



Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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The Western Rhodope Mountains of Bulgaria 17-24 June 2015

Holiday participants

Peter and Elonwy Crook
Val Appleyard and Ron Fitton
George and Sue Brownlee
Sue Davy
Marie Watt

Helen and Malcolm Crowder
David Nind and Shevaun Mendelsohn
Colin Taylor
Judith Poyser

Leaders

Vladimir (Vlado) Trifonov and Chris Gibson

Report by Chris Gibson and Judith Poyser.

Our hosts at the Hotel Yagodina are Mariya and Asen Kukundjiev – www.yagodina-bg.com

Cover: Large Skipper on *Dianthus cruentus* (SM); Scarce Copper on *Anthemis tinctoria* (RF); mating Bee-chafers (VA); Yagodina from St. Ilya and the cliffs above Trigrad (CG); *Geum coccineum* (HC); Red-backed Shrike (PC); Slender Scotch Burnet on *Carduus thoermeri* (JP).
Below: In the valley above Trigrad (PC).



As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of the holiday was put towards local conservation work. The conservation contributions from this holiday raised £700, namely £40 per person topped up by Gift Aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust.

Honeyguide is committed to supporting the protection of *Lilium rhodopaeum*. The Rhodope lily is a scarce endemic flower of the Western Rhodopes, found on just a handful of sites in Bulgaria and just over the border in Greece, about half of which have no protection. Money raised in 2014 was enough to fund Honeyguide leader Vlado Trifonov, who is recognised as the leading authority on the Rhodope lily, for monitoring and mowing for two years at the location visited by Honeyguiders. That includes this year (2015). That work is likely to continue for some years, but other conservation needs in the future are uncertain. At Vlado's request we are simply earmarking the money for *Lilium rhodopaeum* within the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, to be made available as future priorities become clear. As noted in the report, there may be issues around illegal activities on the site: if a need for active enforcement arises, Honeyguide contributions could be used for such measures.

The total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 was £101,743 as at August 2014.

DAILY DIARY

Wednesday 17 June: the way there...

After leaving a very hot Stansted in mid-afternoon, we arrived at Plovdiv as the last vestiges of sunset behind the looming Rhodopes were obliterated by thunderclouds, met Vlado (the local leader) and our driver Iliyan, and boarded the bus. Our journey to Yagodina, sporadically illuminated by lightning, took a little over three hours (a fuel stop bringing us light emerald and a dead pine hawk-moth). So we eventually rolled up at the hotel after midnight and ready for bed, serenaded by the incessant song of field crickets in the humid night air.

Thursday 18 June: Trigrad Gorge and the valley above

A cloudy but dry dawn didn't attract out many of the weary travellers before breakfast, apart that is from Colin who took his now-traditional walk up the hill behind the hotel to see the sunrise. Unfortunately, low cloud completely obscured the vista, and to add insult to injury, 'his' seat had fallen into advanced disrepair...

But all was well as we assembled for breakfast, as always a delightful mix of breads, freshly baked dishes, and local yoghurt, honey and jam, although Ron unwittingly broke rank and acquired a hard-boiled egg from the picnic table of the other group!

With a glimmer of sunlight breaking through, we ran quickly through the formalities – introductions, facilities, daily routines – taking in the local 'garden' birds: great tits, black redstarts, serins and numerous tree sparrows, house sparrows being seemingly absent from the village.

Then on with the holiday! A short drive, albeit spectacular within the rocky gorges, of some 8km brought us to our first destination, Trigrad Gorge, where Vlado pointed out a crevice in the rock face just a few metres above the road. This is a regular nest site for wallcreepers, reputedly the easiest place to see this jewel of a bird in Europe. But sadly not this year – not a sight nor a sound, on this or any other occasion, and even the dedicated wallcreeper paparazzi whose world seems to revolve around that lay-by were reporting only sporadic sightings.

Fortunately, that was not all. A noisy family party of peregrines wheeled high overhead, above the dramatic gorge walls, and growing on the cliffs were patches of the local endemic African violet *Haberlea rhodopensis* in good flower. One of just five members of its family in Europe, each one a pre-glacial relict of a much wider distribution, this was to become a regular feature of our next few days, thriving especially on shady north-facing rocks. Other plants included *Valeriana montana*, a Bulgarian Red List species, and beautiful pink patches of rock crane's-bill.



Serin, Trigrad Gorge and Rock Cranesbill (CG)

Walking through the tunnel and up the gorge, we soon came to the Devil's Throat cave, the rocks around the car park adorned with *Dianthus petraea* and *Arenaria rhodopaea*, a local endemic with strikingly large white flowers. The mouth of the cave itself was adorned with ledges clothed in *Haberlea*. Continuing up the road towards the village of Trigrad it remained largely cloudy and damp (though no sign of the forecast downpours), but during the occasional brief bursts of sunshine a few butterflies started to fly, including Glanville fritillary and mazarine blue, along with several black-veined moths. And the verges and meadows were ablaze with flowers, including yellow rattle, poppies, Turkish comfrey, and deep blue *Anchusa barrelieri*. Even the tiny pockets of cultivation had their interest, especially the numerous Colorado beetles which were demolishing many a potato patch.

Lunch was taken in a restaurant next to a dairy and cheese factory, and not surprisingly provided us with some lovely fried yellow cheese dishes with copious fresh salad. And some welcome warmth – the day remained unseasonably cold – and relief when we traced an apparently unhappy miaowing to an attention-seeking kitten under the roof tiles.

Fully refreshed, we headed by coach further up the valley, before walking back down the road taking in the botanical and entomological riches on the way. Among the many plants were tufted vetch, fragrant orchids and maiden pink, mixing with yellow *Genista januensis* and *Linum capitatum*; the beautiful, if understated, *Ajuga laxmannii* mingling with purple *Ajuga pyramidalis*; patches of matted globularia; a large bellflower *Campanula moesiaca*; and the picnicker's nightmare – unexpectedly spiny cushions of *Astragalus angustifolius*. Even the thistles were impressive – tall, multi-headed *Cirsium appendiculatum*, a magnet for the few nectaring insects. Birds were few and far between – just coal tits, a great spotted woodpecker, a pair of red-backed shrikes around a cultivated patch, and across the valley a party of jays were interacting with our only nutcracker of the trip. The hobby feeding overhead gave much more satisfactory views, as chimney-sweeper and speckled yellow moths flapped lazily through the damp grass.

In the damper areas, a number of purple marsh orchids were identified as *Dactylorhiza baumanniana*, and a short walk down to the river produced some unexpected delights in the form of yellow-bellied toads in the marginal pools, initially drawing attention to themselves by their gentle 'poop' calls. In contrast, the rocky cuttings were a haven for saxifrages, with both *Saxifraga sempervivum* and *Saxifraga stribyrnii*, some already finished flowering but clearly distinguishable by their different leaf forms.

As we headed home, we fell into the honeytrap, roadside stalls selling local honeys, jams and fridge magnets, one of rather few opportunities for retail therapy! And then to Iliyan's evident delight he was able to show us the bird of the day, a black stork feeding in one of the small riverside meadows.

After dinner, we were treated to a visit by the 'Yagodina Grannies', a local folk song and dance troupe, their numbers swelled this year by a young bagpipe player. But no takers for the opportunity to dress in local costume and join in: just one day in to the holiday, we perhaps hadn't quite shed the mental trappings of life back home...

Friday 19 June: Trigrad to Yagodina

Another cool, cloudy dawn saw the early birders heading out before breakfast. Among the familiar fare of robins and blackcaps, a family party of marsh tits gave excellent views, and the skies were filled with the graceful shapes of several red-rumped swallows, seemingly especially numerous around the village this year. A hummingbird hawk-moth nectared along the verges, and a dead red-necked footman moth allowed us to appreciate its strikingly yellow abdomen, normally well-hidden under its sombre black wings.

After breakfast and making our packed lunch, we headed back to Trigrad and took another opportunity to stop at the wallcreepers' nest site. With similar results to yesterday – 'you should have been here an hour ago' was little comfort!

Starting on the trail back to Yagodina, a distance of 7km, the Honeyguide pace soon became apparent. Indeed the walk eventually clocked in at some six hours! In the village itself, we noted that the predominant sparrow in this village was the house sparrow, and the verges and fields were clothed in an array of spectacular plants. Sadly *Morina persica*, although abundant, was not yet flowering, but swallow-wort, *Jurinea* and especially St Bernard's lily put on a great show. A pair of red-backed shrikes showed well as they hunted for their insect food from fence posts and bushes, and an ascalaphid *Libelloides macaronius* rested for all to see and photograph by the path – a far cry from their normally restless behaviour.



