

# Romania

## Danube Delta & Black Sea

Fri 3rd - Sat 11th May 2013



*Photos (clockwise, from top left): Our Romanian group in afternoon sun • A fabulous female Red-footed Falcon near Vadu • An awesome view of an adult White-tailed Eagle • A Roller in flight is always a spectacular sight • No less so is a White-winged Black Tern • A speciality of the Danube is the Paddyfield Warbler © all photos StephenDaly/andalucianguides.com*

**report compiled by tour leader:  
Stephen Daly**

## Trip Diary

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### Danube Delta & Black Sea

With its serene beauty and richness of birds, the Danube Delta is one of Europe's greatest natural treasures. The largest reedbeds in the world are here and in May the Delta provides one of the continent's major bird spectacles.

As we found, it is worth coming to see the pelicans alone, but the trip offers so much more. With much of our birding possible only by water, we were able to explore hidden areas of the vast swamps aboard one of the Danube's unique 'pontons' or 'hotel-boats', allowing us unrivalled views of the Delta and its magnificent birdlife. The Danube Delta is an amazing place and we had many highlight moments – a lot of them red: Red-footed Falcons, Red-breasted Flycatchers and Red-backed Shrikes; but also Bee-eaters, Saker, Thrush Nightingale, plus many waders and terns. Who will forget the Eastern Imperial Eagle mobbed by Marsh Harrier and Long-legged Buzzard? We will all have our own special moment.

#### Day 1. Friday 3rd May

Our flight from London Heathrow bound for Bucharest took off in the morning without a hitch. Turning the clocks two hours forward, it was late afternoon when we touched down just outside Romania's capital. The drive eastwards to the Black sea brought us our first colourful birds of the trip, which included some Bee-eaters strung along a fence and two Rollers on an electric wire. Yellow Wagtails were numerous and the male of the black-headed sub-species *feldegg* really stood out sitting along the posts of the fields of rapeseed. Red-back Shrikes too were in plentiful supply although these and many other first day birds were only fleeting views as we made our way to our hotel.

Once at Constanta, we took a satisfying and tasty dinner in the hotel restaurant and later retired after a long day's journey. The weather was warm with little wind and clear skies from Bucharest with a maximum temperature of 23C.

#### Day 2. Saturday 4th May

Easter weekend of the Greek Orthodox Church is always a busy time in eastern countries and Romania was no exception. The town was busy with tourists and there was a lot of activity out on the streets of Mamaia. Around the rear of the hotel we watched a good number of Tree Sparrows and migrating Chiffchaffs.

After breakfast we left the sandy spit that holds lots of hotel and apartment accommodation, to head to a nearby lake that holds a sizeable White Pelican population. Dalmatian Pelicans were also present in small numbers and we managed to get great views of both species as Great Reed Warblers called and flitted through the reed beds that extended along the roadway. A Black Redstart was also watched across the road at an abandoned factory as Swifts and Swallows flew overhead.

Taking the road to Vadu we stopped to watch Lesser Grey Shrikes, Black-headed Buntings and Yellow Wagtails. A Hobby left its perch and headed off low across the open field to where a flock of Red-footed Falcons were circling, so we decided to explore the area. Corn Buntings and Red-backed Shrikes lined the taller vegetation and small bushes along the track to the wood; on getting out of the van we heard Golden Oriole, Cuckoo, Savi's Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher calling. The views of Red-footed Falcon as they came across over the woodland were spectacular and eventually we enticed a Cuckoo to come right in and land on a wire about 10m away! The flycatchers were difficult to see but most of us managed to get decent views of this beautiful bird.

We travelled on a short distance and stopped at some open water fringed by broken reeds. Cattle were grazing and a shepherd was tending his goats above a small Bee-eater colony. The birds sat on the nearby wires and we had good 'scoped views as well as watching others catching flying insects nearby. On the shoreline, we picked up Temminck's and Little Stints, whilst Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper and Redshank were noted feeding. Citrine Wagtail was good bird to see and two females were seen feeding around some cut reeds.

