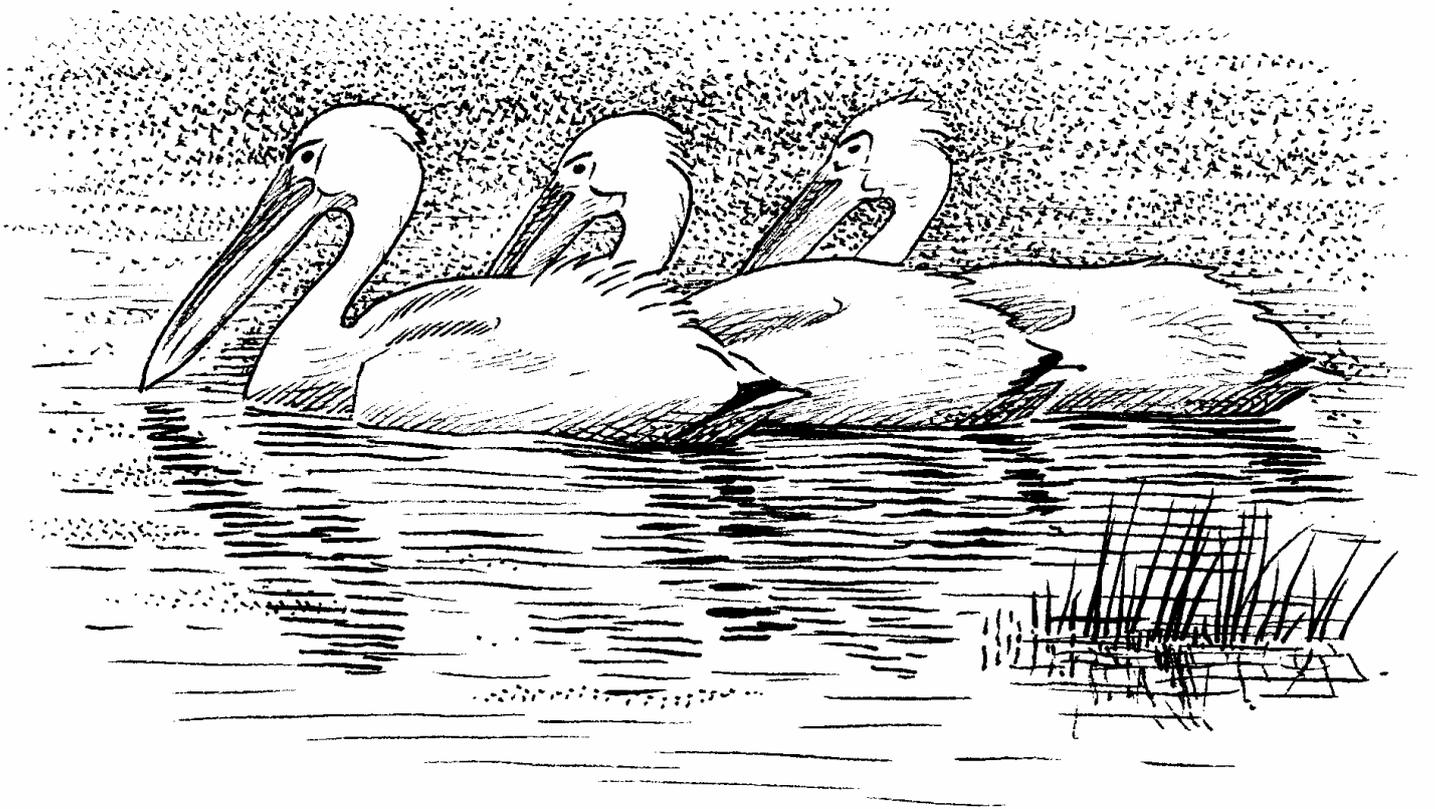


Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Danube Delta
3 – 10 June 2006

Danube Delta
3 – 10 June 2006

Holiday participants

June Cutler
Michael Cutler

Julie Sherwood

Graham Harris
Peter Higgleton

Chris Ebdon
Graham Wilkins

Margaret Marris

Marilyn Hodgson
Collin Hodgson

Derek Boughton

Leaders

Daniel Petrescu (birds)
Mihai Petrescu (botanist, in Dobrogea)

Bird list from Daniel Petrescu, plants from Mihai Petrescu. Other contributions from group members, plus information from the RSPB's Mark Day about the Society's work in Romania.

Illustrations by Rob Hume. Cover: white pelicans

This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also puts something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. But, unusually, there are two thank-you letters at the end of this report.

