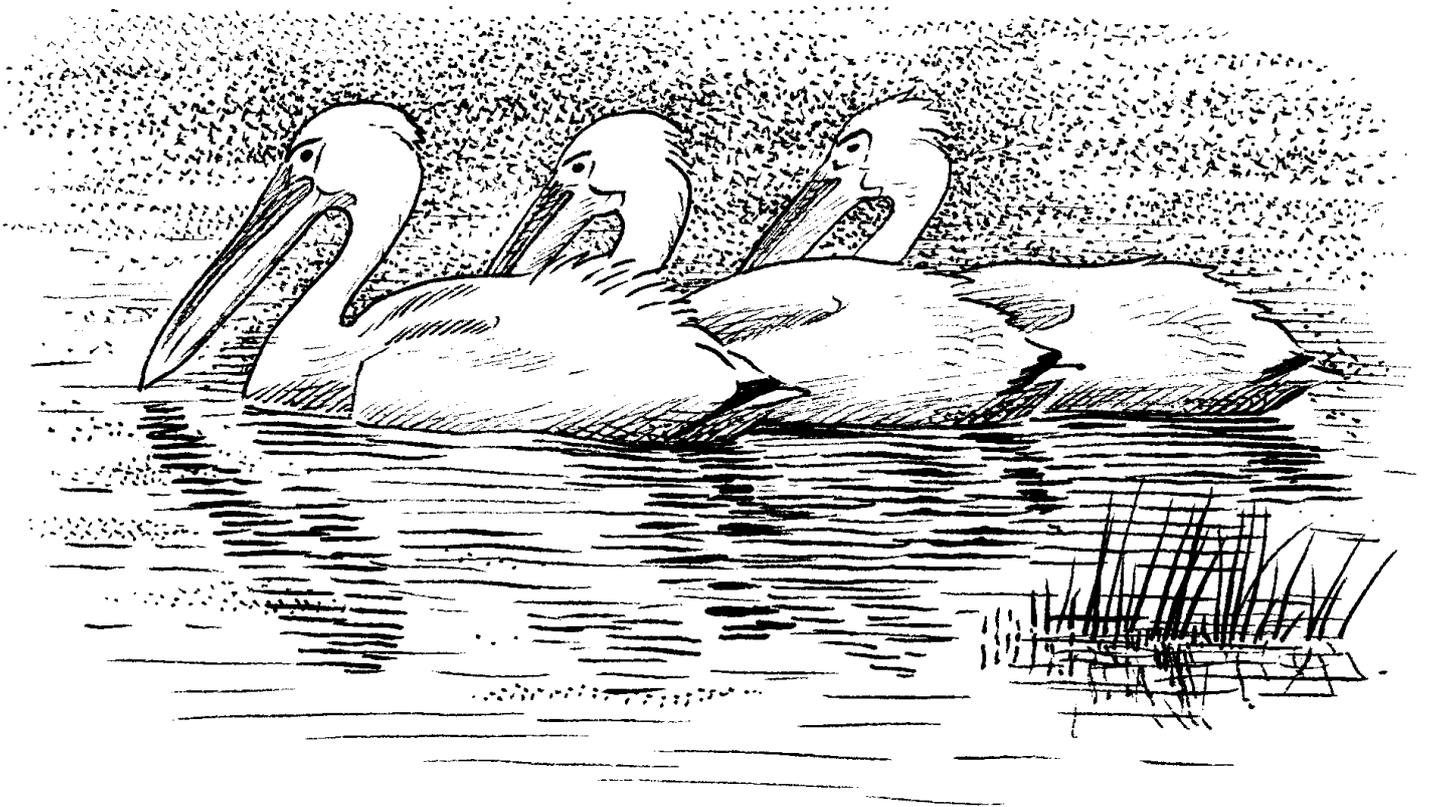


Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Danube Delta
4 – 11 June 2005

Danube Delta
4 – 11 June 2005

Holiday participants

Anne Richards	W Sussex
Alan James	Norwich
John Minihane	Southwold
Norman Moore Janet Moore	Cambridgeshire
Martin George Barbara George	Strumpshaw, Norfolk
Dorothy Crisp	Snettisham, Norfolk
John Barney Sarah Barney	Norwich
Douglas Willis Catherine Willis	Ross-shire
John Lovett	King's Lynn
<u>Honeyguide leaders also on the holiday</u> Robin and Rachel Hamilton	Norfolk

Leaders

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

The account of the holiday below was compiled from reports and diaries contributed by Martin and Barbara George, Anne Richards and Rachel and Robin Hamilton.

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.

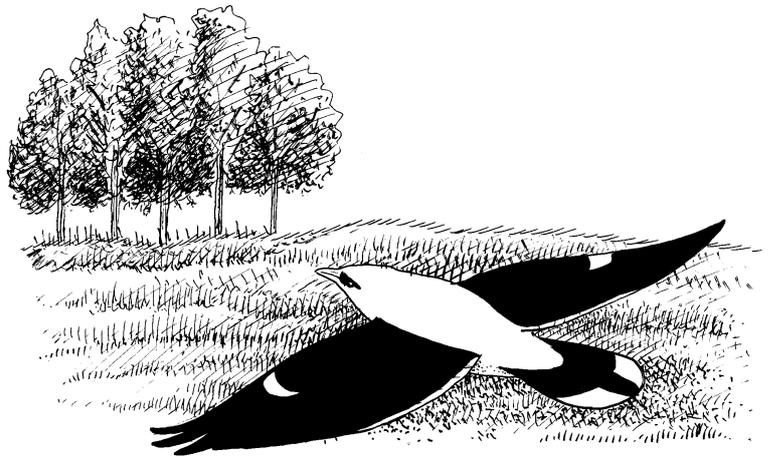
The usual conservation contribution this year of £25 per person, £375, was given to the young ornithologists group in Tulcea, *Falco cherrug* (the saker falcon). This was supplemented in two ways. Firstly, by gift aid through the new Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. Secondly, by a donation of £200 from Roger Jordan and friends in the Wildlife Outreach Network based in Essex, leading to a total of €923 (£659). This brings the total given to the Romanian Ornithological Society (SOR) since 1999 to £2884, and to various conservation projects to £38,645 since the start of Honeyguide in 1991. A thank-you letter from SOR appears at the end of this report.

Secondly, there is a new conservation organisation based in Tulcea, the Eco Pontica Foundation, trying to take on the huge conservation issues that need tackling in the Danube Delta. There was a rather grey area between our hosts Ibis and Honeyguide about whether there is normally a 'free' place for a Honeyguide leader with the group: they thought so, but I thought not, not least as we don't normally have a UK-based leader with the group. Anyway, Ibis made a donation to Eco Pontica equivalent to a leader's place and they are giving Honeyguide the credit, but a joint Ibis/Honeyguide contribution of €460 would be a better way of looking at it.

