

# Lesvos

29 April – 6 May 2004

**Participants:**

**Peter Basterfield**

**Brian and Mary Chilcott**

**Helen Heyes**

**Fay Katz**

**Ian Taylor**

**Graham Woods**



**Black-eared Wheatear**

**Leader: Bob Buckler**

**A personal account by group member Helen Heyes**

**Day 1:** The flight out to Lesvos was extraordinary. Everywhere I looked there were field guides, birding magazines and maps being pored over; every other person on the flight seemed to be a birder! This gave the purser a great opportunity, during the sale of duty free goods, to interest us all in a pair of Beverley Hills Polo Club binoculars with a free compass (a snip at £25!). Needless to say, we all politely fought the urge to laugh out loud. It was like being amongst old friends, I found it strangely comforting. After scrambling for our luggage at the airport's only baggage carousel and meeting up with the rest of our group, we finally set off through the maze of winding roads that is Mytilini. The drive to our hotel in Skala Kallonis was a fair one and we didn't arrive until late afternoon, but we still had time, after checking in and freshening up, to do some birding around the Kallonis (pronounced Kalloni) pools – literally just outside the hotel! These pools are, sadly, now in desperate need of management to prevent them being totally overwhelmed by Tamarisk and other foliage. All of the bird tour companies are lobbying for some much-needed work here – after all, the birding business has extended the hotel season by up to a month in this part of the island and it would hit their trade very badly if this area of marsh was lost. Despite the problems, however, we still saw Little Bittern, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, a beautiful male Black-headed Wagtail, many Black-winged Stilts, a single Common Snipe, quite a number of Wood Sandpipers, Glossy Ibis, Cetti's Warbler (one bird used to sing at the top of a bush before breakfast every morning, giving amazing views for a bird that people struggle to see at home), Common Moorhen, Squacco Heron, Purple Heron and Little Egret. Walking around the back of the pools, around the streets of Skala Kallonis, we came to a single large palm tree that was heaving with Spanish Sparrows, many carrying nesting material. We spent some time watching these gorgeous birds, only to discover later that there were some trying to take over House Martin nests in our hotel! Further on, past the back of the football pitch, we had singing Corn Buntings, the ubiquitous Crested Larks, House Martins and Eurasian Swallows galore and more Eastern Olivaceous Warblers, this time a little easier to see. All in all, it was a nice relaxing start to the trip, and we fell asleep that night, as on every night that week, to the sound of Common Nightingales.

**Day 2:** No rest for the wicked as Bob had us up and about at 5.45 am! Our first destination today was the Inland Lake and boy was I glad that I'd taken my gloves, jumper and coat! It was cold! Not at all what you expect from a Mediterranean island, but I suppose it was still the end of April! Still, we were soon distracted by the birds – we had thirteen Black-crowned Night-herons, quite a few Squacco Herons, three Little Bitterns sitting up in the reeds, Purple Herons coming out of their roost, two Little Crakes (a male and a female), Sedge Warblers, a handful of European Reed Warblers and about twelve Great Reed Warblers. We returned to the hotel for breakfast (continental style with ham, cheese, bread, hard-boiled eggs, Greek yogurt, coffee and fruit juice) and a quick change into cooler clothes and then set off out again, this time for a walk up the West River. Sadly, this has become a bit of a dumping ground for people's rubbish and for unwanted building materials, so it's not the most scenic birding spot on the island. We did have some good birds however, including Great White Egret, Black Stork, Ruddy Shelduck in flight, Stone Curlew, a number of Temminck's Stints, and the ubiquitous Yellow-legged Gull and Hooded Crow. We then turned our attention to the East River - a much prettier and more productive birding area for us. Here, we added several terns to our list – Whiskered, Little and Common –

had the most amazing views of European Bee-eaters flying back and forth across the river, together with masses of hirundines, and had our first good views of Black-headed Bunting (a bird that, after a few days, became just another Black-headed Bunting and was added to Bob's list of unmentionables - which also included Corn Bunting and Crested Lark!) We also started to tick some shrikes, with one Woodchat and a couple of Red-backed putting in an appearance, and were gripped off by Bob who had driven the van to the ford and had a Citrine Wagtail while he was waiting for us to catch up! If it hadn't been for the photos Bob...! Two more sites remained on the agenda for today. The first was the salt pans, an incredibly bird-rich habitat, where we added Pied Avocets, a large flock of Greater Flamingos, one Montagu's Harrier and one Western Marsh-harrier, Little Ringed Plover (far more common on the island than Ringed), several Collared Pratincoles, some of which obligingly sat on the ground reasonably close to us, ten Kentish Plovers, Little Stints, Ruff (sadly not in breeding plumage), three Marsh Sandpipers, Sandwich Terns and some stunning White-winged Black Terns. At the back of the salt pans is an area commonly known as the sheep fields. This too has some special birds, and we saw about ten Greater Short-toed Larks, about twelve Red-throated Pipits with lovely red throats, many Yellow Wagtails (of various types) and several Whinchats. On the way back to the hotel, we managed to pick up a couple of Lesser Grey Shrikes, and then we stopped in at Skala Kallonis school, where we lined up along a wire fence to view our first Eurasian Scops-owl. A lovely end to the day.

