



# DANUBE DELTA

through the eyes of Elena Muste, a senior tourist



## Preamble

During May this year ( 2022) I traveled with my group of seniors who love walking through the legendary land between the Danube and the Black Sea, guarded by the oldest mountains of Romania, the Macin Mountains and the youngest earth of the country, the Danube Delta.

Due to our tourist guide, a passionate university history professor, our group discovered that it is a land with a unique history through the Greek archaeological sites and those of the frontier of the great Roman Empire. Being at the confluence of the East and the West, this land, named the Dobrogean space is a cosmopolitan and exotic area

In this presentation I will briefly describe the youngest land of the country, the Danube Delta, that I visited.

# The Danube River



The Danube, the second longest river in Europe after the Volga is a river that connects 10 European countries:

- Germany
- Austria
- Slovakia
- Hungary
- Croatia
- Serbia
- România
- Bulgaria
- Republic Moldova
- Ucraina

running through their territories or being a border from Black Forest-Germany into the Black Sea- Romania **with mouth Danube Delta**

# The Danube – River and Delta

If in Ulm it is celebrated International Danube Festival 2022, there is no Danube festival in Romania, but in Romania it is celebrating yearly the International Danube Day on June 29th by organizing greening actions with the help of volunteers with the motto of the event: “Discover the Danube”



Considering that the Danube Delta is located almost in Romania, it is organized annually by the Administration of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve the “Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Day” on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

# On the occasion of the International Festival of the Danube in Ulm, I made some bags for promoting the Danube

I attached to it the tricolor of Romanian Flag and the green leaf that represents Romania,s tourism promotin.

I also sewed the three arms of the Danube and the Black Sea in a stylized way with bleu tread.



# The Danube Delta is located in the Dobrogea Region in the south-east of Romania



Danube Delta is the second largest river delta in Europe, after the Volga Delta, with an approximate surface area of 4,152 square kilometres

The greater part of the Danube Delta (3,446 km<sup>2</sup>: 83%) is in Romania in Tulcea County , with a small part ( 706 km<sup>2</sup>: 17% )in Ukraine in Odessa Oblast.

The waters of the Danube, which flow into the Black Sea, form the largest and best preserved of Europe's deltas. The Danube delta hosts over 300 species of birds as well as 45 freshwater fish species in its numerous lakes and marshes.

# Danube Delta - Biosphere reserve



In December 1990, the Danube Delta entered the UNESCO world heritage as a biosphere reserve, gaining the maximum international recognition by including it in the UNESCO List of World Natural and Cultural Heritage.



# Danube Arms

Chilia, in the north, the longest and youngest, with two secondary internal deltas and one microdelta in full process of formation at its mouth (to Ukraine). The branch Chilia is 104 km long and represents the border between Ukraine and Romania for a length of 86 km.

Sulina, the central and thus the shortest arm, 71 km long, which consequently led to its extensive use for traffic and severe transformation. At its mouth is located the main port and a single settlement with urban characteristics of the Romanian part of the delta. Because of the alluvium deposited at its mouth, a channel gradually advancing into the sea (presently it has 10 km) was built in order to protect navigation.

Sfântul Gheorghe (**Saint George** in English), 112 km long, in the south, is the oldest and most sparsely (slab) populated. Its alluvium has led to the creation, beginning in 1897, of the Sacalin Islands, which today measure 19 km in length.

# Sacalin Island



Sacalin Island is a newly formed island in the Black Sea, right off the coast of the Romanian Danube Delta, off the Sfântu Gheorghe branch. Initially Sacalin was made up of two smaller islands, Sacalinu Mare and Sacalinu Mic. In time, however, the two merged into one continuous landmass.

Insula Sacalin reprezinta cel mai nou tarâm românesc , aflat la confluența dintre Delta Dunării si Marea Neagră

## Small, narrow through canals cut among the reeds



The walks in the Danube Delta were spectacular, because we passed through small, narrow through canals cut among the reeds ( stuf ), sometimes big enough to fit a boat, through clearings ( luminisuri ) or lakes full of “carpets” of water lilies.







Boat trips on the Danube canals,  
sailing on a fairytale watwer made of  
carpets of colourful, white or yelloww  
water lilies









# Canals, where willows grow directly from the water



# Planks ( plauri ) – fixed or floating

- The biotopes found in the Danube Delta are diverse: scrubby marshes ( mlastini stuficole ), lakes, floating or fixed planks ( plauri ), salt marsh ( grind ) vegetation, meadow vegetation. With over 1800 species of trees and plants, the specific of the delta is the floating vegetation of reeds in planks ( plauri ). The plank ( plaur ) consists of a mesh ( impletitura ) of reed rhizomes and roots different aquatic plants mixed with organic remains and soil in a thick layer up to 1 m. The plank can detach from the bottom of lakes turning into floating islands.









