

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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**DANUBE DELTA AND THE CARPATHIANS
CAMBRIDGE U3A BIRD CLUB
5 – 16 JUNE 2010**

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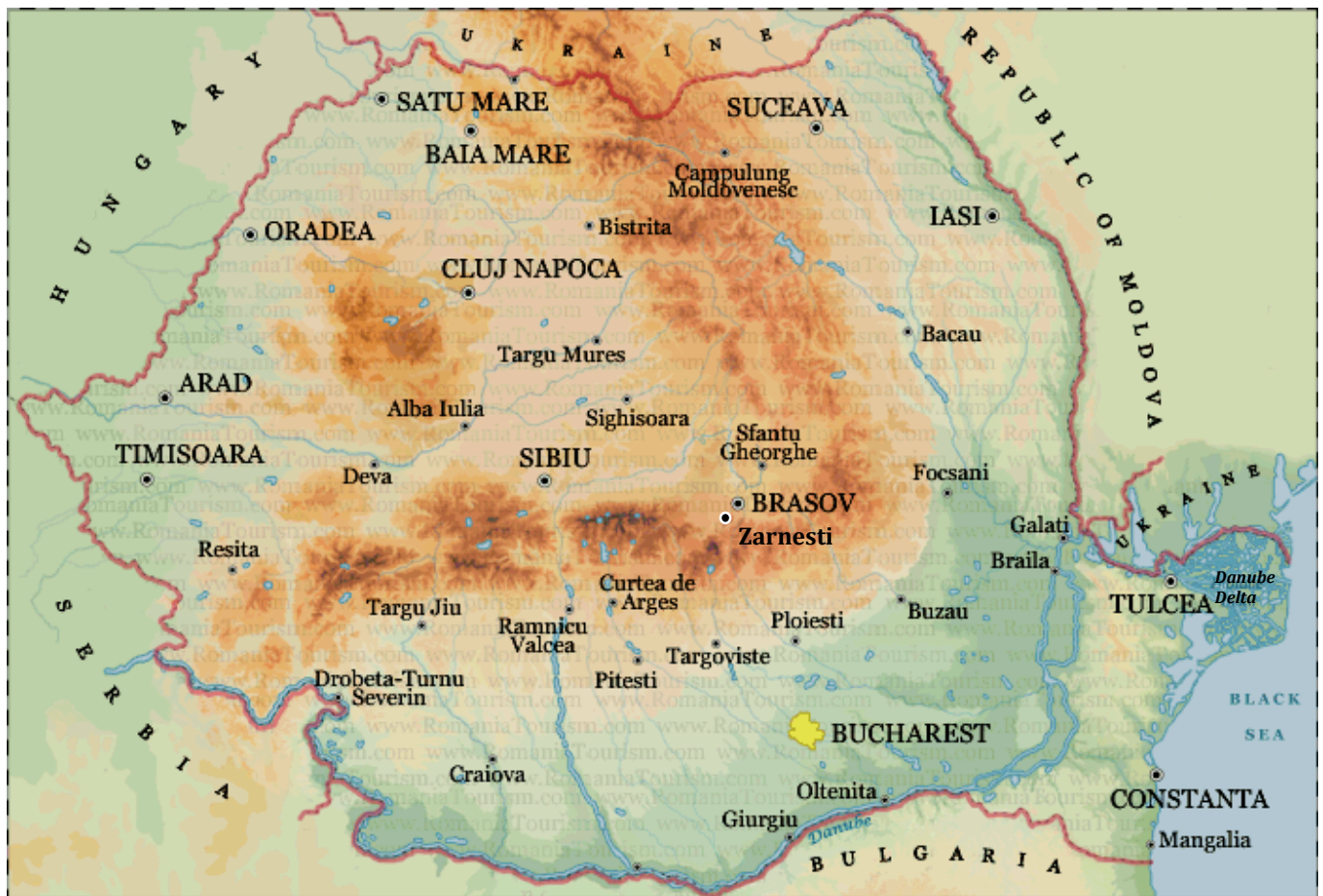
<http://www.ibis-tours.ro/>

Report by group members Thea Cockcroft and Jean Walker. Edits and formatting by Helen Crowder.

Photos by Daniel Petrescu (not taken during the holiday). Cover – cormorants fishing;

page 5 – myriads of birds on the delta; page 8 – white pelicans.

More of Daniel's photos on <http://danielpetrescu.ro/>



As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of this one was put towards a local conservation project. Our contribution of £35 per person went to Falco Cherrug ('the saker'), a young naturalists' group which is providing the delta's conservationists for the future. The group is run by the Romanian Ornithological Society's representative in the delta, Eugen Petrescu, whose son Daniel was one of our holiday leaders from Ibis this year. The conservation contribution was supplemented by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, resulting in a donation of £608.

The total amount of conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays since 1991, as at August 2010, is £66,727.

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Friday 4 June

Late evening found the group assembling at a very quiet Luton Airport for check-in at about 11.50.

Saturday 5 June

TRAVELLING FROM BUCHAREST TO TULCEA – HARSOVA LAKE

Hot and sunny.

At about 1.30 am we flew out on a Wizz Air flight to Bucharest. After an uneventful, rather cramped flight we landed safely at Bucharest's Baneasa Airport around 7.00, emerging bleary-eyed into hot sunshine to be met by a representative from Ibis Tours with a small bus and its driver, Mekita, who would be with us during our travels.

With luggage and all of us aboard we set off for Tulcea, first through the outskirts of Bucharest and then into the countryside, with vast landscapes of rolling hills and plains and the occasional road lined with trees. It was very hot. There were huge fields of maize, barley, sunflowers and some wheat, and occasionally people working in the fields, with horse and cart for transport. We passed through rural villages, each home with its garden and vine and often a well. Some bigger towns had huge apartment blocks amongst the houses and gardens. We saw a number of birds – rollers, crows and hooded crows, to name but a few. There were lots of wild flowers – striking spikes of purple loosestrife, poppies, viper's bugloss, daisies and other common plants. Mid-morning we stopped for a very welcome break, not having had any breakfast. On again and we crossed the mighty Danube which was very full. Soon after the town of Harsova we stopped again for a stretch of legs by a reedy lake where we saw quite a lot of bird life – crows mobbing something above a nearby hill, ruddy shelduck, purple and grey herons, terns, black-headed gulls, ferruginous ducks and a hoopoe. On again through more hilly countryside, sometimes with abandoned collective farms, and finally winding downhill through vineyards to Tulcea and the Ibis Guest House at about 2.00. Here we were welcomed and allocated rooms and were grateful for the light meal which had been prepared for us. After that it was settling in and a 'crash out' until a short time before dinner. Daniel Petrescu introduced himself as we were finishing dinner and briefed us about plans for tomorrow.

Sunday 6 June

DOBREGA – NUFARU, MAHMUDIA, BESTEPE HILLS, LAKE MURIGHIOL, PLOPUL FOREST AND ENISALA

A windy, hot, sunny day.

