

Limosa *Holidays*

The Travelling Naturalist

BULGARIA: **THE ‘SECRET FLYWAY’** **September 15th ~ 22nd 2008**

Tour Report

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Introduction

The funny thing about introductions is how they have to be written with hindsight. To say that the trip was simply exceptional would perhaps be rash, but despite –or was is *due* to?- mixed, but generally dry weather, the final list of bird species recorded was a stunning 182. This is a fine reflection of the range of habitats visited during peak migration time in this amazing migration corridor along the W coast of the Black Sea, and good local guiding to take us to the right spots at the right time. Indeed two species had never been seen on this trip before – Eleonora’s Falcon and (Eastern) Black-eared Wheatear – again showing that there is potential on every trip for something new. What was also great was how the ‘top bird’ of the trip, as voted for by a number of you (those who were prepared to vote ☺), was almost a tie, since after 7 votes, seven species had been chosen!! I feel that this a reflection of the high quality of many of the sightings, which after all is far more important than ‘number crunching’, and the list has considerable quality: ‘Pelican’ (both combined!), Terek Sandpiper, Little Crake, European Roller, Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Woodchat Shrike, Tawny Pipit, Hawfinch. The question as to the most impressive or memorable sighting however was less varied: the stunning spectacle of almost 4300 Great White Pelicans coming over one of the lakes late one afternoon and then continuing on to the S on migration was the clear winner (6 votes), but the breath-taking sight of a large female Northern Goshawk in an extended aerial dog-fight with a juvenile Lesser Spotted Eagle on passage also received 3 votes, the amazing passage below us of some 4000 Great Cormorants and hundreds of Great White Pelicans received two, and of course the amazing spectacle of some 150 Black Storks arriving in various flocks off the sea before circling up and continuing on also received one vote. And to think what was left off! Read on...

Daily Diary

Day 1 Monday 15th September 2008 With unusually early opening of the check-in desks, most were through before your leader checked-in. Then, after a long wait airside, our flight was called rather late and boarding was immediate, so those at the back escaped me seeing them again! I had at least met 5/11 of the participants flying out... The rest were finally rounded-up in the baggage reclaim hall at Varna airport, and once all our bags were safely out, loos visited and money changed, we headed out to meet our local guide Lyubo. Somehow all the bags fitted into the back of the minibus and we were off in the dark, since it was already well past 11 p.m., but we lost no time since fortunately there was almost no traffic on the roads at all (very noticeable to us all). Reaching our hotel a little over an hour later, we quickly decanted into our rooms for a hopefully good night’s sleep.

Day 2 Tuesday 16th September 2008 With an 8 a.m. breakfast we were generally well rested by the morning and ready for our first day in the field. We also met Jan and Clare who’d flown in separately and earlier than us the day before. Views from the balcony by those who ventured outside, revealed that we overlooked the end of a largely wooded gorge, and large numbers of hirundines hawked the skies overhead, with a couple of groups of Alpine Swifts and a small flock of noisy European Bee-eaters powering past suggesting good migration was underway. The somewhat murky low cloud and light breeze hinted at rain though, so we were keen to get out. Our first stop was simply on the roadside in a dry steppe area near Bulgarevo village, prompted by a good flock of Calandra Larks which suddenly rose up. Needless to say they’d disappeared by the time that we all got off the bus, but we set to the task and started scanning. Two small falcons well off to one side were too far to ID properly, but another larger bird of prey moving along the coast was a Black Kite. The first of a couple of Eurasian Hobbies appeared too, and we could clearly see how migration was truly on the move. Indeed, as we waited, so a few more raptors started to appear, usually in little mixed groups, great for comparisons, and included a series of Levant Sparrowhawks,

Western Marsh Harriers, more Eurasian Hobbies, a probable Lesser Kestrel, European Honey Buzzards (both pale and light birds) and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk to keep us alert!

A little further along the road we entered the Kaliakra Reserve and stopped by a tall stone carving not far from the tip of the peninsula. This proved to be superb, and even as we disembarked, two Caspian Terns went high over, one noisily following the other, and a Caspian Gull also passed rapidly over high. Though a few passerines in the bushes, including some confiding Red-backed Shrikes (the first of many during the day) and excellent Lesser Whitethroats -their Common cousins remaining for the moment rather more secretive- were enjoyed, it was more small groups of passing raptors that really caught our eye, including our first Common Buzzards (apparently of the *vulpinus* subspecies) and three Montagu's Harriers amongst those Noted before, plus two groups of Grey Herons totalling 36 going over high on passage (yes, perhaps odd for us in the UK, but they are a common migrant throughout Europe), and a terrific Black Stork which came in quite low before trying to gain height and then powering off to the S out to sea with a tail wind. The first of three small groups of Black-throated Divers passing east was quite something, especially with an aquatic supporting cast of dozens of Little Gulls, Sandwich and Common Terns and Great Cormorants down on the supporting wires of some fixed fishing nets below. To then see a few Harbour Porpoises offshore was pure luxury! A high Osprey circling with a couple of Common Buzzards was a good finale here, though we had by now also started the slightly painful debate over the autumn ID of Pied and (Eastern) Black-eared Wheatears, given a lovely winter-plumaged Pied Wheatear on the cliffs just below...

Our next plan was to visit the lovely Bolata Valley very close by, and in the very warm sun this proved to be an excellent choice. While some concentrated on the numerous 'non' birds, including Adonis Blue, Hummingbird Hawk-moths, Balkan Wall, Balkan Green and Green Lizards, and larkspur and chicory flowers (probably in an attempt to relax the already tense neck muscles from so much straining upwards!), others continued to track down more birds including Garden Warbler, a fly-over European Roller and by trying to see the calling Red-breasted Flycatchers... An Icterine Warbler was OK in the scope but *just* too far to really see well though. Lots of flowers near the bottom attracted even more insects, including Lang's Short-tailed Blue and a Cardinal (Fritillary), while continuing along the valley bottom produced a juvenile Purple Heron which flew out of the reed-mace, a superb male Common Redstart and no less than 5 Golden Orioles, which after trying to hide (quite successfully, of course!), then decided to sit out in full view in the dead snags at the top of some poplars for all to admire! Our first Red-breasted Flycatcher appeared, albeit at range, while we nearly tripped over an enormous *Convolvulus* Hawk-moth caterpillar crossing the track and, back by the bus, a high raptor turned out to be a pale morph Booted Eagle, but simply too high to show why! What a walk!

Back to the cape for lunch, this time driving as far out as possible (despite the gateman's intentions!), we were forced to stop again, this time by a superb pair of Pied Wheatears on some ruins, with a visiting Northern Wheatear for comparison, while on the shore below three immature *desmarestii* European Shags tried to hide amongst the cormorants... And those 'plastic bags' in the water a few of us had Noted before were correctly re-identified as enormous jellyfish! We finally sat down for an excellent lunch, and rounded off by watching Red-breasted Flycatcher and Garden Warbler just below us at short range. The short but now hot walk to the point turned into a good plan too, since single Pied and Northern Wheatears sat on the cliff in front the whole time and a stunning Icterine Warbler sat and mulled the time over in full view for so long that we switched our attention elsewhere. E.g. to a Mallow Skipper showing off just in front!

We rounded off with a trip along roads heading mostly through steppe. Although rather breezy and sunny, a stop for a large-looking raptor on a pole revealed it was a superb juvenile Osprey complete with fish, though we were reluctant to get out given a massive hatch of ants on the roadside, with the verge simply shimmering with movement in places! This seemed to have attracted the attention of other birds too, and while a few Red-footed Falcons seen from a distance by the leaders had simply disappeared during the short time it took to approach, we bumped into a stunning flock of over a hundred European Bee-eaters wheeling noisily low over the road. Fabulous!

