

## **DANUBE DELTA and TRANSYLVANIA BIRDING TOUR in SPRING**

**30 April – 11 May,  
2022**



**Brun Bjørn i Transsylvanien. Fotograferet fra på DOF-turen i 2019. Foto: Søren Skov**

Romania is a fantastic bird watching destination in Europe where our company has more than 20 years of experience. Based on our best knowledge we designed a spring birding tour especially for you. This 12 day long tour will start in Transylvania where we spend 4 nights/3 full days than we will cross the Carpathian Mountains and continue birdwatching in South-East Romania along the river Danube. Before we reach the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve we will stop for 1-1 nights at the Baragan lowland than in the Macin Mountains National Park. We expect to find 200+ species on this tour!

### **DETAILED ITINERARY:**

#### **Day 1.**

You will meet with your local guide in the Airport. He will explain you the first day program, the length of travelling than we starts driving to the Harghita Mountains direction where we going to

stay at Szekelyvarsag (Varsag) village. We will need 5-6 hours driving in case you arrive to Bucharest and 4 hours driving in case if you arrive to Cluj Napoca.

If we have time we could stop briefly to check several places for birds but all this depends on your arrival time. **Night at Hotel Három Bocs, Szekelyvarság**

## Day 2.

*We will start every morning with an optional pre-breakfast birding walk around the hotel. This optional birding starts 1 hour before breakfast at 7:00 following the breakfast from 8.00 o'clock.*

We will have our first pre breakfast birding around the Hotel than after breakfast we heading to the Bicaz Gorge - Hasmas Mountains National Park to find among others the Wallcreeper in its breeding place. We will stop first to check a wet meadow with Salix bushes for Common Rosefinch, Grasshopper Warbler, Great Grey Shrike, Lesser Spotted Eagle than drive straight to the Gorge. We will walk here short distances and scanning the cliffs for the beautiful Wallcreeper. In this area we can also find Dipper, Alpine Swift, Peregrine Falcon and Carpathian Chamois. Lunch will be in a roadside restaurant than we continue birding in high elevation pine forest for more species. **Night at Hotel Három Bocs, Szekelyvarság**

## Day 3.

Pre breakfast birding around the Hotel than after breakfast we going to visit a nice Oak tree reserve to find as many species of Woodpecker as possible to our growing list. We will need 2 hours to reach this place and we can spend the whole morning in this lovely area. We have good chances to find Middle Spotted -, Lesser Spotted -, White-backed-, Black and Grey-headed Woodpeckers! Picnic lunch will be in the same place than we continue driving back to our Hotel direction. If you would like to visit Sighisoara citadel we can find half an hour to visit this nice cultural world heritage site. In the afternoon we can do more birding around Sub Cetate reservoir and/or in Varsag . **Night at Hotel Három Bocs, Szekelyvarság**

## Day 4.

Pre breakfast birding around the Hotel than after breakfast we will drive up to 1500 meter elevation in the Harghita Mountains to locate some more higher elevation species like Pygmy Owl, Three-toed Woodpecker, Crested Tit, Willow Tit, Bullfinch, Ring Ouzel or even Capercaillie. We will walk around the ski resort and in the woods for several hours. Lunch will be in a restaurant than we drive down and prepare for the evening Bear watching session from 18.00 o'clock. **Night at Hotel Három Bocs, Szekelyvarság**





**Mellemflagspætte i en af Transsylvaniens gamle egeskove. På turen har vi mulighed for at se alle Europas spætter. Foto: Søren Skov**



### **Day 5.**

The usual pre breakfast walk will take place between 7.00 to 8.00 o'clock than after breakfast we leaving this area with all the luggage's and drive across the Carpathians to reach our next birding destination in the lowlands where some superb shallow salt lakes and vast grasslands offering us road we can find more Lesser Spotted Eagles over re memorable sightings. The number of birds seen here is exceptional! On the first part of the the fields than crossing the Carpathians at Lepsa - Vrancea Mountains. Lunch will be in a roadside restaurant in Lepsa. In the afternoon we would like to reach a traditional moulting site for Dotterels. In spring Dotterels staying in this area shorter than in autumn but even so early May is a good period to find them here. **Night at Conacul Balta Alba, Balta Alba**

### **Day 6.**

Today morning the pre breakfast birding will take 2-3 hours. We take our car and drive to the nearby Balta Alba lake and spend the early hours birding here. Breakfast will be served from 10.00 AM at the Hotel.

Shallow lakes in this time will be full of birds. Among other we can find Black-necked Grebes, Whiskered, Black and White-winged Black Tern, Marsh Sandpipers, Avocets, Black-winged Stilts, Black-tailed Godwits, Kentish Plover, Collared Pratincole, Stone Curlew, Red-footed Falcon and many more. After breakfast we leave with our luggage's to our next birding place but visit one or two smaller lakes in the area before crossing the Danube with a ferry. In the other side of the Danube lies Romania oldest mountains the Macin Mountains which actually has National Park status. **Night at Hotel Troesmis, Turcoaia**

### **Day 7.**

We will start the day at 7.00 and plan to have a late breakfast again. We will use our car to reach the foothills of the Mountains and walk to a higher point to find our two most important species here, the Levant Sparrowhawk and the Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush. Beside these we will surely find some other interesting species too like Ortolan Bunting, Wood Lark, Roller, Pied Weather, Tawny Pipit, Syrian Woodpecker or Sombre Tit.

