



Introduction

This was primarily a mammal recording trip with the Dutch Mammal Society (although other taxa were actively recorded). I had done some work with them a few years back and managed to get myself an invite on this trip to the Danube Delta.

Lots of the recording was via camera traps, bat loggers etc. and with at least two teams doing things it would be impossible to see all the mammals recorded by the survey. This is an account of my movements and not that of the whole group. In total 37 mammals were recorded, I saw 21 of them.

It was a good trip and although I don't speak much Dutch they did a lot in English and I was made most welcome.

I flew with Ryanair which was rubbish as expected, late arriving and a nice 10 hour delay coming back.

Car Hire with Europcar – they were expensive but fine, the car a Dacia Logan was rubbish don't buy one.

Temperatures were mid 20's to low 30's all the time and we had one night of heavy rain.

The photos are hyperlinked to larger versions.

Diary

1st August 2018

I was 30 mins late landing at Ortopeni but the airport exit and car hire processes went smoothly and I was off to Tulcea by 3pm, further instructions would be provided along the way. I stopped briefly for cold drinks and ice cream and eventually turned off the motorway onto smaller roads, here bee-eaters and rollers were plentiful but I did not have time to stop as I had instructions to meet a boat at 8pm. I arrived and made it to the boat at 8.05pm fortunately I was not the last to arrive and when the others arrived we departed to Vulturru in the Danube delta. We had dinner and got to know each other and did a little walk spotlighting and bat detecting. Some **noctules**, **soprano pipistrelles** and **pond bats** all seen as well as detected and we found a **Romanian hedgehog** and a **green toad**.

2nd August 2018

We were setting up traps in two locations not too far from the hotel a selection of longworths and shermans (mostly placed in trees for dormice and squirrels). An oriental tree frog was a nice find while setting up and there were green frogs everywhere. After some lunch a couple of us took a walk where we had a nice selection of butterflies and dragonflies (Balkan emperor, scarlet darter, eastern spreadwing, lesser emperor, southern darter, large checkered skipper). Birdwise lots of flyover great white pelicans, redstart and a sparrowhawk. On our return to the hotel we saw a dying dice snake after being caught by a local cat. After dinner we checked the traps with loads of annoying mosquito's, while another group were mist netting for bats. We had one catch a nice **Miller's water shrew** a brief view of a possible **wildcat** or hybrid. Back at the hotel we were just in time to see a **Kuhl's pipistrelle** that had been caught, and another **Romanian hedgehog**.



Kuhl's Pipistrelle



Exochomus nigromaculatus



Eyed Hawkmoth



Hummingbird Hawkmoth



Aerida vaganica



3rd August 2018

It was very hot and again sunny not a cloud in the sky and I took a walk with a couple of others after breakfast. A distant white tailed eagle and a couple of red footed falcons and loads of red backed shrikes amongst the bee-eaters and rollers. More butterflies and dragonflies (Small red eyed damselfly, white tailed darter, painted lady, hummingbird hawkmoth). After lunch we walked the other way from the hotel here the landscape was different with more pools and plenty of herons and egrets, reed warblers and a selection of grasshoppers. Late afternoon I relaxed in the shade at the hotel, the cat brought in a **common vole** we were not quick enough and it died before we retrieved it. After dinner we searched through the nice selection of moths attracted to the hotel lights along with a few other insects.

4th August 2018

I woke to a golden oriole singing what a nice start to my birthday. For the early morning trap checks the only capture was a **wood mouse** so we collected the traps to move to different sites. After breakfast we went on the small boat to look for suitable trapping sites and after a couple of hours touring the channels and visiting a couple of lakes we located a nice island for trapping. On the way back we stopped at at Maluic for a quick look round and luckily enough found the pub in this tiny village and had a birthday beer and some peanuts for lunch. The trip produced some incidental sightings of hobby, wood sandpiper, whiskered tern, white legged damselfly. Back at the hotel and I spent a few hours looking for ladybirds and other insects, 7, 14, 16 and scarce 7 spot and one that I could not identify (later identified as *Exochomus nigromaculatus*). The evening was once again spent looking through the moths and having a couple of beers.



