

Lesvos, Greece

Species List



LESVOS SPECIES LIST

April 28-May 6, 2019

Guides Gina Nichol and Steve Bird, Naturalist Journeys host Peg Abbott and 9 participants:

Lise, Jean, Pat, John, Kelly, Bob, Freddy, Glenn, Steve, Lori

Species List compiled by Steve Bird, with plant list by Gina Nichol

Tour Summary by Peg Abbott: A first trip for Naturalist Journeys, and for this one we joined our friends and partners for the tour Gina and Steve of Sunrise Birding who are many-year pros on Lesvos, guiding us to great sightings of regional specialties such as Sombre Tit, Sardinian Warbler, Kruper's Nuthatch, and both Cinereous and Cretzschmar's buntings. From sea cliffs almost too beautiful to take in, we scoped Scopoli's Shearwater among the more abundant Yelkouan Shearwater. With luck on the North Coast we had a fly-by of Audouin's Gull that chose to circle and put on a good show, all the more reason to enjoy our leisurely taverna lunch in the scenic seacoast town following that sighting. The flower show was unbelievable after a very wet spring, we fell on our knees to find orchids and well over 200 species of other wildflowers and shrubs, patiently identified by our botanists Kelly Amsberry and Bob Meinke alongside Gina. We were thrilled to see Eleanora's Falcon on several days including a pair circling high above us off the coast at Sigri. We enjoyed the diversity of habitats, from marsh to montane and coastal. Steve patiently walked us through the myriad choices of brown-clad Old World warblers. How can one ever tire of watching graceful Collared Pratincole, colorful and graceful European Bee-eater, strikingly patterned Eurasian Hoopoe, glistening Golden Oriole, or secretive Little Bittern or Little Crake? Black Storks gleaming in dawn light as they joined a feeding frenzy of white-plumaged egrets were memorable. And did I mention Little Owl posing on lichen-clad rock walls or barn corners... A million thanks to Steve and Gina for sharing their patch – we'll be back next year!

BIRDS (143 species)

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* – (4) Up to 20 or more regularly seen when visiting Kalloni Salt pans.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* – (5) Great looks at this attractive duck. Although often wary this species is increasing in numbers and most easily seen in the area we call the (sheep fields) at Alykes Wetlands. At least 35 seen there on one day. Other pairs seen in the Meladia Valley, Perasma Reservoir (with chicks), and flying over Kavaki.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* – (3) Small numbers of this generally common European duck occur on the island between November – May. We had sightings on the Kalloni pool right outside our hotel, plus other on Metochi Lake and also the Alykes Wetlands and Salt Pans with a maximum of 7.

Chukar Partridge *Alectoris chukar* – (3) On one day Peg heard a bird, then driving through the Meladia Valley two birds flushed in front of our vehicles with one bird flying a short distance and then posing for

us in a bare patch of undergrowth. Another almost hit Steve as we were about to walk into Ipsolu Monastery. This can be a tricky bird to find so very pleased with the bird that posed for us.

Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* – (1) Scopoli's Shearwater was split from Cory's Shearwater maybe 10 years ago and represents a new species of what was considered the Mediterranean race of Cory's. On a blowy day at Faneromeni Beach just a few were scoped at distance. They were further out than the commoner and smaller Yelkouan Shearwaters also passing at this time, but careful study showed they were paler and had the distinctive flight of arching up and gliding down again on bowed wings. This flight action is something learnt over many years and not always obvious depending on wind conditions. We saw about 4 or 5 but most probably many more passing by.

Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan* – (3) Once considered the Eastern Mediterranean form of Manx Shearwater it is now a full species and is the default shearwater from the coast of Lesvos. We enjoyed see groups of these birds flying together low over the water. In particular it was pleasant to see around 40+ from one of our favorite picnic spots on the headland at Agios Fokas. Others were seen of Kavaki and many hundreds distantly from the beach at Faneromeni.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – (2) Our best views of this cute grebe in its breeding plumage were of 3 at the small lake of Metochi.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* – (3) The Great Crested Grebe in all its summer finery ranks as one of the most beautiful grebes in the world. We watched one or two distantly in the Kalloni Bay from the Alykes wetland and also from the Tsiknias river mouth.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* – (6) Always a favourite with everyone we got to see several hundred on each visit to the Kalloni Salt Pans (a birding hotspot). Most birds are present on the island between Sept – May with a few non breeding birds staying throughout the year. Although people are often surprised that they look white rather than pink, this view soon changes when you see them in flight and their bright pink wings make them look spectacular.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* – (5) Mostly a migrant a few pairs breed in the woodlands on the island. Seen up close and in good light it is a beautiful stork showing green and purple sheen and a bright red bill, eye-ring and legs. We had plenty of opportunities to get great looks at this bird including 4 in a feeding frenzy one morning on the Kalloni Salt Pans. A maximum of 8 were seen on one day.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* – (7) Fewer White Storks were seen than Black Storks with our highest count of 5 around the Salt Pans. Many were already on nests which were mostly on chimney stacks or poles in the middle of towns. We saw several stood up on their nests so they were either on eggs or small chicks. One bird showed very nicely feeding in deep grass on the Alykes wetland.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* – (3) This was a surprise this year with just a few sightings including a maximum of 30 birds seen distantly from the NE side of Kalloni Salt Pans. We also had a couple of sightings on the Alykes wetlands and at the Tsiknias river mouth. This shows the wonders and unpredictability of migration as Glossy Ibis is normally a common migrant and



