

DANUBE DELTA & DOBRUDJA SPRING TOUR with **SAKERTOURS**

18th – 25th May 2018



Rose-coloured Starlings were special in 2018 (Gábor Simay)

Leader: Dániel Balla

The Danube Delta with the surrounding Dobrudja area and Macin Mountains offers a great variety of Eastern European bird specialties. The Delta itself is a ‘must see’ site being the largest reedbed in the World. It has numerous unspoilt and hidden inner lakes, lagoons, channels and thousands of birds. May is one of the best month to visit the area however this year migration was not very strong during our trip. Hence a few common migrants were missing from our list but not the breeding specialties. We ended the tour with a total of 167 species recorded from which 4 were heard only. We were lucky with the weather with only a few showers on our first day. The rest of the tour was gifted with nice, sunny and clear weather letting us to enjoy the birds as long as we wanted every day. This year’s highlights included both White and Dalmatian Pelicans, Ferruginous Duck, three species of grebes, Booted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Red-footed Falcon, Levant Sparrowhawk, Collared Pratincole, Kentish Plover, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Slender-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Great Spotted Cuckoo, five species of woodpeckers, Isabelline and Pied Wheatears, Sombre Tit, Rufous-tailed (or Common) Rock Thrush, Paddyfield Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Penduline Tit, Black-headed Bunting, Ortolan Bunting and several flocks of Rose-coloured Starlings. Little we know that the large numbers of Rose-coloured Starlings seen on the tour was the first sign of the breeding of this eruptive species. Later in June there were several thousand pairs breeding in the Dobrudja area.

Friday, 18th May

After meeting at the International Airport of Bucharest (Otopeni Airport) we started a four hour drive to our first accommodation in the village of Sinoe close to some of the best birding sites in the lagoon system south of the Danube Delta. Before arriving to the hotel had a brief stop at a quarry start our proper birdwatching. We quickly spotted the three possible wheatear species from a single point: Common, Isabelline and Pied Wheatears. What a start! While getting better views of the Pied Wheatear a flock of eight Rose-coloured Starlings flew by though this brief flight view was not very satisfying. We went back to manage the better views of the Wheatears when we spotted a singing male Ortolan Bunting perched on a green bush. We were enjoying the close scope views of this beautiful bunting while Pied Wheatears were singing around when suddenly more Rose-coloured Starlings crossed the sky giving us a few more seconds to enjoy them. It was great to see them on the first day of the tour already as normally this eruptive species is rather scarce on this tour. While heading back to the bus a European Honey Buzzard just landed on the ground allowing eye-level views just about 200 meters away so we could enjoy it while it was preening and searching for something to eat in the grass. European Bee-eaters and Common Swifts were flying around and the first Hoopoe of the tour was seen. The last bird to show up was a Long-legged Buzzard just before we left this site. Before getting to our hotel we spotted a Eurasian Hobby chasing Barn Swallows in the last rays of light. At the hotel we were enjoying our dinner indoor, while outside it was raining, washing off the first day's dust from our bus.



Ortolan Bunting was a highlight of the first afternoon (Gábor Simay).

Saturday, 19th May

The plan for the morning was to visit a scenic gorge as well as pastures and agriculture fields for farmland birds while in the afternoon we were after wetland birds. When leaving our hotel after finishing breakfast we just saw a beautiful Spanish Sparrow first for the tour in the car park singing on the top of an acacia tree. After a short drive we could watch Calandra Larks fighting for the territory and Greater Short-toed Larks close to us on the ground and singing above us on a grazed

