

WINGSPAN BIRD TOURS

TRIP REPORT

Lesvos April 24th - May 1st 2008

Leader Bob Buckler

Summary

Our group of eight 'wing-spanners' had a fantastic week exploring this superb bird-watching venue, over 170 species were recorded which included the Lesvos specialities such as: Kruper's Nuthatch, Western Rock Nuthatch, Cinereous Bunting, Cretzchmar's Bunting, Sombre Tit, Olive Tree Warbler, Rupell's Warbler and Baillon's, Spotted & Little Crakes. Some birds with



Lesvos rarity value also appeared which included Levant Sparrowhawk, Great Snipe, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Savi's Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Ferruginous Duck and Spur-winged Plover.

Recent rainfall had embellished this gem of an island with a carpet of wild flowers and the lush green meadows held seasonal pools which, in turn, attracted many birds. Though the rainfall was not as prolific as in 2006 it was nowhere near the drought conditions of 2007. Cold weather brought on by a northerly wind dominated the first 3 days, very dense low cloud on day 3 caused a massive fall of migrants in the west of the island and from day 4 the weather improved and lots of great birds were seen.

Bird-watching highlights

Thursday 24th April, Day 1.

Our delayed arrival on day 1 left us precious little time for birding, after landing at 5pm we arrived at our hotel in Skala Kalloni at 6:30pm and we were back out, raring to go, at 6:45pm.

We took a leisurely walk to the nearby Kalloni Pool which was now very overgrown and lacked any open water, small areas were wet but the small pools that did hold water were obscured by reeds. Our first birds were Squacco Herons, looking very bright orange in the evening light, next we saw Olivaceous Warbler singing from the tamarisk. We also noted Nightingale, Cetti's Warbler, Corn Bunting, Crested Lark and above us we saw House and Sand Martin, Barn Swallow, a single Pallid Swift and many Common Swifts. Our outing was short but sweet, we returned to the hotel in time for our much appreciated dinner.

Friday 25th April, Day 2.

We made an early start to visit the Metochi lake, a ten minute drive from the hotel. The morning was chilly and a brisk breeze was blowing from the north. At the lake the air was alive with the magical sounds of a dawn chorus made up of warblers! Reed and Great Reed Warblers, Olivaceous Warbler, Cetti's Warbler and Nightingale all sang from the dense scrub that lined the pool. We had good sightings of all of those birds, we also saw at least 3 Little Crakes, a Spotted Crake was a bonus, an excellent find.

We then drove the short distance to a rocky hillside which was a little sheltered from the wind, there we added some interesting species. Black-eared Wheatears seemed to be all over the place, we also noted Jay, the eastern variety with a much darker head, Spotted Flycatcher and a Pied Flycatcher (on a rock, sunbathing), Crested Lark, Nightingale, Corn Bunting and we had a very brief glimpse of a Rock Nuthatch.

After breakfast we set off to view the Tsiknias river and to our great delight the first birds we noted were two Slender-billed Gulls, another good find. A few Common and little Terns flew around the river mouth and we saw a single Bee-eater, Cormorant and Red-rumped Swallow.

Up-river at the ford we had great views of a Marsh Sandpiper alongside a Wood Sandpiper both were feeding in the water just a few meters from where we stood. A few Yellow Wagtails were feeding on the river bank and several Little-Ringed Plovers ran along the sand-spits. Overhead there were many Hirundines and Swifts, we noted Alpine Swift and Red-rumped Swallow amongst the many Barn Swallows and Common Swifts.



Next we visited the Kalloni Salt Pans and amongst a flock of Yellow Wagtails we found a beautiful male Citrine Wagtail, we had a brief look at this gem before it flew off, never to be seen again. Other birds noted in the short-grass meadows were Black Stork, Red-throated Pipit and Short-toed Lark. Along the feeder channel of the salt pans there were many Ruff, Wood Sandpipers and some fabulous summer plumaged Curlew Sandpipers. In the distance we could make out large flocks of Greater Flamingo, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilts and a few Little Egrets.

On the coastal side of the pans we walked into a wide open flat meadow that was grazed by sheep, from there we had good views of Kentish Plover, a fly-over Ruddy Shelduck and a distant Tawny Pipit.

