

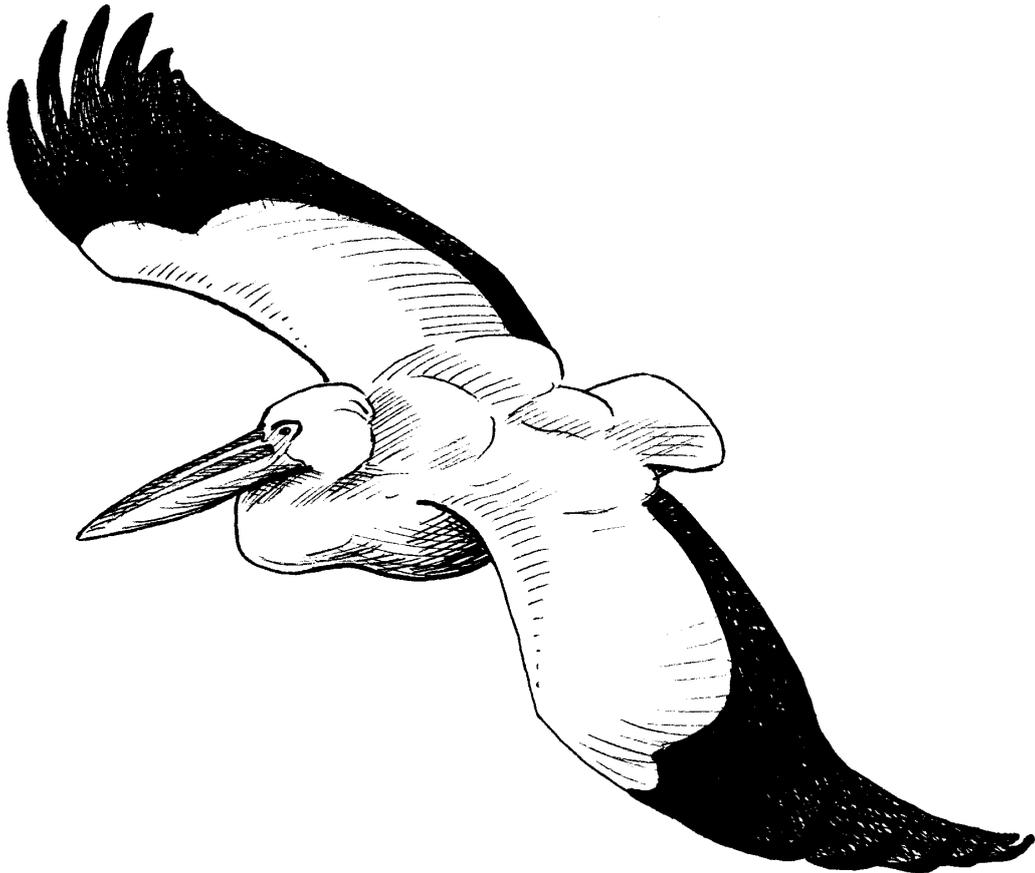
Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Danube Delta
5 – 12 June 1999

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The group

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| | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| <u>Leaders:</u> | Eugen Petrescu of Ibis | Tulcea, Romania |
| | Mihai Petrescu of Ibis | Tulcea, Romania |
| | Chris Durdin | Norwich |

With commiserations to Alan Hull of Maidstone who had to withdraw on the day of departure due to a bad back.

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. The conservation contribution this year of £25 per person, £200, was given to the young ornithologists group in Tulcea, *Falco cherrug* (the saker falcon). This brings the total given to various conservation projects in Europe to more than £3,000 in 1999, and more than £17,000 since the start of Honeyguide. A thank-you letter appears at the end of this report (though not on this web version).

Report written by Chris Durdin, with plant lists by Mihai Petrescu.
Illustrations by Rob Hume. Cover: white pelicans

Danube Delta 5 – 12 June 1999

Saturday 5 June – Bucharest to Tulcea

Nine gathered at Gatwick; a telephone message established that the tenth wouldn't be able to. As this took time to establish the final check-ins were a little hurried, with the almost inevitable result, airports being what they are, that hurry turned to waiting as the flight was delayed by an hour. But the flight was smooth and a little time was made up. Bucharest Otopeni airport had been much modernised since I was there last year, and getting visas proved less bureaucratic than one comes to expect. Dominic of Ibis Tours greeted us, along with driver Dan who was to be with us whenever we were land-based. The first part of the journey out of the airport, parallel to a railway line, is a short-cut they nicknamed the Grand Canyon on account of the somewhat irregular road surface. But this was by no means the pattern for the journey as once we'd joined the main road east it was plain sailing, or rather driving, from then on.

The scenery is generally open, punctuated by towns and woodlands, with often large fields with sometimes uniform crops and elsewhere mixed crops in strips. Everywhere there were people in the fields, mostly hoeing, sometimes by the roadsides loading hay into horse- or donkey-drawn carts, so much a feature of life here; the carts increased in frequency the nearer to Tulcea we reached. White storks on nests had large, fluffy-white youngsters, and the first roller was glimpsed. Half way there was a stop for a beer or other drink, and the change of plan to an overnight stay to a hotel in Tulcea was explained, prompting Bradbury to enlighten us with stories of other east European wildlife holidays with far more radical changes in the day-to-day arrangements. More rollers were promised, not in the least rashly as four more appeared on roadside wire in the next few kilometres. Farther east still and we passed flooded areas, crossed the Danube (surprisingly bluish in colour so far from Vienna), dozens of storks, little egrets and our first flying spoonbill.

