

Bird – Watching Holiday

To

LESVOS

April 29TH – May 6TH 2017



TRIP REPORT

Leader and author of this trip report: Bob Buckler

Participants:

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SUMMARY

Another wonderful tour of this magical Aegean Island was both enhanced and thwarted by the weather! It was fantastic to go out every day in glorious sunshine with a gentle breeze to keep the heat down but the number of migrant species arriving on the island was reduced because of this settled high pressure system! You need a couple of days of wet, misty weather or a good storm to produce a fall of migrant birds.

Having said that, we saw all of the island specialities: Cinereous & Cretzschmar's Buntings, Kruper's Nuthatch, Ruppell's & Olive Tree Warblers, Baillon's & Little Crake, Chukar, Eleonora's Falcon, Red-throated Pipit.....I could go on listing many more goodies! We recorded 165 species which under the 'poor-migration' circumstances was a great effort.

Day 1 - 29th April 2017

KALLONI POOL - METOCHI LAKE – ACHLADERI PINE WOODS – MESA MARSH – KALLONI SALT PANS – ALYKES WETLANDS – TSIKNIAS RIVER (UPPER & LOWER).

WEATHER: Sunshine all day, light wind, top temp 27C

We had such a wonderful tour, Lesvos is a brilliant birding destination! This is my 17th consecutive year here and I love it all, the weather, the scenery, the people and the wildlife. We hardly travelled any distance today and yet we saw nearly 100 species including some real goodies such as Baillon's Crake, Kruper's Nuthatch, Temminck's Stint and quite a few 'good' island birds, Ferruginous Duck, Eurasian Spoonbill, Gull-billed Tern, Collared Pratincole and many more.



Cetti's Warbler

It's not just the number of the sightings but the number of birds, everywhere you look you will find not just one of each species but sometimes dozens.

We set off at dawn for a pre-breakfast visit to Metochi Lake, it is a small pool really, which has a great record for producing Crakes and Warblers. We found 4 Little Crakes, a single Baillon's Crake, Little Bittern and lots of Reed, Great Reed, Cetti's & Olivaceous Warblers.

After Breakfast, we climbed up to the raised hide in the garden of the hotel, from there we had a commanding view of the Kalloni Pool, I haven't seen it looking this good for years, open pools of water held a number of species. We found 4 Purple Herons, 6 Squacco Herons, a Black Stork, 3 Glossy Ibis, lots of Black-winged Stilts, a Shoveler and innumerable Wood Sandpipers. Just as we were leaving two Ferruginous Ducks flew over the pool, they circled once and disappeared.

Having been told that chicks were about to fledge at a well-watched Kruper's Nuthatch nest site we decided to visit there today just in case. Achladeri Pine Woods are about a 20 minute drive and a short walk away from our hotel. When we arrived the birds were still there performing well, we also found Cirl Bunting, Short-toed Treecreeper, Serin, Woodchat Shrike and a Long-legged Buzzard circled over the woods.



Kruper's Nuthatch – courtesy Kevin Jones

For the rest of the morning we visited the Kalloni Salt Pans, it was fantastic, birds and birders were everywhere. Greater Flamingos, Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts, Ruff, Wood Sandpipers and Little Stints were the most abundant species but we had good sightings of several (9) Temminck's Stints, Gull-billed Terns, two Eurasian Spoonbills, 3 Collared Pratincoles and a host of other species.

A flooded field behind the pans was the best place for getting closer views of birds such as Spotted Redshank and Whiskered Tern, we also added Curlew Sandpiper, Greater Ringed Plover, a leucistic Eurasian Curlew (it was almost all white), Red-throated Pipit, Western Yellow Wagtails (*Feldegg*) and hundreds of Ruff and Wood Sandpipers.

After eating our picnic lunch on the shore of the Gulf of Kalloni we walked in the 'sheep fields' nearby which actually held horses and donkeys. We found lots more Red-throated Pipits, a couple of Short-toed Larks, European Bee-eaters, Crested Larks and both Common and Little Terns flew over us.

