

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

28th September to 6th October 2026 (9 days)

THE DANUBE DELTA

autumn birding in Europe's largest wilderness

"a special and beautiful place with great birds"

"open boat trips...
stunning"

Danube Delta 2019

One of the very few holidays to include a week on a 'floating hotel', exploring the spectacular wildlife of the Romanian Danube Delta.

At the end of a 1,700 mile long journey across Europe, the great Danube River reaches the Black Sea. Here, the river splits into numerous channels and canals, creating the second largest delta on the continent. Vast expanses of swamps and forests, as well as a scattering of lakes surrounded by thick reedbeds, provide a perfect sanctuary for over 300 species of birds, many year round residents; others summer breeders or passage migrants.

Our traditional spring visit to the Delta this year is already fully booked, but we are delighted to be returning for our first autumn trip to this, a favourite Wildlife Travel destination for the last 20 years. This holiday is timed to coincide with the big build up of waterbird numbers, as they gather in great flocks before heading south for the winter.

As well as the bird life, autumn can be a great time for mammal watching, and we will be keeping our eyes peeled for Golden Jackal, Raccoon-dog and Wild Cat, Wild Boar and Roe Deer along the channel banks. These waterways are also home to Otter, Muskrat and the very rare European Mink.

In the Delta we stay on a very comfortable, travelling houseboat, equipped with all the 'mod cons' we might need, along with an open deck for birdwatching and relaxing as we travel. Our meals are as local as it gets, with Danube Herring, carp, goose and marshland lamb all likely to feature on the menu, along with good Romanian wine.

The holiday is aimed at providing a unique visit to **one of the last remaining wilderness areas of Europe.**



Price

£2,390

**Single Room
Supplement**
£350

Full board

- Day 1** flight to Bucharest
Day 2 travel to Danube Delta
inc Babadag Forest
Day 3-8 Danube Delta
inc Sfântu Gheorghe
Sacalin Island
Day 9 return to UK

Leader

Dr Phil Saunders

Group size

min 4, max 14

Autumn migration,
natural history,
seven nights aboard
'floating hotel'



ITINERARY

Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.

Day 1 After arrival in Bucharest and making our way through passport control formalities, we **transfer to our hotel** in Amara, approximately two hours away. We should arrive at our hotel in time to settle in and have a brief introduction to the holiday before dinner.

Day 2 An early morning exploration of the nearby lakes will give us our first introduction to the wetland birdlife of Romania. Little Bittern can often be seen flying between the patches of reeds, while Ferruginous Duck may be found amongst the wildfowl on the open water.

After breakfast, we travel eastwards, stopping at various spots along the way to break the journey and familiarise ourselves with the wildlife of the Romanian countryside. If the day is a sunny one, the last of the summer's butterflies and dragonflies should still be on the wing: Queen of Spain Fritillary haunts the tracksides, while Red-veined Darter and Migrant Hawker hunt in the shelter of the trees.

Our lunch stop will be in the **Babadag forest**, home to various reptiles including Balkan Wall Lizard and Spur-thighed Tortoise, as well as some woodland birds that we won't encounter later in our holiday. After checking out the dry grassland around Inala, and the salt lakes near Murighiol, we will join our houseboat **Kingfisher** nearby, our home for the next seven nights.

Day 3 The morning dawns on our first day on the Danube, with groups of Pygmy and Great Cormorants, Glossy Ibis and Great White Pelicans shuttling between their roost sites and the day's fishing grounds.

The Danube splits into three main channels before it enters the Black Sea -the Sulina, Chilia and Sfantu Gheorghe Channels. The Sulina Channel is the shortest route to the Sea and carries most of the traffic. Today we will have a leisurely cruise to **Sfantu Gheorghe**, one of the most beautiful fishing villages in the delta, right at the mouth of the Danube where it empties into the Black Sea. Our journey takes us along the southernmost channel, the Sfantu Gheorghe, which is the most attractive of the three and probably the oldest. It meanders gently to the village that shares its name. This is a fishing village and small port, very isolated and surrounded by dunes, woodlands and marshes, adjacent to the Black Sea. Many of the villages in the Delta were settled by previously Slavic peoples and the houses and other buildings reflect the continued presence of these cultures.

From the deck of the boat we will see many of the typical birds of the delta such as egrets, pelicans, herons and the ever present Marsh Harriers, the peace only disturbed by the occasional **White-tailed Eagle** hunting overhead. After arriving in Sfantu Gheorghe in the early afternoon we will visit the village to see the local houses in the Ukrainian style.

Day 4 We explore the local area around Sfantu Gheorghe by small boat, including the sandy Sahalin Island, at the mouth of the **Black Sea**. After lunch, we will take a walk, looking for migrating waders on the marshes, and various south-bound migrants in the bushes. If we make it to the beach, we will look for the **Steppe Runner**, a central Asian lizard that only reaches Europe in this corner of Romania.

Day 5 After an early morning bird walk back along to the marshes behind the village, we will have a leisurely day on the boat, travelling towards the Dunavat channel, giving us the choice of birding from the upper deck or simply indulging in a siesta!