And so to Tulcea, gateway to the Danube Delta, exactly five hours after leaving the airport. We quickly decamped into the centrally located Hotel Europolis, and in no time we were walking the three minutes or so to the Restaurant Select. Well-selected by Ibis it was, too, as the service was good and the food excellent. Conversation soon moved away from wildlife and holidays to what type of fish we were eating dancing, and the history of the Black Sea – and that all at one end of the table only.

Sunday 6 June – Celic Dere nunnery, Babadag forest and Enisala

The hotel is basic but the beds comfortable and the plumbing good, though a wedding party downstairs meant a disturbed night for some. Breakfast of bread, jam and omelettes was good, and soon it was nine o'clock and the minibus was outside. A bevy of wildlife talent was also lined up. Bird leader Eugen Petrescu, top of the pecking order; Danube Delta conservation officer for the Romanian Ornithological Society, and original driving force behind Ibis and almost anything to do with birds in on the delta. Botanist Mihai Petrescu (no relation), urbane, astonishingly fluent in English, as enthusiastic about his plants as Eugen is on his birds; we'd expected him to be with us in Dobrogea (the land area around the delta), but learnt he was to be with us all week, a real bonus. And finally Tutu and Danny, two 15 year olds from *Falco cherrug*, who impressed us all with their wildlife knowledge, social skills and command of English and surely destined to be key figures in the Danube Delta in the future in some shape or form.

Short-toed eagle and long-legged buzzard were stopped for or logged from the bus as we drove to Celic Dere nunnery. A levant sparrowhawk flew through as we looked around this attractive spot, the more so for it being Sunday as we were later to hear the strains of singing from the church. A long list of flowers was soon underway; happily Mihai compiled these later into the lists at the back of this report. But two notable stars were the brownish-flowered Grecian foxglove *Digitalis lanata*, a Balkan species, and the many leaves of the peony *Paeonia peregrinus*.

In Babadag forest, we made four stops, the first of these for a picnic lunch, accompanied in the clearing by clouded apollo and brown argus butterflies. Mulleins one expects to be yellow; here was the purple-flowered *Verbascum phoeniceum*. The second was a brief one to look for the large-leaved Hungarian oak, which Mihai had explained as being a key component of the woodland type here, along with the

also large-leaved elm *Ulmus montana* and manna ash. For native species like these Mihai used the word 'spontaneous'; for what we would call established aliens, like oleaster, 'sub-spontaneous', but sadly he soon picked up the more conventional English usage.

The third stop was for some more intensive botanising, albeit with the distraction of a chestnut heath butterfly soon transferred from net to pot. It was a good spot for orchids: red helleborine, pyramidal orchid, and the two saprophytic species, birdsnest and violet birdsnest orchids, under the trees. Mihai later gave this as his best bit of the week. Also there were *Iris sintenisii* (one of many species not in the Mediterranean flower book) and the widespread yellow yarrow *Achillea coarctata*. Fourthly, across the road, we walked through more scrub and past many wild flowers, and found red-backed shrike and heard several ortolan buntings before refinding the bus a little farther along.

Enisala hill gives a fine yet relaxed view over an edge of the Danube Delta. A Dalmation pelican drifted slowly past; the scarcer of the two species, and often solitary, but nonetheless seen most days. Looking down into the reedbed edge, there was great reed warbler singing and a ferruginous duck. In the meantime, a coach load of Japanese tourists arrived. The Ibis minibus takes readily to tracks across fields, and so we went past calandra larks down to the twin lagoons. Birdwatching around a lagoon felt good - reminiscent of the Norfolk or Suffolk coast, perhaps; or maybe simply because birds like avocet, black-winged stilt, common and whiskered terns are easy and a delight to see anywhere. Past various ducks, including red-crested pochard, and there was a singing great reed warbler so still in the reeds at the back of the lagoon that his orange gape could be seen.

The minibus was in the shade and took us to the final and most colourful stop of the day, a bee-eater colony. No-one who has ever seen a bee-eater or even a picture of one needs persuading that they are stunning birds, yet here they had rivals for attention: two rollers; a little owl, then two, on the sand cliff; and tree sparrows, swifts and purple herons. After all this, not surprisingly we were anything but promptly back in Tulcea, where we quickly gathered ourselves and again to supper at the Restaurant Select.

Monday 7 June – Denistepe Hill, Histria and Vado by the Black Sea

Denistepe Hill, south of Tulcea, was our first stop. Eugene was disappointed that a shepherd and his flock walking ahead of us meant we were unable to find stone-curlew, but those within striking distance of the English Brecks were distinctly unworried as there were plenty of equally glamorous birds. Tawny pipits, upright, long-legged and unstreaky, are always good to see: the male's call is someone calling 'Cherie, Cherie', I advised. And the female calls back 'Tony, Tony', suggested Bradbury. Another peg to hand information about bird song also came in here, the Beethoven's fifth song of the many ortolan buntings that were so characteristic here and elsewhere. Birds of prey are supposed to rise early here, perhaps tempted by the many susliks (ground squirrels), and a fine pair of short-toed eagles was followed by a pale phase booted.

A large group of Danish visitors was arriving as we left to explore the poplars (Romanian = plop, now there's a memorable name) around the nearby farmhouse. The quest was for Spanish sparrows, which we found among the many house sparrows.

