

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Romania, 26 May – 5 June 2024
Danube Delta & Carpathian Mountains

Holiday participants

David and Dianna Alcock
Gill Cartwright and Tove Ford
Denise Back

Judith and David Brown
Mick Gold
Birgit Piechulla (guest of Ibis)

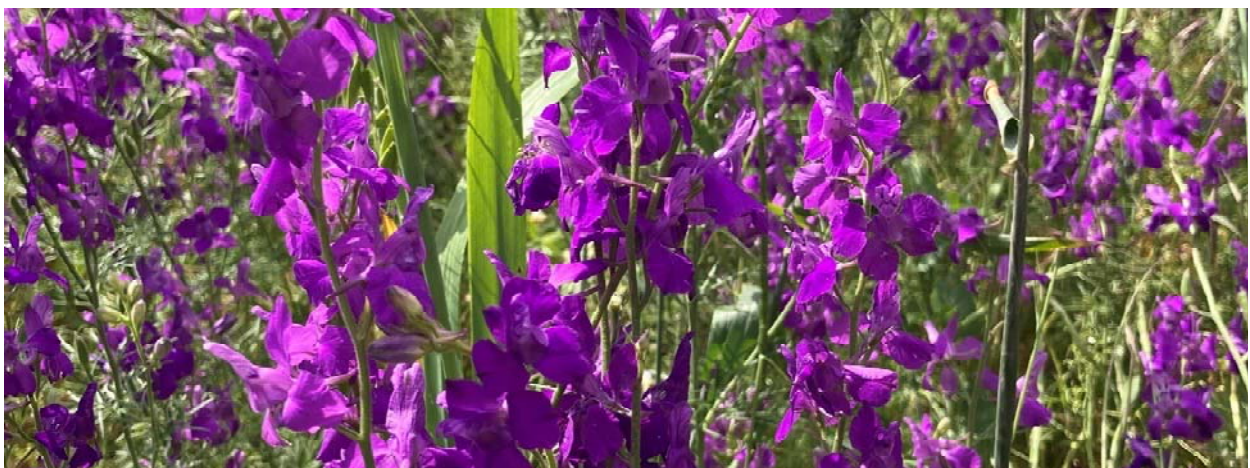


Honeyguide group 2024 (without Mihai in this photo). Below: larkspur.

Leaders

This holiday runs in partnership with Ibis Tours www.ibis-tours.ro
The leaders from Ibis were Florin Palade and botanist Mihai Petrescu in Dobrogea.
Honeyguide leader: Rob Lucking.
Report written by Rob Lucking (Danube Delta) & Denise Back (Carpathians)

Photos by Rob Lucking, unless noted.
Cover: white pelicans (BP); red-backed shrike and purple heron (RL).



As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price was put towards a local conservation project, in this case for Falco Cherrug ('the saker'), a young naturalists' group which is providing the delta's conservationists for the future.

The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, resulting in a donation of £500. This brings the total given in Romania since the first Honeyguide holiday here in 1999 to £7682. The total for all conservation contributions through Honeyguide since 1991 is £154,022 (August 2024).

DAILY DIARY

Sunday 26 May – Bucharest to Tulcea

Our flight left a dull and rainy Heathrow and arrived at a sunny Bucharest airport in the early afternoon. After collecting baggage, we located Florin of Ibis Tours, along with Denise who had flown in the previous day and Birgit, a guest of Ibis Tours who was to become an honorary Honeyguider for the week. The minibus picked us up from outside the airport and we were soon on our way through the suburbs of Bucharest and then through the flat, intensive agricultural plains of south-east Romania. The fields were huge and full of cereals, maize and sunflowers with the odd bright purple punctuation of purple eastern larkspur. After a couple of hours, we stopped at a petrol station for a leg stretch, loo break and refreshments (can recommend raspberry Magnums!) and headed on east passing through the village of Tandarei, notorious for its criminal gangs who compete with each other to build the biggest and fanciest house with profits from benefit fraud and organised begging rings.

As we crossed the River Danube near Giurgeni, the landscape became more rolling and interesting. Florin told us that we were entering an area of steppe habitats where the grassland interfaced with the forest forming areas of wooded steppe. A quick stop at an area of roadside steppe revealed two stone-curlews, several crested larks and a splendid tawny pipit, which performed its display flight in front of us.

We eventually arrived at the port town of Tulcea and the Ibis guesthouse which was to be home for the next two nights. After much needed welcome drinks, we were shown to our rooms and then assembled downstairs for a tasty three course dinner of soup, roast chicken and Romanian pancakes. Florin then outlined our itinerary for the following day and then it was bedtime following a long day of travelling.

Monday 27 May – Dobrogea

After breakfast, we boarded the minibus for our first full day of wildlife watching in the Dobrogea region of Bulgaria. We were joined by Mihai Petrescu, one of Romania's leading botanists, who also knew a great deal about the history of the area. He explained that the Dobrogea region was a melting pot of 15 different ethnic groups including Turks, Ukrainians, Tartars, Jews and Hungarians, each bringing their own cultures and traditions to the area.

Our first stop was an area of grassy steppe habitat overlooking the Danube floodplain, with Ukraine only a short distance away. Mihai explained the importance of the steppe habitat and showed the group some of the characteristic steppe plants, including hairy rupturewort and ground pine. We were distracted by two white-tailed eagles, then four and then six together soaring on the upwelling caused by the northerly breeze hitting the steppe.



Ground-pine; whiskered tern; immature white-tailed eagle (MG).

It was a cool start to the morning and a short shower dampened us, but not our enthusiasm, as we had our first real experiences of the Danube wetlands with a constant movement of whiskered terns carrying insect food gleaned from the surrounding steppe to their nests on the rafts of white lily pads. Flocks of great cormorants perched out on exposed dead trees with a few of their much smaller relatives, pygmy cormorants. In the distance we saw our first white pelicans, and from the reeds we could hear the chuntering songs of what must have been dozens of great reed warblers. The icing on the cake was provided by two adult great black-headed gulls (also known as Pallas's gulls) flying overhead. This species is a relatively recent colonist of the Delta as it spreads westwards from its stronghold in Central Asia.

Our next stop was the monastery of Celic Deri. As soon as we got out of the bus, we could hear golden oriole calling, and Florin soon found a splendid male in full view perched in the bare branches of a dead tree. We walked through to an old orchard and found our first red-backed shrikes, and overhead we saw long-legged buzzard and Levant sparrowhawk. We continued our walk through a mixed lime and hornbeam woodland and could hear hawfinches calling but only got the briefest of flight views. One of our target species was red-breasted flycatcher and after hearing several singing close by, we eventually had great views of one perched. The woodpeckers were less obliging: middle spotted and great spotted woodpecker gave only the briefest of views. As we left the woodland and walked out into neighbouring farmland, we had

a small passage of migrating raptors including a lesser spotted eagle and several honey buzzards. We had our picnic lunch in the shade of a walnut tree and enjoyed exceptional views of an ortolan bunting singing from a nearby tree.

After lunch we had a longish drive to the Macin Mountains National Park, stopping off at a service station for a loo stop and refreshments. The entrance track to the park gave us our first rollers and a hoopoe obligingly flew along both sides of the road so that everyone in the bus could see it! Two tawny pipits showed well in an area of steppe close to where we had parked. As we walked into the mountains, Florin found one of our other target species – a splendid male pied wheatear. The Dobrogea region is right at the westernmost edge of the pied wheatear's breeding range and we were lucky to see it so well. We saw our first butterflies, including cardinal, green underside blue and common blue, along with green-eyed hawk dragonfly, golden-bloomed grey longhorn beetle and the micro-moth spotted sulphur. As we returned to the bus we saw several bee-eaters and another Isabelline wheatear.