grassland site. Behind us a grazing flock of sheep was coming closer and pushing a pair of Eurasian Stone-curlews toward us until they got in the air flying over almost right above us. What a beautiful shorebird and declining rapidly in Europe. Continuing on the road a small colony of Red-footed Falcons were much appreciated by the group, and while the falcons were hunting for insect around us several European Souseliks were running and whistling on the ground. Leaving the redfoots behind we drove to a superb gorge in search for some special breeding birds in the scenic surrounding. A pair of Long-legged Buzzard gave terrific looks while feeding their chicks and got a Woodlark flying above us singing. On the limestone cliffs we spotted a singing Black Redstart, Pied Wheatears and a pair of Northern Wheatear was also nice to see. On the way back to our hotel we had great views of Rose-coloured Starlings singing on a wire and a flock of about a 100 White Pelicans flying high in the sky. In the afternoon we visited a nice wetland area where saw a flock of about 20 Collared Pratincoles hunting around us, Black-headed Yellow Wagtails and a Lesser Grey Shrike. Pratincoles are special and always a tour highlight – especially for shorebird lovers! Light rain was cooling down the temperature but it could not stop us to get nice views of Paddyfield Warbler and close sightings of different waders including beautiful breeding plumaged Curlew Sandpipers, Ruffs and even two Marsh Sandpipers. Avocets, Black-winged Stilt and Common Shelducks were common around us and we also spotted a few Garganeys as well as our first Ferruginous Ducks of the tour. While searching for other waders we just spotted two Eurasian Bitterns flying over the reed bed, which was a welcome addition to all the other herons which included Great White Egret, Little Egret, Grey Heron and a few passing Purple Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron. We decided to get better views of the gulls on the other part of the wetland and while driving on the track suddenly we flushed a Great Spotted Cuckoo from the grassy vegetation nearby, which sat on the road beside us for a few seconds before it flew away. This is a great rarity in Romania and such a lucky observation for us! Our last spot gave us Wood Sandpiper and better views of Northern Shoveler, Common Shelduck, Common Redshank and a few other species but we never got the gulls and terns we wanted.



Collared Pratincoles are always a tour highlight (Gábor Simay).



Spanish Sparrow nest building (by tour participant Stefan Eichenberger)

Sunday, 20th May

In the morning we had an optional pre-breakfast walk in the village where we got very nice scope views of a Little Owl sitting at eye-level on an acacia tree. While admiring this lovely Owl a Syrian Woodpecker landed on a wooden electric pole just behind us so a quick turn and everyone was enjoying this individual which was completely soaking wet from the early morning shower we had just before we left the hotel. After we left our accommodation we went to check a few sites near some historical ruins. We stopped at a car park where trees and bushes seemed to be good for migrant songbirds. In 30 minutes we got Blackcap, Willow Warbler, Wood Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher. We moved to another site close with even more dense bushes and trees where we managed to see Common Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat and two Red-breasted Flycatchers and a nice pair of Lesser Grey Shrikes. We were satisfied with the bush-birding so it was time to move on to visit a small wetland site close-by where we saw more Collared Pratincoles just where we have parked. Moving forward to better lights and searching for waterbirds resulted in a flock of 10 Broad-billed Sandpipers in their best breeding plumage with many breeding plumaged Curlew Sandpipers around as well. We also could compare Black, White-winged and Whiskered Terns and Little Gulls very carefully as they were also resting near each other and flying together. It was a fantastic place and surely the scarce Broad-billed Sandpipers were much appreciated! We also spotted a pair of Red-crested Pochard and keep our wildfowl list growing a late migrant male Eurasian Wigeon showed up as well. A small flock of Eurasian Spoonbills and a larger flock of White Pelicans with a few Dalmatians were passing above us.



Result of pre-breakfast birding a nice Little Owl (by tour participant Stefan Eichenberger)

