

Danube Delta - Romania



13th – 17th September
2023

Introduction

I joined the www.sakertour.com trip to the Danube Delta focussed on seeing the European Mink, but there had been no sightings this season on the previous two trips so we were not very hopeful. The tour was good as we saw plenty of other things.

I flew with Wizz air from Luton and stayed at an airport hotel in Bucharest.



Forest Dormouse

Wednesday 13th September

After arriving in the early hours a pickup time from my hotel of 2pm was perfect we drove to the Constanta area and had something to eat then into a night drive, a new strategy for me using thermal imagers only and only spotlighting to confirm ID and get photos. It worked well particularly for small mammals which can be overlooked when spotlighting. We found many jackals, but it was the small mammals that were of interest Steppe mouse, Common and Sibling voles and a couple of Romanian hamsters. Red fox, brown hare and badgers were also spotted, a productive night drive.



Romanian Hamster



Golden Jackal



European Souslik

Thursday 14th September



Schreiber's bent wing

After a late start we headed off to some grassland areas for European souslik, here we found quite a few but most were quite skittish probably due to the large numbers of long legged and common buzzards around. Other birds of note were Isabelline wheatear, Roller, Bee-eater.

The next stop was a bat cave where it was nice and cool great to escape the midday heat, the most numerous bats were Schreiber's bent wing and a few Greater mouse eared and lesser mouse eared.

It was time for a very late lunch / early tea at a hotel, a hummingbird hawkmoth Eastern treefrog and Balkan spadefoot of note during our stay. We drove 45 mins or so to a wood with nestboxes home to Forest dormice, and the second box has a dormouse which we caught then escaped and we recaptured then escaped, we also had a spur thighed tortoise here.

We drove to Tulcea with a quick ice cream stop on the way, then took a night boat drive to Mila23 arriving at 1am A nice selection of mammals seen on the way Jackal, Racoon dog, Brown Rat, muskrat and a water shrew and a few birds.

Friday 15th September

A late breakfast then we took the boat out for a cruise round the channels and lakes we quickly found some Great white pelicans and pygmy cormorants and a nice selection of water birds. At the edge of the village we found two grass snakes and a dice snake swimming in the channel.

We were back for a late lunch then took a walk round the island a red backed shrike, wood and green sandpipers, a massive roost of Caspian terns and a few of butterflies. We found more snakes a couple of large grass snakes and not far from the shop 4 baby grass snakes. It was time for a cold drink and a shower before tea.

We headed off for the night tour on the boat putting the thermal imager to good use locating purple heron, little bittern, osprey, kingfisher mammal wise it was less productive with mostly rats, a couple of Jackals and two harvest mice.



Grass Snake



Great White Pelican

Saturday 16th September

Another late breakfast before a boat trip, this time we found several Dalmatian pelicans, white tailed eagles but the highlight was a lake with a massive number of squacco herons feeding, hundreds of them quite a spectacular sight. We managed to catch up with grey headed woodpecker and red breasted flycatcher along the way as well. After lunch a few of us popped to the shop spotting grass and dice snakes on the way.

The night trip was quite cold and the mammal activity was much reduced mostly rats spotted along with a nice tawny owl.



White Tailed Eagle



Tawny Owl

Sunday 17th September

The boat trip and drive back to the airport was largely unremarkable but we did see a couple of new species for the trip Honey buzzard and Black woodpecker. The Wizz Air flight was on time the first time I have experienced this!



Grey Headed Woodpecker

Birds - 68

White Wagtail	White Winged Black Tern	Squacco Heron
Little Grebe	Great Crested grebe	Red Backed Shrike
Green Sandpiper	Wood Sandpiper	Woodpigeon
Snipe	Stock Dove	Little Bittern
Osprey	Purple Heron	Greater Spotted woodpecker
Lapwing	Red Breasted Flycatcher	Grey headed Woodpecker
Dalmation Pelican	Greylag Goose	Glossy Ibis
Syrina Woodpecker	Coot	Mallard
Mute Swan	House Martin	Ferruginous Duck
Great Tit	Kingfisher	Golden Oriole
Reed Warbler	Bearded tit	White Tailed Eagle
Marsh Harrier	Mediterranean Gull	Black Headed Gull
Tree Sparrow	Caspian Tern	Whiskered Tern
Greenshank	Spotted Redshank	Little Egret
Great White Egret	Great White Pelican	Cormorant
Pygmy Cormorant	Grey Heron	Moorhen
Sand Martin	Spotted Flycatcher	Hooded Crow
Jackdaw	Starling	Chaffinch
Goldfinch	Northern Wheatear	Isabelline Wheatear
Common Buzzard	Long Legged Buzzard	Turtle Dove
Yellow Wagtail	Jay	Black Crowned Night Heron
Kingfisher	Mute Swan	Swallow
Collared Dove	Feral Pigeon	House Sparrow
Black Woodpecker	Short toed Snake eagle	Yellow Legged Gull
Caspian Gull	Rook	Roller
Bee-eater	Kestrel	Magpie
Tawny Owl	Crested Lark	



Black Crowned Night Heron

Mammals - 21

Romanian Hamster	Golden Jackal	Brown Hare
Steppe Mouse	Sibling Vole	Water Shrew
Brown Rat	Raccoon Dog	Greater Mouse eared Bat
Lesser Mouse eared Bat	Schreiber's Bent Wing Bat	Nathusius's pipistrelle
Common Pipistrelle	Kuhl's Pipistrelle	Harvest Mouse
Muskrat	Badger	Red Fox
European Souslik	Daubenton's Bat	Northern white-breasted hedgehog



Steppe Mouse

Herps - 10

Eastern Green Lizard	Dice Snake	Grass Snake
Marsh Frog	Edible frog	Fire Bellied Toad
Balkan Spadefoot	Eastern Tree Frog	Spur Thighed Tortoise
Pool Frog		



Eastern Tree Frog

Insects - 18

Common Blue	Red Admiral	Large White
Cardinal	Eastern Bath White	Southern Small White
Danube Clouded Yellow	Tree Grayling	Striped Grayling
Nutmeg Moth	Ringed China Mark	Hummingbird Hawkmoth
Southern Green Shieldbug	7 Spot Ladybird	Brown Argus
Small Heath	Southern darter	Purple Barred yellow



Common Blue

Selected Plants.

Small Caltrops	White water Lily	Yellow Water Lily
Fringed Water Lily	Frogbit	Water Chestnut
Spleen Amaranth	Cocklebur	Woody nightshade
Yellow Loostrife	Greater Celandine	Canadian Fleabane
Indian Pokeweed	Mugwort	Giant sumpweed
Goats Rue	Chicory	Bermuda Grass
Coast Sand Spurry	Puple Loostrife	Black Nightshade
Thorn Apple	China Jute	Marsh Mallow
Meadow Fleabane	Flowering Rush	European Turn Sole
Floating Fern	Marsh Fern	Arrowhead



Small Caltrops

