

## May 2012. Spring Fresh.

Contributed by Jos  
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Red-breasted Flycatcher, Golden Orioles and Lesser Spotted Eagles, Camberwell Beauties, Swallowtails and Short-tailed Blues, the delights of early May in Lithuania. Next came a short break to sunny Mallorca, Balearic Warblers and Eleonora's Falcons heading the starcast list. And then it was back to Lithuania, Red-backed Shrikes and Icterine Warblers arriving at Labanoras, a flush of butterflies including Green Hairstreaks and Dingy Skippers, plus yet more Swallowtails and Camberwell Beauties.

1-5 May. Country Awakening.

Gentle greens, a profusion of flowers, abundant birds, the best of early spring in Lithuania.

Kicking the month off, basking under a warm sun, a super selection of birds on my Labanoras plot - a Bittern booming in the swamp zone, White-tailed Eagle and Lesser Spotted Eagle sharing air space, an Osprey hunting lakes just yonder, two Hobbies hawking dragonflies and, in the forest, plentiful Pied Flycatchers at the nestboxes, along with newly-arrived Tree Pipits, Wood Warblers and Spotted Flycatchers.

Butterflies on the up too - after yet another Camberwell Beauty, my first Wood Whites and Green-veined Whites of the year, plus too many Brimstones, Orange Tips and Peacocks. One very nice Grass Snake too, slithering across a track before slipping away into the forest.

Back in Vilnius, the nestbox tally in the garden:

Starling - two boxes occupied.

Pied Flycatcher - interest in two boxes

Common Redstart - one box

Great and Blue Tits - one box each.

Also Spotted Flycatchers now arrived, plus voices of the night - Bittern and Thrush Nightingale echoing up from beyond the pines.

5-6 May. Flurry of Birds and Butterflies.

All most pleasant, a country bathed by warm sunshine and dotted with birds and butterflies a'plenty.

In what is turning out to be an excellent season for the species, yet another Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell was spotted near Vilnius on the 5th, while Swallowtail and Short-tailed Blue graced Labanoras on the 6th, all accompanied by numerous Orange Tips, Brimstones, Peacocks and Map Butterflies, plus lesser numbers of Wood Whites and Green-veined Whites.

On the bird front, still plenty of incoming migrants at Labanoras, including two very nice Golden Orioles, a swirl of Black Terns, plus my first Swifts, Garden Warblers and Thrush Nightingales at this location this year. Of more interest, continuing a colonisation of Beaver-cleared forest, Sedge Warblers were also noted, at least one churring away in the swamp-zone.

Star of the weekend however, a nice complement to the Spotted Flycatchers and numerous Pied Flycatchers singing alongside, was a rather showy Red-breasted Flycatcher. Not easy to find in Lithuania, the swampy forest on my land is just about perfect habitat - but even here, I am by no means guaranteed to find them in any given year. This year's individual, a first-year male, is singing on a territory held by another bird in 2010.

10-14 May. Mallorca, Endemics and More.

Escaping the confines of Lithuania, a mini trip to the Mediterranean and the holiday island of Mallorca. An impressive few days in the stunning settings of the Serre de Tramuntana mountains and the Formentor Peninsula, with highlights including Eleonora's Falcons, Black Vulture and both Balearic and Moltoni's Warbler. Also Long-eared Owls and Barn Owls in the island's interior, Marbled Teal and Purple Swamphens in the wetlands of S'Albufera and a whole host of other species. All in all, an excellent trip, also adding Viperine Snake and Algerian Hedgehog. For a full account, [CLICK HERE](#) for a trip report.

18-26 May. Spring Heights in Lithuania. With a mini heatwave and unbroken sunshine, all was pleasant in Lithuania. Pretty much on schedule, the two weekends of middle and late May saw the return of the final batch of incoming migrants, a bunch of highly charismatic and welcome visitors - up at Labanoras, Red-backed Shrikes and Icterine Warblers on the 19th, Corncrakes, Marsh Warblers and Common Rosefinch on the 26th, plus good numbers of Golden Orioles, Wrynecks still in good voice and increasing numbers of Thrush Nightingales. Also one very smart Black Redstart appeared on a roof top. Pleasant indeed it is to sit and listen to the choral backdrop of grating Corncrakes and melodious Golden Orioles while overhead a Hobby hurtles through, Cranes and White Storks make the occasional fly-over and Black Terns whip across, taking a short cut from lake to lake. Also in this period, a good flush of butterflies - Amanda's Blue and Dingy Skipper at Labanoras, a Swallowtail in my Vilnius garden and, all in the forests south of the capital, heaps and heaps of both Green Hairstreaks and Grizzled Skippers, a couple more Amanda's Blues, yet another Swallowtail, one Camberwell Beauty and assorted other species.