

Albania in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Report

15 - 22 April 2016



Ferry boat ride by Stephen Thorpe



Nose-horned Viper by Tom Mabbett



Hermann's Tortoise by Tom Mabbett



Dalmatian Pelican by Tom Mabbett

Report compiled by Tom Mabbett
Images courtesy of Stephen Thorpe & Tom Mabbett
Plant list compiled and provided by John Street



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Tour participants: Tom Mabbett & Marsela Dedndreaj (leaders) with 15 Naturetrek clients

Summary

This inaugural tour to Albania was a real success. We all enjoyed the wonderful scenery, learned a lot about the country and of course saw a great range of birds, butterflies, wild flowers and a few mammals too. It was said that our group were believed to be the first ever group dedicated to finding, watching and recording wildlife in the areas we visited so it really is a pioneering tour! Although travelling in a very comfortable vehicle and staying in two very comfortable guesthouses, there is still that adventurous feel to travel in Albania and it is certainly exciting and fascinating.

Day 1

Friday 15th April

We all arrived safely into Tirana Airport and met our local guide Marsela in the arrivals hall before transferring to our minibus and heading towards the UNESCO World Heritage city of Berat.

The weather was glorious and we stopped just outside Berat at a small wine estate where, after a tour of the winery, we were able to enjoy the gardens and sample a selection of local wines alongside some tasty cheeses. We were all very much focused on the wine and cheese but we did note Red-rumped Swallows passing by, with Common Wall Lizard on the building and a Swallowtail butterfly.

Feeling replete we were then driven on to our comfortable hotel in central Berat. Once settled in we then went out to enjoy an evening meal in a local restaurant.

Day 2

Saturday 16th April

A few of us were up early before breakfast for a walk around the town and made our way across the bridge, watching for birds as we went. A male Blue Rock Thrush was a highlight, with good views of a perched Sparrowhawk also. Today we visited the coastal lagoons of the Divjaka-Karavasta NP. On the way we picked up Tao Bino, a university professor who has studied this area extensively, and then carried on to the park, learning about the area as we went. On our approach, we stopped to look through a large flock of Little Egret with a single Cattle Egret amongst them: a rare bird in the area.

Upon arrival we drove to the coastal area where we took a walk through the vegetated sandbars alongside the open water. On stepping out of the vehicle several Dalmatian Pelicans were flying overhead and Whitethroat could be heard singing. A small flock of Whimbrel flew up and, further on, a Squacco Heron was wading along the lagoon edge. A number of orchids were noted as we walked towards the observation tower including Lax-flowered and Tongue Orchids.

As we continued along the sandy track, a Hermann's Tortoise was well spotted in the long grasses just next to the path, and we all had excellent views before it trundled on its way. At the observation tower a Tawny Pipit was singing away from its tree top perch while a very smart Yellow Wagtail of the black-headed race showed well for us. From the observation tower Pygmy Cormorant and Great Egret were enjoyed, while Little Ringed Plover

and Black-tailed Godwit were spotted. Waders were a little distant on the lagoon but included Grey Plover, a brick-red Bar-tailed Godwit and Curlew, with a single Avocet noted.

We walked back to the vehicle noting a Plain Tiger butterfly as we journeyed to an area of pine forest. Here we had lunch and enjoyed a smart Woodchat Shrike; Yellow Bee Orchid and Early Spider Orchid were noted in the surroundings. After appreciating a very showy Scarce Swallowtail, we took a walk through the trees leading to another small lagoon. On the way to the lagoon we enjoyed the beautiful song of the Nightingale and, following a scan of the lagoon which was rather quiet for birds, we returned to the vehicle watching Cleopatra butterflies as we went.

In the afternoon we walked along another track leading through the forest alongside open marshland and finishing at the main lagoon of the reserve which is the largest in Albania. As we walked alongside the marshes, Great and Little Egret flew up and Spotted Flycatcher was seen briefly, and we also had excellent views of a Whinchat and Woodchat Shrike. At the culmination of the walk, we were able to look across the lagoon to the breeding islands of the Dalmatian Pelicans with several birds flying close overhead. This is an internationally important site for the pelicans and we learned about their ecology from Tao. We then made our way back, to return to Berat where we ate out at a different restaurant, in the heart of the old city, with a lovely rooftop terrace providing a splendid view of the historic city centre.