Later, we travelled to have lunch at a roadside restaurant, which was very good quality, and we had the added bonus of watching Swallows come and go under the patio to nest-build. After our break we drove the short distance to an abandoned quarry where Isabelline, Northern and Pied Wheatears were watched. A single Long-legged Buzzard came across the hillside and flew over us as a Common Buzzard appeared right on queue to show the comparison between the two *Buteos*.

As we walked up the cliff line of the quarry we watched a few Hoopoes, but once at the top a single Saker took off and flew away from view. Later we managed to catch up with many Calandra and a few Short-toed Larks along an open and quite rolling agricultural plain. Here we also watched many Souseliks as well as a pair of nesting Stone Curlew. Back at the hotel we relaxed a little before the trip list and a filling dinner.

### **Day 3. Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May**

It was a breezy and overcast start to the morning. The short pre-breakfast walk produced very little although Swallow, Chiffchaff, Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Blackbird were seen. After our breakfast we left the town and made our way past the local Pelican lake and saw both pelican species.

We drove on to Grindul Lupilor and stopped to watch waders and wetland species on the water's edge or in the reeds and scrub. There was a strong breeze and lots of dust on the dry track, but the open edge of the huge lake was full of waders and other wetland birds. Duck here included Gadwall, Garganey, Mallard, Ruddy and Common Shelduck, Ferruginous Duck, Pochard and Red-crested Pochard.

Paddyfield Warbler was a great bird to watch singing and climbing up on the reeds and we had quite a few sightings of this special warbler – there are now said to be 300,000 pairs in Romania. Squacco and Purple Herons were around as were the commoner Grey Heron. Spoonbills, Little and Great Egrets fed on shallow pools as migrating Red-throated and Tawny Pipits stopped off to feed or bathe. Bee-eaters and 100s of Sand Martins fed in the air or passed overhead; a Roller was seen heading north over the reeds. Terns were in abundance with Gull-billed, Whiskered, Common, Black, White-winged Black and Caspian Terns all seen in the area.

A real treat for the group came when we had a good view of some juvenile Great Black-headed Gulls with one sitting beside a Caspian Gull for comparison. We lunched at a nearby hotel, taking on a traditional goulash dish washed down with a glass of beer. After lunch we continued on across the open landscape picking up more larks and wagtails and a few more Marsh Harriers. Walking in an open landscape filled with shallow depressions that still held water, we found Collared Pratincoles, and many waders. A single juvenile Montagu's Harrier was also seen and we had good views of both Lesser Grey and the commoner Red-backed Shrikes.

We stopped to look at the ancient Greek site of Histria or Istros. This was a trading port and centre for agriculture and fishing until the 7th Century. Looking through the ruined site we saw Little Owl and many migrating and resident passerines that included Turtle Dove, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Black Redstart, Spotted and Collared Flycatchers, Icterine and Eastern Olivaceous Warblers, Wood and Willow Warbler, plus Whitethroat. Without doubt, the very obliging Thrush Nightingale was one of the special birds that afternoon and everyone managed to watch it feeding close to the museum building.

Later in the afternoon after watching a couple of male Cuckoos having a tussle above our heads, we headed back cross-country to Vadu and the huge colony of Common Terns that breed there - with bird numbers close to 1000 the noise alone was incredible! Some other tern species are seen here as well and we saw Black-necked Grebe and heard a Bittern. Then a pair of Cuckoos put on a fine aerial ballet above our heads as Collared Pratincoles flew past and Reed Buntings flitted and sang.

Back at the hotel we had a good dinner and retired for the evening.

#### **Day 4. Monday 6th May**

We said farewells to our hotel after breakfast and headed back once again to visit the quarry at Vadu. Picking up Northern Wheatear out on the open grazed sides leading to the old workings, we again saw Pied and Isabelline Wheatears. Tawny Pipit and Hoopoe were viewed and a hepatic form of Cuckoo flew across. There were also Kestrels around the area, but alas there was no sign of the Saker and we went on our journey towards the Danube Delta and Tulcea.

En route to Badagag we saw a large eagle flying low across an open plain being mobbed by a Marsh Harrier. A Long-legged Buzzard came in as the eagle climbed and the harrier dropped down low away from the action. The eagle turned out to be a second year Eastern Imperial and we had some great views of it gaining height then tucking its wings in and gliding at speed in a 45° angle away from us. What a show!