For the rest of the afternoon we patrolled the banks of the Tsiknias River searching for Citrine Wagtails. We found many more new species but not the wagtail, a Masked Shrike sighting was brief but 4 Black Storks circled above us, lots of Little Egrets, Common Nightingales, Eastern Olivaceous Warblers, Cetti's Warblers and Common Snipe kept us entertained.

Back at the hotel we watched the pool for a while in the evening light it was just lovely, 4 Purple Herons, 3 Glossy Ibis, a Black Stork and half a dozen Squacco Herons were our best sightings.

One last piece of excitement came just as we sat down to dinner, another birder came rushing into the hotel saying that she had found an owl in the trees, we all dashed out and sure enough a Long-eared Owl sat in pine tree not 20 meters from our rooms!

Day 2 - 30th April 2017

POTAMIA VALLEY – KALLONI BIRD OF PREY OBSERVATORY – KAVAKI – PETRA RESERVOIR – KREMASTES TRACK – KREMASTES BRIDGE – KALLONI SALT PANS – ALYKES WETLANDS – TSIKNIAS RIVER – KALLONI POOL

WEATHER: Wall to wall sunshine, breezy pm, top temp 29C

It was our second day of great birding on this beautiful Greek Island, but there is also plenty of other wildlife to be seen. Wild flowers are prolific this year, the array of colours and wonderful scents are amazing. The wild flowers attract lots of butterflies, we saw many today including the stunning Southern White Admiral, also Eastern Dappled White, Eastern Festoon, Swallowtail and several more species. A large Spur-thighed Tortoise was found by Jeanne, we photographed the Banded Demoiselle and a Fox was seen by Kevin. The sighting of a large Balkan Green Lizard was exciting but our search for snakes went unrewarded.

We met at 6am for our pre-breakfast birding excursion, today we visit two bodies of water hoping to track down the two Ferruginous Ducks we saw yesterday in flight. The unnamed pool near Kalloni Reservoir held Moorhen, Coot and three Night Herons but the Kalloni Reservoir had nothing on it. In the surrounding scrub we saw our first Black-headed Bunting, also Masked Shrike, Woodchat Shrike and two Common Ravens flew over.



Cirl Bunting

We stopped next at a rocky outcrop and scanned the hillside looking for and finding Western Rock Nuthatch as well as seeing Black-eared Wheatear and close views of the Eurasian Jay, subspecies with a black crown (*Garrulus glandarius atricapillus*).

After breakfast we set off for Petra on the northern coast which is only 25km away, we made three stops along the way. Our first stop was made just outside of Kalloni which is a regular spot for seeing roosting Scop's Owl, we saw two but a coach party of Greek birders were there so not much else showed up. At the Kalloni Raptor

Watch-Point we spent a lovely hour in the hazy morning sunlight, it was fairly quiet and all our raptor sightings were quite far off. We saw Short-toed Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Goshawk, Common Raven and Black Storks! Birds on the rocky slopes around proved more interesting, we saw Cirl, Corn and Cretzschmar's Buntings, Black-eared Wheatear, Orphean and Subalpine Warblers and a pair of Blue Tits were nesting in the roof of the shelter.

Our third stop was on the slopes leading down to Petra, we looked for Middle Spotted Woodpecker but its regular nesting tree had gone! However, a pair were nesting in a nearby tree and we watched them coming and going, obviously feeding young.

At Kavaki, a coastal look-out point on the hillside above Petra, we spent an hour looking for Ruppell's Warbler at this well-known site. We had commanding views over some spectacular coastline and the surrounding islands, the Turkish mainland could be seen just a few miles away. Our little target bird showed very well but often at quite a distance, we also saw Orphean and Subalpine Warblers, Common Raven and two European Shags.

