

Poland 2006 May John Parisah

Croydon Birders in Poland – John Parish

Poland – 13 – 22 May 2006 – with (the late) Felix Felgar's Wildlife Tours

Help from a local guide is necessary if the most is to be made of a birding trip to Poland – or, at least, that was the view of our party of past and present Croydon RSPB Group members as we planned a trip to see as many as possible of that country's avian highlights. Although we had generally been quite successful in finding our own birds during a series of annual visits to other parts of Europe stretching back to the early 1990s, we appreciated that our chances of locating some of Poland's more sought-after species, such as woodpeckers and owls, would much improve if we were able to benefit from an insider's knowledge of current stake-out sites. In checking for a suitable guide on the internet, we came across Fatbirder's Anytime Tours website (www.anytimetours.co.uk) and realised that a package including not only guiding, but also transport, accommodation and food doesn't have to be prohibitively expensive, especially for a group of eight as we eventually turned out to be. When we found that one of the Anytime Tours was operated on the ground by Polish agent and guide A. Felix Felger, of whom we had already heard favourable reports from other south London birders, the choice was sealed.

The selection proved to be a good one and the whole enterprise ran smoothly, both in the preliminary negotiations through Fatbirder and eventually in Poland. Nearly all of the special birds on our eight separate 'wish lists' were found during the tour and most were seen well. The accommodation arranged for us was clean and comfortable, generally with en suite facilities (although some of us did have to share for a couple of nights in the Bialowieza area). Food was wholesome, our vehicle was roomy, and our party was able to strike up good rapport with Felix himself, with Martin and Darek (other guides who substituted for him at the beginning and towards the end of the tour), and with Marek (a safe and helpful driver), so that a happy atmosphere prevailed throughout. At the end, all participants rated the tour a great success and considered it to have been very good value for money, especially as our itinerary had taken us to areas near the Slovakian border in the extreme south of Poland as well as the more regularly-visited sites such as Bialowieza Forest and Biebrza Marshes further north.

Bookings & Cost

As we were planning to visit Poland during the most popular birding season, our outline requirements were made known to Bo Beolens at Fatbirder well in advance. He negotiated on our behalf over dates, itinerary and fees and, once general agreement had been reached, put us in direct touch with A Felix Felger, our guide in Poland. The package to be provided by Felix included collection from Kraków airport, guiding, transportation, accommodation for nine nights, three meals per day, and a final drop off at Warsaw airport. Cost of the package was agreed at 770 euros per person for our group of eight with an additional 10 euros per person per night for single room occupancy. (At prevailing exchange rates, about £545 per person for the standard package and £7 per night single room supplement).

Flights were booked through the British Airways Travel Shop in Croydon. The cost/person for BA flights, (outbound Gatwick – Kraków, returning Warsaw – Heathrow), was £105.00, including a £15 booking fee for using the travel shop (attempted internet booking was foiled since the system appeared to have no mechanism for retaining a ‘special offer’ return fare while at the same time stipulating different arrival and departure airports in Poland).

Overall cost for the 10-day trip was therefore £650 for room sharers and £713 for single room occupants (excluding insurance, most drinks, gratuities and personal spending).

Participants

Alan Edwards, David Mercer, John & Allie Parish, Bev & Yvonne Sale, David Skeels, Ian Wiltshire.

Itinerary

13.05.06. Fly London (Gatwick) to Kraków, then drive from Kraków to Zator with visits to Spitkowice & Przereb Fish Ponds (Upper Wisła Valley). [Overnight at Hotel Mysliwska, Zator.]

14.05.06. Zator to Niedzica with visits to Podhale and Pieniny National Park. [Overnight at Hotel Pod Taborem, Niedzica.]

15.05.06. Day tour from Niedzica visiting Zakopane and Koscieliska Valley. [Overnight at Hotel Pod Taborem, Niedzica.]

16.05.06. Day tour from Niedzica visiting Niebieska Doliwa and Gromowce Nizne. [Overnight at Hotel Pod Taborem, Niedzica.]

17.05.06. Niedzica to Gruszki, near Narewka. [Overnight in Hotel Ostoja in the hamlet of Gruszki.]

18.05.06. Day tour from Gruszki visiting sites in Bialowieza Forest. [Overnight in Hotel Ostoja.]

19.05.06. Gruszki to Tykocin visiting Siemianówka Reservoir and Bialystok Fishponds. [Overnight at Alumnat Hotel in Tykocin.]

20.05.06. Day tour of the Biebrza Marshes Southern Basin from Tykocin. [Overnight at Alumnat Hotel in Tykocin.]

21.05.06. Local tours from Tykocin visiting Zajki, Piaski, Petowo and Waniewo (Narwianski Park). [Overnight at Alumnat Hotel in Tykocin.]

22.05.06. Tykocin to Warsaw, then fly Warsaw to London (Heathrow).

Day by Day

Saturday, 13th May

Our British Airways flight got away shortly after the scheduled 0735 but we arrived in Kraków on time at 1105. We were met there in the arrivals hall by forestry student (and keen birdwatcher) Martin Stanczyk who was to be our guide for the first afternoon (while main man Felix Felger was concluding an earlier tour up in Warsaw). After exchanging a few pounds for zlotys, we went outside to meet driver Marek and load our bags into the 14-seat Mercedes minibus that was to be our transport throughout the tour.

Our first stop was close-by, at Uyspianski Park in the suburbs of Kraków, where Martin started off the birding on a high note by taking us to a Syrian Woodpecker nest hole which was almost immediately visited by both of the adult pair. We also spent time watching and trying to photograph the many Fieldfares present in the park, not realising that this would prove to be a very common bird almost everywhere, and found our first Wood Warbler here too. However, we soon began to feel rather self-conscious with our bins and scopes among the beavies of scantily-clad young ladies sunning themselves on the grass and decided it was time to depart before we someone took offence. Leaving the city, we drove west for about 40 km to Zator where we took lunch at Hotel Mysliwska in the village square, taking the opportunity to unload the luggage since this was to be our accommodation for the first night.

In mid-afternoon, we drove on a little further west to explore extensive areas of bird-rich fishponds in the Upper Wisla Valley. Many Black-necked Grebes and Whiskered Terns, several Black and White Storks and Marsh Harriers and four Common Cranes were seen at the first halt and we soon had good looks at Ruffs, Wood Sandpipers and Savi's and Great Reed Warblers too, though Great Bittern and River Warbler were only heard. An island in one of another complex of ponds held breeding colonies of Black-crowned Night Herons and Caspian Gulls and a stop beside a small river nearby gave views of a big colony of Sand Martins in the sandy bank and a pair of Little Ringed Plovers on mid-stream shingle. Back in the hotel at 1900 hrs, Polish beer prices came as a very welcome surprise as we thanked Martin for giving us an excellent start to our trip, before seeing him off on a bus back to Kraków.

