a cup of tea and a snack with a friend of Marcin's. As the evening drew on we walked back along the railway line and found an adult Ural Owl by the railway line and most of us saw the bird. This year, as the vole population had crashed, the owls were not breeding. All owl pellets found by the local researchers contained beetle remains indicating a severe shortage of food.



Day 7: The following morning it was raining hard and after a late breakfast we headed north to Zwierzyeie near Zamosc. We passed through 'Eagle' Valley which it seems is actually a watchpoint. A short watch produced eight Lesser-spotted Eagles, a number of Buzzards and a Black Stork. We then stopped near Nowy Sacz for a short break where we saw our only Green Woodpeckers and Goosanders. A little further north we stopped in a scots pine plantation and found Hobby, Woodlark, Hawfinch, Redstart, Crested Tits and more Black Woodpeckers. It is always surprising that such apparently poor mono-cultural plantations should hold so many species that are rare in the UK. An observation that seems to apply across the whole of mainland Europe. Arriving in Zwierzyeie we found Barred Warbler, Woodlark and more Red-backed Shrikes on an overgrown pasture in front of our hotel.

Day 8: After breakfast we headed north to visit the Popowka reserve, an area of steppe, to see Spotted Sousek at one of its only European sites. These charming little creatures were dotted all over a grassy hillside in one of few reserves that secure the future of this specialised mammal in Poland. Another reserve near Zamosc produced Ortolan Bunting and, over a marsh, a number of Great Egrets and Marsh Harriers. A small village a little further on gave us stunning views of a pair of very confident Wrynecks which we were all able to watch a point blank range. The mighty primeval Bialowieza forest was then our destination, although we did stop at the river bug to do some birding where we found Thrush Nightingale and Penduline Tit.



Day 9: Today we visited the primeval Bialowieza Forest and walked through several stunning areas of flooded forest. We found Red-breasted and Pied Flycatcher along with huge numbers of Wood Warblers. We also found more River Warblers, Thrush Nightingales, Middle-spotted Woodpeckers, Black Woodpeckers and a Black Stork. The late morning was

wet and during the afternoon it got progressively worse. We visited a site for Pygmy Owl but we gave up because of heavy rain and headed towards the Narew valley Great Snipe lek. We decided to go to the site, and if it was raining hard, return another day. However, we were lucky and it cleared for our short walk to the site. On arrival we heard and then saw a male Black Woodpecker. At the marsh it was not long before we could hear the strange clicking noises of displaying Great Snipe in the dense grass in front of us. Then one and two more Great Snipe jumped up displaying their white sided tails. As the light began to fade a number of birds jumped up and chased in rapid flight around the marsh. Elated with our success we returned to our hotel and invited ourselves to a confirmation party being held in the hotel for cake.



Day 10 Early this morning we visited the Bialowieza forest and returned to the Pygmy Owl site. Fairly quickly after our arrival a bird was heard calling. We started to walk in that direction and were confronted with another group of birders. They had found a single Pygmy Owl feeding and we quickly walked to the site and were able to watch the bird plucking the remains of a Treecreeper. However, another bird appeared with prey and the two owls fed on what ever it was they had caught. John then saw one of the birds fly to a nest hole and we had found the nest. After the success of our early morning search for Pygmy Owl we returned to our hotel and departed for the Siemianowka reservoir where we easily found Citrine Wagtail and Thrush Nightingale along with our first White-winged Terns. It was 9.5C and we departed for the Biebzra marshes hoping for warmer weather. On the way the rained closed in and it did not look promising. In Bialystok we were disappointed to have to say goodbye to Marcin and headed to Tykocin. At our hotel in the southern marshes we met up with Felix our new guide and after dinner visited a splendid site for Aquatic Warbler. This rather uncommon bird was singing on arrival in the gentle rain and before long we were getting our first great views of this lovely little warbler. We enjoyed scope views of a singing adult at 20meters. In the fading light we retraced our steps and returned to our hotel for celebratory drinks after an excellent day. The deep red sky at sunset gave us hope of a better day to come after a reasonable explanation as to why this might be the case.