easily seen in good numbers during spring. Lets hope nothing bad has happened to them!

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* – (1) There was a Eurasian (Great) Bittern present in the reedy Kalloni pool outside of our hotel all week. But try as we may we only got a brief sighting on our first day. We tried all times of day after that but it never showed which is pretty typical for this species.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* – (5) The Little Bittern although a skulking bird is often the very opposite while on migration through the island, and as expected we got many great views of this tiny little heron. Several were seen right outside our hotel, others on the Tsiknias river and the best of all were the ones on Metochi lake where the early morning light and crystal clear reflections were a photographers dream. The most we saw were 4 on Metochi lake.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – (1) An adult showed very well one morning at Metochi lake.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* – (7) The name instantly attracts attention (a what?). Squacco Herons were easily seen every day in front of our hotel on the Kalloni pool. We also had great views of several around the edges of Kalloni Salt Pans. Their cryptic colors of creamy/buff and light purple soon change when they take flight and almost look completely white.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* – (1) There have been only 9 accepted records of Western Cattle Egret up to 2016. Since then it has been annual with just ones or twos seen. A great spot by Gina as one flew overhead from our driving vehicles as we were returning to the hotel. The bird had been around a few days but hardly anyone was seeing it.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* – (6) Small number were seen around many different wetland areas. One present most days in front of hotel and up to 12 seen at Kalloni Salt Pans.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* – (6) This cryptic heron behaves more like a Bittern and can blend into the reeds and easily be missed. We had up to 4 right outside our hotel in the Kalloni pool, and a few others near wetlands around the island.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* – (7) One bird showed very well nearly every day on the Kalloni pool with a few singles also seen on the Kalloni Salt Pans and Alykes wetland.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* – (6) A common migrant numbers had just started to increase at the start of this tour. On our first morning visit to Kalloni Salt Pans we witnessed an incredible feeding frenzy with around 40+ Little Egrets, 4 Black Storks and 100 Common Terns all going crazy right in front of us.

European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* – (2) Only a few individuals seen. One from the cliff top of Kavaki and a couple of others from the beach of Faneromeni and the harbor at Sigi.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* – (1) Only one immature seen at the Tsiknias river mouth by Bob and Kelly on the final morning before they went to airport.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus galliscus* – (5) This large broad winged eagle was seen most days with a maximum of 4 on one day. Often seen hovering with slow wing beats, its pale underneath and often dark looking hood make it easily identifiable. Can often migrate through in numbers and can turn up anywhere which is why I have not put any particular site, although thinking about it the Kalloni Salt Pans is always a good spot.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* – (1) A single bird flew overhead in the west of the island at the Meladia valley near the river ford. This is a scarce resident with most sighting in the middle and east.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* – (4) WE saw most of our sightings between the Tsiknias river and the Kalloni Salt Pans



an area referred to as the Lotzaria Track. Mostly immature and adult female birds with varying amount of cream color on their upperwings and head. We got great looks as several as they hunted low over the fields.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* – (4) Several sightings amounting to 4 days with possibly the same bird a 2nd calendar year male seen hunting around the edges of Kalloni Salt Pans, the Alykes wetlands and also the Lotzaria track.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo runinus* – (2) We had good views of several birds in the Meladia valley allowing comparisons to the Common Buzzards also seen. In the Potamia valley we scoped one bird perched high on the cliffs and another flying around.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* – (6) We had many good sightings of Common Buzzards throughout the island. Several well marked individuals may have fallen into the category of "island Buzzard" which is still an ongoing study as to whether they are vagrant Steppe Buzzards (*Buteo buteo vulpinus*) or hybrids.

