

Danube Birding Adventure

11 days through: Ukraine – Romania – Bulgaria - Serbia

**21 May -31 May 2013.
11 days/10 nights**

Price: £1,015

Price includes: local travel (vehicle and boat), accommodation and all meals, reserve entry fees, guiding.

Price excludes: air fares to tour start/end, travel insurance, visa fees, personal expenditure.

Supplement for single room: £110. Price based on minimum of 16 participants

Take a Danube Birding Adventure from Vilково in the delta to Belgrade in the middle reaches. This unique and exclusive tour covers five countries along the Danube: Moldova, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia. It is organised by two highly experienced companies, Salix Nature Tours in Odessa and Magelan in Novi Sad, both of which are members of the Danube Competence Centre. On this trip, among stunning landscapes and wild places, you can expect to see a wealth of birds, including specialities like Dalmatian Pelican, Pygmy Cormorant, Black Stork, Ferruginous Duck, Great Black-headed Gull, Levant Sparrowhawk, River Warbler and Sombre Tit. Not to mention an abundance of plants, butterflies, dragonflies and other wildlife. In addition, you will enjoy the wide range of hospitable local cultures, and indulge the cuisines and wines!



Tuesday 21st May 2013. Moldova

Arrival in Chisinau, transfer to Cahul. The adventure will begin with arrival in Chisinau - the capital of Moldova. From here we will proceed southwest across the rolling countryside of woodlands and meadows to Cahul, situated on the east side of the River Prut floodplain. On the way we can expect to see birds such as Crested Lark, Hoopoe, Bee-eater and Lesser Grey Shrike. We stay in Cahul.



Wednesday 22nd of May 2013. Lower Prut Reserve, Bolgrad steppe, Izmail (Moldova / Ukraine)

We will drive south along the Prut floodplain and visit Lake Beleu. We should see our first White Pelicans here, along with a good range of herons and waders. Black Storks and Lesser Spotted Eagles are regular visitors. We will head inland across the steppe zone to the Ukraine border at Bolgrad. This town lies at the apex of Lake Yalpug - Ukraine's largest natural freshwater lake, where species like Red-footed Falcon, Tawny Pipit, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Pied Wheatear and Ortolan Bunting can be found. We will stay in the historic town of Izmail.



Thursday 23th of May 2013, Danube Delta, Izmail (Ukraine)

Our excursion today covers the Danube floodplain between Izmail and the Black Sea coast to the east, passing through a mosaic of woodlands, meadows, fish ponds, rice paddies and reedbeds where we can expect to find a good range of waders, woodpeckers and warblers. We visit Vilково - the "Little Venice" of Ukraine and take a trip into the Kilia part of the Danube Delta, aboard our locally-built "chaika" and alight on the coast at "0" kilometre where the river enters the sea. The shallow waters and sand bars here attract White Pelicans, Spoonbills, Pygmy Cormorants and Great Black-headed Gulls. We return to Izmail for the night.



Friday 24th of May 2013. Izmail, Danube Lakes, Macin Mountains, Tulcea (Ukraine / Romania)

In the morning we will investigate the vast marshes and meadows of lakes Yalpug and Kugurlui lying just west of Izmail. These areas support a huge number of waterbirds including Black-necked



Grebe, Little Bittern, Squacco Heron, Glossy Ibis, Ferruginous Duck, Red-crested Pochard, White-winged, Whiskered and



Black Terns, and

Penduline Tits. We will also see a large colony of spotted susliks. In the afternoon we cross the border to Romania, take a ferry across the Danube and enter the Macin Mountains National Park. The woodlands here support birds such as Levant Sparrowhawk, Sombre Tit and Hawfinch. We spend the night in Tulcea.

Saturday 25th of May 2013. Tulcea - Danube Delta and Babadag; Silistra (Romania / Bulgaria)

From Tulcea, we will explore the lower Danube floodplain beside the old St George branch of the river. We will explore a range of wetlands and meadows reaching the Ottoman era fort at Enisala. Birds here include colonies of Mediterranean Gull, Black-winged Stilt and Collared Pratincole, while migrating parties of Red-Throated Pipits forage in the grass. After lunch we will have a walk in the lime and oak woods of Babadag Forest. Then we will cross the undulating Dogbrogea plateau, heading upstream along the Danube, to the Bulgarian town of Silistra to spend the night.



Sunday 26th of May 2013. Silistra - Srbarna, Kalimok-Brashlyan, Ruse (Bulgaria)

Today we will drive upstream along the Danube, visiting the Srbarna Biosphere Reserve and Kalimok Brashlyan nature reserve. Srbarna is most famous for holding the most important colony of Dalmatian Pelicans on the Danube outside the delta, but it also has an impressive range of other birds breeding there. The Danube floodplain at Kalimok-Brashlyan is a good place to find Red-necked Grebe, River Warbler and Barred Warbler. We will spend the night in Ruse.



Monday 27th of May 2013, Ruse - Rusinsky Lom – Bistret (Bulgaria / Romania)

Close to Ruse is the Rusinsky Lom Nature Park, a deep and sinuous gorge, which contains a number of outstanding historic sites, including rock churches designated under the World Heritage Convention. It is also important for birds like Black Stork, Egyptian Vulture, and Eagle Owl, while Red-rumped Swallows breed in the cliffs and under bridges. We will spend much of the day here before heading over the Danube again, to Bistret in Romania for the night.



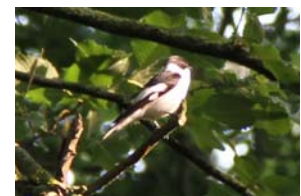
Tuesday 28 May 2013. Bistret Lake - Djerdap National Park (Romania / Serbia)

We spend the morning birding around Bistret Lake, which holds a good population of Great Bitterns, Spoonbills and herons, and where the muddy shores attract waders like Black-Tailed Godwit, Wood Sandpiper and Ruff. From here we cross our final frontier into Serbia to spend the rest of the day in Djerdap (Iron Gate) National Park. The Djerdap Gorge stretches for about 100 km along the Danube. It includes limestone cliffs and mixed deciduous woodland, with Golden and Short-toed Eagles, Alpine Swift, and Middle Spotted Woodpecker. Night in Donji Milanovac.



Wednesday 29 May 2013. Deliblato Sands and Labudovo Okno wetlands (Serbia)

Today we continue exploring the Danube upstream. The Deliblato Sands Nature Reserve comprises a large sandy region with grassland, farmland and mixed forest. The Danube sandbanks house the largest Central European Sand Martin breeding colony with up to 18,000 pairs present! There will be a good chance to see White-tailed Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Booted Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, and Saker Falcon. The wetlands around Labudovo Okno support colonies of Pygmy Cormorant, Night Heron, Squacco Heron and Little Egret. Night in Kovačica.



Thursday 30th of May 2013, Fruska Gora National Park (Serbia)

Fruska Gora National Park is a picturesque ridge of hills that extend 78km along Danube. The hills contain mixed forest, grazed steppe, farmland and meadows. Here we can see Imperial Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Goshawk, Scops and Little Owl, Black Woodpecker, Collared Flycatcher, Short-toed Treecreeper, Hawfinch, and Cirl, Ortolan, Corn and Black-headed Buntings. Overnight stay in Belgrade.



Friday 31 May 2013. Morning Departure from Belgrade (Serbia). End of program.