Libelloides macaronius (RF)



Marsh Fritillary (CG)



Chequered Skipper (CG)

Approaching the forest edge, various high-pitched calls from the canopy resolved into firecrests and coal tits, while a lesser whitethroat rattled away in the foliage, and a few Lepidoptera were noted (especially speckled yellow moths), despite the relatively chilly, overcast conditions.

We then came to a rocky section of the trail which demonstrated clearly the turbulent geological history of the Rhodopes, with limestone strata twisted and folded, and partly metamorphosed into marble, the result of past continental collisions. The rocks glistened with the trails of numerous Roman snails, but the insect star was a veritable jewel, a large iridescent ground beetle *Calosoma sycophanta*, reflecting bright metallic green, bronze and purple from its black wing-cases.

Around the forest edge, there were plentiful signs of some of the mammalian inhabitants: pine cones eaten by red squirrels and the rootings of wild boar, and several huge wood ants' nests, some of which had been dismantled by boar or bear. The numerous flowers here included especially showy golden-drops and a stately umbellifer *Laserpitium siler*, along with a few spikes of red helleborine, and several common wall lizards were basking in a vain attempt to warm up.



Misumenia vatia (RF) and *Calosoma sycophanta* (CG)

We took lunch in a small flowery meadow at the highest point of the walk, amongst the yellow rattle, spring sandwort and bastard-toadflax, with a couple of examples of toothed orchid. Lying wait on many of the flowers there were large females of *Misumenia vatia*, a crab-spider with a bulbous white abdomen showing red side-stripes. A small party of crossbills provided a brief but noisy fly-over. Then downhill all the way back, spotting pinewood orchid, white helleborine, woodland burnet moths, and a brief nectaring broad-bordered bee hawk-moth. A family party of long-tailed tits moved through the canopy, and as the trees gave way to meadows, yellowhammers and corn buntings came into view. As the sun broke through, so the insects sprung into action,

including numerous black-veined whites, almond-eyed and bright-eyed ringlets, chequered skipper, Duke-of-Burgundy, marsh fritillary and scarce copper, a brief glimpse into the richness of butterflies in these parts, otherwise suppressed by the dull, damp weather.

The group was well strung out by the time of our final descent into Yagodina, but everyone made it back by the time the threatened downpour arrived!

Saturday 20 June: walk to Yagodinska cave and the valley beyond

Another misty dawn saw the pre-breakfast walkers heading up towards the church. A green woodpecker fed on ants on the grassy slope opposite the hotel, and a group of three red-rumped swallows gave us all great views as they rested unconcernedly, gently twittering to each other, on the overhead wires. Family parties of long-tailed and great tits were much in evidence, but perhaps the highlight (for me at least!) was evidence that wolves approach the outskirts of the village at night, in the form of droppings and tracks in the mud.

As we gathered for our main walk, suddenly the skies were full of pallid swifts, clearly breeding in a building over the road from the hotel. Thus far all we had seen had been common swifts, but presumably these pallids had been on a distant feeding foray, working their way around the storms.

Then it was up the hill behind the hotel, the trackside blooming with clustered clover, tassel hyacinth and maiden pink. The hilltop meadow was equally diverse, most showily with the white flowers of dropwort and *Moenchia mantica*, again typically teeming with insects, including the metallic green oil beetle *Cerocoma schaefferi*. And the tiny, but delightful, flowers of *Sideritis montana* were much appreciated in close-up. Malcolm, Shevaun and Judith then spent a happy few minutes watching a stand-off between a large bush-cricket and a wolf spider, while others scoured the slopes for flowers, eventually producing a few burnt and pyramidal orchids, and butterflies including adonis and Escher's blues and spotted fritillary.



Sideritis montana (CG)

We then headed through the pine, spruce, silver fir and beech forest to Yagodinska Cave. The forest was typically quiet so far as birds were concerned, with just a few chiffchaffs, blackcaps and goldcrests singing and calling in the dense tree cover. Impossible to miss was the vast wood ants' nest, so big that a fence had been built around it and the trail diverted.

In the deep shade, plant life was limited, but included two species of wintergreen, sanicle and some ten species of orchid, including fly, frog, twayblade, bird's-nest, coralroot and broad-leaved, white and red helleborines. However the identity of the butterfly orchid caused a little controversy, seemingly having intermediate flower features between the over-simplifications given in the field guides. Although insect life in the shady woodland was sparse, Vlado did spot a splendid New Forest cicada.



Agapanthia kirbyi (RF)



A *Ctenophora* crane fly (CG)

After our morning's walk, a drink at the restaurant outside the cave entrance, with our packed lunch, was in order, taking advantage of the shelter from a sudden rain shower. Then following lunch we were ferried into the upper valley, to another stunning meadow, with showy mulleins and clustered broom. These in turn attracted an array of exciting insects, among which were numerous fritillaries (including twin-spot, lesser spotted and Niobe), Balkan copper, figwort sawfly, a large green bush-cricket *Tettigonia cantans*, and

a very obliging field cricket on the roadside. Most mullein flower spikes seemed to have their resident *Agapanthia kirbyi*, a longhorn beetle, and for me one of the most dramatic insects of the tour was a large, colourful *Ctenophora* crane fly. Eyes skyward, unfortunately a 'short-toed eagle' turned into a badly-behaved, pale, hovering common buzzard, but conversely an apparently familiar frog was identified as a Balkan stream frog by the spacing of its nostrils in relation to the distance from nostril to eye!

The return home was quite subdued given the rain outside, although a red-necked footman taking shelter with us caused a flurry of excitement, its scuttling walk making it appear more hymenopteran than lepidopteran. And the day was rounded off magnificently with dinner, including a substantial cake to celebrate Ron's birthday!

Sunday 21 June: Borino and Zmeitsa

Overnight thunder gave way to a heavy drizzly dawn, so the pre-breakfast walk turned into a sit, on the hotel terrace. Three species of woodpecker, including black, were heard; red-rumped swallows were not deterred from foraging; and likewise, a hummingbird hawk-moth darted between petunia flowers. But by breakfast time, the sun seemed to be breaking through...

Just before the town of Borino, we made a stop to search for the local birdlife. A male ortolan bunting added its simple refrain to the jangling keys of corn buntings; both honey and common buzzards flew over; and after a few minutes, our main target, a couple of corncrakes started craking, with a side order of rock partridge. A second unscheduled stop shortly thereafter (in response to wheel-nut traumas) gave us better, closer corncrakes; a family of kestrels interacting with a hobby; fly-over white storks; and some lovely flowers including wild gladiolus and lax-flowered orchid.

Continuing beyond the Borino towards Zmeitsa, we were taken on a side road to potter back through the woods and meadows. The grassland was incredibly diverse, including *Armeria rumelica*, *Plantago subulata*, Spanish catchfly, *Polygala major* and false helleborine, as well as some good stands of *Digitalis viridiflora*. A tree pipit was in full song, and an agile frog hopped around the grassy verges. By now, the sky was lowering, and in the sultry damp air few insects were showing, apart from huge numbers of chimney-sweeper moths. An eerie silence descended over us, before the sound of an express train heading towards us translated into the manifestation of the Yellow warning of rain we had seen the night before. From sticky but dry, to completely drenched in ten seconds, the rain was of an intensity few had seen before, and it was fortunate that the bus wasn't more than a couple of minutes away.

From the bus, we then sought further refuge and sustenance in the café in Borino, where we were treated to cheesy chips, salad, beer and coffee...not a bad accompaniment to the drying process!

As it was still raining and we were quite uncomfortable, we decided to head back to the hotel, just stopping off by the river to watch a family of dippers. But with the sediment in the water from the torrential rain, their usual feeding tactic of walking under water wasn't working, and they were reverting to an alternative approach of flycatching.

Given the early return, after a suitable chance to change into something dry, we then took a walk back down the road, looking at the flowers, and especially the bugs and beasties thereon. Particularly impressive was a large robber fly *Dysmachus fuscipennis* holding on tight to its evening meal, in the form of a hoverfly, while other highlights included a spotted sulphur moth, a large, metallic-purple leaf-beetle *Chrysomela cuprea*, and a leopard slug.

After dinner, buoyed up by Colin and Vlado's explorations there the previous evening, quite a group of us headed down to the pub to be initiated into the delights of 'Green Stuff', a heady mix of mint and aniseed liqueurs...

Monday 22 June: Devin Gorge

Another misty, cool start, but we did trek up above the hotel to see what that stretch might reveal. On the way up, a couple of brown hares ran across the track; at the top, a corncrake was in full song; and on the way down, some had one of the better views of back woodpecker for the week, as it worked its way down the valley. And as we gathered after breakfast, at least one, possibly two, honey buzzards and several common buzzards flew over the hotel.



