

# 1000

# *Birds*

OF THE ULCINJ SALINA





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📷 Peter Sackl

## About birdwatching

Birdwatching is a form of active recreation in nature that includes bird identification and watching as well as observing their behaviour. Identification is made easier with the use of optical instruments (binoculars, telescope), photography equipment (cameras with long lenses) or on the basis of their song or call. Birdwatching is practiced by an ever growing number of people around the world, from scientists who gather data on birds for the purpose of scientific studies to nature lovers who do it as a hobby. In a time when nature is more and more under the pressure of human activities, birdwatching is an ideal way of getting back to nature, while an increase in the number of birdwatchers influences local community development, raises awareness on nature protection and reduces illegal activities, such as poaching, fires, habitat destruction and so on.

## Introduction

This manual is intended for all nature and bird lovers, whom we would like to introduce to the ornithofauna biodiversity in the Ulcinj Salina Nature Park. The 100 most common bird species that can be seen in this unique area have been presented. In addition to photographs, the manual also includes the description of a bird's appearance, which can be of help to birdwatchers when identifying the species.

Montenegro is a country that is characterised by significant natural riches, which is why bird lovers from all around the world have shown an increasing interest in it during the recent years. So far, 351 bird species have been recorded in the territory of the country, some of which are rare in other parts of Europe. Montenegro is a spot on the Adriatic Flyway, where birds from Central and Eastern Europe fly over the Balkan Peninsula and the Mediterranean Sea during autumn and spring migrations to Africa and back. While commuting, the birds stop at the Ulcinj Salina, where they rest, feed and re-energise for the flight ahead. Shallow waters rich in food, saltwort fields in dry basins, grassy embankments with shrubbery, as well as reeds, pose an ideal nesting habitat for a large number of species. Even when it gets colder, the salina landscape remains unchanged, and many winter visitors can be seen here during the winter months.

We hope that this manual is going to encourage all birdwatchers to further expand their knowledge, thereby contributing to the protection of the natural wealth of Montenegro.



📷 Marja Šoškić

## How and when to watch birds?

Birdwatching implies a careful observation of birds, with or without the help of optical instruments, an identification of birds on the basis of sound, as well as taking photographs and making sketches, for the purpose of studying or gathering information on specific species from various manuals. During any birdwatching activity, it is important to always have the well-being of the birds as a top priority. One should keep in mind that everything the birds do serves a purpose, so even when they sing, they do this in order to attract a partner or warn of danger. Necessary birdwatching equipment includes binoculars, a bird species identification manual and a notebook, in which you enter: the date, time, weather conditions, observed bird species and the number of individual birds of the same species. If possible, you should record the age and sex, as well as the type of habitat and any observed human activities that affect birds, such as: hunting, fishing, habitat destruction, etc. Inexperienced birdwatchers can sketch the physical features of a bird in their notebooks. It is necessary to observe as long as possible, in order to better notice the characteristics of the observed species and for later determination with the help of a manual. Field observations can also be recorded in mobile apps, such as *Observation*, which enable an easier overview and a systematisation of the observed species.

The best birdwatching conditions are at the time of migration, from March to June and from the second half of August to November, as well as during nesting, from April to June. It is important to know that birds are not equally active throughout the day: they are most active in the early morning and the late afternoon. While observing, a birdwatcher should keep back and be careful so the birds wouldn't be unnecessarily stressed or put in danger. Such behaviour enables an unobstructed performance of their natural activities (feeding, nesting, resting). It is important to note that, during the nesting season, one should not come close to the nests, nor should the birds be disturbed in any way, for this could result in nest failure. While observing birds in colonies, any behaviour not suited to the place and the situation can negatively affect a large number of nests. This is why it's very important not to enter colonies, but instead observe their activities from afar. Also, if any fledglings or eggs are noticed, they should be left alone and not touched while keeping a safe distance. Birdwatchers must make an effort not to leave any visible traces behind and not to jeopardise the habitat by their movement.



### Bird size:

**L** | A bird's size expressed in centimetres as the length from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail

**WS** | Wingspan

### Symbols:

♂ | male

♀ | female



1.

**MUTE SWAN***(Cygnus olor)*

📷 Jure Novak

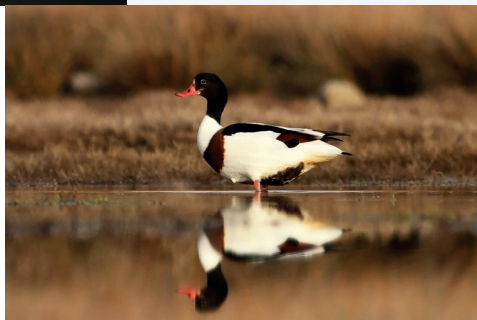
A large bird with a white body and a long neck that is slightly curved in the shape of the letter "S" while swimming. The head is small, with an orange-red beak and a recognisable black knob on the forehead. It prefers open water surfaces. It is rarely seen at the Salina.

**L** 140–160cm    **WS** 200–240cm

2.

**COMMON SHELDUCK***(Tadorna tadorna)*

📷 Jure Novak



Medium-sized, goose-like. The body is white, with a broad dark rusty band across the breast. The head is dark green and the bill red. The remiges, the tip of the rectrices and the belly band are black. Males have a red knob on the head. It feeds in the shallows, preferring open areas. It can be seen at the Salina throughout the entire year.

**L** 55–65 cm    **WS** 100–120 cm

3.

**MALLARD***(Anas platyrhynchos)*

📷 Jure Novak



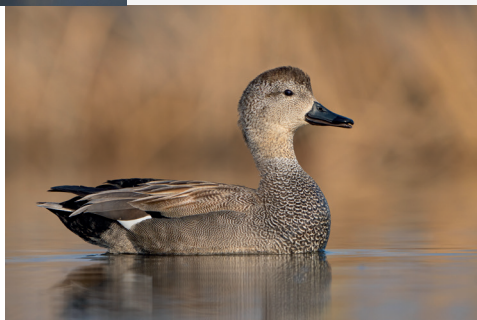
Medium-sized duck. The male has a characteristic green head and a grey-black body. In flight and on water, it is possible to see purple speculum feathers. It is the most common European duck. It nests at the Salina and can be seen throughout the year. It builds nests on the ground, by the water, and a single nest contains 8–13 eggs. It feeds on plants, insects, molluscs, amphibians, fish.

**L** 50–60 cm    **WS** 81–95 cm

4.

**GADWALL***(Anas strepera)*

📷 Jure Novak



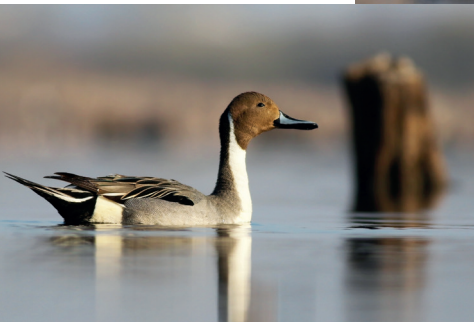
Similar to the Mallard, but more slender, with narrower wings and body. The male is mainly grey, with a black rump, while the bill is black-grey. In flight, a white speculum and chestnut and black portions on the wing coverts are displayed. The female is brown, with a grey head, while the belly is white.

