

WINGSPAN BIRD TOURS

TOURING LESVOS

April 26th - May 3rd 2026



TRIP REPORT

DAY 1 – SUNDAY 26TH APRIL 2026

LUNCHTIME ARRIVAL AT MYTILINE AIRPORT – TRANSFER TO SKALA KALLONI WITH STOPS AT MESA – KALLONI SALT PANS

WEATHER: terrific all day, cloudless sunny sky, with light breeze. 25C

We couldn't have asked for better weather for our first day on this idyllic Aegean Island. I arrived at 7:30am and picked up the minibus in preparation for the arrival of the group at 12:45. I took the opportunity to check out the local **Ruppell's Warbler** site and got very lucky with a nice male singing to me. Other birds seen were **Cretzschmar's Bunting**, **Woodchat Shrike**, **Whinchat**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Eastern Orphean Warbler** (heard), a nicely perched **Short-toed Eagle** and a flyover **Raven**. At a pool near Charamida a little further down the road, I saw both **Grey** and **Purple Herons**, **Coot**, **Little Grebe** and I heard **Reed Warblers** singing.



Ruppell's Warbler

I collected my group of four a little earlier than expected because the flight was early. We loaded onto the minibus and set off for Skala Kallonis. We saw **hooded Crow**, **Barn Swallow** and **Yellow-legged Gulls** on the way into Mytiline Town.

Our first stop was at the open marshland near Mesa called Kalami Marsh. It was a little quiet there, we clocked up; **Squacco Heron**, **Grey Heron**, **Purple Heron**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Yellow Wagtail (Feldegg)**, **Corn Bunting**, **Zitting Cisticola** and a couple of superb male **Whinchats** with one female.

We arrived at the Kalloni Salt Pans, taking the west track from the main road. Parking a few meters along the track we got out to scan 'Stilt Corner'. We found three **Temminck's Stints** with about 30 **Wood Sandpipers**, three **Common Sandpipers** and the obligatory bunch of **Black-winged Stilts**. Scanning the nearest salt pans we listed dozens of **Greater Flamingos**, **Pied Avocets**, some distant **Little Terns** and a few **Ruff**.

It was the Alykes Wetlands that was full birds, hundreds of them we soon listed quite a good number. A flock of 20+ **White-winged Terns** were dashing about, a single **Whiskered Tern** too. The seasonal pools in the flooded meadows were full of **Wood Sandpipers**, **Ruff**, **Little** and **Great Egrets**, **50+ Glossy Ibis**, **Black Storks (2)**, **Grey Herons**, **Purple Heron**, **Squacco Heron**, we found a male **Garganey**, two **Ruddy Shelducks**, lots of **Yellow Wagtails**, **Red-throated Pipits** and several **Corn Buntings**.



Great Bittern

A female **Marsh Harrier** circled in the distance and another **Black Stork** dropped in. A large group of birders were watching a **Great Bittern**, so we joined them and filled our boots, what a cracker, (apparently later on a second bird was reported there).



Cretzschmar's Bunting taken this morning near Charamida

My group were getting fatigued, it had been a long day, so we packed up and drove to our hotel in Skala Kalloni, we collected Jo, the fifth member of the team, from another hotel where she had been staying. The usual **Common Nightingale** was singing in the hotel gardens and a **Savi's Warbler** was reeling from the Kalloni Marsh just outside the hotel gates.

DAY 2 – 27TH APRIL 2026

METochi LAKE – PAPIANA – EAST TRACK KALLONI SALT PANS – ALYKES WETLANDS AND SHEEP FIELDS – SCOPS COPSE – WEST BANK OF THE TSIKNIAS RIVER

WEATHER: wall to wall sunshine but a quite windy in the morning. Top temp 25C

We had a fantastic day today, excellent birding, fantastic scenery, the wild flowers were amazing and the light was superb. The windy conditions for most of the day was the only downer on a great day out.

We started at the small Lake called Metochi, a fantastic setting with beautiful scenery, bird song came from all directions, and the water was dead-flat calm. We listed all the species expected at this place

at this time of the year, **Little Crake**, **Little Bittern**, **Squacco** and **Purple Heron**. **Ruddy Shelducks** with a large number of chicks was a surprise.



Female **Little Crake**

in the scrub and reedbeds we found **Great & Common Reed Warblers**, **Sedge Warbler** and **Cetti's Warbler**. We heard **Common Nightingale** and **Olivaceous Warbler**. **Common Swifts** joined the hirundines coming down for a drink and distant birds included **European Bee-eaters**. On the way back to the hotel we added **Red-backed Shrike** and **Black-headed Bunting** to the list.

