

Romania's Danube Delta & Carpathian Mountains

Naturetrek Tour Report

9 – 18 May 2015



Honey Buzzard by Christine Dowding



European Brown Bears by Geraldine Stephenson



Little Bittern with Frog by Phillip Crayford



Collared Pratincole by Phillip Crayford

Report compiled by Terry Goble
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	14 adventurers	

Summary

As always with tours to Romania it is the sheer diversity of habitats and the wildlife that is so striking, particularly in these two centre trips. The contrast from the cool mountains and valleys of the Carpathians to the warmer climes of the Delta is unique, as is the wildlife experiences you encounter. On this trip it was no exception. In the mountains we watched Lesser Spotted and Short-toed Eagles and a multitude of other raptors soaring against the backdrop of the snow clad Carpathians. The highlight for most was the European Brown Bears, making a slightly later appearance than usual, but magnificent when they arrived, with a large male taking centre stage. For others in our group the mini-beasts were an equal attraction and we spent quite a bit of time on our hands and knees looking at such delights as the Green Tiger Beetle and the alarming Bronze Bush Cricket!

Down on the delta the pace was slower and more relaxed as we literally floated amongst the wildlife. The large flocks of pelicans were an obvious delight, but the constant flow of herons, egrets, cormorants, harriers and White-tailed Eagles was incredible. Again a predator stole the show as some of the group were very fortunate to have a brief encounter with a large male Wild Cat in the middle of the delta!

Back on dry land the last few days were taken up with sampling the varied habitats around Tulcea and again the pace picked up. We had a lot to pack in from the delightful Susliks on the steppes to the waders, terns and gulls of the coast. The sites did not disappoint with some very handsome Pallas's Gulls, multitudes of waders such as Broad-billed Sandpiper and Little Stint, and perhaps the least expected, a Red-necked Phalarope in summer plumage.

In conclusion, it was a hugely enjoyable trip which produced a variety of big and little beasts that reflected the diverse interests of the group; not forgetting the orchids and peonies of the Bagadog Forest. The humour and patience of the group added to the experience and I hope they enjoyed the trip as much as me!

Day 1

Saturday 9th May

Heathrow to Bucharest - drive to Zarnesti

Most of the group met up in the departure lounge in Terminal 5, Heathrow airport. The flight was a little delayed by the late arrival of our plane and further delayed by sorting out the catering. We eventually got underway and made up some of the lost time, landing at Bucharest Airport after a smooth flight.

In the arrivals area we met up with our guide Laurenitu and his trainee, our driver Florin, and Geraldine who had flown out earlier that day. We were now running a little late so we quickly got underway after changing some money at the airport. We drove through the flat agricultural plains before rising up into the foothills of the Carpathians (Sub-Carpathians). We then stopped for a drink and to stretch our legs at a café just passed Sinaia. We picked up a few birds: Serin, Coal Tit, White Wagtail and a few hirundines wheeling overhead. We later headed down the winding road into Zarnesti spotting White Stork and Fieldfare along the way. Just as it was

starting to get dark we arrived at Elena Guest House and got settled into our rooms. We then met up for a lovely meal before discussing the itinerary and going off to bed after a long travelling day.

Day 2

Sunday 10th May

Coltul Chiliilor Monastery; drive to Stramba Valley

The day started with an early walk around the back of the pension. The walk produced a few common birds with Yellowhammer and Black Redstart being the most prominent. The rain arrived a little earlier than forecast so we returned for breakfast and to get ready for the long day ahead.

After breakfast we headed off in search of the Nutcracker at Coltul Chiliilor Monastery. This involved an uphill walk into the foothills of the Carpathians. Fortunately the rain eased for the duration of the walk, but the path was slippery and we had to take care. Progress was slow but we enjoyed some good birds, plants and insects to cater for our diverse interests. Tree Pipits seemed to be singing from every tree, whilst overhead Buzzard, Raven and Kestrel were seen. Eventually we had climbed high enough to find the Nutcracker and after some searching one finally obliged, sitting nicely on top of a pine tree giving good telescope views. After also enjoying some orchids in an open meadow it was time to make our way back for lunch. We had a short drive back and arrived about half past twelve. We had a leisurely lunch and then got ready to head off to the Stramba Valley.

The afternoon and evening really demonstrated the wildlife value of this region. There were some lovely orchids and flowering plants to enjoy and some nice butterflies, but the birdlife was a real treat. Both Lesser Spotted and Short-toed Eagles gave excellent views and these were supported by fine views of Middle Spotted and Grey-headed Woodpeckers, glimpses of Golden Oriole and lovely views of Red-backed Shrike among a host of other birds. In addition we also heard Corncrake and Black Woodpecker. There was quite an array of birdlife and in addition we found some Yellow-bellied Toads which are always a delight.