We will be back for breakfast to our accommodation from 10.00 AM. In the close vicinity Black-headed Buntings, a pair of Long-legged Buzzard and Red-rumped Swallows use to bred every year. After breakfast we leave our luggage's and drive to Tulcea. We can stop one more time to find Sombre Tit, Hawfinch, Wryneck, Booted Eagle or even Levant Sparrowhawk.

Lunch will be in Tulcea than driving down to the harbor and car park where we join to Sakertours special wildlife watching boat. This boat was designed for birding and has a capacity of 13 persons, including your driver and your local guide. The boat can protect you against the sun and rain and if needed the roof can be completely open within seconds.

In the afternoon we will enjoy the Danube Delta wildlife from this boat while slowly reaching our next Hotel for 3 nights stay. Along channels and lakes we will surly encounter White and



**I Donaudeltaet kan vi se begge pelikanarter – her er det Krøltoppet Pelikan. Foto: Søren Skov**

Dalmatian Pelicans, Night Herons, Squacco Herons, Pygmy Cormorants, Red-necked Grebe, White-winged Black Tern, CommonTern, White-tailed Eagle...

### **Night at Pensiunea lui Ivan, Danube Delta**

#### **Day 8-9.:**

We are going to have two full days to explore the Danube Delta birdlife. Every morning before breakfast we will have a walk around our Hotel. This will start at 7.00 and last until 8.00 o'clock. The Hotel has a good birding position because one side has dry lands with some agricultural fields and the other side wetlands. The diversity is great and we can find many interesting species in the garden, like Hoopoe, Red-footed Falcon, Penduline Tit, Little Bittern, Kingfisher, Cuckoo, Grey-headed Woodpecker...

After breakfast we will explore the Danube Delta from the boat and visit many different channels, lakes and reed beds. Lunch will be in a restaurant followed by another birdwatching session with the boat. On these days we will have chance to see among others fishing groups of Pelicans and Great Cormorants, Whiskered-, Black and White-winged Black Terns, Pallas's Gull, Caspian Gull, Red-necked Grebe, Little Crake, Hobby, Red-footed Falcon, White-tailed Eagle, Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Purple Heron, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Thrush Nightingale, Roller, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Bearded Tit, Penduline Tit and so on.

### **Two nights at Pensiunea lui Ivan, Danube Delta**



**Dvärgskarv er almindelig i Donaudeltaet. Foto: Søren Skov.**

### **Day 10.:**

Today we leave the Danube Delta and travel to our last base near the Black Sea. We plan to arrive Tulcea by 11.00 o'clock then drive a bit more south to reach fields dominating mainly with agricultural lands. We will spend the afternoon in a vicinity of an abandoned rock quarry surrounded by large steppes. In this place we would like to find Calandra Larks, Greater Short-toed Larks, Tawny Pipit, Isabelline Weathear, Stone Curlew while in the quarry Pied Weathear, Northern Weathear, Ortolan Bunting, Short-toed Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard or even Saker Falcon. **Night at Histria, lagoons of Black Sea.**

### **Day 11:**

The pre breakfast birding walk will last 2 hours. Our accommodation is a perfect place to find migrant passerines and wetland birds. We are close to the huge Sinoe lake, but our garden also has some smaller ponds and bushes. In a wet spring when the nearby fields are also flooded this place is a bird paradise! We would like to find here Long-eared Owls, but focus on bushes for migrant Warblers too. This place is good breeding area for Paddyfield Warbler, so we will make special efforts to find them.

After breakfast we will travel a bit more south to reach the southern border of the Danube Delta biosphere reserve at Vadu. We will spend the rest of the day here checking wetlands and the sea shore for more species. In the last two years (in 2020 and in 2021) White-tailed Plovers were seen here but the breeding was not confirmed. Will we have chance to see them in 2022? Who knows... Picnic lunch will be in the Black Sea shore looking for Yelkouan Shearwaters over the waves. We will finish the day at Vadu where we will visit the southern bay of lake Sinoe. Hundreds of Ruddy Shelducks, Pelicans, Spoonbills, Shovelers and maybe Greater Flamingos will be seen here. The later species started to colonize the Danube Delta area where several pairs successfully breed in 2021 first time. **Night at Histria, lagoons of Black Sea.**

**Day 12:**

We will have our last birding walk before breakfast than travelling to Bucharest. The distance to reach the Airport is about 4 hours. If we have time we can stop briefly to have a sandwich break and to check a Pallid Swift breeding place along the motorway. They were found nesting under a bridge over the Danube river in 2021. The tour will end in Bucharest Airport.