Sunday, 14th May

A pre-breakfast walk around Gator produced up to five Golden Orioles for some. Main guide Felix was waiting for us at the hotel when we returned and, after introductions, he began by asking each of us for a wish list of up to ten species for the trip, so that priorities could be set. At about 0845 we left for a two-hour drive south to an area of peat bogs at Podhale, near the border with Slovakia. During three stops here we found our first Lesser Spotted Eagle (about ten were to be seen in the day) as well as Garganey, Hobby, Black Tern, Cuckoo, Raven, Yellow (Blue-headed) Wagtail, Tree Pipits, Black Redstart and Northern Grey and Red-backed Shrikes. We halted for lunch further to the east, near Gromowce Nizneat on the edge of the more mountainous Pieninski National Park, at an inn whose sunny terrace overlooked the picturesque gorge of the River Dunajec.

As we ate, a Peregrine circled around a rocky crag high above us and a very confiding Yellowhammer hopped around under our tables. A short drive further east again took us to the hillside village of Niedzica, where the smart modern Hotel Pod Taborem was

to be our home for the next three nights. We had this (primarily winter sport?) hotel practically to ourselves and so were able to select rooms with balcony views out across a sizeable reservoir in the valley below. After we had unloaded our luggage, we went out for a late afternoon excursion in hilly, mixed agricultural and wooded country nearby, where a major highlight came with the discovery of a Long-legged Buzzard on the ground. Many Common Buzzards were also seen hereabouts and later (as we kept a wary eye on the movements of three huge white Padhalan dogs shepherding a flock of sheep on the slope behind us) a pair of Ring Ouzels showed well and an immature Golden Eagle appeared momentarily from behind a ridge.

Monday, 15th May

Pre-breakfast, individuals made their own explorations of the hotel garden, adjacent woodland and the top of the nearby dam, recording birds such as Black Redstart, Serin, White Wagtail and Robin (the latter far less confiding than at home) and enjoying spectacular views of the snow-capped Tatra Mountains to the west. After breakfast we headed off in the direction of these mountains. We had to abandon our planned ride to the tops by cable-car (the spring had been a late one and deep snow was reportedly still lying around the summit station, with low temperatures to match). Instead, after an hour exploring the tourist honey-pot town of Zakopane (during which we came across our first Grey Wagtail) we drove a short distance to the Koscieliska River Valley and followed this upstream on foot. The broad track was busy with other tourists and school parties but the spectacular scenery and a variety of unusual plants provided plenty of interest, and there were good birds too – a succession of (Black-bellied) Dippers (seemingly a pair based under each bridge), two close-range Ring Ouzels (of the race *alpestris*, showing much more silvery-white in the plumage than *torquatus* with which we are familiar at home), and a full-adult Golden Eagle soaring around a crag high on the rim of the valley for several minutes.

After two or three kilometres, we reached a narrow path branching off up the side of the valley to climb steeply beneath our primary objective, a cliff where, Felix assured us, Wallcreepers breed regularly. Unfortunately, our arrival at the foot of the cliff coincided with the descent from above of a group of around fifty schoolchildren who were finding one particularly steep section of the route difficult going and were making a good deal of noise and commotion over it. We sat down in the sun for half an hour or so to wait for the group to negotiate the obstacle, though the likelihood of any birds staying around amid so much disturbance seemed remote. But, unbelievably, no sooner had the last of the children rounded the first bend in the trail below than both members of a wallcreeper pair appeared and flew and crept about the rock face just above our heads, giving great views.

After this, the return walk down the valley in the hot sunshine took some time and we needed a beer or two to assist recovery before boarding the bus and heading back towards Niedzica. One or two stops in bushy country as we neared the village produced the likes of Garden Warbler, Spotted Flycatchers, Yellowhammer and more of the ubiquitous Red-backed Shrikes before we returned to Hotel Pod Taborem.

Tuesday, 16th May

After more pre-breakfast checks around the hotel garden and in the adjacent woods, the main business of the day was a walk through an extensive forested reserve at Niebieska Doliwa. The starting point was only a short drive away from the hotel and

Felix's description made the day sound a doddle – 'We'll be driving to the top of the hill and walking slowly back down'. However, it wasn't quite like that! True the finishing point was at lower elevation than the start, but there were a few steep switchbacks in between; also, Felix's slow walking pace proved to be more of a jog for some of us! We all completed the course, though, and encountered a couple of really special birds en route to make the effort well worthwhile : first we had a bit of a chase before getting prolonged clear looks at a male Three-toed Woodpecker, then we visited an occupied Ural Owl nest. The latter was in a depression at the top of a three metre-high tree stump and by climbing the sloping ground we were able to see at least one owlet in the nest until one of the parents, initially heard barking nearby, came swooping down through the trees to take a look at us, coming to a halt frighteningly-close before retreating to the canopy again. From there, this big, big owl glared down at us through a window in the foliage – which conveniently allowed us amazing scope views back. The walk also took us through a number of Hazel Grouse territories (apparently), but although Felix used his special high-pitched hunter's whistle, he was unable to attract in any of the males, our only contact being the briefest of glimpses for one of our number as a grouse shot from the trail-side into a thicket. We opened our packed lunches outside a rather ramshackle hunting lodge and while eating were entertained by a pair of Black Woodpeckers flying back and forth, then by an adder that slid slowly away only slowly, giving good opportunities for photographs. We left the reserve in mid-afternoon and returned to the Niedzica area where we stopped at some ponds caused by the activities of European Beavers.

We crossed a stream on one of the sturdy dams and though there no birds of special interest around, we did note a Daubenton's Bat in flight over one of the pools, in full sunlight! We went on to make a second visit to Gromowce Nizne where, after refreshments, we took a walk by the fast-flowing Dunajec River but failed to find the hoped-for rosefinch. We ended our day's excursion at a roadside pull-off in the Pieniny Park where a Sparrowhawk flew over and our first Nutcracker was almost overlooked, even though it was perching prominently on the uppermost pinnacle of a conifer.

