

# Bulgaria 2010, Species List

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In total, 102 species of birds were recorded, along with four species of mammal. Due to the severity of the winter, goose numbers were very good this winter, not remaining further north in Romania. However, the flip side to this, heavy snow and very low temperatures about two weeks earlier had led to a number of species departing to the south, thus some birds (most particularly waders, dabbling ducks, pelicans and small passerines such as buntings) were either not recorded or were found only in small numbers.

## Birds.

**Little Grebe.** On the two largest of the coastal lakes, minimums of 50 were recorded at Lake Varna and 20 at Lake Burgas.

**Black-necked Grebe.** Counts of up to 30 were recorded on the sea at Durankulak, with a further five at Shabla and about 20 at Cape Kaliakra. Additionally, 15 were noted on Lake Varna and five at Lake Burgas.

**Great Crested Grebe.** Widely recorded in coastal areas, both on the sea and on larger lakes. Best totals were about 60 at Durankulak, a minimum of 400 at Lake Varna, 50 off Poda and at least 150 at Lake Burgas. Smaller totals were also seen at Shabla (two), Cape Kaliakra (eight) and Atanasovsko (15).

**Shag.** Only recorded at Cape Kaliakra, where about 35 sat on the waters beneath the headland.

**Great Cormorant.** Widespread in coastal areas. In the north, totals included about 20 Durankulak, at least 50 at Cape Kaliakra and a roost of 400 in trees at Lake Varna. In the Burgas area, up to 45 birds were already occupying nest sites on electric pylons at Poda and an additional 60 birds were noted around Lake Burgas.

**Pygmy Cormorant.** In the Durankulak area, the only birds noted were three at Durankulak Lake. Further south, however, large numbers were seen - an impressive total of about 1000 on Lake Burgas, plus at least 200 at roost on Lake Varna. About 85 were also seen at Poda and five at Atanasovsko.

**Dalmatian Pelican.** Cold weather had pushed many birds south, the only Dalmatian Pelicans seen were four at Durankulak (flying over the lake, then sitting in a field) and a single on the sea at Poda.

**Great Bittern.** Five birds at Poda, all along the walkway through the reedbeds.

**Grey Heron.** In the Burgas area, four at Poda and five at Lake Burgas.

**Great White Egret.** Single birds were seen at Durankulak and Baltata, then a further two at Poda.

**Whooper Swan.** Only recorded at Durankulak, where a single was noted in a field with geese, another ten on the lake and a flock of 55 flying over.

**Mute Swan.** All in coastal areas, lakes attracted up to 30 birds at Durankulak, 15 at Poda and 35 on Lake Burgas. Three also noted on the sea at Durankulak and five at Cape Kaliakra.

**White-fronted Goose.** In early 2010, the wintering population in Durankulak was about 80,000. Heavy snow in preceding weeks had pushed some south, but many had already returned and the nightly roost numbered about 60,000, most of which fed in fields immediately to the south during the day. Additionally, four birds were seen on Lake Burgas.

**Greylag Goose.** In the flocks of White-fronted Geese, a single was found north of Durankulak and another ten in the large flocks to the south. Probably many more birds present.

**Red-breasted Goose.** A good winter for the species in Bulgaria, with numbers up to 20,000. Despite some leaving the area due to snow in preceding weeks, an estimated 10,000 still roosted on Lake Durankulak both nights, most feeding in fields to the south during the day, with about 800 also in meadows to the north.

Common Shelduck. About 70 birds were noted on the saltpans at Pomorie.

Wigeon. 15 birds at Durankulak, a minimum of 40 at Lake Burgas.

Mallard. Numbers in excess of 200 were noted at both Durankulak and Burgas Lake, elsewhere records included about 30 at Atanasovsko and 150 at Poda.

Gadwall. Only recorded on Durankulak and Burgas Lakes, were minimums of 25 and 40 were noted respectively.

Pintail. All in the Burgas area, five were seen at Atanasovsko and 25 on Burgas Lake.

Shoveler. Three birds on Burgas Lake.

Teal. Totals included about 20 on Durankulak Lake, ten at Atanasovsko, five at Poda and about 40 on Lake Burgas.

Pochard. Almost all males, an impressive total of at least 2500 were noted on Lake Burgas, with a further 400 on Lake Varna. Three birds also noted on the sea at Durankulak.

Ferruginous Duck. After a single male was found at Durankulak, another six birds were located on Lake Burgas (five males, one female).

Tufted Duck. At Durankulak, twelve Tufted Ducks were noted on the sea and about 30 on the lake. Elsewhere, 50 were on Lake Varna and 40 at Lake Burgas.