At the eastern entrance to the pans a small seasonal pool had formed on the side of the main road and it proved to be an excellent magnet for wading birds. Spotted Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint, Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, and Black-winged Stilt all fed there.

It was approaching lunch time so we left the pans and headed south towards Mytilini we stopped near a disused bridge and ate our picnic lunch in bright sunshine. We then walked a track that had a rocky hillside on the left and a salt marsh on the right, surprisingly not many birds were found and the most notable finds were Red-backed Shrike, another Temminck's Stint and a Ruddy Shelduck.



We then drove across an open causeway and followed the southern shoreline of the Gulf of Kalloni until we reached an area of pine forest where there was a known nest site for the Kruper's Nuthatch. Within minutes of leaving the bus we were watching the Nuthatch which gave great views as the male perched just above its nest hole calling and wing-flicking, very soon the female arrived with food and promptly disappeared into the nest. Next we began to search the surrounding woodland for other woodland birds where we met other bird-watchers looking intensely into the tree canopy, we soon found out why, as we were directed to three Long-eared Owls that were perched high up in a pine tree. There were two recently fledged fluffy chicks and one adult assumed to be the female, the chicks delighted the group with their comical facial expressions and neck-stretching antics. We then searched for, and found, a pair of Masked Shrikes, which is the smallest of the four species of Shrikes found on Lesvos, but very colourful.

Driving back towards Kalloni through some open grassland a shout of "Roller" went up, sure enough after we all quickly bailed out of the bus we were confronted with the beautiful sight of a perched Roller. We watched this beauty for a while as it dived to the ground to capture insects whilst showing off its wonderful colour scheme of blue, brown and creamy white. A quick search of the surrounding fields produced first, a Lesser Grey Shrike, then a Red-backed Shrike and lastly a Woodchat Shrike, what an area, within an hour we had seen four species of shrikes! Other birds recorded in the area were Whinchat, Black-eared Wheatear, Turtle Dove and a distant Black Stork circling over the hillside.

We returned to Kalloni, via the salt pans, which you cannot pass without stopping because there are always new birds to see and this stop was no exception. A flock of White-winged Terns fed over the grassy banks, whilst Ruff, Wood Sandpipers and Curlew sandpipers waded in the shallow lagoons and a male Whinchat sat on a fence-line posing perfectly for us. When we arrived back at the hotel we met some other birders in the car park who informed us that a Cattle Egret had just been seen near the pans, the group opted to return to search for this island rarity, however, we failed to find it and as a consolation we had excellent views of a Great Egret in the east river on the way back.

Saturday 25th April, Day 3

Dull, overcast, and a cold wind all day was not the recipe for good birding and yet we had a brilliant day out. The morning trip began at 6:15am at which time it should have been light but it was still dark due to the thick dark clouds overhead. We made the short trip to the Potomia Valley and parked alongside the river, we never saw a bird for about 20 minutes then they began to wake up, first a Turtle Dove 'turred', then a Raven 'cronked' as it flew over, a very high Red-footed Falcon soared by and a family party of Sombre Tits passed by. An Olivaceous Warbler began belt out its monotonous song adding to that of the Chaffinch and the Blackbird, we then had a brief encounter with a Middle Spotted Woodpecker but not much else. As we returned to the bus a whole host of hirundines filled to the skies, literally thousands of birds including many Crag Martins and hundreds of Barn Swallows, House Martins and Red-rumped Swallows some of which perched along a telegraph wire, on the same length of wire we found a Black-headed Bunting, then a Cirl Bunting showed up and a Roller flew across our field of view for a few seconds. A pair of Black-eared Wheatears performed well just before we left, our breakfast was eagerly consumed.

Following breakfast we set off for Sigri via 'Devil's Bridge', Agra and Eresos, we never made it to Sigri! The birding throughout the day was superb despite the cold, dull and windy conditions and our progress was very slow. At Devils Bridge we walked up a concrete path to a small chapel where we found Rock Nuthatch, Cretzchmar's Bunting, Ortolan Bunting, Cirl Bunting, Sombre Tit, Short-toed Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard and many other species. We stopped several times after that, the most notable was just above Agra where we had great views of Golden Oriole and a Jay, also a brief view of the 'song-flight' of a Blue Rock Thrush. Next we stopped at a river crossing where a Spotted Flycatcher showed well and a Subalpine Warbler did not.

