



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Hungary & Romania: The Best of Eastern Europe 2017**

Apr 22, 2017 to May 8, 2017

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*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).*



*We had a wonderful daytime view of this European Scops Owl in Szekelyudvarhely City Park. Photograph by participant Jean Peralta.*

Our 2017 Hungary & Romania Tour once again took us from the Danube Delta to the Black Sea coast, the Bicz Gorge, the Carpathian Mountains, Transylvania (including a morning at Bran 'Dracula's' Castle), and then to the famous national parks at Hortobagy and Kiskunsag in Hungary.

As always, the birding included the specials of the region, with Pygmy Cormorant, Dalmatian Pelican, Imperial Eagle, Great Bustard, Black Woodpecker and Wallcreeper being just a few from an impressive list. However, this year we also did absolutely exceptional for mammals, with European Mink being the rarest, but we also had Common 'Golden' Jackal, Wildcat, and no less than 8 Brown Bears.

Beginning in Bucharest, many of the group did an optional day City tour and then it was off to Tulcea where we boarded our 'floating hotel' for a three night stay traveling within the Danube Delta. By birding from the viewing terrace of the floating hotel and then transferring to a smaller boat to negotiate the narrow channels, we saw a dozen species of ducks and geese - with Ferruginous Duck being the most localized, plus Red-necked and Great Crested grebes which were displaying and being to breed. The formerly uncommon Pygmy Cormorants are now increasing in numbers and we saw at least 600 this year. Likewise, Dalmatian Pelicans are also doing well, and we saw several small flocks, as well as hundreds of Great White Pelicans. A good selection of herons, together with Glossy Ibis and Eurasian Spoonbill were present alongside shorebirds which included Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff and Spotted Redshank all in breeding plumage. Groups of Collared Pratincole were present at a couple of locations, and amongst the large numbers of Black-headed and Caspian gulls were flocks of delightful Little Gulls and a single Pallas's Gull. Land birds are not numerous during this part of the tour, but we all enjoyed our first White-tailed Eagles, Eurasian Hoopoes, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Eurasian Magpie, the gorgeous Bearded Reedling, Great Tit, Eurasian Penduline-Tit (a fabulous male at a nest), Common Chiffchaff, Great Reed-Warbler, Savi's Warbler, European Pied Flycatcher, and Reed Bunting. And it was here, deep in the delta, that we saw all three of our unexpected mammals - perhaps it was due to the low water levels exposing a greater area of dry shoreline than usual, but whatever the reason, European Mink, Common Jackal, and Wildcat were all mammals rarely seen!

We then took a day trip inland, passing through the Babadag Hills and Cheia Dobrodegea Gorge, picking up such varied species as Booted Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Eurasian Thick-knee, Little Owl, European Bee-eater, Middle Spotted and Syrian woodpeckers, Calandra and Wood larks, Sombre Tit, Eurasian Blackcap, Common Nightingale (amazingly right in the open), Collared Flycatcher, Pied Wheatear, Tawny Pipit, and Ortolan Bunting. We also saw our first Sousliks - a cute little mammal rather like a small Prairie Dog.

After a night near Constanta, we spent a few hours at Vadu where our first stop was to see dapper Spanish Sparrows nesting in the lower side of occupied White Stork nests. In the nearby marshes we saw hundreds of shorebirds and nesting Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts, and Common Terns, and then at the shore of the Black Sea, hundreds of gulls and terns, including 16 gorgeous Mediterranean Gulls in full breeding plumage. It was now time to begin a long travel day to the attractive city of Brasov, breaking the journey inland and our three night stay at the Carpathian Mountains.

Before heading into the Carpathians, we took a few hours to visit Bran Castle - more popularly known as Dracula's Castle - a fascinating story of history and myth enjoyed by everyone. We then had a fabulous traditional lunch at a homestead in the historic Saxon village of Viscrii, before continuing west to Desag, finding Lesser Spotted Eagle, Red-backed and Northern shrikes, Common Raven, Willow Tit, Common Redstart, and European Goldfinch along the way.