Danube Delta 4 – 11 June 2005

Saturday June 4: Bucharest to Tulcea

Our 15 member party met up at Heathrow in time to catch the 09.45 flight to Bucharest. There, on a warm and sunny afternoon, we were met by Florin, a geomorphologist who was to accompany us on the journey to Tulcea and give us the benefit of his wide understanding of the geography of the area. The c. 5 hour bus ride to Tulcea took us through rich agricultural land. Haymaking was in progress and families were out hoeing the enormous fields of maize, sunflowers and pumpkins, with horses and carts standing patiently alongside. The field margins and roadsides were bright blue and purple with wild sage *Salvia nemorosa* and larkspur, *Consolida* sp. and the ditches were misty-white with various umbellifers. The most frequent birds on the telegraph wires along the roadside were lesser grey shrikes and we caught frequent glimpses of hoopoes, rollers and bee-eaters. We stopped at a garage to buy maps so that we could follow our route and there we encountered a beautiful lime tree, the silver lime - *Tilia tomentosa* with downy-white undersides to its large leaves. We later got to know it well as an important component of the native forests of the region. We broke the journey for drinks at a roadside café, where several of us were delighted to see a male golden oriole flying to and fro across the road, a good omen for the holiday. We crossed the Danube, entering the region of Dobrogea, near Giurgeni where, upstream, the bankside trees looked like flooded forests with water well up into their branches - evidence of recent exceptional rains. We broke the journey again, this time by a reedy lagoon not far from Hasarlik Lake. Here we had excellent views of a great reed warbler, grey, purple and night herons, little and great white egrets, a large flock of tree sparrows, several bee-eaters and a roller, a species which we were to see again and again during our time in Romania. As we approached the lake, John L had spotted the first ferruginous duck of the week and we all had a tantalizingly difficult view of it, distant and against the low sun. That, too, was a species we were to see again and again on the Delta.



We arrived at Tulcea as it was getting dark, and as we were led on board, an extremely welcome, and powerful, drink was thrust into our hands! We were shown to our quarters for the night on one of the three floating hotels owned by Ibis Tours. This was moored at a jetty beside the fast-moving, and heavily sediment-laden Tulcea branch of the Danube, and it was sobering to be reminded that despite its seemingly enormous width, this only carries about 38% of the river's flow, the remainder finding its way to the Black Sea via the Chilia branch to the north. After the long but fascinating journey, we were all pleased to sit down to an excellent 3-course dinner: local delicacies such as a chicken soup with vegetables and noodles, zander cooked with new potatoes, Dobrogea cheese pie and a plentiful supply of the delightful local wines – the first of many such meals during the holiday.

Sunday June 5: Day 1 of our exploration of the Danube Delta

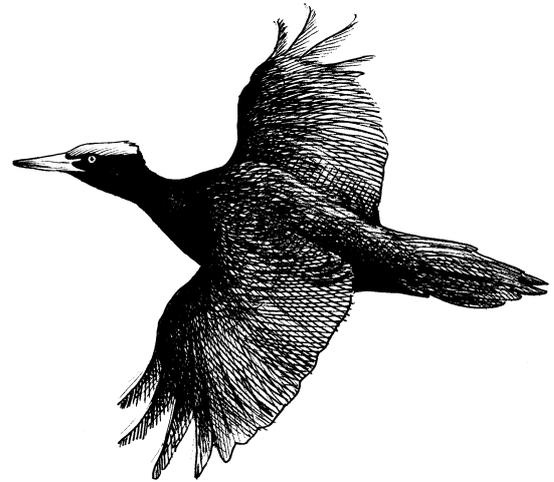
Sunday morning was bright and sunny and after a post-breakfast briefing about our forthcoming holiday by our principal guide, Daniel Petrescu, we embarked on a motor launch and headed downstream on the vast and awe-inspiring Tulcea Channel. Shortly after leaving Tulcea we turned left into the quieter Mila Channel. Even here the river was running swiftly and, with birds all around us, we watched and listened as a wonderful world of reeds and riverside woodland unfolded beside us. Our morning's route took us down the Mila Channel for several miles; then we turned into Lake B_cl_nestii, and from there sailed southwards through Lake Furtuna to the village of Malluc.

All of us who opted to come on this holiday were of course well aware that the wildlife of the Delta is renowned for its richness and diversity, but each of us was truly astonished by this, our first, experience of it. This was particularly apparent when the engine of our launch was switched off, and we were able to drift gently downstream, while listening to a veritable chorus of bird song, much of it emanating from thrush nightingales, a species new to most of us. Daniel kept us alert to the birds and on such occasions he also demonstrated his remarkable skill at 'whistling up' a variety of different birds by mimicking their songs. Ornithological excitements during the morning included icterine warblers and golden orioles, our first views of white and Dalmatian pelicans – the latter usually flying solo – two black storks and a spoonbill, also in flight, a little bittern, both common and pigmy cormorants, a rather fleeting view of a black woodpecker, cuckoos galore, ferruginous

ducks everywhere and several red-necked grebes on lake B_cl_nestii. Particularly impressive were the views we had of a pair of red-footed falcons nesting within a rookery, while on the way across a rather choppy Lake Furtuna we enjoyed excellent views of a white-tailed sea eagle.

On our way down the Mila Channel, we were amazed to see both Freyer's fritillary and lesser purple emperor butterflies alighting on the boat (and sometimes even on us!) while Norman was pleased to see numerous Norfolk hawker dragonflies, a species whose biology he is currently studying in East Anglia. Large numbers of the lesser emperor dragonfly *Anax parthenope* and banded demoiselle were also on the wing.

Meantime the floating hotel that was to be our home for the rest of our time in Romania (and which was a more modern and luxurious version of the one which we had stayed in the previous night) had been towed down the Sulina Branch of the Danube to moor at the village of Malluc. After we had enjoyed a welcome 3-course lunch on board, we went for a walk through the village, the scene of some non-sensical experiments during the communist era aimed at determining which, if any, species of (mainly introduced) tree could be grown as a commercial crop in the Delta. Many of the buildings involved had been abandoned, or overgrown by some of the species used in the experiments, and it was in such a tree that we had good views of an olivaceous warbler. After seeing a redstart, hoopoe, grey-headed woodpecker and a variety of other birds in and around the village we walked round some fish ponds and noted the presence in them of a variety of water-loving plants, including both reedmace species *Typha angustifolia* and *T. latifolia* and there was considerable excitement when we also saw a European pond terrapin, snoozing on a log. A few metres farther on, Daniel once again demonstrated his prowess at mimicking bird calls by 'whistling up' two black woodpeckers, one an adult, the other a juvenile, both of which we were able to watch for many minutes. This was the first time any of us had had such excellent views of this rather secretive species, and for many of us it formed one of the highlights of our visit. But those interested in butterflies were equally pleased a little farther on when we obtained close-up views of a female large copper. Given that we were in eastern Europe rather than Holland this would have belonged to the continental race - *Lycaena dispar rutilus*.



After re-embarking, our floating hotel was towed on down the Sulina Branch, our progress revealed by the series of posts installed by British surveyors during the 19th century to mark the c. 39 nautical miles which separate Tulcea from the Black Sea. During this part of the trip we were able to obtain panoramic views over the huge expanses of marsh, dominated by common reed *Phragmites australis*, which form one of the main ecological features of the Delta. Along the riverbanks, another characteristic feature is the lines of white willows *Salix alba*, interspersed here and there by hybrid black poplars, with the waterway fringed with marsh spurge *Euphorbia palustris*, tamarisk *Tamarix ramosissima* and the low-growing purple-flowered shrub, false indigo *Amorpha fruticosa* – an invader from eastern USA. When we were about eight nautical miles short of the Sulina Branch's outfall to the Black Sea, we turned north up a side channel and, after a further two miles or so, moored up for the night. As soon as the engine of the tug was switched off we had the immediate sense of being deep in the heart of the Delta and we were once again able to hear the chorus of bird song, not least the almost continuous buzzing of a nearby Savi's warbler.

After supper we had a de-briefing session, during the course of which we produced a summary list of our observations during the day. It turned out that we had either seen or heard no fewer than 84 different bird species, a good illustration of just how rich and varied is the Delta's avifauna. It had been a long but very exhilarating day, and we were lulled to sleep by the cacophonous croaking of nearby marsh frogs; no one objected to the noise – after all, now we were intruders in their world!

