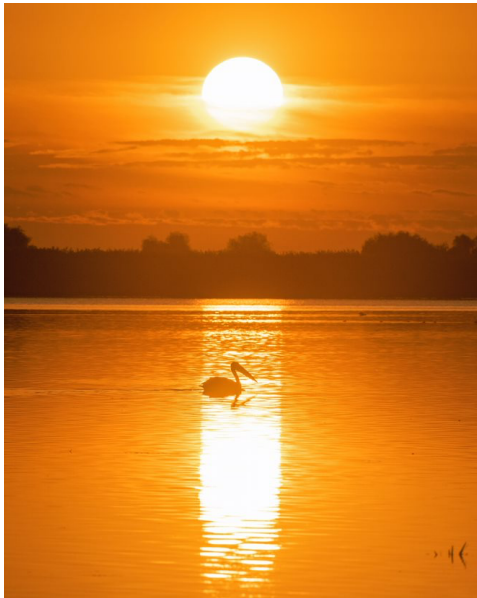


# Romania's Danube Delta & Carpathian Mountains

Naturetrek Tour Report

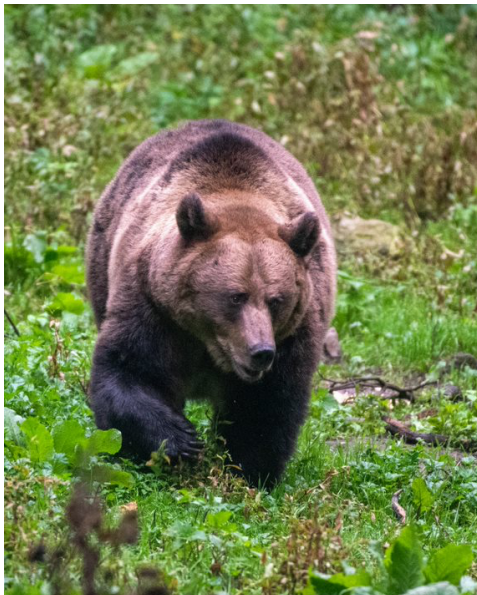
15th – 24th September 2023



Sunrise



Dalmatian Pelican



Brown Bear



Piatra Craiului National Park

Tour report by Neil McMahon, photos by Wen-Yi Lee and Chris Stones



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Tour participants: Neil McMahon & Florin Palade (leaders) with 13 Naturetrek clients.

## Summary

Our ten day adventure to Romania began with a journey into the Carpathian Mountains with stunning scenery and an abundance of birdlife, sometimes right outside our accommodation. The highlight though was the visit to a hide to watch as many as eight feeding Brown Bears in daylight conditions, concentrating on their banquet and ignoring us as well as the four Red Foxes feeding around them! A super walk along a gorge resulted in a distant view of a Wallcreeper, always a special bird, and we glimpsed raptors passing over on migration with Honey and Common Buzzards being the most numerous. A Lesser Spotted Eagle posed for us and everywhere there were passerines on the autumnal move south.

Following our visit to the uplands we headed east and joined our floating mini hotel aboard the Danube Delta. From this mobile accommodation we were treated to comfortable boat excursions along the channels and lakes of this very important European wetland, and it wasn't long before we were immersed into feeding flocks of Whiskered Terns and watched the synchronized fishing of Great White Pelicans with their Cormorant side-kicks and clamouring gulls overhead! Grey Herons and Kingfishers continually flew up on our approach and we managed some close views of White-tailed Eagles, Bearded Tits, Pygmy Cormorants and the local speciality, Dalmatian Pelicans.

Our last couple of days were spent exploring the Babadag plains and hills with more raptors, waders and an opportunity of visiting and paddling on a Black Sea beach.

## Day 1

## Friday 15th September

Eight members of our group took the 9.25am flight from T3 at Heathrow Airport, which was slightly delayed, and we flew at around 10am on a BA Airbus. The crew made up the time nicely and we took just three hours to get to Bucharest. The passport control at the airport was negotiated with the minimum of fuss and after a bit of a wait we successfully retrieved our baggage intact! There was an opportunity to obtain some local currency in the arrival area (exchanging cash in Euros) and here we also met a smiling Florin and the remaining members of our group, some a little weary after their long journey from other airports. We headed out of the airport and met up with our driver in a Mercedes mini-coach and stowed our main luggage into the trailer.

We were then whisked away from Bucharest and off to the Carpathian Mountains to the north and the start of our adventure. We drove through a flat landscape with linear communities alongside the main road with fields of sweetcorn and sunflower behind. The dark brooding skies to the north suggested that the showery and thundery weather forecast was going to be accurate. Common birds seen included Feral Pigeons, Collared Dove and Jackdaws and a few raptors were espied including brief views of Honey Buzzard. Some sweets were passed around as we sat back and surveyed the landscape around us and Common Kestrel, Common Buzzard, Marsh Harrier, Magpie, Rook and House Sparrows were also noted. Large warehouses, shopping centres, lines of pylons and massive advertising boards proved it isn't just the UK countryside suffering from the ravages of 'progress'.

As we neared the foothills of the Carpathian chain it began to rain. Wildlife sightings stopped as we climbed higher in grey, murky conditions before stopping for a comfort break and coffee. Additional birds by now included a

couple of cock Pheasants and White Wagtail. The last ninety minutes of our journey saw us climbing through heavily wooded valleys and several towns before dropping down again with a series of hairpin bends arriving at something of a plateau and then our accommodation in Vulcan – Sura Sasilor, a very comfortable guesthouse – just after 7.30pm (local time – Romania is 2 hours ahead of UK time). We gathered for our evening meal – local plum-based alcoholic welcome drink, vegetable soup, salad, chicken goulash and sweet. Delicious! Florin provided a briefing about the following day's venture and local arrangements while we enjoyed a hot beverage, it was then time to retire for the night and, for some, catching up on some lost sleep!

## Day 2

## Saturday 16th September

Barking dogs during the night were annoyingly loud, as were the 7am church bells for those hoping for a lie-in – but most of us slept for at least part of the time.