A short visit was made to the river at Skala Eresos where Olivaceous and Cetti's Warblers performed well, a couple of Whiskered Terns patrolled the river and a few yellow Wagtails, with varying degrees of head colour, fed on the river bank. Just before the wind drove us off we watched a Night Heron fly over and eventually settle in a nearby tree, it was then flushed by workers whereby it flew off into the distance, a Squacco Heron flew in as we walked towards the bus.

We drove through Eresos without a hitch and stopped by the rubbish dump along the coast road to Sigri to look for Raven and Yellow-legged Gulls, finding only the gulls. Our lunchtime destination was the Maledia ford and along the way we noted Red-footed Falcon, Cirl and Cretzchmar's Buntings, Stonechat, Rock Nuthatch, Whinchat, Hooded Crow and hundreds more Yellow-legged Gulls.

At the ford we parked the bus sideways onto the wind so we could eat our lunch with side door open, although the wind was cold it wasn't too strong to stop us from birding. We searched the scrub for warblers as this was a good habitat for migrant species, soon we found a Barred Warbler, in fact we had a singing Barred Warbler alongside a singing Orphean Warbler (no contest) and then a Common Whitethroat flew in to join them. Within the space of ten minutes we had found four shrike species in one field, Lesser Grey, Masked, Red-backed and Woodchat all perched-up and being very obliging! Then three male Golden Orioles were found sitting in one bush, an Ortolan Bunting showed briefly but well, other 'good' birds included Reed and Great Reed Warbler, Black-headed and Cretzchmar's Bunting, what a start. As the afternoon wore on things just got better, we ventured through the fig-tree plantation finding Pied Flycatcher, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Common Redstart, Tree Pipit, Rock Nuthatch, Turtle Dove, Sombre Tit (nesting in a post), two more Ortolan Buntings, a very showy and surprising Thrush Nightingale, that repeatedly chased the Redstart away, cocking its tail in an arrogant manner. The time flew by and soon it was time to leave this wonderful valley, we vowed to return as we set off for our dinner back at the hotel.



Sunday 27th May, Day 4.

Although rain was forecast it did not materialize, but the overcast conditions remained with bouts of brighter weather and much less wind.

We searched the west river area for an hour or so before breakfast looking for Stone Curlew and finding many birds except the Curlew. A flock of 22 Little Egrets was nice, three species of shrike was also nice (Woodchat, Red-backed and Lesser Grey), but a single Great Egret was better. Other birds included many Yellow Wagtails, Kentish, Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers, Whiskered Tern and Black Stork.

Our day out was to include a trip to the north of the island and en-route, once we had passed through Kalloni, we stopped at a well known site for Scop's Owl. The owl was a real crowd pleaser and then at the "Bandstand" a well known raptor-watch point we saw Rock Nuthatch, Cretzchmar's and Cirl Bunting, Black-eared Wheatear, but no raptors as the cloud was too low.

Our route was to take us through Petra and as we descended towards this coastal town we pulled into a small track for a short break. We were soon watching Red-rumped Swallows and then we made a great find, an active nest hole of the Middle-spotted Woodpecker, we all had stunning views of this bird and all the digi-scopers had to be dragged away. We drove through Petra and then onto Molivos eventually arriving at the Petra Reservoir after a couple of aborted wrong turns. In the scrub leading up to the reservoir we heard Great Reed and Reed Warbler, we saw Subalpine Warbler and Cirl Bunting, whilst the bus was driven up to the parking area adjacent to the reservoir the rest of the group saw a small flock of 6 Ortolan Buntings.

The reservoir itself had been drained for repair to be carried out and all that was left was a small pool and lots of exposed plastic liner. Around the pool there was a single Wood Sandpiper, a single Ruff and one Ruddy Shelduck, not a lot! Several hundred Yellow-legged Gulls loafed on the liner and concrete banks.

