

WINGSPAN BIRD TOURS

TRIP REPORT

Lesvos April 23rd - 30th 2009

Leader Bob Buckler

Wingspan Bird Tours made yet another great tour of this Aegean island gem with a group of 8 intrepid wing-spanners: The group participants were:

Denise Chamings, Lynn Osborne, Chris and Sandra Woodruff, Ken and Margaret Smith, Barbara Priest and David Davidson

Summary

A good deal of rain had fallen during early spring and wild flowers covered every square meter of the uncultivated land. Seasonal pools were full but despite the promise of a great birding trip it did not fully materialize as we had to work hard to find some of the annual migrants that usually grace the pools and flower meadows; several species that were normally present did not turn up at all during our stay.

Bird-watching highlights

Day 1 - Thursday 23rd April.

As we stepped from the plane at Mytiline Airport we were greeted by a cold north-easterly breeze and only 13 degrees, not quite what we expected from this island in the sun! As we drove towards Skala Kalloni it was obvious that a lot of rain had fallen in recent weeks, the island was verdant with new growth, wild flowers flourished along the roadside and many roadside pools held plenty of water. We quickly arrived at our hotel and after checking in we met in the car park for our first birding excursion but not before admiring the song of our local **Nightingales** and having great views of the resident **Spanish Sparrow**.

. We walked the few meters to the Kalloni Pool and began to start our list as we caught site of **Hooded Crow, Barn Swallow, House Martin** and **Yellow-legged Gull** along the lane. The pool had plenty of open water but it was too deep for waders, egrets and herons, we managed to see **Garganey, Mallard, Moorhen, Little Grebe** and **Squacco Heron**. Passerines were found in the tamarisk scrub and included **Cetti's** and **Great Reed Warblers, Greenfinch** and **Goldfinch, Crested Lark** and **Corn Bunting**.



For the last half hour we drove the short distance to the Tsiknias River where we had good views of four **Slender-billed Gulls**, a single **Mediterranean Gull**, a single **Common Ringed Plover, Common Shelduck, Little, Common** and **Sandwich Terns, Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper** and a **Glossy Ibis**. We drove up river to the bridge, where we added **Sand Martin** and then on to the Komares River and back through Skala Kallonis to our hotel. Along the way back we logged **Marsh Harrier** and more Terns, with fading light we returned to the hotel just in time for dinner, well satisfied with our first birding outing.

Day 2 - Friday 24th April.



Wood Sandpiper

We awoke to a clear blue sky and a chilly north easterly breeze, so fleeces were the order of the day. Our early morning excursion took us to the salt pans and in particular a track on the western edge of the pans. Along the track we searched nearby open ground for a reported **Spur-winged Plover** and after about half an hour this superb bird appeared. In the meantime we logged many new species for the trip, there were many **Yellow Wagtails** with varying degrees of head colour, ranging from the jet black (*feldegg*) to the brown of the nominate race. We also noted many **Whinchats**, several **Red-throated Pipits**, **Greater Short-toed Larks**, **Montagu's Harriers**, **Marsh Harrier** and a **Common Buzzard**. Along the muddy fringe of the salt pans there were dozens of **Wood Sandpipers**, small groups of **Ruff**, and a couple of **Curlew Sandpipers**. We worked our way around the to the back of the pans and scanned the water meadows that lay beyond them, these flooded fields held many birds the most notable being **Glossy Ibis** (34), **Great Egret** (4), **Purple Heron** (2), **Spotted Redshank** (1), **Squacco Heron** (1) and **Garganey** (3).

