

## Bulgaria: Rhodope Mountains & Black Sea Coast Fri 6th - Sun 15th May 2011

---



Photos, clockwise from top right: Adult **Lesser Grey Shrike** is a handsome bird • **Wallcreeper** at Trigrad! • **Pied Wheatear** is a speciality to watch for along the Black Sea coast • **Short-toed Lark** displays its short, sandy-rufous crest • **Male Eastern Black-eared Wheatear** is another smart bird • **Black-headed Buntings** started to arrive just as our tour began. A cracking selection of pictures - and all taken on our May 2011 tour to Bulgaria © Brian Small.

report compiled by tour leader:  
**Brian Small**

---

## Trip Diary

**Tour Leaders: Brian Small and Lyubo Profirov**

*with Cecile Gillard, Keith Gooday, Brian & Ann Hague, and John MacLean*

*Wow!* What a great trip! With spring migration being a touch late in the eastern Med this year, we were treated to some of the earlier migrants staying later (for example, marsh terns), plus the arrival of the later migrants (including Rollers and Masked Shrikes) during the last few days of our tour. Then there is the stunning and as yet largely unspoilt Bulgarian landscape (though it is in a state of change), which always adds to the trip. This grand tour of Bulgaria takes in a whole host of sites, covering an enormous cross-section of species - and with fine weather to boot is always fun!

### **Fri 6th May**

A smooth landing at Sofia was followed by a good transit and we were soon stood outside with Lyubo. Our drive to Pamporovo was broken by three main stops. The first was just east of Sofia at Vakarel for Corncrake (heard only), our first Barred Warblers and nice views of Ortolan Bunting. At a roadside stop for refreshments near Vinigradec, we had Red-rumped Swallow and Golden Oriole. Finally, as we began to climb up into the mountains, we stopped at Asenovgrad for Dipper and Blue Rock Thrush. We arrived at our hotel tired and a touch cold - although the 10cm of snow from the night before had thankfully all but melted!

### **Sat 7th May**

Rising early to a deep frost, an eventful 30 mins birding produced Crested Tit and Firecrest, but a leader only Nutcracker. The start to our long day took us first west to Nastan and a magnificent Alpine Swift colony and Dipper stream, then further south to the Trigrad gorge, where we were treated to the most amazing views of Wallcreeper you could ever wish for. Two males and a female jostled and fluttered about the cliff face, not more than three metres away at times, singing and even chasing into a tunnel at one stage. Quite stunning! Tearing ourselves away, we made a short walk at Trigrad (Black Redstarts and Serins), followed by a fine trout lunch, and then began the long drive east towards our next hotel north of Krumovgard. Various stops along the way produced Black Stork, Isabelline Wheatear and Woodchat Shrikes before we arrived at the Arda river hotel.

### **Sun 8th May**

It was a surprise to awake to light rain, but this did not dull the Nightingales' song, which was cacophonous - I have never seen or heard so many in such a small area. A brief pre-breakfast walk produced plenty of Corn Buntings and Turtle Doves, but best of all the first Black-headed Buntings had arrived that morning. Our day was taken touring the area of Studen Kladentz dam, Potochnitza for vultures, and the Krumovitza river for migration and lunch. It was an eventful day starting with Eastern Black-eared Wheatear and Blue Rock Thrush, followed by many vultures (though they were reluctant to fly in the conditions), Wood Lark, shrikes, at least three Sardinian Warblers, Bee-eaters, Levant Sparrowhawk and the first Eastern Olivaceous Warblers along the river. The migration along the river was quite incredible, mostly hirundines, but the occasional Booted Eagle. Late in the evening, a Peregrine was found on the cliffside and it was hoped it would still be there the next morning.