Devin Gorge (VA)

Our drive today took us to the outskirts of Devin – home of the lovely local bottled water – and the start of a track which led us alongside the tumbling Devinska river, into a broad, heavily wooded, rocky gorge. Here we were among some unfamiliar trees, such as green alder, oriental hornbeam, *Quercus dalechampii*, and both small-leaved and large-leaved limes. A patch of the Balkan endemic *Digitalis viridiflora*, beckoned us in to the botanical delights, including yellow patches of *Genista carinalis*, blue *Camapanula persicifolia*, purple-red rose campion and the local endemic King Boris's cinquefoil. *Silene italica* and *Silene dichotoma* grew side-by-side as an exercise in compare and contrast, and sprawling patches of wild liquorice in flower were a magnet for bumblebees.

Once again it was the insects which really fired our enthusiasm, with marbled and cardinal fritillaries, clouded Apollo, purple-shot copper, and white and poplar admirals all putting in an appearance. Several trees were festooned with the large larval webs of the small eggar moth, while small elephant hawk and cream-spot tiger adult moths were discovered. And a small selection of the non-lepidopteran delights included bee-chaffer, capricorn beetle, speckled longhorn, spotted carrion beetle, hornet hoverfly, ladder-marked longhorn and spring dumbledor – their names as diverse and evocative as the beasties themselves.



Left: Purple-shot Copper (HC)
Above: Cardinal (VA)
Right: Clouded Apollo (MC)

Common wall lizards, including one in active skin moult, basked on the rocks and boulders along with a one or two greener Balkan wall lizards. But bird-wise, the gorge was quiet apart from the omnipresent grey wagtails, although those who were able to lift their eyes skywards were treated to a few common buzzards drifting across.

We took lunch in the heart of the gorge, giving time for the more adventurous to explore its upper reaches along a walkway suspended from the cliffs. Here, martagon lily was just coming into flower; butterfly-orchids abounded on the forest floor; and many a boulder in the river provided evidence of the local otters, in the form of caches of dismantled crayfish. But all too soon it was time to head back, although the cold beer from the bar near the car park proved a temptation too far for some! However, wildlife watching never stops, and we were able to watch the locally breeding red-rumped swallows nest building and crag martins feeding young. And then as we headed back to the bus, a majestic adult golden eagle spent several minutes wheeling along the high tops.

Those who opted to walk the last kilometre back to the hotel to take advantage of the lovely sunny day picked up several new flowers, including *Seseli rigidum* and Rhodopean scabious, together with alpine swifts, common buzzards and a sparrowhawk over the valley.

After dinner, we again descended on the pub, this time with several of the Dutch group who were sharing our hotel. What followed can best be described as a three-way Eurovision song contest, trading English, Dutch and Bulgarian songs to an accompaniment of accordion, guitar and drums, with David and Colin as 'dancing girls'!

Tuesday 23 June: St. Iliya

The by-now-familiar misty, moisty start saw the early birds walking towards the church above the village, and as the sun struggled through it lit up a wonderful dew-laden landscape. Red backed shrikes were everywhere, with several corn buntings and yellowhammers, and a clouded buff moth added itself to our week's list.

After breakfast, we herded ourselves into and onto (H&S rules anybody?) two 4WD vehicles to ferry us up to the top of the local mountain St Iliya, a height of 1560m. What a drive over the steep and heavily rutted ground! – it was testament to the skill and experience of the drivers that there were no visible signs of discomfort as we spilled out at the top.

At first, we had the summit to ourselves, to enjoy the spectacle of alpine swifts wheeling around, above and below, and the vast unspoilt montane landscapes, the snow-capped slopes of Pirin to the west, and the border with Greece to the south. A couple of chamois were picked out on the distant slopes across the valley, and bizarrely, a flock of 12 cormorants flew high overhead in a south-westerly direction. Then it was out to the viewing platform, sticking out into the void from the cliff edge, with a heart-stopping sheer drop of some 600m below. For those who could tear their eyes from the drop, another much closer chamois was grazing on the grassy slopes at the foot of the cliff. Our adrenaline levels suitably raised, we then pottered slowly back along the crest of the mountain ridge, gradually losing altitude, through the sparse pine forest. Several mistle thrushes scattered in our wake, and a tree pipit was in full, mellifluous song from the top of a pine tree. The butterfly life was heavily dominated by painted ladies and small tortoiseshells, with swallowtails around the mountain top, and a roe deer moved stealthily through the trees. Yet another adrenaline-raising moment came when we discovered very fresh brown bear prints in one of the muddy puddles....



Brown Bear prints (HC)

The colourful rocky limestone grassland flora included yellow patches of horseshoe vetch and *Fumana procumbens*, a single-flowered knapweed *Centaurea triumfettii*, white *Cerastium decalvans* and *Marrubium frivaldskyanum*, and blue matted globularia. And last year's seedheads of *Carlina acanthifolia*, flat to the ground, provided a spectacular counterpoint to the plant growth from the current season.

By now it was very hot, still, and becomingly increasingly humid under almost unbroken blue skies, so we sought out shade for our lunch break, with bloody-nosed beetle, rhombic leatherbug and a red-and-black jumping spider *Philaeus chrysops* for added entertainment. Ron found a large longhorn beetle *Monochamus sutor* on his shirt, and as we tried to encourage it back to a more natural habitat, Val was surprised by the audible squeaking it produced, presumably as an anti-predator device. On our gradual descent to the village, it got ever hotter so a café and cool drink proved a popular option before we headed back home.

The rest of the afternoon was free time, for everyone to do their own thing, a last dose of the Yagodina delights: walking, relaxing, packing and drinking! And of course birdwatching – our final checklist session was enlivened by another honey buzzard drifting over.



Swallowtail, photographing fragrant orchids, and a cluster of Silver-studded and Idas blues (HC)

After dinner we were treated again to a visit from the 'Yagodina Grannies', which soon turned into a highly participative event, especially for some adorned in the local costume. But then we drifted into a continuation of last night's Eurovision song contest, which I am pleased to say we won with a rousing rendition of '*Ilkley Moor bah't 'at*', followed closely by Colin's dramatic re-appearance in full ladies' costume! As we shared our winnings (a bottle of wine) with our new best Dutch friends, a lone fire-fly flew across the patio, a winking flash of light to remind us of the real reason we were there!

Wednesday 24 June: Trigrad, Shiroka Laka, Stoykite, Bachkovo, Azenovgrad and home...

No early walk today, given our imminent departure, but ironically this was the only day with a proper sunrise. Bags were packed and loaded straight after breakfast, so we could get a prompt departure after bidding farewell to Maria, Asen and Hotel Yagodina.

Given the evening flight, we had a full day of visits planned, starting with a final return to Trigrad Gorge to try and catch up with the elusive wallcreeper. No luck on that front, but the sight of more than a hundred alpine swifts in and over the gorge was most impressive. As indeed was a military orchid we must have previously overlooked, and a single stunning example of *Morina persica*, in full flower on the road verge.



Shiroka Laka (HC)

Next was a brief stop in Shiroka Laka, a traditional village with stone-tiled roofs, and a remarkable icon-filled Orthodox church, built from scratch in 1834 in just 38 days. Several serins and scarce swallowtails showed well in the churchyard, and we all marvelled at resourcefulness of the locals in recycling domestic radiators into garden fences!

Then, a real treat! Vlado is a national authority on one of the most spectacular local endemic plants, the Rhodope lily *Lilium rhodopaeum*. He has written the Action Plan for its conservation, and been involved in monitoring the known sites – and when he introduced a previous Honeyguide party to it, by unanimous agreement we decided that the conservation contribution should go to that species.

A return visit was definitely in order. On reaching the remote valley near Stoykite, the initial signs were good. The excess growth of grass and false helleborine, so obvious in past years and a source of concern that the lily may be at risk of being squeezed out, seemed to be less apparent. But unfortunately, so too was the lily, partly because of the late season (its buds were still some way from bursting) but also it was clear there had been a very recent theft of several of the established plants. So it was with heavy hearts we settled down to lunch, and tried to think of ways in which the Honeyguide contribution could help if such activities start to become more regular.

At least we should take heart from the fact that probably only three or four bulbs had been stolen, despite the fact that the perpetrators had driven right up to the site in a four-wheel drive, to judge from the track through the meadow. And the glorious orange patches of *Geum coccineum*, and piles of puddling butterflies, including several marsh fritillaries, did their best to keep our spirits up.

Pressing on, we arrived at Bachkovo Monastery, a tourist honeypot near the northern edge of the mountains, for a welcome drink and comfort stop. Our only spotted flycatcher of the week was spotted flycatching among the oriental plane trees which fringe the fast flowing river.