At Petra reservoir, we found an Audouin's Gull amongst hundreds of Yellow-legged Gulls, also a few Ruddy Shelducks, a single Common Pochard and a large Spur-thighed Tortoise moved around in the grassy banks. As we ate our picnic lunch a raptor came up behind us, it was a dark morph Booted Eagle, this was an excellent find, a rarity for Lesvos! We went for a walk in the scrub around the reservoir, it was very quiet in the heat of the day, we saw 3 Red-backed Shrikes, a couple of Whinchats, a Reed Warbler, lots of Woodchat Shrikes and more Subalpine Warblers.



The view towards Petra from Kavaki

For the rest of the afternoon we drove back to Kalloni and re-visited the Salt Pans, Alykes Wetlands and the Tsiknias River. We drove back via the Kremastes Track, stopping for birding and to look at the ancient stone bridge (which is under repair) but we never added any new species.

The numbers of waders in the area of the Salt Pans had reduced dramatically and so had the water in the Alykes Wetlands. We still enjoyed our afternoon visit, the only new species seen was Red-footed Falcon, we saw two hawking insects as we travelled up the track along the Tsiknias River.

We were back at the hotel by 6pm ready for dinner at 7:30pm.

Day 3 – 1st May 2017

KALLONI POOL – AGRA – ERESOS POOLS – ERESOS TO SIGRI TRACK – SIGRI FIELDS AND BEACH – IPSILOU MONASTERY – LARDIA VALLEY – KALLONI SALT PANS – ALYKES WETLANDS

WEATHER: A day of hazy sunshine, easterly wind, top temp 25C

It was another fantastic day in birding paradise, we saw 98 species and caught up with a lot of the island's specialities. It was a long day we began at 7am and finished at 7pm but it was filled with exciting findings, we travelled through some fantastic scenery and the weather was just dandy.

From the raised hide in our hotel car park we listed some interesting species out on the Kalloni Pool. A male Garganey was nice to see, a male Eurasian Teal was unexpected and the usual crowd of Glossy Ibis, Squacco & Purple Heron, Wood Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt was enhanced with the appearance of Common Snipe and Night Heron.

Our plan today was to visit the west of the island at Sigri we travelled along the coast road passing through Paraloika, Mesotopos, Agra and Eresos. Just passed Agra we made our first stop where we saw: Woodchat, Red-backed & Masked Shrike, Black-headed Bunting, Cretzschmar's Bunting, Raven and a Short-toed Eagle.



Spotted Fritillary

We stopped again at some roadside pools just before Eresos, we found a male Little Crake there, also Olivaceous Warbler, Little Grebe and we heard Eurasian Hoopoe but did not see it.

The journey along the track from Eresos to Sigri was bumpy and dusty but was full of bird sightings and well worth the discomfort. We made many stops and saw a host of species; Whinchats, our first Stonechats, Northern Wheatear, Spotted Flycatcher (10+), Icterine Warbler (2), Tree Pipit (2), Lesser Whitethroat (3), Cretzschmar's Buntings were everywhere as were Black-eared Wheatears. At Meladia Ford we added our first Lesser Grey Shrike, also Red-footed Falcon and a Marsh Harrier.

We visited the Sigri Fields and found them disappointing, we saw a couple of migrant species with Pied Flycatcher being the best. At the Faneromeni Beach it was really was windy but we finally caught up with a Citrine Wagtail, we also added Yelkouan Shearwater to the list and a couple of Ruddy Shelduck.

Our journey back to Kalloni was via the Ipsilou Monastery and the Lardia Valley where we found Cinereous Bunting at the former and Crag Martin, Mistle Thrush and Black Stork at the latter. During the homeward journey we also saw Lesser Kestrel, Long-legged Buzzard and Common Buzzard.

Back at Kalloni we spent the last hour at the Salt Pans and Alykes Wetlands where we enjoyed watching a host of species it was especially nice to see White-winged Terns they are so beautiful and elegant as they feed over the fields. We added Mediterranean Gull to our list and really enjoyed the coming and goings of small flocks of waders as they decide where they are going to roost.

It had been an incredible day, a most enjoyable experience, I do love this place.