At 7.30am a small band of us stepped out into the street for a look around and a walk up the road which has a leafy stand of trees beside a stream between the carriageways. These trees were enough to attract Blue and Great Tit, Chiffchaffs and Spotted Flycatcher. Fly-over birds included Woodpigeon, Yellow and Grey Wagtail with an Aquila eagle sp. flapping over at first light. Despite being mid-September several Black Redstarts were adorning the roof tops including a couple of singing males. Our short stroll before our 8am breakfast also captured views of House Sparrows, Magpie, Jay, Hooded Crow, Collared Dove and Nuthatch plus a fly-over Kestrel. A Hummingbird Hawk-moth attracted to Honeysuckle in the garden was the first of a few on our first full day. Florin in the meantime had seen a Syrian Woodpecker on the Walnut Tree in the rear garden and reported a Spurge Hawk Moth had been there the evening before.

We consumed our continental-style breakfast and each made up our packed supper for later and just after 9am we left our accommodation and checked out some fields outside the village. A watchful Lesser Spotted Eagle on a telegraph post was much appreciated with a supporting cast of Kestrels, Common Buzzard and a Marsh Harrier. Tree Pipits, White, Yellow and Grey Wagtails were on the rolled fields and a great many corvids included Rook, Jackdaw and Raven. A Grey Heron flew over and further down the road there were several White Storks in a field. Another Lesser Spotted Eagle flew level with our vehicle for a short time and some fifteen minutes later we arrived at a section of the local National Park.

Unfortunately, the weather had deteriorated to rain showers and low clouds to the point where we could only guess where the high peaks rising to 2,000m were around us! Luckily there was little in the way of wind as we took a slow walk up a fairly steep hilly track towards a Monastery, all within the Piatra Craiului National Park. Black Redstarts, Tree Pipits and Common Buzzards were the initial birds seen and meadow plants were in abundance, many still in flower. Up to half a dozen Nutcrackers were encountered as they continually flew down the hill to forage for harvested food and then back up to presumably cache it at higher altitude in the predominantly Spruce forest above. Bell-laden cattle and a few horses grazed the meadows and open forest glades and higher up we saw a fly-over Hawfinch, a pair of Bullfinch, several Tit species, Sparrowhawk and Siskins. Green Woodpeckers called below us and Great Spotted Woodpeckers showed above us. Migrant Chaffinches and a few Goldcrest flitted around in the wet trees.

Just after we turned around to dawdle back down to the bus there was a short break in the clouds with milky sunshine and more warmth. The birds and a few butterflies responded, and we located a couple of Red-backed

Shrikes and Willow Warblers, while Tree Pipits and Yellowhammers were heard as they flew around us. Ravens croaked, Buzzards mewed and Jays screeched as we descended seeing Hummingbird Hawk Moth and Clouded Yellow butterflies around standing vegetation. After a last scan around we drove back to our comfortable guesthouse for an enjoyable hot lunch – soup, salad, schnitzel and sweet!

We departed again at about 3.15pm for a longer drive of about fifty minutes which took us to the beginning of a forestry track at Stramba. Here we slowly walked along the track and it seemed fairly quiet. The weather was much improved and rather warm as we notched up close views of Marsh Tit, Whinchat, Common Treecreeper and briefly saw a few warblers and other tits. Migrant House Martins and Swallows were overhead and Sparrowhawk and Common Buzzard hunted the woodland edge. At the end of our walk was a small dead tree which attracted a female Great Spotted Woodpecker, a Marsh Tit and a male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker – the latter being particularly confiding and for the majority it was easily the bird of the day. Florin had explained that Roe Deer were rather scarce here but by this time we had seen three different animals and our luck with mammals was about to improve further!

We drove the last section of the track past a couple of very large houses and other accommodation associated with the local forest rangers and after a brief bush stop carried on towards a bear hide, completing the last few hundred metres on foot.

In daylight conditions and even before we reached the foot of the steep steps up to the hide we could see Eurasian Brown Bears in the sunlit glade – wow!! We quietly filed into the hide and drank in the spectacle in front of us, eight bears including a cub of the year, completely ignoring everything around them except the food in front of their noses.

Although no aggression was exhibited, there was clearly something of a pecking order amongst them with one female plainly very nervous of the older animals and giving them a very wide berth. The mother with the cub was much slimmer than the other females. The ranger with us knows all the individuals and can age them – the oldest perhaps being eighteen or nineteen years old. Despite their size, these large animals feed with dexterity and finesse and it was wonderful to see them at very close range in the low autumn sunshine and completely unfazed by our presence. One Red Fox was feeding with them when we arrived, but during the time in the hide that number increased to four, taking advantage of the apples and food provided for the bears but giving them a fairly wide berth. Jay, Nuthatch and Robin also put in an appearance at the banquet! We had to reluctantly come away from this marvellous spectacle before it became dark so that we could see where we were going walking back to the bus without the need for torches. As we began to depart the hide the first few guests down the steps saw a Badger which came running towards the glade but then ran away when it saw us – clearly not as habituated at the bears.

Back in the coach we drove slowly back down the track and those in the front were lucky enough to see an unidentified owl, another Red Fox and then a Nightjar.

The coach journey back to Vulcan provided an opportunity to consume our packed supper. We arrived back at 9.15pm and after a welcome hot drink retired for the night with vivid memories of our bear adventure.

## Day 3

## Sunday 17th September

With our breakfast at 7.30am there wasn't much time for a morning walk, but a few birds around our guesthouse included brief views of a Syrian Woodpecker and more routine Black Redstarts, Kestrel etc. Scrambled eggs and small sausages comprised the hot option with cereals, fruit juice, yoghurt, fresh fruit and a cold meat and cheese platter, bread, homemade jam and honey making up the rest of the ingredients for our breakfast and a self-prepared packed lunch.

At 8.30am we departed in our mini-coach for a full day excursion. En-route we again saw 'our' Lesser Spotted Eagle loyal to his telegraph pole, plus many Common Buzzards and assorted corvids. Our first venue was the beautiful Zarnesti Gorge and we spent the morning slowly walking up between the steep sides of the limestone cliffs and pinnacles, draped in a variety of trees and lush green vegetation. Being a Sunday and with sunny conditions we had to share the gorge with many walkers, some exercising their dogs and even a few cyclists. Plenty of neck-craning was required to spot the birds but botanical interest ensured there was plenty to look at on the ground too. A few butterflies included Red Admiral, Wall Brown, Silver-washed Fritillary and what appeared to be Brown Argus or a scarcer relative. Dragonflies were rather too quick to identify but we were confident of Migrant Hawkers. Grey Wagtail, Marsh Tit and Common Treecreepers were the early birds plus a pair of inquisitive Crested Tits. A Peregrine showed well several times above us as we walked up and down the gorge. We heard unseen woodpeckers but a Black Woodpecker did permit a few snatched views.

