



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Hungary & Romania: The Best of Eastern Europe 2016**

Apr 23, 2016 to May 9, 2016

Terry Stevenson & Lajos Nemeth-Boka

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



*The dainty Black Redstart is widespread along our route through Hungary and Romania. Photo by participant Jan Shaw.*

Our Hungary and Romania 2016 tour largely followed the route we had taken in 2015, but we added a couple of cultural visits -- including a night in the historical town of Brasov, an excellent traditional lunch in the Saxon village of Visceri, and a tour of Dracula's (Bran) Castle. Pre-tour and post-tour extensions to see the cities of Bucharest and Budapest were also available for those who wanted them. Our birding experiences took us from the Danube Delta to the Black Sea coast, through the Carpathian Mountains, the Bicaz Gorge, and west in to Hungary and the reserves at Hortobagy and Kiskunsag.

Beginning in Bucharest, it was a five-hour drive to Tulcea, where we boarded our floating hotel for a three-night stay. We soon made ourselves comfortable, with ten cabins, a restaurant, bar, and rooftop viewing deck. Pulled by a small 'tug' and towing a second smaller boat for use on the small and shallower channels, we were prepared for any eventuality. We spent three nights on board, enjoying delicious food and birding the channels and lagoons. Highlights included 15 species of waterfowl, varying from Graylag Goose and Mute Swan to Garganey, Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, and even a male Smew. Great-crested and Red-necked grebes were also common, as were Pygmy Cormorants, and both Great White and Dalmatian pelicans. We also saw six species of herons, Eurasian Spoonbill, 17 species of shorebirds, and many Black, White-winged and Whiskered terns, all in breeding plumage -- and just stunning! Landbirds in the delta included ten different White-tailed Eagles, Eurasian Hoopoe, Black and Gray-headed woodpeckers, Red-footed Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, gorgeous Bearded Reedlings, Eurasian Penduline-tit, Long-tailed Tit, Savi's Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, and Reed Bunting.

Once back at Tulcea, we then drove to the Babadag Hills and the Cheile Dobrodega Gorge, seeing ten species of migrating raptors which included European Honey-Buzzard, Booted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk, and Long-legged Buzzard. The special bird of the hills here is Sombre Tit, which proved difficult this year, but eventually we all had good looks. The farm fields held Calandra and Greater Short-toed larks, and finally at the gorge we found Pied Wheatear and a lovely singing Ortolan Bunting.

After a night in Constanta (on the Black Sea coast) we made a short visit to the Vadu Marshes, where we saw many more shorebirds including Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, and Spotted Redshank in breeding plumage. We then spent the afternoon driving to Brasov, with nesting White Storks a feature of almost every village along the way.

The following morning found us visiting Bran Castle (more often known as Dracula's Castle) and then lunch at the lovely Saxon Village of Visceri. Afternoon birding included a visit to some fish ponds, where highlights included Lesser Spotted Eagle, Little Gull, and Northern and Lesser Gray shrikes.

Continuing on we spent three nights at Desag, giving us access to Mount Hargita, Bicaz Gorge, and a specially arranged visit to a Brown Bear hide.

Birding highlights included seven species of corvids (including Eurasian Nutcracker), Coal, Crested, Marsh, Willow, and Great tits, Long-tailed Tit, great close looks at Wallcreeper, Eurasian Treecreeper, White-throated Dipper, Goldcrest, Firecrest, Common Redstart, Ring Ousel, Mistle Thrush, Eurasian Bullfinch, and European Serin. The hide was also outstanding, with a huge male Brown Bear as we entered the hide, and then 90 minutes of watching two females and four youngsters, sometimes feeding only 20 feet away!

We then headed further west to Odorheiu Secuiesc and Coltesti, where, based at a lovely hotel set in an area of traditionally farmed countryside, we added Short-toed Snake-Eagle, Golden Eagle, Corncrake (just amazing looks), Alpine Swift, Little Owl, European Scops-Owl, Eurasian Wryneck, Little Spotted and Syrian woodpeckers, Red-rumped Swallow, Collared Flycatcher and Rock Bunting.

