

Bulgaria – The Black Sea Coast
4th to 18th September 2009
Fred Gould, Ian Kinley & Dave Thexton



Hoopoes, Pomorie, Fred Gould

Introduction

This was essentially a repeat of last autumn's trip but a couple of weeks earlier. Most of the sites visited were the same as last year though there were a number of differences in the birds found. Waders were generally more numerous and varied this time and included flocks of up to 100 Marsh Sandpipers and nine Broad-billed Sandpipers. Raptor migration was slow to get underway with no evidence of any real passage until 14th; indeed at one point we wondered if we were actually going to see a Lesser Spotted Eagle at all. Once it did get going however, it produced some spectacular sights: one of the highlights was the appearance of a 100 strong flock of Lesser Spotted Eagles in a hitherto birdless sky - our first evidence of raptor migration on any scale all trip. Whilst we failed to see Greater Spotted Eagle and recorded far fewer Buzzards this time, there was ample compensation in the form of an Eleanora's Falcon and higher numbers of Booted Eagles, Short-toed Eagles, Levant Sparrowhawks and Red-footed Falcons. Passerine migration was again dominated by Red-backed Shrikes, Spotted and Red-breasted Flycatchers but this year also included Thrush Nightingale and Icterine Warbler. Some other species such as Hoopoe, Wryneck and Lesser Grey Shrike were present in greater numbers though, despite the earlier dates, we failed to find Paddyfield Warbler. There were pros and cons to the timings of both trips but the weather conditions clearly play a large part in what you're going to see, regardless of the date.

We met a few more birders travelling independently this year, though still no more than a handful, and this remains an area where you usually have the place to yourself and find your own birds. We were still unable to obtain a copy of the out of print *Where To Watch Birds In Bulgaria* by Petar Iankow, so, we were again

largely reliant on Gosney's *Finding Birds in Bulgaria* and a handful of trip reports found on the internet, though, of course, we also had the benefit of our experience from last year. We used the Reise 1:130000 map of the Bulgaria Black Sea Coast.



Marsh Harrier causing panic at Burgas Lake, Fred Gould

Weather

Perhaps best described as mixed, ranging from hot and sunny to monsoon-like but thankfully short-lived rain. After a wet and windy night on 6th/7th, we awoke to further heavy rain and found ourselves virtually marooned in the hotel at Pomorie as each route we attempted out of town proved to be under at least two feet of water. Thankfully, conditions gradually eased and we were able to venture out and do some birding in the afternoon. In general, most days provided ideal birding conditions - dry, warm but not too hot, sunny and not too windy. Maximum daytime temperatures ranged from about 15C to about 30C. Birding light was from about 06.30 to 20.00.

Travel

We flew from Manchester to Burgas with Balkan Holidays www.balkanolidays.co.uk (booked over the internet, £268 per person and problem-free). At Burgas airport, we picked up a hired VW Polo from Thrifty booked through Economy Car Rentals www.EconomyCarRentals.com at a cost of £329; very smooth and efficient. It had proved impossible to book a hire car with some firms as we needed to pick up the vehicle outside office hours but there was no problem with Thrifty (though there was an out-of-hours pick-up charge) whose rep was at the desk when we arrived, spoke good English and was extremely helpful and efficient.

Burgas airport proved a much easier proposition than Varna last year, being in open country next to a main road and just 15 minutes easy drive away from our first, and last, hotel in Pomorie.

Accommodation

We stayed at the following: -

Inter Hotel, Pomorie

www.bulgariaholidays.net/holiday-in-Interhotel-Pomorie-Beach-hotel-Bulgaria-676-en/

We booked our first four and last four nights here in advance through Balkan Holidays, having no wish to repeat last year's experience of turning up at our pre-booked and pre-paid accommodation to find the hotel closed for the winter. It proved a nightmare to find when we arrived in the dark after midnight and we were grateful to two friendly locals who jumped in our car and directed us straight there before wandering off into the night. Even by the end of our stay we sometimes struggled and went wrong on occasions! At a fraction over £9 per person per night, including breakfast, it has to be said that the main, perhaps only, attraction was the price. The rooms were clean and comfortable enough if rather sparsely furnished, the buffet style breakfast was good (though it was a half mile trek from our rooms to the restaurant) but the staff were generally unhelpful and disinterested. Whilst there were no complaints about the quality or value of the food served in the restaurant in the evening, we were usually the only ones eating there (most guests seemingly preferred the cheap buffet that was served between 18.00 and 20.00. – too early for us after a full day's birding) and the staff made it clear they wanted us out before 10pm. Some excellent tavernas were to be found nearby and proved far preferable! In addition, the outdoor swimming pool closed at 5pm and this was strictly enforced by the Stasi-trained attendant!

