Dobruja essentials and Transylvanian Adventure

The Milvus Group’s
Pre-conference
tour offer
18th August – 25th August
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8 days

Price: 994,5 €
Single room supplement in the hotel: 60 €
Single room supplement on the boat: 180 €

Departure:
From Bucharest: Sun, 18, Aug, 2019, 10:00 o’clock
From Cluj: Sun, 18, Aug, 2019, 13:00 o’clock

To get the best fares groups of minimum 10 persons are recommended

Bookings will be after the “first come first served” principle. According to requests, additional teams can be organized

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TOUR DESCRIPTION

Our 8 days long “Dobruja essentials/ Transylvanian Adventure” tour will take you through the most important places for birding in Romania. We cross a range of habitats from the remote channels of the Danube Delta, through the Black Sea coast, salty lagoons, steppes and oak forests of Dobruja to the untouched beech/pine forests and gorges of the Carpathians. Our bird list will be impressive, owing to the diverse habitats we visit, and we also will have a chance at seeing brown bear, wild boar, red deer and jackal during our journey.

During these 8 days tour you will also experience the special feeling being among the pelicans and other wonders of the Danube Delta in a 3 days long excursion with a floating hotel.
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TOUR ITINERARY
1st Day (Sunday, 18, Aug): Cluj and Bucharest airports - arrival, travel to the Carpathians
2nd Day (Monday, 19, Aug): The Carpathians – Several National Parks in the Carpathians
3rd Day (Tuesday, 20, Aug): The Carpathians – Cernavoda Danube, Grindul Lupilor – Sinoe
4th Day (Wednesday, 21, Aug): Sinoe – Cheia, Gura Dobrogei, Vadu (Black Sea coast), Enisala, Murighiol and Plopu Lakes – Sinoe
5th Day (Thursday, 22, Aug): Sinoe – Babadag Forest, Tulcea, Danube Delta – Floating Hotel
6th Day (Friday, 23, Aug): Floating Hotel – Danube Delta – Floating Hotel
7th Day (Saturday, 24, Aug): Floating Hotel – Danube Delta – Floating Hotel
8th Day (Sunday, 25, Aug): Floating Hotel – Măcin Mountains, Balta Albă – Cluj (EOU)
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TOUR INCLUSIONS
Transportation, accommodation, meal and guides

TRANSPORTATION
From Bucharest airport and Cluj by air-conditioned minibus. End of tour in the Conference Hotel.

WHAT TO BRING AND EXPECT
Binoculars, scopes, small backpack, camera, hat, sunglasses, raincoat that can fit in your pack, pen and notebook. Even in August the mornings and evenings can be surprisingly chilly, so be prepared with multiple layers of clothing, which can be added and removed to match the conditions.

Important notes:
- If your backway flight after the conference is from Bucharest, you have to arrange your transport from Cluj to Bucharest Airport by yourself.
- For species likely to be seen, food, travel, payments, please contact us: robert.zeitz@milvus.ro
Dobruja essentials and Transylvanian Adventure
Pre-conference tour

1st Day

1st Day (Sunday, 18, Aug): Cluj and Bucharest airports - arrival, travel to the Carpathians

After your arrival at Cluj airport and/or Bucharest Otopeni Airport, our Staff will pick you up and transfer to the Carpathians by air-conditioned minibus.

Departure from Cluj at 1300 o’clock, therefore we kindly ask the participants to book a flight to Cluj in safe time!

Departure from Bucharest airport at 1000 o’clock, therefore we kindly ask the participants to book a flight to Bucharest in safe time!

Arrival to the hotel is at 1800 o’clock, later in the evening on request we can arrange bear-watching. Dinner in the hotel.
2nd Day (Monday, 19, Aug): The Carpathians – Several National Parks in the Carpathians

After having our breakfast at the hotel we will visit two national Parks in the Carpathians: Departure from the hotel at 7:00 o’clock, first we will visit the nearby forest to catch the morning rush of the songbirds and woodpeckers, here we have the chance to see Crested and Willow Tits, Gold and Firecrests, Black and Three-toed Woodpeckers. After the morning walk we will head to various forest and gorgy habitats, Where it is possible to observe the Red-breasted, Collared, Pied and Spotted Flycatchers, Serins, Common and Black Redstarts, Treecreepers and Alpine and Common Swifts.
2nd Day (Monday, 19, Aug): The Carpathians – Several National Parks in The Carpathians