Muster at 8.30! Out of Tulcea through back streets to the edge of the delta, with poplar trees and a low escarpment of sedimentary mud on our right and traces of water and reeds on our left. Our first stop was at a small quarry with a fantastic colony of bee-eaters (right) busy all around. Rollers too, along with house sparrows, starlings and a kestrel. A little owl was spotted sitting outside a hole. It was a fascinating spot filled with activity and birds calling. Then on along a winding road through interesting rustic villages, rolling land with vast fields of barley, sunflowers and maize, and marshy areas and glimpses of water, coming to the rather ugly town of Bestepe on the shores of a branch of the Danube. On the edge of town we went off-road onto an uphill rough track to just below radio masts. Here we had wonderful views of the surrounding area, with lots of bushes and a ravine nearby – an extremely good spot for bird watching, with



white and Dalmatian pelicans thermalling, lesser spotted eagle, long-legged buzzard, common buzzard, hobbies and bee-eaters all above and below. Wild flowers were examined too. A walk downhill before rejoining the minibus and a stone curlew was observed attacking a crow on the hillside above us – an amazing sight! Off again across rolling grasslands to Lake Murighiol, a shallow sheet of water with islands and reeds. The hillside opposite was a sheet of yellow euphorbia. A walk across scratchy grass brought wonderful views of black-winged stilts, Mediterranean and

black-headed gulls, common terns, mute swans, pelicans, black-necked grebes, ferruginous ducks, mallard and teal. It was a very busy scene and difficult to tear ourselves away. A call for lunch, so we continued on our way and after a bit went off on a track through fields of barley, stopping to look at a patch of cornflowers and poppies and wonderful deep blue anchusa. Then into the plantations of Polpul where robinia and poplar trees were full of noise – a large colony of crows and red-footed falcons were all around us. Lunch was prepared and consumed while we enjoyed all the activity. We examined butterflies, crickets and wild flowers, and a Syrian woodpecker was seen too in this magical and memorable spot. On again, stopping to look at shrikes and woodpeckers along the way, with low limestone hills to the right and several villages and Lake Razin on our left. We searched for owls in the trees along the road but none were seen. Eventually we arrived at Enisala with its ruined C13th castle, to which some restoration has been carried out. There were ancient terraces on a hill opposite where we watched wheatears, hoopoes and more bee-eaters. Flocks of sheep and goats below us were accompanied by herdsmen and their dogs. Some folk enjoyed the wild flowers and others the scenery and birds and susliks running in and out of their burrows, all with a panorama of blue and green across the delta below us. Pelicans were fishing along the edge of the water, seemingly in unison. We had another great view of these majestic birds from the bus. So, by degrees, we returned to Tulcea after an amazing hot sunny day full of surprises and enjoyment.

Monday 7 June

PARCHES LAKE, SOMOVA FOREST, NICULITEL FOREST, MONASTERY OF CELE DERE

Hot and sunny.

After an adventurous night when Jean's room was flooded with hot water due to a burst connection in her basin, we woke to another day of sunshine and heat. Mihai Petrescu, the botanist, joined us at breakfast time. We were on the road by 8.30, going out of Tulcea in the opposite direction from yesterday, to a ridge overlooking the delta and in the far distance Ukraine at Parches. Here we crossed a patch of rough grass with susliks popping up all around. We came to a steep drop overlooking a small lake with water-lilies and reeds, and poplars and willows along the banks. We sat down on the grass above the lake and enjoyed golden oriole flying among the trees, common and whiskered terns fishing, great crested grebes, purple heron and a little bittern, and also some smaller birds flying about. It was a magical spot and hard to leave. On again to the village of Somova and through it to an open steppe woodland area with white oaks, grassy open spaces and wild flowers growing in profusion. A white stork was feeding among the trees and honey buzzards were in the sky above us. Many cuckoos were calling, a female being courted by three males at one point! We admired a variety of insects – a large green cricket, a hornet, carpenter bee and a large orange cicada sitting on a branch. During our enjoyable lunch sitting under a large oak tree we saw ortolan bunting, hobbies, middle spotted woodpeckers and a fox hurrying along in the grass below us.

As it was a very hot day it was decided to make our way to forested areas rather than the open land at Macon Hills. We drove up into the forest above Niculitel, stopping to look at a small C13th Byzantine church on the way where swallows were busy. Further into the forest we had a walk up a track to a viewpoint above the village, with wooded slopes and then the delta in the distance. We saw one of the largest crickets in Europe, a bronze colour, heard wood warblers and chaffinches but not much else – it was too hot! After enjoying the view and a short rest at some rustic tables we returned to the bus and drove to Monastery Cele Dere and a nunnery, where a number of nuns live and work around the village. We had a walk along a wooded track seeing nuthatches, middle spotted woodpeckers, an icterine warbler, and some folk saw sombre tits and hawfinches. There was a group of lively school children nearby enjoying dancing and games. So back to Tulcea after another good day but it had been very hot!

Tuesday 8 June

BABADAG FOREST, GRINDUL LUPILOR, VADU

Hot, sunny and overcast at times.

8.30 and we were on the road ready for a long day amid the scenery along the shores of the delta and Black Sea. Out of Tulcea and across flat plains with huge colourful fields to Babadag. Wind farms are being built along the ridges of some of the hills (a pity). Through Babadag and we were into a deciduous forest of mixed trees, predominantly oaks. We stopped by the side of the very busy road, noting cardinal butterflies feeding on milk thistles, a pretty blue iris and a huge spider on its web, then crossed the road onto a path through tamarisk and oak trees. A tortoise was spotted under a bush and there were numerous butterflies, dragonflies and wild flowers all around us. We meandered along the path through heathland and a plantation of silver birches and David found a snake-eyed skink.

On again, but stopping to admire a field of milk thistles which was a sea of purple and pink – an incredible sight against a blue sky and water with a blue-roofed cottage in the distance. Larks and pelicans were about too. Onwards to Viteazu and Sinoe and a quarry area, walking along a rough track between reed beds with great reed warblers singing in the reeds beside us, bearded tits playing and many other birds too. Little pools along the track contained small fish and tadpoles. Further on, in the bus again, we came across heaps of drying reeds. One was taller than the others and had a stork's nest on top! We came to a lake and had a walk across rough ground to a sandy ridge where

a feast of birds was before us – pelicans, Caspian terns, gull-billed terns, black-tailed godwits in breeding plumage, Kentish plover, lapwings and many others were all enjoyed and we eventually tore ourselves away to have lunch.



After another spell of watching we reluctantly continued on our way across flat land to Vadu and its sand extraction complex and out to the Black Sea. Some folk swam! The rest pottered, looking at shells, a dolphin skeleton, cormorants and terns fishing. A great spot, but time was flying and so we had a fast drive back to Tulcea.

After dinner Eugen Petrescu and a group of young people from Falco Cherrug came to visit. Claude presented a cheque from Honeyguide towards the conservation work Eugen does with the group. He told us a bit about his work and then we had a chat with the youngsters and Eugen, whom I remembered from 2003. Our hosts were also thanked and dues were paid as we are going on the delta tomorrow.

Wednesday 9 June.

THE DELTA – MALIUC, CRISAN, CHANNEL MILA 36

Hot and sunny.