Next on the agenda was the short drive and walk to the bear hide to hopefully view European Brown Bears. Once we were settled in the hide all we could do was wait and hope. In the event the bears were unusually late in arriving and a thunderstorm didn't help. However they did eventually come to feed and we had great views of three of these magnificent animals. As the light began to fade it was time to leave. However that was not the end of what was turning into a fantastic wildlife watching day. On the way back to the pension we had five owl sightings: Tawny Owl, a probable Barn Owl, and three Ural Owls including an excellent view of these impressive owls low in a tree. We finally arrived back about 10.30pm, tired but very satisfied with a great day in the Carpathian region.

Day 3

Monday 11th May

Zarnesti Gorge; Bran Castle; Moaciau viewpoint

We again started the day with a walk around the back of the pension. Apart from a few common birds only Yellowhammer and a calling Cuckoo held our attention. On the way back to the pension a fortuitous stop to tie a shoelace resulted in our only Little Owl sighting (usually fairly common). This brightened the morning a little as we walked back to our hotel with the latest group member, a friendly black dog that followed the group all the way to the gorge!

Once back we had breakfast and then got ready for a lengthy walk to the Zarnesti Gorge. This was a very pleasant walk through the village and up the valley. Our first bird of note was a Dipper whirring up and back down the stream. However not just the birds were enjoyed; there were a host of insects and the startlingly coloured Fire Salamanders to entertain us. A smart male Red-breasted Flycatcher was another nice bird and several other species were heard but not located in the Beech forest. We eventually reached the lunch spot and despite an extensive search the elusive Wallcreeper remained just that! Grey Wagtails and an Orange Tip butterfly kept the photographers busy until it was time to head back and meet up with the minibus.

We then went to the famous Bran Castle, which several of the group went in and enjoyed. Others were content to look around the village and came back with reports of Nuthatch and Red Squirrel. After this we drove up a steep road to a viewpoint above the village of Moaciu. Here we had spectacular views of the Kingstone Ridge and the valley below. On the return journey we had enough time for a Bran Castle photo shoot before getting back to Zarnesti and our pension for our final evening. After a lovely meal we completed the checklist and discussed the plans for the following day. The group then gradually departed to bed preparing for the long drive to the delta.

Day 4

Tuesday 12th May

Drive Zarnesti to Tulcea; Poplar Plantation near Ialominta; Hasarlac Lake

Today we said 'goodbye' to Gigi and Elena who had looked after us very well during our stay and set off on the journey to Tulcea. The group seemed in good spirits and there was a bubbly atmosphere as we went on our way. We were soon spotting birds along the route and enjoying the magnificent backdrop of the snow covered Carpathian Mountains. Eventually this gave way to the hills and then eventually the arable plains. Large tracts of the plains were occasionally interrupted by small villages as we headed to the Delta. We started to see new birds such as Marsh Harriers as they quartered the fields, and Yellow Wagtails popping up on posts and fences. Our first stop was at a petrol station to have a drink and a stretch. Luckily the unmown lawns harboured insects and bugs to keep people amused, with Violet Carpenter Bee and a lovely fresh Lesser Spotted Fritillary among the Painted Ladies. There was not a great deal for the birders, but a Crested Lark was seen nearby.

Refreshed, we set on our way again, spotting the occasional Marsh Harrier. About an hour and a half later we arrived at a Poplar Plantation where we immediately picked up some cracking birds. Common Nightingale could be heard belting out its song, and Golden Oriole could be heard fluting in the background. After a little searching we found our main target bird, the Red Footed Falcon, and we managed to find both male and female. A Pallid Harrier was a great bird to find as Laurentiu identified a female circling over the plantation. Some nice butterflies and dragonflies were also enjoyed along with other insects. We still had a fair way to go so, reluctantly, we had to set off. We stopped at another petrol station for another comfort stop and an ice cream, which produced little as the grass had been mown.

We were soon underway to our next stop, picking up Rollers and Grey Partridge en route. After entering the Drobroga region we crossed the mighty Danube and headed for Lake Hasarlac. Here was a real treat as some of the group had amazing views of the normally elusive Little Bittern and a very Handsome Penduline Tit. In the background European Rollers were flying around, whilst Golden Orioles were calling along with Nightingale. Out on the lake, Great Reed Warblers were very evident and a Purple Heron was also sitting out in plain view. Several other birds were noted along with some lovely insects. We really had to drag ourselves away.