**L** 46–56 cm    **WS** 78–90 cm

5.

**NORTHERN PINTAIL***(Anas acuta)*

📷 Jure Novak



A duck the size of the Mallard, but significantly more slender and elegant. The male has a characteristic pointed tail. It winters at the Salina, though it can be found here more frequently during the spring migration. It has a varied diet, feeding on the ground or deeper in the water.

**L** 51–62 cm    **WS** 79–87 cm



6.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER***(Anas clypeata)*

Jure Novak

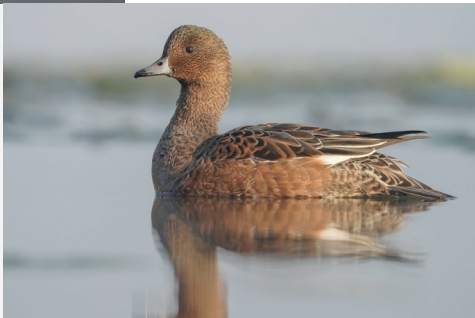
Medium-sized, with a short neck and a prominent long and wide bill. The male has a green head, white breast and chestnut belly and flanks. The female has a dark brown belly, contrasting the white underwing coverts.

**L** 44–52 cm    **WS** 73–82 cm

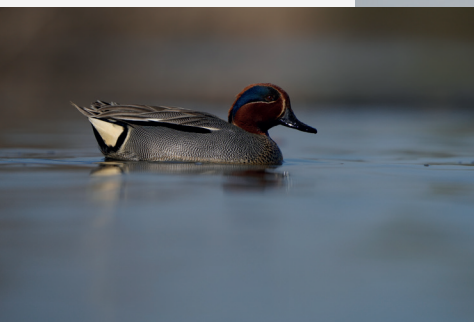
7.

**EURASIAN WIGEON***(Anas penelope)*

Jure Novak



The male has a chestnut head, a buffy forehead and it's impossible to mistake it for some other duck. The female is light brown and has a greyish bill with a black tip and pale stripes along the flanks. The belly is contrastingly white. It has a characteristic whistling call.

**L** 42–50 cm    **WS** 71–85 cm

8.

**EURASIAN TEAL***(Anas crecca)*

Jure Novak

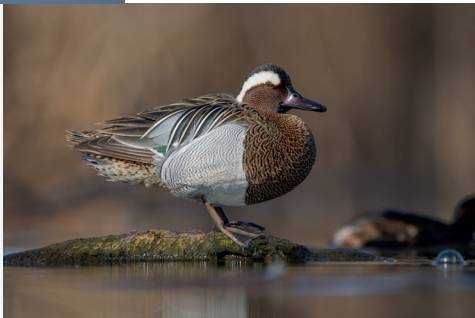
The smallest duck in the area, with narrow pointed wings and a short neck. It can take off from water easily and is quite agile. The male has a chestnut head with green sides, which are bordered with yellow. The female is brown, with dark vertical stripes and a green speculum.

**L** 34–38 cm    **WS** 53–59 cm

9.

**GARGANEY***(Anas querquedula)*

Jure Novak



The male has a dark brown head, with a white crescent around the eye down to the nape. The breast is dark brown, the flanks pale grey. The female has a slightly darker cheek stripe and a pale cream chin and throat. They can be seen at the Salina during the spring migration.

**L** 37–41 cm    **WS** 59–67 cm

10.

**COMMON POCHARD***(Aythya ferina)*

Jure Novak

Medium-sized, short tail. The bill is black with a slightly concave culmen leading to a sloping forehead, which gives this species its distinctive head profile. It has a bright chestnut head. The breast is jet black, while the flanks and the back are pale grey. It often dives or dabbles in search of food near the surface.

**L** 42–49 cm    **WS** 67–75 cm



11.

**RED-CRESTED  
POCHARD***(Netta rufina)*

Jure Novak

A fairly large duck. In flight, a prominent broad wing stripe is displayed. Black breast, centre of belly and tail, while the flanks are white. Brown back. The head is rounded, orange-brown, with a red bill. It feeds in shallow waters with lush vegetation; herbivore.

**L** 53–57 cm**WS** 85–90 cm

12.

**TUFTED DUCK***(Aythya fuligula)*

Borut Rubinić



Small, short-bodied and with a narrow neck. It has a rather large head, with a crest on the back of its head. In flight, a broad white wing stripe can easily be seen. The male's body is black, with clearly defined white flanks. The females are brown with paler flanks.

**L** 40–47 cm**WS** 65–72 cm

13.

**COMMON  
GOLDENEYE***(Bucephala clangula)*

Jure Novak

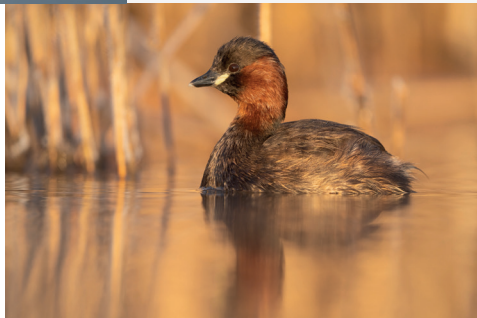
It has a distinct colouring and silhouette with a large head. The body is compact, the head rounded, with a slightly peaked crown on a short neck. White spots on the cheeks, with white wing feathers (speculum) as well.

**L** 40–48 cm**WS** 62–77 cm

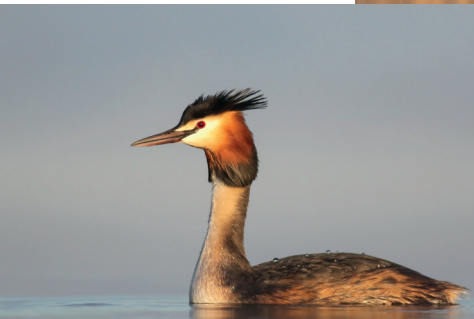
14.

**LITTLE GREBE***(Tachybaptus ruficollis)*

Jure Novak



The smallest European grebe. It nests at the Salina, with higher numbers when wintering. The nests are floating constructions, made up of reed or waterweed. It has one to two nests, with four to six eggs. Both parents look after the offspring. It feeds on small fish and other water organisms.

**L** 23–29 cm

15.

**GREAT  
CRESTED GREBE***(Podiceps cristatus)*

Jure Novak

It is the size of a Mallard. It has plumes on its head that stick out like two ears, though less prominent outside of the nesting season. At the Salina, it can be seen in winter in small numbers. It feeds on fish and other water organisms. Diver.

**L** 46–51 cm**WS** 59–73 cm



16.

**DALMATIAN PELICAN***(Pelecanus crispus)*

📷 Jure Novak

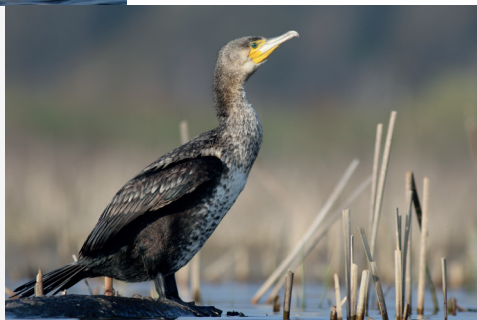
White plumage with a greyish hue, wings with a dark trailing edge, yellow breast. The neck is long, as is the bill, with a gular pouch that is orange during the nesting season. It is also famous for the mane-like feathers on its head. At the Salina, it can usually be seen from August to December.