Lunch was at Istria where a rudimentary hide offered shade from another hot day as we looked out onto the marshes and Lake Istria beyond. A pratincole appeared, then more, red-crested pochards and a flying pelican flock, including a Dalmation. A pink under our feet was *Dianthus polymorphus*, a Pontic species. We then walked along the road with reeds either side, hearing many great reed warblers and reed warblers, but only glimpses and snatches of song of the paddyfield warbler that seems to like marginal habitat of reed edge as it abuts saltmarsh. At the end of this road is the Greco-Roman fortress of Istria. Postcards were bought but the ruins not visited. Five spoonbills flew past and a recently dead paddyfield warbler was being chewed by a local dog.

One of the great sights in Dobrogea, rivalling even pelicans and rollers, are the fields, or strips in fields depending on the success of herbicide applications, of the striking, purplish-violet Eastern larkspur *Consolida orientalis*. We stopped for photographs of the larkspur, and for red-footed falcons as we headed farther south still to Vado. First stop here was to overlook a lagoon almost in the shadow of a large heavy metal plant, now ramshackle and redundant. It is like a folly from the previous regime, a

fruitless attempt to exploit heavy metals present in tiny quantity in the Delta's sands. But our eyes were mainly on the birds, not least a small flock of delicate marsh sandpipers: perhaps non-breeding birds rather than either going north or returning from the north. Curlew sandpipers, garganeys, black-tailed godwits and more pratincoles were noted. In the meantime, on nearby wires and pylons, were at least three cuckoos, one a striking-looking rufous phase female. Then a few yards around the corner, where the reeds petered out, a warbler singing in frame-filling telescope view. It was a paddyfield warbler, the best view that one could ever wish for, but nonetheless a little brown job with a less than inspiring song.

There was more: another lagoon, the settling tank, as was, for the old factory. Three broad-billed sandpipers were an excellent wader to find here, along with little stints and little gulls that we always thought Eugen was calling little girls. Zank heaven for little gulls, which grow up in a delightful way to gain adult plumage with a distinctive dark underwing. We walked around the lagoon and looked out onto low saltmarsh with 40 pratincoles, evidently a breeding colony as there were chicks.

Finally, a short trip to see the Black Sea. Dan the driver got out his fishing rod, some paddled, others looked at Kentish plovers and gulls. Then, returning, a large orchid in the marsh was found, inciting vigorous debate – of which more later. A late return to Tulcea and another fine meal in the Restaurant Select.

Tuesday 8 June – Day 1 in the Delta: Channel 35 to Maliuc

Bags were packed and we took a short walk from the Hotel Europolis to the quay at Tulcea. The bags were loaded onto what was to be our base for the rest of the week, Ibis's carefully renovated flagship. They call it a pontoon – it has to be towed – some would say a floating hotel; it's somehow more than the former and less than the latter. However we were to board a smaller boat for the morning. This took us out of the port of Tulcea, passed various small naval vessels and miscellaneous commercial craft of various sizes, and left into Channel 35. This channel, named after its kilometre mark, soon became a riverine forest, mainly of white and grey willows and white poplar, with a fair scattering of the non-native pea family shrub, *Amorpha fruticosa*, and American ash *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*. The birds demanded attention: hoopoes, kingfishers, night heron, redstart and cuckoos. Icterine warbler was heard from the wet wood. The glamour of the birds increased as we travelled into the delta's core: squacco herons, glossy ibis and the sounds of golden orioles. A short shower of rain came to nothing. In a lake just of the channel, red-necked grebes – with red necks, none of your obscure winter plumage birds here – had stripey-headed youngsters. Then a great surprise: a large mammal swimming across the channel, swiftly identified by Eugen as racoon dog. Introduced from eastern Asia into European Russia, we gathered they had spread into the delta some 30 years ago. Then another mammal, a muskrat towing a reed, a species introduced from N America and rather like a small coypu.

Into a smaller channel, the boat sometimes pushing aside branches. Despite it being a well-wooded channel, the sudden appearance of flights of pelicans was a reminder of the wider delta beyond. These were soon outdone by two distractions in the sky; firstly a white-tailed eagle, secondly a surprising rainbow effect, almost Northern Lights in style, and apparently nothing to do with rain. The third grass snake of the morning swam away; the white-tailed eagle re-appeared; and orioles disappeared into poplars. Pygmy cormorants were everywhere, sometimes singly, sometimes little clusters on dead trees.

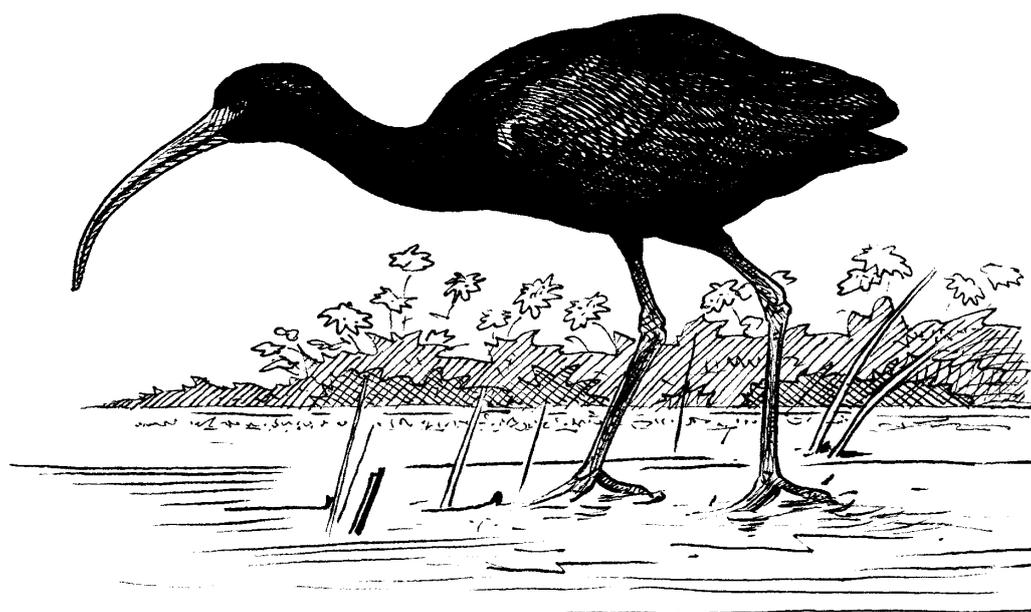
And rollers, always rollers. Flying out of channel-side trees, perched on wires, singly, in twos, threes and fours, bold, bright and numerous, though rarely rolling. We're conditioned to expect rollers in dry country in central Spain or southern France, but here they are common in wetland habitats, especially wooded or mixed, as well as on roadside wires outside the delta.