A little further on we saw a distant Lesser Spotted Eagle and a Booted Eagle, but the star raptor was a rare adult Steppe Eagle high in the sky. Several of us took photographs and we later confirmed the ID with its distinctive seven primary feathered 'hand'. Later, a mid-morning walk was just what we needed and in a mixed broad-leaved forest near Badagag we looked for some woodland species. There was certainly a lot of birds singing but little visible movement.

The calls of Icterine Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher and Wood Warbler greeted us, with Great Tit, Blue Tit and Chaffinch calling and putting in an appearance. Several woodpeckers were heard which included Grey-headed, Great Spotted and Black. Finally an obliging Icterine Warbler came in as did a Middle-Spotted Woodpecker at its nest. Both parent birds were watched and we moved away to look at a lovely male Red-breasted Flycatcher singing under the canopy. There were some butterflies around, mainly Wood and some Green-veined Whites plus Red Admiral. We also watched a Migrant Hawker dragonfly.

We had a late lunch, drove down the flat lands to Tulcea and en route saw a Short-toed Eagle. We reached our boat or 'pontón' as it's called in late afternoon and were towed down the Danube towards the delta and open sea. I think that all of us were really impressed by the layout of the ponton and the viewing areas and individual accommodation. Setting off from the town we quickly spotted Pygmy Cormorant, Hobby, Red-footed Falcon, Roller, Pheasant, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Raven and Night Heron.

Our dinner on board was taken in a perfect setting, with the sun going down behind us and the sights, sounds and wildlife of the last part of the mighty Danube River passing in front of our eyes. As the sun went down, it wasn't long before the stars came out and as some of us relaxed on deck in the cooler evening air others took a shower and bedded down for the night in their cabins below, with the thoughts that tomorrow would find us exploring the shoreline of the delta and looking for more birds and other wildlife.

#### **Day 5. Tuesday 7th May**

We awoke to sound of distant Cuckoos, Nightingale and Golden Orioles calling from the tree lines of both banks of our anchorage. Marsh Frogs had been 'singing' as we went to bed down below on the lower deck their croaking didn't disturb us too much.

Dawn came calling around 6:15am and some of us gathered on the upper deck to listen to the start of the avian dawn chorus: Cuckoos and Golden Orioles were the noisiest birds and a Black Woodpecker was heard then seen just as most of the tour members had joined us. Night Herons and Purple Herons were seen and a few Kingfishers flew across the river. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was also watched as the Black Woodpecker came and went in the woodland near our mooring. The next great bird we watched was a White-tailed Eagle flying along the tree line. Pygmy Cormorants and to a lesser extent, Great Cormorants, flew past as Cuckoos began to fly around the ponton.

Breakfast beckoned, and afterwards we donned our lifejackets and boarded a smaller passenger boat to explore the remainder of the Danube down to the delta around the town of Sulina. From here we boarded a smaller craft and motored down a narrow channel to a track that led to the beachfront on the Black Sea. A Thrush Nightingale was again seen and heard but this time more skulking than the great views we had at Histria. Lesser Whitethroat and Swift were seen as we motored quietly along the channel and Red-backed Shrike was seen close to the path when we set foot on dry land. Along the beach we saw Common Shelduck, Gadwall, Mallard and Turnstone. Caspian and Sandwich Terns came past and White and Dalmatian Pelicans were seen through the 'scopes. A flight of Knot and a single Little Ringed Plover were also seen and looking way out to the sea wall that extends around Musura Bay we could see adult Great Black-headed Gulls near the pelicans.

After our picnic lunch we took our boat back to the town and en route saw many Hobbies with a few Kestrel and Red-footed Falcon. Caspian and Yellow-legged Gulls were plentiful and we also watched two juvenile Mediterranean Gulls. After a coffee in the town, we travelled back upstream and saw Glossy Ibis, Purple Herons, Roller, Hoopoe, Golden Oriole and a pair of White-tailed Eagles. Further upstream we had 100s of terns that were in the main Whiskered, Black, White-winged Black and Common. There were also a couple of Gull-billed Terns seen as well and Marsh Harriers patrolled over the extensive reed beds.