The usual conservation contribution this year of £25 per person, £300 (11 from the group plus one who had to withdraw) was given to the young ornithologists group in Tulcea, *Falco cherrug* (the saker falcon). This was supplemented in two ways. Firstly, by gift aid through the new Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. Secondly, by a donation of £250 from Roger Jordan and friends in the Wildlife Outreach Network based in Essex, leading to a total of €23 (£659). This brings the total given to the Romanian Ornithological Society (SOR) since 1999 to €4,938 (£3,527) and to various conservation projects to £42, 235 (to summer 2006) since the start of Honeyguide in 1991.

For more information on Eco Pontica Foundation, a new conservation organisation based in Tulcea:
www.eco-pontica.ro

Danube Delta **3 – 10 June 2006**

Some highlights

Looking at a sombre tit, which was new to many people, and realising that there was a Levant sparrowhawk perched on the next tree.

Derek Boughton

The most impressive thing was the sheer numbers of birds, species that we normally only see two or three of in a week, we saw huge numbers e.g. rollers, squacco herons, egrets, pelicans etc.

Chris Ebdon

Our overnight stop in Letea and the riverside walk in the evening listening for corncrakes; the late evening noise of frogs croaking whilst looking across at the pelicans at Lopatna and the sight of thousands of pelicans, forming skeins and circling before descending onto the river the next day.

June Cutler

Butterflies

Swallowtail
Red admiral
Painted lady
Lesser purple emperor
Freyer's purple emperor
Large copper
Common blue
Adonis blue
Tessellated skipper
Cardinal
Queen-of-Spain fritillary

Bath white
Small white
Ilex hairstreak
Southern grayling
Meadow brown

Other notable invertebrates

Hummingbird hawk-moth

Norfolk hawk
Banded demoiselle
Scarlet darter
Black-tailed skimmer
(and many more unidentified dragonflies)

Mammals

Suslik
Musk rat
Brown hare
Roe deer

Reptiles and amphibians

Green lizard
Balkan green lizard
Balkan wall lizard
Grass snake
European pond terrapin
Edible frog

Butterflies mostly contributed by Graham Harris with the rest by Dave Wilkins.

Notes about the RSPB's involvement in Romania and the Danube Delta

Dear Chris,

Many thanks for your email and for passing on the comments of some of your visitors. Their observations are appropriate, and I am pleased to say that the RSPB is beginning to invest properly in what is arguably Europe's most important wetland.

At the national level, the RSPB continues to invest in the capacity building (Country Programme) which represents £35,000 plus a proportion of my time to invest in SOR core support. As part of that we are supporting EU Accession for SOR-BirdLife Romania in many ways. Firstly, we have been supporting the identification of Important Bird Areas in Romania, the greatest density of which are in the Danube Delta and Dobrogea. Once the full dataset in submitted later this year, we will shift our emphasis to designation of these sites as part of the

EU's Natura 2000 network.

Related to this, we have been providing specialist support and training on EU Structural and Rural Development Funds to ensure that good provision is made for biodiversity related investments that would especially effect those two areas. We have also just appointed Crisanta Lunghu, a new Development Director for SOR, who will lead on the fundraising and awareness-raising for SOR.

At the international level, last July we hosted two back-to-back international workshops on
i) red-breasted geese conservation and
ii) the Lower Danube and Danube Delta
in conjunction with the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration (DDBRA), the Danube Delta Institute (DDI) and WWF Danube & Carpathian Programme, as well as a suite of BirdLife International partners.

As a result of that two staff have additionally been funded and appointed: Ciprian Fantana is about to join as the Danube Policy Officer is RSPB funded and Lavinia Raducescu is the Coordinator for the Red-breasted Goose International Working Group is part funded by us - both are based at SOR-BirdLife Romania in Bucharest.

Lavinia will work with partners nationally and internationally to support their efforts in relation to red breasted geese, while Ciprian's role is to work with strategic partners DDBRA, DDI and WWF and the Government to improve the situation in relation to protecting the Lower Danube and Danube Delta by either encouraging protection and restoration, or by opposing potentially damaging developments (Primarily in Romania, but also Ukraine and Moldova).

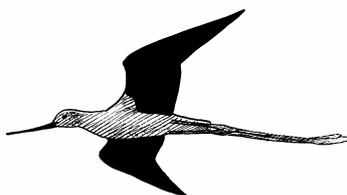
At present we are also looking at the feasibility of undertaking habitat restoration projects within the Delta, to restore some of the estimated 30,000 hectares of land that has been drained. Equally, the initial wind farm development applications are starting to be submitted, and we are using our knowledge of site casework to oppose any proposed developments that would be within Important Bird Areas.