After lunch we visited another well-celebrated wetland site near the sea coast. On the way we watched a nice pair of Crested Larks as well as we had a pair of Black-headed Bunting as the male was singing in front of us. We carefully checked the wetland area stopping at various spots and managed to find a pair of Kentish Plovers guarding their chicks and more Collared Pratincoles sitting on their nests in the very special habitat of halophyte vegetation. On the other side of the road a Savi's Warbler was singing on the top of a reed stick. We drove down to the sea shore where we saw Sandwich Terns, Great Cormorants, Great Crested Grebes a single Common Ringed Plover on the sand and Yellow-legged Gulls flying around. When coming back from the shore we stopped at a huge colony of Common Terns and watched them chasing away Red-footed Falcons, Marsh Harrier and all possible predators getting threatening close. Later we returned to the same wetland we have visited the previous day and try our luck again with the gulls coming to roost. This time we got what we wanted! Looking over the gulls and terns resulted in nice sightings of two Caspian Terns on the ground with Black-headed Gulls. Looking over the Caspian and Black-headed Gulls for last time and voilà an adult Slender-billed Gull turned up on the water, a good species to end the day with. While driving back to our hotel we saw a pair of Golden Jackals going hunting and we could watch them for a few minutes right around our bus.

Monday, 21th May

We were excited going to the Danube Delta in the afternoon! We left our hotel after breakfast and started driving towards Tulcea. On the way we stopped at the mighty Babadag Forest and managed to see Wood Warbler as it was drinking on the ground right in front of us, Icterine Warblers singing close to us, Common Treecreeper and even a nice male Red-breasted Flycatcher. He was singing and singing away right in front of us and we could watch him as long as we wanted.



Red-breasted Flycatcher and Icterine Warbler in the Babadag Forest (by tour participant Stefan Eichenberger)

The weather was not the best for songbirds so we moved on and stopped at a lake not far from Tulcea where we got a nice colony of Caspian Gulls as well as enjoying a colony of more than 200 pairs of Mediterranean Gulls as we ate our packed lunch. After lunch we reached the port of Tulcea where we met our boat driver Stefan. After a bit of packing and organizing we started our four hours boat ride to our hotel in the heart of the Danube Delta. On the way we stopped at a heron colony where we could spot the rare breeder Western Cattle Egrets at their nest (it is only rare in this part of Europe). Going forward we heard both Eastern Olivaceous and Garden Warblers singing from willow trees at various locations. We had to stop the boat as we approached a magnificent adult White-tailed Eagle which let us close as 20 meters. We also got our first close sightings of Red-necked Grebes and flushed a female Common Goldeneye from the water in front of the boat. Just before arriving to the hotel we saw European Rollers and a pair of displaying Common Kingfishers as the male was offering a small fish as a gift to the female.



Grey-headed Woodpecker and Western Cattle Egret (by tour participant Stefan Eichenberger)

Tuesday, 22nd May

The day was spent in the boat driving through the magnificent channel and inner lake system of the Danube Delta. During the day we got beautiful views of Black-necked Grebes, Great Crested Grebes, we could compare the Pygmy Cormorants to Great Cormorants many times, a Little Bittern just flushed in front of our boat in a shady channel, Squacco Herons were everywhere on the more open channel and Glossy Ibises were feeding on the edges. On the bigger lakes of the Delta we saw flocks of White Pelicans fishing and a few Dalmatians feeding separately. On different suitable sites we managed to see Grey-headed Woodpecker, Long-tailed Tits, Eurasian Penduline Tit, Great Reed Warbler, Savi's Warbler and Garden Warbler. It was a great day cruising around the remote parts of this vast wetland complex known as the Danube Delta.



Dalmatian Pelican and Red-necked Grebe (Dániel Balla)

Wednesday, 23rd May

In the morning we headed to Letea which is a village close to the Ukrainian border located on a sandy island on the eastern end of the delta. On the boat drive to the island we crossed a large lake which held a flock of more than 240 White Pelicans!