Crossing the border into Hungary we visited two main areas, first the Foldes Wetland and Hortobagy where we enjoyed Black Stork, Common Crane, European Roller, and Common Nightingale (a real skulker). Then it was on to Kiskunsag, where thanks to Lajos's friend, the local warden, we were quickly taken from stakeout to stakeout; just a few of the most memorable birds were Gray Partridge, Imperial Eagle, Great Bustard (a total of 25, with a displaying male), Eurasian Thick-knee, Long-eared Owl on a nest, Eurasian Nightjar, nice looks at European Bee-eater, Saker (distantly), Short-toed Treecreeper, Eurasian and Great reed-warblers, Moustached Warbler, and of course a good variety of other more widespread species.

As a finale for our visit to the region, most of this happy fun group the tour continued with an optional tour to the historical city of Budapest.

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

--Terry

---

#### 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

---

### BIRDS

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

**GRAYLAG GOOSE** (*Anser anser*) – Very common in the Danube Delta and the nearby Vadu Marshes, and then at the Foldes Wetland and at Kiskunsag; in all we saw about 800.

**MUTE SWAN** (*Cygnus olor*) – A common waterbird of the Danube Delta and the Vadu Marshes, we also saw about a dozen at the Foldes Wetland.

**COMMON SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna tadorna*) – Six in the Danube Delta, and about 40 at the Vadu Marshes.

**GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) – Widespread in a variety of wetlands throughout the tour; in all we saw about 120.

**EURASIAN WIGEON** (*Anas penelope*) – Five in the Vadu Marshes, and 10 at the Foldes Wetland.

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

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*) – We saw 8 in the Danube Delta and Vadu Marshes, and then about 60 at the Foldes Wetland.

**GARGANEY** (*Anas querquedula*) – Widespread in small numbers; with a total of about 30.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN)** (*Anas crecca crecca*) – One in the Danube Delta.

**RED-CRESTED POCHARD** (*Netta rufina*) – Two in the Danube Delta.

**COMMON POCHARD** (*Aythya ferina*) – Common and widespread on a variety of fresh water wetlands; in all we saw about 220.

**FERRUGINOUS DUCK** (*Aythya nyroca*) – Fairly common in the Danube Delta (50+), at Vadu (2), San Paul Fish Ponds (8), and at the Foldes Wetland (20).

**SMEW** (*Mergellus albellus*) – We saw a single flying male in the Danube Delta.

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

**RING-NECKED PHEASANT** (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Common and widespread in farmland throughout the tour.

**GRAY PARTRIDGE** (*Perdix perdix*) – A pair were flushed twice in the Kiskunsag area.

#### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – A few of the group saw 1 at Kiskunsag.

**RED-NECKED GREBE** (*Podiceps grisegena*) – Great looks at about 50 in the Danube Delta.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** (*Podiceps cristatus*) – At least 75 in the Danube Delta, and a few others at scattered wetlands elsewhere.

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis*) – Seven in the Danube Delta.

#### Ciconiidae (Storks)

**BLACK STORK** (*Ciconia nigra*) – One at Gilau.

**WHITE STORK** (*Ciconia ciconia*) – Just wonderful to see these 'classic' storks nesting in many villages throughout the whole tour.

#### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**GREAT CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Very common at wetlands throughout the tour.

**PYGMY CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*) – Formerly consider uncommon and local, but now increasing significantly; we saw about 240 in the Danube Delta.

#### Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**GREAT WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) – We all enjoyed seeing some nice big flocks in the Danube Delta; in total we saw about 600.

**DALMATIAN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus crispus*) – We saw a total of about 22 in the Danube Delta.

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

**GREAT BITTERN** (*Botaurus stellaris*) – Heard several times in the the Danube Delta.

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Common at wetlands throughout the tour.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – Small numbers (mostly seen in flight) in the Danube Delta and at the Foldes Wetland.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Common at a wide variety of scattered wetlands.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – Common in the Danube Delta and at the Vadu Marshes, and then 3 at Hortobagy.

**SQUACCO HERON** (*Ardeola ralloides*) – About 95 in the Danube Delta, and then 4 at Hortobagy.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – About 110 in the Danube Delta.

#### *Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)*

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – At least 300 in the Danube Delta.

**EURASIAN SPOONBILL** (*Platalea leucorodia*) – Great looks at birds in stunning breeding plumage in the Danube Delta, and 6 at Hortobagy.

