

# Romania

## Danube Delta and Black Sea

Fri 9th - Sat 17th May 2014



*Photos (clockwise, from top left): Two views of a stunning male Red-footed Falcon – one on the track in front of the bus, the other hawking insects over cattle near Vadu • A Pygmy Cormorant takes flight • At Macin we had some good views of Long-legged Buzzards • Always one of the highlights of the trip is the number of Cuckoos we see • A speciality of the Danube Delta is the Paddyfield Warbler © all photos StephenDaly/andalucianguides.com*

**report compiled by tour leader:  
Zoli Baczó & Stephen Daly**

## Trip Diary

### Tour Leaders: Stephen Daly and Zoli Baczó

*with Michael Alderman, Richard Baker & Henrietta Roberts, Brian & Anne Cox, Janet Fraser, Bill & Jan Henderson, Jo Parilla, Simon Smith & Lyn Graves and Bill Richards*

The Danube Delta is without doubt the best-preserved wetland delta on the European continent, only the vast Volga Delta is larger. There are 176 recorded species of birds breeding in this World Heritage site. As it flows down to the delta, the Danube meets countless other waterways and the constantly evolving landscape covers an area of over 8,187 sq-km that includes huge reed beds, marshes, sand dunes as well as forests and countless waterways, lakes and channels. Some of the channels are navigable by larger vessels and it is here that we spend three nights aboard our floating hotel or ponton. Towed by a tug, so there's little vibration from any engines, makes this part of the trip extra special as we moor where we please and then explore on a smaller boat along the tangled network of ever eroding canals with remote fishing villages and lots of wildlife.

On the higher ground and along many of the main tributaries and older Danube routes are swathes of poplar, willow, oak and alders. To the south along the coastline of the Black Sea at Razalem-Sinoe you can find several large brackish lagoons cut off from the sea by a large sandbar. Huge reedbeds, which surround the higher ground, are constantly being fed by the delta and the sea where large numbers of waders feed in the silt and falcons catch flying insects on the wing.

Photographers can have a field day from the two main observation decks on the ponton as we go down river from Tulcea and each evening we change mooring locations to see different parts of the delta. Photo opportunities continue during our various trips from our land-based hotels. All in all this is a fantastic area, unique in its birding density as we travel at a comfortable easy pace watching all the best key species that this part of Eastern Europe has to offer.

### Day 1. Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Stephen and Zoli were at Bucharest airport to meet the flight from London with the majority of the tour participants. Richard and Henrietta had travelled from their home in France earlier and had met Stephen at arrivals. Unfortunately the London flight was delayed and we had an hour's delay. We made good progress getting to our first destination at our hotel in Sinoe but as it's a fair drive to the coast from Bucharest it had been dark for a few hours and we didn't really see much from the minibus. We ate heartily and looked forward to our first day on the delta's coast.

### Day 2. Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

It's always great to have a good start to the day and our pre-breakfast walk turned up quite a few good species. The dawn chorus of singing Golden Orioles, Common Cuckoos and other birds really got us in the mood to find them. After a short search we tracked down the orioles and saw a pair of Syrian Woodpeckers into the bargain. Cuckoos seemed to be abundant and a few Red-backed Shrikes turned up, some of them very confiding.

After breakfast we headed along the broken road to the brackish waters and reedbeds east of the village, stopping frequently, not only because of the poor road conditions but happily watching Calandra Lark, Black-headed Bunting, Corn Bunting, Yellow Wagtail, as well as single Common Quail, Marsh Harrier, Whiskered, Black and White-winged Black Terns and the now ubiquitous Red-backed Shrike! The dull overcast day didn't stop us from seeing some excellent birds.

It had been wet over the last few days and the tracks leading down to the lower reserve were quite muddy. Imri our very steady driver coped very well and guided the minibus down to drier areas where we could get out and explore this vast area adjacent to the Black Sea. Almost immediately we saw Bee-eaters, Roller, a single male Montagu's Harrier, Spoonbills taking off from a nearby pool, all kinds of waders feeding in the shallows of muddy margins. There was such a lot going on so the group got out of the minibus and all looked in the same direction as Zoli and I pointing to the birds that could be seen. Marsh Sandpiper, Redshank and Wood Sandpipers were seen and all around the reed beds we could hear lots of spring bird song that included Great Reed Warbler – always winning the vocal competition. Paddyfield Warbler could also be heard calling. (On my list, someone pleaded, "But could we see it please?").