Day 11: Today it turned out to be sunny and warm as predicted and provided us with a great day of birding. A pre-breakfast walk produced a single Syrian Woodpecker and a nesting pair of Lesser-spotted Woodpeckers so completing our list of European woodpeckers. We also picked up a pair of lovely Bluethroats, more Common Rosefinches and a couple of Marsh Warblers. We then headed for the magnificent Biebzra marshes. Our first site was the largest White-winged Tern colony in Europe. We were able to watch these beautiful birds down to a few meters giving us one of the most memorable sightings of the trip. We also saw a number of Common Cranes, an adult White-tailed Eagle and several Lesser-spotted Eagles. Amongst the raptors over the nearby alder forest Andrew and Eustace found a pair of Greater-spotted Eagles, but unfortunately the rest of the group had long started their return to the bus. It seemed very much that the claim that these marshes are huge and packed with birdlife was true. The sound of trumpeting Cranes and booming Bitterns together with huge numbers of White-winged Terns at this site made the experience quite unforgettable. During the course of the day we saw a superb adult White-tailed Eagle, a few adult Ruff, a pair of nesting Whooper Swans and three Bee-eaters at a small colony nearby. We then returned to our hotel for a well earned break after a spectacular day of birding. We totalled 176 species of a possible list of about 205.



Day 12: After a walk along the river we packed and headed for Warsaw. We were treated to the sites of the city en route to the airport. The traffic was heavy and we were glad to reach the airport in time. The traffic was no different in the UK as operation stack was running. The M20 was closed and the traffic backed up for miles. The whole of Kent was gridlocked and it took more than three hours to get home. We should have stayed in Poland.



SYSTEMATIC LIST

All species seen by a good proportion of the group unless otherwise specified. (L) = leader only.

(H) = heard only. Trip highlights with species name emboldened.

PODICIPEDIDAE

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*: Common at Zator fishponds and on other open waters elsewhere.

Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) Common at Zator ponds and a few in the Biebrza marshes.

Little Grebe (*Tachypadtus ruficollis*) A few seen on the Zator ponds.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*: Small numbers of the race *sinensis* along the Narew river.

ARDEIDAE

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* : (H) Heard booming at Zator ponds and in the Biebrza marshes, but never a glimpse.

Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) (H) Several heard at Zator fishponds.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*: 9 seen at Zator ponds. 6 near Zamosc. 40 in the Biebrza marshes and at least 6 at Siemianowka Reservoir. A recent colonist, the population in Poland is expanding rapidly.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: Common from the Zator fishponds and the river San to the Biebrza marshes and other wetland areas.

Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) 2 seen at Zator fishponds and 1 near Tykocin.

Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) Up to 4 seen at Zator fishponds.

CICONIIDAE

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*: 4 in the Pieniny mountains, 6 en route to Bieszczadi. Good looks at a few in the Bieszczady region. Good numbers of this species seen, especially in the south.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*: A few near Krakow, 15 en route to Bieszczadi. Common in the northern areas visited on the village roofs and chimneys and feeding in nearby pastures.

ANATIDAE

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*: Wild birds seen throughout.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*: Two at a nest in the Biebrza marshes. Great to see both this species and European Bee-eater at nesting sites on the same day.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*: Good numbers seen at Zator fishponds.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*: A few at the Siemianowka Reservoir.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*: Common at Zator fishponds. A few at other sites throughout.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: Common throughout.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*: Common at Zator fishponds and small numbers seen in the Biebrza marshes and at Siemianowka Reservoir.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*: 1 near Pieniny mountains and a few in the Biebrza marshes.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*: Common at Zator fishponds and four seen in the Biebrza marshes.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*: Common Zator fishponds and small numbers seen elsewhere.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*: Up to 5 seen in the Bialowieza forest and a few along the Narew valley.

Goosander *Mergus merganser* : 4 seen near Nowy Sacz.

ACCIPITRIDAE

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*: Four seen in the Biebrza marshes. 2 adults and two sub-adult birds seen during the course of one day. We had superb views of one full adult along the Narew valley. It is good to know that the population of this magnificent raptor is increasing in Poland with up to 700 pairs as of 2008. Classified as 'Near-threatened' in *Threatened Birds of the World* with a world population of 5,000-7,000 pairs.

Black Kite *Milvus nigrans* : (L) A single bird seen in the Biebrza marshes. A rare bird in this part of Poland. A fly by.

Western Marsh Harrier (Eurasian Marsh Harrier) *Circus aeruginosus*: Several pairs at the Zator fishponds and seen in the north with many great views.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*: Good views of one near Hajnowka and small numbers seen in the Biebrza marshes.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*: Two singles seen Wolski forest. Several seen in the Pieniny and Bieszczadi area .

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*: Small numbers of the nominate race were seen throughout. A very variable species

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. 2 sub-adult birds seen near Cisna and another at Bieszczady,

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*: A single bird seen in the Pieniny Mountains, 4 en route to Bieszczady. 8 seen from a watch point south of Zamosc and several seen in the Biebrza marshes.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*: A pair seen along the Narew valley and another at the lunchstop nearby. There are usually between seven and ten pairs present in the Biebrza marshes..