We eventually arrived in Tulcea around six in the evening and drove down to the floatel. We settled quickly into our rooms and met back on deck for our dinner. As we ate we filled in the required forms and watched the sun go down as well as enjoying the terns and gulls plying up and down the river. After dinner Laurentiu outlined the plans for the next day before leaving and then we began the checklist. Everyone seemed to be in a relaxed and jovial mood and the list was carried out in good humour and a fun atmosphere. After this was complete everyone gradually drifted off to their rooms for their first night on the boat.

Day 5

Wednesday 13th May

Mila36; Sireasa; Zontea; Furtuna Lake; Sulina Channel; Old Danube Channel

After breakfast we set off into the delta for our first expedition on the small boat, whilst the Floatel went off to our lunch rendezvous site. At mile 36 we turned into a small channel and left the Whiskered Terns and Caspian Gulls behind. Very soon we were enjoying a plethora of wildlife and at times didn't know which way to look! Both Thrush and Common Nightingales could be heard belting out their songs from inside the riverine forest, as could a host of smaller birds including Collard Flycatcher and Common Redstart. Golden Oriole and Roller were very common; seen and heard throughout the channel. Overhead squadrons of White Pelicans wheeled around and a Lesser Spotted Eagle and several White-tailed Eagles were also seen. Meanwhile a Musk Rat swam across before disappearing into a clump of vegetation; and a few Grass Snakes and a Dice Snake were also seen swimming. Added to this were a constant stream of herons, ibis, grebes, ducks, falcons and smaller birds. There were also some stunning insects such as Banded Demoiselle, other damselflies and dragonflies, and occasional butterflies. It helped bring into perspective the rich diversity of the area.

We finally met up with the floatel after navigating through some very shallow channels (with the help of Laurentiu and his punt!). We stopped for a delicious lunch before setting off again, this time relaxing on the floatel as it was pulled along by a tug up the main channel. Most of the group sat upstairs and watched the world drift by whilst watching a variety of birds including a few new ones such as Lesser Grey Shrike and Black-winged Stilt. However we were also treated to large numbers of herons, including many Purple and Night Herons with the mix of egrets and Squacco Herons. Five juvenile White-tailed Eagles were seen at reasonably close range allowing us to appreciate just how large these birds are. Marsh Harriers were also plentiful as were Rollers and Great Reed Warblers. Just before mile 8 we turned off the main channel to moor up for the evening. Prior to dinner we listened out for, and eventually heard, the strange buzzing reeling of Savi's warbler, although we were unable to see any.

After dinner Laurentiu entertained us with a brief history of the delta and an outline of the next day's programme. Terry went through the checklist and after a few drinks most of the group went to their rooms. A few stopped up to admire the night sky and the masses of bugs around the floatel, and some content looking spiders.

Day 6

Thursday 14th May

Old Danube; Letea Village; Sulina Channel; Eracle Channel

After breakfast we set off to the village of Letea via a small channel from the Old Daube. As always there were a lot of birds to appreciate and we were soon admiring the many egrets and herons passing over or flying from the

reed beds. The suite of birds was much the same as the previous day, but we did add Reed Bunting and a few people saw Bearded Tits. Pleasingly there were a few Penduline Tits heard and seen although we were unable to locate the nest that gives them their name. Laurentiu demonstrated the floating island vegetation by jumping off the boat onto a large vegetative mass. He gave a talk about their role in the ecology and their importance to nesting birds before jumping back on and continuing our journey.

We were also unable to locate a few of the more specialist species but Red-necked Grebe was a lovely addition to our species seen. Approaching Letea a few Grass Snakes were seen just before we alighted to this 'old world' village. The wildlife around the village was superb. We found several dragonflies including Four-spotted Chaser and Keeled Skimmer, and butterflies such as Grizzled Skipper and Pale Clouded Yellow. Laurentiu managed to find the dramatically marked Fire-bellied Toad to show people. At this point we set off for a walk around the village and the rustic houses. Laurentiu described the tough lifestyle and customs of the people, and the building and farming techniques.