Pallid Swifts were virtually ever present, often giving stunning close views from the hotel balconies, while the coastal location ensured regular sightings of Mediterranean and Little Gulls.

Hotel Otdih at Kavarna

www.hotelotdih.com email reservations@hotelotdih.com Having stayed here last year, we had no hesitation in repeating the experience. Knowing that the reception staff spoke good English, we phoned ahead the night before to make a booking, enabling us to bird all day without worrying where we would stay that night. Six nights at 90 Levs a night for a twin-bedded room and 70 Levs for a single room, including very good buffet breakfast. Very modern and comfortable with helpful, friendly, English-speaking staff and a good, by no means expensive, restaurant. Handily situated on the edge of Kavarna, with easy access out to Cape Kaliakra and just a 30 minutes or so drive from Durankulak.

Though not really situated in great birding habitat, our balconies overlooked a wooded park, producing some decent birds including Icterine Warbler, Golden Oriole and Red-breasted Flycatcher.

Sites Visited

Mostly the same as last year so site details and directions can be found either in Gosney or in our 2008 trip report at <http://www.birdtours.co.uk/tripreports/bulgaria-15/Bulgaria-08.htm>



Poda, Ian Kinley



It's a hard life! Birding at Poda, Dave Thexton

Poda

This 100 hectare nature reserve run by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds was the only really new site we visited. Poda is situated south of Burgas just off the E87, the road to Sozopol, about 2km before the turn for Kreimorie. It's impossible to access from the southbound carriageway; if you're coming from the Burgas direction, best to carry on to the Kreimorie turn-off and come back on yourself but take care not to miss that turning, as we did, it's a long way to the next junction! Even approaching from the south, though signposted, it's easily missed. Look out for the flat-roofed information centre building. The habitat includes fresh, brackish and salt water lagoons with extensive reedbeds and there's a nature trail and a couple of hides, one of which overlooks some nice wader habitat if the water level is not too high as it was on our second visit. There's an entrance fee of 3.60 Levs per person; by no means expensive and in a worthy cause. The information centre, staffed by volunteers, boasts a rooftop viewing platform, sheltered from the sun, giving excellent views over the reserve as well as selling a range of goods including welcome cold drinks. The reserve has its own website at <http://www.bspb-poda.de/sites/english/home/home.htm> Species seen here on our two visits included Pygmy Cormorant, White Pelican, Great White Egret, Purple Heron, Garganey, Osprey, Honey Buzzard, Marsh Harrier, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Black Tern and Penduline Tit.



Broad-billed Sandpiper, Pomorie, Fred Gould



Little Gull, Pomorie, Fred Gould

Pomorie Salt pans

Species here included Black-necked Grebe, White Pelican, Osprey, Temminck's Stint, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Slender-billed Gull, Caspian Gull, Whiskered Tern, Black Tern, Hoopoe, Red-throated Pipit, Red-breasted Flycatcher.



Slender-billed Gull, Pomorie, Fred Gould



Little Gulls at Pomorie, Dave Thexton

Pomorie Marsh

An area of marsh next to the E87 west of Pomorie. Not easy to view as you either have to stop illegally on the side of the westbound carriageway of the busy E87 or park on the coast, where there is ample room to get off the road, but then cross the E87 on foot and stand at the roadside as the traffic whizzes by. Unsurprisingly, our stops here tended to be brief but still produced good numbers of Little Egrets, a Purple Heron, a Marsh Sandpiper and a few other waders. One of our regular rituals was to count the Little Egrets as we sped past heading west!



White Pelican, Burgas Lake, Dave Thexton



Tawny Pipit, near Cerno More, Ian Kinley

Burgas Lake

Species at this site included White Pelican, Dalmatian Pelican, Squacco Heron, Night Heron, Spoonbill, Ruddy Shelduck, Garganey, Osprey, Short-toed Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Hobby, Red-footed Falcon, Bee Eater, Hoopoe, Roller, Golden Oriole, and Great Reed Warbler.