Back aboard the ponton we settled down on the aft deck with a beer before dinner and watched an adult White-tailed Eagle come in and land on the tree beside us. Keeping our movements to the minimum we found our cameras and managed to take some close shots of this magnificent creature. What an end to the day!

#### **Day 6. Wednesday 8th May**

The dawn chorus was a mixture of Golden Orioles and Thrush Nightingales peppered with Garden Warblers and Black Woodpecker, as we took an easy morning look at the tall riverside trees beside our mooring. A few woodpeckers flew fleetingly across the river as did a distant Bittern and a few Purple Herons.

Following breakfast, we transferred to the small boat which was very comfortable and had a shaded awning. We set off upstream to explore the old part of the flooded delta that makes up the lakes of Cazanele, Trie Iezre and Radacinos. It was a breezy morning and the lake's surface had a few waves and most of the bird life was around the sheltered corners.

Terns were as ever active with Black and White-winged Black hunting over the extensive water-lily pads, where they also nest, while Common Terns sat around on logs allowing us to take some lovely photos. A male Marsh Harrier came in close and we watched a pair of Penduline Tits and Bearded Tits climb up the reeds on a long narrow channel. Lesser Whitethroat, Garden Warbler and Common Redstart were seen; Mute Swans, White Pelicans and Greylag Geese fed on the open stretches. Some commoner birds were also around like Great Cormorant, which gave us good comparison to the diminutive Pygmy Cormorants we saw. We could also compare Grey Heron and Purple Herons in flight and get to grips with distant flocks of Glossy Ibis that seemed to be constantly on the move. Wildfowl too were plentiful and the shape, structure and colours of various species were seen and we were able to see the difference between flights of Ferruginous Ducks, Red-crested Pochard and the commoner Mallards.

We took a welcome coffee at a modern hotel and later motored in a loop back to the ponton for lunch. Gull-billed Terns flew noisily past and Glossy Ibis were seen on the move. In the afternoon we changed the anchorage of the ponton, being pulled further up the old Danube where we anchored further north-west later that afternoon. Thrush Nightingales and Golden Orioles sang most of the early evening and a hunting Hobby flew past. After dinner on board the ponton we watched another amazing sunset through the willows and poplars.

#### **Day 7. Thursday 9th May**

Another warm, still morning with clear skies as we departed from our mooring at the Siruesa Channel and made our way down the old Danube towards Tulcea. Thrush Nightingales sang along the banks and Hobbies were performing as they flew at speed through the trees displaying. Flights of Squacco Heron, Glossy Ibis, Pygmy Cormorants and Greylag Geese flew sedately overhead and parties of Ferruginous Ducks blasted past at great speed! A few White-tailed Eagles were seen as was our first Honey Buzzard of the tour. Yet more Hobbies were watched and a Golden Oriole flew past the upper deck as we were towed back to the port at Tulcea.

Downriver we saw Kingfisher, Mediterranean Gull and a lot closer views of Caspian Gull. At the port we said farewell to the staff of the ponton and transferred to the minibus and dropped off our luggage at our hotel which would be our base for the final two nights. Driving to the saline lake at Murighiol we looked at the huge colony of Mediterranean Gulls that were breeding there. Some Little Gulls were seen and Red-crested Pochard fed with Black-necked Grebes in the shallow waters. Little Stint, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt and a pair of Curlew were the main waders present and around the lake fringes were Red-footed Falcon and Kestrel. The lake is also a breeding area for Common, Whiskered as well as Black and White-winged Black Tern.

#### **Day 8. Friday 10th May**

Still clear skies and warm temperatures enveloped Tulcea as we finished our breakfast at the hotel. We headed back across to the Danube River and a mountainous area, to search for different birds and butterflies. Stopping off at a woodland grove on the edge of the bababag Forest that had a lush mix of poplar with cherry and walnut trees, we found Sombre Tit, Hawfinch and had fleeting views of Golden Oriole. There were a few different butterfly species that included Scarce Swallowtail and Clouded Apollo. We managed to get some views of a very skittish Sombre Tit as it hid amongst the foliage of small oaks and cherry trees.