Scanning the skies we watched huge flocks of White Pelican lift into the air. Across the landscape Ruddy Shelduck took off with Garganey, Common Pochard, Mallard and ones and twos of Purple and Grey Herons. Common Shelduck, a host of Mute Swans and individual White Storks were seen. We tried for Paddyfield Warbler and very quickly we had three birds rising up the reeds to sing. Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting were also noted and we could hear Savi's. Migrating Sand Martins passed overhead and Barn Swallows hunted insects with House Martins and some Common Swifts could be seen higher up in the sky.

Taking a track around the lower margins of the smaller lake we found around 50 Broad-billed Sandpipers in a large mixed flock of waders that included Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Ruff, a single Bar-tailed Godwit, a single Ruddy Turnstone and Black-tailed Godwit. Watching the Broad-billed Sandpipers we also picked up Avocet, Lapwing, Grey Plover, Ringed, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers. Some Caspian Terns were sitting on a sandbank with a few Little Terns preening and a small flock of Dalmatian Pelicans was also seen as were Magpie, Rook, Caspian Gull, Black-headed and Yellow-legged Gulls.

We watched more Marsh Harriers hunting above the reeds as White Storks raided the cut reeds for nesting material. We came across a lovely male Red-footed Falcon ahead of us on the track and we slowly drove towards it, where it seemed not in the least bit interested in us. We got to within a few feet of the bird before it took off, stopping regularly then taking off again as we approached. We got out to watch Stone-curlews and two more Red-footed Falcons.

We took lunch back at the hotel and then continued to a site south of Vadu where some woodland held a variety of bird species. As we were getting out of the minibus we watched a few Marsh Harriers then picked up a female Hen Harrier. A few minutes later we spotted another harrier, this time a female Pallid Harrier, its lighter boar or collar clearly visible. There seemed to be a lot of activity around a freshly mown meadow and there were lots of Rook, Hooded Crow and Jackdaws of the eastern race *soemmerringii*. The adjacent woodland by the meadow had a good number of Red-footed Falcons perched or out hunting close by and we spent a good period enjoying this wonderful spectacle. A few Hobbies came past and there were plenty of Cuckoos around. We took time to watch Lesser Grey Shrikes, additional Golden Oriole and Roller that were also present.

### **Day 3. Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

Our pre-breakfast trip around the village went well with great views of Syrian Woodpecker as well a reasonable view of Red-breasted Flycatcher. Hoopoes and Golden Orioles called as we walked back for breakfast. After breakfast we drove the short distance down to the old Greek ruins at Istria where more Bee-eaters and Common Shelduck were seen. Icterine Warblers, Common Whitethroat, and Spotted Flycatcher fed around the few trees and bushes that were close to the museum and restaurant and Tawny Pipit, Blackcap, Goldfinch, Tree Sparrow and Starling.

Close to Vadu we scanned a small lake to find a group of Wood Sandpipers with four Temminck's Stint. A Terek Sandpiper was also seen and we all had good views of these rare waders that were on their migration north. Six or so Little Gull were seen overhead and there was a small colony of breeding Bee-

eaters close by, where these beautifully coloured birds were busy nest building, tunneling into a sandy embankment creating their nest chambers.

Moving down a track away from the road we stopped to look at a large water catchment area from a disused factory. There were lots of birds around and the shallow water had created islands in the middle where thousands of terns were breeding. In amongst the reed and shallows we saw Penduline Tit, Great Crested Grebe, Wigeon, Pintail, Glossy Ibis, Red-crested Pochard, Ruddy Shelduck and Shoveler. A Bittern was heard ‘booming’ as we scanned the huge Common Tern nesting site. This was an incredible sight to see and the noise was unbelievable. In amongst the terns we counted 12 Collared Pratincoles.