In the meantime, the pontoon had been towed into the delta long one of the more major waterways. We rendez-vous'ed at Maliuc, found our cabins for the next few days, and met Viorica, the cook, and Costica, the waiter. Lunch started with soup – ciorba – as usual, and we soon found that meals on the Ibis pontoon are every bit as good as the Restaurant Select. Then a siesta; most civilised. Bryan G and I went on shore and looked around the park, finding a redstart family and what looked like a middle spotted woodpecker which then turned out to be a young Syrian as it was fed by its parents.

The 4.30 outing trip was at first by boat, but soon we transferred into two rowing boats, to be impressed by both the wildlife and the rowing prowess of the crew, not least through sometimes thick water weed. Mihai showed us many plants and grey-headed woodpecker and stock doves were new birds. But the most memorable sight was scores of whiskered terns, dipping lightly into the water, including one without the usual black belly (probably a first year bird). Then back to the pontoon for another excellent meal.

Wednesday 9 June – Day 2 in the Delta: Maliuc to Caraorman

The day started with a pre-breakfast walk at Maliuc, Eugen's home village, with everyone except Sara and Mihai making the early start, to their later regret. In the park by the boat were olivaceous warbler, redstarts and lesser whitethroat. Round the edge of the village, we could see how high the water level was this year; it was as if there were moats around the livestock and their rustic shelters. Eugen's enthusiasm for woodpeckers was rewarded by an excellent view of grey-headed woodpecker for us all (green, by contrast, are only in Dobrogea and rather scarce), and on the way back by the flash of a black woodpecker, though not, on this occasion, seen well. We walked to the old fishponds at the edge of the village where, for many of us, was the sight of the week. Black-necked grebes – dozens of them – on their floating nests of water weed among colourful sheets of yellow-flowered fringed waterlilies, surrounded by scores of whiskered terns, also nesting on the waterlilies, often carrying bits of weed, and always calling. The fact that the grebes choose to nest with the protection of the feisty terns added to the interest, evidenced as a hooded crow was harassed by the terns, though not before it grabbed a coot chick. A sample of greater bladderwort pulled from the water delighted Mihai; comfrey growing here he identified as a local subspecies *Symphytum officinale uliginosum*.



Glossy ibis

The pontoon was then towed to Caraorman, past inlets with whiskered terns, many wonderful glossy ibises, great white egrets and sand spits – the original mouth of the delta. At Caraorman – black forest in Turkish – there is another of Ceaucescu's follies, again works to take heavy metals from the sand, this time with never-completed blocks of flats for the workers. Wildlife is reclaiming the factory, with black redstarts, kestrels and swallows nesting. The lagoon had stilts, avocets, migrant black-tailed godwits and a host of small frogs around the edge. The village of Caraorman has cottages built in traditional style and materials, no doubt disapproved of by the previous administration, which Eugen led us past to a nest of Syrian woodpeckers he knew of – outside someone's front door.

Nearby, Mary and Mihai were in conversation, of sorts, with a local lady: of sorts as the local people are of Ukrainian origin so even Mihai's linguistic skills were tested. She fetched Mary a wonderful posy of white lilies from her garden. I hadn't realised at that point, though Mary had, that the village lady was blind, attracted by the sound of voices.

Not far away, we saw crested larks and the local white stork nest, and beyond a smallholding being cleared by hand for cultivation, Eugen pointed out a hay meadow of orchids. Having ascertained that they were all due to be cut tomorrow, three orchids were picked for later identification – the same species as the day before yesterday's. Back on the pontoon, they were put with the lilies in a vase on the table and admired as we ate stuffed vine leaves.

During a post-punch siesta, a couple of young penduline tits were in the willow by the boat, as was a probable (from that distance) lesser purple emperor butterfly. Mihai swam. Then another boat trip, in search of woodpeckers and other things. We found grey-headed – there are no green woodpeckers in the delta – and great spotted woodpecker; the latter more-or-less replaces Syrian woodpecker which is the village woodpecker in this area. We heard lots of penduline tits, and there were small, loose groups of both night and squacco herons. We were shown reed 'hover', as we call it in Norfolk, reeds that are growing over the water rather than rooted, here growing with marsh fern. An attractive sunset, albeit behind pylons, was there as we approached the pontoon – as was a young long-eared owl on a charred willow stump right by where we were moored.

