



**Hungarianbirdwatching.com**

Address: H-1214 Budapest, Rózsa u 9/b, Hungary

Tel/Fax: +36-1-2768827

Email: mail@hungarianbirdwatching.com

## **Spring tour “A” Lake Fertő-Hanság-Tata-Gerecse Mountains-Kiskunság (6 day, 5 nights)**

*During this 6-days (5 nights) tour we will visit 3 National Parks. Fertő-Hanság NP, Duna-Ipoly NP (Tata and Gerecse) and Kiskunság NP offering us the opportunity to see a great variety of habitats and birds. During birding we try to see the most characteristics birds of Hungary, the Great Bustard, Great White Egret, White Stork, Imperial and White-tailed Eagle, Saker, Red-footed Falcon, various woodpeckers, warblers, Bee-eater, Roller and many other species. Hungary is famous about its spas, so we won't miss to try out a thermal bath during our tour. We also visit wonderful towns and villages, Unesco World Heritage areas and historic castles. And of course we will taste prize-winning Hungarian wines and will enjoy the Hungarian cuisine in a csárda.*





## Hungarianbirdwatching.com

Address: H-1214 Budapest, Rózsa u 9/b, Hungary

Tel/Fax: +36-1-2768827

Email: mail@hungarianbirdwatching.com

### Day 1

#### Birding around Lake Fertő, visiting Esterházy Palace

##### *Overnight Sarród*

Our tour will start in Budapest, where we pick you up and will drive to Lake Fertő, a large saline lake situated on the Austrian-Hungarian border. The Hungarian part of the lake (an area of 75 km<sup>2</sup>), is 88% covered by reedbeds (Phragmites), and adjacent mesophile and wet saline grasslands. In this area we will spend three nights in a small village called Sarród.

We will be accommodated in a traditionally renovated pension which has a large garden with sheeps and goats. The garden also attracts various songbirds, ideal for early morning birding. The headquarters of the Fertő-hanság NP is some ten minutes walk from the house.

In the morning we will be birding at the South-East part of Lake Fertő and will see Great White Egrets and Grey Herons, but Purple Heron, Little Egret and Spoonbill can also appear. (Great White Egret is a symbolic bird of Lake Fertő and the Hungarian nature conservation, since it almost died out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But thanks to the work of the “Egret Guards” who were guarding Egrets and Egret nests by guns its population started to grow.) Various gulls and terns possible to see like Mediterranean Gull, Black-headed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Common, Whiskered Tern and Black Tern.

Lake Fertő is an ideal habitat for geese and ducks likely we will see Greylag Goose, Shelduck, Gadwal, Teal, Mallard, Garganey, Shoveler, Red-crested Pochard, Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Tufted Duck. We will also have chance to see different raptors in the area like Marsh Harrier, Kestrel and Buzzards.

Depending on water conditions at the managed flooded areas of the lake we have good chance to see Black-winged Stilt, Avocet, Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Redshank, Ruff but Ringed and Little Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper are also possible.



*Lake Fertő*



*Sarród*



*Great White Egret*



*Ferruginous Duck*



*Avocet*



## Hungarianbirdwatching.com

Address: H-1214 Budapest, Rózsa u 9/b, Hungary

Tel/Fax: +36-1-2768827

Email: mail@hungarianbirdwatching.com

The reedbeds of the Lake also offers an excellent habitat for different warblers. Reed, Great Reed, Moustached, Sedge, Savi's and Grasshopper Warblers can be likely seen and heard in this time of the year.

On the adjacent area and nearby farm buildings Yellow Wagtail, White Wagtail, House and Tree Sparrows, Crested Lark, Sky Larks, Red-backed Shrike, Swift, house Martin and Black Redstart are regular.



*Great Reed Warbler*

We will also visit a place where the European Sousliks live. These species are globally endangered and Hungary is the most Western country in Europe where it lives. The Souslik is very important, because it is the most significant prey of the Saker Falcon and also for Imperial Eagle.