Levant Sparrowhawk, Atanasovsko, Fred Gould



Long-legged Buzzard, Atanasovsko, Dave Thexton

Atanasovsko Lake

Again, we found access to the lake itself difficult and we were largely limited to rather distant views though we did manage to view some good wader habitat by stopping on the slip road to the southbound E87 dual carriageway. Possibly illegal but no-one seemed to mind and it did enable us to see a flock of 100 Marsh Sands amongst other things. As last year, our raptor watching was mostly done from an area almost due west of Burgas Airport from a driveable track heading west immediately after the beginning of the road leading to Cerno More. Species around the lake and our raptor watching site just inland included White Pelican, Dalmatian Pelican, Purple Heron, Great White Egret, Black Stork, White Stork, Honey Buzzard, Long-legged Buzzard, Steppe Buzzard, Pallid Harrier, Hen Harrier, Levant Sparrowhawk, Goshawk, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Booted Eagle, Osprey, Hobby, Red-footed Falcon, Eleanora's Falcon, Quail, Marsh Sandpiper, Slender-billed Gull, Whiskered Tern, Bee Eater, Alpine Swift, Red-throated Pipit, and Lesser Grey Shrike.



Great Reed Warbler, Durankulak, Fred Gould



Steppe Buzzard, near Durankulak, Fred Gould

Lake Durankulak

Although we'd visited this site several times on our last trip, we managed to find a fresh access point this time. By taking a minor, unsigned, road east off the E87 just south of the main lake and village, we came across a small undisturbed pond and an area of scrubby woodland that produced Pygmy Cormorant, Great White Egret, Purple Heron, Osprey, Long-legged Buzzard, Marsh Harrier, Golden Oriole and Red-breasted Flycatcher. You can't get far before coming to a locked gate but it's a worthwhile diversion. Other species recorded around the main lake area included Bittern, Ferruginous Duck, Hobby, Red-footed Falcon, Gull-billed Tern, Whiskered Tern, Black Tern, Bee Eater, Hoopoe, Red-throated Pipit, Great Reed Warbler and Penduline Tit.



More hard birding! Seawatching at Durankulak,
Dave Thexton



Alpine Swift, Kaliakra, Fred Gould

Cape Kaliakra (including the Bolata Gorge)

Benefiting from last year's experience, we managed to avoid the charge of three Levs per person to access the last few hundred metres to the car-park on the headland by arriving early with the added benefit of missing the worst of the tourist hordes. Heavy rain and strong winds produced a spectacular fall here on 8th, which unfortunately was the day we travelled up from Pomorie so we were only able to enjoy the aftermath due to our mid afternoon arrival onsite. As with all migration hotspots, weather conditions play an important part in what you're likely to see at this site but there's always something of interest. Species here included Pygmy Cormorant, Night Heron, Honey Buzzard, Pallid Harrier, Black Kite, Levant Sparrowhawk, Short-toed Eagle, Hobby, Red-footed Falcon, Quail, Corncrake, Eagle Owl, Alpine Swift, Bee Eater, Hoopoe, Calandra Lark, Red-rumped Swallow, Tawny Pipit, Red-throated Pipit, Wryneck, Golden Oriole, Thrush, Nightingale, Pied Wheatear, Icterine Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher and Lesser Grey Shrike.



Red-backed Shrike, Kaliakra, Ian Kinley



Lesser Grey Shrike, Kaliakra, Ian Kinley

Perhaps best included as part of this site was an area of steppe like habitat just outside the village of Balgarevo which we visited for the first time this year. Access is easy as the area is criss-crossed by a network of driveable tracks. Our one late afternoon/early evening visit produced large numbers of Calandra Larks and a high density of Tawny Pipits, plus Golden Plover, Stone Curlew and a Red-footed Falcon. This is the area where some people have seen Dotterel in the past.



Bluethroat, Sabla Lake, Fred Gould



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Sablenska Tuzla, Dave Thexton

Sabla Lake and Sablenska Tuzla

We found no better access to the main lake at Sabla than last year. The water level at Sablenska Tuzla was high enough to produce good numbers of waders at reasonable range. Species included Purple Heron, Squacco Heron, Spoonbill,

Ruddy Shelduck, Ferruginous Duck, Levant Sparrowhawk, Collared Pratincole, Temminck's Stint, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Slender-billed Gull, Caspian Gull, Bee Eater, Hoopoe, Syrian Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Bluethroat, Red-breasted Flycatcher and Lesser Grey Shrike.