We then took the north coast road and climbed through the mountainous area at Skiminios and down the east coast to Mandamados where we turned eastward back towards Kalloni. Turning off the main road at the head of the Napi Valley we took a bumpy track to an area known as Plantania where there is a regular spot to look for Olive Tree Warbler. We arrived just as a couple of birders were leaving, they informed us that the bird was showing every 30 minutes or so. We waited 40 minutes and then we heard it calling, we followed the call from tree to tree until we saw a Masked Shrike – this bird was imitating the Warbler! Then, the real bird started to call, but it took us another 40 minutes for every one of the group to get a good look at it, the bird was very hard to see and always seemed to sing from the other side of the tree or bush. Other birds seen in the area were Hoopoe, Turtle Dove and several more Masked Shrikes. Returning along the track we stopped right next to a disused barn to watch an obliging Little Owl that sat in the window space staring at us.

We then drove the length of the Napi valley and visited the Kalloni Salt Pans stopping first at the roadside pool, the water was rapidly evaporating but the bird numbers remained virtually the same. The Spotted Redshanks increased to three and were looking blacker by the day, the Marsh Sandpiper remained as did Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint and Black-winged Stilts. Along the 'canal' at the pans there were many Ruff and a lot more Wood Sandpipers.



Next we drove through Kalloni and onto a dirt track to pay another visit to Metochi Lake specifically to look for a Baillon's Crake which we were told had been showing well. When we arrived it seemed that everyone else on the island was there and a large group were watching the crake from near a little bridge. Soon we all got great views and were delighted when a second bird appeared just a few meters away.

Several Little Crakes were showing on the far bank of the pool and a group of Whiskered Terns fed over the pool and made us all chuckle when they all alighted on a floating log, balancing precariously they made a great picture. Overhead small numbers of Alpine Swift mixed with larger numbers of Common Swift and a party of Bee-eaters flew noisily by.

The place of interest that we visited was the mouth of Tisknias River where we watched Squacco Heron, Little Bittern, and another Temminck's Stint before we decided to call it day and return to the comfort of the hotel.

Monday 28th May, Day 5.

Another early start to another great day on this magical island. It was dull and overcast but the cold wind had died down to a chilly breeze. We assembled at 6 am for a short drive to the Tsiknias River where we were to look for Savi's Warbler and as we arrived it was obvious that the bird was present because a loud buzzing was coming from across the river. It took quite a while to locate it but eventually we all had 'in the scope' views. At the river mouth there were a few Yellow-legged Gulls, Common and Little Terns and Common Shelduck. We then drove back into Skala Kalloni via the harbour and round to the pool, we stopped at the pool to join another group of early birders who informed us that a Ferruginous Duck was there. We quickly got onto it in the distant reeds and to complete a trio of new birds a shout went out as three Mediterranean Gulls flew right over us, not a bad morning.

After breakfast we headed off back to the river for a quick 'twitch' as another group staying at our hotel had passed on the news of the sighting of a Great Snipe, we searched for 30 minutes and left empty handed. We set off west to visit the Monastery at Ipsilou stopping several times along the way. At the steep side gorge just after Andissa we found the elusive Rock Petronia and then at the Eresos-Sigri crossroads we had very good views of Isabelline Wheatear along with Whinchat, Cretzchmar's Bunting and a superb male Ortolan Bunting.

At the monastery we parked at the base of the approach road and walked the steeply inclined tarmac road picking out many migrant birds in the scattered bushes found on the slopes. Black-eared and Northern Wheatears were very common and in the deep valley we stopped to admire three Long-legged Buzzards, one of which was displaying. In the scrub we found many Blackcaps, Wood Warblers, Lesser Whitethroats, Spotted and Pied Flycatchers. We also had brief glimpses of a Thrush Nightingale but at the top we watched another one as it fed in a larger tree, sometimes bursting into song.

Next we drove towards Sigri but had to stop several times as “raptor” was called out, first we noted Hobby then Red-footed Falcon and then a party of Lesser Kestrels (eight in all), two Short-toed Eagles added to the excitement. At Sigri we dropped two members of the group off at the Geological Gardens and Museum whilst the rest of set off for the ford at Faneromeni where we parked up and ate our picnic lunch in the bright, warm, sunshine. The river was just a trickle and small pools had formed along the stony river bed, in one of these, about 50 meters up river, there were a group of waders and herons. The most obvious bird was a striking Purple Heron, this was flanked by three Squacco Herons, one of which was a very deep orange making the other two look very pale. The waders included Greenshank, Spotted Redshank, Temminck’s Stint and about twenty Wood Sandpipers. After a while we began to pick out Little Bitterns in the grassy banks, counting four altogether, then a wader stirred very close to the river bank and on close inspection it turned out to be a Great Snipe, a superb find, soon we were joined a large group of Dutch Birders who delighted in seeing this little gem.