After returning to the hotel for breakfast we set off to look at the eastern side of the pans, the sun had risen but so had the wind and it felt quite cold. From the track we logged **Common** and **Little Terns**, **Avocet** and impressive numbers of **Little Egrets** with (105) in one area alone. **Mute Swan** (3) was a good Lesvos tick and **Black Storks** numbered (4), **White Storks** (2) added to good numbers of **Grey Herons**. A distant **Cuckoo** reminded us that it was spring despite the cold conditions, the wind drove us off in the end and we set off for the Achladeri pine woods. A short walk, in warmer conditions, and a very short wait was rewarded with excellent views of **Kruper's Nuthatch** which was followed by brief views of **Short-toed Treecreeper** after a fairly long walk into the woods. We spent a while looking for raptors from a prominent open area along the track and logged a couple of **Short-toed Eagles** and a **Long-legged Buzzard**. Returning to woods we decided to eat our picnic lunch and during which time we saw another **Long-legged Buzzard**, a third **Short-toed Eagle** and a **Honey Buzzard**. In the woods we had great views of the superb **Masked Shrike**, we also saw another good Lesvos bird in the shape of a **Collared Flycatcher**, then a pair of **Woodchat Shrikes** appeared and we had the briefest of views of a **Cirl Bunting** just before we left.



We headed off back to the salt pans for another search, the wind had dropped and the temperature rose into the mid twenties and the birds kept on coming. A Couple of **Temminck's Stints** gave us a good show and a flock of some 25 **Whiskered Terns** held 3 **White Winged Terns**, during the next hour many of this morning's species were re-located. We had good close views of

Olivaceous Warbler before setting off into the flat water meadows near the beach. During the next hour we watched many species and got the run-a-round from a **Tawny Pipit**, near the beach we watched a **Stone Curlew**, **Greater Short-toed Larks** (19), **Whinchats** and the ubiquitous pair, and my favourites, the **Crested Lark** and the **Scorn Bunting**.

For the last hour we visited the Tsiknias River which was very quiet, but we did see **Little Stint**, we moved on to the Kalloni Pool which we found also very quiet except for excellent views of a **Reed Warbler** and the finding of a superb bird for Lesvos, the **Great Bittern**. The views of the Bittern were brief, as they usually are with this species, but there was no mistaking this island beauty.

Day 3 - Saturday 25th April.



Our early morning start found us driving along a bumpy track to Metochi Lake, with a clear sky above and virtually no wind the morning weather was perfect. Metochi is an inland pool and this year held a great deal of water, it has great potential and attracts lots of birds. We were not disappointed this time, within minutes of our arrival we had logged two **Little Crakes**, a **Little Bittern**, 3 **Squacco Herons** and a **Purple Heron**. Many warblers were flitting about in the reeds, the most common one was the **Great Reed Warbler** which numbered well over 15! There were also **Sedge** and **Reed Warblers** and in the bushes we found both **Olivaceous** and **Cetti's Warbler**, the whole place was teeming with bird life. Other notables were **Golden Oriole** (heard only), **Whinchat**, **Red-rumped Swallow** and a couple of **Jays** along the track.

After a much welcomed breakfast we drove through Kalloni and stopped at a well known site for **Scops Owl** and sure enough an owl was present, showing very well, we all had superb views of this little gem. Continuing along the Petra road we visited the 'band-stand' for a short raptor watch, the conditions were just right. Over the hour that we stayed there we logged several **Long-legged Buzzards**, a **Goshawk**, a **Sparrowhawk**, **Common Buzzard**, **Short-toed Eagle**, and a **Peregrine Falcon**. On the surrounding hillside we noted very few species which was surprising, **Black-eared Wheatear**, **Cirl Bunting** and **Stonechat** were all that we logged.

Another short hop in the bus found us at Petra where we stopped on the hillside overlooking the sea, a cold breeze could be felt as we left the bus. The hill side and adjacent cliffs were covered with scrub and exposed boulders, a well known area for the **Ruppell's Warbler** of which we had brief views of a male in song flight. A second male showed just below on the cliff side but that proved just as elusive. A Beautiful **Blue Rock Thrush** dodged most of the group but **Orphean** and **Sub-alpine Warblers** gave us better views. We also noted **Common Kestrel**, **Ruddy Shelduck**, **Hobby**, **Common Whitethroat**, **Turtle Dove**, **Linnet** and another much more showy **Ruppell's Warbler**.

