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CYPRUS

Spring Migration on Aphrodite's Isle



Masked Shrike and Red-throated Pipit, Cyprus April 2022 © Gary Elton

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CYPRUS

Spring Migration on Aphrodite's Isle

5-12 April 2022

Leader and Trip Report: Gary Elton

Participants: Fiona Codd, Sandra Gould, Roger Lee, Charles Lowe and Brian Martin

5 April: Arrival and local afternoon walk

After a straightforward flight, we were met at the airport by Deborah, our local agent. We then transferred to our base for the week, the Kefalos Village Hotel, which is ideally positioned close to Paphos Headland.

After checking in and a chance to unpack and freshen up, we headed out for our first spot of birding, taking the coastal path running from the hotel to the headland. A nice selection of birds was seen, some of which would become a familiar sight over the next week including Corn Bunting, Sardinian Warbler, Crested Lark and large numbers of Yellow Wagtails, with the Black-headed '*feldegg*' birds looking particularly smart.

Other birds included Tawny Pipit, Hoopoe, Short-toed Lark, a rather dapper male Eastern Black-eared Wheatear and the icing on the cake, an adult male Pallid Harrier that flew across the grassland inside the confines of the heritage site in front us. A Kingfisher, Ruff and Common Sandpiper were also noted along the shoreline.

Returning to the hotel, dinner followed, giving us a chance to get to know each other and discuss the plans for the week ahead.



Pallid Harrier © Gary Elton

6 April: Pre-breakfast walk, Tomb of Kings then headland, harbour lunch, heritage site. Night Owl trip

A short pre-breakfast walk started off the day with us heading out in the opposite direction to the afternoon before, along the coast path towards the Tombs of the Kings heritage site.

Although somewhat quieter, we still managed some nice birds with a small flock of ten Short-toed Larks, Hoopoe, Marsh Harrier and another male Pallid Harrier. A pair of Laughing Doves were also seen; a species which has spread rapidly across the area over the last few years.

After breakfast, we again took the coastal path along to the headland and this was a productive walk with the highlights including a perched (albeit distant) Great Spotted Cuckoo, Isabelline Wheatear, two Water Pipits, around twenty Red-throated Pipits sporting a variety of red throats, Whinchat and two Cretzschmar's Buntings.

Visible migration included a flock of thirty-five Glossy Ibis, a ringtail Pallid Harrier and a Short-eared Owl, the latter watched flying over the sea and along the coast.

Arriving at the harbour, we quickly found our restaurant where we enjoyed a tasty and more than ample lunch, after which we purchased tickets and spent the afternoon exploring the nearby Mosaics site.

Being located on the headland means this site acts as both a draw and refuge for tired migrants and one of the joys of a trip such as this is looking for birds never really knowing what you may or may not find.

We spent the next few hours walking along the tracks exploring the field edges, bushes and trees. The site is quite exposed and the increasing wind did little to help, although we compiled a reasonable list, with the most surprising find being a European Nightjar, which we flushed whilst we explored one of the more sheltered areas.



Other birds included Black-crowned Night Heron, Zitting Cisticola, Isabelline Wheatear, Woodchat Shrike, Common Redstart, Tawny Pipit plus a few of the commoner warblers such as Lesser Whitethroat and Blackcap.

Isabelline Wheatear © Gary Elton

After dinner, we went out in search of the endemic Cyprus Scops Owl. We made a number of stops along the road with several birds heard but, unfortunately, these were distant and seemingly too settled for them to come any closer. As we drove back towards the hotel, an owl was spotted on a telegraph wire over the road which on closer inspection was a Little Owl.....

7 April: Pre-breakfast walk, Kiti Dam, Larnaca - Salt Lake, Water treatment pools, Desalination plant fields, Spiros pools/beach, Oroklini Marsh, Kensington Cliffs

A short pre-breakfast walk along the headland coastal path produced the expected species and, as always, the odd surprise. Two late winter stragglers were Robin and Song Thrush, along with two groups of over flying Glossy Ibis which totalled 54 individuals.