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

**EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Pernis apivorus*) – Two flying over the Babadag Hills, and then another flying bird at Kiskunsag.

**SHORT-TOED SNAKE-EAGLE** (*Circus gallicus*) – One over the high rocky mountain near Coltesti.

**LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE** (*Clanga pomarina*) – Four near Desag, and then 1 near the Foldes Wetland.

**GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE** (*Clanga clanga*) – One flying over the Sarlopuszta Club Hotel, Kiskunsag.

**BOOTED EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) – Two singles over the Babadag Hills.

**IMPERIAL EAGLE** (*Aquila heliaca*) – Some of the group saw a sub-adult bird from the boat in the Danube Delta, and then we all had great looks at 2 others at Kiskunsag.

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

**EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER** (*Circus aeruginosus*) – Common throughout most of the tour; with a total of about 150.

**NORTHERN HARRIER (EURASIAN)** (*Circus cyaneus cyaneus*) – Some of the group saw 1 in the Hortobagy area.

**PALLID HARRIER** (*Circus macrourus*) – We saw a single female over the Babadag Hills.

**MONTAGU'S HARRIER** (*Circus pygargus*) – Singles in the Danube Delta, at Babadag, and Kiskunsag.

**LEVANT SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter brevipes*) – Great looks at 3 low flying birds over the Babadag Hills.

**EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*) – We saw a total of 9 in a variety of widespread areas.

**WHITE-TAILED EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) – Great looks this year, with at least 10 in the Danube Delta, and 1 at Hortobagy.

**COMMON BUZZARD** (*Buteo buteo*) – Seen almost daily throughout the tour.

**LONG-LEGGED BUZZARD** (*Buteo rufinus*) – At least 3 over the Babadag Hills.

#### *Otididae (Bustards)*

**GREAT BUSTARD** (*Otis tarda*) – So wonderful to see at least 25 of these great birds at Kiskunsag.

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

**WATER RAIL** (*Rallus aquaticus*) – Heard at San Paul Fish Ponds and at the Foldes Wetland.

**EURASIAN MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – Small numbers in the Danube Delta, and at the San Paul Fish Ponds.

**EURASIAN COOT** (*Fulica atra*) – Very common on a variety of scattered wetlands.

#### *Gruidae (Cranes)*

**COMMON CRANE** (*Grus grus*) – At Hortobagy we saw 3 very distant birds, and then a close bird in flight, and finally another 3.

#### *Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**EURASIAN THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus oedicnemus*) – After some effort (and thanks to our local guide) we all finally saw a pair at Kiskunsag.

#### *Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** (*Himantopus himantopus*) – We saw a total of about 200 at a variety of wetlands.

**PIED AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra avocetta*) – One hundred and fifty at the Foldes Wetland were by far the most together, but we also saw small numbers in the Danube Delta and at Vadu Marshes.

#### *Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**NORTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus vanellus*) – Common and widespread in farm country throughout the tour.

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – One in the Danube Delta, and 2 at Vadu Marshes.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius dubius*) – Three in the Danube Delta.

#### *Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Three singles between the Danube Delta and San Paul.

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** (*Tringa erythropus*) – Four in the Danube Delta, 3 at Vadu Marshes, and about 40 (with many in good breeding plumage) at the Foldes Wetland.

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – Small numbers in the Danube Delta and at the Vadu Marshes.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** (*Tringa glareola*) – One of the most common and widespread sandpipers; with a total of about 400.

**COMMON REDSHANK** (*Tringa totanus*) – One in the Danube Delta, 10 at Vadu Marshes, and 12+ at the Foldes Wetland.

**EURASIAN CURLEW** (*Numenius arquata*) – Two in the grasslands at Kiskunsag.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa limosa*) – About 80 in the Danube Delta.

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – One (in fine breeding plumage) in the Vadu Marshes.

**RUFF** (*Calidris pugnax*) – We saw a total of about 700, with many in a variety of colorful breeding plumages.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** (*Calidris ferruginea*) – About 100 at the Vadu Marshes included birds in near breeding plumage.

**DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) – Scattered small flocks included several in breeding plumage.

**LITTLE STINT** (*Calidris minuta*) – One in the Danube Delta, 50 at the Vadu Marshes, and 6 at the Foldes Wetland.

**COMMON SNIPE** (*Gallinago gallinago*) – One in the Danube Delta.

*Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)*

**COLLARED PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola pratincola*) – Four in the Danube Delta, about 150 at the Vadu Marshes, and 6 at Hortobagy.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – By far the most common and widespread gull.

**LITTLE GULL** (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) – Two at the San Paul Fish Ponds.

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** (*Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus*) – Some of the group saw 1 in the Danube Delta, and then we all saw about a dozen of these very attractive gulls at Kiskunsag. [E]

**MEW GULL** (*Larus canus*) – Two on the Black Sea coast.

**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** (*Larus michahellis*) – About 20 in the Kiskunsag area.

**CASPIAN GULL** (*Larus cachinnans*) – Very common in the Danube Delta and along the Black Sea coast.

**LITTLE TERN** (*Sternula albifrons*) – One along the shore of the Black Sea.

**GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – Two along the Black Sea coast.

**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – Two singles in the Danube Delta.

**BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias niger*) – The most common 'marsh tern' and all in breeding plumage; in total we saw about 500.

**WHITE-WINGED TERN** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) – We saw about 25 of these gorgeous terns in the Danube Delta, and at the Vadu Marshes.

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – Another attractive 'marsh tern' that were in breeding plumage; in all we saw about 140.

**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna hirundo*) – Common in the Danube Delta and at Vadu, and then about 10 more at Kiskunsag.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Common and widespread.

**STOCK DOVE** (*Columba oenas*) – Six flying over woodland in the Danube Delta.

**COMMON WOOD-PIGEON** (*Columba palumbus*) – Widespread, and seen almost daily throughout the tour.

**EUROPEAN TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia turtur*) – One near Tulcea, and then a total of 8 others at a variety of sites.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Very common throughout the tour.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**COMMON CUCKOO** (*Cuculus canorus*) – Seen or heard daily; with a total of about 20 seen.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**EUROPEAN SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus scops*) – Heard at Desag, and then seen nicely in a nest hole at our hotel at Coltesti.

**LITTLE OWL** (*Athene noctua*) – We saw singles in the Danube Delta (distantly), in the Babadag Hills, and then more closely on a roof near Coltesti.

**TAWNY OWL** (*Strix aluco*) – Some of the group heard 1 at Desag.

**LONG-EARED OWL** (*Asio otus*) – Nice scope views of a bird on a nest at Kiskunsag.

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**EURASIAN NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) – Two or three were seen flying over the sand dune heath at Kiskunsag.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**ALPINE SWIFT** (*Apus melba*) – At least 40 were high over the cliffs at Turda Gorge.

**COMMON SWIFT** (*Apus apus*) – Widespread in small numbers.

*Upupidae (Hoopoes)*

**EURASIAN HOPOE** (*Upupa epops*) – These attractive birds were seen on at least 10 days during the tour - always enjoyable to watch!

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – About a dozen in the Danube Delta.

*Meropidae (Bee-eaters)*

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER** (*Merops apiaster*) – Fifty in the Danube-Vadu area, and then about 60 at Kiskunsag.

*Coraciidae (Rollers)*

**EUROPEAN ROLLER** (*Coracias garrulus*) – Singles in the Danube Delta, at Foldes, and at Kiskunsag.

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**EURASIAN WRYNECK** (*Jynx torquilla*) – Singles at Coltesti and Kiskunsag.

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos minor*) – Good looks at 1 in the City Park at Odorheiu Secuiesc.

**MIDDLE SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos medius*) – A few of the group saw 1 during our last morning birding at Kiskunsag.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos major*) – Singles in the Danube Delta, near Coltesti, and at Kiskunsag.

**SYRIAN WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos syriacus*) – One at Odorheiu Secuiesc.

**BLACK WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus martius*) – Excellent this year, with great views in the Danube Delta, and then for some of the group at Kiskunsag.