Careful scanning of the rock faces paid off when a Wallcreeper flew into view and landed on a distant pinnacle and fidgeted around for about thirty minutes. Always at long range it was still possible to study its unique behaviour and the main plumage details of this special Alpine species.

Whilst looking up, raptors began to funnel over with quite a number of lofty migrating Honey Buzzards. Sparrowhawk and Common Buzzards also appeared over the peaks and we were thrilled to see a female Goshawk soaring around and being mobbed by two rather cautious male Sparrowhawks.

At a junction in the dry gorge, we sat down to unharness our backpacks and consume our sandwiches and fruit and a Wall Brown butterfly and a couple of Romanian dogs came to see what we were eating. A few more raptors passed over in the strengthening breeze and after eating we turned back down the gorge and slowly made our way back to our waiting vehicle. A recently dead Convolvulus Hawk-moth was examined and then we set off to our next destination, keeping an eye on the trackside stream in case a Dipper was to show itself.

Next, we drove to the tourist town of Bran with Bran Castle as the centrepiece. We didn't have time to go into the castle, but took advantage of the tourist attractions in the town centre with facilities for a little shopping, coffee and ice-cream for an hour or so.

Next Florin took us to some scenic high ground not far out of town and took the opportunity to explain some of geology and geomorphic processes that had produced such steep-sided valleys, picturesque meadows, mixed forests and limestone outcrops. It also seemed a good spot for a group photo and some locally-produced honey and fruit products were being sold on the stands in the layby.

We finished this very pleasant day with a short walk along a slope with large fields at the bottom and scrub and grassland on the higher contours. This vale and hill habitat was something of a bird migration bottleneck as

migrants moved along the contours of the Carpathians. There were plenty of Common Buzzards dotted about sitting on fence posts, hay bales and on the ground and other raptors seen included Marsh Harriers, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Hobby. Some White Storks remained distant, but a flock of thirty-six Black Storks glided almost overhead. A Great Grey Shrike sat up on a pylon cable over the grassy slopes and several Red-backed Shrike showed nicely. A few wagtails and common warblers were supplemented by a couple of Common Redstart and Swallows and House Martins whipped overhead. We took our leave of this peaceful setting to return to our guesthouse with time to spare before our 7.30pm evening meal. A small selection of beers and Romanian wine were available to whet the appetite and after a full day out in the fresh air and after plenty of exercise the majority of our party sleepily retired for the evening.

## Day 4

## Monday 18th September

A very short, but productive pre-breakfast walk along the road succeeded in securing Syrian Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Red-breasted Flycatcher for the day list as well as Tree Pipit, Black Redstart, Grey Wagtail and Fieldfare and Sparrowhawk overhead.

We thanked the staff for a very pleasant stay and left Sura Sasilor at about 8.30am and today was all about the long drive to the Danube Delta over to the east. However, Florin had promised us some breaks during the journey and by 10.30am we had arrived at Sinaia where we walked a woodland path to the old summer residence of the now deposed Romanian royal family, Peles Castle. Several Carpathian Red Squirrels ran across the woodland floor and track in front of us and a flock of tits included many Coal Tits and a couple of Marsh Tits plus Goldcrest and Common Treecreeper were seen. Caroline spotted a Rabbit or two on the lawns which were the only ones seen on the tour.

At the castle Florin picked out a migrant Wood Warbler but easier to see were several Blackcaps, Robin, Blackbird and Jay in the castle gardens. We filed up towards a restaurant and enjoyed coffees and ice cream and enjoyed watching Hummingbird Hawk-moths coming to the potted flowers whilst we supped and consumed.

With a long journey ahead, we didn't linger here for too long but our walk back to the bus provided further views of the enchanting Red Squirrels, our first Long-tailed Tits of the trip and we heard a Hawfinch in the trees above us. Back on our coach we headed south-east and then east around Bucharest, always keeping an eye out through the windows. A comfort stop at a fuel station coincided with a little raptor migration providing fly-over views of Honey Buzzard, Hobby and Red-footed Falcon. Further on Florin picked out an Eastern Imperial Eagle, but there wasn't an opportunity to stop to appreciate it. As we approached the River Danube Swallow numbers increased and we began to see Black Storks and stopped to look at a flock of them numbering over two hundred birds sitting along a bund with a supporting cast of Grey Herons, Great White and Little Egrets.

Still with two hours to go to Tulcea, we stopped at an evaporating lake for a spot of birding. Hundreds of Ruddy Shelduck crammed the near shore which they shared with loafing Mallard and a few Teal, Pintail, Shoveler, Pochard and Ferruginous Duck. Two Tufted Ducks were also spotted, which are a scarce bird in Romania at this time of year. Lake (Lacul) Hazarlac also provided waders including Green Sandpipers, Wood Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Dunlin and Ruff and raptors over the nearby hills were Hobby, Kestrel, Long-legged Buzzard, Marsh Harrier and a single Short-toed Eagle. Great Cormorants were gathered in large numbers and a sizeable flock of Starlings visited briefly. Passerines included Yellow Wagtail, White Wagtail, Crested Lark and a Red-backed Shrike.

We moved on to Tulcea, arriving at the harbour at about 7pm just as the sun was setting and said a temporary goodbye to our driver and road transport. We were introduced to our Flotel (floating hotel) which was to be our home for the next four nights. We ate at about 8pm after sorting out our cabins and luggage and retired not long after we had eaten, slightly tired after our long day of travelling. Constant splashing was an indication of the fish-rich waters of the Danube particularly in the Delta and Whiskered Terns joined Black-headed Gulls hunting insects on the wing before settling down for the night. After dark it was possible to hear migrating Common Scoters passing over above the artificial lights on the riverside.