After lunch we dove to Sitorman quarry spotting a Long-legged Buzzard, which had come in very close to where we were walking. Northern Wheatear, Corn Bunting, Hoopoe, Tawny Pipit and Common Kestrel were all seen very quickly, then as we reached the top of the quarry the open grassland and cliff edges held Isabelline and Pied Wheatears and a single Whinchat and a Linnet. A pair of migrating Honey Buzzards was also seen on high. A late drive back to the hotel across some open steppe brought us more Isabelline Wheatears, and good views of Calandra and Short-toed Larks.

#### **Day 4. Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May**

Our transfer to Tulcea went well and we managed to arrive at our Danube ponton in plenty of time for lunch. Casting off from the busy river port we were soon down one of the smaller channels where there was lots to see. It’s always fascinating heading down river and watching the landscape and the wildlife slowly change. Greylag Geese and Mute Swans were abundant as were Squacco and Night Heron, Little Egret and Pheasant. More and more Great Cormorants were also seen and as we headed east we started to see more Pygmy Cormorants, Carrion Crows, Blackbird, Starling Rooks and our first White-tailed Eagle. Common, Whiskered, Black and White-winged Terns were also present on the river and surrounding countryside as Ferruginous Duck, Pochard, Gadwall and Mallard were all seen in flight.

Hobbies were seen either perched or in flight and a few passing Red-footed Falcons were also watched. Common Cuckoo, Red-backed Shrike, Spotted Flycatcher, Golden Oriole were ticked and we moored late afternoon to watch the tree-lined bank and watched and listened to the birdlife it contained. The tall poplars seemed to hold a lot of passerines and although we could hear lots of different birds calling or singing, good views were tricky although we did sort out Thrush Nightingale, Magpie, Wood Warbler, Garden Warbler, White Wagtail, Chiffchaff, Common Whitethroat and Treecreeper.

Donning our life vests we took a trip in the two smaller motorboats that we towed behind the ponton to look at the smaller channels and open water. Black Woodpecker was heard then seen as was Great Spotted and Grey-headed Woodpecker. The views of the Black and Grey-headed Woodpeckers were stunning and quite a few people managed to get some excellent photos! Great Reed Warblers were very visible as were more Hobby and Ferruginous Duck. Taking time to look at some open water we saw many Great Crested Grebe and a few Red-necked Grebe. The light was failing when we arrived back to the ponton for dinner.

#### **Day 5. Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May**

The dawn chorus was in full swing as most on board the ponton came up on to the top deck for a pre-breakfast look at the woodland. Marsh Harrier, Red-footed Falcon, Hobby and a few White-tailed Eagles were around and we had great enjoyment watching the various woodpeckers that came into the woodland. Lesser-spotted Woodpecker and a pair of Black Woodpeckers put on a show for us; a short while later two Grey-headed and a single Great Spotted Woodpecker appeared.

We set off after breakfast for Letea at the northeast corner of the delta. We were on board the tug this time and could spread ourselves around the boat quite comfortably as we first took the regular channel of the old Danube then a much smaller course. The usual herons, gulls and ducks kept us company and we

spotted Kingfisher and Marsh Harrier. We managed to get on to dry land at the wider end of the channel and walk the short distance to the edge of the town where Zoli had arranged transport to explore the saltmarsh, woodland and dunes. We watched a pair of Penduline Tits at their nest in a large willow and admired the flowering lilies on the water.

Our transport arrived and we all got in and headed to the saltmarsh where a small flock of waders was feeding and a party of Collared Pratincoles hawked for insects above the flat plain. The waders were 'scoped and included Broad-billed Sandpipers, Wood Sandpiper, Little Stint, Black-tailed Godwit, Black-winged Stilt, Avocet, Lapwing and Ringed Plover.

We drove on to the National Park and had our picnic lunch in the shade. Common Redstart, Blackbird and Treecreeper were seen or heard singing. Exploring the woodland we found Turtle Dove, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Chaffinch, and eventually some of the Common Redstart males that were singing. Icterine Warbler was again seen and Blue Tit, Great Tit and Long-tailed Tit were also present. After a trip through to see the sand dunes and looking along the woodland strip at the changing landscape of the delta we drove back to the tug and motored back to the ponton.