Little Crane *Porzana parva* – (1) An early morning visit to Metochi lake with perfect morning light behind us allowed us to find 3 female and one male Little Crane all of which showed well considering they normally hide in the reeds.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* – (4) Ones and twos seen at Metochi lake, the Kalloni Pool, the Tsiknias river and Perasma Reservoir.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* – (3) Just a few singles seen at Metochi lake, Perasma Reservoir and the Kalloni pool.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* – (2) A nocturnal species as evident by its huge yellow eyes we saw a couple on the Alykes wetlands and Kalloni Salt Pans. During the middle of the day these birds just lay down and are seldom seen so best time is early morning or evening.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* – (5) This elegant shorebird always looks great in the mirror like reflections of the main channel on the Kalloni Salt Pans where several pairs breed each year. We saw at least 12 with very close views and good photo opportunities.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* – (5) Up to 100 birds seen every visit to the Kalloni Salt Pans. Generally distant in tight packs swimming on the water, but occasionally we got a few feeding closer. A few at Polchinitos Salt Pans.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* – (1) A scarce bird that is now becoming annual. We had great looks at one bird in a flowery field between Sigri and Faneromeni.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* – (3) A regular migrant but only in small numbers we saw up to 6 only on the Alykes wetlands.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* – (3) The Little Ringed Plover with its distinctive bright yellow eye-ring breeds in small numbers and we got good views of several birds on the Kalloni Salt Pans, Parakila beach and the Alykes wetlands.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* – (4) The eastern counterpart of the Piping Plover we had reasonable views of several on the Alykes wetlands.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* – (4) Normally one of the most abundant shore birds we had 60+ plus including small groups so close you could see every detail. Most were seen on the Kalloni Salt Pans, a few at Polchinitos Salt Pans, Alykes wetland and the close main channel of the salt pans

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* – (2) We had good scope views of 15 birds on the Alykes wetlands where birds could be seen in non-breeding and plum-colored breeding plumage.



Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* – (2) A few were seen on the main channel on Kalloni Salt Pans where direct comparison to the Little Stints beside them was very educational.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* – (1) Just one Dunlin was spotted amongst the small flocks of shorebirds on the Kalloni Salt Pans.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* – (4) We had great close views of many Little Stints on the main channel of the Kalloni Salt Pans, plus more distant views on the Alykes wetlands with a maximum count of 50.

Common Snipe *Callinago gallinago* – (1) With the report of one observer finding a Great Snipe we checked the marshy pools of the Alykes wetlands and managed to find 4 Common Snipe, the only records of this species so far this year.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* – (1) On a windy day in the west we managed to find two birds on the stream from the lower Faneromeni ford.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* – (2) With numbers of this species diminishing as it is normally an early migrant we were lucky to get close good views of a couple on the main channel of the Kalloni Salt pans. Good comparisons feeding with Wood Sandpipers and Ruff.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* – (6) Without doubt the commonest shorebird every year, we saw birds at many wetland sites but closest views and study was easy at the Kalloni Salt Pans, Polchinits Salt Pans, Alykes wetland and Tsiknias river

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* – (2) After distant view of one on the Kalloni Salt pans we enjoyed close views of two together the following day on the main channel.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincole* – (1) An interesting shorebird as it resembles a cross between a shorebird and a tern, especially when seen in flight hawking for insects. We got distant views of one hidden amongst the rocky edge on the Kalloni Salt Pans, and for those doing an evening run one day we got fantastic views of a single bird perched close on a low pile of salt near the Alykes wetland.



Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* – (1) A full adult in breeding plumage was found by Peg on a successful evening run in search of Rufous Bush Robin near the mouth of the Tsiknias river.

Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaeetus audouinii* – (1) One of the rarest gulls in the world restricted to rocky islands within the Mediterranean we checked several areas in hope of finding one and eventually came lucky when one was spotted an adult circling around fairly close to shore on the Erresos to Skala Sikiminia road. Everyone could see the details on this bird including its "lip-stick red bill".

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus* – (1) As we scanned the Alykes wetlands for elusive shorebirds Gina spotted a second calendar year bird sat at the back of the marsh. Everyone got good scope views of this bird.



Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michanhellis* – (8) The most common gull on the island seen just about everywhere, including farm fields, high over the mountains and hills, on the sea, and of course anywhere on the coast and wetlands.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* – (1) With a tip off from a friend who had just seen two Caspian Terns flying away from the Kalloni Salt Pans we made an impromptu stop at the Mesa Pool which was the

direction they were flying and this proved to be a good call as Peg spotted them roosting amongst the gulls. We had great views on the ground and also in flight as they departed and were not seen again.
Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* – (6) Numbers of birds slowly increased from almost zero the week before until we regularly saw 30 or more on the Kalloni Salt Pans.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* – (5) Good numbers were regularly seen around the Kalloni Salt Pans, Alykes wetlands and Tsiknias river. A feeding frenzy on the main channel of Kalloni Salt Pans probably held over 80 birds and was quite a spectacle.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* – (1) Just two birds were seen amongst the feeding frenzy of Common and Little Terns, and we spent quite a while trying to pick them out in the mayhem, even though they look distinctly different.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* – (1) This is a “must see” bird on Lesvos and we were getting worried with no records. But then one evening along the main channel of the Kalloni Salt Pans three birds appeared and flew back and forth right in front of us. What an elegant looking tern and what superb views!