## Day 5

## Tuesday 19th September

The set up for an on-water Danube Delta safari is an interesting one. A broad floating barge with about twelve rooms for guests, staff quarters, a kitchen, a dining room and observation decks is pulled by a small tug boat. Then a second small boat with an observation deck with seating is used for excursions along the smaller channels and into the lakes, with a rowing boat as a stand-by option too.

We began our day with a 7.30am breakfast followed by an 8.30am excursion on the small boat. The morning cruise took us to Cotete Lake, the Sontea Chanel and Baclanesti Lake. Here we were introduced to flocks of Great White Pelicans and the first of the more solitary Dalmatian Pelicans. Grey Herons, Kingfishers and Marsh Harriers became commonplace as we chugged along Willow Tree lined channels and their bordering beds of Common Reeds, Water Soldier and other aquatic plants. We managed some memorable close sightings of adult White-tailed Eagles that we disturbed from their dead tree perches and witnessed a little raptor migration over the delta which included a couple of Booted Eagles riding thermals like the flocks of Black Storks.

More Ferruginous Ducks, a few Garganey, a juvenile Turtle Dove in a tree and lots of Little and Great Crested Grebes were enjoyed. Waders were scarce but Lapwing, Common Snipe, Green Sandpiper and Greenshank were in the margins and many Black-headed and Caspian Gulls were present in the open water. Pygmy and Great Cormorants were both numerous as were Squacco Herons but we were a bit too late in the season for Little Bittern and Little Crake. Woodpeckers in the trees included Lesser Spotted, Middle Spotted and Great Spotted with brief views of Grey-headed and Black only being heard.

Meanwhile our Flotel had been moved away from the town to a new anchorage well into the Delta where we met with it in time for a very welcome late lunch just after 2.30pm. Lunches on board tended to be delicious home-made soups, followed by a savoury course and a light sweet, plus fruit. Evening meals were generally a salad, a savoury main meal and again a light sweet and/or fruit.

Our afternoon small boat excursion commenced at 4pm taking us from the Sulima Arm where we enjoyed a large number of Whiskered Tern hawking with moulting White-winged Black Terns and just a solitary Black Tern. We visited Lake Cuibida where we managed views of two juvenile Penduline Tit, and whilst nestled into the waterside Juncus we had views of Sedge and Eurasian Reed Warblers. The trees and bushes tantalised us with glimpses of Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Blackcap but the calling Eastern Olivaceous Warblers refused to show. Mixed tit flocks, Chaffinches, Tree Sparrows and a few Spotted Flycatchers were somewhat easier to see. Lake Yacob contained plenty of waterfowl and we enjoyed our fill of Pygmy Cormorants and Ferruginous Ducks.



Fishing is a significant way of life here and many banks and a number of boats were adorned with rod-wielding fishermen and a few fisherwomen too. Nothing is thrown back here, and we witnessed the capture of Silver Bream, Carp, Pike, Rudd – presumably all for the family table or to be sold in the town. The waters contain many other species including some huge catfish.

Other forms of wildlife were difficult to see and we had a day when no identifiable mammals were seen. A Grass Snake was seen swimming across the channel and we encountered plenty of 'Marsh' Frogs and heard calling Eastern Tree Frogs.

Back on board the floating hotel at around 7pm in time to see the sun setting over the reeds, we prepared ourselves for our evening meal at 7.30pm followed by Florin's briefing for the following day on the enormous map of the Delta and then we completed our Naturetrek checklist. This gentle process eased us into relaxation mode and an opportunity to unwind prior to retiring for the evening. Some howling Golden Jackals at 11.30pm were not heard by many!!

## Day 6

## Wednesday 20th September

It was another sunny and partly cloudy day for our continued Danube Delta experience with the day temperatures well into the upper 20°C. After our 7.30am breakfast we made ready for the 8.30am excursion on our smaller boat and spent the morning gently checking out the reed-fringed channels with occasional forays onto shallow lakes of variable size and depth, all north of the Danube River. Our little craft was well equipped with a canopy over the chairs and a toilet at the back – and we were well supplied with water for the trip and coffee and snacks for mid-morning – all for the comfort of the travellers. Piping Kingfishers were commonplace but rarely sat still for photographs on the approach of the boat. Pygmy Cormorants sat on low sticks or formed large fishing flocks on the surface of the water. Dalmatian Pelicans rarely form large flocks and were often seen on their own or were part of a well-spaced group of four to half a dozen birds. Their grey-white plumage, dull yellow pouches and different underwing patterning were helpful when distinguishing them at range from their Great White cousins. Swallows and a few Sand Martins flocked overhead with migrant flocks of White Wagtails being more prominent first thing in the morning and again as light faded in the evening. Two White-tailed Eagles were outnumbered by three or four Ospreys. We all enjoyed watching a flock of noisy Bearded Tits clambering up the giant phragmites reeds and fluttering short distances. A calling Moustached Warbler was only successfully glimpsed by a few in the group – Blackcap and Reed Warbler being much easier to see.

On returning to the Flotel at lunch time Gail and Chris enjoyed a swim in the water, demonstrating how warm it was after a summer of sunshine. Then it was time for our three-course lunch and an hour of down time prior to our afternoon trip at 4pm.

Our afternoon of searching provided plenty of repeat sightings of many bird species with additional singles of Goldeneye and Eurasian Wigeon. We also saw one each of Dice Snake and Grass Snake as they swam quickly across our path, needing to keep themselves hidden from the keen eyes of the many Grey Herons we continually disturbed from the waterside vegetation as we cruised. We also saw a Black-crowned Night Heron and a Cuckoo and didn't even try to count the numbers in the skeins of Greylag Geese flying around. In time, we docked again with the mother ship at her new moorings just as the sun set and enjoyed another fine meal in the comfortable



lounge. As usual we undertook a review on Florin's map of where we had sailed that day and a briefing for the following day, meticulously completed our checklists to the best of our ability and retired for the evening.

