

New species in the Hungarian avifauna in 2017

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Abstract Two new species appeared in the Hungarian avifauna in 2017: the Siberian Accentor and the Bonaparte’s Gull. A Siberian Accentor was observed and photographed at Surány near Pócsmegyer between 18th–29th January. A Bonaparte’s Gull was seen and photographed over Hortobágy Fishponds at Hortobágy on 14th April. With the observations of these species, the number of bird species known to occur in Hungary rose to 416.

Keywords: bird checklist, Hungarian Checklist and Rarities Committee, Siberian Accentor, *Prunella montanella*, Bonaparte’s Gull, *Larus philadelphia*

Összefoglalás 2017-ben két, Magyarország faunájára nézve új madárfaj bukkant fel: a szibériai szürkebegy és a Bonaparte-sirály. A szibériai szürkebegyet 2017. január 18–29. között figyelték meg és fényképezték a Pócsmegyer közigazgatási területén lévő Surány mellett, a Bonaparte-sirályt pedig 2017. április 14-én látták és fényképezték a Hortobágyon, a Hortobágyi-halastó felett. E két faj előkerülésével a Magyarország mai területén valaha bizonyítottan előfordult madárfajok száma 416-ra emelkedett.

Kulcsszavak: Magyarország madarainak névjegyzéke, MME Nomenclator Bizottság, szibériai szürkebegy, *Prunella montanella*, Bonaparte-sirály, *Larus philadelphia*

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In 2017, two bird species were accepted by the Hungarian Checklist and Rarities Committee as new to the Hungarian fauna. These are the Siberian Accentor and the Bonaparte’s Gull. By these, the number of bird species found in Hungary (with present-day political borders) to date has risen to 416.

Prunella montanella (Pallas, 1776) – Siberian Accentor

18th–29th January, 2017, Pócsmegyer, Surány, 1 individual (L. Molnár and others)

The Siberian Accentor breeds from Northern Ural Mountains through Siberia, to the eastern and the western shores of Okhotsk Sea and Barents Sea, and from the upper flow of rivers Ob and Yenisey through the Altai to the Amur region. Two subspecies are recognized: the populations breeding in Northeast Siberia, east of River Lena, are described as ssp. *badia*. The populations in the western part of the breeding area (west of River Lena) belong to the ssp. *montanella* (del Hoyo *et al.* 2005). The breeding range of the nominate subspecies reach the extreme northeastern part of Europe on the western slopes of Ural Mountains, it also breeds on the Bol’shezemel’skaya tundra, the More-Yu River basin and the Chornaya basin (Estafiev *et al.* 1997). The species breeds in boreal and subarctic zones of Siberia, mainly along the northern edge of coniferous and deciduous forests, in river valleys, in

dense vegetation of bushes and trees often close to rivers, also in forests of the taiga zone, and on mountains up to the tree line in sparse woodlands (del Hoyo *et al.* 2005). It migrates to the central and eastern parts of China, and to the Korean Peninsula for the winter (del Hoyo *et al.* 2005).

European occurrences, outside Russia, had been scarce and sporadic until 2016 (Lewington *et al.* 1991, Lorgé 2006). Its first known European occurrence dates back to the turn of the 19th century, in Austria (von Pelzeln 1871), there are three records from Northern Italy, where two specimens were shot in 1884 and 1901 (Picchi 1904) and one more in the fall of 1907 (Lewington *et al.* 1991). After decades of absence it was observed in Czechia: a young specimen was caught near Postupice in December 1943 (Černý 1944a, b). It is notable that there had been no records from Sweden until 1976 (Lindell *et al.* 1978), neither from the UK until 2016 (Stoddard 2018). Between 1975 and 2015, a significant number of occurrences was recorded only in the southern part of Fennoscandia. Out of the 32 European records from these years, 11 came from Finland (Koivula *et al.* 2017), nine from Sweden (Sikora *et al.* 2018), two from Norway (Koivula *et al.* 2017). Between 1975 and 2015, there are four more European records from the Ukraine (Fesenko *et al.* 2017), and one record from each of the following countries: Lithuania, Belarus (Zuenok 1999), Poland (Fijewski 1996, Stawarczyk *et al.* 2017), Denmark, Luxembourg (Lorgé 2006) and Slovakia (Fulín & Šmelko 1996).

An unexpected irruption of Siberian Accentor was to be witnessed in the fall of 2016 (Ławicki *et al.* 2016, Riezing 2016). A total of 231 birds were observed or trapped in Europe (Sikora *et al.* 2018): 75 individuals in Finland, 72 in Sweden, 14 in Great Britain, 13 in Denmark, 11 in Norway, ten in Poland, nine in Latvia, eight in Germany, eight in Estonia, four in Lithuania, four in the Ukraine, and single individuals were reported from the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Most birds (195 individuals) were recorded on the Baltic coast and in the Danish Straits, most records (177 birds) originated from areas within 5 km of the sea shore and from sea islands. The irruption in Europe started in the first week of October, and peaked between 14th and 20th October, when 41% of all recorded individuals were noted (12–16 birds/day). 95% of records were made in October and November of 2016, and the remaining 11 records between December 2016 and March 2017 (Sikora *et al.* 2018). An analysis of records suggests that the most likely route to Europe was southwest along the southern coast of the White Sea, continuing across South-Central Fennoscandia and the Baltic region to Western Europe. The first individuals probably arrived to the Baltics in late September, and northern parts of Europe – including Great Britain – were reached rapidly in early October. Overall, these data suggest an active migration toward west and southwest in October (Koivula *et al.* 2017).