Our final wildlife stop then was just outside Azenovgrad, where the Rhodope massif peters out. A convenient spot by an unfinished hotel gave us the chance to have a last look at the butterflies of the area, with several large groups of small and wood whites, along with brimstone, scarce swallowtail and nettle-tree butterfly. A road casualty freshwater crab was a bit of a surprise, and small pincertail dragonfly perched helpfully for all to see; however an unidentified snake was seen only by Helen. A final delight, especially for me, was a series of very large bagworm 'bags', adorned with leaf fragments, which turned out to be the hairy sweep *Canephora hirsuta*.

Just a couple of kilometres further on we were in the town, surrounded by hordes of swifts, and visiting our pre-arranged (and pre-ordered) evening meal venue. Unfortunately, they rather overestimated our appetites, and found our dietary challenges too much to handle. Never mind – it was better than we would have got from Ryanair! Talking of which, the airport was just twenty minutes' drive away, and before we got into the terminal we added a final couple of species to our bird tally – skylark and yellow-legged gull. Then final farewells to Vlado and Iliyan, and homeward bound...

The best bits

On our final evening over dinner, as is a Honeyguide tradition, everyone was asked to recall their most memorable moments of the week, although many found it difficult to remain within the suggested restriction to two items...

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| Sue D | The natural rock gardens, and the beautiful butterflies, especially cardinal and poplar admiral. And of course the never-to-be forgotten social events (to be fair, this featured on most lists, but Sue had the benefit of being first to be asked!) |
| Helen | Loved every single butterfly, has never seen so many red-rumped swallows, and favourite plant was <i>Sideritis montana</i> with its exquisite tiny flowers. |
| Sue B | The butterflies, but especially the cardinal; broomrapes and red-backed shrikes. |
| Shevaun | The gentle rhythm of Yagodina, especially the comings and goings of the cows; groups of butterflies puddling; and the wild pansies. |
| Elonwy | Another vote for the pansies and butterflies; and the diverse delights of Devin Gorge. |
| Peter | The lovely village with picturesque woodpiles; the butterflies and the alpine swifts. |
| Malcolm | Devin Gorge; butterflies everywhere; and the most obliging red-rumped swallows, especially those allowing prolonged views on the wires of Yagodina. |
| Marie | The delightful walk down through the woods to the cave; diversity of orchids; and butterflies, in particular the poplar admiral. |
| George | The excitement of finding bear prints; the isolation of Yagodina and the wonderful walks around it; learning about birds and butterflies; and the variety of orchids, many of them so rare back home. |
| Colin | Yagodina, one of his favourite places; hirundines everywhere; seeing the rest of the group enjoying it so much; and Helen, for her camera tuition. |
| David | The diversity of life in the wonderful meadows, especially the butterflies; and the martagon lilies in Devin Gorge. |
| Ron | Devin Gorge was 'The Spot'; and the array of beetles and other invertebrates. |
| Val | Devin Gorge, a place to lose oneself in the diversity of small things; lovely campanulas; and two particular insects – ascalaphid and nine-spotted moth. In fact, everything! |
| Judith | The leader (she had to say that, though which one she didn't specify!); Colin in his <i>alter ego</i> as a Yagodina Granny; and the firefly which sealed our victory in the song contest. |
| Iliyan | We helped open his eyes to nature in the Rhodopes; and the chance to show us one of the best birds – the black stork. |
| Vlado | Good food and good company; to be able to introduce everyone to the unique landscape; and especially the abundant delights of Devin Gorge. |
| Chris | Like many others, our day in Devin Gorge with exciting finds at every turn; and some of the special insects right through the week – the iridescent ground beetle, giant bagworm, and beautiful crane-fly. |

Taking all of these highlights along with a few other facts and figures (76 bird species, 64 butterflies, and many other animals and plants, including numerous local endemics and rarities), it is not difficult to understand why we all headed home with smiles on our faces!

WILDLIFE LISTS

You may realise that the lists provided, especially for the insects, are somewhat more extensive than is normal for a Honeyguide report. In part, this is testament to the incredible richness of the Western Rhodopes, but it is also in recognition of the fact that there are few readily-available sources of information in English about the wildlife of the area.

I am hugely grateful to Judith for the innumerable hours she has spent since our return, seeking out names for the many bugs and beasts we photographed. I must stress however that I take full responsibility for any misidentifications which may have crept in, something which is highly likely as many 'identifications' should be better characterised as 'best fits' to western European species for which identification material is more readily available. To supplement this report we will be updating our photoguide to some of the wonderful insects we saw, and this will be available on the Honeyguide website by the end of the year.

In general, localities are not given for groups other than birds, as we stayed most of the time in a tight area around Yagodina, and almost anything we saw could reasonably be expected to be seen almost anywhere around there in the right habitat.

BIRDS	
Cormorant	A flock of 12 flying south-west high over St. Iliya
White Stork	Several around Borino, including a bird on a nest
Black Stork	One near Trigrad
Mallard	A pair above Trigrad
Honey Buzzard	One or two birds seen on several days
Sparrowhawk	One over Yagodina
Common Buzzard	The commonest raptor, seen almost every day
Golden Eagle	One adult over Devin Gorge
Kestrel	Small numbers most days
Hobby	One hunting in the valley above Trigrad; one near Borino
Peregrine	Two family parties, one of four at Trigrad and one of three near Yagodina
Corncrake	Several heard near Borino, with one also above Yagodina
Rock Partridge	One near Borino
Yellow-legged Gull	At Plovdiv Airport
Feral Pigeon	Common, especially in towns and villages; some true Rock Dove types in the gorges
Collared Dove	Common around the lowland settlements, and a very small number around Yagodina and Trigrad
Cuckoo	An occasional bird still calling at the start of the week
Common Swift	Common; especially numerous around Asenovgrad
Pallid Swift	Occasionally seen with Common Swifts; on one or two days only, seen visiting nest sites in Yagodina
Alpine Swift	Excellent views from St. Iliya; occasionally elsewhere, with maybe a hundred over Trigrad Gorge on the final day
Green Woodpecker	Seen or heard most days
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Seen or heard most days
Black Woodpecker	Seen on several early mornings and evenings around Yagodina
Skylark	At Plovdiv Airport
Woodlark	Seen and heard well on St. Iliya and above Yagodina
Crag Martin	Common in suitable rocky habitats
Barn Swallow	Common everywhere
Red-rumped Swallow	Common, more so than on previous trips; breeding at Yagodina and a disused nest at Devin Gorge
House Martin	Common; breeding in villages and on cliff faces
Tree Pipit	Single birds near Zmeitsa, St. Iliya and Stoykite
Grey Wagtail	Common in all rivers; several fledged broods
White Wagtail	Common around water and in villages
Dipper	Frequent in all upland rivers, with several fledged broods
Wren	One of the most obvious birds, by song, in all mountain forests and gorges
Duncock	Occasional in mountain forest clearings and scrub
Robin	Common in the forests
Black Redstart	A constant feature of all towns and villages
Whinchat	One above Trigrad
Stonechat	One at Stoykite
Blackbird	Fairly common
Song Thrush	Frequently heard in the mountain forests
Mistle Thrush	Seen occasionally around upland forest habitats
Blackcap	Common in forest areas, especially near streams, and around the villages
Lesser Whitethroat	Seen or heard several days – one of the more obvious birds in sparse woodland
Whitethroat	One near Borino
Chiffchaff	Abundant in the mountain forests; still singing well
Goldcrest	Common
Firecrest	Small numbers in several lightly forested areas
Spotted Flycatcher	One at Bachkovo
Long-tailed Tit	Occasional family parties around Yagodina and elsewhere
Marsh Tit	A regular family party or two around Yagodina
Crested Tit	Surprisingly scarce; heard only on St. Iliya
Coal Tit	Common, and noisy in all forest areas
Blue Tit	Fairly common

Great Tit	Common
Red-backed Shrike	Very common in upland agricultural habitats and scrub
Jay	Frequent in the forests
Magpie	Very common
Nutcracker	One with Jays above Trigrad
Hooded Crow	Common
Raven	Seen in small numbers every day
Starling	A few birds seen most days
House Sparrow	Common in some towns and villages, including Trigrad and Devin
Tree Sparrow	Replaces House Sparrows in some villages, such as Yagodina
Chaffinch	Common
Serin	Fairly common, especially around villages
Greenfinch	Just one at Yagodina
Goldfinch	Fairly common
Linnet	Small numbers in several places
Bullfinch	The occasional bird at Yagodina and Devin Gorge
Crossbill	Occasionally flying over Yagodina; a party of four between Trigrad and Yagodina
Yellowhammer	Present, and reasonably abundant, in agricultural uplands
Cirl Bunting	One on St. Iliya
Ortolan Bunting	A singing male at Borino
Corn Bunting	Fairly common in agricultural areas
Rock Bunting	A male between Trigrad and Yagodina

Probably the most surprising omissions were quail, blue rock thrush, northern wheatear, sombre tit and (very sadly) wallcreeper.

