

Belarus

Saturday 28 April – Sunday 6 May 2012

Leaders:

Barrie Cooper

Attila Steiner

Group Members:

Dave Holberton-Jones

Graham & Jo Morton

Pam Phillipson

Malcolm Porteous

Sue Stevens

Colin Leggat

John & Pam Smallwood

Summary

Hot, sunny weather throughout the week created perfect conditions to appreciate the rich biodiversity of Southern Belarus. The main areas visited were Turov, Belovezhskaya Pusha and Sporovo. Not only was the group treated to a quality list of species, we also had superb views of some of the main targets. Bird highlights included close views of an amorous pair of **Azure Tits**, **Aquatic Warbler**, **Great Grey Owl**, **Great Snipe**, **8** species of **woodpeckers**, excellent views of **Montagu's Harrier** and **Barred Warbler**. Mammals included a **Wolf** walking in front of the vehicle, a herd of **Bison** and a **Beaver** that conveniently posed on land. **Camberwell Beauty**, **Swallowtail** and **Map** butterflies added their elegant beauty for us all to enjoy.

Day 1: 28 April 2012 Arrival at Minsk Airport and journey to Turov

After a transit flight from Warsaw we finally arrived in Minsk. Unfortunately, Colin's luggage had remained at London Heathrow so we had a delay as we sorted out the paperwork for this. To save some time, we had dinner at the airport restaurant before our four hour journey to Turov. Only a little light remained and the few birds we saw would become very familiar during the coming days. The most notable sighting was a brown hare alongside the road in the gathering darkness. We arrived at our hotel in Turov around midnight.

Day 2: 29 April 2012.

A brief look over the meadows in front of the hotel gave us a swift introduction to the wealth of birdlife in this magnificent area. Waders such as lapwing, ruff and black-tailed godwit were easily seen, while serin and black redstart provided some of the background singing. We then all assembled for the short drive to a site alongside the river, less than two miles from the hotel. After five minutes of adding a few more species to the list, such as lesser whitethroat and wood warbler, Barrie spotted our target bird – azure tit. We then had the pleasure of enjoying the company of a pair of these beautiful tits nest building in a nearby garden. These special birds performed superbly to give everyone stunning views, culminating in some wing fluttering display followed by copulation. After witnessing the lovely couple's attempts to propagate their wonderful species, we moved on to continue our walk along the riverbank. Birds included garganey, spotted and common redshank, but one highlight was a male goshawk flying overhead and treating us to superb views of a raptor that can be difficult to see well. White-tailed eagle and marsh harrier and a distant greater spotted eagle were other raptors seen during this first morning. One of the most common and beautiful birds were the variety of yellow wagtails; different races included flava and thunbergi. The first brood of map butterfly was a common sight along this riverside trail and some of us took the opportunity to photograph this attractive little insect. To finish our first morning on the meadows we were treated to close views of a Terek sandpiper which is one of the specialities that Turov is famous for – there is even a statue of a pair in the main square in front of the hotel. After lunch at a local restaurant, we drove a short distance to another part of the meadows. As soon as we jumped out of the van, we were treated to two species of geese: two greater white-fronts and six tundra bean geese were sitting on the meadows just a few hundred metres away. With the light behind us, the differences between the terns were easier to pick out and whiskered, black, white-winged black and common provided another distraction to the hundreds of waders. A sparrowhawk alerted many waders to take flight, but that was nothing compared to the consternation just twenty minutes later when a peregrine put almost everything up. The peregrine reappeared soon after to give the remainder of the group a view of this top predator. The excitement did not stop as Pam P called out "glossy ibis" as one flew over the marshes. This was only the second record for Belarus, so the luck we were having on this first full day in Turov was truly amazing. We decided to take a timeout from the marshes for a short while to drive around to a local rookery where long-eared owls had nested in previous years, sure enough as soon as we arrived an adult owl was standing as a sentry close up to the trunk of a roadside tree. Our first owl of the trip and a very obliging individual.

