

Romania's Danube Delta & Carpathian Mountains

Naturetrek Tour Report

4th – 13th August 2022



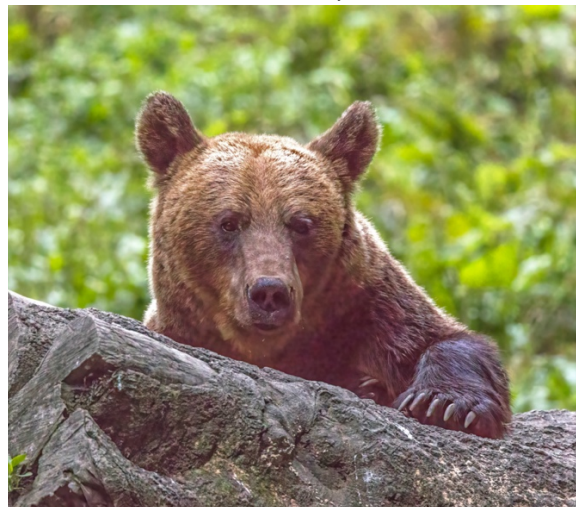
Dalmatian Pelican by Charles Sharp



Little Crake by Barbara Zietkowska



White-tailed Eagle by Barbara Zietkowska



European Brown Bear by Charles Sharp

Tour report by Richard Bashford



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Tour participants: Florin Palade & Richard Bashford (leaders) with 14 Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Thursday 4th August

Warm and sunny throughout

Most of the group met at T3 LHR and checked in/bag dropped with ease – always welcome at Heathrow in August! Too good to be true perhaps as we were then ushered to gate 30, then gate 11 and then had a delay while the air conditioning was fixed... We took off about 90 minutes late, but we were on our way and landed at 15:20 local time (two hours ahead). Once we'd picked up our luggage (the luggage belt stealthily changed from two to three, in keeping with the theme of the day), we met Florin and the last two of the party who had arrived earlier from Australia. We then met our bus and driver Christian and started our journey north towards the Carpathians. Traffic out of Bucharest was light, and in just over an hour, we had a roadside comfort stop where coffees, teas, ice creams were bought, and a few added The Dryad butterfly to our sightings. Back on the road, the foothills became more obvious, and the architecture changed. We drove through scenic mountain villages popular with increasing amounts of cars escaping into the mountains, and our pace slowed. At one stage appropriately, given our location, a bat flew along the pavement, causing a man to duck, before it landed on a shop windowsill! We arrived at our guesthouse just after 20:00 and checked in before a welcome dinner at 20:30. Florin then detailed our plans for tomorrow which sounded good. Can't wait!

Day 2

Friday 5th August

Warm and sunny throughout

An early morning walk from the hotel was welcome for a small select band with Hooded Crows and the expected commoner species seen. We ended up in a meadow with a family party of Red-backed Shrikes on show. After breakfast, we drove thirty minutes to the Zarnesti Gorge, arriving before 09:00, and thankfully before most other people in this popular and scenic spot. Our morning walk was largely in the shade but later as the sun rose, some sunshine. It wasn't long before the first butterflies of the day were seen such as Hungarian Glider and Woodland Ringlet. Noticing House Martins in the air above us, Florin recommended we keep an eye on them, and before too long, we saw our first Alpine Swifts joining the group – the size difference is quite a surprise! But the majority of the walk was one of butterflies with Speckled Wood, Arran Brown, Scotch Argus, Map and Sudendat's Ringlet.

Florin showed us the nesting crevice of Wallcreeper and we decided to wait in the area for a breather - just in case! A couple of Honey Buzzards flew over, but no Wallcreepers – a hard species to see after the nesting season. Butterflies were excellent here too with Silver-washed and Dark Green Fritillary, Large Blue as well as Six-spot Burnet and Hummingbird Hawk Moth. As we reached the end of our walk, we started to gather together when Tim saw a bird...on a rock...Wallcreeper! Close and feeding. We ushered the rest of the group together and were able to see it perched on top of a nearby rock column. But better was to come. It then flew low over our heads and began to feed a few feet away – for about ten minutes! Just amazing and very welcome. Our return walk was quicker and we were back at the bus for 12:35, adding a few more common butterflies to our impressive day list.



Wallcreeper by Charles Sharp

We returned to the guest house in Vulcan for a cooked lunch and a breather for about an hour before setting off again at 15:00.