After Breakfast, before setting off to the Salt Pans, we stopped off in Papiana, the next village to Skala Kalloni, where we searched and found two of a family group of **Long-eared Owls**, we saw one chick and one adult.

At the Salt pans we really felt the wind on our backs as we walked a good mile along the eastern track. It was well worth the trouble though, because we found 8 **Dalmatian Pelicans**, a single **Shoveler**, lots of terns including **Little**, **Common** and **Gull-billed**. We couldn't find **Eurasian Spoonbills** but we added **Grey Plover** to our wader list.

We ate our lunch at the outflow near the racetrack behind Alykes Wetland. We found a **Whimbrel** and a **Kentish Plover** on the beach and two **Whiskered Terns** flew along the shore.



Long-eared Owl taken by Alan Baxter

A short walk in the flooded 'sheep fields' produce very little, lots of **Wood Sandpipers** fed with a few **Ruff** and we also found **Little Ringed Plovers**, a good number of **Ruddy Shelducks** and a **Short-toed Lark** in song flight. Six **Eurasian Spoonbills** circled on thermals, **Black Storks** flew over, at least four, all one at a time. A **Short-toed Eagle** headlined the raptors, with **Common Kestrel** and **Marsh Harrier** the supporting acts.

We spent some time at Alykes Wetlands looking for **Citrine Wagtail**, we found not one but two females, along with a mixture of **Yellow Wagtails** and **Red-throated Pipits**. The **Eurasian Bittern**, still present, was very showy once again and large flocks of **Glossy Ibis** swirling around in the wind for most of the morning.

A quick excursion to the Scops Copse was rewarded with the sighting of a **Scops Owl**, it wasn't very obliging as it sat with its back towards us. We couldn't find a second bird and on the way back we saw a **Little Owl** fly up onto the roof of a building, our third owl of the day.

The last couple of hours was spent driving-walking, driving-walking, the length of the west bank of the river Tsiknias. Again, we didn't see much, but we enjoyed the sunshine, the wild-flowers and warmth. We watched **European Bee-eaters**, we found a **Hoopoe**, **Black-headed Bunting**, **Olivaceous Warbler** and quite a few species already seen today.

One of the **European Bee-eaters** seen today

It was almost 6pm when we got back to the Hotel, we ate dinner at 7:30pm and at 9pm we met up for a visit into the town centre to look for a **Barn Owl**. We staked out the building in which the **Barn Owl** has built its nest, it gains access to the nest via a chimney. We watched the chimney for 40 minutes there was no activity, but we did see the **Barn Owl** flyover the chimney without stopping. Four Owl species in one day isn't bad, is it?



DAY 3 – APRIL 28TH 2026

KALLONI OLD RESERVOIR – POTAMIA VALLEY TO NEW KALLONI RESERVOIR – ACHLADERI PINE FOREST – POLICHNITOS SALT PANS – VATERA AND AGIOS FOKAS

WEATHER; perfect once again, clear sky all day, a nice cooling breeze – top temp 27C

This idyllic island keeps on producing the goods, we had another perfect day in superb weather, you can't ask for much more than that!

Before breakfast we set out on a short mission to look for two species in particular, they were the **Night Heron** and the **Rock Nuthatch**. The old Kalloni Reservoir is a regular roosting site for the **Night Herons** and that is where we went first. There were no Herons on show from where we stood, looking through the gaps in the trees and bushes from the track.

Then as we moved further along the track we flushed a single **Night Heron** that flew to the far side of the reservoir, it sat in full view for a while. Then two more flew out and finally a fourth bird joined them. All four birds were quickly lost to sight.

From around the water we heard **Great Reed Warbler**, **Cetti's Warbler**, **Olivaceous Warbler** and we saw **Squacco Heron**, **Little Grebe**, **Moorhen** and **Coot**.

As we drove from the old reservoir to the embankment of the new reservoir we found a **Lesser Grey Shrike** on the power wires, a **Red-backed Shrike** on a fence and a **Woodchat Shrike** in the bushes. At the track leading up to the new reservoir we stopped to watch a nest site of the **Western Rock Nuthatch**. The information about the position of this nest site was given to me on Sunday by my good friend Mervyn Jones, thanks Merv. The Nuthatches showed really well, everyone got to see them, but they were a bit distant.