Rock Dove *Columba livia* – (8) The Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) was easily seen around any habitation on the island.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* – (4) This very smart looking dove was seen quite a few times in different areas but most memorable was the ones we saw sat on a stone wall and telephone wires while at Kavaki.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* – (8) Another common species seen every day especially around human habitation.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* – (3) We heard the distinctive “cuckoo” call on several days but in areas we were unable to get close enough to search. Then on one day as we drove away from Ipsolu Monastery a bird flew across the road, down the hill and landed in a small tree. Most of us got to see it before it made a short flight to another tree where it seemingly disappeared.

Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops* – (1) At our regular day stake out for roosting Scops Owls, we unintentionally found one too close and it flew to a large tree where we got slightly obscured views of it amongst the leaves.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* – (2) After our first initial sighting of one bird on a farm building roof along the Lotzaria track, we got several fabulous views of 3 different birds on our journey out west.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* – (1) John spotted a bird flying around Ipsolu Monastery as the group walk down the sheltered side of this peak.

Common Swift *Apus apus* – (7) Seen on most days in varying numbers with super views low over Metochi lake one morning.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* – (6) We started off with flight views of groups going over giving their distinctive liquid calls. Eventually we got to see birds perched on wires and bushes where their gorgeous colors could be fully appreciated. Seen best near the Tsiknias River and Alykes wetlands.



Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* – (4) We recorded it on 4 days but this included several birds only being heard. Another glamour bird that everyone wanted to see. Our first reasonable views were had as we returned from the west and two birds were spotted sat on a telephone pole. All sorts of acrobatics ensued in one vehicle as people tried to see as we were now almost under the pole. The birds then flew off and landed in a large tree, but by the time we got there they had mysteriously gone. So apart from other brief flight views as we travelled around, the next good sighting, at least for one vehicle was when a bird flew slowly across in front of the bus and then again into a large tree along the Platania track. The flight views were highly appreciated and actually very good.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* – (1) As we drove the dusty coastal road from Eressos to Skala Sikiminia Gina and Peg heard a bird calling in one of the wooded gullies. Despite some searching we never heard it again or saw it.

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocoptes medius* – (2) The only woodpecker on the island it is surprising how difficult it can be to see it well even though it is fairly common. I think the main reason is that they are nesting during the weeks we visit and trying to evade detection by predators and us! Anyway another tip from a friend who had found a very active nest led us down a quite road to an old tree and a telephone pole full of woodpecker holes. As soon as we were out of the buses we had a family of woodpeckers flying all over the place. Excited youngsters!! We had to be patient to get views of another pair that were bring food to their nest hole in the pole, but eventually those that persevered got good views. Many others were glimpsed as we drove around the island.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* – (3) An identification challenge when not seen well as they can closely resemble the Common Kestrel. We managed several views of birds while in the west and tried our best to point out the discerning features. However on our visit to the Platania track and after our excitement of seeing Olive-tree Warbler and Hoopoe, we spotted a close Lesser Kestrel hovering and hunting right in front of us at eye level. Now we could see all the features and this showy bird even made it onto some peoples top 5.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – (2) Not too many but we did get good views of several including a Meladia valley and Faneromeni.

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* – (2) A target bird for Peg and of course many others we were under pressure to deliver! Defeat was not an option and on one day while walking up the Potamia valley a dark morph bird was spotted circling over the hillside. Ok not the greatest views but we found one. Then while heading towards the beach at Faneromeni on a blustery day both vehicles had a bird fly right across in front of us. Now we were on alert and from the beach we spotted one bird coming in off the sea, but best was to come when two birds a light phase and a dark phase circled around together and were seen by everyone when we were near the lower Faneromeni ford.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* – (1) In our search for better views of wheatears Gina and Peg found one bird flying around the wind turbines while in the west. Unfortunately the other bus missed this one.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* – (1) While at the cliff top in Kavaki a lone Peregrine was spotted hunting over the hillside. A group of Spanish Sparrows went into panic mode as it returned to its nest hidden under the cliffs.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* – (4) After the first Red-backed Shrikes started to arrive at different spots around the island we had at least 10 birds seen well on our exploration of