# Water Fruits



# Luxuriant deciduous forests ( foioase )



# A house on water at Mila 23, the village where Ivan Patzachin was born

Ivan Patzachin was a Romanian canoe racing coach and sprint canoeist, the most decorated Romanian canoeist of all time, named **“the champion with the broken paddle ”**

He took part in all major competitions between 1968 and 1984, including five consecutive Olympics, and won seven Olympic and 22 world championship medals, including nine gold medals of which four Olympics, four silver medals and nine bronze medals.

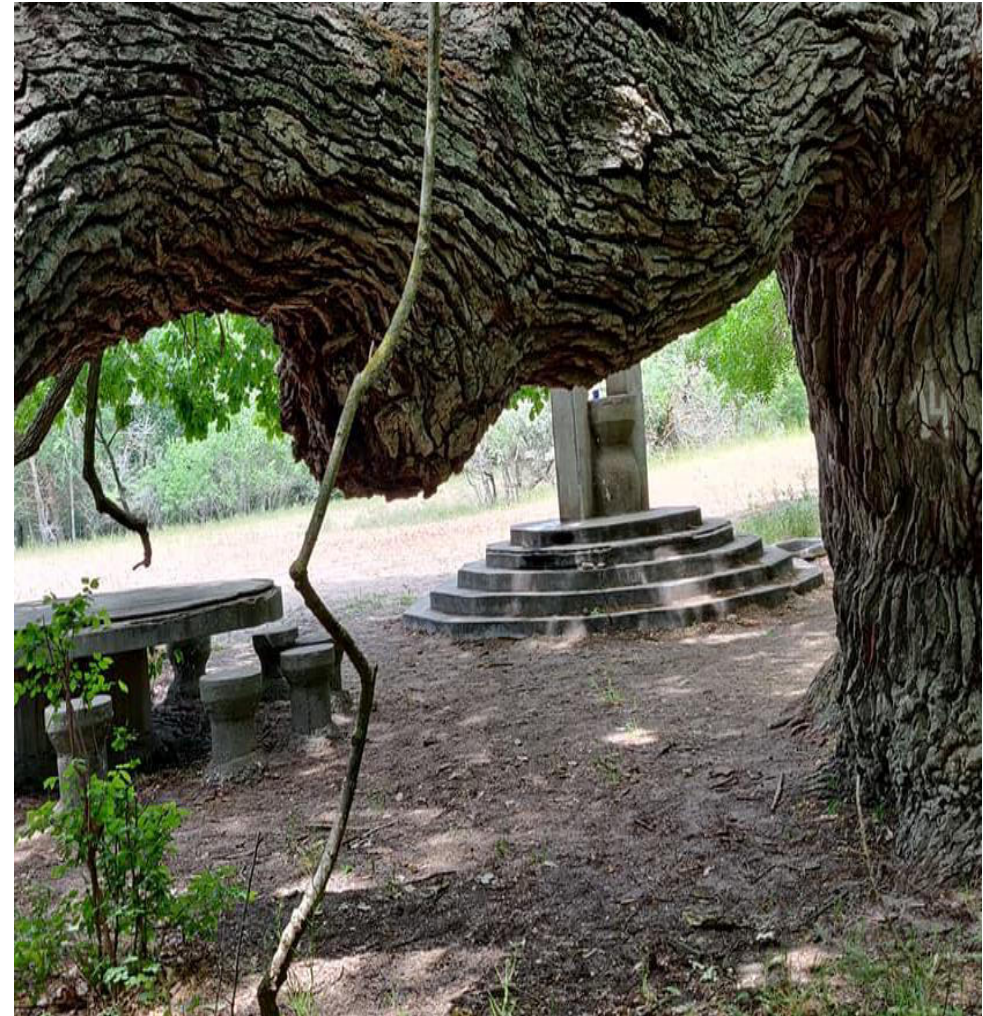


There are several strictly protected areas in Danube Delta, of which I enumerate:

The Letea forest, a fairytale land of the last wild horses in Europe and nature unchanged by man is the northernmost subtropical forest in Europe, where you can find several rare species of orchids and many birds that prefer terrestrial areas and salt marshes (mlastini).

The Caraorman forest includes, in addition to the subtropical forest, the most representative dunes in the delta. We admired in the southern part of the forest monumental oaks with a circumference between 4.70m. In the Caraorman forest we traveled by safari cars, we were not allowed to walk in order to protect the forest.