Wednesday, 17th May

We woke up to rain and mist, but this soon dispersed and allowed us a final local walkabout at Niedzica before departing for a long drive north immediately after breakfast. Including stops, we were to be on the road for around twelve hours, but the route took us through varied rural landscapes (no EU monocultures here – yet!), and with an ever-present possibility of interesting birds (eg plenty of White Stork nests on rooftops, a party of three Hen Harriers flying north, etc), the journey really wasn't too tedious. During our longest halt (of about forty minutes) for lunch at a service station north of Lublin, where picnic tables gave views out over extensive heathland, we found our first Corn Buntings and Northern Wheatears of the week.

A final interruption to our journey came close to the village of Narewka, and only a few miles from our journey's end, when we were flagged down by border police who suspected we might be people traffickers (we were now very close to the eastern boundary of the EU) – but the enforced wait while Marek's credentials were being checked over the radio was enlivened by roding Woodcock passing overhead! It was still daylight (just) when we reached the hamlet of Gruszki and we could see that our comfortable small hotel here was wonderfully situated, just a hundred metres from the

forest edge and with damp meadows leading down to the River Narewka nearby. After dinner, a drinks party developed around a bonfire in the garden – for those able to keep their eyes open that long!

Thursday, 18th May

Most people went out for a couple of hours before breakfast to make their own initial exploration of the varied habitats around Gruszki and were rewarded with close-range sightings of Thrush Nightingale (singing all over the place), River Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, etc, and three people even managed to flush a pair of Corncrakes in the meadows! Whinchats and Wrynecks were found to be unusually numerous in certain parts of the village and Wood Warblers were positively abundant in the forest. After breakfast, we drove to the entrance to the Bialowieza Primaeval Forest Strict Reserve where, after viewing our first Icterine Warbler of the week, we met licenced guide Arek who took us into the reserve and showed us around for about three hours. This was a fascinating experience during which we watched pairs of Middle Spotted Woodpeckers, Collared Flycatchers and Hawfinches at their nests and caught up with the likes of Treecreeper and Nuthatch, as well as the large butterfly-like moth *Aglaia tau* and some unfamiliar plants.

During a subsequent outdoor lunch in Bialowieza Village, we heard the song of Scarlet Rosefinch for the first time and, although this proved to be a dowdy-looking first-year male when we tracked him down, we came upon a brilliant full adult male shortly afterwards at nearby Teremiski. A huge female Goshawk also showed overhead there and two of our number had brief but clear looks at an Aquatic Warbler beside a stream through the meadows (apparently a very unusual record for the immediate Bialowieza area). Also, during the afternoon, we penetrated an area of swampy forest where, after a short wait, we were treated to excellent views of a White-backed Woodpecker visiting its nest hole and then watched a Lesser Spotted Eagle riding the breeze and hanging almost motionless over the treetops.

Later on, we strolled along quiet lanes (with Common Snipe drumming overhead and Thrush Nightingales belting out their songs from the hedgerows) and on forest tracks (where hazel grouse refused to show themselves but mosquitos were truly virulent for the only time during the trip). We also took refreshment at a disused railway station, formerly the disembarking point for Russian tsars but now an upmarket café. By early evening, with the light just beginning to fade, we were back in forest to meet Arek again and he demonstrated remarkable craft to call in a Pygmy Owl by a series of whistles; the bird appeared almost immediately and showed well, as did a second that came in to investigate a few minutes later. By then, after around fifteen hours in the field, we were more than ready for our late dinner back at Gruszki.

Friday, 19th May

Individual pre-breakfast sorties around Gruszki produced many of the previous morning's birds again, but with Woodlark and Barred Warbler added for some. After breakfast we bade farewell to the Bialowieza area and headed north, soon reaching the shoreline of the vast Siemianówka Reservoir. Fast-growing birch trees had somewhat restricted the view from the observation tower there, but all three marsh terns were in evidence and we were also able to find several more Garganeys amongst a variety of wildfowl, then three distant Great Egrets on the wing and two

much closer Whooper Swans, also in flight. One or two pairs of Common Cranes flew in as well, but the almost constant babble that we had imagined to emanate from a huge hidden crane flock somewhere in the distance apparently came from a nearby multitude of Fire-bellied Toads! Leaving the tower for a walk along the reservoir bank, we soon came across a male Citrine Wagtail (with a Blue-headed Wagtail conveniently close-by for comparison) and a little further on we were treated to stunning close-up views of a male Penduline Tit as he repeatedly visited a partly-built nest (not suspended over water in this instance).

Another drive, interrupted for lunch in an extravagantly-decorated rustic restaurant, took us to an extensive complex of ancient fish-ponds at the edge of the city of Bialystock. Walking around here for a couple of hours, we encountered good numbers of wildfowl (including three Goldeneye), and a variety of warblers, terns, hirundines, etc, but the pick of the bunch were two Red-necked Grebes sitting on nests, one of them within a few metres of the bank, brightly coloured and not a bit like the dingy specimens we sometimes see at Dunge. After driving through Bialystock, we reached the historic small town of Tykocin, some fifteen miles to the west, by late-afternoon and there checked into the Alumnat Hotel for the remaining three nights of our trip. The hotel proved to be the oldest building in town, a former hospital for the high-ranking soldiers from what we could gather, though now very comfortably fitted-out and supervised by the local priest. The building was situated in the shadow of the town's huge Catholic church but also on the bank of the Narew River with vast numbers of birds close by.

After we had settled in, Felix announced that he would have to take his leave of us after dinner, complications with another tour in Warsaw demanding his attention. We were truly sorry to see this larger-than-life figure depart – he had found us some really special birds and taken us to some remarkable places during the course of the previous six days – and had certainly ensured that there had been few dull moments thus far!

Saturday, 20th May

Most of us were out before 6 am (when a deafening peal of bells rang out from the church next door to waken any malingerers), exploring the banks of the Narew River and enjoying a productive session with plenty of good looks at Thrush Nightingale and Sedge, Great Reed, Marsh and Savi's Warblers. An observation tower just upstream gave an outlook over extensive reedbeds where Marsh Harriers, White Storks and White-winged Terns were in view most of the time. House and Tree Sparrows were present around the buildings, Golden Orioles were regularly seen, and the first Hoopoe of the trip flew by.

