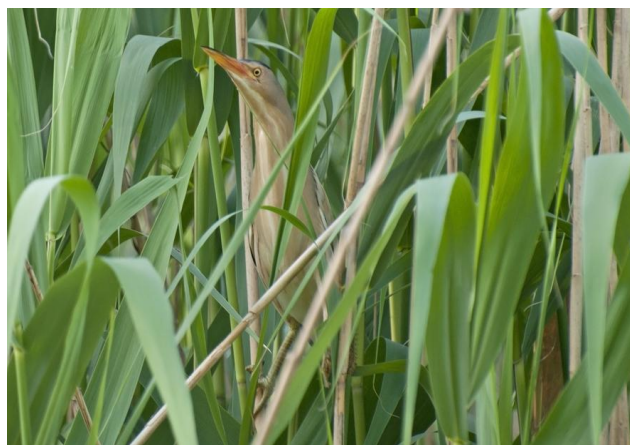


# Romania:

Danube Delta & Black Sea Coast

Sat 5<sup>th</sup> - Sun 13<sup>th</sup> May 2012



Trip pictures (clockwise, from top left): pale morph **Booted Eagle** glided over the group • female **Red-footed Falcon** looking for insects in fly • male **Pied Wheatear** guarding its territory • feeding and calling **Black Woodpecker** in the Danube Delta • Danube Delta is the **Cuckoo's** paradise too • **Little Bittern** felt unseen when we spotted it © photos Zoltán Baczó

Report compiled by tour leader:  
Zoltán Baczó

## Trip Diary

**Tour leader(s):** Zoltán Baczó

**With** Mr. Derek Hardy, Mrs. Liz Hardy, Mr. Harry Baillie

The Danube Delta and habitats along the western coast of the Black Sea showed again a very nice face to our small groups of participants. We designed this 9 day long holiday to visit the most important birding spots and leisurely explore the available characteristic bird species, focusing to local breeders and late spring migrants. This year was not an exception and we had a very successful trip again with 177 bird species observed!

Straight in the beginning, after the group arrived we soon enjoyed masses of birds around Calarasi`s first class wetland sites, in the perfect afternoon light behind us! We had our first Little Bitterns, Spoonbills, Glossy Ibises, Purple Herons, all 4 Grebe species, all Marsh Terns here and the show continued with 100+ Ferruginous Ducks, mixed colonies of 300 Whiskered Terns with Black-necked Grebes and 2 separate colonies of Black-headed Gulls and Black-winged Stilts. What a good start! Early evening we arrived to our accommodation in Silistra, Bulgaria.

Next morning we did birding in the nearby park along the Danube, watching flocks of 40 Goldfinches while eating seeds of *Dandelion* flowers. Highlight was a Syrian Woodpecker perched in the open over our heads. After the breakfast we continued our journey to the Black Sea coast and birding in the morning mainly along the Danube Valley. First birds immediately appeared around Ostrov`s vineyard such as newly arrived Red-backed Shrikes, European Bee-eaters, territorial Ortolan Bunting, two male Barred Warbler, a pair of Wryneck and a Black Kite. Next stop was in the vicinity of Buceag village where flooded fishponds along the Danube were full with birds. Here we saw 50+ Ruddy Shelduck, Garganeys, Wishkered Terns, a distant White-tailed Eagle and a feeding flock of Glossy Ibises.

We had lunch at Canaraua Fetei woodland where Red-rumped Swallows breed together with hundreds of Barn Swallows and House Martins. In this place we had the best view of a pale morph Booted Eagle while gliding over our heads. Early afternoon we reached Mamaia where we had time to check in to our rooms, than took a short visit to Navodari before the evening dinner.

During the next three days we mostly did birding around the Sinoe lagoons and steppe grasslands - agricultural fields of coastal Dobrudja. Highlights` here was hundreds of soaring White Pelicans, 7 Dalmatian Pelican, 3 Marsh Sandpipers, 80 Collared Pratincoles, 6 Little Terns, a single Red-breasted Flycatcher, breeding plumage Red-throated Pipits on migration, Pied Weathars, Paddyfiled Warblers, Calandra- and Greater Short-toed Larks, male Levant Sparrowhawk while hunting than eating a lizard 100 meter away from us, 80+ Red-footed Falcons, 2 imm. Pallid Harrier, an immature (3 cy) Eastern Imperial Eagle and a close, perched Saker Falcon!