Today we are abandoning dry land and taking to the watery world of the delta itself. Having said goodbye to our hosts we were driven down to the Ibis pontoon, where the Danube was very full and fast-flowing. We crossed gangplanks and climbed into a small launch with chairs and an awning in front of the helmsman's cabin, setting off at about 9.00 down the main river, past mothballed naval boats, several barges and banks fringed by willows with water round their trunks. As we motored along, fast canoes and launches and a larger tourist boat went by, creating quite a wash. The launch cut diagonally across the fast current and into Channel Mila 36, where once away from the main river the engine was turned off and we floated along in a magical world with bird song all around us. The lovely song of the thrush nightingale in particular was heard but the bird not seen, there were cuckoos galore, golden oriole, black, grey-headed and greater spotted woodpeckers.



We turned off Mila 36 into narrower channels with lots of reeds, emerging onto lakes with water lilies of various sorts in full bloom and lovely to see. With myriads of birds all around it was an amazing experience. Squacco, night, purple and grey herons abounded. Whiskered and common terns nested on the lily pads. Occasionally, black and white-winged black terns flew past. Cuckoos were everywhere, and bearded tits playing, great reed warblers calling and little bitterns taking off and disappearing into the reeds. Around a corner, a large brown bird was seen sitting below a clump of reeds – a white-tailed eagle, which took off and flapped slowly away. Marsh harriers were quartering the

reeds too in this wonderland. As we came along a channel near Maliuc there were horses and cows on a sandy bank in a flooded area and a family of semi-wild pigs were seen swimming across the water to an island and then across a flooded field! Round into a main channel and there was our floating hotel waiting for us. So, after a magical morning we climbed aboard, were greeted and allocated cabins, and then enjoyed a welcome and good lunch at a beautifully laid long table.

After lunch we settled in and then went up on the sun deck as we were towed along the Sulina Channel. It was very hot so most sought the shade after a while. At around 5.00 we reached Crisan, our launch came alongside and we climbed aboard and went off again exploring the magical watery world in that area. The engine was switched off at times and we were treated to nature's music – frogs, toads, birds, all in full song. Birds galore were busy wherever we looked and Daniel used very clever mimicry to entice them closer! We came to an area with reeds, trees and bushes where two little bitterns were sitting in the sun on top of a bush, almost translucent against the light – wow! Above us in the trees were noisy crows, jackdaws and red-footed falcons – another wow! Hundreds of dragonflies and demoiselles were on the wing too. Along another wider channel we came across a sandy bank with three pelicans sitting on it, and ringed plovers and lapwings. As well as the birds there were many frogs and toads and occasionally a snake swam across our path. It was an enchanting evening under vast blue skies with blue water, green reeds and trees and wildlife all around us.

Replete with sunshine and nature we rejoined our floating hotel, now moored at the edge of a lake surrounded by reeds and trees. Another beautifully laid table before us and dinner was served. We went to sleep that night lulled by a chorus of frogs and toads outside our windows.

Thursday 10 June

MAGEARU, LETEA, ERACLE

Hot and sunny.

Breakfast call at 7.00 and departure at 8.00 to beat the heat. Almost immediately our attention was attracted to a large group of bearded tits in the reeds nearby. We sailed into the base of the reeds where we sat enthralled by the antics of these lovely little birds. Eventually we moved on and motored along a tree-lined channel, birds busy all around us. Again the engine was turned off and we drifted along listening to bird call and song and Daniel's mimicry – black woodpeckers in particular, which we eventually saw flying. We entered a narrower channel with reeds all around and came to a floating island where we stopped while Daniel explained how it had been formed and that it was floating on bubbles of methane gas being produced by decaying material underneath. He pushed a pole into the debris by the boat and large bubbles of smelly gas erupted!



We continued through the reeds, emerging into a wider, tree-lined channel with signs of habitation – Letea (left), a village built on a sandbank by Russian Lipovani and Ukranian fishermen after the Crimean War. We disembarked and went for a walk in this fascinating village with its fences made of reeds, mud-brick houses with reed roofs, gardens with vegetables, flowers, vines and wells and hens scratching around. Some of the houses were in a poor state, others very well kept. Redstarts, swallows and sparrows flitted about. We walked along the dusty main road enjoying mulberries from trees along the way! Some of us went into the general store to purchase ice cream and cool drinks. We spent about an

hour here, returning to the river bank just as a lively group of students in motorised canoes appeared, some of whom immediately went swimming. Our trusty boat came and we re-boarded and cruised back through the reeds into a more open area of water where there were masses of lilies with whiskered and common terns nesting on the lily pads. There were red- and black-necked grebes, glossy ibis, Dalmatian pelicans, ferruginous ducks and many herons and egrets – an amazing sight and experience. Eventually we returned to our floating hotel for lunch and a rest in the heat of the day.

At about 3.00 our tug took up station and we set off along the Sulina Channel. There was a very strong current flowing so progress was slow, but we enjoyed the scenery and wildlife along the way. There is quite a lot of building work on the banks, with new guest houses, hotels and houses going up. Beyond Crisan at about 5.00 we transferred to our launch and went off for more exploration, still with the day's heat. We sailed among reeds, along channels and across lakes, with hundreds of birds all around. Daniel got out a fishing rod as we crossed a lake and played the surface with bottle tops to entice frogs and toads, which was quite amusing! Terns were busy nesting and hooded crows were after the eggs, sometimes successfully (right). Pelicans, herons and grebes were abundant too. Suddenly there was a commotion of terns dive-bombing something swimming amongst the lilies – an otter! Great excitement, and we watched as it ducked and dived in its endeavour to escape from the attacking birds, eventually disappearing. Then ahead we saw an area full of glossy ibis, egrets and herons feeding in a grassy marsh area, a wonderful sight. We sailed along more channels and lakes, with woodpeckers, little bittern, harriers and cuckoos, surrounded by bird song and all very magical. We returned to our floating hotel at about 7.40 after another wonderful day, very ready for dinner at 8.00.



Friday 11 June

ERACLE, FURTUNA, TULCEA

Hot and sunny.

Another 7.00 breakfast call and we were up on deck too early, so enjoyed a short spell on the sun deck on a wonderful blue, calm day, with a line of squacco herons fishing opposite the pontoon and bird life busy all around. 8.00 and we were off exploring another area of this wonderful blue-green watery world. Along the Eracle Channel and across small lakes there were so many birds it was difficult to know where to look next! Herons, grebes, terns, cormorants, ducks, cuckoos and pelicans were fishing or in the air. Many of the willows looked unhealthy, their leaves a yellowy colour; they are being destroyed by caterpillars. Along a wider channel with sandy banks we came upon several rather shabby buildings, some parts of which were being restored by the people camping in them. A small boy was fishing and a young lady was collecting water in a bucket. Several kingfishers were seen at this point. There had been nest holes in the banks, but these had been destroyed by the high water levels. Further along a little owl was spied sitting on the crossbar of a telegraph pole. Onto a lake and we paused to enjoy a coffee break. Next into another channel, sailing around a tree and through reeds looking for penduline tits and their nests, unfortunately to no avail. So on and ahead in the tree-lined channel. There were lovely reflections in the water and a commotion of birds – a feeding frenzy of pelicans and cormorants – what a sight! They took off as we approached and circled above us. We reversed our route and came to a corner of Lake Furtuna, a vast area of mirror-like water, then returned to the channel around the edge of the lake seeing many birds, a herd of wild horses, and wild flowers in an area of sandy soil. Back into Lake Furtuna and we sailed across the shining water and to the left, where we could see the tug and our floating hotel which we rejoined in time for lunch. After another excellent meal we repaired to the deck outside in the shade.