Our destination was the Stramba Valley around 45 minutes away. Our walk through the fields and tracks into the valley was slow and started off with a perched male Red-back Shrike – the first of many, and a fantastic display of a Lesser-spotted Eagle diving on folded wings and then climbing into the skies calling. But the walk was really focussed on butterflies with Nickerl's Fritillary and Short-tailed Blue, Dryad etc. After two hours, the bus picked us up and we drove further into the wooded valley for our pre-arranged session at the bear hide. We were briefed and ushered swiftly across a wooden bridge and into the raised hide with three tiered rows of benches giving all the group a good view of the clearing where there was already a female European Brown Bear. Within a few minutes we saw a mother and two cubs. Slight agitation from the mother and her two cubs indicated another bear, a male had arrived. She moved away and her two cubs climbed a tree as the male entered the clearing - males are a considerable threat to young cubs. Over the next 1.5 hours, we saw a total of 11 or 12 bears, with at least a couple of males and another mother with two larger cubs – at one stage chasing a male and growling. Attendant bears standing to check who was nearby, others running. A real treat for us all. An Edible Dormouse was also seen briefly by a few in the entrance to the hide.

It had been a long day and by 20:00, time to return arriving at 21:35 at our guest house for snacks, the odd bottle of ~~bear~~ beer and a checklist.

Day 3

Saturday 6th August

Hot and sunny throughout

With breakfast and sandwich making complete, we were on the bus by 08:00, and driving the short distance to Piatra Craiului and the route towards Coltul Chililor monastery. Red-backed Shrikes seemed to be the only birds perched on tree tops but we heard the first of many Tree Pipits too. The butterflies were beginning to wake but the early stars of the show were a hawk moth caterpillar on the path which Florin posted on an online group and within a couple of hours, we had an identification – Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk Moth! The other notable sighting here was a Sombre Golden-ringed Dragonfly which a few of the party followed and were able to photograph as it oviposited. Calls alerted us to Nutcrackers and we found one which perched for a short time allowing a few to view through the telescope. Entering the small trees, we found Crested and Marsh Tit and Wood Warbler. New butterflies included White Admiral, Ringlet, Camberwell Beauty and High Brown Fritillary. We started our walk back and had lunch around noon in the shade of some trees – here, a Purple Emperor flew overhead and before long, we'd found it perched on a willow. Joining the bus once more, our drive was delayed for the perfect reason, both Scare and Common Swallowtail butterflies were feeding along the roadside.

Just after 13:00, we headed for the town of Bran. This being a Saturday afternoon in August, we were not alone in this tourist honeypot location. The castle is dramatic and picturesque, but it was very busy. We parked and made our way hoping to spend some time in the parkland surrounding the castle but this was not possible. A few ice creams, cool drinks and Dracula inspired fridge magnets later, we left the town for some countryside.

Florin took us next to a viewpoint overlooking the Poarta River where he explained the area's geological history. The sloping field was pretty butterfly rich too and we added Silver-spotted Skipper and Small Tortoiseshell. By the bus, we found Wasp Spiders and a Great Green Bush Cricket. A roadside stop for a castle photo or two was welcome before we headed back. Passing the guest house, we dropped a few of the group off and then visited some disused orchards just above the town. There was fruit on many of the trees – sampled by many of the group over the next 45 minutes. We were looking for Hawfinches here but didn't succeed. We saw Great spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Wood Warbler, Redstart and a fleeting Collared/Pied Flycatcher. We then returned to the guesthouse in good time for a freshen up before dinner and log.



Sombre Golden-ringed Dragonfly by Charles Sharp



Crested Tit by Barbara Zietkowska

Day 4

Sunday 7th August

Hot and sunny throughout

A travel day today. After our last breakfast here, we packed, paid our bar bills and thanked our fabulous hosts. We set off, snaking through the mountain following the route we came, but then heading due south into a more open landscape. A couple of comfort stops punctuated our journey adding such highlights as Robin, Starling and Jackdaw! Our scheduled stop (for tachograph reasons), was shortened due to the "lake" having no water. A short walk onto the sun baked mud provided a bizarre photographic opportunity for many. But aside from a few calling Yellow Wagtails, Sand Martins and the most distant of White Pelicans, we changed our plans and drove to another garage stop to allow Christian his 30 minute break and the group to freshen up with snacks and drinks. Here we saw our first perched Bee-eaters and at one point, a House Sparrow tacking a praying mantis!

By 14:25, we had crossed the River Danube and entered a different environment of enormous fields in a rolling landscape. We reached our next stop – Hasarlac Lake, thankfully with more water and experienced our first bewildering array of birds in and around the shoreline. Larger birds such as the numerous Greylag Geese, kept company with smaller numbers of Ruddy Shelducks, Garganeys, Teals and the odd Spoonbill. On the near shore, we picked out a good range of waders from the dramatic Black-winged Stilts, similar sized Black-tailed Godwits, Ruffs, Wood and Common Sandpipers and the smaller Temminck's Stint. The shadow of a sub adult White-tailed Eagle spooked the birds – especially the geese as it flew overhead offering great views. Here too were the elegant Collared Pratincoles which we managed to get quite close to when they perched on the mud. A young bird with them was dramatically different with a paler barred plumage. On the lake itself, a cursory scan (there was too much to look at!), revealed distant White Pelicans, and our first terns – Whiskered - dancing over the water.