Following a short break to return to the hotel to change into rubber boots, we returned to the marshes. The target for this evening walk was great snipe. As we approached the lek, we could see that the snipe were already strutting their stuff as a few birds could be seen jumping into the air as if they were looking out for yet another group of birdwatchers. After having good views of some of the performers and hearing their bubbling calls, we had to make our way back with some in the hand views of fire-bellied toad that we had been hearing all day. As we ate

dinner, Malcolm commented that it was the best first day of any trip he had ever been on; it was difficult to argue with that conclusion.

Day 3: 30 April 2012

At breakfast, Colin happily informed us that his luggage had finally arrived at the hotel late the previous evening. Was it an omen for another good day in the field? After satiating ourselves on the marshes yesterday, we embarked into the forest of the Pripiatsky National Park. As soon as we were out of the vehicle we were greeted by the sight and sound of a pair of hoopoe. Before we could linger too long on these, calling wrynecks decided to compete and give us equally good views. Lesser spotted eagle was our first raptor of the day and good views of this bird were appreciated by the group. Our entry into the forest was welcomed by very friendly and thirsty mosquitoes and most of the group reluctantly donated their blood to support the food web of the forest. Indeed, perhaps some of our blood eventually made its way into the stomachs of the collared and spotted flycatchers that we enjoyed. Some insects we did appreciate included silver-washed fritillary, green-veined white, orange-tip and ruby whiteface dragonfly. Hawfinches were very obliging and provided everyone with scope views to enable their full beauty to be appreciated. We had been hearing golden orioles and Jo managed to find one showing well at the top of a tree. A large clearing provided temporary respite from the mosquitoes, it also provided us with distant but reasonable views of a greater spotted eagle being mobbed by a common buzzard. The open panorama also enabled us to observe black stork and sparrowhawk. The pleasant display of a tree pipit was also in this area. But a return to blood duties was necessary, so back into the forest we went. It was worth it because a superb male lesser-spotted woodpecker showed well, soon followed by its larger cousin great. No disrespect, but GSW was not top of the priority list for woodpecker enthusiasts; surely we can find a woodpecker of more interest to British birders? As we made our return journey down the broad track to our vehicle, one of the cuckoos that we had been listening to decided to treat us to an overhead fly past. This must have inspired the black woodpecker we could hear because it gave us two fly pasts, just in case we missed the first one. We returned to the vehicle to find a black and a white stork giving us a synchronised soaring display enabling us to compare and contrast the differences between the two species. Our lunch was soon interrupted by Dave alerting us to a singing common redstart. We were almost ready to leave when one of Graham's bogey birds - white-backed woodpecker flew into a dead tree for a few seconds before flying off into the forest. We decided to try to find it, but had to settle for great views of a northern long-tailed tit instead. We headed back to Turov and to the ringing station. While we waited for the ringers to return we contented ourselves by watching musk rat having a meal in the water. After seeing birds such as ruff, redshank and yellow wagtail in the hand, it was time to make an evening visit to another part of the forest. It was worth it as we were treated to close views of another lesser-spotted eagle on the way. The wide forest trail was perfect for looking for birds and one of the prizes was a pair of middle-spotted woodpeckers that were brilliantly illuminated in the evening sunshine. An adder gave us good views before disappearing into the undergrowth and a green sandpiper was heard. But as the evening was progressing we were hoping for some mammals and we were not disappointed. A couple of red deer were seen in

the distance as they crossed the track. But not long after, three wild boar crossed with at least fifteen small young in tow. It was a remarkable sight as a continuous stream of boar exited one side of the forest to enter the other side. Our drive back to Turov was brought to an abrupt halt as we saw a red fox earth in a field. Four relatively small clubs brazenly explored their local patch watched by a cautious parent. Could things get any better? Yes, they could as Gordon the proud Scot treated us to a couple of rounds of "Donald where's your trousers?" to provide us with some in-van entertainment on our way back to the hotel.