Goldeneye. All on the sea. Three birds were seen at Durankulak and 12 at Cape Kaliakra.

Smew. In the north, three birds were noted on the sea at Durankulak, another six on the lake and two at Cape Kaliakra. Further south, a minimum of 600 were found on Lake Burgas.

Goosander. Three birds on Durankulak Lake were the only birds recorded.

Red-breasted Merganser. Twelve birds were noted in the bay at Poda.

Hen Harrier. Relatively low numbers, snow had pushed many birds to the south in weeks previous. Single birds were recorded at Durankulak on a couple of occasions, as well as one at Cape Kaliakra and another at Lake Burgas.

Marsh Harrier. At least eight were seen over the reeds at Durankulak and, all in the Burgas area, one at Pomorie, two at Atanasovsko, three at Poda and at least ten around Lake Burgas.

Sparrowhawk. Records consisted of one at Brestnica and singles at Durankulak on three occasions.

Common Buzzard. Abundant. In addition to birds noted whilst on transit to and from Sofia, at least 115 were noted in the Durankulak-Kaliakra area and another 30 around Burgas.

Long-legged Buzzard. One bird near Balchik.

Rough-legged Buzzard. Five recorded - one near Brestnica and four in the Durankulak area.

White-tailed Eagle. An immature bird was noted at Durankulak, flying around, then sitting on the ice.

Peregrine Falcon. A pair roosted at the top of Trigrad Gorge, another was noted 20 km down the valley.

Common Kestrel. Widespread. Records included a single at Sofia airport, two near Brestnica, at least six in the Durankulak area, five around Burgas and four en route back to Sofia.

Pheasant. One male bird at Durankulak.

Moorhen. Two birds were seen at Atanasovsko and at least 15 at Burgas Lake.

Coot. Abundant on the bigger lakes, the best totals included a minimum of 3000 on Lake Varna, 400 on Lake Burgas and 250 on Lake Durankulak. Additionally, 150 were noted at Poda, 45 on the sea at Durankulak and about 30 at both Cape Kaliakra and Atanasovsko.

Grey Plover. One bird noted at Atanasovsko.

Dunlin. Roosting on a breakwater, 16 at Atanasovsko.

Little Gull. Feeding in the surf at Durankulak, about 20 were noted on the 13th, with a single the next day.

Black-headed Gull. Common around Lake Burgas, but otherwise the only record was of ten birds at Durankulak.

Common Gull. Generally the most abundant gull present, with many hundreds seen in all coastal localities.

Yellow-legged Gull. Common along the coast, hundreds seen. Four also noted on the reservoir in the lower reaches of the Trigrad Valley

Wood Pigeon. Flocks encountered on a number of occasions, the largest being of about 60 birds at Durankulak and 40 at Lake Burgas. Smaller flocks of 8-15 birds were also noted north of Durankulak and at Shabla.

Feral Pigeon. Several in Balchik town, common Burgas town.

Collared Dove. Common in Durankulak village, at least 30 birds present.

Stock Dove. Two records - a pair and a flock of 14, both near Durankulak.

Little Owl. One in the camp site at Durankulak.

Long-eared Owl. Two flew across the road on route from Sofia to Varna (near Veliko Tarnova).

Tawny Owl. One at night along the road to Trigrad Gorge, a grey phase bird perching on cable.

Green Woodpecker. Three in the parkland at Baltata, another in Trigrad Gorge

Great Spotted Woodpecker. Widely recorded, singles or pairs noted in Brestnica, Durankulak, Baltata and the Trigrad Valley.

Middle Spotted Woodpecker. In the wet woodlands at Baltata, three birds were seen adjacent to the cabins.

Syrian Woodpecker. A total of eight birds seen - one near Durankulak campsite, one on the edge of Durankulak village, another three in the village itself, two at Baltata and a single in a village alongside Lake Varna.

Skylark. Sporadic records, many having moved further south. Five were seen near Brestnica, about 20 in the Durankulak area and occasional small flocks en route to Sofia.

Crested Lark. In the north, the only records were two on the beach at Krapets and one Lake Varna. Further south, at least ten were seen in the Lake Burgas area and two on the roadside west of Burgas.

Calandra Lark. Two flocks noted - 55 in meadows north of Durankulak Lake and about 20 en route to Sofia. Not recorded at the traditional hotspot of Cape Kaliakra.

Water Pipit. One in the Trigrad Valley.

Meadow Pipit. One at Atanasovsko, one at Burgas Lake.

Grey Wagtail. One in Trigrad Gorge.