Collared Pratincole and juvenile by Charles Sharp

At 16:00, we continued our drive with our first roadside Red-footed Falcons and descended into the large town of Tulcea. We arrived at the waterside and onto our base for the next few days, the “flotel”. We relaxed with a sour cherry brandy and the odd cool beer etc before dinner and briefing at 19:00. Looking forward to the next few days.

Day 5

Monday 8th August

Warm and sunny throughout

We woke to more sunny weather and prepared to leave the flotel at 08:00, joining a smaller boat. As we explored, the flotel would be towed to a new location within the delta. As we left the Tulcea area, we noted Common Terns and Yellow-legged Gulls and our first (of many), herons of various species. Shortly after leaving, we saw one of the areas specialities – a Pygmy Cormorant. Kingfishers started to be seen regularly with a few waders such as Green and Common Sandpipers. Entering smaller creeks, we saw groups of small birds – many Spotted Flycatchers, some wonderful white headed Long-tailed Tits, and close but brief Lesser-spotted and Black Woodpeckers. At once stage we found a small group of Western Olivaceous Warblers actively feeding. Further, we passed a colony of Black crowned Night Herons with birds exploding from the trees. We also picked up a few Purple Herons – we’d see many more over the next few hours including many gorgeously rusty juveniles. We added Squacco Herons, Glossy Ibis, squadrons of White Pelicans, Snipe, Caspian Gulls and Whiskered Terns. Florin offered us all a tea or coffee just as an adult White-tailed Eagle flew down to the water in front of us and back up – an amazing close view. Nearby, we found a family of Rollers, and spent some time trying to see them. We need not have worried that the views weren’t too easy this time... We then slowly worked our way back to meet the flotel and enjoyed a refreshing late lunch on board at 14:00.

At 16:00, most of the group returned to the smaller boat for the afternoon. Our route took us towards an industrial area via many more channels and creeks. We saw increasing numbers of creekside waders – Black-tailed Godwits, Wood Sandpipers, Ruffs, a Curlew and an Oystercatcher, as well as a very welcome Dalmatian Pelican. We saw a good number of Rollers too, including some in good light and plumage. Mid-way, we stopped at an abandoned industrial area - a silicate extraction plants which was started, but never completed. Here we hoped to find water in the nearby fishponds but they were dry. We did see Red-footed Falcon, Turtle Dove, Roller, Hobby, Wheatear and then a group of waders including a moulting summer plumage Spotted Redshank.

We started to head back visiting a large open area of Water Chestnut where herons, ducks, waders were everywhere. Such a rich area which took some scanning, while we tried, at the same time, to catch glimpses of the Bearded Reedlings a few feet away. Turning back, Florin spotted an adult and a juvenile Little Crake which we were able to watch walking along the front of the reeds. Fantastic! Here too, we managed views of Grey-headed Woodpecker and finally saw two Hoopoes well, after a few fleeting glimpses. A female or two Golden Oriole seen flying into nearby trees were not so obliging and remained hidden but calling occasionally. But time was moving on and we returned to the flotel later than planned, but with an excellent range of sightings.

We had a quick wash and sat down to dinner – perch tonight! Florin set up his moth light on the observation deck which had attracted a small number by around 22:00 including the fabulous Poplar Lappet moth. Let’s see what tomorrow brings...



Poplar Lappet by Charles Sharp

Day 6

Tuesday 9th August

Warm and sunny throughout with a light breeze

Our second full day exploring the delta on the small boat. Similar to the previous day in many ways but plenty of different things to see. The moth lamp had attracted about 20 species in addition to the Poplar Lappet – a cross between a leaf and a womble! Also several Reed Leopards, Scarce Burnished Brass and a Reed Tussock.

We left at 08:30 after a fine breakfast, but stopped about two minutes into our journey to scan the trees where a Golden Oriole was singing. Or was it two? In fact, as many as eight were seen between the trees and across the channel, as well as a Grey-headed Woodpecker. A good start! Onward into more channels and lake areas adding a few to our species list with Cuckoo, Caspian Tern and the fabulous Pallas's Gull with a near complete black hood. The morning was typical in terms of the Danube we had come to know – many herons, Purple, Grey, Night and our first secretive Little Bittern. We experienced a bit of “frog wrangling” as our skipper lured a frog to a net to show the group how to tell the species from the shape of a lump on its leg. Several of us also tried Water Chestnut as Florin lifted a plant and collected the nuts to offer the group this local produce! Back for a more traditional lunch for 12:30.

