

Holiday Highlights

Bulgaria

20 – 28 May 2017

Guides: Roy Atkins and Attila Steiner

Guests: Ann McGregor, Sue Ripley, Peter Adams, Annie and David Erdman, Shelagh and Frank Mawby

Day 1: We gather at Heathrow and after a bit of a false start due to miscommunication between the baggage loaders and mission control we get on our way an hour late. Attila, plus Frank and Sheila are there to greet us at Sofia and we grab a bite to eat before we set off as we have a long way to go.

It is always exciting at the start of an adventure and we are keen to spot some birds, however our first species are just Starlings, House Sparrows, Magpie and Feral Pigeon as we head out of town but things get more interesting as we head out into the countryside. It is not much to look at to start with, just fields of crops but we still spot the occasional White Stork overhead and as we pass some paddy fields there are a couple of Little Egrets and a Grey Heron. We spot the occasional Buzzard and, more excitingly both Booted Eagle and a Lesser Spotted Eagle circling lazily.

We make a stop for petrol and can hear Skylark and Black-headed Bunting singing though spot neither. We find Red-backed Shrike and Corn Bunting before we get our way and there are plenty more White Storks as we drive and a single Black Stork - a nice surprise. We make a quick stop when we notice a Montagu's Harrier quartering one of the fields and get good views.

Further on the habitat starts to look much more interesting with sandy banks, woods and scrubland and perhaps the chance of some different birds. There seem to be Corn Buntings everywhere and we spot more Red-backed Shrikes and occasional Bee-eaters then as we drive up a minor road suddenly, there in the road, is a tortoise!! We pull in and Roy jumps out to take it off the road so it won't get run over. It must have already been knocked once as there is a bubble of blood on its nose and a scrape underneath the shell, but apart from that it seems fine. We check the identification and the split scale at the back and lack of any spurs identify it as a Hermann's Tortoise - the scarcer species! We let it go in the bushes and are about to drive on when Ann spots a bird with a long tail vanish into the tree up ahead. There are Goldfinches in there but also a slightly bigger bird - a Masked Shrike!! Wow - a great find and some of us get a good view but it is very restless and soon vanishes into trees further away.

We drive on and the road becomes very poor with more pot holes than road which slows us down for the last bit of the journey. The scenery is more interesting still and as we approach the village we spot Red-rumped Swallow,

several Griffon Vultures and a Black Kite. We receive a warm welcome from Betty and check in with time to settle into our rather nice, if rustic rooms, before the evening meal.

The evening meal is delicious then after going through the checklist and chatting about tomorrow we have a look at the map before we head to bed. We are split between two buildings and those of us down the road hear Scops Owl from our accommodation - perhaps we'll look for it tomorrow evening?

Day 2: Over a nice leisurely breakfast we discuss some of the things seen already this morning just around the grounds - including Spanish Sparrow, White Stork, Turtle Dove and Cuckoo.

We intend on heading to the vulture feeding area but with poor weather we are in no rush – they won't be active yet. We can therefore stop to take in anything we spot as we drive and we are soon watching Red-backed and Woodchat Shrikes, Crested Lark, Corn Buntings are everywhere with the odd Red-rumped Swallows amongst the Barn Swallows and House Martins. We stop to listen to a Quail then pause further on and decide to hop out for a look round in what looks like nice habitat.

We are clearly surrounded by Nightingales as they are singing noisily all around us - Peter even manages to glimpse one in the bushes. There are Turtle Doves on the wires and we find a singing Hoopoe. A Cuckoo flies over and we can hear a Golden Oriole singing. They are generally hard to find so we are surprised when Ann calls that she has found it and we get good views both in the tree and in flight. A Bee-eater appears as we are about to go, perching on the wires and we hear a distant Woodlark.

Driving on we pause to look at a Little Owl then see Ravens, White Storks on nests and in the fields and we get astonishingly close views of an Egyptian Vulture on a telegraph pole by the road. There are more Turtle Doves here plus Greenfinch, lots more Bee-eaters and a lovely Hobby.

We drive on to a bridge over a river and find even more Bee-eaters and they look superb in the sunshine though one looks most strange as if many of the feathers on its head have grown out in tufts! We discover a pair of Little Ringed Plovers and there are Crag Martins, more Red-rumped Swallows, White Wagtail and the first Griffon Vultures are getting airborne.

We drive up to the vulture feeding station area, stopping a little short to have lunch and scan the area to see what we can find. It is beginning to warm up a little now and we find Burnet and Forrester Moths and a Green-underside Blue. Field Crickets are calling and scurrying through the grass, Red-backed and Woodchat Shrikes are in the bushes and above the ridge are Ravens and both Griffon and Egyptian Vultures.

After we have eaten we decide to walk down the slope to where Attila can hear an Olive-tree Warbler singing its gruff song. The slope is a mass of flowers including species of Thyme, Dianthus, vetches, wild gladiolus and lots of flowers that are very pretty but which we are unable to name. There are no portable flower books to this area and it is a little frustrating but then again you could spend hours trying to work them out if there was a book so perhaps it is easier this way! Arriving at the bushes at the bottom of the field we are about to try playing bit of Olive-tree Warbler song when we suddenly realise it is already perched out in full view on some dead branches! It is a fantastic view of what can be a very skulking bird and we are delighted. Not everyone gets onto it so we still end up playing a bit of the song and after a few moments it flies across to check us out and again we get more chances for good views before it finally disappears.

Well pleased we start walking back up the slope only to become instantly distracted by butterflies! The warmth has brought out Glanville Fritillary, Brown Argus, Small Heath and Silver-studded Blue. Back at the vans we drive a short way up the road then get out to walk up to the viewing area pausing to look at more beautiful flowers - including more Dianthus of different types, a lovely blue vetch, rockrose and many more. Sue spots a snake that we identify later as a Dahl's Whip Snake. We scan the vulture feeding area and there, amongst the dead animals, is an Egyptian Vulture which takes flight as a second flies in. These two birds spend a while playing around together - an adult and a young bird. There are plenty of Griffon Vultures on the wing but none seem interested in coming in to feed. We find a Common Buzzard in with them looking tiny in comparison.

We wait for a while then try walking up the slope a little way again soon distracted by other things - Wart-biter Bush-crickets, Marbled White butterfly, Forrester Moths, a weird looking bee with long antennae and a slim Shield-bug like thing. We are pleased to find a young Balkan Green Lizard with pale tram lines down its back and lovely white spots in the sides. We check all the Griffon Vultures that appear - which is a lot - but can't make any of them into Black Vultures. We get excellent views of Black Stork cruising by quite low down.