Also, SOR is running two EU LIFE projects in partnership with the DDBRA, focussed on red breasted geese and Dalmatian respectively. In the former we give advice and in the latter the RSPB are a full and active partner. These two projects have strengthened the relationship with the DDBRA, resulting in them offering SOR to establish a Danube Office inside the DDBRA headquarters. This links in very well with Eugen and Daniel's Ibis Tours.

Finally, something that may be of direct interest to you and your visitors is that SOR will shortly start developing WorldBirds in Romania, the web based bird data gathering website similar to BTO BirdTrack. This will obvious enable the records that you and your visitors to directly contribute to data for conservation. (Note: Bulgaria will also launch its version - Bulgarian Bird Quest - in July)

Apologies for the length of the message, but all in all the RSPB has begun investing quite heavily in both technical and financial terms in the Danube and Dobrogea over the last two years. What we have been poor at doing is communicating these investments! Therefore another challenge that I am involved with at present is to upgrade RSPB's international website information.

Mark Day
European Country Programmes Manager
RSPB



Plant list 2006

Listed by Mihai Petrescu, all in Dobrogea. *RL – on the Romanian red list.*

ACERACEAE – maples

Acer tataricum Tartar maple

ANACARDIACEAE – smoke bush

Cotinus coggyria smoke bush

BORAGINACEAE – borage family

Argusia (Tournefortia) sibirica Siberian sea rosemary

CAMPANULACEAE – bellflowers

Campanula rapunculus rampion bellflower

Campanula romanica RL an endemic bellflower

CANNABACEAE – hemp family

Cannabis sativa hemp

CARYOPHYLLACEAE – pinks

Dianthus nardiformis RL

Dianthus polymorphus

Gypsophila perfoliata

Kohlruschia (=Dianthus) prolifera

Paronychia cephalotes RL

Scleranthus annuus

annual knawel

Silene conica

sand catchfly

Silene csereii

Spergularia borysthenica

Spergularia media

greater sea-spurrey

CELASTRACEAE

Euonymus europaeus

spindle-tree

Euonymus verrucosus

warted spindle-tree

CHENOPODIACEAE

Bassia hirsuta

hairy seablite

Halimione verrucifera

Salicornia herbacea

a glasswort

Suaeda maritima

annual seablite

COMPOSITEAE (ASTERACEAE) – daisy family

Achillea clypeolata

a sneezewort or yarrow

Achillea ochroleuca

Achillea setacea

a sneezewort or yarrow

Artemisia loebelii

Artemisia santonica

a steppe wormwood

Artemisia tchernievina

Bombycilaena erecta

a cudweed

Carduus nutans

musk thistle

Carthamus lanatus

a yellow thistle

Centauria arenaria

Centauria marschalliana

Centauria orientalis

Crepis sancta

a hawkbeard

Echinops ruthenicus

a globe-thistle

Jurinea mollis

jurinea – a carline thistle

Onopordum acanthium

cotton or Scotch thistle

Scolymus hispanicus

Spanish oysterplant

Scorzonera hispanica

a viper's grass

Senecio paludosus

Xanthium strumarium

rough cocklebur

CONVOLVULACEAE – bindweeds	
<i>Convolvulus cantabrica</i>	pink bindweed
<i>Convolvulus lineatus</i>	a pink bindweed
CORYLACEAE – hornbeams	
<i>Carpinus orientalis</i>	eastern hornbeam
CRASSULACEAE – stonecrops	
<i>Sedum hillebrandtii</i>	a stonecrop
CRUCIFERAE (BRASSICACEAE) – crucifers	
<i>Crambe maritima</i>	sea kale
CYPERACEAE – sedges	
<i>Schoenoplectus (=Scirpus) tabernaemontani</i>	grey club-rush / bulrush
ELEAGNACEAE	
<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>	sea buckthorn
EUPHORBIACEAE – spurges	
<i>Euphorbia agraria</i>	
<i>Euphorbia cadrilateri</i>	
<i>Euphorbia dobrogensis</i>	
<i>Euphorbia myrsinites</i> RL	broad-leaved glaucous spurge
<i>Euphorbia seguieriana</i>	
<i>Euphorbia stepposa</i>	
FAGACEAE – oaks	
<i>Quercus pedunculiflora</i>	
<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	downy oak
GERANIACEAE – cranesbills & storksills	
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	common storksbill
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	bloody cranesbill
GLOBULARIACEAE – globularias	
<i>Globularia punctata</i>	
GRAMINEAE (POACEAE) – grasses	
<i>Agropyron brandzae</i>	a couch grass
<i>Agropyron elongatin</i>	
<i>Agropyron pectiniformae</i>	
<i>Apera spica-venti ssp maritima</i>	loose silkybent
<i>Bromus squarrosus</i>	
<i>Bromus sterilis</i>	sterile brome
<i>Bromus tactorum</i>	
<i>Chrysopogon gryllus</i>	
<i>Festuca callieri</i> RL	a fescue
<i>Festuca valesiaca</i>	a fescue
<i>Leymus (Elymus) sabulosus</i>	
<i>Koeleria brevis</i>	a hairgrass
<i>Melica ciliata</i>	hairy melick
<i>Phragmites australis ssp altissima</i>	reed
<i>Poa bulbosa</i>	bulbous meadow-grass
<i>Puccinellia limosa</i>	saltmarsh grass
<i>Secale sylvestre</i>	
<i>Stipa capilliata</i>	a feather-grass
<i>Stipa lessingiana</i>	a feather-grass
<i>Stipa pulcherrimum</i>	a feather-grass
<i>Stipa ucrainica</i>	a feather-grass