As if all this wasn't enough, we also had many spectacular birds. At one point we could hear Bee-eater, Golden Oriole and Hoopoe all calling at the same time! We saw many of each except the Oriole. In addition we saw Collared Flycatcher, Lesser Whitethroat, Northern Wheatear, Tree Sparrow and a Little Owl to name a few. After a very enjoyable few hours we made our way rather wearily back to the boat to return to the floatel. Judging by the many speedboats that sped past us we thought the return journey would be devoid of wildlife, scattered by the fast boats, however we were wrong! Firstly there were plenty of birds with Squacco Herons posing nicely and a Dalmatian Pelican flying over. The biggest surprise however was a Wild Cat, which unfortunately was only seen by the people at the front of the boat as it disappeared into the reed beds: quite an amazing sighting! Apart from some nice Roller sightings the rest of the journey was relatively quiet as we made our way back to the main boat.

On board we made up for the late lunch by tucking in heartily; it was the quietest the group had been since the first full day, obviously hungry and enjoying their meals. After lunch we soon were away again to the western arm of the Old Danube, aiming to moor on a smaller channel further north-east of the Old Danube. The strong wind made progress slow and birding relatively quiet, but some old favourites were still around: Purple Heron and Marsh Harrier amongst others. Once we turned off the Sulina Channel we began to find some more interesting birds and a Garganey was a nice find, along with Black-tailed Godwit. We then turned onto the smaller Channel Eracle which produced a large amount of birds flying from all angles. A large number of egrets and Glossy Ibis were particularly enjoyed. We finally found two Black Terns amongst the many Whiskered and Common Terns. We also had good views of another Dalmatian Pelican, and another pair of Red-necked Grebes amongst the Great Crested Grebes. Just as everyone went off to prepare for dinner a small flock of Mediterranean Gulls made an appearance to end a fabulous day of wildlife; one of the best so far.

Dinner was an entertaining affair finished off by Laurentiu's family history woven into a history of the delta as a backdrop to the next day's itinerary. The evening concluded with the checklist before we all drifted off to bed after a very enjoyable day.

Day 7

Friday 15th May

Exploring the Lopatna region; Stipac Channel; Mila 36; Tulcea

Having moored overnight at a confluence on Channel Eracle, a few of the group got up early to enjoy the views and birds of this area. Bittern could be heard 'booming' throughout the morning and a Savi's Warbler joined the chorus and eventually climbed a reed stem into view. Other avian highlights included a huge number of Great White Pelicans flying overhead, White-tailed Eagle and Marsh Harrier passing the boat, and at the other end of the scale a delightful Bearded Tit hopped around in the reeds by the side of the boat. Honorary mention should also go to the Garganey and Red-necked Grebes among many others. After breakfast we set off to explore the Lopatna region and in particular a shallow lagoon. En route we heard many calling Penduline Tits and most saw a well hidden pendulous nest that gives the bird its name. The channel also hosted many of the now familiar herons, ducks and egrets as well as Rollers and other common birds. At the lagoon we were treated to a fly-by Caspian Tern, the largest European Tern, however the stars were definitely the numerous White Pelicans feeding in the lagoon. Once we had enjoyed these and added the beautiful Black-necked Grebes to our sightings we retraced our tracks and set off down another channel with a plan to eventually meet up with the Floatel for lunch.

First we passed the drained area that had been turned into agricultural land. Here we picked up a few birds including Kingfisher, Wood Sandpiper and the ubiquitous Rollers. We later saw our second Musk Rat crossing in front of the boat.

We then met up with the floatel to begin the journey back to Tulcea after a delicious lunch. The return journey didn't yield any new species, but it was lovely to cruise the channels with great views over the reed beds and being eyelevel with the Willows. A male Common Redstart was a nice sighting and again both Thrush and Common Nightingales could be heard. Eventually we re-joined the Sulina Channel and headed back to Tulcea to moor for the night.

We met up for our final meal on the Danube and said farewell to Laurentiu. He was going off to undertake some bird transects in the north so had to leave us. The group thanked him for sharing his historical and natural history knowledge, and for entertaining the group with his humour. Afterwards we completed the checklist for the day and studied some photographs to identify some insects and recount some of our earlier sightings. It was then off to bed for an early start with another packed day ahead.

Day 8

Saturday 16th May

Somova; Telita; Macin Quarry; Greci

Back on dry land we wasted no time in getting straight off to the Avant Delta just outside Tulcea (Somova). Here we watched Bee-eaters gliding around and listened to Golden Orioles calling from the Poplars. Out on the lake there were literally thousands of Greater Cormorants and lots of now familiar water birds. Rollers were also tumbling around, but the overcast and damp weather put off any butterflies.