Our main destination today was off to the east, birding in and around the Larnaca area and our first stop was at a large reservoir. Driving along the track by some overflow pools looked promising but produced no more than Coot, Moorhen plus a showy Cetti's Warbler, so we continued round to the main parking area where a stand of conifers produced a showy and vocal Eastern Bonelli's Warbler and two equally vocal but not quite as showy Great Spotted Cuckoos.

We climbed the dam wall to look out over the reservoir only to find it almost completely dry, other than some distant pools where there was a pair of Spur-winged Plovers and two Little Egrets.

We moved on to the main destination stopping at the side of the large Salt Lake. Several hundred Flamingos could be seen, plus Black-winged Stilts and a distant Kentish Plover scurrying along the sandy edge.



Our next stop was the nearby treatment pools, which are overlooked by a purpose-built hide. We decided to have lunch here and found a pair of Ruddy Shelduck, Marsh Harrier, around eighty Teal, twelve Garganey, fifteen Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper and Ruff.

Wood Sandpiper © Gary Elton

There were also several Black Francolin calling, seemingly tucked out of view in the long grass. You often need a degree of luck to see them and for some of us, it was to be our lucky day, as one took off and flew a short distance across the field.

After lunch, we took the road that runs along the coast concentrating our efforts on some agricultural land which produced Short-toed Lark, Red-throated Pipit and Isabelline Wheatear, followed by a ringtail Pallid Harrier that repeatedly flushed the Woodpigeons and Ruff that were feeding in the area.



Greater Short-toed Lark © Gary Elton

Our next stop was another hide overlooking a lake, with a second positioned a short drive towards the rear of the area. Some of the birds were quite close and we enjoyed some nice views of Glossy Ibis. Other birds included Red-crested Pochard, Common Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Little Grebe, Shoveler and Garganey, with three Black-crowned Night Herons seen in

flight over the second hide.

With the day drawing to a close, we headed back west along the coast making one last stop, a viewpoint over a large bay. Two Chukars were seen in flight, and small numbers of noisy Jackdaws and 'twittering' Alpine Swifts flew around the cliffs below us.

8 April: Pre-breakfast walk, Mandria, Asprokremmos Dam, Episkopi, Anarita Park, Agia Vavara Pools

The day started with our regular pre-breakfast walk towards the headland, although it was a different sort of day with some cloud and the wind was already picking up. A Kingfisher was seen on the shoreline rocks in the company of two Common Sandpipers and more Glossy Ibis were noted flying over. The big surprise of the morning was a Stone Curlew, seemingly flushed off the beach by some Hooded Crows, which flew by and into the heritage site.

After breakfast, we headed east to explore a coastal area close to the airport, although the wind had increased further which somewhat hampered viewing but there were still birds to be seen. A small flock of Woodpigeons contained a Turtle Dove and there were Northern Wheatears and a Tawny Pipit on some bare ground near the car park.



Common Kingfisher © Gary Elton

We walked along for a short distance and found a small pool where there was a Ruff, Wood Sandpiper and two Green Sandpipers. A 2CY Slender-billed Gull flew by along the beach and as we retraced our route back to the main road, we stopped to admire a flock of Yellow Wagtails which were mainly black and blue-headed birds. There was also a solitary Short-toed Lark in amongst them and two pipits on some nearby wires were found to be Tree.

Our next stop was the Asprokremmos Dam and we started at the top exploring the small patch of mainly coniferous woodland. The first of two Eastern Bonelli's Warblers were quickly located followed by our first Wood Warbler of the trip, which gave us some nice views. A pair of Sardinian Warblers clearly had a nest near the van, so we were able to enjoy good views of these and a Common Sandpiper was discovered 'bobbing up and down' on the overflow.



Sardinian Warbler © Gary Elton

We then headed down to the lower part of the dam walking through an area of scrub which ended at a small pool. A Woodchat Shrike was found sat out in typical manner on top of some bushes and whilst watching this another bird appeared nearby, a Wryneck! This sat in view for several minutes enabling us all to enjoy it and as it disappeared, it was replaced by a dark-headed warbler, a Ruppell's - an exciting few minutes birding!



Woodchat Shrike © Gary Elton

We walked over to the pool where there was a Kingfisher, two Wood and one Common Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt and Spur-winged Plover. Several Red-rumped Swallows were picked out amongst the Barn Swallows above the pool and calling Chukars were eventually briefly located amongst the boulders on the dam wall.