Day 4 – 2nd May 2017

ALYKES WETLAND – NAPI VALLEY – PLANTANIA TRACK – KALLONI SALT PANS

WEATHER: a chilly wind kept the temperature down, we had all day sunshine, top temp 30C.

Another early start to another super day! We visited the Alykes Wetlands in the hope of finding a Harrier or two, especially Pallid which had been seen recently. It was just lovely out there a nice clear morning with no wind and birds everywhere. Over the next hour we saw Red-footed Falcon, Marsh Harrier and a single Montagu's Harrier we also added Mute Swan to our list! Swans are rarely seen on Lesvos, this is only the second time I've seen one in Seventeen Years.

After our breakfast we set off to visit the Napi Valley which runs north to south across the island and is a favourite route for migrating raptors. It is a wide valley with gently sloping sides which are covered in open oak woodland and olive groves, rocky crags appear each side of the valley. This area is a favoured habitat for a number of species we haven't seen yet.



The Olive Tree Warbler was very hard to photograph – Kevin did extremely to get this shot

We parked at the southern end of the valley where we had great views of several rocky outcrops and large tracts of woodland below us, it was quite windy and chilly to start with. We quickly found Black-eared Wheatear and had brief views of our first Blue Rock Thrush as it performed its display flight and we got fleeting views of Eurasian Hoopoe for another first.

Further down the valley we finally caught up with Sombre Tit but the view we got was all too brief and not a satisfactory one for most of the group. Shrikes were everywhere both Masked and Woodchat were seen often, also lots of Turtle Doves were calling but we never heard a single Common Cuckoo. We listed Long-legged and Common Buzzard and Short-toed Eagle but not much else was up in the sky except for dozens of Yellow-legged Gulls moving from one side of the island to the other.

Along a track at the head of the valley called Plantania we searched for Olive Tree Warbler but not a single one was heard, we saw lots of Cirl Buntings, Masked Shrikes (including one nest with a female incubating its eggs), Subalpine Warbler, Orphean Warbler and not much else. We spent more time looking at butterflies and other insects that were visiting the huge number of flowering plants.



Bath White sp.

Our butterfly count was increased by a number of new species including Red Admiral, Eastern Bath White, Scarce Swallowtail, Spotted Fritillary and Gatekeeper.

We left the valley just after lunchtime and drove back towards the salt pans at Kalloni, we made one stop near Agia Paraskevi where we had a lovely time watching Olive Tree Warblers as we sat on a grassy bank looking up into an olive grove, what a great finish to our Napi Valley excursion.

Next, we visited an area along the shore of Kalloni Bay a few kilometers to the east of the salt pans. From the beach we scanned the sea and shoreline and discovered the Mute Swan once again, it was sleeping on a sandbank surrounded by gulls and a couple of Cormorants. We also noticed a flock of smaller gulls sitting out on the water, we counted 32 Mediterranean Gulls, an amazing count and a record for the island.

It was 4pm by the time we left the beach area, we drove back to the hotel where most of the group wanted to call it day and have an hour or two relaxation before dinner. Just two of us went back out with, Richard, another birder from the hotel. We enjoyed great views of White-winged Terns as they fed over a channel of water and we saw a couple of hundred Greater Flamingos in flight which was a great spectacle of colour. We never saw any new species until we were on our way back, as we crossed a ford spanning the Tsiknias River we found a Common Sandpiper, it was the only one we had found since we arrived, so, not so 'Common' after all.

Our species count so far is 141, an average list, I'd expect another 20 species over the next few days but not much more.

Day 5 – 3rd May 2017

FILIA RADIO MASTS – LARDIA VALLEY – PERIVOLI MONASTERY – IPSILOU MONASTERY – SIGRI FIELDS – FANEROMENI FORDS

WEATHER: all day sunshine, light winds, top temp 30C

We managed to persuade the hotel staff to make ready an early breakfast, so we ate at 6:30am and set off around 7:15am. We drove up through the middle of the island along what I call the ‘village run’, passing through Dafia we stopped at Liminos Monastery to look for Middle Spotted Woodpecker at a regular nest site in the car park. The ‘peckers’ must have fledged but we did see a Little Owl.