As we walk back to the van we pause at a clearing where there are more butterflies including a superb Queen-of-Spain Fritillary, Black-veined White and a superb Praying Mantis flies in and lands on Sue's back! It is superb - what a shame Sue can't see it!! Eventually we coax it round to her front and she can have a look then it drops to the grass where the camouflage is superb. Back at the van we drive slowly down the road pausing to check a white butterfly that turns out to be an Eastern Dappled White. There is also a Clouded Yellow and a small bird flits into the bottom of a bush - a gorgeous male Eastern Subalpine Warbler!! It shows surprisingly well for this species and we enjoy great views before it finally vanishes.

From here we drive back towards the hotel then on to a large rocky outcrop where we scan the rocky pinnacles and faces for whatever we can find. At our first stop it is pretty quiet with Crag Martins perhaps the best of it - so we move on to another spot. This is better with much more action and as we get out of the van we immediately hear and quickly find a singing Ortolan Bunting. Overhead are occasional Griffon Vultures but by far our best views so far. We find a couple of Blue Rock Thrushes perched up on the pinnacles and there are very close Red-rumped Swallows. A flock of Alpine Swifts is careering round the highest rocks and look absolutely fantastic as they race around at high speed. It would also seem that a pair of Peregrine here has already fledged young and two immatures are chasing an adult that seems to be teaching them how to enjoy life. They race around above our heads looking magical. We watch a group of four Black Storks fly in and they start circling above us against the clear blue sky and circling with Griffon Vultures, and sometimes the Peregrines and some Alpine Swifts too - it is a superb sight! We are delighted when a Lesser Spotted Eagle flies overhead, a much better view than yesterday. We are thinking about heading back and about to get into the van when we spot a Short-toed Eagle hovering above the skyline and stay for a while longer enjoying it as it hangs almost motionless above the ridge.

Driving back to the hotel we pass plenty more Red-backed Shrikes and occasional Woodchat Shrikes too plus Skylark, lots of Corn Bunting and a nice surprise - a Whinchat! Our final stop is to have a look at some orchids in the edge of a field. They are in great condition and we soon identify them as Lax-flowered Orchid.

Back at base we have a short break before gathering for the evening meal and a run through the checklist, then we head back out for a quick look for the Scops Owl that was calling so much last night. We arrive in the area and soon find it calling from a large tree. Peering up into the branches eventually we find it and get good views before it flies - a nice end to the day indeed.

Day 3: After breakfast, Attila brings the van round to pick up those of us staying in the accommodation down the road and as we are putting our stuff in the back we are thrilled to see a Goshawk fly past - a great start to the day!

We start off on the same road we finished on yesterday making a stop at a good spot for Chukar. We very quickly find Blue Rock Thrush and there is a Griffon Vulture perched on the crags above us. Crag Martins are flying around the cliffs but we scan the rocks for our target bird with no luck. After a while we walk down the road a little way soon finding a very nice male Cirl Bunting singing on the dead branches of a tree. We find a distant Black-eared Wheatear which looks nice through the scope despite the distance and then Ann spots a Fox! It vanishes all too quickly but while looking to see if any birds are disturbed by it, Frank is pleased to spot a Chukar perched up on one of the rocks where it stays long enough for us all to enjoy good scope views. We are also very distracted by all the flowers - it is a wonderful display with so many species and

Sue and Ann try to work a few of them out with the Mediterranean flower book but it is not easy.

We move on to another spot down the road - again where we stopped yesterday, and again the Ortolan Bunting is singing above the road. Yesterday, while trying to photograph the Ortolan Bunting, Peter found a Rock Bunting so we look for it in the area where he saw it and quickly hear it calling. Suddenly there it is in the bare outer branches of one of the trees where it stays for ages while we enjoy great scope views. We find Red-rumped Swallows, another Cirl Bunting, Black Stork and Griffon Vultures overhead

We drive on towards a raptor viewing area pausing when we spot a Subalpine Warbler in the bushes by the roadside, then continue on to the spot where we scan the skies for raptors for a while although we keep getting distracted by other birds, butterflies and flowers! Red-backed Shrikes seem to be everywhere and we find a superb male Black-headed Bunting, a lovely singing Woodlark and fly-by Turtle Doves. Black-veined Whites look beautiful as they briefly feed on the flowers and we find Common Blue and Eastern Dappled White. There are a few Griffon Vultures up now and the occasional passing Black Stork, Kestrel and Buzzard but we are frustrated when a Sparrowhawk appears over the ridge flying away over the trees providing too poor a view to identify it - though at this site Levant is the more likely! There are Caspian Gulls down by the river, a Woodchat Shrike down the road and we hear a Barred Warbler singing but it fails to show. A flock of Bee-eaters flies through and two Golden Orioles fly over. We hear a Whitethroat singing but when a warbler appears in one of the bushes we are surprised to realise it is an Eastern Orphean Warbler!! We get a further brief view and then realise we can also hear an Olive-tree Warbler and try playing just a little of the song. It pops in for a quick look at us and sings a little back in the gravelly voice they have before vanishing again.

Eventually we decide to move on and drive down the valley and stop when we see a Spur-thighed Tortoise at the side of the road! It is a nice sized one too and identified by the single undivided plate at the back of the shell. Well pleased we are about to get back in the van when a Black Kite appears and several Alpine Swifts cruise overhead plus more Red-rumped Swallows and Bee-eaters. We pass another Woodlark perched on a road sign.

Dropping down to the river, we spot a possible Levant Sparrowhawk on the way, and then hop out to scan for birds while we eat our lunch. Before we have even had time to start scanning we find a fabulous beastie by the van - a Thread-wing or Spoon-wing Lacewing - a gorgeous thing like a butterfly but actually related to antlions and lacewings, with patterned forewings and elongated, narrow hindwings with slightly wider tips. It is simply gorgeous! A Honey Buzzard is soaring high overhead with Griffon Vultures and rather strangely a flock of soaring Cormorants. Ann spots a hairstreak on the bush nearby and we identify it as Ilex Hairstreak. Suddenly there is a shout from Attila, "Golden

Eagle!" and we are amazed to see it is only just above the tree very close by!! We watch as it circles higher above the trees before gliding away - a superb sight. We eat lunch but can't stop looking at the flowers and Rose-chafer beetles, Banded Demoiselles, Lesser Spotted Fritillaries, Kestrels, Buzzards and then high overhead Attila identifies an Eastern Imperial Eagle! This is a good find indeed and he explains the identification points as it cruises slowly overhead and away over the trees.