Day 4: 1 May 2012

Another warm, sunny day began with a walk in another part of the meadows. The first notable species was a yellow-legged tortoiseshell, a butterfly most of us would have misidentified as a large tortoiseshell if it hadn't been for Attila's sharp eyes and familiarity with the species. Close views of Terek sandpipers, whinchats and a wheatear were some of the highlights of this morning, before the group split up. Those who remained saw an osprey and six Baltic gulls. The rest of us went to experience the Turov Wader Festival. This celebration of the meadows by the local community featured local schoolchildren performing on stage telling stories about the waders through song, dance, drama and even a fashion show. The highlights included four children performing a ruff dance, a girl dressed as a Terek sandpiper singing a beautiful song, and a group of children dressed as lapwings singing another poignant song. Barrie was presented with two books of the meadows written and illustrated by local children. When walking around the various stalls at the festival, John and Pam S were given a hand carved Terek sandpiper by a local craftsman. Meanwhile, Malcolm had made a new friend in the Dutch ambassador.

The festival goers had to leave it before its end in order to join the rest of the group for the hour long drive to Beloe fishponds. The star of the show here was smew and we saw a few pairs scattered on the various ponds. Other waterbirds included black-necked and great-crested grebes, goldeneye and a booming bittern. On a drained pond were a group of black storks and Jo spotted our first common sandpipers of the trip. A great reed warbler obligingly sang out in the open for its admiring audience. A few white-tailed eagles flew around, one of which caught a fish, while a female Montagu's harrier flew in front of us to try to steal the show. On our drive back to the hotel we had excellent views of a black kite. A sign showed the temperature to be 26 degrees C at 18.45 in the evening, typical of the hot and sunny weather we had enjoyed all week.

Day 5: 2 May 2012

We checked out of the hotel to embark on our long drive to Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. A stop near the bridge over the River Pripyat gave us white-tailed and lesser-spotted eagles, osprey, Montagu's and marsh harriers. A stop at a service station for an ice cream gave us a swallowtail to keep us entertained. After checking into our hotel at Kameniuki, we went for

a pre-dinner stroll. There were several spotted flycatchers performing and we soon had very good views of crested tit - a reminder to Malcolm of his Scottish homeland and the logo of the SOC. Ravens were a common sight and one obligingly perched at the top of a tree in full evening sunlight. A lesser-spotted eagle flew low over our heads and a black woodpecker was calling in the distance, while redstarts and black redstarts showed well in the animal enclosures. As we were returning to the hotel the calls of grey-headed woodpecker beckoned us; it conveniently perched in a tree to give us good views of yet another target species. Before we could make it into the hotel for dinner, Sue found our first treecreeper of the trip to end a brief, but quality walk.

Day 6:3 May 2012

Our first destination today was a reservoir where we had brief views of a whooper swan in flight. We then moved onto an open area of grassland surrounded by forest. This place was popular with lesser spotted eagles as there were several around. A distant short-toed eagle was very welcome and three cranes in flight added to the variety. We then moved onto a boggy area where there were three more cranes probing around. Lesser spotted eagle was also here, but a spotted eagle helped to reinforce the identification techniques for separating these two aquilas. A thrush nightingale provided some of the background sound. Four spotted chaser and ruby whiteface were two dragonfly species here. We then stopped for lunch near an area of grassland that provided a welcome hors d'oeuvres – fourteen bison. They were distant but the size difference between the adults and young was very obvious. We then drove off to a destination that had a specific target, but before we got there we did an emergency stop to savour the king of butterflies in this writer's opinion – Camberwell Beauty. It was being hassled by three Map butterflies and eventually flew off into the forest. Just five minutes later we had another fortuitous road observation. A wolf crossed the road less than forty metres in front of us. Most of the group managed to see it as went into the forest before it eventually melted away. Lady luck was still smiling on us. We eventually reached our destination for a twenty minute walk into some old, undisturbed forest. Before we arrived at our end point, a few of us had a brief glimpse of a male great grey owl flying through the forest. But the rest of the group were not disappointed for long, as we arrived at the nest of a great grey owl with the female sitting on it and sunbathing in the afternoon heat. While there, three people saw a racoon dog to add another tick to the list. Before we headed back to the hotel, we watched a red fox hunting in a meadow – today had been a very good day for seeing predators.