Balkan Emperor



Black Crowned Night Heron



Clouded Yellow



Pigma Cormorant



Eastern Spadefoot

5th August 2018

At 6am a few of us left in a small boat for a trip through the delta mainly for birdwatching, and full of birds it was. 4 grebe species, little, black necked, red necked and great crested. White tailed eagle and hobby perched up nicely, kingfisher, great reed warbler along with the usual herons, egrets, cormorants, gulls and terns etc. A massive flock of ferruginous ducks was the highlight. We made it back to the hotel for lunch in what was now seriously hot weather and I took a lazy afternoon in the shade with cold drinks with a few others chatting. Late afternoon I prepared some Longworth traps that had been collected from another site and after dinner a couple of us set them in the grassland behind the hotel. The rest of the evening I spent looking at the moths attracted to the hotel lights and having a couple of beers once again.

6th August 2018

I was up early to check the traps, the only capture was a **lesser white toothed shrew** but it was at least a capture. After breakfast I took a walk with a couple of others but we did not find anything else that we had not seen before. After lunch we took the boat back to the road where we had a car parked. From here we swapped with another team who have been out in the grassland trapping since Sunday. They had a nice surprise for us a **Romanian hamster** which they had caught earlier that morning along with a **Steppe mouse**.

We stopped for supplies and headed upto some farmland to set more traps both Pitfalls and Sherman's. We had some photos with the hamster before its release then set about setting up our camp. A nice mantis and a Cone-headed Grasshopper were spotted as quail called all around. I settled into my borrowed tent for the night as the rain started to fall. The rain became torrential and the strong wind blew it in through the vent which would not hold closed and my tent started to fill up with water. I turned it 90 degrees and this at least stopped it coming in the vent but the zips were now exposed and the rain came in there instead and I was forced to retreat to the car for the night.



Great White Pelican



13 Spot Ladybird



Carpathian Dancing Grasshopper



Fiery Copper



Scarlet Darter



Lesser Mole Rat

7th August 2018

Quail were still calling as we got up and the heat made it easy to dry the tent and kit out. We checked the traps, nothing at all apart from a flock of 8 hoopoe passing by, so we packed up and collected the traps. We headed to the village of Bestepe for supplies. Our car was not able to get to the next site due to the poor road so our kit was taken in the van and we walked the hour to the site. I was not feeling at all well by this time, I had a bad headache and spent most of the afternoon doing little sitting in the shade, travelling light I had no pain killers but fortunately others did and by early evening I was almost human again. The view over the delta was nice and a few hours here watching the world go by was very pleasant. There were plenty of tawny pipits, rollers around. The others had been working hard digging out Lesser mole rat burrows to try to trap one, but had no luck. We checked the traps which were already in place but no captures so we photographed Eastern and common spadefoot toads the others had caught in the rain the previous evening and as the mosquitoes arrived in force we retreated to the tents.



Blue Winged grasshopper



Tawny Pipit



Steppe Mouse

8th August 2018

We checked and collected the traps, again no captures the morning was spent photographing butterflies while some persevered with the lesser mole rat capture. Early afternoon a couple of us took a walk further down the track to see some **European sousliks**, crested lark and pied wheatear were bonus sightings on the way. We watched a few sousliks and a flyover steppe buzzard and a pallid harrier. We arrived back at camp and packed up, then I took a wander round the hillside photographing plants and butterflies before we were ready to head back to the village. We were just about to leave when a **lesser mole rat** was caught and we had a photo shoot before we had to walk back to the village to collect the car. Here it was time for an ice cream and cold drink before heading back to the boat. We stopped on-route for a nice spot where several butterfly species had been spotted by another group, common glider the highlight. A green lizard was a bonus as we headed back to the hotel. I took a small boat to another area to check some traps but nothing trapped but we did find some fire bellied toads in a puddle before heading back to the hotel as the mosquitoes started to attack.

9th August 2018

We took the boat to check the traps first thing two **common shrews** and one **striped field mouse** caught. We then took the boat on a trip round the delta, a white winged black tern the only addition to the bird list but it was very pleasant. After lunch I had a lazy afternoon photographing butterflies in the garden and enjoying the shade as it was just too hot to do a walk, a large red underwing moth was a bonus during a cold drink break.

We checked the traps just again before dusk but just one **striped field mouse** was trapped but a 22 spot ladybird landed on me during the checks was nice.