Once we have finished eating we drive on and make another stop when we hear a singing Eastern Bonelli's Warbler. It is not easy to find but after a bit of persistence we finally get good views of what is quite a bland looking but distinctive bird. The song is very distinctive and this bird is calling too which is interesting as this chipping call is very different from the call of the western species.

Closer to the river we pass dozens of Cormorants on the banks which are unusual here, then make a stop to check where a small stream passes under the road. Here we find a Greek Stream Frog, a rather Common Frog-like species and also a Marsh Frog which makes for a nice comparison. We walk from here down to the river starting with a very good view of Middle Spotted Woodpecker. A couple of Golden Orioles fly over then when we get a view of the river we are amazed to see lots of Grey Herons plus at least three Black Storks.

It seems rather quiet so we walk back to the area by the vans where the view is wider and we can scan for raptors – really hoping for a Levant Sparrowhawk. We soon spot a Golden Eagle which flies in and perches on the hillside in the distance with a second bird. We find Kestrels, Buzzards, another Honey Buzzard and more vultures, then focus on smaller things like Grizzled Skipper type butterflies and other little beasties.

We decide that given it is nice and warm perhaps an ice cream is in order and head into the nearby village. Ice creams devoured we move on and take a little road down towards the river, stopping short of the spot where the road has collapsed into a culvert!! Just outside the van on the road two Dung Beetles are rolling a little ball of poo (or is it poe) away to bury it - a sight some of us have not seen outside of Africa!

We walk the rest of the way down the riverside and search for anything different. There is a River Club-tailed Dragonfly, similar to the Common Club-tail but with bright blue eyes. A beautiful male Eastern Green Lizard - all bright green with a blue throat - is sunbathing on a rock and we find more Spoon-wings.

Once down by the river we scan the skyline for raptors soon finding more Griffon Vultures and an Egyptian Vulture. Over the next half hour Peregrine, Buzzard, Black Kite and a very smart pale-phase Booted Eagle appear then a bigger surprise - a White-tailed Eagle! There are Common and Alpine Swifts up there with them and more Black Storks. As we walk back we get good views of a Nightingale

(hoorah!) as well as Nuthatch and a brief Short-toed Treecreeper. We add Holly Blue and a beautiful male Banded Demoiselle before reaching the van and heading for home.

Day 4: After another lovely breakfast at which we wish Ann a Happy Birthday, we say our fond farewell to Betty and the Wild Farm and head round to the rocky landscape we have looked at before. We are hopeful of perhaps picking up something extra before we leave but there is nothing new though we do enjoy great views of Ortolan, Blue Rock Thrush, Peregrine, Red-rumped Swallow and Attila spots a Chukar right up on the skyline.

Moving on we pause at the raptor viewing area we stopped at before but again there seem to be few raptors here - though we do add Whitethroat to the list and find Cirl Bunting, distant Black-headed Bunting and Turtle Doves.

Again, we move on - now into new territory looking out for birds as we drive. Ann spots a Long-legged Buzzard which vanishes all too quickly but while we are out of the van we enjoy the sight of a White Stork on a nest which has loads of Spanish Sparrow nests in the bottom of it. Driving on, we spot plenty of Red-backed and Woodchat Shrikes, a Woodlark, Corn Buntings on the wires and other familiar birds.

We make a stop at a beautiful scrubby meadow of beautiful flowers and butterflies where we hope to find a Masked Shrike. We are very distracted by the flowers and identify a few as well as several species of butterfly such as Lesser Spotted Fritillary, Meadow Brown, Southern White Admiral, White-banded Grayling, Green Hairstreak, Black-veined White etc. There are Whitethroats singing, we get brief views of Hawfinch and both Red-backed and Woodchat Shrikes but no Masked. A Spur-thighed Tortoise is wandering through the grass and back at the van we find a very nice butterfly - a Yellow-banded Skipper.

We drive on again making our next stop at our Eastern Imperial watch point. This is a scarce breeding species in Bulgaria and we park up by an information sign about the species - which bodes well surely! We scan the skies but soon we're distracted by a singing Eastern Olivaceous Warbler and Black-headed Buntings nearby and shortly find both. We are also very pleased to see Black-headed Wagtail, perhaps the smartest of the Yellow Wagtail races, as it flies in and lands close-by, perching on top of the plants in the field right in front of us. We are just finishing our lunch when Attila announces he has found the Imperial Eagle! It is actually perched up in the trees but the heat haze is terrible. We decide to try walking closer and so we lock the van and walk down the track stopping when the track starts to turn away in the wrong direction. As first it does not seem much better but then the sun goes in and the heat haze magically vanishes - almost - and now the view is much sharper and we are delighted to see the yellowish head and white marking on the back of this impressive bird.

We have a long way to go but want to fit in a bit more birding so we set off again and take a very beautiful and interesting route that takes us through some superb habitat. We hear a Barred Warbler singing at one point so we stop to check it out and play a bit of the song. It sounds very close and when we play the song it soon pops into a very open tree beside us to investigate, allowing us to see the barring on the flanks and the yellow eye - superb!

Further down the road we pause to look at a kaleidoscope of butterflies licking the wet mud at the side of the road. Most are Black-veined Whites but also a stunning deep blue butterfly we identify as Mazarine Blue - it is gorgeous! A Silver-studded Blue looks rather dull in comparison.

Again we drive on, spotting birds here and there but little different, but we are very pleased to get a brief view of a Golden Jackal at the edge of one of the fields as it dashes off into the bushes. We spot a pair of Booted Eagles and stop to look at them - and a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker calls from right beside us. It flies to some trees the other side of a field so we try playing a bit of the drumming and call and it flies back towards us landing in a dead tree where we get the most fantastic views. A little further down the road we stop to allow two Balkan Green Lizards to continue flirting in the middle of the road - the male a stunning brilliant green.

The road winds on and we spot more birds from the bus like Turtle Doves, Corn Buntings galore and plenty more shrikes then we arrive at a river which looks beautiful. Attila tells us he has seen the biggest European damselfly here - the Odalisque. Walking down to the river it is a beautiful spot with the sunshine bringing out dozens of Banded Demoiselles. It makes a lovely scene as they dance around the long grasses and Flowering Rush along the river bank catching the sun and glistening like green metal. Feather-leg Damselflies are laying eggs in the weeds and a Great Reed Warbler is singing constantly with its guttural song and we hear a Cuckoo and a Green Woodpecker. We find the nest hole of a Green Woodpecker and though the adults seem extremely shy, now and then the head of a young bird appears in the hole. Occasionally Golden Orioles fly through and eventually we even find an Odalisque!