Earlier in the day, Gary had struck up a conversation with another birder who had told him he had visited a day roosting Cyprus Scop's Owl! He had been happy to share the location so that was where we headed next. The site was tucked away in a small village with equally small roads but, fortunately, Edward our driver rose to the challenge and it wasn't long before we were stood in front of the tree admiring the owl!



Cyprus Scops Owl © Gary Elton

Our next stop was a valley near the village of Anarita and with the morning having slipped by, lunch was on our minds. We drove into the valley along a farm track where we spotted a singing wheatear on some farm machinery. This proved to be our first Cyprus Wheatear of the trip, so two endemic species in one day!

Lunch preparation was another of Edward's skills and, before long, we were enjoying a mixture of salad, Greek cheeses, meats and wine!

A walk around the area after lunch revealed a pair of Eastern Black-eared Wheatears, Woodchat Shrike, Lesser Kestrel, Whinchat and at least ten Ortolan Buntings. As we left, a pair of Chukars flew across, landing briefly in view on the field edge.

Our last stop of the day was some small pools near Agia Vavara where some other birders had told us of a quicker route to get to the pools. We parked and walked past the first two to view the third, which was shallower and clearly attractive to several wading species with at least five Wood and two Marsh Sandpipers, which was an educational comparison.



Little Crake © Gary Elton

We walked back to the second pool noting several Moorhens feeding at the back edge which were then joined by an adult male Little Crake! We enjoyed great views of the crake which was harassed to a degree by the Moorhens, but always quickly returned back into the open again.

9 April: Pre-breakfast walk, Asprokremmos Dam, Troodos, Mandria

The pre-breakfast walk group size was getting smaller by the day, and this morning it was just a group of two. The two Common Sandpipers were again on the rocks, in the company of a Whimbrel which was the first of the trip.

After breakfast, we headed back to revisit the Asprokremmos Dam hoping to find the last of the endemics, Cyprus Warbler. We walked along the track at the base of the dam noting presumably the same Woodchat Shrike we had seen the day before and hearing the Chukars again on the dam face.

Initially, we drew a blank with our quest, but our mood brightened with the distinct call of Bee-eaters high above us. The birds appeared in view and their identity was confirmed as European and then our luck changed as a Cyprus Warbler appeared on a nearby bush, giving a short burst of song and allowing the scope to be trained on it long enough for everyone to get a view.

Pleased with our success, we returned to our vehicle, but as with buses, often there is a second one not far behind, and this was the case here, as a second Cyprus Warbler gave slightly better views.

We headed onto the top of the dam, where we spent an enjoyable hour or so wandering around the small coniferous wood. Wood Warblers were again present with at least six birds noted, plus at least one Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, a male Redstart, male Pied Flycatcher and a pair of Semi-collared Flycatchers.

Heading north, our next destination was the Troodos Mountains with our journey producing roadside birds including Great Spotted Cuckoo, Hoopoe and Cyprus Wheatear. Arriving in the town centre, we found a car park and started to explore the area with the first few minutes producing our first Masked Shrike, followed by Coal Tit of the distinctive looking and sounding 'cypriotes' race. Several Short-toed Treecreepers could also be heard singing, but they stayed high in the tree canopy making finding them challenging, with most views brief glimpses or birds in flight.

The Jays were a bit easier with a noisy small flock of at least four birds found near our lunch spot. There was also an extremely tame Masked Shrike, which approached within a few feet of us on occasions.



Masked Shrike © Gary Elton

After lunch, we headed on to a second nearby site, a botanical garden, where a short walk produced several more Jays, Serin and Red-rumped Swallow.

A last comfort stop and a short walk failed to produce the hoped for Crossbills but consolation was to quickly arrive because as we started our descent from the mountains, a message came through on Gary's phone, informing him of the presence of a large flock of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters near Mandria. A few text messages followed, and we soon had an exact location, so we headed off with our fingers crossed!

