

December 2007. Back to the Tropics, Ugandan Express!

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December was always going to be excellent, or rather it was going to be mind-blowing! Within days of the month beginning, I was to flee the cold northern climes of Lithuania and then bask in equatorial sunshine of Uganda, soaking up the joys of fantastic birding and experiences with gorillas, chimpanzees, leopards and more. Before that though, there were a few loose ends to tie up - 75 kg of peanuts to purchase to fill the feeders to last a full month and more, plus 25 kg of sunflowers to cheer up my feathered friends during my absence. And on top of that, in those last few days in Lithuania, there was the cold cocktail of weather to endure - snow, sleet, torrential icy rain, you name it, it was doing it! On the bird front, the month really kicked off much as November had left off - Waxwings! Barely a few hours into the new month and a flock of ten had appeared in the Labanoras garden, and there they stayed, hogging overhead wires for much of the day, flitting down to pluck odd berries as they fancied, darting over to scoff apples if they preferred.

1-5 December. Lithuania, last gulps of cold air.

Waxwings, Waxwings and Waxwings! Otherwise, it was really a tale of action at the feeders - though all at the surface seemed as usual, a transformation was underway. Quietly mingling in with the birds already present, a massive influx of Great Tits, almost all adult males, signalled the true arrival of winter. The daily totals of that species alone now hovered somewhere approaching the 250 mark, an impressive number that totally swamped all other species by a huge margin. Plenty of finches still darted about, but no sign of either the Chaffinch or House Sparrow of a few days previous - the stars had departed! Still, one Grey-headed Woodpecker put in a brief appearance and no less than three Bullfinches offered themselves for ringing.

And then came my last full day in Lithuania, the feeders all getting their last top up. Looking like plastic tree trunks, several of them now towered two and a half metres into the sky, surely capacity enough to keep several hundred birds' stomachs full until the New Year! And with that, I left Labanoras, the Waxwings still in the garden (and in fact in bigger numbers - a flock of 12 waving me goodbye!), a Grey-headed Woodpecker popping in to check the mega-feeders were okay. Back in Vilnius, I still had a day to kill, but there too there is a feeding station, more plastic trunks to go up!

6-31 December. Uganda, Pearl of Africa

An amazing trip, full details in the full trip report. [Click here to read the report.](#)