Thursday 10 June - Day 3 in the Delta: Caraorman, Mila 23 and return to Tulcea.

A seven o'clock start for a boat trip first took us past a flock of white pelicans that were close to the pontoon. It's amazing how sometimes they feed in unison, dipping heads and pouches into the water like a many-headed animal. We noted how the great white egrets looked taller than the grey herons; and it was an especially good morning for little bitterns with their song like a distant, muffled dog.

Most of the day, after breakfast, was taken up with the journey home. Not that travelling here is arduous, as the tug towed the pontoon, with us on board, down the original Danube's course along a large M-shape instead of the short-cut for commercial traffic. We passed the village Mila 23, named after its position by the milepost of the same number, with its intricate woodwork and patterns on the gable ends of houses, all different, to guard against evil spirits for the old Russian Orthodox Lipovans living here.

A river side stop and walk allowed good views of hobby and red-footed falcons, though we were mainly in search of bluethroats (not found) and penduline tits. For the latter, Eugen spotted the intricate weaver-bird style nest strung from the end of a willow branch. We waited, and some had good but incredibly brief views as the birds shot in and out of the nest. A large copper butterfly and lesser purple emperors were seen.

So after lunch, a relaxed cruise back to Tulcea, with time for a relaxed beer or two, to read, write, compare field guides, sunbath or argue over orchid identification. There were two in the book: loose-flowered orchid and bog orchid. They can't be the former, I argued, as they are so different from those I had often seen in The Lot, France. They are not the latter, insisted Mihai, as not only does the Romanian flora say they don't occur (but can be confused with the former) but various things on flower and leaf structure didn't fit. But something else (I forget what now) and the lack of loose-floweredness, didn't fit the former, I countered. Follow this? Don't bother, as all the books came out, and we finally agreed on a distinct eastern subspecies of loose-flowered orchid *Orchis laxiflora elegans*.

Two new birds to the list on the return journey; tufted ducks, not far from Tulcea, and two white-winged black terns, if a little distant. Better still was a good view of black woodpeckers on the dead tops of trees. The level of the water was definitely dropping on the last leg, exposing mud with a sprinkling of green sandpipers.

Friday 11 June – Macin Mountains and Cheia gorge

Our bonus day, back in Dobrogea, took us well inland, joined by another of Eugen's *Falco cherrug* group, Ando. The drive to the Macin Mountains took us past the one large area of the Delta upstream of Tulcea, with the usual wetland birds sprinkled liberally with bee-eaters, rollers and birds of prey. It was hot; we were grateful for the Ibis air-conditioned bus.

Eugen, as ever, had all the birds ordered and organised with astonishing efficiency. Firstly rock thrushes, including brilliantly marked males, tempted quite close by the CD player with sounds of a competing male bird in his territory. Perhaps oddest of all was a brief burst of singing nightjar in the bright, hot morning. A range of unusual plants included the bellflower *Campanula romanica*. There were wheatears, ortolan buntings, barred warbler in scrub and our first woodchat shrike, and we returned to the bus to find Brian G had found isabelline wheatear right there.

Farther along at the second stop in the Macin Mountains was a curious wood pasture habitat, not unlike Spanish dehesa on a small scale, and offering welcome shade to man and sheep. One target here was the scarce saker falcon – *Falco cherrug*, as in Eugen's young birdwatchers group – and there it was, circling upwards and away, almost as soon as we stepped outside into the heat. A wryneck sat for ages in clear view on a dead treetop, and an icterine warbler sang as if singing had just been invented – or perhaps simply as this was the first time it had heard Eugen's CD. Greenfinch and rather variable hawfinch views added two more to the list.

A consensus was reached to travel to Cheia gorge, which we did through the heat of the afternoon in the air-conditioned bus, but it was still like stepping out into an oven as we reached this attractive gorge in the late afternoon. We learned later that Tulcea had been 37°C in the shade. The bird luring us here appeared without delay, a smart male pied wheatear, then a female, and two males interacting. Stonechat, cuckoo, ortolan bunting, crested lark, linnets and a rather odd-looking pale buzzard were all noted in our brief visit before we headed back to the pontoon at Tulcea.

There were various moments over our last supper as we reflected on Honeyguide's first Danube Delta holiday. Most memorable was Mihai being overcome, speechless, as we presented first Blamey & Grey-Wilson's Mediterranean Wild Flowers then Polunin's Flowers of Greece and the Balkans, jointly bought by the group from Sara and myself as these books are so hard to come by in Romania. It prompted the question: how does one make Eugen speechless?

Saturday 12 June – Tulcea to Bucharest

We were joined after breakfast by Ando and his mother, a local teacher who, with Eugen, runs the *Falco cherrug* young birdwatchers' group. The usual Honeyguide donation of £25 per person translated to \$310 which was very gratefully received. We were all loaded on the bus before 9 a.m., which then wouldn't start, the battery no doubt run down after heavy use of the air conditioning yesterday. But it was up and running in an instant with jump leads, and away we went, accompanied by Dominic's mother (for a hospital appointment in Bucharest) and Daniel Petrescu. Just beyond the Hotel Europolis in Tulcea we had a brief stop at the market to buy honey and cherries. "Everything is possible in Romania", I remember Daniel saying before the recce a year ago. Visit the Eiffel Tower: no problem. There is a large model of it about halfway, alongside Southfork (the Dallas ranch), built by an entrepreneur after the collapse of Communism. He is now in jail due to large-scale financial irregularities, we learned. The place so absurd it is interesting, and in any event makes a good stop for a drink and picnic lunch. The return journey took us past more black and white mulberries than you could count, dropping fruit over the road, and five and a half hours later (including picnic stop) we were at the airport.

