

Birds of the

ROSCI0120 Nature Reserve

Tâmpa & Dealul Melcilor

Brașov, Romania

Record of Sightings (2024)

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1. Introduction

This report presents a list of bird species observed in the ROSCI0120 nature reserve by one observer during the year 2024. The reserve comprises Tâmpa and Dealul Melcilor, two natural topographic features located inside the city of Brașov, Romania.



A view over the Postăvaru Massif from the summit of Tâmpa.

2. The Habitat

Dealul Melcilor is a small hill located amid the city of Brașov, bounded on all sides by the urban area. Part of the southern sector of the hill was the site of a limestone quarry in the recent past. Tâmpa is a small mountain, bounded on three sides by the urban area and to the south-west by the forest of the Postăvaru Massif, of which it constitutes a part. Dealul Melcilor and Tâmpa are separated by a single street lined with buildings of mainly residential character. The town centre of Brașov is located at roughly 600 m altitude. The summit of Dealul Melcilor lies at 712 m, while the summit of Tâmpa lies at 955m.

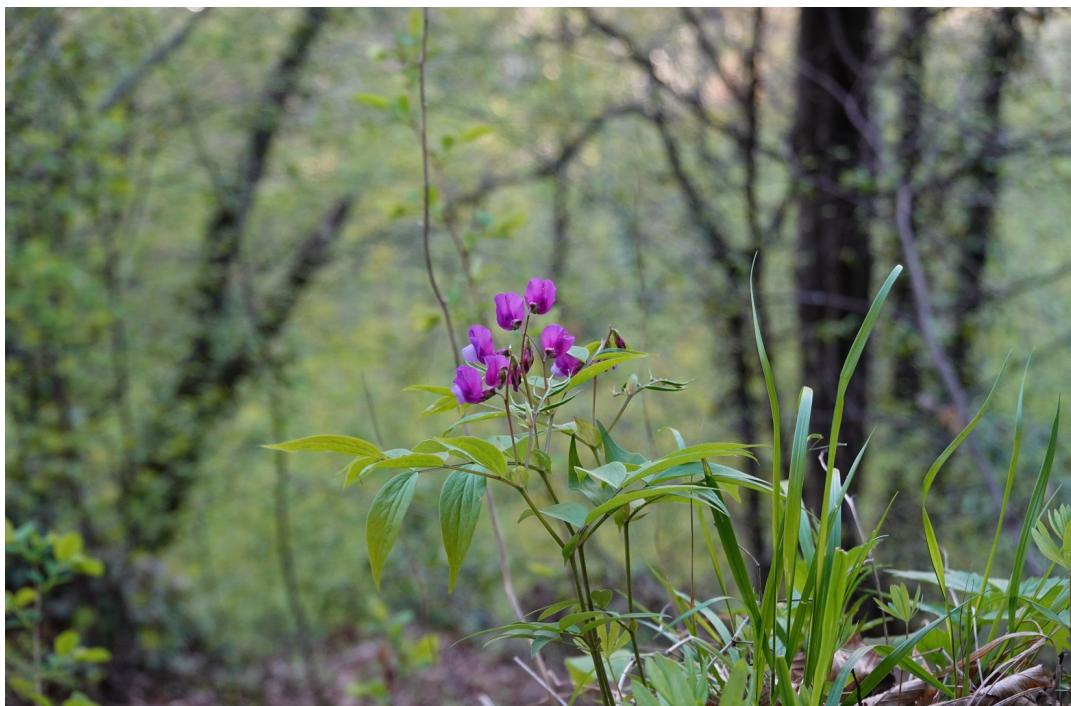
Tâmpa and Dealul Melcilor are predominantly covered in forest, interspersed with open areas of meadow and shrub and a few areas of cliff. The bedrock is composed primarily of limestone. The woodland covering the reserve is comprised of a remarkable mixture of upland and lowland tree species, in contrast to much of the forest of the Postăvaru Massif, which is comprised mainly of upland species. Water seeps from several springs in the comparatively wet north-eastern sector of Dealul Melcilor. There is at least one spring on Tâmpa - the mountain is otherwise comparatively dry. A few small caves are scattered through the range.



Hepatica transsilvanica photographed on Dealul Melcilor in February.