Next we went to the 'Dehesa' style woodland just outside the village of Telita. This proved to be a cracking site with great views of Sombre Tit, Ortolan Bunting and Levant's Sparrowhawk. However the best view was of a Honey Buzzard just a few metres above our heads, which drew gasps as we noted fine plumage details! The

Barred Warbler was not so co-operative but we did catch up with this large warbler at a nearby site. We also enjoyed some excellent butterflies and other invertebrates. There were also some beautiful flowers to enjoy, particularly the wild Peony. As if all this wasn't enough there were Spur-thighed Tortoise and a multitude of lizards fizzing through the grass.

After a long walk we stopped for some lunch and enjoyed more birds and butterflies. Lesser Grey Shrike were nesting nearby and a Red-rumped Swallow made a fleeting appearance. Silver-studded Blue and Glanville Fritillary butterflies seemed to have freshly emerged and were very abundant.

Moving on from this area we drove to Macin and explored a quarry, finding some more specialist birds such as the sumptuous Common (Rufus-bellied) Rock Thrush and Pied Wheatear. We also saw Northern and Isabelline Wheatears and a few Tawny Pipits. However the highlight for some was watching a Long-legged Buzzard nest with the parents nearby bringing in food items. Great views were had of the parents and again identification details could be seen very well.

Our next site was the steppe area beyond the village of Greci. Here we saw the adorable Susliks, abundant Isabelline Wheatears, and some Long-legged Buzzards hunting the rodents! Another steppe speciality, the Stone Curlew, was also found and was just about photographable in the fading light. Before the light faded we just had time to find a Wryneck in a nearby wood, which also contained calling Turtle Doves. Now it was getting late and we still had an hour to drive back to Tulcea. We made haste but did note a Little Owl and Turtle Dove on the route back.

After getting settled, we met for dinner and enjoyed a lovely meal before running through our last itinerary and nearly last checklist! A very tired group then went off to bed, content with the day's wildlife experience.

Day 9

Sunday 17th May

Bagadog Forest; Grindul Lupilor; Vadu; Black Sea coast

We had an early breakfast and left at 8am as it was going to be another long day. We started with a 'short' trip to Bagadog Forest, which is renowned for its botanical attractions such as Peony, Lady Orchid and Butterfly Orchid to name a few. It also had a good selection of reptiles and invertebrates. This coupled with the diverse interests of the group meant this visit was going to be anything but short! Perhaps the most spectacular sighting other than the plants were the hordes of dragonflies. Norfolk Hawker was the most dominating species, but others such as Golden-ringed and Red-veined Darter were also noted: there were literally hundreds, often swarming around the flying ants; presumably preying on them.

We eventually tore ourselves away and went on to visit Wolf Sandy Bank (Grindul Lupilor). En route we saw a few raptors including a dark phase Booted Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Honey Buzzard and numerous Marsh Harriers. We also saw a few new smaller birds such as Calandra Lark and Black-headed Bunting, unfortunately the latter only seen by the leaders.

The lake area itself was incredible for its diversity and numbers of birds. The flock of Dalmatian Pelicans is one of the main attractions; however there were many other stunning birds. Red-necked Phalarope was a nice surprise in its summer splendour. Caspian Terns were admired along with the Little Gulls and some very

handsome Pallas's Gulls; at least one with a jet black head. Among all the usual waders there were a number of Broad-billed Sandpipers, and many common ones but in summer plumage; a sight not so common in the UK. Collared Pratincole, Black-winged Stilt, Curlew Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank were the most admired. We then had a picnic lunch before leaving the area. As we left we found four Temminck's Stints; although not as gaudy as other summer birds, still a nice find.

We were soon on our way to Vadu as it was now getting late and we had little time left to explore this expansive area. On arrival we noted a few Bee-eaters and a number of Hoopoe around. We then picked our way through the vast amounts of waders before walking around the large Common Tern colony. This was fortuitous as we saw a pair of Gull-billed Terns fly over. As time was limited we soon drove on to the Black Sea and saw a few migrants such as Pied, Collared and Spotted Flycatchers as well as a Common Redstart. At the beach itself there were no new birds but we enjoyed the spectacle of the gulls, terns, cormorants and pelicans loafing about the beach. We also had two mammals with Susliks and Brown Hare seen. The drive back was quiet and largely uneventful as most were tired after a long day.

On return we soon freshened up and met for dinner. The group expressed their thanks to the guides and we all acknowledge what a tiring but very enjoyable ten days with some amazing wildlife. The good humour continued into the evening before we all decided to retire to our rooms after a great last day.

