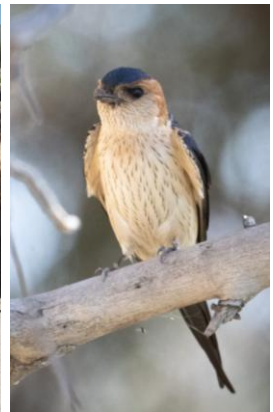


Lesvos, Greece: Migration! | April 28 – May 3, 2026

Trip Report by Hugh Simmons



With guides Stylianos Zannetos and Hugh Simmons, and clients Andrea, Eileen, Jeff, Kim, Lise, Maryan, Steven, Webb, and Will



Sun., Apr. 26

Arrival in Mytilene | Drive to Skala Kallonis

After gathering our group from the airport and hotel we drove south to an area called Charamida . We stopped on a beautiful roadside with a wildflower covered hillside and a majestic view of Aegean Sea. Here we found our target bird, the Ruppell's Warbler, as well as Eastern Orphean Warbler and Cretzschmar's Bunting. It was then time to make the one-hour drive to our hotel in Skala Kallonis.

We checked in to the Hotel Kalloni Bay in Skala Kallonis and then spent a few minutes birding the wetland across from the hotel. We quickly got Little Bittern, Eurasian Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Garganey, Black-winged Stilt, Common Kingfisher and European Bee-eater.



It was then off to the renown Kalloni Salt Pans where we found 28 species in relatively short order. There were large numbers of Greater Flamingo, Wood Sandpiper, Ruff, Little Egret and Gray Heron. Also, Black Stork, Curlew Sandpiper, Collared Pratincole, Ruddy and Common Shelduck, Garganey, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, European Red-rumped Swallow, Cetti's Warbler, Greater Short-toed Lark, European Greenfinch and Red-throated Pipit.

Mon., Apr. 27

Metochi Lake | Kalloni Bay | Kalloni Salt Pans

This morning, before breakfast, we went to Metochi Lake where the reeds and birds were bathed in the amber morning sun. Here the target and highlight was the Little Crake. There were also Squacco Heron and Ruddy Shelduck with adorable, fuzzy ducklings racing about. Common Swift were scooping up the insects waking in the morning sun, as were about 30 European Bee-eaters. In the amber light on the reeds, we found Sedge Warbler, Common Reed Warbler, and Great Reed Warbler.

After breakfast we made an exciting stop to find the Kruper's Nuthatch and the Short-toed Treecreeper. Then we made a long drive down to the southeast shore of Kalloni Bay to look for a reported Lesser Flamingo. This was one of only a few records of this bird in Lesvos and we were lucky enough to find it. There were also many Greater Flamingo (which provided a great size comparison), Sandwich Tern, Pied Avocet and Temminck's Stint. In the area we also found Woodchat Shrike, Red-backed Shrike, Black-headed Bunting and Kentish Plover.

We returned to Skala Kallonis for a delicious lunch at a local restaurant and then went looking for owls. Our targets were the Eurasian Scops-Owl and Long-eared Owl although we did not find them in the first location where they were known to be found. Moving to another location we found the Eurasian Scops Owl hiding in

some dense foliage. We then returned to the first location and did find the Long-eared Owl along with an older owlet.

We wrapped up our day with a trip through the Kalloni Salt Pans where we had 28 species. Of those species, we added White-winged Tern, Little Stint and Little Owl to our list.

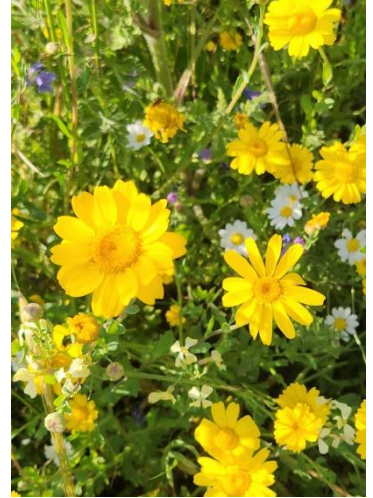


Tues., Apr. 28

Vatousa Gorge | Ipsilou Monastery | Petrified Forest Museum | Faneromini Fields | Perivolis Monastery

Today we headed to the western coast. Our first stop was roadside in Vatousa Gorge in the Larvia Valley where we found 12 species including Common Buzzard, Lesser Whitethroat, Western Rock Nuthatch, Spanish Sparrow, European Greenfinch, and Cirl Bunting. Our next stop was the Ipsilou Monastery, high on a mountaintop with amazing views of the Aegean Sea in two directions. A monk gave us a bit of history of the site and we birded around the surrounding scrub, steppe habitat finding Red-footed Falcon, Northern Wheatear, Isabelline Wheatear, and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear. Along the road to our next stop, the Petrified Forest Museum, we got Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, and Cretzschmar's Bunting. We then spent about an hour exploring the fascinating Petrified Forest Museum. After the museum it was getting to lunchtime and we did some birding on the Faneromini Fields area on the way to our picnic spot. In the fields were Lesser Gray Shrike, Eurasian Jackdaw and Eurasian Blackcap. We had a picnic lunch at the beach and, while there, scoped Scopoli's Shearwater, Yelkouan Shearwater, and European Shag. After lunch we did another walk in the Faneromini area on a path through fields and along a stream. This was a very productive walk tallying 28 species including: Common Cuckoo, European Roller, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Red-backed Shrike, Woodchat Shrike, Great Tit, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Sardinian Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Common Nightingale, Collared Flycatcher, and Citrine Wagtail.

Our final stop of the day was at the Perivolis Monastery where we added Middle Spotted Woodpecker at scope distance. On the drive back we had a Blue Rock Thrush perched on some roadside rocks and a Common Wood Pigeon flew across the road.