## Day 7

## Thursday 21st September

With the spell of sunny autumn weather persisting unabated and after our success with some super sunsets we got up while it was still dark for an optional 6.20am excursion to witness a sunrise over one of the nearby lakes. This proved to be a wonderful experience, we all enjoyed a beautiful sunrise and those taking photographs were also very successful even managing to include the silhouette of pelicans flying across the image of the rising sun. Sleepy waterbirds became more active as it got light, with vocal Caspian Terns calling around us and herons and Marsh Harriers flying along the reed margins. Large numbers of Little Grebe joined Coots and other waterfowl in the sunlit lake and a Montagu's Harrier passed overhead. A few singing Starlings joined small parties of Tree Sparrows and Bearded Tits in vegetation along the channels with roving flocks of Blue and Great Tits joining in with common warblers and flycatchers to confound us as they flitted through the still, thick green foliage. Great Spotted Woodpeckers were vocal and a couple of resident Grey-headed Woodpeckers showed in the dead trees. An apparent comet (P1 Nashimura) was visible in the early morning sky too.

We popped back for our 8am breakfast and then ventured forth again at 9am to check new channels and lakes for birds and beasts. A new and extensive lake for us held literally hundreds of Ferruginous Ducks demonstrating yet another reason why this area is so important for wildlife in Europe. Black-necked Grebe joined good numbers of Little and Great Crested Grebes and we found a single Red-necked Grebe in amongst them. A Ruff and two Spotted Redshanks fed on a mat of floating water weed and two Wood Sandpipers showed well. Numerous Caspian Gulls, the only big gull here in numbers, were quite tame with adults and first-year birds dominating. A Black Tern showed well and Osprey and Black-crowned Night Heron put in an appearance too. White-tailed Eagles were perched up in large dead trees and we probably saw eight different individuals. Penduline Tit and unidentified Locustella warblers were heard calling from the reeds and Juncus and we were delighted to encounter more showy Bearded Tits.

We returned to our floating hotel at 2pm for lunch and then the afternoon was spent relaxing onboard as it was towed slowly and steadily back to the mooring in Tulcea. Topping up the suntan, reading and resting or further scanning was possible as the elevated observation deck permitted views over the reeds into adjacent lagoons. Whiskered Terns were common and Kingfishers and Grey Herons were flushed throughout the westward journey. A small flock of Garganey showed well early on.

By 6pm we had arrived in Tulcea and there was an opportunity to disembark and take a stroll along the promenade prior to the evening meal. Tulcea is particularly multi-cultural as reflected in the architecture and religious buildings with a Jewish synagogue, Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches and a Mosque with a minaret. Nationalities present in the town in significant numbers include Turks, Russians and Ukrainians.

We spent our last night on the Flotel in anticipation of land-based ventures during our remaining two days in the area.

## Day 8

## Friday 22nd September

Following breakfast, and after 'scoping a Peregrine on one of the distant dockside cranes, we said good-bye and thank you to the crew of the Flotel and its accompanying smaller craft and once again clambered aboard a Mercedes mini-coach – this time a slightly newer and larger one than before.

Florin was keen to show us some sites of the Dobrogea region. It took us about twenty minutes to reach some low hills with natural grassland plains and accompanying wind-blown flowering plants. The beautiful flowers of Forking Longspur were admired as well as Chicory which we had seen throughout our tour. We took a short walk along the crest of the hill which overlooks the extensive wetlands of the Delta below. Beyond the wetlands we could see the large grain ships using the River Danube and Black Sea connection to transport wheat from Ukraine to the outside world. The river here is the border between Romania and Ukraine – only a few miles away in the distance – with the port of Izmail which had only days before been attacked by the Russians in the current conflict, visible on the horizon.

We searched in vain for the cute Susliks that live in burrows in this habitat. We flushed a covey of Grey Partridge and Hobby and Kestrel were on the prowl. Strong south-easterly winds stalled the hoped-for visible migration, but no-one told the many over-flying and very vocal Red-throated Pipits. Smaller numbers of Yellow Wagtails and Tree Pipits also battled into the head-wind and sweeping flocks of White Wagtails and hirundines passed us at knee height! An adult male Pallid Harrier swept past and careered down towards the marshes below.

We hopped back onto the coach after examining the large Slant-headed Grasshoppers hopping around in the grass and left these plains just east of Parches and continued further west. Our journey was interrupted when a European Roller was spotted on some telegraph wires and it permitted good telescope views. Small White and Eastern Bath White butterflies were on the wing here too.

Fifteen minutes further on and we were at the monastery village of Celic Dere with its orchards including plenty of Walnuts. These trees were the target food for Middle-spotted, Great Spotted and Syrian Woodpeckers with all three species seen in just a couple of trees without even leaving the car park beside the farm. The local cats and dogs from the village came out to greet us and see what we were up to as we added Spotted Flycatcher, Red-breasted Flycatcher and Common Redstart to our day list and finches including many Hawfinches in the trees above. We walked out of the village into the fields and orchards on the hill behind, which yielded plenty of butterflies with lots of very large Cardinal Fritillaries taking centre stage. Little Owl, Red-backed Shrike and a Grey-headed Woodpecker were further good birds and raptors moving overhead included Long-legged Buzzard, Honey Buzzard, Hobby and a Lesser-spotted Eagle. Then it was time for our picnic sitting under a Walnut tree in the meadow beside the, currently dry, river, with bread, ham and chicken, cheese and salad, a spinach roulade, cake and fruit and coffee.

After our lunch we drove for about fifty minutes to arrive at a ridge of granite hills – the Macin Mountain National Park. It was very warm by now but we took a slow stagger upwards into the hills, distracted by an array of butterflies, more Slant-headed Grasshoppers and huge, vivid green Praying Mantis. A little water leaking from the rocks further up was a magnet for butterflies with fritillaries, whites and blues all gathering before us. It was rather late in the season for interesting passerines here but raptors overhead included yet more Hobbies pursuing the numerous dragonflies, the only Black Kite of the tour, Long-legged Buzzards and three or more Booted Eagles.

There were plenty of plants and shrubs to admire, although some of them were non-native. Some shady trees protected us from the fierce sun as we made our way back to our waiting vehicle. It was quite a long drive back to Tulcea, where we arrived at our guest house at 7pm to find all of our luggage miraculously transported for us from the Flotel.

The remainder of the evening was taken up with our main meal, briefing and checklist and discussions and agreements to share the best images from our trip when we had time to review them on our return home.