Later we travelled to the Macin National Park where en route we spotted a few Long-legged Buzzards, Common Buzzards, Booted Eagle and a small group of seven Honey Buzzards. Marsh Harriers were also seen as was a single Short-toed Eagle - not a bad tally of birds of prey and it was going to get better! At the start of the walk, a Wryneck was seen coming to drink and a Woodchat Shrike was seen perched. This was a good start and we soon caught up with a very tolerant Lesser Grey Shrike that stayed perched at the top of one of the bare trees, posing at it let those with cameras take some good photos.

We took lunch at a nearby roadside restaurant, where it was quite relaxing to sit in the shade and out of the hot sun, which had already topped 29C! Our walk across the craggy edge of the park picked us up more Red-backed Shrikes, Corn Buntings and a nice pair of Ortolan Buntings. Another Long-legged Buzzard flew low past us then soared up the valley, eventually settling on a distant ridge. We managed decent 'scoped views of this lovely raptor.

A bit further up the trail, on higher ground beside a small stream trickling through the valley, we stopped to study some butterflies and dragonflies that were attracted by the water. Butterflies included Queen of Spain Fritillary, Scarce Swallowtail, Clouded Apollo, Brimstone, Small Skipper, Meadow Brown and False Ringlet. Several dragonflies passed by or were seen perched and these included Hairy Hawker, Green-eyed Hawker and Four-Spotted Chaser.

A distant male Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush was seen on a large boulder half way up the valley, then another bird, this time the female, was also spotted. Scanning across the tops of the ridges we managed to locate another pair, which was a good number although views were distant. To get everyone excited we watched another ridge as a female Levant Sparrowhawk rose up on the slipstream then disappeared out of sight. As if on cue the male appeared right above our heads and rose steadily on a warm thermal, getting higher and higher as it lifted over the valley.

### **Day 9. Saturday 11th May**

After breakfast we said farewell to the staff at our hotel in Tulcea and departed cross-country towards Bucharest. There were a few sites that we wanted to look at en route, if we had time, so we drove along the quieter, smaller roads to the north-west - through rolling countryside mixed with fertile agricultural that included vines and huge wheat fields. Forested areas came into view and we passed many Yellow Wagtails, plus Calandra and some Short-toed Larks in the fields. Stopping at the side of the road we watched Long-legged Buzzards and a few Common Buzzards wheeling above the landscape.

A Rookery came into view as we descended from the woodlands down into a river valley where we stopped at a freshwater lake off one of the Danube tributaries. Purple Heron and Little Bittern were seen and we had great views of Penduline Tit in the trees at a small farm coppice. A Wryneck was heard then briefly seen, as Nightingales called and Kestrels flew overhead.

Our return to Bucharest was fairly straightforward and once at the airport we said farewell to Zoli and Laslo our driver. Both were good company and Zoli's sharp eyes and enthusiasm kept us all alert and found new birds and other wildlife. Thanks to the group we had a happy time throughout and many laughs together. The Danube Delta is an amazing place and I for one will be looking forward to going back in the future! I hope to see some of you on another Limosa Holiday tour.

*Stephen Daly - June 2013*

## **ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED**

*(A total of 176 species recorded by the group)*

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

A few were seen and several more heard.

### **Quail *Coturnix coturnix***

Heard at Histria on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

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

A very common species.

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

Seen most days.

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

Seen with Common Shelduck near Grindul Lupilor on 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Gadwall *Anas strepera***

A common bird seen most days during the trip.

### **Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***

Common.

### **Shoveler *Anas clypeata***

A few pairs noted.

### **Garganey *Anas querquedula***

A pair at Navodai on the 4<sup>th</sup>, two at Histria on the 5<sup>th</sup> and a pair near Crisan on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Teal *Anas crecca***

One at Navodai on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

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

A few on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Navodai, and again near Histria on the 5<sup>th</sup> and a dozen on the 9<sup>th</sup> on Lake Cazanele on the old Danube.

**Pochard *Aythya ferina***

Common.

**Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca***

Quite common seen most days in the Delta.

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

A few pairs were found in the Danube marshes and the smaller reed-fringed lakes as we left Mile 23 on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

Breeding pairs seen at most lakes on the tour.