We set off at about 3.00 on our journey back to Tulcea, rejoining the old course of the Danube and winding along its tree-lined banks, the sturdy tug making slow progress against a very strong current. At one point we saw a huge white-tailed eagle (right), which caused much excitement. Then we were held up by a police launch and told to push into the side while a tourist boat, followed by four bigger boats filled with people wearing conference labels and enjoying refreshments, passed by. The last boat held fewer people and they looked more important! Who they all were we knew not. The procession ended with an ambulance boat. Once they had passed we set off again and were slowly pulled back to Tulcea.



Berthed back at the Ibis pontoon we had our final dinner in the delta region. After an excellent, merry meal we were entertained by two male musicians, one playing a variety of traditional pipes including Romanian bagpipes, the other accompanying on a piano accordion. The evening ended with speeches of thanks, a little dancing and merrymaking.

So ended a wonderful few days amongst the very special scenery of the Danube Delta.



Saturday 12 June

TRAVELLING FROM TULCEA TO ZARNESTI IN THE CARPATHIANS

Very hot and sunny.

Farewell to our hotel pontoon and aboard our minibus at about 9.00, with Mekita at the wheel and Daniel still with us, reversing the route we had travelled at the start of our adventures. We had a drinks stop at the lakes near Harsova, crossed the Danube, and continued across the vast plains towards Bucharest. A 'coffee' stop was had at a hotel where we sat in the shade on the terrace and enjoyed cold drinks! It was very hot travelling. Lunch was a picnic in a poplar plantation. Crows, red-footed falcons and hobbies occupied some of the trees and flew around above us. On again, turning north at Ploiesti onto a very busy road crossing a very flat plain which was featureless, until finally mountains appeared in the distance and soon we were entering the Prahova Valley in the Carpathian mountains. We stopped at a petrol station for fuel, drinks and necessities. On the move again we climbed and wound our way up the narrow valley, through Sinaia, a busy tourist area, with interesting buildings along the way. Craft stalls were beside the road at some places, also stalls selling cherries. We stopped by one and Daniel bought a large bagful which was consumed fairly quickly! We turned off onto a more rural road through meadows, trees and small villages, across a range of mountains to Rasnov, a fascinating town, then off to Zarnesti and Pension Elena, arriving at about 5.30. A rather travel-weary group tumbled out and were welcomed to our new abode. After a tidy-up there was a aperitif of 'firewater' – wow! Dinner was most welcome and we were introduced to Bebe who would be our guide for the next four days.

Sunday 13 June

MAGURA AND ZARNESTI GORGE

Hot and sunny.

A slightly later start after yesterday's travelling. We drove out of the village towards the mountains, across meadows and into a steep-sided valley of the Parc Craiului. There were a lot of hikers and picnickers making for the same place. We stopped to watch a dipper working in the stream beside the road. A short way on, a black animal was spied bounding across the road – a juvenile bear! Bebe found footmarks in the mud near where it was seen but no sign otherwise.

Then we drove up a steep gravel road with lots of hairpin bends, through lovely forest, emerging into hay meadows and spectacular views in bright sunshine. We were in the scattered village of Magura. We had a leisurely walk in the tranquil area, with some interesting old buildings and some newer ones scattered around the slopes. A large curly-horned ram was corralled outside a barn and it managed to escape into a hay meadow as we were passing! We watched a number of birds in the fields – mistle thrush, fieldfare and starlings. Common and alpine swifts whirled above us and elsewhere swallows and house martins were busy round an old house. Buzzards and long-legged buzzards were also soaring above the trees. We found a shady area along a grassy track and enjoyed wild flowers – orchids in particular – out of the sun. A greater spotted woodpecker was also watched and enjoyed.

Back in the bus we returned to the valley floor and drove along the narrow valley, along with many others, to the entrance of the Zarnesti Gorge. Huge cliffs and rock faces towered above us as we walked up this interesting valley,

wallcreepers our target, but where were they? We picnicked watching a group of rock climbers, some more nimble than others. On up the gorge, grey wagtails, crag martins, and butterflies were observed. Eventually after a pause at a junction in the valley and where a nutcracker was seen high above us in a tree, we returned, seeing a sombre tit on the way. Bebe also showed some of us a tree where bears rub their backs. Hairs were lodged in the bark and he picked some out for us to feel – some were very coarse. Clouds were gathering and rumbles of thunder were heard as we continued our walk back down the gorge. Although we kept an eye open for wallcreepers none were seen, perhaps disturbed by all the human activity. We reached the bus just as the first drops of rain fell and drove slowly back to the village along with hundreds of others – many had had barbecues or fires going and the atmosphere was rather smoky. On our way Bebe showed us one of the oldest traditional houses in the area, which was in a very poor state. On the edge of this fascinating village there are some awful apartment blocks built in Communist times.

At dinner we celebrated Meg's birthday. A cake and one candle was produced along with 'bubbly' – we had a merry time! The day ended with a crashing thunderstorm and torrential rain.

Monday 14 June

BARSA BUGUR AND STRIMBA

Thunderstorm and rain till midday then sunshine and hot.

We woke to another thunderstorm, rain and low clouds. What a contrast to the hot sunshine of the previous days! Today we headed for the wide valley of Barsa Bugur in rain, with low clouds covering the mountains as we went along. We were driving through meadows with scattered dwellings, some old, others new and not always in keeping. Not many birds were about, sheltering from the rain like us, although we did see plenty of grey wagtails and chaffinches. Logging was taking place higher up when we were in a wooded area. We eventually turned round and retraced our route. We had a sing song at this stage much to the amusement of Bebe and Mekita! An alert person spied a different bird which appeared to be sitting on a log by a stream – it was a common sandpiper. A large flock of sheep and goats was being moved by herdsman and huge dogs, involving a lot of shouting and bleating! Soon after this the rain crossed and the clouds lifted and as the sun came out, so did the birds. Blackbirds, song thrushes, fieldfares, chiffchaff, blue and great tits were all busy around us in the trees and fields. Some folk were scanning the tree tops and suddenly a nutcracker was spied sitting at the top of a fir tree, giving everyone a wonderful view.

After all this excitement we returned to Villa Elena for our main meal at 1.00. After lunch we set off for the Strimba Valley, quite a long drive through pretty countryside, hills and mountains and interesting villages. After a while we turned off the metalled road onto an unmade road leading up a wide valley. Almost immediately a number of birds were seen so we stopped beside a newly mown hay meadow, with lots of bushes and trees around the fields. A buzzard hove into view followed by a lesser spotted eagle. Next a red-backed shrike was seen in a tree, and meadow pipits, robins and golden oriole were heard nearby. We walked on and after a while more red-backed shrikes perched on fences and we watched fascinated as a golden oriole hunted along bushes and at one point appeared to hover. A yellowhammer sat in a tree and then flew onto the ground a few feet from us, giving a lovely close-up view. We continued up the valley in the bus, stopping amongst silver poplars to watch woodpeckers. Further on we saw three displaying peacocks outside a farm.