## Day 9

## Saturday 23rd September

Our last full day of wildlife-watching began with a 7.30am breakfast and 8.30am departure, this time in a southerly direction. A twenty-five-minute drive brought us to the lonely Deniz Tepe Hill, an isolated hill to the north-west of the Black Sea and a favourite for raptors to find wind and thermals to assist them during their autumn migration. The hill also retains a small area of native grassland, with intensive agriculture all around. The cute Suslik was a target here, but sadly only the driver and Wen Yi saw a couple as the bus drove slowly along the track and search as we might, nobody could find them again. Up to thirty Kestrels hunted the large hill, most hovering in the southerly wind. A few Long-legged Buzzards and Ravens showed too and a 'ringtail' Harrier 'playing' with the Kestrels was possibly a Montagu's.

Wheatears in the heat haze were confidently identified by Florin as both Isabelline and Northern, but the harsh light and distance made confirmation and photographs of the Isabelline difficult. Several Crested Larks showed nice and clearly. Two Sparrowhawks were stalking a large flock of White and Yellow Wagtails further down the main track. After plenty of scanning and no further Susliks we clambered back into the mini-coach, checked a series of nearby fields and drove on further south to Tuzla Lake (lagoons). A flock of Bee-eaters on wires were much enjoyed and we walked down to the edge of a shallow lagoon where there was an obvious collection of birds made up of ducks, gulls and waders. Many of the gulls were the diminutive, but very attractive, Little Gull, standing alongside Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls and a couple of Yellow-legged Gulls too. Shoveler seemed to be the most common duck, other species being Teal, Pintail and Mallard. Terns included all three marsh terns with two summer plumage adult White-winged (Black) Terns being the most eye-catching. A nice mix of waders included three each of Little and Temminck's Stint, Ruff, Dunlin, Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers, Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper and a single Curlew Sandpiper. Red-throated Pipits and Yellow Wagtails came down to drink and forage around the small stream flowing into the lagoon. The local shepherd with his mixed herd of goats and sheep carried on regardless of our presence. More distant birds included a collection of big gulls and more ducks including Common Shelduck and a flock of Avocet.

We drove around to the farthest corner of the lagoon where it proved possible to obtain a closer view of the Avocets without disturbing them. More waders here included two Grey Plovers and whilst we enjoyed our picnic lunch sitting on the top of the hill, in the shade of the bus, a Booted Eagle tried a variety of manoeuvres to shake off a mobbing Hobby to no avail. Marsh Harriers quartered the reedbeds as we chomped through the yummy food – funny how fresh air makes you hungry!

Our final venue for the day was to visit Vadu, an area at the very southern tip of the Delta and where the 'Mad Max' factory dominates the landscape – a reminder of the communist era - a factory designed to extract and recycle rare metals which was part-built, but never completed and used. Overgrown areas and pools provided shelter for

a Little Owl, lots of Common Snipe, a few Wood Sandpipers and some Ruff. A little further down the track we flushed Red-backed Shrike and Purple Herons from the edges of the Phragmites beds. Smaller pools held Little, Black-necked and Great Crested Grebe and then we were at the sea shore! The track concluded at the beach where we were met with a fairly rough Black Sea. Great Cormorants rested on apparatus in the water and small numbers of Sandwich Terns flew south over the waves. Gathering gulls included Black-headed, Mediterranean, a single Common, Caspian and Yellow-legged. We couldn't see any shearwaters on the move despite the lively, but warm conditions. A couple of Crested Larks on the beach dared us to use our optics to watch them amongst the partly clad and completely unclad sun-worshippers!

Here we had an opportunity to paddle and Gail again had a brief swim and it was a fitting end to our day and tour. On the way back to the main road, those lucky few at the front of the bus saw two Golden Jackals cross the track in front of us! The remainder of the journey back to Tulcea was uneventful and we made it back for 7pm – just in time to freshen up and sit down to eat at 7.30pm. We said our thank-you to Florin for his excellent leadership, completed our checklist and checked in on-line for the flight the following day where possible and then retired for our final night in sunny Romania.

## Day 10

## Sunday 24th September

Our last day was all about travel and after our customary 7.30am breakfast we drove from the guesthouse direct to Bucharest. Most binoculars/cameras may have been packed but the coach trip back to Bucharest was interrupted when a large eagle was spotted on a pylon. It was assumed to be an Imperial Eagle but telescopic views confirmed it as a White-tailed Eagle – how can you be disappointed even though we had seen plenty on the Danube Delta! The first flights were early in the afternoon and the BA flight to Heathrow was delayed for an hour on the runway. Other flights were much later which provided some with an opportunity of visiting the city prior to check-in.

We had recorded over 170 species of birds and the Eurasian Brown Bears were a definite highlight!

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## Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only, GO = Guide only)

I=Introduced		September 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>					✓	✓	✓				
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>									✓		
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>				✓					GO		
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>					GO	✓	✓				
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>				GO			✓		✓		
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>					✓	✓	✓				
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>						1					
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>				✓					✓		
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>				✓	✓		✓				
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>				GO	✓	✓	✓				
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>				2							
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>				H GO							
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>						1					
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>								✓			
Common Pheasant - I	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓		
European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>		✓									
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>					1	1	1				
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>					1				1		
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					H	H					
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>				✓	H	✓	✓				
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Little Crane	<i>Zapornia parva</i>							H GO				
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>							1				
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>						✓	✓		1		
Eurasian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>				GO							
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>									✓		
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					✓	✓	✓		✓		
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>									✓		
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>									✓		
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>				✓					✓		
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>				2			1		✓		
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>									1/2		
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>									3		
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>				✓					✓		
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>									✓		
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>				1	✓	✓					
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>				2			2		✓		

I=Introduced		September 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>				5			✓				
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					✓				✓		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>									✓		
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>									✓		
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>									1		
Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>									✓		
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>									GO		
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>					✓	✓	✓				
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>									✓		
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>						✓	✓		✓		
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>					✓	1			2		
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>					1		1		✓		
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>		1	36	c20 0	✓		✓				
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>		✓	✓	✓							
Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmaeus</i>				1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>					✓	1 juv	1 adult				
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓			
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		1		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>					1	✓	✓		✓		
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>					1	✓	✓				
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>					2	3/4	✓				
European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓			
Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>				1							
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>		2	1					1			
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>					2			3	1		
Eastern Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>				GO							
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	2		
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>			1♀								
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>								1			
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>							1		?		
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>								1			
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>					✓	2	8				
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>					1			GO	2		
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>				H							
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		1									
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>								2			
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		H			✓	✓	✓				