The most plausible reasons for this unprecedented influx may be the lack of experience in orienteering by young individuals coupled with weather conditions (favourable easterly tail winds in Northern Russia in September and a cold burst from northeast-east in early October), common wildfires and early winter in Siberia (Koivula *et al.* 2017, Sikora *et al.* 2018, Stoddard 2018). In contrast to large numbers of birds observed in fall, their numbers in winter and spring dropped heavily indicating high mortality and/or their return to the east (Sikora *et al.* 2018).

Regarding the countries adjacent to Hungary, the Siberian Accentor occurred one time in Austria, one time in Slovakia, and eight times in the Ukraine. In northern Austria (Obermeisling) an individual was collected in the fall in the end of the 18th or the beginning of the 19th century (probably between 1798 and 1806) (von Pelzeln 1871, Glutz von Blotzheim 1985). It is likely identical with the specimen described erroneously from Hungary by Temminck (1820–1840). In Slovakia one specimen was trapped on 4th November, 1994 near Rožňava (Fulín & Šmelko 1996). This Slovakian record is also the first of the species from the Carpathian Basin. In the Ukraine, the first record of the Siberian Accentor comes from 1985: a female bird was trapped near Kyiv. Until 2000, another bird was also recorded near Donetsk and two others were simultaneously caught in Kharkiv. Four new Ukrainian records occurred in 2016: one individual was trapped on 3rd November near Kosachivka, another bird was caught with mist nets on 24th November at the same place, one bird was caught on 28th November in Rozumovka, and another on 22nd December at a marsh near Pohreby (Fesenko *et al.* 2017).

In Hungary, one Siberian Accentor was seen by Lída Molnár on the 18th of January, 2017 near Surány (Pócsmegyer) on the Szentendrei Island of River Danube, north of Budapest. The bird was repeatedly observed and photographed by several birdwatchers until the 29th of January. This was the first record of the Siberian Accentor in Hungary, and the second in the Carpathian Basin.

Larus philadelphia (Ord, 1815) – Bonaparte’s Gull

14th April, 2017, Hortobágy, Hortobágy Fishponds, 1 ad. individual (M. Molnár)

Bonaparte’s Gull breeds in the northern part of North America, ranging from South Alaska to areas south of Hudson Bay, throughout the boreal forests of Canada (del Hoyo *et al.* 1996, Malling Olsen & Larsson 2007, Malling Olsen 2018). Unlike other gull species, it prefers to nest on trees, mainly conifers. The northern edge of its range is confined by the tree line (Malling Olsen 2018). They breed either as solitary pairs or in small, loose colonies, near muskeg lakes or bog ponds, typical wet habitats of the taiga (del Hoyo *et al.* 1996). Birds breeding on the western part of their range migrate to the Pacific coast of North America for the winter. Part of the breeding population east of Saskatchewan province in Canada migrates south or southwest along the Mississippi valley, another part at the Great Lakes, and another across the St. Lawrence River. These populations winter at the south and the southwest coasts of North America. In the past few decades, the number of birds wintering near inland waters has been growing (Malling Olsen & Larsson 2007, Malling Olsen 2018).

Bonaparte’s Gull is a rare but regular vagrant in Europe. Most of its European occurrences are recorded in fall, but, in smaller numbers, it is also observed in winter and spring (Mitchell 2017). Most European records originate from the Atlantic coast, where birds drifting from North America with the North Atlantic cyclones reach the European continent. In spring they seem to occur somewhat further north than in fall, as overwintering birds arriving to Europe in fall follow their traditional American migration route to the north (Hoogenboom & Steinhaus 1990). Most occurrences have been recorded in Western Europe: more than 210 in the UK, more than 70 in Ireland, more than 30 in Iceland, more than 30 in Spain,

more than 25 in France, and more than ten in Norway. It has also been sighted occasionally in Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Portugal (Lewington *et al.* 1991, Mitchell 2017). It is a rare vagrant in inland regions of Europe, without any records in the neighboring countries, thus no records in the Carpathian Basin, until recently. The closest occurrence to Hungary was in Czechia, where one adult individual was seen at Hradecký Fishpond at Tovačov, on 24th April, 1988 (Doupal 1989).

Only an unverified observation have been featured in the ornithological literature from present-day Hungary: a single individual was claimed to be observed at River Danube in Budapest, on the 22nd of February, 1984 (Bankovics 1989). However, due to the lack of photograph and detailed description, and also due to the fact that the observer was unaccompanied at the observation, this record was not validated by the Hungarian Checklist and Rarities Committee, and was denied inclusion into the Hungarian checklist.

An adult Bonaparte's Gull in breeding plumage was seen and photographed by Márton Molnár on 14th April, 2017 at the Hortobágy Fishponds in the Hortobágy. This was the first well-documented and confirmed record of Bonaparte's Gull for Hungary, and the first record for the Carpathian Basin as a whole.

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