AVIFAUNA OF NATURA 2000 "*GRUIA - GÂRLA MARE*" SUMMER-FALL

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Abstract. *This paper presents data on bird species from the "Gruia - Gârla Mare" Avifauna Special Protection Area (ROSPA0046) monitored during the summer-fall period. Weekly outings allowed us to identify 111 bird species of which 80 are nesting; we also monitored their abundance and the threats representing risk factors for the stability of bird populations in the future.*

Keywords**:** *avifauna, Gruia - Gârla Mare, Natura 2000 site*

INTRODUCTION

Upstream the Danube River, from Bazias to Salcia, there are several avifaunistic protected areas among which Porțile de Fier, Blahnița and Gruia - Gârla Mare. The Gruia - Gârla Mare protected area consolidates the European ecological network Natura 2000, a special avifaunistic protection area playing an essential role due to its minimum 111 bird species nesting or simply staying for short whiles in the area.

The site covers 2756.2 ha and the localities Gârla Mare, Gruia, Vrata and Pristol, located in the continental bioregion, at an altitude of 27-90 m. According to the data supplied by the standard form of the Gruia - Gârla Mare site, the area is covered by deciduous forests (35%), shrub-transition forests (23%), marshes (22%), watercourses and lakes (8%), grasslands (8%) (http://biodiversitate.mmediu.ro/rio/natura2000/static/pdf/rospa0046.pdf, 2011), as well as by vineyards, orchards, and arable lands.

The area is specific to the Danube River flooding meadows, a landscape impressing due to its flora and fauna diversity. Precipitations in spring and summer develop several moist areas that last for long periods of time and that are the ideal environmental for numerous amphibian and reptile species, basic elements of the food chain; these species are not only food sources for a wide range of animals: they are also beneficial to the ecosystem because damaging invertebrates are food for other animal species.

The performance of the nesting birds such as European roller, great white egret, little egret, purple heron, common white-eye, ortolan, ern, Eurasian sea eagle, many of which are under the pressure of human activities that damage the nesting habitats, is completed by bird species that start coming there ever since the first spring days: black stork, yellowhammer, bullfinch, common spoonbill, or glossy ibis.

Human activities influence negatively both plant and animal species (birds in particular). Studies conducted in the field show that we need to take measures to protect bird species, to develop special protection rules that contribute to the conservation of biodiversity from a sustainable perspective.

Protecting isolated species can be done effectively in nature reserves, but we need changes at social level and particularly at local community level, by increasing population environment-related awareness and by involving institutions. Nature completes the culture of

each community; it is a people-identity element and, due to regional development, we will be able to contribute to the development of complex ecosystems.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out in the Gruia - Gârla Mare Special Protection Area, three times a week from June 26, 2017 to October 1, 2017; we used such methods as binocular observations, bird photographing, and bird nest examining. Bird species identification was done with determiners (GENSBOL, 2008; NICOLAI *ET AL.*, 1994). The species were monitored during three of the six ecological moments of an annual cycle: summery, serotinal and autumnal (STĂNESCU, 2004). We searched for both factors with a negative impact on bird populations (TOROK *ET AL.*, 2005) and food sources and preferred nesting places in Vrata (Pădurea Vrata, Balta Mare, Balta Vrata, marsh areas adjacent to the bogs, crops near villages), Gârla Mare (the six fishing lakes, the area between the lakes and the Danube), Pristol (Balta Lată), Gruia (the water area near the poplar and willow habitat), and along the Danube in the same localities.

The ROSPA0046 Gruia - Gârla Mare. As stipulated by the *Government's Decision* No. 1284 from October 24, 2007, the area was declared Avifaunistic Special Protection Area. Since 2009, the area has been subjected to a study by the ProMehedinți Foundation that is carrying out the inventory and mapping of community interest species as well as a Management Plan (http://www.promehedinti.ro/aria-naturala-protejata-gruia-garla-mare/). This project also aimed at monitoring awareness raising among natives as well as increasing institutional management ability of the site.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

During the study period, we inventoried 111 bird species, i.e. a significantly larger number than that of the ProMehedinți Foundation that finalised, in 2011, the Management Plan (http://www.promehedinti.ro/aria-naturala-protejata-gruia-garla-mare/); the Plan contained 71 bird species, of which 49 are also on our list.