### **Mon 9th May**

The Peregrine spent the first ten minutes or so of the pre-breakfast walk on the cliff before moving on, though we did pick out an adult later. Our walk along the quiet road produced more Barred Warblers, Long-legged Buzzard, Cuckoos and more Black-headed Buntings. An unavoidably long day driving to the coast today, but with several short stops for speciality birds. At Majorovo, we saw Golden Eagle, Subalpine Warbler, Rock Bunting, more vultures and Black Storks; at Borislavtzi, we added Black Kite and another Sardinian Warbler; a great stop at Jerusalemivo produced several Masked Shrikes and Wood Lark, but no Olive-tree Warblers were yet in. After lunch, we made an important stop near Topolovgard for Eastern Imperial Eagle and were treated to two different females on nests; only a brief view of a male in flight, though there were several Lesser Spotted Eagles and three Montagu's Harriers to compensate. The day pushed on and further stops at Sredets and Lake Mandria for raptors, and at Lake Atanasovsko for waders were very good but brief. We arrived at Pomorie tired and a little damp in light rain - but eagerly looking forward to our time at the coast.

### Tue 10th May

An early walk to the salt pans was eventful, with first Red-breasted Flycatcher, then Eastern Bonelli's Warbler being found amongst a few migrant *Phylloscopus* warblers, that included Wood Warbler also. The salt pans held the usual terns, plus Pygmy Cormorant and Slender-billed Gulls. High water levels precluded too much wader action, but we watched a lovely male Kentish Plover working on a nest scrape, and distant marsh terns were incredibly plentiful - of which more later...

Our first stop of the day was on Atanasovsko, where we found Red-throated Pipit, many pelicans and great views of Little Stint and Curlew Sandpipers. Further on we had better views of White and Dalmatian Pelicans, plus many Black Terns, Little Gulls, Night Herons and lovely close views of Spotted Flycatcher. The rest of the day was spent circumnavigating Vaia and Mandria lakes, with various stops for raptors, terns, waders, duck and more, plus White Stork nests adorned with Spanish Sparrows. The highlights were probably our first Rollers and the White-tailed Eagles, and the Garganey were fine as were the many Hobbies hunting - but, in many ways, the 1000s of Black Terns and 100s of Whiskered and White-winged Black Terns were the real stars, being so numerous and a great spectacle, as was the endearing little Penduline Tit in its nest.

### Wed 11th May

Our early walk this morning took us north from the hotel to look for migrants. With hundreds of hirundines continuing to pour through we had a little hope, and though not in spectacular numbers we managed a few good birds: Red-backed Shrike, Icterine Warbler, Collared and Red-breasted Flycatchers, warblers, but also a lovely singing Thrush Nightingale.

Onwards and northwards to Kavarna, but not before more great birding: at Pomorie lake we saw yet more waders in fine summer plumage including Golden Plover and Dunlin; at Poroy, Hawfinches were glimpsed and Quail heard in the woods, but at the lake and bee-eater colony we found Great White Egrets, storks, more Rollers, Isabelline Wheatears and Ruddy Shelduck. Quartering nearby fields we saw a group of Gull-billed Terns, and at Goritza we were treated to a Semi-collared Flycatcher and Short-toed Treecreeper feast as males of the former jostled for territories, with one in the restaurant grounds. Light rain pushed us in to Topola and Kavarna, where a brief moment of migration produced Pied and Spotted Flycatchers and Common Rosefinch.

### Thu 12th May

An hour's stand at the hotel produced a few birds including a male Levant Sparrowhawk, then after breakfast it was up to Durankulak and Shabla. What a great day, with so many birds and so much excitement it is hard to know where to begin! On our way north, the cloudy morning was very peaceful as we stopped to watch Red-footed Falcons hunting. At Durankulak, we made our first walk along the shore amongst noisy marsh frogs and Great Reed Warblers; the reeds were alive with *Acrocephalus* warblers and we soon found our first Paddyfields singing and chasing. A Savi's Warbler did its best to pull our attention away, as did the fabulous array of more marsh terns and Squacco Herons. Lesser Grey Shrikes sat on roadside wires and bushes as we drove round to the southern end of the lake, where another walk got us Marsh Warbler, Caspian Tern, Purple Herons, Bittern and more Red-footed Falcons. Lunch was had at Shabla lake amongst meadows for butterflies, but also Collared Pratincoles, Hobbies and even more Red-foots filled the sky; Glossy Ibis and Squaccos filled the wetlands and marsh terns poured through amongst 1000s of Swallows and martins and Alpine Swifts - it was all too much at times!...