MAMMALS

Red Squirrel	None seen, but much evidence from their nibbled cones
Brown Bear	Fresh footprints on St. Iliya, and several raided ant nests
Brown Hare	Several seen above Yagodina; droppings also frequently seen
Wolf	Tracks and droppings just outside Yagodina
Mole	Hills very obvious in some mountain pastures
Wild Boar	Abundant rootings on the edge of the forests
Stone Marten	Scats in Devin Gorge
Roe Deer	Seen on St Iliya; prints, droppings and other evidence elsewhere; heard at Stoykite
Otter	Feeding remains (crayfish) in Devinska River
Chamois	Three seen from St. Iliya peak
Polecat	Tracks and scats near Yagodina

Very surprisingly, given that the western Rhodopes are one of the bat diversity hotspots of Europe, we did not encounter any bats, despite deploying a bat detector around Yagodina on several occasions.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Balkan Wall Lizard – occasional, Devin Gorge	Balkan Stream Frog – one in the valley above Yagodinska Cave
Common Wall Lizard – common	Common Toad – many crossing the road on the journey there
Common Frog – Stoykite	Yellow-bellied Toad – in pools by the river above Trigrad
Agile Frog – Zmeitsa	Also an unidentified snake seen briefly near Azenovgrad

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail
Scarce Swallowtail
Clouded Apollo
Large White
Small White
Mountain Small White
Green-veined White
Wood White
Black-veined White
Clouded Yellow
Brimstone
Powdered Brimstone
Red Admiral
Painted Lady
Peacock
Comma
Small Tortoiseshell
White Admiral
Poplar Admiral
Queen-of-Spain Fritillary
Pearl-bordered Fritillary
Silver-washed Fritillary

Cardinal Fritillary
Niobe Fritillary
Glanville Fritillary
Twin-spot Fritillary
Marbled Fritillary
Lesser Spotted Fritillary (adults and larvae)
Spotted Fritillary (adults and larvae)
Marsh Fritillary
Heath Fritillary
Speckled Wood
Large Wall Brown
Wall Brown
Woodland Ringlet
Bright-eyed Ringlet
Almond-eyed Ringlet
Lattice Brown
Meadow Brown
Dusky Marbled Brown
Pearly Heath
Chestnut Heath
Small Heath

Marbled White
Adonis Blue
Common Blue
Idas Blue
Silver-studded Blue
Mazarine Blue
Escher's Blue
Small Blue
Brown Argus
Balkan Copper
Purple-shot Copper
Scarce Copper
Small Copper
Ilex Hairstreak
Nettle-tree Butterfly
Duke-of-Burgundy
Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper
Large Skipper
Small Skipper
Essex Skipper
Chequered Skipper

MOTHS

Macromoths (Scientific names given only for non-British species)

Hummingbird Hawk-moth
Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth
Pine Hawk-moth
Small Elephant Hawk-moth
Dwarf Cream Wave
Mullein Wave
Riband Wave
Dusky-brown Wave <i>Scopula tessellaria</i>
Light Emerald
Chimney-sweeper
Common Heath
Latticed Heath
Magpie Moth
Rose-banded Wave <i>Rhodostrophia calabra</i>
Speckled Yellow
Black-veined Moth
Clouded Buff
Cream-spot Tiger

Garden Tiger (larva)
Jersey Tiger (larva)
Wood Tiger
Red-necked Footman
Bordered Gothic
Silver Y
Burnet Companion
Spotted Sulphur
Mullein Moth (larvae)
Small Eggar (larvae and nests)
Narrow-bordered Five-spotted Burnet
Six-spotted Burnet
Woodland Burnet <i>Zygaena osterodensis</i>
Slender Scotch Burnet
Forester
Scarce Forester
Nine-spotted Moth <i>Syntomis phegea</i>
Krueger's Nine-spotted Moth <i>Syntomis kruegeri</i>

Micromoths

<i>Plutella xylostella</i> Diamond-back
<i>Anthophila fabriciana</i> Nettle-tap
<i>Chrysocrambus craterella</i>
<i>Crambus pascuella</i>
<i>Anania funebris</i>
<i>Aphelia paleana</i> Timothy Tortrix
<i>Dichrorampha petiverella</i>
<i>Hedya pruniana</i> Plum Tortrix
<i>Epiblema sticticana</i>

<i>Epiblema turbidana</i>
<i>Epiblema foenella</i>
<i>Archips podana</i> Large Fruit-tree Tortrix
<i>Archips xylosteana</i> Variegated Golden Tortrix
<i>Olethreutes arcuella</i>
<i>Coleophora deauratella</i> a shiny case-bearer
<i>Taleporia tubulosa</i> a tubular bagworm case
<i>Psyche casta</i> a bagworm
<i>Canephora hirsuta</i> Hairy Sweep, a large bagworm

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

Onychogomphus forcipatus Small Pincertail

Enallagma cyathigerum Common Blue Damselfly



Above: Nine-spotted Moth (CG), Wood Tiger Moth and Small Elephant Hawk-moth (HC)

Below: *Poecilimon thoracicus* a bush cricket (HC), *Cetonia aurata* Rose Chafer (JP)

Carpocoris fuscispinus large brown shield bugs mating (HC)



OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Mollusca – Molluscs	
<i>Cepaea hortensis</i>	White-lipped banded snail
<i>Helix pomatia</i>	Roman Snail
<i>Zebrina detrita</i>	a stripy snail
<i>Arion ater</i>	Large Black Slug
<i>Limax maximus</i>	Leopard Slug
Crustacea – Crustaceans	
<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	White-clawed Crayfish
<i>Potamon ibericum</i>	Freshwater Crab
Diplopoda – Millipedes	
<i>Tachypodiulus</i> sp.	a black millipede
Arachnida – Spiders and relatives	
<i>Araneus angulatus</i>	a humpy orb-web spider
<i>Araneus diadematus</i>	Garden Spider
<i>Aculepeira ceropegia</i>	Oak Spider
<i>Araniella cucurbitina</i>	Cucumber Spider
<i>Philodromus histria</i>	an orb-web spider
<i>Enoplognatha ovata</i>	a comb-footed spider
<i>Pardosa amentata</i>	Spotted Wolf-spider
<i>Pisaura mirabilis</i>	Nursery-web Spider
<i>Xysticus cristatus</i>	a ground crab-spider
<i>Misumena vatia</i>	a crab-spider
<i>Agelena orientalis</i>	a large funnel-web spider
<i>Philaeus chrysops</i>	a red-and-black jumping spider
<i>Aceria exilis</i>	a mite gall on Lime
<i>Aceria lateannulatus</i>	a mite gall on Lime
Ephemeroptera – Mayflies	
<i>Ephemera vulgata</i>	
<i>Ecdyonurus torrentis</i>	
Plecoptera – Stoneflies	
<i>Dinocras cephalotes</i>	
<i>Perla bipunctata</i>	
Dictyoptera – Cockroaches	
<i>Ectobius pallidus</i>	Tawny Cockroach
Orthoptera – Grasshoppers and Crickets	
<i>Pholidoptera aptera</i>	a brown bush-cricket
<i>Pholidoptera femorata</i>	a brown bush-cricket
<i>Rhacocleis neglecta</i>	a brown bush-cricket
<i>Psorodonotus fieberi</i>	a large, fat, brown bush-cricket
<i>Psorodonotus fieberi illyricus</i>	a large, fat, green bush-cricket
<i>Poecilimon macedonicus</i>	a colourful bush-cricket
<i>Poecilimon thoracicus</i>	a bush-cricket
<i>Poecilimon orbelicus</i>	a bush-cricket
<i>Poecilimon ornatus</i>	a bush-cricket
<i>Decticus verrucivorus</i>	Wart-biter
<i>Tettigonia viridissima</i>	Great Green Bush-cricket
<i>Tettigonia cantans</i>	a great green bush-cricket
<i>Isophya speciosa</i>	a wingless green bush-cricket
<i>Polysarcus denticauda</i>	a tooth-tailed bush-cricket
<i>Ephippiger ephippiger</i>	a saddle-back bush-cricket
<i>Leptophyes punctatissima</i>	Speckled Bush-cricket
<i>Metrioptera roeselii</i>	Roesel's Bush-cricket
<i>Oedipoda germanica</i>	Red-winged Grasshopper
<i>Gomphocerippus rufus</i>	Rufous Grasshopper
<i>Gryllus campestris</i>	Field Cricket