FALCONIDAE

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: Several seen around Krakow.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*: 4 seen in the Pieniny mountains, 1 Biebrza marshes.

PHASIANIDAE

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*: Seen en route to Zator fishponds and at several sites thereafter.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* : (H) Heard at many locations.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*: Common in the south. Seen on the drive both from and to Warsaw.

RALLIDAE

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*: (H) 1 heard at Siemianowka reservoir.

Little Crane *Porzana parva*: Seen by a few of the group at the Zator fishponds.

Corn Crane *Crex crex*: (H) First heard in the Bieszczady area outside our hotel but very few heard throughout. In the Biebrza marshes we heard only one as it seems the cold spring had delayed the arrival of this species or least the start of their calling. Classified as 'Vulnerable' in *Threatened Birds of the World*, the world population is estimated as 1,700,000-3,000,000 singing males.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chlorops*: 1 seen near Zamosc and another heard in the Biebrza marshes.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*: Common at Zator fishponds.

GRUIDAE

Common Crane *Grus grus*: Always a lovely bird to see. Fairly common in the Biebrza marshes.

CHARADRIIDAE

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*: Seen at a number of sites.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*: Common throughout.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*: Seen at Zator fishponds. We also saw good numbers of breeding plumaged males by the Biebrza river.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*: Drumming birds on several occasions in the Biebrza marshes. The Old World taxa are now treated as being distinct from those in the New World.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*: A more recently discovered lek along the Narew valley produced some great views, of a least 4, for most of us. Classified as 'Near-threatened' in *Threatened Birds of the World* this species has been in decline since the 19th century. Destruction of the favoured habitat of flood plain and tussock meadows and natural fens is a major threat. The term 'lek' was originally used to describe an assembly of displaying male Black Grouse but is now used to cover the displays of many other species including Cock-of-the-rock, grouse species and Ruff.

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*: Several seen in Bieszczadi forest at several sites.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*: Seen at several sites throughout.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*: One in breeding plumage at Zator fishponds.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*: Common Zator fishponds. Small numbers in the Biebrza marshes.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: Up to 30 at the Zator fishponds.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: 1 seen along a small river en route to Pieniny.

LARIDAE

Little Gull *Larus minutus*: 1 Siemianowka reservoir.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*: First seen in Krakow. Common throughout the wetland areas. The breeding colony at Bialystok fishponds was particularly noisy.

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus cachinnans cachinnans*) Common in the south.

STERNIDAE

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Small numbers throughout the lakes and marshes.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*: Several seen by the Biebrza river.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*: Good numbers seen at marshlands sites.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*: Common at Zator fishponds.

White-winged Tern (White-winged Black Tern) *Chlidonias leucopterus*: Probably thousands of this stunning marsh tern seen in the Biebrza marshes and a few at the Siemianowka Reservoir.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Dove *Columba livia*: Common.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* : Fairly common in the south.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*: Common in the south.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*: A few in towns and villages.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* : 1 seen in the Pieniny Mountains, several seen and heard elsewhere in the north.

CUCULIDAE

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*: Small numbers seen throughout.

STRIGIDAE

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* : Several heard in Bieszczady area.

Eurasian Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium passerinum*: 1 heard in Debno forest but not responsive to tape. On our second attempt in the Bialowieza forest we found one bird feeding on a Treecreeper and then were surprised by a second bird. Then it became clear we were at a nest site and we were able to watch the pair exchanging food and coming in and out of the nest hole in a nearby oak. A splendid result producing fantastic views of these engaging little terrors of the forest.

Ural Owl *Strix uralensis*. A single bird seen at Balinka. A large grey owl flew out from a dense spruce and landed briefly in a small beech before flying off through the forest mobbed by Blackbirds and Chaffinches.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*: Heard and seen at Balinka. Another seen along the Narew valley.

APODIDAE

Common Swift *Apus apus*: Quite common and widespread.

ALCEDINIDAE

Common Kingfisher *alcedo atthis*: Several seen along various rivers in the south.

MEROPIDAE

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*: 3 seen near Tykocin in the Biebra marshes.

UPUPIDAE

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*: Heard near Wolski forest and near Zamosc. 3 seen in the Biebra marshes.

PICIDAE

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*: Superb views of two south of Chelm at a nest hole and another pair in town at Hajnowka..

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*. A pair near Nowy Sacz.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*: A pair in the Wolski forest, another pair at Rajskie and a single at Balinka.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*: A stunning pair seen in the Wolski forest and others seen in the Pieniny, Bieszczady and Bialowieza forests. A common and widespread species.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*: Common from the Wolski forest onwards.