Our final stop was on a rather exposed area of open steppe near Rusalka Village, where despite plenty of Corn Buntings and Yellow Wagtails, two calling Greater Short-toed Larks gave no more than distant flights views and the various Tawny Pipits also went straight to ground given the wind. After a moderate walk however, we finally came across a group of Calandra Larks which flushed from the grass as we approached, and a Short-toed Eagle circled low overhead, seemingly carrying a huge snail in its beak (!). But the greatest surprise of the day was also in store here, since a snipe suddenly flushed from the dry ground, and as it cruised leisurely away, its bulk and rather blunt wings were Noted as very different... It then pitched into a dry field of maize stubble and we knew it had to be a Great Snipe. Walking in it flushed again, confirming the ID, while a few who'd followed it again saw it a third time as it rose at close range before disappearing behind bushes in the steppe. What a fantastic end! We returned via a local village to pick up a few bits and bobs and had an hour's break before our four course evening meal! The call-over revealed 74 bird species and reminded us again of some superb moments during the day.

Day 3 Wednesday 17th September 2008 A few of us took a pre-breakfast stroll down to the local wooded valley bottom in the search for a few birds. The heavy rain had left plenty of large puddles and the cloud threatened, but only a few small drops actually fell for the hour we were out. Hirundines were again present in their hundreds over the bottom of the valley, while a Red-breasted Flycatcher on the edge of the car park was a good omen. Walking down through the increasingly large 'building site' we Noted a fly-over Long-legged Buzzard, and another new bird was a fine male Black Redstart on the corner of a large hotel shell, while a juvenile Levant Sparrowhawk cruised over. Dodging the numerous huge Roman Snails over the tracks we walked onto a track leading into woodland, and though it was difficult to see into the dense cover, a fine European Robin scolded us from some dead twigs and a couple of noisy Green Woodpeckers, seemingly a begging youngster but aggressive territorial adult sped through the undergrowth between suitable trunks. The tail of a Short-toed Treecreeper was also Noted by Joy! Ticking Hawfinches had also remained invisible, though two finally raced over at height before diving deep into cover.

Moderate rain started over breakfast and continued as we boarded the bus, and continued until just before we got to our first destination near Lake Dourankulak on the edge of the Black Sea. A stiff breeze kept most small birds well down in cover, so on disembarking we took a good long look at the sea just offshore and along the algae-strewn beach. Single Great Crested and Black-necked Grebes bobbed on the water, while large numbers of Mediterranean Gulls were very evident, both in flight and resting with Black-headed, Yellow-

legged and a couple of apparent Caspian Gulls on the beach. A fine Purple heron flew over the reedbed before pitching in, while there were also a few waders on the beach, including a Grey Plover, a few tricky-to-ID-at-range Little Stints and good numbers of Sanderling. A walk behind the dunes adjacent to the reedbed was apparently not very productive, despite an almost constant passage of White Wagtails, a calling Tree Pipit (which remained unseen) and two 'pairs' of calling Red-throated Pipits passing over, but which were just too high against white cloud to be seen well. A group of 30 Eurasian Spoonbills passing high offshore were also almost missed. Persistence also gave us a couple of excellent Pygmy Cormorants in flight, a brief flying Ferruginous Duck followed a little later by three more flying over the shore and three Crested Larks in the dunes. Perhaps the sight of the walk though was when a Eurasian Hobby was seen attacking a small passerine in flight which was coming in off the sea. Several stoops were unsuccessful, with the poor victim taking extreme evasive action, and as we started to see it well, so it got closer and was almost picked off by a second Hobby... In a desperate bid it came almost down into the water and shot in over the beach and into the grass dunes to hide! An unusual place for a Red-breasted Flycatcher! More than one of the party thought it had more than deserved to escape however ☺. We finished by watching the antics of two Ospreys that were cruising the bay and seemingly half-heartedly trying to fish.

Starting our return S saw us driving down towards the lake proper, stopping for a fine Hoopoe en route, before a walk took us to near a tall tower hide overlooking water. We were more than glad we didn't actually have to use the tower though! Western Marsh Harriers kept up an almost constant presence over the extensive reedbeds, though a single and then a pair of Long-legged Buzzards spiralled up and passed, moving S in the wind. A distant Eurasian Bittern in flight was too far for some to find before it dropped down into the vast reedbeds and the numerous Yellow Wagtails all but refused to even pause in view as well, and the reeds were swaying too energetically to even contemplate looking for any warblers that might have been hiding inside. However, two adult Caspian Terns gave good views as they fished over a pool, a juvenile Whiskered Tern sneaked past almost without anyone noticing and even a group of 14 White Pelicans wheeling high overhead almost escaped our notice before they headed off S in V-formation. We rounded off by watching the hunting technique of a Short-toed Eagle, its size being excellently demonstrated by an Osprey which flew very close around it on a couple of occasions to 'take a look'.

A simple but quite tasty picnic lunch (what wonderful grapes!) was followed by our exit towards a shallow salty lake not too far away: Shabla Tuzlata. Preliminary views revealed a brief male Reed Bunting and at least 5 Common Stonechats in the short sedge vegetation in the largely dry mud, and though we noted a few species out on the small patch of water, we walked round to get a much better look from closer. This was terrific, and though some birds remained a little distant, we clocked up a terrific series of sightings including a Ruddy Shelduck, 5 Caspian Terns and a Broad-billed Sandpiper amongst a host of gulls, terns, ducks and waders. Indeed it was fun to look at the juveniles of several waders with their 'peachy shoulders', from Little Stints, through Curlew Sandpipers to male Ruff. With Pied Avocet, Spotted Redshank and Wood Sandpipers on offer this was a fine site. Our return was via Shabla Lake, where despite just a narrow viewing hole through the towering fringing reeds, we noted three Black-necked Grebes, our first Common Coot, a perched Purple Heron, a fly-over female Little Bittern, a skulking Squacco Heron and even a Grey Wagtail on just a couple of feet of shoreline. More Red-breasted flycatchers called from the scrub and a couple of Common Whitethroats showed well in a fruiting wild rose. A remarkable set of sightings in just 15-20 minutes! A final wander to view over a patch of open grassland produced a Whinchat, which was promptly chased off by a Red-backed Shrike, though plenty of wheeling European Bee-eaters kept us entertained. Even the drive back was punctuated by a short stop when a Long-legged Buzzard hovered repeatedly over a field off to one side! Another fine day and with far better weather than we thought possible in the morning, and no less than 103 species to boot!

Day 4 Thursday 18th September 2008 An hour's pre-breakfast walk on Kavarna hill above the village was decidedly cold in a very chill wind. While plenty of small passerines were present in the dense weed cover on the top of the hill to the E of the village, these remained mostly deep in cover until the sun (briefly) shone. Apart from a Pied Wheatear and Whinchat beside a small building, passing migrants were more visible than the scolding Common Redstarts and Common Whitethroats, including dozens of White and a few Yellow Wagtails, Tree and Tawny Pipits, plus calling Corn Buntings and a couple of the local Crested Larks. Two groups of Hawfinches even came in off the sea, comprising first three and then eight birds, while most of the raptors were heading E, including a Eurasian Hobby, a notably pale European Honey Buzzard, two Levant's Sparrowhawks and an Osprey. A really fine start to the day, though the hot coffee awaiting our return at breakfast was very welcome! Given an uncertain weather prospect we headed a little to the S first near Topola, where on a bush on a small cliff, a superb dozing Eurasian Eagle Owl sat out well. We contemplated this as well as the scores of Northern House Martins and Barn Swallows hawking in the lee of the cliff, and also a couple of Eurasian Sparrowhawks which circled up energetically in the wind before spiralling off high out of sight.

To the N we returned to the Bulgarevo steppe to search for a few birds, though with a keen wind it was going to be tricky. But the weather had grounded migrants and we soon found a few Northern Wheatears keeping very low in the little shelter available, while a large flock of some 500+ noisy Calandra Larks suddenly rose at distance before splitting into two flocks which then raced very low across the ground flickering black and white as they went. Two Common Quail then rose at some distance before whirring off to find more cover, though we tracked them both down, watched them whirr off again independently, and also another which gave good views in flight. Some 'chir-ip' calls alerted us to some flighty Tawny Pipits, but we eventually had fine views (much to John's delight) of no less than four as they scuttled across the rather bare areas, one even having a tiff with one of several Whinchats present at one point. We spread out somewhat on our return to the vehicle, which turned into a blessing, with the discovery of a female (Eastern) Black-eared Wheatear, and while I and Dave got terrific close views, a few others had distant views before it started moving towards a little towards the vehicle. Those who'd boarded got out again and were finally rewarded with not just one, but two – a male and a female – of the species, out on the steppe and in close company with several Northern Wheatears for comparison.