**L** 160–180 cm    **WS** 270–320 cm

17.

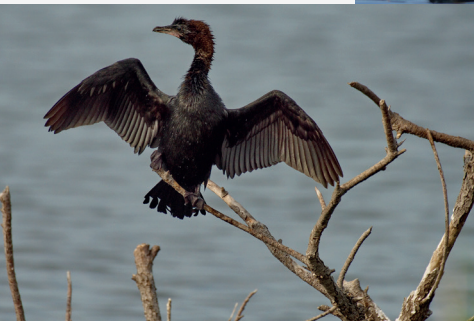
**GREAT CORMORANT***(Phalacrocorax carbo)*

📷 Jure Novak



A large bird with a long thick neck. The head profile is rather wedge-shaped and the bill is strong. Much larger than the Pygmy Cormorant. Pale cheeks, with pale thighs in the spring. It feeds on fish.

**L** 77–94 cm    **WS** 121–149 cm



18.

**PYGMY CORMORANT***(Phalacrocorax pygmaeus)*

📷 Peter Sackl

Half the size of the Great Cormorant, with a bill that is short in proportion to the head and a longer tail. Blackish with a bronzy gloss. It nests colonially, feeding in large flocks. Several individuals can often be seen resting in trees.

**L** 45–55 cm    **WS** 75–90 cm

19.

**GREAT BITTERN***(Botaurus stellaris)*

📷 Peter Sackl



A large brown heron, somewhat smaller than the Grey Heron, but more squat and with a thicker neck. It can rarely be seen in flight. It hides in reeds, where it also nests. If disturbed, it can be seen with its bill pointed directly upwards. It feeds on fish, frogs, insects, etc.

**L** 69–81 cm    **WS** 100–130 cm



20.

**SQUACCO HERON***(Ardeola ralloides)*

📷 Jure Novak

A small buff-brown heron with white wings. Adults have a yellowish neck. At the Salina, it can be seen in spring and autumn, in smaller numbers. It feeds on insects, small fish and amphibians.

**L** 40–49 cm    **WS** 71–86 cm



21.

**LITTLE EGRET***(Egretta garzetta)*

Jure Novak

The smallest white heron in our region, with a black beak and yellow feet. It nests in colonies together with other herons. It can often be observed feeding at the Salina.

**L** 55–65 cm**WS** 88–106 cm

22.

**GREAT EGRET***(Casmerodius albus)*

Jure Novak



A large, completely white heron, almost the same size as the Grey Heron, but slightly more elegant – with longer legs and neck. What differentiates it from the little egret are its slower wingbeats, longer legs, yellow bill and size.

**L** 85–100 cm**WS** 145–170 cm

23.

**GREY HERON***(Ardea cinerea)*

Jure Novak

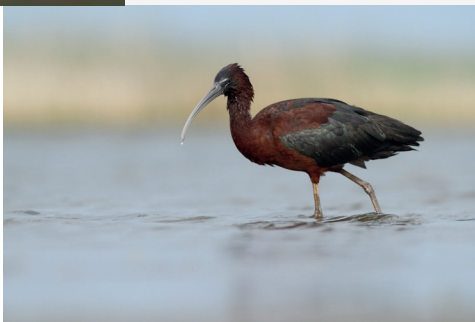
Our most widely distributed and largest heron, pale grey in colour with a white neck. In flight, the contrasting black flight feathers are displayed. It nests in colonies, in the delta of the Bojana River. It can be found at the Salina throughout the year. It feeds on fish, frogs, insects, snails, etc.

**L** 84–102 cm**WS** 155–175 cm

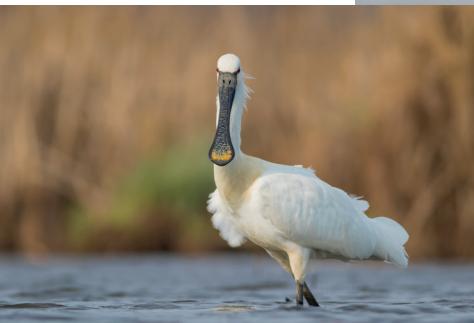
24.

**GLOSSY IBIS***(Plegadis falcinellus)*

Jure Novak



A dark bird with a long, curved bill and a long neck. The plumage is dark purple-brown, with green gloss on the wings. It feeds on insects and frogs.

**L** 55–65 cm**WS** 88–105 cm

25.

**EURASIAN SPOONBILL***(Platalea leucorodia)*

Jure Novak

Unique in appearance. It has a long spoon-shaped bill which it puts into the water for feeding and then sways its head from side to side as it moves forward. It feeds on molluscs, crustaceans and small fish.

**L** 80–93 cm**WS** 120–135 cm



26.

## GREATER FLAMINGO

(*Phoenicopterus roseus*)

📷 Peter Sackl

Soft pink plumage, with red wing coverts and black flight feathers. The legs are completely pink, whereas the bill is pink with a black tip. Chicks are grey-brown in colour. Large flocks can be observed at the Salina. It feeds on small water animals and plankton.

**L** 120–145 cm    **WS** 140–170 cm

27.

## OSPREY

(*Pandion haliaetus*)

📷 Jure Novak



A medium-sized bird of prey with long narrow wings; it is white underneath with a unique silhouette, while the tail is short and squared. It is grey-brown above and white underneath; black barring on the underwings. The head is white, with a black “mask” over the eyes. It has a clearly visible breast band. It feeds on fish and hunts with a feet-first plunge into shallow water.

**L** 52–60 cm    **WS** 152–167 cm



28.

## WESTERN MARSH HARRIER

(*Circus aeruginosus*)

📷 Jure Novak

The largest harrier, slightly larger than the Honey Buzzard, but with a more slender body, narrower wings and longer tail. It circles with its wings held in a shallow V-shape. It has distinctly set-off black wing-tips, a uniformly pale grey tail, and a beige head and breast. Chestnut belly and wing coverts. It nests in spacious tall reed beds, by the water. It feeds on birds and mammals.

**L** 43–55 cm    **WS** 115–140 cm

29.

## HEN HARRIER

(*Circus cyaneus*)

📷 Peter Sackl



Easily recognised by its flight and wings raised high in a V-shape. It differs from the Marsh Harrier by its plumage and flight. The wingtips are black, the head is pale grey, while the breast is sharply set off from the lower white parts. Dark trailing edge to the underwing, pale grey upperparts, with white uppertail coverts. In females, the upperparts are brown, with white uppertail coverts; the underparts are buffish-white. It feeds on small mammals and birds; nests on the ground.

**L** 45–55 cm    **WS** 97–118 cm



30.