Monday June 6: Day 2 of our exploration of the Delta

The day dawned fine and dry, and some pre-breakfast bird-watching enabled us to snatch a good view of the Savi's warbler, still in full song, and to observe several of the species particularly common in the Delta, including pygmy cormorant, glossy ibis, pochard, ferruginous duck, squacco, purple, grey and night herons and marsh harrier. After breakfast we re-embarked in the day launch, and motored up the narrow, and in places heavily overgrown Magearu Channel to the village of Letea. We stopped on several occasions. Daniel jumped out into a bed of reed, marsh fern and woody nightshade and pushed a long pole down about 10 feet through the vegetation in order to demonstrate that much of the reed-dominated marsh in this part of the Delta forms a free-floating

community given the name '*plav*' by the British ecologist, Marietta Pallis, in 1916. Later we stopped to admire at close quarters the beautiful hanging nest made by a pair of penduline tits. The parents were busily engaged in feeding their young, and this, plus the views we had of a number of white-winged black terns circling overhead (thought by Daniel to be breeding nearby) formed another highlight of this part of the holiday.

We moored at the village of Letea. The settlement is inhabited by Lipovian (ie old Russian) and Ukrainian fisher folk, and is one of the remotest in the Delta; indeed, it can only be reached by boat. The reed-thatched cottages are constructed of mud reinforced by reed and cattle dung, with carved devil-repelling charms over the doorways. Until an earthen bank was constructed around the settlement some 20 years ago, they were liable to flooding despite being based on slightly raised foundations. During our walk through the village, it transpired that our guide, Daniel, was born there, his Ukrainian parents being the teachers at the local school; it was reassuring to be told that the village had changed little since he left it some 30 years ago.

Although many of the gardens in the village were colourful with larkspur, roses and other flowers, it was obvious that vegetable growing was regarded as more important. One farmer we spoke to was struggling to keep an infestation of bright orange Colorado beetle larvae at bay with a pesticide and seemed bemused that we were so interested in them. Daniel found a dead specimen of the familiar striped adult beetle for us to look at. We were all amused to see no fewer than five white storks on a nest atop an electricity pole, and other birds seen during our visit to the village included common and black redstarts, spotted flycatcher, grey-headed woodpecker and roller. A bittern was also heard booming, and shortly before we re-embarked in the launch several of us watched a marsh frog in a ditch stalking a tree frog in a presumed bid to make a meal of it.

On the way back to the floating hotel we saw two more penduline tit nests, one of which was still under construction. A fine flock of about 40 white pelicans flew by. Red-necked grebes, terns and herons were much in evidence, and at one point we enjoyed superb views of a pair of hobbies. During our slow passage downstream we were also able to admire the crystal-clear water, and the abundant growth within it of a whole range of water plants; these included white, yellow and fringed water lilies, water soldier, bladderwort, and a wide variety of pondweeds *Potamogeton* spp.

After lunch our hotel was towed further upstream, and was eventually moored up in a magical setting, enclosed by reeds and immediately opposite a large tern colony. This was based on a dense mattress of water soldier, interspersed with water lilies – just coming into flower - and although whiskered terns predominated, black terns were also present; we were enchanted by their elegant aerobatics. Later we made another trip in the motor launch, this time exploring Lake Trei Iesere and a number of narrow waterways in the vicinity of the Eracle Channel. We had wonderful close encounters with both species of pelican, about their business on the water and, as well, good views were obtained of glossy ibis, marsh harrier, garganey, little bittern and ferruginous duck. We returned to the hotel for supper, and afterwards for a further de-briefing session. And as on the previous day, we were lulled to sleep by the gentle rocking of the boat and the croaking of marsh frogs.

Tuesday June 7: Day 3 of our exploration of the Delta

It was another lovely morning and those up on deck saw a Savi's warbler again, a pair of Dalmatian pelicans occupied in preening themselves on the water close by and seemingly endless streams of pigmy cormorants flying across above us - in both directions!

After breakfast we once again embarked on the launch and made our way past the pelicans, along a series of sinuous channels in the company of herons and egrets, glossy ibises and terns and with squacco herons lining the waterway: one or two every 10 metres or so! A great reed warbler flew across in front of us, its beak crammed with food and a little bittern flew past us and away down the channel behind us, giving many of us the best view so far. To the constant chorus of frogs and great reed warblers, we drifted along and watched a grey heron struggling to swallow an enormous pike. The channel wove its way among amphibious bistort *Persicaria amphibia* in full flower and past a beautiful clump of flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus*. We chugged gently through a number of small lagoons on one of which we counted no fewer than 50 black-necked grebes, several with youngsters on their backs. This prompted some discussion as to whether the juveniles were able to hold their breath underwater for as long as the adults and whether the parents sent them a signal that they were about to go under!

Our destination was the settlement of Mila 23, so called in recognition of its distance, in nautical miles, from the Sulina outfall. Mila 23 is another village founded by Lipovan settlers, refugees from the Russia of Peter the Great, and Daniel explained that although fluent in Romanian the inhabitants still talk to one another in a Russian dialect. Their houses, most of which face away from the river on account of the bitterly cold northerly winds which occur during the winter months, are cob-walled, their woodwork being painted blue or green. The painted eaves were crammed with house martins' nests. Numerous small craft, constructed of tarred timber and with

pointed bows and sterns, were tied up beside the river, evidence that fishing remains an important activity for those living in the village. But several new houses were under construction and there was evidence that tourists were expected as various locally-made goods were being offered for sale beside the main jetty.

We were delighted with some good views of Syrian woodpecker to add to our growing bird list. Damsselflies were much in evidence and Norman was pleased to find an unusual, dark-coloured form of *Coenagrion pulchellum*. Males, females and juveniles of the white-legged damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes* were also abundant.

Once we had returned to the floating hotel, the tug towed us up to a point overlooking Lake Furtuna. Here we moored up and had lunch, before setting off in the launch once again to explore a series of winding, and heavily overgrown channels leading to Lake Rotund. On the way, Daniel succeeded in 'whistling up' another pair of black woodpeckers, thus ensuring that all of us had what was, if anything, an even better view of this species than we had enjoyed previously. But for some of us, the main highlight of this particular trip was the discovery that Lake Rotund contains a near-dominant stand of water chestnut *Trapa natans*. This biologically fascinating plant (usually placed in the same family as water soldier and frogbit) is astonishingly well adapted for the aquatic life. It has attractive white flowers, both floating and submerged leaves, a flotation collar, a fine, flexible stem of length sufficient to enable the plant to grow in water up to about 3 metres deep, all growing from a single-seeded fruit with a hard, persistent coat and vicious, curved spines which serves as an anchor in the muddy substrate at the bottom of the lake.

With great reluctance we returned for the last time to the floating hotel, which was then towed up a series of winding waterways, almost all of which were bordered by lines of white willows. Eventually we joined the Mila Channel, the waterway on which we had started our voyage of exploration two days previously. And thus back to our mooring in Tulcea, being passed on the last lap by an ultra-long and apparently brand-new German tourist vessel: a sharp contrast to our tranquil and minimally intrusive mode of transport.

While we were having supper we were joined by Daniel's father, Eugen Petrescu, together with group of young naturalists from the Romanian Ornithological Society, *Falco Cherrug*, and their organiser. After a short speech by Eugen, Martin handed over a cheque for over €900 (equivalent to about £620) some of which represented the contributions each of us had made as part of the cost of the week-long excursion. We then spent a thoroughly enjoyable time chatting to the young bird watchers, hearing their enthusiastic accounts of their bird-watching activities and being astounded and humbled not only by the difficulties that they encounter but also by their superb English.

Wednesday June 8: Day 1 of our exploration of the Dobrogea Region

Tulcea – Somova Hills – Celic Dere Monastery – Macin Mountains – near Carcaliu – returning via Horia village and Cataloi

During our exploration of the Dobrogea Region, the countryside adjoining the Delta, our leader Daniel was joined by Mihai Petrescu from the Tulcea Museum. Mihai is not only an expert botanist, but was also able to tell us about the geology and cultural history of the region and its inhabitants and he constantly drew our attention to the rich and fascinating evidence of the cultural diversity of the villages as we drove through them in our charming but rather idiosyncratic coach.