Chris Durdin

BIRD LIST

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Great crested grebe | Ringed plover | White wagtail |
| Red-necked grebe | Kentish plover | Nightingale H |
| Black-necked grebe | Lapwing | Black redstart |
| Cormorant | Little stint | Redstart |
| Pigmy cormorant | Curlew sandpiper | Stonechat |
| White pelican | Broad-billed sandpiper | Isabelline wheatear |
| Dalmatian pelican | Ruff | Wheatear |
| Little bittern | Black-tailed godwit | Pied wheatear |
| Night heron | Redshank | Rock thrush |
| Squacco heron | Marsh sandpiper | Blackbird |
| Little egret | Green sandpiper | Savi's warbler H |
| Great white egret | Mediterranean gull | Sedge warbler H |
| Grey heron | Little gull | Paddyfield warbler |
| Purple heron | Black-headed gull | Reed warbler |
| White stork | Herring gull | Great reed warbler |
| Glossy ibis | Yellow-legged gull | Olivaceous warbler |
| Spoonbill | Common tern | Icterine warbler |
| Mute swan | Little tern | Lesser whitethroat |
| Greylag goose | Whiskered tern | Blackcap |
| Shelduck | White-winged black tern | Wood warbler H |
| Gadwall | Stock dove | Chiffchaff H |
| Teal | Woodpigeon | Bearded tit |
| Mallard | Feral pigeon | Long-tailed tit |
| Garganey | Collared dove | Blue tit |
| Shoveler | Turtle dove | Great tit |
| Red-crested pochard | Cuckoo | Treecreeper sp. |
| Pochard | Little owl | Penduline tit |
| Ferruginous duck | Long-eared owl | Golden oriole |
| Tufted duck | Nightjar H | Red-backed shrike |
| Honey buzzard | Swift | Lesser grey shrike |
| White-tailed eagle | Kingfisher | Woodchat shrike |
| Short-toed eagle | Bee-eater | Magpie |
| Marsh harrier | Roller | Jackdaw |
| Sparrowhawk | Hoopoe | Rook |
| Levant sparrowhawk | Wryneck | Hooded crow |
| Buzzard | Grey-headed woodpecker | Starling |
| Long-legged buzzard | Green woodpecker | House sparrow |
| Lesser spotted eagle | Black woodpecker | Spanish sparrow |
| Booted eagle | Great spotted woodpecker | Tree sparrow |
| Kestrel | Syrian woodpecker | Chaffinch |
| Hobby | Middle spotted woodpecker | Greenfinch |
| Red-footed falcon | Lesser spotted woodpecker | Goldfinch |
| Saker falcon | Calandra lark | Linnet |
| Grey partridge | Crested lark | Hawfinch |
| Pheasant | Woodlark | Yellowhammer |
| Moorhen | Skylark | Ortolan bunting |
| Coot | Sand martin | Reed bunting |
| Black-winged stilt | Swallow | Corn bunting |
| Avocet | House martin | |
| Collared pratincole | Tawny pipit | H – heard only |
| Little ringed plover | Black-headed wagtail | |

MAMMALS

Suslik: common in dry natural habitats in Dobrogea

Raccoon dog: seen once in the delta, swimming across a channel

Muskrat: several in the delta

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Green lizard – local subspecies
European pond terrapin
Grass snake
Marsh frog

Chestnut heath
Large copper
Lesser purple emperor
Painted lady

BUTTERFLIES

Clouded apollo
Brown argus

DOBROGEA AND DANUBE DELTA FLORA AND VEGETATION 6-11 JUNE 1999

This list was prepared by Mihai Petrescu, written out in longhand, while we were in the Delta, and kindly typed by Mary Seal-Coon. Some English names have been added; these are incomplete, with gaps especially where English names are difficult to find or don't exist, especially for eastern species. It may be that some names have synonyms. Mihai's structure here is to describe the vegetation community (usually shown in capital letters), with a list of the species we saw to follow. Some plants were in more than one community and are then listed twice or more.

Abbreviations

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--------|--|
| R | rare species | pont | Pontic species (only around the Black Sea) |
| RL | on the red list | o.d.r. | only found in Dobrogea within Romania |
| V | vulnerable species | t.r. | translation of the name from Romanian |
| Nm | nature monument | Tauric | from Crimea |
| Ssp | subspecies | | |

A. Celic Dere monastery

1. Balkan forest layer
 - 1.1 FRAXINO (ORNI)-QUERCETUMDALECHAMPII
Sessile oak with flowering ash
Quercus dalechampii
polycarpa
petraea
Carpinus orientalis
Fraxinus ornus manna or flowering ash
Mercurialis ovata dog's mercury
Fraxinus coriariaefolia (r) Caucasian ash
Cornus mas Cornelian cherry
Anthriscus cerefolium ssp trichosperma
Geum urbanum herb bennet
Ajuga reptans bugle
 - 1.2 Meadow in the forest area
Paeonia peregrina (v/r) (n.m.)
Digitalis lanata Grecian foxglove
Phlomis tuberosa
Ajuga laxmanii (Pontic-Balkan-Pannonic)
Convolvulus cantabrica (Mediterranean) pink convolvulus
Verbascum chaixii
phlomoides orange mullein