The chill wind had got through to us, so we headed via some back roads towards our lunch destination. Another good move when we spotted a pair of juvenile European Rollers on wires, which gave excellent views, and then a dark morph Booted Eagle struggling into the wind. Another impromptu roadside stop was for an immature White-tailed Eagle cruising at distance! Stepping out into the stiff wind again at Yailata we noted a Common Swift or two among the clouds of hirundines, and a flock of Levant Sparrowhawks which rather peculiarly came in very high from the S and a rather lost looking European White Stork which struggled to get back over land having circled a little out to sea! The wind was just a little too much, though as we reached the cliff edge and stood (I think John was indeed

right saying it was sacrilege that it wasn't fenced off) among the Thracian graves and sacrificial altar cut out of the rocks on the cliff-top, so had excellent views out to sea where a group of Bottle-nosed Dolphins were passing, some very close inshore and visible even under the surface in the now bright sunlight. Indeed, walking down the main path towards the old Byzantine castle ruins, in the lee of the cliff in the sun it was very pleasantly warm, and considerable insect activity, including a few butterflies, impressively large White-faced Bush Crickets and even a singing cicada, was very noticeable. The greatest surprise though was a presumably male Eleonora's Falcon which cruised fast through just below us and very close, before just seconds later disappearing round the corner... A remarkable, albeit brief sighting, with the species being a very scarce late spring or autumn visitor to the country's coastal regions, and a new bird for this tour. With insects, birds and flowers to contemplate, the group spread out somewhat and so we all saw different things, but including our first Blackcaps, a Black-throated Diver (though the same or another was also watched on the sea later) and a Yelkouan Shearwater amongst others. The walk was an absolute delight in a beautiful sheltered undercliff area, while the presence of the ruins of a 5th-6th century castle just rounded it off!

Lunch was taken back along the main track, a very fresh Pale Eastern Clouded Yellow being of most note as we ate, though just afterwards and as we returned to the vehicle so we noted a spectacular *Argiope* spider (rather like *lobata*) and for a lucky few, both Holly Blue and Queen of Spain Fritillary. We didn't even make it back to the vehicle before noting a low-flying harrier over the thistle-filled steppe, and the debate began as to whether it was Montagu's or Pallid. Fortunately it gave good views in the sunny conditions and we could appreciate the head and underwing pattern and our first Pallid was well appreciated. A walk along the road to try and get better views produced both a large green Praying Mantis and a very confiding adult female Red-backed Shrike, with a whirring Common Quail noted in flight by a couple of the party. We finally decided that the harrier must have sneaked off, but just moments after all re-boarding the bus it rose up again and gave more good views, reconfirming the ID. A coffee break in a delightful local bar was a good interlude and we finished the day out with a walk out across steppe to the low cliffs near Tyulenovo (=seal village in 'memory' of the Monk Seals which once bred here). A couple of flat Green Toads on a track were a bit sad, but a few birds kept us entertained and the views out to sea (with a pleasantly warm sun behind), to watch a super group of 25 European Shags and passing Yellow-legged, Mediterranean and Little Gulls, plus Sandwich and a few Common Terns, as well as the odd passing Eurasian Hobby, was a good finale. Well, not quite, since we stopped first at a little information centre en route in order to see a few nick-nacks and info about the area, and then a stop in town for a few spices and a quick visit to the supermarket! The wind suddenly died, leaving a warm, still, sunny sunset, and the promise of fine weather for our transfer day S.

Day 5 Friday 19th September 2008 After a 7:45 breakfast we were away an hour later, though not before a few observant members of the party had seen a few birds from their balconies, including clouds of Northern House Martins collecting on wires down by the port, a Hawfinch and even a passing ringtail harrier, which had to remain unidentified. The coastal road was a delight, despite signs of uncontrolled building along the cliff top, so spoiling the horizon with a few new villas and the associated building waste. Indeed, the tremendous recent development underway in the country, but leaving a gulf between the apparent post-communist style and some of the frankly nearly as awful and out-of-place modern housing styles, was a feature of the journey south. A few older buildings with 'classic' architecture in towns such as Varna were greatly appreciated however. We stopped first under a likely-looking area of cliff where the air was simply teeming with martins, as along this entire stretch of road – 10s of thousands must have been on the move. Our first main, though unplanned stop however, was on the roadside near Kantardjievo, due to the presence of three low Lesser Spotted Eagles overhead! After we decanted from the bus, so another joined them, but the next bird was a superb female Northern Goshawk with glided slowly across, then circled up a little before suddenly turning back, and turned 'in anger' on another, clearly juvenile, Lesser Spotted Eagle migrating across its territory. A terrific dog-fight then ensued, with talons out and the eagle even having to turn over a couple of times to defend itself, giving us fantastic views against the blue sky. Another Lesser Spot rounded off the tally here and we finally decided to continue on, pausing once again for three (different) Lesser Spotted over fields to one side, especially given one with large pale patches which looked like something very different...

Our second stop for the morning was in the Goriza Forest, where in our quest for woodland species we spent about 1½ hours walking tracks plus crossing a few bits which had been heavily felled. Sadly, the tremendous thinning out of standing deadwood in a broad strip adjacent to all the paths meant that the hoped-for woodpeckers were all but absent, and despite a calling Lesser Spotted Woodpecker which gave good, albeit brief views as it sped from perch to perch, and later a superb Syrian Woodpecker and Great Spotted Woodpecker for good measure (Dave also saw a Green), it was quite hard work finding almost anything. A couple of brief Short-toed Treecreepers and a very confiding Marsh Tit, as well as our first Chaffinches were all new though. The relative lack of ground flora (but over the next few years this will improve dramatically) and open sunny patches was clearly good for some insects though, and we flushed and then tracked down a few Woodland Graylings, as well as scrutinizing some odd-looking Small Coppers, though a few other butterflies were also present including Common Blue and a Speckled Wood, a first for this trip in autumn. Perhaps the oddest thing was a superb tiny Snake-eyed Skink slithering through the dry leaves and actually finally giving good views to all. After walking out and down the road we had lunch in an excellent local café, noting how the temperature had risen while we were inside, and even better, the breeze had dropped to almost nothing. Outside, a few raptors were also noted passing very, very high overhead, including European Honey Buzzards and Western Marsh Harriers, though more of these were noted from the top of a little hill near Banya, which was also alive with small birds. Eurasian Skylarks, Corn Buntings, Whinchats and Red-backed Shrikes vied for most attention, while small flocks of passing European Honey Buzzards were of most note, including a couple of low birds, while a flock of 25 Levant Sparrowhawks went over so high as to almost be invisible. A juvenile Woodchat Shrike was a good find, as were a few Blackcaps and Common Whitethroats, while a very dully coloured Yellowhammer required more than just a cursory glance to identify it. A couple of Balkan Wall Lizards, including a superb large male, were also found under rocks to most people's delight. We finally dragged ourselves away and continued the remaining distance to the W part of Pomorie Lake, which in fact has been completely converted into a series of large salinas. It was now overcast and dead still, with excellent light, and we were greeted by a flying Black Stork. A noisy Greenshank put in first appearance, then we noticed the first of a few Little Ringed Plovers on some mud, while a Green Sandpiper did an silent disappearing act from a pond behind. The next salt pan held good numbers of Pied Avocets and Common Redshank, all with their pristine reflections in the water, plus two Spotted Redshank, while ahead again another pan had a single juvenile Kentish Plover amongst the Little Ringed. We were rather strung out on our return, and the back-markers were fortunate in seeing the Green Sandpiper return, a flock of 5 Ruddy Shelduck pass over at some height on their way S and a couple of Eurasian Reed Warblers in the low vegetation.

Shortly afterwards we finally reached the hotel, albeit somewhat late, but didn't even enter until we'd also taken a look at a roosting bat simply clinging onto the outside wall near the main entrance in full view!