Day 3

Sunday 17th April

Again, some of us were up early to explore a different area around Berat, in the morning sun. We walked up a small valley which we were delighted to find held lots of Nightingales. Their amazing song was heard loud and clear. We enjoyed Stonechat and Whitethroat as the track broke out into the surrounding hillsides and, on heading back to the hotel for breakfast, one Nightingale was scoped in full view. Superb.

Today we made another visit to the coast with a visit to the salt lagoons of Narte. After a winding journey through rural countryside and becoming caught up in the busy market day of one small town, we eventually arrived at the lagoons. We stopped to look over the first lagoon and enjoyed Wood Sandpiper and Greenshank with Kentish Plovers and Little Ringed Plovers on show. Greater Short-toed larks were displaying and we had a wonderful fly-by from a Collared Pratincole, giving us all excellent views. We drove on a little further and pulled in, to allow us to walk out towards a small building in the heart of these vast Salinas. In the distance we could see a large number of Greater Flamingos and a selection of smaller waders were closer to us which included Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint and a few Sanderling. All these waders were on passage to their breeding grounds in the north. We accidentally flushed two Stone-curlew here, and all had excellent scoped views of these often-difficult-to-see birds. A snake of the *Natrix* genus was seen swimming across a lagoon and looked to be either a Grass or Dice Snake, but was a little distant to be certain.

We carried on to a crossroads in these lagoons where we had very close views of the Flamingos, Black-winged Stilts, Avocets and Kentish Plovers. A few Slender-billed Gulls were enjoyed with their rosy-pink bellies and Common and Little Tern were feeding close to shore.

We were picked up now and drove on a short distance to an area of Stone Pine woodland for lunch. On the way we stopped to look at the eggs of a Stone-curlew which had been found on the path side in a shallow scrape by

our driver! (I later learned from the subsequent tour in May that these eggs hatched successfully). We stopped at the end of the track by a pumping station and on the way there paused as a flock of Spoonbills were feeding in the shallows. A short way further on led us to the coastal pine shelter-belt and, as we arrived, a Little Owl bounded away. Here we stopped for our picnic lunch. As we relaxed and explored our surroundings, Alpine Swifts sped past and yet another Hermann's Tortoise was well found.

Following lunch and a really close look at a pair of Red-rumped Swallows, we then returned to Berat. Before we could leave the Salinas, we stopped to scan through a huge flock of waders. Here there were at least 40 Ruff with similar numbers of Greenshank and, although distant, a Marsh Sandpiper was picked out. There were also around 70 Spotted Redshank with many in their fine spring plumage. The birds were a little distant and a scope was certainly required but it showed how many birds these lagoons support on their northward migration and also for breeding. We headed back to Berat and went sightseeing around the city, visiting a mosque and a restored church, meeting locals and having an insight into their lives here. After freshening up, we all walked the short but steep road up to the old town above us and finished up with another excellent meal in a small restaurant within the Citadel's walls.

Day 4

Monday 18th April

Today was our transfer day and, after another morning walk, which produced a striking Black-eared Wheatear from the bridge, we were on our way. Our destination was the Valbona Valley Mountains in the far north, entailing a long road trip. It was not all driving though, as we firstly broke the journey with a visit to the medieval town of Kruje, famous as the birthplace of the C15 Albanian hero Skanderbeg. We were able to enjoy the museum here and enjoyed a hearty lunch of local and traditional dishes before some bought a few souvenirs from the market stalls on the way back to the bus. Another Black-eared Wheatear was seen on roof tops around the town before we were soon back on the road.