Western Rock Nuthatch at its nest

After breakfast we set off on another ‘Nuthatch-crusade’ and once again the nest site of this bird was given to me by Mervyn. His directions were spot on, and we found the nest site of the **Kruper’s Nuthatch** straight away on arrival.

We arrived near Achladeri pine woods and parked next to a bridge, along the way we had noted many species the most notable were; **Glossy Ibis, Greater Flamingo, Avocets** and **Black-winged Stilts**.

The nest hole of the **Nuthatches** was quite high off the ground and there was a lot of activity around it. Both of the adult Nuthatches were visiting the hole and so was a pair of **House Sparrows**!! Soon there was a massive punch-up, the **Nuthatches** really gave the **Sparrows** a beating, I saw the male Nuthatch with a mouthful of sparrow-feathers!

Kruper’s Nuthatch

Moving onto the Achladeri Pine woods we spent an hour looking for typical breeding species. We found many **Chaffinches** and **Greenfinches**, also **Goldfinches** and **Serins**, we heard **Common Nightingales**, we saw **Turtle Dove, Cirl Bunting, Raven** and a **WOOD PIGEON**. Well, would you believe **Wood Pigeons** are very uncommon on Lesvos this late in spring, so it was a biggie! We found both **Woodchat** and **Red-backed Shrikes**, but not the **Masked Shrike** or a **Short-toed Treecreeper**.



The coastal track to Polichnitos had been washed away in recent storms, so we had to make our way inland to the town of Polichnitos and then we took a short drive back to the coast at Skala Polichnitos. We sat and drank a cup of coffee at the harbour café before making our way to the Salt Pans.

Many waders were out on the ‘pans’, we added **Curlew Sandpiper** (dozens of them in brick-red summer plumage), also **Dunlin** and **Little Stints**. Also present were **Greater Flamingo, Common Shelduck, Wood Sandpiper, Avocet, Black-winged Stilts** and dozens of **YL Gulls**.

A ‘mega’ for Lesvos was also present, we saw it well, a Lesvos tick for me and a lifer for the rest of the group – it was a **LESSER FLAMINGO**!! It was not ringed and, as such, an acceptable wild bird, the whole of the bird-watching fraternity on Lesvos had been down to see it since its discovery last Saturday. Wowza!

We stayed in the area for lunch and we spent some time searching the salt pans for a **Spotted Redshank**, without luck. We added **Common Stonechat, Red-footed Falcon, Marsh Harrier, White Stork** and other bits and bobs to the list.



For the rest of the afternoon we drove to Vatera and on to Agios Fokas where we 'sea-watched' for a short while. We made a couple of stops as we drove onto the headland at Agios Fokas where we found **Sardinian Warbler** and a **Roller** (in flight).

Olivaceous Warbler

During our sea-watch we found several groups of **Yelkouan Shearwaters**, we found a group of five **Greenshanks** on the rocks, we had excellent views of **Olivaceous Warbler** and we marvelled at the carpets of wildflowers covering the headland.

On the way back to our hotel we made, a short stop in the pine woods above Achladeri, we searched for a **Short-toed Treecreeper** and found one after about fifteen minutes.

Back at the hotel the group dispersed and went to their rooms, I walked across the road to view the flooded marsh, where there was plenty to see. I found 3 **Garganey** and my first **Mallard** of the trip, wowza! A **Nightingale** was belting out its melodic tune just above the hotel car park and I saw it fly to another tree, my first actual sighting of one this trip!

At 10pm a **Scop's Owl** began calling in the hotel garden just outside my room, I thought that I may have to throw an old boot at him if he didn't shut up pretty-dam-quick, but he did and I slept like a log.

DAY 4 – 29TH APRIL 2026

CHRISTOU RIVER AND MUDFLATS – LARDIA VALLEY – IPSILOU MONASTERY – PRETIRFIED FOREST – ANTISSA TOWN SQUARE

WEATHER; ditto for yesterday, perfect weather, sunshine all day and a nice breeze.

Our pre-breakfast birding was a short drive from the hotel to the Bridge over the Christou River. We were hoping for a sighting of a **Stone Curlew** and after searching for 30 minutes we decided that we were not going to see one today.

We made a brief stop at the mudflats adjacent to the river and found a few nice species there. At least 20 **Gull-billed Terns** were dashing about with the usual **Greater Flamingos** feeding in the pools. We also logged **Kentish Plover**, **Grey Plover**, **Common Shelduck**, **Great Egret**, **Little Egret** and a few other species.