#### **Day 6. Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May**

It was raining slightly when we went on deck for a quick pre-breakfast look at what was around. A few Caspian Gulls had come in to feed on the remains of the fish that had been served to us the previous evening and most of the birds we saw looked a bit bedraggled and were sitting out the wet and much cooler weather. We took breakfast and decided that it would be a good day for ducks – perhaps grebes; so off we set once more into the small boat with some members of the group opting to do some birding from the comfort of the ponton. Great Reed Warblers sang regardless of the weather and we saw a few Reed Buntings feeding and also a Sedge Warbler.

Black-necked Grebe was a new bird and we did get a chance to see more and better views of Red-necked Grebes as well. Dalmatian Pelican was spotted in a group of White Pelicans that were surrounded by a huge flock of over 135 Cormorants. When the pelicans feed then the cormorants can profit from the larger birds ability to herd shoals. An interesting tactic in cooperation! We were cold and wet and took a coffee on board the ponton and after a while set off again this time to another lake. Stars of the show on the second leg were Hobby and a very obliging female Red-backed Shrike. We also saw a Lesser Grey Shrike in the same tree and both birds were undaunted by the raindrops bouncing off their heads.

After our wet exploration we decided to call it a day and head back to the ponton once more and take advantage of the weather and change our mooring for the evening. We then travelled back down the old tributary and surprisingly saw a good deal of the birds we had already encountered the days before as well as close views of White-tailed Eagle, many Hooded Crows, Rollers and Cuckoos and Golden Orioles. Later in the afternoon we found a quiet mooring.

#### **Day 7. Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May**

A better day greeted us in the morning and Marsh Tit sang around the pontoon. After breakfast we prepared to get underway again and travel the last remaining few miles back to Tulcea. Saying farewell to the crew and thanking them for an excellent time on board we loaded the mini bus trailer and drove across town to our hotel and dropped off the luggage and trailer. We cut through the town taking a route that ran back parallel to the Danube but into some wonderful hilly landscape full of high sandy embankments. We stopped to see a Little Owl that Zoli had spotted and then we stopped again at a large Bee-eater colony where Rollers were perched and below, Marsh Harriers and Purple Herons flew over the distant reeds.

We drove further to a wetland near Murighiol and there we took a walk around the perimeter of the lake. By this time the sun was shining and the temperature was in the low 20's. Here we saw a very smart

female hepatic form of the Cuckoo, it's beautiful rufous plumage lit up in the mid-morning sun. Mediterranean and Black-headed Gulls, and huge numbers of terns including Common, Whiskered, White-winged Black, Gull-billed and Black Terns were seen and Yellow Wagtails, Northern Wheatear, a few Red-footed Falcons came and went as we explored the area. A single Sparrowhawk was also seen. Two Booted Eagles also turned up and we also saw Common Buzzard. Ducks included Gadwall, Mallard, a single Garganey, Common and Red-crested Pochard and Ferruginous Duck. A Red-throated Pipit was also noted.

We took lunch at a local restaurant and later continued on to a forest site at Babadag where we found Hawfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker and had excellent views of Red-breasted Flycatcher and Icterine Warbler. Song Thrush, Robin and Barred Warbler were also seen as were Lesser Whitethroat, Treecreeper, Nightingale, Tree Sparrow and Goldfinch.

### **Day 8. Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May**

It was a beautiful cloudless morning as we set off early at 8am to head west this time to the Macin Mountains National Park. We stopped en route to watch Lesser Spotted Eagle over open farmland then saw perched Long-legged Buzzards, Common Buzzard and Booted Eagles in flight. Rollers were again plentiful as we drove into the park and there were some Pied and Northern Wheatears near a quarry and Tawny Pipits on the lower grassland. Lesser Grey Shrikes and Red-backed Shrikes posed and it wasn't long before we spotted an Ortolan Bunting on one of the gentle narrow tracks up one of the mountain valleys. Corn Buntings were singing and we could hear Wood Lark and Barred Warbler singing. Lots of different butterflies were to be found around the path and these included Cardinal Fritillary, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Brimstone, Clouded Yellow, Small Copper, Common, Holly and Silver-studded Blues, Peacock, Red Admiral and Painted Lady

More Long-legged Buzzards came overhead and while scanning the distant skyline Zoli spotted two very distant Black Storks and a pair of Ravens came over. Up on the wonderfully weathered rocks we managed views of several male Rock Thrushes and more Pied and Northern Wheatears. Finally we caught up with the singing Wood Lark and a short time later we had good views of Levant Sparrowhawk.