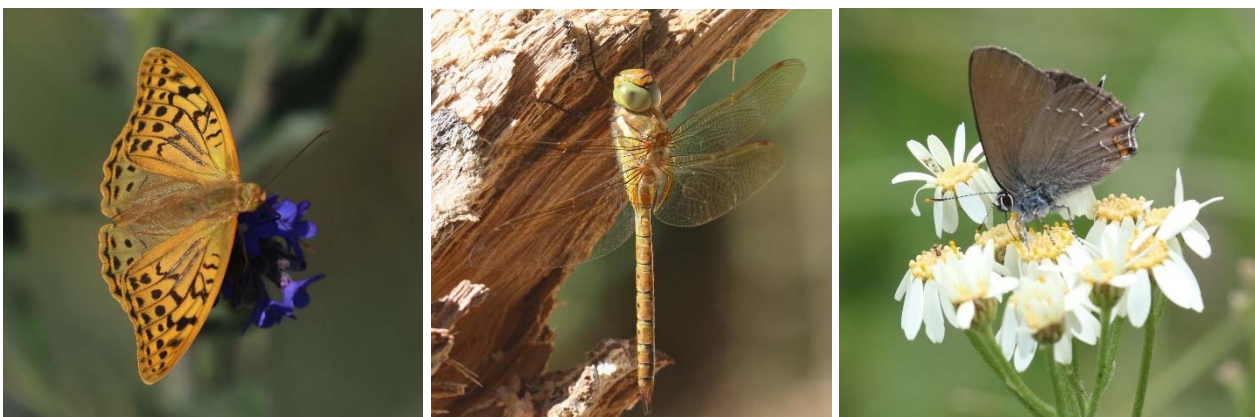
Green underside blue; spotted sulphur moth; Rob and Mihai (MG).

We returned to Tulcea where we met up with David and Dianna who were delayed leaving the UK; they arrived in Romania in the early hours and caught a later bus to join up with the rest of the group. An excellent first day wildlife watching in Romania.

Tuesday 28 May – Dobrogea

Our first stop on our second day of touring the Dobrogea region was Denis-Tepe or the 'Hill of the Sea'. The bumpy drive down the track through the farmland was enlivened by multiple rollers on the wires alongside the track and vivid purple patches of eastern larkspur along the edges of arable fields. We saw our first susliks, a small ground squirrel, in an area of disturbed ground as well as little owls on electricity poles and more Isabelline wheatears, which use disused suslik burrows in which to nest. Short-toed larks were singing around us, but we struggled to get a good view of one on the ground. We were more successful though with an obliging tawny pipit. A hoopoe called continuously from the slopes of the hill, and two marsh harriers hunted over the farmland. As it warmed up, we saw our first long-legged buzzards of the day and two pale-phase booted eagles flew past.

Mihai Petrescu had joined us again and came into his own at our next stop in Babadag Forest, a botanically rich area with many rare and localised plants. The forest was dominated by downy oak and ash and the forest floor was carpeted with smoke bush – *Cotinus coggygria* – a familiar garden plant to many of us and nice to see in its native environment. We saw our first orchids of the holiday – commonest were pyramidal orchid, but much taller than the specimens we usually see in the UK. We found several spikes of the lizard orchid *Himantoglossum jankae*, recently described as a new species, but unfortunately they weren't open. Patches of vivid yellow were *Achillea clypeolata* (a type of yarrow). There were several species of butterfly on the wing including cardinal, niobe fritillary and ilex hairstreak along with green-eyed hawkers and several lesser emperors. We heard woodlark and golden oriole singing and had more excellent views of ortolan. On the way back to the bus we saw a sand lizard.



Niobe fritillary; green-eyed hawkler (=Norfolk hawkler); ilex hairstreak.

Our lunchtime stop was an open area of woodland down a rough track. An explosive crack from underneath the bus proved to be a broken leaf spring, but the driver didn't appear too concerned! A hawfinch perched obligingly in one of the small trees we were picnicking under, and we amused ourselves by taking arty-farty pictures of knapweed seed-heads!

After lunch, we headed towards the coastal village of Vadu, dominated by an abandoned factory built during the communist era to extract valuable metals from the extensive sand dunes in the area. Fortunately, no sand was ever processed, the dunes remain largely intact and the settlement lagoons have now become excellent wildlife habitat. The first lagoon we looked over held a good variety of wildfowl including ferruginous duck, red-crested pochard, shoveler and pochard along with some more distant black-necked grebes. We saw our first black-winged stilts and a single ruff, while around us were bee-eaters, most likely nesting in the bank below us. Several red-footed falcons fed on insects above us.



The abandoned factory near Vadu; red-footed falcon.

We moved on to another area of coastal wetland, passing by a resting golden jackal on the edge of some reeds. This wetland was a natural wetland where reedbed, freshwater and saltmarsh met forming a rich ecotone full of birds. It was difficult to know what to look at first but we enjoyed good views of garganey, common pratincole, our first black-crowned night herons and a purple heron. A highlight was paddyfield warbler, a rare species in Europe with just a few populations along the western shores of the Black Sea. More familiar species included redshank, green sandpiper and lapwing.

We ran out of time to visit the shore of the Black Sea and so headed back to Tulcea where we boarded the floating hotel, our home for the next four days/five nights.

Wednesday 29 May – Danube Delta

We set sail after breakfast on our long journey down the St George branch of the Danube into the southern part of the Delta. Sitting on the top deck of the floating hotel gave us a great view over the river and the journey was full of birds. Glossy ibis, night herons and egrets crisscrossed the river between feeding sites and nest colonies, and over the course of the journey at least six white-tailed eagles were seen. The bankside vegetation was dominated by an American invasive species *Amorpha fruticosa* which was planted as an ornamental shrub in Austria. Seeds subsequently floated down the Danube, and it is now common downstream of Vienna.

We started to see our first Dalmatian pelicans, associating with fisherman who had set their nets for Pontic shad, a Romanian delicacy, hoping for a free lunch of under-sized fish released by the fishermen. Two great black-headed gulls flew over, and a huge Caspian tern perched on a sandbank dwarfing two common terns. From the bankside trees we heard blackcaps and chiffchaffs, the odd great reed warbler, redstart and plenty of cuckoos. Hobbies were also numerous.

Eventually the riverbanks became less dominated by trees and opened up into reedbed as far as the eye could see. We lost count of the number of marsh harriers we saw. We moored up near the village of Saint George. After lunch we transferred into the small day boat, disembarking on the beach close to where the Danube joins the Black Sea. With the exception of the Bosphorus, which joins the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmora and thence to the Mediterranean, the Black Sea is entirely enclosed by land and as such has no tides to speak of. These are the conditions required for deltas to form and the only sediment deposited is fluvial sediment brought down by the river. The Danube Delta is a comparatively young structure and still very dynamic with new features being created by the sediment brought down by the river.



European pond terrapin; Dalmatian pelican.

The beach crest vegetation was dominated by woolly butterbur and sea holly. The introduced, and highly aromatic, Russian olive *Elaeagnus angustifolia* was the dominant shrub and within it the vine *Periploca graeca*. Along the tideline we found the empty shells of another introduced species, the predatory marine mollusc *Rapana venosa* introduced to the Black Sea in ships ballast. Fortunately it is a popular delicacy and so has never become dominant. Florin pointed out a very localised species of *Ipomea* which, unfortunately, was not in flower.