A brief watch over the Kalloni Marsh added a male **Little Crake**, a **Little Bittern**, **Purple** and **Squacco Herons**, **Coot** and **Moorhen** to the day list.

After breakfast and before we hit the road for the Ipsilou Monastery, we stopped just up the road from our hotel to look at a pool where **Night Herons** were reported to be roosting. We found 10 of them, they gave good views (apparently an incredible 49 **Night Herons** left the roost at 8:30pm later that night).

We stopped a couple times as we made our way through the centre of the island, but to be honest, we never saw much. **Red-backed Shrikes, Long-legged Buzzard, Ravens, a Jay and Red-rumped Swallows.**

Black-eared Wheatear

In the rugged, steep-sided Lardia Valley, we made an effort to find a few montane species. We saw **Crag Martins, Black-eared Wheatears, Blue Rock Thrush, Cirl Bunting** and a few common species. We failed to find **Rock Sparrows** and we never saw a single raptor!



Just above the Eresos/Sigri Junction we made another stop, this time to look for **Isabelline Wheatears!** We saw none! We did see a few raptors, 3 **Eleanora's Falcon, 2 Red-footed Falcons,** another **Long-legged Buzzard** and a few more **Ravens.**



Parking at the base of the Ipsilou Monastery track we spent a good hour enjoying some great birding. Standing on the grass verge we looked down into a rock-strewn valley with scattered oak trees. **Isabelline Wheatears** were in good numbers as were **Black-eared** and **Northern Wheatears.** We found **Cinereous Bunting** and **Cretzschmar's Bunting** quite easily, and we tracked down a **Woodlark** that had been singing above our heads, another **Blue Rock Thrush** appeared, and we added **Linnet** to our trip list.

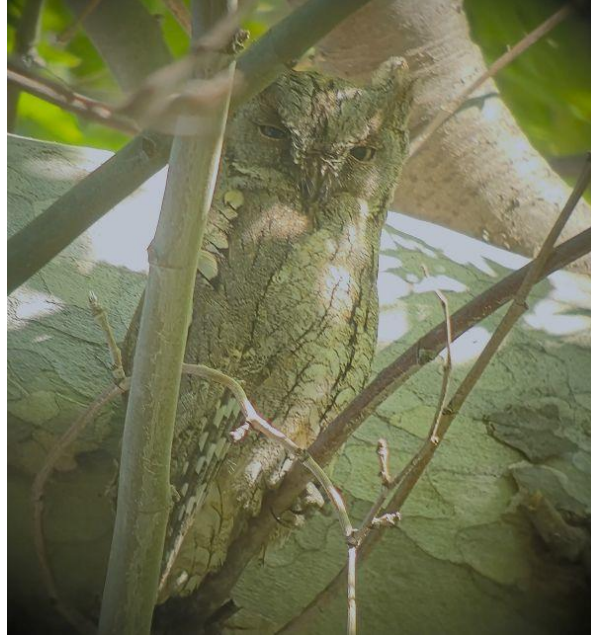
Cinereous Bunting

We drove up to the top of the monastery road and parked just below the monastery where we ate our lunch. We saw nothing new there, but a **Short-toed Eagle** came over and the sky was full of martins, swallows and swifts. (Incidentally, we saw a **Pallid Swift** flying over the hotel during breakfast time).

After lunch we walked down to the base taking a different track, it was sheltered from the breeze and we saw many birds. Three species of **Flycatchers** went into the notebook. Plenty of **Spotted Flycatchers,** also a few **Pied** and at least 3 **Collared Flycatchers** were seen. We also added **Wood Warbler** and **Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** and we saw more wheatears and buntings.

From Ipsilou we drove round to the Petrified Forest entrance-track, it is a 5km narrow road overlooking a huge valley. Along the way we stopped by a roadside pool and watched and waited for birds to arrive. Four species of Bunting came along: the inevitable **Corn Bunting** but also **Cinereous, Cretzschmar's** and **Cirl. Linnets** were the only other species to drink or wash. **Red-backed Shrike** was another species recorded there.

We drove to the Petrified Forest car park but got thrown out as the centre was closing at 4pm! We managed a short walk and saw two **Turtle Doves** and plenty of **Black-eared Wheatears**.



Scops Owl in the Square at Andissa

On the way back to Kalloni we drove into the picturesque little square in the centre of Andissa where we sat and drank a nice coffee/tea/beer. We then joined other birders watching a **Scops Owl** a few meters from our table! Back at the hotel for 6pm the group dispersed to get ready for dinner.