# The moving sand dunes and the secular oaks on Grindul Caraorman with the multi-secural Kneeling Oak





## The Blue color – the specific to the houses of Delta,s inhabitants





# Birds



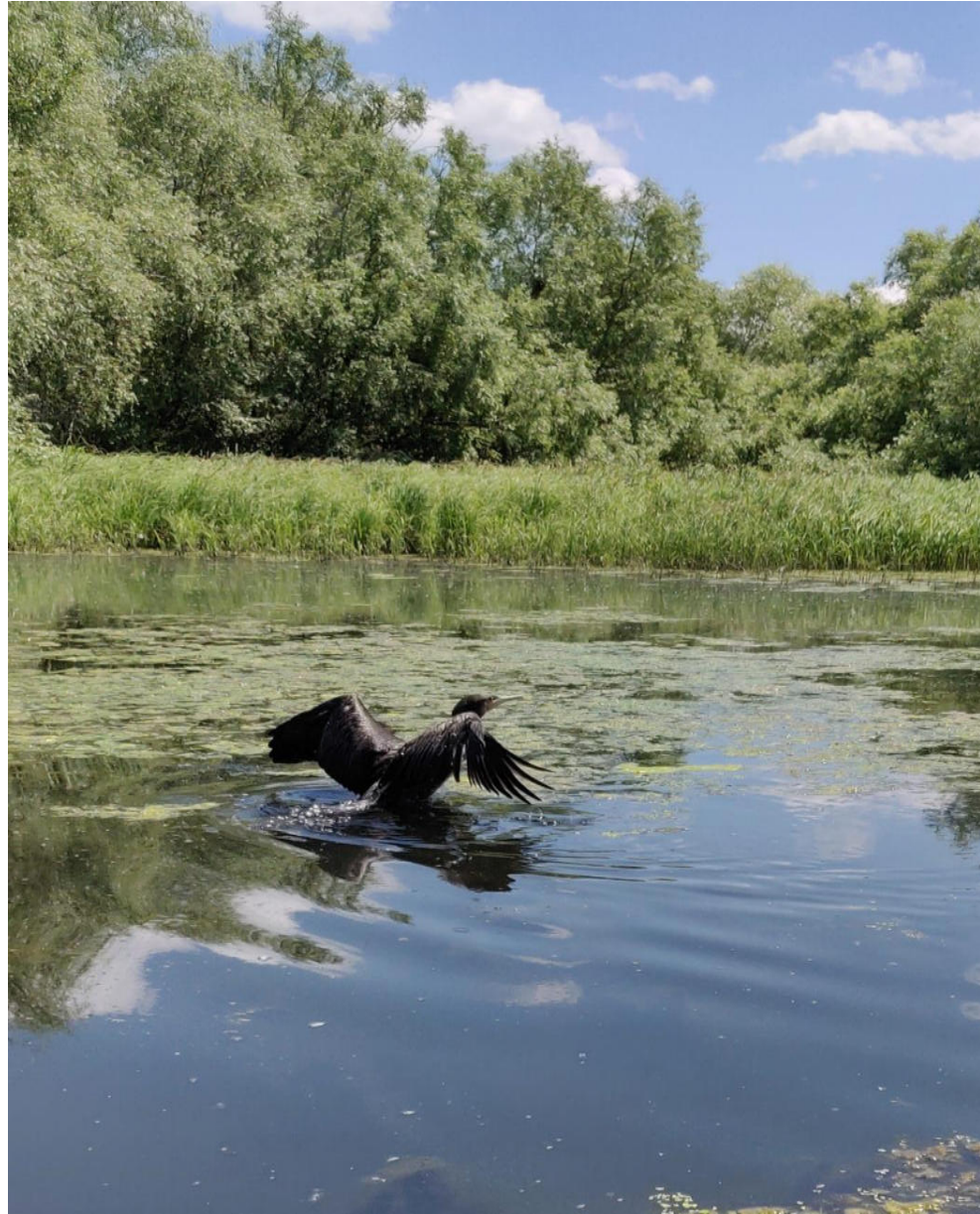
The Danube Delta, is the ultimate birdwatcher's paradise. Situated on major migratory routes, and providing adequate conditions for nesting and hatching, the Danube Delta is a magnet for birds from six major ecoregions of the world, including the Mongolian, Arctic and Siberian. There are over 320 species of birds found in the delta during summer, [\[10\]](#) of which 166 are hatching species and 159 are migratory. Over one million individual birds (swans, wild ducks, [coots](#), etc.) winter here.

Out of the 350 species of birds that live in here, 300 of them migrate.

















# Gura Portita





# Conclusions

We met in our trip in the Danube Delta with the representative of the Danube Delta Association, who fights for conservation of Delta. She showed us her concern about one day trips which are harmful to the environment, to the fauna, to the flora and implicitly to the tourists, who are very tired and who may leave the Delta disappointed.