**EURASIAN GREEN WOODPECKER** (*Picus viridis*) – Nice looks near Coltesti.

**GRAY-HEADED WOODPECKER** (*Picus canus*) – Three in the Danube Delta, and 2 at the Senete Swamp.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

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

**RED-FOOTED FALCON** (*Falco vespertinus*) – Wonderful to see so many this year, with a total of about 70 in the Danube Delta, Babadag Hills, the Foldes Wetland, Hortobagy, and at Kiskunsag.

**EURASIAN HOBBY** (*Falco subbuteo*) – About a dozen in the Danube Delta and Babadag Hills, and then singles at Coltesti, and Kiskunsag.  
**SAKER FALCON** (*Falco cherrug*) – We saw a very distant bird at Hortobagy, and the nearer (but still rather far away) bird at Kiskunsag.  
**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – We saw two single birds at Coltesti.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** (*Lanius collurio*) – Widespread in small numbers.  
**NORTHERN SHRIKE** (*Lanius excubitor*) – One near Desag.  
**LESSER GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius minor*) – Three near Desag, and then singles at Foldes and Kiskunsag.

*Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)*

**EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus oriolus*) – Widespread in a variety of wooded areas; in all we saw about a dozen.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**EURASIAN JAY** (*Garrulus glandarius*) – Small numbers were widespread in wooded areas throughout the tour.  
**EURASIAN MAGPIE** (*Pica pica*) – Very common and widespread.  
**EURASIAN NUTCRACKER** (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*) – Great looks at this fabulous bird at Mount Hargita.  
**EURASIAN JACKDAW** (*Corvus monedula*) – Very common and widespread.  
**ROOK** (*Corvus frugilegus*) – Very common and widespread.  
**HOODED CROW** (*Corvus cornix*) – Yet another very common and widespread corvid.  
**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – Small numbers near Desag, Coltesti, Foldes, and Kiskunsag.

*Panuridae (Bearded Reedling)*

**BEARDED REEDLING** (*Panurus biarmicus*) – Everyone saw these gorgeous birds in the Danube Delta, and then a few of the group saw others at the San Paul Fish Ponds, and at the Foldes Wetland.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**CALANDRA LARK** (*Melanocorypha calandra*) – We saw about 15 of these big larks in the farmland near Cheile Dobrodgea.  
**GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK** (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) – Five in the farmland near Cheile Dobrodgea.  
**CRESTED LARK** (*Galerida cristata*) – Small numbers in open country at Cheile Dobrodgea, Vadu, Hortobagy, and Kiskunsag.  
**SKY LARK** (*Alauda arvensis*) – Widespread in small numbers.  
**WOOD LARK** (*Lullula arborea*) – Two in the wooded valley near Coltesti.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – Widespread; with a total of about 200.  
**EURASIAN CRAG-MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) – Five in the limestone gorge near Coltesti.  
**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Very common and widespread.  
**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) – Five near Coltesti.  
**COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon urbicum*) – Widespread in small numbers.

*Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**COAL TIT** (*Parus ater*) – We saw about a dozen at Mount Hargita, and then another 6 at the Liben Pass, and 1 near Coltesti.  
**CRESTED TIT** (*Lophophanes cristatus*) – Nice views of 1 in the pines at Liben Pass.  
**SOMBRE TIT** (*Poecile lugubris*) – Very hard this year, but eventually we all had good looks in the Babadag Hills.  
**MARSH TIT** (*Poecile palustris*) – Singles at Senete Swamp and near Coltesti.  
**WILLOW TIT** (*Poecile montanus*) – Two near Bicaz Gorge, and 2 near Coltesti.  
**EURASIAN BLUE TIT** (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) – Widespread in small numbers.  
**GREAT TIT** (*Parus major*) – Very common and widespread.

*Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)*

**EURASIAN PENDULINE-TIT** (*Remiz pendulinus*) – Great looks at a pair at their nest in the Danube Delta, and then a single male at the Foldes Wetland.

*Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)*

**LONG-TAILED TIT** (*Aegithalos caudatus*) – Two in the Danube Delta, 2 at Senete Swamp, and 1 at Coltesti.

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**EURASIAN NUTHATCH** (*Sitta europaea*) – We saw our first one at Bran 'Dracula's' Castle, and then a couple of others in the Coltesti area.