Common Glider



Violet Carpenter Bee



Striped Field Mouse



Squacco Heron



Roller

10th August 2018

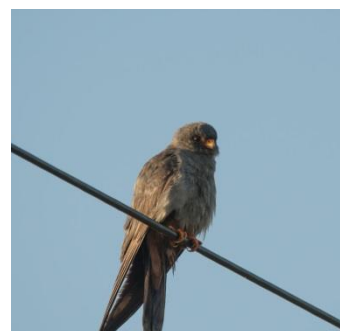
I took a walk first thing to avoid the heat, the birds were pretty active with bee-eaters, little owl, roller, grey headed woodpecker but the highlight was a cuckoo being chased by two golden orioles. The rest of the morning was spent cleaning the traps and sorting and packing up all the equipment. I took a walk in the afternoon looking for ladybirds but only found the same species as earlier in the week but I did find a nice redstart. The evening was spent socialising as the trip was coming to an end.

11th August 2018

By late morning I was on the last boat away from the Hotel back to Tulcea, I was now on my own and drove west ending up at a couple of lakes near Balta Alba for waterbirds, my target was Dalmatian pelican and I found plenty on two of the lakes. The usual waterbirds seen in the delta were here but also ruff, little stint, redshank, black winged stilt of note. I headed to a small area of grassland near Ionești, this was very rich in wildlife lesser grey shrikes, rollers and hoopoes were very common. Nice flocks of yellow wagtails and a few little owls but the large number of rather confiding **European sousliks** was the highlight and I spent quite a while photographing these before the sun set. Once it did I spent several hours spotlighting in the area and there were plenty of mammals about. Some distant **golden jackals** and a much more accommodating **red fox** were seen early on. Much later a **badger** and several **brown hares** along with a couple of **mice** but I could not get enough of a view for an ID. Eventually activity petered out and I got a couple of hours sleep.

12th August 2018

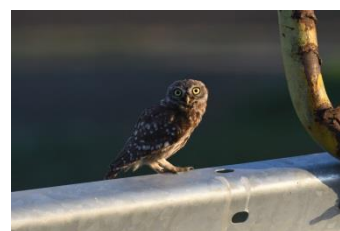
I was up early for a drive round the area, some nice little owls and some close waders but the highlight was a family group of red footed falcons showing very nicely and allowed me to get some good photos. I passed by Balta Alba once again with similar birds to the previous day and then took a slow drive back to Bucharest via a the back roads to see the countryside stopping at a few small villages for refreshments. I was at the airport a fraction early to be confronted with a 10 hour delay.



Red Footed Falcon



Red Footed Falcon



Little Owl



European Souslik



Dalmatian Pelican

Checklists

Mammals - 21



Romanian Hamster	Steppe Mouse	Wood Mouse
Striped Field Mouse	Common Shrew	Lesser White Toothed Shrew
Miller's Water Shrew	Kuhls Pipistrelle	Noctule
Soprano Pipistrelle	Pond Bat	Romanian Hedgehog
Lesser Mole rat	Daubenton's Bat	European Ground Squirrel
Common Vole	Red Fox	Golden Jackal
Badger	Brown Hare	
Possible wildcat		



Miller's Water Shrew



Lesser White-toothed Shrew



Red Fox

Herps - 9

Eastern Tree Frog	Fire Belled Toad	Green Toad
Dice Snake	Grass Snake	Balkan Green lizard
Common Spadefoot	Eastern Spadefoot	Marsh Frog



Eastern Tree Frog

Green Toad

Green Frog Sp

Birds - 119

Great Crested Grebe	Little grebe	Black Necked Grebe
Red Necked grebe	Moorhen	Coot
Grey Heron	Purple heron	Little Egret
Great White Egret	Squacco Heron	Little Bittern
Black Crowned Night Heron	Mute Swan	Greylag Goose
Pochard	Red Crested Pochard	Mallard
Ferruginous Duck	Gadwall	Quail
Pheasant	Grey Partridge	White Stork
Black Stork	Spoonbill	Glossy ibis
Cormorant	Pygmy Cormorant	Sparrowhawk
Kestrel	Hobby	Red Footed Falcon
White Tailed Eagle	Marsh Harrier	Montagu's Harrier
Steppe Buzzard	Water Rail	Stone Curlew
Lapwing	Avocet	Ringed Plover
Little Ringed Plover	Black tailed Godwit	Curlew Sandpiper
Dunlin	Little Stint	Common Sandpiper
Wood Sandpiper	Redshank	Greenshank
Yellow Legged Gull	Caspian Gull	Black Headed Gull
Whiskered tern	White Winged Black tern	Common Tern
Feral Pigeon	Woodpigeon	Collared Dove
Cuckoo	Little Owl	Roller
Hoopoe	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Great Spotted Woodpecker
Grey Headed Woodpecker	Red Backed Shrike	Lesser Grey Shrike
Golden Oriole	Magpie	Jackdaw
Rook	Hooded Crow	Great Tit
Long Tailed tit	Skylark	Swallow