While we could build in a bit of a siesta in the middle of the day, we did have a bit of work to do first! The propeller had become entwined with an illegal crayfish trap and a few “volunteers” were used to weight the boat on one side while the valiant Florin jumped in the water with a knife and pliers to remove the wire and string. This took about 20 minutes and received a round of applause for his efforts.

At 15:00 we set off, first enjoying the group of White Pelicans across the channel from our position. Our stops this afternoon added our first Ferruginous Ducks, a cute young Common Tern, the first of several (somewhat awkward), Little Bittern sightings, and more welcome opportunity to see Pallas's Gull – two sub-adult and two juveniles. These really are fabulous birds – and big! On the return journey we saw more Little Bitterns, a Little Crake or two and a couple of Hobbies before enjoying the White Pelicans opposite the flotel in the evening light. Back at 18:30 and time for a breather before dinner at 19:30 and moth lamp on again!



Great-black-headed Gulls by Barbara Zietkowska



White and Dalmatian Pelican by Barbara Zietkowska

Day 7

Wednesday 10th August

Warm and sunny with a breeze

Only a few moths to start the day, thanks to the breeze, including Silky Wainscot and the fabulous Small Chocolate-tip. Back on the small boat and into Lacul cu Ciulina, we managed to see a closer Caspian Tern and then another, and another. In fact, a flock of five birds giving good views and pleasing the photographers. Nearby we noted Fringed Water Lily (*Nymphaoides peltata*). As we explored this area, we found Little Grebe, Ferruginous Duck and Garganey as well as our first Cattle Egrets. As we returned, Florin showed us the floating reedbeds by making his way onto a reed island, bordered with ferns, and explaining how this unusual structure is created.

Onward, Barbara found our first accommodating Little Bittern which perched out in the open for many photographs. Next, another species which had caused problems – we'd heard plenty of Penduline Tits but now we found three juveniles on the heads of reeds, feeding actively.

Back to the flotel by 13:30 and lunch. The afternoon was spent on the flotel as it was towed towards Tulcea. It was quite a relaxing afternoon with the breeze, scanning all around from the top observation deck or back deck with a bit of shade. On our journey we passed many areas, filled with herons and egrets – showing how rich this area is. Overhead, and by scanning the skies, squadrons of White Pelicans could be seen hanging in the air, sometimes there were large groups of Glossy Ibises too, and often groups of Bee-eaters. We saw our first decent views of Black Stork too, several White-tailed Eagles, Long-legged Buzzard, Golden Oriole, Black Woodpecker and, tracking down an unfamiliar call, a young Cuckoo, begging for food. Wow!

We reached our dock at 18.55 and freshened up before our last dinner on board at 19:30.



Small Chocolate-tip by Charles Sharp



Little Bittern by Charles Sharp

Day 8

Thursday 11th August

Hot and sunny throughout

The previous evening, Florin had explained we would be starting the day with a longer drive so that we ended our day, nearer to our guest house. This seemed like a good idea – we were all keen for a bit of a walk after three days on the flotel. So, after thanking the Danube Delta hosts, we were on the road south by 08:15, and heading south to various sites on the Black Sea coast. A comfort stop provided us with our first Common Sousek – a mammal we were to see several more of during the day. A little while later, just before our turning to the coast, Florin suggested a quick detour to the right, to check out an area where Stone Curlew had nested. On our drive we noted our first Short-toed Larks of the trip and then carried on for a couple more minutes. We stopped and scanned but saw nothing. Jane then said “Is this the Stone Curlew?”, as a head with a large yellow eye appeared from behind a ridge. Excellent – and close. This magnificent and weird bird trundled along and then showed well before sitting down. Next, Cath said “Here’s another one!” This was even closer and showed very well indeed. We had stopped in the perfect place. Returning, we found an Isabelline Wheatear. Not a bad detour.



Stone Curlew by Barbara Zietkowska



Golden Jackal by Charles Sharp

Over the road, we headed to the coast, noting a few Red-footed Falcons in roadside fields and a fabulous Roe Deer running. As we reached our destination, we saw our first Lesser Grey Shrike of the trip. We got out here to view the various small pools as we took the main road to the beach. On the first was Ringed Plover, Temminck's Stint and Ruffs. But the best was to come – a Golden Jackal walked in and viewed us. Then quickly walked towards the reeds. It was a good but quick view and it would be too much to hope for more as it walked away with all cameras and binoculars pointing at it. Thankfully, it stopped and looked back at us for about 30 seconds. Wonderful.