We are just starting to walk back when Attila almost steps on a fluttering Masked Shrike on the ground!! This seems bizarre and we wonder what could have caused its injuries. Frank is used to handling birds as he is a ringer so he examines it, discovering an injury under the belly. It is rather thin too but there seems to be no damage to the wings so we are not sure why it can't fly. We place it somewhere safe in case it recovers then almost immediately find a second male Masked Shrike - this one flying from one tree to the next and giving us a bit of a run around before settling down and allowing us great views. It is simply beautiful but we can't help wondering whether this bird might be the cause of the other bird's injuries! They are both males after all and this one even does a little singing making it clear this is its territory.

Time is flying by now and we still about two hours to drive so we get on our way still keeping an eye out for birds as we drive and it pays off with a superb male Montagu's Harrier over the fields that we stop to enjoy as it soars round against a blue sky.

We hit the main roads now for the last part of the journey to our hotel near Bourgas, seeing a few good birds as we pass lakes and reed beds near the city - Marsh Harrier, Little Egret, Common Tern, lots of large gulls (either Yellow-legged or Caspian) and even a Night Heron before we arrive at the hotel and check in.

Day 5: After breakfast we gather by the van and examine the Yellow-legged Gulls on the rooftops before heading out to our first stop of the day overlooking some salt pans. It is sunny and warm and we immediately spot several Avocets, a flock of Ruff and plenty of Little Egrets. Some distance away is a big flock of Dalmatian Pelicans - great looking birds, all out on the banks and preening with their ridiculously large bills. Two birds appear to be in breeding plumage with their much brighter orange bill-sacs. There are lots of Common Terns breeding here and they create a constant background noise. Scanning more carefully we find a single Great White Egret, Shoveler, Gadwall, a distant Slender-billed Gull and a single Little Tern. A Marsh Warbler starts to sing nearby so we try hard to get a view of it. We know where it is but it refuses to show, so we try playing some song hoping to coax it out and shortly it appears but only very briefly and then it is a bit of a 'cat and mouse' game with it showing in tiny windows amongst the foliage so briefly - but most people manage to see it even if just for a second.

We move on the next destination, a very large lake which has lots and lots of White Pelicans! They are in big flocks, some way in the distance and also some quite a lot closer including big groups clustered in dense masses on top of large concrete blocks in the water - the purpose of which we have no idea. Maybe they are there for the pelicans! The pelicans look superb through the telescope, all busy preening in a mass and we find a single Dalmatian Pelican here too as well as plenty of Great Crested Grebes, Coots and a few Pochard. A Pygmy Cormorant flies out from the reedy fringe of the lake and we find another some distance away. There are Common Terns fishing and Yellow-legged Gulls flying over constantly. Ann spots a Little Bittern in the reeds but it vanishes all too quickly, and Shelagh picks up a Great Reed Warbler singing from the tops of the reeds that allows great scope views. After some time, a Honey Buzzard circles up providing perhaps our best view so far. A Black-crowned Night Heron flies past and then a male Little Bittern flies out of the reeds just before we leave.

Delighted with our sightings here, we move on to another shallower lake with reedy fringes. We spot both Common and Honey Buzzard circling together as we get closer and it is a great opportunity to compare these two species that many people find hard to distinguish, allowing us to see the longer tail and subtly different profile.

Down at the waterside we spot a superb male Garganey as we get out of the van but have to be quick as it soon vanishes into the reeds. There are Purple Herons here and we get some fabulous views of them especially as they fly past quite close. Great Reed Warblers provide the soundtrack as we watch Marsh Harriers, Common Terns and Squacco Heron and have fun identifying the dragonflies. There are lots here and we identify Broad-bodied Chaser, Green-eyed Hawker, Lesser Emperor, Scarlet Darter, Black-tailed and White-tailed Skimmers and lots and lots of Blue-tailed Damselflies. Sue spots a Hobby as it flies past and Ann picks out the head of a European Pond Terrapin poking up from the water amongst the Marsh Frogs.

We walk along the road a little way and check an inlet where we immediately find two more Pygmy Cormorants, two Squacco Herons and another Marsh Harrier. Three Hobbies are hunting dragonflies here and look fantastic in their aerial pursuits! A distant White-tailed Eagle appears - the tail gleaming white in the sunshine. We glimpse Golden Oriole and get great views of Purple Heron. A Sandwich Tern and a probable Gull-billed Tern fly through and Ann spots a Glossy Ibis flying by - twice!

We have lunch at the picnic tables by the lake and while we eat we watch the dragonflies but also add more birds. Mediterranean Gulls seem to be fly-catching high above and look superb with the sun shining through their wings. We spot a couple of distant Whiskered Terns, another White-tailed Eagle and get a great view of Lesser Spotted Eagle. Marsh Harriers seem to be in view most of the time.

After lunch, we move on again and as we drive we spot a few birds. We stop when we spot a Lesser Grey Shrike on a hedgerow tree and get great views before it flies across a field to join its partner. There is now a shocking heat-haze so shortly we return to the van noticing there is a third one much closer! Passing another lake, we pause when we notice a flock of Glossy Ibis perched on a low wall at the edge of the reeds and get out the scopes to enjoy great views of them all preening away and shining in the sun. There are Squacco Herons here too and several Marsh Harriers.

We arrive at our next destination - a coastal area with some small saltpans and coastal shingle in a small island. We quickly notice Avocets both in the saltpans and on the beach and are delighted to find several with tiny babies! They are just balls of fluff with short legs and tiny up-curved bills and they're seriously cute - a real 'ahhhh' moment. Two are sat with Mum (or Dad) while she/he continues to incubate the remaining unhatched egg.

Out on the island dozens of Sandwich Terns are nesting - though they seem to have abandoned lots of eggs as well. They are calling constantly and on the island with them are more Avocets and a Black-winged Stilt. A few Little Terns are out there too but mainly they are fishing just offshore allowing us fantastic views sometimes landing on the beach just feet away! We get excellent views

of Yellow-legged Gulls here perched with Cormorants and a couple of Pygmy Cormorants too.

We move on and make a brief stop while passing more saltpans where we notice lots of waders. They turn out to be mainly Ruff but there are also plenty of Black-winged Stilts, a few Avocets, Shelducks, a Ringed Plover and a flock of Little Stints. We head next to a reservoir accessed through a small village and as we start down a dirt track at the end of the village we are astonished when suddenly a Rose-coloured Starling flies across right in front of the van and lands on a post right in front of us!! It is a gorgeous bird and after perching in full view drops down to the ground and starts running towards a puddle as if it going to have a drink. Frustratingly a car appears and scares it away - but still, it has been an exceptional sighting of a stunning bird.