Wed., Apr. 29

Kalloni Salt Pans | Makara Tract | Fila Mast Track | Potamia Old Reservoir

We started this morning with a pre-breakfast trek to the east side of the Kalloni Salt Pans. This visit added Dalmatian Pelican, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-bellied Plover, and Northern Shoveler.

After breakfast we headed west to the Makara Tract with roadside sightings of Western Rock Nuthatch, European Stonechat and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear. At a walk along Makara beach and estuary we were excited to find a few of the impressively large Alpine Swifts. While there we also had Little Stint, Eurasian Jackdaw, Common Chaffinch, European Greenfinch, European Goldfinch and Black-headed Bunting.

We returned to Skala Kallonis for lunch and then drove down the Fila Mast Track. After some effort everyone in our group got the target bird for this location, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler. While there, we were also excited to have fly-by of a Eurasian Hobby as well as Hawfinch, and European Robin.

On the way back to the hotel, we stopped at the Potamia Old Reservoir but did not add any new species. However, after leaving there we did get good looks at Masked Shrike on a farm fence.



**Thurs., Apr. 30 Agra | Skala Eresos | Meladia to Eresos Tract |
Faneromini Fields**

This morning we headed toward the west coast again. This time we took a more southerly route, closer to Kalloni Bay. A roadside stop in Agra produced good looks at Sombre Tit and Sardinian Warbler. Continuing west we came to the coastal town of Skala Eresos, a quintessential Greek seaside village. Here we found nesting Laughing Doves and had cappuccinos in a lovely cafe near the water. We then spent an hour exploring the area of the Meladia to Eresos Tract. We found Isabelline Wheatear, Rock Sparrow, Eleonora's Falcon, Common Hoopoe, Eurasian Crag-Martin, and Lesser and Greater Whitethroat.

After a delicious and filling lunch in the village of Sigri we again explored the area around Faneromeni. Here we had Little Ringed Plover, Cetti's Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Eastern Subalpine Warbler, Eurasian Blackbird, Common Reed Warbler, Long-legged Buzzard, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, and best looks yet at Masked Shrike.

It was then time for the long drive back to the hotel and dinner.

**Fri., May 1 Kalloni Salt Pans | Christou River | Tsiknias River |
Metochi Lake**

This morning we returned to the dirt tracks, rivers, lakes and farmfields in and around the Kalloni Salt Pans. Scanning shorebirds in one of the ponds Stelios found a Spotted Redshank in breeding plumage; a striking bird, nearly all black with a red bill and red legs. Several Collared Praticoles also showed well here. A Little Gull and a White-winged Tern were flying about. Following a tip, we made our way to the Christou River and walked a dirt path to a bend in the river where we could get scope views of a Spur-winged Lapwing and a group of Eurasian Spoonbills. Later we would get even better views of three Spur-winged Lapwings at Tsiknias River. Returning to Metochi Lake we found three Little Crakes, a couple of Spotted Flycatchers and heard the elusive Hoopoe which had yet to give us good looks. On a short walk out to Skala Kallonis Beach we found Sandwich Tern, Little Tern, and Common Tern.

Sat., May 2

Faneromeni and the Filia Track | Segri | Kalloni Salt Pans

Today was a day to find species we had missed and we all agreed that we would like to return to the west coast and Segri. But first, while having coffee before breakfast we got word that there was a Mediterranean Monk Seal in the Kalloni Bay near the hotel. A few of us went to see it and get photos. It was a treat to see such a beautiful, rare creature only about 40 yards offshore. After breakfast we drove west and returned to the Faneromeni and the Filia Track. We were excited to add Levant Sparrowhawk, which we had been trying to find for days. We also found Olive-tree Warbler and Eastern Orphean Warbler, which had both been "heard only" to this point. While not a new bird, we also had a spectacular showing of Eastern Bonelli's Warbler. Lots of photos!

Lunch was at a repeat restaurant in Segri, which was a favorite from earlier in the week. In the afternoon we returned to the Kalloni Salt Pans where we added Whiskered Tern, Slender-billed Gull, and Peregrine Falcon.

Our farewell dinner was a sumptuous Greek meal at our favorite lunch restaurant in Skala Kallonis, Mezen.

Sun., May 3

Kalloni Salt Pans | Departures

It was rainy and cold but we could not resist going out for one last birding drive after breakfast. We drove through the Kalloni Salt Pans, revisiting locations we had frequented earlier in the week. We saw many of the same birds but did add Ruddy Turnstone. We also had spectacular close views of Whiskered Tern and White-winged Tern.

Finally, we returned to the hotel, finished our packing, and loaded the vans for the 45-minute drive back to the Mytiline airport after a wonderful adventure in Greece.



Photo Credits: Group Photo (Kim Nelson, KN), Monastery (Andrea Tuttle, AT), Black Stork (KN), Sheep (Hugh Simmons, HS), Red-rumped Swallow (Hugh Simmons, HS), Chukar (KN), Long-eared Owl (KN), Landscape (AT), Group at Nuthatch Site (KN), Black-winged Stilt (KN), Ruddy Shelduck (KN), Monastery (HS), Eastern Black-eared Wheatear (KN), Picnic lunch at beach (KN), Group Birding (HS), Eurasian Blue Tit (HS), Yellow Flowers (AT), Masked Shrike (HS), Landscape (HS), Gull-billed Tern (HS), Female Red-backed Shrike (KN), Pied Avocet and Wood Sandpiper (KN), Oceanview (HS), Fresh Produce (Hugh Simmons), Restaurant (HS), Group Birding (KN)