We carried on walking along the beach until we reached a beachside cafe where we stopped for refreshments. Florin heard an eastern (or Oriental) tree frog and later found us one sitting high in a tree. We also saw various frogs from the 'Rana complex' - a mixture of pool frogs, marsh frogs and their fertile hybrids which are known as edible frogs.

A lily-filled lagoon supported a small colony of breeding whiskered terns, and we watched as a hooded crow stooped in and stole an egg from one of the nests. Another pool held bladderwort, an insectivorous wetland plant and flowering rush. Just as we approached the jetty where the day boat awaited, a European pond terrapin crossed the track in front of us.

Thursday 30 May – Danube Delta

After breakfast we set off in the day boat to the Sacalin area of the delta. This is one of the most strictly protected areas of the delta and also one of the most dynamic as silt travelling down the length of the Danube is deposited to form sand bars which are then colonised by vegetation and eventually become part of the extensive reedbed and lagoon system.

We soon saw more Dalmatian pelicans, typically seen in ones and twos, along the river channel and disturbed multiple black-crowned night herons from the bank side vegetation. Hobbies and cuckoos were once again common. We reached the end of the channel which opened out into a large lagoon where a large flock of white pelicans rested on a sand bar and partially submerged tree stump. Eventually they all flew off to feed giving us all fantastic views of this magnificent bird.



White pelicans; bladderwort (BP).

We returned to the floating hotel and set sail on our way to the northern part of the delta along the Tataru Canal towards Lake Rosshu. We passed an area of marshland with black-winged stilts, lapwings and green sandpiper. The electricity pylons running alongside the canal were ideal supports for white stork nests, and we passed at least eight, several of which contained large chicks. Hobbies were again common, and we also had great views of both male and female red-footed falcons. Several turtle doves perched on electricity cables along with bee-eaters and rollers.

We parted company with the floating hotel after lunch and explored some narrower channels and lake in the day boat planning to rendezvous with hotel near the main Sulina channel. We heard the thin, downwards whistle of a penduline tit and soon picked up a male looking like a diminutive red-backed shrike with its black

mask, grey head and rusty-red back. Florin even located the hanging nest on a nearby willow, made from the fluff from poplar flowers and held together with spiders' webs. As we entered Lake Roshu, it started to rain heavily but we continued across the lake undeterred, even seeing an otter as we went. We stopped at an area of floating reedbed, and Florin explained how a cushion of marsh gas underneath the floating reedbeds allowed them to move up and down with fluctuating water levels. The floating reed beds are more floristically diverse as they are never submerged by water and are also important nesting habitat for white storks and purple herons. On the downside, they sometimes break off and block navigation channels, something we were about to experience first-hand!

Oblivious to what lay ahead, we continued through the delta seeing multiple purple herons, ferruginous ducks and many hobbies and cuckoos, including the brown 'hepatic' form of cuckoo. We saw our first grey-headed woodpecker, which perched obligingly on a dead branch for all to see. We could see the top of the floating hotel ahead, but the channel was blocked by a large piece of floating reedbed. The tugboat crew managed to break through it in an impressive show of skill and even pulled the floating hotel through as well, so that we were able to transfer back onto the hotel barge and continue our journey along the Sulina channel, the main shipping channel leading back to Tulcea, and then north to our overnight stop.



Pulling floating hotel through floating reed blockage.

Friday 31 May – Danube Delta

We slept soundly to a chorus of frogs and woke to the call of cuckoos and a singing Savi's warbler. After breakfast, we boarded the day boat for a trip to the village of Letea and Letea Forest. It was a long journey to Letea, and we left early to beat the visitor rush. There were plenty of birds to look at including multiple purple herons, rollers, red-footed falcons and rollers. A highlight was another penduline tit at its nest.

The village of Letea can only be reached by boat and the original inhabitants were refugees of Ukrainian origin who fled the Russian empire during the reign of Empress Catherine the Great. Even now the spoken language in the village is Ukrainian mixed with words of different origins eg Romanian, Turkish, Greek & Russian.

We were met at the jetty by Mr Dudu with his amazing hand-built tour bus. The bus was built around an ancient Russian engine and gearbox - the only original components - and to prevent overheating Mr Dudu periodically topped the radiator up with water!



Mr Dudu's bus (BP).

There was a short stretch of paved road through the village after which a bumpy, unmade track took us to Letea Forest, the first designated nature reserve in Romania and the foundation of the Danube Delta World Heritage Site. The

forest is fenced to exclude the free-roaming horses that would otherwise damage the vegetation, and we entered through one of the access gates that were located every so often in the fence.

Letea Forest has developed on an ancient dune system that pre-dates the formation of the Danube Delta around 12,000 years ago. A mixed forest of oak and ash has formed in the damp dune slacks whilst the higher dunes remain largely unvegetated so from above, the forest is alternating strips of forest and sand dune.

A sunny glade at the entrance of the forest was full of niobe fritillaries, and as we entered we saw middle spotted woodpecker and heard golden oriole, redstart, spotted flycatcher and thrush nightingale. The forest was also full of starlings – presumably nesting in the many empty woodpecker holes. We also heard black woodpecker but despite Florin's efforts to call it in, it remained hidden. Alongside the path through the forest we found European birthwort and a mating pair of nine-spotted moths.

Mr Dudu took us back to Letea village via a saline lagoon, which held an impressive flock of more than 50 Pallas's gulls, 30+ Caspian terns and various waders including collared pratincole, ruff, avocet, black-winged stilt, little stint and black-tailed godwits.



A line of Pallas's (or great black-headed) gulls.

Some of the group elected to be dropped off at the church in Letea village and walk back to the boat past the traditional houses, many of which were constructed with a timber frame infilled with reed and plastered over with mud. Some had elaborate woodwork and many were painted blue – a colour traditionally associated with divinity.

Once back on the day boat, we rendezvoused with the floating hotel for lunch and then headed out into the backwaters of the delta into some lily-filled lakes full of breeding whiskered terns, black-necked and red-necked grebes, ferruginous ducks and much, much more, with the background sound of the Danube Delta – thousands of frogs!



Letea village.

Saturday 1 June – Danube Delta

As usual, we awoke to the chorus of frogs and the call of cuckoos. After breakfast we thanked and bade farewell to Rob who had to return to the UK for family reasons. Florin had organised an efficient transfer for him by speedboat and bus to Bucharest airport.

This warm, sunny morning was to be our last excursion on the 'small boat'. Our first destination was to an unnamed lake, via a channel, where Florin would expect to see numerous squacco herons, but they were

not showing themselves there today. However, we did hear a bittern booming and had a good sighting of bearded tits. At another lake, Florin picked up a water soldier plant with its delicate white flower and showed us its root system and biosphere of creatures such as snails, leeches and spiders.

On a lighter note, Florin rose to the challenge of encouraging marsh/pool/edible frogs to jump a metre. From the end of a fishing line, he dangled a red bottle top to attract the amphibians to leap. Whether a metre was reached is debatable!

From the small boat we did eventually see squacco herons plus a white-tailed eagle, middle spotted woodpecker, a brace of ring-necked pheasants in addition to the waterbirds we had become accustomed to seeing. On one riverbank there were obvious kingfisher holes. However in that location we did not have a 'halcyon moment', but a roller flew out of one of the holes. Further on we did see the brilliant blue of a kingfisher.

The small boat then took us along a channel alongside a polder which had been drained for intensive agriculture decades ago. We saw the remains of buildings and poles on the tops of which white storks had built their nests. At various stopping points we were able to have good views of European terrapins, green sandpipers, blue-tailed damselflies, green-eyed hawkers, snails and butterflies.