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius*: A pair seen in the Wolski forest and others in the north.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*: A single bird and possibly a pair found on the edge of the Biebra marshes.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos*: A single drumming bird seen at Rajskie and another pair found at Balinka with others heard in the Bieszczady region. Apparently this can be a tricky bird to catch up with.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*: A pair seen at Rajskie and a single in the Bialowieza forest. A breeding pair and their nest hole discovered in the Biebra marshes.

Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactyla*: 1 outside our hotel in the Pieniny mountains, 3 on our walk at the base of the Tatras. Often missed by tour groups we noticed with no known nest in the Bialowieza forest for a couple of years.

ALAUDIDAE

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*: Common north of Zamosc at many sites..

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*: Common throughout in suitable habitat.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*: Common at Zator fishponds.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Common and widespread.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*: Common and widespread.

MOTACILLIDAE

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*: Fairly common in the Pieniny mountains and other sites in the south.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*: A few near Zator fishponds. Seen at numerous other sites throughout.

Blue-headed (Yellow) Wagtail *Motacilla flava*: Fairly common around the marshes. All of those identified to subspecies were Blue-headed Wagtails (nominate *flava*), which breeds locally.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*: A very smart male seen singing at Siemianowka Reservoir and two others subsequently seen with it. A recent colonist, here the birds are at the extreme western end of their range.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*: Several seen in the Pieniny mountains and common in Bieszczady region.

White Wagtail (Pied Wagtail) *Motacilla alba*: The nominate race was common and widespread.

TROGLODYTIDAE

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Heard in the Pieniny mountains. Seen in the Bieszczady region and elsewhere.

TURDIDAE

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*: A few seen in Wolski forest and common elsewhere in the south.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*. A single bird briefly seen at Rajskie.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*: Great views of this imaginative songster at many sites in the north.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*: Numerous at Tykocin in the Biebrza marshes. A pair carrying food.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*: First found nesting on our hotel in Wolski forest. Common elsewhere.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*: Heard at Baligrod. Several pairs seen near Zamosc and in the Bialowieza forest.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*: Commonly seen in the south.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* : Several pairs seen near Bieszczadi. 1 pair Siemianowka reservoir.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*: 1 seen near Pieniny, 3 in the Biebrza marshes.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*: Very common indeed.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*: Common to abundant.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*: Common in Wolski forest and elsewhere in the south.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*: A few seen in the south.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* . Several seen in Pieniny and Bieszczady.

SYLVIIDAE

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*: Heard on several occasions in the Biebrza marshes along the Narew valley.

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*: Good views of two birds at Zator fishponds and seen very well in the Bialowieza forest.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*: Good scope views of a singing bird near Zamosc where there were up to three. Paolo Savi (1798-1871) was an Italian naturalist, zoologist, palaeontologist, geologist and senator. He obtained a specimen of the warbler in 1821 and finally described the bird as a new species in 1824. Temminck had shot one in Norfolk, England, but misidentified it as Cetti's Warbler.

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*: Easily seen within minutes of arrival at our site. A couple of superb singing males watched at length down to fifteen meters or so. Classified as 'Vulnerable' in *Threatened Birds of the World*, of an estimated world population of 27,000-42,000 (two-thirds of which have only been discovered since 1995), there are about 2,900-3,000 singing males in Poland.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*: Common at Zator fishponds and seen elsewhere.



Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*: Several heard and seen in the Biebzra marshes.

European Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*: Several at Zator fishponds. Scattered birds in the Biebrza marshes.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*: Common at suitable sites throughout.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*: 1 seen at Zator fishponds and common thereafter.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*: Great views of several birds from Zamosc northwards.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*: Heard and seen throughout.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*: Common.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*: Seen in the Pieniny mountains and elsewhere.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*: Commonly heard and seen.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*: Common in deciduous forests of Wolski forest and abundant in the Bialowieza forest.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*: Common.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*: A few heard in Wolski forest.

REGULIDAE

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*: Seen and heard in the Pieniny mountains.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*: Seen in the Pieniny mountains and throughout the south.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: Fairly common and widespread.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*: Two heard in Bieszczady. A male was then seen in the Bialowieza forest which performed quite well.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*: Common in Wolski Forest and seen at many nest boxes.

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*: One or two heard in the Bialowieza forest.

AEGITHALIDAE

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*: Seen at Zator fishponds. Common in Bieszczady. Birds here of the white-headed northern race.

