

## **Olomouc, Czech Republic, March 20th - 24th, 2013**

I was going on a business trip to Olomouc in the Czech Republic and although my meeting schedule didn't leave many hours for birdwatching, I was hoping to find a few hours for birding in the Olomouc area, searching especially for woodpeckers of which middle spotted woodpecker was the main target.

Olomouc isn't on the main track for birders, and I wasn't able to find any birding reports for the area or any web-pages with updated sightings in English, but looking at a city map, there seemed to be a few good city parks on the route from my hotel to the university, where my meeting was being held.

I took the train from Prague to Olomouc (ca. 10 euro each way). Olomouc is 250 km east of Prague and it takes approximately 2,5 hours. I bought a ticket with one of the two private rail companies, as I was told that the trains and the service was better than with the Czech railways. This was indeed true, free water, comfy seats, good service and possibility to buy coffee, food etc. In Olomouc I stayed at the Ibis hotel (60 euro/night), it is a new hotel build in 2010, a good breakfast was included, rooms were nice and clean, and service good.

The weather was unusual cold for this time of the year with temperatures between +2 and -8, some wind, and still some snow on the ground.

As for the birds I spend 2 hours in the parks Cechovy Sady and Smetanovy Sady in the early morning on the 22th and 2 hours in Smetanovy Sady and Bezrukovy Sady on the 23th. Besides that I walked quickly through the parks back and forth from the meeting every day. All three parks are easy accessible, the landscape is open with many old trees, there is a small lake in Smetanovy Sady and a stream runs through Bezrukovy Sady. Nesting boxes have been put up on many trees and there is at least three birdfeeding stations. The three parks connects to each other and walking through all parks is a distance of 3-4 km. As for the birds I found 5 species of woodpeckers and saw a total of 46 species.

Most interesting birds were:

Middle spotted woodpecker (lifer) 22nd, Cechovy Sady

The bird was first heard (a series on hoarse calls), then it was seen very well in a large tree in the middle of the park. The bird was foraging close to two nuthatches, every time the woodpecker came to close to the nuthatches, they tried to scare the woodpecker away. Very Nice bird.

Syrian woodpecker, 23th, Smetanovy Sady

A single bird (male) was found in the northeast corner of the park. It was being chased around by a Greater spotted woodpecker.

Grey-headed woodpecker, 23th, Bezrukovy Sady

One male was seen sitting calling on a tree by the stream. It was sitting still calling for quiet a while, beautiful bird.

Green woodpecker

Seen every day, at least 4-5 different birds

Greater spotted woodpecker

Seen daily, at least 10-15 birds

Kingfisher, 23th, Bezrukovy Sady

Two birds seen along the stream

Rough-legged Buzzard, 22nd, Smetanovy Sady

One bird soaring over the park

The most interesting birds are marked on this Google Map:

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=206651983383468232773.0004d95c03f04f15e570e&msa=0&ll=49.5938,17.254972&spn=0.018638,0.049567>

Other birds seen:

Cormorant, Grey Heron, Mallard, Pheasant, Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Marsh Harrier (seen from the train), Black-headed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Rock Dove, Collared Dove, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, White Wagtail, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Marsh Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Robin, Wren, Chifchaf, Goldcrest, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Siskin, Goldfinch, Hawfinch, Bullfinch, Starling, House Sparrow

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