After lunch at a local restaurant we went to another woodland site in the huge Babadag forest. En route a Little Owl was seen in an old ruin. As we came into the forest Wryneck was heard calling and after hearing Sombre Tit we finally tracked a small group of them down, getting good views of four birds after all the effort. Two Green Woodpeckers and a Black Redstart were seen and a pair of Jays flew past. We had a lovely evening meal on the hotel terrace and we organized a special surprise birthday cake for Bill H's birthday!

### **Day 9. Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May**

The final day is always a bit sad and we were continuing our conversation from the previous evening about what a great tour this is and how many birds we'd seen. After saying our goodbyes to the hotel staff and to Zoli who was awaiting another group we headed off to Bucharest. We made a few stops en route to look for a Saker that had been earlier reported in an area where it was worth taking a slight detour but we failed to see the bird. A pair of Grey Partridge beside the minibus was some form of consolation though. We stopped again to have a look around a lakeside where Penduline Tits were nesting and Pygmy Cormorant, Great Egret, Yellow Wagtail and Hoopoe were all viewed at close range. Back at the airport we said farewell and the London flight took off on time.

Thanks to all who participated in this springs tour. It was full of special memories and wonderful birdlife, butterflies and early dragonflies too. Hopefully our paths will cross again on some other wildlife adventure, so until the next time, all the very best to you all.

*Stephen Daly & Zoli Baczó*

**ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED**

(A total of 181 species was recorded by the group)

**Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

A total of seven individuals were seen during the week

**Quail *Coturnix coturnix***

One was seen briefly in flight and several more heard

**Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix***

One was seen on 15/05 and two more roadside birds on 17/05

**Greylag Goose *Anser anser***

Several groups totalling approximately 350 individuals in the Delta

**Mute Swan *Cygnus olor***

Common

**Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***

At least 60 seen in the lagoons of Black Sea, then six at Letea and 50+ in Murighiol Salt Lake

**Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea***

Three were seen early morning at Vadu on 11/05

**Gadwall *Anas strepera***

24 individuals were seen during the first half of the trip

**Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***

Common throughout the week, recorded daily

**Shoveler *Anas clypeata***

Recorded only on 11/05 when a total of three males were seen at Histria

**Pintail *Anas acuta***

Three at Histria on 11/05

**Wigeon *Anas penelope***

Four were seen at Vadu on 10/05

**Garganey *Anas querquedula***

Mainly seen in small numbers around the lagoons and inside the Delta

**Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina***

A small group of three at Vadu on 11/05 then 10+ nearby Enisala in a roadside fish pool on 15/05

**Pochard *Aythya ferina***

Common

**Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca***

Recorded daily and a total of 60 were seen during the week!

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

Common

**Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***

One on lake Fortuna, a small group of four birds on 14/05 and 30+ on Murighiol Lake on 13/9 where they breed together with gulls and terns

**Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps griseginea***

Seen exclusively in the Delta lakes and channels

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra***

Two distant birds was seen in the Macin Mountain National Park area

**White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***

Common and widespread

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

Smaller flocks, pairs in flight as well as feeding birds seen on 11/05; 12/05; 13/05 at various Danube locations and lagoons of the Black Sea. A total of 110+ were recorded during the week

**Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

16 birds were seen in Vadu on 11/05, three more at Sinoe on 14/05 then 10 inside the Delta

**Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus***

Mainly heard the male's typical territorial call inside the Delta

**Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***

Heard only in several places in the lagoons and inside the Delta too

**Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Seen every day and very common within the Danube Delta

**Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides***

Common within the Danube Delta

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Common

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea***

Recorded daily and mainly seen in flights over the reedbeds

**Great Egret *Ardea alba***

Seen every day and fairly common in the Danube Delta

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Common on wetland areas especially on the Danube Delta

**White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus***

Our first groups were at Grindul Lupilor on 10/05, when 1000+ were seen flying to the north, then 400+ in Vadu on 11/05 and smaller groups in the Delta were recorded every day. Danube Delta breeding populations were estimated to be ca. 2000 pairs

**Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus***

25 at Grindul Lupilor on 10/05, then one in Vadu and 20 more in the Danube Delta

**Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus***

Common

**Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

Common throughout the tour and seen daily.

**Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

Widespread and fairly common

**Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus***

Over 50 individuals in a colony near Vadu on 10/05 was a great spectacle and we had the chance of close views as they hunted for insects low down around a group of grazing cattle. We had a very nice sighting too in the Grindul Lupilor area when a male bird was sitting in the road just a few metres from our bus. Seen later in the Delta but in smaller numbers

**Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

Common, widespread and recorded daily especially when we reached the Delta, then they became particularly numerous, many perching in riverside trees, hunting alongside the waterways, and just generally having fun

**Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus***

Two birds on 11/05 then four on 13/05 and at least eight in the Macin NP on 16/05

**White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla***

One adult at Vadu on 11/05 then recorded daily with a couple of pairs in the Danube Delta

**Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina***

Four were seen on 16/05 when we visited the Macin Mountain NP

**Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

Common and recorded on every day of the tour

**Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***

A female at Vadu on 10/05 and a male on 11/05

**Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus***

An adult female was seen in Vadu on 10/05 while hunting over a freshly harvested field

**Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes***

An adult male were seen in the Macin Mountain National Park area on 16/05

**Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

A total of two birds were seen during the week

**Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

Recorded on four days of the tour, but absent from the delta region

**Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus***

Noted on three dates, the first one were recorded at Sitorman Quarry on 11/05, a pair at Murighiol Lake on 15/05, at least eight at Macin Mountains NP on 14/9

**Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus***

A pale morph and a dark morph pair nearby Enisala on 15/05 then six more in Macin Mountain National Park area on 16/05

**Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Widespread in small numbers throughout the Delta

**Coot *Fulica atra***

Generally common at wetland areas and seen most days

**Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus***

A pair was seen in the Grindul Lupilor area on 10/05

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

Mainly seen around the shallow lagoons of the Black Sea coast. The highest count was on the salt lakes in Murighiol and Plopu where 100+ individuals were recorded on 15/05

**Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

At least 150 at Murighiol and Plopu Salt Lake on 15/05

**Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus***

Widespread in small numbers in agricultural fields and wetland areas, and recorded daily

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

One at Murighiol Lake on 15/05.

**Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

Eight birds were seen in Grindul Lupilor, two in Vadu on 10/05 then 20 more at Letea on 13/05 and five more at Murighiol Salt Lake on 15/05

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

Two at Vadu on 10/05

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

Six on the Grindul Lupilor wetland site on 10/05

**Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago***

Two flushed at Vadu on 10/05 and seen only in flight

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa***

Six at Grindul Lupilor on 10/05 and four at Letea on 13/05

**Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica***

One was seen at Grindul Lupilor on 10/05

**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata***

Two at Grindul Lupilor on 10/05

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus***

Noted on Grindul Lupilor and Vadu area when a total of 26 bird were counted

**Redshank *Tringa totanus***

Most common in Vadu wetland sites where six pairs were recorded on 11/05

**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis***

At least one at Grindul Lupilor on 11/05

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

Widespread and recorded at many wetland sites on three dates but only in small numbers

**Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus***

One at Vadu on 11/05

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***

Four birds seen at Vadu on 11/05

**Turnstone *Arenaria interpres***

One at Grindul Lupilor wetland site on 10/05 was the only sighting

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta***

Good numbers recorded this year with sightings on four dates. Most numerous at Grindul Lupilor, Vadu, Letea and Murighiol Salt Lakes. We counted a total of 700 birds during the week!

**Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii***

Four at Vadu settling lagoons on 11/05

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

Less numerous than Little Stint but shared a similar distribution. At least 480 were recorded during the week at the Grindul Lupilor, Vadu, Histria, Letea areas

**Dunlin *Calidris alpina***

Status similar to that of Curlew Sandpiper, with 150+ at Grindul Lupilor wetland site on 10/05 and four more at Vadu the next day

**Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus***

A good year for this species, with 50+ recorded at Grindul Lupilor wetland site then 20 more at Letea area on 13/05

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

Common and widely recorded at wetland sites throughout on seven dates

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola***

Two were seen at Gr. Lupilor on 10/05, 20+ at Vadu on 11/05 and 50+ at Letea on 13/05

**Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***

Very common, recorded daily throughout the tour

**Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus***

Noted in smaller numbers mainly on lakes along the lagoons

**Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus***

The only breeding colony of the Delta had at least 100 pairs at Murighiol Salt Lake on 15/05

**Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis***

Few were seen in the lagoons of Black Sea

**Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans***

Very common, recorded every day of the tour. Much more numerous than the previous species, and particularly numerous away from urban areas where Yellow-legged Gull dominated

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons***

At least eight at the Grindul Lupilor wetland site on 10/05 then four more in Vadu next day were the only sightings

**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilocta***

Six around the Grindul Lupilor on 10/05, including one during the pre-breakfast birding

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia***

12 birds seen in Grindul Lupilor on 10/05

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***

Very common and widespread this year and noted on seven dates

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

Common but present in smaller numbers than Whiskered Tern

**White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus***

40+ at Grindul Lupilor on 10/05 and 20+ at Vadu on 11/05

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

Noted on five dates but the most numerous at Vadu where we had at least 500 breeding pairs!

**Feral Pigeon *Columba livia***

Recorded each day except in the Danube Delta

**Stock Dove *Columba oenas***

Few seen in the Delta

**Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus***

Most numerous in the Delta, mostly seen in flight over the river from the ponton

**Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***

Still a common farmland bird around Macin mountain National Park and Babadag area

**Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Very common throughout the tour except in the Danube delta

**Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

Very common in the Danube Delta, with several hepatic females noted

**Little Owl *Athene noctua***

The first one was in a mixed colony of a Bee-eaters and Starlings nearby Tulcea on 15/05 then another one just sitting in a window of an abandoned building close to Macin on 16/05

**Common Swift *Apus apus***

Common

**Roller *Coracias garrulous***

Common, seen daily

**Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

Widespread in the Danube Delta with daily sightings of up to six birds

**Bee-eater *Merops apiaster***

Recorded in good numbers every day of the tour

**Hoopoe *Upupa epops***

Common, seen daily

**Wryneck *Jynx torquilla***

Two heard in the Babadag Forest on 16/05 when we tried to find Sombre Tit

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor***

A male was heard calling in a poplar tree line near Crisan on 13/05 and later we had a brief view of it

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius***

A pair was seen in the Delta along the Canal 36 on 15/05 then another pair was noted at Babadag Forest on 16/05

**Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus***

Two at Sinoe on three mornings

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***

Seen daily from the Ponton inside the Danube Delta

**Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius***

Fantastic view of three males in the Danube Delta

**Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis***

One calling and seen briefly in flight at Babadag forest on 16/05

**Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus***

Seen daily on the Danube Delta, but the best view was a male during the pre-breakfast birding from the top deck of our ponton on 13/05

**Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio***

Common

**Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor***

Common outside the Delta

**Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus***

Seen daily but the best view was during the pre-breakfast walk around our hotel in Sinoe village

**Jay *Garrulus glandarius***

Two in the Macin Mountain NP on 16/05

**Magpie *Pica pica***

Very common, recorded daily in good numbers

**Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula soemmerringii***

Recorded daily in good numbers apart from the lower delta where it was absent

**Rook *Corvus frugilegus***

Very common throughout the week

**Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix***

Widespread and common, and recorded regularly throughout the week

**Raven *Corvus corax***

Two in flight at the Macin Mountains NP on 16/05

**Sombre Tit *Poecile lugubris***

Four birds (two pairs) showed well on the way to Macin NP on 16/05

**Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris***

One at the Babadag Forest on 15/05 was the only sighting

**Great Tit *Parus major***

Common, seen daily

**Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus***

Very common in the Danube Delta

**Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus***

The best view was in Letea on 13/05 when we found a nest-building pair

**Sand Martin *Riparia riparia***

Very common

**Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica***

Two pairs was seen during the week on 16/05

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Common and widespread

**House Martin *Delichon urbicum***

Common

**Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis***

Three males were seen in the Macin Mountain NP

**Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus***

Common in the Delta, our best view was during the pre-breakfast birding from the top deck of our ponton on 13/05

**Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla***

Common in the coastal Dobrudja

**Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra***

One of the commonest breeding larks of the coastal agricultural areas

**Crested Lark *Galerida cristata***

Common

**Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis***

Common in some places

**Wood Lark *Lullula arborea***

At least one in the Macin Mountains NP on 16/05 was the only sighting

**River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis***

One was heard nearby Izvoarele village close to Tulcea on 16/05

**Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides***

Common

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus***

Very common

**Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola***

Seen very well at Grindul Lupilor reedbeds on 10/05 where a total of 10 birds were seen during the week

**Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus***

Common

**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

Seen on 14/05 from the ponton

**Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina***

Common bird of Babadag and Letea forest. We had superb 'scope views of a singing bird in Letea

**Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

A few heard and seen

**Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix***

Common in Babadag woodland

**Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla***

Few individuals were seen around our accommodation in Sinoe and several more in the Danube Delta

**Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin***

Common in the Danube Delta

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca***

Widespread in small numbers, and noted on five dates

**Whitethroat *Sylvia communis***

One was seen well in Vadu on 11/05

**Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria***

One was heard at Macin Mountain National Park on 16/05

**Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos***

One or two were heard in the Macin Mountain NP

**Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia***

Common in the Danube Delta, seen briefly during pre-breakfast birding from the ponton

**Nuthatch *Sitta europaea***

At least three at the Babadag Forest on 14/9

**Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris***

Several heard and one showed well in Letea on 13/05

**Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

Very common, recorded in good numbers

**Blackbird *Turdus merula***

Several birds were seen in Babadag Forest then in the Macin Mountain NP

**Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos***

One was heard in the Babadag Forest on 15/05

**Robin *Erithacus rubecula***

Three seen in the Babadag Forest on 15/05

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros***

One at Tulcea city and at least two at the Macin Mountains NP on 16/05

**Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus***

Common in the Danube Delta

**Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra***

One was seen in Babadag city on 12/05 from the car

**Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina***

A feeding pair at Salcioara on 10/05 ; at least 12 individuals around Gura Dobrogei Valley and Sitorman Quarry then eight at Macin Mountain NP on 16/05

**Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe***

Common in suitable habitats; more than 30 seen during the week

**Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka***

Four pairs at Sitorman Quarry, including a hybrid male between Pied x Black-eared Wheatear on 11/05 then a male at Macin Mountain NP on 16/05

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata***

A common late spring migrant

**Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva***

Three territorial males at Babadag Forest on 15/05 then at least three females on migration around Sinoe village on 12/05

**Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis***

Two singing males heard along the Canal 36 in the Danube Delta on 15/05

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Common around towns and villages, but largely absent from the delta

**Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis***

Common breeding bird of villages and farmlands

**Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus***

Common and widespread

**Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

Recorded in good numbers throughout the week and seen or heard daily

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

Quite common and recorded daily throughout the week

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus pratensis***

Several seen in the coastal area and in Macin Mountain NP

**Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus***

Three seen in flight at Grindul Lupilor wetland site on 10/05

**Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs***

Common and widespread in woodland areas

**Greenfinch *Chloris chloris***

Three seen at Sitorman Quarry on 11/05

**Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis***

Common

**Linnet *Linaria cannabina***

One male was seen at Sitorman Quarry then one more at Sinoe

**Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***

At least 12 were seen during the week in the wooded area of Babadag Forest and Macin Mountain NP on 15/05 and 16/05, including a freshly fledged youngster in Babadag

**Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra***

Common and widespread

**Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala***

5 was seen along the coastal agricultural (mainly rape) fields

**Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana***

Common in the Macin Mountain NP area

**Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus***

Common and widespread in wetlands

**Butterflies**

Scarce Swallowtail

Clouded Apollo

Large White

Small White

Green-veined White

Orange-tip

Brimstone

Clouded Yellow

Small Copper

Common Blue

Holly Blue

Silver-studded Blue

Peacock

Red Admiral

Painted Lady

Cardinal Fritillary  
Glanville Fritillary  
Marsh Fritillary  
Speckled Wood  
Small Heath  
Large Skipper

**Dragonflies**

Hairy Dragonfly *Brachytron pretense*  
Southern Skimmer *Orthetrum brunneum*  
Green-eyed Hawker *Aeshna grandis*

**Other**

Rose Chafer