DAY 5 – WEDNESDAY 30TH APRIL 2026

LOTZARIO TRACK TO SALT PANS – ALYKES WETLANDS – SKALA KALLONI TO TSIKNIAS RIVER TRACK – PETRA ROAD RAPTOR WATCH-POINT – PETRA TRACK AND TOWN CENTRE – PERASMA RESERVOIR – SKALA KALLONI TO TSIKNIAS RIVER TRACK

WEATHER; yet another perfect day, I can't tell you how much we are enjoying these glorious sun-shiny days. Top temp 25C

I just love birding on Lesvos and if I ever start to doubt it, I just think of mornings like this one!



It was another fantastic sunrise at 6:30am, we were watching the bird life on the Kalloni Marsh just outside the hotel as the sun rose up over the horizon, spreading warmth and peach-coloured light across the water.

We listed a male **Garganey**, a **Little Bittern** in flight, several **Glossy Ibis**, **Black Stork** and some **Greater Flamingos** flew over and the sky was full of hirundines and swifts as usual. A **Nightingale** sang from high up in a Eucalyptus Tree in the car park, a pair of **Olivaceous Warblers** chased one another around the tamarisk, **Great Reed** and **Reed Warblers** sang from the Reedbeds, it was just wonderful.

We dashed off to the Lotzaria Track, this track connects the Kalloni salt pans to the Tsiknias River, we went to look for two or three waders missing from our list. The seasonal pool towards the beach was almost dry and devoid of birds, we saw a **Common Whitethroat**, a **Whinchat** and a **Red-backed Shrike** there. But further along the track towards the salt pans the whole area was flooded and covered in birds, thousands of them!

It was an absolute joy sifting through hundreds of **Wood Sandpipers** looking for **Spotted Redshank**. The light was magical, the birds looked as though they had been painted, the variety was mind boggling. **Greater Flamingos** mixed with **Glossy ibis**, **Grey Herons**, **Black Storks**, **Eurasian Spoonbills**, **Ruddy** and **Common Shelducks**. We found **Ruff**, **Little Stints**, **Black-winged Stilts**, a single **Spotted Redshank** which flew off, into Alykes Wetlands.



distant waders and other species: **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Common Shelduck**, **Grey Heron**, **Black-winged Stilts** and just left of the two shelduck is a **Spotted Redshank**

We drove round to the salt pan perimeter track and viewed the wetlands from there. We found our first **Marsh Sandpiper** and then two **Spotted Redshanks**, but the **Black-tailed Godwit** eluded us.

After breakfast we drove across the village to the track leading to the Tsiknias River to look for a **Rufous Bush Robin**, one had been sighted yesterday, other birders were already on site. No-one saw the bird whilst we were there, so we dipped on that one.

Next we drove up to Band-Stand Raptor watch point on the road to Petra. We stayed for about 45 minutes and saw a few birds. The best of the raptors was a single **Eleanora's Falcon**, we also saw both **Common** and **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Short-toed Eagle** and lots of **Ravens**. **Cretzschmar's Bunting** sang from a bush close to us and we also saw **Stonechat** and **Black-eared Wheatear**.



A quick stop up the hill from the Band-Stand produced a lovely **Toothed Orchid** and further along the main road we stopped to look for **Middle-spotted Woodpecker**. We saw two, a pair, they were returning to the same cluster of trees, but we could not locate a current nest hole.



Red-rumped Swallow collecting mud

We ate our lunch sitting on the beach wall in the centre of Petra. We searched the town for **Laughing Doves** (a recent colonising species) but only two of us saw three of the doves in flight.

The rest of the birding day was spent at the now defunct Reservoir at Molivos. Hundreds of **Yellow-legged Gulls** sat on the water and banks, with a few **Ruddy Shelducks** on the water. We were hoping for a **Great-spotted Cuckoo** sighting, three were seen earlier, in fact we missed one by only 10 minutes. We watched **Subalpine Warbler**, **Olivaceous Warbler** and heard **Orphean Warbler**. Then a flycatcher was seen, it turned out to be a first winter male or female type **Red-breasted Flycatcher**, wowza! That was brief, but nice. A pair of **Black-eared Wheatears** frightened the flycatcher off.