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) are numerous across the range, while small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*), large-leaved lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and larch (*Larix decidua*) are numerous on Tâmpa, occurring in smaller numbers on Dealul Melcilor, as do silver poplar (*Populus alba*) and willow (*Salix x*) on the wetter parts of the hill, while saplings of black pine (*Pinus nigra*) have been planted on the dry slope south of the old quarry (not being native to the area, they appear not to be thriving). Common walnut (*Juglans regia*), aspen (*Populus tremula*), common hazel (*Corylus avellana*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*), pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), silver fir (*Abies alba*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) and silver birch (*Betula pendula*) occur sporadically in parts of the range. A few venerable common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) line the banks of the small river which runs along the outside of Dealul Melcilor.

The reserve hosts a remarkable number of species of flowering plant. On Dealul Melcilor in early spring, splashes of violet and blue colour the woodland floor, when among others, *Hepatica transsilvanica*, *Scilla bifolia*, *Vinca minor* and *Erythronium dens-canis* come into flower. Martagon lilly (*Lilium martagon*) flower abundantly on Dealul Melcilor in June, while purple *Crocus banaticus* decorates the woodland floor in September. The wild flora of Tâmpa is especially varied.



Lathyrus vernus photographed on Tâmpa in May.

3. Consolidated List

The table below presents bird species which were identified by this observer on Tâmpa or Dealul Melcilor during the year 2024. The inclusion of species is based on the objective data presented in S.4 'Data'.

Entries corresponding to bird species which are incidental and seldom encountered in the area under study, being rather birds of the rural (agricultural) or urban habitat, have been coloured **grey**. Entries corresponding to species which, according to the recorded observations and the supporting literature (see S.6 'Bibliography'), are present only during the warmer months are coloured **red**, while those present in the area under study only (or almost exclusively) during the colder months are coloured **blue**. The remarks which accompany each entry and the colour classification of entries represent considered judgements by the author.

'MB' designates those bird species which, according to the supporting literature, occur as migrant breeders in Romania, while 'WV' designates species which are documented to occur as winter visitors.

S.5 'Glossary' contains a table of the common names of birds in Romanian and German.

Observations of a total of 45 bird species have been reported.

Common Name	Latin	Remarks
Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	
Feral pigeon	<i>Columba livia (dom.)</i>	A bird of the urban habitat. Rarely enters the reserve.
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Rather a bird of the rural/semi-rural habitat. Not regularly seen in the reserve.
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	MB of the urban habitat. Feeds over the reserve.
Black woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>	
Green woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	
Grey-headed woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>	
Greater spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	
Middle spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>	
White-backed woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>	
Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	MB - feeds over the reserve.
House marten	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	MB of the urban habitat. Feeds over the reserve.

Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Absent (or largely absent) in winter. Appears in the reserve from March.
Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	MB.
Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Mainly occurs in the reserve on passage.
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	MB - from late February.
Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Altitudinal migrant - seldom observed inside the reserve.
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	MB.
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	MB - from March.
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Winters in the reserve.
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	MB.
Red-breasted flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	MB.
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	
Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	
Crested tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	
Marsh tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	
Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Rather a bird of the rural/urban habitat. Not regularly seen in the reserve.
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	
Hooded crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Rather a bird of the rural/urban habitat. Not regularly seen in the reserve.
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Occasionally enters open areas within the reserve which face the urban habitat.
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	WV.
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	
Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	MB.
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Winters in the reserve.
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	

4. Data

During the periods from 2 January - 29 February 2024 (winter) and 12 May - 25 July 2024 (summer), sightings of birds were recorded by the observer while engaged in recreational walking on Tâmpa and Dealul Melcilor (Brașov, Romania). The typical duration of a walk was within the range of less than one hour to a couple of hours.

Only sightings of birds which were seen sufficiently clearly to enable decisive identification were recorded (some allowance has been made for goldcrest, due to the difficulty of decisively distinguishing the species from firecrest). Binoculars (8x42) were utilised to aid visual identification. To avoid any possible misidentification, merely hearing a bird was not deemed sufficient - the bird had to be seen as well. Birds merely seen at a distance from a vantage point but not interacting in any way with the area under study (for example, white stork observed in flight at a distance) were not recorded. The urban area was excluded from this study.