Day 7: 4 May 2012

After watching a pair of spotted flycatchers squatting in a house martin nest on the hotel we set off for a short drive to a forest in the southern part of the park. Our main target was pygmy owl and it didn't take too long to see one. A red squirrel and tau emperor moth were also in the same area. As we ventured further we heard a red-breasted flycatcher and eventually had superb views of a singing male. Attila commented that his first record of rbf last year was 15

May, so this prolonged spell of hot, sunny weather had assisted us once again. A middle spotted woodpecker also showed well, allowing scope views. A few wild boar were not quite as cooperative and it was rear end views of them. Once we had finished our trek through the forest we decided to have our picnic lunch near the van. It was a good decision because a barred warbler was singing close by, another migrant that had probably just arrived as a result of this amazing weather. We left the national park to drive to Beloazersk and on the way we saw our first great grey shrike perched on roadside wires. Prior to the shrike we had stopped at the mediaeval Kamenetskaya Tower. Not surprisingly, natural history was a priority over ancient history, particularly as a pair of Montagu's harriers were showing really well over the reedbed below us. The afternoon light brought out the beauty of this elegant raptor. After checking into our hotel, we went out to Sporovo nature reserve. A bittern was heard booming by some of the group and one of us saw a bittern flying over the reedbed. A spotted crane was also heard at the same spot. We then moved on to another part of the reserve in the hope of seeing aquatic warbler. A few were heard singing, but were proving to be elusive. Eventually most of us had decent but brief views of a bird. We were about to leave when another one was located and this fully cooperated. The group were treated to excellent scope views of a male singing continuously until eventually we had to leave him to return to the hotel for a late dinner. The view of the aquatic warbler in full song will linger in the memories of us all for some time.

Day 8: 5 May 2012

We left the hotel for the start of a long day in cool and drizzly conditions, a total contrast to what we had for the previous seven days. Our first brief stop was for fieldfare and wryneck could also be heard calling. We arrived at Sporovo reserve and after one distant individual, we had excellent prolonged views of two singing male bluethroats. In the same area, scope views of a pair of citrine wagtails were followed by that male having a dispute with another male. Savi's warbler was heard but failed to reveal itself. After a picnic lunch, we drove to Sielets fishponds, pausing briefly to watch three crested larks. The sun had come out mid morning, and now the weather had reverted to the hot and sunny conditions we had become familiar with. Birds included red-throated diver, Heuglin's, Caspian and little gulls, curlew sandpiper and ruff. Red-backed shrikes had arrived, and barred warbler showed superbly in the scope. Everybody managed to see a thrush nightingale and turtle dove was heard. By now it was mid evening, so our focus turned to a channel running parallel to the track in the hope of spotting a beaver. It took awhile, but eventually Jo spotted one swimming. Only three of us saw that individual and despite a lot of searching and waiting, it did not reappear while we there. It was approaching nine o'clock so we had to leave for dinner back at the hotel, and it was with a sense of sadness for those who hadn't had that brief glimpse of the beaver. However, after just a few minutes of driving, Atitila saw another beaver swimming in the channel adjacent to a different part of the track. We all watched from the van as the beaver swam up and down for a couple of minutes, and then we had the bonus of it crawling onto the bank so we could see it in all its damp splendour. It dragged itself back into the water and swam in the opposite direction to the way the van was facing, so we agreed it really was time to head back to the hotel. The journey threw up a long-eared owl in one of the villages and, as we were driving through an agricultural

area, a nightjar suddenly flew up and hit the windscreen of the van. A sad end to what had been another outstanding day.

