

# Bulgaria

Rhodope Mountains & Black Sea

Sun 13th – Tue 22nd May 2018



*House Martins and Barn Swallow 'mudding', Paddyfield Warblers and male Pied Wheatear © tour participant Martin Holmes*

**Report compiled by tour leader:  
Richard Thaxton**

## Bulgaria | Rhodope Mountains & Black Sea

**Tour leaders:** Richard Thaxton, Lyubo & Svetlyo

Starting in Sofia we headed south east into the Black Pine, Scots Pine and spruce cloaked hills of the Western Rhodope Mountains, then heading further east to the barren hills and lower deciduous oakwoods of the eastern Rhodope Mountains, then on further east to the lakes, marshes and saltings on the Black Sea coast at Burgas and Pomorie, then to the coastal steppe and lakes north of Kavarna, before finally reaching the lowland farmland, woodland and lakes of the mighty River Danube. The weather for our tour of this part of Bulgaria was by and large warm and sunny throughout, the few spits & spots of rain barely deserve a mention.

In all we encountered 208 species of birds. The abundance of birdlife we enjoyed was so often not confined to reserves or such special places, but rock-up at any bit of what might seem like standard countryside in Bulgaria, of whatever habitat, and the birds are simply there, as they should be, like going back in time.

Below are some selected highlights of the tour. You'll all have your own set of abiding memories but I'm sure some of those that follow will feature amongst them. So for you, was it.....

- The general overall evidence of migration - the marvel of birds on the move, be it soaring birds like storks, pelicans and raptors, the swifts, martins and swallows, or all the assorted warblers visiting from warmer climes.
- The birds that are so difficult to now see at home, maybe? Like European Turtle Dove, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Hawfinch and Red-backed Shrike.
- The array of such colourful birds provided by the likes of European Bee-eaters, European Rollers, Eurasian Golden Orioles and Eurasian Hoopoes.
- The 'pecker set; European Green, Black, Grey-headed, Syrian, Great, Middle and Lesser Spotted. Especially that Black Woodpecker!
- The four species of wheatears-Northern, Pied, Black-eared and Isabelline. The strikingly handsome Pied Wheatear is surely among the many Birds of the Trip.
- The inspiring success of the Lesser Kestrel project and the chance to see these dainty falcons so well.
- The array of all the raptors especially Booted Eagle, European Honey Buzzard, the massive White-tailed Eagle, Griffon and Egyptian Vultures or that Northern Goshawk at Pelican Lodge.
- The array of waders, especially those summer plumaged Curlew Sandpipers.
- The chance to see unusual warblers like Paddyfield, Olive-tree and Savi's.
- The daily ethereal soundtrack to the tour provided by Common Nightingales, Common Cuckoos, European Turtle Doves and Eurasian Golden Orioles.
- Or simply all of the above, and much, much more!

What follows is a synoptic account of our time together in Bulgaria in daily-diary format, hopefully capturing for you and serving as a reminder of where we were, what we saw and how. I hope you enjoy re-living the experiences.

### Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May

Our flight from Heathrow to Sofia was straightforward and on arrival we were met by our Bulgarian guides Lyubo and Svetlyo and driver Mitko. Without further ado we headed out of the city suburbs towards Dubrash in the Rhodope Mountains, making several stops along the way. The first of these was just off the motorway to a secluded area of farmland, scattered trees and bushes at Vakarel. Corn Crane was our hope, but Lyubo told us that they were late this year and were yet to arrive, bah! The vagaries of spring migration eh? Hey-ho, nevertheless we contented ourselves with the first of hundreds of Red-backed Shrikes we'd see in the days ahead, Barred Warbler, Whinchat, both Cirl and Corn Buntings, Common Cuckoo, Eurasian Sparrowhawk and a Common Kestrel. Though sunny on arrival in Sofia some light rain had now set in so pressing on, we paused in Vinogradetz to enjoy the first of many White Stork nests, a few fly-by Red-rumped Swallows and a Common Buzzard.

Climbing into the forested and picturesque Rhodope Mountains, we stopped at Beglica Forest and reservoir. A short leg-stretch along a track through the pinewood produced Black Redstart, Ring Ouzel, Wren, Common Chaffinch, Common Crossbill, European Serin, European Greenfinch, Eurasian Siskin, both Song and Mistle Thrush, Common Blackbird, Coal Tit, European Robin and Great Spotted Woodpecker, plus great views of both Common Firecrest and both Willow Tit.

Pressing on, drive-by birds included a corvid selection of Eurasian Magpie, Eurasian Jay, Hooded Crow and Northern Raven, plus Grey Wagtail. On arrival at Dubrash Hotel we found ourselves amongst a somewhat loud young student's end of term graduation party. Our hearts sank a bit after a day of travelling and we needed sleep, as a very, very noisy night seemed in prospect. But to their considerable credit, come midnight the celebrations miraculously stopped in an instant, like the plug had been pulled and by morning you'd not know there had even been a rave of a party going on, bless 'em. Phew!

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May**

The day dawned bright and sunny with light cloud billowing across the superb mountain vista from the hotel terrace. A pre-breakfast stroll in the hotel grounds soon had us amongst some great birds, best of which was surely that opportunity to sift-out Pallid Swift from Common Swift as birds zipped about low above our heads, along with both Common House and Eurasian Crag Martins. In nearby pines we found Common Crossbill, Blackcap, European Greenfinch, Cirl Bunting, Great, Blue and Coal Tits, Spotted Flycatcher and a distant European Honey Buzzard. A Black Woodpecker was certainly heard, and glimpsed by some?

Setting off at 09.30am we'd only gone about a mile when the minibus conked out! But hey, a chance to do some roadside birding while driver Mitko worked his magic. Here we saw Northern Goshawk, Common Buzzard, another Cirl Bunting and yet more Red-backed Shrikes. We were soon on our way and at our next stop, unforced this time, in an area of pine, we found Crested Tit, Eurasian Treecreeper, Eurasian Bullfinch, Northern Raven and Great Spotted Woodpecker. Black Woodpecker was heard, again! Moving on, we stopped at Trigrad Gorge. In the fast-flowing riverbed, we found Grey Wagtail and White-throated Dipper, whilst up above us were Alpine Swifts, Eurasian Crag Martins and Eurasian Sparrowhawk. European Green Woodpecker was heard.