Our next stop was the Petra Reservoir, the scrub on the approach road is usually good for warblers but a recent fire had burnt all the bushes to a cinder. We ate our picnic lunch overlooking the now full reservoir, on the water were a couple of hundred **Yellow-legged Gulls** and one **Ruddy Shelduck**. A short walk produced our first **Red-backed Shrike**, our first perched **Bee-eaters**, a couple of **Sub-alpine Warblers** singing and song-fighting, we had distant views of **Jays** and a pair of well marked **Long-legged Buzzards**.

Following the northern coastline we drove through Eftalou and parked alongside the beach where we watched hundreds of gulls and at least 50 **Yelkouan Shearwaters** feeding on a shoal of fish. Several sightings were made of Porpoises as they ploughed through the feeding frenzy and a single **Shag** dropped in for its share of the booty.

We made several stops along the northern coastline as we approached Skala Sykimona which produced several flocks of **Bee-eaters**, our first **Sombre Tits** and an excellent **Cretzchmar's Bunting**. Despite these sightings the coastline was very quiet, a **Chukar** was heard by some of the group and a small flock of some 14 **Whinchats** were found along a fence-line but not much else. We stopped in the picturesque village of Skala Sykimona for the traditional ice cream, we sat on the benches along the harbor wall to devour our iced delights, sitting in the warm afternoon sunshine admiring our surroundings.

We made a couple of stops on our way back to the hotel and took a brief walk into a wooded area of pine, this only produced a **Short-toed Treecreeper** and several **Chaffinches**. We arrived back at the hotel in plenty of time for our early dinner, we sat down at 6:30pm and were finished by 7:30pm the whole sitting rushed through because the hotel was hosting a Greek Wedding. We took advantage of this and set off at 8pm for an evening visit to the pool at Metochi. It was a beautiful warm, still evening and as we approached the pool we stopped to admire a **Little Owl** perched on a barn roof. At the pool we waited for things to happen and very soon our first **Black-crowned Night Heron** appeared, this was followed by three other sightings as these handsome herons

left their roost. A group of four **Squacco Herons** dropped into the reeds to roost, small Bats whirled their erratic flight paths above us and frogs began calling from the reeds, the dim light faded into darkness and we set off home well satisfied with our night excursion.

Day 4 - Sunday 26th May.

Today we took an early breakfast and we were out on the road at 8 am. Our destination was Sigri out in the far west corner of the island. We drove up through Filia, Vatousa and we stopped just before Andisa at a wide steep gorge. Our first sighting of the day was a **Golden Oriole**, calling from the top of the gorge from the edge of the cliff, what a bizarre sight! Next we found **Black-eared Wheatear** and **Blue-rock Thrush**, we spent quite a while tracking down an **Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** but eventually it showed very well for all of us. Above us we saw a **Goshawk**, **Long-legged Buzzard** and a **Common Kestrel**.

Passing through Andisa and on up through the valley we stopped to watch a **Hoopoe** which wasn't very obliging so we moved down to the Eresos crossroads where we watched **Cretzchmar's Bunting** and had brief views of **Isabelline Wheatear**. We made a couple of stops on the road to Eresos the best of which provided **Common Cuckoo**, **Cinereous Bunting**, **Cirl Bunting**, more **Cretzchmar's Bunting** and lots of **Black-eared Wheatears**. Along this road the scenery is terrific having a deep wide valley and a tree-lined river that snaked its way along the valley bottom, the open treeless hillsides held flowering shrubs and were littered with large expanses of bare limestone rock.

Passing through Eresos we took the coast road to Sigri, this is unmade dirt track with plenty of interesting twists, turns and steep drops. We made two very good stops along the way, the first, overlooked an olive plantation with a large mature plane tree just below us. In the plane tree we noted a superb male **Collared Flycatcher** and a **Spotted Flycatcher**, on a fence line nearby we saw **Pied Flycatcher**, **Whinchat** and just above them a **Woodchat Shrike** sat on high. A huge flock of **Alpine Swifts** drifted above us and several more **Cretzchmar's Buntings** put in an appearance.