We set off back along the track towards Sigri and very soon a shout of “Bee-eater” went up, there were eight in all and were perched on a dead tree and along the telegraph wires, they soon dispersed when a camera was produced. At this point the group were left to walk whilst the bus was driven back into town to retrieve the two ‘geologists’, once retrieved they were quickly deposited back along the track towards the ford where the group of Dutch Birders were watching a perched Red-footed Falcon, a Masked Shrike and a Roller. The bus then carried on to the ford to pick-up the main body of the group, along the way a Sparrowhawk flew across the track just as the bus met the group. It flew along a hedgerow giving reasonable views and enough for it to be identified as a Levant Sparrowhawk, another excellent sighting for the group (all except the two geologists)

We turned the bus around and drove back to Sigri stopping to admire the Falcon and the Roller and to reunite the group and just before we left we saw five Red-footed Falcons above us high in the sky.

It was now late afternoon so we set off back towards Kalloni via Eresos and Agra, we stopped at Paraloika Marshes where a sub-adult Mute Swan graced the pools, but other than a few Black-winged Stilts we saw very little else. We arrived back at the hotel at around 6:30pm and some of us decided to venture to the Tsiknias river for a last minute watch. There was not much about but a small group of waders consisted of 3 Dunlin, 2 Sanderling and a single Curlew Sandpiper, another good bird for our list was Collared Pratincole, 3 of which flew over us and landed on a sand-spit for the briefest of moments before flying off.

Tuesday 29th May, Day 6.

We had a lie in today and met at breakfast at 7:30am (what a lie in, luxury), after breakfast we set off for the eastern side of the salt pans and visited the road-side hide. A large flock of Terns were feeding in the middle-distance over a shallow lagoon, the flock included 20+ White-winged Terns, Common Terns, Little Terns and a couple of Black Terns. In the salt pans just in front of the hide we saw a Eurasian Curlew, 23 Little Egrets and a distant Black Stork and along the embankments we located a Stone Curlew and a Great Egret.

Moving on we drove further eastward and passed through Achladeri pine woods where earlier in the week we had watched the Kruper’s Nuthatch, after about 5 miles of climbing the road leveled off and we turned left towards Mytilini. We drove through several miles of pine woods before turning left onto a woodland track. We parked and walked further into the wood and very soon we were watching a beautiful male Serin sitting on a dead branch, thus finding our target bird.

A little further along the road we turned off and drove along the ‘old road’ through a tiny village called Diminos, 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. Soon we had located Grey Wagtail and Coal Tit, we heard Chaffinch, Wren and a Common Cuckoo. We spent a good hour walking downhill through the village passing a disused mill before climbing back into the bus and heading off.

Our next stop was the beautiful town of Agiasos where we intended to visit the Chestnut Wood that stretches for miles on the surrounding hillside, this added a real English flavour to the tour. After climbing through the town we took a cobbled track that led off steeply up through the woods, Nightingales were singing all over the place and we all got to see a Wren, wow! We spent a couple of hours on the track, it seemed like forever before we emerged at the top, but what fantastic views. It was getting very hot so we headed back down the trail serenaded by Robin, Song Thrush, Common Chiffchaff and more Nightingales. We ate an ice cream back in town but soon we were on the road again. Just out of town we noticed a large raptor in the sky to our left, it was carrying prey which turned out to be a snake and the bird was a Short-toed Snake Eagle – what else could it be?

Our penultimate destination of the day was Vatera, a small seaside town, on the south of the island. It was very hot when we got there but a nice cooling breeze occasionally stirred. We parked by the bridge over the river which was overgrown with sedges, reeds and grasses.

A beautiful array of wild flowers added a wonderful splash of colour along each river bank. At the bridge we had great close-up views of a Temminck’s Stint which fed alongside a Common Sandpiper, it was great to compare these two species as they fed close together, Reed and Great Reed Warblers were also seen from the bridge. We then took a walk along the track besides the river and added a good selection of birds there, we saw another Temminck’s Stint, Little Bittern (2), Hoopoe (2), Common

Sandpiper, Night Heron (fly over), Squacco Heron, more Reed, Great Reed and Sedge Warblers, Olivaceous Warbler and a Lesser Whitethroat.