Along the track to the Radio Masts above Filia we had great views of Eastern Bonelli’s Warbler, this little fellow performed well. We also saw Cirl Bunting, Turtle Dove and not much else.



Glass Lizard – very common on Levos – this one taken by Kevin Jones refused to move from under a car

In the Lardia Valley we made two stops both of which were successful in terms of finding target species. This valley has large rocky pinnacles and steep sided cliffs where we found Rock Sparrow and Blue Rock Thrush our two main target species, we also saw a perched Short-toed Eagle, Crag Martin, Black-eared Wheatear and Red-rumped Swallows.

Ipsilou Monastery sits high up on a rocky pinnacle it looks like a setting out of ‘Lord of the Rings’ with its craggy pinnacles and the monastery building perched precariously on the top. The slopes are covered in oak woodland and can be full of migrating warblers and flycatchers. We walked on the eastern slope finding Cinereous Bunting, Isabelline and Black-eared Wheatears, our first Golden Orioles and likewise Wood Warblers.

We heard Chukar but never found them but we did see 3 Eleonora Falcons feeding above us, they were catching flying insects and one showed particularly well. Whilst watching the falcons we found Common and Alpine Swifts!

The road leading to the Petrified Forest can be good to see Chukar, we drove along it, searching the rocky hillsides without success. We ate our picnic lunch beside a small pool where Linnets, Goldfinches and a Cretzschmar’s Bunting came to drink, we also saw Isabelline Wheatear, Black-headed Buntings, Spotted Flycatchers and lots of Black-eared Wheatears in the immediate area.

Sigri Fields were a disappointment as far as migrating birds was concerned, it was hard work finding any. We managed to see our first Blackcaps, we also saw several Pied Flycatchers but not much else. We visited the Upper and Lower Fords at Faneromeni where we enjoyed prolonged views of an obliging Little Bittern, we also saw Little Egrets, Night Heron, Moorhen, Little Ringed Plover, more Blackcaps and Pied Flycatchers.



Eleonora's Falcon – another shot from Kevin Jones

A long walk along a track on the northern side of the Upper Ford produced Turtle Dove, some distant Lesser Kestrels, a small flock of 5 Blue-headed Yellow Wagtails (*Motacilla flava flava*) and more flycatchers.

We left the area at 4pm and drove straight back to our hotel where, after a 10-minute break most of us set off for our usually evening visit to the salt pans. The light was superb as usual as we drove along the western edge looking eastward into the pans. We saw a flock of White-winged Terns and a single Black Tern they looked stunning.

The number of Ruff, Little Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Wood Sandpipers seemed to have increased by a large amount, we counted 80 Little Stint and over 100 Ruff in just two of the pans! The water level in the flooded field behind the pans in Alykes Wetland was dramatically reducing so that the birds feeding there were more concentrated in a smaller area. Again, the numbers of Stints and Ruffs was higher, the three Spotted Redshanks were still there as was the lone Whiskered Tern. Luckily for us a flock of 17 White-winged Terns came in to bathe what a wonderful sight I do love seeing this delightful species.

We added 10 new species to our list today so we are on target for 160+, tomorrow we are off to the southern shore at Vatera.

Day 6 – 4th May 2017

KALLONI SALT PANS – MAKARA – AGIASOS – VATERA – AGIOS FOKAS – ALYKES WETLAND

WEATHER: Sunshine all day, light wind, top temp 31C

After another early breakfast we set off southward towards Mytiline making our first stop on the east side of the salt pans where a raised hide give great views right across the pans. The morning light was superb as usual and the nearest 'pan' was full of birds, apart from the usual Greater Flamingos, Pied Avocets, Ruff, Wood

Sandpipers and Black-winged Stilts, we noted 20+ Curlew Sandpipers, 12 Grey Plover, 40+ Little Stints and 2 Greenshanks. Most the usual terns were in far off locations except perhaps Little Terns.