Spotted Flycatcher



Spotted Crake



Collared Flycatcher

At the ford of the river Maladia the wind had picked up so it was quite chilly, we sat and ate our picnic lunch whilst watching another **Collared Flycatcher**, it was joined by **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Sedge Warbler**, **Willow Warbler** and **Cetti's Warbler**. Above more **Alpine Swifts** numbering over 100 passed through the valley, a **Common Kestrel**, **Short-toed Eagle** and a **Long-legged Buzzard** drifted on the wind. We took a walk along the track away from the ford towards Sigri, a **Common Quail** called to us from the scrub and we had our first sighting of **Black-headed Bunting**. A solitary **Red-backed Shrike** sat on the leeward side of a bush and several **Whinchats** flitted about the flower heads. We then turned around and took the track that led into an orchard of fig trees and in the orchard more **Flycatchers** were found and a superb male **Golden Oriole** showed well, but not much else. This whole area is usually very good for migrant passerines but unfortunately not today, so we moved on and drove towards Sigri, we stopped briefly to look for a reported **Rufous Bush Robin** but found a family party of **Cretzchmar's Bunting** instead. We admired a **Little Owl** perched on a fence post as we left the track and headed into Sigri.

We made a bee-line towards the Ford at Faneromeni but got held up on several occasions to admire the colourful **Bee-eaters** and **Golden Orioles** that kept cropping up. At one stage we found a tiny leafless tree that held a **Bee-eater**, a **Golden Oriole**, a **Whinchat** and a **Spotted Flycatcher**! Where else could you find such a combination? At the ford we met a couple of other birders who directed us to a place nearby where a **Spotted Crake** had been recently showing and sure enough out popped the crake and gave us wonderful close views, the bird was practically tame! We also watched another **Collared Flycatcher**, this time it was a wonderful female, we all had good close views and were able to pick out all its diagnostic identification features.

More **Bee-eaters** passed overhead as we left the ford, again we stopped along the track back towards Sigri this time it was to look at waders on a large expanse of mud along the shoreline, this area was usually bereft of birds but this year several birds were present. A solitary **Greenshank** stood fast asleep, a **Grey Plover** stalked the muddy areas and was joined by two **Little-ringed Plovers** and three **Little Stints**. Eight **Little Egrets** gathered on the shoreline and in the distance a **Grey Heron** stood motionless, somewhat further away, as if guarding the entrance to the bay. Well it was now 5pm another day had flashed by and it was time to

head off back to Skala Kalloni. We stopped a couple of times during the homeward journey but added only **Jackdaw** to our trip list.



Great Bittern

Arriving back at the hotel at 6pm there was still good enough light to venture down to the Kalloni pool to try and grab a sighting of the **Great Bittern** that had been present since our arrival on the island. Sure enough a small crowd were already watching the bird and we got good views of head neck and shoulders as the bird raised itself from the thick sedge and reeds.

Day 5 - Monday 27th May.

Another early breakfast and another fine morning to start another great day on this magical bird-watching island. Our destination today was Vatera at the southern tip of the island, a good place to search for migrant species and has been quite productive in recent years. We stopped briefly at the eastern side of the salt pans at Kalloni, the air was still, the pans were beautifully lit in morning light and the birds looked magnificent, especially the **Greater Flamingos** in flight. Several species were noted very close to us such as **Kentish Plover**, **Little Ringed Plover**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Red-throated Pipit**, **Whinchat**, **Yellow Wagtail** and a **Little Grebe**. The air was alive with hirundines, a conservative estimation put the number of **Barn Swallows** at 2000! Then there were hundreds of both **House Martins** and **Sand Martins** and lesser numbers of **Common Swifts**.

We drove through 'Derbyshire' and noted 6 **Black Storks** in a small road side pool alongside a **Great Egret**, **Grey Heron** and a **Little Egret**, passing through Achladeri we turned onto the main road towards Mytiline and stopped after a couple of miles on a woodland track. Our target species was **Serin** which we noted after 30 seconds, but we also added **Cirl Bunting** and some lovely brightly coloured **Chaffinches**. A little further along the road we turned off and drove along the 'old road' through a tiny village called Diminios, we were able to stop and park anywhere we liked as the road was completely deserted. We made several stops taking short walks along the road which overlooked a quintessential babbling brook, our target birds were more likely to be seen in the UK than Greece but the scenery and habitat made a complete contrast to anything else found on Lesvos. We failed to see our target birds but we noted **Collared Flycatcher**, **Kruper's Nuthatch**, **Coal Tit** and not much else.