We arrived in a forested area near a fish farm and taverna, both shut. We paused here and after drinks explored the environment – a rushing stream, grey wagtails pottering. Pools of water contained yellow-bellied toads, and butterflies flitted about. Some of the group walked on along the track, others waited with the bus until the Bear Warden appeared in his car. We followed along the very rough track, picking the walkers up on the way, and continued along the rough, muddy track through the forest to the Warden's parked car. From there we walked in a tight group, in silence, further up the track and then across a very narrow wooden bridge spanning a rushing stream and up a narrow path through trees to the bear hide, which we climbed into. We ate our picnic supper there as the Warden prepared the containers of food scattered around the clearing. Containers filled, he came back into the hide and we waited.

Suddenly there was movement and a young bear came out of the trees and was soon climbing onto and uncovering the container with the food – sugar, grain and peanuts. It had a good feed sitting in the container and it was on its guard all the time and kept looking around. After a while it suddenly leapt down and rushed back into the forest. Soon afterwards, the huge bulk of a female appeared and to our amazement she had two small cubs with her. She proceeded to raid a cache of food hidden up a tree, standing on her hind legs and then climbing up into the tree followed by the two cubs. We watched their antics enthralled and after a while she descended with the cubs and proceeded to several more containers, giving us amazing views of their behaviour. Another female made an appearance, also a male and a number of juveniles – I think ten bears in all. They all made short work of removing obstacles on the containers and all had a good feed. What a wonderful, memorable experience. As the light faded we left quietly, walking in silence till we reached the main truck and so back to the minibus and through the forest to the main road as night fell.



We arrived back at about 10.30 after a wonderful day, ending with the amazing encounter with the bears. A snack consumed and we fell into bed.

Tuesday 15 June

FUNDATA PARK, DAMBOVICIOARA GORGE, BRAN CASTLE

Hot and sunny.

An early start on another very hot sunny day. We drove out of Zarnesti and after crossing the flat plain, turned south onto a busy main road through villages and mountains rising up on each side. We went through the town of Bran with 'Dracula's Castle' perched high up above a narrow pass, then climbed steadily up a ridge with wonderful views all round. As we reached the top a large bird of prey was seen flying near us, so we drew into a large empty car park and all descended and had excellent views of a golden eagle and the lovely valley – a village strung out below and hay-makers up the slopes, with men scything the hay at almost impossible angles. Common and long-legged buzzards were spied riding the thermals above the pass. A lady was setting up a cheese and drink stall – locally made. Some of the cheese was wrapped in bark and another was in a sheep's bladder! Purchases were made by several of the party.

We continued upwards, passing an interesting wooden stave church and others more orthodox and under restoration, then down into another valley and off the main road onto a concrete road to the Dambovitara Gorge. After paying a toll we drove along a little way and then all got out and walked some way up the gorge, with towering cliffs of grey rock on each side. We examined huge Roman snails and flowers and scanned the cliff faces for wallcreepers. A ride in the minibus took us further up the gorge, then another walk. The road was busy and there were quite a number of walkers. We saw alpine and common swifts, crag martins, tree pipits, redstarts, robins, blackbirds and song thrushes but no wallcreepers! A rushing stream ran beside the road and there was a lot of rubbish in it including a number of plastic bottles, some of which were being tossed in a mini waterfall! So back in the bus and to the main road and up the mountain stopping in a small lay-by for lunch which was eaten sitting in the shade of a large tree. A great view spread below our feet and lots of birds to observe. As we returned to the bus a bird of prey landed in a tree above us. After some deliberation, it was decided it was a hobby. Near the top of the pass we had an unexpected coffee stop at a new hotel complex. We sat under cover – it was raining – on a terrace with a great view, and cool drinks were enjoyed as were hawfinches, serins and a juvenile greenfinch sitting in trees below us.

On down the mountains to Bran where we parked and walked through a modern shopping mall, across the busy main road and through a craft market to the entrance to Bran Castle. Tickets were purchased and then we climbed up to the castle entrance. Most of us went into this fascinating building built in 1382 by the Citizens of Brasov to defend the Bran mountain pass from the Turks. From 1920 Queen Marie lived there and it remained a summer palace until 1947 when King Michael was forced to abdicate. We enjoyed exploring this historic place of nooks and crannies, low ceilinged rooms, numerous narrow winding staircases and a secret, narrow, straight steep flight in between stone walls. A fountain in the courtyard covers secret passages underneath the castle. Out again and back down to the entrance and a brief visit to the craft stalls, before returning to the bus. We set off again and took a 'short' cut across the countryside to Zarnesti, pausing on the way to look at a little owl on a rooftop and enjoying the profusion of wild flowers in the meadows and hedges, and so back to our abode.

A farewell meal and thanks to our good hosts, final bird lists and highlights, and another fantastic day had ended.

Wednesday 16 June

HARMAN, BRASOV, BUCHAREST – LUTON ENGLAND

Hot and sunny

So our wonderful journeys were coming to an end! Farewells to the good folk of Villa Elena and we were on our way out of Zarnesti at about 8.45 at the start of a very long day. First we drove to the pretty Saxon village of Harman, where we visited the C16th peasant citadel with a C15th church and clock tower at its centre. In the area of grass outside the huge fortifications it was fascinating to watch three people tossing hay using pitchforks. Inside the citadel the Warden gave us a brief talk about the place, with its storehouses around the inside of the massive walls, and wooden stairs and balconies up to each. The church is German Lutheran and has an interesting, lofty interior and a huge organ in the gallery. A number of Turkish carpets hang in various prominent places. Backless wooden benches in the centre of the church are for the women and pews with high backs round the edge for the men! Outside we saw a wall painting in one of the apse windows and the huge weathered clock tower. Round to the west end was the fluted main door and a great old cracked bell, now a memorial.

Back outside after an interesting hour, there was a horse and cart with a pretty young foal running beside it, so cameras were busy! All aboard and on to Brasov, a sprawling industrial city with a medieval heart, sitting below Mount Tampa. Here we parked near the centre and had time to explore if we wished. We walked to the central square which is pedestrianised and pretty, with an interesting fountain and raised flower beds, plenty of places to sit and lots of cafes and restaurants around the outside. Just off-centre is the Council House and Trumpeter's Tower, a very fine building. A wander took me to the Black Church, named thus after a fire in 1680 left its outside walls black. There wasn't enough time to go inside, so I continued to enjoy the outside of some lovely colourful old buildings along the side of the square and part-way along another pedestrianised street with open-air cafes all down the middle. At 12.30 a rendezvous with Bebe and a short walk took us to a pleasant restaurant for lunch – soup, chicken, chips and salad followed by ice cream served on white square or oblong plates; the food presentation was amazing.