Day 9: 6 May 2012

We made an early start for the drive to Minsk Airport. The most notable sighting was the occasional Montagu's harrier. After removing our luggage from the van we said goodbye to Attila at the end of a truly memorable trip. A great list of species seen and with good views of most species, with the bonus of amazingly hot and sunny weather.

SPECIES LISTS

BIRDS - AVES

GROUSE, PHEASANTS & allies – Phasianidae

Hazel Grouse *Tetrastes bonasia* 1 female on the 3rd seen by the roadside and then perched in a tree

GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS - Anatidae

Tundra Bean Goose *Anser serrirostris* 6 seen on Turov meadow on the 29th

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* 2 seen on Turov meadow on the 29th

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* Seen each day

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* 1 seen in flight at Lake Liadskoye on the 3rd

Gadwall *Anas strepera* Seen on 4 days with good numbers at the Beloe Fishponds

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* 1 on Turov meadow and 2 at the Beloe Fishponds

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Seen every day in good numbers

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Seen every day in the Turov region in good numbers

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* 6 seen on day 2 on Turov meadow

Garganey *Anas querquedula* 10+ at Beloe Fishponds and singletons on 3 further days

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* Several pairs at Beloe Fishponds and 2 at Sielets Ponds

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* 6 on Turov meadow, many at Beloe and Sielets Fishponds

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* 6 on Turov meadow, many at Beloe and Sielets Fishponds

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* 10+ at Beloe Fishponds

Smew *Mergellus albellus* 4 pairs and a male seen well at Beloe Fishponds

DIVERS - Gaviidae

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata* 1 in winter plumage on Sielets Reservoir

GREBES - Podicipedidae

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Many at Beloe and Sielets Fishponds

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* 10+ at Beloe Fishponds, 2 at Sielets Fishponds

STORKS - Ciconiidae

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* Seen almost every day in good numbers

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* Seen every day, a common farmland bird

IBISES & SPOONBILLS - *Threskiornithidae*

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* 1 seen in flight above Turov meadow on day 2

HERONS & BITTERNs - *Ardeidae*

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* Heard at Beloe Fishponds and 1 seen by Barrie at the ferry crossing in Sporovo Reserve

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Seen most days

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Seen most days in good numbers

CORMORANTS - *Phalacrocoracidae*

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Many seen at Beloe and Sielets Fishponds

OSPREY - *Pandionidae*

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* 1 seen on Turov meadow and 1 on the northern side of Pripiat river on the 2nd

HAWKS, EAGLES & allies - *Accipitridae*

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* 1 seen on day 2 in the Turov region

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* 2 seen by the roadside near Zhitkavichi on 1st May

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* Several seen in the Turov region and at Beloe and Sielets Fishponds

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* 1 seen in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP soaring above the meadow

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Common, seen every day

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* Observed on 4 days, adult males and females as well

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* Singles seen on 4 different days

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* 1 immature bird hunting above Turov meadow was seen on day 2 and 4

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* Common, seen on most days

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* 2 on day 3, 2 on day 5 and 10+ in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on the 3rd

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* Singles on day 2 and 3 in the Turov region, 1 bird perched and then in flight in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

FALCONS & allies - *Falconidae*

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Only 1 on the way from Turov to Kameniuki

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* 1 hunting above Turov meadow on day 2

RAILS, CRAKES & COOTS - *Rallidae*

Corn Crake *Crex crex* 1 heard on day 2

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* Heard in Sporovo Reserve on day 7

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Heard at Turov meadow on day 4

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* 10+ at Beloe Fishponds and 1 at Sielets Reservoir

CRANES - Gruidae

Common Crane *Grus grus* 8 observed soaring above Turov meadow, 6 seen in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP and singles seen in Sporovo Reserve