Our journey continued onwards and, after having turned eastwards, we reached the border with Kosovo and completed immigration formalities. Once in Kosovo, we headed for the town of Prizren where we stopped again to explore this historic, and ethnically diverse place. We had time for quick wander along the narrow streets and a look at the Sinan Pasha Mosque with the Prizrenska Bistrica River running through the town. We were soon on our way once more for the final leg of our journey to the Albanian Alps and the Valbona Valley. We arrived just after dark to a warm and comfortable guesthouse and, on pulling up, had excellent views of an Eastern Hedgehog in the headlights. The pale underneath was clear to see and looked quite different to our Western species. We walked down to the local restaurant for a pleasant dinner before getting some sleep after a long day!

Day 5

Tuesday 19th April

We awoke today to the spectacular mountain views from our hotel and, with beautiful blue skies, we were all eager to get out in the field. Some of us headed out to explore the immediate area before breakfast with Black Redstart around and Serin also noted.

After breakfast we boarded the 4x4s and drove the short distance towards the nearby Gjarper Mountain. Here we wound higher and higher through small open meadows and plum tree orchards before reaching the Cemek Stan. On the way two Rock Partridge were seen in a meadow. Here we stopped and set out on foot.

We walked slowly across the mountainside enjoying the great number of Eastern Green Lizards while many butterflies were on the wing, including Green-underside Blues. Lesser Whitethroats were singing and Green-winged Orchids were also enjoyed. It was a spectacular view to the snow-capped peaks all around us, and perfect walking conditions. We continued along the valley for a short while before resting and retracing our steps back towards the Stan. The Stan is the shepherd's house and these hardy locals live here and tend to their land and livestock, leading a fascinating life. The lunch here was quite superb and a real highlight of the holiday. First we were shown how they cook the traditional Flija dish and then all sat outside to enjoy the dish with bread, cheese, yoghurt and raki, all made on the farm. It was a gorgeous day and we sat eating with the family with the snow-capped peaks around us.

As we were finishing our food, a Golden Eagle was spotted drifting over the forest and gave excellent views. We said our farewells and thanked our fantastic hosts. Before we left, we learned about their relationship with the local wolf pack and the battle to protect their flock!

Some of us now decided to get a lift back down to the guesthouse while others walked back down through the meadows seeing Rock Partridge again briefly and enjoying the carpets of orchids and wonderful scenery. Near to our pick-up point, an impressive Lady Orchid was spotted and a Black Woodpecker was heard but alas we could not see it.

We were transferred back to the guesthouse for some time to relax before dinner. I headed straight back out and set up two camera traps to try and record some of the local wildlife. Just before dinner, we spotted two Chamois high on the mountainsides above us with everyone watching these hardy animals. We enjoyed dinner and retired to bed.

Day 6

Wednesday 20th April

A few of us were up early to walk before breakfast and we went to retrieve and check a camera trap I had put out. The result after just one night was a Badger and an Eastern Hedgehog trundling past. Excellent. We also found a Marsh Tit nest and enjoyed some close views. Today was spent walking in the Kukaj valley. We began again by boarding 4x4 vehicles and were taken across the river and up a rough stony track to a shepherd's seasonal home. We drove as far as we could and then continued on foot along the gently rising track through some beautiful scenery and forest alongside a lovely stream.

We enjoyed a beautiful walk passing through beech forests and open meadows with Rock Bunting, Tree Pipit and a brief Collared Flycatcher found. A Scorpion was an interesting find and we stopped here and relaxed in an open meadow for a snack and drinks surrounded by the mountains. Here there was an interesting and varied flora that we enjoyed identifying, with Early Star of Bethlehem and Alpine Squill noted. Once ready we slowly started making our way back to the Stan for lunch.

It was a lovely walk back and we met those who had decided not to take the full walk before sitting down to lunch. Again we ate with the locals and it happened that a local news team were around and wanted an interview about wildlife tourism and the reasons for visiting the area. We had found out that we were probably the first ever dedicated wildlife watching/ natural history-focused group to the area! Big news!