**Day 3:** Up again at 5.45 (these early starts were optional, but at this early point in the trip, nobody wanted to be the first to wimp out!) We revisited the salt pans and added a few familiar birds to our list of waders - singles of Ruddy Turnstone, Grey Plover, Common Sandpiper and Curlew Sandpiper, two Common Greenshanks and a Eurasian Curlew (which is apparently quite rare on the island and which, unbelievably, was Bob's bird of the day!!) We also added to our list of raptors, with relatively poor views of Red-footed Falcon, two Eurasian Sparrowhawks and another two Montagu's Harriers. Finally, two Gull-billed Terns were picked out over the water before we headed back to the hotel for breakfast. First stop after breakfast today was meant to be the Krüper's Nuthatch site, but as we approached, we were horrified to see what looked like the whole local population parked at the site and enjoying their Saturday! Needless to say, we abruptly switched to Plan B and birded the nearby 'Derbyshire' area instead. This, apparently, is a name used only by birders and quite why it's used is a bit of a mystery - the area doesn't bring Derbyshire to my mind at all! Still, it is a lovely area and has some really nice birds. While we were scanning each side of the road for Tawny Pipits and Western Rock Nuthatch, we had our first views of Black-eared Wheatear and Blue Rock-thrush (beautiful bright blue males became a relatively regular sight during the trip). Walking a couple of the trails in the area was productive for us too. On one, we saw a stunning male Subalpine Warbler, both storks, Spotted Flycatcher, Red-rumped Swallows, Blue Tits and some very pale, washed out Great Tits, numerous shrikes (Red-backed, Lesser Grey and Woodchat), Eurasian Jay (with a very different facial pattern to those at home) and Chaffinches galore. I also had a very brief glimpse of a Middle Spotted Woodpecker - sadly, though, it didn't hang around to be seen by everyone else. Another track in the area was where we stopped to eat our packed lunch (these were provided every day and contained two massive rolls, a hard-boiled egg, a piece of fruit and a couple of biscuits, together with a large bottle of water). This was a great little area and on the walk we picked up fantastic views of a male Rüppell's Warbler sitting at the top of a bush, had brief views of two Eastern Orphean Warblers, and I managed to find the only European Roller of the trip. This bird obligingly sat at the top of a small bush long enough for everyone to get good views and then flew off, flashing its magnificent blue wings at us. After lunch, we visited the Upper East River and then the Goat Pit Track - at the top of this, there really is a pit where dead goats are thrown! You do not need to go up this far, however, and it's a really lovely little area. Here we added such wonderful birds as Western Rock Nuthatch at the nest, a single sub-adult Rose-coloured Starling, seen only poorly through the windscreen of the van, stunning singing Cretzschmar's Buntings, more glorious Subalpine Warblers and fantastic close views of Black-eared Wheatear on a big rock in front of us (both those with the black throat and those with just the eye mask occur on the island). As yet, though, there was no sign of the Rufous Bush Robins - this is a good site for them once they arrive.

