

Romania & Bulgaria: Black Sea Fall Migration | Species List

September 15 – 24, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



With Guide Gerard Gorman and participants Amnon, Colette, and Kate.

Compiled by Gerard Gorman

(#) = Number of days recorded. (H) = heard only, not seen.

For further details on specific species, locations and habitats, please see the tour report.

BIRDS (151 species recorded)

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae

Graylag Goose *Anser anser* — (2) Several flocks seen, the largest of around 200 birds at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* — (2) Several groups of up to 20 birds seen in Romania.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* — (4) Scattered sightings in both countries, most on Lake Atanasovsko in Bulgaria.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula* — (1) Only seen at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* — (4) Scattered sightings in both countries. Most, around 100 birds, at Lake Atanasovsko in Bulgaria.

Gadwall *Mareca strepera* — (1) Only seen at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2.

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope* — (1) Just one seen, at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* — (7) Fairly common and widespread in both countries.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* — (1) Only seen at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2. Up to 10 birds.

Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal *Anas crecca* — (4) Flocks of up to 50 birds seen in both countries, mostly in Bulgaria.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* — (1) 100+ at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* — (1) Two seen at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2.

PHEASANTS, PARTRIDGES AND ALLIES: Phasianidae

Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* — (3) Five seen in total, on day 1 in Romania and days 5 and 7 in Bulgaria. Others heard.

FLAMINGOS: Phoenicopteridae

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* — (4) Many on coastal wetlands in Bulgaria, 1000+ on days 7 and 8 at Lake Atanasovsko.

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* — (2) Three seen, two in Romania and one in Bulgaria on day 9.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* — (4) Up to 30 seen on Lake Mandra, Bulgaria, on day 9.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* — (1) One in Nesebar harbor in Bulgaria on day 8.

SHEARWATERS: Procellariidae

Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan* — (1) Good views of two birds resting on the sea off Cape Kaliakra in Bulgaria on day 6.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae

Rock (Feral) Pigeon *Columba livia* — (10) Widespread. Only feral “domestica” birds seen.

Common Wood-Pigeon *Columba palumbus* — (9) Small numbers seen almost daily in both countries, often in flight.

European Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia turtur* — (2) Up to 5 seen in total, on days 2 and 6.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* — (10) Common and widespread, seen in settlements throughout.

SWIFTS: Apodidae

Alpine Swift *Apus melba* — (2) Good views of dozens flying low at Cape Kaliakra, Bulgaria, on day 6.

Common Swift *Apus apus* — (2) Small groups seen flying overhead on days 5 and 8.

RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* — (H) Heard on day 5 in the Bolata valley and in reeds at Lake Mandra on day 9, both in Bulgaria.

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* — (2) Heard on day 5 in the Bolata valley and one seen on water by the banding camp at Lake Atanasovsko on day 9.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* — (3) 100s on Lake Mandra in Bulgaria on day 9.

THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae

Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oedichnemus* — (1) A group of around ten found on steppe near Balgarevo in Bulgaria on day 4.

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* — (2) Small numbers seen on day 2 at Jurilovca, Romania, and closer views on day 8 at Pomorie salt ponds.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* — (2) 100s seen feeding and in flight on days 7 and 8 at Lake Atanasovsko in Bulgaria.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* — (1) One found at Lake Sabla, Bulgaria, on day 5.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* — (2) A few seen on coastal wetlands in Romania on days 2 and 3.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* — (3) Scattered sightings, all in Bulgaria.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* — (3) Scattered sightings, all in Bulgaria.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* — (1) One seen on day 8 at Pomorie salt ponds, Bulgaria.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* — (1) About 20 feeding at Lake Atanasovsko, Bulgaria, on day 8.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* — (1) Three seen at close range on day 8 at Pomorie salt ponds, Bulgaria.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* — (4) Scattered sightings of birds in non-breeding plumage in both countries.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* — (1) One on day 5 at Lake Sabla, Bulgaria.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* — (1) Two in winter plumage seen at close range on day 8 at Pomorie salt ponds, Bulgaria.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* — (2) Several seen at Lake Sabla on day 5 and seen up close at Pomorie salt ponds on day 8.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* — (2) Several at Lake Sabla on day 5 and watched up close at Pomorie salt ponds on day 8.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* — (2) Several seen in Romania, in flight and on the ground, at Jurilovca on day 2 and Histria on day 3.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* — (2) A few in winter plumage seen on days 2 and 3 at coastal wetlands in Romania.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* — (1) One seen on day 8 at Lake Atanasovsko, Bulgaria.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* — (1) Two seen well at Pomorie salt ponds, Bulgaria, on day 8.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* — (4) Scattered sightings at wetlands in both Romania and Bulgaria.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* — (2) Seen on day 3 at Jurilovca, Romania, and on day 8 near Pomorie, Bulgaria.