*Tichodromidae (Wallcreeper)*

**WALLCREEPER** (*Tichodroma muraria*) – Great looks at 2 males and a female at Bicaz Gorge.

*Certhiidae (Trecreepers)*

**EURASIAN TRECREEPER** (*Certhia familiaris*) – Singles at Dracula's Castle and Mount Hargita.  
**SHORT-TOED TRECREEPER** (*Certhia brachydactyla*) – At least 3 in the grounds of our hotel near Budapest.

*Cinclididae (Dippers)*

**WHITE-THROATED DIPPER** (*Cinclus cinclus*) – Great close looks at 2 birds along the river at Bicaz Gorge.

*Regulidae (Kinglets)*

**GOLDCREST** (*Regulus regulus*) – Three at Mount Hargita.  
**FIRECREST** (*Regulus ignicapilla*) – Difficult, but eventually we all saw at least 1 (of 2) in the forest at Liben Pass.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

**COMMON CHIFFCHAFF** (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – Heard almost daily, and seen in at least 6 different areas.

**WOOD WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) – Heard near Coltesti, and then more commonly at Kiskunsag, but we never managed to see this species.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

**MOUSTACHED WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus melanopogon*) – We saw a bird in the reed beds at the Kiskunsag banding station - which then flew into a mist net right beside us - giving super close views!

**SEDGE WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) – Heard in the Danube Delta, and then about a dozen were seen in the Hortobagy and Kiskunsag areas.

**MARSH WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus palustris*) – Singles at the Foldes Wetland and Hortobagy areas.

**EURASIAN REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) – Small numbers in the Danube Delta and Vadu Marshes, and then at Kiskunsag.

**GREAT REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) – Most common in the Kiskunsag area, but we also saw them near Coltesti, at Hortobagy, and in the Danube Delta.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

**EURASIAN RIVER WARBLER** (*Locustella fluviatilis*) – This super skulker was heard singing in a dense thicket at Kiskunsag, it was then seen in flight by some of the group, and seen well by just one person.

**SAVI'S WARBLER** (*Locustella luscinioides*) – Good looks at a singing bird in the Danube Delta.

**COMMON GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER** (*Locustella naevia*) – Heard at Kiskunsag.

Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)

**EURASIAN BLACKCAP** (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – About 6 were seen and many heard in a variety of woodlands throughout the tour.

**GARDEN WARBLER** (*Sylvia borin*) – Singles at Odorheiu Secuiesc City Park and near Hortobagy.

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** (*Sylvia curruca*) – Two in the Danube Delta, and 1 at Senete Swamp.

**GREATER WHITETHROAT** (*Sylvia communis*) – About 4 in the Coltesti area, and 1 at Kiskunsag.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa striata*) – Small numbers between Senete Swamp and Kiskunsag; with a total of about 7.

**EUROPEAN ROBIN** (*Erithacus rubecula*) – Two at Mount Hargita, and 1 at Desag.

**COMMON NIGHTINGALE** (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) – Heard in several areas, but only seen at our restaurant shortly after crossing the border into Hungary.

**EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) – A single male and then a female were seen in the Desag area.

**COLLARED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula albicollis*) – Great looks at this gorgeous little flycatcher at Dracula's Castle, and then at least 5 at Odorheiu Secuiesc.

**COMMON REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) – About 10 were seen by the group doing the pre-tour Bucharest city tour, and then other singles at the Danube Delta, Desag, and near Coltesti.

**BLACK REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – We saw a total of about a dozen in widespread areas from Desag to Kiskunsag.

**RUFIOUS-TAILED ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola saxatilis*) – A pair were seen high on the top of Turda Gorge.

**WHINCHAT** (*Saxicola rubetra*) – Small numbers were widespread in open country.

**EUROPEAN STONECHAT** (*Saxicola rubicola*) – We saw a total of about 15 between the San Paul Fish Ponds and Kiskunsag.

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – Most common in the Cheile Dobrodgea area, but we also saw a few others at widespread sites elsewhere.

**PIED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe pleschanka*) – Three in the gorge at Cheile Dobrodgea.

**ISABELLINE WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe isabellina*) – Six in the Cheile Dobrodgea area.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

**RING OUZEL** (*Turdus torquatus*) – Nice looks at 2 males at Mount Hargita.

**EURASIAN BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus merula*) – Fairly common and widespread; in total we saw about 70.