I=Introduced		September 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>					✓	1			✓		
Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>					✓			✓			
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>		1♂		1♂	H	✓	H				
Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>		GO	GO	✓				✓			
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		✓	H	✓	1	✓	✓	✓			
Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>			✓			H					
European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		H	H					H			
Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓			
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>				1		✓					
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>			1	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			✓					✓			
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>		✓	✓	1		GO		✓	✓		
Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>			1								
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Spotted Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>		✓	✓								
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓	✓	✓					2		
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>		✓	✓	✓							
Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>			✓								
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		✓	✓	✓				H			
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>			✓								
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>					✓		H				
Bearded Reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>					H	✓	✓				
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>									2	✓	
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>				✓				H	✓		
Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>									GO		
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓						
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>				GO							
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		✓	✓		H	H	✓	H			
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	H	✓	✓	✓		
Moustached Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>						1					
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>					1						
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>					✓	✓					
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Iduna pallida</i>					H	H					
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>				✓	✓	✓		✓			
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		✓	H	✓							
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			H	✓							



I=Introduced		September 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓		
Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>			1							
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>		✓	✓	✓	H	H				
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>				✓	✓	H				
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		✓								
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓	✓		1		✓	✓	
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓					
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		1			✓	✓	✓	✓		
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	✓	✓					✓	
Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>					✓					
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>				1	✓	H	✓	✓		
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓					
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>			✓					✓		
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		1								
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		GO				GO			✓	
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>									✓	
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>		1								
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>		H		1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		H								
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	H		✓		
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>								✓	✓	
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>		1		H				✓		
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>		✓								
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>								1		
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓	✓	H	H		✓	✓	
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>		✓		✓						
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>				✓					✓	
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		✓	✓							
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>					H	H	✓			

## Other vertebrates

		September 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Mammals											
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>				✓						
European Suslik	<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>									✓	
European Rabbit - I	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>				✓						
Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>					H	H			✓	
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		5								
Eurasian Brown Bear	<i>Ursus arctos arctos</i>		8								
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>		1								

		September 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b>Reptiles &amp; Amphibians</b>											
Eastern Tree Frog	<i>Hyla orientalis</i>					H	H	H			
Edible Frog ('Marsh')	<i>Pelophylax esculentus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓		
Agile Frog	<i>Rana dalmatina</i>			✓							
Tortoise sp. (Dead)											
Common Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis muralis</i>										
Crimean Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis tauricus</i>								}✓	}✓	
Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>					1	1				
Dice Snake	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>						1				

Others (GO = Guide only, D = Dead)

		September 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b>Butterflies</b>											
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>			✓	✓				✓		
Small White sp.	<i>Pieris sp.</i>			✓					✓	✓	
Eastern Bath White	<i>Pontia edusa</i>							✓	✓	✓	
Clouded Yellow sp.	<i>Colias sp.</i>			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>			✓							
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>								✓		
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>			✓					✓		
Adonis Blue	<i>Polyommatus bellargus</i>								✓		
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>			✓					✓		
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>			✓					✓		
Cardinal Fritillary	<i>Argynnis pandora</i>								✓	✓	
Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>			✓					✓		
Marbled White sp.	<i>Melanargia sp.</i>								✓	✓	
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>								✓		
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>								✓		
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>			✓					✓		
Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>								✓		
Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>								✓		
<b>MOTHS: (Macros)</b>											
Convolvulus Hawk-moth	<i>Agrius convolvuli</i>			D							
Humming-bird Hawk-moth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓		✓
Spurge Hawk-moth	<i>Hyles euphorbiae</i>	GO									
<b>Other invertebrates</b>											
Common Bluetail	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>					✓	✓				
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>									✓	
Great Green Bush-cricket	<i>Tettigonia viridissima</i>			✓							
Slant-headed Grasshopper	<i>Acrida ungarica</i>								✓	✓	

Common name	Scientific name	September 2023									
		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Praying Mantis	<i>Mantis religiosa</i>								✓	✓	
Shield Bug sp.	<i>Eurydema sp.</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Fire Bug	<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i>								✓		
Hornet	<i>Vesper crabro</i>					✓			✓		
Dor Beetle sp.	<i>Geotrupes stercorarius</i>								✓		
Centipede sp.										✓	
<b>MOLLUSCS:</b>											
Roman Snail	<i>Helix pomatia</i>			✓							