Sue then picked up our first Bittern (completing the set of possible herons), which most saw well except a small party who had gone to check out another pool. As we regrouped, another appeared, and we all managed to see this one well. Next were a small party of Gull-billed Terns, and then a large party of superb backlit Mediterranean Gulls which flew overhead showing their white, almost translucent flight feathers as they passed. Moving on, Bee-eaters, Cuckoos, Curlews, more Ruffs. Frustratingly, the Paddyfield Warblers this site is well known for, remained hidden. We could hear them but the breezy conditions kept them down in the reeds. Scanning another larger pool, we saw a good number of roosting terns including many Caspian Terns dwarfing the nearby Common Terns. Many Mediterranean Gulls here too in various plumages – some with black heads remaining from the breeding season. A Little Tern zipped over a couple of times.

Down at the beach, we were not alone among the locals having a dip, but we took a few minutes to scan the Black Sea picking up a couple of Sandwich Terns but little else. Time for lunch and we retraced our route and headed towards an area of small tree for a fabulous picnic – joining the familiar bread, meat, tomatoes, cucumber and cheese, were stuffed mushrooms followed by apple strudel. The wildlife here was good too – of course! A Barn Owl was flushed by one of the party looking for a comfort stop. We saw our first Cardinals, the gorgeous Spotted Sulphur moth and Eastern Bath White.



Cardinal by Charles Sharp



Praying Mantis by Charles Sharp

We carried on to another lake where we saw a group of Greater Flamingos, Shelduck, Little Gull, Avocet and Pallas's Gull. Searching the waders, we found more Temminck's Stints, Little Ringed Plover and a moulting Curlew Sandpiper. A Praying Mantis (*religosa*) was found on Richard's back, meaning many photos followed before this fabulous insect was placed in the nearby grass.

Our next and last stop was the Babadag Forest – a protected area where Florin introduced us to the habitat and explained about the specific flora of this area of steppe with Oriental Hornbeam and Downy Oak. Most of the

flowering plants were over by this time but we were shown several of the key plants of the area including sage and globe thistle. Here we saw Great-banded Grayling, Antlion and our first Cicadas.

Returning to the bus, we completed the 40 km back to Tulcea and checked into our last guesthouse at 18:30. Florin by this time was in quite some pain and left us at dinner and arrived later having had a molar extracted! He was in much better shape but decided wisely to do the briefing for tomorrow at breakfast when he might be able to move his jaw!

Day 9

Friday 12th August

Hot and sunny throughout

Today was a circuit west along the Danube and looping through Micas Mountains National Park to end back in Tulcea. A short stop at a lakeside west of Tulcea gave us a few waterbirds for the day including Spoonbill and White-tailed Eagle. Next was a viewpoint near Parches, overlooking the Danube valley – the broad river in front being the Old Danube and the current river hidden by a line of trees. Here we heard from Florin who described the scene in front of us, stretching into the distance and into Ukraine. The sheer scale of the Danube Delta and how the pools, lakes and floods work together to make up this rich landscape – amazing! As was the flyby White-tailed Eagle... In the nearby grassland, we saw our first Tawny Pipit striding along the tracks and into the grass. We identified Balkan Wall and Green Lizards and photographed our first Slant-faced Grasshopper.

Driving on to the Celic Dere Monastery, we parked up and noted a Middle-spotted Woodpecker in nearby trees. Outside, a target species, the Hawfinch was calling around us and after several flyovers, we found one or two perched. New trip birds here were Booted Eagle - both phases, Swift, Sombre Tit as well as a few Honey Buzzards and Lesser-spotted Eagles. By 12:30, we were back at the bus and a fine picnic was served. Notable sighting included a Levant's Sparrowhawk and then a Hobby carrying a Bee-eater – much to the alarm of the other Bee-eaters swarming around calling! After another short walk where we heard, but couldn't track down Syrian Woodpecker aside from a few flight views, we headed towards the Macin Mountains National Park.

Arriving at 15:00, we left the main road and headed towards the granite ridge of hills. The fields had Rollers everywhere it seemed. Also some Tree Sparrows and a Lesser Grey Shrike perched on a nearby building. Once parked, we walked the track into the hills. It was very hot once more and bird activity was low. We spent about an hour here noting a beautifully pale Long-legged Buzzard and a rather distant Black-eared Wheatear. No sign of the hoped for Pied Wheatear or Rock Thrush unfortunately. A few nice invertebrates were seen with Scarce Swallowtail and Praying Mantis among them. Back at the bus, we headed back to the road, where we saw two Turtle Doves on roadside wires.

Our last stop of the day was a small patch of Oriental Hornbeam and Oak forest. We saw several Isabelline Wheatears on our way and arrived for our last walk at 17:00. It was still very warm and fairly quiet. Again Syrian Woodpeckers were not active with a couple of flight views of a woodpecker sp! A few insects were seen including a Marbled Green moth. Florin also pointed out an old Long-legged Buzzard nest on a crag which had been commandeered by a Saker Falcon, but once again claimed by Long-legged Buzzards.