## COMMON BUZZARD

(*Buteo buteo*)

📷 Jure Novak

Medium-sized, broad-winged; compact bird of prey with a broad, short neck and a medium-length tail. It can often be seen perched on posts or branches watching for prey. It soars at a moderate height, with wings lifted in a V-shape. The plumage colour varies from very dark to pale. The tail is white, densely barred grey, and regardless of the colour pattern, it has a pale band across the lower breast. The breast is usually pale. It feeds mainly on smaller mammals, reptiles and amphibians, as well as carcasses of other animals. It nests in trees.

**L** 48–56 cm    **WS** 110–130 cm



31.

## EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD

(*Pernis apivorus*)

📷 Borut Rubinić

Similar to the Common Buzzard in appearance, but slightly larger and with longer wings. The neck is slim and the head held forward in flight. The tail is quite long (about as long as the wing width), with the corners rounded. It is characterised by a specific silhouette in flight – smoothly down-curved wings. The plumage colour varies, including dark, medium-pale, pale and rufous types. The tail has three dark bars. The head is pale grey and the upperparts brown-grey.

♂ L 52–59 cm      WS 113–135 cm

32.

## EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK

(*Accipiter nisus*)

📷 Jure Novak



A small raptor with rather short, broad, blunt-tipped wings and a long tail. The tail is always longer than the wing width, with four to five bars. It has a relatively small bill, thin legs and a slim lower body. Dark-grey upperparts, often tinged bluish, rufous cheeks, as well as rufous barring on the breast and the belly. The female is larger than the male, with brown barring and greyish upperparts. A very numerous bird of prey. It hunts small birds, with a surprise attack and a fast flight.

♂ L 29–34 cm      WS 58–65 cm      ♀ L 35–41 cm      WS 67–80 cm



33.

## COMMON KESTREL

(*Falco tinnunculus*)

📷 Peter Sackl

Somewhat small falcon with a long tail, famous for its frequent hovering. Medium-sized, with long wings rather narrow at the base and slightly blunt at the tips when spread. The back and upperwing coverts are reddish-brown, contrasting with dark flight feathers. Widely distributed in open habitats. Feeds on rodents, insects, reptiles... Often nests in trees (in old crow's nests), in buildings, ledges, etc.

♂ L 31–37 cm      WS 68–78 cm

34.

## RED-FOOTED FALCON

(*Falco vespertinus*)

📷 Bojan Zeković



Medium-sized bird of prey, with a silhouette recalling the Common Kestrel. A unique combination of a dark blue-grey body, dull red lower body, below the belly and the undertail, and silvery-grey flight feathers. Deep orange cere and feet. It nests colonially, rarely individually, in open area, steppes or by meadows. Just like the kestrel, it makes its nests in old crow's nests. It feeds on insects.

♂ L 28–34 cm      WS 65–76 cm



35.

## WATER RAIL

(*Rallus aquaticus*)

📷 Jure Novak

A small bird that lives on reed bed floors, well-hidden. It is olive-brown, with black spots above. Grey face and breast, red bill. It nests in dense sedge. Its call is loud and can mainly be heard at night.

♂ L 23–26 cm



36.

**COMMON  
MOORHEN***(Gallinula chloropus)*

Jure Novak

A pigeon-sized dark bird with a rather long tail. The bill is red with a yellow tip. Slate-grey plumage with a white line along the flank. It nests in dense sedge, usually very well hidden.

**L** 27–31 cm

37.

**EURASIAN COOT***(Fulica atra)*

Jure Novak



A dark bird with a broad body, short tail and small, rounded head. Soot-grey body and black head with a white bill and frontal plate. It nests at reed bed edge, with the nest often visible. A large number winters at the Salina.

**L** 36–42 cm

38.

**EURASIAN  
OYSTERCATCHER***(Haematopus ostralegus)*

Jure Novak

Large, compact and deep-chested. It has a striking appearance, with a long and straight orange-red bill and black and white plumage. A broad white wing bar can be observed in flight. It flies in a straight line with quick wingbeats, recalling a duck's flight. It feeds on mussels, worms, crustaceans and larger insects.

**L** 39–44 cm**WS** 72–83 cm

39.

**PIED AVOCET***(Recurvirostra avosetta)*

Jure Novak



Distinct appearance, black and white body, with a thin black upward-curving bill. Long and pale blue legs. It feeds mainly on insects and small crustaceans.

**L** 42–46 cm**WS** 67–77 cm

40.

**BLACK-WINGED  
STILT***(Himantopus himantopus)*

Peter Sackl

A bird with a distinct unmistakable appearance. It has an elegant black and white body, a red needle-fine bill and long red legs. It flies with its head and legs extended, which gives it its characteristic body outline. Its long legs enable it to move and hunt in somewhat deeper waters.

**L** 33–36 cm



41.

**STONE CURLEW***(Burhinus oedicnemus)*

Peter Sackl

It nests on bare or sparsely vegetated open ground (stony pastures, dried mud, steppe margins, etc.). It walks or runs with its long body held horizontal and its head often hunched into the shoulders. Well-camouflaged when resting. Large yellow eyes and a black-tipped bill are often its most prominent features.

**L** 38–45 cm**WS** 76–88 cm

42.

**COLLARED PRATINCOLE***(Glareola pratincola)*

Peter Sackl



Its long wings and forked tail give it a tern-like shape, but with longer legs and a stubby bill. It is distinguished by dull red underwing coverts, a white wing edge and a red base of the bill. It is quite commonly found at the Salina; it nests in colonies, on the ground, preferring open, flat and dry terrain with low vegetation.

**L** 24–28 cm**WS** 60–70 cm

43.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER***(Charadrius dubius)*

Jure Novak

Slightly smaller than the Common Ringer Plover, with a slimmer, longer bill and a more slender rear end. It can be observed on sand or gravel terrain, where it is difficult to make out. It is distinguished by its black neckband and yellow eye-ring, as well as its characteristic run. It nests on the ground.

**L** 15,5–18 cm**WS** 32–35 cm

44.

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER***(Charadrius hiaticula)*

Jure Novak



Prefers open sandy patches among short grass. It is more compact and full-chested, with a longer primary projection in comparison to the Little Ringer Plover. Adults have distinct orange legs and bill base (black tip) and a prominent white wing bar. It feeds on small invertebrates.

**L** 17–19,5 cm**WS** 35–41 cm

45.

**KENTISH PLOVER***(Charadrius alexandrinus)*

Jure Novak

Paler, slightly smaller, longer-legged and thinner-billed than the Common Ringed Plover, with a short rear end and a flat-crowned, broad, large head. It has black markings on the head and breast sides. The crown and the nape have a variable amount of rusty colour.

**L** 15–17 cm

46.

**GREY PLOVER***(Pluvialis squatarola)* Jure Novak

Large head, bulky body and short, heavy bill. In flight, it shows characteristic black axillaries, white wing bar and white rump. In summer, adults have a black belly, breast, neck and face. They can be seen more often in winter, when the underparts are whitish, while the upperparts have whitish, diffusely fringed edges or stripes.

**L** 26–29cm**WS** 56–63 cm

47.

**EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER***(Pluvialis apricaria)* Jure Novak

Slightly smaller and daintier than the Grey Plover. It has somewhat narrower and more pointed wings and faster wingbeats. In flight, a diffuse wing bar can be seen. White axillaries and underwing. Dark grey upperparts, with feather edges densely notched ochrous-yellow or white. The belly and neck are very dark in males, as compared to the lighter females, with patterned white feathers.