OYSTERCATCHERS – Hematopodidae

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* Observed on 3 days in the Turov region with a daily maximum of 4 birds

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS - Charadriidae

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* Seen every day in good numbers

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* Observed in the Turov region on 3 days

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* 1 seen at Sielets Reservoir only

SANDPIPERS, SNIPES & allies - Scolopacidae

Great Snipe *Gallinago media* More than 10 birds seen lekking on day 2 at Turov

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Seen on 4 days including displaying birds

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Common breeder in the Turov region

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* Seen daily in the Turov region with more than 50 on day 2

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Common breeding bird on Turov meadow, seen daily

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Seen on 3 days in the Turov region

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* 2 seen in Pripiatsky NP and 1 heard in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Common in the Turov region, seen on 3 days

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* 4 seen on day 2 and 6 on day 4 on Turov meadow

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* 5 at Beloe Fishponds, 6 at Lake Liadskoye and 3 at Sporovo Reserve

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* 1 moulting into summer plumage at Beloe Reservoir

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* 1 seen on day 2 and 8 on day 4 on Turov meadow

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Thousands seen on Turov meadow including many colourful males, 30+ seen at Sielets Reservoir

GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS - Laridae

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Seen every day

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* 2 observed on day 2 and 1 on day 3 in the Turov region, 10+ at Sielets Reservoir on day 8

Mew Gull *Larus canus* Several at Beloe Fishponds

European Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* 2 adults at Beloe Fishponds

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* 4 on day 2 on Turov meadow, many at Beloe and Sielets Fishponds

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* 6 seen flying high above Turov meadow on day 4

Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini* 1 seen flying above Sielets Fishponds on day 8

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Seen every day in the Turov region in good numbers

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Seen every day

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* The less common of the marsh terns, but seen in good numbers on 4 days

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Seen on 4 days with more than hundred on day 2 at Turov

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* Seen on 6 days in good numbers

PIGEONS & DOVES - Columbidae

Rock Dove (i) *Columba livia feral* Common, seen every day

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* 1 observed on day 2, several in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus* Common, seen every day

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* 1 heard and briefly seen by some at Sielets Reservoir

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* Seen almost daily in towns

CUCKOOS - Cuculidae

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* Heard or seen every day

OWLS - Strigidae

Great Grey Owl *Strix nebulosa* 1 female on the nest and 1 male seen briefly by some on day 6 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

Eurasian Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium passerinum* Scope views of 1 bird in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* 1 bird perched in a tree near Turov, 1 observed flying in Berioza

NIGHTJARS - Caprimulgidae

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* 1 bird seen by some before it hit the windscreen near Beloazersk

SWIFTS - Apodidae

Common Swift *Apus apus* 1 on the drive to Kameniuki on day 5, 5 on day 7 and several on day 8 in Beloazersk

KINGFISHERS - Alcedinidae

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Singles at Sporovo Reserve on day 7 and 8

HOOPOES - Upupidae

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* 2 in Pripiatsky NP on day 3 and 1 heard on day 8

WOODPECKERS - Picidae

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* 2 in Pripiatsky NP on day 3 and 1 heard on day 8

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* 1 seen in Pripiatsky NP on day 3

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius* 2 observed in Pripiatsky NP on day 3 and 1 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 7

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* 2 observed in Pripiatsky NP on day 3

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus* 1 seen in Turov on day 2 and 1 on day 5

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* Seen or heard on most days

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* 1 seen in Pripiatsky NP on day 3 and heard on 3 other days

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* 1 seen in Pripiatsky NP on day 3 and 1 on day 5 and 7 in Kameniuki at our hotel

SHRIKES - Laniidae

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* 3 males seen on day 8 at Sielets Reservoir

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* 1 seen along the road into Beloazersk