At breakfast, we met our new guide, Dariusz Graszka-Petrykowski ('Darek'), and knew immediately that there was no chance of life after Felix being in any way anti-climactic. Darek was obviously a great communicator and his keen sense of humour was tuned to our wavelength. Without delay, we set off on the day's excursion, a clockwise circuit of the Biebrza Marshes Southern Basin, the first stop of which was on an eminence at Gora where a shattered concrete bunker marks the site of heroic resistance at the outset of World War II. Looking north from this grand view point, we could appreciate the layout of the basin and noted a flock of around fifty non-breeding White Storks out

in the meadows, as well as a breeding pair at a nest below eye-level on a nearby barn roof. Our next halt, near Wizna, was in response to a sighting of a full adult White-tailed Eagle from the bus window, but no sooner had we leapt out than a Great Spotted Eagle circling low overhead, too! After the initial excitement had abated, we parked by some sand dunes close-by and had wonderful views of two white-tails, one of which landed for a while not too far away. All three marsh terns, summer-plumage Black-tailed Godwit, drake Garganey, a very smart adult male Montagu's Harrier and an overhead flock of eleven Common Cranes were also seen here. About six miles further on up the western side of the basin, at Burzyn, we stopped at another elevated viewpoint and scanning from here produced two more White-tailed Eagles sitting together in a meadow, three Great Egrets in flight and no less than four Elks at various points in the landscape. Another dozen miles north and we were able to drive along a track from near the village of Mscichy out into the marshes to reach an observation tower from where we noted several Ruffs in breeding plumage and a couple of Black Storks as we consumed of our packed lunches. There were more shattered concrete emplacements as backdrop when we stopped near Osowiec in mid-afternoon, these dating from tsarist times. During a pleasant stroll here, dragonflies rather than birds proved of most interest. By way of contrast after the marshes, our next halt in the garden of one of Darek's ranger friends was in a tiny hamlet set amid mixed forest and heathland. A crate of beer was purchased and we spent a pleasant hour or so relaxing and cooking sausages over a bonfire. By about 1800 we were ready to move on to what should have been a grand finale, the visit to the Great Snipe lek near Dobarz, but we had already been warned that no lekking had been witnessed yet this spring (too cold? too dry?) and so our hopes of seeing the special bird display were not high, though there was a chance of the odd individual snipe flying in to investigate the state of play. We waited on the elevated platform (familiar from TV documentaries) until dusk was closing in but as feared there was no sight or sound of Great Snipe, though about half a dozen Common Snipes were giving drumming displays within our visual range, a couple of roding Woodcocks passed by regularly and, as we left, there was an unusually good look at a reeling Grasshopper Warbler. After a long day (sixteen hours in the field for some of us) we arrived back at the Alumnat an hour later for dinner than staff there had been promised, though they still served with a smile. Darek was apprehensive as to what penance would be demanded of him by the four girls in the kitchen – but in the end he was let off with nothing more painful than making a translation of the dining-room menu into English!

Sunday, 21st May

For the first time on the trip, we had a guided excursion before breakfast, leaving at 0600 in the bus for a drive of about eight miles west before walking a track through water meadows near Zajki. The main attraction was a big nesting colony of White-winged Terns and it was a memorable experience to be strolling so close to scores of these handsome birds as they hunted low over the waterlogged fields. Black-winged Godwits appeared to be breeding here as well and our sole Curlew of the week flew by. Driving back a little way towards Tykocin, we halted to walk across some grassed-over sand dunes at Piaski where, while the main group was watching a very-confiding Cuckoo and some were able to catch up with Woodlark and Wryneck, two others peeled off to follow a Tawny Pipit, though views of it weren't good. Back near the bus, Golden Oriole, Yellow Wagtail and Yellowhammer close together in a ploughed field produced a colourful tableau. Breakfast was late at around 1000, then towards noon we drove a short distance to the celebrated White Stork Farm at Petowo. Ostensibly,

the main business here is raising horses, but high numbers of White Storks have taken to nesting on the roofs of the farm buildings, giving an added draw for visitors. Near an observation tower down by the river below the farm, we came across pairs of Common Redstarts and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, although not many of us saw the latter. We returned to Alumnat for an early dinner and afterwards drove south to the edge of the Narwianski National Park where Darek had a site for another speciality bird of Poland – Aquatic Warbler, a species which has the habit of reserving its main vocalisation for the period just before sunset. The weather had looked rather threatening earlier, but by the time we had reached the site, a field in the transition area between pasture and fen, the sun was out again (maintaining the trip record of zero precipitation during birding hours) though a stiff breeze was blowing. We had brought packed suppers in anticipation of some waiting, but almost as soon as we had set up scopes, the first simple song was heard ahead of us and one of the warblers was seen climbing up out of the grass on some taller stems. Excellent views followed, probably of at least three birds (they were quite mobile), one even performing a song-display flight. A lifer at last for the writer! Celebratory beers followed back at the bus, then it was back to the hotel to pack.

Monday, 22nd May

Back to warm sunshine, even at 0600, for a final stroll along the banks of the Narew. Not too late for the odd new trip bird, either – a Bluethroat [white-spotted race – *L.s.cyanecola*] was seen by some. By 1000, we had eaten breakfast, said goodbyes to the staff at Alumnat, loaded up the bus, and were already on the road towards Warsaw airport. Our flight was not until 1745 so even allowing for traffic holdups in Warsaw, we were able to allow ourselves some exploration of roadside woodland en route, though we found no more new birds. We arrived at the airport with ample check-in time in hand, sadly bade farewell to the team of Darek and Marek, disposed of the last few zlotys in our various ways and eventually boarded our BA flight. We landed at Heathrow a little late, went through facilities, collected bags without trouble and emerged into wet and windy west London soon after 2000, coming back to reality with a jolt!

Bird List

1. **Little Grebe** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Four or five at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05, then singles on a reservoir at Niedzeca on 15.05 and at Bialystok fish ponds on 19.05 .
2. **Great Crested Grebe** (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Ten or so at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05, then a few at Siemianówka Reservoir and about a dozen, including one on a close-range nest, at Bialystok Fishponds, all on 19.05.
3. **Red-necked Grebe** (*Podiceps grisegena*) – About six at Bialystok fish ponds on 19.05, including two on nests, one less than 10 metres from our path.
4. **Black-necked Grebe** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – Around 20 at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05.
5. **Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Singles over Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05 and the Biebrza Marshes Southern Basin on 20.05.
6. **Great Bittern** (*Botaurus stellaris*) – Heard booming at fishponds west of Zator on 19.05.
7. **Black-crowned Night Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – A breeding colony at fish ponds west of Zator was visited on 19.05 when probably around 20 birds were seen

attending nests.

8. **Great Egret** (*Ardea alba*) – Three or four were seen distantly at Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05 then a further three in flight over the Biebrza Marshes Southern Basin on 20.05.

8. **Grey Heron** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Seen regularly at wetland sites – up to about 10 on each of seven days.

9. **Black Stork** (*Ciconia nigra*) – A straggling group of five flew over the fishponds west of Zator on 13.05, then singles followed on 13, 15 & 17.05 before a final pair in the Biebrza Marshes near Mscichy on 20.05.