Above Babadag forest Short-toed Eagles, Honey Buzzards and Long-legged Buzzards glide to North direction. In the woodland Icterine Warblers, Wood Warblers, Blackcaps sang without intermission.

Near Enisala fortress Short-toed Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard and more White Pelicans were the main attractions, than just after the lunch we arrived to Tulcea and started discovering the Delta's birdlife with our smaller boat. Due to the small size group, accommodation in the Danube Delta this time was in a 4 star pension in Mila 23 village and this necessary changes hasn't had any negative effect to our birding list or sense of comfort!

We had mostly sunny and warm days here, this means excellent conditions to find our targets. Every morning we start our daily program from Mila 23 village, than we return to our accommodation for lunch and dinner. Main destinations during these 4 days were the seashore near Sulina, a nice oak woodland near Letea village and lots of different lakes and channels north to the Sulina branch.

Highlights in the Delta part was 6 Great Black-headed/Palla's Gulls, hundreds of White Pelicans, Black -, Lesser Spotted-, Grey-headed Woodpeckers, singing Little Crake, Collared Flycatchers, singing Thrush Nightingales, White-winged Black Terns, a close Little Bittern, Red-rumped Swallows, Red-necked Grebes, Hobbies, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler and evening dinners on the terrace, in the sunset light:)

All in all, it was a very productive and enjoyable birding trip to southeastern Romania in this spring again!

### **ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED**

(Total 177 species recorded by the group)

#### **Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan***

40+ over the sea in Mamaia

#### **Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

A few seen and several more heard

#### **Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix***

One female on the way to Sacele

#### **Greylag Goose *Anser anser***

A few seen in the lagoons of Black Sea and 80 + in the Danube Delta.

#### **Mute Swan *Cygnus olor***

Common

#### **Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***

40 seen in the lagoons of Black Sea

#### **Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea***

50+ seen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day over the Buceag lake. An adult White-tailed Eagle flushed the birds off and then the whole group landed in a half drained lake in front of us.

**Gadwall *Anas strepera***

48 ex. seen during the trip

**Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***

Common.

**Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata***

Two in Calarasi-lezer wetland site

**Garganey *Anas querquedula***

One Calarasi-lezer, 20+ Lake Buceag, two Vadu and several in the Danube Delta

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

One Calarasi-lezer and eight in Vadu

**Common Pochard *Aythya ferina***

Common.

**Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca***

100+ Calarasi-lezer wetland, over 30 in Vadu and several more in Danube Delta.

**Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis***

Observed and heard in Calarasi-lezer wetland site.

**Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena***

One Calarasi-lezer and 40+ in the Danube Delta.

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

Over 100 ex seen during the week

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

8 Calarasi-lezer and 2 in the lagoons.

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra***

One in the Danube Delta

**European White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***

Common and widespread.

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

8 Calarasi-lezer, 26 Lake Buceag, 6 Vadu and 200+ in the Danube Delta

**Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

6 Calarasi-lezer, 4 Lake Buceag, 40 Vadu and 12 in the Danube Delta.

**Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***

One heard only

**Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus***

3 Calarasi-lezer and 1 in Danube Delta

**Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Seen every day and very common the Danube Delta.

**Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides***

Seen every day and very common the Danube Delta.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

30+ seen during the trip

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea***

8 Calarasi-lezer, 4 Buceag, 2 Vadu and common in the Danube Delta.

**Great Egret *Ardea alba***

Seen every day and fairly common the Danube Delta.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Common and widespread.

**Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus***

Seen almost every day of the trip, 700+ over the lagoons and 1200 over the Danube Delta.

**Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus***

6 Vadu, one Histria, and at least 8 sightings in the Danube Delta.

**Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus***

13 Calarasi-lezer, 4 Lake Buceag and several hundred in the Danube Delta.

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

Common.

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

Widespread and fairly common.