Arriving in the area, we scanned the telegraph wires running across the fields and it wasn't long before we picked the birds out. Access was somewhat limited, so we parked as close as we could and then walked down a track that ran along the edge of an olive grove. This proved to be a good move and nice scope views were obtained, with us counting an impressive thirty-two birds! A brief calling Quail was another nice addition.

10 April: Pre-breakfast walk, Akrotiri - Zakaki Marsh, Lady's Mile, Bishop's Pool salt pans, Akrotiri Gravel Pits/St Georges Chapel, Akrotiri Marsh/Phassouri Reedbed, Kensington Cliffs

Our destination today was the Akrotiri Peninsula and our first stop was at Zakaki Marsh, a small roadside pool, on the northern side of the area, complete with a hide and an array of bird pictures along the walkway. We climbed the steps and looked out to find a large area of reeds with a small area of water directly in front of us. With only a few Cetti's and Reed Warblers to be seen, we returned to the bus and decided to explore a nearby track, which revealed a Whinchat and the first calling Black Francolin of the day.

A short drive took us to our next spot, a selection of roadside pools where the birds seen included about 100 Ruff, 80 Little Stints, three Dunlins, two each of Curlew and Marsh Sandpiper, plus Greater Flamingos, Black-winged Stilts, Little Egrets and Kentish Plovers, plus an over flying flock of 33 Glossy Ibis.

We crossed over to look at the sea where a distant offshore fish farm was clearly attracting egrets which appeared to be Little. A smaller heron perched on the rim of the tank was no more than a shimmering silhouette and too distant to identify, but another bird flew back to the shore proved to be a Black-crowned Night Heron.

Our next planned stop was another pool but the gate was locked, so we moved on to check out the much larger Salt Lake. Viewing was challenging as most birds were rather distant but there were good numbers of Greater Flamingos. Some smaller pools by the road were more productive with at least eight Wood and two Green Sandpipers, along with a few Black-winged Stilts. A Black Francolin was calling by the road and in truly annoying fashion, it stayed largely out of view before running briefly into the open but too quickly for most of the group to see it.

We then headed on to our next destination, an area called the Akrotiri Gravel Pit. This seems a somewhat strange description for the site, as it is now a large expanse of bare sand with a few scattered areas of low vegetation. The area was rather quiet, with the occasional Crested Lark and a 'covert' soldier checking on what we were doing, so we continued onwards.

Collared Flycatcher © Gary Elton

By comparison, our lunch stop at a small picnic area near an equally small church was a great success. Lunch was followed by a look around the area, where we found a Tree Pipit plus male Pied and Collared Flycatchers and a very showy Ruppell's Warbler.



A short drive took us to our last stop in the area, where we walked along the roadside, viewing the edge of a large reed bed and marsh. An enjoyable hour or so followed, with lots of birds (including the usual elusive Black Francolin!), Purple and Squacco Herons, Glossy Ibis, Wood and Green Sandpipers, Ruff, Common Snipe, plus our first Cattle Egrets. The familiar call of Bee-eaters was heard, with around ten Blue-cheeked found perched on the reeds, followed by five Europeans further along the track, giving us our best views of these two species.

One more stop at a hide overlooking the reeds produced a couple of Little Grebes, a Reed Warbler and brief flight views of a Ferruginous Duck.

We then retraced our route back along the coast towards Paphos, stopping once again for a look out across the coastal cliffs near the army base. Alpine Swifts were again encountered along with brief views of another Cyprus Wheatear plus a Chukar.

11 April: Cape Drepanum, Baths of Aprodite, Evretou Reserevoir, Arodes Valley

Gary and Fiona walked in different directions this morning with Fiona heading to the headland and logging more migrating Glossy Ibis. Breakfast was followed by a slightly earlier 8.00am departure with our first stop a short drive north along the coast to Cape Drepanum.

The Cape is an area with a few scattered bushes and trees, a rocky shoreline, and an island a short distance offshore. Scanning the island, we found the expected Yellow-legged Gulls plus a small number of Mediterranean Shags on the lower rocks.

An hour spent exploring the area produced Tree Pipit, Northern Wheatear and Blackcap plus several handsome Black-headed Wagtails. Several flocks of larger birds flew by including fourteen Glossy Ibis, nine Little Egret and nineteen Slender-billed Gulls, the latter seemingly all adults.