Almost as a finale to our wonderful four days in the Danube Delta, we enjoyed the amazing spectacle of a feeding frenzy of white pelicans. Huge numbers flew in or emerged out of the reeds to join in the fray. It was such an impressive, unforgettable moment.

As a contrast, we entered the vast Fortuna Lake which was almost devoid of pelicans. We then headed back to the calm of the floating hotel, lunch and a relaxing afternoon as we headed back to the bustle of Tulcea. Being the weekend, there were many more small tourist boats disturbing the peace that we had become accustomed to over the last four days but, despite this, Birgit saw an otter and many of us enjoyed the flashes of kingfisher blue along the banks.

Before joining the main Danube channel, the tug, which had been towing the floating hotel, manoeuvred to push us from the stern to our berth in the busy port of Tulcea. Our final dinner on board ended with a magnificent dessert accompanied by a glass of sparkling wine. We raised a toast to the outstanding trip which Florin had carefully organised. We also showed our appreciation to Elena, Orita and the crew who worked tirelessly to look after us for the last five nights.



White pelicans.

Sunday 2 June – Tulcea to Vulcan

This morning, we said goodbye to Gill, Tove & Birgit who were heading off to Bucharest airport. The remaining six of us then embarked on our next adventure with Florin to the Carpathian Mountains.

First of all, we headed southwest across the steppe with large fields of sunflower, maize and cereals towards Harsana. After the toll booth we crossed the bridge across the Danube and through Tandarei. At Hasarlac lake we stopped to stretch our legs and enjoyed the waterbirds including a large number of coots, terns, gulls and swans. Another brief stop was made at the other side of the lake adjacent to a farm, where a calf had just been born, with attendant magpies, pigeons and crested lark. We then turned our attention to the water to see black-winged stilt, wood sandpiper, great crested and black-necked grebe and various ducks including pochard and shelduck.

It was a hot day so an ice cream (and fuel) stop at a smart service station outside Slabozia was very welcome.

Between Urzicni and Ploiesti, our picnic lunch stop was at a lake with just a little water. There was not much birdlife apart from collared pratincole and little stint. Florin heard a marsh warbler which proved hard to see in the small bushes and tall grass. We were determined to find it, as this was only the second sighting of this species for Florin.

After the big town of Ploiesti, we turned north-west up the beautiful Prahova Valley with the Carpathian Mountains in the distance. In the opposite direction the road was busy with Sunday traffic heading back to the city. We passed by large tourist villages such as Sinaia reminiscent of alpine resorts.

Before Brasov, it was quite a relief to turn left onto a quieter road with hairpin bends and beautiful mountain scenery towards Rasnov with its castle on the hilltop. As we entered the attractive village of Vulcan, we could see the typical Transylvanian Saxon buildings. The Pensiunea Sura Saşilor, our home for the next three nights, is a wonderful 150-year-old converted Saxon barn. It reminds one of an Alpine chalet with its red Pelargoniums in its window boxes and pine furniture.

Before dinner we gathered on the big verandah, where Joseph and Gigi gave us a warm welcome with a glass of strong local fruit liqueur. On this warm sunny evening we could enjoy the garden and the drumming of a nearby (and unidentified) woodpecker. To end the day, we were served a delicious four-course dinner.

Monday 3 June – Zarnesti Gorge

This morning it was pouring with rain while we were having breakfast so Florin delayed our departure to the Zarnesti Gorge by an hour until the weather cleared. At the gorge road barrier, we left the minibus and continued on foot. The track was a gentle upwards gradient along the long, spectacular gorge. A brook ran down the valley, its water cloudy in places with dissolved limestone particles after the heavy rain. It was sometimes a disappearing stream, typical of the karst geology.

On either side of the road were interesting plants such as spleenwort, tufted vetch and perennial honesty. As the sun came out, so did a wonderful display of butterflies including small tortoiseshell, painted lady and red admiral.

Along the gorge were various information boards and teams of rock climbers scaling the sheer cliffs. There were also a few mountain bikers and walkers. It had been hoped that that we would see wallcreeper on the cliff faces and black woodpecker in the woods. Unfortunately neither of these birds showed themselves, but we had good views of a wood warbler and a tiny firecrest.

After a good morning's walk, we reached our destination and stopped at a bridge to eat the sandwiches which we had made at breakfast. After a good rest, we headed back down the track to the minibus. Keeping our eye on the riverbanks we found a dipper with its brown/black beneath the white bill differing from the red/brown belly of UK dippers.

As a marked contrast to our morning activities, in the afternoon Florin took us to the tourist town of Bran to see 'Dracula's Castle'. From a well-chosen café we could see the castle, while enjoying cooling refreshments. As we walked through the municipal park we saw a fieldfare with food in its bill. Florin then drove us to a spectacular viewpoint above the town and explained the geography of the Carpathian Mountains to the group.

We arrived back at our delightful accommodation just before a torrential rainstorm - such good timing! Again we were served a delicious four-course dinner with a wonderful salad selection.

Tuesday 4 June – Piatra Craiului National Park & Bear Watching Hide

After heavy early-morning rain, the weather cleared and the day turned out to be warm and sunny. Dianne decided to rest this morning and enjoy the guesthouse's verandah overlooking the garden. The rest of us went to the Piatra Craiului National Park. The mountain scenery was majestic with cliffs, mixed forested slopes contrasting against the blue sky. This time the path was steeper and wetter than the previous day. However we were able to make frequent stops to look at the colourful wild flowers such as open bellflower, pale bugloss, lesser butterfly orchid and fragrant orchid. There were plenty of delicate butterflies and moths including black-veined moth, speckled wood and clouded yellow. Florin had hoped to find a nutcracker for us to see, but these birds remained hidden. However, it was most enjoyable seeing firecrest clearly, marsh tit and yellowhammer.

As we climbed further up the muddy hill, a brood of hazel grouse hurriedly crossed the track in front of us – apparently a seldom-seen bird. A sand lizard lay on a rock warming up in the sun, and Florin pointed out yellow-bellied toads in the muddy puddles. When we saw recent bear trucks in the mud, we did become more wary of our surroundings!

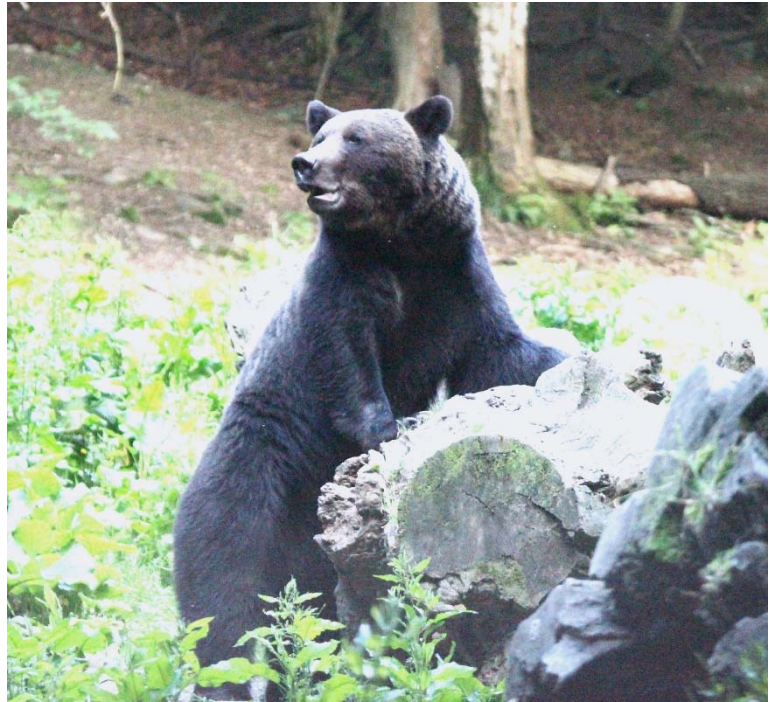
As a change, we returned to hotel for a cooked lunch and to collect the sandwiches we had made for our supper.