During our three nights at Desag we made a day trip to Bicaz Gorge, a day to the higher slopes of Mt. Hargita, and an evening visit to the Brown Bear hides. Gorgeous and as varied as the landscape is, a cold snap a few days before made for some quiet birding, but there were no major misses, and highlights included Eurasian Jay, Eurasian Nutcracker, Coal and Crested tits, Long-tailed Tit, Wallcreeper, White-throated Dipper, Goldcrest, Firecrest, Wood Warbler, Ring Ousel and Grey Wagtail. A mother Brown Bear with two tiny babies, right along the roadside was a huge surprise for us all. And then, at the viewing hide later that evening, we all enjoyed no less than five other bears (including a large male), at times only three feet away.

We now once again continued further west, passing through many beautiful villages, stopping to see the famous Szekler Gates, having a nice picnic lunch in the Sighisoara Forest before heading on through traditional farmland (where they practice strip farming and many still plough the land by horse) to our lovely hotel at Coltesti. Birds seen along the way and then during our two nights here included Golden Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, European Scops-Owl, Tawny Owl, Alpine Swift, Eurasian Wryneck, Lesser Spotted and Eurasian Green woodpeckers, Eurasian Crag-Martin, Eurasian Nuthatch, Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush, Yellowhammer, Rock Bunting, and European Serin.

The final part of our tour is in Hungary, so we left Coltesti behind and drove to the border where the crossing went very smoothly - taking perhaps 25 minutes. Our first stop in Hungary was a local restaurant (my, do these people eat well) and then to the Foldes Wetland where the specially erected nest boxes were full of beautiful Red-footed Falcons. The marshes, reed beds and flooded areas were alive with numerous waterbirds, many of which we'd seen previously, but here close and easy to scope from the raised viewing platform. We also saw two newly fledged Long-eared Owls, and our first colorful European Rollers.

After a night in Hajduszoboszlo, we drove through the Hortobagy National Park, where a pair of Saker Falcons were our best find, and then for a two night stay at Kiskunsag where we were joined by the local warden as we searched out Gray Partridge, Imperial Eagle (a great close flying adult and sub-adult), Pallid Harrier, Great Bustard (several males displaying), Long-eared Owl (two juveniles in a nest and a nearby adult), Eurasian Nightjar, Eurasian Bee-eater (at a colony), Black Woodpecker, Lesser Gray Shrike, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Eurasian Skylark, Short-toed Treecreeper, Marsh Warbler, Common Grasshopper-Warbler (great looks at a singing bird), Mistle Thrush, Tree Pipit, and Hawfinch.

Once again many of the group stayed on in Budapest for a City Tour, others returned home, but no matter what choice one made I'm sure we all left with great memories of the birds, mammals, cultural sights, and the people of Hungary and Romania.

Our next Hungary & Romania Tour runs April 21 to May 7, 2018.

It was wonderful traveling with all of you. Good birding!

--Terry

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#### KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (*Anser albifrons*) – One, together with Greylag Geese at the Foldes Wetland.

**GRAYLAG GOOSE** (*Anser anser*) – Very common in the Danube Delta, and smaller numbers at a variety of wetlands elsewhere; in all we saw about 1500.

**MUTE SWAN** (*Cygnus olor*) – Most common in the Danube Delta, but also widespread on many other wetlands; in all we saw about 900.

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – Some of the group saw a pair at a pool along the roadside as we drove to Tulcea.

**COMMON SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna tadorna*) – Six in the Danube Delta, about 20 at Vadu, and 2 at the Foldes Wetland.

**GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) – Common in the Danube Delta, Vadu, Sin Paul Fishponds, and the Foldes Wetland; with a total of about 120.

**EURASIAN WIGEON** (*Anas penelope*) – Twenty in the Danube Delta, and 15 at the Vadu marshes.

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*) – About 40 in the Danube Delta, and 20 at the Foldes Wetland.

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** (*Anas acuta*) – Two at the Foldes Wetland.