*European Souslik*

Later afternoon we will visit the Esterházy Palace. The 126-room Esterházy Palace, also called the "Hungarian Versailles", was built in the 18th century. Hungary's richest aristocratic family, the Esterházy's were great patrons of music. Joseph Haydn spent more than thirty years as a court composer in the palace and composed many of his famous works during this period. In the old gardens of the castle Green and Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Chaffinch, Serin, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Linnet, Nuthatch, Jackdaw can be seen.



*Esterházy Castle*

In the evening we will drive to Fertőboz where we will have our dinner in a Csárda. The Csárda is a typical Hungarian village restaurant which served as restaurant, pub, meeting point and dance hall for village folks. (Here comes the name of the dance czardas) In the csárda we will taste some traditional Hungarian foods.



*Wine Cellar*

Optional program: Wine and some local redwines.

## Day 2

### Visiting Fertőrákos quarry, Unesco World Heritage landscape and cooking a traditional goulash

#### *Overnight Sarród*

On this day we will visit different areas of Fertő Lake, and during a morning birding we will give second chance to see the birds we missed on day one. We will also visit iconic villages around Fertő-Neusiedler Lake, which is a Unesco World Heritage site in Cultural Landscape



*Lake Fertő*



## Hungarianbirdwatching.com

Address: H-1214 Budapest, Rózsa u 9/b, Hungary

Tel/Fax: +36-1-2768827

Email: mail@hungarianbirdwatching.com

category since 2001. The Fertő Lake area has been the meeting place of different cultures for eight millennia. This is graphically demonstrated by its varied landscape, the result of an evolutionary symbiosis between human activity and the physical environment. The remarkable rural architecture of the villages surrounding the lake and several 18th- and 19th-century palaces adds to the area's considerable cultural interest. We will pass through Fertőszéplak to see the old traditional buildings of the village and stop at certain places having excellent view on the lake.

Afternoon we will drive to Fertőrákos where we can see the open-air museum of a former stone quarry. This area was once covered by sea (the Pannonian Sea) the existence of which is witnessed by the fossils on the walls of the quarry. The Romans exploited the 10-12 million-year-old Lajta limestone to build the walls of Sopron, which they called Scarbantia. This stone was a popular building material in the past few centuries because it was easy to carve. Quarrying the stone created vast empty spaces. The remaining unusable layers cover the halls like enormous ceilings. The interior of the halls remind us of ancient Egyptian rock temples. The Rock Buckthorn Educational Path presents the values of fauna and flora and leads us to the so called Pan-European Monument. The metal sculpture, representing a piece of the 'iron curtain', recalls the memory of the border opening on 19 August, 1989. The open-air museum invites us to an exciting time travel.

In the evening we will make together a traditional Hungarian Goulash soup, and you will learn how to prepare it and you can amaze your guests in the future. The essentials of a good goulash are Hungarian Red Paprika powder, red wine and good beef with vegetables, potato and bay leaves.

### Day 3

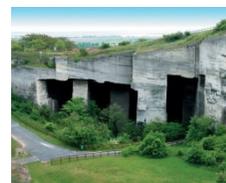
#### **Birding in Hanság, visiting Sárvár or Bükfürdő spa**

##### *Overnight Sarród*

Morning we will drive to Hanság our next birding destination. Hanság is a poorly-drained flood-plain, once together with Fertő it was Hungary's biggest marshland. This beautiful region, divided into wet meadows, alder woods and open water areas, ensures an excellent habitat for several raptor species, song- and water birds.



*Fertőszéplak*



*Fertőrákos quarry*



*Inside the quarry*



*Goulash*



*Hanság*



## Hungarianbirdwatching.com

Address: H-1214 Budapest, Rózsa u 9/b, Hungary

Tel/Fax: +36-1-2768827

Email: mail@hungarianbirdwatching.com

We will see White Storks and passing through small villages we can see how these birds live together with humans and build nests on the chimneys. In the woods of Hanság if we are fortunate, beside many other species we can see here Black Stork, Black Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Middle Spotted Woodpecker. On others parts Red-backed Shrike, Lesser Grey Shrike, Stonechat, Yellowhammer Corn Bunting can be seen. Calls of Cuckoo and song of Golden Oriole we likely hear and with some luck we can also spot these birds as well.