Table 1a.

List of species identified in the Vrata - Gruia area in three of the six ecological moments of an annual cycle: summery, serotinal and autumnal:

Orders *Podicipediformes, Pelecaniformes, Ciconiiformes* and *Anseriformes*

No.	Species Code	Species	Locality
1	A004	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	GM.,G.
2	A005	*Podiceps cristatus*	GM.,G.,P.
3	A017	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
4	A393	*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
5	A021	*Botaurus stellaris*	V.
6	A022	*Ixybrychus minutus*	GM.
7	A023	*Nycticorax nycticorax*	V.,GM.,G.
8	A024	*Ardeola ralloides*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
9	A026	*Egretta garzetta*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
10	A027	*Ardea Alba*	V.,GM.,G.
11	A028	*Ardea cinerea*	V.,GM.,G.
12	A029	*Ardea purpurea*	V.,GM.
13	A030	*Ciconia nigra*	GM.

14	A031	*Ciconia ciconia*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
15	A032	*Plegadis falcinellus*	V.
16	A034	*Platalea leucorodia*	V.
17	A038	*Cygnus olor*	GM.
18	A048	*Tadorna Tadorna*	V.
19	A051	*Anas strepera*	V.,GM.
20	A052	*Anas crecca*	V.,G
21	A053	*Anas platyrhynchos*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
22	A055	*Anas querquedula*	V.,GM.
23	A060	*Aythya nyroca*	GM.
Place: V - Vrata, GM - Gârla Mare, P - Pristol, G - Gruia			

Order *Pelecaniformes*, Family *Phalacrocoracidae*

Phalacrocorax carbo (great cormorant) nests in the mixed colony of Balta Gruia together with pygmy cormorant. On summer mornings, one can see flocks of up to 1,000 birds flying in a serpent style from the colony to the feeding place, on the Gârla Mare Island. There, they develop genuine fishing strategies and line from the island border to the Bulgarian border. There are solitary birds in the fisheries at Gârla Mare, Balta Vrata and Balta Pristol.

Order *Ciconiiformes*, Family *Ardeidae*

Ardea alba (great white egret) prefers wide bogs and moist areas with shrubbery, flooding meadows, channels, ponds (Petrovici Milca, 2015). Present in the site during the entire study period, it prefers Balta Vrata where we identified 7-10 birds on a daily basis; the species might nest in the area but there is no clear evidence of that.

Ardea purpurea (purple heron) is represented by a small population during summer, when there are, in the site, only 3-5 pairs in the fishery at Gârla Mare; when migration starts, the area is only a corridor for a much larger number of birds: we could watch a flock of 26 birds close to the Danube River.

Botaurus stellaris (Eurasian bittern, great bittern) is a rather shy species that camouflages pretty well in the reeds; it produces a strong sound during the reproduction period, which allowed us to identify it in the bogs at Vrata and Pristol.

Ixobrychus minutus (common little bittern, little bittern) is present at the fishery at Gârla Mare; it is a nesting species that suffers a lot because of the fishermen and animals within the area, which has caused the species number to fall.

Order *Ciconiiformes*, Family *Ciconiidae*

Ciconia nigra (black stork) was represented by only two birds at the beginning of the fall; they stayed for five days in the area of the fishery at Gârla Mare.

Ciconia ciconia (white stork) was represented by both nesting birds within or close to the protected area, and birds crossing the area on their way to wintering places at the middle of the serotinal period; we photographed a flock of 643 birds above the village of Vrata.