White Pelican is common in the Danube Delta (Gábor Simay)

We glimpsed an Otter for a few seconds on a smaller lake as it was just swimming across in front of our boat. Arriving at Letea a nice Glossy Ibis was welcoming us in a small pool while we were waiting for our “bus”. To get inside the reserve on this island we used a special vehicle a really true handmade machine nothing to compare to. First we drove to an old oak forest where we managed to get views of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Thrush Nightingale and a Black Woodpecker. Before lunch we checked a nice salt lake on the island where we could enjoy really close views of Collared Pratincole and better Kentish Plover sighting than we had before. Three Caspian Terns were standing with a few Black-headed Gulls while Common Redshanks, Pied Avocets and Black-winged Stilts were around us. Having a nice fish lunch ending with doughnuts kicked us for the boat rides in the afternoon. We

really enjoyed going around the various places in the Delta with our boat and had such memorable moments as displaying Great Crested Grebes, Whiskered Tern and Black Tern colonies, close views of Red-necked and Black-necked Grebes, herons and egrets everywhere, Red-footed Falcons and Eurasian Hobby hunting above us, lots of Common Cuckoos, European Rollers and Golden Orioles flying everywhere and last but not least the giants of the Delta. We had such close views of both White and Dalmatian fishing and just resting sometimes. Everyone got amazed and felt the calmness and tranquillity of this special place, a real untouched piece of the world.

Tuesday, 24th May

We were jumping in our boat early in the morning to embark on our last boat ride in the Delta. We wanted to get to Tulcea as soon as possible because we still had other plans for our last full day birding. On our last boat journey we got nice views of a Grey-headed Woodpecker and then heard a singing Collared Flycatcher. A tame adult White-tailed Eagle let us even closer than the other when coming inside and was waving goodbye for us when it flew away – the last greetings from the Delta.



Adult White-tailed Eagle in the Danube Delta (Dániel Balla)

In Tulcea we were changing back to our well known off-road bus and continued to the Macin Mountains National Park. We drove to this lovely area and as we just started going on a trail when we spotted a dark morph Booted Eagle soaring above the hill. The same spot held also a pair of Eurasian Honey Buzzards further away. After a few hundred meters walking we found ourselves in a nice oak forest where we could hear Red-breasted Flycatcher singing and managed to see a European Nuthatch. The weather got really hot so we left the site and decided to have a lunch in a nice shady restaurant. In the afternoon we were back in the park first visiting a nice site with grazed grassland close to the mountains where we enjoyed Isabelline Wheatears singing while three Short-toed Eagles, Long-legged Buzzards, Common Buzzards were soaring above us and a Lesser Spotted Eagle just disappeared behind a peak. We were just about to leave when Miklós, our driver just spotted something hunting above the forest near the bus which turned out to be a male Levant's

Sparrowhawk. As we got out from the bus it disappeared forever, so unfortunately it remained a leader (and driver) only sighting. We drove to another site at the Mountains where we climbed up a few hundred meters on a trail and then found a distant male Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush singing, but seen pretty well thanks to the dark background. While enjoying the colours of the Rock Thrush a female Levant's Sparrowhawk just turned up above us which we could watch for several minutes. We also managed to see Lesser Spotted Eagle a few times but always just for a few seconds. We left this spot to search for our last target species the Sombre Tit. After checking two good spots without luck we decided to try yet another spot before dusk. As we stopped the bus we got great looks of a Turtle Dove on the ground in front of us. After walking 200 meters in a nice area when a small bird flew into the treetop just where we were standing. Two of the group managed to see it before it flew to a close bush, where everyone finally got to see the Sombre Tit. It was leading fledged young in the bushes so was hiding as much as possible and then disappeared. Also Long-tailed Tit was around the same bush. We spent our last night in a hotel in Tulcea.

Friday, 25th May

This was the last day of the tour and a travel day back to the airport. On the way we stopped at a small fishpond system near Tulcea where we saw the last White Pelicans of the tour besides sightings of Great Crested Grebes, Sand Martins, Bee-eaters and Cuckoos. We drove further on and stopped for the last time before the airport at an electric pylon line where we searched for Saker. We were not very lucky as we did find a Saker but it was sitting far away being a mere silhouette. However Black-headed Buntings were chasing each other around us and a nice Ortolan Bunting was singing on the bottom of a pylon while a pair of Linnets passed us. This was the end of the tour and all left for us is to get through the horrendous traffic near Bucharest to get to the airport in time. It was certainly an action-packed tour and we had great time together with nice memories, great sightings of special birds and got an insight to the truly unique and peaceful Danube Delta.