**GARGANEY** (*Anas querquedula*) – About 220 in the Danube Delta and Vadu, and 8 at the Foldes Wetland.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN)** (*Anas crecca crecca*) – Two in the Vadu marshes, and 6 at the Foldes Wetland.

**COMMON POCHARD** (*Aythya ferina*) – Three in the Danube Delta, 2 at Sin Paul Fishponds, and 1 at the Foldes Wetland.

**FERRUGINOUS DUCK** (*Aythya nyroca*) – Great looks at this rather localized duck, with at least 100 in the Danube Delta, 6 at Vadu, 2 at Sin Paul Fishponds, and 1 at the Foldes Wetland.

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** (*Bucephala clangula*) – Two, and then a single bird, flew next to our floating hotel in the Danube Delta.

### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**COMMON QUAIL** (*Coturnix coturnix*) – Heard in the farm fields near the Babadag Hills, and again at Kiskunsag. [\*]

**RING-NECKED PHEASANT** (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Common and widespread.

**GRAY PARTRIDGE** (*Perdix perdix*) – A few of the group saw 1 cross the road near Tulcea, and then everyone saw at least 1 (of 2) at Kiskunsag.

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – One at Vadu.

**RED-NECKED GREBE** (*Podiceps grisegena*) – Nice looks at about 30 of these attractive grebes in the Danube Delta.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Another gorgeous grebe; we saw about 60 in the Danube Delta, and 4 at the Foldes Wetland.

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis*) – One on the Black Sea near Vadu.

#### Ciconiidae (Storks)

**WHITE STORK** (*Ciconia ciconia*) – We saw about 140 of these 'classic' storks, including many on their nests in farmland villages.

#### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**PYGMY CORMORANT** (*Microcarbo pygmeus*) – Formerly considered endangered, but now increasing in numbers; we saw a total of about 600 in the Danube Delta.

**GREAT CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Very common in the Danube Delta, and a few others elsewhere.

#### Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**GREAT WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) – About 200 in the Danube Delta, and 300+ over the Vadu Marshes.

**DALMATIAN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus crispus*) – We saw about 130 of these localized pelicans in the Danube Delta, and 1 at Vadu.

#### Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**GREAT BITTERN** (*Botaurus stellaris*) – Singles were heard in the Danube Delta, and at Vadu. [\*]

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Very common and widespread.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – Widespread in small numbers, especially in and around reed beds.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Common in the Danube Delta (80), at Foldes (15), Hortobagy (60+), and at Kiskunsag (10).

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – We saw a total of about 130 in the Danube Delta and Vadu Marshes.

**SQUACCO HERON** (*Ardeola ralloides*) – About 70 in the Danube Delta.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – About 300 in the Danube Delta.

#### Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – One hundred and seventy-five in the Danube Delta included many in fabulous spring plumage.

**EURASIAN SPOONBILL** (*Platalea leucorodia*) – Twenty-five in the Danube Delta, 20 at the Foldes Wetland, and 15 at Kiskunsag.

#### Pandionidae (Osprey)

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – One in the Danube Delta.

#### Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Pernis apivorus*) – One in flight over the Sighisoara Forest.

**LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE** (*Clanga pomarina*) – Five along the flyway to the east of Sin Paul Fishponds, and 2 singles on the way to Bicz Gorge and Coltesti.

**BOOTED EAGLE** (*Hieraetus pennatus*) – Three singles over the Babadag Hills.

**IMPERIAL EAGLE** (*Aquila heliaca*) – First a way distant bird, but then fabulous looks at an adult and a sub-adult at Kiskunsag - wonderful!

**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – Two at Turda Gorge.

**EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER** (*Circus aeruginosus*) – Common in the Danube Delta (50), Hortobagy (15+), and Kiskunsag (30).

**NORTHERN HARRIER (EURASIAN)** (*Circus cyaneus cyaneus*) – One from the boat in the Danube Delta.

**PALLID HARRIER** (*Circus macrourus*) – We saw a single female at Kiskunsag.

**MONTAGU'S HARRIER** (*Circus pygargus*) – Two males in the Danube Delta, and then a single at Hortobagy, and a male and a female at Kiskunsag.

**EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*) – One for some of the group on the way to Coltesti, and then good views of a bird in flight also at Coltesti the following day.

**WHITE-TAILED EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) – Many good looks this year, with at least 9 in the Danube Delta, 1 at Foldes, 2 at Hortobagy, and 2 at Kiskunsag.

**COMMON BUZZARD** (*Buteo buteo*) – Widespread in small numbers; in all we saw about 30.

**LONG-LEGGED BUZZARD** (*Buteo rufinus*) – One over the Babadag Hills.

#### Otididae (Bustards)

**GREAT BUSTARD** (*Otis tarda*) – Nice scope views of at least 9 at Kiskunsag included several displaying males.

#### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**EURASIAN MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – About a dozen in the Danube Delta, and 2 at Sin Paul Fishponds.

**EURASIAN COOT** (*Fulica atra*) – Very common in the Danube Delta and Vadu Marshes, and a few others elsewhere.

#### Burhinidae (Thick-knees)

**EURASIAN THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus oedienemus*) – Two near the Babadag Hills, and 2 at Kiskunsag.

#### Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** (*Himantopus himantopus*) – Small numbers in the Danube Delta, Vadu, and at Foldes; in all we saw about 90.

**PIED AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra avocetta*) – Six in the Danube Delta, 50+ at Vadu, and 20 at the Foldes Wetland.

#### Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**NORTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus vanellus*) – Very common and widespread.

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – One in the Danube Delta.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius dubius*) – Singles in the Danube Delta, and at the Sin Paul Fishponds.

#### Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

**EURASIAN CURLEW** (*Numenius arquata*) – One at the Foldes Wetland.  
**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa limosa*) – About 50 in the Danube Delta (including birds in breeding plumage), and 20 at the Foldes Wetland.  
**RUFF** (*Calidris pugnax*) – Just great this year, with many breeding plumage birds at the Danube Delta, Vadu, Foldes, Hortobagy, and Kiskunsag; in total we saw about 1100.  
**CURLEW SANDPIPER** (*Calidris ferruginea*) – Another shorebird that we saw in great breeding plumage, with 20 in the Danube Delta, and 8 at Vadu.  
**TEMMINCK'S STINT** (*Calidris temminckii*) – One at the Vadu Marshes, and 1 at the Foldes Wetland.  
**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – About 30 along the Black Sea coast near Vadu.  
**DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) – Four in breeding plumage in the Vadu marshes.  
**LITTLE STINT** (*Calidris minuta*) – Twenty in the Vadu marshes.  
**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Seven in the Danube Delta, and 1 at Vadu.  
**GREEN SANDPIPER** (*Tringa ochropus*) – Four singles in the Danube Delta.  
**SPOTTED REDSHANK** (*Tringa erythropus*) – Six in the Danube Delta, and 3 at the Foldes Wetland.  
**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – About 75 in the Danube Delta, and at Vadu.  
**MARSH SANDPIPER** (*Tringa stagnatilis*) – One at the Vadu marshes.  
**WOOD SANDPIPER** (*Tringa glareola*) – Most common in the Danube Delta, Vadu, and Foldes; in all we saw about 300.  
**COMMON REDSHANK** (*Tringa totanus*) – Two at the Vadu marshes, and 6 at Foldes.

#### Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)

**COLLARED PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola pratincola*) – Thirty in the Danube Delta, 80 at Vadu, and 5 at Kiskunsag.

#### Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – Very common and widespread; in all we saw about 450.  
**LITTLE GULL** (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) – Good numbers this year; with about 150 in the Danube Delta, 30 at Vadu, 20 at Sin Paul, and 10 at the Foldes Wetland.  
**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** (*Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus*) – We saw these beautiful gulls at Vadu (16) and Hortobagy (4).  
**PALLAS'S GULL** (*Ichthyaeetus ichthyaeetus*) – One in the Danube Delta.  
**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** (*Larus michahellis*) – About 20 at the Foldes Wetland.  
**CASPIAN GULL** (*Larus cachinnans*) – Very common in the Danube Delta, and along the Black Sea coast.  
**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – Two singles in the Danube Delta.  
**BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias niger*) – Small numbers (including some in breeding plumage) at a variety of scattered wetlands; in all we saw about 120.  
**WHITE-WINGED TERN** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) – One in breeding plumage at Vadu, and then 4 at the Sin Paul Fishponds.  
**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – Another 'marsh tern' we saw in breeding plumage; with 4 in the Danube Delta, and 20 at Foldes.  
**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna hirundo*) – About 30 in the Danube Delta, 40 at Vadu, 6 at Foldes, and 1 at Hortobagy.

#### Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Common in towns and villages throughout the tour.  
**COMMON WOOD-PIGEON** (*Columba palumbus*) – Seen daily throughout the tour.  
**EUROPEAN TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia turtur*) – Three in the Danube Delta, 1 at Hortobagy, and 6 at Kiskunsag.  
**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Very common (especially around villages) throughout the tour.

#### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**COMMON CUCKOO** (*Cuculus canorus*) – Heard frequently, and seen on about a dozen occasions.

#### Strigidae (Owls)

**EUROPEAN SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus scops*) – Fabulous close day time looks at a bird in Szekelyudvarhely City Park, and then others heard at Coltesti and Kiskunsag.  
**LITTLE OWL** (*Athene noctua*) – Singles in a quarry near the Babadag Hills, and on the way to Hajduszoboszlo.  
**TAWNY OWL** (*Strix aluco*) – Heard at Desag, and then seen in the Sighisoara Forest as we stopped for a picnic lunch.  
**LONG-EARED OWL** (*Asio otus*) – Two newly fledged juveniles at the Foldes Wetland, and then another pair of juveniles (in a nest) and a nearby adult at Kiskunsag.

#### Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**EURASIAN NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) – One in flight at Kiskunsag.

#### Apodidae (Swifts)

**ALPINE SWIFT** (*Apus melba*) – Four at the Turda Gorge.  
**COMMON SWIFT** (*Apus apus*) – Four over the Danube Delta, and about 10 at Bran Castle.

#### Upupidae (Hoopoes)

**EURASIAN HOOPOE** (*Upupa epops*) – Common and widespread; with a total of about 75.

#### Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – Six in the Danube Delta.

#### Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER** (*Merops apiaster*) – Seven at Vadu, 7 at Hortobagy, and then about 45 at Kiskunsag - one of Europe's most colorful birds.

#### Coraciidae (Rollers)

**EUROPEAN ROLLER** (*Coracias garrulus*) – Two near Foldes, and 1 at Kiskunsag.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**EURASIAN WRYNECK** (*Jynx torquilla*) – Nice scope views of a bird in the Szekelyudvarhely City Park.

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos minor*) – Long close views of a feeding bird at Szekelyudvarhely City Park.

**MIDDLE SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos medius*) – Singles at the Babadag Hills, Sighisoara Forest, and at Kiskunsag.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos major*) – The most common 'Dendrocopos' woodpecker with singles at several widespread sites.

**SYRIAN WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos syriacus*) – Great looks at 1 in the Babadag Hills.

**BLACK WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus martius*) – Difficult this year, but eventually we all had great views of a close flying bird at Kiskunsag.

**EURASIAN GREEN WOODPECKER** (*Picus viridis*) – Two at Sighisoara Forest, and 1 at Kiskunsag.

**GRAY-HEADED WOODPECKER** (*Picus canus*) – Two singles in the Danube Delta.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**EURASIAN KESTREL** (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Very common and widespread.

**RED-FOOTED FALCON** (*Falco vespertinus*) – Just fabulous this year, with many great close sightings in the Danube Delta, at Sighisoara Forest, Foldes, Hortobagy, and at Kiskunsag; in all we saw about 120.

**EURASIAN HOBBY** (*Falco subbuteo*) – About 15 in the Danube Delta.

**SAKER FALCON** (*Falco cherrug*) – We scoped a distant pair on an electricity pylon at Hortobagy, and then saw another distant single flying bird at Kiskunsag.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – We saw a pair on their nest near Coltesti.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** (*Lanius collurio*) – Ten in the Coltesti area were the most for a single site, but we also saw 4 others in widespread farmland areas.