The first site we visited was some steppe grassland with scattered trees (reminiscent of the *dehesa* in central Spain), in the Somova Hills a few kilometres to the west of Tulcea. The trees, including several species of oak (for example *Quercus pedunculiflora* and downy oak, *Q. pubescens*), a number of specimens of a Romanian Red List (RL) wild pear *Pyrus bulgarica*, a field maple *Acer campestre* supporting a large plant of the mistletoe-like, semi-parasitic *Loranthus europaeus*, some almost familiar shrubs such as a 5-seeded hawthorn *Crataegus pentagyna* and the remarkable Christ's thorn *Paliurus spina-christi* all formed part of a community which also contained a huge diversity of colourful herbaceous species, including the spectacular umbellifer, large-flowered bur-parsley *Orlaya grandiflora*, the bright blue tassel hyacinth *Muscari comosum* (left), hoary cinquefoil *Potentilla argentea*, a wormwood *Artemisia austriaca*, field eryngo *Eryngium campestre*, slender crosswort *Cruciata glabra*, a wild thyme *Thymus panonicus*, agrimony *Agrimonia eupatorium*, a (very tasty) wild strawberry *Fragaria viridis*, a pretty lemon-coloured goatsbeard *Tragopogon dubium* and several clovers and vetches as well as many species of grasses. Although the sward was a foot or more tall, it was due to be grazed by cattle shortly, and we were reminded that the hot and very dry summers experienced in Romania would burn it to a frazzle in a few weeks' time. This pattern of climate together with the permeability of the soil limits regeneration, stabilises the community development and gives the habitat the

biogeographical designation of 'steppe'. We enjoyed the distant views over into the Ukraine and watched a flock of 37 white pelicans flying by.

We paused briefly on our route to enjoy the charm of the tiny Romanian village of Teli_a, dominated by its fine church with onion towers. Horses and donkeys pulled laden hay-carts along the village streets and a group of little boys played by the stream.

Our next port-of-call was a wooded valley not far distant from the monastery of Celic Dere. Here, in a group of meadows with scattered trees - oaks of several species and a nettle tree, *Celtis glabrata* – and enclosed by well grown hedges of hazel, privet, dogwood and elm, we enjoyed some moments of exceptional ornithological interest. Against the background of nightingales singing from the bushes on the hillside, we had close-up and prolonged views of several species, notably wryneck, hawfinch and middle-spotted woodpecker, the last responding to calls broadcast from a CD which Daniel used to complement his expertise at 'whistling up' species orally. More distant views were obtained of goshawk, sombre tit and golden oriole, as well as a host of more familiar species.

We had our picnic lunch at a site on the north-eastern flank of the Macin mountains. Hardly had we alighted from the bus, when Doug spotted an immense (but so far unidentified) longhorn beetle, while Martin found an Eastern wood white, a new butterfly for all of us, and then what, after close inspection, turned out to be a freshly emerged spotted fritillary. Much of this range of mountains has recently been designated a National Park on account of the outstanding importance of its flora. The most spectacular plant communities were associated with areas of exposed limestone which were clothed with a dense and diverse carpet of flowers including, as Mihai was able to show us, numerous Romanian Red List species, several of which are endemic to Romania. There were large patches of the spectacular pink convolvulus, *Convolvulus cantabrica*, tiny clumps of yellow ground pine, *Ajuga chamaepitys*, a scattering of the bright blue bur forget-me-not *Lapulla squarrosa*, tiny bright tufts of the pink *Dianthus nardiformis* (RL) and carpets of golden-yellow *Achillea ochroleuca*. While we were exploring the rocks for plants, from time to time, we would disturb a basking Balkan wall lizard *Podarcis taurica* resting among the rocks. Later we worked our way along the foot of the range observing, en route, several isabelline wheatears exhibiting their characteristic upright and rather long-legged stance.

Further on, we explored a disused quarry from which kaolin had once been extracted. Again this was rich in flowers: the dainty, pale pink *Asperula tenella*, the fragrant yellow chamomile *Anthemis tinctoria*, *Silene czereii*, a tall catchfly with tiny flowers, *Alyssum hirsutum*, a tiny alison with hairy seedpods – and many, many more. The quarry provided an amphitheatre ideal for viewing and listening and yielded several more birds which we had not up to then seen, notably a pair of rock thrushes, pied wheatears and an ortolan bunting. Walking back to the coach, we passed an extensive area of the attractive and very fragrant silver-leaved spindle, *Euonymus verrucosus*, familiar as a garden shrub, but were very disappointed to learn that it was in fact an introduction, part of the communist heritage, and was a serious nuisance in some of the very fragile habitats where it had been planted. On the way back to Tulcea we called in briefly at another area of amazingly diverse steppe grassland near Carcaliu, with thymes, (for example *Thymus zygoides* (RL)), grasses (*Koeleria brevis*, *Agropyron ponticum*), and the tiny everlasting flower *Paronychia cephalotes* (RL) and we had distant views of several raptors, including both a short-toed eagle and a long-legged buzzard!

Thursday, June 9: Day 2 of our exploration of the Dobrogea Region

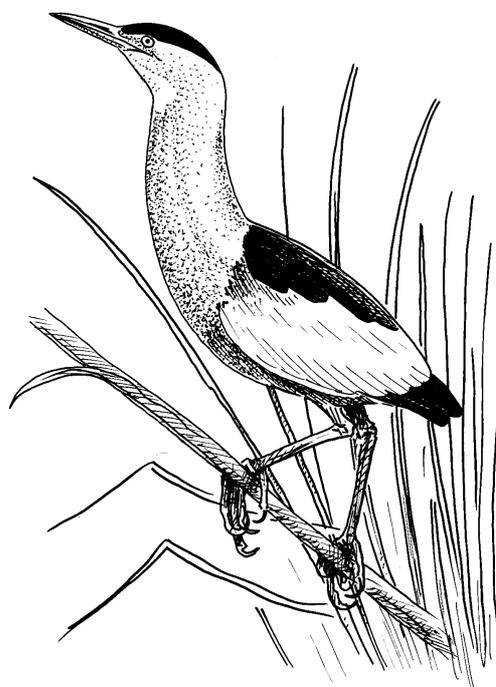
Tulcea – Denis Tepe – Babadag Forest – Vadu and the Black Sea Coast – return

After a wet night and a damp and humid start, the day soon turned hot and sunny. Our coach took us south out of Tulcea and our first visit of the day was to the foot of Denis Tepe or the 'Sleeping Elephant' hill, as it is known, from its distinctive profile. Here, we had a feast of larks: short-toed, crested and calandra larks were seen as well as skylark, and other species present included a fine male Spanish sparrow, tawny pipit and corn bunting. Away in the distance, we watched a booted eagle soaring in a thermal. Those of us who were familiar with tuberous pea *Lathyrus tuberosus* - a species very rarely seen in the UK - were surprised to find it as an abundant weed of waste places in Romania and especially abundant in the field margins around the foot of Denis Tepe. Here, too, we were able to look closely at the eastern larkspur *Consolida orientalis* and at *Anchusa azurea*, both of which stood out in vivid blue as we drove along the lanes. We puzzled over the extremely abundant musk thistle, very similar to *Carduus nutans* from the UK, yet with some distinct differences. Pale bugloss *Echium italicum* with its delicate pink or cream petals and sharply contrasting crimson stamens, St Barnaby's thistle *Centaurea solstitialis*, a pale yellow knapweed with vicious spines on its bracts, a bright yellow goatsbeard *Tragopogon dubium*, a prostrate bedstraw *Galium humifusum*, which is confined to the Balkans, all attracted our attention beside the track and on the lower slopes of the hill we could see the elegant cream spires of the woolly foxglove, *Digitalis lanata*. Meanwhile all of us were very much taken by a pair of European sousliks, a mammal regarded by locals as a pest on account of its burrowing habits.