After lunch we drove through Zarnesti again to the National Park for our final and much-anticipated excursion. On the way, we spent a couple of hours walking along the lane enjoying the natural history. There were common buzzards overhead, various tits in the trees as well as mistle thrush and red-backed shrike. The meadows were full of colour both from plants and butterflies. We saw meadowsweet, *Iris siberica*,

heartsease and dog rose to name but a few. It was a delight to see common blue, grizzled skipper and small heath as well as a Roman snail.

Then it was time to go on an exciting bear hunt! We boarded the minibus and met up with the park warden, who drove ahead of us to the bear hide. We were the only tourists this evening, and Florin had arranged for our group to use the ground-level viewing area. On parking the vehicle, we had to keep very quiet as we crossed a rickety bridge over a stream and then up the hill to the hide.

Before the warden had scattered food, a female bear appeared followed by another pregnant female and her independent cubs. We then had a really special moment when a mother with two very small cubs appeared. Unfortunately, a large male came on the scene and the mother and cubs disappeared quickly! On seeing the large male, the three independent young bears quickly climbed trees to safety and stayed out of the way until the coast was clear. Another male bear arrived and drove the first male away twice. What a truly memorable experience and a wonderful finale to our trip!



Brown bear (MG)

On our way back to Vulcan, we ate our packed suppers and arrived at the guesthouse at about 9.30pm. Our thoughts then turned to our preparations for a 10am departure the following morning.

Wednesday 5 June – Vulcan to Bucharest

On this warm, sunny morning, breakfast was at a leisurely 8am. Before going back to our rooms to finish packing, we adjourned to the verandah to go through the wildlife checklist for a final time. Everyone had also written down their highlights of the trip for the holiday report.

Having thanked and bade farewell to our wonderful hosts at the delightful Sura Sasilor guesthouse, we departed at 10am for Bucharest airport. The first part of the journey was through the forested slopes with plenty of hairpin bends. As we descended the Pratoval Valley, Florin took us on a detour through the tourist resort of Sinaia to see the grand old, recently-renovated buildings alongside modern shopping centres. Apparently, in the winter, this is a popular area for skiing.

As we neared Bucharest, the roads became much busier with traffic. Before reaching the airport, there was time for a final ice cream and fuel stop. This was very welcome as the temperature was over 30°C!

Thanks to Florin, we arrived at the airport in very good time. Once the luggage was unloaded from the minibus we all thanked Florin very much for the amazing trip he had so efficiently organised and for all his patience and knowledge.

As we were early, we found seats in a café for refreshments. Eventually the BA check-in desk was open and, after a lengthy wait in the queue, everyone on the London flight received their boarding passes. Then it was through security and off to the departure gate for the BA flight back to Heathrow.

Holiday highlights

Gill - Superlative knowledge of our Romanian guides and Rob, not only individual knowledge but their wider knowledge of geographical, historical and conservation aspects

Tove - Sighting of squadrons of pelicans over the first lake of the Delta. Beating of wings from pelican feeding frenzy. Appreciation of care taken to prepare vegetarian meals

Birgit - Orchids at Babadag, the colourful birds (kingfisher, roller, bee-eater) and pelican 'race'. Wide knowledge of our guides. Wonderful decoration of the origami table napkins by Elena and the tasty food of Onita. Professional 'rescue' of the floating hotel. Nice members of the Honeyguide group.

David & Judith - from orchids to floating reedbeds, from solitary firecrest to squadrons of pelicans, from meadow butterflies to wild bears, we saw a spectacle of nature that we shall never forget

Mick - Pelicans, brilliant guides (Florin, Mihai & Rob), an understanding of the Danube Delta as a dynamic, constantly changing environment.

Dianna & David - the knowledge, enthusiasm, patience and kindness of our guides and all our hosts. Bear behaviour. Floating about on the Delta in rain and shine, always with a frog chorus. The squadron of pelicans taking flight and Mr Dudu's bus - amazing engineering!

Denise - Wonderfully hot showers on the floating hotel and Elena's amazing origami. Firecrest, dipper and the protective mother bear and her two tiny cubs. Sura Sailor guesthouse in Vulcan.



Caspian tern, black-necked grebes.

WILDLIFE LISTS

DD = Danube Delta

Do = Dobrogea

BIRDS	
Red-necked grebe	Two on coastal lake on first day in Do. Small numbers in DD.
Great crested grebe	Common in DD and coastal lakes in Do.
Black-necked grebe	Several at Vadu, few seen in DD.
Little grebe	Heard on several days in DD
White pelican	Large flock on coastal lake on first day in Do. Common in DD
Dalmatian pelican	Small numbers seen daily in DD
Cormorant	Large colony on coastal lake on first day in Do.
Pygmy cormorant	Several with cormorants on coastal lake on first day in Do. Common in DD.
Grey heron	A few seen around the coast in Do. Common in DD.
Purple heron	One at Vadu in Do. Locally abundant in DD.
Great white egret	One at Vadu in Do. Common in DD.
Little egret	Common in DD and coastal lakes in Do.
Squacco heron	One at Vadu in Do, common in DD.
Night heron	Two at Vadu in Do. Common in DD.
Little bittern	A few seen daily in DD
Bittern	Heard booming in DD
White stork	Common in agricultural areas of DD and Do. Nests in many villages.
Glossy ibis	Small numbers seen at wetlands in Do, daily in DD
Mute swan	Large flock on coastal lakes on first day in Do. Small numbers daily in DD and Do.
Greylag goose	Small numbers daily in DD.
Shelduck	Several at Vadu (Do).
Ruddy shelduck	Several at Vado (Do)
Gadwall	Small numbers daily in DD, also in coastal Do.
Mallard	Small numbers daily in DD and Do.
Garganey	Around 20 at Vadu (Do), also in DD.
Shoveler	Small numbers at Vadu (Do.)
Red-crested pochard	Several at Vadu (Do.)
Pochard	Flock of around 50 birds at Vadu (Do.)
Ferruginous duck	Small numbers at Vadu (Do.)
Honey buzzard	Several at Celic Deri (Do.) and in Carpathians
White-tailed eagle	Six together at coastal lake on first day in Do. Several seen in DD.
Marsh harrier	Seen in most wetland sites visited in Do. Several hunting over arable fields at Deniz-Tepe. Seen daily in DD.
Common buzzard	Seen from minibus between airport and Tulcea. Several seen in Carpathians.
Long-legged buzzard	Several daily in Do.
Booted eagle	Two pale phase birds at Celic Deri and two at Deniz-Tete (Do).
Kestrel	Small numbers daily Do. Also in DD and Carpathians
Red-footed falcon	Around a dozen at Vadu (Do), locally common in DD.
Hobby	Singles at Deniz-Tepe and Vadu (Do). Common in DD - seen daily.
Pheasant	Singles seen from the bus each day in Do. Occasional birds seen in DD.
Moorhen	Several daily in DD.
Coot	Numerous daily in DD and coastal Do.
Black-winged stilt	Several at Vadu (Do). Also seen at several sites in DD.
Avocet	Several at Vadu (Do). Also seen at several sites in DD.