We drive on down through the trees and find more great birds including lots of gorgeous Bee-eaters swooping back and forth under the trees and catching the sunshine. A Hoopoe flies past and a Golden Oriole flies through too then a woodpecker drops down onto the ground right by the track. A quick check of the features and we realise it is a Syrian Woodpecker - excellent!

The track continues on down and levels out and we pass some people working the fields with old fashioned hoes - which looks like hard work. Suddenly Attila is exclaiming his astonishment and we realise he is looking at a big flock of Ruddy Shelducks!! This species has proved more and more scarce in recent years and part of the reason for coming here was just in case we might find one, so it is a massive thrill to find a flock of at least forty birds!! They look fabulous in the sunshine and looking through the scopes we find they even have little ducklings with them. We are delighted by this find but there is a lot more here to see including a mixed flock of White-winged and Whiskered Terns picking insects off the water surface. There are a few Common Terns but also a very impressive Caspian Tern over the lake. A massive flock of hirundines include mainly House Martins and Swallows but plenty of Sand Martins too, it is a wonderful scene.

A large raptor appears over the far ridge and we quickly identify it as a Short-toed Eagle hovering in the sunshine. Shortly another raptor appears behind us, this time a Lesser Spotted Eagle. There are several Black-headed Wagtails in the grass showing well now and then and we are pleased to see a Tawny Pipit fly in and land on the path. A Cuckoo flies over before we leave and a Black Stork flies in and starts feeding in the long grass.

We drive back out to the main road passing more very close Bee-eaters en-route then drive round to a spot where Attila has seen Rollers in the past. They have been very conspicuous by their absence so far and at first we think we are out of luck, then suddenly one flies in and then a second bird which lands on the wires. We drive round to get better light on it and we are thrilled when it takes off and gains height before performing its amazing display where it flies down

'rolling' from side to side. It is a spectacular sight and even better with the sun showing the blue colour in the wings to its best. There is a Black-headed Bunting here too singing from the wires and a Northern Wheatear but time is flying now and we are a bit of a way from home so we decide to call it a day and make our way back to the hotel - very happy with an exceptional day's birding.

Day 6: After breakfast we are soon on our way, making a stop at the same salt pans as yesterday, and mainly with the same birds. The Dalmatian Pelicans are a bit closer today and look great all lined up along one of the embankments and scanning through them we find a couple of White Pelicans making a useful comparison. There are lots of Avocets and Little Egrets again but also four Mediterranean Gulls. In the same bush as yesterday's Marsh Warbler we find an Eastern Olivaceous Warbler which tests a few people and Roy goes through the differences with the book.

Feeling we are not finding anything new we move on and it is a short way to our next stop at beautiful oak woodland. It is quite open with large gaps between the trees and an astonishing amount of regeneration and we walk through listening hard for flycatchers singing as our main target here is Semi-collared Flycatcher but a Nightingale is singing so loudly it is difficult to hear anything else!!

After a short distance, we hear a singing Short-toed Treecreeper and quite quickly we find it and get good views - it looks just like ours and it is a good job the song is so different. There are plenty of Chaffinches, Blackcaps are singing and we hear a Middle Spotted Woodpecker. We find Blue Tits and then suddenly Attila draws our attention to the faint song of a Semi-collared Flycatcher! We walk back listening hard and home in on the bird searching the trees until Attila picks it out and we are delighted that it stays perched out in the open, singing away, long enough for everyone to enjoy great scope views. It flies across into the trees nearby where, while we are trying to find it we get brief views of Grey-headed Woodpecker but we don't see either bird again.

Well pleased we wander back to the van, getting more good views of Short-toed Treecreeper and Middle Spotted Woodpecker on the way. It is then a short drive to the river where we stop for lunch. It is a lovely spot with lots of House and Sand Martins over the river, but we see few other birds here, though we add a new butterfly, a rather confusing Marsh Fritillary - confusing because the Bulgaria sub-species looks very different to ours in the UK.

We drive on now to a rather lovely area of flowery steppe and arrive to find a Tawny Pipit pottering around on the track. It seems very nervous of some Corn Buntings drinking at a puddle. A Long-legged Buzzard flies across lazily and we find Lesser Grey Shrike and a distant Roller on the wires as we eat some delicious cherries that Attila has treated us to. The flowers here are gorgeous with all sorts of colours from yellow through red and pinks to deep purples and we have a stab at naming the families even if we are unable to recognise the

species. A couple of Calandra Larks rise up from the grass singing as they make large circles overhead and a Fox is wandering across in the background.

We decide to walk out across the steppe and soon start finding more birds with another very close Tawny Pipit then a Stone Curlew flies across. We notice a second bird even closer which provides great scope views despite the heat haze. We get good views of Shot-toed Lark, Isabelline Wheatear, plenty more Calandra Larks and more views of Roller. We find several more Lesser Grey Shrikes and a single Red-backed Shrike.

We walk back to the van then drive through the same habitat to get back to the main road pausing as both Isabelline Wheatear and Short-toed Lark appear on the track in front of us and also for more Calandra Larks perched on bushes nearby. We are then treated to a fabulous close view of a pair of Turtle Doves feeding on the ground amongst a swathe of purple and yellow flowers and in the company of Spanish Sparrows - a lovely sight.

We drive on towards our next destination pausing to look at Rollers on the wire, more shrikes, a couple of male Northern Wheatears, Marsh Harriers and a flock of nine Honey Buzzards that must presumably still be migrating north.

We arrive at Shablenska Tuzla Lakes where there are several Shelducks, a family of Mute Swans, several Ferruginous Ducks and a single Garganey. It is a lovely scene with the low sun lighting the pool up beautifully as we watch dozens of Swallows, House Martins and Sand Martins and carefully looking through them we find Red-rumped Swallow as well. Scanning the far shore, we find several waders including a few Ruff and a nice flock of Curlew Sandpipers and Little Stints - with some of the Curlew Sandpipers in gorgeous breeding plumage. We get good views of Great Reed Warbler singing from the top of the reeds. Eventually time runs out on us and we head back to the van where we are surprised to find a Willow Warbler! This is very late for this species - one which does not breed here so must be passing through.

We arrive at the lodge where we learn that our host is away down at the lake trying to photograph Rose-coloured Starlings - which is exciting news and bodes well for the morning. We receive a lovely welcome by Tatyana and are shown to our rooms for a chance to settle in before our evening meal.