10. **White Stork** (*Ciconia ciconia*) – A few each day in the south, becoming more frequent in the north with occupied nests on buildings and pylons particularly numerous around the Biebrza Marshes. We also encountered a flock of around 50 non-breeding birds in the marshes near Gora.

11. **Mute Swan** (*Cygnus olor*) – More than 20 at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05, about 30 during our circuit of the Biebrza Marshes Southern Basin on 20.05 and small numbers on other days. (A flock fed by the local priest during winter on the Narew River at Tykocin had diminished to a single bird).

12. **Whooper Swan** (*Cygnus cygnus*) – Two were seen in flight over Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05.

13. **Greylag Goose** (*Anser anser*) – About 40 seen distantly at Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05, followed by about 10 in the Biebrza Marshes South Basin on 20.05 and 20 near Tykocin on 21.05.

14. **Gadwall** (*Anas strepera*) – About 10 on fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05, a pair on a pool in Podhale peat bogs on 14.05 and another pair on Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05.

15. **Teal** (*Anas crecca*) – Just a single bird, seen from the observation tower at Tykocin on 19.05.

16. **Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Seen daily, up to about 20 per day.

17. **Garganey** (*Anas querquedula*) – At least two at Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05 and singles at Podhole on 14.05 and in the Biebrza Marshes on 20 & 21.05.

18. **Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*) – One at Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05 and a pair in the Biebrza Marshes from Burzyn on 20.05.

19. **Pochard** (*Aythya ferina*) – More than 50 at fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05, about six at Bialystok fish ponds on 19.05 and two in Biebrza Marshes South Basin on 20.05.

20. **Tufted Duck** (*Aythya fuligula*) – More than 50 at fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05, five at Podhale on 14.05 and about 15 at Bialystok fish ponds on 19.05.

21. **Goldeneye** (*Bucephala clangula*) – A male and two females on 19.05 at Bialystok fish ponds.

22. **Honey Buzzard** (*Pernis apivorus*) – One was seen by some of the party from the moving bus in the Zator area on 13.05.

23. **White-tailed Eagle** (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) – Fairly close flight views of two full adults near Wizna on 20.05 and soon afterwards two distantly on the ground in meadows at the edge of the Biebrza Marshes near Burzyn.

24. **Marsh Harrier** (*Circus aeruginosus*) – About 10 over fishponds west of Zator on 13.05 were followed by odd single birds over the following days until we reached Siemianówka Reservoir and the Biebrza Marshes when up to about 25 were seen each day from 19.05 to 22.05, including some individuals particularly close to the observation tower at Tykocin.

25. **Hen Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*) – A group of three (one adult male and two

ringtails) was seen flying northwards somewhere north of Lublin during our long drive on 17.05.

26. **Montagu's Harrier** (*Circus pygargus*) – The first was seen during the long drive north on 17.05, then up to five each day from 18.05 to 22.05, with a couple of spectacular close views of adult males. A dark morph male was seen over the Biebrza Marshes on 21.05.

27. **Goshawk** (*Accipiter gentilis*) – A female circled low overhead from the forest edge at Teremiski, near Bialowieza, on 18.05.

28. **Sparrowhawk** (*Accipiter nisus*) – Two in the Tatra Mountains on 15.05, one at Niebieska Dolina on 16.05 and one over the Biebrza Marshes on 21.05.

29. **Common Buzzard** (*Buteo buteo*) – Seen every day. Particularly common over undulating country near Niedzeca, in the south.

30. **Long-legged Buzzard** (*Buteo rufinus*) – One on a ploughed field in undulating farmland near Niedzeca on 14.05 was first seen on the ground, but on a convex slope above us so that only the (pale) upperparts were visible. The dark spot on the nape (mentioned only in Jonsson) was clearly seen. When the bird did eventually fly, it was in view only momentarily but the upper tail surface was seen to be unbanded.

31. **Lesser Spotted Eagle** (*Aquila pomarina*) – First seen over peat bogs at Podhale on 14.05 (a total of about 10 that day) and another two on the way to the Tatras on 15.05. Then up to four daily around the Bielowieza / Siemianówka reservoir / Biebrza areas from 18.05 to 20.05.

32. **Greater Spotted Eagle** (*Aquila clanga*) – One circled low over our heads near Wizna, at the southern end of the Biebrza Marshes South Basin, on 20.05.

33. **Golden Eagle** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – An immature was seen as it emerged briefly from behind a hill near Niedzeca on 14.05. Next day, there were long clear views of a full adult as it circled around crags on the rim of the Koscieliska Valley in the Tatras.

34. **Common Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Commonest in the south where up to six were seen each day from 13.05 to 16.05. Also one or two in the Biebrza Marshes on 20.05 & 21.05.

35. **Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*) – Three over the Podhale peat bogs on 14.05.

36. **Peregrine** (*Falco peregrinus*) – One was seen circling around crags at the Dunajec River gorge during lunch at Gromowce Nizne on 14.05.

37. **Hazel Grouse** (*Bonasa bonasia*) – One was glimpsed very briefly by just one group member in Niebieska Dolina nature reserve on 16.05.

38. **Pheasant** (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Singles were seen in the south on 13.05 & 14.05 and two more during the drive north on 17.05.

39. **Corncrake** (*Crex crex*) – Heard regularly around Gruszki and less often elsewhere in the north. Two were flushed by part of our group on 18.05 in the meadow between Gruski and River Narewka.

40. **Moorhen** – Only three were seen, west of Zator on 13.05, at Podhale on 14.05 and in the Biebrza Marshes on 20.05.

41. **Coot** – About 20 at fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05, about 10 at Bialystock fish ponds on 19.05 and four in the Biebrza Marshes on 20.05.

42. **Common Crane** (*Grus grus*) – A group of four circled high over the fishponds west of Zator on 13.05, two were in fields near Narewka and two more alighted at Siemianówka reservoir on 19.05, about 20 (including a flock of 11 over Wizna) were at Biebrza Marshes on 20.05 and a further five in the same general location on 21.05.

43. **Little Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius dubius*) – A pair were found on a shingle bank

in a tributary of the River Wisla west of Zator on 13.05.

44. **Lapwing** (*Vanellus vanellus*) – Observed regularly in open and damp habitats almost throughout, up to about 25 being seen on each of nine of the ten days.

45. **Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*) – Two at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05.

46. **Ruff** (*Philomachus pugnax*) – About 10 reeves at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05, then three breeding plumage males from the observation tower near Mscichy in the Biebrza Marshes Southern Basin on 20.05 and at least one more in wet meadows near Zajki on 21.05.