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

One on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Grindul-Lupilor and 25 on the 9<sup>th</sup> leaving Mile 23.

**White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***

Common and widespread.

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

Smaller flocks, pairs in flight as well as feeding birds seen on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> from the ponton at various Danube locations.

**Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

40 or so seen at Grindul-Lupilor on the 5<sup>th</sup> and from the ponton on 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Bittern *Botaurus stellaris***

Heard on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Grindul wetlands and again heard at Radacinos Lake on the 8<sup>th</sup>; finally one seen early morning in flight from the ponton at Mile 23.

**Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus***

Seemed to be the bogey marshland bird and finally we caught up with one in flight at a lake near Ciobanu on our last day!

**Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Seen every day and very common within the Danube Delta.

**Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides***

Seen every day and very common within the Danube Delta.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

A common species.

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea***

Seen most days and most Danube reed-bed sites.

**Great Egret *Ardea alba***

Seen every day and fairly common the Danube Delta.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Common and widespread.

**White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus***

Seen almost every day of the trip; 300+ over the lagoons as well as great flight views with Dalmatian for comparison. 100s on the lakes in the Danube Delta.

**Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus***

18 at Navodai on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 40+ at Histria on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and at more sightings along the Danube Delta.

**Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus***

Quite common and seen in flight most days on the delta.

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

Very common.

**Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

Widespread and fairly common.



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

25+ near Histria with more seen in the Danube Delta.

**Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

Seen most days; highest number was on the 8<sup>th</sup> when we saw 20 on the old Danube.

**Saker *Falco cherrug***

One seen at Sitorman on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus***

One seen on the 9<sup>th</sup> on migration over the old Danube.

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

Seen most days: on the 6<sup>th</sup> near Sitorman, four on 7<sup>th</sup> in Crisan and on 8<sup>th</sup> beside the old Danube.

**Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aguila pomarina***

One seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> and another two on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Steppe Eagle *Aguila nipalensis***

One adult seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> en route to Histria.

**Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca***

An immature bird was seen on a pylon near Sinoe. We saw it hunting then a bit later glide north.

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

Only seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

Widespread and seen daily.

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

One on the 3<sup>rd</sup> travelling to Mamia and one on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria.

**Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes***

One male on the 4<sup>th</sup> and a male and a female seen on the 10<sup>th</sup> at Macin National Park.

**Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

Singles on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup>, then another four on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

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

Two on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Sitorman, one on the 6<sup>th</sup> at Badadag and seven on the 10<sup>th</sup> in the Macin area.

**Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus***

One on the 6<sup>th</sup> near Tulcea and again one on the 10<sup>th</sup> at Macin National Park (both light forms).

**Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***

Heard on two days in the delta.

**Little Crake *Porzana parva***

Heard on the 5<sup>th</sup> only.

**Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Several seen here and there.

**Coot *Fulica atra***

Several seen here and there.

**Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus***

12 on the 4<sup>th</sup> near Sitorman.

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

Seen on five different days at various wetland locations.

**Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

10 on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Navodai and 40+ on the 9<sup>th</sup> at various old Danube lakes.

**Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus***

Seen most days.

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

One bird seen on the 9<sup>th</sup> at Murighiol.

**Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

Only one bird seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria.

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

Seen in low numbers on four days.

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

A few seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria.

**Curlew *Numenius arquata***

One heard on the 7<sup>th</sup> and two seen on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus***

Two lovely summer-plumaged birds seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Grindul Lupilor.

**Redshank *Tringa totanus***

Seen on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

One seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria.

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus***

One seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria.

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

Low numbers seen on four days.

**Turnstone *Arenaria interpres***

A group of 13 recorded on the 7<sup>th</sup> at Murighiol salt lake.

**Knot *Calidris canutus***

A flight seen along the shore with Little Ringed Plover on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta***

A dozen on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 100+ on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Grindul Lupilor and 40 on the 9<sup>th</sup> at Murighiol salt lake.

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

Two on the 4<sup>th</sup> and again on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria.

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

Low numbers on three days of the tour with the other waders.

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

Good numbers at most wetland sites.

