

DANUBE DELTA - DOBRUDJA SPRING TOUR
with **SAKERTOUR**
16-23 May 2016



Stone Curlew (Sándor Borza)

Leader: Sándor Borza

The Danube Delta and Dobrudja region is one of the finest birdwatching destinations in Europe and undoubtedly May is one of the best periods to visit this fantastic region! On this tour we cover a wide range of habitats with a wide range of special birds. Late May is probably the very best time to find the local resident breeders plus a fine selection of migratory birds as well.

Our 2016 spring tour was very successful again with a long list of goodies. It was a really enjoyable trip with a lot of quality birding and simply just lots of birds everywhere! We recorded a total of 183 species during this 8 days trip (with 6 and a half days of actual birding) and only four of them were heard only. What is even more important, basically all the specialties and target species were seen very well! The weather was also on our side with only little rain and most of the days were sunny and pleasantly warm but not hot - so even in the middle of the day bird watching was possible and pleasant. Only on the last two days we had warmer temperature, but we had an extra shady break with excellent lunches!

This year's highlights were Dalmatian Pelican, Red-breasted Goose, Ferruginous Duck, Little Bittern, Pallid Harrier, Levant Sparrowhawk, Collared Pratincole, Stone Curlew, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Pallas's Gull, Isabelline and Pied Wheatears, Sombre Tit, Rock Thrush, Icterine, Olivaceous and Paddyfield Warblers, Red-breasted and Collared Flycatchers and Woodchat Shrike.

Monday, 16th of May

Early afternoon the group members were picked up at the Bucharest International Airport. We had a rather calm and uneventful drive along the fast motorway to Constanta (the biggest city along the Romanian Black-sea coast). Our first birds were found beside the road from the car, for example European Rollers and Red-footed Falcons. Though it was quite late in the afternoon, we still had a short birding stop by a quarry. Surprisingly almost the first species was a Ruddy Shelduck which is a scarce species here - a pair flew overhead. In the quarry we had great views of several Pied Wheatear on the rocks and some Isabelline Wheatear on the short grasslands nearby. Besides that, we had our first Stone Curlew and a very late migrant Fieldfare. It was already dark when we arrived to our nearby hotel in the village of Sinoe.



Fantastic male Pied Whetear (Sándor Borza).

Tuesday, 17th of May

Early in the morning we took a short pre-breakfast walk within Sinoe village. Our main target here would have been the Syrian Woodpecker which is usually breeds in villages where old orchards or wallnut trees are around. Fortunately, we had an occupied nesthole, where we could see the pair very well. We walked back to the hotel and had breakfast at 7:00 what became our regular breakfast time during the trip.

After breakfast we drove towards the first destination, Histria. On route we took a short stop, in a suitable looking arable field. This place gave us the first observation of Black-headed Bunting, Spanish Sparrow and Calandra Lark. We got really lucky as we spotted and declining gamebird – the mysterious Grey Partridge. Histria had an old castle remnant, which had a little park with trees and bushes. This „green patch” collected lot of songbirds such as Icterine Warbler, Collared Flycatcher, Serin and a scarce Common Rosefinch was a bonus and not often seen on this tour.



Common Rosefinch (left) and Icterine Warbler (right) (Sándor Borza)

Later we checked the impressive wetland near Histria. This place gave several good birds to our list. When we were walking to the observation point we saw a male Woodchat Shrike and the first big flock of pelicans. We had a big wader flock - mainly sandpipers and plovers - which had got Broad-billed Sandpipers also. This species is a regular passage bird here in late May. Lunch was back into the hotel.



White Pelicans in Histria (Sándor Borza).

In the afternoon we drove to Vadu. This place has different sorts of wetlands from roadside duck ponds to brackish lagoons. Here we added more waders to our already big list such as Red-necked Phalarope, Collared Pratincole and Temminck's Stint. Other interesting species here were White-winged Tern, Glossy Ibis, Little Gull and so on. In the surroundings of this village we could observe a Bee-eater colony in length, admiring these fantastic and most colourful European birds. Our next port of call was the sea coast, which again added several species to the list like Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Sandwich Tern and Little Tern. On the backway from

the coast we found a singing Paddyfield Warbler in a suitable looking reedbed. We had excellent looks of this Danube Delta specialty!