With a fair journey ahead of us, we left this site and drove to our guest house arriving at 19:00.

Our last checklist was managed just before our last dinner. The wonderful staff had made a cake and produced two bottles of Cava for us. A lovely evening full of memories and laughter.

Day 10

Saturday 13th August

Warm and sunny throughout

Today was to be largely a transfer day but a later flight meant a stop in the late morning. The road out of Tulcea was good for Rollers perched on wires with at least 15 seen (on the right side of the bus anyway!) At 11:15, we reached Hasarlac – which was our first wetland stop on the way to the Danube a few days ago. Over the next hour and a quarter, we saw a range of waders and wildfowl including Pochard and Red-crested Pochard. We also saw a passage of Common Swifts and a small movement of Golden Orioles with around seven or eight along the ridge, some of which perched offering good 'scope views. Here too we heard Water Rail and Thrush Nightingale – both remained unseen however. Finally, Florin found a Penduline Tit's nest. Off again at 12:35. A comfort stop around 15:00 and the final run into Bucharest arriving just after 16:00 where we thanked Christian our fantastic driver, and Florin for introducing us to his country, its wildlife with regular additional geological explanations. We also said goodbye to David and Miriam and David and Jane who were staying on in Bucharest.

The remaining group dropped our off bags on time, but our flight was delayed a bit, meaning we landed late into LHR where we said our goodbyes.



View over the Poarta River valley by Barbara Zietkowska



View over the Old Danube by Barbara Zietkowska



Wallcreeper by Barbara Zietkowska

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2022									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
2	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>				✓	✓	✓	20	✓	✓	✓
3	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>								40		
4	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>				35				✓		✓
5	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>				3	6			4		
6	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>				10	30	3	5	20		5
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>				1			1			
8	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				✓			1	4		15
10	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>										3
11	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>										20
12	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>				3		5	10			
13	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>								1		
14	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>					3			1	H	
15	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>						2	7	10		
16	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				1	3	5	4	2	2	2
17	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>				2			3		2	
18	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	10
19	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>					✓	12	100	6	3	
20	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>								47		
21	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>				2				1	1	35

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2022									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
22	Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>								2		
23	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>						7	2			
24	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>			1		✓	✓	✓			
25	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
26	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		3	2	1	✓	✓	10	✓	1	3
27	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>					30	✓	✓	✓	1	1
28	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3
29	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>				1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2
30	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>							3			
31	Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
32	Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>					4	2		2		
33	Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmeus</i>					40	✓	✓	2		
34	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>							?			
36	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>		2							4	
37	Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>		2	3	1					3	
38	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>							?		3	
39	Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>									1	
40	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		1	2		1				1	
41	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>				5	10	6	✓	✓	✓	2
42	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>				2	5	1	8		1	1
43	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>							2	2	5	
44	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		2	3	3				1	1	2
45	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>										H

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2022									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
46	Little Crane	<i>Porzana parva</i>					2	4				
47	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>				1	5	✓	✓			3
48	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>				2				10		✓
49	Eurasian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>								2		
50	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>					1	1	5			
51	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>				✓	5			1		✓
52	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>								75		
53	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					✓		10	30		
54	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>								2		
55	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>								4		
56	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>					25			15		
57	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>				✓	✓		15		10	✓
58	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>					1			2		
59	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>					1		1			4
60	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					10		2			
61	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>					✓		1			
62	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	10
63	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>				✓	✓		✓	1		4
64	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>				2				4		1
65	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>								1		
66	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>				1						
67	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>				3	20			✓		5
68	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>				6				8		
69	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

			August 2022									
	Common name	Scientific name	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
70	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>								2		
71	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>								✓		
72	Pallas's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus</i>						5		2		
73	Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2
74	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
75	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>								15		
76	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>						1	15	20		
77	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>								2		
78	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>				20	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
79	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>								1		
80	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
81	Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon - I	<i>Columba livia</i>								✓		✓
82	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>			1			1	3			
83	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		1	10	✓		2	2	1	1	5
84	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>				1	1				2	1
85	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		2	✓	✓	✓
86	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		1				1	1	2		
87	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>								1		
88	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>				H						
89	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>		50	3							
90	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>									1	50
91	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>				1	15		3	6	30	25
92	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					✓	✓	✓			
93	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2022									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
94	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>					5			5	4	1
95	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>							1		2	
96	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>					1	H				
97	Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>									H	
98	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			3		2		1		1	
99	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>					1		1			
100	European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		H	1						H	
101	Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>					1	3				
102	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		1	4	4		1		20	15	5
103	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>				3	3			6		
104	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>					3	2	5		4	
105	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>		15	✓		2	1		✓	✓	3
106	Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>			1					1		
107	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>								3	3	
108	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>					H	8	1	1	2	8
109	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		6	10						H	H
110	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		5	5	✓	✓	2		✓	✓	5
111	Spotted Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>			1+H							
112	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>				✓				✓	✓	✓
113	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>				✓				✓		✓
114	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
115	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓	✓	2						
116	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>		✓	✓							
117	European Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>			5							