Continuing our journey north, we added two Great Spotted Cuckoos to the day list, on our way to the Baths of Aphrodite and the nearby campsite. This area can be good for migrants and we were not to be disappointed, with good birds turning up one after another! Birds seen included Collared, Pied and Spotted Flycatchers, Tree Pipit, Wood and Eastern Bonelli's Warblers, Wryneck, Nightingale and Common Redstart! A bonus was a pair of Cyprus Wheatears which gave us our best views of this species.

Re-boarding the bus we headed back south thinking of lunch, with our destination Evretou Reservoir. We made good time and on arrival Edward, our driver, manoeuvred the bus into a position to shelter us from the wind and then prepared and set up lunch.

Whilst he was doing this, we went for a short walk along the sloping track down towards the reservoir base. Bird-wise, it was rather quiet with a Sardinian Warbler the most noteworthy species, however, we did find some Orchids, *Ophrys italic*, or to use its English name Naked Man Orchid, which amused us for a minute or two!



Long-legged Buzzards © Gary Elton

Birds noted during lunch included a female Marsh Harrier and two extremely distant Long-legged Buzzards. We definitely needed better views of this species, although fortunately we didn't have to wait long because after driving for a mile or two (after lunch), we spotted two raptors soaring over the road adjacent to us and both were Long-legged Buzzards and they proceeded to give us the views we had hoped for!

Our last stop of the day was a valley, near the village of Arodes where we explored along tracks running adjacent to the valley itself. Initially the site didn't look particularly promising but the birds clearly felt differently with some nice views of Cyprus Wheatear, along with Turtle Dove, Pied Flycatcher, two male Collared Flycatchers and a pair of Common Redstarts.

We then headed back to the hotel for our last evening in Cyprus and a traditional meze evening at a local restaurant.

12 April: Local headland and heritage site before airport

Our last day already and the week had certainly flown past! With limited time this morning before we had to think about checking out of the hotel and heading to the airport, we decided to walk to the headland for a last visit and back again through the heritage site.

This proved both a very pleasant but also productive walk and nice finale to the trip. As we walked along the fence line bordering the heritage site, flocks of Yellow Wagtails could be seen and heard rising up then disappearing from view in the long grass and several calling Red-throated Pipits did the decent thing, landing to give us one last view. A flock of Herons flying towards us turned out to be Purple Herons, twenty-two in total so an impressive sight!



Purple Herons © Gary Elton

The heritage site was open when we arrived and with the wind blowing, we decided to head to the eastern corner to find some shelter. We explored several areas finding Hoopoe, Wood and Eastern Bonelli's Warblers, Common and Lesser Whitethroat, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Pied Flycatcher, Tree Pipit and a female Subalpine Warbler.

Another group of nine Purple Herons also appeared, circling several times above us before dropping down and attempting to land in the top of some nearby trees. Several of the flock managed to land successfully but eventually decided it wasn't a great idea, re-joining the main flock, which then disappeared from view.

We paused to scan across the forum diggings, close to the Odeon seating area, noting two Isabelline and two Northern Wheatears and on the grassland nearby a distant Woodchat Shrike was also seen.

With our allotted time now having run out, we reluctantly made our way out of the site through the revolving gate and back to the hotel to ready ourselves for the journey home.

Edward collected us at the allotted hour, dropping us off at departures and after a straightforward check in and a light lunch, we boarded the plane. Arriving back in the UK, we had a slight delay on our luggage arriving but all was present and correct, and goodbyes followed as we all started our respective journeys home.

Systematic List

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

A pair on the treatment pool at Larnaca on 7 April.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*

Noted at Larnaca, at the treatment pool (8) and later in the day at Oroklini Lake (12).

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

As above, noted at both the treatment pools and Oroklini Lake. Two were also seen at Akrotiri Salt Lake on 10 April.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Seen at various wetland sites.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

Largest numbers, around 80, at the treatment pool with smaller numbers at Oroklini Lake.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

At least three pairs were seen from the first hide we visited at Oroklini Marsh.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

One briefly in flight at the last hide we visited at Akrotiri Marsh.

Chukar Partridge *Alectoris chukar*

Heard or seen on five dates at various locations.