OLD WORLD ORIOLES - Oriolidae

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* 2 seen on day 3 near Turov, others heard on day 7 and 8

CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES - Corvidae

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Seen every day in small numbers

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* Seen on most days

Western Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula* Common in villages and towns, seen on most days

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* Common, seen on most days

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* Common, seen on most days

Northern Raven *Corvus corax* Common, seen every day

TITS & CHICKADEES - Paridae

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris* Heard on day 3 in Pripiatsky NP

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus* 1 seen well in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6

Coal Tit *Periparus ater* Heard every day in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

European Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* 2 seen well in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 5 and 2 at Sporovo Reserve on day 8

Great Tit *Parus major* Common, seen every day

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* Common, seen every day

Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus* 2 seen on day 2 near Turov

PENDULINE TITS - Remizidae

Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* 2 seen on day 2 near Turov, 1 at Sielets Reservoir on day 8

LARKS - Alaudidae

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* 3 seen by the roadside on day 8 en route to Sielets Fishponds

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* Common, seen every day

SWALLOWS & MARTINS - Hirundinidae

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* Seen on 4 days

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Common, seen every day

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* Common, seen every day

LONG-TAILED TITS AND BUSHTITS - Aegithalidae

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* 1 seen on day 3 at Turov and 2 on day 8 at Sielets Reservoir

OLD WORLD WARBLERS - Sylviidae

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Common, seen and heard every day

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* Common, seen and heard most days

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* Common, seen and heard every day

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* 4 at Beloe Fishponds, several at Sielets Fishponds

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* 2 seen and 2 more heard at Sporovo Reserve on day 7

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Several seen on the edge of Turov meadow, many at Sporovo Reserve

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* 1 heard singing at Sielets Fishponds

Common Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* 2 seen at Sporovo Reserve on day 7

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* Heard at Sporovo Reserve on day 7 and 8

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* Common, seen or heard every day

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* Heard on day 3 at Turov and on day 6 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* Heard on day 7 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP and 1 male seen well at Sielets Fishponds

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* Common, seen or heard every day

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* Common, seen on most days

CRESTS & KINGLETS - Regulidae

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* 1 seen well on day 6 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

WRENS - Troglodytidae

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* Heard in Pripiatsky NP and in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

NUTHATCHES & WALLCREEPER - Sittidae

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* Seen on 4 days in the forests in Pripiatsky NP and in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

TREECREEPERS - Certhiidae

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* Singles seen in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

STARLINGS - Sturnidae

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* Common, seen every day

THRUSHES - Turdidae

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* Seen on 4 days in the forest
Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* Several at Sporovo Reserve on day 8
Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* Heard or seen on most days
Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* 2 seen on day 6 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

OLD WORLD CHATS & FLYCATCHERS - Muscicapidae

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* Seen or heard most days
Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* 3 singing males of the white spotted nominate race seen in Sporovo Reserve
Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* Heard on 3 days and finally seen well on day 8 at Sielets Reservoir
Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* Seen on most days in villages and towns
Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 1 seen on day 3 in Pripiatsky NP, 2 on day 5 and 7 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP
Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* Common, seen every day
Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* 1 seen on Turov meadow on day 4
Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* 1 observed on day 3 in Pripiatsky NP, several on day 5-7 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP
European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* Seen on most days in the forests
Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* 4 observed in Pripiatsky NP on day 3, 1 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 7
Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* 1 singing male on day 7 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

OLD WORLD SPARROWS & allies - Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Common, seen most days
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Common, seen most days

WAGTAILS & PIPITS - Motacillidae

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* Common, seen every day
Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* 2 males and a female seen at Sporovo Reserve on day 8
White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* Common, seen every day
Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* Seen on most days
Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* 3 singing birds seen on day 3 in Pripiatsky NP and 1 seen on day 7 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

FINCHES & allies - Fringillidae

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* Common, seen every day
European Serin *Serinus serinus* Common, seen every day
European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* Common, seen most days
Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus* Seen on day 6 and 7 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP
European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* Common, seen every day
Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* Common, seen most days
Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* Leader only, heard by Attila in the morning of day 6 at Kameniuki