Meal consumed and enjoyed we were on our way again, now headed for Bucharest, a long journey back down the Prahova Valley with roadworks bringing us to a halt at one point. A stop for a drink and stretch of legs, it was hot! Across the plain to Ploiesti and then to Bucharest where we paused at the airport to see about seats on the plane for those with long legs. While we were waiting we saw a Syrian woodpecker, sparrows and chaffinches. On into the city and rush hour! Very slow progress was made to Revolution Square, where we tried to park but eventually had to abandon Mekita and the bus and walk to the restaurant where we were to have dinner. So we reached La Marma and sat at a long table outside, feeling rather hot and weary by this time. A three course dinner was served which was a little too much after our excellent lunch. Then a walk back to the bus, past the Opera House, an open-air concert and memorials in Revolution Square on the way. We found Mekita where we had left him, so all aboard the bus and a fast drive through the busy streets to the airport, arriving at check in time! We said goodbye to Mekita who had cared for us and driven so well, and to Bebe, then had a long, hot wait in the very inadequate departure area of Baneasa Airport. Finally it was out to the bus with another wait before a short drive to the plane. Take off was on time and the flight hot but uneventful back to Luton, where we arrived and dispersed in the middle of a chilly night after another excellent holiday!

Highlights

Suki	Pelicans in flight.
Clare	Two little bitterns on top of reeds.
Holly	Early morning on the delta with squaccos fishing.
Sally	Cuckoos and silence on the launch in the evening.
Moir	Oriels. Pelicans feeding.
Ruth	The delta and the huge number of birds.
Eve	Bearded tits and dinner on the pontoon.
Jane	Stone-curlew attacking a crow.
Meg	The outstanding delta. Nutcracker.
Thea	Terns divebombing the otter.
David	Mother bear with two cubs and her actions. Bearded tits' activities.
Jean	Bearded tits. The bear running across the road.
Claude	The company. Little bitterns.
Bebe	The bear rushing across the road.

Overall highlight

The peace of the delta and the bird song.

BIRDS											
Species and days on which they were seen (h = heard)											
Day 1 – Bucharest to Tulcea Days 2, 3 & 4 – Dobrogea Days 5, 6 & 7 – Danube Delta Day 8 – Tulcea to Zarnesti Days 9 & 10 – Carpathians Day 11 – Zarnesti to Bucharest	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11
<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i> Black-necked Grebe		x			x	x	x				
<i>Podiceps ruficollis</i> Little Grebe					x		x				
<i>Podiceps cristatus</i> Great Crested Grebe	x		x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Podiceps grisegena</i> Red-necked Grebe					x	x	x				
<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i> White Pelican	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Pelecanus crispus</i> Dalmatian Pelican	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> Cormorant	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i> Pygmy Cormorant			x		x	x	x				
<i>Botaurus stellaris</i> Bittern				h	h	h					
<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i> Little Bittern			x		x	x	x				
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> Night Heron					x	x	x				
<i>Ardeola ralloides</i> Squacco Heron		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Egretta garzetta</i> Little Egret	x		x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Egretta alba</i> Great White Egret	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Ardea cinerea</i> Grey Heron	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Ardea purpurea</i> Purple Heron	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Ciconia ciconia</i> White Stork	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> Glossy Ibis					x	x	x	x			
<i>Platalea leucorodia</i> Spoonbill	x			x	x	x	x				
<i>Cygnus olor</i> Mute Swan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Anser anser</i> Greylag Goose		x		x	x	x	x				
<i>Tadorna tadorna</i> Shelduck		x		x		x					
<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> Ruddy Shelduck	x			x				x			
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> Mallard		x	x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Anas strepera</i> Gadwall	x			x	x		x				
<i>Anas clypeata</i> Shoveler				x							
<i>Anas crecca</i> Teal				x							
<i>Anas querquedula</i> Garganey					x	x	x				
<i>Aythya ferina</i> Pochard		x		x	x	x	x				
<i>Netta rufina</i> Red-crested Pochard		x		x			x				
<i>Aythya nyroca</i> Ferruginous Duck	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Aythya fuligula</i> Tufted Duck							x				
<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i> White-tailed Eagle					x		x				
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> Golden Eagle										x	
<i>Aquila pomarina</i> Lesser Spotted Eagle										x	
<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i> Booted Eagle		x									
<i>Milvus migrans</i> Black Kite		x									
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i> Marsh Harrier			x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Buteo rufinus</i> Long-legged Buzzard		x	x	x				x	x	x	x
<i>Buteo buteo</i> Common Buzzard		x	x						x	x	x
<i>Pernis apivorus</i> Honey Buzzard			x								
<i>Accipiter breupes</i> Levant Sparrowhawk							x				
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i> Kestrel	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Falco vespertinus</i> Red-footed falcon			x		x		x	x			
<i>Falco subbuteo</i> Hobby	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x

<i>Coturnix coturnix</i> Quail				h								
<i>Phasianus colchicus</i> Pheasant						x						
<i>Porzana parva</i> Little Crake						h	h					
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i> Moorhen				x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Fulica atra</i> Coot	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> Oystercatcher	x											
<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> Avocet		x		x								
<i>Himantopus himantopus</i> Black-winged Stilt		x		x								
<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i> Stone-curlew		x										
<i>Glareola pratincola</i> Collared Pratincole				x								
<i>Charadrius dubius</i> Little Ringed Plover				x	x							
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> Ringed Plover					x							
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> Kentish Plover				x								
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i> Lapwing	x	x		x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Calidris alpina</i> Dunlin				x								
<i>Tringa glareola</i> Wood Sandpiper					x							
<i>Tringa ochropus</i> Green Sandpiper								x				
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> Common Sandpiper										x		
<i>Tringa totanus</i> Redshank				x								
<i>Tringa erythropus</i> Spotted Redshank				x								
<i>Tringa nebularia</i> Greenshank				x								
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> Marsh Sandpiper				x								
<i>Limosa limosa</i> Black-tailed Godwit				x				x				
<i>Numenius arquata</i> Curlew				x								
<i>Larus ridibundus</i> Black-headed Gull		x	x	x	x	x	x					
<i>Larus melanocephalus</i> Mediterranean Gull		x		x								
<i>Larus cachinnans</i> Yellow-legged Gull		x	x	x	x	x	x					
<i>Larus ichthyaetus</i> Pallas's Gull (GBH)				x								
<i>Larus minutus</i> Little Gull				x								
<i>Sterna albifrons</i> Little Tern				x								
<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> Sandwich Tern				x								
<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> Gull-billed Tern				x								
<i>Sterna hirundo</i> Common Tern	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Sterna caspia</i> Caspian Tern				x								
<i>Chlidonias niger</i> Black Tern	x				x	x	x					
<i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i> White-winged Black Tern				x				x				
<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i> Whiskered Tern		x		x	x	x	x					
<i>Columba oenas</i> Stock Dove							x		x			
<i>Columba palumbus</i> Woodpigeon	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> Collared Dove	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Cuculus canorus</i> Cuckoo	h	h	x	x	x	x	x	x	h	h		
<i>Athene noctua</i> Little Owl		x	x					x	x			x
<i>Apus apus</i> Common Swift		x							x	x		x
<i>Apus melba</i> Alpine Swift										x		x
<i>Alcedo atthis</i> Kingfisher			x		x		x					
<i>Merops apiaster</i> Bee-eater		x	x	x	x							
<i>Coracias garrulous</i> Roller		x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Upupa epops</i> Hoopoe	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
<i>Dryocopus martius</i> Black Woodpecker					x		x					
<i>Picus canus</i> Grey-headed Woodpecker					x		x					
<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i> Syrian Woodpecker		x										
<i>Dendrocopos major</i> Great Spotted Woodpecker					x		x		x	x		
<i>Dendrocopos medius</i> Middle Spotted Woodpecker			x							x		
<i>Dendrocopos minor</i> Lesser Spotted Woodpecker					h							
<i>Alauda arvensis</i> Skylark		x		x				x				