European Roller is a common sight in the Danube Delta (Dániel Balla)



Eurasian Stone-curlew (Dániel Balla)

SYTEMATIC BIRD LIST:

Species marked with (H) were only heard on the tour.

Species marked with (LO) were recorded only by the leader.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchius*: A few individuals were seen almost every day.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* (H): One record of a calling individual near a dirt road in the Dobrudja area.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*: Families and pairs were seen on wetland habitats.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*: Very common waterfowl in the Dobrudja area.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*: Common, a flock of more than 100 individuals were seen in the Delta.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*: Usually pairs were seen on wetlands.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*: A drake was seen on a wetland near Histria.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: Common at wetlands.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*: A few birds were seen near Sinoe and at Histria.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*: A single drake was seen on a wetland near Sinoe.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*: A few individuals were seen on almost every wetland.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*: Several birds seen on almost every wetland.

Red-crested Pochard *Aythya rufina*: We saw pairs on two days in the Dobrudja area.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*: A few birds were seen almost every day.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*: We flushed a female from the water with our boat on the first day in the Delta.

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

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*: Everyday bird in the Delta in small numbers.



Black-necked Grebe (Dániel Balla)

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*: We saw a few pairs at their nesting sites in the Delta.

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*: We saw the species on five days but just few individuals at every occasion.

White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*: We saw flocks on seven days of the tour, with the biggest counting more than 240 individuals.

Pygmy Cormorant *Pharacrocorax pygmeus*: Common in the Delta.

Great Cormorant *Pharacrocorax carbo*: Common in the Delta and near the sea.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*: We saw two flying birds above the reed bed near Sinoe, and heard the species at different wetlands many times.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*: One bird seen for seconds in the Delta.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Few birds seen in the Dobrudja area and many more in the Delta.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*: Common in the Delta.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: We managed to see a bird incubating eggs on its nest and it's pair in full breeding plumage guarding near by.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: Common bird around the wetlands.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*: Common bird in small numbers at wetlands.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Common bird at wetlands, mainly in the Delta.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*: Several birds seen during the trip.

European White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*: Common breeder in the villages.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*: We saw a few individuals in the Dobrudja area on wetlands and individuals in the Delta.



Pygmy Cormorant and Great Cormorant sitting on the same tree (Stefan Eichenberger)

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*: We saw a flock of 10 birds feeding in front of us in the Delta and 1 bird on Letea. Further small, flying flocks were recorded in the Delta.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*: We saw birds on four days in the Delta.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*: We recorded two birds in the Macin Mountains.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*: Three birds were followed with scopes in the Macin Mountains.

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata*: A dark morph bird circled above us in the Northern part of the Macin Mountains.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*: We saw the species on every day of the tour.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*: A 2cy male was seen flying away near Vadu.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*: We recorded a female near Sinoe and one near Vadu.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*: We had several birds in the Dobrudja and the Macin Mountains.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*: We saw a few individuals during the tour.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*: We saw the species in the Dobrudja area on two days and got 4 individuals in the Macin Mountains.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*: A leader (and busdriver) only observation of a male was followed by an observation of a female for several minutes in the Macin Mountains.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: A common raptor seen every day, but easier outside of the Delta.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*: We saw breeding birds at a colony, then hunting individuals many times in the Dobrudja area, and several birds in the Delta as well.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*: Two observations in the Dobrudja and a few ones in the Delta.

Saker *Falco cherrug*: The silhouette of a perched bird was visible on a pylon on our way back to the airport.