Further searching for the cuckoo up the valley produced several **Woodchat Shrikes**, **Red-backed Shrikes**, **Turtle Dove**, **Common Cuckoo** (heard), **Hoopoe** (heard), two **Sombre Tits** working their way along a fenceline and a flyover **Short-toed Eagle**.



Black-eared Wheatear (female)

We left the area around 4pm and drove back to Skala Kalloni, we re-visited the **Bush Robin** site, but the wind had come up and we saw very little, just lots of **European Bee-eaters**, **Corn Buntings** and **Crested Larks**. We finished for the day around 5:30pm.

DAY 6 – 1ST MAY 2026

ERESOS TO SIGRI COASTAL TRACK THROUGH THE MELADIA VALLEY AND ACROSS THE FORD – SIGRI FIELDS AND UPPER FANEROMENI FORD

WEATHER: an abrupt change! We had rain until 9am and a cold wind prevailed all day.

Yes, our weather bubble burst today and the predicted rain came in, the temperature dropped to 11C and the wind was very chilly. But every cloud has a silver lining, with heavy cloud and rain Lesvos usually gets a fall of migrant species and the best place to look for them on Lesvos is out west near Sigri, so that is where we headed.



We stopped once along the way at a lovely place near Agra, but the wind and rain prevented any birding really, we heard an **Orphean Warbler** singing and that was all. As we approached Eresos the rain stopped, in fact it hadn't rained at all, the roads were dry!

Laughing Dove

At Eresos we stopped to look for a recent addition to the Lesvos bird-list, the **Laughing Dove!** We found three of them, quite charming little doves, they are now found in several towns across the island.

Once on the coastal track we soon realised that there had been a 'fall' of shrikes, it was amazing, every bush seemed to have, either



a **Red-backed Shrike**, or a **Woodchat Shrike**, sitting on it. As we progressed we saw a good number of **Cretzschmar's Buntings** and one or two **Cirl Buntings**.

Red-backed Shrike

We crossed the ridge and headed down into the Meladia Valley and the 'shrike' density increased. **Back-eared Wheatears** were numerous too. We stopped to watch a **Little Owl** sitting on a window ledge and we found more **Cretzschmar's Buntings** also a single **Cinereous Bunting**. Our first stop in the valley was rewarded with our first **Masked Shrike**

sighting, what a beauty! We watched a pair of **Rock Sparrows** feeding young in an abandoned **Rock Nuthatch** nest, a pair of **Cirl Buntings** were collecting food close by.

We walked a fair way along the track which gave us good views over some dense scrub and bushes, the whole place was dripping with birds. Lots of **Common** and **Lesser Whitethroats** dashed around the bushes with fewer **Olivaceous Warblers**. Shrikes were all over the place, dozens of them. We added **Lesser Grey Shrike** to complete the four-shrike Lesvos collection.



Masked Shrike

During the journey we had seen **Lesser Kestrels** and a single **Eleonora's Falcon**, here we added **Marsh Harrier** to our raptor list in the valley.

As we approached the Meladia Ford I took the bus ahead whilst the group continued to walk. In a large roadside bush I found a male **Barred Warbler**, it was a stonking, well marked bird, but it disappeared as I fumbled with my phone and I failed to get a photo of it, doh!!



We all met up again and the next large bush held two **European Rollers**, wowza! The group loved those, luckily they stayed in place for their picture to be taken.

The area around the ford was alive with birds, our fifth Bunting of the day appeared in large numbers, the migrant **Black-headed Bunting**, we saw six of them in one small bush! All four shrikes were in view too, with warblers dashing around in the bushes it was magical. I have never seen this valley as good as this.

We ate our picnic lunch in the van, it was too windy and cold to sit outside, the sky brightened and patches of blue appeared, but that didn't entice us out just yet.

We drove further west stopping at a small chapel where we flushed our only **Common Cuckoo** of the trip. We also found a **Common Nightingale**, a **Great Reed Warbler** and a couple of **Olivaceous Warblers**.



Lesser Whitethroat

As we approached Sigri the track climbed high, we had views of the off-shore islands and a sheltered valley below us, there we saw more birding magic! A group of **Red-footed Falcons** were wind-hovering and dropping down to the ground to catch insects. They were joined by a few **Lesser Kestrels**, a single **Hobby** and an **Eleonora's Falcon**. Four **Rollers** sat on some wires with more **Red-footed Falcons**! Four species of falcons and four Rollers, it doesn't get much better than that!