**Day 4:** Another early start! This time our destination was a small area known as Devil's Bridge; our target, Cinereous Bunting. We pulled into a small lay-by at the side of the road and climbed up a fairly short, steepish track to a small chapel with a tall conifer beside it. Apparently, our quarry often sits at the top of this conifer. On this day, however, we did not see or hear any sign of the bird whatsoever! The visit wasn't a complete waste though, we picked up Common Stonechat for the trip, saw some more Cretzschmar's Buntings and at the bottom of the track, just as we were preparing to get back into the van, somebody spotted a pair of Cirl Buntings. We watched them for some time as they flew back and forth across the road - sometimes sitting in bushes, sometimes atop the roadside metal posts. It was magical to see these beautiful birds at such close proximity. After failing to see the Cinereous Bunting before breakfast, we were determined not to repeat the experience later in the day! First thing after breakfast, we set off for Ipsilou Monastery, stopping en route at a site for Isabelline Wheatear. Once at the monastery, we packed our lunches into rucksacks, parked at the bottom and began the steep walk up. Some people drive up and down, but most of the best birding is done on the slopes of the hill and is much easier on foot - besides, although there is a one-way system in operation for cars (up on the right-hand road and down on the other side), some drivers seem to be blissfully unaware of this; rather than me meeting someone coming the other way on those roads!! We took our time climbing the hill, but it didn't take long to pick up the song of a Cinereous Bunting nearby (to me it sounds like cin-cin-cin-cineerus). We scoured the area until we picked up a lovely male sitting at the top of a tree singing. We all queued up to look through scopes and the bird obligingly stayed put, singing his little heart out, it was a great start to the morning. Not long afterwards we had a magnificent fly past by a light phase Eleonora's Falcon, which through binoculars was textbook - wonderful moustachial stripes and a reddish streaked belly - a really lovely bird. A little way further up the road is a small tree-filled gully, which is a great little migrant trap. Unfortunately, you can't get down there, it's only viewable from the road, and trying to get everybody looking in the right direction can be tricky. Still, we did incredibly well here,

with good views of Common Cuckoo, several Spotted Flycatchers, Blackcaps, Wood Warblers, two dullish Pied Flycatchers, Masked Shrikes, and a stunning male Collared Flycatcher! Unfortunately, the latter was only seen by me, and I struggled to spit the words out as I was watching this gorgeous bird fly along. Sadly, we never managed to relocate it for the others. We ate our lunches at the top, accompanied by four of the local feral cats (obviously used to being fed). During our stop, we had great views of Short-toed Eagle, a Blue Rock-thrush and a fly over by about six Eurasian Crag-martins and three Alpine Swifts. Mary then decided to walk on up to the monastery while the rest of us began the descent down the other side. The star unexpected bird of this walk was undoubtedly a pair of Chukars that erupted with a loud shriek from the nearby hillside and flew away from us. Next on the agenda today was a drive out to Sigri, a place with one particular target bird – Lesser Kestrel. We scanned all wires as we drove along, but failed to see anything until we arrived at one particular spot – here, quite amazingly, we had a group of about eleven birds all hunting together in one field. They would each hover and then swoop down, rarely staying low down for any length of time before soaring back up again. Try as I might though, I could not pick out the 'distinctive' grey patches on the wings in flight - yes they had plain backs, and I would later see the patches in a perched up bird, but I could not make out anything on these! After watching this wonderful spectacle for a while, we piled back into the van and started off again; only to stop abruptly a little way down the track when Mary spotted a stunning male Eurasian Golden Oriole sitting low down on a stem of what we thought was fennel (we were assured the following week that it was actually angelica). On closer inspection, we found that there was, in fact, not only the beautiful male, but also a sub-adult male and a female. In fact, there appeared to have been something of a fall of these birds as we had a total of about 15 today in various places. The last port of call today was a place called Faneromeni, where we visited the upper and lower fords. Here, we managed the first fleeting glimpses of Rufous Bush Robin. This bird was particularly skittish and appeared to have just arrived; hence, we had snatched views of its wonderful red tail as it dived away from us. Although we hung around the area for a while and scoured the bushes, we never did get further views of the bird that day. Next, we headed for the other ford, where, we were reliably informed, there was a nest site for Middle Spotted Woodpecker, with the birds regularly visiting the hole. We parked well back and scanned the tree. Sure enough, there was a bird about to enter the nest hole. We had good views of this bird and decided that it was a fitting end to the day.