To render the business of data collection less onerous, only the first sighting of each bird species within the date ranges specified above in each of the respective areas was recorded. The tables presenting the results therefore constitute a record of birds which were seen in the area under study but do not present information concerning the estimated number of individuals, frequency of sightings of a particular species, etc. Nevertheless, some subjective remarks concerning the frequency of sightings are provided.

More comprehensive data was collected during the period from 07 November - 26 December 2024. The full data will be presented separately in a future report. A selection of notable sightings obtained during this period is presented in S. 4.3.

4.1. Sightings: Winter (02/01-29/02)

During the period in question, there were occasional wintery spells when snow lay on ground but it was otherwise rather mild and from mid-February it was positively warm. Blackbird, great tit, marsh tit, long-tailed tit, blue tit, chaffinch, raven, nuthatch, treecreeper and greater spotted woodpecker were encountered particularly often. Bullfinch were encountered often but were heard more often than seen. Coal tit were often seen on Tâmpa. Jay were seen reasonably often. Hawfinch and wren were observed infrequently as they are shy and can be difficult to see. Goldcrest were observed infrequently as they are difficult to observe well due to their small size and active habits, with activity typically confined to within the cover of the branches of pine. Common buzzard were observed infrequently. Song thrush were encountered from late February, typically observed in the evening singing beautifully from a perch. All other birds which were recorded were seen only sporadically, being either more difficult to see or less common.

The dates on which sightings were recorded in each respective area are recorded in the table below. That a greater number of sightings were recorded on Dealul Melcilor is likely accounted for by the fact that a lesser number of walks were conducted on Tâmpa.

Area	Dates	Total
Dealul Melcilor	02/01, 03/01, 04/01, 07/01, 11/01, 14/01, 04/02, 08/02, 23/02	9
Tâmpa	02/01, 05/01, 08/01, 10/01, 05/02, 29/02	6

Table 4.1.1: The dates on which walks were conducted on Dealul Melcilor or Tâmpa during which sightings of birds were recorded within the interval from 2 January - 29 February 2024.

Table of Sightings

Common Name	Date of First Sighting	
	Dealul Melcilor	Tampa
Common buzzard	04/02	
Sparrowhawk	08/02	
Black woodpecker	14/01	08/01
Grey-headed woodpecker	14/01	
Greater spotted woodpecker	02/01	05/01
Middle spotted woodpecker		05/02
White-backed woodpecker		08/01

Song thrush ⁽¹⁾		29/02
Blackbird	02/01	02/01
<i>Goldcrest</i> ⁽²⁾	02/01	02/01
Wren	03/01	08/01
Great tit	02/01	05/01
Coal tit		08/01
Blue tit	02/01	02/01
Marsh tit	02/01	05/01
Long-tailed tit	02/01	02/01
Nuthatch	02/01	02/01
Treecreeper	11/01	05/01
Jay	04/01	10/01
Hooded crow	04/02	
Raven	03/01	05/01
Chaffinch	02/01	
Brambling	23/02	
Bullfinch	07/01	05/01
Hawfinch	03/01	

Table 4.1.2: The complete list of species recorded during walks on Dealul Melcilor and Tâmpa during the interval from 2 January - 29 February 2024. The date of the first recorded sighting of a given species within the stated interval is recorded in the table.

Footnotes

1. The song thrush almost exclusively occurs as a migrant breeder inside Romania. The recorded sighting therefore represents a newly returned individual.
2. Goldcrest could be mistaken for firecrest.

4.2. Sightings: Summer (12/05-25/07)

Birds sighted in the reserve during summer which were not seen in winter include species which occur as migrant breeders inside Romania (redstart, black redstart, song thrush, blackcap, chiffchaff, spotted flycatcher, red-breasted flycatcher and serin), migrant breeders which inhabit the town but feed over the reserve (swift, house marten, barn swallow) and altitudinal migrants (robin). Bullfinch and goldcrest, which nest in the upper reaches of the montane forest, were not observed inside the range during summer.

Several species of bird which occur inside the reserve in summer were noticed to be less numerous than in winter – a notable example is nuthatch. It may be concluded that the reserve serves as a winter habitat for birds which spread out over a larger altitude range following winter's end.

The dates on which sightings were recorded in each respective area are recorded in the table below.