Following my piece to camera and the group being filmed chatting over lunch, we boarded the 4x4s again and continued on our way back down the valley towards the guesthouse. Some of us decided to be dropped off and to walk a section of the valley back, and on this walk a cracking juvenile Nose-horned Viper was well spotted by Marsela. As we were approaching the guesthouse, bizarrely, we ended up in the middle of a shoot for a music video with an Aston Martin being filmed by a drone!

We returned in good time for dinner and on checking the camera trap a Fox had been around the previous night and the local cattle! It had been a great day exploring this beautifully unspoilt region.

Day 7

Thursday 21st April

Today was our final day in the mountains and, following a morning circular with some lovely views of the nearby river and further views of the Chamois on the mountainside, we started our day walk from just down the road at the restaurant. Caroline who owns the guesthouse and restaurant was to be our guide today on the walk and has a deep understanding of the area and a passion in particular for the local Brown Bear Population. We were briefed on the walk by Caroline and set off alongside the river and across open meadows. Crag Martins flew overhead with Grey Wagtail along the river and Mistle Thrush also noted. The botanists were always well entertained, and soon we got to the point where we were to ascend quite steeply through the mountains and the beech dominated Maskollata forest.

The walk was superb although more challenging than initially anticipated. Having left the flat meadows, we were now committed to reach the next small settlement to be picked up. It was a fantastic walk though, in the wild and remote Albanian mountains. Bird-wise it was fairly quiet but we were often stopping, with Herb Paris, Lily-of-the-Valley and Greater Butterfly Orchid all enjoyed. We stopped for lunch within the forest and after this slowly descended back down towards the valley. We had a break to check Catherine's camera trap which had been left monitoring a track for the past 3 months and the batteries needed replacing! We saw signs of Bears, with trees scratched and hair left stuck to the sticky sap. This is a form of territory marking and communication between individuals and was interesting to see.

We continued on our way, eventually reaching the river, and followed alongside it for a while enjoying the views and watching Dippers as they zipped past on whirring wings. Bird's-nest Orchid and Coral-root Orchid were well found along this section. Reaching our pick-up point, we all enjoyed superb views of a Dipper before being driven back to the guesthouse. It had been a wonderful walk, certainly challenging for some, but rewarding and everyone felt very pleased to have completed it.

Back at the guesthouse we had time to relax and I went to retrieve the camera traps which had no new species recorded. We enjoyed our final meal which consisted of a traditional roasted sheep and was delicious. The food here had been superb: varied and plentiful with something for all tastes. We retired early tonight with an early start in the morning.

Day 8

Friday 22nd April

We were up very early today in order to catch the only ferry departure which crosses the Komani and leaves at 6am. We set out in the minibus in the early light and, after squeezing on to the ferry/taxi boat, we started our journey across the famous Komani Lake.

The weather was again clear and the views spectacular as we passed between the towering cliffs. There was a cold wind though, and we all cheered as the sun appeared over the mountains. The journey is a fascinating one and a real adventure. This boat is essentially a taxi service and stops regularly to drop off and pick up the hardy Albanians that carve a living in this incredibly remote area. Our boat was much busier than normal with a festival that day and a large cycling party. Some of the group sat inside where it was warmer but most were outside, wrapped up and enjoying the spectacular views. We were all marvelling at the way people would appear out of nowhere to be picked up and similarly would leave the boat and disappear into the mountains on invisible and extremely steep paths! A small party of Goosander was noted on the bird front and, as we approached the port at Koman, a fantastic flock of Alpine Swifts were zooming around us and going in and out of a cave here, providing wonderful views.

We disembarked at the large hydro dam and were met by our driver and bus. We then completed the journey to the airport and boarded our flight home after an exciting and rewarding week.