**Day 5:** Before breakfast this morning we visited a site up the Potomi River looking for another of the big three Lesvos birds – Olive-tree Warbler. For a big bird, this can be a real pain to see and this time, rather like yesterday's quest for the Cinereous Bunting, we failed! However, we did have the most glorious views of European Turtle-dove on the ground to show for our efforts. A quick trip to the Inland Lake turned up the usual herons, only one Little Crake this time, hoards of Eurasian Swallows perched in the reeds, and a dwindling number of Great Reed Warblers – only about five this time. After breakfast, we headed up the Napi Valley. This is a very pretty drive and we stopped off at a couple of points to do some birding. The first stop was at some farm buildings, where we found our only Northern Wheatear of the week, a handful of shrikes and finches. Next was a truly wonderful sight – a flock of about forty Red-footed Falcons (males and females) decorating the trees on a hillside. They were reasonably distant, but with a scope, the views of these birds were fantastic! To scan one small twiggy bush and see about seven birds in it was really something. We also picked up Sombre Tit and numerous Cirl Buntings in the valley. Our next stop was for the main target bird of the day – Olive-tree Warbler. We stopped at the top of the hill and listened, we had a brief burst of song that could have been it, but no sign of the bird. All we saw on this occasion was a male Eastern Orphean Warbler disappearing over a wall. Suddenly, we were joined at the site by another birding group who told us that a couple at the bottom of the hill had a bird showing well on both sides of the road. Warily, we drove back down the hill, but sure enough, as we arrived and jumped from the van, a bird was sitting on the top of a bush singing! It stayed just long enough for everyone to get brief views and then led us a merry dance, criss-crossing the road, giving just that bit more of a look each time. After we had had our fill and also picked up a couple of raptors, we drove back up the hill to pass on the information to the other group. With the second of the big three under our belts, we headed to Aghios Stephanos for lunch on a beach! This, however, is no Caribbean golden sand with palm trees, the sand here, if you can find a beach with any, is dark grey, and shells are few and far between. We sat and ate, checking the water occasionally for European Shag. After lunch, we made a stop nearby at a site of Bob's for Sardinian Warbler. Unfortunately, there was no sign of one, but we did have our only Tawny Pipit of the week. The bird showed really well on the path in front of us and was a real bonus. After Bob nearly rattled our lunches back out of us on his 'short-cut', which produced nothing but some more orchids for Fay to photograph, we headed for Petra and Molivos. These are the tourist areas of the island, but Molivos, in particular, has a couple of lay-bys that are renowned for Rüppell's Warbler. Having had excellent views earlier in the week, we didn't need this species but we went and had a look anyway, being rewarded with a total of three birds. We also had two Peregrines here - they breed on the cliffs. We then did what, for me, was a rather hair-raising part of the trip. Having long suffered from vertigo, the drive along the coast to Skala Sikiminia and Eftalou terrified me in places, even though everyone else took it in their stride. I have to admit it is a lovely coastline, but I was pleased to see the back of it! We stopped part way along and walked up into one of the gullies to look for birds, finding Eastern Orphean and Subalpine Warblers but not much else in the heat of the day. Our continual scanning from the van for small gulls on the water that could potentially be Audouin's proved fruitless too, nothing but Yellow-leggeds. A raptor watch on the way home turned up a Goshawk and great views of a really orange Long-legged Buzzard, together with Common Buzzard and another Eleonora's Falcon.

**Day 6:** After our snatched views of Rufous Bush Robin the previous day, we were all hoping for something a little better today, so, before breakfast, we did a brief foray up the goat pit track. Fay and Graham found a really obliging bird that sat at the top of a tree for everyone to look at through a scope. The birds don't always sit in the textbook pose with their tails cocked upwards, in fact they only really seem to do that briefly when they first land, otherwise, the tail is held down. The eye stripe is very distinctive, however,

and once seen, this bird is pretty unmistakable. After breakfast the final target bird of the big three was on the agenda and I had positive vibes! We drove to the renowned site near Achladeri, parked the van near to the old shower block and walked slowly into the forest. Remarkably, given the number of people that know of the site, we were the only ones there. Immediately, we could hear the bird we had come to see – Krüper's Nuthatch, but there was no sign of the bird himself. We followed the song for some way into the forest, picking up Short-toed Treecreepers on the way, but losing the Krüper's as his song became fainter and fainter. Reluctantly, we retraced our steps to a tall stump at the beginning of the forest, which we had been told was a nest site. Taking care to stand well back, we waited in the hope that the bird would return. We had some nice views of European Serins feeding young in one of the trees above our heads, and then the song started again, becoming louder and louder, closer and closer, until somebody picked out this tiny blue-grey bird with the red chest patch. From then on you couldn't miss him, he moved from tree to tree above our heads, calling all the time, pecking at the branches for food, sometimes sticking his beak into a pine cone - it was mesmeric. Once he landed very briefly on top of the tall stump, but he never went into the 'nest' hole. We were so spoiled by views of this bird that people were looking at other things and were then able to say, "Where's the Krüper's now?" It was one of those wonderful times in birding when you happen to be in exactly the right place at the right time, the rest of the day had a lot to live up to! Our next destination was Agiasos. Here, we did the walk up through the Sweet Chestnut woodland, stopping to eat our lunch on a wall. The birds here were much more reminiscent of home, and we picked up European Robin, Wren, a singing Song Thrush, Eurasian Blackbirds and a singing Eurasian Bullfinch. We also had some lovely wild flowers up here and some interesting fungi, one of which looked like a cluster of carved radishes. But the star bird of the walk came near to the top, a singing Eastern Bonelli's Warbler that sat at the top of a tree giving wonderful views and occasionally turning round so that we could see his greenish rump. This day was certainly going well, and after the Bonelli's, we also added Osprey and Common Raven to the list. We stopped in Agiasos for an ice cream, chapel visit and pottery (sic) shopping session (that became a running joke for the rest of the trip), before travelling beyond Agiasos. We made a nice stop at a site for European Serin (here they regularly sit on the ground, giving really good views) and we also picked up both Black and White Storks in a distant field, more than fifty Alpine Swifts overhead, Black-eared Wheatears and the traditional couple of shrikes. Another stop on a rather precarious bend in the road produced our only Grey Wagtail of the week, it was seen briefly by about three or four of the group as it dived across the road and down towards the stream on the other side. Next was a rather unproductive visit to the reedbed at Dipi Larssos. We scanned the reeds for Zitting Cisticola, but failed. We had large numbers of European Reed Warblers, Sedge Warbler and Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, but more than that we couldn't find on this occasion, so we headed back to the salt pans for another wader watch. This turned out to be a pretty good move, as we turned up two Common Ringed Plovers, more than thirty Little Stints and a flock of six Curlew Sandpipers, a couple of which were in really nice breeding plumage.