Dark morph Booted Eagle (Dániel Balla)

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*: A few birds were seen in the Delta.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*: A few birds in the Dobrudja area and several more were seen in the Delta.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*: Few birds were seen on wetlands in the Dobrudja area and pairs on the Island of Letea.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: A common wader on wetlands in the Dobrudja and a few also seen in the Delta.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burchinus oedicnemus*: We saw a total of four birds in the Dobrudja area on the second day.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*: Several birds were seen near Sinoe, Vadu, Histria but the best views were on Letea.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*: A single bird was observed on the coast of the Black Sea.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrius*: We saw a few breeding pairs with chicks at Vadu and on the island of Letea.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*: Birds were seen on wetlands in the Dobrudja area and on Letea Island.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*: Several flocks including some nice red ones were seen on wetlands in Dobrudja.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*: 10 individuals together were seen well near Histria.

Little Stint *Calidris minutus*: A few birds were seen in the flocks of Curlew Sandpipers.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: A few birds were seen on wetlands of Dobrudja and Letea.

Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus*: A few breeding and displaying individuals were seen on wetlands of the Dobrudja area.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*: A single bird was seen on a wetland near Sinoe.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*: Two birds were seen on a wetland near Sinoe.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*: Two birds on Histria and two on a wetland near Sinoe were seen.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*: Small flocks were seen on the wetland habitats of the Dobrudja area.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*: A few were seen at the sea shore at Vadu.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*: Common in the Dobrudja and a nice colony not far from Tulcea.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*: Common in most wetlands and in the Delta as well.

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*: We saw a single adult bird coming to roost on a wetland near Sinoe.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*: Around 15 individuals were seen at Histria and a few on a lake near Tulcea.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*: We checked a nice colony of more than 200 pairs not far from Tulcea.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*: 2 individuals were seen from the seashore at Vadu.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Common especially in the Delta.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*: 2 individuals near Sinoe and 3 on Letea were seen.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*: Scarce outside and common in the Delta.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*: We saw a small flock in Histria and more individuals in the Delta.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucoptera*: We saw a flock of 15 birds at Histria.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia f. domestica*: Common bird in and near the settlements.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*: Everyday bird in the Delta.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*: Very common everywhere.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*: A few birds seen outside the Delta with the best views at Horia.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*: Common bird almost everywhere with many sightings.

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*: A bird just flushed from the dirt road near Sinoe.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*: A single individual seen on pre-breakfast birding in Sione and another one near the village.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* (H): We heard a bird calling on Letea Island.

Common Swift *Apus apus*: Common outside the Delta.

Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops*: Very common outside the Delta, but also saw some birds inside as well.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*: A few birds seen in the Delta.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*: Everyday bird on the tour.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*: Many good sightings on the tour in and outside of the Delta as well.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*: A bird seen on Letea Island.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*: A few of us saw a bird near Gore Dobrogei but all of us got it in Sione.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*: Well seen in the Delta and heard in Babadag Forest.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*: A bird heard in the Delta and one seen on Letea.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*: We had several birds seen in the Delta.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* (H): Calling individual we heard twice on the tour.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*: We got singing birds in the Dobrudja area.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*: A bird was seen briefly flying and singing at Gore Dobrogei.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*: A pair was seen near Sinoe and another bird in the Macin Mountains.



Common Kingfisher (Dániel Balla)

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*: Seen at agricultural fields and pastures in the Dobrudja area.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*: A LO bird at Histria, a few in the Macin Mountains and a few seen near Tulcea.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Very common on the tour.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*: Common on the tour.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*: A bird seen near a quarry on the way to Sinoe and another while going to Vadu.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*: Quite common around the wetlands.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*: Nominate form were seen a few times, Black-headed Yellow Wagtail (*ssp. feldegg*) was seen once and many of the race *superciliaris*.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*: Heard a few times and seen twice in the Delta.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (H): A LO pair seen and then heard by the group on Letea.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrusos*: A pair was seen at Cheia.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*: Common bird at suitable habitats.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*: Quite a few seen on sheep-grazed grasslands.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanca*: More than 15 seen at a quarry on the way to Sinoe and more than 5 at Cheia.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*: 2 birds seen in the Babadag forest and one heard near Horia.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*: A few individuals seen on the tour.