Neuroptera – Lacewings and Ant-lions	
<i>Libelloides macaronius</i>	an ascalaphid
Mecoptera – Scorpion-flies	
<i>Panorpa meridionalis</i>	a scorpion-fly
Hemiptera – Bugs	
<i>Lygaeus saxatilis</i>	a red-and-black ground bug
<i>Lygaeus equestris</i>	a red-and-black ground bug
<i>Deraeocoris ruber</i>	a brown-and-red plant bug
<i>Leptoterna dolabrata</i>	a plant bug
<i>Notosira elongata</i>	a plant bug
<i>Beosus maritimus</i>	a plant bug
<i>Stenotus bidentatus</i>	a stripy plant bug
<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i>	Fire Bug
<i>Corizus hyoscyami</i>	a red-and-black bug
<i>Graphosoma italicum</i>	Millwall Bug
<i>Eurydema ornata</i>	a red-and-black shield-bug
<i>Palomena prasina</i>	Green Shield-bug
<i>Peribalis strictus</i>	Vernal Shield-bug
<i>Dolycoris baccarum</i>	Hairy Shield-bug
<i>Pentatoma rufipes</i>	Forest Bug
<i>Tritomegas bicolor</i>	Pied Shield-bug
<i>Carpocoris fuscispinus</i>	A large brown shield-bug
<i>Coreus marginatus</i>	Squash Bug
<i>Syromastus rhombeus</i>	Rhombic Leatherbug
<i>Stictopleurus punctatonevrosus</i>	a rhopalid bug
<i>Rhynocoris annulatus</i>	a red-and-black assassin bug
<i>Camptopus lateralis</i>	a broad-headed bug
<i>Cercopis vulnerata</i>	a large black-and-red frog hopper
<i>Philaenus spumarius</i>	Common Frog hopper
<i>Aphrophora alni</i>	Alder Spittle-bug
<i>Cicadetta montana</i>	New Forest Cicada
<i>Micantulina stigmatipennis</i>	a spotty leafhopper
<i>Aphis fabae</i>	Black Bean Aphid on <i>Rumex</i>
<i>Aphis sambuci</i>	Elder Aphid
<i>Aphis schneideri</i>	an aphid gall on <i>Ribes</i>
<i>Uroleucon jaceae</i>	Large Knapweed Aphid
<i>Cavariella pastinacae</i>	an aphid on Hogweed
<i>Pseudococcidae</i> sp.	a mealybug
Hymenoptera – Bees, Wasps, Ants and Sawflies	
<i>Zaraea fasciata</i>	Honeysuckle Sawfly
<i>Eupontania viminalis</i>	a sawfly gall on Purple Willow
<i>Pontania pedunculi</i>	a sawfly gall on willow
<i>Tenthredo mesomela</i>	a sawfly with fluorescent green patches
<i>Tenthredo scrophulariae</i>	Figwort Sawfly
<i>Diplolepis rosae</i>	Robin's-pincushion Gall on Rose
<i>Diplolepis nervosa/eglanteriae</i>	Smooth Pea Gall on Rose
<i>Diplolepis spinosissimae</i>	a gall on Rose
<i>Osmia</i> sp.	a mason bee
<i>Vespa crabro</i>	Hornet
<i>Polistes</i> sp.	a paper wasp
<i>Formica rufa</i>	Wood Ant
<i>Xylocopa violacea</i>	Violet Carpenter-bee
<i>Megachile parietina</i>	a solitary bee
<i>Apis mellifera</i>	Honeybee
<i>Bombus lapidarius</i>	Red-tailed Bumblebee
<i>Bombus rudarius</i>	Red-shanked Carder-bee
<i>Bombus hortorum</i>	Garden Bumblebee

Diptera – Flies	
<i>Chromatomyia syngenesiae</i>	a fly mine on Sow-thistle
<i>Aulagromyza coenigera</i>	a fly mine on Honeysuckle
<i>Phytomyza charophylli</i>	a fly mine on <i>Chaerophyllum</i>
<i>Phytomyza fulgens</i>	a fly mine on Clematis
<i>Mikiola fagi</i>	a gall-midge on Beech
<i>Ctenophora</i> sp.	a large, colourful crane-fly
<i>Nephrotoma flavescens</i>	a yellow-marked crane-fly
<i>Tipula vernalis</i>	a brown crane-fly
<i>Hemipenthes morio</i>	a bee-fly
<i>Bombylella atra</i>	a bee-fly
<i>Dysmachus fuscipennis</i>	a robber-fly
<i>Rhagio scolopaceus</i>	Downlooker Snipe-Fly
<i>Rhagio tringarius</i>	Marsh Snipe-fly
<i>Rhamphomyia crassirostris</i>	an empid fly
<i>Volucella pellucens</i>	Pellucid Hoverfly
<i>Volucella zonaria</i>	Hornet Hoverfly
<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i>	Marmalade Hoverfly
<i>Chrysotoxum intermedium</i>	a hoverfly
<i>Eristalis pertinax</i>	a hoverfly
<i>Eristalis arbustorum</i>	a hoverfly
<i>Eristalis nemorum</i>	a hoverfly
<i>Eroctalis interruptus</i>	a hoverfly
<i>Sphaerophoria scripta</i>	a slender hoverfly
<i>Syrphus ribesii</i>	a hoverfly
<i>Urophora jaceae</i>	a picture-winged fly
<i>Aciura coryli</i>	a picture-winged fly
<i>Eriothis rufomaculata</i>	a parasitic fly
Coleoptera – Beetles	
<i>Calosoma sycophanta</i>	a rainbow-metallic large ground beetle
<i>Cetonia aurata</i>	Rose Chafer
<i>Trichius sexualis</i>	a bee-chafer
<i>Hoplia argentea</i>	a small, iridescent chafer
<i>Hoplia graminicola</i>	a small brown chafer
<i>Omaloplia ruricola</i>	a brown chafer
<i>Oxythrea funesta</i>	a spotted flower chafer
<i>Trypocopriss vernalis</i>	Spring Dumbledor
<i>Mylabris polymorpha</i>	a red-and-black oil-beetle
<i>Cerocomia schaefferi</i>	a metallic green oil-beetle
<i>Oedemera femorata</i>	a false blister-beetle
<i>Anogcodes melanurus</i>	a false blister-beetle
<i>Rhagonycha fulva</i>	Hogweed Bonking-beetle
<i>Cantharis livida</i>	a soldier-beetle
<i>Cantharis rustica</i>	a soldier-beetle
<i>Cantharis obscura</i>	a soldier-beetle

<i>Malachius bipustulatus</i>	Common Malachite Beetle
<i>Trichodes apiarius</i>	A red-and-black chequered beetle
<i>Dendroxena quadrimaculata</i>	Spotted Carrion-beetle
<i>Silpha obscura</i>	a black carrion-beetle
<i>Luciola lusitanica</i>	Fire-fly
<i>Ampedus pomorum</i>	a red click beetle
<i>Rutpela maculata</i>	Black-and-yellow Longhorn Beetle
<i>Paracorymbia maculicornis</i>	a red-brown longhorn
<i>Stenurella melanura</i>	Black-striped Longhorn Beetle
<i>Stenurella septempunctata</i>	a black-spotted, red longhorn
<i>Dinoptera collaris</i>	a black-and-red longhorn
<i>Cerambyx scopolii</i>	Capricorn Beetle
<i>Phytoecia nigripes</i>	a longhorn beetle
<i>Leptura aethiops</i>	a black longhorn beetle
<i>Saperda scalaris</i>	Ladder-marked Longhorn
<i>Pachytodes cerambycifera</i>	Speckled Longhorn
<i>Agapanthia kirbyi</i>	a greenish longhorn
<i>Agapanthia intermedia</i>	a longhorn beetle
<i>Dorcadion pedestre</i>	a black longhorn with white stripes
<i>Monochamus sutor</i>	a black, spotted longhorn
<i>Lagria hirta</i>	a hairy darkling beetle
<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	Seven-spot Ladybird
<i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	Harlequin Ladybird
<i>Propylaea quatuordecimpunctata</i>	14-spot Ladybird
<i>Timarcha tenebricosa</i>	Bloody-nosed Beetle
<i>Leptinotarsa decemlineata</i>	Colorado Beetle
<i>Chrysomela populi</i>	Red Poplar Leaf-beetle
<i>Chrysomela cuprea</i>	a purple leaf-beetle
<i>Chrysolina fastuosa</i>	a shiny, multi-coloured leaf-beetle
<i>Chrysolina graminis</i>	a metallic leaf-beetle
<i>Chrysolina polita</i>	a red-and-green leaf-beetle
<i>Clytra quadripunctata</i>	a red, spotted leaf-beetle
<i>Cryptocephalus sericeus</i>	a green leaf-beetle
<i>Oreina caerulea</i>	a large, blue-black leaf-beetle
<i>Cassida viridis</i>	Green Tortoise-beetle
<i>Phylllobius</i> sp.	a green weevil
<i>Lixus iridis</i>	a large yellowish weevil
<i>Hylobius abietis</i>	Large Pine Weevil
<i>Hylobius piceus</i>	Spruce Weevil
<i>Cionus hortulanus</i>	a weevil with a black spot
<i>Liparus</i> sp.	a large, blue-spotted weevil