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* 10+ seen on day 3 in Pripiatsky NP, several on day 6 and 7 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP

BUNTINGS, NEW WORLD SPARROWS & allies - Emberizidae

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* Common, seen every day

Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* Common, seen most days

MAMMALS – MAMMALIA

RABBITS & HARES - Leporidae

Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus* 1 en route not far from the airport on 28th April

SQUIRRELS - Sciuridae

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* 1 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 7

BEAVERS - Castoridae

Eurasian Beaver *Castor fiber* 1 seen by a few in canal adjacent to Sielets Reservoir and 1 seen by all in another nearby canal on day 8

MICE, RATS, VOLES & GERBILS - Muridae

Muskrat *Ondatra zibeticus* 1 seen by a few in Sporovo Reserve on day 8

WOLVES & FOXES - Canidae

Grey Wolf *Canis lupus* 1 walked across the road in front of our bus in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* 1 adult with 4 young on day 3 in Pripiatsky NP, 1 en route to Kameniuki on day 5 and 1 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6

Raccoon Dog *Nyctereutes procyonoides* 1 seen by a lucky few as it ran past at the Grey Grey Owl site in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6

PIGS - Suidae

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* 3 adults with 15 piglets on day 3 in Pripiatsky NP, 4 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 7

BOVIDS - Bovidae

European Bison *Bison bonasus* 14 animals, adults and youngsters seen in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6

DEER - Cervidae

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* 4 in Pripiatsky NP on day 3

Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus* 2 in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 7

REPTILES – REPTILIA

Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* Seen at Sielets Reservoir on day 8

Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* 1 at Beloe Fishponds on day 4

European Adder *Vipera berus* 1 in Pripiatsky NP on day 3

AMPHIBIANS – AMPHIBIA

Fire-bellied Toad *Bombina bombina* Seen on several days at wetlands

Green Toad *Bufo viridis* Seen in Pripiatsky NP on day 3 and heard at Sielets Reservoir on day 8

Tree Frog *Hyla arborea* Recorded in Pripiatsky NP on day 3

Common Frog *Rana temporaria* Seen at various forest sites

Marsh Frog *Rana ridibunda* Common at wetlands

BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS – LEPIDOPTERA

Swallowtail *Papilio machaon* Common, seen every day

Large White *Pieris brassicae* Common, seen most days

Small White *Pieris rapae* Common, seen every day

Green-veined White *Pieris napi* Common, seen every day

Orange Tip *Anthocaris cardamines* Common, seen most days

Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni* Common, seen most days

Wood White *Leptidea sinapis* Common, seen most days

Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi* Seen on 2 days

Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus* Common, seen most days

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* Recorded on 2 days

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui* Only seen on day 4

Peacock Butterfly *Inachis io* Common, seen every day

Comma *Polygonia c-album* Seen on day 2 only

Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell *Nymphalis xanthomelas* 1 specimen seen on day 4 at Turov meadow

Camberwell Beauty *Nymphalis antiopa* 2 seen in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6, 1 at Sporovo Reserve on day 8

Map Butterfly *Araschnia levana* Spring brood, common, seen every day

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria* Common, seen most days

DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES - ODONATA

Siberian Winter Damsel *Sympecma paedisca* 1 seen on day 8 at Sielets Reservoir

Variable Bluet *Coenagrion pulchellum* 1 seen on day 8 at Sielets Reservoir

Hairy Hawker *Brachytron pratense* Seen at Sporovo Reserve

Downy Emerald *Cordulia aenea* Seen on day 8 at Sielets Reservoir

Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* Many freshly emerged specimens in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6

Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa* Many freshly emerged specimens in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6

Ruby Whiteface *Leucorrhinia rubicunda* Seen in Belavezhskaya Pusha NP on day 6