47. **Common Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*) – One pair displaying over wet meadow in Bialowieza Forest on 18.05, then up to eight individuals seen in Biebrza Marshes on each on 20 & 21.05.

48. **Woodcock** (*Scolopax rusticola*) – One or two roding over Bialowieza Forest on the evenings of 17 & 18.05 and over the Biebrza Marshes on the evenings of 19 & 20.05.

49. **Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*) – Seen only in and around Biebrza Marshes, three on 20.05 and at least ten on 21.05.

50. **Curlew** (*Numenius tenuirostris*) – One in flight over damp meadows near Zajki on 21.05.

51. **Redshank** (*Tringa totanus*) – Singles at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05, at Podhale on 14.05, in the Bialowieza area on 18.05 and near Wizna on 20.05, then two near Zajki on 21.05.

52. **Wood Sandpiper** (*Tringa glareola*) – About six at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05.

53. **Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Single bird sightings by some group members by the River Narew at Tykocin on 19 & 22.05.

54. **Black-headed Gull** – Seen on eight of the ten days, usually in good numbers (hundreds during the drive north on 17.05).

55. **Common Gull** (*Larus canus*) – Two at the Caspian Gull colony at fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05.

56. **Caspian Gull** (*Larus cachinnans*) – At least twenty at fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05 (most attending a breeding colony on an island in one of the ponds), then about five at Podhale on 14.05, a few during the drive north on 17.05 and a single over the Biebrza Marshes on 20.05.

57. **Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*) – About 10 at the fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05 and smaller numbers on a further five days.

58. **Whiskered Tern** (*Chlidonias hybridus*) – About 10 on 13.05 at fish ponds west of Zator (where breeding seemed to be in progress), a similar number at Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05 and a couple near Wizna on 20.05.

59. **Black Tern** (*Chlidonias niger*) – Small numbers in the south on 13 & 14.05, then about 20 in all at Siemianówka Reservoir and Bialystok fish ponds on 19.05 and small numbers around Biebrza Marshes on 20 & 21.05.

60. **White-winged Tern** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) – Not noted in the south but about 20 in all were seen at Siemianówka Reservoir and Bialystok fish ponds on 19.05, about 50 more around the Biebrza Marshes Southern Basin on 20.05 and scores on 21.05 when we visited the breeding colony at Zajki, amongst other sites. Regular from the observation tower at Tykocin where a final two were seen before departure on 22.05.

61. **Rock Dove** (feral) (*Columba livia*) – Plenty.

62. **Woodpigeon** (*Columba palumbus*) – Seen every day, but only up to about eight daily.

63. **Collared Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Seen on nine out of the ten days, up to about ten per day.
64. **Turtle Dove** (*Streptopelia turtur*) – Heard at Gruszki on 18.05, but only one was seen during the trip – on overhead wires at the Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05.
65. **Cuckoo** (*Cuculus canorus*) – Heard every day and one or two were seen on each of six days.
66. **Pygmy Owl** (*Glaucidium passerinum*) – One was called in by local guide Arek's whistles somewhere in the Bialowieza Forest at dusk on 18.05, the bird perching up and giving good views. Some minutes later, a second bird came in to investigate, also showing well.
67. **Tawny Owl** (*Strix aluco*) – Heard only, from the hotel at Gruszki on the evening of 18.05.
68. **Ural Owl** (*Strix uralensis*) – It was a longish walk to Felix's stake-out for this species in the forest at Niebieska Dolina but well worth the effort. By virtue of sloping ground, it was possible to look into a nest in a depression in the top of a three-metre high tree stump and see at least one owlet there. An adult soon came in to investigate and gave us all prolonged scope views.
69. **Common Swift** (*Apus apus*) – Seen every day, up to about 50 per day.
70. **Hoopoe** (*Upupa epops*) – The first was seen at Tykocin on 20.05, then a second at Gora later the same morning and a final single near Tykocin on 21.05.
71. **Wryneck** (*Jynx torquilla*) – Regular multiple sightings for some of the group around Gruszki during pre-breakfast walks on 18 & 19.05, then a single seen by most at Piaski on 21.05.
72. **Green Woodpecker** (*Picus viridis*) – One only, seen in flight from the moving bus near Zator on 13.05.
73. **Black Woodpecker** (*Dryocopos martius*) – Repeated looks at a pair during our lunch stop in the forest at Niebieska Dolina on 16.05, then one or two in Bialowieza Forest on 18 & 19.05.
74. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos medius*) – Two were seen during a break in our drive north on 17.05, then one or two on each of the following four days.
75. **Syrian Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos syriacus*) – Fine views of a pair near a nest hole during our first birding stop of the trip, in Uyspianski Park on the outskirts of Krakow on 13.05.
76. **Middle-spotted Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos medius*) – A male flew in to visit a nest hole shown to us by local guide Arek during our visit to the 'strict reserve' at Bialowieza Forest on 18.05.
77. **White-backed Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos leucotos*) – A male was seen visiting a nest hole in swampy forest near Bialowieza on 18.05 and some of the party encountered a pair near Gruszki the following day.
78. **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos minor*) – A couple of group members saw (and most people heard) a pair by the river below the White Stork Farm at Petowo on 21.05.
79. **Three-toed Woodpecker** (*Picoides tridactylus*) – After a bit of a chase, fine scope views for all of a male in the forest at Niebieska Dolina on 16.05.
80. **Woodlark** (*Lullula arborea*) – Encountered by some in Gruszki on 19.05, then seen by most at Piaski on 21.05.
81. **Skylark** (*Alauda arvensis*) – A total of about 20 seen or heard on 14.05 at Podhale and near Niedzica, then only a few until 20 to 30 around the Biebrza Marshes, etc, on each of 20 & 21.05.
82. **Sand Martin** (*Riparia riparia*) – Up to about 50 each day in the south (a nest

colony in the bank of a river near Zator was visited on 13.05) and common again around the Biebrza Marshes, etc, from 19 to 22.05.

83. **Barn Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Seen commonly throughout.

84. **House Martin** (*Delichon urbica*) – Fairly common throughout.

85. **Tawny Pipit** (*Anthus campestris*) – Mediocre views of a single bird for two of the group on 21.05 at Piaski.

86. **Tree Pipit** (*Anthus trivialis*) – First seen (three) at Podhale peat bog on 14.05 and occasional thereafter (up to about three on each of four more days).

87. **Meadow Pipit** (*Anthus pratensis*) – Only consciously noted around Biebrza Marshes etc where up to about ten were seen on 21 & 22.05.