Levant Sparrowhawk, Sablenska Tuzla,
Dave Thexton



Red-breasted Flycatcher, Sablenska Tuzla,
Fred Gould

We also spent a short time in woodland and scrub inland from Atanasovsko in the hills between Balgorovo and Rudnik, where species included Wryneck. In addition, we made several stops in woodland between Pomorie and Varna on the days that we travelled between our two bases, basically just pulling off the main road onto side tracks wherever the habitat looked decent. This produced White Stork, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Hobby, Bee Eater, Roller, Syrian, Middle and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Red-breasted Flycatcher and a selection of common (common in Britain anyway) woodland birds that were new for the trip.

Daily Itinerary

- 4th September** Travelled from Manchester to Burgas, arriving after dark. Overnight at Pomorie.
- 5th September** Birding at Pomorie Saltpans, Atanasovsko Lake and Poda. Overnight at Pomorie.
- 6th September** Birding at Atanasovsko Lake, Burgas Lake and Pomorie Saltpans. Overnight at Pomorie.
- 7th September** Birding at Pomorie Saltpans and the outskirts of Pomorie (restricted birding due to torrential rain and flooded roads). Overnight at Pomorie.
- 8th September** Travelled from Pomorie to Kavarna. Birding at several sites en route and at Cape Kaliakra. Overnight at Kavarna.
- 9th September** Birding at Cape Kaliakra. Overnight at Kavarna.
- 10th September** Birding at Lake Durankulak and Sablenska Tuzla. Overnight at Kavarna.
- 11th September** Birding at Sabla Lake, Sablenska Tuzla and Bolata Gorge. Overnight at Kavarna.
- 12th September** Birding at Cape Kaliakra, Sabla Lake and Sablenska Tuzla. Overnight at Kavarna.
- 13th September** Birding at Lake Durankulak and Balgarevo Steppes. Overnight at Kavarna.
- 14th September** Travelled from Kavarna to Pomorie. Birding at several sites en route and at Atanasovsko Lake and the hills above Cerno More. Overnight at Pomorie.

15th September Birding at Pomorie Saltpans and Atanasovsko Lake. Overnight at Pomorie.

16th September Birding at Pomorie Saltpans, Atanasovsko Lake and Burgas Lake. Overnight at Pomorie.

17th September Birding at Poda, Atanasovsko Lake and Pomorie Saltpans. Overnight at Pomorie.

18th September Birding at Pomorie Saltpans and Atanasovsko Lake before flying back from Burgas to Manchester.

Species List

We recorded a total of 187 species. The figures in brackets represent the number of days each species was recorded (e.g. 4/14 means that a species was seen on four days during our 14 day trip (disregarding the first day when no birding was done and bearing in mind the very limited amount of time spent in the field on the last day) and gives a crude indication of how easy each species was to see. More details are given of the rarer or more interesting species.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica* (1/14) Three close inshore off Pomorie on 17th.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (4/14)

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* (6/14)

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* (5/14) Seen in just small number until 15th when 100* were on Pomorie Saltpans.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (14/14)

Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus* (7/14) Small numbers (up to ten) at Lake Durankulak, Bolata Gorge, Sabla Lake and Poda.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* (2/14) A few offshore at Cape Kaliakra.

White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* (6/14) Large numbers on Burgas Lake on 6th though fewer there on 16th; four at Pomorie Saltpans on 15th; one at Poda on 17th. Also see table below.

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* (4/14) Small numbers seen at Burgas Lake, over Burgas itself and at Atanasovsko.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* (1/14) Two at Lake Durankulak on 13th.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (3/14) 30 repeatedly flushed by a Marsh harrier from reeds at Burgas Lake on 6th; one roosting at Cape Kaliakra on 9th and three flew out of the Bolata Gorge at dusk on 11th.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* (3/14) Singles at Sabla Lake on 11th and Burgas Lake on 16th.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* (12/14) Widespread, mostly in small numbers, most notable count was 60 at Pomorie Marsh.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* (4/14) Single figures recorded at Poda, Lake Durankulak and Atanasovsko Lake.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* (9/14)

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* (6/14) Maximum count of 14 at Lake Durankulak with low single figures also recorded at Poda, Atanasovsko, Pomorie Marsh and Sabla Lake.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* (4/14) All our sightings involved birds in flight near Atanasovsko Lake (see table below).