During our trip we will visit an area, where Saker Falcon nests, we hope in 2013 they will nest on the same old tree as in the past 8 years. Hanság is also a home of eagles, Imperial Eagle and White-tailed Eagle can be seen circling in the sky assuming good weather conditions. Marsh Harrier, Kestrel, Buzzard likely we will see, and if we are very lucky we can see Red Kite, Black Kite as well.

During birding we also visit a Bee-eater colony and a very successful habitat restoration at Bősárkány, where a marshland was restored. Here we see Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Little Bittern, Night Heron, Great White Egret, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Spoonbill, Greylag Goose, Shelduck, Mallard, Shoveler, Red-crested Pochard, Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Lapwing, Black-headed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Common Tern, Black Tern.

In the late afternoon we will drive to Sárvár a small town in Transdanubia, which has a very nice castle and park. After having a short walk around the castle, we will drive to the thermal bath of Sárvár. We will relax in the warm thermal water and leave the bath in the evening hours. (alternatively we can visit Bükfürdő, another village famous of its thermal hotels and bath).

We will have our dinner in friendly restaurant.



*Lesser Grey Shrike*



*White-tailed Eagle*



*Night Heron*



*Sárvár Castle*



*Spa in Sárvár*



*Spa in Sárvár*



*Spa in Sárvár*



## Hungarianbirdwatching.com

Address: H-1214 Budapest, Rózsa u 9/b, Hungary

Tel/Fax: +36-1-2768827

Email: mail@hungarianbirdwatching.com

### Day 4 Birding at Tata *Overnight Tata*

After breakfast we will drive to our next destination Tata. Tata is Baroque little town, that surrounds the picturesque and protected Ramsar area, the Old Lake. We will spend two days and two nights here before going to Kiskunság.

We will be birding in the soft wood groves of Lake Öreg of Tata where we have the opportunity to see different woodpeckers. Six woodpecker species are living in this grove and we hope we can see Great-, Middle- and Lesser-Spotted, Syrian, Green or even Black Woodpecker as well. In the parks surrounding the Old Lake we can see and hear a lot of songbirds, finches and thrushes like Chaffinch, Serin, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Robin, Blackcap, Wood Warbler, Chiffchaff, Great and Blue Tit, Song Thrush.

On the lake we can spot different herons, ducks and other waterfowls e.g. Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Greylag Goose, Mallard, Red-crested Pochard, Pochard, Coot but with some luck to see Kingfisher is also possible which is nesting at the lake.

In the second part of the day we will go to Ferencmajor 8 km from Tata where 13 fishponds located adjacent and give the birds an excellent habitat. Mostly water birds can be observed like Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Night Heron, Great White Egret, Grey Heron, Bittern, Black Stork, Greylag Goose, Mallard, Garganey, Shoveler, Red-crested Pochard.

But we can find here Stonechat, Whinchat, Barred Warbler, Savi's Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Bearded Reedling, Penduline Tit, Corn Bunting too.

Raptors can appear as well like Marsh Harrier, Hobby or with some luck even White-tailed Eagle.

In late afternoon and in the evening we will walk in the oldtown of Tata and will see some historic buildings. We will have our dinner in a friendly restaurant at the Old Lake.



*Tata*



*Syrian  
Woodpecker*



*Grey Heron*



*Red-crested  
Pochard*



*Sedge Warbler*



*Watermill in Tata*



## Hungarianbirdwatching.com

Address: H-1214 Budapest, Rózsa u 9/b, Hungary

Tel/Fax: +36-1-2768827

Email: mail@hungarianbirdwatching.com

### Day 4

#### Birding in Gerecse Mountains

##### *Overnight Tata*

This day we will start birding in Tata near to the hotel, also visiting another nice park in the town the English Park, an 18th-century landscaped park of Ferenc Esterházy. The park was built from 1783, when the first trees were planted around the artificial Cseke Lake. The old trees of the park offer excellent habitat for various birds so we can give a second chance to see Middle and Lesser Spotted, Syrian, Green Woodpeckers and most songbirds we missed on the previous day.