During our whole-day Transylvanian birding day we will have our packed lunch. Other birds which can be seen include: the Black Stork, Lesser –spotted Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Grey-headed and Middle-spotted Woodpecker, Scarlet Rosefinch. After arriving to the hotel, later in the evening on request we can arrange bear-watching. Dinner in the hotel.
3rd Day (Tuesday, 20, Aug): The Carpathians – Cernavoda Danube, Grindul Lupilor – Sinoe

After having a breakfast and checking out, we will start our journey to Dobruja at 0800 o’clock. We will cross the Carpathians, heading south-eastwards, through the Romanian Plane and crossing the Danube after 6-7 hours of drive.

After we cross the Danube river we will have a break by the riverside, where we will have our packed lunch, while we will enjoy the company of marshland birds by the river: Garganeys, Ferruginous Ducks, Black-winged Stilts, Avocets, Shelducks, Black-, Wiskered-, White-winged Black Terns, but also Soonbills and Glossy Ibises. We will also have the chance to see passing soaring migrants such as White Storks, Lesser-spotted Eagles, Harriers, White Pelicans, Honey Buzzards.
**3rd Day (Tuesday, 20, Aug): The Carpathians – Cernavoda Danube, Grindul Lupilor – Sinoe**

During our further journey through **Dobruja**, depending on the weather, we will have the chance to see perched on poles and wires: **Rollers, Lesser-grey Shrikes, Red-footed Falcons** and with some luck, at dawn **Little Owls** on the chimneys.

**Arrival to Hotel Grindul Lupilor from Sinoe** at 18:00 o’clock, dinner at 21:30. By request we may have a pre-dinner visit to the nearby marshes of the **Grindul Lupilor** (Danube Delta Lagoon System).
4th Day (Wednesday, 21, Aug): Sinoe – Cheia, Gura Dobrogei, Vadu (Black Sea coast), Enisala, Murighiol, Plopu – Sinoe

After having breakfast in the hotel we will start our first bird-watching journey at 7:00 o’clock, and we will visit various places in Dobruja. The trip will start with a visit to the exceptional limestone formations of the Gorge of Dobrogea (Cheile Dobrogei-Gura Dobrogei), covered with xerophyte oak forests. Here we have the possibility to see the Pied Wheatear, Woodchat Shrike, Levant Sparrowhawk, Long-legged Buzzard, Booted Eagle, Pallid and Montague Harrier, Calandra and Short-toed Lark.
4th Day (Wednesday, 21, Aug): Sinoe – Cheia, Gura Dobrogei, Vadu (Black Sea coast), Enisala, Murighiol, Plopu – Sinoe

Than we turn to east and travel to Vadu and the Chituc sandbank, the southernmost edge of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The Chituc sandbank separate the Sinoe brackish lake and the Black Sea, which is one of Romania’s prime ornithological destinations, providing most of the rare bird sights of the last decades. Vadu lakes and the sea-shore are good places for Collared Pratincole, Slender-billed, Mediterranean and Little Gulls, Sandwich Terns, Sanderlings, Turnstones, Dunlins, Curlews, Little and Teminck Stints, Broad-billed Sandpipers, Wood Sandpipers, Marsh Sandpipers, Redshanks Spotted Redshanks and Greenshanks. In the bushes near the seashore we can spot different Flycatchers and Warblers and in the reedbeds we have good chance for the elusive Paddyfield Warblers.
4th Day (Wednesday, 21, Aug): Sinoe – Cheia, Gura Dobrogei, Vadu (Black Sea coast), Enisala, Murighiol, Plopu – Sinoe

We will return to the hotel for lunch. The afternoon journey will start with a visit to Enisala ruins, which is situated on the top of a limestone hill and offers spectacular view on the red banks of the Danube Delta Lagoon System and an opportunity to see passing pelicans and raptors (White and Dalmatian Pelicans, Marsh Harriers, White-tailed Eagles). The next stop will be at Murighiol and Plopu salty marshes, where we can see gulls gathering in the late afternoon. Tentative species are: Pallas’s Gull, Caspian Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Caspian-, Black-, Wiskered-, White-winged Black- and Gull-billed Terns, but also Black-winged Stilts, Red-footed Falcons, Avocets Ruddy Shelducks and Garganeys.