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* (4/14) Migrating flocks of up to 100 between Pomorie and Varna on 8th. Most other sightings involved birds in flight near Atanasovsko Lake (see table below).

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* (4/14) At least 65 at Burgas Lake on 6th with smaller numbers there on 16th and at Sablenska Tuzla.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* (7/14)

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* (2/14) Singles at Burgas Lake on 6th and Sablenska Tuzla on 10th.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* (10/14)

Wigeon *Anas Penelope* (1/14)

Gadwall *Anas strepera* (5/14)

Teal *Anas crecca* (10/14)

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (9/14)

Pintail *Anas acuta* (3/14)

Garganey *Anas querquedula* (3/14) At least six at Burgas Lake on 6th and nine at Poda on 17th.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata* (4/14)

Pochard *Aythya farina* (4/14)

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* (2/14) Singles at Lake Durankulak on 10th and Sabla Lake on 12th.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* (1/14)

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* (5/14) Not as numerous as we'd hoped in view of our earlier dates. One at Poda on 5th; 11 between Pomorie and Varna on 8th. One at Bolata Gorge on 8th. Other sightings involved birds near Atanasovsko Lake (see table below).

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* (2/14) Three between Pomorie and Varna on 8th. Three at Cape Kaliakra on 9th.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* (1/14) Super views of one, perhaps two, adults, at Burgas Lake on 6th.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* (6/14) Three in the Bolata Gorge on 8th and one between Varna and Pomorie on 14th. Other sightings involved birds near Atanasovsko Lake (see table below).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* (13/14) Widespread and common.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* (1/14) A male near Atanasovsko Lake on 15th.

Pallid Harrier *Circus* (2/14) A male at the Bolata Gorge on 8th; a juvenile near Atanasovsko Lake on 15th.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* (1/14) Two juveniles between Pomorie and Varna on 8th.

Goshawk *Accipiter gentiles* (1/14) One near Atanasovsko Lake on 15th.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* (6/14)

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes* (6/14) A juvenile sitting in a bush at Sablenska Tuzla on 11th; one in the Bolata Gorge on 11th and a juvenile in a ploughed field near Atanasovsko Lake on 15th. Other sightings involved birds near Atanasovsko Lake (see table below).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* (11/14) Far fewer on passage than last year though still included a good percentage of Steppe Buzzards.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* (5/14) Fairly widespread in small numbers.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* (5/14) All our sightings involved birds near Atanasovsko Lake (see table below).

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* (5/14) All our sightings involved birds near Atanasovsko Lake (see table below).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (4/14) Frequent sightings at a number of sites.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (13/14)

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* (6/14) One near Atanasovsko Lake on 5th; four or five hunting in a field between Kavarna and Durankulak on 13th; one near Balgarevo on 13th. Other sightings involved birds near Atanasovsko Lake (see table below).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo* (6/14) Widespread with frequent sightings.

Eleanora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae* (1/14) A pale morph passed us at close range near Atanasovsko Lake on 17th.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix* (3/14) Six individuals flushed at Cape Kaliakra on 9th; one heard calling as we left the Bolata Gorge after dark on 11th and one flushed near Atanasovsko Lake on 14th.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchacus* (3/14)

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* (6/14) Heard at several wetland sites.

Corncrake *Crex crex* (1/14) One flushed at Cape Kaliakra and one found dead on road there on 12th.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* (2/14)

Coot *Fulica atra* (7/14)

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* (7/14) Just a handful seen.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (6/14) Fairly widespread though in quite small numbers.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* (7/14) Largest numbers were to be found at Atanasovsko Lake.