the Meladia valley. Mostly gorgeous males were seen but we did also see a couple of drabber females.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* – (2) Our first Lesser Grey was seen very well as we returned through the Meladia valley. Sat on tree tops it performed very well. Another was then spotted as we passed by Ipsolu Monastery and yet another on a different day in the Potamia valley.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* – (5) The most abundant shrike on the island it could be seen in pretty much any habitat. We enjoyed multiple views of this shrike to the point that it became “just another woodchat” as we checked all shrikes that we could.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* – (6) Sometimes this shrike can be wary and difficult to get good looks at, but not this year as we saw many and enjoyed very good views. Most often associated with Olive groves where its song can easily be confused with the much sought after Olive-tree Warbler.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* – (2) During our best visit to the Meladia valley when there was no wind and migrants were appearing in every bush, we approached the famous “Magic Tree” a lone tree in a barren landscape, and sure enough there were many birds including several Golden Orioles that gave super views once they left cover of the tree to go and feed. We saw about 4 birds this day.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* – (7) You wouldn’t think it but this bird can often be elusive and hard to get a good look at. We saw it most days and good views had by all.

Western Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula* – (2) Isolated in just a couple of places on the island we saw 50 or more when visiting Sigri the birds number one hotspot.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* – (8) Very common and seen every day this two-toned grey and black crow could morph itself into a number of different species causing many a roadside stop!

Northern Raven *Corvus corax* – (4) We had lots of good views of the giant Northern Raven a bird that seems to be on the increase from just a few years ago when we would only see a couple during a week-long tour.

Sombre Tit *Poecile lugubris* – (2) A specialty of the island this one we needed to see! After distant views of one on a tree top along the Agra road and not seen by everyone, we were happy to get much better views of a single bird in an Oak Tree at the end of the Platania track.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* – (6) Fairly common and seen in ones and twos throughout the island.

Great Tit *Parus major* – (6) Another fairly common species and regularly seen throughout the island.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea* – (1) We had good views of one bird perched on a wire near the “Magic Tree” in the Meladia valley. A few others were heard at Ipsolu.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* – (8) One of the commonest birds and seen everywhere. This is one of the species we get people to try and learn within the first day or two.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* – (1) We saw just two on the Alykes wetlands amongst the sand dunes where they were quite flighty. One was seen in song flight.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* – (5) (Bank Swallow) We had good views of many small groups including sightings at Metochi Lake, Kalloni Salt Pans and Alykes wetland.



Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – (7) Seen in good numbers everyday all over the island.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* – (1) We only saw three birds in the traditional site at Lardia Valley. They flew back and forth in this rocky gorge and gave great views.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* – (7) – Seen well everyday with several nesting under the balcony roofs of our hotel.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* – (5) Mostly seen in pairs which makes sense as they are a summer breeding species. Great views of them flying over Metochi Lake, Meladia Valley and often seen around small villages.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* – (7) The explosive song of this dark brown warbler was heard every day, with good views at Metochi Lake and by the Tsiknias River Ford.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* – (1) Only one seen well while we were having a picnic by the ford in Meladia Valley.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* – (2) The loud raucous song of this bird was heard in the Kalloni Pool right outside our hotel, and several were seen low in bushes in the Meladia Valley.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* – (2) Just a couple of sightings by group in Metochi Lake and also Meladia Valley. Was also seen a few times by early morning walkers at the Kalloni Pool.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* – (4) The best views were at Metochi Lake and also a couple showed well at the Tsiknias river ford.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida* – (6) Nicknamed the “singing bush” because every bush seemed to have one of these birds singing from within. After a few days of just hearing them we devoted some time and got wonderful views of several birds perched in the open. Tsiknias river ford being one of these spots.

Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum* – (1) A real target species and rarely arriving before the beginning of May, we had fantastic views of a singing bird in Olive Trees on the Platania track. This bird can be one of the hardest birds on the island to see as it often only sings from deep inside an Olive Tree and is notoriously difficult to get any sort of view. Probably the leaders best view in 20 years!

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* – (1) One bright yellow bird showed well in a small bush in the Meladia Valley.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* – (1) We saw both males (with black cap) and females (with chestnut cap) on our good fall-out day in Meladia Valley.

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris* – (2) This rather large warbler showed well with several seen in the Meladia Valley and one seen at Kavaki.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* – (2) Just a couple seen with our best views in the Meladia Valley.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* – (5) Widespread over the whole island we had good views at many different sites on the island.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* – (1) After a game of cat and mouse with a singing bird near Agios Fokas we eventually got super looks at another bird sat out on a dead tree.

Ruppell's Warbler *Sylvia ruppeli* – (1) I'm not sure what was going on with this bird this year. We attempted to see a singing male in a regular spot, but it was proving elusive until one day with lots of patience we got good scope views of it on top of a bush at Kavaki.