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2022									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
118	Sombre Tit	<i>Poecile lugubris</i>									2	
119	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		1	4							
120	Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>			1							
121	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		2	✓		✓	✓	✓		2	
122	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		4	✓		✓	1			2	
123	Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>					H	H	3			
124	Bearded Reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>					3	1+H	H	2		
125	Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>								4		
126	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>				2				10	1	6
127	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>				20	2	5	5	✓	✓	✓
128	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
129	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		35	✓	✓			15	20	✓	10
130	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>				H	20	5				
131	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			1			1				
132	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		H	8			1				
133	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>			2							
134	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>					1					
135	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>						1				
136	Paddyfield Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>								H		
137	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>						1				
138	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Iduna pallida</i>					6	1	1			
139	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>		2	1							
140	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		H	2							
141	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		H								

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2022									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
142	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		H							5	
143	Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>		1								
144	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
145	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		5			1		1	1	2	H
146	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			6		✓	✓	1		15	
147	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			1	1						
148	Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>										H
149	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>			?							
150	Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>			?							
151	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		1	1	1						
152	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			1		!					
153	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			3							
154	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>					1					
155	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>								5	8	
156	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>									1	
157	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
158	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>		1			20		✓		6	
159	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>				25	30		3	✓	✓	✓
160	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		4	1		1					
161	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		6	2	✓	✓	2	10	✓	✓	✓
162	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>									6	
163	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		1								
164	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			20							
165	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		2	5		✓				✓	

			August 2022									
	Common name	Scientific name	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
166	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>									25	
167	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		4	2						✓	
168	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		5								
169	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		2	H	✓	5				5	
170	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>					H	1				

Other vertebrates

Common name	Scientific name
MAMMALS:	
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
European Brown Bear	<i>Ursus arctos arctos</i>
European Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>
European Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>
Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>
European Souslik	<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>
Edible Dormouse	<i>Glis glis</i>
Muskrat - I	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>
Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES:	
Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>
Pool Frog	<i>Pelophylax lessonae</i>
European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>
Eastern Green Lizard	<i>Lacerta viridis</i>
Balkan Wall Lizard	<i>Podachis tauricus</i>
Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix persa</i>