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus*

Heard on four dates at various locations, with several brief views.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

A brief calling bird whilst we were 'bee-eater hunting' at Mandria on 9 April.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Birds were heard and seen at Oroklini Lake and Akrotiri Marsh.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

A single at the treatment pool, Larnaca.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Large numbers seen at Akrotiri and Larnaca Salt Lakes.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

We did well for this species, with nice close views of perched birds at Oroklini Lake plus various migrating flocks including on our pre-breakfast walks.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

A single at the Paphos heritage site on 6 April, three at Oroklini Lake and a single in/off the

sea at Akrotiri.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Eight at Akrotiri Marsh with cattle.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralliodes*

Two at Akrotiri Marsh were a welcome addition to our lists.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

One or two on four dates.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

At least six at Akrotiri Marsh, with flocks of twenty two and nine at Paphos headland on our last day.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Noted on seven dates during the trip. Most numerous at Oroklini Lake where twenty one were counted.

European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Noted offshore from the hotel, with six on the island at Cape Drepanum.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Noted on several dates off the headland at Paphos, plus others on our visit to Larnaca.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

One was seen from the bus by Roger on 7 April.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to three birds seen on five dates at various sites.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

We did well for this species, though all sightings were over the first three days, with two males and a ringtail at Paphos and a ringtail at Akrotiri.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

Two distantly at Evretou Reservoir and two extremely close birds some ten minutes later as we were driving away from the site.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Singles on 9 and 11 April.

Little Crane *Porzana parva*

Great views of a male at Agia Vavara.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Up to five seen at four wetland sites.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Maximum of two at three wetland sites.

Eurasian Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

One heard at Mavrokolympus Dam on our owl excursion, plus one disturbed from the beach on our pre-breakfast walk on 8 April.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Seen well on four dates, most numerous at Larnaca and Akrotiri.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*

Recorded at six sites on four dates, largest number eight at Larnaca Water treatment works.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

A single at the edge of the large Salt Lake at Larnaca was followed by at least eight at Lady's Mile, Akrotiri.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

One seen on the rocks offshore from our hotel on 8 April and 11 April, with a calling bird overflying our lunch spot at Akrotiri on 10 April.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Two wading up to their waists in water at Oroklini Marsh – the nominate subspecies here, *limosa*.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

One was on the rocks near Paphos headland on our first afternoon walk, with another single seen on a small beach side pool at Mandria on 8 April. Various flocks, numbering over a hundred birds, were seen during our visits to both Larnaca and Akrotiri.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Two were seen during our visit to Lady's Mile, Larnaca with one well on the way to achieving its summer breeding plumage.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Three in amongst a selection of shorebirds along Lady's Mile, Akrotiri.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

At least eighty at various spots on the pools along Lady's Mile.

Common Snipe *Gallinago Gallinago*

Two each at Ortoklini Lake and Akrotiri Marsh.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Up to two noted virtually daily on the rocks outside our hotel.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Two on the small pool on Mandria beach on 8 April and at least three along the saltmarsh channel adjacent to Akrotiri Salt lake.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Nice views of two at Agai Vavara on the pools, with two further birds seen along Lady's Mile, Akrotiri on 10 April.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Seen on four dates, singles at Mandria Beach Pool and Asprokremmos Dam. At least five confiding birds were seen very well at Agia Vavara and around ten were noted on the saltmarsh at Akrotiri Salt Lake.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

A flock of fifteen calling birds flew over the Water Treatment Pool at Larnaca on 7 April.

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*

A 2CY bird at Mandria on 8 April with a flock of sixteen adults past Cape Drepanum on 11 April.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A total of three offshore at Paphos Headland. Two were also seen at Oroklini Marsh.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Noted daily.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Noted daily largely as feral pigeons.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Common, noted daily.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Singles at Mandria (8 April), Arodes Valley (11 April) and two on 12 April.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common, noted daily.

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*

A species which has spread rapidly along the Paphos coastal area, with birds recorded daily at various sites which included a regular singing bird clearly on territory on the small chapel in the hotel complex.

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*

We did well for this species, with birds seen on four dates. A mix of views with most in flight but a perched bird at Paphos headland on our first full day and brief perched views of two at Kiti Dam on 7 April.