IRIDACEAE – irises		
<i>Iris sintenisii</i> (Apogon)	RL	c 20 cm
<i>Iris suaveolens</i>		
<i>Iris variegata</i>		taller, branched; variegated iris
LABIATAE (Lamiaceae) – labiates		
<i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i>		a bugle
<i>Ajuga laxmannii</i>		ground-pine
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>		gipsywort
<i>Salvia austriaca</i>		
<i>Salvia aethiopsis</i>	RL	
<i>Salvia nemorosa</i> ssp <i>tesquicola</i>		wild sage
<i>Salvia nutans</i>		
<i>Scutellaria orientalis</i>		
<i>Thymus zygoides</i>	RL	
LEGUMINOSAE (FABACEAE) – peas		
<i>Astragalus onobrychis</i> ssp <i>linearifolius</i>		
<i>Astragalus varius</i>		
<i>Astragalus vesicarius</i> ssp <i>pseudogalucus</i>		inflated milk-vetch
<i>Coronilla varia</i>		crown vetch
<i>Lathyrus tuberosus</i>		an everlasting pea
<i>Medicago minima</i>		bur medick
<i>Medicago (sativa) falcata</i>		a lucerne with yellow flowers
<i>Ononis columnae</i>		a restharrow
<i>Robinia pseudacacia</i>		false acacia
<i>Trifolium campestre</i>		hop trefoil
LILIACEAE – lilies		
<i>Allium saxatile</i>	RL	
MALVACEAE – mallows		
<i>Althaea officinalis</i>		marsh mallow
OLEACEAE – ashes		
<i>Fraxinus ornus</i>		mannan or flowering ash
ORCHIDACEAE – orchids		
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>		pyramidal orchid
<i>Cephalanthera rubra</i>		red helleborine
<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>		birdsnest orchid
<i>Orchis laxiflora</i> ssp <i>elegans</i>		loose-flowered orchid
<i>Orchis purpurea</i>		lady orchid
<i>Orchis tridentata</i>		toothed orchid
<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>		greater butterfly orchid
PLANTAGINACEAE		
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>		ribwort plantain
POLYGALACEAE		
<i>Polygala major</i>		a milkwort
RANUNCULACEAE		
<i>Consolida orientalis</i>		eastern larkspur
<i>Consolida regalis</i>		forking larkspur
RHAMNACEAE		
<i>Paliurus spina-christi</i>	RL	Christ's-thorn
ROSACEAE		
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>		agrimony

<i>Fragaria viridis</i>	a wild strawberry
<i>Potentilla argentea</i>	hoary cinquefoil
<i>Potentilla bommuelleri</i>	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i> ssp <i>dasphylla</i>	blackthorn
<i>Pyrus bulgarica</i>	a pear
<i>Pyrus pyraster</i>	
RUBIACEAE	
<i>Asperula tenella</i>	
<i>Galium dasypodium</i>	a bedstraw
<i>Galium glaucum</i>	
<i>Galium humifusum</i>	
<i>Galium pedemontanum</i>	
SCROPHULARIACEAE	
<i>Linaria genistifolia</i>	a toadflax
<i>Verbascum blattaria</i>	moth mullein
<i>Verbascum chaixii</i>	
<i>Verbascum pensiflorum</i>	
<i>Verbascum phoeniceum</i>	purple mullein
<i>Verbascum speciosus</i>	
SOLONACEAE	
<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>	henbane
TAMARICACEAE	
<i>Tamarix ramosissima</i>	a tamarisk
TILIACEAE – limes	
<i>Tilia tomentosa</i>	silver lime
UMBELLIFERAE (APIACEAE) – umbellifers	
<i>Anthriscus caucalis</i>	
<i>Ferulago medides</i>	
<i>Laser trilobum</i>	a sermountain
<i>Orlaya grandiflora</i>	a bur parsley
VISCACEA (LORANTHACEAE)	
<i>Loranthus europaeus</i>	