Shabla Tuzlata produced even more marsh terns, a Little Bittern or two, wildfowl with yet more Ferruginous Ducks, and warblers and Bee-eaters in the bushes. Still more was to come as we drove to Karmen Bryag for the coastal steppe, with hundreds of Calandra Larks (the best site I have ever been for them) and Pied Wheatears. Then on to Cape Kaliakra with more Pied Wheatears, a lovely male Red-breasted Flycatcher, Black-headed Buntings and so on, and finally to the steppe at Bolgareveo for Stone-curlews, Isabelline Wheatears, a flushed Corncrake and Short-toed Larks. Would the bonanza ever end?

### Fri 13th May

From Kavarna, we stopped at Topola for a last chance check for Eagle Owl (no joy, but many Barred Warblers), then continued west to the River Danube at Srebarna lake, going via Balchik and Dobric. A few stops on the way produced heard Grey-headed Woodpeckers, more good butterflies and a small wetland that held waders and raptors - including Lesser Spotted Eagles. At Srebarna we were treated to a fine spectacle of breeding pelicans, many Ferruginous Ducks, terns and Hobbies, plus dragonflies. Lunch on its north side was followed by a walk

and more Penduline Tits, Rollers, Savi's Warblers and even distant Red-necked Grebes. This fine reserve offers so much to see. At Vetren we dropped our bags and went down to the lake to check for Black Woodpecker and to have a beer amongst the poplars and ubiquitous Tree Sparrows. A late evening walk helped us hear Scops Owl, but laughably a distant 'nightjar' churring was eventually tracked to be coming from under a nearby stone... a Mole Cricket giving a perfect rendition and most confusing!

#### Sat 14th May

Our early walk today revealed two more singing Thrush Nightingales, Black Woodpecker was heard, and lots of heron and cormorant movement overhead as we walked down to the river. From Srebarna we were to drive west to Russe via some fine old fish ponds where Red-backed Shrikes, Penduline Tits and Savi's were noted. Here we turned south, making a lunch stop at Orlova Chuka. The lovely limestone gorge and woodland offers a fine landscape and good birds and butterflies: amongst the former were Long-legged Buzzard and Goshawk, plus Hawfinch and Ortolan Bunting; amongst the latter Weaver's, Glanville and Queen of Spain Fritillaries – and the leader disgraced himself by spilling beer all over his trousers! On we pressed into the Balkan mountains and our final stop for the night, at the quaint 'museum village' of Etara. Dropping our bags in our rooms, we had time for a late afternoon walk through the ethnographic village - and more great birds and butterflies.

#### Sun 15th May

With unfortunately little time for birding as we had to get to the airport, we made an early start up to the Sokolsky monastery. The hoped-for Black Woodpeckers did not appear, but instead we made do with fine Red-rumped Swallows, plus Semi-collared Flycatchers in the woods. On the drive to the airport we stopped near Sopot for Corncrakes, where one seemed to sing from the edge of the wood, and Barred Warblers continued to display. Bird-wise and country-wise we had gone full circle!

No doubt we had done a lot of travelling, but we had seen many, many fine birds. The highlights would be the Wallcreepers, Imperial Eagles, Rollers, Bee-eaters and Pied Wheatears - but not forgetting the simple spectacle of migration. Thousands of Black Terns, Swallows, many Hobbies and pelicans... all passed through during our week, and this in a way is the real joy of this trip. I hope you all enjoyed it as much as me and I look forward to seeing everyone again next year.

Brian Small

### ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED

(An extraordinary total of 222 species recorded by the group - plus five "leader only"!)