A short walk along the feeder-channel track produced sightings of Great Reed Warbler, a Eurasian Hoopoe in flight and not much else. Our next stop was a little further south at a deserted beach Café we had good views of a sand-bar from there. On the sand-bar we saw 20 Mediterranean Gulls, 2 Great Cormorants, numerous Yellow-legged Gulls and in the sea just behind them was a single Black-necked Grebe and a single Great Crested Grebe.

We then drove to Agiasos, a picturesque village that lies in the mountains just east of Mount Olympus. A unique Sweet Chestnut Woodland covers many hectares on the surrounding mountainside creating a diverse habitat with a completely different suite of birds. We spent a couple of hours walking several trails both above and below the village listing several new species for the tour including Wood Pigeon, Song Thrush, Wren, Robin (heard) and Serin. We also saw Common and Alpine Swifts, Crag Martin, Long-legged Buzzard, Short-toed Eagles and a family party of Kruper's Nuthatches!



One of Richard Pettett's superb pictures of the White Winged Tern

We wandered into the wonderful village where tiny narrow streets are littered with cafés, tourist shops and a huge metal trellis covers the main streets which itself is covered by the biggest Wisteria you are ever likely to see, unfortunately the Wisteria had just gone over. We sat a café for coffee and slice of baklava, yummy!

After buying picnic supplies we drove out of town and ate it by the side of a babbling brook where we watched Grey Wagtails, Crag Martins and more Long-legged Buzzard. We drove down to the south coast at Vatera to where a huge bay has a narrow headland called Agios Fokas and that was our destination today. But first we stopped at a bridge over a small reed-choked river where we found Common Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint, Squacco Heron and lots of Stripe-necked Terrapins. A short walk from the bridge produced our first Sardinian Warbler of the trip, lots of Black-headed Buntings, Olivaceous Warbler and another Short-toed Eagle.

At the headland we spent an hour sea-watching getting really good views of both Yelkouan and Scopoli's Shearwaters and also Great Cormorant and two Ruddy Turnstone looking exquisite in their summer plumage.

At 4pm we set off back to Kalloni arriving back at the hotel by 5pm. We were out again at 5:15 heading off to the Salt Pans for our regular evening scan. We noticed a huge reduction in the number of waders and water in the Alykes Wetland was almost gone. A handful of White-winged Terns were still present to entertain us. We then heard news of a sighting of two Great-spotted Cuckoos nearby so we dashed off towards the Tsiknias River to the last sighting location. After 15 minutes of searching we heard the birds call in the distance, I drove the bus

ahead of the group and saw the two birds in flight, unfortunately the rest of the group did not and we couldn't relocate them!



Ottoman Viper – seen on the track to Agios Fokas

Another 10 species went on the list today, we had surpassed our 160 expectation with one full day to go!

Day 7 – 5th May 2017

MAKARA BEACH CAFÉ - UPPER TSIKNIAS RIVER – POTOMIA VALLEY – KALLONI SALT PANS AND ALYKES WETLAND

WEATHER: sunny all day, light winds, very hot. Top temp 32C

We took an early breakfast again today and at 7am we set off to the Upper Tsiknias River where we planned to search for two species of cuckoo. It was a beautiful morning, a clear sky, hardly a whiff of air and some stunning scenery, it was an uplifting experience, you know when you get that 'glad to be alive feeling'.

The track we took rose into the rocky hills above Arisvi and bird song rang out from all directions but one of the first birds seen was silent. It was a Chukar, perched high up on a ridge, sitting on a dry-stone wall, we had great 'scope views of it.

In the nearby scrub we found Common Whitethroat, Orphean Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, both Red-backed and Woodchat Shrikes, Cirl Bunting, Black-headed Bunting and the annoying Corn Bunting but we never had a sniff of a cuckoo!

For lunch we drove into Arisvi and bought picnic supplies at the supermarket. We then drove the short distance to Kalloni's abandoned 5-a-side football field where mature eucalyptus trees offered some nice shade and the opportunity to look at Scop's Owl again. With lunch finished and Scop's Owl in the camera we set off for the Potomia Valley to finish our search for cuckoos.