Our next visit - and a very memorable one - was Babadag Forest. Here Mihai showed us some of the special trees that characterise the forest: several oak species, (*Quercus pedunculata*, *petraea*, *dalechampii* and *polycarpa*), silver-leaved lime *Tilia tomentosa*, a hornbeam *Carpinus orientalis* and *Acer tartaricum*. He showed us some of the special local plants which occur within the wood itself, including greater butterfly orchid, violet bird's-nest orchid *Limodorum abortivum*, black false helleborine *Veratrum nigrum* and Solomon's seal *Polygonatum latifolium*. On the woodland edges we saw red helleborine *Cephalathera rubra*, several irises: the cream and purple *Iris variegata*, the mauve *I. suaveolens*, the pale cream *I. pumila* and the intense blue *I. sintenisii*. We found the beautiful pale flowers of the flax *Linum tenuifolium* and a host of other species, many of them endemic or listed on the Romanian Red List.

While the botanists among us were busy identifying the plants growing in the limestone grassland bordering the Forest, those of us interested in insects enjoyed a bonanza. Southern grayling, ilex hairstreak, painted lady, meadow brown, common and adonis blue and Essex skipper were on the wing, together with no fewer than five different fritillaries, namely high brown, dark green, silver-washed, Glanville and Queen-of-Spain, while Norman was pleased to discover that an unfamiliar hawk dragonfly - *Aeshna affinis* - had just emerged. While some of us were engrossed with the butterflies, Janet and Kath came upon a charming juvenile spur-thighed tortoise; they stood guard over it so that we could all make its acquaintance. We also had good encounters with other excellent reptiles and amphibians: a green lizard, a green toad, a slow-worm and a nose-horned viper, the last a species which Mihai told us was abundant in and near the forest. The picture was completed by a colony of earthstars, a very attractive little fungus, abundant on some of the sandy banks.

After our picnic lunch, we drove southwards to Vadu on the Black Sea. Here, in the brackish pools we found yellow-legged, little and Mediterranean gulls, together with gull-billed, common, Sandwich and little terns, while the waders identified included little ringed plover, ruff, curlew sandpiper, redshank and black-tailed godwit. All of us were delighted to see a male black-headed wagtail *Motacilla flava feldegg* in full breeding plumage and, in perfect light, we were enchanted to watch the elegant flight of a large colony of breeding collared pratincoles. Barbara found a marvellous little bittern for us all to see, obligingly close to the edge of a reed bed, clinging precariously, and unusually, high up on a reed stem. A damselfly which was abundant in the brackish marsh proved to be *Lestes barbarus*, rather than *L. dryas* as expected.



Afterwards, we drove on down to the sandy shore of the Black Sea and walked through a low sand-dune system with many familiar plants: sea holly, sea kale, sand couch grass and sand catchfly - as well as many unfamiliar ones: a rest harrow, *Ononis arenaria*, *Gypsophylla perfoliata*, a wormwood, *Artemisia tcherniviana* and a blue flax, *Linum austriacum*.

Sarah and John B strolled off for some beach-combing, returning with a fine selection of weathered and water-worn finds, and Robin and Rachel elected to have a paddle while speaking on their mobile phones to their son and daughter back in the UK. On the way back, when passing a derelict factory - another legacy of the communist era - we were amused to see a pair of little owls peeping at us from some rusting ironwork.

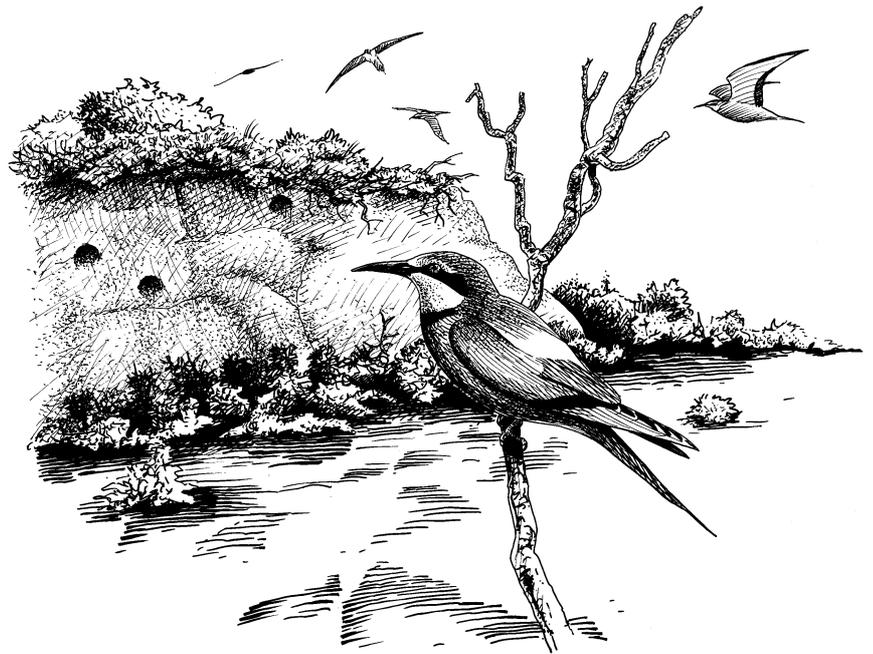
At the end of a very long, fascinating and exhilarating day, we relaxed over our excellent meal and enjoyed a beautiful sunset, with the town of Tulcea, its churches, minarets - and cranes - seen across a meander in the river, silhouetted against a deep crimson sky.

Friday, June 10: Day 3 of our exploration of the Dobrogea Region

Tulcea - Nufaru - Victoria and the Besteppe Hills - Murighiol Saraturi Lake - Forest near Ploput - Ploput Lake - Enisala Hill and Eraclea Fortress - returning to Tulcea via Babadag

For our last full day in Dobrogea we set off east along the southernmost - the Sf Gheorghe (St George's) - Branch of the Danube towards the group of five hills, the Besteppe Hills, which had been a distant landmark throughout our trip. We made an impromptu stop in the particularly picturesque village of Nufaru south east of Tulcea where a local farmer carefully coached us in the proper use of the heavy hoe, the tool of choice, it seems, for most of the work in the fields. An elderly woman and an engaging little boy posed for photographs and a large billy goat with a beautifully decorated tether watched us disdainfully. We then visited two disused quarries

in the loess deposits near the village. Both were being used by colonies of bee-eaters. It was a special treat to be close to such a quantity of these beautiful birds and to be surrounded by their enchanting calls. Starlings, house sparrows and little owls were also in attendance, but rather strangely no sand martins. We also had an excellent view of a hobby and Anne drew our attention to a pair of rollers that were flying dramatically in the wind, and living up to their name.



After exploring the village of Victoria at the foot of the Besteppe Hills, with its Byzantine-style church, we climbed to the top of one of the five hills. There we had magnificent views over the Delta, with the Sf Gheorghe Branch of the Danube in the middle distance. Bee-

eaters were once again much in evidence, both species of pelican were on the wing, and a barred warbler was singing in some bushes, though reluctant to show itself despite Daniel's best efforts. However, the species diversity of the plants growing in the close-cropped grassland more than made up for the relative paucity of the birdlife. The slopes were yellow with spurge, *Euphorbia seguieriana* and dotted with fine purple heads of wild leek, *Allium rotundum*. Wherever we walked, we caught the scent of wild thyme. Little rose bushes, dwarfed by the climate and by grazing, dotted the hillside – Mihai was delighted to find both *Rosa turcica* and *R. micrantha* and a particularly fine plant of the spectacular white salvia, *Salvia aethiopsis*, whose leaves when crushed, really do smell of peaches. One species of particular note, on account of its beauty as well as its rarity, was the woolly foxglove, *Digitalis lanata*, which, until then, we had only seen in the distance.