Kruper's Nuthatch *Sitta krueperi* – (1) Another species that was proving difficult this year and many groups and people left the island without seeing it. One of the island's top specialties we were lucky again after some patience to find a lone bird foraging in the tree tops in an area of the Achladeri Forest. A great success!

Western Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer* – (1) Several birds gave super views while we were in the Meladia Valley

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* – (1) After hearing several in the Achladeri Forest we eventually tracked one down and followed it until everyone had had good views.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* – (6) Widespread over the island we saw many different individuals.

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes* – (2) Another late arrival on the islands we had tried several times for one that had been spotted on the Alykes wetlands. With no luck Steve tried a spot he had seen them previous years by the Tsiknias river mouth and luckily we found one sheltering from the winds low in a bush. The next day Bob and Kelly had a late flight so we checked the Alykes wetland one more time and low and behold a bird sat up on the dead bushes singing his heart out.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* – (3) We saw good numbers especially in the west at Meladia Valley, Sigri and Faneromeni.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* – (6) This bird's song could be heard over most of the island and although very vocal it can be a challenge to see. We had great views at the Tsiknias river ford.

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* – (1) Just two birds were seen on our fall-out day in the Meladia Valley.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* – (1) A very smart male was seen in the "magic tree" in the Meladia Valley.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* – (1) Although a bit distant we got great scope views of a male perched on a rock in the Lardia Valley.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* – (2) Several were seen perched on fences and low bushes in and around fields beside the Tsiknias river and the Kalloni Salt Pans.

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* – (3) A few were seen in the rocky west, including Meladia Valley, near Agra and Ipsolu. Several already had fully fledged young.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* – (3) The first sighting was near Ipsolu and we had more views on the track to Mount Ordimnos near the wind turbines.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabelline* – (2) Again as with Northern Wheatear the first sighting was near Ipsolu, followed by much better views on another day on the track to Mount Ordimnos.

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* – (5) Common over much of the island we saw many. Both western (O.h. hispanica) and eastern (O.h. melanoleuca) forms occur with pale-throated and dark-throated forms of both races. Some birds lack any buffy tones and look completely black-and-white.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* – (7) Common and seen throughout the island

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* – (5) Fairly common and often seen in flocks of up to fifty or more. We had good views at many places including Lotzaria track and in the nest of a White Stork.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* – (1) This declining species is becoming more difficult to find. After brief views in the Lardia Valley we all got good looks at one bird on a rock along the roadside just after Ipsolu.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* – (4) A common passage migrant with up to 6 or more races occurring. We got great views of males of both the Black-headed race (M.f.feldegg) and Blue-headed race (M.f.flava). Females and variants can be impossible to assign to a particular race.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* – (3) Single birds were seen at the Kalloni Salt Pans, Meladia Valley and Sigri coast road.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* – (1) One bird showed by the gate to the sheep fields at Alykes wetlands.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* – (12) Our first visit to the sheep fields on the Alykes wetlands produced about 12 birds feeding amongst the grasses and flowers. Some with brick red throats.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* – (6) Fairly common and seen in wooded areas throughout the island. Common in Achladeri Forest where we saw many.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* – (3) Just a few seen mainly in pairs. We had great views on a fence by the pumping station on the Kalloni Salt Pans.

Common Linnet *Linaria cannabina* – (1) Only one dull looking female seen perched on a fence as we drove out of the Meladia Valley.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* – (6) This beautiful bird was seen in many areas feeding in weeds along the roadside especially near the Kalloni Salt Pans.

European Serin *Serinus serinus* – (1) An impromptu roadside stop after leaving Skala Sikiminia when one was heard singing provided us with super views of up to four birds including several in song flight.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* – (7) One of the commonest birds and seen just about everywhere. Its jingling song fills the air.

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea* – (2) This is one of the main targets of this islands being very difficult to see outside of Lesvos. We had fabulous views of several birds on the rocky hillsides near Agra. Plus a few singing and seen near Ipsolu.

Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia* – (3) Common in the west and other areas of rocky barren hillsides. We had many superb views from Agra all the way to Sigri, through the Meladia Valley and also near Ipsolu.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* – (3) A few birds were seen including males singing in the Meladia Valley.

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala* – (6) The first individuals had just arrived a day before our group. After that the birds arrived in good numbers and we saw them in many places including Meladia Valley, Sigri, Faneromeni, Vatera and the Tsiknias river.



MAMMALS (4 species)

Eastern Hedgehog *Erinaceus concolor* – (1) One night time sighting in the back garden, alerted by one of the local naturalists, those up later in the bar got to see one quite well, it scuffled over to the foundation wall and then followed it, not too alarmed by our presence but wanting to get to a hiding spot.