**Day 7:** With tiredness finally catching up with me, I decided to skip the early morning visit to the salt pans this morning and have a lie-in. By the time I ventured down to breakfast, the weather looked set for the day - it was a virtual washout! It was almost as if the activity and the wonderful views of the day before were because the birds must have known what was coming! We decided to head up to Ipsilou again (given the wind we must have been mad!), but stopped en route at a smaller monastery – Pervoli. Here, we watched in wonder as three long wires filled up with rows of Eurasian Swallows, House Martins and Red-rumped Swallows, all brought down by the foul weather and huddling together for some kind of shelter. We wandered around the small wood at the back of the monastery but found only a large fall of Spotted Flycatchers - they were everywhere! Heading on to Ipsilou, we decided to drive up today. Our quarry was Rock Petronia, which had eluded us all week. Once we finally got the van door open (the wind was so strong that we could barely push it!), we made our way into the courtyard in front of the monastery, where, we had been told, a pair were nesting in a hole in the wall. But after waiting for what seemed an age, feeling miserable, wet and cold, we decided that if we were Rock Petronias we wouldn't come out in this either! Bob decided to take us down to a new little spot that he hadn't visited before so we set off in the van, only to arrive at the site to discover that Bob had left his scope back up at Ipsilou!! Back we went and, luckily, the scope was still where it had been left – no self-respecting burglar would have been out in that weather! We ate lunch in the van and passed most of the rest of a fairly quiet birding day at Petra and Molivos. At Petra we had a flock of 29 Eurasian Jackdaws – the only real location for them on the island. At Molivos we had arguably the best birding of the day – watching a fishing boat come into the harbour followed by hundreds of gulls and Levantine Shearwaters. At Molivos reservoir, we searched in vain (from the van!) for an interesting gull amongst the Yellow-leggeds. Finally, we did a raptor watch on the road to Stipsi on the way home, which turned up some interesting birds. Bob flushed a European Nightjar from the ground, although only about two of the group managed to see it, we again had nice views of Long-legged Buzzard and Short-toed Eagle, and Ian picked up a Wood Pigeon against the far hillside – quite a difficult bird on the island apparently! With the end of the holiday fast approaching, we returned to the hotel to pack up and prepare for the return flight the next day.

All in all, I had a thoroughly enjoyable week, seeing over 150 species (about thirty of them lifers for me) and meeting some really great people. I will remember Lesvos for many things: the incredibly narrow, winding roads and the crazy local driving; the fields of dark red poppies and wild flowers; counting the number of 'dead' fridges and washing machines dumped at the sides of the roads; the cool breezes and the hot afternoons, when we often stopped for ice creams from the garages; the army activity (there were several no-go areas on the island and numerous signs banning photographs); the wonderful hilly scenery; the local Greek men sitting on benches at the roadsides and the older women, dressed all in black, hitching lifts from passers-by; Mary and Fay's quest for a 'potery'; and the fantastic views of some of Europe's most colourful birds. I recommend this trip to anybody and would only add the following advice: make sure you go prepared for cooler conditions as well as full sun, and if you can't eat cheese (like me) make sure you tell the hotel, otherwise you'll get it in everything!

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

2 on the sea from the beach road at Derbyshire 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

1 on sea from mouth of East River 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

1 on Kalloni Pool most days.

2 Inland Lake both visits.

**Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea*

3 passed from Eftalou coast road 3<sup>rd</sup>.