**FIELDFARE** (*Turdus pilaris*) – Small numbers between Bran and Coltesti; with a total of about 20.

**SONG THRUSH** (*Turdus philomelos*) – Singles at Bran, Hortobagy, and Kiskunsag.

**MISTLE THRUSH** (*Turdus viscivorus*) – Singles at Desag and Odorheiu Secuiesc.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

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

Prunellidae (Accentors)

**DUNNOCK** (*Prunella modularis*) – One at Mount Hargita.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla flava*) – Small numbers were seen at a variety of wetland areas throughout the tour.

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (BLACK-HEADED)** (*Motacilla flava feldegg*) – Singles in the Danube Delta, and at the Vadu Marshes.

**GRAY WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla cinerea*) – We saw a total of 6 in the Mount Hargita and Bicaz Gorge areas.

**WHITE WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla alba*) – Very common and widespread.

**TAWNY PIPIT** (*Anthus campestris*) – Three in the farmland near Cheile Dobrodgea, and 1 at Hortobagy.

**MEADOW PIPIT** (*Anthus pratensis*) – Two on the way to Coltesti.

**TREE PIPIT** (*Anthus trivialis*) – We saw a total of 4 between Mount Hargita and Coltesti.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

**YELLOWHAMMER** (*Emberiza citrinella*) – Small numbers were seen in a variety of scattered woodlands and farm country, with a total of about 12.

**ROCK BUNTING** (*Emberiza cia*) – Nice looks at a male near Coltesti.

**ORTOLAN BUNTING** (*Emberiza hortulana*) – We saw a very responsive bird at the Cheile Dobrodgea Gorge.

**BLACK-HEADED BUNTING** (*Emberiza melanocephala*) – One on the pre-tour extension to Bucharest.

**REED BUNTING** (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) – Small numbers in the reeds at the Danube Delta, Vadu Marshes, Foldes, Hortobagy, and Kiskunsag.

**CORN BUNTING** (*Emberiza calandra*) – Common in open farm country; in all we saw about 80.

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**COMMON CHAFFINCH** (*Fringilla coelebs*) – Very common and widespread.

**EURASIAN BULLFINCH** (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) – A few of the group saw 3 in the forest at Liben Pass.

**EUROPEAN GREENFINCH** (*Chloris chloris*) – Widespread in small numbers.

**EURASIAN SISKIN** (*Spinus spinus*) – One at Bran Castle.

**EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** (*Carduelis carduelis*) – Common in a variety of farmland and wooded areas from Desag until the end of the tour.

**EURASIAN LINNET** (*Carduelis cannabina*) – Most common around Desag, but we also saw a few at a variety of other widespread areas.

**EUROPEAN SERIN** (*Serinus serinus*) – We saw a total of 8 at Bran, Desag, Odorheiu Secuiesc, and Coltesti.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Very common and widespread.

**SPANISH SPARROW** (*Passer hispaniolensis*) – At least 10 were seen nesting in the lower side of a White Storks nest near the Babadag Hills.

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*) – Common and widespread.

---

## MAMMALS

**EUROPEAN BROWN HARE** (*Lepus europaeus*) – Most common at Kiskunsag, but we also saw them in several other areas of open farmland.

**EUROPEAN SOUSLIK** (*Spermophilus citellus*) – About 40 in the Cheile Dobrodgea area.

**EUROPEAN RED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus vulgaris*) – Singles at Turda Gorge and Kiskunsag.

**MUSKRAT** (*Ondatra zibethica*) – A single was seen by 2 of the group in the Danube Delta.

**RED FOX** (*Vulpes vulpes*) – Singles for some of the group in the Babadag Hills and in the Hortobagy area.

**BROWN (INCL. GRIZZLY) BEAR** (*Ursus arctos*) – Just great, with a huge male, and then two females and 4 young ones, all from the hide near Desag.

**BEECH MARTEN** (*Martes foina*) – One of our group saw 1 at Desag.

**ROE DEER** (*Capreolus capreolus*) – Ten in the Hortobagy and Kiskunsag areas, and a couple of others elsewhere.

---

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

---

**Totals for the tour: 213 bird taxa and 8 mammal taxa**