FUNGI		LICHENS	
<i>Fomes fomentarius</i>	Bracket fungus on Birch	<i>Peltigera canina</i>	Dog's-tooth Lichen
<i>Phragmidium tuberculatum</i>	Rust on Rose	<i>Usnea</i> sp.	Beard Lichen
<i>Triphragmium ulmariae</i>	Rust on Meadowsweet		

PLANTS

FERNS	
<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black Spleenwort
<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue
<i>Asplenium septentrionale</i>	Forking Spleenwort
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair Spleenwort
<i>Equisetum ramosissimum</i>	Branched Horsetail
<i>Gymnocarpium robertianum</i>	Limestone Fern

CONIFERS	
<i>Abies alba</i>	Silver Fir
<i>Abies borisii-regis</i>	Bulgarian Fir
<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Juniper
<i>Picea abies</i>	Norway Spruce
<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Black Pine
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots Pine

HIGHER PLANTS

Aceraceae – Maple family	
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple
<i>Acer hyrcanum</i>	Balkan Maple
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
Anacardiaceae – Pistachio family	
<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	Smoke-bush
Apiaceae – Carrot family	
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground-elder
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Wild Angelica
<i>Carum graecum</i>	
<i>Carum multiflorum</i>	
<i>Chaerophyllum aureum</i>	Golden Chervil
<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Field Eryngo
<i>Heracleum sibiricum</i>	Hogweed
<i>Laserpitium siler</i>	Laserwort
<i>Oenanthe silaifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved Water-dropwort
<i>Orlaya grandiflora</i>	White Laceflower
<i>Pastinaca hirsuta</i>	Hairy Parsnip
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	Sanicle
<i>Seseli rigidum</i>	Rigid Moon-carrot
<i>Trinia glauca</i>	Honewort
Aristolochiaceae – Birthwort family	
<i>Asarum europaeum</i>	Asarabacca
Asclepiadaceae – Milkweed family	
<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>	Swallow-wort
Asteraceae – Daisy family	
<i>Achillea ageratifolia</i>	Greek Yarrow
<i>Achillea clypeolata</i>	Yellow Yarrow
<i>Achillea crithmifolia</i>	
<i>Achillea grandiflora</i>	
<i>Achillea nobilis</i>	Noble Yarrow
<i>Anthemis tinctoria</i>	Yellow Chamomile
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort
<i>Aster amellus</i>	European Michaelmas-daisy
<i>Carduus thoermeri</i>	
<i>Carlina acanthifolia</i>	Acanthus-leaved Carline-thistle
<i>Carlina corymbosa</i>	Clustered Carline-thistle
<i>Centaurea affinis</i>	
<i>Centaurea triumfettii</i>	Squarrose Knapweed
<i>Cirsium appendiculatum</i>	Balkan Thistle
<i>Cirsium ligulare</i>	
<i>Hypochaeris maculata</i>	Spotted Cat's-ear
<i>Inula aschersoniana</i>	
<i>Jurinea mollis</i>	
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	Hairy Hawkbit
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Ox-eye Daisy
<i>Mycelis muralis</i>	Wall-lettuce
<i>Petasites hybridus</i>	Butterbur
<i>Scorzonera laciniata</i>	
<i>Tanacetum corymbosum</i>	
<i>Telekia speciosa</i>	Large Yellow Ox-eye
<i>Tragopogon balcanicus</i>	Balkan Goat's-beard
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Colt's-foot

Betulaceae – Birch family	
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder
<i>Alnus viridis</i>	Green Alder
Boraginaceae – Borage family	
<i>Anchusa barrelieri</i>	False Alkanet
<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>	Hound's-tongue
<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i> ssp. <i>rotatum</i>	
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Viper's-bugloss
<i>Nonea pulla</i>	
<i>Onosma arenaria</i>	Golden-drops
<i>Symphytum ottomanum</i>	Turkish Comfrey
Brassicaceae – Cabbage family	
<i>Arabis turrita</i>	Towercress
<i>Aurinaria saxatilis</i>	
<i>Berteroa incana</i>	
<i>Cardamine impatiens</i>	Narrow-leaved Bittercress
<i>Erysimum</i> sp.	
Campanulaceae – Bellflower family	
<i>Asyneuma limonifolium</i>	
<i>Campanula glomerata</i>	Clustered Bellflower
<i>Campanula lanata</i>	
<i>Campanula lingulata</i>	
<i>Campanula moesiaca</i>	
<i>Campanula orphanidea</i>	
<i>Campanula scheuchzeri</i>	
<i>Campanula sparsa</i>	
<i>Trachelium rumelianum</i>	Throatwort
Caprifoliaceae – Honeysuckle family	
<i>Sambucus ebulus</i>	Dwarf Elder
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring-tree
Caryophyllaceae – Campion family	
<i>Arenaria rhodopaea</i>	Rhodope Sandwort
<i>Cerastium decalvans</i>	
<i>Dianthus deltoides</i>	Maiden Pink
<i>Dianthus cruentus</i>	
<i>Dianthus petraeus</i>	Rock Pink
<i>Herniaria glabra</i>	Smooth Rupturewort
<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>	Rose Campion
<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged-robin
<i>Lychnis viscaria</i>	Sticky Catchfly
<i>Minuartia verna</i>	Spring Sandwort
<i>Moenchia mantica</i>	
<i>Myosoton aquaticum</i>	Water Chickweed
<i>Scleranthus perennis</i>	Perennial Knawel
<i>Silene dichotoma</i>	Forked Catchfly
<i>Silene fabarioides</i>	
<i>Silene italica</i>	Italian Catchfly
<i>Silene noctiflora</i>	Night-flowered Catchfly
<i>Silene otites</i>	Spanish Catchfly
<i>Silene roemerii</i>	
<i>Silene saxifraga</i>	
<i>Silene viridiflora</i>	
<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder Campion
Celastraceae – Spindle family	
<i>Euonymus latifolius</i>	

Cistaceae – Rock-rose family	
<i>Humana procumbens</i>	
<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	Rock-rose
Clusiaceae – St. John's-wort family	
<i>Hypericum cerastoides</i>	Aaron's Beard
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St. John's-wort
Cornaceae – Dogwood family	
<i>Cornus mas</i>	Cornelian-cherry
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood
Corylaceae – Hazel family	
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam
<i>Carpinus orientalis</i>	Eastern Hornbeam
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Ostrya carpinifolia</i>	Hop-hornbeam
Crassulaceae – Stonecrop family	
<i>Jovibarba heuffelii</i>	
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting Stonecrop
<i>Sedum album</i>	White Stonecrop
<i>Sedum hispanicum</i>	Glaucous Stonecrop
<i>Sedum sartorianum</i>	
Cuscutaceae – Dodder family	
<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	Common Dodder
Cyperaceae – Sedge family	
<i>Carex vesicaria</i>	Bladder Sedge
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	Common Spike-rush
<i>Eriophorum latifolium</i>	Broad-leaved Cotton-grass
Dipsacaceae – Teasel family	
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	Field Scabiousb
<i>Knautia drymeia</i>	Hungarian Widow-flower
<i>Morina persica</i>	Prickly Whorlflower
<i>Scabiosa rhodopensis</i>	Rhodopean Scabious
Euphorbiaceae – Spurge family	
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge
<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>	Cypress Spurge
<i>Euphorbia myrsinites</i>	Rock Spurge
<i>Euphorbia nicaeensis</i>	
<i>Euphorbia seguieriana</i>	
<i>Mercurialis ovata</i>	
Fabaceae – Pea family	
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	Kidney-vetch
<i>ssp. bulgarica</i>	
<i>Astragalus angustifolius</i>	Spiny Milk-vetch
<i>Astragalus glycyphyllos</i>	Wild Liquorice
<i>Chamaecytisus hirsutus</i>	Clustered Broom
<i>Coronilla emerus</i>	Scorpion-vetch
<i>Coronilla varia</i>	Crown Vetch
<i>Dorycnium herbaceum</i>	Prostrate Canary-clover
<i>Genista carinalis</i>	
<i>Genista januensis</i>	Genoa Broom
<i>Genista rumelica</i>	
<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>	Horseshoe Vetch
<i>Lathyrus laxiflorus</i>	
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling
<i>Lathyrus vernus</i>	Spring Pea
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick
<i>Melilotus albus</i>	White Melilot
<i>Onobrychis alba</i>	White Sainfoin
<i>Onobrychis viciifolia</i>	Sainfoin
<i>Robinia pseudacacia</i>	False Acacia
<i>Trifolium alpestre</i>	Purple Globe Clover
<i>Trifolium aureum</i>	Large Hop Trefoil
<i>Trifolium glomeratum</i>	Clustered Clover
<i>Trifolium hybridum</i>	Alsike Clover
<i>Trifolium incarnatum</i>	
<i>ssp. molinieri</i>	Long-headed Clover
<i>Trifolium medium</i>	Zig-zag Clover
<i>Trifolium ochroleucon</i>	Sulphur Clover
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch
<i>V. onobrychoides</i>	Sainfoin Vetch