B. Babadag forest

- i. Balkan forest layer

Lychnis viscaria sticky catchfly
Campanula sibirica a bellflower
Ononis pusilla (**r.l.**) (submediterranean) a restharrow

C. Babadag steppe meadow

STIPO(UCRAINICAE)-FESTUCETUM(VALESIACAE)
(Pontic steppe meadow)
Festuca valesiaca (continental-euroasiatic)
Stipa capillata feather grass
Euphorbia nicaeensis (pontic-pannonic-Mediterranean)
Micropis erectus (Euroasiatic-submediterranean)
Anagallis foemina blue pimpernel
Thymus glabrescens (Pontic-central-European-Mediterranean)

D. Babadag disturbed habitats

Carduus nutans (musk thistle)
Onopordum tauricum (Balkan-Tauric)
Malva sylvestris common mallow
Robinia hispada (non-native, N. America)
Eryngium campestre field eryngo
Malva pusilla (euroasiatic) small mallow

E. Enisala - rocky areas near the Genovese fortress

AGROPYRO (CRISTATAE)-THYMETUM (ZYGIOIDI)
(rocky steppe vegetation)
Campanula romanica (Dobrogea endemic species) (**o.d.r.**)(**r.l.**)(**v/r**)
Euphorbia myrsinites (Mediterranean) (**o.d.r.**) (**r.l.**)
Asplenium ruta-muraria wall-rue
(*Thymus zygioides*) (**r.l.**) Balkan (**o.d.r.**)
Thymus glabrescens
Sedum acre biting stonecrop
Paliurus spina-christi Christ's thorn (Mediterranean) (**o.d.r.**) (**r.l.**)
Dianthus nardiniformis (west Pontic) (**r.l.**) sub-endemic (**o.d.r.**)
Paronychia cephalotes (Pontic-Mediterranean) (**r.l.**) (**o.d.r.**)

F. Enisala - disturbed habitats

Artemisia absinthium wormwood
Vicia cracca tufted vetch
Tragopogon dubius (goat's beard)

G. Enisala ponds - salt vegetation

SALICORNIAETUM EUROPAEAE
Salicornia europaea glasswort or samphire
Bassia hirsuta hairy seablite
Atriplex prostrata (*A. hastata*) spear-leaved orache
Spergularia salina a sand-spurry
Artemisia santonicum

H. Enisala ponds - wet vegetation

SCIRPO PHRAGMITETUM
(reed beds)
Phragmites australis - reed
Scirpus tabernaemontani glaucous bulrush
Hydrocharis morsus-ranae frogbit
Typha angustifolia lesser reedmace

I. Denistepe hill - degraded steppe meadow (overgrazed)

BOMBYCILAENO-BOTRIOCHLOETUM (ISCHAEMI)

Erodium cicutarium common storksbill
Anagallis arvensis scarlet pimpernel
Botriochloa ischaemum (euroasiatic-submediterranean)
Convolvulus cantabrica pink convolvulus
Onopordum tauricum a thistle
Eringium campestre field eryngo
Malva pusilla small mallow

J. Babadag -disturbed habitats (near the road)

Consolida orientalis eastern larkspur
Melilotus officinalis ribbed melilot
Delphinium fissum
Echium vulgare Viper's bugloss

K. Histria – salted wetlands & sand vegetation

Dianthus polymorphus (Pontic) **rare**
Halimione pedunculata sea purslane
Samocus valerandi (**r.l.**)
Salicornia europaea glasswort or samphire
Melilotus alba white melilot
Bromus squarrosus (continental euroasiatic)
Spergularia salina a sand-spurry
Juncus gerardi mud rush
Lycopus europaeus gypsywort
Ononis spinosa spiny restharrow
Calystegia sepium hedge bindweed
Chenopodium bonus-henricus Good King Henry
Tamarix ramosissima (continental-Euroasiatic)
Plantago major greater plantain
lanceolata ribwort plantain
Daucus carota wild carrot
Linum austriacum a flax

L. Black sea coast vegetation (vadu) - salted sand dunes

Elymus sabulosus (Pontic) (o.d.r.)
Ononis spinosa spiny restharrow
Crambe maritima (sea cabbage) (atlantic ocean & black sea) (o.d.r.)
Orchis laxiflora subsp. *elegans* (Pontic-pannonic) loose-flowered orchid
Tamarix ramosissima – a tamarisk

M. Caraorman sandy island area - salted dunes & wetlands

Euphorbia seguieriana (euroasiatic-continental)
Teucrium scordium
Potentilla reptans creeping cinquefoil
Mentha aquatica water mint
Anagallis arvensis scarlet pimpernel
Orchis laxiflora subsp. *elegans* loose-flowered orchid
Xanthium spinosum (non-native - S. America)

N. Caraorman fresh water wetlands (litcov channel)

Abbreviations {(s.p.) [SCIRPO-PHRAGMITETUM] (reed beds)
 {(p.n.) [PHRAGMITETUM NATANTIS] (floating reed beds)
 {(s.a.f.) [SALICETUM ALBAE-FRAGILIS] (white willow forest)
 {(p.p.) [POTAMETUM PECTINATAE] (fennel pondweed vegetation)

(s.p.) (p.p.) *Senecio paludosus* fen ragwort
 Phragmites australis reed
 Symphytum officinalis comfrey
 Hippophae rhamnoides sea buckthorn
 Eleagnus angustifolia oleaster

- (p.n.) *Tamarix ramosissima*
Sagittaria sagittifolia arrowhead
Thelypteris palustris water fern
Rumex hydrolapathum water dock
 (s.p.) *Iris pseudacorus* yellow flag
 (s.a.f.) *Scirpus lacustris* bulrush
Rubus caesius dewberry
Alisma plantago-aquatica common water plantain
Euphorbia palustris (euroasiatic continental)
Stratiotes aloides (Euroasiatic) water soldier
Populus x canescens (grey poplar t.r.) (hybrid between black & white poplar)
Glyceria maxima reed sweetgrass
Stachys palustris marsh woundwort
Hydrocharis morsus-ranae frogbit
Nuphar lutea yellow water-lily
Nymphaea alba white water-lily
 (s.a.f.) *Calystegia sepium* hedge bindweed
Salix alba, *S. cinerea*, *S. fragilis* (s.a.f.) white, grey and crack willows
Potamogeton pectinatus (p.p.)