Dipper. In the upper reaches of the Trigrad Gorge, five Dippers were noted along the stream.

Wren. Two records, one at Burgas Lake and one in Trigrad Gorge.

Duncock. One bird was seen in Trigrad Gorge.

Stonechat. A single bird was noted by the roadside about 50 km west of Burgas.

Fieldfare. Moderately common with flocks of about 30-40 noted daily throughout the country, including around Durankulak, Lake Burgas and the Sofia area.

Song Thrush. A single in Trigrad Gorge was the only record.

Mistle Thrush. Two birds seen, one around the cabins at Baltata, another in the Trigrad Valley.

Blackbird. One seen in Brestnica, two in Trigrad Gorge.

Cetti's Warbler. A singing bird adjacent to the visitor centre at Poda was the only record.

Chiffchaff. In scrubland near Lake Varna, one bird was noted.

Goldcrest. Two birds were seen in conifers south of Durankulak and another in Trigrad Gorge.

Long-tailed Tit. After a single bird in Brestnica, a flock of eight were noted in the lower reaches of the Trigrad Valley.

Sombre Tit. Feeding with Great Tits and finches on a manure pile, a single bird was noted in the village of Brestnica (north-east of Sofia).

Marsh Tit. Two in a village in Trigrad Valley.

Blue Tit. Only encountered on two occasions - a single bird in Brestnica and five in the reedbeds at Poda.

Great Tit. Widespread, seen daily. Typical counts included at least 15 at Brestnica, five at Durankulak, ten at Poda and ten in the Trigrad Valley. Occasional others seen elsewhere.

Eurasian Nuthatch. Just two birds seen - one in Brestnica and one in the Trigrad Valley.

Common Starling. Moderately common, small flocks encountered across the country. Larger numbers included a roost of about 6000 birds in reedbeds at Durankulak, a flock of at least 800 at Lake Varna and concentrations in the Lake Burgas area, where the species was abundant.

Jay. Total records consisted of three birds at Durankulak, two at Lake Burgas and two in the Trigrad Valley.

Magpie. Common throughout the country, roosts of up to 30 birds in reeds at Durankulak and Lake Burgas.

Jackdaw. Most birds had departed to the south, the only record was of three birds with Rooks near Durankulak.

Rook. Common in both the Durankulak and Lake Burgas areas, flocks of some hundreds frequently encountered.

Hooded Crow. Occasional pairs throughout the country.

Common Raven. A minimum of six were seen in the Trigrad Gorge.

Tree Sparrow. Moderately common across the country. Typical records included flocks of up to 30 in Brestnica, throughout the Durankulak area, at Atanasovsko and in the villages of the Trigrad Valley.

House Sparrow. Only seen twice - on both occasions with Tree Sparrows, about ten birds at Brestnica and two at Atanasovsko.

Rock Sparrow. A single bird was noted in an old village, midway down the Trigrad Valley.

Chaffinch. Many birds had departed to the south, flocks were few and far between - best totals included 20 at Brestnica, ten at Durankulak, ten at Atanasovsko and five at Lake Burgas.

Brambling. Two records - one bird at Brestnica and two Atanasovsko.

Hawfinch. A good showing, with about 15 at Brestnica, two at Durankulak, eight at Baltata and a single in the Trigrad Valley.

Siskin. The last species the trip, two birds were seen in the lower reaches of the Trigrad Valley.

Bullfinch. Two birds were noted at the top of the Trigrad Gorge, one of the only passerines noted so high.

Goldfinch. Very few sightings - ten birds at Baltata, a flock of 30 at Lake Burgas and a flock of six in the Trigrad Valley.

Linnet. Low numbers, three birds were seen at Durankulak, 25 near Balchik and at least 40 around Lake Burgas.

Greenfinch. A single sighting, two birds at Brestnica.

Corn Bunting. Normally far more abundant, the cold weather had forced most birds south. The only record was of a flock of about 25 birds near Balchik.

Yellowhammer. As with Corn Buntings, most birds had left the area. Eight birds west of Burgas were the only ones seen.

Reed Bunting. Two birds were seen in reedbeds adjacent to the sea at Durankulak.

#### Mammals.

European Wild Cat. One sitting in the sun at a cave entrance in the gorge at Cape Kaliakra, later seen resting in adjacent grass. A second individual was seen briefly in woodland adjacent to the beach north of Krapets.

Badger. South of Balchik, one individual was seen crossing the road at 5 a.m.

Red Fox. Two seen, one en route from Sofia to Varna, another at Shabla.

Red Squirrel. One in the campsite at Durankulak.