**L** 25–28 cm**WS** 53–59 cm

48.

**NORTHERN LAPWING***(Vanellus vanellus)* Jure Novak

Easily noticeable, rounded wings and striking light and dark contrast. It has a unique, long and thin crest on its head, with green and purple iridescence. In flight, it shows rounded wing tips. The wings are dark above, with white axillaries and belly underneath. They form large flocks in late autumn or winter.

**L** 28–31 cm**WS** 67–72 cm

49.

**DUNLIN***(Calidris alpina)* Jure Novak

Common on marshy plains or parts of shallow shores with low vegetation. Characteristic summer plumage appearance; distinct black belly patch, variable rufous mantle and scapulars. Black bill, medium length and slightly down-curved.

**L** 17–21 cm**WS** 32–36 cm

50.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER***(Calidris ferruginea)* Jure Novak

Slightly larger than the Dunlin, but with a longer, finer-tipped, curved bill. Long legs and neck, giving a more elegant outline. White rump obvious in flight. Adult males are uniformly coloured in summer, with a bright brick-red lower part, whereas females have more patterned white feathers.

**L** 19–21,5 cm



51.

**LITTLE STINT***(Calidris minuta)*

Jure Novak

Small, around two-thirds the size of the Dunlin. Famous for its characteristic walk, faster movements and pecking rate. Fine-tipped, straight, short bill. More extensive white on the head and the breast gives it a whiter front end appearance. Black legs. In summer, adults have rusty tones on the head, breast and upperparts.

**L** 14–15,5 cm    **WS** 27–30 cm

52.

**WOOD SANDPIPER***(Tringa glareola)*

Jure Novak



It has a shape very similar to the Common Redshank, but smaller in size and bill length by a third. Similar to the Green Sandpiper. It differs in a paler brown colour, larger pale patterns on the upperparts, longer yellowish-green legs, breast and flanks, which are loosely streaked and barred. The markings don't form a clear-cut breast band. A light supercilium extends behind the eye. It usually nests in dense vegetation on the ground.

**L** 15,5–21 cm    **WS** 35–39 cm



53.

**GREEN SANDPIPER***(Tringa ochropus)*

Jure Novak

Size and structure as the Wood Sandpiper, but more robust, with slightly shorter legs. Black wings, white rump, black bars on the tail. It differs from the Wood Sandpiper by its uniform blackish upperparts, with finer speckling. A dark breast is clear-cut against white underparts. Greenish-grey legs.

**L** 20–24 cm    **WS** 39–44 cm

54.

**COMMON SANDPIPER***(Actitis hypoleucos)*

Jure Novak



Told by its behaviour and shape long before its appearance; a medium-small bird with a horizontal, semi-crouched carriage; short-necked, long-tailed and rather short-legged. Brown above, with a distinctive white divide that reaches the darker upperparts.

**L** 18–20,5 cm    **WS** 32–35 cm



55.

**COMMON REDSHANK***(Tringa totanus)*

Jure Novak

Medium-sized, with distinctive red legs and bill base. Brownish above, with streaked breast and flanks, as well as a white eye-ring and fore-supercilium. In flight, it shows a characteristic white wing edge on the upper side. It nests on the ground.

**L** 24–27 cm    **WS** 47–53 cm



56.

**SPOTTED REDSHANK***(Tringa erythropus)*

📷 Jure Novak

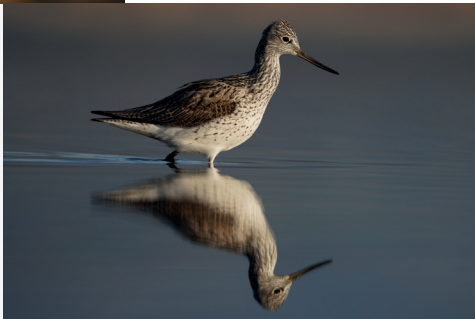
Similar to the Common Redshank, but more slender and elegant. It has slightly longer legs and a longer, finer bill which has a downward droop near the tip. The red on the bill is restricted to the base of the lower mandible. The wings are plain. White rump extending in a thin slit towards the back. The male is all black with fine speckling, and the female is quite similar, but with extensive white flecking on the flanks. It feeds in deeper waters, often diving and swimming like a duck.

L 29–33 cm

57.

**COMMON GREENSHANK***(Tringa nebularia)*

📷 Jure Novak



Slightly larger and more heavily built than the Common Redshank; slightly longer and broader-based bill with a slight upcurve. Grey or greenish-grey bill base and legs. White rump with colour extending up the back. Head, breast and flanks coarsely streaked and barred. It feeds on insects and worms, but being a very agile bird it can also dash after small fish.

L 30–34 cm    WS 55–62 cm

58.

**MARSH SANDPIPER***(Tringa stagnatilis)*

📷 Jure Novak



Of a size between the Wood Sandpiper and the Common Redshank, but its long, needle-fine bill, slim body and neck, as well as very long, thin legs, which make it more slender and elegant than any other sandpipers, give this bird its characteristic appearance. It has a prominent white supercilium and feathering around the base of the bill. Dull yellowish or greenish-grey legs.

L 22–25 cm

59.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT***(Limosa limosa)*

📷 Uku Paal



About the size of the Eurasian Curlew, but more slender. In summer, the bill is yellow or orange with a dark tip. Adult males acquire much more extensive and brighter orange summer plumage, while females have a whitish belly and undertail coverts, with barred flanks.

L 37–42 cm    WS 63–74 cm

60.

**EURASIAN CURLEW***(Numenius arquata)*

📷 Uku Paal



Large, with a very long, evenly decurved bill. Pointed white rump and darker outer primaries. It flies rather slow, resembling a gull. At the Salina, it can be seen during the migration period.

L 45–57 cm    WS 89–106 cm



61.

**COMMON SNIPE***(Gallinago gallinago)*

📷 Jure Novak

It nests in marshes and damp meadows with short vegetation. The nest is usually well concealed in the vegetation. Medium-sized, with a disproportionately long, straight bill, dumpy shape, crouching posture. Legs are short, head and body striped. The plumage is basically brown, with boldly striped head and upperparts. The flanks are barred dark, while the belly is white.

♂ **L** 33–38 cm      **WS** 55–65 cm

62.

**RUFF***(Philomachus pugnax)*

📷 Uku Paal



Males are considerably larger. They leave the impression of a large body, with a small head, a rather long neck and a medium-sized bill, slightly curved. Leg and bill colour varies. Some non-breeding males have bright orange legs and bill base, so they can be confused with the Redshank; the upperparts are scaly and not plain. At the Salina, they can be observed during migration.

♂ **L** 29–32 cm      **WS** 54–60 cm, ♀ **L** 22–26 cm      **WS** 46–49 cm



63.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL***(Larus ridibundus)*

📷 Peter Sackl

A gull with a white head, dark hood and dark, reddish bill and legs; tern-like wings, long neck, whereas the tail is somewhat shorter in comparison to other species. During the nesting period, the head acquires a black colour, resembling a hood. What distinguishes them from other gulls is also the white leading edge to the outer wing.