O. W. Danube Delta (36 Channel, Sontea Channel)

- (s.a.f.) SALICUM ALBAE-FRAGILIS
 SCIRPO-PHRAGMITETUM
 POTMAETUM PECTINATAE
Salix alba, *S. fragilis*, *S. purpurea* and *S. cinerea* white, crack, purple & grey willows
Amorpha fruticosa (non-native)
Eleagnus angustifolia (non-native temperate asiatic) oleaster
Fraxinus pennsylvanica (non-native N America) red (or green!) ash
Populus alba white poplar
Althaea officinalis marsh mallow
Euphorbia palustris marsh spurge
Nymphaea alba white water-lily
Polygonum hydropiper water pepper
P. persicaria redshank
Tanacetum vulgare tansy
Myosotum aquaticum water chickweed
Vallisneria spiralis tape-grass
Solanum dulcamara bittersweet
Vitis sylvestris vine
Populus nigra black poplar
Nuphar luteum yellow water-lily
Tamarix ramosissima
Potamogeton natans broad-leaved pondweed
 crispus curled pondweed
 pectinatus fennel pondweed
Ceratophyllum demersum rigid hornwort

P. Maliuc (Lake Fortunata, Cranyala Channel)

- t.a. TYPHAETUM ANGUSTIFOLIAE (lesser bulrush plant community)
 s.a.f. SALICETUM ALBAE-FRAGILIS
 s.p. SCIRPO-PHRAGMITEUM
Rorripa amphibia great yellow-cress
Lemna minor common duckweed
L. trisulca ivy-leaved duckweed
 t.a. *Typha angustifolia* narrow-leaved reedmace
 s.a.f. *Salix alba* white willow
 s.p. *Phragmites australis* reed
Potamogeton natans broad-leaved pondweed
Hydrocharis morsus-ranae frogbit
Ceratophyllum demersum
Polygonum hydropiper water pepper
Stratiotes aloides water soldier
Trapa natans (protected by international laws - Berne Convention) water chestnut

Utricularia vulgaris (protected as above – insectivorous) greater bladderwort
Elodea canadensis Canadian waterweed
Tamarix ramosissima
Nymphoides peltata fringed waterlily
Symphytum officinale ssp. *Uliginosum* comfrey

R. Stipoc Polder -disturbed habitats, wetland vegetation

Bunias orientalis warty cabbage
Artemisia absinthium wormwood
Carduus nutans musk thistle
Cardaria draba hoary cress
Polygonum aviculare knotgrass
Potentilla reptans creeping cinquefoil
Euphorbia palustris marsh spurge
Delphinium fissum
Stachys palustris marsh woundwort
Butomus umbellatus bulrush
Lycopus europaeus gipsywort
Hordeum murinum wall barley
Vicia cracca tufted vetch
Lathyrus tuberosus tuberosus pea

T. Macin Mountains -Greci

- 1.1 FRAGARIO(VIRIDIS)-POLYQUERCETUM - degraded forest with several oak species

Quercus polycarpa
pedunculiflora
Carpinus orientalis Eastern hornbeam
Tilia tomentosa
Padus (or *Prunus*) *mahaleb* St Lucie's cherry

- 1.2 FRAGARIO (VIRIDIS)-POLYQUERCETUM - man-degraded forest with several oak species

Quercus petraea Sessile or durmast oak
dalechampii
pubescens downy or white oak
pedunculiflora
Carpinus orientalis Eastern hornbeam
Tilia tomentosa
Padus (or *Prunus*) *mahaleb* St Lucie's cherry *Carpinus orientalis*
Fraxinus ornus manna or flowering ash

V. Macin Mountains - Pricopan summit

Non-native:
Verbascum phlomoides orange mullein
Achillea coarctata (submediterranean)
(*Acer negundo* (N America)
(*Eleagnus angustifolia* Oleaster
(*Robinia pseudo-acacia* false acacia
Campanula romanica (r.l.) endemic for Dobrogea (v/r)
Silene compacta (r.l.) (Mediterranean)
Teucrium polium (Mediterranean) felty germander
chamaedris
Dianthus nardiformis (r.l.) a pink
Moehringia grisebachii (r.l.) a sandwort
Lactuca viminalis (r.l.) a lettuce
Thymus zygoides (r.l.) a thyme
Potentilla argentea hoary cinquefoil
Micropus (= *bombycilaena*) *erectus* a cudweed

Sedum sartorianum ssp *hilebrandtii* (**rare**)
Convolvulus cantabrica (Mediterranean) pink convolvulus
Malva pusilla small mallow
Alyssum murale
Lathyrus tuberosus tuberous pea
Scleranthus annuus annual knawel
Xeranthemum annuus