Day 10

Monday 18th May

Tulcea to Bucharest; Lake Hasarlac

Sadly today was mainly taken up by the journey home. We had a slightly later breakfast at 8am and then loaded the minibus for our journey back to Bucharest. We did manage to fit in a quick stop at Hasarlac Lake which we had enjoyed on the way to Tulcea, however with only a little time it was a brief stop. Great Reed Warblers clattered their song out heartily and a Purple Heron afforded some photographic opportunities. Only too soon we were back on the bus and heading off. We managed a few comfort stops before arriving on time at the airport. Window birding had produced amongst others Bee-eaters, Golden Orioles, Red-footed Falcons and a Susliks or two!

At the airport we checked in and said farewell to our driver, escort (Christina), and to Geraldine as she was on a separate flight. We took off about an hour behind schedule to return to the UK and the end of the tour.

Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at www.facebook.com is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!

Species Lists

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted; H = heard only; L/O = leader only)

	Common name	Scientific name	May										
			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>					3					1	
2	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>				2	7				2	1	2
3	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>				2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		10
5	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>							4			✓	
6	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>				4							
7	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>					2	4	2	2	4		
8	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>					✓	✓	✓	4	✓		4
9	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>						1	2			4	
10	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>				1	10	3	✓			2	
11	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>				2	10	✓	✓	2			2
12	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>				2	4	4	20				
13	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				2	✓	✓	✓	4	2		10
14	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>							10				
15	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	1	2	4	✓	8	2	3	✓	6		20
16	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>				6	20	✓	✓			20	20
17	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>					2	1	1			4	
18	Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>							H	H			
19	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>				2							1
20	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>					✓	✓	✓				2
21	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>				10	✓	✓	✓	10			4
22	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>				1	✓	✓	✓	2	2		2
23	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>				2	✓	✓	10	2			2
24	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>				3	10	✓	✓	2	3		4
25	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>				10	✓	✓	✓	6	✓		✓
26	Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>					✓	60	✓	✓	✓		
27	Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>					3	4	4			✓	
28	Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmeus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓			4

	Common name	Scientific name	May									
			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
29	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
30	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>			1		1			3	4	
31	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>					8		1			
32	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>				4	✓	✓	6	2	✓	8
33	Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>				1						
34	Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>								6		
35	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>			L/O							
36	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		8	4	4		2	1	2	2	
37	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>								7	1	
38	Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>		2			1					
39	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>								2	2	
40	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1	2	3	4	6	✓	1	✓	✓	✓
41	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>				3	2	4	2		✓	6
42	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>						4	3	1		1
43	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			1							
44	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					H	H	H			
45	Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>		H								
46	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>					10	✓	✓		2	
47	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>				10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
48	Eurasian Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicanus</i>								1		
49	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>					20				✓	
50	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>									✓	
51	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>				✓	✓	✓	10		✓	✓
52	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>									6	
53	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>									10	
54	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>						2			2	
55	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>									2	
56	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>									1	
57	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>									2	
58	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>									4	
59	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>				1		1			2	
60	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>					1					

	Common name	Scientific name	May										
			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
61	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>										✓	
62	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>										✓	
63	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>										✓	
64	Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>										✓	
65	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>										✓	
66	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>					10					60	
67	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>				6	10	10	10	10		4	
68	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>										12	
69	Pallas's Gull	<i>Larus ichthyæetus</i>										4	
70	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyæetus melanocephalus</i>						3					
71	Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
72	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>							1			10	
73	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>										4	
74	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
75	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
76	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>					4					3	
77	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>						2	20			2	
78	Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
79	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>						1	2				
80	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	10	10	10			2
81	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>									1		
82	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
83	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		✓	H	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2
84	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>			1			1		1			
85	Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>		3									
86	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>		1									
87	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>			L/O								
88	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	6	✓	✓	✓			4	20	✓	✓	1
89	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>				5	✓	✓	15	✓	✓	✓	4
90	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					20		5				
91	European Bee-Eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>				L/O		10		✓	✓	✓	6
92	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>				2	3	10	2	2	✓	✓	4

	Common name	Scientific name	May										
			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
93	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>									2		
94	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>		1									
95	Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>							1				
96	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		1	H								
97	Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>		2				3		2	H		
98	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>		H				1					
99	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>		✓		✓		2	6	4	✓	✓	✓
100	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>						2			8	4	
101	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>		2		4	✓	H		3	2	H	2
102	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	4								
103	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
104	Spotted Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>		1									
105	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
106	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
107	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
108	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		10	4	1							
109	Sombre Tit	<i>Poecile lugubris</i>									2		
110	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		2	1								
111	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	H	H		H							
112	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	1	2	✓	H	2	6	H	✓	8		
113	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		2				1	6	2	2	2	
114	Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>				1	H	4	H				
115	Bearded Reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>						3	1			4	
116	Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>										6	
117	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>				1					4	3	
118	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		H							H		
119	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			H	4					2	✓	✓
120	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>								4		✓	
121	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
122	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
123	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>					1				1		
124	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		8				3	4	6			