In the evening we return to the hotel at Sinoe, where we will have our dinner at the restaurant of the hotel.
5th Day (Thursday, 22, Aug): Sinoe – Babadag Forest - Tulcea - Danube Delta – Floating Hotel

After having breakfast in and checking out the hotel we will start our journey at 7:00 o’clock. On our way to Tulcea, we will stop at the Babadag Forest and using the early morning ”rush”, we will try to locate several songbirds and woodpecker species, such as: Sombre Tit, Middle-spotted Woodpecker, Golden Oriole, Red-breasted Flycatcher.

After arriving in Tulcea (the city which is the main gate to the Danube Delta), we board the *** floating hotel which is dragged by a river tug and will take us around the Delta in the next 3 days. We will travel along the Sulina channels and make daily landings on exciting birding places. We will also use small boats, which are very good for the more remote areas and narrow channels.
5th Day (Thursday, 22, Aug): Sinoe – Babadag Forest - Tulcea - Danube Delta – Floating Hotel

On the floating hotel the accommodation is in 10 twin bed cabins sharing 5 bathrooms with full time hot and cold water. There is a restaurant and bar together with a sun proof terrace which offers spectacular views of the Danube Delta’s unique wildlife and very comfortable birdwatching. Air condition and heating system is available in the restaurant and in the cabins as well. The boat’s personnel will serve you along your trip and the qualified chef prepares the most delicious local specialties. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are available from the bar.
5th Day (Thursday, 22 Aug): Sinoe – Babadag Forest - Tulcea - Danube Delta – Floating Hotel

Target species for the three day main Delta trip are: Pygmy Cormorant, White and Dalmatian Pelicans, Night Heron, Purple Heron, Squacco Heron, Little Bittern, Glossy Ibis, Spoonbill, Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Stone Curlew, Red-footed Falcon, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Collared Pratincole, Mediterranean Gull, Little Gull, Slender-billed Gull, Caspian, Little, Gull-billed, Wiskered and White-winged Black Terns, Roller, Bee-eater, Great Reed Warbler, Bearded Tits, Penduline Tit, and even if it may sound strange Black and Grey headed Woodpeckers.
6th and 7th Day (Friday, 23, Aug): Floating Hotel – Danube Delta – Floating Hotel

A typical day on the boat looks like: waking up in the middle of nature on the floating hotel, breakfast on the boat's restaurant, before noon travel by small boats to an excellent birding place, lots of birdwatching (packed lunch in the field) and travel back to the floating hotel. Relaxing afternoon on the floating hotel's sun proof terrace, enjoying the sunset in the Danube Delta and of course the birdlife of the area.
8th Day (Sunday, 25, Aug): Floating Hotel - Măcin, Greci, Balta Alba – Cluj

After breakfast and checking out from the floating hotel, we will continue our bird-watching journey by the minibus, and facing westwards. Before leaving Dobruja, we will have a stop in the Măcin Mountains.

This is a totally different habitat with very good chance of seeing excitingly new bird species for the trip. We will have the possibility to see impressing migration of soaring birds, birds of prey (Honey Buzzards, Marsh, Montague’s and Pallid Harriers, Levant Sparrowhawks, Booted Eagles), White Storks, but also local specialties, as the Isabelline Wheatear, Rock Thrush, Sombre Tit, or the Long-legged Buzzard.

After we cross the Danube River by ferryboat, we will keep traveling westwards and will visit the Balta Alba (White Lake) salty lake which is one of the best birdwatching sights in Romania, where is likely to see not only very large numbers of ducks, gulls and waders, but many species as well. We will have the chance to see dabbling and diving duck species, such as Shellduck, Garganey, Shoveler, Pintail, Wigeon, Tail, Mallard, Red-crested Pochard, Pochard, Ferruginous Duck. Pygmy Cormorants, Pelicans, Spoonbills, Collared Pratincoles are also likely to be seen here.

After having our packed lunch, we will travel 8 hours, 480 km north-westwards, crossing the Carpathians and heading to Cluj, the site of the conference. Our expected arrival time is 20:00 o’clock.