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

20+ Histria, 60+ Vadu and 28 ex seen in the Danube Delta

**Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

1 over the lagoons and 14 in the Danube Delta.

**Saker *Falco cherrug***

One adult female seen on a pylon near Nuntasi.

**Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus***

A huge female over Sinoe village, in the way to North

**European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus***

One Canaraua Fetii and another one over Babadag Forest

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans***

One seen over Ostrov village on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day

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

1 adult over Buceag Lake and 4 in the Danube Delta.

**Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca***

A 3cy bird were seen on a pylon near Sinoe village. We saw it while hunting than a bit later glide to north direction

**Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus***

One over Enisala fortress

**Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

Widespread and seen daily.

**Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus***

2 immature bird were seen over the agricultural fields of Dobrudja

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

One female in the Danube Delta while we travel to Letea.

**Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes***

One male were seen from 100 meter away along the Gura Dobrogei Valley, perched on a cliff side. Later start hunting and successfully caught and eaten a small lizard

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

1 over Babadag

**Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

Several seen.

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

2 Cheia Gorge, 2 Gura Dobrogei Valley on a nest, and 1 Enisala.

**Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata***

One pale morph Canarana Fetei and 1 Cheia Gorge

**Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***

One heard in Danube Delta

**Little Crake *Porzana parva***

One heard very close along the Magheru chanel/Danube Delta but didn't showed itself

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Several seen here and there.

**Common Coot *Fulica atra***

Several seen here and there.

**Common Crane *Grus grus***

A single bird seen over Navodari-Vadu in the way to north.

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

A colony of at least 50 breeding pairs in Calarasi-lezer wetland site and 40+ in the lagoons, mainly at Vadu.

**Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

40+ Vadu

**Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus***

Widespread and seen daily.

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

1 Lake Buceag

**Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

1 Vadu

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

2 Vadu

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

12 at Vadu

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

2 Lake Buceag, 2 Vadu and 2 Danube Delta

**Curlew *Numenius arquata***

2 Histria

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus***

Two Calarasi-iezer and 6 Lake Buceag

**Common Redshank *Tringa totanus***

30+ at a flooded area in Vadu .

**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis***

Three in Vadu.

**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

One in Danube Delta

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus***

One near Mila 23, Danube Delta

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

20+ Vadu

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***

Small numbers here and there.

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta***

120 at coastal wetlands.

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

Two Vadu.

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

50 Vadu

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

Several seen at coastal wetlands and the Danube Delta.

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola***

Eighty plus Vadu.

**Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus***

Seen most days.

**Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus***

A total of six seen, five adults all in summer plumage and 1 immature bird in the Delta.

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

Common and widespread.

**Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans***

Common in Danube Delta.

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons***

6 in Vadu

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus***

Very common and seen daily.

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

Common and widespread, seen almost every day but less numerous than Whiskered Tern.

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

10 at Calarasi-lezer and several in the Danube Delta.

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

Common on coastal wetlands and in the Danube Delta.

**Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia***

Common.

**Stock Dove *Columba oenas***

A few in the Danube Delta.

**Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus***

17 in the Danube Delta.

**European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***

Seen in Letea forest

**Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Widespread and common.

**Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

Seen or heard every day.

**Little Owl *Athene noctua***

A couple seen here and there.

**Common Swift *Apus apus***

Common, widespread and seen daily.

**European Roller *Coracias garrulus***

Most common in the Danube Delta where we saw total of 23 individual.

**Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

13 in Danube Delta

**European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster***

Seen virtually every day.

**Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops***

Common and widespread on the coast and inland and also seen in the delta.

**Wryneck *Jynx torquilla***

A pair seen along vinyards, near Ostrov

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor***

1 near Crisan, Danube Delta

**Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus***

A pair Ostrov, one Corbu

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***

A few seen mainly in Danube Delta

**Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius***

A pair seen well in a poplar tree line in the Danube Delta.

**Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis***

One heard at Canaraua Fetii

**Grey-faced Woodpecker *Picus canus***

Five in Danube Delta.

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

Seen mainly in Dobrudja with total of 37 individual



**Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor***

15 seen mainly in Dobrudja

**Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus***

Common and widespread.

**Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius***

A couple here and there.