We passed through Polichnitos (noting the ice-cream shop on the corner) and dropped down into Vatera stopping just beyond the bridge on the eastern river. There was a large movement of Greek army personnel and a stream of vehicles, including armoured trucks and tanks, passing us by, the noise and disturbance put paid to any serious birding. However, we did see, **Common** and **Green Sandpiper**, **Reed Warbler**, **Kingfisher** and a trickle of **Alpine Swifts** above us. We walked the river bank which was covered in a beautiful array of flowering plants and we ended up at the mouth of the river at the beach, a good place to take our lunch which we promptly did. A few small parties of **Yelkouen Shearwaters** were passing by and a single **Cormorant** flew across the bay, two **Purple Herons** flew in off the sea and several **Red-rumped Swallows** passed overhead, but little else caught our attention. Following the track to Agios Fokos we made a couple of stops to search for **Sardinian Warbler**, this species is extremely common in most of Europe, but on Lesvos it is hard to locate. We all got brief glimpses of the bird, unlike the views of **Middle Spotted Woodpecker** as one flashed across the road and only yours truly saw it.

On the return journey a visit to the aforementioned ice-cream shop was obligatory but not without a purpose because as we sat in the sunshine and ate our iced delights we watched the local, giant-Stork's-nest for signs of life, we saw far more of **House Sparrows** in the nest than the single sitting Stork.

The Polichnitos salt pans were being battered by a strong wind coming off the sea which ruined our visit to a certain extent, however there were good numbers of **Wood Sandpiper** to look at. We also noted many **Yellow Wagtails** a few **White Wagtails** and a **Red-backed Shrike**.

It was late afternoon when we arrived back at Kalloni salt pans where we noted a small influx of waders, there were now 20+ **Curlew Sandpipers**, 10+ **Little Stints** and a good flock of 200 **Ruff**. On the flooded meadow we saw two **Squacco Herons**, several **Glossy Ibis**, a **Great Egret**, **Whiskered Tern**, **White-winged Tern** and a **Marsh Harrier**. On the return journey we stopped to look at a shrike on the telephone wire and it turned out to be a **Lesser Grey Shrike** to the great delight of the group, our first one and what a beauty. The last stop was at the mouth of the Tsiknias river where **Common Terns** loafed with a single **Mediterranean Gull**, a few **Little Terns** fished nearby and as we left 4 **Slender-billed Gulls** dropped in.

Day 6 - Tuesday 28th May.

Ipsilou Monastery was our destination for the day and we made good progress having left the hotel at 8:30am arriving at 9:45am stopping only at the Eresos 'crossroads' to admire the **Isabelline Wheatears** found there. We wrapped up warm because it is always cold and windy up at the monastery, however, this visit proved to be quite the opposite, a clear sky and very still air that soon warmed up. We parked at the top of the hill on which this small monastery was built and walked down through the wooded hillside, the slope was very steep so that we could look into the canopy of the trees below us without straining our necks. One of our first birds that we encountered was a beautiful **Little Owl** that sat and watched us from the canopy, the bird was at eye level and regarded us with a nonchalant glance.



The whole wooded hillside acts as a migrant trap and with the right weather conditions can be 'dripping' with migrant warbler species, but having had clear overnight skies for the last few nights the migrants were few and far between. We counted the birds as we descended through the wood, **Wood Warbler** (7), **Spotted Flycatcher** (9), **Pied Flycatcher** (3), not a huge haul. Some of resident species added a little excitement to our morning, we watched **Cinereous** and **Cretzchmar's Bunting**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, **Black-eared Wheatear** and a pair of **Rock Nuthatches** visiting their nest. The first of three singing Woodlarks took a while to find and more of the same Buntings were found on the lower treeless slopes.