Day 7: Those up early spot a few nice birds before breakfast such as Montagu's Harrier, Black-headed Bunting, Marsh Harriers and Black-headed Wagtail, but we start our day dropping down to the lake shore where we search out a Penduline Tit nest that Pavel, our host, has told us about. We soon find it and get exceptional views of a male Penduline Tit singing beside it - and Attila explains how they almost complete the nest before trying to attract a female, and if she doesn't like it then he scraps it and starts again! We are also delighted when a flock of Rose-coloured Starlings fly into the cherry trees here. We enjoy superb views of them and some are very pink - but we are a little surprised as we walk a little closer

when the fly off - apparently much more skittish than the Common Starlings that all stay put and are not the least bothered.

From here we drive round to the coast on the far side of the lake where we scan the sea. We have hardly set off however, when we find a pair of Red-footed Falcons on the wires which fly out and start hovering and hunting over the fields - gorgeous to watch. Out on the sea we find two Black-necked Grebes and a Slavonian Grebe all in wonderful breeding plumage. There are Great Cresteds too plus passing Mediterranean Gulls but suddenly a bird flies into Roy's field of view that is a huge surprise... "Nightjar!" he shouts as it flies in off the sea and over the car park vanishing behind the buildings. We are all astonished but a little while later he spots a second bird out over the sea and it is remarkable how similar they can look to a skua in this habitat even to the white flashes in the wings. It makes landfall in roughly the same spot and drops down behind the same buildings - unbelievable!

On the sand, we find a nice flock of waders including several Little Stints, Little Ringed and Ringed Plovers, two Ruff and a single breeding plumage Sanderling. We walk down to check the reed-bed - a good site for Paddyfield Warbler - but all seems quiet without even any Great Reed Warblers chugging away. We spot Marsh Harrier, a couple of Squacco Herons fly over plus two Whiskered Terns and two Night Herons. We decide to try playing some Paddyfield Warbler song to see if that wakes them up, and we are delighted when after a few moments, a bird hops up onto the top of the reeds. It flies towards us then shows fabulously well as it checks us out and we even manage to scope it. Although in some ways similar to other reed-bed warbler species it is somehow distinctive with the sharper looking face pattern, shorter bill and perkier look than Reed Warbler and rather darker looking cap.

Well pleased with this we decide to head back out and move onto the next spot. We arrive at another reedy lake and we are blown away by the glorious display of flowers. Crimson coloured Poppies, deep purple Salvias, bright yellow flowers of all sorts, pink Mallows and lots of other flowers are vying for attention and the overall effect is wonderful. We have lunch enjoying the view and also lots of Bee-eaters fly-catching from the wires. Lesser Grey Shrikes, a Stonechat and a surprising Golden Oriole feeding in a reed-bed! We get very close views of Tawny Pipit and watch Marsh Harriers hunting over the reeds, sometimes completing a food-pass when the male comes in with food for the female.

After we have eaten we walk down to the edge of the reeds and play a little Savi's Warbler song and quickly get a response. The bird shows well but very briefly and so we go and try another spot. We flush two Grey Partridges on the way and find a Whinchat. A Cuckoo flies over as we start trying for a different Savi's Warbler - and this time we get better views though it is very active and good views of Great Reed Warbler too. We then hop back in the bus and drive slowly along the leading edge of the acacia wood here looking for a Magpie nest. This is another tip-off from Pavel and we are thrilled when suddenly there

it is - and we know it is the right one as it has a Long-eared Owl sat on top!! It sits looking back at us with ears erect but eyes half closed as if a bit interested but still a bit sleepy. After taking plenty of photos we finish with a quick check of the lake where we get our closest views of Ferruginous Ducks.

We drive now back to the coast where we take a track that skirts the edge of some rather rocky coastline. We are surprised to flush another Grey Partridge as we drive slowly through an area of flowery steppe and rocky coastline pausing to look at a family of Stonechats, and spotting Lesser Grey Shrikes, Red-backed Shrikes, Tawny Pipit and of course plenty of Corn Buntings. We make a stop overlooking a rocky bit of coastline on which a couple of Shags of the Mediterranean race are perched. The adult looks longer and slimmer billed than ours and the immature very white bellied. But more enjoyable is a beautiful male Pied Wheatear singing from the rocks below us and we get fabulous scope views of this exquisite bird.

Out at sea there are plenty of Yellow-legged Gulls and a steady stream of Mediterranean Gulls passing and then Roy picks out a very distant flock of what have to be Yelkouan Shearwaters. They are incredibly distant but the way they are flying is distinctive. It is a little frustrating they are so far away as they are just dots but a few minutes later he picks up three flying by much closer and this is much more like it with detail of plumage visible. We can see they are similar to Manx Shearwater though not as black and white - but the flight is much the same. To our astonishment, he then picks out another Nightjar!!! It is flying very low over the water and we can hardly believe our eyes as it flies along again looking like a miniature skua!

Our next stop is the same pool we went to yesterday but we try the other side to see if we can find the waders from this side as they might be closer. Sadly, we can't see the mud any better due to the reeds - but we are pleased to find a Spoonbill and also add two more new birds in the form of Black-headed Gull and a Dunlin which flies in and lands on the beach. We decide to try where we were yesterday but don't find anything different - though the hirundines are spectacular again. There seem to be no waders other than a flock of Ruff today.

We head back for an early evening meal as we are going out again on an owling expedition later. It is a delicious evening meal with far too much of it, then we gather again at 7:00pm to head back out. It is a bit of a drive to the gorge where we hope to see Eagle Owl and we get good views of a Fox on the way. We arrive with plenty of light left allowing us to thoroughly enjoy watching hunting Hobbies catching dragonflies and other insects over the reed-bed here. There are Swifts cruising back and forth across the cliff face and amongst them a few Alpine Swifts. A sound-track of Great Reed Warblers and Nightingales is constant in the background and we hear a singing River Warbler over the far side with no chance of getting anywhere near it to see it.

We walk down the road slowly and suddenly Attila points as the Eagle Owl flies over us and away - but no-one else managing to get on it so we walk back up to look for it but with no luck. After a while we walk back down the road to scan the rocky cliff-face and slopes on the other side. We watch the Hobbies as the light fades and we are just thinking about calling it a day when suddenly the owl flies across the valley, silhouetted against the sky for a few seconds before vanishing against the background of the cliffs. Although we are pleased to see it we are also frustrated not to be able to relocate it on the cliffs and with the light fading fast now, despite our best efforts, we have to give up. Walking back to the van we glimpse a Scops Owl which is a nice surprise but again frustrating as it vanishes all too quickly.