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Mountain lunch by Tom Mabbett

Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

| | Common name | Scientific name | April | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|----|------|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| | | | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | |
| 1 | Common Shelduck | <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 2 | Eurasian Wigeon | <i>Anas penelope</i> | | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 3 | Goosander | <i>Mergus merganser</i> | | | | | | | | 2 | |
| 4 | Rock Partridge | <i>Alectoris graeca</i> | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| 5 | Greater Flamingo | <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i> | | | 150+ | | | | | | |
| 6 | Eurasian Spoonbill | <i>Platalea leucorodia</i> | | | 12 | | | | | | |
| 7 | Squacco Heron | <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> | | 3 | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Grey Heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 9 | Great Egret | <i>Ardea alba</i> | | 10 | 6 | | | | | | |
| 10 | Little Egret | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> | | 20 | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Cattle Egret | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Dalmatian Pelican | <i>Pelecanus crispus</i> | | 40 | 2 | | | | | | |
| 13 | Pygmy Cormorant | <i>Microcarbo pygmeus</i> | | 5 | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Great Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 15 | Eurasian Sparrowhawk | <i>Accipiter nisus</i> | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 16 | Common Buzzard | <i>Buteo buteo</i> | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 17 | Golden Eagle | <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 18 | Common Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Eurasian Stone-Curlew | <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i> | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| 20 | Black-winged Stilt | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i> | | | c40 | | | | | | |
| 21 | Pied Avocet | <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> | | | c40 | | | | | | |
| 22 | Oystercatcher | <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> | | | 4 | | | | | | |
| 23 | Black-tailed Godwit | <i>Limosa limosa</i> | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| 24 | Bar-tailed Godwit | <i>Limosa lapponica</i> | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| 25 | Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| 26 | Little Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius dubius</i> | | | 6 | | | | | | |
| 27 | Spotted Redshank | <i>Tringa erythropus</i> | | | 70 | | | | | | |
| 28 | Ruff | <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> | | | 25 | | | | | | |
| 29 | Sanderling | <i>Calidris alba</i> | | | 3 | | | | | | |
| 30 | Kentish Plover | <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> | | | 20 | | | | | | |
| 31 | Whimbrel | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> | | 6 | | | | | | | |
| 32 | Common Sandpiper | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| 33 | Little Stint | <i>Calidris minuta</i> | | | 20 | | | | | | |
| 34 | Curlew Sandpiper | <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> | | | 15 | | | | | | |
| 35 | Dunlin | <i>Calidris alpina</i> | | | 5 | | | | | | |
| 36 | Collared Pratincole | <i>Glareola pratincola</i> | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| 37 | Black-headed Gull | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> | | | | 2 | | | | | |
| 38 | Yellow-legged Gull | <i>Larus michahellis</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 39 | Slender-billed Gull | <i>Chroicocephalus genei</i> | | | c10 | | | | | | |
| 40 | Little Tern | <i>Sternula albifrons</i> | | | 20 | | | | | | |
| 41 | Common Tern | <i>Sterna hirundo</i> | | | 12 | | | | | | |
| 42 | Rock/Feral Dove | <i>Columba livia</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 43 | Common Wood Pigeon | <i>Columba palumbus</i> | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| 44 | Eurasian Collared Dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 45 | Common Cuckoo | <i>Cuculus canorus</i> | | | | | H | H | | | |
| 46 | Tawny Owl | <i>Strix aluco</i> | | | | H | | | | | |
| 47 | Little Owl | <i>Athene noctua</i> | | | | 1 | | | | | |