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei* — (1) One seen well on the water at Pomorie salt ponds, Bulgaria, on day 8.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* — (8) Common and widespread, seen throughout.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* — (2) One at Lake Sabla on day 5 and many at at Pomorie salt ponds on day 8. Most transitioning into winter plumage.

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* — (3) Flocks seen at wetlands and in farmland in both countries.

Pallas's Gull *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus* — (2) Three on day 2 and an exceptional 155 on day 3 at Lake Sinoe in Romania.

Yellow-legged *Larus michahellis* — (8) Common and widespread, even in urban areas.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* — (2) A few seen on days 2 and 3 around Lake Sinoe in Romania.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* — (3) Singles birds seen on days 2, 3 and 9.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* — (2) Twelve at Lake Sinoe in Romania on day 3, one at Lake Sabla in Bulgaria on day 5.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* — (1) About 20 at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* — (2) A few around Lake Sinoe in Romania on days 2 and 3.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* — (2) Dozens off Cape Kaliakra on day 6 and 100+ seen up close, perched on poles in the Pomorie salt ponds, on day 8.

STORKS: Ciconiidae

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* — (1) One seen in a field near Sliven, Bulgaria, on the last day.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* — (2) Single birds seen in roadside fields on days 2 and 8.

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae

Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmaeus* — (4) 100s seen, particularly common at wetlands around Bourgas in Bulgaria.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* — (8) Common at most wetlands in both countries.

European Shag *Gulosus aristotelis* — (1) Around a dozen on cliffs and in flight at Cape Kaliakra, Bulgaria on day 6. The Mediterranean/Black Sea subspecies *desmarestii* seen.

PELICANS: Pelecanidae

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* — (4) Over 1000+ seen fishing and in flocks in flight on day 3 in Romania and day 8 in Bulgaria.

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* — (5) Dozens seen in both countries with an exceptional 45 resting together at Lake Atanasovsko, Bourgas, in Bulgaria on day 8.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea* — (5) Scattered sightings in both countries.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* — (3) Seen in both countries, around six in total.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* — (4) Scattered sightings in both countries.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* — (4) Scattered sightings in both countries.

IBIS AND SPONNBILLS: Threskiornithidae

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* — (2) Only seen in Romania, around Lake Sinoe on days 2 and 3.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* — (4) Scattered sightings in both countries.

OSPREY: Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* — (4) Four on day 2 and one on day 3, all in Romania.

HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae

European Honey-Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* — (3) Four individuals on passage seen in total.

Short-toed Snake-Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* — (1) One seen very well, perched and flying, near Balgarevo in Bulgaria on day 6.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina* — (1) One seen, on day 1 by the motorway in Romania east of Bucharest.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* — (1) A white morph individual hunting by Enisala fort, Romania, on day 2.

Eurasian Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* — (10) Common, seen every day, in both countries. Mostly females and immatures.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes* — (1) Around five seen on day 5 in the Bolata Valley in Bulgaria.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* — (5) Single birds seen on several days in Bulgaria.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* — (1) Three seen, two immatures and one adult, on day 9 at Lake Mandra in Bulgaria.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* — (10) Fairly common and widespread in both countries, seen every day.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* — (2) One near Balgarevo on day 6 and two in the Karnabat Hills on the last day, all in Bulgaria.

OWLS: Strigidae

Little Owl *Athene noctua* — (6) Around ten seen, often on village house rooftops and chimneys in both countries.

HOPOES: Upupidae

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* — (1) One seen on day 3 near Istria in Romania

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* — (1) One seen on day 8 near Pomorie in Bulgaria.

BEE-EATERS: Meropidae

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* — (8) Many seen, in both countries, perched on wires and in flocks in flight on migration.

ROLLERS: Coraciidae

European Roller *Coracias garrulus* — (2) One on day 2 and three near the Dionysius monastery on day 4, all in Romania.

WOODPECKERS: Picidae

Middle-spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocoptes medius* — (2) Seen in Bulgaria in the Baltata Reserve near Albena on day 7 and heard in the Ropotamo Forest on day 9.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* — (3) Scattered sightings in Bulgaria.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus* — (5) Seen in settlements in both countries. Four different individuals on day 5.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* — (5) A female (subspecies *liffordi*) seen well in the Ropotamo forest in Bulgaria on day 9.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor* — (2) One seen on day 7 and one heard in the Ropotamo Forest in Bulgaria on day 9.

Gray-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* — (1) One seen in the Ropotamo Forest in Bulgaria on day 9.

Eurasian Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* — (3) Several heard and two seen in Bulgaria: one in the Bolata valley on day 5 and one in the Baltata Reserve near Albena on day 7.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* — (1) A female seen well, in flight and perched, in the Ropotamo forest in Bulgaria on day 9.

FALCONS: Falconidae

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* — (10) Common and widespread, seen every day.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* — (5) Scattered sightings in both countries. Six seen on day 2 in Romania.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* — (1) A female seen in Istria, Romania, on day 2.

SHRIKES: Laniidae

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* — (9) Seen daily, as they moved southwards on migration.