We returned to the bus, which our driver had parked where our path reached the foot of the hill, beside the Turkish cemetery which was full of wild flowers and characteristic blue-painted double wooden crosses. We then made our way southwards and Daniel stopped the coach in the middle of an area of gently undulating steppe grassland and low scrub. We took in our surroundings and enjoyed the sight of a little flock of three Dalmatian and one white pelican flying over. Then, as we scanned the area in front of us we soon located a pair of stone-curlews lurking among the stones. A statuesque figure above them on the hill proved to be a perched booted eagle dozing in the sun, and then some rapid movement close by caught our eye and we were able to watch a pair of European sousliks about their business among the rocks.

We drove on and paused beside the Murighiol Saraturi Lake. An island in the lake held a common tern colony and we added several species to our tally for the day, some of which were new for the trip: shoveler and shelduck, Mediterranean gull, curlew and black-necked grebe and, with John L's patience and skill with the telescope, a distant red-crested pochard. As we were about to drive away, we noticed that another European souslik was scrabbling about among some stones beside us and from time to time, sitting up on its hind legs in an alert pose reminiscent of a meercat.

As we stopped in a wood for a picnic lunch, we disturbed a pair of long-eared owls. Curious about their behaviour, we searched the branches of the trees where they had been and Robin soon found two well-grown juveniles. They perched motionless on their branches in the rain and we were all able to see them clearly and marvel at their immobility and their incredible fluffy appearance. We could hear rooks calling around us and there was a rookery nearby so we were intrigued to discover that this, like the one we had seen in the Delta a few days previously, had a pair of breeding red-footed falcons associated with it. A male golden oriole was seen by several of the group and as we drove away we were able to watch a hoopoe down on the track in front of the bus, heedless of the pairs of eyes and clicking cameras focussed on it.

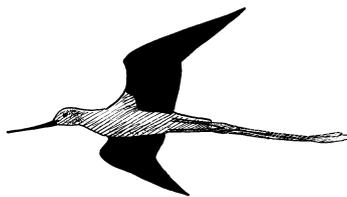
In the village of Plopol, even from the coach, we had excellent views of a pair of Syrian woodpeckers, before we walked down to the shores of a nearby brackish lake. Despite drizzle, and rather poor light, distant views were obtained of pintail and shoveler. The brackish vegetation growing at the lake edge, and in particular the abundance of annual sea purslane *Halimione pedunculata* - a species virtually extinct in Britain - proved of interest to several of us and we were pulling seed of the tiny barley, *Hordeum hystrix* out of our socks for days!

Our last visit was to the 13th century Byzantine fort of Eraclea at Enisala. Although in a derelict condition, picture postcards were obtainable from the custodian, indicating that the building is a tourist attraction. The fort's main tower has been partially restored, and surrounded with semi-permanent scaffolding, and a pair of pied wheatears was nesting in its stonework. The site also provides one with a magnificent view over the surrounding countryside, and made us realise just how extensive is the steppe-type grassland found in this part of Romania. Around the fort, too, was a veritable rock garden of wild flowers – real treasures for the botanists among us. The pink convolvulus, *Convolvulus cantabrica* was flowering in profusion and in crevices in the rocks we found the delicate little sages: *Teucrium polium* and *T. chamaedrys*. Many of the rocks were covered in cushions of the prostrate glaucous-leaved spurge, *Euphorbia myrsinites*, a Romanian Red List species though familiar to British gardeners.

Our last evening back at our floating hotel was a very cheerful occasion. As we relaxed after dinner, we discussed the moments in the week which each member of the group would treasure as their greatest highlights (see below). Then it became clear that our hosts had something more in store for us: Eugen Petrescu had engaged a couple of very talented musicians, one playing a piano accordion and the other a series of no fewer than six different wind instruments, to entertain us. This, plus a glass of champagne each, and a pudding topped with a lighted firework, effectively brought what had been a truly memorable week to a delightful end.

Saturday, June 11: The homeward journey

The journey back to Bucharest inevitably proved something of an anticlimax to the excitements of the previous few days. Even so, our 'comfort' stop at the same wetland which we had visited on our way to Tulcea provided sightings of golden oriole, roller, bee-eaters and some of the other birds that we had learnt almost to take for granted during our visit. As we drove through the miles of agricultural land, we wondered at the hard lives of the farming families and the rich mix of cultures we had seen. Nevertheless, the time passed quickly, and we managed safely to negotiate the hectic traffic in the outskirts of Bucharest, arriving in good time to catch our afternoon flight back to Heathrow.



Highlights of the Week

Alan: the company; the black woodpeckers

Anne: being deep in a reed bed; rollers rolling

Barbara: the magical silence on the Delta; the black woodpeckers; the little bittern at Vadu

Cath: the whole wildness of it all; the wild irises; the bee-eaters; drifting silently through the delta; the little tortoise

Dorothy: the company; Daniel with his individual approach; the glossy ibis

Doug: being in the presence of specialist naturalists; being in truly wild places and having time to think; seeing the villages and the contact that the people had with the natural world; Daniel's fallibility over the size of the pelicans!

Janet: the company; the pelicans; drifting silently along the waterways deep in the Delta

John B: having a chance to use telescopes and having help to find things with them; the villages; the circles of pelicans in the sky

John L: the Dalmatian pelicans (to complete his set of all seven of the world's pelicans); the company and the way the group formed a team

John M: Daniel's knowledge – and way with – English, and his jokes; the eagle asleep on the hillside above the stone-curlews

Martin: seeing crystal clear water and the enormous diversity of water plants, especially the water chestnut; the bird associations: black-necked grebe with black-headed gulls and red-footed falcons with rooks; being given an insight into the landuse and geography by Mihai

Norman: the pelicans, bee eaters and rollers; *Lestes barbarus* at the Black Sea; the black-necked grebes with their families

Sarah: having a chance to use telescopes and having help to find things; seeing the villages and the human side of this part of Romania

Rachel: Daniel's style of guidance, his way with birds - and the laughs; Mihai – the company of another crazy botanist with his Romanian Flora; the wilderness; mooring beside the whiskered tern colony floating among the water soldier and water lilies

Robin: the wilderness; the confiding nature of the birds

Footnote: The Danube Delta - some facts and figures

Physical features

Total area – 5,640 sq. km, of which about 80% is in Romania, and the rest in Ukraine. The water in the Danube finds its way through the Delta in three main waterways. The Chilia channel in the north (which forms the boundary between Romania and Ukraine) carries about 62% of the river's flow, while the Sf Gheorghe channel in the south takes about 20%. The Sulina channel in the centre of the Delta takes the remainder, and between 1862 and 1902 was dredged and straightened (thus shortening it by about 30 km) to improve its navigability. It has been estimated that about 50 million tonnes of sediment derived from the Danube's immense catchment (which covers some 815,000 sq. km) are carried into the Delta each year. As a consequence, the latter is gradually extending eastwards into the Black Sea.

In addition to the main river channels, there are hundreds of kilometres of smaller waterways, some natural and some man-made; there are also c. 400 lakes, with a total surface area of c. 1140 sq. km. Reed-dominated communities, many of which are free-floating and known in Romania as 'plaur', cover an area of c. 2700 sq. km, the largest near-continuous expanse of this type of terrain in the world. About 30 other wetland ecotypes are represented in the Delta.