**Common Magpie *Pica pica***

Very common.

**Eurasian Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula***

Widespread and common.

**Rook *Corvus frugilegus***

Widespread and common.

**Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix***

Widespread and common.

**Marsh Tit *Parus palustris***

1 at Babadag Forest

**Great Tit *Parus major***

Common.

**Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus***

Common in the Danube Delta

**Eurasian Penduline-tit *Remiz pendulinus***

Several seen in the Danube Delta.

**Common Sand Martin *Riparia riparia***

Very common.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Common and widespread.

**House Martin *Delichon urbicum***

Common.

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

Ten Canarana Fetei and two Danube Delta.

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

A couple in the Danube Delta.

**Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra***

50+ in Dobrudja's steppe grasslands and agricultural fields.

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

3 near Sacele

**Crested Lark *Galerida cristata***

Several coastal area.

**Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis***

Common and widespread.

**Woodlark *Lullula arborea***

One heard near Enisala and one in Letea/ Danube Delta.

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

Frequently heard and occasionally seen.

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus***

Common.

**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

One obliging bird near Mila 23/Danube Delta

**Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola***

Half dozen Wolves Peninsula and in Histria.

**Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus***

Common.

**Eastern Oliveaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida***

One seen well near Mila 23, Danube Delta

**Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina***

2 at Canaraua Fetii and one in Babadag Forest

**Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus***

A few heard and seen.

**Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

A few heard and seen.

**Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix***

One seen and several more singing in Babadag Forest

**Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla***

Common in drier woodlands.

**Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin***

Several heard and a few seen in the Danube Delta.

**Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria***

Two Ostov

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca***

Five heard or seen.

**Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis***

One at Cheia Gorge

**Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus***

A few in the Danube Delta.

**Nuthatch *Sitta europaea***

Two Babadag Forest.

**Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris***

One seen at Babadag Forest.

**European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

Widespread and common.

**Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula***

A few at Canaraua Fetei area

**Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos***

A few at Canaraua Fetei area

**European Robin *Erithacus rubecula***

One heard near Ostrov

**Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia***

Seen and heard in the Danube Delta.

**Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos***

Several heard.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros***

One at Mamaia

**Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus***

3 Vadu and commonly heard and frequently seen in the riparian woodlands of the delta.

**Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra***

6 at the coastal area.

**Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina***

6 Histria, 10+ Gura Dobrogei Valley

**Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe***

Several in coastal areas.

**Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka***

1 male in Gura Dobrogei Valley, 5 different male at Cheia Gorge charst region, among them at least 1 hybrid with Eastern Black-eared Wheatear

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata***

1 at Mamaia

**Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis***

5 in the Danube delta.

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

1 at Mamaia Park.

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Widespread and common.

**Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis***

Common

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus***

Common.

**Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

Common in the lagoons area and among them many black headed `feldegg` individual.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

Several seen.

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris***

15+ at Gura Dobrogei Valley

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

13 at Wolves Peninsula, some males had sang too

**Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs***

Small numbers here and there.

**European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris***

8 seen during the trip in different places.

**European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis***

40+ in Silistra park and several more in the Danube Delta

**Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina***

2 Cheia gorge and 2 Gura Dobrogei Valley

**Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***

At least 2 Canarana Fetei

**Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra***

Common.

**Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana***

7 seen during the week, all in Dobrudja

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

1 male near Sacele

**Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus***

Several seen in Vadu, Histria and in the Danube Delta

**MAMMALS**

**Noctule Bat *Nyctalus noctula***

**Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris***

**European Sousek *Spermophilus citellus***

**Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus***

**REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS**

**European Pond Terrapin *Emys orbicularis***

**Grass Snake *Natrix natrix***

**Marsh Frog *Pelophylax ridibundus***

**Edible Frog *Pelophylax kl. Esculentus* \***

( \*fertile hybrid of the Pool Frog and the Marsh Frog)

**DRAGONS & DAMSELS\*\***

**Scarce Swallowtail *Iphiclides podalirius***

**Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus***

**Small Copper *Lycaena Phlaeas***

**Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina***

**Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia***

**Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria***

**Blue Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens***

**\*\*thanks to Liz for the above list!**