| | Common name | Scientific name | April | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| | | | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | |
| 48 | Scops Owl | <i>Otus scops</i> | | | H | | | | | | |
| 49 | Alpine Swift | <i>Tachymarptis melba</i> | | | 15 | | | | | 20 | |
| 50 | Common Swift | <i>Apus apus</i> | | | 5 | | | | | | |
| 51 | Eurasian Hoopoe | <i>Upupa epops</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 52 | Black Woodpecker | <i>Dryocopus martius</i> | | | | | H | H | | | |
| 53 | Eurasian Jay | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 54 | Eurasian Magpie | <i>Pica pica</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 55 | Western Jackdaw | <i>Coloeus monedula</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 56 | Alpine Chough | <i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i> | | | | | 40 | | | | |
| 57 | Hooded Crow | <i>Corvus cornix</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 58 | Northern Raven | <i>Corvus corax</i> | | | 2 | | | | | 1 | |
| 59 | Marsh Tit | <i>Poecile palustris</i> | | | | | 2 | 1 | | | |
| 60 | Great Tit | <i>Parus major</i> | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 61 | Eurasian Blue Tit | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 62 | Crested Lark | <i>Galerida cristata</i> | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| 63 | Greater Short-toed Lark | <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i> | | | 5 | | | | | | |
| 64 | Barn Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 65 | Eurasian Crag Martin | <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i> | | | | | 30 | 6 | 1 | | |
| 66 | Common House Martin | <i>Delichon urbicum</i> | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| 67 | Sand Martin | <i>Riparia riparia</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 68 | Red-rumped Swallow | <i>Cecropis daurica</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 69 | Long-tailed Tit | <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 70 | Common Chiffchaff | <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> | | | | | H | H | H | | |
| 71 | Eurasian Blackcap | <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> | | | ✓ | | | H | | | |
| 72 | Sardinian Warbler | <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 73 | Common Whitethroat | <i>Sylvia communis</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 74 | Lesser Whitethroat | <i>Sylvia curruca</i> | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | |
| 75 | Cetti's Warbler | <i>Cettia cetti</i> | | H | H | H | | | | | |
| 76 | Zitting Cisticola | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i> | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 77 | Eurasian Nuthatch | <i>Sitta europaea</i> | | | | | | H | | | |
| 78 | Woodchat Shrike | <i>Lanius senator</i> | | 3 | | | | | | | |
| 79 | Common Starling | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> | | | 6 | 10 | | | | | |
| 80 | Common Blackbird | <i>Turdus merula</i> | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 81 | Mistle Thrush | <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> | | | | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| 82 | European Robin | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 83 | Common Nightingale | <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> | | H | ✓ | H | | | | | |
| 84 | Black Redstart | <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| 85 | Black-eared Wheatear | <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i> | | | | 2 | | | | | |
| 86 | Blue Rock Thrush | <i>Monticola solitarius</i> | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 87 | Spotted Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa striata</i> | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 88 | Collared Flycatcher | <i>Ficedula albicollis</i> | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| 89 | White-throated Dipper | <i>Cinclus cinclus</i> | | | | | | 1 | 3 | | |
| 90 | House Sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 91 | Tree Sparrow | <i>Passer montanus</i> | ✓ | | | | | | | | |
| 92 | Black-headed Wagtail | <i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i> | | 6 | 15 | | | | | | |
| 93 | Grey Wagtail | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| 94 | White Wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 95 | Tawny Pipit | <i>Anthus campestris</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 96 | Tree Pipit | <i>Anthus trivialis</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| 97 | Common Chaffinch | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 98 | European Serin | <i>Serinus serinus</i> | | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | | |

| | Common name | Scientific name | April | | | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|----------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 99 | Eurasian Siskin | <i>Spinus spinus</i> | | | | | | | H | |
| 100 | European Greenfinch | <i>Chloris chloris</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 101 | European Goldfinch | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| 102 | Common Linnet | <i>Linaria cannabina</i> | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 103 | Corn Bunting | <i>Emberiza calandra</i> | 1 | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| 104 | Rock Bunting | <i>Emberiza cia</i> | | | | | | | 2 | |
| 105 | Cirl Bunting | <i>Emberiza cirrus</i> | | | H | | | | | |

Mammals

Alpine Chamois, *Rupicapra rupicapra balcanica* – 2 seen on mountainside from hotel most days in Valbona.

Northern White-breasted Hedgehog, *Erinaceus roumanicus* – 1 seen very well on arrival to the hotel in Valbona and also on camera trap.

Fox, *Vulpes vulpes* – 1 seen on the camera trap.

Badger, *Meles meles* – 1 seen on the camera trap.

Brown Bear, *Ursus arctos* – signs seen in Valbona with scratchings on trees.