Day 6 Saturday 20th September 2008 The 7 a.m. pre-breakfast walk was well attended by most... Indeed your leader forgot to change one of his alarms and so missed it, and consequently missed a few new birds for the trip including Little Egret and Common Sandpiper amongst a host of waders, gulls and terns in the salinas near the salt museum. Fortunately we returned to the S and nearby section of the lake (salinas) again after breakfast where many of these species were seen again and the true numbers present also appreciated. The 3000+ Little Gulls genuinely had to be seen to be believed, with birds in just about every plumage imaginable except 'full' breeding adults, since almost all, except for large numbers of smart and dark juveniles, were in moult. Large numbers of Black-headed Gulls, a scattering of Slender-billed and Yellow-legged Gulls and a couple of Mediterranean Gulls completed the round-up, though a very close feeding frenzy of Little, slender-billed and Black-headed (for comparison) gave us some simply incredible views of these often flighty birds. Waders were also present in some quantity and especially variety, allowing us terrific views of Little Stint, Ruff, Common and Little Ringed Plovers, Common and Spotted Redshank, a few Curlew and Wood Sandpipers, Dunlin, our first Black-tailed Godwit, a Common Snipe and, albeit somewhat distantly, a single Red-necked Phalarope. Hundreds of Common Shelduck were scattered across the pools, though we also spent considerable time looking at the sky, right from the start, with a flock of almost 70 Black and a single White Stork setting the trend, and indeed by the time we'd left we seen over 150 Black and 12 White Storks in several migrating flocks! Raptors were following suit, though in much smaller quantity, but included a smattering of Lesser Spotted Eagle, European Honey, Long-legged and 'Steppe' Buzzards, Western Marsh Harrier, Levant and Eurasian Sparrowhawks and Eurasian Hobby. The sun tentatively peeked out from behind the clouds and the temperature rose, so pulling a few warblers up from their hiding places in the reeds. Sedge and Eurasian Reed showed well, while a single Savi's (of the many calling) put in an all too brief showing before slipping head-first back down into cover. We finally pulled ourselves away and headed 'to the hills' at the edge of the Poroy forest, ostensibly to watch any raptor migration. In the couple of hours we were there we totalled 'just' single pale morph Booted and a Short-toed Eagle, 15 Lesser Spotted and a single Greater Spotted Eagle, plus Western Marsh Harrier, Levant Sparrowhawk and European Honey Buzzard, but it did seem slow at the time! This led us to wander to the woods, where a pair of Sombre Tits showed for most on the edge (frustratingly very shortly after most had left their scopes in the bus), Eurasian Blue Tits were arriving on migration in small flocks (!), a few Cirl Buntings perched for scope views, and several Spotted and two Red-breasted Flycatchers also showed well. But it was the woodpeckers which stole the show: a single, and then a pair of stunningly attractive Middle Spotted were gorgeous, a Syrian showed briefly, a Great Spotted put in a few appearances and a Green, apart from yaffling once, also gave views for a couple of the party members.

Despite a chill breeze starting, when the sun warmed things sufficiently, butterflies were active here too, and we Noted Great Banded, Woodland and 'normal' Graylings amongst a few others, with another slant-faced grasshopper, this time in its green form, a superb fawn-coloured bush cricket and a large brown female Praying Mantis also admired!

A brief stop en route after lunch saw us pausing for a couple of 'Steppe' Buzzards passing over, one carrying prey, though a male Northern Goshawk had designs on the prey and stole about half of it in a short aerial battle, before returning to sit in trees before finally disappearing round the corner of the hill! A mining area and adjacent asphalted area, where a few locals were teaching their respective friends and/or family how to drive, looked very unpromising, but as we walked towards a hard-core area, so a flock of 23 Eurasian Stone-curlews rose up and flew leisurely round 180°, before some returned, and then turned back yet again to drop into some fields. Indeed they then gave excellent views standing out openly in very short areas of a large patch of burnt grass. John was particularly taken by their legs... (!) Large numbers of 'Steppe' Buzzards and Eurasian Kestrels had also concentrated around the area, presumably feeding on the abundant grasshoppers or some other small invertebrates on the grassy slopes.

We finished the day by visiting the NE part of the Atanasovsko Lake. Stepping out of the vehicle we immediately located the first of several Common Kingfishers along a channel, while a couple of European Pond Terrapins hauled out along one edge and then in a muddy puddle, both Fire-bellied Toads and small Marsh Frogs, were terrific. A calling Cetti's Warbler even ferreted about in the bottom of a willow and was seen by a few. After successfully negotiating a tricky sluice gate, we suddenly found ourselves on a high raised bank overlooking part of this enormous lake. A selection of duck included a small flock of Gadwall, 7 Eurasian Spoonbills rested distantly in the water, with another 38 passing over at one point, a couple of Great Egrets stalked the reeds, and the by now 'typical' selection of raptors passed over in small numbers regularly. Small flocks of Northern Lapwings pattered gently around and a few waders included Common and Spotted Redshanks, Ruff, and even a single Marsh Sandpiper briefly (for Dave and John) in flight. And despite some 50+ Black Storks passing, it was the pelicans which stole the show. A few small and very distant groups on the water included 8 Dalmatian Pelicans, but suddenly, and when time just seemed to be pushing, a huge flock of 2000+ Great White Pelicans appeared in tight formation to the N and flew in increasingly long undulating lines as they passed, the skeins changing constantly in shape and form, providing a truly awesome spectacle. In fact I'm not sure if I even let out an expletive on first seeing them (I sincerely hope not), but it really was that impressive! And this was then repeated, with 1500+ circling up, only to be overtaken by other much smaller (but still very impressive!) groups, and when all these had past, a couple more groups came through just to round things off. A truly stunning spectacle. We finally pulled ourselves away as time was running on and it was getting quite cool, boarding the bus just as a few rain drops fell. Apart from quick looks from the bus at another small group of Great White Pelicans as we were leaving, and then of a delightful Little Owl on a chimney pot in a small village, headed back and returned in good time before dinner. The diversity was well reflected in the 106 species we'd seen during the day and the list now stood at a remarkable 170 species in total!

Day 7 Sunday 21st September 2008 The early morning walk was called off since it was raining, chilly, breezy and rather 'grim' outside. However, that didn't stop John & Peter looking out from their balcony and spotting a flock of c.40 noisy Oystercatchers heading S along the beach! After a normal breakfast and departure, the rain continued, but was easing a little as we headed towards a complex of lakes in the Bourgas region. Indeed it had basically stopped raining when we paused on the edge of the huge Vaya or Bourgas Lake (even though it's the smallest of the large lakes in this area!), where hundreds of Common Coot, Great Cormorants and Common Pochard were immediately visible, a few Whiskered Tern juveniles bounced past, and a superb Squacco Heron did a marvellous fly-by from left to right. Other birds included several Dalmatian and Great White Pelicans, allowing us our first chance to compare the rather

grey-tinted plumage of the former and remarkably pink-tinted plumage of the adults of the latter. Indeed, the Bulgarian name for Great White Pelican is “pink pelican”. With a stiff chill wind though, we soon moved on to look at a few more spots.