Persian Squirrel *Sciurus anomalus* – (3) Seen mainly in bursts as they crossed the road. Sightings were single animals, but on some days we had several sightings. One scanned from above at the Ipsolu Monastery.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* – (1) One seen on the “rough track” home from the Salt Pans, facing us while it sat in tall grass, a beautiful image but no photos as too quickly it bounded away from our view

European Hare *Lepus europaeus* – (1) Seen on the slope facing us as we enjoyed a picnic lunch in the Meladia Valley at the river crossing. It was visible for several minutes before bounding up to disappear behind the ridgeline. Sightings of European Hare are surprisingly rare on the island so well done to the lucky few who saw it.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (14 Species)

Starred Agama *Laudakia stellio* – (3) Black males and several paler checkered females seen in rocky areas mainly on west of the island.

Balkan Green Lizard *Lacerta trilineata* – (1) Just seen on one occasion.

Snake-eyed Lizard *Ophisops elegans* – (4) Fairly common and seen at a number of sites.

Snake-eyed Skink *Ablepharus kitaibelii* – (2) Just one or two seen.

European Glass Lizard *Psuedopus apodus* – (1) One seen on road and disappeared quickly in Meladia Valley.

Dice Snake *Natrix tessellata* – (2) Seen on river edge in Potamia Valley and also on Kalloni Pool.

Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* – (1) One or two seen on river in Potamia Valley.

Worm Snake *Xerotyphlops vermicularis* – (1) A great find! Two adults under a rock at Perasma Reservoir and a bunch of babies under another rock in the same spot.

Eastern Tree Frog *Hyla orientalis* – (4) Several seen outside of our hotel on bushes on the Kalloni Pool.

Green Toad *Bufo viridis* – (1) One found under rock by ford in Meladia Valley.

Levant Water Frog *Pelophylax bedriagae* – (5) Common and seen near any body of fresh water.

European Pond Terrapin *Emys orbicularis* – (1) Scarce and only one seen with next species at Metochi Lake.

Western Caspian Turtle *Mauremys rivulata* – (6) Also known as (Stripe-necked Terrapin) or (Balkan Pond Turtle). Common and many seen near any body of fresh water.

Spur-thighed Tortoise *Testudo graeca* – (1) One found on the Alykes wetland.



BUTTERFLIES (16 species)

Scarce Swallowtail *Iphiclides podalirius* – (2) Seen.

Common Swallowtail *Papilio machaon* – (2) Seen.

Black-veined White *Aporia crataegi* – (3) Seen.

Large White *Pieris brassicae* – (4) Seen.

Eastern Wood White *Leptidea duponcheli* – (2) Seen in Achladeri Pine Forests.

Orange Tip *Anthocharis cardamines* – (2) Seen.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas* – (1) Seen.

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus* – (2) Seen.

Brown Argus *Aricia agestis* – (1) Seen.

Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi* – (1) Seen.

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* – (1) Seen.

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui* – (6) Commonly seen with many worn individuals after long migration from Africa.

Large Wall Brown *Lasiommata maera* – (1) Seen.

Oriental Meadow Brown *Hyponephele lupinus* – (2) Seen.

Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus* – (2) Seen.

Levantine Skipper *Thymelicus hyrax* – (1) Seen.

OTHER SPECIES

Odalisque *Epallage fatime* – (1) Seen.

Robust Spreadwing *Lestes dryas* – (3) Seen.

Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa* – (1) Seen.

Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii* – (3) Seen.

Mediterranean Chequered Scorpion *Mesobuthus gibbosus* – (1)
Seen under rock by Ipsolu Monastery.

Lesvos Bush Cricket *Poecilimon mytelensis* – (2) Endemic to
Lesvos, mostly seen on west of island.

Mammoth Wasp *Megascolia maculata* – (1) Seen.

Great Green Bush Cricket *Tettigonia viridissima* – (1) Seen.

Thread Lacewing *Nemoptera sinuata* – (1) Beautiful insect seen
by coast at Parakila Beach.

Migratory Locust *Locusta migratoria* – (1) Seen.



COMMON FLORA SCIENTIFIC NAME NOTES

Compiled by Gina Nichol

(Plant fans, please request expanded botanical list compiled by Kelly Amsberry from our Naturalist Journeys office)

TREES & SHRUBS

Quince *Cydonia oblonga*

Cypress *Cypressus sempervirens*

Wild Fig *Ficus carica*

Olive *Olea europaea*

Tamarisk *Tamarix parviflora*

Calabrian (Turkish) Pine *Pinus brutia*

Oriental Plane *Platanus orientalis*

Gall Oak (Spikey leaf) *Quercus infectoria* - Appeared like oak apple gall

Valonia Oak *Quercus macrolepis* - Hairy acorn cup. Well divided leaf that ends in sharp points