House Martin	Sand Martin	Cetti's Warbler
Chiff Chaff	Wood Warbler	Great Reed Warbler
Reed Warbler	Blackcap	Lesser Whitethroat
Paddyfield Warbler	Wren	Blackbird
Robin	Thrush Nightingale	Redstart
Whinchat	Wheatear	Isabelline Wheatear
Pied Wheatear	House Sparrow	Yellow Wagtail
White Wagtail	Tawny Pipit	Hawfinch
Linnet	Corn Bunting	Reed Bunting
Starling	Great White Pelican	Dalmatian Pelican
Ruff	Green Sandpiper	Stock Dove
Kingfisher	Bee-eater	Tree Sparrow
Crested Lark	Goldfinch	Shelduck
Black Winged Stilt	Whitethroat	





False Apollo	Painted Lady	Red Admiral
Scarce Swallowtail	Common Swallowtail	Balkan Emperor
Mallow Skipper	Meadow Brown	Brown Argus
Common Blue	Red Admiral	Peacock
Painted Lady	Small Heath	Dingy Skipper
Eastern Bath White	Small White	Large White
Large Chequered Skipper	Common Glider	Tree Grayling
Lesser Clouded Yellow	Long Tailed Blue	Holly Blue
Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow	Map	Large Skipper
Balkan Green veined White	Large Copper	Lesser Fiery Copper
Comma	Eastern Short Tailed Blue	Small Blue
Pale Clouded Yellow	Small Copper	Lang's Short Tailed Blue
Glanville Fritillary	Knapweed Fritillary	Short tailed Blue
Cardinal		
Southern Darter	White Tailed darter	Southern Migrant Hawker
White Legged Damselfly	Banded Demoiselle	Blue Tailed Damselfly
Rudy Darter	Scarlet Darter	Small Red Eyed Damselfly
Lesser Emperor	Emperor	Migrant Hawker
Red Veined darter	Keeled Skimmer	Eastern Willow Spreadwing
Southern Spreadwing	Broad Bodied Chaser	Red Veined Darter
Southern Skimmer	House Cricket	Carpathian Dancing Grasshopper
Meadow grasshopper	Leek grasshopper	Large Golden Grasshopper
Hansome Cross Grasshopper	Grey bush Cricket	Great Green Bush Cricket



Meadow Grasshopper	Large Conehead	Short winged Conehead
Long winged Conehead	Blue Winged Grasshopper	Tree Cricket
Decticus albifrons	Great Green Bush Cricket	Red Winged Grasshopper
Stripe Winged grasshopper	Acrida ungarica	Blue-winged Sand Grasshopper
Mottled Grasshopper	Lesser Field Grasshopper	Roesel's Bush Cricket
Field grasshopper	Large Marsh Grasshopper	Tricolour Grasshopper
Mediterranean Katydid	European Mantis	Harlequin Ladybird
7 Spot Ladybird	Scarce 7 Spot Ladybird	13 Spot Ladybird
16 Spot Ladybird	14 Spot Ladybird	Adonis Ladybird
Exochomus nigromaculatus	Hummingbird Hawkmoth	Goat Moth
Gypsy Moth	Small Chocolate tip	Purple Bordered Gold
Large red Underwing	Nutmeg	Small Angle Shades
Buff Tip	Jersey Tiger	Reed leopard
White Ermine	Brown China Mark	Rusty Dot Pearl
Silver Y	Leopard Moth	Eyed Hawkmoth
Brown Silver Line	European corn borer	Muslin Moth
Lappet Moth	Purple Barred yellow	Dotted Footman
Common Heath	Box Moth	Cotton Bollworm
Violet Carpenter Bee	Striped Shieldbug	Mammoth Wasp

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