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedichnemus* (1/14) At least five near Balgarevo at dusk on 13th.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (1/14) A single juvenile at Sablenska Tuzla on 11th.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* (8/14) Present in small numbers at several sites.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (9/14)

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* (6/14) Present in small numbers at several sites.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* (1/14) A flock of 10 near Balgarevo at dusk on 13th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* (6/14)

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* (2/14)

Knot *Calidris canutus* (1/14)

Sanderling *Calidris alba* (1/14)

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* (7/14) Seen at Atanasovsko Lake, Poda, Pomorie Salt pans, Pomorie Marsh and Sablenska Tuzla.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* (5/14) Two at Sablenska Tuzla on 10th then, at Pomorie Salt pans, two on 15th, three on 16th and one on 17th.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* (7/14) Up to 30 at Pomorie Salt pans with smaller numbers elsewhere.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* (9/14)

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* (5/14) One at Poda on 5th; one at Pomorie Salt pans on 6th then seen on every visit to Sablenska Tuzla, with counts of nine on 10th, six on 11th and five on 12th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* (6/14) Seen at Atanasovsko Lake, Poda, Pomorie Salt pans, Pomorie Marsh and Sablenska Tuzla.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* (3/14)

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (3/14) Present in small numbers at several sites.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* (4/14) Up to three at Pomorie Salt pans.

Curlew *Numenius arquata* (4/14)

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* (3/14) Best count was of 10 at Atanasovsko Lake.

Redshank *Tringa tetanus* (8/14)

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* (9/14) 100 at Atanasovsko Lake on 5th; one at Pomorie Marsh on 7th; up to six at Sablenska Tuzla from 10th to 12th; 10 at Atanasovsko Lake on 15th; one at Pomorie Salt pans on 16th and 17th; six at Atanasovsko Lake on 18th.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* (7/14) Present in small numbers at several sites.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* (1/14)

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* (9/14) Seen at Atanasovsko Lake, Poda, Pomorie Salt pans, Pomorie Marsh and Sablenska Tuzla.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (1/14) One at Pomorie Salt pans on 6th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* (1/14)

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (4/14)

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* (1/14) One at Sablenska Tuzla on 12th.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* (12/14) Seen at most wetland sites and at times in fields with the largest numbers at Pomorie Salt pans.

Little Gull *Larus minutus* (12/14) Widespread. Sightings included up to 1000 at Pomorie Salt pans

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* (13/14)

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* (8/14) Up to c20 at Pomorie Saltpans and smaller numbers at Atanasovsko Lake and Sablenska Tuzla.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* (14/14)

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* (5/14) Four (two adults and two juvs) at Pomorie Saltpans on 6th; single adults at Sablenska Tuzla on 10th and 12th. No doubt we overlooked others.

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica* (2/14) One at Burgas Lake on 6th and three at Lake Durankulak on 10th.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* (2/14) One at Burgas Lake on 16th and two at Poda on 17th.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* (13/14)

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* (12/14)

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* (7/14)

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* (1/14) Seen only in small numbers.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (8/14) Seen at most wetland sites, in small numbers apart from 100 at Pomorie Saltpans on 15th.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* (14/14)

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (9/14)

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* (6/14)

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* (2/14)

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* (1/14) Heard at the Bolata Gorge, Cape Kaliakra from 19.40 onwards on 11th but not seen.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* (1/14)

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* None seen in headlights as we left the Eagle Owl site in the dark this year (see 2008 trip report) but one found dead on the road at Cape Kaliakra on 12th (not counted in the trip list)

Common Swift *Apus apus* (2/14)

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* (8/14) Up to a dozen seen regularly at very close range from the Inter Hotel at Pomorie.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba* (6/14) Most notable sightings involved flocks of up to 100 or more at Cape Kaliakra and the Bolata Gorge, often giving superb close views as they screeched low overhead.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* (7/14)

Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* (12/14) Frequent sightings of migrating flocks and perched birds, especially early in the trip.

Roller *Coracias garrulus* (3/14) Four together between Pomorie and Varna on 8th; one between Kavarna and Durankulak on 10th and four on wires near Burgas Lake on 16th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops* (6/14) Much more numerous than last year including 20+ at Cape Kaliakra on 9th.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* (5/14) One seen regularly feeding on the road in the Bolata Gorge from 8th to 11th with singles elsewhere in the gorge and on Cape Kaliakra itself on 9th; one near Cerno More on 14th.on

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* (3/14)

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major* (9/14)

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus medius* (1/14) One seen in woodland between Pomorie and Varna on 8th.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus minor* (2/14) Two at Sablenska Tuzla on 10th and one there on 11th.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopus syriacus* (5/14) Quite widespread.