Stone-curlew	Two seen nr Tulcea (Do) on first day.
Collared pratincole	Several at Vadu (Do) and Letea (DD) and between Urzicni and Ploiesti on way to Carpathians
Lapwing	Several on route from Bucharest and at Vadu (Do).
Ringed plover	Several near Letea (DD)
Little ringed plover	Several near Letea (DD)
Kentish plover	Several near Letea (DD)
Common snipe	One at Vado (Do).
Black-tailed godwit	One at Vado (Do). Small numbers seen at several sites in DD.
Redshank	Several at Vadu (Do). Small numbers seen at several sites in DD.
Green sandpiper	One at Vadu (Do). Small numbers seen at several sites in DD.
Wood sandpiper	One at Vadu (Do).
Little stint	One near Letea (DD)
Ruff	One at Vadu (Do). Small numbers in DD with other waders
Caspian gull	Seen daily with some big flocks on larger lakes and on the coast.
Pallas's gull	Two adults over coastal lake on first day (Do). Small numbers seen most days in DD with flock of 50+ near Letea.
Black-headed gull	Seen in most freshwater wetlands visited in Do.
Little gull	Several on coastal pools at Vadu (Do).
Common tern	Four at Vadu (Do). Small numbers daily in DD and on the Black Sea coast.
Whiskered tern	The commonest tern. Seen at all wetland sites visited in Do. and abundant in DD.
Black tern	One at Vadu (Do). Also seen in small numbers in DD nesting among whiskered terns.
Rock dove/feral pigeon	Seen throughout
Stock dove	Single seen in DD.
Woodpigeon	Small numbers seen daily in DD and in Carpathians.
Turtle dove	Heard at Celic Deri (Do.). Small numbers seen most days in DD.
Collared dove	Common daily around habitation.
Cuckoo	Heard and seen Macin Mountains NP (Do.)
Little owl	Two on electricity poles at Deniz-Tepe (Do.)
Swift	Seen most days in Do and DD
Kingfisher	Seen on final day in DD.
Bee-eater	Seen daily in DD and Do, with colonies at Vado (Do).
Roller	Seen daily in DD and Do.
Hoopoe	Seen and heard both days in Do.
Middle spotted woodpecker	Heard and seen briefly at Celic Dere (Do.) and Letea Forest (DD)
Great spotted woodpecker	One seen briefly at Celic Dere (Do).
Black woodpecker	Heard only Celic Dere (Do.), Letea Forest (DD) and in the Carpathians
Grey-headed woodpecker	One seen well in DD and heard several times
Calandra lark	One near Vadu (Do.)
Short-toed lark	Seen and heard Deniz-Tepe (Do.)
Crested lark	Seen daily in Do.
Woodlark	Heard singing in Babadag Forest (Do.)
Skylark	Heard and seen next to coastal lake on first day in Do.
Sand martin	Small numbers in DD
Swallow	Common everywhere.
Red-rumped swallow	Small numbers both days in Do.
House martin	A few seen daily in DD and Do.
White wagtail	Seen daily in DD.
Yellow wagtail	Small numbers in DD.
Tawny pipit	A few seen in steppe habitats on both days in Do.
Firecrest	Seen both days in Carpathians
Dipper	One at Zarnesti Gorge
Wren	Heard in Carpathians
Blackbird	Seen daily in DD and Do.
Fieldfare	One carrying food at Bran
Song thrush	Seen daily in Carpathians
Mistle thrush	Seen daily in Carpathians
Cettis warbler	Heard on the way to Vulcan
Savi's warbler	Heard most days in DD.
Sedge warbler	A few daily in DD.
Paddyfield warbler	At least two at Vadu
Reed warbler	Heard at Vadu Do.
Marsh warbler	One between Urzicni and Ploiesti on way to Carpathians
Great reed warbler	Dozens singing from coastal lake on first day in Do.
Eastern olivaceous warbler	Heard and seen most days in DD
Icterine warbler	Heard at Celic Deri (Do)
Chiffchaff	Heard and seen most days in DD
Wood warbler	Heard & seen in Zarnesti Gorge, Carpathians
Blackcap	Heard and seen most days in DD
Garden warbler	Heard several times in DD. Also in Carpathians
Lesser whitethroat	Heard and seen most days in DD

Spotted flycatcher	Heard several times in wooded areas in DD
Collared flycatcher	Heard in Letea Forest
Red-breasted flycatcher	Heard and seen well at Celic Dere (Do).
Common nightingale	Heard singing in Macin Mountains NO (Do).
Thrush nightingale	Heard in several locations in DD
Redstart	Frequently heard singing from riverside trees in DD. Also in Letea Forest.
Black redstart	Seen in Carpathians
Stonechat	Single at Vadu (Do)
Northern wheatear	Two at Deniz-Tepe & one at Vadu (Do)
Pied wheatear	A male in Macin Mountains NP (Do).
Isabelline wheatear	A few seen daily on steppe grassland in Do.
Bearded tit	Heard at Vadu (Do). Seen regularly in DD.
Long-tailed tit	Small numbers seen in DD and Carpathians
Blue tit	Heard and seen daily
Great tit	Heard and seen daily
Marsh tit	One in Piatra Craiului National Park, Carpathians
Coal tit	Seen daily in Carpathians
Nuthatch	Heard and seen at Celic Dere (Do).
Penduline tit	Seen and heard daily in DD.
Golden oriole	Male seen well at Celic Dere and heard in most wooded habitats in Do.
Red-backed shrike	Several (all males!) seen in Do.
Lesser grey shrike	Two near Deniz-Tepe (Do).
Jay	Celic Dere (Do) and Carpathians
Magpie	Common throughout.
Jackdaw	Common throughout.
Rook	Flocks seen most days in DD and Do.
Raven	Seen daily in Carpathians
Hooded crow	Common throughout.
Starling	Common throughout.
Reed bunting	Small numbers in DD.
Ortolan bunting	A few each day in Do.
Corn bunting	Seen and heard both days in Do.
Chaffinch	Common throughout.
Greenfinch	Occasionally seen in DD and Do.
Goldfinch	Common throughout.
Linnet	Seen in Carpathians
Hawfinch	Heard and seen at Celic Dere and Babadag Forest (Do.)
House sparrow	Common throughout.
Spanish sparrow	Colonies in stork nests at two villages in coastal Do.
Tree sparrow	Seen in Carpathians



Ortolan bunting; golden jackal.

MAMMALS

European souslik	Golden jackal
Brown bear	

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Sand lizard	Eastern tree frog
Balkan green lizard	European pond terrapin
Grass snake	Fire-bellied toad (heard)
Marsh/Pool/Edible frog	Yellow-bellied toad

BUTTERFLIES

Essex skipper	Lesser spotted fritillary
Grizzled skipper	Small heath
Common swallowtail	Great-banded grayling
Large white	Wall brown
Small tortoiseshell	Meadow brown
Comma	Speckled wood

Painted lady	Grayling
Red admiral	Ilex hairstreak
Niobe fritillary	Large copper
Duke of Burgundy	Green-underwing blue
Cardinal	Small blue
Pale clouded yellow	Holly blue
Clouded yellow	Common blue
DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES	
Banded demoiselle	Blue emperor
Blue-tailed damselfly	Lesser emperor
Green-eyed (= Norfolk) hawk	Black-tailed skimmer
Scarlet darter	Scarce chaser
OTHER INVERTEBRATES	
Horsefly (<i>Hybomitra</i> spp.)	German wasp (<i>Vespula Germanic</i>)
Gypsy moth caterpillar	Paper wasp (<i>Polistes</i> sp.)
Rose chafer (<i>Cetonia aurata</i>)	Mammoth wasp (<i>Megascolia</i> sp.)
Great silver diving beetle (<i>Hydrophilus piceus</i>)	Violet carpenter bee (<i>Xylocopa</i> sp.)
European hornet (<i>Vespa crabro</i>)	Leaf cutter bee (<i>Megachile</i> sp.)
Common wasp (<i>Vespula vulgaris</i>)	Common carder bumblebee (<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>)
Nine-spotted moth (<i>Amata phegea</i>)	A potter wasp (<i>Delta unguiculatum</i>)
Black-veined moth	Roman snail

PLANTS 2024

This is a very incomplete list, mainly those plants we could identify from a boat on the delta and a mix of typical and special species of Dobrogea pointed out by Mihai.