#### **Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix* –**

a close encounter with a fm at Shabla on 12<sup>th</sup>

#### **Quail *Coturnix coturnix* –**

heard at Poroy on 11<sup>th</sup>

#### **Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* -**

four dates, first en route on 9<sup>th</sup>

#### **Greylag Goose *Anser anser* -**

one at Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>, then several at Srebarna

#### **Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* -**

recorded on five dates; with 20+ noted on 11<sup>th</sup>

#### **Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* -**

seen commonly at various southern coastal locales

#### **Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* -**

six at Poroy on 11<sup>th</sup>

#### **Gadwall *Anas strepera* -**

common in the Bourgas area

#### **Wigeon *Anas penelope* -**

12 at Shabla Tuzla on 12<sup>th</sup>

#### **Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* -**

noted on nine dates at all wetland and riparian sites

**Garganey *Anas querquedula* -**

some fantastic males amongst the birds we saw, the first were at Atanasovsko on 9<sup>th</sup>

**Shoveler *Anas clypeata* -**

see near Bourgas on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>

**Pintail *Anas acuta* -**

a pair at Shabla on 12<sup>th</sup>

**(Common) Teal *Anas crecca* -**

two at Shabla on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* -**

recorded on four dates at coastal sites near Pomorie and Shabla

**Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* -**

very good numbers this year, with the first at Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup> then at least 100 at Srebarna on 13<sup>th</sup>

**Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica* -**

four off Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup> were in various states of plumage; eight at Durankulak and Kaliakra on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan* -**

one of Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup>; 70-100 off Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* -**

four dates at scattered locales, but in small numbers

**Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* -**

three nice summer-plumaged birds at Srebarna on 13<sup>th</sup>

**Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* -**

three dates, with 20 at two sites, Pomorie and Srebarna

**Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* -**

two dates but the same flock of 12 off Pomorie on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* -**

seven dates, the first at Asenovgrad; at least 200 were seen at various places on 9<sup>th</sup>

**White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* -**

seen every day; the nests near Mandria lake on 10<sup>th</sup> hosted numerous Spanish Sparrow nests

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* -**

13 at Shabla Lake on 12<sup>th</sup> were very nice; 25 at Srebarna on 13<sup>th</sup>

**Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* -**

five dates, but in quite small numbers

**Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* -**

one in flight at Shabla on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* -**

three birds on three dates, the first being a male on a small culvert at Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup>

**Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* -**

four dates in variable numbers at Atanasovsko, Kavarna, Srebarna, R. Danube

**Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* -**

six dates and always great to see; daily max. of 20 on 13<sup>th</sup>

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* -**

eight dates at coastal and Danube wetlands

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* -**

four dates, with 15 seen on both 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>

**Great White Egret *Ardea alba* -**

seen on two days, with the 13 roosting in a field at Poroy on 11<sup>th</sup> being nice to see

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* -**

nine dates at all wetland sites

**White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* -**

700+ at Atanasovsko on 10<sup>th</sup> lifted up from their roost and flew off north

**Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* -**

nine seen at various sites near Bourgas on 10<sup>th</sup> then at least 20 adults and 15 young at Srebarna on 13<sup>th</sup>

**Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus* -**

first seen inland at the river at Kadjali on 7<sup>th</sup>, then at sites near Bourgas and Srebarna

**Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* -**

noted at coastal and Danube sites

**Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* –**

11 at Karmen Bryag on 12th

**(Common) Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* –**

noted daily

**Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* –**

the first, a male, was seen at Kadjali on 9<sup>th</sup>, then three on 9<sup>th</sup> and 35 on 12<sup>th</sup> – the three males on roadside wires early morning were very pleasing

**Hobby *Falco subbuteo* –**

five dates, the first at Arda on 9<sup>th</sup>, but the flock of c.20 at Shabla, with similar numbers of Red-foots, were amazing

**Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* –**

a juvenile and adult on cliffs at Arda on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>; two on 14<sup>th</sup>

**Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* –**

six dates in total, 20 on 10<sup>th</sup> being the max.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans* –**

ten on our travels on 9<sup>th</sup>

**White-tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* –**

at least two seen 10<sup>th</sup> at Mandria lake

**Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* –**

six seen on 8<sup>th</sup>, with at least one nest; one at Majarovo the next day

**Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus* –**

noted on the same dates and places at the previous species, but in larger numbers; 35+ at Potochnitza

**Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* –**

four dates in small numbers

**Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* –**

seen on eight dates, with the max. of 20 on 10<sup>th</sup>

**Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* –**

a 2nd yr male and pair seen on 9th

**Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes* –**

m and fm along Krumovitza river on 8<sup>th</sup>; one at Majarovo on 9<sup>th</sup> and a male at Kavarna on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* –**

noted on three dates and only three birds seen

**Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* –**

one displayed over the Hotel at Pamporovo on 7<sup>th</sup> and another was seen being chased by a Raven on 14<sup>th</sup> at Orlova Chuka

**Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* –**

seen every day in generally low numbers

**Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* –**

seen on six dates, again in low numbers

**Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* –**

six on 9<sup>th</sup> and three the next day at Mandria; three around pools at Dobric

**Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* –**

two on nests on 9<sup>th</sup> and two in flight

**Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* –**

an adult near Majaorov on 9<sup>th</sup>

**Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata* –**

two migrants over the Krumovitza river on 8<sup>th</sup> and two more on subsequent days

**Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* –**

heard on two dates at Atanasovsko and Srebarna

**Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* –**

four dates at freshwater wetlands

**Coot *Fulica atra* –**

five dates near the coast

**Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediconemus* –**

one on nest near Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup>, but perhaps better was the bird at Bolgarevo on 12<sup>th</sup> that appeared to have young

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* –**

seen at Pomorie salt pans on three dates

**Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* -**

ditto!

**Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* –**

small numbers on four dates, the max. being three on 10<sup>th</sup>

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* –**

one flew over at Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Golden Plover *Pluvialis apicaria* -**

one on Pomorie salt pans on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* –**

one on two dates at Pomorie and Atanasovsko

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* –**

two on the beach at Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* -**

three days at Pomorie, one male was watched making a nest scrape

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa limosa* –**

a total of eight on three dates at Pomorie

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* –**

ten at Atanasovsko on 9<sup>th</sup> in light rain; three the next day

**Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* –**

one at Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* –**

seen on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, with a max. of 10 being disappointing

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* –**

two on two dates

**Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* –**

two at Atanasovsko on 9<sup>th</sup> and then on two subsequent dates

**[Sanderling *Calidris alba* –**

three at Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup>]

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta* –**

very good numbers near the coast, with 100s seen at Atanasovsko on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> and at Pomorie and Durankulak

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* –**

again very good numbers, with 500 noted on 11<sup>th</sup> at Pomorie

**Dunlin *Calidris alpina* –**

noted on three dates, with fine summer plumaged birds, perhaps of the race centralis, at Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* –**

four dates near the coast with very good numbers seen

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* –**

about 100 were seen on 10<sup>th</sup> at three sites around Mandria and Atanasovsko; another group were at Shabla on 12<sup>th</sup> flycatching with Alpine Swifts, Hobbies and Red-foots!

**Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola neumanni* –**

one was seen with Collared Pratincoles on 10<sup>th</sup>

**Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* –**

seen on nine dates, but obviously most common on the coast

**Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* –**

six dates near the coast and at Srebarna

**Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* –**

four dates, with the daily max. being 30 at Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* –**

always nice to see, so out total of about 20 was good, the best being those at Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>

**Little Gull *Larus minutus* –**

two flocks of 50 at Atanasovsko on 10<sup>th</sup> and Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup>, plus two other dates

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* –**

breeds at Pomorie

**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*** –

one at Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup> and five over fields near Sunny Beach on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*** –

two at Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*** –

many 100s seen at the coast, mixed in with the Black Terns – a fine bird

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*** –

one of the highlights of the trip, with c.3000 seen on 10<sup>th</sup>, 1500 in one flock on 11<sup>th</sup> and many others at Durankulak and Srebarna

**White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*** –

a real beauty, but no more than 50 seen in with the Black Terns at any one site

**Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*** –

breeds at Pomorie, seen on four dates

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*** –

five dates at coastal sites

**(Feral) Rock Dove *Columba livia*** –

seen daily, but are any at Kaliakra ‘real’?

**Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*** –

seven dates in low numbers

**Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*** –

nine dates and with small flocks on the move at several sites; a daily max. of over 30 on 8<sup>th</sup>

**Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*** –

seen daily

**Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*** –

seen or heard daily, most numerous at Srebarna

**Scops Owl *Otus scops*** –

heard at Kavarna and Vetren

**Little Owl *Athene noctua*** –

when looked for seen on several ruined buildings on three dates 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>

**Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*** –

six dates, with the best by far being those at the colony at Nastan on 7<sup>th</sup>, where they swept around us noisily at very close range

**(Common) Swift *Apus apus*** –

daily

**Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*** –

only noted from 13<sup>th</sup>, when two were seen at Kavarna, then the best being c.20 at Etara on 15<sup>th</sup>

**Roller *Coracias garrulus*** –

arrival took place from 10<sup>th</sup>, and we had over 10 on two dates

**Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*** –

seen and heard on three dates, the best perched on a stick on the Danube on 14<sup>th</sup>

**European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*** –

eight dates and some very fine views, notably at the colonies at Poroy and on 14<sup>th</sup> as we traveled to Etara

**Hoopoe *Upupa epops*** –

seven dates, often en route

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*** –

heard twice

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius*** –

one on 9<sup>th</sup> at a roadside stop as we travelled to the coast; heard at Goritza

**Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*** –

seen on seven dates, the first being a pair along the Krumovitza river on 9<sup>th</sup>

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*** –

four dates often around villages

**Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*** –

heard near Vetren on 14<sup>th</sup>

**Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*** –

heard or seen on six dates

**Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*** –

heard on three dates, but seen at Srebarna on 13<sup>th</sup>

**Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*** –

like Roller these arrived late, being seen from 11<sup>th</sup>; a total of just seven seen

**Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*** –

about 12 seen near Drankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>; two at Balchik; one very distantly at Etara

**Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*** –

seen on six dates, with over 20 on 8<sup>th</sup>

**Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*** –

as usual only noted at our site near Juerusalmivo on 9<sup>th</sup>, with seven seen

**Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*** –

seen daily

**Jay *Garrulus glandarius*** -

daily

**Magpie *Pica pica*** -

daily

**Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*** –

two above the hotel at Pamporovo on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>

**Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*** -

daily

**Rook *Corvus frugilegus*** –

seen at Sofia on 6<sup>th</sup>, then quite common around Dobric on 13<sup>th</sup>

**Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*** –

seen daily

**Raven *Corvus corax*** –

seen on eight days, often near cliffs inland

**Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*** –

three dates in the highlands

**Sombre Tit *Poecile lugubris*** –

always good to see, but just three on one day were all we saw – still better than none

**Coal Tit *Periparus ater*** –

Pamporovo and Etara only

**Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*** –

three performed nicely early on 7<sup>th</sup>

**Great Tit *Parus major*** –

seen daily, often nesting in strange places

**Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*** –

seen less frequently than Great

**Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*** –

seen on four dates near Bourgas and Srebarna, often first located by the call (pishing works well) and several nests were seen

**Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*** –

seen on eight dates, but not in high numbers

**Swallow *Hirundo rustica*** –

seen daily, sometimes in huge numbers as birds pushed northwards

**Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*** –

noted on six dates at inland riparian areas and cliffs

**House Martin *Delichon urbicum*** –

like Swallows, very numerous

**Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*** –

noted daily, but often only breeding birds so seen in low numbers

**Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*** –

seven dates, in small feeding parties; max at Krumovitzta on 8<sup>th</sup>

**Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*** –

another amazing spectacle is the 100s that breed on the coastal steppe near Karmen Bryag, where males wear themselves out chasing around to establish territories, seemingly from every available perch; seen on two dates

**Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* –**

noted on two dates on coastal steppe near Kavarna; seen well at Bolgarevo

**Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* –**

noted daily

**Wood Lark *Lullula arborea* –**

seen on six dates, with the best views on 9<sup>th</sup>

**Skylark *Alauda arvensis* –**

noted daily

**Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* –**

heard near Bourgas on three dates

**Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* –**

seen and heard at Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup> and three at or near Srebarna on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* –**

a noisy inhabitant of coastal reed beds

**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* –**

seen on two dates with a total of seven birds

**Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* –**

one of the special birds of this trip, so it was good to see five different birds and hear others at Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* –**

seen at coastal reed bed sites and Srebarna

**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* –**

one sang well for us at Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida* –**

seen or heard on four days, the first at Krumovitza river on 8<sup>th</sup>, but numbers had not built up

**Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* –**

two near the hotel at Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* –**

seen on four dates only in low numbers

**Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* –**

seen on nine dates, but only up to five on any day

**Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis* –**

a migrant fed in bushes at Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* –**

seen on three dates, the first being two at Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup>

**Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* –**

seen or heard daily

**Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* –**

one of the first birds seen on the trip and one of the last; a fine singer and performed its song-flight well on various occasions

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* –**

noted virtually daily in low numbers

**Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris* –**

heard and seen briefly on two dates, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>

**(Common) Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* –**

seen or heard at various sites on eight days

**(Eastern) Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans albistriata* –**

noted on just two dates, the best being those that performed around us at Majarovo on 9<sup>th</sup>

**Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* –**

it was a surprise to find these on two dates inland at Potochnitza on 8<sup>th</sup> and en route on 9<sup>th</sup>

**Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* –**

as usual at Pamporovo

**Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* –**

likewise, only seen at Pamporovo

**Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* –**

seen or heard in mountainous riparian habitats

**Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* –**

four at Gotitza and similar numbers at Etara on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>

**Western Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer* –**

one attending a nesthole at Majarovo on 9<sup>th</sup>

**Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* –**

a major highlight of the trip came in the form of three birds chasing each other, a male singing, and a pair collecting nest material at Trigrad on 7<sup>th</sup>

**(Eurasian) Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* –**

one in pine forest at the hotel on 7<sup>th</sup>

**Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* –**

two singing were seen well at Goritza on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* –**

seen daily, in huge numbers near the coast

**Blackbird *Turdus merula* –**

seen daily

**Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* –**

seen or heard on five dates in deciduous woodland

**Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* –**

seen on three dates in old forests, notably Goritza

**Robin *Erithacus rubecula* –**

like Wren, noted in damp riparian woodland

**Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* –**

seen and heard daily, but numbers at the Arda river were astonishing!

**Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* –**

one was pulled out of the hat at Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup>, where one showed well; two more were a big surprise also at Vetren on 14<sup>th</sup>

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus* –**

seen on three dates in the old mountain towns of Trigrad and Etara

**(Common) Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* –**

several males seen in Vetren on 14<sup>th</sup>

**Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* –**

seen daily in low numbers as birds move through

**Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* –**

noted on just three dates

**Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* –**

another special bird, especially when you find them occupying Shuslik holes; noted on six dates

**Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* –**

seen in low numbers on three dates

**Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* –**

superb views were had at Karmen Bryag and Kaliakra on 12<sup>th</sup>; a total of 20+ birds for the day

**“Eastern” Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe [hispanica] melanoleuca* –**

seen on two dates at Studen Kladents and Majarovo; a very fine bird indeed, possibly better than Pied....

**Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* –**

seen on three early dates, with the best view of a male at the dam at S Kladents on 8<sup>th</sup>

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* –**

the first of five flycatcher species we saw on the trip; seen on six dates

**Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* –**

a sign of the late spring was the fact that this and the next species were stioll about; seen on four dates, the first at Pomorie on 10<sup>th</sup>

**Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* –**

a lovely female at Pomorie on 11<sup>th</sup>

**Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* –**

always splendid and another highlight was to see and hear these in the forests at Goritza and Etara

**Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* –**

several males noted on three dates, the best perhaps at Kaliakra on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* –**

seen on four dates on mountain streams in the Rhodopes and Balkan mountains

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*** –

seen daily

**Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*** –

almost daily views of this handsome bird

**Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*** –

seen daily

**Dunnock *Prunella modularis*** –

heard only at the Elitza hotel on 7<sup>th</sup>

**Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*** –

various forms seen and heard on eight dates; the buzzy call of Black-headed *feldegg*s were most common, but Blue-headed *flava* or *thunbergi* types also seen and heard