Order *Ciconiiformes*, Family *Threskiornithidae*

Platalea leucorodia (common spoonbill, Eurasian spoonbill) is a rare bird species in the site: however, we could see a flock of 16 birds flying above the fishery at Gârla Mare, mid-September.

Plegadis falcinellus (glossy ibis) was a regular presence during the serotinal summer period, both lonely and in mixed flocks together with *Egretta garzetta*, *Ardea cinerea* or *Ardeolla ralloides*. The largest number of glossy ibis in a flock was nine, at Balta Vrata.

Order *Anseriformes*, Family *Anatidae*

Aythya nyroca (common white-eye, ferruginous duck, ferruginous pochard, white-eyed pochard) has a less gregarious behaviour than other species of the Genus *Aythya* (Petrovici Milca, 2015). In Romania, it is present in remote places at Balta Pristol and on quiet days it can also be seen in places hidden among water lilies in the fishery at Gârla Mare; the presence of youth during the first period of summer made us think that its presence in the area is not random and that it nests in the neighbourhood.

Anas strepera (gadwall) could be seen near the Danube, in the Gruia area, particularly at the beginning of the fall; before this period, it was rather accidental (we found four more birds on the channel at Gârla Mare, on August 15, 2017).

Tadorna tadorna (common shelduck) was seen twice: first, on September 27, when we saw two birds on the pond at Vrata; the second, one week later, in the same habitat, when we observed four birds.

Table1b.

List of species identified in the Vrata - Gruia area in three of the six ecological moments of an annual cycle: summery, serotinal and autumnal:

Orders *Accipitriformes, Falconiformes* and *Charadriiformes*

No.	Species Code	Species	Locality
24	A072	*Pernis apivorus*	OGM.
25	A075	*Haliaeetus albicilla*	OGM.
26	A080	*Circaetus gallicus*	GM.
27	A081	*Circus aeruginosus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
28	A085	*Accipiter gentilis*	V.,GM.
29	A086	*Accipiter nisus*	V.,GM.,G.
30	A087	*Buteo buteo*	V.,GM.,P.
31	A403	*Buteo ruffinus*	V.
32	A096	*Falco tinnunculus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
33	A097	*Falco vespertinus*	V.
34	A099	*Falco subbuteo*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
35	A131	*Himantopus himantopus*	V.
36	A136	*Charadrius dubius*	V.
37	A142	*Vanellus vanellus*	V.,GM.,P.,G
38	A151	*Philomachus pugnax*	V.
39	A160	*Numenius arquata*	V.
40	A164	*Tringa nebularia*	V.
41	A165	*Tringa glareola*	V.,G.
42	A177	*Larus minutus*	GM.
43	A179	*Larus ridibundus*	V.,GM.,G.
44	A196	*Chlidonias hybridus*	V.,GM.,G.
Place: V - Vrata, GM - Gârla Mare, P - Pristol, G – Gruia, OGM – Ostrovul Gârla Mare (Island)			

Order *Accipitriformes*, Family *Accipitridae*

Haliaeetus albicilla (ern, erne, grey eagle, Eurasian sea eagle, white-tailed eagle, white-tailed sea eagle) nests rarely in coastal, lacustrine and river regions rich in fish (Bruun *et al.*, 1999). We found a pair on the Island of Gârla Mare together with two youth. The species is also mentioned in the standard form, so that its presence within the site is an element of stability, at least for now. We continued to monitor the species during the entire study period. We could see that the human impact on the Romanian side of the Danube puts pressure on species adaptability because of the large number of fishermen and of livestock; therefore, the

birds prefer the Bulgarian side where they have been seen many times feeding or flying the coastal area.

Pernis apivorus (common pern, European honey buzzard, pern) was represented by a pair and a youth in the area close to the locality Gârla Mare where they used to feed; at dawn, they were often seen flying to the Island of Gârla Mare.