Area	Dates	Total
Dealul Melcilor	12/05, 13/05, 14/05, 15/05, 21/05, 29/05, 06/06, 07/06, 11/06, 19/06, 25/07	11
Tâmpa	23/05, 29/05, 07/06, 12/06, 13/06, 14/06, 19/06, 21/06, 09/07, 11/07, 24/07	11

Table 4.2.1: The dates on which walks were conducted on Dealul Melcilor or Tâmpa during which sightings of birds were recorded within the interval from 12 May - 25 July 2024.

Table of Sightings

Common Name	Date of First Sighting	
	Dealul Melcilor	Tampa
Common buzzard	15/05	12/06
Sparrowhawk	14/05	
Kestrel	15/05	
Collared dove	07/06	
Swift ⁽¹⁾	12/05	23/05
Black woodpecker		24/07
Green woodpecker	11/06	
Grey-headed woodpecker	12/05	11/07
Greater spotted woodpecker	12/05	23/05
Barn swallow	19/06	14/06

House marten ⁽¹⁾	06/06	13/06
Robin	12/05	23/05
Redstart		07/06
Black redstart	15/05	
Song thrush	13/05	23/05
Blackbird	12/05	23/05
Blackcap	13/05	07/06
Chiffchaff	12/05	23/05
Wren	13/05	13/06
Spotted flycatcher	25/07	14/06
Red-breasted flycatcher		19/06
Great tit	12/05	23/05
Coal tit	13/05	07/06
Blue tit	12/05	07/06
Crested tit		07/06
Marsh tit	12/05	14/06
Long-tailed tit	11/06	07/06
Nuthatch	13/05	23/05
Treecreeper	15/05	19/06
Jay	13/05	12/06
Raven	13/05	23/05
House sparrow ⁽²⁾	15/05	
Chaffinch	12/05	23/05
Goldfinch	29/05	21/06
Serin		09/07
Hawfinch	06/06	10/06

Table 4.2.2: The complete list of species recorded during walks on Dealul Melcilor and Tâmpa during the interval from 12 May - 25 July 2024. The date of the first recorded sighting of a given species within the stated interval is recorded in the table.

Footnotes

1. Swift and house marten reside in the urban habitat but sometimes hunt insects in the air above the reserve.
2. House sparrow reside in the urban habitat but occasionally visit open areas inside the area under study which face the town.

4.3. Sightings: Miscellaneous

Notable sightings recorded outwith the periods documented above are listed here.

Species	Location	Date	Comment
Chiffchaff	Dealul Melcilor	2024-03-24	First sighting at this location this year.
Robin	Dealul Melcilor	2024-03-24	First sighting at this location this year.
Black redstart	Dealul Melcilor	2024-03-26	First sighting at this location this year.
<i>Goldcrest</i>	Dealul Melcilor	2024-03-26	Could be mistaken for firecrest.
Green woodpecker	Dealul Melcilor	2024-04-10	
Blackcap	Dealul Melcilor	2024-04-10	
Magpie	Dealul Melcilor	2024-09-25	
Feral pigeon	Dealul Melcilor	2024-10-01	Observed just inside the woodland area (possibly outside the reserve perimeter).
<i>Goldcrest</i>	Tâmpa	2024-10-12	Could be mistaken for firecrest.
Sparrowhawk	Tâmpa & Dealul Melcilor	2024-11-04	
Goldcrest	Dealul Melcilor	2024-11-07	Observed at close range - identification unproblematic.
Black redstart	Dealul Melcilor	2024-11-07	Probably a juvenile in its first autumn - likely a straggler.
Mistle thrush	Dealul Melcilor	2024-11-08	4 mistle thrush observed briefly in flight - alarm call heard. They appeared to take refuge in a distant conifer.
Black redstart	Dealul Melcilor	2024-11-08	2 individuals seen.
Goldfinch	Dealul Melcilor	2024-11-26	
Middle spotted woodpecker	Dealul Melcilor	2024-11-26	
Goldcrest	Tâmpa	2024-11-27	Observed at close range - identification unproblematic.
Brambling	Dealul Melcilor	2024-11-28	A flock of at least 10 observed.
Brambling	Tâmpa	2024-12-11	
White-backed woodpecker	Tâmpa	2024-12-23	