**L** 35–39 cm      **WS** 86–99 cm

64.

**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL***(Larus michahellis)*

📷 Jure Novak



Adults have a white head and bright yellow legs, a heavy bill with a strongly curved tip and a larger red spot often reaching onto the upper mandible. The back is dark grey with less bluish cast. They are numerous and nest in colonies; rarely as individual pairs. They feed on fish, crustaceans, eggs and other species' chicks, as well as carcasses and leftover food in landfills.

**L** 52–58 cm      **WS** 120–140 cm



65.

**LITTLE TERN***(Sternula albifrons)*

📷 Jure Novak

A tiny tern, half the size of the Common Tern, with very narrow wings; it hovers low over the surface with distinct quick wingbeats, often prolonged, and then plunges to catch fish. It has a white forehead, with black feathers between its bill and eyes (lores). The bill is yellow with a small black tip, while the legs are orange-yellow. It nests in colonies, on sandy terrain with gravel, shellfish and low vegetation.

**L** 21–25 cm      **WS** 41–47 cm



66.

**COMMON TERN***(Sterna hirundo)*

Jure Novak

Distinct red bill with a black tip. The underparts are pale grey, usually without contrast. It nests colonially or individually in ground niches on sandy or gravelly terrain with shellfish and/or low vegetation. The young resemble the Little Tern, but are much larger. It feeds on small fish.

**L** 34–37 cm**WS** 70–80 cm

67.

**CASPIAN TERN***(Hydroprogne caspia)*

Borut Rubinić



The largest tern, with a slower flight in comparison to other terns. It can easily be recognised by its very large red bill and dark legs. At the Salina, it can be observed during the spring and autumn migration.

**L** 48–55 cm**WS** 96–111 cm

68.

**EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE***(Streptopelia turtur)*

Jure Novak

A rather small and slender bird from the family Columbidae. Bright orange-brown feather edges and clear-cut black centres of the coverts. Up close, a black and white striped neck patch is visible. It has a recognisable call. It nests in trees in the Salina's surroundings.

**L** 25–28 cm**WS** 45–50 cm

69.

**COMMON CUCKOO***(Cuculus canorus)*

Jure Novak



A medium-sized bird, slender, with a long rounded tail and pointed wings. Famous for its nest parasitism. It doesn't build its own nest and instead lays 9-10 eggs in other birds' nests for incubation. It feeds on insects, especially caterpillars and worms. It has a highly distinct call. Migrant.

**L** 32–36 cm**WS** 54–60 cm

70.

**LITTLE OWL***(Athene noctua)*

Jure Novak

A rather small and compact owl. It has a large, wide, rounded head and a proportionately flat crown, long legs and a short tail. It's often crouched when alert and nervously moves the body up and down. White-speckled brown above, with smaller spots on the head and somewhat larger on the back. Whitish underparts with brown bars. Yellow eyes, white brows, with a stern expression. Active during the day as well, which is why it can be seen frequently.

**L** 23–27,5 cm**WS** 50–57 cm



71.

**EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR***(Caprimulgus europaeus)*

📷 Jure Novak

Medium-sized bird, specialised in catching larger insects in flight, at dusk and during the night. It has long, narrow wings and tail, short legs and bill. The plumage is brown, speckled with white spots. Present in summer. During the day, it rests on branches or on the ground. It is usually observed at night and recognised by its distinct call.

L 24–28 cm

WS 52–59 cm

72.

**EURASIAN HOOPOE***(Upupa epops)*

📷 Jure Novak



One of the most striking birds that can be seen at the Salina. Brown-orange with black- and white-striped broadly rounded wings. It has a distinct crest on its crown. Long, narrow and slightly curved bill. It nests in holes in trees and walls. It can most often be seen on the ground in search of food. It feeds on large insects and earthworms. Migrant, winters in Africa.

L 25–29 cm

WS 44–48 cm

73.

**COMMON KINGFISHER***(Alcedo atthis)*

📷 Jure Novak



Pale blue back, blue-green wings and orange breast and belly. It cannot be mistaken for any other bird. Its flight is fast and direct; it plunges to catch fish. It is difficult to pick out if perched motionless, and can be seen much easier as it flies low over the water surface, calling.

L 17–19,5 cm (uključujući i kljun od 4 cm)

74.

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER***(Merops apiaster)*

📷 Jure Novak



Distinct exotic appearance with gaudy plumage colours. It cannot be mistaken for any other bird; bright yellow throat, bluish underbody, yellowish-white shoulder patches and red-brown crown. It uses shrubs and power lines to look out for flying insects. It loves open mosaic-like habitats. It nests colonially, in gravel or sand pits.

L 25–29 cm

WS 36–40 cm

75.

**EUROPEAN ROLLER***(Coracias garrulus)*

📷 Jure Novak



A distinct Jackdaw-sized, heavily built, green-tinged pale blue bird with a brown back. It nests in holes, though at the Salina it makes use of pole-mounted birdhouses. It can often be seen on power lines watching its prey.

L 29–32 cm

WS 52–57,5 cm



76.

**CRESTED LARK***(Galerida cristata)*

Jure Novak

Greyish-brown with a long spiky crest, visible at the rear of the head even when folded. The underwing and often the uppertail coverts have a red-brown hue. The bill is long and pointed with a straight lower edge. It nests on open dry fields.

**L** 17–19 cm

77.

**COMMON SAND MARTIN***(Riparia riparia)*

Peter Sackl



A rather small swallow, dull brown above, while below with a uniform breast that separates a white throat from a white belly. It nests colonially in vertical sand and earth banks, where it burrows up to a depth of one metre. It has a strong association with water, feeding on insects.

**L** 12–13 cm

78.

**BARN SWALLOW***(Hirundo rustica)*

Peter Sackl

The typical swallow, well-known to all through its nesting habits and through its characteristic appearance: long, pointed wings and a deeply forked tail with wire-thin elongated streamers. Blue-glossed black above, white or buffish-white below, with a blue-black breast band and a blood-red throat and forehead. It nests in distinct open cups made of mud and plant material, on the beams of buildings, bridges, below sills, etc. It feeds on insects.

**L** 17–21 cm

79.

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW***(Cecropis daurica)*

Borut Rubinić



By its size and shape, as well as the pointed tail-streamers, it resembles the Barn Swallow, but is distinguished by a pale rump, which appears white from afar, though it is of a pale rusty-red colour. The sides of the head are pale and there is a rusty-red band across the head. The wings and the tail are brownish-black, while the mantle, scapulars and the crown are shiny blue-black. The throat and the breast are white from below, while the black undertail coverts are squared-off (white in the case of the barn swallow). It builds a closed mud nest with an entrance tunnel. It feeds on flying insects.

**L** 14–19 cm

80.


**HOUSE MARTIN***(Delichon urbicum)*

Jure Novak

Tail fork shallow, white below, black above, with white uppertail coverts. It is a common colonial-nesting species; it nests, just like the Barn Swallow, on buildings, and sometimes on cliffs. It builds a rounded closed mud nest with a small entrance. It feeds on insects.