Singing Paddyfield Warbler (Sándor Borza).

On the backway to the hotel we checked again the wetland in Histria. We had an unexpected bird there because we could observe a late Red-breasted Goose. Dobrudja is a wintering site for this species, but they all leave by mid March. So this was a good record and the bird did not look injured at all. After a good and successful day we reached the hotel in the evening. This day was amazing and our final bird species was 109 for the day!

Wednesday, 18th of May

Close to Sinoe there is a shallow lagoon, with plenty of mudflats, surrounded by deep water ponds and reed beds. This very birdy area was our first stop. Because of the previous day's amazingly long birdlist – especially waterbirds, we only had a handful of new species for the list. But quality over quantity we had an amazing Pallas's Gull! Besides that, we could see more Broad-billed Sandpipers and several Gull-billed Terns.

After that we drove towards Cheia gorge where most of the morning was spent. Along the road we took several stop, where we could see the first Ortolan Buntings, Common Whitethroats and Calandra Larks. When we reached the entrance of the gorge we stopped again and scanned for raptors. We were lucky here, because we saw a Short-toed Eagle and displaying pair of Long-legged Buzzards. We also had other goodies like several pairs of Pied Wheatears, a Booted Eagle and a late migrant Pallid Harrier.



Displaying pair of Long-legged Buzzard (Sándor Borza).

After a nice packed lunch in the gorge, we went back to Black Sea coast. We visited a big port close to Navodari. We were lucky there because we could find back a Romanian rarity which was a young male Common Eider – reported a few days ago. In addition to this we could add Pygmy Cormorant and Lesser Black-backed Gull to the trip list. Later we decided to head back slowly towards our accommodation, but we had several birding stops at various wetlands but without any notable bird.

Thursday, 19th of May

After breakfast we left Sinoe behind and drove towards Tulcea and our next destination: the mighty Danube Delta! But we had a longer stop near Babadag. The Babadag-hills have an extensive oak forest which was a new habitat for the tour and inevitably with new birds to look for! When we were walking on the trail we heard Icterine and Wood Warblers constantly. Along the trail we observed a Middle-spotted Woodpecker, Marsh Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Red-breasted Flycatcher and many common forest species. We found a suitable puddle on the pathway, which was working as a drinking pool for the birds. This puddle gave us excellent views of the magnificent Hawfinch.

When we reached port of Tulcea and we changed our car to a boat and embarked on the Delta adventure of the trip! In the Danube Delta one can do birdwatching only with a boat as this is the actual and only way of transport. We use the boat as a car and try to stop it wherever some interesting bird turns up. The delta has different new habitats for us, like small well vegetated channels, smaller and bigger lakes, some poplar and more willow forests and a really vast reedbeds. Because of the late departure, we were straight heading towards Mila 23 which was our base for the coming days. On the way however we connected with many interesting species like we saw Little Bittern, Olivaceous Warbler and Thrush Nightingale. We heard several Grey-headed Woodpeckers, but only one of them was finally visible. We also had a very friendly adult White-tailed Eagle, which we could approach as close as 25 meters! What a beauty!

After arriving to our hotel which is located along the Danube River we were greeted by the very kind staff and with some local welcome drinks! So we arrived into the Danube Delta proper!



White-tailed Eagle (left) and Little Bittern (right) (Sándor Borza)

Friday, 20th of May

After a nice breakfast we were in our boat again. Today we planned to explore the surroundings of the Mila 23 area. We took a longer boat trip before lunch and visited an extensive channel system and various lakes. The highlights of this trip were flocks of Great-white Pelican (up to 300 individuals), breeding plumaged Red-necked Grebes, a fine Black Woodpecker and many Glossy Ibises. We heard several Common Redstart and Garden Warbler on the way too. At noon we were back for a nice lunch and little break in the heat of the day. In the afternoon we only took a shorter trip in around our hotel. This was very enjoyable with many great views of the various special delta birds like Squacco Heron, more Glossy Ibises and many pelicans.