5. Glossary

English	Latin	Romanian	German
Common buzzard	Buteo buteo	Şorecar comun	Mäusebussard
Sparrowhawk	Accipiter nisus	Uliu păsărar	Sperber
Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	Vânturel roşu	Turmfalke
Feral pigeon	Columba livia (dom.)	Porumbel	Haustaube
Collared dove	Streptopelia decaocto	Guguştuc	Turteltaube
Swift	Apus apus	Drepnea neagră	Mauersegler
Black woodpecker	Dryocopus martius	Ciocăniță neagră	Schwarzspecht
Green woodpecker	Picus viridis	Ghionoai verde	Grünspecht
Grey-headed woodpecker	Picus canus	Ghionoai sură	Grauspecht
Greater spotted woodpecker	Dendrocopos major	Ciocăniță pestriță mare	Buntspecht
Middle spotted woodpecker	Dendrocoptes medius	Ciocăniță de stejar	Mittelspecht
White-backed woodpecker	Dendrocopos leucotos	Ciocăniță cu spatele alb	Weißenrückspecht
Barn swallow	Hirundo rustica	Rândunica	Rauchschwalbe
House marten	Delichon urbicum	Lăstun de casă	Mehlschwalbe
Robin	Erithacus rubecula	Măcăleandru	Rotkehlchen
Redstart	Phoenicurus phoenicurus	Codroş de pădure	Gartenrotschwanz
Black redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros	Codroş de munte	Hausrotschwanz
Song thrush	Turdus philomelos	Sturz cântător	Singdrossel
Mistle thrush	Turdus viscivorus	Sturz de vâsc	Misteldrossel
Blackbird	Turdus merula	Mierlă	Schwarzdrossel
Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	Silvie cu cap negru	Mönchsgrasmücke
Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	Pitulice mică	Zilpzalp
Goldcrest	Regulus regulus	Aușel de iarnă	Wintergoldhähnchen
Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	Păntăruş	Zaunkönig
Spotted flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	Muscar sur	Grauschnäpper
Red-breasted flycatcher	Ficedula parva	Muscar roşu	Zwergschnäpper
Great tit	Parus major	Pițigoi mare	Kohlmeise
Coal tit	Periparus ater	Pițigoi de brădet	Tannenmeise
Blue tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	Pițigoi albastru	Blaumeise
Crested tit	Lophophanes cristatus	Pițigoi moțat	Haubenmeise
Marsh tit	Poecile palustris	Pițigoi sur	Sumpfmeise
Long-tailed tit	Aegithalos caudatus	Pițigoi codat	Schwanzmeise
Nuthatch	Sitta europaea	Ticlean	Kleiber
Tree creeper	Certhia familiaris	Cojoaică de pădure	Waldbaumläufer
Magpie	Pica pica	Coțofană	Elster
Jay	Garrulus glandarius	Gaiťă	Eichelhäher
Hooded crow	Corvus cornix	Cioară grivă	Nebelkrähe
Raven	Corvus corax	Corb	Kolkrabe
House sparrow	Passer domesticus	Vrabie de casă	Haussperling
Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	Cînteză	Buchfink
Brambling	Fringilla montifringilla	Cînteză de iarnă	Bergfink
Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	Sticlete	Stieglitz
Serin	Serinus serinus	Cănăraş	Girlitz
Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	Mugurăr	Gimpel
Hawfinch	Coccothraustes coccothraustes	Botgros	Kernbeißer

6. Omissions

Information concerning the sightings of some owls, game birds and birds of prey may be redacted from these reports until such time as the trafficking and hunting of birds ceases to be a problem (if applicable).

7. Bibliography

The following resources were used to aid in the identification of birds, trees and wild flowers in the field.

“Collin’s Bird Guide” by Lars Svensson, Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterström (2021).

“Romania - A Bird Watching and Wildlife Guide” by James Roberts (2000).

“Dendrologie” by Florin Clinovschi (2005).

“Flora Mică Ilustrată a Republicii Populare Române” by I. Prodan and A.L. Buia (1961).

<https://www.meetsun.ro/florile-carpilor-flori-pe-culori> - Claudia Gican (2008-).

The topographic data cited in S.1 ‘Introduction’ were obtained from the following sources.

“Harta de Drumetie: Postăvaru, Piatra Mare, Baiului (Colecția Munții Noștri)” - Schubert & Franke (2020).

<https://en.mapy.cz/> - Seznam.cz a.s., et al. (2024).