This is her desperate message:

“ Please stop selling tourists the most toxic tourist product for the Biosphere Reserve: a day trip to the Danube Delta !”

During this meeting a national TV team made a report in this regard, a short movie in which we also appeared.

In reply, Valentin Coman, our tour guide in Dobrogea and the Danube Delta, a history university teacher and true professional in the field, was impressed by our group from Cluj and even mentioned us in a newspaper article:

“Last week we had the first group, which came from Cluj to Delta, from Monday, for five-day packages. Tourists who buy long packages come from Monday to Friday and we visit tourist attractions from all over Dobrogea”

In conclusion the Danube Delta is a magnet for those passionat about birds, for fishermen and lovers of wild nature ! But we have to protect it!



**Thank you for your patience in watching  
images and some details regarding the  
Danube Delta seen through the eyes of a senior  
tourist!**





# The Danube Delta

Natural and beautiful



**The Caraorman Island in the middle of the Danube Delta**



**Safari trip to the Caraorman Forest**



**The Caraorman wild Forest**



**Old oak tree**



**The kneeling oak tree and a replica of the sculpture  
„The Table of Silence”**



**A fountain dug in the woods for the thirsty hiker**



**Our group paying a visit to the kneeling oak**



**Happy under the kneeling oak and around the Table of  
Silence**



**Happy under the kneeling oak and around the Table of  
Silence**



**The modest village of Caraorman**

# The „K” Island, also called „The Happiness Island”

- At Sulina, in the Bay of Musura, an island of several dozen hectares appeared in the early 2000s. This is the undiscovered kingdom of birds.

## The „K” Island, also called „Happiness Island”

The Danube Delta is not only beautiful at its heart, at Crişan or Caraorman, but also where the river, after its journey through ten European countries, flows into the Black Sea with all three of its arms. Not many people know that Sulina, the mouth of the middle Danube, is no longer the easternmost point of the European Union, because for the last 10-15 years Romania has gained another territory: K Island, as it was called by the people of Sulina. The youngest land of the old continent appeared in the Gulf of Musura, north of the mouth of the Sulina Arm, through the accumulation of alluvium transported by the Chilia Arm, a natural process favoured by the circular currents of the Black Sea.





**The old lighthouse, we passed by on our way to the K Island**



**A shipwreck adds to the mystery of the Black Sea's sandy expanse.**



**We were lucky to see dolphins  
on our way to the K Island.**



**They also call it "Happiness Island", and its inhabitants could confirm this, but they can't because they are birds. Because the seven-kilometer-long, 80-metre-wide sandbank is a kingdom of birds.**



**People are not allowed to land on the island;  
at most, they can anchor their boats a few dozen  
meters from the shore**



**The K Island from another angle, having the shipwreck as a background**



**And there are thousands of birds: black cormorants, pelicans, laughing gulls, egrets and grey terns. The birds don't mix, they are grouped in colonies and live in close proximity, according to rules known only to themselves. People do not have to land on the island; at most, they can anchor their boats a few dozen meters from the shore, where they can admire the birds with binoculars or the naked eye.**



**This a predator: an eagle**



**The black cormorant**



**For a tourist on holiday in Sulina, the Danube mouth and a trip to K Island are unmissable destinations.**



**And a magic, breathtaking sunset, returning from the K  
Island to Sulina.**



**And a magic, breathtaking sunset.**



**And a magic, breathtaking sunset.**



**And a magic, breathtaking sunset.**

# Sulina beach

- Where the Danube flows into the sea, Sulina beach welcomes us with its unreal fine sand. It's a still wild corner of the world, you'll find tall grasses and thistles growing out of the sand, as well as cows and horses grazing peacefully on the beach and sometimes cooling off in the sea water.



**Grass and thistles growing out of the sand**



**On the sandy tongue, among the tourists sunbathing or playing volleyball, the locals' cows and horses stroll peacefully.**



**Sulina beach is the northernmost beach on the Romanian coast, with the finest sand, thanks to the silt brought by the Danube. These are carried by the sea currents and deposited on the beach, which advances five to eight meters into the sea every year.**



**The Black Sea at Sulina**



**There are only a few beach bars and one terrace on the beach.**



**The fresh waters of the Danube meet the salty sea here and the sand is incredibly fine.**



**Sand forms decorated with mussels**



**Sand forms decorated with mussels**



**The sand on Sulina beach is said to be good for hourglasses, so clean and fine.**



**Tall grasses and thistles**



**The magic of the natural Black Sea coastline**



**So anyone who wants a holiday in nature on the Black Sea, away from the hustle and bustle of the big all-inclusive hotels and the thousands of tourists looking for food, drink and noisy fun, is here in the right place.**