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola***

A single on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 50+ on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Histria.

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

Seen most days.

**Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus***

Several seen on the 9<sup>th</sup> downriver from Tulcea

**Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus***

Two juveniles near Histria on the 7<sup>th</sup> and others near Tulcea on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Black-headed Gull *Ichthyaeetus ichthyaeetus***

Two juveniles seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Grindul Lupilor.

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

Common and widespread.

**Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans***

Common in the Danube Delta.

**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica***

11 on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Grindul Lupilor and Histria and one pair on the 7<sup>th</sup> near Crisan.

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia***

Seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Grindul Lupilor and on the 7<sup>th</sup> along the beachfront along the Black Sea.

**Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis***

Seen with Caspian Terns on the Black Sea coast on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**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***

80 following the boat on the 5<sup>th</sup> to Crisan and seen most days from the Ponton.

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

A dozen on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Lake Navodai, 500 + at their breeding colony on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Grindul Lupilor and every other day on the Delta.

**Feral Pigeon *Columba livia***

Common.

**Stock Dove *Columba oenas***

A few in the agricultural areas.

**Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus***

Common.

**Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***

Seen most days in small numbers.

**Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Widespread and common.

**Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

Seen or heard every day with over 40 seen on the 8<sup>th</sup> on the old Danube flooded woodlands. A hepatic bird noted in the quarry at Vadu on the 6<sup>th</sup>

**Little Owl *Athene noctua***

Seen twice on the tour.

**Swift *Apus apus***

Common, widespread and seen daily.

**Roller *Coracias garrulous***

Seen most days of the tour, particularly when aboard the ponton.

**Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

Fairly common, seen most days on the Delta.

**Bee-eater *Merops apiaster***

Seen virtually every day.

**Hoopoe *Upupa epops***

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

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor***

Heard on two occasions and seen once on the 10<sup>th</sup> at the Badadag forest.

**Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus***

One seen on the 3<sup>rd</sup> en route to Mamia.

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius***

One seen on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***

Seen daily in low numbers on the Delta.

**Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius***

Heard once, then seen on the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> from the ponton.

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

Heard twice and seen on the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> in the Danube Delta from the ponton.

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

Seen every day on the tour in low numbers

**Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor***

Three seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> near Histria and low numbers on most other days of the tour.

**Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator***

Seen on the 7<sup>th</sup>

**Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus***

Common and widespread.

**Jay *Garrulus glandarius soemmerringii***

One bird seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> en route to Sitorman

**Magpie *Pica pica***

Very common.

**Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula***

Widespread and common.

**Rook *Corvus frugilegus***

Widespread and common.

**Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix***

Widespread and common.

**Raven *Corvus corax***

Seen twice on the Danube Delta

**Sombre Tit *Poecile lugubris***

Two seen in the Badadag on the 10<sup>th</sup>

**Great Tit *Parus major***

Common.

**Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus***

Common in the Danube Delta.

**Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus***

Seen twice on the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> on the Delta

**Sand Martin *Riparia riparia***

Very common.

**Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Common and widespread.

**House Martin *Delichon urbicum***

Common.

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

Six seen on the 10<sup>th</sup> around Macin.

**Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra***

Fairly common on open terrain, particularly in the agricultural areas.

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

Similarly common in same habitats as Calandra Lark.

**Crested Lark *Galerida cristata***

Seen most days in appropriate habitat.

**Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis***

Common and widespread.

**Wood Lark *Lullula arborea***

One seen on the 10<sup>th</sup> at Badadag.

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

Frequently heard and good views of one male singing on the 8<sup>th</sup> on the old Danube lakes.

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus***

Heard or seen most days in low numbers.

**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

Heard in the Danube Delta twice and seen once on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Histria.

**Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola***

Four individual birds seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Grindul Lupilor.

**Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus***

A pair seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria and heard on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Eastern Oliveaceous Warbler *Iduna [pallida] elaeica***

One seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria and one on the 8<sup>th</sup> from our moored ponton.

**Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina***

Seen on a few days particularly at Badadag on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus***

A few heard and seen.

**Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

A few heard and seen.

**Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix***

One seen and several more singing in Badadag 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***

One male seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> near Vadu.