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* — (7) Many seen, though often single birds, in Bulgaria.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* — (10) Common and widespread, seen throughout.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* — (9) Common in both countries, in both rural and urban areas.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* — (7) Widespread, with flocks of 100+ seen in Romania.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* — (9) Common and widespread, seen throughout but not in large flocks.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* — (3) Scattered sightings, usually of two to four birds in flight.

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* — (2) Surprisingly few seen, only on days 4 and 7 in Bulgaria.

Great Tit *Parus major* — (4) Fairly common in wooded habitats in Bulgaria.

PENDULINE-TITS: Remizidae

Eurasian Penduline-Tit *Remiz pendulinus* — (1) Two seen well by reedbeds near Pomorie on day 8.

LARKS: Alaudidae

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea* — (1) One seen singing near Balgarevo in Bulgaria on day 6.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* — (2) Small parties seen in Bulgaria, near Balgarevo on day 6 and in the Karnabat Hills on the last day.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* — (4) Scattered sightings. A dozen in by farm near Balgarevo on day 6.

BEARDED REEDLING: Panuridae

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biamicus* — (1) Two seen in reeds at Lake Sinoe in Romania on day 3.

REED WARBLERS: Acrocephalidae

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* — (1) Three shown at the Lake Atanasovsko banding camp on day 9.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* — (1) One shown at the Lake Atanasovsko banding camp on day 9.

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia* — (4) Small numbers seen in flight, often with other hirundines.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* — (9) Common and widespread, flocks seen throughout.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* — (4) Only seen in Bulgaria: best views at Pomorie.

Common House-Martin *Delichon urbicum* — (2) A few seen with other hirundine species flocks.

LEAF WARBLERS: Phylloscopidae

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* — (5) The most numerous warbler seen.

SYLVIID WARBLERS: Sylviidae

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* — (1) Males and females shown at the Lake Atanasovsko banding camp on day 9.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* — (1) One shown at the Lake Atanasovsko banding camp on day 9.

Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca* — (1) One at the Lake Atanasovsko banding camp on day 9.

Greater Whitethroat *Curruca communis* — (1) One seen well near Pomorie on day 8.

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europea* — (2) Two in Bulgaria: one by the roadside in the Eastern Balkan Range on day 7 and one heard on day 9 in the Ropotamo forest.

TREECREEPERS: Certhiidae

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* — (1) Two seen on day 9 in the Ropotamo forest, Bulgaria.

STARLINGS: Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* — (10) Abundant. Seen every day, often in large flocks.

THRUSHES: Turdidae

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* — (1) One seen on day 7 near Balchik in Bulgaria.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula* — (3) Less than ten seen in Bulgaria.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS AND CHATS: Muscicapidae

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* — (8) Many single birds on migration seen, mostly in Bulgaria.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* — (2) One at the Baltata Reserve on day 7 and one on day 9 at the banding camp at Lake Atanasovsko, both in Bulgaria.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* — (5) Up to six a day seen in bushes and trees whilst on migration.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* — (1) One shown at the Lake Atanasovsko banding camp on day 9.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* — (4) Fairly common in settlements.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* — (4) Several single birds seen in Bulgaria.

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* — (2) A few seen at roadsides on days 3 and 4.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* — (3) Seen on the ruins at Histria in Romania and Cape Kaliakra in Bulgaria.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* — (10) Abundant. Seen in all settlements and around farms.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* — (3) Small groups seen in both Romania and Bulgaria.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* — (1) Surprisingly only seen on one day.

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS: Motacillidae

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* — (2) A few seen on day 3 by Lake Sinoe in Romania and on day 8 at Pomorie in Bulgaria.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* — (9) Common and widespread. Seen throughout.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* — (1). Two seen near Histria on day 3.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* — (1) Two seen in a mown field by Lake Mandra in Bulgaria on day 9.

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* — (3) Several seen in woodlands in Bulgaria.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* — (1) Two seen overhead near Balchik in Bulgaria, on day 7.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* — (1) One seen at Jurilovca in Romania on day 2.

Eurasian Linnet *Linaria cannabina* — (1) A small party seen near Balgarevo in Bulgaria on day 6.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* — (2) Small flocks seen on days 6 and 8 in Bulgaria.

OLD WORLD BUNTINGS: Emberizidae

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* — (5) Fairly common in farmland in Bulgaria, several flocks seen.

OTHER WILDLIFE OBSERVED

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* — (1) One seen on the last day in the Karnabat Hills in Bulgaria.

Fallow Deer *Dama dama* — (1) A fine stag with impressive antlers seen in the Ropotamo Forest in Bulgaria on day 9.

Marsh Frog *Pelophylax ridibundus* — (1) Several seen, and many heard, at Lake Mandra in Bulgaria on day 9.

Spur-thighed Tortoise *Testudo graeca* — (1) One fine specimen found on steppe grassland before Cape Kaliakra in Bulgaria on day 6.