Circaetus gallicus (short-toed eagle, short-toed snake eagle) is a species seen only twice within the site, close to a watercourse near the locality Gârla Mare. When first seen, the bird was attacking a reptile; the presence of reptiles (among which *Natrix natrix* or *Natrix tessellata*) is a positive indicator for the future of the bird species in the area.

Accipiter gentilis (northern goshawk) was found near the locality Vrata; it has a bad reputation among pigeon breeders in the area, hence the importance of raising awareness related to the importance of the species in the food chain to avoid incidents.

Buteo ruffinus (long-legged buzzard) was represented by only two birds in the Vrata Forest. It is currently extending in south-eastern Europe (BRUUN *ET AL.*, 1999); however, other birds might be accidentally present within the site.

Order *Falconiformes*, Family *Falconidae*

Falco subbuteo (Eurasian hobby, hobby) was represented by a pair nesting in the Vrata Forest, close to the Danube, in the nest of a hooded crow, hoodie; however, the number of the birds is larger, hence the significance of their frequency within the site.

Falco vespertinus (red-footed falcon): close to the site, in Cujmir, 3 km from the protected area, there is a colony of *Corvus frugilegus*. The colony was made up of 27 nests, of which three were occupied by red-footed falcon. Taking into account that birds from this species are more and more common in the area, they may settle within the protected area. This asks for the protection of the populations of *Corvus frugilegus* that the species profits from (fabric commensalism) and for the placing of artificial platforms for nesting.

Order *Charadriiformes*, Family *Recurvirostridae*

Himantopus himantopus (black-winged stilt) is a species present at Balta Vrata (two nesting pairs). We watched several times the four adults and seven youth feeding in common, in shallow water allowing the birds to fly away in case of danger.

Order *Charadriiformes*, Family *Laridae*

Chlidonias hybridus (whiskered tern) made up a monospecific colony on the water lily lake in the fishery at Gârla Mare. In 2017, the colony consisted only in eight pairs. Other birds were found dispersed at Balta Vrata or at Balta Gruia, without making up a stable nucleus. The figures referring to this species in the standard form point to a definite fall (200-250 pairs a few years ago). The main threat is human disturbance.

Table.1c.

List of species identified in the Vrata - Gruia area in three of the six ecological moments of an annual cycle: summery, serotinal and autumnal:

Orders *Columbiformes, Cuculiformes, Strigiformes, Apodiformes, Galliformes, Gruiformes, Coraciiformes, Piciformes*

No.	Species Code	Species	Locality
45	A112	*Perdix perdix*	V.
46	A113	*Coturnix coturnix*	GM., P., G.
47	A123	*Gallinula chloropus*	V.,GM., P.,G.

48	A125	*Fulica atra*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
49	A153	*Gallinago Gallinago*	V.
50	A208	*Columba palumbus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
51	A209	*Streptopelia decaocto*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
52	A210	*Streptopelia turtur*	V.,GM.
53	A212	*Cuculus canorus*	V.
54	A218	*Athene noctua*	V.,GM.
55	A219	*Strix aluco*	GM.
56	A221	*Asio otus*	V.
57	A229	*Alcedo atthis*	GM.
58	A230	*Merops apiaster*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
59	A231	*Coracias garrulus*	V.
60	A232	*Upupa epops*	V.,GM.
Place: V - Vrata, GM - Gârla Mare, P - Pristol, G – Gruia			

Order *Strigiformes*, Family *Strigidae*

Asio otus (long-eared owl) nests in common magpie and crow nests in the forests, frequently in tree clumps in cultivated areas (Bruun *et al.*, 1999). We identified a pair that successfully nested and raised three youth. It used to be a common magpie nest; therefore, we should avoid destroying these nests with fabric potential for the species preferring free nests (fabric commensalism). The nest was 3 m above the soil, in a tree that was part of a glade hedge, a spine tree that had contributed to the protection of the nest from predators. In the neighbourhood, there were vineyards, an orchard and several plots of crops (wheat, maize, peas, oats, alfalfa), i.e. a mosaic vegetation supplying food for the birds.