One of the key aims was to visit Mandra Reservoir. I stayed on the bus and slept due to a stomach bug, and so missed a suite of great sightings. A flock of Eurasian Spoonbills on the main lake reached c.80, while after a short walk to a bridge, in a shallow area by a feeder river, a host of birds were present including c.60 Pygmy Cormorants, a Black-winged Stilt, a summer-plumaged Temminck’s Stint and a fine Water Rail which walked out in full view for some time before finally disappearing off back into cover. This news and the effects of the sleep meant that at the subsequent bridge nearby we were *all* out! A fine Squacco Heron in crouched hunting pose, a couple of Common Kingfishers sat in full view on twigs, a passing Gull-billed Tern then fished over numerous duck, coot and Common Moorhens and a dead tree was adorned with a European Turtle Dove and a Eurasian Hoopoe. A huge raptor was then spotted parachuting gently down over a small rise, and the juvenile White-tailed Eagle then caused panic amongst the wildfowl, with 5 Eurasian Wigeon flying up and around as a result. The little rise over which the eagle had disappeared gave us good views down into a little bay at the mouth of a small incoming river. The eagle sat on the beach well off to the left, while out in the water, among the numerous duck were in fact at least 7 Eurasian Wigeon and a Garganey in eclipse plumage amongst numerous Common Teal, Northern Shoveler and Mallard. A small bird preening among the reedmace was a female Little Crake, which despite the distance was seen by all, especially when it flew out and perched on a horizontal reed in full view for a few moments! But it was the sight of a flock of Great White Pelicans coming in, almost right over our heads and low, which perhaps took front stage, while these, and more on the lake then appeared to our left, behind lines, and lines and lines of Great Cormorants – a simply amazing sight! Indeed Lyubo estimated that some 4000 birds passed, with many landing and standing packed, shoulder to shoulder, on a spit of mud, with a line of pelicans, including several Dalmatian, in front for good measure. Three more Dalmatians then circled slowly up and round and round in front before finally heading off to other fishing grounds - a magnificent sight too! We finally left here, ostensibly to go for lunch in a local village, though small Common Tree and Edible Frogs were also Noted in the wet grass. But another short stop to look over a little patch of mud by another little stream entrance also turned up trumps. There on the end of the little spit in broad daylight were two adult Black-crowned Night Herons! And not only that, but among the waders were another adult Temminck’s Stint, a few Curlew Sandpipers and a Wood Sandpiper, plus a juvenile Gull-billed Tern asleep among the Black-headed Gulls. A flock of Spotted Redshanks fed in ‘speedy’ fashion, rushing forward as a tight group with necks and bills out and bodies horizontal in belly-deep water – most peculiar! Even an old rusty corrugated metal sheet was good to check, with two tiny Kotschy’s Geckos enjoying the relative warmth underneath.

We reached a small bar in a little hamlet, and enjoyed lunch under tin sheet cover (a good idea with very light rain), and rounded off with either herbal or black tea, the total bill being absurdly low at under 4 Lev for 9 drinks! Single male Blackcap and Lesser Whitethroat graced a bullace bush on the other side before we left, with a super little flock of European Bee-eaters suddenly surrounding the bus as we drove out of the village, the damp and cool conditions meaning insects, and consequently the birds, were keeping very low, and so gave great views. We returned to Vaya Lake, this time scanning the S section from on high, and were immediately struck by a large flock of c.350 Northern Pintail in the water, easily identified as they up-ended continuously, so sticking their pointed tails skywards. A Tufted Duck in flight was our second, over a hundred Mute Swans graced the water, while way across against the reedmace on the far shore were no less than 12 Great White Egrets. We continued round on roads, stopping twice en route, firstly for a flock of sparrows among which at least 3 male Spanish Sparrows were present, and secondly for a rather grubby-chested White Stork hunting in a meadow. Our main stop though was to look across to a large flock of Great White Pelicans roosting on a dry field, with a few Willow Warblers and a Common Whitethroat in the adjacent umbellifers for variety. Sadly, a very secretive Thrush Nightingale in this thicket refused to show, having taken one quick look at me and fled! Our final stop at this reservoir was to a spot for possible marsh terns, where single Whiskered and Black Terns were perched shoulder to shoulder on posts just offshore, before another juvenile Black replaced the Whiskered and people thought that they were seeing double! Watching the ancient fishing technique here with a square net was enhanced by the truly bizarre (at least to my mind) sight of seeing the fisherman toss some unfortunate poor little flapping fish to his small dog, which instantly pounced on it and crunched it up with glee!

Our final stop was at the S end of the Atanasovsko Lake. This is really a series of salinas, and although few birds were close, among the numerous Pied Avocet and Common Shelduck, a few Black-tailed Godwit, two rather distant but very pale Kentish plover, and two terrific and close Wood Sandpipers were the cream of the crop. Calling Red-breasted Flycatchers in the bushes were making a fair bit of noise, but refused, as usual, to show! We returned with a very quick look by a few of us from the top of the dunes in front of the hotel, where Dave Noted a good number of Black-necked Grebes and another Harbour Porpoise!

Day 8 Monday 22nd September 2008 A 7 a.m. departure saw a quick look out to sea where we picked up a couple of sadly rather distant Red-necked Grebes, but quickly moved round to the salinas by the salt museum. The manager of the only Swedish bird tour operator was there, and we were very grateful when she pointed out that two Terek Sandpipers were present in front! We had great views of these, despite being a little more distant than when Bill & Jan had seen them two days before. Sandwich Terns were massed on the posts, along with a few Common Terns, with two adult and two juvenile Little Terns on a beach also new for the great majority of the group. The usual smattering of small waders included plenty of Dunlin and fewer Little Stint, but we were more than content by sifting through the waders, terns and gulls, including Black-headed, Mediterranean and two pink-legged Yellow-legged!! A quick drive down to the end of the road along the beach between the salinas and the sea revealed a Hoopoe in the car park and a couple of Black-throated Divers on the sea, but the grebes there were too distant to see clearly. We breakfasted and then left at a little after 9:30. Heading N was fairly clear on the road given it was a national holiday (“Unification Day”), with, despite a single Woodpigeon on wires (our last new species), just one stop for birds, being for a flock of 30+ Black Storks and a couple of Levant Sparrowhawks. Stopping to pick up our picnic lunch from a small restaurant, we spent a little time outside, with some very high passing raptors including a Long-legged Buzzard and a Lesser Spotted Eagle, plus couple of Common Buzzards thrown in ‘for free’, though it was quiet.

The airport was readily reached with 2 _ hours to spare, and we said our farewells to the Lyubo, Miro and Pancho. We killed most of the time in the airport out on the back balcony, before boarding, and despite a slightly delayed departure reached Gatwick 15 minutes ahead of time. We bade our farewells in the baggage reclaim area and went our separate ways.

I would again like to pass on my sincere thanks to you all for your good humour, friendliness and capacity to cope with such varied weather and even a spot of traveller's belly for a few. This was a fun and very rewarding trip, not least due to the enthusiasm and effort shown by all both in the field and at meal times, and including the very generous sharing of the numerous telescopes present. I hope that it has inspired interest in the region for you and, if possible I urge you to look at signing the petition to block a proposed extension to the hunting season in Bulgaria with the aim of continuing to be able to see such as sights as we were privileged to see. My thanks to you all and I sincerely hope to see you again on a Limosa Wildlife Holidays or The Travelling Naturalist trip in the future,
John Muddeman, Limosa Holidays & Travelling Naturalists

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES SEEN

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Migrants are often almost stepped upon, such as the 3 at the Bulgarevo steppe and 1 Yailata on 18th.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Noted on 5 days: one ad + 7 young (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, 12+ various sites on 17th, 1 on sea on 18th, 3 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and 100+ various sites on 21st.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Noted on 5 days with 3 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 3 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 1300+ Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 300 on 21st, and 200+ again Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Noted on 2 days with 1 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, and a flock of 5 high over Pomorie Lake (W) late on 19th.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Just 8 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

At least 7, mostly in eclipse plumage Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Plenty various sites on 17th, 30+ Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, lots on 21st, and a few Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Noted on 5 days with 4+ Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 1 female in road on 18th, 150+ Pomorie Lake (S) & 60+ Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, lots on 21st, and several Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

3 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, and an impressive flock of 350 up-ending Vaya Lake on 21st.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Just one, but a nicely seen bird at Mandra Reservoir on 21st.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

Noted on 4 days with 400+ Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 50 Pomorie Lake (S) & Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, 100s on 21st, and a few Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Abundant on the S freshwater lakes, with 2-3000 various sites on 21st.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

Four in flight over Dourankulak Lake on 17th.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Two singles at different sites on 21st.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Noted on 4 days with perhaps surprisingly large numbers for apparently so early, but all were in non-breeding plumage, suggesting they were not adults: 5 + 7 + 4 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, 1 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 1-2 Yailata on 18th, and 2 off the beach at Pomorie on 22nd.

Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*

Noted on 2 days with notable offshore breeze or winds almost the entire time, difficult to see, but 3 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, and 1 Yailata on 18th.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Noted on 3 days with 1 Bolata valley on 16th, 15-20 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and 100+ various sites on 21st.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

At least two offshore Pomorie on 22nd.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Mostly in the S: 1 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 1 Tyulenovo on 18th, 6-10 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 12 on 21st, and a few Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Quite common and widespread and noted on 5 days: 1 ad Dourankulak Lake & 3 Shabla Lake & 1 Hotel Kavarna on 17th, 2 Yailata on 18th, 30+ Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 40+ on 21st, and several at sea off Pomorie on 22nd.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Noted on 5 days with terrific numbers: 1 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, 1 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 157 Pomorie Lake (S) & 49 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, 2 on 21st, and a group of 33 en route on 22nd.