1 from Molivos Harbour 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Levantine Shearwater** *Puffinus yelkouan*

A dozen birds following fishing boat into Molivos harbour 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

2-3 birds Sigri 2<sup>nd</sup>.

1 from East River mouth 30<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>.

1 Molivos 5<sup>th</sup>.

**European Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*

2 off Aghios Stephanos on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

2-3 at Skala Kalloni Pool 29<sup>th</sup> and most days.

3 at inland lake on 30<sup>th</sup>.

1 at Faneromeni Ford on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

2 at Inland Lake on 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-crowned Night-heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

2 seen flying over Kalloni on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

13 at Inland lake on 30<sup>th</sup>.

19 at Inland Lake on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

3 at Inland Lake on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

Seen almost daily at Skala Kalloni Pool, Inland Lake and on visits to the East River.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Widespread and seen regularly at East River and Kalloni salt pans. Highest count was 50 on at Kalloni salt pans 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Great White Egret** *Egretta alba*

Seen most days on salt pools beside Derbyshire, a regular fly over Kalloni and salt pans, max 10 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

Seen regularly at Kalloni salt pans max count 2 on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

Singles regularly at Skala Kalloni Pool and 4 at the Inland Lake 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*

Seen most days in ones and twos.

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

Seen almost daily around Skala Kalloni and nesting on top of one of the churches.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

Seen daily feeding in Kalloni Pool, highest count 52 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*

Large numbers throughout at Kalloni salt pans. Max count 450 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

2 on 30<sup>th</sup> West River, 4 on 1<sup>st</sup> at Kalloni salt pans, 2 from beach at Aghios Stephanos.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

1 on 30<sup>th</sup> at Kalloni salt pans.

2 on 5<sup>th</sup> at Kalloni salt pans.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

2 on 6<sup>th</sup> at Skala Kalloni Pool.

**European Honey-buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

1 from Ipsilou Monastery 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*

Seen sporadically for 3 out of 8 days.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

Seen most days hunting at the back of Kalloni salt pans.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

Sub-adult male seen very well at the back of salt pans 30<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

1 on 3<sup>rd</sup> over hills above Petra.

1 flying over the on road above Achladeri 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Up to 2 on 1<sup>st</sup> at Achladeri.

2 on 5<sup>th</sup> above Petra.

Singles on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

Singles seen on 4 days.

**Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*

2 to 3 seen on most days.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

1 seen circling over pine forest at Achladeri.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*

11 on 2<sup>nd</sup> hunting over the approaches to Sigri from Faneromeni ford.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Single seen 2<sup>nd</sup> Faneromeni. 2 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Napi Valley.

**Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus*

3 birds seen over the salt pans 1<sup>st</sup> with 2 birds still on 5<sup>th</sup>.  
40+ high over ridge along Napi Valley on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Eleonora's Falcon** *Falco eleonora*

2 around Ipsilou 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
2 above Petra 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> at Faneromeni.  
1 over Inland lake and single seen from the bus Molivos on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Chukar** *Alectoris chukar*

2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> flying passed Ipsilou monastery.

**Little Crane** *Porzana parva*

2 most visits to the Inland Lake.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Seen regularly on Skala Kalloni Pool and Inland Lake.

**Common Coot** *Fulica atra*

Seen most days on Kalloni Pool.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

Seen daily on Skala Kalloni Pool and visits to Kalloni salt pans.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Seen in good numbers (100+) on visits to Kalloni salt pans.

**Stone Curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus*

3 on 30<sup>th</sup> West River.  
2 at Kalloni Salt Pans, 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*

10+ on 30<sup>th</sup> from track to salt pans.

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

2 along salt pans on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

Seen regularly in ones and twos in the ditch and sheep field at Kalloni salt pans and the lower East River.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Seen on all visits to Kalloni salt pans in the sheep field.  
Highest count was 6 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

3 at the salt pans on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

Seen in most visits to Kalloni salt pans, highest count 50+.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

12 on 30<sup>th</sup> along lower East River. 2 on 1<sup>st</sup> at Kalloni salt pans.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

Seen in all visits to Kalloni salt pans with 12 on 30<sup>th</sup> being the highest count. 6 seen at Faneromeni river mouth on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

1 seen on 30<sup>th</sup> at Kalloni salt pans.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Seen on most visits to Kalloni salt pans and East River.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

1 seen at Kalloni Pool on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

1 seen at salt pans 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*

3 seen on 30<sup>th</sup> & 2 seen on 1<sup>st</sup> Kalloni salt pans.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

2–3 seen and heard on salt pans and East River.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Seen daily on all fresh water sites - the most ubiquitous wading bird of the tour, no counts made, numbers reduced drastically from 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