Order *Coraciiformes*, Family *Coraciidae*

Coracias garrulus (European roller) was present within the site with 14 nesting pairs: three at Vrata, two at Garla Mare, two at Gruia and seven at Pristol. It nest in loess walls on abrupt coasts in mixed colonies with *Merops apiaster* and *Riparia riparia*. The species is directly affected by activities with a negative impact, by the stubble fires during the breeding of the youth, by the disturbance of nesting places or by the extraction of pebble from the quarries. Very sensitive to land use changes, it is a bio-indicator of mosaic habitats (Petrovici Milca, 2015). We need to take management measures to avoid all this as well as to place artificial nests to increase successful nesting.

Alcedo atthis (common kingfisher, Eurasian kingfisher, river kingfisher) is a shy presence in both the fishery of Balta Vrata and in the fishery of Gârla Mare, where it really nests. The species is affected by the frequent fishermen and by the free-range livestock.

Upuppa epops (Eurasian hoopoe) was present all over the site, particularly in agricultural areas where it finds food easily; a pair successfully nested close to the village of Vrata, in a mulberry hollow.

Table.1d.

List of species identified in the Vrata - Gruia area in three of the six ecological moments of an annual cycle: summery, serotinal and autumnal:

Order *Passeriformes*

No.	**Species Code**	**Species**	**Locality**
64	A237	*Phoenicurus ochruros*	V.
65	A238	*Turdus merula*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
66	A244	*Galerida cristata*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
67	A247	*Alauda arvensis*	V.,GM.

68	A249	*Riparia riparia*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
69	A253	*Delichon urbicum*	V.
70	A259	*Hirundo rustica*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
71	A256	*Anthus trivialis*	V.
72	A260	*Motacilla flava*	V.,GM.,P.
73	A261	*Motacilla cinerea*	GM.
74	A262	*Motacilla alba*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
75	A269	*Erithacus rubetra*	V.
76	A271	*Luscinia megarhynchos*	V.
77	A275	*Saxicola rubetra*	V.
78	A277	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	V.,GM.
79	A292	*Luscinia luscinioides*	V.
80	A295	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*	V.
81	A296	*Acrocephalus palustris*	V.,GM.
82	A297	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*	V.,GM.
83	A298	*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*	V.,G.
84	A307	*Sylvia nisoria*	V.
85	A308	*Sylvia curruca*	V.
86	A309	*Sylvia communis*	GM.
87	A314	*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*	V.,GM.
88	A315	*Phylloscopus collybita*	V.
89	A319	*Muscicapa striata*	V.
90	A354	*Passer domesticus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
91	A326	*Passer montanus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
92	A329	*Cyanistes caeruleus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
93	A330	*Parus major*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
94	A336	*Remiz pendulinus*	V.
95	A337	*Oriolus oriolus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
96	A338	*Lanius collurio*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
97	A339	*Lanius minor*	V.
98	A343	*Pica pica*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
99	A347	*Corvus monedula*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
100	A348	*Corvus frugilegus*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
101	A349	*Corvus cornix*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
102	A351	*Sturnus vulgaris*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
103	A359	*Fringilla coelebs*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
104	A361	*Serinus serinus*	V.
105	A363	*Carduelis chloris*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
106	A364	*Carduelis carduelis*	V.,GM.,P.,G.
107	A365	*Carduelis spinus*	P.
108	A376	*Emberiza citrinella*	V.
109	A378	*Emberiza schoeniclus*	V.,GM.
110	A379	*Emberiza hortulana*	V.
111	A382	*Emberiza melanocephala*	V.
Place: V - Vrata, GM - Gârla Mare, P - Pristol, G - Gruia			

Order *Passeriformes*, Family *Oriolidae*

Oriolus oriolus (Eurasian golden oriole, golden oriole), with a stable population of at least five nesting pairs, is often seen and particularly head during the reproduction period, along the watercourses lined by *Populus alba, Salix alba* or fruit trees. It feeds on invertebrates (caterpillars), but it also eats fruit (from the mulberry orchard at Vrata). It is extremely territorial, particularly during reproduction; it is not afraid of predators: we repeatedly witnessed them fighting with hooded crows or red-footed falcons.