Fagaceae – Beech family	
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>ssp. moesiaca</i>	
<i>Quercus dalechampii</i>	Dalechamp's Oak
Geraniaceae – Crane's-bill family	
<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	Shining Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium macrorrhizum</i>	Rock Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little Robin
<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>	Pyrenean Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Bloody Crane's-bill
Gesneriaceae – African-violet family	
<i>Haberlea rhodopensis</i>	Rhodopean Haberlea
Globulariaceae – Globularia family	
<i>Globularia cordifolia</i>	Matted Globularia
Iridaceae – Iris family	
<i>Gladiolus illyricus</i>	Wild Gladiolus
Juglandaceae – Walnut family	
<i>Juglans regia</i>	Walnut
Juncaceae – Rush Family	
<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	Greater Woodrush
Lamiaceae – Mint family	
<i>Acinos alpinus</i>	Alpine Basil-thyme
<i>Acinos arvensis</i>	Basil-thyme
<i>Acinos suaveolens</i>	
<i>Ajuga laxmannii</i>	Laxmann's Bugle
<i>Ajuga pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Bugle
<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit Dead-nettle
<i>Lamium garganicum</i>	Large Red Dead-nettle
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	Spotted Dead-nettle
<i>Marrubium frivaldskyanum</i>	
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint
<i>Memtha spicata</i>	Spear Mint
<i>Micromeria dalmatica</i>	
<i>Prunella laciniata</i>	Cut-leaved Self-heal
<i>Salvia argentea</i>	Silver Sage
<i>Salvia sclarea</i>	Clary
<i>Salvia verticillata</i>	Whorled Clary
<i>Salvia virgata</i>	Wand Sage
<i>Scutellaria altissima</i>	Tall Skullcap
<i>Sideritis scardica</i>	Mountain Tea
<i>Sideritis montana</i>	Ironwort
<i>Stachys alpina</i>	Alpine Woundwort
<i>Stachys germanica</i>	Limestone Woundwort
<i>Stachys officinalis</i>	Betony
<i>Stachys recta</i>	Yellow Woundwort
<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	Wall Germander
<i>Thymus sp.</i>	Thyme
Liliaceae – Lily family	
<i>Anthericum liliago</i>	St Bernard's Lily
<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	Meadow Saffron
<i>Lilium martagon</i>	Martagon Lily
<i>Lilium rhodopaeum</i>	Rhodope Lily
<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Tassel Hyacinth
<i>Ornithogalum montanum</i>	Mountain Star-of-Bethlehem
<i>Polygonatum odoratum</i>	Angular Solomon's-seal
<i>Veratrum lobelianum</i>	False-helleborine
Linaceae – Flax family	
<i>Linum capitatum</i>	Yellow Flax
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Purging Flax
<i>Linum tenuifolium</i>	
Moraceae – Fig family	
<i>Ficus carica</i>	Wild Fig
Oleaceae – Olive family	
<i>Fraxinus ornus</i>	Manna Ash
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	Lilac
Onagraceae – Willowherb family	
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rose-bay Willowherb
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved Willowherb

Orchidaceae – Orchid family	
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Orchid
<i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	White Helleborine
<i>Cephalanthera rubra</i>	Red Helleborine
<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Frog Orchid
<i>Corallorhiza trifida</i>	Coral-root Orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza baumanniana</i>	Baumann's Marsh-orchid
<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>	Broad-leaved Helleborine
<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	Fragrant Orchid
<i>Listera ovata</i>	Common Twayblade
<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	Bird's-nest Orchid
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	Fly Orchid
<i>Orchis coriophora</i>	Bug Orchid
<i>Orchis laxiflora</i>	Lax-flowered Orchid
<i>Orchis militaris</i>	Military Orchid
<i>Orchis morio</i> ssp. <i>picta</i>	Green-winged Orchid
<i>Orchis pinetorum</i>	Pinewood Orchid
<i>Orchis tridentata</i>	Toothed Orchid
<i>Orchis ustulata</i>	Burnt Orchid
<i>Platanthera</i> sp.	Butterfly-orchid
Orobanchaceae – Broomrape family	
<i>Orobanche alba</i>	Thyme Broomrape
<i>Orobanche ramosa</i>	Branched Broomrape
Papaveraceae – Poppy family	
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy
Plantaginaceae – Plantain family	
<i>Plantago media</i>	Hoary Plantain
<i>Plantago subulata</i>	Awl-leaved Plantain
Platanaceae – Plane family	
<i>Platanus orientalis</i>	Oriental Plane
Plumbaginaceae – Sea-lavender family	
<i>Armeria rumelica</i>	
Poaceae – Grass family	
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking-grass
<i>Hordelymus europaeus</i>	Wood Barley
<i>Milium effusum</i>	Wood Millet
<i>Stipa pennata</i>	Feather-grass
Polygalaceae – Milkwort family	
<i>Polygala major</i>	Large Milkwort
<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	Common Milkwort
Polygonaceae – Dock family	
<i>Polygonum bistorta</i>	Bistort
Primulaceae – Primrose family	
<i>Lysimachia punctata</i>	Dotted Loosestrife
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose
Pyrolaceae – Wintergreen family	
<i>Orthilia secunda</i>	Toothed Wintergreen
<i>Pyrola chlorantha</i>	Yellow Wintergreen
Ranunculaceae – Buttercup family	
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	Hepatica
<i>Ranunculus illyricus</i>	
<i>Ranunculus serbicus</i>	
<i>Ranunculus trichophyllus</i>	Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot
<i>Thalictrum aquilegifolium</i>	Greater Meadow-rue
<i>Thalictrum minus</i>	Lesser Meadow-rue
Rhamnaceae	
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	Alder-buckthorn
<i>Paliurus spina-christi</i>	Christ's Thorn

Rosaceae – Rose family	
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet
<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>	Dropwort
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry
<i>Geum coccineum</i>	
<i>Geum rivale</i>	Water Avens
<i>Potentilla argentea</i>	Hoary Cinquefoil
<i>Potentilla borisii-regis</i>	King Boris's Cinquefoil
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil
<i>Potentilla pedata</i>	
<i>Prunus padus</i>	Bird Cherry
<i>Rosa gallica</i>	French Rose
<i>Rosa pendulina</i>	Alpine Rose
<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Raspberry
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad Burnet
<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Whitebeam
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Wild Service-tree
<i>Spiraea salicifolia</i>	Bridewort
Rubiaceae – Bedstraw family	
<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	Crosswort
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw
Salicaceae – Willow family	
<i>Populus tremula</i>	Aspen
<i>Salix alba</i>	White Willow
<i>Salix purpurea</i>	Purple Willow
Santalaceae – Sandalwood family	
<i>Thesium divaricatum</i>	Bastard-toadflax
Saxifragaceae – Saxifrage family	
<i>Saxifraga paniculata</i>	Livelong Saxifrage
<i>Saxifraga rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved Saxifrage
<i>Saxifraga sempervivum</i>	Evergreen Saxifrage
<i>Saxifraga stribyrni</i>	
Scrophulariaceae – Figwort family	
<i>Digitalis lanata</i>	Grecian Foxglove
<i>Digitalis viridiflora</i>	Green Foxglove
<i>Euphrasia</i> sp.	Eyebright
<i>Linaria arvensis</i>	Common Toadflax
<i>Linaria genistifolia</i>	Balkan Toadflax
<i>Melampyrum sylvaticum</i>	Wood Cow-wheat
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle
<i>Rhinanthus wagneri</i>	
<i>Scrophularia aestivalis</i>	
<i>Scrophularia scopolii</i>	Italian Figwort
<i>Verbascum nobile</i>	Noble Mullein
<i>Verbascum phlomoides</i>	Orange Mullein
<i>Veronica austriaca</i> ssp. <i>jacquinii</i>	
<i>Veronica urticifolia</i>	Nettle-leaved Speedwell
Tiliaceae – Lime family	
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small-leaved Lime
<i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>	Large-leaved Lime
Ulmaceae – Elm family	
<i>Celtis australis</i>	Nettle-tree
Urticaceae – Nettle family	
<i>Parietaria officinalis</i>	Large Pellitory-of-the-wall
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle
Valerianaceae – Valerian family	
<i>Valeriana montana</i>	Dwarf Valerian
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	Common Valerian
Violaceae – Violet family	
<i>Viola tricolor</i>	Wild Pansy