Saturday, 21st of May

This morning we were to visit Letea forest which is a very interesting area. It is located in a huge sandbank with dunes which is in the heart of the delta. This area is big enough to host three villages where fishermen live, a big alkaline pond and a huge, dry oak forest. The boat trip was rather long from our hotel but with birds constantly seen along the way it seemed rather short. The first new species was a Sedge Warbler along the channel to Letea. At the little harbor a car was waiting for us with a local guide. Firstly we visited an alkaline pond, which gave a great view of four Caspian Terns. Besides that we could see many Collared Pratincoles, Kentish Plover and more Broad-billed Sandpipers. Our next aim was to get to the dry oak forest. We took a short walk in this lovely place, where we saw Collared Flycatcher and Stock Dove. We

were invited by our driver to have a meal in their house. It was a real delta experience and the traditional fish meal was really tasty.

After lunch we got back to the boat and took another trip. We could find occupied nest of White-tailed Eagle and Eurasian Hobby, the latter was using an old abandoned Hooded Crow's nest. We heard several Savi's Warbler en route. It was late afternoon by the time we arrived back to Mila 23 for our last night.



Black Woodpecker in the Danube Delta (Sándor Borza).

Sunday, 22nd of May

We started the last full day with a hearty breakfast and then a fast boat picked us up which could take us to Tulcea in one hour. We had to be quick as we had many things to do in our last birding day. In Tulcea we quickly changed our boat back to our trusty van again and we drove to a woodland habitat. This oak forest near Horio gave the first Sombre Tits and Eurasian Jay. The Sombre Tit is a rather localised speciality so it was great to connect with it. Before lunch we had time to check a steppe area with sousliks which is a good place for the raptors. We had our first female Levant Sparrowhawk and several European Honey Buzzards. We also got our best looks of Short-toed Lark here.

After a nice lunch we had a little rest in the shadow and then headed toward the Macin hills. At first we checked an old empty factory building which had a nesting pair of Red-rumped Swallows. Unfortunately the nest wasn't occupied. We had a very pleasant walk into the rocky hills where we managed to find a singing male Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Lesser-spotted Eagle and many Ortolan Buntings. Later we could find a pair of Red-rumped Swallow. In the late afternoon we ended the birdwatching, because the hotel in Tulcea was one hour driving from Macin. That was a fantastic day again!



Eurasian Hobby and Common Cuckoo in the Danube Delta (Sándor Borza).

Monday, 23rd of May

We had to wake up early and drive to Bucharest because some of us had an early departure time. It was time to say goodbye for all the participants. We had such a great group and again this fantastic region gave us all the special birds and many unforgettable experience!

SYSTEMATIC BIRD LIST

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species which were recorded only by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*: It was seen on most days but usually only a few individuals.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*: One pair was seen in Dobrudja.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*: Not really common, but around wetlands, small flocks or family groups were regular.

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*: It was a great surprise of the tour to find a late stayer near Histria.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*: Common, sometimes numerous at all wetland sites.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*: Very common in Dobrudja but it was seen elsewhere too. A family with few days old chicks was also seen.



Common Shelducks in flight (Sándor Borza)

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*: One flying pair was seen above the quarry near Sitroman.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*: Two different birds were seen in the lagoons of Dobrudja.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*: A few were seen in Dobrudja and it was common in the Danube Delta.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: Common around most of the wetland sites.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*: Mostly in the lagoons of Dobrudja.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*: Common but not numerous around all wetland sites.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*: A few were seen around most of the wetland sites, but it was evidently more common in the Delta.

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*: One young male was observed in the port of Navodari. This is a rarity for Romania.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*: Several birds were seen in the lagoons Dobrudja. We had a good view of the beautiful males as well.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (NL): One bird was seen in the artificial pond system near Vadu.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*: Common, especially in the Delta.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*: Only seen in the Delta where it was not uncommon.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*: We had one group of it in the artificial pond system near Vadu.

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*: It was recorded in four consecutive days. Usually not in big numbers, but the biggest flocks contained more than 15 birds.