**L** 13,5–15 cm

81.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL***(Motacilla flava)* Jure Novak

Small, slender and long-tailed, with a pointed bill, often wagging its tail up and down. The male is bright yellow below, while the female is duller. Head appearance variations are common in males. The most common variation in our region includes a dark grey nape and ear-covers, but without a supercilium, and a yellow throat like the underparts. It feeds on insects. A common nesting species at the Salina.

**L** 15–16 cm

82.

**EUROPEAN ROBIN***(Erithacus rubecula)* Jure Novak

Recognisable, small and brownish with a rusty-red throat. The head appears large; long and very thin legs. It feeds on insects, snails, worms. It nests in hollow stumps, on the shore, in crevices.

**L** 12,5–14 cm

83.

**COMMON NIGHTINGALE***(Luscinia megarhynchos)* Jure Novak

More often heard than seen, famous for its song. Its appearance is surprisingly plain; brown above with a rusty-red tail and rump, grey-buff below with a diffusely red throat.

**L** 15–16,5 cm

84.

**WHINCHAT***(Saxicola rubetra)* Jure Novak

Tiny, short-tailed, with long dark legs. Dark-spotted yellow-brown rump, with dark stripes on the remainder of the upperparts, with a little white on the tail base, glimpsed in flight. Prominent supercilium above the eye. Rather dark wing feathers. Widely distributed in open lowlands. It usually nests in damp areas, inside tussocks. It feeds on insects.

**L** 12–14 cm

85.

**STONECHAT***(Saxicola rubicola)* Jure Novak

The entire head is black, including the chin, with a white spot on the side of the neck. The breast is reddish-orange, which continues on to the flanks with varying intensity. Dark-streaked brown rump, paler in summer. It can be seen in open areas with low shrubbery.

**L** 11,5–13 cm



86.

### SUBALPINE WARBLER

(*Sylvia cantillans*)

📷 Marija Šoškić

Characterised by a strong contrast between a brick-red throat and upper breast, and many paler or even whitish underparts. Distinct white moustache. It often nests in shrubs, on dry slopes or sandy heaths.

📏 12,5–13,5 cm

87.

### CETTI'S WARBLER

(*Cettia cetti*)

📷 Peter Sackl



A rather compact warbler, medium-sized, short-necked and broad-tailed; it has short and strongly rounded wings. The plumage is uniform red-brown above, dusky greyish-white below, with a rusty tinge on the flanks and the belly. Lively and active, flicks wings and tail. It has a characteristic call. Only bird with ten tail feathers. It nests in dense and quite tall vegetation, beside water if possible.

📏 13–14 cm

88.

### GREAT REED WARBLER

(*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)

📷 Peter Sackl



Largest reed warbler. Apart from its size and distinct gruffer voice, it is also recognised by its strong bill, as well as a dark spot at the tip of the lower mandible. Clearly distinct pale supercilium and a slightly darker eyestripe, along with a grey-brown nape and hindneck. The upperparts are grey-brown with a yellow-brown tinge on the flanks; it has fine grey streaks on the neck. It has a characteristic and loud call, emitted from the top of reed beds.

📏 16–20 cm

89.

### OLIVACEOUS WARBLER

(*Iduna pallida*)

📷 Uku Paal



Medium-sized, with a peaked head, flat forehead and a long, narrow bill. A short, pale supercilium ending behind the eye; pale eye-ring. The coverts are olive-grey with white tips on the secondaries; white underparts. It nests in open woodlands, shrubbery or lush vegetation.

📏 12–13,5 cm

90.

### WINTER WREN

(*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

📷 Jure Novak



Our smallest bird. Mainly brown above. Short tail that is usually raised vertically. The bill is quite long, pointed and slightly decurved. It hops quickly among the roots and low shrubbery.

📏 9–10,5 cm



91.

## RED-BACKED SHRIKE

(*Lanius collurio*)

📷 Jure Novak

Pale pinkish-buff breast and belly, white throat, pale grey crown. Reddish-brown above. Broad, black eyestripe prominent on the head. Black tail with white edges near the base. It nests in open areas with hawthorn, wild rose and garland thorn. It mainly feeds on insects. It stores food by impaling it on thorns.

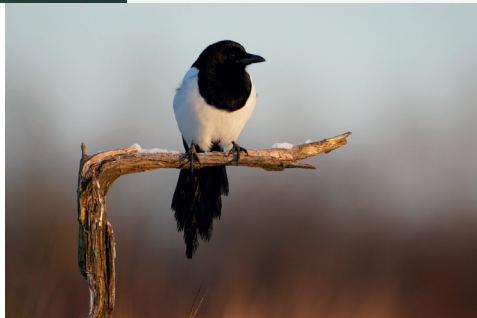
📏 16–18 cm

92.

## COMMON MAGPIE

(*Pica pica*)

📷 Jure Novak



Long-tailed with black and white plumage, it is quite common in human settlements. It is unmistakable and probably the bird which most people recognise. It builds a roofed stick nest in tree crowns. Occasionally they gather in loud flocks.

📏 40–51 cm



93.

## HOODED CROW

(*Corvus cornix*)

📷 Jure Novak

It has a distinct bicoloured plumage with an ashy grey body and black wings, tail and head. It nests in open woodlands, tree clumps, beside open areas and similar. Omnivore. It robs other birds' nests, eats refuse and carrion, insects and other invertebrates, berries, seeds, small fish and vertebrates.

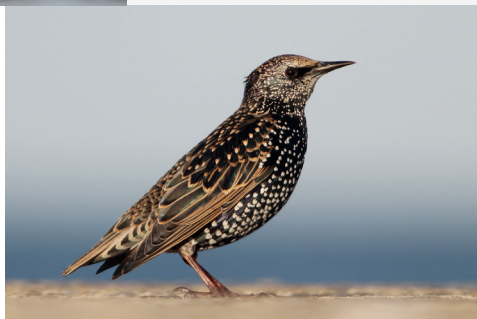
📏 44–51 cm      📏 84–100 cm

94.

## COMMON STARLING

(*Sturnus vulgaris*)

📷 Jure Novak



A seemingly black bird, its bill is yellow in the nesting season and grey-brown outside of it. If you look more closely, you can see that the plumage is iridescent (giving off a metallic-green and purple gloss), as well as spots above, or below in the winter. The tail is short, while the bill is rather long and pointed. After nesting, they form huge flocks. They feed in fields, gardens, trees.

📏 19–22 cm



95.

## GOLDEN ORIOLE

(*Oriolus oriolus*)

📷 Marija Šoškić

A blackbird-sized bird. The male's body is largely yellow, with black wings and tail. The female and the young are green, as well as white below. It is hard to see, preferring to stay hidden high up in the foliage. It has a beautiful and distinct song. It feeds on insects and berries. It builds nests suspended like a hammock from a branch. Migrant, winters in Africa.

📏 22–25 cm



96.

**HOUSE SPARROW***(Passer domesticus)*

Peter Sackl

A bird that many people recognise easily. Robust, heavy-bodied and fairly large-headed, with a big bill. The back is brown with broad black streaks. Males have a black throat and lores, i.e. spaces between the bill and the eyes. Grey crown, chestnut brown on the sides. Females have a darker brown plumage, grey-white below, buffy-brown above, with black streaks across the back.