We lunched further up the gorge, during which we saw Common Redstart, Black Redstart, Red-rumped Swallow, Common Chiffchaff, more Eurasian Crag Martins. Later at another stop we found two Hobbies, Yellowhammer, Whinchat and yet more Red-back Shrikes. We stopped next at the town of Kurdjali where canalisation of the section of the River Arda passing through town has created an adjacent swampy wetland, which heaved with birds – 60+ Little Egrets, 60+ Black-crowned Night Herons, 15+ Pygmy Cormorants, a Squacco Heron, a Little Bittern, a Great Cormorant, several Great Reed Warblers and a Western Yellow Wagtail, plus the humble Mallard, Common Moorhen and Western Jackdaw. Eventually we fetch-up at our hotel at Krumovgrad, where, bizarrely another young student's end of term graduation party was in full swing! Or was this some sort of Bulgarian tradition for welcoming visiting birdwatchers, we began to think. Thankfully, it too soon calmed down, enough to hear Common Nightingales serenading us through the night.

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May**

Pre-breakfast today we wandered down to the Krumovitzka River. Here, in a brief saunter we heard more and actually saw one Common Nightingale, heard Eurasian Hoopoe, Eurasian Golden Oriole and Eastern Olivaceous Warbler. On the river shingle were three pairs of Little Ringed Plovers. After breakfast, we drove alongside the river, stopping at an area of scattered woodland, bushes and scrub, fields and stony hillside. What a spot! We didn't get very far. Almost from standing still at one spot we found; Barred Warbler, Common Whitethroat, Corn Bunting, European Bee-eater, European Roller, Eurasian Hoopoe, Spanish Sparrow, Black-headed Bunting, Collared Dove, Chukar and Black-eared Wheatear above us up on a rocky outcrop and Olive-tree Warbler! Added to all this the background soundtrack was an incessant cacophony of birdsong, comprising Eurasian Golden Orioles, Common Nightingales and European Turtle Doves, the wonderful score that was to accompany us throughout the rest of the tour. From this same spot, overhead we saw both Griffon and Egyptian Vultures, the latter in display flight, Long-legged Buzzard, European Honey Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Grey Heron and both White and Black Storks. Crikey!

Without really needing to, we moved on a bit and were soon stopped in our tracks to 'scope European Roller, Lesser Grey Shrike, further Black-eared Wheatears, Northern Wheatears, Cirl Bunting and this time with Eurasian Hobby and Short-toed Snake Eagle overhead. In all the excitement and our hurry to get in and out of the minibus as birds presented themselves we managed to damage the vehicles sliding door, preventing it closing properly. This coincided with the heat of the day, so after lunching in a bus stop with nesting Red-rumped Swallows, we headed back to the hotel for a wee siesta whilst driver Mitko went to get the door fixed. Sorted. We ventured back out at 3pm this time to a surreal, volcanic rock landscape Studen Kladenetz, a beautiful spot. Here we saw more Griffon and Egyptian Vultures including birds perched on cliffs, Common Buzzard, Marsh Harrier and Subalpine Warbler. That evening after dinner we wandered around town, looking and listening for Eurasian Scops Owl. Two were heard and one glimpsed.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May**

We had got a long drive ahead of us today, long enough even if we didn't stop for birds. So no pre-breakfast walk this morning but a prompt departure. Our first stop was at the Studen Kladenetz dam, where we found two Goosander, which was unusual. There were several Eurasian Golden Orioles zipping about, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, both Northern and Black-eared Wheatears and a Black Kite. We were also able to 'scope cliff-nesting Egyptian Vultures and spied a Blue Rock Thrush way, way up on the cliff top, at what we reckoned was about a kilometre away, but given away by its haughty, nose-in-the-air posture. Honestly!

At our next stop we found both nesting Western Rock Nuthatch and Middle Spotted Woodpecker and more Griffon Vultures soared overhead. Then further on we stopped at a spectacular area of soaring cliffs above the Arda River where there were yet more Egyptian and Griffon Vultures, Long-legged Buzzard, Peregrine Falcon, Black Stork and Blue Rock Thrush, much nearer this time! We had great views here too of our first Ortolan Buntings. We stopped next at Borislavtsi where the River Arda enters a reservoir. Here whilst enjoying close views of nesting White Storks complete with Spanish Sparrow nest-lodgers, a mighty White-tailed Eagle soared over brandishing a fish, its huge wings causing a solar eclipse! Moving on, at Mezek Tumb we found our first Woodchat Shrikes, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Crested Larks and a distant Eastern Imperial Eagle. Getting peckish, we stopped for lunch at Levka, this time not with Red-rumped Swallows but with Lesser Kestrels, 40 of 'em flying about the place. Here we were given a talk and an insight into an inspiring successful project to re-introduce these superb little falcons. We had a chance to see them close up, to see how they differ from Common Kestrels, close enough to even see their pale claws (dark in Common), a feature that I for one had never been able to see before!

With a ways yet to go, we needed to move, onwards to the Black Sea coast at Pomorie. Not though before we stopped to 'scope a pair of Eastern Imperial Eagles at their nest plus both Woodchat and Lesser Grey Shrikes, European Turtle Dove and Olive-tree Warbler. Further on still we stopped near Topovgrad for Isabelline Wheatear, four of them, plus Eastern Orphee Warbler for good measure. After two more brief stops, at the first of which we saw a fine dark morph Booted Eagle, Eurasian Skylark, more European Turtle Doves and a Lesser Whitethroat, and at the second of which-a petrol station, where we saw a male Montagu's Harrier, we eventually arrived at Pomorie. Phew!

#### Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May

Up with the (Crested) lark, pre-breakfast we wandered around to the Salt Museum on the edge of the Pomorie lagoon, which was *hoaching* with birds. There were Common, Little and Sandwich Terns, Great and Pygmy Cormorants, Pied Avocets and Black-winged Stilts, Mallard and Gadwall, Yellow-legged Gulls aplenty and a few Eurasian Tree Sparrows. On the Black Sea, just offshore we found a Black-throated Diver and Black-necked Grebes and fleetingly saw some Bottle-nosed Dolphins.

After breakfast we headed to Atanasovsko Lake for a spot of wader-sifting. There were 110+ Curlew Sandpipers many in their brick-red summer plumage finery, but in sifting through them we found a Dunlin. There were also Eurasian Curlew, Whimbrel and four Grey Plover, two in wonderful summer plumage. Here we also found Black-headed and Slender-billed Gulls, Eurasian Spoonbill, Common Shelduck, more avocets and stilts, Whiskered Tern and best of all both Great White and Dalmatian Pelicans. Oh and several migrant European Honey Buzzards passed over too. Moving on to Vaya Lake, here we found Garganey, Northern Shoveler and Common Pochard, dozens and dozens of Great Crested Grebes and Eurasian Coots, more Great White Pelicans, and then at a petrol station stop saw Grey Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron and heard our first Cetti's Warbler. At Mandra Lake we found more Garganey, more Common Pochard and more Great White Pelicans, our first Purple Heron and several Marsh Harriers. Around the other side of Mandra we found several Squacco Herons, whilst White Storks and Lesser Spotted Eagles passed overhead.

We lunched at Dimchevo village during which a White-tailed Eagles sailed over, after which we headed for Poda-Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB) Reserve. From the viewing deck we found Ferruginous Duck, Eurasian Oystercatcher and Eurasian Reed Warbler and on walking along the trail heard both Marsh Warbler and Water Rail, all of which were new for us, whilst 100+ migrating White Storks passed over us. Nice.

#### Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May

Pre-breakfast we wandered along the dyke separating Pomorie lagoon from the Black Sea shore. Along here, checking on either side, we found Little Stint, Kentish Plover, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Ruff, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling and Mediterranean Gull. After breakfast, we found two more Black-throated Divers. Onwards, we stopped at the other end of Atanasovsko Lake where we saw European Roller, Common Cuckoo, Black Kite and Collared Pratincole, Northern Lapwings and a dozen European Honey Buzzards passed over us. We then wandered through the reeds and bushes finding Spotted Flycatcher and Common Whitethroat but our route ahead was overgrown and as nobody had packed their machete, we back-tracked. Heading north, we next stopped at the oak woodland at Poroy and saw Hawfinch as soon as we got out of the minibus. Hoopoes were calling, so too European Turtle Doves and Eurasian Golden Orioles. A flock of 25+ European Bee-eaters were lovely to see, as were further Black-headed Buntings.

We had lunch at a restaurant at Goritza after which we visited the nearby Goritza Forest. Here, a short stroll produced Short-toed Treecreeper, Eurasian Nuthatch, Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap, Common Chiffchaff and Common Chaffinch but alas Grey-headed Woodpecker was only heard. In another part of the forest we put time in on trying to find Semicollared Flycatcher and eventually did. It took us a while but we did see a pair at a nestbox, plus Spotted Flycatchers too. Our last stop of the day was at Topola, near Kavarna. Lyubo, Svetlyo and I kept quiet as to why, until we knew our target was in the bag – Eurasian Eagle Owl. It proved tricky, it's usually there somewhere and sure enough we found it eventually, high up on a cliff ledge shrouded in overhanging foliage. Even once found, in the 'scope folk struggled to make it out at first, but we all got there in the end, phew! And so to Kavarna and Hotel Kosta.

#### Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May

Hotel Kosta sits above a wooded valley coming in from the coast, which can funnel migrants inland. So pre-breakfast all we had to do was step outside and peer over the edge. In no more than half an hour, we heard both River Warbler and Marsh Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Spotted Flycatcher, Eurasian Golden Orioles, Hawfinches and our first Syrian Woodpecker.

At Durankulak, a reed-fringed lake on the Black Sea shoreline, no sooner had we arrived then we found Paddyfield Warbler. One would have been good, but we saw three of these much sought-after birds on the western edge of their range here, singing and posing nicely atop a reed stem. Here too we saw several Great Reed Warblers and heard Savi's Warbler. As we enjoyed these, we swivelled around to see a passing flock of 60+ Yelkouan Shearwaters and several European Shags. There were a lot of birds here, including Ferruginous Duck, fly-by Gull-billed and Whiskered Terns, 50+ Great White Pelicans overhead, many Great Crested Grebes on the sea, Common Sandpiper and Common Ringed Plover on the shore, Marsh Harrier, Spanish Sparrow, Lesser Grey Shrike, Eurasian Coot, a distant White-tailed Eagle and our only Red-footed Falcon. At Shabla & Tuzlata Lake there were more Ferruginous Ducks and Mute Swans, singles of Common Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper and Western Yellow Wagtail and Marsh Warbler was only heard, again!

We lunched near the beach, but nobody braved a swim save for a wee paddle for some, after which we stopped briefly at part of Durankulak where we had great views of Savi's Warbler, before then back-tracking home, birding along the way. We stopped at Kamen Bryag, an area of coastal rocky steppe. Here we found our first Calandra Larks and Tawny Pipits as well as those handsome Pied Wheatears on the cliff edge. What absolute *stotters* they are, eh? We also 'scoped Eurasian Hoopoe and Lesser Grey Shrike. Further on we stopped amongst the wind turbines where we found Isabelline Wheatears,

more Lesser Grey Shrikes and Eurasian Golden Orioles. Our last stop of the day was at Balgarevo steppe specifically for Eurasian Stone-curlew and lo, no sooner did we arrive, than we picked out a pair on the roadside steppe, along with Greater Short-toed Larks, a couple more Tawny Pipits and yet more shrikes both Red-backed and Lesser Grey. We had a wonderful chance here to 'scope European Turtle Doves on the ground and to admire their beautiful turtle shell wing patterning.

### Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May

Pre-breakfast we again just stepped outside the hotel, though not much was seen, just European Goldfinches. So without further ado, we promptly bade farewell to Kosta and his team and set off for Cape Kaliakra.

We stopped at a spot where there seemed to be shrikes everywhere - that "*shrikey place*", mind? With all three present-Red-backed, Lesser Grey and Woodchat. Here too Eastern Olivaceous Warblers, Eurasian Golden Orioles and Common Chiffchaff. Out on the Cape itself there were many Pied Wheatears, our first Common Linnets, lots of European Bee-eaters, Alpine Swifts zipping passed and one or two Black-headed Buntings. A surprise find was a singing immature male Common Rosefinch, a new bird for some of us, including guide Svetlyo. Another surprise was that lone Rosy Starling perched on a wire, fresh in. Out on the water below were European Shags and Yelkouan Shearwaters. And what about those cute Common House Martins at our feet collecting mud? Heading away from the Cape we stopped at that "*chatty place*" with several Whinchats, a pair of European Stonechats, Northern Wheatears plus Common Whitethroat, Marsh Warbler and Black-headed Bunting. Continuing north, heading for the River Danube, we stopped for a roadside picnic lunch at Onogur, during which we had an amazing opportunity to 'scope a Grey-headed Woodpecker. We then took a gentle stroll along a wooded ride, where we saw several Hawfinches, including a scruffy juvenile, which was new for me, never seen a juv. Hawfinch before. Along here, too, we saw Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Blackcap, had great views of a Booted Eagle, a pale morph this time, as Common Buzzards, European Honey Buzzards and Lesser Spotted Eagles and a Levant Sparrowhawk passed over us, whilst Common Cuckoos called incessantly. An altogether lovely post-lunch bibble.

Pressing on we drove for a while to get some miles covered, but eventually stopped at a roadside colony of European Bee-eaters of about 40+ birds where, bizarrely, attempts had been made, apparently by some bee-keepers who'd taken against the bee-eaters, to plug their nest holes with expanding polystyrene foam from aerosol cans! All a bit extreme and in any case to no avail seemingly, as the birds were excavating fresh holes alongside the plugged ones and we enjoyed them immensely all the same. So there, you dastardly bee-keepers! Oh, and we heard Common Pheasant here, our only contact. We made a brief cursory stop at Sreburna Lake but birds were distant and hard to see in the heat haze and we'd be there tomorrow anyway. And so to Pelican Lodge at Vetren, and yet another night full of Common Nighthale song. Would we ever tire of that? Discuss.

### Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May

As we met in the garden about to set off for a pre-breakfast walk down to the mighty River Danube, a Northern Goshawk flew low overhead, giving fabulous views and a good start to the day. Down by the river we saw Greylag Geese and Whiskered, Common and Little Terns. Black-crowned Night Herons coming off shift, Great Egrets, Little Egrets, Squacco Herons, Glossy Ibises, Dalmatian Pelicans and Pygmy Cormorants all going on shift. A lone fly-by Tufted Duck was our only one of the tour. After breakfast we headed to Sreburna Lake. From an elevated vantage point, looking down on the lake and surrounding reed fringe, we could see Ferruginous Duck, Dalmatian and Great White Pelicans, Eurasian Spoonbill, Pygmy Cormorant, Little Bittern, Common Moorhen and Eurasian Coot, a brief fly-by Purple Heron and Great Crested Grebe. In and around us in bushes and trees were Eurasian Golden Orioles, European Roller, Common Wood Pigeons, Eurasian Hoopoe, calling Common Cuckoos, a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and a flock of 10 Rosy Starlings flew passed all too quickly. In the willows we saw Penduline Tit. Walking along the trail through the bushes produced nothing but an unseen singing Marsh Warbler but overhead we had fabulous views of first a Short-toed Snake Eagle and then a European Honey Buzzard.

We stopped briefly for coffee before then pressing on to Malak Preslavetz. Walking along the road here we heard Long-tailed Tit and saw a second Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (such a scarce bird back in Blighty nowadays). On the lake there were 150+ Whiskered Terns, a fine Little Bittern posing for us at the reed fringe and a Common Kingfisher darting by in a flash. It was a fine spot to have our picnic lunch, during which a Lesser Spotted Eagles passed high overhead, so too a Common Buzzard. Two Common Redstarts were a good find, but best by far was that Black Woodpecker experience. Acting on information from a fellow birdwatcher we met there, he told us of an active nest hole, in the seventh poplar tree along, down by the river. We eventually found said poplar together with hole and waited. And waited. We'd all but given up thinking the 'peckers had gone, when *wham*, in it came right above our heads giving us superb views. Surely a BOT-bird contender, (Bird of the Trip).

After lunch we stopped at Antimovo Reservoir in the hope of Ruddy Shelduck but no, only Mallards and Common Sandpipers. So we moved to Garvan Lake where Red-necked Grebe had been seen previously. It was difficult to view the lake through the trackside vegetation but on finding a gap we spotted Marsh Harrier, Squacco Heron, Ferruginous Duck and.....Black-necked Grebe. Was our intelligence wrong? Undeterred, Lyubo persevered and lo, eventually found for us the said Red-necked Grebe. Determined to find Ruddy Shelduck, on our way back to Pelican Lodge we stopped at Popina on the banks of the River Danube. A sand island was covered with birds; gulls, terns, ducks, some waders, spoonbills and herons and yes, in amongst the throng were eight Ruddy Shelduck.

### Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

Our last morning. No pre-breakfast walk, but Syrian Woodpecker was seen in the garden. We loaded the minibus and said goodbye to our host Dora and set off, calling in at Sreburna Lake for one last look. There was nothing new but we enjoyed our last looks at European Roller, Purple Heron, Booted Eagle and Garganey, plus five Grass Snakes basking on the warm rocks. Finally, and I hesitate to mention it, especially as it was one of the last things we saw and experienced, was that

extraordinary full-on relentless fight to the death between two rival male Mute Swans. That such otherwise placid birds could be so brutal. But hey, that's nature. Red in tooth & claw an' all that. We had a ferry to catch, across the River Danube to Romania for our return flight from Bucharest, the wait for which gave us our penultimate bird of the tour, Rook, 100+ of them wheeling over Silistra. When we finally crossed the river, Sand Martins were spied on the sandy bank opposite. All week without a Sand Martin, unbelievable, but we got 'em. Just.