Conservation

In 1990 UNESCO designated some 5800 sq. km as a biosphere reserve centred on the Romanian part of the Delta. A substantial part of the Delta located within the Ukraine was added in 1998. 18 individual sites within the Romanian part of the Delta have been afforded special protection, where no other human activity other than bona fide research is permitted.

Birdlife

Of the 280 species of birds recorded from the Delta, some 177 breed there, the remainder passing through on passage, or over-wintering. The populations of c. 8,000 white pelicans and 200 Dalmatian pelicans are regarded as being of international importance, as are the c.2,500 pairs of pygmy cormorants (60% of the world population) and the c. 40,000 red-breasted geese (50% of the world population) which over-winter in the Delta.

Threats

At the end of the Second World War, Romania's then communist regime embarked on a series of measures aimed at pump-draining selected parts of the Delta so that they could be used for agriculture. Other areas were planted with hybrid Black Poplars, while some of the meanders in the Sf Gheorghe channel were by-passed in a bid to improve its navigability. Since the 1989 revolution, during the course of which President Ceauçescu was deposed, many of the polders have proved uneconomic to farm, and the now-eroding embankments which protect them from flooding are unlikely to be repaired. Another communist-era initiative, namely the large-scale cutting of reed for paper manufacture, has also been abandoned, although considerable quantities are still harvested during the winter months, both for local use and export to countries such as the UK.

The greatest threat posed to the Delta at the moment is that Ukraine is considering a scheme involving the abstraction from the Chilia Channel of huge quantities of water to be used for irrigating farmland. It is impossible to reconcile this idea with the fact that Ukraine agreed in 1998 that its part of the Delta should be included in the Biosphere Reserve. Moreover, the Romanian authorities are deeply unhappy with the proposal since they believe, probably rightly, that it would have a very adverse effect on the water regime of the whole Delta.

Martin & Barbara George, 18 June 2005

Bird List for Honeyguide Group

June 4 — 11, 2005

Danube Delta and Dobrogea

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
GAVIIDAE								
(Red-throated?) Diver	<i>Gavia ?stellata</i>						✓	
PODICIPEDIDAE								
Great Crested Grebe	<i>P. cristatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>		✓		✓			
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricolis</i>		✓		✓			✓
PHALACROCORACIDAE								
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Pygmy Cormorant	<i>P. pygmeus</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓
PELECANIDAE								
White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ARDEIDAE								
Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>			✓				
Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Purple Heron	<i>A. purpurea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
CICONIDAE								
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>		✓					
THRESKIORNITHIDAE								
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		✓	✓	✓			
Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓
ANATIDAE								
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>			✓	✓			
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>						✓	✓
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>							✓
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>							✓
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>			✓	✓			✓
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>							✓
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>							✓
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>		✓					
ACCIPITRIDAE								
Honey-Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>					✓		
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>		✓		✓			
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circus gallicus</i>					✓		
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>					✓		

-	-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>Levant Sparrowhawk</u>	<u><i>A. brevipes</i></u>					✓		
<u>Common Buzzard</u>	<u><i>Buteo buteo</i></u>	✓		✓		✓	✓	
<u>Long-legged Buzzard</u>	<u><i>Buteo rufinus</i></u>					✓		
<u>Booted Eagle</u>	<u><i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i></u>					✓	✓	✓
<u>FALCONIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Kestrel</u>	<u><i>Falco tinnunculus</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Red-footed Falcon</u>	<u><i>Falco vespertinus</i></u>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>Hobby</u>	<u><i>Falco subbuteo</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>PHASIANEIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Grey Partridge</u>	<u><i>Perdix perdix</i></u>					✓	✓	
<u>Quail</u>	<u><i>Coturnix coturnix</i></u>					✓		
<u>Pheasant</u>	<u><i>Phasianus Colchius</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<u>RALLIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Moorhen</u>	<u><i>Gallinula chloropus</i></u>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Coot</u>	<u><i>Fulica atra</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>RECURVIROSRTIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Black-winged Stilt</u>	<u><i>Himantopus</i></u> <u><i>himantopus</i></u>						✓	✓
<u>Avocet</u>	<u><i>Recurvirostra</i></u> <u><i>avosetta</i></u>						✓	✓
<u>BURHINIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Stone-curlew</u>	<u><i>Burhinus oediconemus</i></u>							✓
<u>GLAREOLIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Collared Pratincole</u>	<u><i>Glareola pratincola</i></u>						✓	
<u>CHARADRIIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Little Ringed Plover</u>	<u><i>Charadrius dbius</i></u>						✓	
<u>Lapwing</u>	<u><i>Vanellus vanellus</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>SCOLOPACIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Curlew Sandpiper</u>	<u><i>Calidris rerruginea</i></u>						✓	✓
<u>Ruff</u>	<u><i>Pphilomachus pugnax</i></u>						✓	
<u>Black-tailed Godwit</u>	<u><i>Limosa limosa</i></u>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
<u>Curlew</u>	<u><i>Numenius arquata</i></u>							✓
<u>Spotted Redshank</u>	<u><i>Tringa erythropus</i></u>						✓	
<u>Redshank</u>	<u><i>Tringa totanus</i></u>						✓	✓
<u>Marsh Sandpiper</u>	<u><i>Tringa stagnatilis</i></u>						✓	
<u>Green Sandpiper</u>	<u><i>Tringa ochropus</i></u>		✓		✓			
<u>LARIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Mediterranean Gull</u>	<u><i>L. melanocephalus</i></u>						✓	✓
<u>Little Gull</u>	<u><i>Larus minutus</i></u>						✓	✓
<u>Black-headed Gull</u>	<u><i>Larus ridibundis</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Yellow-legged Gull</u>	<u><i>Larus cachinans</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>STERNIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Gull-billed Tern</u>	<u><i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i></u>						✓	
<u>Sandwich Tern</u>	<u><i>Sterna sandvicensis</i></u>						✓	
<u>Common Tern</u>	<u><i>Sterna hirundo</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>Little Tern</u>	<u><i>Sterna albifrons</i></u>						✓	
<u>Whiskered Tern</u>	<u><i>Chilidionias hibrida</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Black Tern</u>	<u><i>Chilidionias niger</i></u>			✓	✓		✓	
<u>White-winged Black Tern</u>	<u><i>C. leucopterus</i></u>			✓	✓			
<u>COLUMBIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Stock Dove</u>	<u><i>Columba oenas</i></u>		✓					
<u>Woodpigeon</u>	<u><i>Columba palumbus</i></u>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Collared Dove</u>	<u><i>Streptopelia decaocto</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

-	-	1	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
Turtle Dove	Streptopelia turtur		✓			✓	✓	✓
CUCULIDAE	-							
Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
STRIGIDAE	-							
Little Owl	Athene noctua						✓	✓
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>							✓
APODIDAE	-							
Swift	Apus apus	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
ALCEDINIDAE	-							
Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis		✓	✓	✓			
MEROPIIDAE	-							
Bee-eater	Merops apiaster	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
CORACIIDAE	-							
Roller	Coracias garrulus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UPUPIDAE	-							
Hoopoe	Upupa epops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PICIDAE	-							
Wryneck	Jynx torquilla					✓		
Grey-headed Woodpecker	Picus canus		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Black Woodpecker	Dryocopus maritimus		✓		✓			
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>D. major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Syrian Woodpecker	<i>D. syriacus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>D. medius</i>					✓		
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>D. minor</i>		✓			✓		
ALAUDIDAE	-							
Calandra Lark	Melanocorypha calandra	✓					✓	✓
Short-toed Lark	Calandrella brachydactyla					✓	✓	
Crested Lark	Galerida cristata					✓	✓	✓
Woodlark	Lulula arborea					✓	✓	
Skylark	Alauda arvensis					✓	✓	
HIRUNDINIDAE	-							
Sand Martin	Riparia riparia		✓			✓		✓
Swallow	Hirundo rustica	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
House Martin	Delichon urbica	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MOTACILLIDAE	-							
Tawny Pipit	Anthus campestris					✓	✓	✓
Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava supercilialis						✓	
Black-headed Wagtail	Motacilla f. feldegg						✓	✓
White Wagtail	Motacilla alba		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TURDIDAE	-							
Thrush Nightingale	Luscinia luscinia		✓		✓			
Nightingale	Luscinia megarhynchos					✓	✓	
Black Redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Redstart	Phoenicurus phoenicurus		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Isabelline Wheatear	Oenanthe isabellina					✓	✓	✓
Wheatear	Oenanthe oenanthe			✓		✓	✓	✓
Pied Wheatear	Oenanthe pleschanka					✓		✓
Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>					✓		
Blackbird	Turdus merula					✓	✓	✓
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos					✓	✓	