1 on West River on 30.  
1 on 2<sup>nd</sup> at Faneromeni.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

1 along East River 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Single on Kalloni salt pans 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

5 on 3<sup>rd</sup> on the sand bar at the mouth of the East River.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

7 on sand bar at East River 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus s michahellis*

Good numbers throughout the island.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*

2 seen distantly on 1<sup>st</sup> the salt pans.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

7 on 30<sup>th</sup> at the salt pans.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

Seen almost daily between Skala Kalloni harbour and Lower East River and on all visits to the Kalloni salt pans.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

Seen almost daily between Skala Kalloni harbour and Lower East River and on all visits to the Kalloni salt pans.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus*

Seen on all visits to the salt pans.  
5 along west river 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*  
2 on 30th over West River.

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*  
Seen most days on most visits to salt pans max count 10  
West River.  
6 over at Faneromeni on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*  
1 seen from raptor watch point above Petra on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Collared-dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*  
Seen daily throughout the island, widespread and abundant.

**European Turtle-dove** *Streptopelia turtur*  
Seen in ones and twos throughout the island.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*  
2 seen flying around Ipsilou monastery, 1 seen very well.  
Heard 3 on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Eurasian Scops-owl** *Otus scops*  
1 on 30th roosting in a Plane tree in Skala Kalloni school  
yard.  
1 seen very well in Kalloni 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*  
1 along track to Inland Lake 30<sup>th</sup>.  
1 along track from salt pans 5<sup>th</sup>.

**European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*  
1 flushed on hill side above Petra 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*  
Small numbers seen most days.

**Alpine Swift** *Apus melba*  
Small numbers on four days, max count 50+ over lake above  
Achladeri on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*  
Up to 19 regularly seen in the fields around Kalloni salt  
pans.  
And along the East River, max count 62 seen leaving roost  
near Inland Lake on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**European Roller** *Coracias garrulus*  
1 on 1<sup>st</sup> along track near Achladeri / Derbyshire.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*  
Heard on many occasions.  
1 seen, but only distant views along Napi Valley 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos medius*  
Brief views on several occasions.  
1 at nest site at lower ford Faneromeni on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*  
2 seen West River on 30<sup>th</sup>.  
10 seen in sheep field behind salt pans 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*  
Abundant and widespread seen every day.

**Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea*  
2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> at Ipsilou Monastery.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*  
Seen regularly in small numbers over Skala Kalloni Pool salt  
pans and Inland lake.

**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*  
Several seen over Ipsilou Monastery and Grand Canyon.

**Eurasian Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
Abundant in all areas.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*  
Seen most days, good views at Aghios Stephanos and  
Pervoli Monastery.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*  
Abundant in the Skala Kalloni area with numerous nests on  
the hotel.

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*  
1 bird seen well along track at Aghios Stephanos on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*  
Good numbers in the sheep fields at the salt pans, reducing  
as the week progressed.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava flavissima*  
Seen rarely, West River 30<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> salt pans.

**Yellow Wagtail (Blue-headed Wagtail)** *Motacilla flava  
flava*  
Individuals noted along West and East Rivers.

**Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed Wagtail)** *Motacilla flava  
feldegg*  
Seen most days along East River and in sheep fields around  
the salt pans, most abundant race of wagtail.

**Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed Wagtail)** *Motacilla  
thunbergi*  
1 seen along East River 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*  
1 seen well and photographed at East River ford 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*  
1 seen along river above Agiasos 5<sup>th</sup>.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*  
1 from East River bridge 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Winter Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*  
1 on 5th in woodland above Agiasos.

**European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*  
2 on 5th in woodland above Agiasos.

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*  
Heard regularly everywhere and seen very well in the open above Agiasos on 29<sup>th</sup>.  
1 singing in the hotel grounds kept some people awake!

**Rufous Bush Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes*  
1–2 seen along track at Faneromeni Upper Ford on 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
1 seen along Goat Pit track 4<sup>th</sup>.  
1 seen salt pans 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*  
Seen sporadically most days. 5 on 30<sup>th</sup> along West River.

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*  
8 on 2<sup>nd</sup> on road from Ipsilou to Sigri.  
Several other sightings throughout the week.

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*  
3 on 3<sup>rd</sup> near Ipsilou Monastery.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*  
3 Seen along Napi valley on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanicus melanoleuca*  
Widespread in rocky areas, seen most days.

**Blue Rock-thrush** *Monticola solitarius*  
Seen on most days in the north and west of the island.  
2 on 3<sup>rd</sup> on rocks at Ipsilou Monastery.