<i>Galerida cristata</i> Crested Lark		x		x							
<i>Lullula arborea</i> Woodlark			x	x							
<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i> Calandra Lark				x							
<i>Riparia riparia</i> Sand Martin		x	x	x							
<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i> Crag Martin									x		x
<i>Hirundo rustica</i> Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Delichon urbica</i> House Martin	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Anthus campestris</i> Tawny Pipit				x							
<i>Anthus trivialis</i> Tree Pipit											x
<i>Motacilla flava flava</i> Blue-headed Yellow Wagtail		x	x						x	x	x
<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i> Black-headed Yellow Wagtail				x		x					x
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i> Grey Wagtail			x					x		x	x
<i>Motacilla alba</i> White Wagtail		x		x	x	x	x		x	x	
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> Wren									x		
<i>Cinclus cinclus</i> Dipper									x		
<i>Prunella modularis</i> Dunnock	x									x	
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i> Robin			x						x		x
<i>Luscinia luscinia</i> Thrush Nightingale					h		h				
<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> Redstart		x		x	x	x			x		x
<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> Black Redstart						x			x		x
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> Wheatear		x	x	x		x					
<i>Saxicola rubetra</i> Whinchat		x									
<i>Turdus philomelos</i> Song Thrush			x						x	x	x
<i>Turdus viscivorus</i> Mistle Thrush									x		
<i>Turdus pilaris</i> Fieldfare									x	x	
<i>Turdus merula</i> Blackbird	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
<i>Sylvia borin</i> Garden Warbler					h	h					h
<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> Blackcap						h	h			x	
<i>Sylvia curruca</i> Lesser Whitethroat					h	x	h				
<i>Sylvia communis</i> Whitethroat		h									
<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i> Sedge Warbler					h	x	h				
<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i> Reed Warbler					x						
<i>Locustella luscinioides</i> Savi's Warbler					x	x	x				
<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i> Great Reed Warbler			h	x	x	x	x				
<i>Hippolais icterina</i> Icterine Warbler			x								
<i>Hippolais pallida</i> Olivaceous Warbler					h	x	x				
<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i> Wood Warbler		h									
<i>Phylloscopus collybitus</i> Chiffchaff		x		h	x	h		h	x	x	
<i>Regulus regulus</i> Goldcrest									h		
<i>Parus major</i> Great Tit			x		x	x	x		h		x
<i>Parus ater</i> Coal Tit								x		x	x
<i>Parus caeruleus</i> Blue Tit					x	x	x			x	x
<i>Parus palustris</i> Marsh Tit									x	x	x
<i>Parus lugubris</i> Sombre Tit			x						x		
<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> Long-tailed Tit					x	x	x				
<i>Panurus biarmicus</i> Bearded Reedling						x	x				
<i>Remiz pendulinus</i> Penduline Tit					h	x	h				
<i>Sitta europaea</i> Nuthatch			x								
<i>Lanius collurio</i> Red-backed Shrike		x	x							x	x
<i>Lanius excubitor</i> Great Grey Shrike									x		
<i>Lanius minor</i> Lesser Grey Shrike		x	x	x			x				
<i>Pica pica</i> Magpie	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
<i>Garrulus glandarius</i> Jay			x						x	x	x
<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i> Nutcracker									x	x	
<i>Corvus monedula</i> Jackdaw	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		

<i>Corvus frugilegus</i> Rook	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x
<i>Corvus corone cornix</i> Hooded Crow	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
<i>Corvus corone corone</i> Carrion Crow	x	x									
<i>Corvus corax</i> Raven							x			x	
<i>Sternus vulgaris</i> Starling		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Sturnus roseus</i> Rose-coloured Starling	x										
<i>Oriolus oriolis</i> Golden Oriole	h	x	x		x	x	x			x	x
<i>Passer domesticus</i> House Sparrow	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i> Spanish Sparrow		x									
<i>Passer montanus</i> Tree Sparrow		x	x		x	x	x	x			
<i>Fringilla coelebs</i> Chaffinch			x	h	x	h	h		x	x	x
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i> Goldfinch			x			x					x
<i>Carduelis chloris</i> Greenfinch			x								x
<i>Serinus serinus</i> Serin											x
<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i> Hawfinch			x								
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> Reed Bunting					h	x	x				
<i>Emberiza hortulana</i> Ortolan Bunting			x	x							
<i>Emberiza citronella</i> Yellowhammer										x	
<i>Miliaria calandra</i> Corn Bunting		x	x	x			x	x			x

Total = 163 species seen



Ferruginous duck



Collared pratincole



Black woodpecker

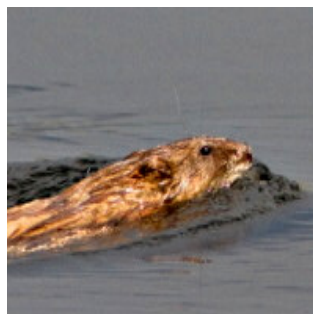


Little bittern

OTHER ANIMALS

Mammals

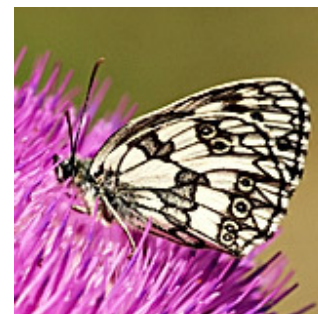
European brown bear
Weasel
Muskrat
Souslik (*far right*)
Fox
Otter (*right*)



Butterflies and other insects

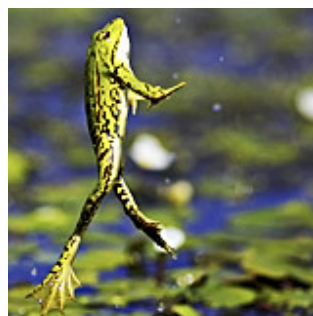
Orange Tip
Marbled white (*right*)
Red Admiral
Cardinal
Painted Lady
Meadow Brown

Many unidentified *odonata*
Banded demoiselle
Hornet
Carpenter bee
Saga pedo cricket
Giant cricket
Grasshopper
Large orange cicada



Amphibians

Marsh frog (*right*)
Pool frog
Edible frog
Yellow-bellied toad (*far right*)
Fire-bellied toad



Reptiles and others

Spur-thighed tortoise
Terrapin
Balkan wall lizard (*right*)
Green lizard
Grass snake
Whip snake (dead)
Snake-eyed skink (*far right*)
Others
Roman snail
Leech
Mini pike



PLANTS

Romania is a challenge and a wonderland for the botanist. Many plants will be familiar to those who have travelled in western Europe and the Mediterranean but in addition there are many species from the steppes or of Asiatic origin. Introduced plants add to the identification challenge. Alas, no one field guide covers the area.