Butterflies

Scarce Swallowtail, *Iphiclides podalirius*

Large White, *Pieris brassicae*

Orange Tip, *Anthocharis cardamines*

Cleopatra, *Gonepteryx cleopatra*

Small Copper, *Lycaena phlaeas*

Green-underside Blue, *Glaucopsyche alexis*

Small Blue, *Cupido minimus*

Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta*

Meadow Brown, *Maniola jurtina*

Queen on Spain Fritillary, *Clossiana euphrosyne*

Plain Tiger, *Danaus chrysippus*

Small Heath, *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Dingy Skipper, *Erynnis tages*

Swallowtail, *Papilion machaon*

Small White, *Pieris rapae*

Clouded Yellow, *Colias crocea*

Wood White, *Leptidea sinapis*

Osiris Blue, *Cupido osiris*

Chequered Blue, *Scolitantides orion*

Common Blue, *Polyommatus icarus*

Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*

Southern Comma, *Polygonia egea*

Large Tortoiseshell, *Nymphalis polychloros*

Speckled Wood, *Pararge aegeria aegeria*

Grizzled Skipper, *Pyrgus malvae*

Reptiles

Eastern Green Lizard, *Lacerta viridis* – Lots in valbona

Common Wall Lizard, *Podarcis muralis*

Nose-horned Viper, *Vipera ammodytes* – 2 seen

Hermann's Tortoise, *Testudo hermanni* – 4 seen around coast.

Plants

16th April,

Phlomis fruticosa, Jerusalem Sage

Ophrys lutea, Yellow Bee Orchid

Serapias sp., A Tongue Orchid

Ophrys sphegodes, Early Spider Orchid

Anacamptis (Orchis) laxiflora, Lax-flowered Orchid

17th April,

Tordylium apulum, Tordylium

19th April,

Anemone nemorosa, Wood Anemone

Cardamine pentaphyllos, Five-leaflet Bittercress

Aremonia agrimonioides, Bastard Agrimony

Oxytropis campestris, Yellow Milk-vetch

Euphorbia myrsinites, Glaucous Spurge

Primula vulgaris, Primrose

Buglossoides purpureoacerulea, Blue Gromwell

Doronicum columnae, Heart-leaved Leopardsbane

Anacamptis (Orchis) morio, Green-winged Orchid

Cruciata laevipes, Crosswort

20th April,

Corydalis cava, Bulbous Corydalis

Euphorbia cyparissias, Cypress Spurge

Gagea bohémica, Early Star of Bethlehem

Scilla bifolia, Alpine Squill

21st April,

Moebria muscosa, Mossy Sandwort

Asarum europaeum, Asarabacca

Trifolium noricum, Cream Clover

Daphne laureola, Spurge Laurel

Pulmonaria officinalis, Common Lungwort

Allium ursinum, Ramsons

Polygonatum odoratum, Scented Solomon's-seal

Paris quadrifolia, Herb Paris

Neottia nidus-avis, Bird's-nest Orchid

Neottia (Listera) ovata, Common Twayblade

Scandix pecten-veneris, Shepherd's Needle

Aquilegia vulgaris, Columbine

Saxifraga rotundifolia, Round-leaved Saxifrage

Fragaria vesca, Wild Strawberry

Lathyrus nissolia, Grass Vetchling

Helianthemum nummularium, Common Rock-rose

Primula veris, Oxlip

Lamiastrum galeobdolon, Yellow Archangel

Narcissus poeticus, Pheasant's-eye Narcissus

Orchis purpurea, Lady Orchid

Galium odoratum, Woodruff

Draba aizoides, Yellow Whitlow-grass

Lonicera xylosteum, Fly Honeysuckle

Muscari neglectum, Grape Hyacinth

Globularia cordifolia, Matted Globularia

Hepatica nobilis, Hepatica

Coronilla vaginalis, Small Scorpion-vetch

Sanicula europaea, Sanicle

Melittis melissophyllum, Bastard Balm

Fritillaria graeca ssp. *thessala*, A Fritillary

Convallaria majalis, Lily-of-the-Valley

Platanthera chlorantha, Greater Butterfly Orchid

Corallorhiza trifida, Coral-root Orchid



Lady Orchid by Tom Mabbett