Invertebrates

Common name	Scientific name
BUTTERFLIES:	
	<i>Papilionidae</i>
European Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>
Scarce Swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>
	<i>Pieridae</i>
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>
Eastern Bath White	<i>Pontia edusa</i>
Danube Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias myrmidone</i>
Pale Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias hyale</i>
Berger's Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias alfacariensis</i>
Mountain G V White	
Wood White	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>
Fenton's Wood White	<i>Leptidea morsei</i>
	<i>Lycaenidae</i>
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>
Scarce Copper	<i>Lycaena vigaureae</i>
Sooty Copper	<i>Lycaena tityrus</i>
Short-tailed Blue	<i>Everes argiades</i>
Little Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>
Silver-studded Blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
Large Blue	<i>Phengaris arion</i>
	<i>Nymphalidae</i>
Purple Emperor	<i>Apatura iris</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Freyer's Purple Emperor	<i>Apatura metis</i>
White Admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>
Common Glider	<i>Neptis sappho</i>
Hungarian Glider	<i>Neptis rivularis</i>
Camberwell Beauty	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>
Comma Butterfly	<i>Polygonum c-album</i>
Map Butterfly	<i>Araschnia levana</i>
Cardinal Fritillary	<i>Argynnis pandora</i>
Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>
Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia forma. valesina</i>
Dark Green Fritillary	<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>
High Brown Fritillary	<i>Argynnis adippe</i>
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Clossiana selene</i>
Spotted Fritillary	<i>Melitaea didyma</i>
Heath Fritillary	<i>Mellicta athalia</i>
Nickerls Fritillary	<i>Mellicta aurelia</i>
	Satyridae
Marbled White	<i>Melanargia galathea</i>
Dryad	<i>Minois dryas</i>
Great Banded Grayling	<i>Kanetisa circe</i>
Arran Brown	<i>Erebia ligea</i>
Scotch Argus	<i>Erebia aethiops</i>
Woodland Ringlet	<i>Erebia medusa</i>
Sudetem Ringlet	<i>Erebia sudetem</i>
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria tircis</i>
	Hesperiidae
Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>
Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>
Silver-spotted Skipper	<i>Hesperia comma</i>
Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes venatus</i>
MOTHS: (Micros)	
White Plume Moth	<i>Pterophorus pentadactyla</i>
Crambid	<i>Eurchromius bella</i>
Crambid	<i>Pyrausta purpuralis</i>
Tortrix	<i>Agapeta hamana</i>
Tortrix	<i>Agapeta zoegana</i>
Pyralid	<i>Loxostege sticticalis</i>
Pyralid	<i>Synaphe punctalis</i>
Pyralid	<i>Scleroncona acutellus</i>
Ringed China-mark	<i>Parapoynx stratiotata</i>
Pyralid	<i>Donacaula forficella</i>
Pyralid	<i>Calamothropha paludella</i>
Willow Knot-horn	<i>Sciota adelphella</i>
MOTHS: (Macros)	
Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk Moth - larva	<i>Hemaris tityus</i>
Geometridae	<i>Chariaspilates formisaria</i>
Geometridae	<i>Eilicrinia cordiaria</i>
Six-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>
Poplar Lappet	<i>Gastropacha populifolia</i>
Purple-bordered Gold	<i>Idaea muricata f. auroraria</i>
Shaded Broad-bar	<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Latticed Heath	<i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>
Common Heath	<i>Ematurga atomaria</i>
Purpe-barred Yellow	<i>Lythria purpuria</i>
Small Chocolate Tip	<i>Clostera pigra</i>
Round-winged Muslin	<i>Thumatha senex</i>
Copper Underwing	<i>Amphiptra pyramidea</i>
Spotted Sulphur	<i>Emmelia trabealis</i>
Reed Leopard	<i>Phragmataecia castaneae</i>
Reed Tussock	<i>Laelia coenosa</i>
Silky Wainscot	<i>Chilodes maritima</i>
Scarce Burnished Brass	<i>Diachrysia chryson</i>
Scarce Bordered Straw	<i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>
Marbled Green	<i>Nyctobrya muralis</i>
Odonata:	
Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>
Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>
Common Blue tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>
Sombre Golden Ringed Dragonfly	<i>Cordulegaster bidentata</i>
White-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum albistylum</i>
Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>
Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>
OTHER INVERTEBRATES:	
Praying Mantis	<i>Mantis religiosa</i>
Ant Lion	<i>Nemoptera sinuata</i>
Robber-fly	<i>Asilid</i> sp.
Bee Fly	<i>Bombylius</i> sp.
Crab Spider	<i>Misumena vatia</i>
Wasp Spider	<i>Argiope segmentata</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Cicarda sp	
Wart-biter cricket	<i>Decticus verrucivorus</i>

Notes on plants (with thanks to Richard Baker)

Our trip began with an exploration of the Zarnesti Gorge. This is a deep limestone gorge, part of the Piatra Craiului National Park. Highlights, beautiful Beech (*Fagus*) forests, with Jupiters Distaff (*Salvia glutinosa*), Monkshood and Wolfs Bane (*Aconitum napellus*, *A. vulparia*), Bellflowers (*Campanula carpatica*, and *C. trachelium*), and Yellow Foxglove (*Digitalis viridiana*). In the open patches of grassland, we saw Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) laden with insects, Sticky Catchfly, (*Silene viscosa*), Red berried Elder (*Sambucus racemosus*), Orpine (*Sedum telephium*) and Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*). In the afternoon we visited meadows en route to the bears, and the margins had the Carthusian Pink (*Dianthus carthusianorum*).

The next day we visited a limestone grassland with forest, beneath towering limestone mountains. The highlights surely were the Willow and Cross Gentians (*Gentiana asclepiadea* and *G. cruciata*), still flowering well, alongside wild Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) and the Stemless Carline Thistle (*Carlina acaulis*).

The Danube delta is not uniform; it is a complex, ever-changing landscape of open water, narrow channels, wood, fen, reedbed, floating marsh. Every route taken by the boat seems to be slightly different to the last. There is a transition from open water, to a fringe of water plants (the rare fern *Salvinia natans*, Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*), Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*), Fringed Water Lily (*Nymphoides peltata*), and Yellow and White Water Lilies (*Nuphar lutea* and *Nymphaea alba*), into Bulrush (*Typha* sp.), Arrowhead, (*Sagittaria sagitifolia*) and Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and into reedbeds of *Phragmites australis* entangled with ferns (*Thelypteris palustris*) and Red-berried Woody Nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*).

Late in the trip we visited some sclerophyllous oak woodland high on the remnant primary steppe in the Babadag plateau. Here, the Downy Oak (*Quercus pubescens*) and Eastern Hornbeam (*Carpinus orientalis*) formed a welcome shade; in the glades *Eryngium campestre*, and *Echinops ruthenicus* were flowering.

We all visited a bluff overlooking the Danube delta, on a small area of secondary steppe. Here we saw flowering, *Xeranthemum annuum*, *Consolida regalis*, *Marrubium peregrinum*, *Teuchrum polium*, the grass *Stipa ukraineum* was also here.