FERNS AND ALLIES		
<i>Dryopteridaceae</i>		
Crested buckler fern	<i>Dryopteris cristata</i>	DD
<i>Equisetaceae</i>		
Field horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Do
Water horsetail	<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>	DD
<i>Hypolepidaceae</i>		
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Do
<i>Thelypteridaceae</i>		
Marsh Fern	<i>Thelypteris palustris</i>	DD
ANGIOSPERMS		
<i>Aceraceae</i>		
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	Do.
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Do.
<i>Anacardiaceae</i>		
Smoke bush	<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	Do.
<i>Apocynaceae</i>		
Montpelier scamomy plant	<i>Cynanchum acutum</i>	Do.
Silkvine	<i>Periploca graeca</i>	DD
White swallowwort	<i>Vincetoxicum hirundinaria</i>	Do
<i>Araliaceae</i>		
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Do
<i>Aristolochiaceae</i>		
European birthwort	<i>Aristolochia clematitis</i>	DD
<i>Asparagaceae</i>		
Climbing asparagus	<i>Asparagus verticillatus</i>	Do
	<i>Muscari tenuifolium</i>	Do
<i>Betulaceae</i>		
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	DD
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Do
Eastern Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus orientalis</i>	Do
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Do
<i>Boraginaceae</i>		
Honeywort	<i>Corinth minor</i>	Do
Italian bugloss	<i>Echium italicum</i>	Do
Viper's bugloss	<i>Echium vulgare</i>	Do
Water forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis scorpiodes</i>	Do
<i>Campanulaceae</i>		
Spreading bellflower	<i>Campanula patula</i>	Do
Rampion bellflower	<i>Campanula rapunculus</i>	
<i>Cannabaceae</i>		
Hop	<i>Humulus lupulus</i>	Do
<i>Caprifoliaceae</i>		
Common elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Do
Red-berried elder	<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>	DD
Wayfaring tree	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Do
<i>Caryophyllaceae</i>		

Hairy rupturewort	<i>Herbaria hirsuta</i>	Do
a sandwort	<i>Moehringia grisebachii</i>	Do
<i>Celastraceae</i>		
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaea</i>	Do
<i>Compositae</i>		
a yarrow	<i>Achillea clypeolata</i>	Do
a yarrow	<i>Achillea coarctata</i>	Do
Noble yarrow	<i>Achillea nobilis</i>	Do
a yarrow	<i>Achillea setacea</i>	Do
Wormwood	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	Do
a wormwood	<i>Artemisia austriaca</i>	Do
Tartarian southernwood	<i>Artemisia santonica</i>	Do
Upright cudweed	<i>Bombycilaena erecta</i>	Do
Musk thistle	<i>Carduus thoermeri</i>	Do
Nodding thistle	<i>Carduus nutans</i>	Do
Saffron thistle	<i>Carthusian lanatus</i>	Do
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Do
Yellow knapweed	<i>Centaurea orientalis</i>	Do
Bearded creeper	<i>Crupina vulgaris</i>	Do
Mouse-ear hawkweed	<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>	Do
	<i>Jurinea mollis</i>	Do
Nipplewort	<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Do
a cotton thistle	<i>Onopordum tauricum</i>	DD
Black salsify	<i>Scorzonera hispanica</i>	Do
A salsify	<i>Scorzonera mollis</i>	Do
Fen ragwort	<i>Senecio paludosus</i>	DD
a feverfew	<i>Tanacetum corymbosum</i>	Do
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Do.
Yellow salsify	<i>Tragopogon dubios</i>	Do.
<i>Convolvulaceae</i>		
Hedge bindweed	<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Do.
Field bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Do.
Cantabrian bindweed	<i>Convolvulus cantabricus</i>	Do.
Narrow-leaved bindweed	<i>Convolvulus lineatus</i>	Do.
<i>Cornaceae</i>		
Cornelian cherry	<i>Cornus mas</i>	Do.
<i>Crassulaceae</i>		
Orpine	<i>Sedum maximum</i>	Do.
<i>Cruciferae</i>		
Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolate</i>	Do.
Yellowtuft	<i>Alyssum murale</i>	Do.
Sea kale	<i>Crambe maritima</i>	Do.
Diffuse wallflower	<i>Erysimum diffusum</i>	Do.
Marsh Yellowcress	<i>Rorippa palustris</i>	Do.
Wild mignonette	<i>Reseda lutea</i>	Do.

Eastern rocket	<i>Sisymbrium orientale</i>	Do.
<i>Elaeagnaceae</i>		
Russian olive	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	Do.
<i>Euphorbiaceae</i>		
Nice spurge	<i>Euphorbia nicaeensis</i>	Do.
Sea spurge	<i>Euphorbia paralias</i>	Do.
Dog's mercury	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Do.
<i>Fabaceae</i>		
Hairy broom	<i>Cytisus hirsutus</i>	Do.
Thorny locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Do.
	<i>Ononis pussila</i>	Do
<i>Fagaceae</i>		
Pale oak	<i>Quercus pedunculiflora</i>	Do
Common oak	<i>Quercus pedunculata</i>	Do
Downy oak	<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Do
<i>Geraniaceae</i>		
Herb robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Do
<i>Hippocastanaceae</i>		
Horse chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Do
<i>Labiatae</i>		
Motherwort	<i>Leonurus cardiaca</i>	Do
Gypsywort	<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>	Do
A Horehound	<i>Marrubium peregrinum</i>	Do
Water mint	<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	DD
Horse mint	<i>Mentha longifolia</i>	Do
Pontic skullcap	<i>Scutellaria pontica</i>	Do
Downy woundwort	<i>Stachys germanica</i>	Do
Wall germander	<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	Do
Felty germander	<i>Teucrium polium</i>	Do
Hungarian thyme	<i>Thymus pannonicus</i>	Do
A thyme	<i>Thymus zygoides</i>	Do
<i>Lamiaceae</i>		
Woodland sage	<i>Salvia nemorosa</i>	Do
Blue savory	<i>Satureja caerulea</i>	Do
Stiff hedge nettle	<i>Stachys recta</i>	
<i>Leguminosae</i>		
False indigo bush	<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	DD
Milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus glycyphyllos</i>	Do
Crown vetch	<i>Coronilla varia</i>	Do
Bur medick	<i>Medicago minima</i>	Do
False acacia	<i>Robinia pseudacacia</i>	Do
Hop trefoil	<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Do
Common vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Do
Slender vetch	<i>Vicia tenuifolia</i>	Do
A sainfoin	<i>Onobrychis gracilis</i>	Do
<i>Linaceae</i>		
Asian flax	<i>Linum austriacum</i>	Do
Downy flax	<i>Linum hirsutum</i>	Do
Narrow-leaved flax	<i>Linum tenuifolium</i>	Do
<i>Malvaceae</i>		
Marsh mallow	<i>Althaea officinalis</i>	Do.
Common mallow	<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Do.
<i>Moraceae</i>		
White mulberry	<i>Morus alba</i>	Do
Black mulberry	<i>Morus nigra</i>	Do
<i>Nymphaeaceae</i>		
Yellow water-lily	<i>Nuphar lutea</i>	DD
White water-lily	<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	DD
Fringed water-lily		DD
<i>Orobanchaeae</i>		
a broomrape	<i>Orobanche laevis</i>	Do
<i>Oleaceae</i>		
Canadian ash	<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	DD
Narrow-leaved ash	<i>Fraxinus angustifolia</i>	Do.
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Do
<i>Onograceae</i>		
Evening primrose	<i>Oenothera sp.</i>	Do.
<i>Paeoniaceae</i>		
Balkan paeony	<i>Paeonia peregrina</i>	Do
<i>Plantaginaceae</i>		
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Do
<i>Polygalaceae</i>		
Great milkwort	<i>Polygala major</i>	Do
<i>Polygonaceae</i>		
Sheep sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Do
Water dock	<i>Rumex hydrolapathum</i>	DD