**L** 14–16 cm

Of the same shape as the House Sparrow; it is distinguished by its fully chestnut-brown crown. It has a large, broad and black throat, which connects with blackish scapulars. It has black streaks on its lower breast and on the flanks. The cheeks are whitish, the supercilium white. It nests in tall vegetation, in large colonies; the nests are made of hay and twigs.

**L** 14–16 cm

97.

**SPANISH SPARROW***(Passer hispaniolensis)*

Jure Novak



Smaller than the sparrow. It nests in trees around the Salina. It feeds on seeds. Unmistakable with other species due to its red 'face' on an otherwise black and white head. Black wings with a broad, yellow wing bar. Both sexes are similar. Long and pointed bill. Famous for its beautiful song.

**L** 12–13,5 cm

Medium-sized bunting, with a small and dark bill. The plumage is mostly brown and buffy-white with dark streaking. In summer, males are easily distinguished by their black head and by their throat with a pure-white neck band. It nests in reeds, tall rushes and shrubbery, at the edge of water surfaces.

**L** 13,5–15,5 cm

99.

**COMMON REED BUNTING***(Emberiza schoeniclus)*

Jure Novak



Large, with quite a heavy body and a stout bill. Its plumage is dark, brown-streaked above and buffy-white below. Yellow-pinkish legs and bill. Nesting species at the Salina. It can often be seen in isolated trees, shrubs, posts or wires, from where it sings loudly. It feeds on grass seeds. It nests in tussocks or in low shrubbery.

**L** 16–19 cm

100.

**CORN BUNTING***(Emberiza calandra)*

Jure Novak



## About the Salina

The Ulcinj Salina is located at the very south of Montenegro, covering an area of 1,492 ha. It was built in the region with the greatest amount of insolation in the Adriatic—up to 2,567 hours of sunlight—and with the largest number of tropical days in the former Yugoslavia, which makes it ideal for a salina. In this concrete case, the salina based its salt production mainly on evaporation, with the help of the sun and the wind.

It is located between the most important ornithological localities in the Adriatic, and beyond, which are of international significance for birds: Velika Plaža, Ada Bojana, Lake Šas, Lake Skadar and Velipojë in Albania. This is one of the ten largest and newest salinas in the Mediterranean.

Before its construction, in this area was the Zogaj marsh (“zog” means “bird” in Albanian), a swamp with brackish water. With the intention of creating a fertile plain in the hinterland of Velika Plaža (Long Beach), in 1890 Queen Milena Petrović gave an order to connect the lake with the sea, thus drying it up. Since the elevation of the lake was lower than the average sea level, once the channel was

dug out the sea flooded the lake and completely salinated the water and the surrounding land. At that moment, the only benefit of this endeavour was reflected in the fact that the number of mosquitoes was reduced, for they carried the danger of spreading malaria. Several decades later, such erroneous assessment of the potential hydrological consequences of this endeavour created additional conditions for the construction of the salina “Bajo Sekulić”. The channel that used to connect the Zogaj marsh with the sea still connects the sea to the Ulcinj Salina, bearing the name Port Milena in the Queen’s honour.

The salina started to take its current form in 1926, when the first works were commenced. It successfully functioned as an artificial ecosystem orchestrated by man, where the schedule for the filling of ponds with seawater, the water level in them and the salinity were all predetermined. After 80 years of salt production, the harvest of 2013 was the last one, and the absence of harvesting puts the entire ecosystem in danger.

In 2019, the Ulcinj Salina was declared a nature park and recognised as a nationally important locality. In the same year, it was entered in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.



## Flora

So far, 201 plant species have been described in the salt ponds. Beside spacious salinated meadows (112 ha), there are vast fields of reed (*Phragmites*) at the Salina, which cover more than 62 ha. Reed can be found in the channels and the ponds, where the water is as salty as in the sea or even twice as salty. It is rather aggressive and spreads more and more each year.

Tamarisk (*Tamarix dalmatica*) and other woody plant species cover 13 ha of the embankments. In the spring, the embankments are fertile ground for whole meadows of orchids.

Plant communities that live on the salina's salinated meadows are highly interesting, since they have adapted to life in the quite severe physiological conditions of a salinated surface and water. Glasswort or Pickleweed (*Salicornia herbacea*) is the predominant species at the salina. Sea Beet (*Beta vulgaris ssp. maritima*) is a species whose only habitat in Montenegro is the Ulcinj Salina. Ruderal species are predominant on the embankments, as an indicator of human presence, grass cutting and constant grazing.



© Zoran Popović



© Marija Soskić

## Fish

The salina is a closed system and there is no possibility for fish to swim from the surrounding channels into the salina's ponds. Their presence is only possible if they pass the ponds' embankments—which only eels can do—or if they come directly from the sea by pumping: the powerful pumps which supply the Salina with sea water mainly pump in eggs, larvae or sea organisms' progeny.

Animals introduced by the pumps develop in the ponds up until June, when the water starts to heat up fast, while its oxygen levels drop. Some species, such as the eel, burrow into the muddy bottom and wait for the first favourable conditions for further development, whereas others die or become easy prey for birds once they rise to the very surface of the water trying to get some air.

Larger organisms cannot survive the passage through the pump impellers, so they most often perish in April, when hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of water were pumped in at the time of salt production. In the Salina's ponds, depending on the salinity level, 23 fish species have been recorded so far, out of which the most economically important are the mullet (*Mugilidae*), eel (*Anguillidae*), European Seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), Old World silverside (*Atherinidae*), Mediterranean Killifish (*Aphanius fasciatus*) and the pupfish (*Cyprinodontidae*), whose numbers are the highest.



© Marija Soškić

## Mammals

In the area of the Salina, beside numerous small mammals (mice, voles, shrews) and a great number of bat species, there are also larger mammals, such as: Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Golden Jackal (*Canis aureus*), Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Eurasian Badger (*Meles meles*), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) and the European Hare (*Lepus europaeus*), the most common mammal at the Salina.



© Marija Soškić

## Amphibians and reptiles

The herpetofauna's wealth is reflected in the presence of 12 amphibian species and 28 reptile species, which find the extremely high temperatures typical of salinas favourable. Since it is difficult for amphibians to survive in saline water or in the salina's freshwater channels—where they are easy prey to many birds—they choose brackish waters as their habitat, or growth-covered parts of the pond. The salina is a rich habitat for reptiles as well, because here they can find plenty of food, such as insects, small mammals and fish. Among reptiles, there are two species of tortoises: the Hermann's Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) and the European Pond Turtle (*Emys orbicularis*). The outer channel is the most favourable habitat for the pond turtle, since there is always water in it and the shores are easily accessible. The most common snake species are the Dice Snake (*Natrix tessellata*), the Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) and the Four-lined Snake (*Elaphe quatuorlineata*). As far as lizards are concerned, there are the European Glass Lizard (*Pseudopus apodus*), the Balkan Green Lizard (*Lacerta trilineata*) and the Dalmatian Wall Lizard (*Podarcis melisellensis*). According to IUCN standards, the majority of reptile and amphibian species at the Salina are either vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered.

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