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra* (2/14) Huge flocks of several hundred among the wind turbines at Cape Kaliakra and near Balgarevo.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* (10/14)

Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (9/14)

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* (14/14)

Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (14/14)

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* (5/14) Widespread in small numbers.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum* (9/14)

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* (3/14) Sightings included 10+ near Balgarevo on 13th and one picked up stunned but alive, albeit with a damaged leg, from the road near Cerno More on 14th which after a few minutes flew off quite strongly.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* (7/14)

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus* (5/14) Frequently recorded in small numbers, calling as they flew over, at most sites throughout the trip.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* (13/14)

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* (6/14)

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba* (14/14)

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* (2/14)

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* (2/14) Super close views of a bird that repeatedly came onto the road in the Bolata Gorge to feed on 8th and two or three on Cape Kaliakra on 9th.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* (2/14) Singles at Cape Kaliakra on 9th and

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* (1/14) Two at Sabla Lake on 11th.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (7/14)

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* (11/14)

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* (1/14)

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (8/14)

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschenka* (2/14) Five or six at Cape Kaliakra on 9th and one there on 12th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula* (4/14)

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* (2/14)

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* (1/14)

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* (1/14) One at Cape Kaliakra on 9th.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobanus* (5/14)

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* (4/14)

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (5/14) Several sightings of birds in sparse vegetation away from reedbeds.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* (1/14) Four or five at Cape Kaliakra on 9th. one from balcony at the Hotel Otdih in Kavarna on 9th.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* (7/14) Very numerous at times.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* (9/14)

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* (6/14)

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* (7/14) Very numerous at times.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* (4/14)

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* (9/14)

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa sriata* (12/14) Abundant.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (10/14) Numerous and widespread. Frequent, often stunning, views.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus* (1/14) Several seen at Sabla Lake and heard at Burgas Lake and Lake Durankulak.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris* (1/14)

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus* (11/14)

Great Tit *Parus major* (5/14)

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* (1/14)

Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* (2/14) Occasionally heard at Poda and Lake Durankulak.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* (6/14) Quite widespread in small numbers.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius colluria* (14/14) numerous; at times every bird we stopped to look at seemed to be either a Spotted Flycatcher or a Red-backed Shrike. Though, as last year, the vast majority were juveniles, there were a handful of adult males this time.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* (4/14) One near Atanasovsko Lake on 5th; one at Cape Kaliakra on 9th; one at Cape Kaliakra on 12th; one at Sabla Lake on 12th.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius* (8/14)

Magpie *Pica pica* (14/14)

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* (12/14)

Rook *Corvus frugilagus* (1/14)

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* (8/14)

Raven *Corvus corax* (2/14)

Common Starling *Sternus vulgaris* (13/14)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (9/14)

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* (11/14) Widespread and numerous in rural locations, often in large flocks.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* (5/14)

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (2/14)

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* (1/14)

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* (11/14)

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* (3/14)

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* (1/14) Four between Varna and Pomorie on 14th.

Reed bunting *Emberiza schoenicus* (1/14)

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* (6/14)

Overhead migration at Atanasovsko

Date	14/09/2009	15/09/2009	16/09/2009	17/09/2009	18/09/2009	Totals
Time	13:30 - 15:15	11:00 - 14:45	11:00 - 14:45	12:10 - 16:10	10:30 - 11:55	
Lesser Spotted Eagle	c.500	58	52	36	111	757
Short -toed Eagle	c.50	19	10	9	3	91
Booted Eagle	7	8	2	18	1	36
Long-legged Buzzard	2	0	1	0	0	3
Common Buzzard	20	11	20	15	3	69
Honey Buzzard	10	0	6	0	2	18
Pallid Harrier	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hen Harrier	0	1	0	0	0	1
Harrier sp.	0	0	0	2	0	2
Marsh Harrier*	9	6	6	4	6	31
Levant Sparrowhawk	c.100	37	3	4	8	152
Goshawk	0	1	0	0	0	1
Eleanora's Falcon	0	0	0	1	0	1
Red-footed falcon	1	0	0	139	0	140
Hobby	0	0	0	1	0	1
Raven	0	0	0	1	0	1
White Stork	12	23	1	9	0	45
Black Stork	1	29	25	5	0	60
White Pellican*	1	0	725	0	0	726
Dalmatian Pellican	0	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	713	194	851	245	134	2137
Hrs	1.75	2.75	3.75	4.00	1.50	13.75
Birds/hr	407	71	227	61	89	155

* Totals include some off-passage birds