What goes down must go up, now we were at the base of this high pinnacle we had to climb back up to the bus, we took the tarmac road at a gentle pace. Along the climb we notched one of our target species the **Rock Petronia** (Sparrow), but also saw **Alpine Swift**, **Short-toed Eagle**, **Subalpine Warbler**, **Common Whitethroat** and more buntings. Back at the top we looked down over sparse scrub on the eastern slope and found two **Lesser Whitethroats** and more **Wood Warblers**, we then took the bus down the western side stopping at an area that we had not searched yet. This proved to be rewarding as we had brief views of **Chiffchaff**, **Common Redstart** and a very distant **Montagu's Harrier**.

Moving on we headed for Sigri and only stopped when we saw a group of six **Lesser Kestrels** feeding just above the hillside and to our delight a **Red-footed Falcon** flew high over the Kestrels whilst we had the Kestrels in view. We then drove through Sigri and took the coastal track towards Eresos, parking just a kilometer outside Sigri to eat our picnic lunch. Our chosen site overlooked a dry riverbed, where earlier, other birders had seen a **Rufous Bush Robin**. We had several false alarms as similar sized species appeared, one in the shape of a female **Red-backed Shrike** and two **Great Reed Warblers**. There were also several **Whinchats** and many **Crested Larks**. After about an hour we decided to go, we gave the Bush Chat one more chance to show up and he kindly obliged giving the briefest of views as he flew from one bush to another.

The wind began to pick up and the afternoon temperature required fleeces but we still enjoyed a couple more stops in the Maladia valley. We added **Blackcap** to our trip list and noted **Woodchat Shrike**, **Bee-eater**, lots more **Whinchats** and several flycatchers to our day list. Our journey back to Skala Kalloni was relatively uneventful except for a stop at the river in Skala Eresos. From the bridge we saw **Little Ringed Plover**, **Common** and **Wood Sandpipers** and two **Little Bitterns**. We arrived back at 5:30pm giving just enough time for a short outing for those that wanted to and five of us set off to the Komares river on the west side of town. We walked across the salt marsh to the mouth of the river noting **Yellow Wagtail**, **Red-throated Pipit**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Greenshank**, **Little Egret** and **Common Tern**. Lastly we drove upriver and parked just above the bridge where we watched **Kentish Plover** and more **Wood Sandpipers**, we called it a day at 6pm and headed back into town.

Day 7 - Wednesday 30th May.

Our last full day and we intended to make the most of it; we were up and out by 6:30am our first destination was the river Tsiknias. At the river mouth there were a few **Common Terns** and not much else so we drove up to the ford and crossed over to the track that leads to the salt pans. We logged many species but failed to see anything new for our list, the dull overcast skies and chilly conditions did not help our cause so we bid a hasty retreat and headed back for breakfast.

At 9am we were back on the road passing through Kalloni before turning north on the track alongside the upper section of the Tsiknias river, we searched the sandy banks and riverside vegetation for a **Great Snipe** that had been seen the previous day but we had no luck, a few **Wood Sandpipers**, **Little Ringed Plovers** and good views of **Great Reed**, **Cetti's** and **Olivaceous Warblers** was all we had.

Passing through Paraskevi and Napi we entered a wide valley with gently rolling hillsides, the wooded valley floor was broken by open areas of grass meadows and farm buildings. We parked the bus overlooking this scenic vista and our first bird was a **Hoopoe**

found sitting in a nearby tree, next we found **Rock Nuthatch, Cretzchmar's Bunting, Black-eared Wheatear, Turtle Dove** and a **Jay**.

We stopped at a couple of places along this lovely valley hoping to find **Olive-Tree Warbler** and during our search we added **Common Cuckoo, Masked and Woodchat Shrikes, Cirl Bunting** and heard a **Thrush Nightingale** but despite a thorough search the bird failed to show and neither did the **Olive Tree Warbler**. At the head of the valley we turned onto a dirt track and made our way to another Olive grove where the elusive Warbler was known to frequent, we had great views of **Golden Oriole** but not the warbler. It began to rain so we decided to head back up the valley and take our lunch at the salt pans, what a good decision that turned out to be. The weather improved, blue sky appeared and the temperature rose, soon it was obvious that the recent heavy low cloud and rain had forced many birds to drop from the sky and rest a while in the salt pans. At the eastern end of the pans we could see many **Whiskered and White-winged Terns**, we found a single **Black Tern** and three **Spoonbills** which were located high up in the sky as they made their descent onto the marsh in the distance.