**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*** –

noted on six dates on inland rivers

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*** –

seen daily

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*** –

a grand total of just ten on four dates, but the first near Pomorie were as good as any, but those at Karmen Bryag were in such fabulous light

**Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*** –

seen in low numbers on five dates; the first at Trigrad on 7<sup>th</sup>

**Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*** –

it was nice to pick up a close flying bird on call at Atanasovsko on 10<sup>th</sup>, at such close range you could see the brick-red on the face; others heard on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*** –

seen daily

[Siskin *Carduelis spinus* –

two flew over the hotel near Pamporovo on 7<sup>th</sup> ]

**Serin *Serinus serinus*** –

seen well at Trigrad on 7<sup>th</sup> and at Orlova Chuka on 14<sup>th</sup>

**Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*** –

seen daily

**Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*** –

likewise, seen daily

**Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*** –

noted in low numbers on five dates

[Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* -

two or three at the hotel on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> ]

[Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* -

a roadside pair near Trigrad on 7<sup>th</sup> ]

**Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*** –

‘monster’ views of this bird on eight dates, some of the best by the hotel at Kavarna

**Scarlet (Common) Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*** –

a female-type was seen just as we arrived at the hotel at Kavarna, but could not be relocated later

**Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*** –

great views daily

**Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*** –

seen and heard on four dates inland

**Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*** –

it was nice to see a pair at Majorovo on 9<sup>th</sup> having only heard them on 7<sup>th</sup>

**Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*** –

seen at our first stop on 6<sup>th</sup>, perhaps our best views, and seen or heard on six subsequent dates

**Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirius*** –

noted on three dates in the Arda/S. Kladents/Krumovitza river area

**Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala*** -

arrival took place from 8<sup>th</sup>; our first at Arda, then great views on five other dates, the best at Kaliakra on 12<sup>th</sup>

**Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*** –

on three at Durankulak on 12<sup>th</sup>; eastern birds have different plumage and larger, bulbous bills

**BUTTERFLIES**

1. Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*
2. Scarce Swallowtail *Iphiclides podalirius*
3. Southern Festoon *Zerynthia polyxena*
4. Eastern Festoon *Zerynthia cerisyi*
5. Clouded Apollo *Parnassius mnemosyne*
6. Large White *Pieris brassicae*
7. Small White *Artogeia rapae*
8. Green-veined White *Artogeia napi*
9. Eastern Bath White *Pontia edusa*
10. Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*
11. Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*
12. Berger's Clouded Yellow *Colias alfacariensis*
13. Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow *Colias erate*
14. Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*
15. Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*
16. Eastern Wood White *Leptidea duponcheli*
17. Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*
18. Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeus*
19. Grecian Copper *Lycaena ottomana*
20. Sooty Copper *Lycaena tityrus*
21. Silver-studded Blue *Plebejus argus*
22. Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*
23. Escher's Blue *Agrodiaetus escheri*
24. Eastern Short-tailed Blue *Everes decoloratus*
25. Green-underside Blue *Glaucopsyche alexis*
26. Eastern Baton Blue *Pseudophilotes vicrama*
27. Adonis Blue *Lysnadra bellargus*
28. Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*
29. Peacock *Inachis io*
30. Common Glider *Neptis sappho*
31. Map Butterfly *Araschnia levana*
32. Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*
33. Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*
34. Large Tortoiseshell *Nymphalis polychloros*
35. Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*
36. Comma *Polygonum c-album*
37. Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia*
38. Glanville Fritillary *Melitaea cinxia*
39. Knapweed Fritillary *Melitaea phoebe*
40. Spotted Fritillary *Melitaea didyma*
41. Marsh Fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*
42. Weaver's Fritillary *Clossiana dia*
43. Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*
44. Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*
45. Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera*
46. Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*
47. Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus amoricanus*
48. Mallow Skipper *Carcharodus alceae*
49. Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages*
50. Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*