**NORTHERN SHRIKE** (*Lanius excubitor*) – One near Desag.

**LESSER GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius minor*) – Difficult this year, but eventually we all had great views of 1 at Kiskunsag.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

**EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus oriolus*) – Quite a few were heard in the Kiskunsag area before we eventually all caught up with a couple of singles there.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

**EURASIAN JAY** (*Garrulus glandarius*) – Fabulous looks at the Brown Bear hides, and also at scattered woodland areas elsewhere; in all we saw about 45.

**EURASIAN MAGPIE** (*Pica pica*) – Very common and widespread.

**EURASIAN NUTCRACKER** (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*) – Two singles on the higher slopes of Mt. Hargita.

**EURASIAN JACKDAW** (*Corvus monedula*) – Very common and widespread.

**ROOK** (*Corvus frugilegus*) – Very common and widespread.

**HOODED CROW** (*Corvus cornix*) – Another common widespread corvid.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – Small numbers from Desag to Coltesti, with a total of about 20.

Panuridae (Bearded Reedling)

**BEARDED REEDLING** (*Panurus biarmicus*) – One of the real trip favorites; with excellent views in the Danube Delta, Sin Paul Fishponds, and at the Foldes Wetland.

Alaudidae (Larks)

**GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK** (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) – Good looks at 1 next to our vehicles in the farmland near the Babadag Hills.

**CALANDRA LARK** (*Melanocorypha calandra*) – About 5 in the farmland near the Babadag Hills.

**WOOD LARK** (*Lullula arborea*) – Great scope views of a singing bird in the Babadag Hills.

**EURASIAN SKYLARK** (*Alauda arvensis*) – One near the Babadag Hills, and about 6 at Kiskunsag.

**CRESTED LARK** (*Galerida cristata*) – Some of the group saw 1 at Vadu, and then everyone saw at least 2 at Hortobagy.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – Widespread in small numbers.

**EURASIAN CRAG-MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) – About a dozen in the Coltesti area.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Very common and widespread.

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) – Eight in the Coltesti area.

**COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon urbicum*) – Widespread in small numbers; with a total of about 70.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

**COAL TIT** (*Pariparus ater*) – About 10 in the Desag and Mt. Hargita areas.

**CRESTED TIT** (*Lophophanes cristatus*) – Very nice looks at 2 at Mt. Hargita.

**SOMBRE TIT** (*Poecile lugubris*) – One in the Babadag Hills.

**MARSH TIT** (*Poecile palustris*) – Singles near Desag, Szekelyudvarhely, and at Kiskunsag.

**WILLOW TIT** (*Poecile montanus*) – Two singles at Desag.

**EURASIAN BLUE TIT** (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) – Unbelievably difficult this year, with just a couple of folks seeing 1 in the Danube Delta, then another (for one of our group) near Desag, but finally we all got good views during our last morning birding at Kiskunsag.

**GREAT TIT** (*Parus major*) – Very common and seen daily throughout the tour.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

**EURASIAN PENDULINE-TIT** (*Remiz pendulinus*) – Nice looks at a male near a nest in the Danube Delta.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

**LONG-TAILED TIT** (*Aegithalos caudatus*) – Two in the Danube Delta, 3 in the Liben Forest area, and 2 at Kiskunsag.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

**EURASIAN NUTHATCH** (*Sitta europaea*) – We saw a total of 7 in the Szekelyudvarhely Park and 1 at Coltesti.

Tichodromidae (Wallcreeper)

**WALLCREEPER** (*Tichodroma muraria*) – After a morning at the Bicz Gorge without success, half of the group returned after lunch and had good looks at 2, yippeee!