We'd given ourselves ample time to make the journey to the airport and, just as well, as the regular ring road route was grid-locked. However, driver Mitko expertly plotted a route through town, giving us a chance to at least see some of the Bucharest suburbs and delivered us to the terminal in good time. Phew! We bade fond farewell both to him and to our great guides Lyubo and Svetlyo who had looked after us so well, and showcased for us Bulgaria and its birds. A great tour folks, I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. Thank you for coming along and sharing it.

### ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED (208 species)

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

Recorded on three dates; two at Pomorie Lake on 17/5, 60+ Sreburna Lake on 21/5 and two from the ferry across River Danube at Calarasi on 22/5.

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

Recorded on seven dates, on all the large water bodies we visited, 100+ recorded in total. And who could forget that fascinating, yet harrowing to watch, fight between two rival males, to the death of one of them, at Sreburna Lake, 22/5.

#### **Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***

Recorded on three dates; 20+ at Pomorie Lake on 17/5, four at Atanasovsko Lake 18/5 and 10+ at Lake Shabla on 19/5.

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

Eleven on sand bar island in River Danube at Popina, 21/5.

#### **Garganey *Spatula querquedula***

On 17/5, two on Vaya Lake and 12+ on Mandra Lake, one at Atanasovsko Lake on 18/5 then two at Sreburna Lake 22/5.

#### **Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata***

One, a drake, Vaya Lake, 17/5.

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

12 in total on 17/5 at Pomorie/Mandra/Vaya lakes, 23 on 18/5 at Pomorie/Atanasovsko lakes, one on 19/5 at Shabla Lake.

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

Noted on six dates at all wetland sites.

#### **Common Pochard *Aythya ferina***

Recorded on four dates; 18 at Vaya Lake 17/5, 10+ at Atanasovsko Lake on 18/5, three at Durankulak on 19/5, and one, Sreburna Lake 21/5.

#### **Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca***

Recorded on three dates; three at Mandra Lake on 17/5, 10+ at Durankulak plus 35 at Shabla Lake on 19/5 and 14 at Sreburna Lake 21/5.

#### **Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula***

Just the one, flying down River Danube at Vetren, 21/5.

#### **Goosander *Mergus merganser***

Two, Studen Kladenetz Reservoir, 16/5.

#### **Chukar *Alectoris chukar***

Two seen, others heard, on 15/5, Krumovitza River.

#### **Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

One, heard only, at the roadside Bee-eater colony near Alfatar, 20/5.

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

One on 17/5 and then two on 18/5, offshore at Pomorie.

#### **Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan***

60+ off-shore at Durankulak on 19/5 and eight off-shore at Cape Kaliakra, 20/5.

#### **Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis***

Recorded on three dates; two on 19/5 at Shabla Lake, one at Maluk Preslavets on 21/5 and one at Sreburna Lake 22/5.

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

One at Garvan Marsh, 21/5.

#### **Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus***

100+ in total, over four dates, on the larger water bodies visited.

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

Recorded on two dates; 10+ on 17/5 at Pomorie and Mandra Lakes, then three Garvan Marsh, 21/5.

#### **Black Stork *Ciconia nigra***

Recorded on six dates; two at Kurdjali on 14/5, five at Dolna Kula on 15/5, seven at the cliff area at Madjarovo, and one over the R. Danube at Vetren on 21/5.

#### **White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***

Seen daily; in fields, on nests in villages, plus some passage birds too - a flock of 125 over Poda Reserve, 17/5.

#### **Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

24 on 21/5 at Sreburna Lake.

**Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

Four dates; five at Atanasovsko Lake on 19/5, one at Shabla Lake on 19/5, and seen on all three days at Sreburna Lake 20-22/5, with six on 21/5.

**Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus***

A male at Kurdjali on 14/5 and two at Maluk Preslavetc on 21/5.

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

60+ at Kurdjali on 14/5, 10+ at Mandra Lake, 17/5 and 12+ at Sreburna Lake, 21/5.

**Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides***

Recorded on four dates; one at Kurdjali on 14/5, 20+ on 17/5 at Vaya/Mandra Lakes, one at Shabla/Tuzlata Lake on 19/5 and 12+ on 21/5 at Sreburna/Maluk Preslavetc.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Recorded on all but one day, with a maximum of 12 on 16/5.

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea***

Four dates; two at Mandra Lake on 17/5, one at Durankulak on 19/5, four at Sreburna Lake on 21/5 and two at Garvan Marsh on 22/5.

**Great Egret *Ardea alba***

Four dates; one at Poda BSPB Reserve on 17/5, three on 18/5 at Pomorie Lake, three on 20/5 at Sreburna Lake and one there next day too, 21/5.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

60+ at Kurdjali on 14/5, 50+ in total on 17/5 at Vaya/Mandra/Atanasovsko Lakes, 20+ at Sreburna Lake on 21/5 and 10+ next day, 22/5.

**Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus***

300+ at Vaya Lake on 17/5, 50+ on 19/5 at Durankulak, 30-40 daily at Sreburna Lake on 20-22/5

**Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus***

67 on nest platform at Anatasovsko Lake on 17/5, 20+ on nest platform at Sreburna Lake on 20/5 and 65 on sand island in River Danube, at Popina, 21/5.

**Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus***

Six dates; 15 pairs at Kurdjali on 14/5, 35+ on 17/5 at Pomorie/Vaya/Mandra Lakes, 20+ Pomorie/Atanasovsko Lakes on 20/5, and between 10-40 on three days at Sreburna Lake area 20-22/5.

**European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis***

15+ at Cape Kaliakra, 20/5.

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

400+ in total for the week from 17-22/5 at Black Sea coastal wetlands and River Danube sites visited.

**Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus***

Four on 14/5 at Trigrad and two at Studen Kladenetz on 15/5.