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca***

Two seen on the 7<sup>th</sup> on the canal to Sulina Beach. One on the 8<sup>th</sup> and two at Badadag on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Whitethroat *Sylvia communis***

Four on the 4<sup>th</sup> near Vadu, two on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria and heard on the 9<sup>th</sup> at Enisala.

**Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus***

Heard on the 4<sup>th</sup>, one male on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Vadu and a pair seen very well on the 8<sup>th</sup> at Radacinos.

**Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

Widespread and common.

**Blackbird *Turdus merula***

Singles seen most days.

**Rock Thrush *Monticola sacantilis***

Two males and two females seen at Macin National Park on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos***

One bird seen on the 10<sup>th</sup> at Macin National Park.

**Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia***

Seen and heard in the Danube Delta. Great views of one at Histria archaeological grounds on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos***

One seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Vadu and heard on a few occasions.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros***

Seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus***

Seen on three occasions on the flooded tree lines of the old Danube Delta from the ponton.

**Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra***

Seen in open country near Sitorman on the 4<sup>th</sup> and again on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria.

**Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina***

12 on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Sitorman and on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Six seen on the 10<sup>th</sup> at Macin National Park.

**Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe***

Good views of birds seen on four days of the tour.

**Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka***

Ten seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> and again eight on the 6<sup>th</sup> at Sitorman and one male seen on the 10<sup>th</sup> at Macin National Park.

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata***

Seen in small numbers on 4 days.

**Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis***

Singles seen in three days with better views at Badadag forest on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

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

Lots of females seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Vadu woodland, ten birds seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Histria and again on the 6<sup>th</sup> at Badadag.

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Widespread and common.

**Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis***

Common.

**Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus***

Common.

**Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

Common in the lagoons area and amongst them many Black headed *feldegg* individuals.

**Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola***

Two females on the 4<sup>th</sup> near Badadag and one male seen on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

Ten late migrants seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> near Sitorman and two seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> at Badadag.

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris***

Ten on the 4<sup>th</sup> near Sitorman and two seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> close to Badadag.

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

12 seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> at Grindul Lupilor.

**Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs***

Seen and heard most days.

**Greenfinch *Chloris chloris***

Only a few seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> at Badadag.

**Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis***

Fairly common, seen most days.

**Linnet *Linaria cannabina***

Six birds seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria.

**Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***

Six watched flying over the group on the 10<sup>th</sup> at Badadag.

**Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra***

Common.

**Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana***

One male seen on the 10<sup>th</sup>, singing at Badadag.

**Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella***

One seen en route to Mamia on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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

Six on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Vadu, two on the 5<sup>th</sup> near Histria and nine seen on the 9<sup>th</sup> at Enisala woodlands.

**Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus***

Two seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> and one on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**MAMMALS**

**Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus***

**Steppe Polecat *Mustela eversmanii***

**European Souslik *Spermophilus citellus***

**REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS**

**Fire-bellied Toad *Bombina bombina***

**European Pond Terrapin *Emys orbicularis***

**Grass Snake *Natrix natrix***

**Marsh Frog *Pelophylax ridibundus***

**Eastern Green Lizard *Lacerta viridis***

**Balkan Wall Lizard *Podarcis taurica***

**BUTTERFLIES**

(sequence follows LaFranchis, *Butterflies of Europe*, 2004)

**Hungarian Skipper *Spialia orbifer***

**Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris***

**Clouded Apollo *Parnassius mnemosyne***

Scarce Swallowtail *Iphiclides podalirius*  
Brimstone *Opisthocraptis luteolata*  
Berger's Clouded Yellow *Colias sareptensis*  
Green-veined White *Pieris napi*  
Small White *Pieris rapae*  
Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*  
Small Copper *Lycaena Phlaeas*  
Eastern Short-tailed Blue *Cupido decolorata*  
Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*  
Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*  
Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia*  
Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*  
Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*  
False Ringlet *Coenonympha oedippus*

#### DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

(names and sequence follows Dijkstra and Lewington, *Dragonflies of Europe*, 2006)

Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*  
Migrant Spreadwing *Lestes barbarus*  
Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*  
Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope*  
Hairy Hawker *Brachytron pretense*