	Common name	Scientific name	May									
			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
125	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		1	H	H	H					
126	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		2	H		H	H	H	H	H	
127	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>				6	✓	H	2		1	1
128	Paddyfield Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>									2	
129	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>				H	H	H	H		2	
130	Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>					H	1	2			
131	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		H		H	H					
132	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>		H			H	H	H			
133	Barred Warbler	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>								3	1	
134	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>		1			1	2	1	2	1	
135	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>		H		1	H					
136	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		H	H							
137	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H								
138	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			1							
139	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
140	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	✓	2			1	2	2	2
141	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	4	2	3							
142	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		3	1						H	
143	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		4								
144	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			✓							
145	Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>					H		H			
146	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>				1	H	H		H	H	
147	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	1	6	✓	✓				1	1	
148	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			2		1		2		1	
149	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>								1		
150	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>				1		6		8	✓	
151	Isabeline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>								✓		
152	Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe</i>								1		
153	Common Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>								1		
154	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>								1	1	
155	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>									1	
156	Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>					1	34			1	

	Common name	Scientific name	May									
			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
157	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>			2							
158	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>			2							
159	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
160	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>										L/O
161	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>		1			1	10	✓		✓	
162	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		6			2			1		
163	Black-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>				2	3				✓	
164	Grey-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava thumbergi</i>							1			
165	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		4	✓							
166	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
167	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>								2	6	
168	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		✓								
169	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	H	H		H	
170	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		✓						1		
171	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		2	4	2		3		2	1	2
172	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>				✓			1	✓	✓	
173	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		✓	2							
174	Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>								✓	4	
175	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>									L/O	
176	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>						✓			2	

Mammals

1	European Brown Bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>		4								
2	Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>			2							
3	European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>								1	2	
4	Musk Rat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>					1		1			
5	Souslik	<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>								✓	✓	2
6	Wild Cat	<i>Felis silvestris silvestris</i>						1				
7	Bat sp (Noctule ?)	<i>(Nyctalus lasiopterus)</i>		6								

	Common name	Scientific name	May									
			9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

Amphibians

1	Agile Frog	<i>Rana dalmatina</i>			1							
2	Yellow bellied Toad	<i>Bombina variegata</i>		✓								
3	Marsh/Pond/Edible Frog	<i>Pelophylax sp</i>					1	✓	✓	✓		✓
4	Fire-bellied Toad	<i>Bombina bombina</i>						H	10			
5	Fire Salamander	<i>Salamandra salamandra</i>			6							
6	European Pond Terapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>					1					

Reptiles

1	Dice Snake	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>					1					
2	Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix persa</i>					4	5	1			
3	Balkan Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis tauricus</i>		1						✓	✓	
4	Spur-thighed Tortoise	<i>Testudo graeca</i>								2	4	

Butterflies

European Swallowtail, *Papilio machaon*

Small White, *Pieris rapae*

Brimstone, *Gonepteryx rhamni*

Pale Clouded Yellow, *Colias hyale*

Brown Argus, *Aricia agestis*

Green Underside Blue, *Glaucopsyche alexis*

Glanville Fritillary, *Melitaea cinxia*

Lesser Spotted Fritillary, *Melitaea trivia*

Small Tortoiseshell, *Aglais urticae*

Mallow Skipper, *Cacharodus tripolinus*

Chequered Skipper, *Carterocephalus palaemon*

Scarce Swallowtail, *Iphiclides podalirius*

Large White, *Pieris brassicae*

Orange Tip, *Anthocharis cardamines*

Small Copper, *Lycaena phlaeas*

Mazarine Blue, *Cyaniris semiargus*

Silver-studded Blue, *Plebejus argus*

Heath Fritillary, *Melitaea athalia*

Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta*

Wall Brown, *Lasiommata maera*

Grizzled Skipper, *Pyrgus malvae*

Large Skipper, *Ochlodes venatus*

Wood White, *Leptidea sinapis*

Green-veined White, *Artogeia napi*

Clouded Yellow, *Colias crocea*

Common Blue, *Polyommatus icarus*

Provencel Short-tailed Blue, *Cupido alcetas*

Eastern Baton Blue, *Pseudophilotes vicrama*

Knapweed Fritillary, *Melitaea phoebe*

Painted Lady, *Vanessa virginiensis*

Small Heath, *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Orbed Red Underwing Skipper, *Spialia sertorius*