Black Locust / False Acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*

White Mulberry *Morus alba*

GRASSES

Large Quaking Grass *Briza maxima*

Sharp Rush *Juncus acutus*

Hare's tail Grass *Lagurus ovatus*

Common Reed *Phragmites australis*

SPURGE

Large Mediterranean Spurge *Euphorbia characias*

Narrow-leaved Glaucous Spurge *Euphorbia rigida*

BULBS/TUBERS

Tassel Hyacinth *Muscari comosum*

Eastern Iris *Iris orientalis*

OTHER

Eastern Hollyhock *Alcea pallida*

Common Alkanet *Anchusa undulata*

Peacock Anemone *Anemone pavonina*

Greek Chamomile *Anthemis chia*

Branched Asphodel *Asphodelus ramosus*

Black Mustard *Brassica nigra* - Widespread roadside tall spindly plant with yellow flowers

Rock Bellflower *Campanula lyrata*

Red Hottentot Fig *Carpobrotus aciniformis*

Knapweed *Centaurea aegialophila* - Pink flower like a cross between a thistle and lavender

Spiny Madwort? *Hormathophylla spinosa* (formerly *Centaureum spinosa* or *Alyssum spinosus*)

Cornflower *Centaurea cyanus*

Crown Daisy *Chrysanthemum coronaria* - Yellow or yellow and white large daisy like flower

Pink Cretan Cistus *Cistus creticus*

White Sage-leaved Cistus *Cistus salvifolius*

Brass Buttons *Cotula coronoptifolia* - Abundant yellow flowers on Alykes sheep fields

Milk Thistle *Cynara cornigera*

Viper's-Bugloss *Echium vulgare* - Slim stems with numerous blue/mauve radiating flowers

Purple Viper's Bugloss *Echium angustifolium*

Field Eryngo *Eryngium campestre* - Numerous small spiny thistles

Sea Holly *Eryngium maritimum*

Giant Fennel *Ferula communis*

Yellow-horned Poppy *Glacium flavum*

Wild Gladiolus *Gladiolus italicus?* - Tall slim with pink flowers

Curry plant *Helichrysum siculum* - Groups of glaucous green stems with a head of numerous yellow round flowers

Caley Pea *Lathyrus hirsutus*

French Lavender *Lavendula stoechas*

Venus' Looking Glass *Legousia speculum-veneris*

Winged Sea Lavender *Limonium sinuatum*

Narrow-leaved Lupin *Lupinus angustifolius*

Blue Lupin *Lupinus varius* - Larger leaves

Burgundy Loosestrife *Lysimachia atropurpurea* - Tall mauve plant curling over

Virginia Stock *Malcolmia maritima*

Common Mallow *Malva sylvestris*

Wild Camomile *Matricaria recutita*

Syrian Thistle *Notobasis syriaca*

Prickly Pear *Opuntia ficus-indica*

Oregano *Origanum vulgare*

Pale Poppy *Papaver argemone*

Common Poppy *Papaver rhoeas*

Wild Radish *Raphanus raphanistrum*

Holy Bramble *Rubus sanctus*

Horned Dock *Rumex bucephalophorus*
Common Sorrel (Common Dock) *Rumex acetosa*
Thorny Burnet *Sarcopoterium spinosum* - Widespread low clumping phrygana plant
Red Stonecrop *Sedum rubens* - Tiny red rock sedum
Mediterranean (Pink) Catchfly *Silene colorata* - Widespread pink flower that crinkles at the edges
Forked Catchfly *Silene dichotoma*
Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*
Spanish Broom *Spartium junceum*
Round-leaved Alexander's *Symrniium rotundifolium*
Mediterranean Hartwort (Ant's jam tarts) *Tordylium apulum*
Purple Salsify *Tragopogon poriffolius* - Huge dandelion seed head
Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris*
Roman Nettle *Utrica pilulifera*
Great Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*
Wavy-leaved Mullein *Verbascum undulatum*
Fodder Vetch *Vicia villosa*
False Dittany *Ballota pseudodictamnus* - Furry leaves
Pink Hawksbeard *Crepus Rubra*
Bladder Campion *Silene vulgaris*
Yellow Rock Rose *Helianthemum nummularium*
Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*
Spotted Rock Rose *Tuberaria guttata* - Yellow with brown center
Pink Bindweed *Convolvulus oleifolius*
Lesser Celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*
Shining Cranesbill *Geranium lucidum*



ORCHIDS

Violet Limoudore *Limodorum arbortivum* - Pine forests
Holy Orchid *Orchis sancta*
Small Flower Serapias *Serapias parviflora*
Woodcock Bee Orchid *Ophris Oestrifera*
Bull-headed Orchid *Ophris bucephalis*