Certhiidae (Trecreepers)

**SHORT-TOED TRECREEPER** (*Certhia brachydactyla*) – One in the grounds of our hotel at Kiskunsag.

Cinclididae (Dippers)

**WHITE-THROATED DIPPER** (*Cinclus cinclus*) – Two at the Bicz Gorge, and 1 high on Mt. Hargita.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

**GOLDCREST** (*Regulus regulus*) – Two at Mt. Hargita.

**FIRECREST** (*Regulus ignicapilla*) – One in the Liben Forest Pass.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

**WILLOW WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – Singles in the Danube Delta, and at the Szekelyudvarhely City Park.

**COMMON CHIFFCHAFF** (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – Singles in the Danube Delta and near Coltesti.

**WOOD WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) – At least 2 where in a small patch of woodland near the Liben Forest Pass.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

**SEDGE WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) – Most common at Kiskunsag (20+) and a few others at the Foldes Wetland.

**MARSH WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus palustris*) – Very secretive, but a great songster; eventually about 4 of the group saw 1 at Kiskunsag.

**EURASIAN REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) – Commonly heard and a few seen in the Danube Delta, and another seen at the Foldes Wetland.

**GREAT REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) – About 20 at Kiskunsag were by far the most at one area, but we also saw a couple in the Danube Delta and at Foldes.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

**SAVI'S WARBLER** (*Locustella luscinioides*) – Scope views of a couple of birds singing in the reed tops in the Danube Delta.

**COMMON GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER** (*Locustella naevia*) – Great looks at a singing bird at Kiskunsag.

Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)

**EURASIAN BLACKCAP** (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – Singles were seen in four or five scattered areas of woodland.

**GARDEN WARBLER** (*Sylvia borin*) – Heard in the Danube Delta. [\*]

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** (*Sylvia curruca*) – Four in the Danube Delta.

**GREATER WHITETHROAT** (*Sylvia communis*) – One near Coltesti.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa striata*) – Widespread in small numbers; in all we saw about 10.

**EUROPEAN ROBIN** (*Erithacus rubecula*) – One at Desag, and 4 between Szekelyudvarhely and Coltesti.

**COMMON NIGHTINGALE** (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) – Heard in several areas, and fantastic looks at 1 right in the open near the Babadag Hills.

**RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula parva*) – Some of the group saw 1 at Bran (Dracula's) Castle.

**EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) – Four in the Danube Delta.

**COLLARED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula albicollis*) – One in the Danube Delta, and 3 in the Szekelyudvarhely City Park.

**COMMON REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) – Two at Desag, and 1 at Coltesti.

**BLACK REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – One at the Cheia Dobrodgea Gorge, 4 at Desag, 2 at Turda Gorge, and 1 at Hortobagy.

**RUFUS-TAILED ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola saxatilis*) – One at Turda Gorge.

**WHINCHAT** (*Saxicola rubetra*) – Widespread in small numbers, with a total of about 20.

**EUROPEAN STONECHAT** (*Saxicola rubicola*) – Widespread in small numbers, with a total of about 8.

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – About 30 in the Babadag Hills area, 10 at Vadu, and 1 in the Danube Delta.

**PIED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe pleschanka*) – Some of the group saw at least 1 (of 2) in the Cheia Dobrodgea Gorge.

**ISABELLINE WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe isabellina*) – Four in the farmland near the Babadag Hills.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

**RING OUZEL** (*Turdus torquatus*) – Four on the higher slopes of Mt. Hargita.

**EURASIAN BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus merula*) – Small numbers were widespread away from the coastal area.

**FIELDFARE** (*Turdus pilaris*) – We saw about 12 between Bran Castle, Desag and Mt. Hargita, and then another 4 at Coltesti.

**MISTLE THRUSH** (*Turdus viscivorus*) – Two at Kiskunsag.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Very common and widespread.

Prunellidae (Accentors)

**DUNNOCK** (*Prunella modularis*) – One on the higher slopes of Mt. Hargita.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla flava*) – Small numbers were at a variety of wetland and farm areas; in all we saw about 70.  
**GRAY WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Six at the Bicaz Gorge, and 2 at Mt. Hargita.  
**WHITE WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla alba*) – Common and widespread.  
**TAWNY PIPIT** (*Anthus campestris*) – Five in the farm fields near the Babadag Hills.  
**MEADOW PIPIT** (*Anthus pratensis*) – Some of the group saw 1 at the Cheia Dobrodgea Gorge.  
**TREE PIPIT** (*Anthus trivialis*) – One singing from the top of a high pole at Kiskunsag.  
**WATER PIPIT** (*Anthus spinoletta*) – One at our lunch stop restaurant at Mt. Hargita.

*Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)*

**YELLOWHAMMER** (*Emberiza citrinella*) – Small numbers at Coltesti, Hortobagy, and Kiskunsag; in all we saw about 6.  
**ROCK BUNTING** (*Emberiza cia*) – One near Coltesti.  
**ORTOLAN BUNTING** (*Emberiza hortulana*) – Nice looks at 1 at Cheia Dobrodgea Gorge.  
**REED BUNTING** (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) – Four in the Danube Delta, 1 at Foldes, and 1 at Kiskunsag.  
**CORN BUNTING** (*Emberiza calandra*) – Common in the open farmlands, with a total of about 100.

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**COMMON CHAFFINCH** (*Fringilla coelebs*) – Common and widespread away for the coast.  
**EUROPEAN GREENFINCH** (*Chloris chloris*) – One at Desag, and then about 30 at Kiskunsag.  
**EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** (*Carduelis carduelis*) – Two at Desag, and then daily from Coltesti to Kiskunsag; in all we saw about 120.  
**EURASIAN LINNET** (*Carduelis cannabina*) – Three at Cheia Dobrodgea Gorge, and 2 at Bran Castle.  
**EUROPEAN SERIN** (*Serinus serinus*) – Two were scoped while singing high in the tree tops at Szekeleyudvarhely City Park.  
**HAWFINCH** (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) – Singles at Sighisoara Forest, and in the grounds of our hotel at Kiskunsag.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Common and widespread.  
**SPANISH SPARROW** (*Passer hispaniolensis*) – About a dozen were nesting in the underside of a White Storks nest at Vadu.  
**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*) – Small numbers in the Danube Delta area, and at Kiskunsag.

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## MAMMALS

**OLD WORLD RABBIT** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – Some of the group saw 1 in the grounds of our hotel at Kiskunsag.  
**EUROPEAN BROWN HARE** (*Lepus europaeus*) – One in the Danube Delta, and then about another 30 mainly in the Coltesti and Kiskunsag areas.  
**EUROPEAN SOUSLIK** (*Spermophilus citellus*) – About 50 in the farmland west of Constanta.  
**EUROPEAN RED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus vulgaris*) – One right on the veranda of our hotel at Desag.  
**MUSKRAT** (*Ondatra zibethica*) – One of our group saw 1 in the Danube Delta. [I]  
**RED FOX** (*Vulpes vulpes*) – Singles in the Danube Delta, and at the Sighisoara Forest.  
**COMMON JACKAL** (*Canis aureus*) – Nice looks at 1 from our floating hotel in the Danube Delta.  
**BROWN (INCL. GRIZZLY) BEAR** (*Ursus arctos*) – Fantastic this year, first we had a mother with 2 tiny babies, and then at the bear hides another 5 - which included 2 young ones, 2 females, and finally a very large male.  
**EUROPEAN MINK** (*Mustela lutreola*) – Now extremely rare, so we were very very lucky to see 1 swimming across a channel in the Danube Delta.  
**WILD CAT** (*Felis silvestris*) – The low water levels led to an exposed shoreline in the delta - and this is where we had great looks at this usually rather shy cat.  
**ROE DEER** (*Capreolus capreolus*) – Fairly common and widespread, with a total of about 40.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Other creatures seen on the tour included;

Yellow-bellied Toad: 1 in a pool in the Sighisoara Forest.

Fire-bellied Toad: several in the Danube Delta.

Green Toad: 3 in a pool near the Liben Forest.

Marsh Frog: common in the Danube Delta.

Edible Frog: common in the Danube Delta.

Green Lizard: 1 at Coltesti.

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**Totals for the tour: 206 bird taxa and 11 mammal taxa**