Day 6 The day will be spent exploring some of the more remote areas of the Delta: fingers crossed today we might catch up with some of the shyer animals of the Delta - **Wild Boar** or even **Golden Jackal** occasionally put in an appearance along the river bank.

Day 7/8 We will spend more time in the small boats as we explore the shallow lagoons and lakes hidden amongst the reedbeds, off of the main channel. The reeds should be alive with family groups of both Bearded and Penduline Tits, while egrets, herons and bitterns stalk the margins, and various waterbirds gather on the open water, hopefully in large numbers.

Black and Grey-headed Woodpecker haunt the wet woodlands, while hirundines can gather in large numbers at their reedbed roosts.

We will gradually make our way back upstream to our original mooring point at Uzlina. After another couple of bird-packed days, we will relax with a glass of wine and a farewell dinner on board.

Day 9 This morning we bid farewell to the boat and head back towards Bucharest, stopping along the way for one last spot of birdwatching before we finally return to Bucharest for our journey home.

Accommodation and meals

Our first night is spent in the **Hotel Diamant** in Amara. On the delta, our home is the **Kingfisher**, a comfortable house boat, with panoramic views from the dining room and the viewing/sun deck, from where we will watch the wildlife along the waterways as we travel between moorings. The nine cabins are all on the same deck, with twin or double beds, en-suite shower room/WC and a window.

On our way to/from the Delta, we will travel by small coach.

Our meals will be a mixture of **Romanian and International dishes**, with an emphasis on local cuisine, including local game (boar and goose) and plenty of local fish.

Leaders

The Wildlife Travel leader for this trip will be **Dr Phil Saunders** an excellent birder and all-round naturalist who has been part of the Wildlife Travel team since 2018. Phil has worked as an ecologist for over fifteen years within both the corporate and academic sectors, and is currently based in Dorset.

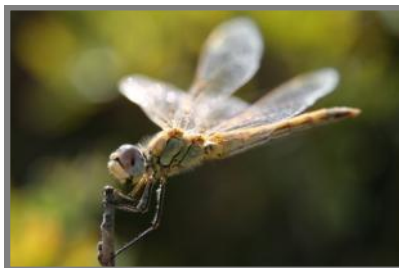
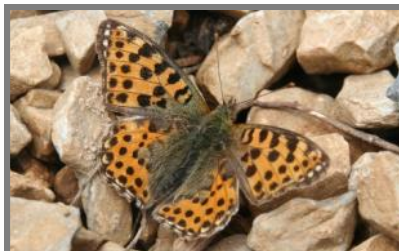
Our local guides, **EuroDelta Travel**, know the Delta intimately. They have organised and led our previous trips to the area and we are pleased to be travelling with them again.

Weather

The weather is likely to still be pleasantly but autumnally warm by the end of September, although cooler and wetter weather is always possible. We will do our best not to be out long in the sun. There should be no major problem from mosquitoes at this time of year in the Delta.

Health and fitness

You will need to be able to climb in and out of small boats, sometimes directly onto the bank. We will spend quite a bit of time sitting in the small boats (not all have back supports). As this tour involves considerable moving around in boats, it may not be suitable for people with limited mobility. The longest walk will be about three miles, over flat terrain.



Flights

Group flights are with British Airways from London Heathrow to Bucharest Otopeni. Autumn 2026 flight times aren't yet available, but we expect them to be similar to 2025 timings, as follows.

28th September **depart London Heathrow 08.50**, arrive Bucharest Otopeni 14.05
6th October **depart Bucharest Otopeni 18.15, arrive London Heathrow 19.40**

Romania is two hours ahead of UK time.

Passport and Entry Requirements

Your passport must be issued less than 10 years before the date you enter the country (check the 'date of issue') and valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date').

If you hold a British passport, you are able to travel to the Schengen area (including Romania) for up to 90 days in total in any 180-day period without a visa.

From 12th October 2025, The European Union's new Entry/Exit system will begin. When travelling into and out of the Schengen area, you may need to have your fingerprints and your photo taken.

At Romanian border control, you may also need to show a return or onward ticket, and prove that you have enough money for your stay.

For up-to-date information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/romania

TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

DEPOSIT £350 PER PERSON, SECOND INSTALMENT ON CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY £650 (to cover committed costs) BALANCE DUE BY 29/06/2026

INCLUDED: Return flights from London (Heathrow) to Bucharest, as above. Local transport on excursions as specified in the itinerary. Eight nights accommodation, all meals dinner day 1 to lunch day 8. Services of leaders and guides.

NOT INCLUDED: Refreshments. Gratuities. Travel insurance.

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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Photos: front (clockwise from top): Black-crowned Night Heron, Marsh Harrier, Bearded Tit, White-tailed Eagle, Danube Delta

Page 3 (from top): excursions by small boat, Queen of Spain Fritillary, 'The Kingfisher' (our home for the week on the Danube), Red-veined Darter, Great White Pelican.

Trip reports from our previous Danube Delta holidays can be found on our website.