88. **Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava*) – First seen at Podhale on 14.05 and encountered on six days in all, usually one or two a day, but around 10 in and around the Biebrza Marshes on 21.05. As far as we noted, all birds seen were 'Blue-headed Wagtails' (*M.f.flava*).

89. **Citrine Wagtail** (*Motacilla citreola*) – At Siemianówka on 19.05, a male flew from the weedy margin of the reservoir into wet grassland nearby where it showed once or twice over the next few minutes (with a male Blue-headed Wagtail conveniently sitting nearby for comparison).

90. **Grey Wagtail** (*Motacilla cinerea*) – First seen at a stream in Zakopane town on 15.05, a further six or so were noticed alongside the river during our walk in the Koscieliska Valley later in the day. Not seen outside the Tatras.

91. **White Wagtail** (*Motacilla alba*) – Seen every day, up to about 20 per day.

92. **Dipper** (*Cinclus cinclus*) – At least four were seen along the river during our walk in the Koscieliska Valley on 15.05.

93. **Wren** (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) – Heard by all during the forest walk at Niebieska Doliwa on 16.03, but seen only on 19.05, and then only by two of the group, in a brush pile on the river bank at Tykocin.

94. **Dunnock** (*Prunella modularis*) – The only sightings were of singles in the garden of the hotel at Niedzeca on 14 to 16.05.

95. **Robin** (*Erithacus rubecula*) – Seen near the hotel at Niedzeca on 15 & 16.05, the only other sightings were of singles in forest at Niebieska Doliwa and Bialowieza.

96. **Thrush Nightingale** (*Luscinia luscinia*) – The far-carrying song was a common sound in the north (eg from the bedrooms of the hotel at Gruszki) and good views could be obtained with a little stealth. Seen daily from 18.05 to 22.05.

97. **Bluethroat** (*Luscinia svecica*) – One of the white-spotted race *L.s.cyanecula* was seen by two of the group by the Narew River at Tykocin on the morning of 22.05.

98. **Black Redstart** (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – Fairly common around buildings, mainly in the south (eg hotel at Niedzeca), and up to about ten were seen on each of six days.

99. **Common Redstart** (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) – The first single was seen at Gruszki on 18.05, followed by pairs in a hamlet near the Biebrza Marshes on 20.05 and at the White Stork Farm at Petowo on 21.05.

100. **Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*) – Seen on eight of the ten days, up to about 20 per day. Concentrations noted in places, eg a party of eight in a small paddock in Gruszki on 18.05.

101. **Stonechat** (*Saxicola torquata*) – The first was by fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05, another single was seen at Podhale the following day and a final two were seen during the drive north on 17.05.

102. **Northern Wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – Two were seen during the journey north on 17.05, one more followed in the Bialowieza area on 18.05 and there was a

final single in the Tykocin area on 20.05.

103. **Ring Ouzel** (*Turdus torquatus*) – A pair were seen in undulating rough grazing near Niedzeca on 14.05, then three (two very closely) in Koscieliska River Valley on 15.05 and a final two in the Niedzeca area on 16.05. All were of race *T.t.alpestris*, showing much more silvery-white in the plumage than *T.t.torquatus* with which we are familiar at home.

104. **Blackbird** (*Turdus merula*) – Seen on all ten days, up to about ten per day.

105. **Fieldfare** (*Turdus pilaris*) – Unexpectedly common, especially in parks and gardens. Seen on all ten days, over a hundred in a day at the maximum.

106. **Song Thrush** (*Turdus philmelos*) – Seen on eight of the ten days, up to about six per day.

107. **Mistle Thrush** (*Turdus viscivorus*) – Two on 20.05, on the track to the Great Snipe lek site near Dobarz.

108. **Grasshopper Warbler** (*Locustella naevia*) – One heard during our vigil at the site of the Great Snipe lek site near Dobarz was located in a low bush and seen well as we departed.

109. **River Warbler** (*Locustella fluviatilis*) – One singing strongly at fish ponds west of Zator on 13.05 could not be seen, but one of at least two in meadows beside the hotel at Gruszki habitually sang from the uppermost twigs of a thicket and was seen on the mornings of both 18 & 19.05.

110. **Savi's Warbler** (*Locustella luscinioides*) – One singing by a fish pond west of Zator on 13.05 climbed up reed stems right in front of us. One of two singing close to an observation tower near the hotel at Tykocin habitually sang from reed tops and was seen on 20, 21 & 22.05.

111. **Aquatic Warbler** (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) – Two of our group had brief but clear views of one at Teremiski, near Bialowieza (where it is a rarity), on 18.05. Three or four more were observed in the transition zone between pasture and marshes at the edge of the Narwianski National Park near Waniewo on the evening of 21.05. Good views had of birds singing from sedge stems, flying back and forth and performing a song display flight.

112. **Sedge Warbler** (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) – The first single was seen in an open area near the Bialowieza Forest on 18.05 and up to ten followed on each of the next four days, at Siemianówka Reservoir, Bialystok fishponds, Biebrza Marshes, etc. The biggest concentration seemed to be in wet meadows at Zajki early on 21.05 (where we were looking for Aquatic Warbler).

113. **Marsh Warbler** (*Acrocephalus palustris*) – Two were seen and heard on the margins of Bialystok fishponds on 19.05, then good views of up five or six were had each day from 20 to 22.05 during walks by the River Narew at Tykocin.

114. **Reed Warbler** (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) – One or two were seen at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05, then similar numbers at Tykocin and elsewhere in the north on 21 & 22.05.

115. **Great Reed Warbler** (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) – First seen at fishponds west of Zator on 13.05 and thereafter seen commonly whenever reedbeds were visited, with up to about 15 sightings on each of a total of six days. Seemed unusually confiding and easy to see well here, compared with Spain etc.

116. **Icterine Warbler** (*Hippolais icterina*) – Two on 18.05, the first outside the gate to Bialowieza Palace Park, the second at the disused railway station.

117. **Barred Warbler** (*Sylvia nisoria*) – A male was singing and making display flights by the Narewka River at Gruszki pre-breakfast on 19.05.

118. **Lesser Whitethroat** (*Sylvia curruca*) – One was seen in the garden of the hotel

at Niedzeca on 16.05 and two more during the circuit of the Biebrza Marshes Southern Basin from Tykocim on 20.05. Heard only on five other days.

119. **Common Whitethroat** (*Sylvia communis*) – Seen every day, up to about six a day.

120. **Garden Warbler** (*Sylvia borin*) – The first was seen in the Podhole peat bogs on 14.05, with further singles on 15 & 16.05 near Niedzeca.