European White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Noted on 3 days with 1 Yailata on 18th, 11 Pomorie Lake (S) & 1 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and a single en route on 21st.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Noted on 3 days with 30 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 18 Poroy Forest & 38 + 7 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and 90+ various sites on 21st.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

One rather distantly in flight was seen by a few at Dourankulak Lake on 17th.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Noted on 2 days with 1 female Shabla Lake on 17th, and another heard Vaya Lake on 21st.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Two adults perched out on the mud in broad daylight were a strange sight at Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Singles Shabla Lake on 17th, and Vaya Lake and reservoir on 21st.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Quite common and widespread, including birds clearly on active migration: 36 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, c.20 various sites on 17th, 12 various sites on 20th, 30+ on 21st, and c.12 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Surprisingly scarce and only noted in the N: a juvenile Bolata valley on 16th, and 2 Dourankulak Lake & 1 Shabla Lake on 17th.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Noted on 3 days with 1 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 3 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and 12 Vaya Lake on 21st.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Noted on 3 days with 4 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 15-20 on 21st, and 2-3 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Fabulous! 14 (including 1 ad) on migration Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and the extraordinary sight of c.4270 on migration and 30+ resting distantly Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and 1750+ in various flying, swimming and perched groups at various sites (but especially Vaya Lake) on 21st.

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*

Good numbers of this very scarce species on 2 days: 10 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and 34+ various sites on 21st.

Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*

Excellent views of this lovely little bird: 8-10 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and 100+ at various sites on 21st.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Abundant! Seen daily from 16th at numerous sites, including max. c. 50 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve+, 16th, Lots various sites 17th, plenty various sites 18th, 20 Hotel Kavarna 19th, plenty various sites 20th, 5000+ 21st and plenty Pomorie Lake (S) 22nd.

European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Noted on 2 days with 3 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, and an impressive 74 various sites on 18th.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

A probable bird on migration (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th was *just* too far away to be 100% sure.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Common and widespread, and seen daily from 16th, but with high numbers in the S lowlands visited, max. 30-40 various sites on 20th and 15-20 on 21st.

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*

A single dark morph bird was a super discovery, albeit briefly seen, at Yailata on 18th, while 1-2 others were noted by other groups in the general area thereafter over the following few days.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Noted on 6 days with excellent numbers on migration: 15-20 various sites. on 16th, 10-15 various sites on 17th, 6+ various sites on 18th, 1 Banya on 19th, 1 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and 1 en route on 22nd.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Noted on 3 days with good numbers of migrants: 1 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve & 1 juvenile with a fish en route on 16th, 4 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and singles Kavarna hill, Yailata + en route on 18th.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

A common migrant seen on 6 days, though we were approaching the end of their passage; except on 21st, seen daily from 16th, with max. 10-15 various sites on 16th, 25-30 various sites on 19th, and 4 Pomorie Lake (S) + 15 Poroy Forest on 20th.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

One very late migrant clearly on passage at the Bulgarevo steppe quite early on 16th.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Noted on 2 days with 1 immature en route on 18th, and a juvenile at Mandra Reservoir on 21st.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Noted on 4 days with singles quite well seen Rusalka village steppe on 16th, Dourankulak Lake on 17th, G on 19th, and Poroy Forest on 20th.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Very common and seen on 7 days: 15-20 various sites. on 16th, 20+ various sites on 17th, 2 on 18th, 2 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 20+ Atanasovsko Lake (NE)+ on 20th, 10-15 on 21st, and 4-5 on migration Pomorie Lake (S) and 1 en route on 22nd.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

Fortunately, one of the closest harriers of the trip was a juvenile at Yailata on 18th hunting low over the grass.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

A male, a female and a juvenile on passage high over (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*

Noted on 6 days with 20-25 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve+ on 16th, 1 juvenile + 1 male Hotel Kavarna on 17th, 2 Kavarna hill + 21 Yailata on 18th, 2 en route + 25 Banya on 19th, 5 Pomorie Lake (S) + 3 Poroy Forest + 32 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and a few very high birds en route on 22nd.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Noted on 6 days with 2-3 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve & Bolata valley on 16th, 1 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 5-6 various sites on 18th, 1 Hotel Kavarna + 1 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 1 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and 1-2 high migrants en route on 22nd.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Female in an aerial dog-fight at Kantardjievo on 19th and a super male stealing prey off a Common Buzzard in flight on 20th.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Noted on 6 days with 7-8 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve+ on 16th, 1 en route on 18th, 6+ various sites on 19th, 25+ various sites on 20th, 4-5 various sites on 21st, and 2-3 en route on 22nd; according to Lyubo these were all the migratory ssp. *vulpinus* also known as 'Steppe' Buzzard.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

Noted on 3 days with 1 Hotel Kavarna, 3 Dourankulak Lake & 1 en route on 17th, 2 en route on 20th, and 1 high over the picnic restaurant en route on 22nd.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

After a very hot summer, main migration had not started this year: 9 Kantardjievo + 1 Banya on 19th, 2 Pomorie Lake (S) + 20 Poroy Forest on 20th, and 1 over the picnic restaurant en route on 22nd.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

Considering how few eagles we really saw, this was a major bonus, with one moving among 4 Lesser Spotted for comparison at Poroy Forest on 20th.

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata*

Noted on 3 days with 1 pale morph Bolata valley on 16th, 1 dark morph en route on 18th, and a single pale morph bird on migration over Poroy Forest on 20th.

European Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Noted on 4 days with birds heard Bolata valley on 16th, heard Dourankulak Lake on 17th and heard Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, but the best was last, with 1 out in the open for several minutes at Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Little Crane *Porzana parva*

A female watched distantly at the Mandra reservoir on 21st, flew from a preening perch to out in the open on a reed stem before dropping down into cover again; a great sighting!

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Only seen on 2 days with 1 + heard Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, but plenty at various sites on 21st.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

Noted on 2 days with 1 Shabla Lake on 17th, but then 1000s on the various lakes on 21st.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus*

A fantastic flock of 23 en route, flushed from their roost, but then watched flying round, before some returned close and were then watched on the ground on 20th.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

40 on migration along the beach (John & Peter) at Pomorie early morning on 21st.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Just one from the first bridge Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Noted on 4 days with 2 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 50 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 50 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and 170+ at various sites, especially the salinas, on 21st.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Noted on 2 days with 40 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and one on the spit beside the cormorants and pelicans at Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Just one winter-plumaged bird on the beach Dourankulak Lake on 17th.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Plenty Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 12 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 40-50 on 21st, and several Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Seen on 4 days with 1 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 10 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 6 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and a few at various sites on 21st.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Just 1 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, and two distant adults in the salinas on 21st.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*

One Rusalka village steppe was watched well in flight 3 times on 16th.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Two Dourankulak Lake on 17th, one Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and one from the Mandra reservoir 2nd bridge on 21st.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Just one Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and a total of c.15 at various sites on 21st.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

One came in off the sea and flew inland Kavarna hill on 18th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Two Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 2 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 4-5 Pomorie Lake (S) & Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, 50 on 21st, and a few Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Two Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 25 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 50+ various sites on 20th, 100+ on 21st, a few Pomorie Lake (S) 22nd.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Just one briefly in flight (Dave & I) Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Three Shabla Lake on 17th, heard Yailata on 18th, 1 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, and c.6 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Just one flighty bird Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, and one heard Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Noted on 3 days: three Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 6 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and two superb birds in the salinas on 21st.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Two Pomorie Lake (S) (Bill & Jan) were a terrific find on 20th, and even better for the rest of the party was when we saw them there again on 22nd.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Just one early morning Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Noted on 2 days with 6 + 2 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and 1 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Noted on 2 days with 30+ Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and 12 Pomorie Lake (S) (Bill & Jan) on 20th.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Seen on 4 days with 3 Dourankulak Lake + 25-30 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, Lots Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 15 on 21st, and 10+ Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Two separate adults at Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Noted on 4 days with two Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 12 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 20+ on 21st, and 2-3 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Also seen on 4 days with 10 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 30+ Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 10 on 21st, and 30+ Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