At Sigri we drove through the village and onto the track to the fords. Shrikes were all over the place there too! At the ford was counted eight **Spotted Flycatchers**, a bunch of **Yellow Wagtails** and many Swallows were feeding over the water. It was very windy in the area and our walk didn't last long.

We found a single **Hoopoe** (our third of the day), more shrikes and more **Spotted Flycatchers**, but not much else.



Red-footed Falcon

We called it day at 5pm and spent an hour getting back to the hotel, wind-swept and tired we all agreed that it had been a fantastic day!

DAY 7 – 2ND MAY 2026

POTAMIA VALLEY - TSIKNIAS RIVER – LOTZARIA TRACK TO KALLONI SALT PANS – AGIASOS SWEET CHESTNUT WOODS – KALLONI SALT PANS AND TSIKNIAS RIVER TRACK

WEATHER: cloudy with sunny spells, very chilly wind. Max temp 11C but felt like 3C

Yes, it was a cold one today, we wrapped up warm and headed out at 6:30am to look for **Olive Tree Warblers** in the Potamia Valley. We got to the right spot and waited and listened, nothing! The wind was howling along the valley and that didn't help much. We saw **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**, both **Blue & Great Tits** and not much else. On the way back we stopped at the bridge over the River Christou to look for **Stone Curlews** – we dipped again.

Just before we pulled into the car park we saw a large crowd of birders on the beach gazing into the bay. We soon found out that a **Monk Seal** was there, we saw it well.



After breakfast we set off on a mission to see at least 6 species in order to get our list up to a respectable 150. We tried the fields surrounding the Lotzaria track in the hope of seeing any of the three **Spur-winged Lapwings** that had been seen last night. We dipped on those.

Little Stints and Ruff

However, we really enjoyed watching all the waders out in the marshes. Dozens of **Wood Sandpipers** were feeding with **Ruff, Little Stints** and a

large flock of **Curlew Sandpipers**. We scanned the Alykes Marsh and found many species, an impressive 7 **Black Storks** were present, along with **Eurasian Spoonbills, Purple Herons, Great Egret** and lots of **Grey Herons**.

On the salt pans we searched the dividing banks for **Stone Curlews** but we couldn't see any. It was at this point that my group decided that they had had enough of chasing birds and asked me to take them to Agiasos to look for orchids and to visit this wonderful 'ancient' town.

It took us forty minutes to get there, it was even colder there, because we were at a much higher elevation.



Provence Orchid



Green-winged Orchid

We searched for orchids and found four species as well as wild Tulips and a vast range of wildflowers. We also saw **Subalpine Warblers**, we heard a **Mistle Thrush** and we saw **Chaffinch, Blue and Great Tits**.

In the village the group walked around the main streets and enjoyed a lovely coffee stop. I stayed by the bus and saw **Serin, Alpine Swift, Common Swift, Barn Swallow, Common Buzzard** and heard **Blackcap and Common Nightingale**.

We left the area at 3pm and drove back to the Kalloni Salt Pans, taking the west track, we stopped at hide No.3 where we saw the **Lesser Flamingo** again, found by Anne. We also searched the sheep fields behind the hide for a **Cattle Egret** which did not appear.

Driving through the Lotzaria track we reached the Tsiknias River where we saw virtually nothing. We made our third attempt to see the **Rufous Bush Robin**, it was very windy again and once again we dipped. So our last full day provided very few new species, but we enjoyed what we did see and the orchids of course were special.

DAY 8 – 3RD MAY 2026

TRANSFER TO MYTILINE AIRPORT WITH A STOP AT KALLONI SALT PANS

WEATHER: windy, cloudy, wet and cold!

Our last morning was ruined by the weather, it was very windy and very cold. None of the group opted to go out before breakfast and I don't blame them.



Glossy Ibis

We assembled after breakfast at 9am, the luggage was loaded onto the bus and we set off to the airport with a planned stop at the Kalloni Salt Pans.

We noticed the extraordinary number of Swallows, Martins and Swifts, many were flying very low to the ground to get out of the cold wind. Apparently, hundreds of 'downed' hirundines and swifts were found on roads across the island, they just couldn't cope with the windy conditions and the cold. Many were taken into care and released later.

On 'Stilt Corner' at the salt pans there were over 50 **Black-winged Stilts**, the most I have ever seen there. We stopped at hide 3 on the west track and scanned the nearest pans, the only birds visible were **Greater Flamingos** (the **Lesser Flamingo** was still present, but we never searched for it), we also saw **Avocets, Little Terns** and a few **Wood Sandpipers**.