**Eurasian Blackbird** *Turdus merula*  
Seen almost daily in all habitats including the hotel grounds.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*  
1 heard singing in the chestnut wood above Agiasos on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*  
Seen and heard almost daily around Skala Kalloni Pool, East River and Inland Lake.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaemus*  
Many seen at inland lake 30<sup>th</sup>.

**River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis*  
2 heard at inland lake on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**European Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*  
As above, also seen at Dipi Larssos reedbed on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*  
Up to 15 on 30<sup>th</sup> at Inland Lake with 3 still there on 1<sup>st</sup>.  
Also seen along East River.

**Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum*  
1–2 birds seen well along Napi valley on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** *Hippolais elaeica*  
Seen and heard daily.

**Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans*  
4 on 1<sup>st</sup> along track east of Derbyshire.

**Rüppell's Warbler** *Sylvia rueppelli*  
1 along track above Derbyshire on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia crassirostris*  
2–3 seen and heard singing on three separate days.

**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*  
1 seen at Ipsilou monastery 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*  
1–3 birds seen on several days.

**Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus orientalis*  
1 seen singing and holding territory above Agiasos on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*  
15+ on 2<sup>nd</sup> on road up to Ipsilou Monastery.

**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*  
1 heard in woodland above Agiasos 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*  
Seen regularly between 26<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis*  
Male seen briefly on 2<sup>nd</sup> along track up to Ipsilou monastery.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*  
2–3 along track on 2<sup>nd</sup> along track up to Ipsilou monastery.

**Sombre Tit** *Parus lugubris*  
2 seen along Napi Valley feeding young fledglings on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**European Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus*  
Widespread seen most days in all habitats.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*  
Widespread, seen most days.

**Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*  
1 seen from the bus between Petra and Kalloni on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Krüper's Nuthatch** *Sitta krueperi*  
Male seen very well calling and feeding on 4<sup>th</sup> at nest site in woods at Achladeri picnic site.

**Western Rock Nuthatch** *Sitta neumayer*  
1 at nest along Goat Pit trail on 1<sup>st</sup>.  
Sightings on 3 other days.

**Short-toed Treecreeper** *Certhia brachydactyla*  
2–4 on 4<sup>th</sup> in pine woods at Krüper's site and at lake site near Achladeri.

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*  
Seen regularly in flight and in small groups.  
Up to 8 in grand canyon on 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
4 along track to Sigri from Faneromeni 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*  
Seen in good numbers most days.



**Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor*  
Several good sightings. Up to 4 on 1<sup>st</sup>.  
1 along track to East River on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*  
Most abundant Shrike seen most days.

**Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus*  
Several sightings from 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*  
Seen regularly in woodland and from vehicle along tracks and roads.

**Eurasian Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*  
14 on 2<sup>nd</sup> at Sigri, 29 on 5<sup>th</sup> in Petra.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus corone*  
Seen daily everywhere.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*  
4 seen from raptor watch point – Petra on 5<sup>th</sup>.  
1 seen on mount Olympus, Agiasos 4<sup>th</sup>.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*  
Widespread and abundant.

**Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis*  
Seen almost daily around Skala Kalloni Pool breeding in the hotel complex. Large colony in palm tree next to pool.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

#### **Butterflies**

Swallowtail  
Scarce Swallowtail  
Orange Tip  
Small White  
Clouded Yellow *sp.*  
Cleopatra  
Small Blue  
Holly Blue  
Adonis Blue  
Eastern Festoon  
Small Pearl  
Bordered Fritillary  
Painted Lady  
Small Heath  
Small Copper Brown  
Meadow Brown  
Grizzled Skipper  
Large Skipper

Widespread, especially in woodland.

**European Serin** *Serinus serinus*  
6 along track near lake above Achladeri.  
2-4 in pine woods on 4<sup>th</sup> near Krüper's site near Achladeri.

**Eurasian Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*  
2 seen and heard calling in woodland above Agiasos on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**European Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*  
1-2 seen most days.

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*  
Widespread and abundant.

**Eurasian Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*  
Heard singing at Ipsilou monastery but not located.

**Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus*  
Widespread, seen daily.

**Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea*  
3 on 3<sup>rd</sup> at Ipsilou Monastery.

**Cretzschmar's Bunting** *Emberiza caesia*  
Widespread in the north and east, seen on 3 days.

**Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*  
Widespread during throughout the week.

**Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra*  
Widespread and abundant.

#### **Mammals**

Persian Squirrel

#### **Reptiles and amphibians**

Spur-thighed Tortoise  
Stripe-necked Terrapin  
Agama Lizard  
Balkan Green Lizard  
Turkish Gheko  
Marsh Frog