One Shabla Tuzlata was a super find on 17th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Noted on 3 days with 20+ Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 30+ Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and c.6 at various sites on 21st.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

One Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Abundant and widespread, especially along the coast, and seen daily from 16th.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

A very tricky bird to find amongst the great majority of Yellow-legged Gulls, and the only ones specifically noted were an immature (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, 1+ Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and a few Yailata (Jan) on 18th.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Lots Dourankulak Lake on 17th, abundant Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, abundant on 20th, abundant on 21st, and plentiful Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*

At Pomorie Lake (S), 25-30 on 20th and at least one on 22nd.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephala*

Noted on 4 days with 500+ various sites on 17th, lots on 18th, 6 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and a few Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Noted on 6 days with 100s (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve+ on 16th, lots various sites on 17th, several Tyulenovo+ on 18th, 3000 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, few on 21st, and 1-2 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

2 Pomorie Lake (S) (Bill & Jan) on 20th, and 2 adults and 2 juveniles there on 22nd.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Noted on 2 days with 2 juveniles Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and separate ad and juvenile at the Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

2 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, and 2 Dourankulak Lake & 5 Shabla Tuzlata were a terrific sight on 17th.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

One Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 10 on 21st, and 3-4 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Noted on 4 days with c.10 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 6 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 3 on 21st, and 2-3 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Noted on 6 days with 50+ (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, lots various sites on 17th, plenty on 18th, 100+ Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 15+ on 21st, and 200+ Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Also seen on 6 days with 30+ (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, plenty various sites on 17th, few various sites on 18th, 12 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 1-2 on 21st, and 10+ including adults feeding young Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Quite common and widespread and seen daily in small number from 16th.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

One on a wire quite near Pomorie en route was a surprise last new bird on 22nd.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Noted on 4 days with 1 Bolata valley, 1 Rusalka village steppe + 1 en route on 16th, 10+ en route + 2 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 2 Kavarna hill on 18th, and 2 at the Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Generally abundant, and seen daily from 16th except on 20th.

Eurasian Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

One superb bird roosting in a bush on a cliff near Topola on 18th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

One on a chimney pot en route on 20th.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

Noted on 3 days with 200+ various sites on 16th, 10+ Hotel Kavarna on 17th, and 1 Kavarna hill on 18th.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Noted on 5 days with 2 en route on 16th, 4+ Yailata on 18th, 1 en route + 1 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, 1 Pomorie Lake (S) & 1 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and a surprise small passage with 6+ Pomorie Lake (S) and 1+ en route on 22nd.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

One briefly Bolata valley on 16th, and 2 superb juveniles watched hunting from wires en route on 18th.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Noted on 2 days with 4-5 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, and 2 Mandra reservoir on 21st.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Good numbers of quite late migrants: recorded on 5 days with 10+ Hotel Kavarna, 100+ en route on 16th, lots various sites on 17th, lots various sites on 18th, heard somewhere on 19th, and a flock of c.15 around the bus en route on 21st.

Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Small numbers noted on 5 days: 1 Bolata valley + 1 Rusalka village steppe on 16th, 2 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 1 Pomorie Lake (S) & 1 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th, 1 on 21st, and 1 Pomorie on 22nd.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

Just one noisy, but very flighty bird Goriza Forest on 19th.

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius*

Noted on 2 days with one heard Goriza Forest on 19th, and 3 superb birds Poroy Forest on 20th.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*

Noted on 5 days with 1 + heard Hotel Kavarna on 17th, heard Kavarna village on 18th, 1 Goriza Forest on 19th, 1 Poroy Forest on 20th, and heard behind the salinas on 21st.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

One + heard Bolata valley on 16th, 1+ Goriza Forest & 1 Banya on 19th, and 1-2 Poroy Forest on 20th.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Noted on 3 days with 2 Hotel Kavarna on 17th, and singles Goriza Forest on 19th and Poroy Forest on 20th.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A very common migrant and noted on 7 days: 40-50 various sites. on 16th, 15 various sites on 17th, 20+ various sites on 18th, 15+20 various sites on 19th, 15+ various sites on 20th, 20+ on 21st, and a few Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

A late juvenile Banya was a good find on 19th.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Five+ mostly juvenile birds in poplars along the Bolata valley gave excellent views on 16th.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Noted on 5 days with 6+ various sites on 16th, several various sites on 17th, plenty various sites on 18th, few en route on 19th, and 2+ various sites on 20th.

Common Magpie *Pica pica*

Common, widespread and seen daily from 16th, particularly in the C and S of our route.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Quite common and widespread in small numbers; variable in number but seen daily from 16th.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Three groups, seemingly all juveniles, totalling c. 50 Dourankulak Lake+ on 17th.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Noted on 4 days with 2 Banya on 19th, 5 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, 6+ on 21st, and 1 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Sombre Tit *Poecile lugubris*

A calling pair at Poroy Forest on 20th were frustratingly brief.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

One seen excellently and another heard Goriza Forest on 19th.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Noted on 5 days with 6-8 Bolata valley on 16th, several Hotel Kavarna on 17th, 2 Kavarna village on 18th, several various sites on 19th, and several various sites on 20th.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Noted on 4 days with 1 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, heard Kavarna village on 18th, several Goriza Forest on 19th, and 20+ Poroy Forest+ on 20th.

Common Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

A migrant in small numbers towards the end of its migration period, with 25 the Bulgarevo steppe + 2 Hotel Kavarna on 16th, a few small flocks various sites on 17th, a few Yailata on 18th, a few en route on 19th, 1 Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th, and a few on 21st.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Very common and migrants seen at virtually every stop; variable numbers but common to abundant daily from 16th.

Northern House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

An abundant migrant seen daily, including 1000s on 19th.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Noted on 4 days: 4 Hotel Kavarna on 16th, 5+ Shabla Tuzlata & several Hotel Kavarna on 17th, few various sites on 18th, and 4 Banya+ before they suddenly disappeared on 19th.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Just a small flock heard Goriza Forest on 19th.

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

100+ Rusalka village steppe+ on 16th, and a lovely flying display by 500+ birds at the Bulgarevo steppe on 18th.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Widespread in small numbers: 3 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 1 + heard Kavarna hill and 1 Tyulenovo on 18th, 1 Pomorie Lake (S) & 4-5 Poroy Forest on 20th, 2 on 21st, and 1-2 Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

30+ Rusalka village steppe on 16th, 1 juvenile Tyulenovo on 18th, 7 Banya on 19th, and several in arable fields on 21st.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Just one briefly in flight (and calling) Poroy Forest on 20th.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

One seen briefly and 2 others heard Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Noted on 2 days: heard Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and 1 seen very briefly & 3 others heard Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Just 4-5 noted in the calm and warm conditions at Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Noted on 4 days with 1 + heard Bolata valley on 16th, heard Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 2 Pomorie Lake (W) on 19th, and 4-5 in the reeds Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Different singles Bolata valley & (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve were excellent finds on 16th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A common migrant noted in small number at various sites daily from 16th except on 20th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A 'pair' Yailata and 1 male on 18th, 2 male + 1 female Banya on 19th, 1 Poroy Forest on 20th, and a male just after lunch on 21st.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Singles noted Bolata valley & (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

A common migrant, and noted on 6 days, with max. 6+ various sites on 16th and 4-5 on 21st.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Also quite common and noted on 4 days: 6+ various sites on 16th, 4-5 various sites on 17th, plenty Kavarna hill on 18th, and 2+ at Banya on 19th.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

Five+ seen and more heard Goriza Forest on 19th and 1 Poroy Forest on 20th.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*

'Arfur' bird seen Hotel Kavarna (Joy) on 17th, but 2 seen & another heard Goriza Forest on 19th.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Very common and widespread (100s), and seen daily from 16th.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Widespread in small number and seen and/or heard daily except on 22nd

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Singles Hotel Kavarna on 16th and again on 19th.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A few Hotel Kavarna on 17th and 2 Goriza Forest on 19th.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Just one male Hotel Kavarna was perhaps surprising for this relatively common breeder on 17th.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Noted on 3 days with 1 male Bolata valley + 1 female Rusalka village steppe + 1 male en route on 16th, 1 female Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and plenty heard Kavarna hill + 1 seen Yailata on 18th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Noted on 4 days with One Shabla Lake on 17th, 6+ various sites on 18th, 4 Banya on 19th, and a single on 21st.