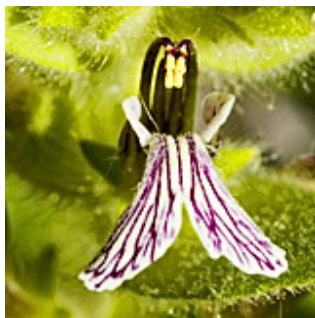
The following is a list of plants noted by Mihai Petrescu on days 2, 3 and 4 in Dobrogea.

BF = Babadag Forest BSC = Black Sea Coast GL = Grindul Lupilor P = Parches/Telita Crossroads

ANACARDIACEAE Cashew Family		
<i>Cotinus coggygia</i>	smoke bush	BF
APIACEAE Carrot Family		
<i>Ferulago confusa</i>		BF
<i>Ferulago meoides</i>		BF
<i>Ferulago vulgaris</i>		BF
<i>Orlaya grandiflora</i>		P
<i>Smyrniun perfoliatum</i>	perfoliate alexanders	P
<i>Trinia multicaulis</i>		BF
ASTERACEAE Daisy Family		
<i>Achillea nobilis</i> ssp. <i>neilreichii</i>		P
<i>Achillea setacea</i>		P
<i>Anthemis tinctoria</i>	yellow chamomile	BF
<i>Artemisia austriaca</i>		P
<i>Artemisia tchernieviana</i>		BSC
<i>Aster oleifolius</i>		BF
<i>Carduus thoermeri</i>		P
<i>Centaurea arenaria</i>		BSC
<i>Jurinea mollis</i>		BF
<i>Onopordum acanthium</i>	cotton thistle	P
<i>Onopordum tauricum</i>		P
<i>Scorzonera hispanica</i>		BF
<i>Tanacetum corymbosum</i>		BF
<i>Tanacetum millefolium</i>		BF
BORAGINACEAE Borage Family		
<i>Cerinthe auriculata</i>		BF
BRASSICACEAE Cabbage Family		
<i>Berteroa incana</i>	hoary alison	P
<i>Cakile maritima</i> ssp. <i>euxina</i>		BSC
<i>Crambe maritima</i>	sea kale	BSC
CARYOPHYLLACEAE Pink Family		
<i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>	thyme-leaved sandwort	GL
<i>Gypsophila perfoliata</i>		BSC
<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>		P
CHENOPODIACEAE Goosefoot Family		
<i>Bassia hirsuta</i>	hairy seablite	BSC
<i>Salicornia herbacea</i>		BSC
<i>Salicornia herbacea</i> var. <i>prostrata</i>		GL
CORYLACEAE Hazel Family		
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	hornbeam	P
<i>Carpinus orientalis</i>	eastern hornbeam	P
CYPERACEAE Sedge Family		
<i>Holoschoenus vulgaris</i>	round-headed club-rush	GL
DIOSCOREACEAE Yam Family		
<i>Asparagus verticillatus</i>		BF

ELAEAGNACEAE Oleaster Family		
<i>Eleagnus angustifolia</i>	oleaster	BSC
EUPHORBIACEAE Spurge Family		
<i>Euphorbia nicaeensis ssp. dobrogensis</i>		BF
<i>Euphorbia seguieriana</i>		GL
FABACEAE Pea Family		
<i>Astragalus onobrychis</i>		P, BF
<i>Astragalus varius</i>		BF, GL
<i>Medicago minima</i>	bur medick	P, GL
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	red clover	P
<i>Trifolium pallidum</i>		P
<i>Vicia tenuifolia</i>		P
FAGACEAE Beech Family		
<i>Quercus pedunculiflora</i>		P
FRANKENIACEAE Sea-Heath Family		
<i>Frankenia pulverulenta</i>		GL
GLOBULARIACEAE Globularia Family		
<i>Globularia punctata</i>		BF
IRIDACEAE Iris Family		
<i>Iris sintenisii</i>		BF
<i>Iris suaveolens</i>		P, BF
LAMIACEAE Mint Family		
<i>Ajuga laxmannii</i>		BF
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	bugle	P
<i>Salvia austriaca</i>		BF
<i>Salvia nemorosa</i>	wild sage	BF
<i>Satureja caerulea</i>		BF
<i>Thymus zygioides</i>		P
LINACEAE Flax Family		
<i>Linum austriacum</i>		BF
<i>Linum hirsutum</i>		BF
<i>Linum tenuifolius</i>		BF
LORANTHACEAE Mistletoe Family		
<i>Loranthus europaeus</i>		P
MALVACEAE Mallow Family		
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	common mallow	P
ORCHIDACEAE Orchid Family		
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	pyramidal orchid	BF
<i>Cephalanthera rubra</i>	red helleborine	BF
<i>Epipactis microphylla</i>	broad-leaved helleborine	BF
<i>Limodorum abortivum</i>	violet bird's-nest orchid	BF
<i>Orchis simia</i>	monkey orchid	BF
<i>Orchis laxiflora ssp. elegans</i>	loose-flowered orchid	BSC
<i>Orchis purpurea</i>	lady orchid	BF
<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	greater butterfly orchid	BF
OROBANCHACEAE Broomrape Family		
<i>Orobanche ceruna</i>		GL
PAPAVERACEAE Poppy Family		
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	common poppy	P, BF
PLUMBAGINACEAE Sea-lavender Family		
<i>Limonium bellidifolium ssp. danubiale</i>		GL

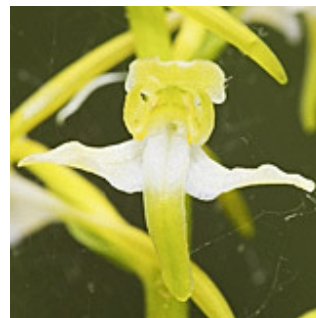
POACEAE Grass Family		
<i>Bromus squarrosus</i>		P
<i>Bromus tectorum</i>	drooping brome	P
<i>Bromus sterilis</i>		P
<i>Chrysopogon gryllus</i>		BF
<i>Festuca valesiaca</i>		P, BF
<i>Leymus racemosus</i> ssp. <i>sabulosus</i>		BSC
<i>Stipa lessingiana</i>		BF
<i>Stipa pennata</i>		BF
POLYGALACEAE Milkwort Family		
<i>Polygala major</i>		BF
RANUNCULACEAE Buttercup Family		
<i>Clematis integrifolia</i>		BF
ROSACEAE Rose Family		
<i>Potentilla argentea</i>	hoary cinquefoil	P
<i>Potentilla bornmuelleri</i>		P
<i>Potentilla recta</i>	sulphur cinquefoil	P
RUBIACEAE Bedstraw Family		
<i>Galium humifusum</i>		P
SCROPHULARIACEAE Figwort Family		
<i>Linaria genistifolia</i>		BF
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>		P
<i>Verbascum banaticum</i>		GL
<i>Verbascum chaixii</i>		P
TILIACEAE Lime Family		
<i>Tilia tomentosa</i>	silver lime	P
VIOLACEAE Violet Family		
<i>Viola arvensis</i>		GL



Ajuga laxmanii



Monkey orchid



Greater butterfly orchid