Moths

Common Heath, *Ematurga atomaria*
 Speckled Yellow, *Pseudopanthera macularia*
 Straw Belle, *Aspitates gilvaria*
 Small Blood-vien, *Scopula imitaria*

Lattice Heath, *Chiasmia clathrata*
 Angle Shades, *Phlogophora meticulosa*
 Long Horn sp, *Adelidae sp*
 Grass-veneer sp, *Crambidae sp*

Common Carpet, *Epirrho alternatae*
 Burnet Companion, *Euclidia glyphica*
 Silver 'Y', *Autographa gamma*
 Sulpur Pearl, *Sito palealischroa*

Dragonflies/Damselflies

Common Damselfly, *Enallagma cyathigerum*
 Banded Demoiselle, *Calopteryx splendens*
 Four-spotted Chaser, *Libellula quadrimaculata*
 Hairy Dragonfly, *Brachytron pratense*
 Norfolk Hawker, *Aeshna isosceles*

Blue-tailed Damselfly, *Ischnura elegans*
 Club-tailed Dragonfly, *Gomphus vulgatissimus*
 Ruddy Darter, *Sympetrum sanguineum*
 Southern Hawker, *Aeshna cyanea*
 Golden-ringed Dragonfly, *Cordulegaster boltonii*

White-legged Damselfly, *Platy pennipescnemis*
 Keeled Skimmer, *Orthetrum cocerulescens*
 Red-veined Darter, *Sympetrum fonscolombii*
 Emperor Dragonfly, *Anax imperator*

Other Invertebrates

Rose Chafer sp, *Cetonia sp*
 Roman Snail, *Helix pomatia*
 Stonefly sp, *Perlodes sp*
 Solider Beetle, *Cleridae sp*
 Viloet Ground Beetle sp, *Calasoma violaceus*
 Field Cricket, *Gryllus campestris*
 Honey Bee, *Apis sp*

Sheild Bug sp, *Graphos italicumoma*
 Ramshorn Snail, *Planorbidae sp*
 Medicinal Leech sp, *Hirudo medicinalis*
 Green Tiger Beetle, *Cicindela campestris*
 Fire Bug, *Pyrrhocoris apterus*
 Bronze Bush Cricket, *Bradyporus dasypus*
 European Paper Wasp, *Polistes gallicus sp*

Leopard Slug, *Limax maximus*
 Cockchafer, *Melolontha melolontha*
 Wasp Beetle, *Clytus arietis*
 Scarab Beetle, *Scarabaeus sp*
 Great Diving Beetle, *Dytiscus marginalis*
 Carpenter Bee, *Xylocopa violacea*

Notable Plant species (Courtesy of tour participant Heather Mills)

Walk to Colti Chililor National Park

Mountain Pansy, Wild Pansy, Wood Sorrel, Wood Anemone, Woodruff, Wood Spurge, Wild Strawberry, Cuckoo flower, Early Purple Orchid, Elderflower Orchid, Crosswort, Purple Gromwell, Daisy, Oxslip, Cowslip, Coltsfoot, Trumpet Gentian, Forget-me-not, Field Speedwell, Comfrey, Violets, Ground Ivy, Shepherd's Purse, Bilberry, Alpine Snowbell (*Soldanella*).

Rookery

False Acacia trees & Hoary Cress everywhere. Hounds-tongue, Birthwort

Walk to Bear hide

Water Horsetail, Large Red Deadnettle, Yellow Anemone, Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage, Archangel, Butterbur, Toothwort.

Village Lopatna

Yellow Iris, White & Yellow Water Lily, Water Forget-me-not, Greater Celandine, Catchfly, Star of Bethlehem.

Lakes

Water Soldier, Bittersweet, Narrow & Broad-leaved Water Plantain, floating Water Fern islands with *Nephrodium thelypteris*.

Forest walk with Eugene for Sombre Tit

Large Pheasant's-eye, Broomrape, Tufted Vetch, Thyme, Dog Rose, Balkan Peony, Nodding Sage.

Quarry

Cornflower, Artimesia

Babadag Forest

(At the roadside before we entered the forest - Periwinkle, Green Alkanet)

Ground Pine, Salad Burnet, Eastern Larkspur, Lady Orchid, Lesser Butterfly Orchid, Violet Birds-nest Orchid, Cotton Thistle, Mignonette, Sheepsbit, Pasque flower, Common Fumitory

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