PARIDAE

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*: A pair at Nowy Sacz and seen at other woodland sites throughout.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*: Common; the local birds are of the paler and grey race *borealis*

Crested Tit *Parus cristatus*: Seen in the Pieniny, near Zamosc and in the Bialowieza forest.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*: Common .

Great Tit *Parus major*: Very common.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*) Seen in Wolski forest, where quite common and others elsewhere.

SITTIDAE

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*: Seen at nest outside our hotel in the Wolski forest and widely found elsewhere.

CERTHIIDAE

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*: Several in the Wolski forest and many others found in the Bialowieza forest.

Short-toed treecreeper *Brachydactyla* A pair at a nest found at Rajske.

REMIZIDAE

Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*: Great views of a bird along the river Bug and several others seen elsewhere.

ORIOLIDAE

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*: Heard throughout and first seen in the Wolski forest. Commonly seen and heard thereafter.

LANIIDAE

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*: Seen at Zator fishponds and thereafter on many occasions throughout the tour.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*: A pair in the Bieszczadi forest and seen regularly thereafter throughout. Fairly common in the Biebzra marshes

CORVIDAE

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*: A very pretty corvid seen throughout.

Common Magpie *Pica pica*: Common near Krakow.

Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*: Seen on most days in the south with up to three seen on one day near Baligrod.

Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*: Very common.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*: Numerous in the south.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* : Fairly common and widespread. This species was previously lumped with Carrion Crow *C. corone*.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*: Scattered sightings throughout.

STURNIDAE

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*: Common throughout.

PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: Very common throughout.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*: Seen at Zator fishponds and Biebzra marshes.

FRINGILLIDAE

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*: Abundant.
European Serin *Serinus serinus*: Common, usually around villages.
Siskin *Carduelis spinus* Several seen near Baligrod.
European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*: Several seen in Wolski forest.
European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*: Several seen in Wolski forest.
Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*: Common in the south.
Redpoll *Carduelis flammula* Heard fly over Cisna.
Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*: A party of 15 on our walk in the Pieniny mountains.
Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*: 1 singing male at Zator fishponds, 2 at Rajskie. .
Biebrza Marshes and a few were heard subsequently at Bialowieza.
Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*: Seen at a number of sites in the south.
Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*: Excellent views around the hotel in the Wolski forest and commonly seen at scattered sites throughout elsewhere. Especially common in the Bialowieza.

EMBERIZIDAE

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*: Common throughout.
Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*: Good scope views of a male near Zamosc at one of the Spotted Sauslik sites.
Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*: Common throughout the marshes.

MAMMALS

Spotted Sauslik *Spermophilus suslicus* Numerous at one of the steppe reserves north of Zamosc.
European Hare (Brown Hare) *Lepus europaeus*: A few seen in agricultural land around the marshes.
Eurasian Red Squirrel (Red Squirrel) *Sciurus vulgaris*: Several seen around our hotel in the Wolski forest.
Fox *Vulpes vulpes*: Several seen in the Bieszczady area and one in the Biebrza marshes.
Pine Marten *Martes martes*: One ran across the road in front of the bus on 17th.
Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* 2 seen in Wolski forest.
Western Roe Deer (Roe Deer) *Capreolus capreolus*: 1 seen in Wolski forest and several seen at sites throughout.
Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* 2 and a single in the south.
Moose (Elk) *Alces alces*: 2 seen around the Biebrza Marshes.

AMPHIBIANS

Adder: 1 seen in the Pieniny mountains.
Grass snake: Several seen in the Bieszczady region.
Sand Lizard: 1 seen in the Narew valley.
Fire-bellied Toad: Common in the south.
Carpathian Newt: Fairly common in the south.

BUTTERFLIES compiled by Steve Blasket

Owing to the unseasonably cool weather there were fewer butterflies than might be expected.

Swallowtail. A few seen in the open river valley sites.
Large White. Seen throughout.
Small White. Seen throughout.
Green-veined White. Seen widely
Orange Tip. Seen throughout.

Brimstone. Seen in woodlands throughout.
Wood White. A few seen.
Small Copper. A few seen.
Sooty Copper.
Mazarine Blue.
Common Blue.
Camberwell Beauty. A few seen in woodland sites in the south.
Peacock. A few seen
Red Admiral. A few seen
Painted Lady. A few seen..
Small Tortoiseshell.
Comma. Several seen
Map. Fairly common in the south.
High Brown Fritillary. A few seen.
Small Heath. A few noted.
Speckled Wood. A few seen.
Grizzled Skipper. A few seen
Orberthur's Grizzled Skipper. A few seen.
Dingy Skipper. A few seen.
Chequered Skipper. A few seen.