**European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus***

Seen on six dates with 23 in total, maxima of 10 at Atanasovsko Lake area on 18<sup>th</sup> and at Onogur on 20/5.

**Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus***

20+ at the cliffs above the Krumovitz River and at Dolna Kula on 15/5, 10+ at Studen Kladenetz on 16/5 .

**Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus***

Two singles; one at Dolna Kula on 15/5 and one at Sreburna Lake on 21/5.

**Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina***

Two at Mandra Lake on 17/5, one at Onogur on 20/5 and one at Sreburna Lake on 21/5.

**Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata***

Just two, a dark phase bird at Madjarovo on 16/5 and pale phase bird at Onogur on 20/5.

**Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca***

A nesting pair at Levka on 16/5.

**Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes***

Two at Dolna Kula on 25/5, one at Durankulak on 19/5 and one at Onogur on 20/5.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

Singles on two dates; one at Vakarel on 13/5 and one at Trigrad Gorge on 14/5.

**Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis***

One distant bird near Dubrash Hotel on 14/5 and one low over the garden at Pelican Lodge, Vetren on 21/5.

**Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

Seen on eight dates, with maximums of 12+ on 19/5 at Pomorie/Vaya/Mandra/Atanasovsko lakes, and then 10+ on 19/5 at Durankulak/Shabla/Tuzlata lakes.

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

A male was seen fleetingly by some from the petrol station, *en route* to Burgas, 16/5.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans***

Noted on two dates; one on 16/5 at Studen Kladenetz and one on 18/5 at Atanasovsko Lake area.

**White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla***

An adult with a fish over the lake at Borislavtsi on 16/5, then an adult and an immature bird near Dimchevo village on 17/5, and an adult at Durankulak on 19/5.

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

Seen on four dates; three on 15/5 at Dolna Kula, two on 16/5 at Studen Kladenetz, one on 18/5 at Atanasovsko Lake and one on 20/5 at Onogur.

**Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

2-3 birds were seen daily.

**Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***

Heard only, at Atanasovsko Lake on 17/5 and at Durankulak on 19/5.

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Three at Kurdjali on 14/5, five at Mandra Lake on 17/5, three at Sreburna Lake on 21/5 and two there next day too, 22/5.

**Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra***

30+ at Shabla & Tuzlata Lakes on 17/5, 20+ at Sreburna Lake on 20/5 and 10+ seen there next day, 22/5.

**Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus***

A pair on roadside steppe at Balgarevo, 19/5.

**Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus***

Two, Poda BSPB Reserve, 17/5 and one along the Pomorie dyke, pre-breakfast on 18/5.

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

Seen at Black Sea coast wetlands and saltpans, 80+ in total with maximums of 35 at Pomorie/Atanasovsko Lakes 17-18/5 and 12 at Durankulak on 19/5.

**Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

50+ at the saltpans at Pomorie, 17-18/5.

**Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus***

Seven at Atanasovsko on 18/5, five at Sreburna Lake on 22/5.

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

Four, two in summer plumage, Atanasovsko Lake on 17/5.

**Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

One, Durankulak, 19/5.

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

Three pairs seen on river shingle during our pre-breakfast stroll at Krumovgrad, 15/5.

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

Eight on the beach along the dyke at Pomorie, 18/5

**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus***

One, Atanasovsko Lake, 17/5.

**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata***

Two, Atanasovsko Lake, 17/5.

**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

One, Shabla & Tuzlata Lake, 19/5.

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

One, Shabla & Tuzlata Lake, 17/5.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***

Four on the shore at Durankulak, 19/5.

**Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres***

Twelve, on the beach along the dyke at Pomorie, pre-breakfast on 18/5.

**Ruff *Calidris pugnax***

Four, Atanasovsko Lake, 18/5.

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

110+ at Atanasovsko Lake, 17/5, some in full breeding plumage.

**Sanderling *Calidris alba***

Four on the shore, along the dyke at Pomorie, 18/5.

**Dunlin *Calidris alpina***

Just one, sifted out amongst the 110+ Curlew Sandpipers, Atanasovsko Lake, 17/5.

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta***

10+ on the shore, along the dyke at Pomorie, 18/5.

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola***

Seven near Atanasovsko Lake on 18/5.

**Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei***

Five, Atanasovsko Lake on 17/5 and then 20+ fly-bys, along the dyke at Pomorie, 18/5.

**Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***

Five at Atanasovsko Lake, 17/5.

**Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus***

Just the one, along the dyke at Pomorie, 18/5.

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

Seen daily, most common on the coast.

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

Six at Durankulak, 19/5.

**Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis***

Breeds at Pomorie, 200+ on 17/5 and 1000+ on 18/2, plus two at Cape Kaliakra, 20/5.

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons***

Breeds at Pomorie, 20+ on 17-18/5 and then 200+ River Danube sand island, 21/5.

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

Seen on six dates, maximums of 300+ at Pomorie 17-18/5 and 300+ River Danube sand island, 21/5.

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***

10+ at Atanasovsko on 17/5, seven at Durankulak/Shabla/Tuzlata Lakes on 19/5 and 150+ at Maluk Preslavets, 21/5.



**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger***

One at Anatasovsko Lake on 17/5 and then nine on River Danube, at Maluk Preslavets, 21/5.

**Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia***

Seen daily, in towns & villages.

**Stock Dove *Columba oenas***

One, along the River Kromonvitza, 15/5.

**Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus***

Eight dates in low numbers, various sites.

**European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***

Six dates, low numbers (1-8) at various sites, but with a maximum of 25 in total on 21/5 at sites along the River Danube.

**Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Common and widespread, seen daily

**Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

Widespread, seen or heard daily.

**Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops***

Two, heard at least in the local park at Krumovgrad on 15/5, but did anyone see one?

**Eurasian Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo***

One perched high on a cliff top edge tucked behind overhanging branches, at Topola near Kavarna, 18/5.

**Little Owl *Athene noctua***

One, fleeting drive-by bird, near Madjarovo on 16/5 and then one near Garvan Marsh, 21/5.