Cyprus Scops Owl *Otus cyprius*

Two heard during our night foray on the evening of the 6 April at MavrokoyImpus Dam with fantastic views of a day roosting bird at Episkopi on 8 April.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Somewhat of a surprise as one flew past us along the shoreline as we walked towards the headland on the morning of 6 April.

Little Owl *Athene noctua lilith*

One seen sat on some overhead wires at MavrokoyImpus Dam during our evening owl excursion. The eastern subspecies *lilith* is sometimes treated as a separate species – oddly called ‘Cucumiau’ due to its call.

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Somewhat of a surprise find, with one flushed from its day roost during our walk through the heritage site on 6 April.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

At least 12 noted at Kensington Cliffs plus several over Asprokremmos Dam.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Noted daily at various sites.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

Eight vocal birds, often alongside Common Swifts at the Troodos, gave a useful comparison between the two species.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Seen on four mornings on the rocks outside our hotel. Another was noted on the small pool at the base of Asprokremmos Dam.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Common and seen daily.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

A vocal highflying flock were over Asprokremmos Dam on 9 April, with at least five birds present at Akrotiri Marsh/Phasouri Reedbed on 10 April, giving us some nice perched views.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

A ‘twitch’ for us, with news of a large flock present at Mandria as we left the Troodos. We managed a count of thirty-two birds, which were strung out along telegraph lines.

Slightly better and closer views the next day at Akrotiri Marsh/Phasouri Reedbed where perched birds gave some nice scope views.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Two birds, one at Asprokremmos Dam, the other at Baths of Aphrodite Campsite.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

At least one at Kiti Dam with another, a male, seen at Anarita Park on 8 April.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Noted daily at various sites during the trip.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

An extremely distant perched bird on the rock face at Kensington Cliffs.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator niloticus*

Seen on four dates at five sites, all singles other than two at Paphos Heritage site on 8 April.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*

At least four, possibly five, seen during our visit to the Troodos, with one particularly confiding bird !

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius glaszneri*

At least eight seen during our visit to the Troodos Mountains.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

Easily seen as we travelled around and recorded on seven dates.

Western Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula soemmerringii*

Noted on four dates, with birds showing a distinct white half collar on the hind neck.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix sharpii*

Common, noted daily.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Just one seen, at Akrotiri Marsh on 10 April.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater cypristes*

Around ten seen or heard on our visit to the Troodos.

Great Tit *Parus major aphrodite*

Common, noted daily.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata cypriaca*

Common, easily seen.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Small numbers noted on the headland on several dates, with a flock of around ten at the Tomb of the Kings, with a single bird also seen at Mandria on 8 April.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common, easily seen.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Seen daily around the headland.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Noted on both visits to Asprokremmos Dam, with a single also seen at the headland on our last morning.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti orientalis*

Heard daily and occasionally seen throughout our week, invariably around wetland areas or around the various valleys.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Great views of up to at least six birds on our visits to Asprokremmos Dam, plus others at The Baths of Aphrodite campsite and Paphos Heritage site.

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis*

Singles seen on five dates with two at Asprokremmos Dam woodland on 8 April.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Surprisingly scarce with only two birds seen, both at Paphos Heritage site.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Unexpectedly scarce with birds only noted at our lunch stop at Akritori and Paphos Heritage site.

Sedge Warber *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Birds were noted at Paphos Heritage site and Agia Vavara Pools.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Heard and seen in expected habitat primarily around the Larnaca and Akrotiri areas.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida*

Only heard, single birds at Paphos Headland on 6 April and Kiti Dam 7 April.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

A regular sight and sound as we travelled around the countryside.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Seen on five dates and noted at various sites.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Noted on four dates, most numerous on our walk around the Heritage site on 6 April.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Noted on three dates, Lanarca on 7 April, Anarita Park 8 April and our last day at the headland.

Eastern Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans albistriata*

A single female type bird was the only one seen this year, at the heritage site on our last morning.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*

Common, seen and heard at numerous sites.

Rüppell's Warbler *Sylvia ruppeli*

Three smart males were seen, with birds at Anarita Park, Asprokremmos Dam and Akrotiri (lunch stop).

