

Romania – Photographic Tour

Danube Delta & Ultima Frontiera

Saturday 17 June – Saturday 24 June 2017

Principal Leader: Richard Coomber and local guides

Saturday 09 September – Saturday 16 September 2017

Principal Leader: Paul Rogers and local guides

2017 Cost **£1,999** single room supplement **£140**



Ornitholidays has visited Romania many times over the last 50 years and we now have a photographic tour to the Danube Delta, where we shall stay at Ultima Frontiera, a lodge with its own grounds and photographic hides. The newly constructed lodge boasts large rooms, all with their own en suite facilities, and grounds that extend to over 2,500 acres of fish ponds, reedbeds, lagoons, riverine forest, and salt steppe. On the property there are 20 hides that will be available for our use. Over 100 bird species will be present when we visit in June and September but you may want to choose which you wish to photograph, as these hides will provide you with some great photographic opportunities for many exciting species. The June tour will give you the chance to see some nesting birds, with European Rollers and European Bee-eaters both incubating, or with small young, while European Hoopoes will already have fledged youngsters. The September tour see large numbers of Pygmy Cormorants, waders, egrets, herons, pelicans and terns passing through. On both tours we shall also make use of their "photographic-boat", kitted out as a floating hide, and we can hope to take photos of Dalmatian and White Pelicans, Whiskered Tern, Ferruginous Duck and both Black-necked and Red-necked Grebes. There will also be a range of other species to be seen, such as Pallas's Gull, Bearded Reedling, Penduline Tit and a great variety of ducks, herons, egrets and waders. Mammals you may see include Golden Jackal, Muskrat, Otter and Danube Delta Horse (one of the four "wild horses" of Europe). Throughout the tour our guides will be looking after you and advising you on how to get the best results from each of the hides - all the photos here were taken at Ultima Frontiera on our recent tours. Also, please look at our website to see photos that have been taken from the hides by previous Ornitholidays' groups - you will be impressed at what can be achieved!

ITINERARY

Day 1

We fly from London Heathrow to Bucharest, where we arrive in the late afternoon, and meet our driver. We stay overnight in Bucharest.

Days 2 to 7

We transfer from Bucharest to Tulcea, passing via

an area of grassy steppe near Garliciu, where we can stop for a leg-stretch and to look for White-tailed Eagle and various ducks, herons and egrets. At Tulcea we board a water taxi and make the 90 minute transfer on the Danube to Ultima Frontiera, where we stay for the next six nights.

Our time here will be spent visiting the hides and photographing a range of species. There are over

20 hides to use, so we will have to choose which species interest us most while we are here. The hides have been planned so some can be used in the morning, some in the afternoon, and some throughout the day. Various baits are used to entice the birds (and mammals) to approach the hides so, in June and September, large dead carp are used for White-tailed Eagles, Hooded Crows and Golden Jackals.

White-tailed Eagle, with Hooded Crows and Common Magpies





Grey-headed Woodpecker

In June, to photograph some of the nesting species there will be hides set up near the nests of European Bee-eaters, European Rollers, Little Owls, Penduline Tit and possibly Western Marsh Harriers. Other nests are subject to water-levels in the lagoons and also to what stage the birds may be at in their breeding cycles. Thrush Nightingales sometimes come to water at the drinking hide, Eurasian Turtle-Dove often comes for seed, while Tree Sparrows and Common Magpies are common at the feeders. The extensive sand dunes of Letea are amazing and they hold a number of interesting flowering plants and insect life for macrophotography.

In September there will be large numbers of Pygmy Cormorants present and they make great subjects with a background of flowering yellow nymphaea water lilies. Good numbers of Red-backed Shrikes will be present, attracted by hand-outs of mealworms, while the waterbird numbers will be swollen by many passage waders, egrets and ducks. Common Kingfisher will be present feeding in front of a few of the hides, while many European Bee-eaters will be perched on tamarisk bushes. Red-breasted Flycatchers are often common.

We shall also make two boat excursions, one to the main lagoons (Matita and Merhei) to have close encounters with Dalmatian and White Pelicans, and to see Whiskered Tern, Caspian Gull, Ferruginous Duck and probably both Black-necked and Red-necked Grebes. The other will

be to the edge of the Black Sea where there will be opportunities to see Pallas's Gulls.

The lagoons of Ultima Frontiera are teeming with fish and they provide rich feeding grounds for egrets and herons, and both Pygmy and Great Cormorants. It is here that we might hope to see European Otters, which are frequently encountered. The woodlands around the lodge are host to three species of woodpecker – Lesser Spotted and Grey-headed (both relatively common) and Black (scarcer). In June you also have the chance to see Eurasian Wryneck. However, a bird that you will encounter in large numbers is Eurasian Hoopoe as they will be feeding in family groups along the sandy tracks.

A project is currently underway to entice Wild Cat and Wild Boar to a night time feeding station – so make sure you bring your flash guns.

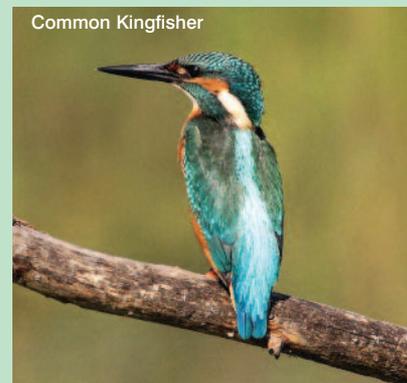
The lodge provides electric buggies that can be driven between the lagoons and along the pathways and which also act as mobile hides for photographing many of the common species around the grounds. Our six nights at Ultima Frontiera will be full of photographic action so bring lots of memory cards.

Day 8

We transfer back to Tulcea, using a water taxi, and then drive back to Bucharest to catch our return flight to London, where we arrive in the late afternoon.



Pygmy Cormorant



Common Kingfisher

Outline Itinerary

Day 1 Fly to Bucharest
Days 2-7 Danube Delta
Day 8 Depart Bucharest

Party Size

Maximum of six clients.

Accommodation

Comfortable accommodation in twin/double and single rooms, with private facilities.

Transport

By minibuses.

Includes

All flights, meals, accommodation, transport, services of the leaders, VAT, airport taxes and tips.

Gradings

 Good

 110

 Warm

 Low

 Normal

 Relaxed

 Excellent

 Easy

 Scheduled



Eurasian Penduline Tit