<i>Primulaceae</i>		
Water-violet	<i>Hottonia palustris</i>	DD
Creeping jenny	<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	Do
<i>Ranunculaceae</i>		
Pheasant's eye	<i>Adonis vernalis</i>	Do
Wood anemone	<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	Do
Marsh marigold	<i>Caltha palustris</i>	DD
Solitary clematis	<i>Clematis integrifolia</i>	Do
Traveller's joy	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Do
Eastern larkspur	<i>Consolida orientalis</i>	Do
Forking larkspur	<i>Consolida regalis</i>	Do
<i>Rosaceae</i>		
Cornelian cherry	<i>Cornus mas</i>	Do
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	DD, Do
Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Do.
Hoary cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla argentea</i>	Do
a cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla bornmuelleri</i>	Do
Marsh cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla palustris</i>	DD
a cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla taurica</i>	Do.
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Do.
Cherry plum	<i>Prunus cerasifera</i>	DD, Do
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Do.
European wild pear	<i>Pyrus pyraeaster</i>	Do.
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	DD, Do
Raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Do.
Salad burnet	<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Do.
Wayfaring tree	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Do.
<i>Rubiaceae</i>		
a bedstraw	<i>Galium dasypodum</i>	Do.
Spreading bedstraw	<i>Galium humifusum</i>	Do.
Sweet woodruff	<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Do.
<i>Rutaceae</i>		
Fragrant yellow-rue	<i>Haplophyllum ciliatum</i>	Do.
<i>Salicaceae</i>		
Black poplar	<i>Populus nigra</i>	DD, Do
Hybrid poplar	<i>Populus x canadensis</i>	DD, Do
White poplar	<i>Populus alba</i>	DD
White willow	<i>Salix alba</i>	DD, Do
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	DD, Do
Grey willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	DD, Do
Crack willow	<i>Salix fragilis</i>	DD
Purple willow	<i>Salix purpurea</i>	DD, Do
Almond willow	<i>Salix triandra</i>	DD
<i>Scrophulariaceae</i>		
Field cow-wheat	<i>Melampyrum arvense</i>	Do
A mullein	<i>Verbascum banaticum</i>	Do
Orange mullein	<i>Verbascum phlomoides</i>	Do
Great mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	Do
<i>Simaroubaceae</i>		
Tree of heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Do
<i>Tamaricaceae</i>		
Tamarisk	<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	DD
<i>Tiliaceae</i>		
Small-leaved lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Do
<i>Ulmaceae</i>		
Wych elm	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Do
Field elm	<i>Ulmus minor</i>	Do
<i>Umbelliferae</i>		
Chervil	<i>Anthriscus cerefolium</i>	Do.
Wild carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	DD
Field eryngo	<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Do
Sea holly	<i>Eryngium maritimum</i>	Do
a ferulago	<i>Ferulago confusa</i>	Do
Milk-parsley	<i>Peucedanum palustre</i>	DD
Sanicle	<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	Do
Upright hedge-parsley	<i>Torilis japonica</i>	Do
<i>Vitaceae</i>		

Grape vine	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	DD
Urticaceae		
Stinging nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	DD
Monocotyledon families		
Alismataceae		
Water plantain	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	DD
Alliaceae		
Sicilian honey-garlic	<i>Nectaroscordum siculum</i>	Do.
Araceae		
Eastern arum	<i>Arum orientale</i>	Do
Butomaceae		
Flowering rush	<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	DD
Cyperaceae		
Lesser pond sedge	<i>Carex acutiformis</i>	DD
Fibrous tussock sedge	<i>Carex appropinquata</i>	DD
Water-chestnut	<i>Eleocharis dulcis</i>	DD
Grey club-rush	<i>Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani</i>	DD
Gramineae		
Jointed goat-grass	<i>Aegylops cylindrica</i>	Do
Crested wheat-grass	<i>Agropogon cristatum</i>	Do
Tall wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron elongated</i>	Do
Creeping bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Do
Soft brome	<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Do
Rough brome	<i>Bromus squarrosus</i>	Do
Downy brome	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>	Do
a beard-grass	<i>Chrysopogon gryllus</i>	Do
Bermuda grass	<i>Cynodon dactyl</i>	Do
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Do
Yellow bluestem	<i>Dichanthium ischaemum</i>	Do
Volga fescue	<i>Festuca valesiaca</i>	Do
Reed sweet-grass	<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	DD
Sea barley	<i>Hordium marinum</i>	Do
	<i>Koeleria brevis</i>	Do
Purple-stem cat's-tail	<i>Phleum phleoides</i>	D.
Common reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	DD, Do
Narrow-leaved meadow-grass	<i>Poa angustifolia</i>	Do
Bulbous meadow-grass	<i>Poa bulbosa</i>	Do
Slender feather-grass	<i>Stipa capillata</i>	Do
Lessing feather-grass	<i>Stipa lessingiana</i>	Do
Ukrainian feather-grass	<i>Stipa ucrainica</i>	Do
Hydrocharitaceae		
Frog-bit	<i>Hydrocharis morus-ranea</i>	DD
Water soldier	<i>Stratoides aloides</i>	DD
Iridaceae		
Yellow flag	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	DD
an Iris	<i>Iris sintensii</i>	Do
an Iris	<i>Iris suaveolens</i>	Do
Pygmy iris	<i>Iris pumila</i>	Do
Juncaceae		
Saltmarsh rush	<i>Juncus gerardi</i>	Do
Liliaceae		
Branched St Bernard's-lily	<i>Anthericum ramosum</i>	Do
Melanthiaceae		
Black false hellebore	<i>Veratrum nigrum</i>	Do
Orchidaceae		
Pyramidal orchid	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Do
A robust marsh orchid	<i>Anacamptis palustris</i>	DD
White helleborine	<i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	Ca.
Broad-leaved marsh orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza majalis</i>	DD
Fragrant orchid	<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	Ca
Lizard orchid	<i>Himantoglossum jankae</i>	Do
Violet birdsnest orchid	<i>Limodorum abortivum</i>	Do
Lady orchid	<i>Orchis purpurea</i>	Do
Three-toothed orchid	<i>Orchis tridentata</i>	Do

Lesser butterfly orchid	<i>Plantanthera bifolia</i>	DD
Typhaceae		
Lesser reedmace	<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	DD
Great reedmace	<i>Typha latifolia</i>	DD



Lesser butterfly orchid and *Anacamptis palustris* (BP).



Periploca graeca.



Nine-spotted moths *Amata phegea* (BP)