121. **Blackcap** (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – Encountered on eight of the ten days, up to about six per day.

122. **Wood Warbler** (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) – The first was on 13.05 in Uyspianski Park in the suburbs of Kraków, then heard in Niebieska Doliwa on 16.05. The trilling song was later a constant backdrop in the northern forests and plenty were seen and many more heard each day from 18.05 to 20.05.

123. **Chiffchaff** (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – Seen or heard daily, numbers not recorded.

124. **Willow Warbler** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – Seen or heard daily, numbers not recorded.

125. **Goldcrest** (*Regulus regulus*) – A single bird was seen on 15.05 in the Koscieliska River Valley. Heard only on three other days.

126. **Spotted Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa striata*) – First seen on 13.05 in Uyspianski Park in the suburbs of Kraków, in all recorded on seven of the ten days, with up to about six per day.

127. **Red-breasted Flycatcher** (*Ficedula parva*) – Splendid close views of an adult male on 18.05 and a first-year male on 19.05 in forest near the hotel at Gruszki. Another adult male in the Bialowieza Strict Reserve on 18.05.

128. **Collared Flycatcher** (*Ficedula albicollis*) – One was seen visiting a nest in the Bialowieza Strict Reserve on 18.05 and, in all, about six were encountered that day.

129. **Long-tailed Tit** (*Aegithalos caudatus*) – The only one seen, in Uyspianski Park in the suburbs of Kraków, belonged to the white-headed race *A.c.caudatus*.

130. **Marsh Tit** (*Parus palustris*) – One for at least two of the group members at the edge of the forest at Gruszki on the morning of 18.05.

131. **Coal Tit** (*Parus ater*) – Singles on 15.05 in the Koscieliska River Valley and on 16.05 in Niebieska Doliwa reserve.

132. **Blue Tit** (*Parus caeruleus*) – The first two were on 15.05 in the Koscieliska River Valley and, in all, one or two were seen on each of six days.

133. **Great Tit** (*Parus major*) – The first two were in Kraków on 13.05 and, in all, one or two were seen on each of six days.

134. **Nuthatch** (*Sitta europaea*) – Two in the Bialowieska Forest Strict Reserve on 18.05.

135. **Wallcreeper** (*Tichodroma muraria*) – After quite a long walk and climb in the Koscieliska River Valley to reach the site on 15.05, we thought we had little chance of seeing this bird (rare in Poland) when the favoured rock face was alive with a large party of noisy school children. However, after half an hour's wait (in beautiful surroundings it must be admitted) the children eventually departed and a pair of wallcreepers showed almost at once to give memorable views as they crept and flew about the rock face.

136. **Treecreeper** (*Certhia familiaris*) – A total of four on 18.05, in forest either at Gruszki or Bialowieska, with a single at Gruszki the following day.

137. **Penduline Tit** (*Remiz pendulinus*) – Fabulous close-range scope views of a male building a nest at the edge of Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05, but difficult to find elsewhere this spring.

138. **Golden Oriole** (*Oriolus oriolus*) – Most people saw at least one at Zator early on 14.05, when one of the group found five in the park. Up to four followed on each of six days.
139. **Red-backed Shrike** (*Lanius collurio*) – Quite common in most area and up to about twelve were seen on each of nine days.
140. **Northern Grey Shrike** (*Lanius excubitor*) – Three between Zator and Niedzeca on 14.05, a single in the Niedzeca area the following day and further singles around the Biebrza Marshes on 20 & 21.05.
141. **Jay** (*Garrulus glandarius*) – One or two seen on seven of the ten days.
142. **Magpie** (*Pica pica*) – Common and seen daily, up to about 20 per day.
143. **Nutcracker** (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*) – One seen in the south, in Pieniny National Park on 16.05, then another two for some at Siemianówka Reservoir on 19.05.
144. **Jackdaw** (*Corvus monedula*) – Seen every day in variable numbers, from just one to over fifty per day.
145. **Rook** (*Corvus frugilegus*) – Seen on nine of the ten days, more than 100 in the day during the long drive north. Absent in Bialowiesza area.
146. **Hooded Crow** (*Corvus cornix*) – Seen on nine of the ten days, up to a maximum of around 12 a day..
147. **Raven** (*Corvus corax*) – Seen or heard on six of the ten days, up to four per day.
148. **Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Very common throughout; seen daily with maxima exceeding 100.
149. **House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*) – Common around settlements and seen on nine of the ten days, up to about ten daily.
150. **Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*) – Seen on five of the ten days, the most obvious colony being in riverside trees in the village of Tykocin.
151. **Chaffinch** (*Fringilla coelebs*) – Common throughout; seen every day with a maximum of around 20.
152. **Serín** (*Serinus serinus*) – Seen on nine of the ten days, up to around eight per day.
153. **Greenfinch** (*Carduelis chloris*) – Seen on eight of the ten days, up to around six per day.
154. **Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*) – Seen on seven of the ten days, up to around ten per day.
155. **Linnet** (*Carduelis cannabina*) – Seen on seven of the ten days, up to around six per day.
156. **Common Rosefinch** (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) – The first, in the centre of Bialowieza on 18.05, was a first-year male and very drab but a colourful adult male was seen later in the day. Seen or heard on all of the final five days of the trip with a daily maximum of about ten.
157. **Bullfinch** (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) – Three were seen by one group member only in the garden of the hotel at Niedzeca on the morning of 16.05.
158. **Hawfinch** (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) – About four singles were seen in flight from the moving bus on 13.05, then, when a nest was found in the Bialowieska Forest Strict Reserve on 18.05, a male was seen bringing food to a sitting female.
159. **Yellowhammer** (*Emberiza citrinella*) – Seen on nine of the ten days, up to around ten per day.
160. **Reed Bunting** (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) – Seen on eight of the ten days, up to

around six per day.

161. **Corn Bunting** – Two were seen during a break in the drive north on 17.05.

List of Butterflies (those that we had time to stop and examine!)

Large White (*Pieris brassicae*)

Small White (*Artogeia rapae*)

Green-veined White (*Artogeia napi*)

Orange Tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*)

Pale Clouded Yellow (*Colias hyale*)

Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*)

Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*)

Sooty Copper (*Lycaena tityrus*)

Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*)

Short-tailed Blue (*Everes argiades*)

Map Butterfly (*Araschnia levana*)

Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

Peacock (*Inachis io*)

Comma (*Polygonum c-album*)

Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*)

Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*)

Moth

Tau Emperor (*Aglaia tau*) – several males (initially mistaken for butterflies) in the 'strict reserve' in Bialowieza Forest.