We set off for home and keep our eyes on the road looking for any animals or birds along the way and soon spot a Nightjar that gives us a treat, sat on the road it stays in the headlights as we stop before taking off in pursuit of a moth and flying away. Further on we glimpse what must have been a Brown Hare vanishing into the long grass, and further on still spot some eye-shine on the verge. It looks like a Fox perhaps but when it dashes out across the field we realise it is a Golden Jackal!

Day 8: After breakfast we load up the van and say our fond farewells to Tatyana and Pavel, who have been great hosts. We decide to make a final check of the sea before we depart and drive down to the coast where scanning the sea we find the two Black-necked Grebes still here and Great Crested Grebes too. There are Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers on the beach but a strange lack of Nightjars! Attila picks out a Little Gull flying past which seems quite late for this species, and in the next time zone there is a flock of swans that cause some debate. From the way they are holding their necks, and that they are on the sea at this time of year when Mutes are nesting, we suspect they are a late family of Whooper Swans that have not left yet.

With nothing else different we get on our way - it is a very long drive today. We pause to enjoy another look at the Red-footed Falcon which is back on the wires plus a beautiful Roller, shortly followed by a second - our best views yet of this superb bird.

We now embark on a long drive following the coast southwards before heading inland and into rain. The weather has really turned and it is pouring for much of the journey, but pausing at a fuel station for lunch it is only just spitting. Here we find a few Roe Deer out in the fields and get lovely views of a Black-headed Wagtail and Jaffa Cakes (good close views).

We continue the journey and settle in to enjoy the views and spot the occasional Buzzard or whatever as we drive. We make a stop just for a leg stretch up a random side road where we see a large flock of Turtle Doves - the most we have seen together so far. There are Jays, Song Thrush, Hooded Crow and

a Green Woodpecker but new for the trip is a brief Yellowhammer! We are also impressed with the flowers of Field Cow-wheat by the road.

Our next stop is for ice creams before we leave the main road and head up towards our accommodation through beautiful hilly forested countryside - but the weather is the worst of the trip with pouring rain so we don't do any stops. We arrive in the town and it is a beautiful place, very old buildings and real atmosphere. Some of the buildings look beautiful with huge slabs as roof tiles. As we get settled there is also time for a look round the middle of the town and a quick look round the shops. A Grey Wagtail is on the river side and there are at least two Black Redstarts singing.

We meet up for our evening meal which is accompanied tonight by some music, which sounds rather traditional style Bulgarian with an electronic organ providing the background and some kind of clarinet type instrument that has a buzzy quality to it and actually sounds pretty good. There is also a singer - who doesn't. I think some people enjoyed it but we are all puzzled as to why they have to have the volume so loud that no-one can hold a conversation!

It is not possible to do the checklist in the foyer upstairs as the music is so loud in the dining room, so we retire to Frank and Shelagh's bedroom which is big enough to accommodate us all. We go through the checklist then do our traditional round up of the trip with everyone choosing a favourite bird, a favourite place and also a 'magic moment' - something they might just remember for ever!

We go round the group and it is fascinating to hear all the species that are chosen. You might imagine on some trips that many people would choose the same species but this trip we have seen so many good birds that almost everyone chooses something different! Species include Ruddy Shelduck, Hobby, Rose-coloured Starling, Black Stork, Mazarine Blue, Turtle Dove, Masked Shrike and Red-footed Falcon - but the only species that gets more than one vote is Roller after great views this morning and the wonderful displaying bird the other day. There are a few places chosen too but the place where we saw the Ruddy Shelducks comes out on top as we saw so many birds there from Rose-coloured Starling to the Marsh Terns to Ruddy Shelducks and wonderful views of Bee-eater, Syrian Woodpecker and Black-headed wagtail. It was also a beautiful place and interesting with the people working the fields and the shepherd etc.

What people might choose as a magic moment is always hard to predict and we have a nice range once again with Peregrines teaching their young to fly, to Rose-coloured Starlings, Eagle Owl, Montagu's Harrier, Imperial Eagle and Ruddy Shelducks but the only thing that gets more than one mention is the bizarre sightings of Nightjars over the sea - something that will certainly stick with me for ever!

Roy finishes with a big thank you to everyone for coming - it has been a fun trip with lots of laughs - but also a big thank you to Attila for all his hard work making this a very successful trip indeed.

Day 9: We have an early breakfast as it is a long drive still to the airport and our flight home. As we gather at the van we hear a singing Black Redstart and soon find it on top of a spruce tree then Attila picks up the call of Pallid Swifts which are wheeling high over the houses. We get on our way spotting a few birds as we drive including a group of three Serins that fly up from the side of the road. We spot a Eurasian Sparrowhawk as we drive then hit a snag as we arrive at what must be the tail-end of a queue perhaps due to an accident. The police direct us back through a load of small back lanes until we reach the main road again - but shockingly it has added 45 minutes or so to the journey! It is a good job we allowed ourselves plenty of time as we still arrive at the airport with time for Frank and Shelagh to check in for their flight with time to spare.

We are concerned about our own flight as British Airways have apparently been having massive problems for the last couple of days with their computers failing completely and hundreds of people stranded at airports - so we are very surprised to find that our flight is actually on time. When we get home and hear how bad it has been we realise we have really been very lucky.

Birds

Black-necked Grebe
Slavonian Grebe
Little Grebe
Great Crested Grebe
White Pelican
Dalmatian Pelican
Great Cormorant
Pygmy Cormorant
European Shag
Yelkouan Shearwater
Little Bittern
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Squacco Heron
Little Egret
Great Egret
Grey Heron
Purple Heron
White Stork
Black Stork
Glossy Ibis
Eurasian Spoonbill
Mute Swan
Whooper Swan
Ruddy Shelduck
Common Shelduck
Mallard
Gadwall
Garganey
Northern Shoveler
Ferruginous Duck
Common Pochard
Griffon Vulture
Egyptian Vulture
Honey Buzzard
Black Kite
Golden Eagle
Eastern Imperial Eagle
Lesser Spotted Eagle
Short-toed Eagle
Booted Eagle
White-tailed Eagle
Marsh Harrier
Montagu's Harrier
Long-legged Buzzard
Common Buzzard
Northern Goshawk
Eurasian Sparrowhawk
Common Kestrel
Red-footed Falcon
Eurasian Hobby
Peregrine
Chukar
Quail (heard)