Lastly we visited the tiny fishing port of Agios Fokas which is found on the headland just west of Vatera. We sat on a grassy bank and watched out to sea as small groups of Yelkouan Shearwaters passed. We saw a couple of Cory's Shearwaters, Shag (2) and a pair of Black-winged Stilt were feeding in rocky pools below us, but the sea was calm and generally quiet. On the headland we found several Black Headed Buntings (6) and not much else. The café/bar proved very tempting and a couple of beers were consumed by some of the group before we set off for the return journey. Along the track, on the way back, we stopped to look for Sardinian Warblers and having spent a frustrating hour we managed only a couple of brief glimpses, however these were overshadowed with the sighting of a pod of Dolphins off-shore in the bay. They put on a wonderful display as they jumped high out of the water, somersaulting as they dropped back to the surface we were fascinated and spell bound for 30 minutes, a great way to finish off our day.

Wednesday 30th May, Day 7.

Our last full day and we intended to make the most of it, we were up and out by 6am. Our first stop was the seasonal pool at the back of the salt pans, we were looking for a Spur-winged Plover that was present the day before but unfortunately the bird had flown. However we saw a good number of other species which included 15 Ruddy Shelduck, Collared Pratincole, Red-footed Falcon, Red-throated Pipit, Short-toed Lark and the usual array of waders, herons and flamingos on the salt pans.

After breakfast we set off west for a second visit to the Meladia Ford, that is found on the Eresos-Sigri coast-road, but our first stop was the river on the outskirts of Skala Eresos. We walk along the track looking down over the river which held very little except the usual Wood Sandpipers, Cetti's and Olivaceous Warblers. We did have excellent views of a Little Stint before we drove off through Eresos and onto the coast track that leads to Sigri, after about 6km we came to the ford of the river Meladia. Dense scrub surrounded the ford and thinner scrub spread out across a huge area on the north side. There was also a large fig tree plantation and it was there that we found a superb male Collared Flycatcher. We also found Pied and Spotted Flycatcher, in good numbers along with Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, Marsh Warbler (singing) and a Great Reed Warbler,

We ate our packed lunch at the 'chapel' where we had several sightings of Long-legged Buzzard and at least four Short-toed Eagles but not a lot of passerines were seen in the pine trees in the Chapel gardens. We then moved onto Sigri stopping in the town for a quick ice-cream/beer, we sat overlooking the port in glorious weather. Next we drove along the track to the beach at the mouth of the river Faneromeni where we saw some very colourful Curlew Sandpiper and a single Common Sandpiper.

At the Upper - Faneromeni Ford we found Little Bittern (2), Squacco Heron, Wood Sandpiper (11), Reed and Great Reed Warbler, another singing Marsh Warbler and many Black-headed Buntings forming flocks of up to 20.

We drove back towards Eresos climbing up from Sigri passing the Monastery at Ipsilou before turning south into the picturesque Valley above Eresos. We stopped several times to look for Chukar and we had our first sighting of one after about 30 minutes, although it was seen by only a couple of the group as it flew quickly away directly below us. Other birds showed well which included Red-backed Shrike, Black-eared Wheatear, Cretzchmar's Bunting and Common Cuckoo. It took 60 minutes to drive back to Kalloni from Eresos and most of the group slept all the way.



After a brief stop-off at the hotel we made our regular late-afternoon visit to the mouth of the Tsiknias River where we noted Eurasian Curlew (2) and a Bar-tailed Godwit in somewhat peculiar plumage. Moving onto the salt pans we were delighted to hear from other birdwatchers that the Spur-winged Lapwing was back in the field near the seasonal pool and sure enough there it was. The bird was a real crowd pleaser and a 'tick', for most of the group. Other birds on show included 3 Collared Pratincoles, 11 Ruddy Shelduck, 2 Red-throated Pipits and 5 Short-toed Larks. There were 4 Red-footed Falcons feeding over the field and they occasionally perched on a nearby telegraph line. We set off back to the hotel very pleased with ourselves having caught up with the elusive Spur-winged Lapwing.

Thursday 1st May, Day 8.