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Notably scarce, with just 5 together Shabla Tuzlata on 17th.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Noted on 3 days with 2 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, 1 Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and 10 at various steppe sites on 18th.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Terrific! 4 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th and a male Kavarna hill on 18th.

(Eastern) Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica melanoleuca*

Also great! A 'pair' the Bulgarevo steppe was an excellent find on 18th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Noted on 5 days with 6+ various sites on 16th, several various sites on 17th, 2 Yailata on 18th, 1 Goriza Forest on 19th, and 6+ in the Turkey oak woods Poroy Forest on 20th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

A common migrant noted on 6 days, though mainly on call! 1 + several heard Bolata valley and 1 + heard (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, 4-5 + plenty heard various sites on 17th, 1 + heard Yailata on 18th, 1 Hotel Kavarna + 1 Banya on 19th, 2 Poroy Forest on 20th, and 3 heard in bushes near the salinas on 21st.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common, widespread and seen daily from 16th.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

Three fine males on the roadside near Vaya Lake en route on 21st.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common and widespread and noted in small number on 5 days.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Although a common migrant, most were in active migration and those coming down were remarkably difficult to observe on the ground. Noted on 6 days with max. 20+ Rusalka village steppe+ on 16th, 40+ various sites on 17th and 100+ various sites on 18th.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

An uncommon migrant, with 2 Dourankulak Lake + 1 Shabla Lake on 17th, 2 Yailata on 18th, and 1 heard Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

An abundant migrant and noted on 7 days from 16th.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

A moderate migrant: 2 the Bulgarevo steppe + 6 Rusalka village steppe on 16th, 5-6 Kavarna hill + 4+ the Bulgarevo steppe & 2 Tyulenovo on 18th, and a single Banya on 19th.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

A common migrant, but most passing over high on passage: several heard various sites on 16th, heard Dourankulak Lake on 17th, 3 seen + 20+ heard various sites on 18th, 1 seen + several heard on 21st, and heard Pomorie Lake (S) on 22nd.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

Two 'pairs' in flight Dourankulak Lake on 17th, and also heard passing over Kavarna hill on 18th.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Noted on 4 days: heard Kavarna village on 18th, 2+ Goriza Forest & 25+ Banya on 19th, few Poroy Forest on 20th, and 5-6 various sites on 21st.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

4-5 Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 2 Banya on 19th, and a single Pomorie Lake (S) on 20th.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Noted on 6 days with 4-5 Hotel Kavarna and c.10 various sites on 16th, 12+ Shabla Tuzlata on 17th, 20+ Kavarna village on 18th, c. 10 Banya on 19th, 5-6 Poroy Forest on 20th, and heard on 21st.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Two seen + another heard Hotel Kavarna on 17th, 3 + 8 on passage Kavarna hill on 18th, and 1 Hotel Kavarna + 2 Banya on 19th.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Quite common, widespread and recorded on 6 days from 16th, except on 22nd; max. 120+ Rusalka village steppe on 16th, and lots Banya on 19th.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Just one juvenile Banya on 19th.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

Three moulting birds Poroy Forest on 20th.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Just one brief male Shabla Tuzlata on 17th.

MAMMALS

European Hare *Lepus europaeus*

1 the Bulgarevo steppe + 1 Tyulenovo on 18th.

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

Noted on 4 days with 4-5 (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th, 2 Yailata on 18th, 1 (Dave) Pomorie on 20th, and 2 (Dave & Ted) there on 21st.

Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

10 Yailata on 18th were superb!

AMPHIBIANS

Fire-bellied Toad *Bombina bombina*

4-5 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th.

European Tree Frog *Hyla arborea*

One Dourankulak Lake on 17th, heard Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th and 1 Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Common Marsh Frog *Pelophylax ridibundus*

Heard calling as well as a few juveniles seen Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th and 2 Mandra reservoir on 21st.

European Green Toad *Bufo viridis*

2 dead Tyulenovo on 18th.

REPTILES

European Pond Terrapin *Emys orbicularis*

2 Atanasovsko Lake (NE) on 20th.

Kotschy's Gecko *Mediodactylus kotschy*

2 Mandra reservoir on 21st.

Eastern Green Lizard *Lacerta viridis*

1 juvenile Bolata valley on 16th.

Balkan Green Lizard *Lacerta trilineata*

2 adults Bolata valley on 16th.

Balkan Wall Lizard *Podarcis tauricus*

Noted on 4 days with 1 Bolata valley on 16th, 1 Yailata on 18th, 2 Banya on 19th and 2 Poroy Forest on 20th.

Snake-eyed Skink *Ablepharus kitaibelii*

2 of these tiny beauties Goriza Forest on 19th.

BUTTERFLIES

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Only noted around the restaurant en route on 16th and 19th.

Small White *Artogeia rapae*

Noted on 5 days: 16th, 17th, 18th, 20th and 21st.

Eastern Bath White *Pontia edusa*

Recorded on 16th, 17th and 18th.

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

Noted on 4 days: 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th.

Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow *Colias erate*

A superb freshly hatched male Yailata on 18th.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

Seen on 3 days: 16th, 19th and 20th.

Lang's Short-tailed Blue *Leptotes pirithous*

Noted on 16th and 19th.

Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*

Just one Yailata on 18th.

Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*

Noted on 5 days: on 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th.

Adonis Blue *Lysandra bellargus*

A couple of males Bolata valley on 16th.

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

Noted on 3 days: on 17th, 19th and 20th.

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Seen on 4 days: on 16th, 17th, 18th and 20th.

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Only recorded on 2 days, on 16th and 18th.

Cardinal *Argynnis pandora*

Only seen, but very well in Bolata valley on 16th and at Yailata on 18th.

Queen of Spain Fritillary *Issoria lathonia*

Just one Yailata on 18th.

Woodland Grayling *Hipparchia fagi*

Noted Goriza Forest on 19th and Poroy Forest on 20th.

Grayling *Hipparchia semele*

Just one Poroy Forest on 20th.

Great Banded Grayling *Kanetisa circe*

A few Poroy Forest on 20th.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

Quite common and seen on 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th.

Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Just ones and twos on 17th and 20th.

Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera*

Just a few Bolata valley on 16th and several Yailata 18th.

Oberthür's Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus armoricanus*

A brief single at CK on 16th was almost certainly this species.

Mallow Skipper *Carcharodus alceae*

A few on 16th and 18th.

MOTHS

Convolvulus Hawkmoth *Agrius convolvuli*

1 caterpillar Bolata valley on 16th.

Hummingbird Hawkmoth *Macroglossum stellatarum*

Rather common: lots on 16th, and noted on 17th, 18th and 19th.

DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES

Small Bluetail / Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura pumilio*

A male Tyulenovo on 18th was a nice capture!

Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*

Noted on 3 days in small number: on 16th, 17th and 18th.

Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*

Only definitely seen on 17th.

Ruddy darter *Sympetrum sanguineum*

Two males at different sites on 17th.

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Huge Jellyfish *Rhizostoma pulmo*

Lots (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th.

Roman Snail *Helix pomata*

Lots (Cape) Kaliakra Reserve on 16th.

The serrated-sided spider *Argiope cf lobata*

1 Yailata + 1 Tyulenovo on Lyubo's arm on 18th.

Wolf Spider

One with young Goriza Forest on 19th.

Praying Mantis *Mantis religiosa*

Noted on 2 days with 3 various sites on 18th and 1 Poroy Forest on 20th.

White-faced Bush Cricket *Decticus albifrons*

Lots of this impressively large bush cricket species Yailata on 18th.

Slant-faced grasshopper sp *Truxalis nasuta*

Noted on 2 days with 1 of the brown form Rusalka village steppe on 16th, and 1 of the bright green form Poroy Forest on 20th.

Violet Carpenter Bee *Xylocopa violacea*

1 (Peter) Bolata valley on 16th.

Small mantis sp.

One Tyulenovo on 18th was probably an *Ameles* species.