**Alpine Swift *Tachymartus melba***

Three dates; 25+ at Trigrad Gorge on 14/5, 10+ at Studen Kladenetz on 16/5 and then 12+ at Cape Kaliakra, 20/1.

**Common Swift *Apus apus***

Common and widespread, seen daily.

**Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus***

Several picked out amongst Common Swifts around the Dubrash Hotel, 14/5.

**European Roller *Coracias garrulus***

Seen on six dates, 15 in total for the week, often drive-by birds on roadside wires, plus some great 'scoping opportunities.

**Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

Two along the River Krumovitza on 15/5 and one at Srebarna Lake, 21/5.

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

Seen almost daily, between 10-20 per day, 1200+ in total for the week, maximum of 1000+ on 18/5 on our drive from Pomorie to Kavarna and 100+ on 19/5 including that roadside colony of 20+ pairs at Alfatar.

**Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops***

Six dates, more often heard than seen but a total of eight for the week, various locations.

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius***

One seen at a nest hole on the Krumovitza River on 16/5 and one heard only at Goritza Forest on 18/5.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor***

One heard at Srebarna Lake and then one seen at Malak Preslavetz on 21/5.

**Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus***

One at Hotel Kosta on 19/5 and three on our pre-breakfast walk from Pelican Lodge, Vetren on 21/5.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major***

Seen and/or heard on five dates.

**Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius***

Frustratingly just heard and glimpsed by some at Dubrash Hotel on 13/4 but then seen fabulously well at a nest hole on the banks of the River Danube at Maluk Preslavetz.

**European Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis***

Heard only on three dates.

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

One heard at Goritza on 18/5, then that 'scope-able one over lunch at Onogur on 20/5 and one heard at Srebarna on 21/5.

**Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni***

Surely a highlight to be able to see them so close, those 40+ birds at the breeding colony project near Levka on 16/5.

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

Several noted daily.

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

Just one, at Durankulak on 19/5.

**Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo***

Two near Trigrad on 14/5, two along the River Krumovitza on 15/5 and one at Srebarna Lake on 21/5.

**Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus***

Just the one, at Madjarovo on 16/5.

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

At least 10-20 seen daily, everywhere. On 19/5 we reckoned on 120+ birds!

**Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor***

Seen on four dates, 14 in total, with a maximum of 10 on 19/5 in the Kavarna/Kamen Bryag/Balgarevo steppe area.

**Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator***

One or two on three dates, various sites.

**Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus***

Heard daily almost everywhere as part of the soundtrack to the tour, plus 3-4 seen daily, with a maximum of 15 on 19/5, a total of 40+ for the week.

**Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius***

A few drive-bys seen on five dates.

**Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica***

Several seen daily.

**Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula***

Widespread, seen on seven dates.

**Rook *Corvus frugilegus***

Our first and only birds were 100+ at Silistra on 22/5.

**Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix***

Seen daily

**Northern Raven *Corvus corax***

Seen on five dates, during the first half of the trip.

**Coal Tit *Periparus ater***

A few seen and heard on 13-14/5 in Rhodope Mountains.

**European Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus***

Just one, on 14/5 around Dubrash Hotel.

**Willow Tit *Poecile montanus***

Three in the pinewoods at Beglica reservoir, 13/5.

**Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus***

One or two seen on three dates.

**Great Tit *Parus major***

Seen daily.

**Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus***

One heard on 18/5 at Atanasovsko Lake and one seen at Sreburna Lake on 21/5.

**Woodlark *Lullula arborea***

One at Topovgrad on 16/5.

**Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis***

Noted on four dates.

**Crested Lark *Galerida cristata***

Two or three noted on six dates at numerous sites.

**Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla***

Three at Balgarevo on 19/5.

**Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra***

30+ on 19/5 on the coastal steppe at Kamen Bryag.

**Sand Martin *Riparia riparia***

Just got 'em, phew! 10+ on a sand island in River Danube as we crossed on the ferry to Romania *en route* home, 22/5.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Common and widespread, seen daily.

**Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris***

Noted on four dates 13-16/5 at inland riparian areas and cliffs.

**Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum***

Common and widespread, seen daily.

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

Seen on six dates. The best were those at lunch in the bus shelter, 15/5.

**Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti***

Heard only, on four dates at any suitable waterbodies during the second part of the trip.

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

Heard only on 21/5 at Maluk Preslavet

**Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

Noted on six dates, mainly just heard, various locations.

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

One seen at Mezek Tumb near Levka on 16/5.

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus***

Noted on six dates at various sites, with a total of 90 for the week! 50 of those on just one day, 19/5 at Durankulak/Shabla/Tuzlata lakes.

**Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola***

Three males singing and showing well at Durankulak on 19/5.

**Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus***

Just two, one at Vaya Lake on 17/5 and one at Durankulak on 19/5.

**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris***

Heard only, on four occasions; Poda BSPB Reserve on 17/5, outside Hotel Kosta on 19/5, at Cape Kaliakra on 20/5 and Garvan Lake on 21/5.

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida***

Seen or heard on six dates. Best views were down by the river at Krumovgrad on our pre-breakfast walk, 15/5.

**Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum***

Two seen at Dolna Kula on 15/5 and two near Levka on 16/5.

**River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis***

One heard outside Hotel Kosta on 19/5.

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

Two heard and one seen very well at Durankulak on 19/5.

**Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla***

Seen and/or heard virtually daily.

**Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria***

Seen on four dates; at Vakarel on 13/5, Dolna Kula on 15/5, Kamen Bryag on 19/5 and Garvan Marsh on 21/5.

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca***

Seen on three dates; Dolna Kula on 15/5, Levka on 16/5 and two at Sreburna Lake on 21/5.

**Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris***

Two on 16/5 at Topovgrad.

**Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis***

Seen or heard at various sites on seven days.

**Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans***

Just one, by the river at Krumovgrad, 15/5.

**Common Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla***

Great views of two at Beglica reservoir on 13/5.

**Goldcrest *Regulus regulus***

One or two seen 13-14/5 in the Rhodope Mountains.

**Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes***

Heard only 13-14/5 in the Rhodope Mountains.

**Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea***

Six, Goritza Forest, 18/5.