Rufous-tailed (or Common) Rock-thrush *Monticola saxatilis*: A male was seen singing in the Macin Mountains.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*: Heard at 2 sites in the Dobrudja and a male was spotted for a few seconds and seen by 3 of us.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*: Common in the Delta, seen a few times.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*: Few birds heard on the tour a 2 birds seen at Histria.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*: A few birds heard in the Dobrudja area at drier, bushy slopes and 2 birds seen at Histria.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*: Walk away views of a bird at Histria and a few heard at other suitable sites.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*: A single singing individual was seen at a wetland near Histria.

Common Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*: Common in the Delta by sound, seen well near Sinoe.

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*: Five birds seen at a wetland area.



Paddyfield Warbler is a real speciality of the Danube Delta (Dániel Balla)

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*: Nice views of singing birds in the Dobrudja area, common in the Delta.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*: Heard many times at suitable reed beds and seen once in the Delta and once at near Vadu.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*: Heard many times on the tour, but nice views only twice in the Babadag Forest.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida*: Few birds heard in the Delta and a singing individual seen at our hotel.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*: One seen at Histria and one in the Babadag Forest.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*: One seen at Histria and another in the Babadag Forest where many others singing.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*: One seen at the Babadag Forest and many heard at the Delta.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: A few seen at Histria and in Babadag.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*: 2 seen briefly at Histria and nice views of singing birds at the Babadag Forest. We heard a singing bird at the Macin Mountains.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* (H): A singing bird only heard in the Delta.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*: A female seen well at our hotel in Sinoe.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*: A pair seen in the Babadag Forest.

Great Tit *Parus major*: Common in the Delta, and also seen at the Babadag Forest.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*: Common in the Delta.

Sombre Tit *Parus lugubris*: A family with fledged juveniles seen for seconds close to the Macin Mountains.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*: Nice views in the Delta.

Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*: A pair seen in the Delta and many more heard.

European Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*: One seen in a forest at the Macin Mountains.

Common Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*: Two birds seen in the Babadag Forest.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*: A single bird seen close to Sinoe and a pair at Histria.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*: Very common outside the Delta and a few birds in the Delta.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*: A single birds flying was seen for seconds on Letea.

Common Magpie *Pica pica*: Very common everywhere.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus mondeula*: Common on the tour.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*: Common in the Dobrudja area.

Hooded Crow *Corvus corone cornix*: Very common on the tour.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*: A single bird seen flying close to Tulcea.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*: Common on the tour.

Rose-coloured (or Rosy) Starling *Sturnus roseus*: Seen 4 times on the tour with the biggest flock counting 30 birds.



Rose-coloured Starlings were seen several times on the tour this year (Gábor Simay)

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*: Heard many times and seen flying, scopeviews once of a female in a treetop.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: Common on the tour.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*: Common on the tour.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*: A nice colony seen in a White Stork's nest and other individuals elsewhere in the Dobrudja area.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*: Seen in the Babadag Forest and on Letea.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* (LO): Seen by the leader only in Tulcea city.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*: Scopeviews of a singing bird in the Dobrudja area.

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*: Seen in the Macin Mountains and on the way back to the airport.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*: Brief views of a pair in Babadag Forest and in Macin Mountains.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*: Nice views at a quarry and on the way to the airport and heard a few times in the Dobrudja area and in the Macin Mountains.

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala*: Nice views of a pair near Vadu and three males on the way to the airport.

Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*: Nice males seen on a wetland near Sinoe, few birds seen in the Delta as well.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*: Very common outside the Delta.

MAMMALS:

Golden Jackal *Canus aureus*: All together 3 individuals were seen in the Dobrudja area

European Suslik *Spermophilus citellus*: Very common on grazed grasslands in Dobrudja and Macin

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

Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*: 3 occasions in the Dobrudja

River Otter *Lutra lutra*: One seen in the Delta



White Pelicans in the Danube Delta (Dániel Balla)