Pheasant
Grey Partridge
Common Moorhen
Common Coot
Avocet
Black-winged Stilt
Stone Curlew
Northern Lapwing
Little Ringed Plover
Kentish Plover
Ringed Plover
Dunlin
Curlew Sandpiper
Little Stint
Ruff
Black-headed Gull
Slender-billed Gull
Mediterranean Gull
Little Gull
Caspian Gull
Yellow-legged Gull
Caspian Tern
Little Tern
Common Tern
Sandwich Tern
Gull-billed Tern
White-winged Tern
Whiskered Tern
Feral Pigeon
Woodpigeon
Collared Dove
Turtle Dove
Cuckoo
Eagle Owl
Scops Owl
Little Owl
Long-eared Owl
Tawny Owl (heard)
Nightjar
Common Swift
Pallid Swift
Alpine Swift
Hoopoe
European Bee-eater
European Roller
Green Woodpecker
Grey-headed Woodpecker
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Syrian Woodpecker
Middle Spotted Woodpecker
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Calandra Lark
Skylark
Woodlark

Crested Lark
Short-toed Lark
Sand Martin
Crag Martin
House Martin
Barn Swallow
Red-rumped Swallow
Tawny Pipit
Grey Wagtail
White Wagtail
Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed)
Robin
Nightingale
Black Redstart
Northern Wheatear
Black-eared Wheatear
Pied Wheatear
Isabelline Wheatear
Stonechat
Whinchat
Blue Rock Thrush
Blackbird
Song Thrush
Mistle Thrush
Savi's Warbler
Great Reed Warbler
Reed Warbler (heard)
Paddyfield Warbler
Cetti's Warbler (heard)
River Warbler (heard)
Olive-tree Warbler
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler
Barred Warbler
Eastern Orphean Warbler
Blackcap
Common Whitethroat
Eastern Subalpine Warbler
Eastern Bonelli's Warbler
Chiffchaff
Willow Warbler
Semi-collared Flycatcher
Spotted Flycatcher
Penduline Tit
Blue Tit
Great Tit
Nuthatch
Short-toed Treecreeper
Red-backed Shrike
Woodchat Shrike
Lesser Grey Shrike
Masked Shrike
Jay
Magpie
Jackdaw

Rook
Hooded Crow
Raven
Common Starling
Rose-coloured Starling
Golden Oriole
House Sparrow
Spanish Sparrow
Tree Sparrow
Chaffinch
Greenfinch
Goldfinch
Linnet
Hawfinch
Reed Bunting
Corn Bunting
Cirl Bunting
Ortolan Bunting
Black-headed Bunting
Rock Bunting

Mammals

Golden Jackal
Red Fox
Fallow Deer
Roe Deer
European Soudik
Weasel
Brown Hare
Harbour Porpoise
Bottlenose Dolphin

Reptiles and Amphibians

Balkan Green Lizard
Eastern Green Lizard
Dahl's Whip Snake
European Pond Terrapin
Spur-thighed Tortoise
Hermann's Tortoise
Marsh frog
Greek Stream Frog

Butterflies

Grizzled Skipper
Yellow-banded Skipper
Orbed Red-underside Skipper
Small Skipper
Eastern Festoon
Black-veined White
Large White
Small White

Eastern Dappled White
Balkan Marbled White
Clouded Yellow
Silver-washed Fritillary
Cardinal
Spotted Fritillary
Lesser Spotted Fritillary
Queen-of-Spain Fritillary
Glanville Fritillary
Marsh Fritillary
Common Blue
Silver-studded Blue
Green-underside Blue
Mazarine Blue
Holly Blue
Brown Argus
Ilex Hairstreak
Green Hairstreak
Small Copper
Meadow Brown
Small Heath
Red Admiral
Painted Lady
Small Tortoiseshell
Great Banded Grayling
Southern White Admiral

Other things!

Scarlet Darter
Lesser Emperor Dragonfly
Emperor Dragonfly
Black-tailed Skimmer
White-tailed Skimmer
Green-eyed Hawker
River Clubtail
Broad-bodied Chaser
Banded Demoiselle
Blue-tailed Damselfly
Red-eyed Damselfly
Featherleg
Odalisque
Spoonwing Lacewing
Hummingbird Hawkmoth
Cream-spot Tiger
Wart-biter Bush-cricket
Field Cricket
Praying Mantis sp
Hornet species
Rose Chafer
Cockchafer
Dung Beetles

Plants

Many thanks to Sue Ripley for her contribution to this plant list as she identified most of the species and looked up more on returning home.

Smoke bush - *Cotinus coggygria*
Russian olive - *Elaeagnus angustifolia*
Christ's thorn - *Paliurus spina-christi*
Robinia pseudacacia
Judas tree - *Cercis siliquastrum*
Mock-orange *Philadelphus coronarius*
Wild rose – *Rosa canina*
Clematis - *Clematis viticella*
Large Speedwell – *Veronica austriaca*
Spanish Stonecrop- *Sedum hispanicum*
Wild Thyme sp
Wild Sweet Pea sp
Milkwort sp
Rockrose sp.
Tassel hyacinth – *Muscari comosum*
Round-headed leek – *Allium sphaerocephalon*
Allium nigrum
Lax flowered orchid – *Orchis laxiflora*
Foxglove sp. - *Digitalis lanata*
Hairy cinquefoil - *Potentilla hirta*
Crosswort – *Cruciata laevipes*
Onosma visianii
Tuberous crane's-bill – *Geranium tuberosum*
Large Venus's Looking Glass – *Legousia speculum-veneris*
Spurge - *Euphorbia wulfenii*
Cotton lavender – *Santolina*
Anchusa sp
Orlaya - *Orlaya grandiflora*
Balkan Gladiolus - *Gladiolus illyricus*
Hairy cinquefoil - *Potentilla hirta*
Field Pansy – *Viola arvensis*
Field Cow-wheat - *Melampyrum arvense*
Campion sp - *Silene compacta*
Pink sp - *Dianthus giganteus*
Star of Bethlehem – *Ornithogalum collinum*
Birthwort sp. - *Aristolochia longa*
Cornflower - *Centaurea cyanus*
Common Poppy – *Papaver rhoeas*
Wall flower – *Cheiranthus cheiri*
Wild jasmine – *Jasminum fruticans*
Eastern Larkspur - *Consolida orientalis*
Love-in-a-Mist – *Nigella damascena*
Wild Mignonette- *Reseda lutea*
Bladder Campion – *Silene vulgaris*
Lysimachia atropurpurea
Pheasant Eye – *Adonis annua*
Dropwort – *Filipendula vulgaris*
Oriental Mayweed - *Anthemis orientalis*
Yellow (flag) iris – *Iris pseudocorus*
Yellow Asphodel - *Asphodeline liburnica*
Sea Kale – *Crambe maritime*
And other unidentified plants including vetchs, vetchlings, spurge and many more