Cyprus Warbler *Sylvia melanothorax*

Surprisingly scarce with two males seen at the base of the Asprokremmos Dam on our second attempt.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla dorotheae*

Easily heard during our visit to the Troodos, though seeing them was a bit more challenging!

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Heard and seen on our visit to the Troodos.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

One seen on our pre-breakfast walk on 7 April.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

One seen again on our pre-breakfast walk on 7 April.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

A short burst of song revealed the presence of a bird at The Baths of Aphrodite campsite. Seen by Roger.

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Five birds on four dates, all males. Recorded in the pine wood at Asprokremmos Dam, Akrotiri (lunch), Baths of Aphrodite campsite, Arodes Valley and the Heritage site.

Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata*

A pair were a pleasing find in the woodland at Asprokremmos Dam.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*

Great views of this species, with all the birds we saw being males. Our first was at our lunch stop at Akrotiri which was followed by others at Baths of Aphrodite Campsite and Arodes Valley (2).

Spotted Flycatcher *Musciapa striata*

One was seen during our visit to The Baths of Aphrodite camp site.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Seen on three dates, with two at the heritage site on 6 April, a single at Asprokremmos Dam on 9 April and two each at Baths of Aphrodite Campsite and Arodes Valley.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Two at the headland on 6 April, with others at Anarita Park and Zakaki Marsh, Akrotiri.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Seen on six dates, most numerous on the 6 April around the headland, with four encountered.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

Up to two on three dates, with all birds seen around the headland area.

Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe melanoleuca*

Seen on three dates. Our first was a distant bird on a guard rail on our first afternoon walk, with others seen at Anarita Park and Larnaca.

Following a recent study (Schweizer *et al*, 2018) Eastern Black-eared Wheatear is now treated as a full species and distinct from Western Black-eared Wheatear.

Cyprus Wheatear *Oenanthe cypriaca*

Noted on four dates with some nice views achieved of this smart wheatear.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common, seen daily.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

Seen virtually daily near the hotel.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Seen daily in good numbers, especially around the headland. Birds were mainly of the Black-headed *feldegg* race with Blue-headed *flava* also noted. The two inter-racial hybrids '*dombrowskii*' and '*superciliaris*' were also seen.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Common and noted daily.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

Noted on three dates, with birds seen at the headland/heritage site and at Mandria.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Noted on several dates around the headland.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Noted on six dates. Mostly over flying calling birds, but perched views at Mandria, Baths of Aphrodite Campsite and the headland heritage site.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

Again noted on six dates, largely on our pre-breakfast walks and around the headland, with several nice 'red-throated' individuals seen.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Two birds that were attaining their summer plumage were seen well on Paphos Headland on 6 April.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs syriaca*

Birds seen well at the Troodos.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris muehlei*

Noted daily, again largely around the hotel and headland area.

Common Linnet *Linaria cannabina bella*

As above, with some smart 'cherry chested' males seen.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis niediecki*

Noted daily.

European Serin *Serinus serinus*

Noted at Asprokremmos Dam, Akrotiri Marsh and the Troodos.

Eurasian Siskin *Spinus spinus*

A heard only, with an over flying bird in the Troodos.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Common and very much appreciated from a British perspective.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

Two at the headland on the 6 April were followed by great close views of at least ten at Anarita Park and a single bird at the base of Asprokremmos Dam on 9 April.

Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia*

Fortunately, we saw two well on our first day on the headland, as this species this year proved tricky for us to find.

Butterflies

Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Small White *Pieris rapae*

Eastern Dabbled White *Euchloe ausonia*

Common Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

Paphos Blue *Glaucopsyche paphos*

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Cyprus Meadow Brown *Maniola cypricola*

Reptiles and Amphibians

Cyprus Water Frog *Pelophylax cypricus*

Starred Agama *Stellagama stellio*

Troodos Rock Lizard *Phoenicolacerta troodica*

Fringe-toed Lizard *Acanthodactylus schreiberi*

Black Whip Snake *Dolichophis jugularis*

Orchids

Ophrys italic

Serapias laxiflora

Anacamptis pyramidalis