Our last day began as usual at 6am. By 6:15 we were at the eastern end of the salt pans looking out from the new hide where a perfectly still morning made bird watching a real pleasure. A red sun rose behind us and added extra colour to the 'pink' Flamingos and distorted the hue of most of the other birds. The water-filled lagoons were like mirrors and produced wonderful reflected images of all the birds, a photographer's dream. We finally caught up with Grey Plover, three of them were fairly close, a large group of Curlew Sandpipers held one Dunlin and a Ruff. Plenty of other species were noted including Greenshank, Avocet, Wood Sandpiper, Little Stint, Stone Curlew, Little Egret, Black Stork, Kentish Plover and Common Sandpiper.

We returned to the hotel for breakfast and then spent our last two hours birding in the picturesque hillside adjacent to the upper Tsiknias river along the track towards the 'dead goat pit'. There were plenty of birds to see, it was a wonderful clear morning and quite warm, soon were we fully exploiting this lovely area. We all saw Bee-eaters perched in a distant tree, an ambition of some of the group and one unfulfilled thus far, the same applied to a perched Hoopoe. We also had great views of a male Cirl Bunting, Cretzchmar's Bunting, Black-eared Wheatear, Rock Nuthatch, we then had distant views of a Woodchat Shrike and brief glimpses of our second Chukar. Further up the valley we heard Turtle Dove, Common Raven and Common Cuckoo and watched a much closer Woodchat Shrike.

Well that was it, our time was up! We headed back down the valley to the hotel, loaded up the bus for the trip to the airport, saying goodbye to the very friendly staff at the hotel as we set off.

	SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC	Week 1 Apr 24 th 08	Week 2 May 8 th 08
1	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	√	√
2	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	√	√
3	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	√	√
4	Yelkouan Shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>	√	√
5	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	√	√
6	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</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	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	√	√
17	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	√	√
18	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	√	√
19	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	√	√
20	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	√	√
21	Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>		√
22	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>		√
23	Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	√	√
24	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	√	√
25	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	√	√
26	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	√	√
27	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	√	√
28	Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>	√	
29	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	√	√
30	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	√	√
31	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	√	√
32	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	√	√
33	Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>		√
34	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	√	√
35	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	√	√
36	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	√	√
37	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subuteo</i>	√	√
38	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>		√
39	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	√	√
40	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	H	
41	Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	√	√
42	Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	√	
43	Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>	√	√
44	Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</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	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	√	√
62	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	√	√
63	Great Snipe	<i>Gallinago media</i>	√	
64	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	√	
65	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	√	√
66	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	√	√
67	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	√	√
68	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>		√
69	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	√	√
70	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		√
71	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	√	√
72	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	√	√
73	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	√	√
74	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	√	√
75	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	√	√
76	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	√	√
77	Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	√	√
78	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	√	√
79	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	√	
80	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i>	√	√
81	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	√	√
82	Rock Dove /Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia feral</i>	√	√
83	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	√	√
84	Common Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	√	√
85	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	√	√
86	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	√	√
87	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	√	
88	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	√	
89	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	√	√
90	Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>	√	√
91	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	√	√
92	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	√	√
93	Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	√	√
94	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	√	√
95	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	√	√
96	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		√
97	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	√	√
98	Middle-sp. Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus medius</i>	√	√
99	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	√	√
100	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	√	√
101	Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		√

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

154	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	√	√
155	Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	√	√
156	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	√	√
157	Sombre Tit	<i>Parus lugubris</i>	√	√
158	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	√	√
159	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	√	√
160	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	√	√
161	Kruper's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta kruepei</i>	√	√
162	Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>	√	√
163	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>		√
164	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolis orioles</i>	√	√
165	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	√	√
166	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	√	√
167	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	√	√
168	Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>	√	√
169	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus grandarius</i>	√	√
170	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	√	√
171	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	√	√
172	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	√	√
173	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	√	√
174	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	√	√
175	Rock Petronia	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	√	√
176	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringella coelebs</i>	√	√
177	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	√	√
178	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	√	√
179	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	√	√
180	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	√	√
181	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	√	√
182	Cinereous Bunting	<i>Emberiza cineracea</i>	√	√
183	Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	√	
184	Cretzschmar's Bunting	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>	√	√
185	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	√	√
186	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	√	√
			170 +1H	168 +2H