## Flora

Common name	Scientific name
<b>Water-ferns</b>	<b>Salvinaceae</b>
Floating Fern	<i>Salvinia natans</i>
<b>Spleenworts</b>	<b>Aspleniaceae</b>
Maidenhair Spleenwort	<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>
<b>Water-lilies</b>	<b>Nymphaeaceae</b>
European White Water-lily	<i>Nymphaea alba</i>
European Yellow Water-lily	<i>Nuphar lutea</i>
<b>Water-plantain Family</b>	<b>Alismataceae</b>
Common Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>
<b>Frog-bit Family</b>	<b>Hydrocharitaceae</b>
Water-soldier	<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>
<b>Bulrush Family</b>	<b>Typhaceae</b>
Lesser Bulrush	<i>Typha angustifolia</i>
Common Bulrush	<i>Typha latifolia</i>
<b>Rushes</b>	<b>Juncaceae</b>
Sharp Rush	<i>Juncus sp.</i>
<b>Grasses</b>	<b>Poaceae</b>
Common Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
<b>Buttercup Family</b>	<b>Ranunculaceae</b>
Common Wolf's-bane	<i>Aconitum lycoctonum</i>
Moldavian Monk's-hood	<i>Aconitum moldavicum</i>
Field Larkspur	<i>Delphinium consolida</i>
Alpine Delphinium	<i>Delphinium elatum</i>
Entire-leaved Clematis	<i>Clematis integrifolia</i>
<b>Pea Family</b>	<b>Fabaceae</b>
Spiney Restharrow	<i>Ononis spinosa</i>
<b>Rose Family</b>	<b>Rosaceae</b>
Common Quince	<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>
Common Agrimony	<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>
<b>Oleaster Family</b>	<b>Elaeagnaceae</b>
Narrow-leaved Oleaster	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>
<b>Hemp Family</b>	<b>Cannabaceae</b>
Indian Hemp	<i>Cannabis sativa</i>
<b>Nettle Family</b>	<b>Urticaceae</b>
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
<b>Beech Family</b>	<b>Fagaceae</b>
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Downy Oak	<i>Quercus pubescens</i>
<b>Birch Family</b>	<b>Betulaceae</b>
Eastern Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus orientalis</i>
<b>Violets</b>	<b>Violaceae</b>
Wild Pansy	<i>Viola tricolor</i>
<b>Willow Family</b>	<b>Salicaceae</b>
White Poplar	<i>Populus alba</i>
White Willow	<i>Salix alba</i>
Grey Willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>
<b>Flaxes</b>	<b>Linaceae</b>
	<i>Linum</i> sp. Blue flowers, not certain ID
<b>Crane's-bills</b>	<b>Geraniaceae</b>
Meadow Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium pratense</i>
Common Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
<b>Purple Loosestrife Family</b>	<b>Lythraceae</b>
Purple Loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
Water-chestnut	<i>Trapa natans</i>
<b>Sumac Family</b>	<b>Anacardiaceae</b>
Common Smoke-tree	<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>
<b>Mallow Family</b>	<b>Malvaceae</b>
Silver Lime	<i>Tilia tomentosa</i>
<b>Cabbage Family</b>	<b>Brassicaceae</b>
Perennial Honesty	<i>Lunaria rediviva</i>
<b>Showy Mistletoes</b>	<b>Loranthaceae</b>
Mistletoe sp.	<i>Loranthus</i> sp.
<b>Campion Family</b>	<b>Caryophyllaceae</b>
<b>Amaranth Family</b>	<b>Amaranthaceae</b>
Fat-hen	<i>Chenopodium album</i>
<b>Dogwood Family</b>	<b>Cornaceae</b>
Common Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>
<b>Bedstraw Family</b>	<b>Rubiaceae</b>
Woodruff	<i>Galium odoratum</i>
<b>Borage Family</b>	<b>Boraginaceae</b>
Common Viper's-bugloss	<i>Echium vulgare</i>
<b>Bindweed Family</b>	<b>Convolvulaceae</b>
Field Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
<b>Nightshade Family</b>	<b>Solanaceae</b>
Bittersweet	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>
<b>Olive Family</b>	<b>Oleaceae</b>
European Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
Manna Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior/ornus</i>
<b>Plantain Family</b>	<b>Plantaginaceae</b>
	<i>Plantain</i> sp.
Common Toadflax	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>
Spiked Speedwell	<i>Veronica spicata</i>
<b>Vervain Family</b>	<b>Verbenaceae</b>
Common Vervain	<i>Verbena officinalis</i>
<b>Dead-nettle Family</b>	<b>Lamiaceae</b>
Whorled Clary	<i>Salvia verticillata</i>
Pannonic Thyme	<i>Thymus pannonicus</i>
Water Mint	<i>Mentha aquatica</i>
Eastern Felt Germander	<i>Teucrium capitatum</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Ground-pine	<i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i>
Marsh Woundwort	<i>Stachys palustris</i>
Horehound	<i>Marrubium peregrinum</i>
<b>Bellflower Family</b>	<b>Campanulaceae</b>
Carpathian Bellflower	<i>Campanula carpatica</i>
Common Harebell	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>
<b>Bogbean Family</b>	<b>Menyanthaceae</b>
Fringed Water-lily	<i>Nymphoides peltata</i>
<b>Daisy Family</b>	<b>Asteraceae</b>
Yellow Melancholy Thistle	<i>Cirsium erisithales</i>
Cabbage Thistle	<i>Cirsium oleraceum</i>
Burdock sp.	<i>Arctium sp.</i>
Common Chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>
Edelweiss	<i>Leontopodium nivale</i>
European Michaelmas-daisy	<i>Aster amellus</i>
Eastern Daisy Fleabane	<i>Erigeron annuus</i>
European Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Common Tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>
Rough Cocklebur	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>
Spiny Cocklebur	<i>Xanthium spinosum</i>
<b>Viburnum Family</b>	<b>Viburnaceae</b>
European Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Guelder-rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
<b>Honeysuckle Family</b>	<b>Caprifoliaceae</b>
Small Scabious	<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>
Pale Yellow Scabious	<i>Scabiosa ochroleuca</i>
<b>Aralia Family</b>	<b>Araliaceae</b>
Common Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
<b>Umbellifers</b>	<b>Apiaceae</b>
Field Eryngo	<i>Eryngium campestre</i>
Sea-holly	<i>Eryngium maritimum</i>
<b>Others</b>	
Beech	<i>Fagus sp - probably sylvatica</i>
Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>
Spruce	<i>Picea abies</i>
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Sweet Chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>
Horse Chestnut	<i>Castanea satvia</i>
Small-leaved Lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>
Walnut	<i>Juglans regia</i>
Locust Tree	<i>Robinia sp.</i>
Japanese Knotweed	<i>Reynoutria japonica</i>
European Larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>
Scot's Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Irish Yew	<i>Taxus sp.</i>
Honey Locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>
Tuberous Pea	<i>Lathyrus tuberosus</i>
Small Elm	<i>Ulmus minor</i>
Wych Elm	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>
Dandelion sp.	<i>Taraxacum sp.</i>
Turkish Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Sea Kale	<i>Crambe maritima</i>
Sea Lavender	<i>Limonium sp.</i>
European Ephedra	<i>Ephedra fragilis</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Dog Rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>
Himalayan Balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Dark Mullein	<i>Verbascum nigrum</i>
Martagon Lily	<i>Lilium martagon</i>
Autumn crocus/Naked ladies	<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>
Autumn crocus	<i>Crocus nudiflorus</i>
Broad-leaved anemone	<i>Anemone hortensis</i>
Knapweed	<i>Centaurea sp -</i>
Plumeless Thistle	<i>Carduus acanthoides</i>
Leopard's-bane	<i>Doronicum sp.</i>
Knapweed	<i>Centaurea sp.</i>



White Pelican feeding frenzy