As the weather warms up we will drive to Gerecse Mountains. The Gerecse Mountain is of fossil origin and despite of its small area approximately hundred bird species are nesting and living here. The variety of habitats (forests, shrublands, grasslands, agricultural areas) offer good conditions for biodiversity.

Blackcap, Wood Warbler, Chiffchaff, Spotted Flycatcher, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Golden Oriole, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Whinchat, Stonechat, Turtle Dove, Wood Pigeon are regular. Gerecse is also good habitat for raptors, in good weather condition we can have the chance to see White-tailed Eagle and Saker. The bushy parts of the Gerecse offer us to see Yellowhammer, Corn Bunting, Tree Sparrow, and Red-backed Shrike.



*Middle Spotted  
Woodpecker*



*Gerecse  
Mountains*



*Red-backed Shrike*

**Optional program – Winetasting:** In the evening we will visit one of Hungary's most famous cellar the Hilltop Cellar in Neszmély, a small village not far from Tata. The wines of this cellar won several prizes both in Hungary and abroad and in 2004 it was the “Wine-cellar of the year” and also won the “Excellent wine-cellar of Hungary” award. Upon tasting the famous Hilltop wines, you will understand why we have visited this cellar.



*Neszmély,  
Hilltop Cellar*

### Day 6

#### Birding in Kiskunság

##### *Return to Budapest*

After checking out from the hotel, we will drive to **Kiskunság** to visit the National Park. Kiskunság like Hortobágy is a big “Pusta” (steppe) with grasslands, saline lakes, fishpond systems and in certain areas quicksand. The main objective is to see the Great Bustard, which is also a symbolic bird of Hungary.





## Hungarianbirdwatching.com

Address: H-1214 Budapest, Rózsa u 9/b, Hungary

Tel/Fax: +36-1-2768827

Email: mail@hungarianbirdwatching.com

The Great Bustard is a resident bird in Hungary and one of its highest populations can be found in Kiskunság. Usually it can be seen in larger flocks (30-40 species) and it is an unforgettable experience when you see them in flying. If we are fortunate on the steppe we will also see different birds of prey like Buzzard, Kestrel, Merlin, Red-footed Falcon or another symbolic bird of Hungary the Saker.

In the afternoon we will also go to a fishpond. Depending on water conditions at the fishponds we have chance to see Ruffs, Redshanks, Spotted Redshanks, Lapwings, Avocets, Marsh Sandpipers and many Grey Herons, Great White Egrets and with good chance Squacco Herons, Purple Herons, Spoonbills. Very likely we will see and hear Sedge Warblers and Great Reed Warblers as well. We will have a chance to see raptors like Mars Harrier or if we are fortunate even White-tailed Eagle.

In Kiskunság we can also see some birds, which are very typical for this area, like White and Yellow Wagtails, White Storks, Corn Buntings, Stonechats, Tree Sparrows, Sky and Crested Larks, Red-backed Shrikes, Pheasant and Marsh Harriers. On certain fields, Greylag Geese can be seen as well. We will have good chance to see Bee-eaters and with some luck even Rollers.

We finish our trip birding at Kiskunság, and get back to Budapest late afternoon.

### Disclaimer

We cannot guarantee good birding weather and cannot guarantee that all the birds or any of the specific birds listed in our itinerary can be observed. We take no responsibility for any damages, lost or injuries during the trip, so please arrange proper insurance. Some programs may change due to unfavorable weather conditions or unforeseen reasons.

*Kiskunság*



*Great Bustard*



*Great White Egret*



*Bee-eater*