-	-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>SYLVIIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Savi's Warbler</u>	<u><i>Locustella luscinioides</i></u>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>Sedge Warbler</u>	<u><i>A. shoenobaenus</i></u>			✓				
<u>Reed Warbler</u>	<u><i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i></u>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>Great Reed Warbler</u>	<u><i>A. arundinaceus</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>Olivaceous Warbler</u>	<u><i>Hippolais pallida</i></u>		✓					
<u>Icterine Warbler</u>	<u><i>Hippolais icterina</i></u>		✓			✓		
<u>Barred Warbler</u>	<u><i>Sylvia nisoria</i></u>					✓		✓
<u>Lesser Whitethroat</u>	<u><i>Sylvia curruca</i></u>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<u>Whitethroat</u>	<u><i>Sylvia communis</i></u>		✓		✓	✓		
<u>Garden Warbler</u>	<u><i>Sylvia borin</i></u>			✓	✓			
<u>Blackcap</u>	<u><i>Sylvia atricapilla</i></u>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>MUSCICAPIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Spotted Flycatcher</u>	<u><i>Muscicapa striata</i></u>			✓				
<u>TIMALIIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Bearded Tit</u>	<u><i>Panurus biarmicus</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<u>PARIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Long-tailed Tit</u>	<u><i>Aegithalos caudatus</i></u>				✓			
<u>Sombre Tit</u>	<u><i>Parus lugubris</i></u>					✓		
<u>Blue Tit</u>	<u><i>Parus caeruleus</i></u>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<u>Great Tit</u>	<u><i>Parus major</i></u>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>SITTIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Nuthatch</u>	<u><i>Sitta europaea</i></u>					✓		
<u>CERTHIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Treecreeper</u>	<u><i>Certhia familiaris</i></u>		✓					
<u>REMIZIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Penduline Tit</u>	<u><i>Remiz pendulinus</i></u>			✓				
<u>ORIOLIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Golden Oriole</u>	<u><i>Oriolus oriolus</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>LANIIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Red-backed Shrike</u>	<u><i>Lanius collurio</i></u>			✓		✓	✓	✓
<u>Lesser Grey Shrike</u>	<u><i>Lanius minor</i></u>	✓				✓	✓	✓
<u>CORVIDAE</u>	-							
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>						✓	
<u>Magpie</u>	<u><i>Pica pica</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Jackdaw</u>	<u><i>Corvus monedula</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Rook</u>	<u><i>Corvus frugilegus</i></u>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<u>Hooded Crow</u>	<u><i>Corvus corone cornix</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>STURNIDAE</u>	-							
<u>Starling</u>	<u><i>Sturnus vulgaris</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>PASSERIDAE</u>	-							
<u>House Sparrow</u>	<u><i>Passer domesticus</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Spanish Sparrow</u>	<u><i>Passer hispaniolensis</i></u>						✓	✓
<u>Tree Sparrow</u>	<u><i>Passer montanus</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<u>Chaffinch</u>	<u><i>Fringilla coelebs</i></u>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>					✓		
<u>Greenfinch</u>	<u><i>Carduelis chloris</i></u>	✓				✓		
<u>Goldfinch</u>	<u><i>Carsuelis carduelis</i></u>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<u>Linnet</u>	<u><i>Carduelis cannabina</i></u>					✓		✓
<u>Hawfinch</u>	<u><i>Coccothraustes c.</i></u>					✓		
<u>EMBERIZIDAE</u>	-							

-	-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>Yellowhammer</u>	<u><i>Emberiza citrinella</i></u>		✓			✓	✓	
<u>Ortolan</u>	<u><i>Emberiza hortulana</i></u>					✓		
<u>Reed Bunting</u>	<u><i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i></u>			✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>Corn Bunting</u>	<u><i>Miliaria calandra</i></u>					✓	✓	✓
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MAMMALS								
Brown Hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	✓						
Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>				✓			
European Souslik	<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>					✓	✓	✓
Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	✓						
AMPHIBIANS								
Green Toad	<i>Bufo viridis</i>						✓	
Tree Frog	<i>Hyla arborea</i>				✓			
Marsh Frog	<i>Rana ridibunda</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
REPTILES								
Spur-thighed Tortoise	<i>Testudo graeca</i>						✓	
European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>		✓					
Green Lizard	<i>Lacerta viridis</i>						✓	
Balkan Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis taurica</i>						✓	
Slow Worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>						✓	
Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>		✓	✓				
Dice Snake	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>		✓					
Nose-horned Viper	<i>Vipera ammodytes</i>						✓	
BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS								
Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>						✓	
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>				✓		✓	
Small White	<i>Artogeia rapae</i>						✓	
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>			✓				
Eastern Wood White	<i>Leptidea duponcheli</i>					✓		
Lesser Purple Emperor	<i>Apatura ilia</i>		✓	✓		✓		
Painted Lady	<i>Cynthia cardui</i>			✓			✓	✓
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>			✓			✓	
Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>			✓			✓	✓
Dark Green Fritillary	<i>Mesoacidalia aglaja</i>						✓	
High Brown Fritillary	<i>Fabriciana adippe</i>						✓	
Queen of Spain Fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>						✓	
Freyer's Fritillary	<i>Melitaea arduinna</i>		✓					
Glanville Fritillary	<i>Melitaea cinxia</i>						✓	
Spotted Fritillary	<i>Melitaea didyma</i>					✓		
Southern Grayling	<i>Hipparchia aristaeus</i>						✓	✓
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>						✓	
Ilex Hairstreak	<i>Nordmannia ilicis</i>						✓	
Large Copper	<i>Lycaena dispar</i>		✓					
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>			✓				
Adonis Blue	<i>Lysandra bellargus</i>						✓	
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>					✓	✓	
Herald Moth	<i>Scoliopteryx libatrix</i>				✓			
Narrow-bordered 5-spot Burnet							✓	
DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES								

-	-	1	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
White-legged Damselfly	<i>Platycnemis pennipes</i>				✓			
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>		✓	✓				✓
Variable Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i>	✓			✓			
Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>		✓	✓				
Southern Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes barbarus</i>						✓	
Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>		✓		✓			
Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>		✓	✓				
Lesser Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax parthenope</i>		✓	✓				
Norfolk Hawker	<i>Aeshna isosceles</i>		✓	✓				
Southern Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna affinis</i>						✓	
Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>			✓				
Scarlet Darter	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>		✓	✓	✓			
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>		✓			✓		
OTHER								
INVERTEBRATES								
Colorado Beetle	<i>Leptinotarsa decemlineata</i>			✓				
Medicinal Leech	<i>Hirudo medicinalis</i>				✓			
Great Pond Snail	<i>Limnaea stagnalis</i>			✓				
Ramshorn Snail	<i>Planorbis spirorbis</i>			✓				