White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*: Common in Dobrudja and in the Delta as well. Many big flocks were seen daily. The biggest flocks were above 400 birds. Some soaring birds even above the Macin-hills.



White Pelican taking off (Sándor Borza)

Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*: The first one was seen in the port of Navodari. It was very common in the Delta region.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*: Common throughout the trip.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* (H): Unfortunately it remained heard-only. Several times heard in Dobrudja but no joy.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*: One seen in flight very briefly on the first evening in the Delta. On the next day two different calling males were seen exceptionally well.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: It was fairly common in Dobrudja and very common in the Delta.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*: A few were seen in Dobrudja but very common in the Delta.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: Quite common and it was seen on most of the days.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*: Fairly common, though not numerous in reedbeds both in Dobrudja and in the Delta.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*: Quite common during the whole trip.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: They were recorded on most of the days. More in the Delta.

European White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*: Common. Almost all the nests are in villages but we found a beautifully located nest among the lagoons of Dobrudja as well.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*: This year it was surprisingly scarce, recorded only on one date, but the views were good.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*: A few flocks were seen in Dobrudja but in the Delta it was quite common. Close to our hotel on a shallow weedy wetland they were feeding all mornings and evenings, providing us very good views.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: One bird was observed in the Macin hills.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*: Recorded in four days. One adult was especially seen well as we could approach it by our boat without disturbing it.

Lesser-spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*: One bird was seen in the Macin-hills on the 22nd.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*: There were two observation in Cheia and Dobrudja.

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata* (LO): There was one dark morph bird quite far above the Cheia gorge. Unfortunately, there was the lunchtime for us and the telescope wasn't available.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*: The most frequently seen birds of prey during the trip.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*: Two late birds were seen in the Dobrudja region.



Hen Harrier in flight (Sándor Borza)

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*: We observed one late bird above the Cheia gorge.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*: They were seen both in Dobrudja and in the Macin-hills.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*: A few were seen for example around the Cheia gorge, Babadag-forest and the Macin-hills.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*: Only seen on two day, the first one was observed above the Cheia gorge. The others were in the Macin-hills.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*: One female bird was seen in the Cheia gorge.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*: We had two observations of this specialty. One male and one female were seen in different sites of Macin-hills. All were exceptionally good views.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: A widespread and common raptor. More were seen outside the Delta.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*: Some breeding pairs and very close views in Dobrudja, but several were seen elsewhere and some in the Delta as well.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*: Only one was seen in Sinoe in our last day in Dobrudja but several were recorded in the Delta.

European Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* (**H**): Only one was heard in the Delta. We tried to get some views but it stayed in the dense reed.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*: It was only seen in the Delta.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*: Quite common, especially in the Delta.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*: Many breeding pairs were seen around the lagoons and also a big breeding colony around Letea.

Blck-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: A few were seen around shallow wetlands.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedichnemus*: Three birds were seen at two locations in Dobrudja.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*: A few were seen around most of the suitable wetland sites, but big breeding colonies were also present at two locations. They were already siting on their nests.



Collared Pratincole is allways a favorite bird on the tour (Sándor Borza).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*: Some good views in Dobrudja and Letea as well, but only a handful of birds were seen all together.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*: Some smaller migrating flocks were recorded near Sinoe and a few elsewhere.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*: Breeding pairs were recorded at least three different locations.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*: Four birds were recorded near Sinoe, in nice breeding plumage.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*: Fairly common around suitable wetland habitats.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*: The biggest flock (about 100 birds) was seen near Histria. Elsewhere only single numbers were recorded.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*: Most of them were in stunning breeding plumage. Common around most of the lagoons.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*: Four birds were observed by the sandy coast near Vadu.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*: Hundreds were seen at Histria and common at other lagoon sites as well. The most common *Calidris* species during the tour.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*: One bird was seen in the artificial shallow lagoon near Vadu.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*: One of the star species of the trip. The timing of the trip was excellent to find this odd wader. A few dozens were recorded in Dobrudja. The biggest flock was 29 individuals.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: Fifteen birds were seen by the sandy coast on the 17th of May.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*: One breeding plumaged male bird was seen near Vadu.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: Not numerous but a few birds were present around all suitable wetland sites.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*: Only a few birds were seen around the lagoons in Dobrudja.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*: Several birds were seen in the lagoons of Dobrudja.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*: A few dozens were recorded in Dobrudja.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*: Quite common, though not really numerous around the lagoons.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*: Only recorded around the Constanca region.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*: Very common during the whole trip.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*: A scarce migrant. Two adults *ssp. fuscus* were seen in the tour (Navodari, Sinoe).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*: Common bird around wetlands.

Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyæetus*: One of the main target species of the trip. Only one adult bird was seen in the shallow lagoon near Sinoe. Great bird!

Little Gull *Larus minutus*: The biggest flocks were 35 plus birds, mostly immatures, but a few nice adults as well. Only seen in Dobrudja.

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*: Only two adult birds were seen in the shallow lagoon near Sinoe.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Very common both in the Delta and in Dobrudja as well.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*: Two birds were recorded above the Black Sea near the coast of Vadu.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*: Small flocks, maximum four birds together were seen on the alkaline pond in Letea.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*: Three birds were observed by the sandy coast near Vadu.



Little Tern (Sándor Borza).

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*: A few were seen around the Dobrudja lagoons and many more in the Delta with some breeding colonies there as well.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*: A few dozens were seen on four different dates in Dobrudja and Delta as well.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*: Several birds were observed near Vadu.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*: Common and recorded every day.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*: Common in the Delta but scarce elsewhere.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*: Only one individual was recorded in the forest of Letea.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*: Very common.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*: Commonly seen in the countryside.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*: Very common, especially in the Delta.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*: One bird was observed in Sinoe village.

Common Swift *Apus apus*: We recorded them a couple of times during the trip.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*: Common, especially in Dobrudja in villages and short grassed pastures and along dirt roads.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*: Many were seen breeding in holes of the banks of the Danube channels.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*: Very common in Dobrudja and Macin-hills, basically anywhere where breeding habitat (sandbank) is available.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*: Quite commonly seen in Dobrudja but many more were seen in the willow forests in the Delta.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*: An exceptionally great view was obtained in the Delta region.

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius*: One bird was seen briefly in the Babadag forest.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*: One pair was observed very well beside of the nesthole in Sinoe village.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*: Common in the Delta. We also found in the Babadag forest.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*: We had a great view of a male drumming in the poplar forest in the Delta.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* (H): One was heard in the Delta.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*: Commonly seen in the Delta, but we had only a handful of really good views as most of the birds were rather shy.



Grey-headed Woodpecker in the Delta (Sándor Borza).

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*: Very common in agricultural areas.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*: Common in Dobrudja, especially by smaller roads.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*: There were a few on the rocky slopes of the Macin-hills.

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*: We recorded a few displaying birds in Dobrudja, but we had a good view near Greci.

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*: A common bird of the Dobrudjean farmlands.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Common.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cercropis daurica*: One pair was seen in the Macin-hills. These birds drank in the puddle on the road.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*: Very common especially in villages.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*: They were seen a couple times mainly around wetlands.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*: Quite common in all kind of wetlands.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*: A common bird around farmlands and wetlands as well. Most commonly Black-headed Wagtails (*feldeggii*) were seen but the hybrid *superciliaris* form was recorded regularly as well. Blue-headed (nominate) Wagtails were also regularly seen just like the also hybrid *dombrowski* types.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*: A common, though not numerous species of short grassed pastures and farmlands.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* (NL): One bird was heard in the Delta.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* (H): A few were heard in bushy areas in the Macin-hills.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*: A few were heard in the Delta and one was seen also there.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*: A male was seen in the Cheia-gorge and Letea and one was heard singing in Tulcea.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*: A common breeding bird in the Delta.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*: A very common bird around suitable habitats.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*: First a pair was seen in our very first evening. Later a few more were seen around the very short grassed pastures.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*: A few pair were seen well in our very first evening and another six birds in the Cheia gorge and Macin as well.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*: Two birds were seen near Sinoe.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*: A few birds were seen in the Delta and a few heard singing elsewhere in forested areas.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*: A few were heard and one bird was seen in the Babadag forest.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*: One late bird was recorded near Sitorman in the first afternoon.

Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*: One nice male was seen singing on the rocks in the Macin-hills.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*: In the delta it is a fairly common breeding bird and many of them were heard. A few were also seen well.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*: In bushy and forested areas it was a quite common species.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*: Only a few were seen singing along ditches or bushes in Dobrudja.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*: One migrating bird in Dobrudja and a few breeding also in the Delta which were seen well.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*: Only one bird was seen briefly and a few more heard in the Delta.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobenus*: Several singing birds in the Delta near Letea.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*: Common in the reeds.

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*: Two birds were observed in Dobrudja. This is a special warbler for this tour!

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*: Very common in all types of reeds.

Icterine Warbler *Hyppolais icterina*: The first bird was seen in the car park in Histria. Many breeding one were seen in the forests.

Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida*: One bird was seen and few more heard in the Delta.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*: A common bird in the more forested areas and in the Delta.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* (NL): One bird was heard in the Delta.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*: A few singing birds were very nicely seen in the Babadag-forest.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: Many migrating birds were seen in the bushes in Dobrudja near the coast. A few were seen elsewhere during the trip.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*: We had three observation of it. The first one was in the reedbed near Vadu.



Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula collaris*: The first one was in the car park of Histria. We saw few birds in the forest of Letea.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*: One bird was seen in the Babadag-forest.

Great Tit *Parus major*: Very common in the Delta, a few were seen elsewhere.

Sombre Tit *Parus lugubris*: Three birds were seen in an open oak forest near Horia.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*: Very common in the Delta.

Eurasian Penduline-tit *Remiz pendulinus*: Quite commonly heard and also seen a couple of times in the Delta.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europea*: It was seen only in the Babadag-forest.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*: A pair was seen in the Babadag forest and Letea as well.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*: A very common bird outside the Delta.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*: A rare bird in Romania, so it was nice to find a fine male in Dobrudja.



Adult Woodchat Shrike has just recently colonized the Dobrudja area (Sándor Borza).

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*: Not rare in Dobrudja. We had some very nice views.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*: Only seen on our last day in the Macin-hills.

Common Magpie *Pica pica*: Very common throughout.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*: Common, especially in Dobrudja.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*: Common, especially in Dobrudja.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*: Common, especially in the Delta.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*: Two birds were seen near Letea.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*: Extremely common in the whole area.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*: Many birds were seen briefly or in flight and many more were heard singing.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: Very common.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*: It was common around farmlands and villages in Dobrudja. The first ones were seen in the arable fields around Sinoe when the birds built their nest on the pylon.



Spanish Sparrow with nesting material (Sándor Borza).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*: Generally common, especially in the Delta.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*: Common in forested areas.

European Serin *Serinus serinus*: A surprisingly scarce bird in this region so we were still happy to find in Dobrudja.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*: Recorded a couple of times around very different type of habitats.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*: Recorded only a few times during the trip.

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*: Several birds were seen in the Cheia gorge.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*: We could see several birds in the Babadag forest. We had a great view of drinking birds on the puddle.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*: Quite scarce bird in this region. One male bird was seen in Histria.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*: Recorded on two days. A few good scope views and also some distant birds. They were quite actively singing.

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala*: We had several birds in this tour. The first ones were seen in the arable fields around Sinoe.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*: More were seen in the reedbeds of Dobrudja, but a few were seen daily in the Delta as well.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*: Very common in Dobrudja.



Black-headed Bunting is also a recent colonist in the region (Sándor Borza).

MAMMALS:

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*: One was seen in Dobrudja.

Otter *Lutra lutra*: One was seen in the Delta.

Suslik *Spermophilus citellus*: Common ground living mammal in grassy areas.

Musk Rat *Ondatra zibethicus*: a few were seen in the Delta.

Brown Hare *Lepus europeus*: A few were seen in Dobrudja.