**Western Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer***

One at a nest site at the cliffs along the Krumovitzka river 16/5.

**Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris***

One near Dubrash Hotel, 14/5.

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

Two on 18/5 at Goritza Forest.

**Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus***

One at Cape Kaliakra on 20/5 and then 13 at Sreburna Lake on 21/5.

**Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

Between 10-40 daily.

**Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus***

Two in the forest at Beglica reservoir, 13/5.

**Common Blackbird *Turdus merula***

Common and widespread, seen daily.

**Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos***

Seen or heard on five dates, various locations.

**Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus***

Seen on four dates, various locations.

**Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata***

Seen on five dates, various locations.

**European Robin *Erithacus rubecula***

Seen on two dates in the Rhodope Mountains, 13-14/5.

**Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos***

Never not heard throughout the week, everywhere, day and night! Marvellous. Saw one or two too.

**Semicollared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata***

It took us a while but we eventually nailed a pair at a nestbox in Goritza Forest, 18/5.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros***

One or two seen in the Rhodope Mountains, 13-14/5 and one near Pelican Lodge in Vetren, 21/5.

**Common Redstart**

One during lunch at Trigrad on 14/5 and two at Vetren on 21/5.

**Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius***

Two males at Studen Kladenetz n on 16/5.

**Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra***

Two at Vakarel o 13/5.

**European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola***

A pair at Cape Kaliakra on 20/5.

**Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe***

One on 15/5 at Dolna Kula, two on 19/5 at Kamen Bryag and then two on 20/5 at Onogur.

**Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina***

Two pairs at Topovgrad on 16/5 and then three at Kamen Bryag on 19/5.

**Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica***

Three males and a female at Dolna Kula on 15/5, and a single female on 16/5 at Madjarovo.

**Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka***

Four at Kamen Bryag on 19/5 then 20+ at Cape Kaliakra on 20/5.

**White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus***

Two, Trigrad Gorge on 14/5.

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Common and widespread, seen daily

**Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis***

Seen daily, mostly in the base of White Stork nests.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus***

Seen on six dates, small numbers, various locations.

**Dunnock *Prunella modularis***

One or two in the mountain pines at Beglica reservoir, 13/5.

**Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

Three Black-headed *feldeggs* at Kurdjali on 14/5 and two at Lake Shabla & Tuzlata on 19/5.

**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***

Two at Beglica reservoir on 13/5 and five in Trigrad Gorge on 14/5.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

Common and widespread, seen daily.

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris***

Three at Kamen Bryag on 19/5.

**Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs***

Seven dates, widespread, various sites.

**Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***

Two at Hotel Kosta on 16/5, two at Poroy on 18/5, four plus a juvenile (never seen a juv. before) at Onogur on 20/5 and then 6+ at Sreburna Lake on 21/5.

**Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula***

One, Dubrash Hotel, 14/5.

**Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus***

An immature male singing at Cape Kaliakra on 20/5.

**European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris***

Low numbers on five dates.

**Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina***

Four at Cape Kaliakra, 20/5.

**Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra***

Five at Beglica reservoir including a juvenile, 13/5 and three around Dubrash Hotel 14/5.

**European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis***

Common and widespread, seen daily

**European Serin *Serinus serinus***

A few on our first two days in Rhodope Mountains, 13-14/5.

**Eurasian Siskin *Spinus spinus***

As above for Serin.

**Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra***

Several seen on eight days, 50+ for the week, with a maximum of 20 on 19/5.

**Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella***

Heard only at Dubrash Hotel on 14/5.

**Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana***

Four males singing at the cliffs at Madjaravo on 16/5 and two at Goritzta Forest on 18/5.

**Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirius***

Seen and or heard on four dates in Rhodope Mountains, 13-16/5.

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

Seen on six dates 15-20/5, a total of 34 for the week, all males.

**MAMMALS**

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*  
 Souslik *Spermophilus citellus*  
 Coypu *Myocastor coypus*  
 Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*  
 Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*  
 European Wildcat *Felis silvestris*  
 Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*  
 Western Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*

**BUTTERFLIES**

Scarce Swallowtail *Iphiclides podalirius*  
 Southern Festoon *Zerynthia polyxena*  
 Eastern Festoon *Zerynthia cerisyi*  
 Black-veined White *Aporia crataegi*  
 Large White *Pieris brassicae*  
 Small White *Artogeia rapae*  
 Eastern Bath White *Pontia edusa*  
 Common Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*  
 Berger's Clouded Yellow *Colias alfacariensis*  
 Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow *Colias erate*  
 Common Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*  
 Eastern Wood White *Leptidea duponcheli*  
 Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeus*  
 Large Copper *Lycaena dispar*  
 Small Blue *Cupido minimus*  
 Silver-studded Blue *Plebejus argus*  
 Common Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*  
 Mazarine Blue *Cyaniris semiargus*  
 Adonis Blue *Polyommatus bellargus*  
 Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*  
 Freyer's Purple Emperor *Apatura metis*  
 Common Glider *Neptis sappho*  
 Comma *Polygonum c-album*  
 Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*  
 Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*  
 Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*  
 Cardinal *Argynnis paphia*  
 Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia*  
 Lesser Spotted Fritillary *Melitaea trivia*  
 Woodland Ringlet *Erebia medusa*  
 Common Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*  
 Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*  
 Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*  
 Lattice Brown *Kirinia roxelana*  
 Common Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*  
 Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*

**DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES**

Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*  
 Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*  
 Blue Emperor *Anax imperator*  
 Common Bluet *Enallagma cyathigerum*  
 Common Bluetail *Ischnura heterosticta*  
 Large Redeye *Erythromma najas*

**REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS**

Marsh Frog *Pelophylax ridibundus*.  
 Yellow-bellied Toad *Bombina variegata*.  
 European Tree Frog *Hyla arborea*.  
 Spur-thighed Tortoise *Testudo graeca*.  
 Kotschy's Gecko *Mediodactylus kotschyi*.  
 Balkan Green Lizard *Lacerta trilineata*.  
 Common Wall Lizard *Podarcis muralis*.  
 Dice Snake, *Natrix tessellata*