Next we watched a real gem at close quarters, a male **Citrine Wagtail** and whilst watching the wagtail out popped a **Little Crake** just a few meters from us. We headed to the west side stopping several times to look at the large flocks of waders that had newly arrived, there were **Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Greenshank and Wood Sandpiper** all in good numbers and we also picked up **Stone Curlew and Slender-billed Gull** a little further along the track. For lunch we sat at the beach café, drinking hot coffee and devouring our picnic, even then the birds kept on coming, a beautifully marked **Pallid Harrier** flew along the beach straight passed us!

We then walked the large sheep field at the southern side of the salt pans and at one stretch of water we found six **Common Ringed Plover**, and singles of **Dunlin and Temminck's Stint**, there we also **Glossy Ibis, Wood Sandpiper, Red-throated Pipit** and lots of **Yellow Wagtails**. Heading back towards the Tsiknias river we spent a pleasant hour watching recently arrived migrants in the shape of **Lesser Grey Shrike (3), Red-backed Shrike (2), Bee-eater (6), Whinchat (6), Common Whitethroat and Black-headed Bunting**. The sky was full of thousands of hirundines and we noted **Montagu's and Marsh Harriers, a Hobby, two Short-toed Eagles, Long-legged Buzzard** and a second **Pallid Harrier**. It's hard to believe that so many species can be seen in such a short space of time.



Back at the Tsiknias river-mouth we found **Slender-billed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Sandwich Tern, Little Tern and Common Tern**. As we made the short trip back to the hotel we had a little time to reflect on the vast amount of different

species we had seen during the day, 4 Shrikes, 4 Buntings, 6 Terns, 7 Warblers, 13 Waders, 3 Herons, the list goes on, we logged 95 species during the day!

Day 8 - Thursday 1st May.

Our last day began with breakfast at 7am and by 8:30am we were at the Metochi Lake in beautiful light, fantastic scenery and a plethora of birds, what a great way to spend our last morning. We spent an hour or so watching **Little Crakes, Little Bittern, Squacco Heron** and a good variety of warblers. **Bee-eaters** flew over and **Golden Orioles** called from nearby trees as we left this superb venue. We took the tracks to the Potomia river and spent a couple of hours walking along the river bank hoping to catch a glimpse of **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**, without success. En-route we came across a great sight of some 30 **Turtle Doves** feeding on freshly ploughed earth in an olive grove. Birds were scarce on the ground so we move to another section of the river and watched a small **Bee-eater** colony for a time, we also had good views of a **Great Reed Warbler** before moving off to the salt pans at Kalloni.

Along the west track leading onto the pans we finally bumped into a small flock of **Collared Pratincoles** hawking insects above the water meadows, just above them there was also a single **Red-footed Falcon**. Just 100 meters away we found a **Marsh Sandpiper** very close to the roadside and affording great views for the group, so within 30 minutes we had added three new species for the trip and very good ones at that. It was fast approaching the time to leave the pans and to head off back to the hotel to finalize our packing before setting off to the airport for our return home.

The Species list is shown below with a comparison of the birds seen during the following week April 30th – May 6th. The lists show that each week can produce a good selection of birds, both lists are slightly below average for the time of year and this was due to the prevailing north-easterly winds and generally cold conditions.

	SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC	Week 1 Apr 23 rd 09	Week 2 Apr 30 th 09
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	√	√
2	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>		√
3	Yelkouan Shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>	√	√
4	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	√	√
5	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	√	√
6	Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	√	
7	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	√	√
8	Black-cr Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	√	√
9	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	√	√
10	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	√	√
11	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	√	√
12	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	√	√
13	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	√	√
14	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	√	√
15	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	√	√
16	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	√	√
17	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	√	√
18	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	√	
19	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	√	
20	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	√	√
21	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	√	√
22	Garganey		√	
23	Mallard	<i>Anthus platyrhynchos</i>	√	√
24	Pintail	<i>Anthus acuta</i>	√	
25	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		√
26	Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	√	√
27	Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	√	√
28	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	√	√
29	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	√	
30	Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	√	
31	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	√	√
32	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	√	√
33	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	√	√
34	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	√	√
35	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	√	√
36	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	√	√
37	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	√	√
38	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subuteo</i>	√	√
39	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>		√
40	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	√	√
41	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	H	
42	Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	H	√
43	Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	√	√
44	Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>	√	√

45	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	√	√
46	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	√	√
47	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	√	√
48	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	√	√
49	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	√	√
50	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>		√
51	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	√	√
52	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	√	√
53	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	√	√
54	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	√	√
55	Spur-winged Lapwing	<i>Vinulus spinosus</i>	√	
56	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		√
57	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	√	√
58	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	√	√
59	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	√	
60	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	√	√
61	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	√	√
62	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	√	√
63	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	√	√
64	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	√	√
65	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	√	√
66	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	√	√
67	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	√	√
68	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	√	√
69	Little Gull	<i>Larus minutes</i>		√
70	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	√	
71	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	√	√
72	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	√	√
73	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	√	√
74	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>		√
75	Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	√	√
76	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	√	√
77	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	√	
78	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i>	√	√
79	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	√	√
80	Rock Dove /Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia feral</i>	√	√
81	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	√	√
82	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	√	√
83	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	√	H
84	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	√	√
85	Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>	√	√
86	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	√	√
87	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>		√
88	Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	√	√
89	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	√	√
90	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>		√
91	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	√	
92	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	√	√
93	Middle-sp. Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus medius</i>	√	√
94	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	√	√
95	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	√	√
96	Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	√	√

97	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	√	√
98	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	√	√
99	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	√	√
100	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	√	√
101	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	√	√
102	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	√	
103	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus Trivialis</i>		√
104	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	√	√
105	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>	√	√
106	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>	√	√
107	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flavissimo</i>	√	√
108	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava tumbergi</i>	√	√
109	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	√	√
110	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		√
111	White Wagtail	<i>Moyacilla alba</i>	√	√
112	Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		√
113	Rufous Bush Robin	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	√	√
114	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rbecula</i>		√
115	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	√	√
116	Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	H	H
117	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	√	√
118	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	√	√
119	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	√	√
120	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	√	√
121	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	√	√
122	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	√	√
123	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola salitarius</i>	√	√
124	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	√	√
125	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	√	√
126	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	√	√
127	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	√	√
128	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	√	√
129	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	√	√
130	Eastern Olivaceous	<i>Hippolais elaeica</i>	√	√
131	Olive-tree Warbler	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>		H
132	Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>		√
133	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	√	√
134	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	√	√
135	Ruppell's Warbler	<i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>	√	√
136	Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>	√	√
137	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	√	√
138	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	√	√
139	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	√	√
140	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	√	√
141	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	√	√
142	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	√	√
143	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula striata</i>	√	√
144	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	√	√
145	Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	√	
146	Sombre Tit	<i>Parus lugubris</i>	√	√
147	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	√	
148	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	√	√

149	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	√	√
150	Kruper's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta kruepei</i>	√	√
151	Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>	√	√
152	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	√	√
153	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolis orioles</i>	√	√
154	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	√	√
155	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	√	√
156	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	√	√
157	Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>	√	√
158	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus grandarius</i>	√	√
159	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	√	√
160	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	√	√
161	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	√	√
162	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		√
163	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	√	√
164	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	√	√
165	Rock Petronia	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	√	√
166	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringella coelebs</i>	√	√
167	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	√	√
168	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	√	√
169	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	√	√
170	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	√	√
171	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	√	√
172	Cinereous Bunting	<i>Emberiza cineracea</i>	√	√
173	Cretzschmar's Bunting	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>	√	√
174	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	√	√
175	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	√	√
			156 +3H	156 +3H

H = Heard only.