Order *Passeriformes*, Family *Remizidae*

Remiz pendulinus (Eurasian penduline tit, European penduline tit) was seen once in a mixed warbler of *Salix alba* and *Populus alba* close to the lake at Gruia. It locally lives in the willows by the river sides, in grove, in general, among reeds.

Order *Passeriformes*, Family *Laniidae*

Lanius collurio (red-backed shrike) was present both within communes and in agricultural areas where there are shrubs; the species is spread all over the site and is well conserved.

Lanius minor (lesser grey shrike) was represented by three pairs (two at Vrata and one at Gârla Mare), all located in agricultural areas, in shrubs close to electricity poles.

Order *Passeriformes*, Family *Fringilidae*

Coccothraustes coccothraustes (hawfinch). The number of birds during passage is fluctuating; the species was also monitored by us in previous years, in the same area. Though the number of birds is influenced by weather conditions during the hiemal period, there was also a decrease of the food sources and of shelter opportunities (haymaking fields, straw supplies, cereal supplies).

Chloris chloris (European greenfinch) was present in large numbers during both reproduction and passage periods.

Carduelis carduelis (European goldfinch, goldfinch) was present during the entire year: during the passage period, local populations migrate towards the south and northern populations replace them. The number of birds crossing the area is rather large but, since they are vulnerable in limit-situations, they are often captured by poachers who sell them on the close markets. This affects several species of *Passeriformes*, but European goldfinch, gold finch suffers the most because it is more familiar with human presence than other species.

Order *Passeriformes*, Family *Emberizidae*

Emberiza melanocephala (black-headed bunting) is expanding in southern Romania. It is a nesting species living in the area of agricultural lands and feeding on sunflower seeds from mid-June to mid-July.

Emberiza citrinella (yellowhammer) is a passage species occurring in large numbers at the end of the fall and at the beginning of the hiemal period. It is often seen in the villages in the area where it used haystacks as a source of food and shelter during frosty nights.

Emberiza hortulana (ortolan, ortolan bunting) is found in small numbers in open cultivated areas with tree or shrub clumps. Its presence in the site was confirmed from the first days of the study; it kept being present in agricultural crops during the entire summer.

Order *Passeriformes*, Family *Muscicapidae*

Luscinia megarhynchos (common nightingale, nightingale). We found a single nest in an uninhibited household at Vrata, in a dry tree 70 cm high, between two buildings, isolated by vegetation on 10 m^2. The species was heard in other areas of the site, but it was confirmed as a nesting species only in the village of Vrata.

CONCLUSIONS

During the study period, we inventoried 111 bird species. Comparing the data we obtained with the data supplied by the standard chart of the site, we could see there are a few differences:

- Though the study was not carried out during an entire year, our study confirmed only 49 species of the 71 species in the standard form;

- We identified 62 new bird species for the Gruia - Gârla Mare Avifaunistic Special Protection Area:

- 7 new bird species specific to moist areas: *Ciconia nigra, Tadorna tadorna, Tringa nebularia, Philomachus pugnax, Larus ridibundus, Larus minutus, Alcedo atthis*;
- 55 new bird species specific to other types of habitat: *Ciconia ciconia, Pernis apivorus, Circaetus gallicus, Buteo ruffinus, Falco vespertinus, Falco subbuteo, Coturnix coturnix, Perdix perdix, Columba palumbus, Streptopelia decaocto, Streptopelia turtur, Athene noctua, Strix aluco, Asio otus, Merops apiaster, Upuppa epops, Jynx torquilla, Dendrocopos major, Dendrocopos syriacus, Phoenicurus ochruros, Turdus merula, Galerida cristata, Alauda arvensis, Riparia riparia, Hirundo rustica, Anthus trivialis, Motacilla cinerea, Saxicola rubetra, Oenanthe oenanthe, Sylvia nisoria, Sylvia curruca, Sylvia communis, Phylloscopus collybita, Phylloscopus sibilatrix, Muscicapa striata, Passer montanus, Passer domesticus, Parus major, Parus caeruleus, Lanius minor, Lanius collurio, Serinus serinus, Pica pica, Corvus monedula, Corvus frugilegus, Corvus cornix, Sturnus vulgaris, Fringilla coelebs, Carduelis chloris, Carduelis carduelis, Emberiza miliaria, Emberiza citrinella, Emberiza hortulana, Emberiza schoeniclus, Emberiza melanocephala*;

- Though the number of bird species was significantly large, the number of individuals was much below the one in the standard form; the most obvious case is that of common spoonbill, seen only while migrating; little egret, mentioned in the standard from with over 50 nesting pairs, was represented only by 10 pairs; common white-eye is represented by a small number of birds, like common pochard: there are serious doubts about the species nesting within the site (we could not find any such proof); other species that decreased in numbers are *Ixobrychus minutus, Nyctycorax nyctycorax, Ardeola ralloides, Chlidonias hybridus, Coracias garrulus, Cygnus olor*;

- We could not find other species mentioned as reproducing in the standard form during the study period: *Falco cherrug, Sterna hirundo, Chlidonias niger*. At the same time, there are species that might not have been seen because of the time of their arrival within the site (possibly during the hiemal period): *Buteo lagopus, Pelecanus onocrotalus, Anser albifrons, Anas penelope, Anas acuta, Anas clypeata, Aythya fuligula, Mergus serrator, Mergus merganser, Tringa totanus, Tringa ochropus, Limosa limosa, Actitis hypoleucos, Locustela fluviatilis, Fringilla montifringilla, Larus cachinnans.*

We intend to resume our study in the future to complete the annual cycle and the species list; we also hope to find solutions for a management favourable to community interest bird species.

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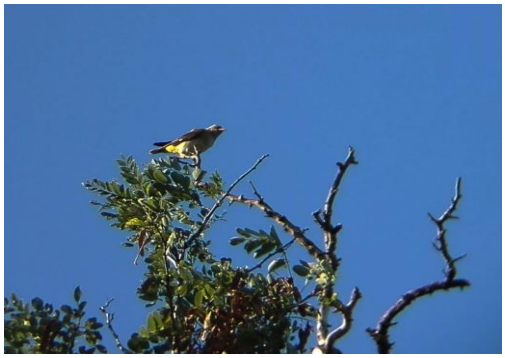
Original photos from ROSPA0046 Gruia - Gârla Mare:

Ardea alba (great white egret), *Ardea cinerea* (grey heron), *Egretta garzetta* (little egret), *Fulica atra* (Eurasian coot).

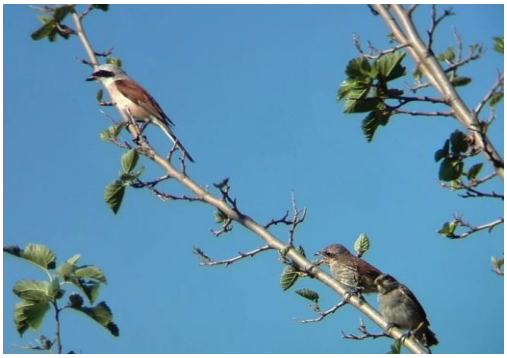
Plegadis falcinellus (glossy ibis) and *Himantopus himantopus* (black-winged stilt)

Tringa glareola (wood sandpiper)

Coracias garrulus (European roller)



Oriolus oriolus (golden oriole)



Lanius collurio (red-backed shrike)