An area of flat cultivated land surrounded by high ridges was the first place we stopped as we approached Potomia. It was an idea place for raptor watching so that is what we did and over the next hour we watched Long-legged Buzzards on their nest, Short-toed Eagle, Common Buzzard, Common Kestrel and Eurasian Sparrowhawk.

By the time we reached the Potomia Valley it was very hot, we saw a Sombre Tit very briefly and lots of common birds but bird activity was minimal and we were all feeling the heat. So we gave up and headed back to the hotel where we took an hour's break from 3-4pm.



Scops Owl

Only 2 of us turned out for the evening salt-pan session, so we asked Richard, a fellow guest at our hotel, to join us again. The wader numbers had reduced again, fewer Ruff and Little Stints were present and now you have to search for a Wood Sandpiper. Half a dozen Curlew Sandpipers were nice to watch and a small flock of 13 Whiskered Terns joined 4 White-winged Terns and together with the usual Little & Common Terns it made it a lovely afternoon's birding session.

A quick stop at the Tsiknias River ford produced Little Bittern and two Common Greenshanks were found near the mouth of the river.

It had been a struggle today with the heat, we were chasing a few species still missing from our list and that is always hard. We added just one new species, Chukar, to the trip list. Tomorrow we have 3 hours birding before we have to leave for the airport.

Day 8 – 6th May 2017

NAPI VALLEY – TRANSFER TO MYTLINE AIRPORT

Weather: some cloud, broken sunshine, light winds. Top temp 19C (morning only).

Our final day had arrived, the time had flown by, we had only a few hours left to find a couple of species that had eluded us so far. We made an early start leaving the hotel at 6:15am it was yet another glorious morning we really had witnessed some spectacular and colourful sunrises and today was no exception.

The Napi Valley with its miles of wooded hillsides is well known to be a good place to see Common Cuckoo and some sections of the older woodland support a pocket-population of Eurasian or Wood Nuthatch. We searched for both species and it wasn't until we were running out of time that we achieved some measure of success.

We worked our way up the valley stopping to, walk a little, and, listen a lot, for the cuckoo call, we encountered Sombre Tit several times, finally getting great views of it. We also watched Turtle Dove, Masked Shrike, Eurasian Jay, Cirl Bunting and Black-headed Bunting.



Chukar

Finally, a Cuckoo called from way back down the valley so we turned the bus and set off in pursuit of our main target species. Sadly, we never found the bird which went silent once we arrived but we did find Wood Nuthatch, a single bird was collecting food in a tree close to where we stopped.

Well that finished our birding for the tour except for noting both Black-eared Wheatear and Cretzschmar's Bunting on the way back to breakfast.

By 10:30am we were all packed and on our way, we had recorded 165 species during our tour of this incredibly beautiful Island. I will be back next year, if you want to join me make contact now as there are just four places left!

LESVOS 2018: - SATURDAY 28TH APRIL – SATURDAY MAY 5TH

SPECIES RECORDED BETWEEN 29TH APRIL – 6TH MAY 2017

SPECIES		Scientific Name	DATE SEEN							
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Mute Swan	<i>Cynus olor</i>				X				
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	X	X
4	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X		
5	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	X							
6	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	X							
7	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas</i>			X					
8	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>			X					
9	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	X							
10	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		X						
11	Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>					H		X	
12	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>				X		X		
13	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	X		X	X		X		
14	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	X	X		X		X	X	
15	Scopoli's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris d. diomedea</i>						X		
16	Yelkouan Shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>			X			X		
17	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	X			X		X	X	
18	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax a. desmarestii</i>		X						
19	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	X		X	X	X	X	X	
20	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		X	X		X			
21	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
22	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
23	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	X			X				
24	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	X	X	X		X	X	X	
25	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
26	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
27	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
28	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
29	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	X							
30	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
31	Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circus gallicus</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	
32	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>		X						
33	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		X	X	X		X	X	
34	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>				X				
35	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
36	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X		
37	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		X	X				X	
38	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipter gentilis</i>		X						
39	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	X	X	X				X	
40	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>			X		X			
41	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>		X	X	X			X	
42	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>					X			
43	Little Crake	<i>Porzna parva</i>	X		X					