In the sheep fields behind the hide we found a single **Cattle Egret** with a flock of sheep and a **Common Pheasant**? I've never seen a **Pheasant** on Lesvos before today!

Alykes Wetlands was still brimming with birds, although they too, we hunkered down. We saw **Black Stork, Dalmatian Pelican, Eurasian Spoonbill, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Great and Little Egrets, Glossy Ibis** and several waders. **Spotted Redshank, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper** and **Little Stint**.

Further along the track near the salt-mountain we had close views of **Whiskered Terns** and **White-winged Terns**, and we had better views of the birds mentioned above.

It was soon 10am and we needed to set off to the airport, it was the end of the tour, it's a shame that the weather spoiled the last couple of days. We saw 150 species of birds, four more were heard and not seen. Butterflies and dragonflies were notable by their absence. The group loved the trip, so did I and I can't wait to return next year.

CHECKLIST OF SPECIES SEEN

SPECIES		<i>Scientific Name</i>	DATE SEEN								
			26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	
1	Common Quail	<i>Corturnix corturnix</i>				H		H			
2	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	X	X	X		X		X	X	
3	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	X	X	X		X	X		X	
4	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>			X						
5	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypaeta</i>		X							
6	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	X	X	X		X				
7	Yelkouan Shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>			X						
8	Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>		X			X			X	
9	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	X	X	X						
10	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
11	Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>			X				X		
12	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>		X	X	X	X		X		
13	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
14	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
15	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		X			X		X	X	
16	Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	X	X							
17	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>		X	X	X	X				
18	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>			X	X					
19	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	X	X	X		X				
20	Cattle Egret	<i>Bulbulcus ibis</i>								X	
21	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
22	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	X	X		X	X		X	X	
23	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
24	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	X	X		X			X	X	
25	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	X	X	X	X		X		X	
26	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax a. desmarestii</i>			X						
27	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			X						
28	Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	X	X		X	X				
29	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	X	X	X			X			
30	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>						X			
31	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>			X	X					
32	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	X	X			X		X		
33	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		X							
34	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>						X			
35	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>			X	X		X			
36	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subuteo</i>						X			
37	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>				X	X	X			
38	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>		H	H	H					
39	Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>		X		X					
40	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
41	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
42	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	X	X	X		X		X	X	
43	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
44	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>		X							
45	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	X	X			X		X		

SPECIES		SCIENTIFIC NAME										
			26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3		
140	Common or Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
141	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolis oriolis</i>				H		X				
142	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
143	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X			
144	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>						X	X			
145	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringella coelebs</i>			X		X	X	X			
146	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>				X						
147	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X			
148	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>			X		X					
149	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>			X				X			
150	Cretzschmar's Bunting	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>	X			X	X	X				
151	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>			X	X		X				
152	Cinereous Bunting	<i>Emberiza cineracea</i>				X		X				
153	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>		X				X				
154	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Sightings of: MAMMALS/AMPHIBIANS/REPTILES/ BUTTERFLIES/DRAGONFLIES/INSECT SPECIES			
	Persian Squirrel	<i>Sciurus anomalus</i>	X
	Mediterranean Monk Seal	<i>Monachus monachus</i>	X
	Marsh Frog	<i>Pelophylax ridibundus</i>	X
	Tree Frog	<i>Hyla arborea</i>	H
	Balkan Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis tauricus</i>	X
	Balkan Green Lizard	<i>Lacerta trilineata</i>	X
	Glass Lizard	<i>Pseudopus apodus</i>	X
	Stripe-necked Terrapin	<i>Sciurus anomalus</i>	X
	European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>	X
	Starred Agama Lizard	<i>Laudakia stellio</i>	X
	Common Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>	X
	Scarce Swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>	X
	Eastern Festoon	<i>Zerynthia cerisyi</i>	X
	Large White	<i>Pieris brassiae</i>	X
	Small White	<i>Artogeia rapae</i>	X
	Eastern Dappled White	<i>Euchloe ausonia</i>	X
	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>	X
	Cleopatra	<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	X
	Painted Lady	<i>Cynthia cardui</i>	X
	Common Meadow Brown	<i>Manilota jurtina</i>	X
	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	X
	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	X
	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	X

	Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	X
	Black-veined White	<i>Aporia crataegi</i>	X
	Robust Damselfly	<i>Lestes dryas</i>	X
	Dark Spreadwing Damselfly	<i>Lestes macrostigma</i>	X