44	Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	X							
45	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
46	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X		
47	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
48	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
49	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	X		X		X	X	X	
50	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	X	X						
51	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	X		X	X	X	X	X	
52	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
53	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	X		X	X				
54	Grey or Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	X					X		
55	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>						X		
56	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	X				X	X	X	
57	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X	
58	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
59	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
60	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>				X		X		
61	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	X	X	X	X	X			
62	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	X					X		
63	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	X							
64	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	X		X	X				
65	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
66	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	X	X	X	X			X	
67	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>			X	X		X		
68	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
69	Audouin's Gull	<i>Larus audouinii</i>		X						
70	Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
71	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	X	X						
72	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
73	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>					X			
74	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i>			X	X	X	X	X	
75	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
76	Rock Dove /Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia feral</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
77	Common Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>						X		
78	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
79	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	H	X		H	X	H	X	X
80	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>			H		H			H
81	Great-spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandularis</i>						X		
82	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	X							
83	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>			H		H	H		
84	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>			X	X	X	X	X	
85	Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>		X				H	X	
86	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
87	Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>					X	X		
88	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	H	H	H	X	X	X	X	H
89	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
90	Middle-spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>		X		X		X		X
91	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
92	Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	X		X	H				
93	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	X			X				

94	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	X	X						
95	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>			X		X	X		
96	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
97	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
98	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
99	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			X					
100	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	X	X		X				
101	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	X	X		X			X	
102	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava (subspecies)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Blue-headed Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>					X	X	X	
	Black-headed Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>		X	X	X		X		
103	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>			X					
104	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>						X		
105	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rbecula</i>						H		
106	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	X	X	H	H	X	H	H	
107	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>					X			
108	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			X					
109	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>			X		X			
110	Eastern Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe h. melanoleuca</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
111	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
112	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>			X				X	
113	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>						X		
114	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	H		X		X			
115	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
116	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola salitarius</i>				X	X			
117	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>					X			
118	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>			X		X		X	
119	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>			X					
120	Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>		X	X	X			X	
121	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>						X		
122	Ruppell's Warbler	<i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>		X						
123	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>		X		X	X	X	X	
124	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	X		X			X		
125	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	X	X	H	H	X	H	H	
126	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaecus</i>	X	X	X	X				
127	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	X		H			X	X	
128	Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>			X					
129	Olive-tree Warbler	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>				X				
130	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais pallida</i>	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
131	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>					X			
132	Eastern Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus orientalis</i>					X			
133	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>					H	X		
134	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula striata</i>			X	X	X	X		
135	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>			X		X			
136	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
137	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
138	Sombre Tit	<i>Parus lugubris</i>				X				X
139	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos c. tephronotus</i>					X			
140	Kruper's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta kruepei</i>	X					X		
141	Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>		X	X	X				

142	Wood Nuthatch	<i>Sittia Europaea</i>								X
143	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	X							
144	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>			X					
145	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
146	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
147	Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
148	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus grandarius</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
149	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>					X			
150	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
151	Common or Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		X	X	H	X	X	X	X
152	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolis oriolis</i>				H	X			
153	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
154	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
155	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>					X			
156	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringella coelebs</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
157	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>			X		X			
158	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
159	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	X	X			X	X	X	
160	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	X					X		
161	Cretzschmar's Bunting	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>		X	X		X			X
162	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
163	Cinereous Bunting	<i>Emberiza cineracea</i>			X		X			
164	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
165	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Sightings of Common:
MAMMALS/AMPHIBIANS/REPTILES/
BUTTERFLIES/DRAGONFLIES/INSECT SPECIES

[illegible]

[illegible]