

Spring migration in the Eastern Mediterranean

Situated in the Eastern Mediterranean, the island of Cyprus is an ideal staging point for migrant passerines, water birds and birds of prey during the spring. A visit in mid-April gives the opportunity to see a wide range and variety of birds. Many species of wheatear including Black-eared, Desert and Hooded occur. Ruppell's, Subalpine, Barred, Eastern Orphean and Eastern Bonelli's Warbler are regular while Isabelline Shrike, Cream-coloured Courser, Trumpeter Finch, Baillon's Crake, Caspian Plover and Cinereous Bunting are among the less regular but almost annual rarities. Cyprus has two full breeding endemics - Cyprus Warbler and Cyprus Wheatear - as well as four endemic sub-species, one of which, Cyprus Scops Owl, is probably a full endemic species in its own right. Cyprus has increasing populations of Spur-winged Lapwing and Black Francolin. The trip will cover both mountain and coastal areas and is based centrally in the coastal city of Limassol.

■ Jane Stylianou resides in Cyprus and is an active member of the local birding scene and Birdlife Cyprus, an important conservation body promoting and protecting the island's birdlife.

Day 1: Morning flight to Larnaca airport. On arrival, we transfer to our hotel in the Limassol area.

Day 2: Today will be spent around the Limassol area. We explore the Akrotiri Peninsula taking in Zakaki Marsh, Lady's Mile, Bishop's Pool, Akrotiri Salt Lake, Akrotiri Gravel Pits, coastline, and Phassouri Reed Beds. At this time of year, the area should be alive with migrant passerines, waders and herons. Regular species include Little Crake, Collared Pratincole, Little Bittern, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Collared Flycatcher and various wheatears. Interesting breeding birds include Black Francolin and Ferruginous



Red-throated Pipit Photo: Jane Stylianou

Dates

Saturday April 8th - Saturday April 15th 2017

Leader: Jane Stylianou
Group Size: 8
Birds: 130-155

Duck. Later in the day, we visit Germasogeia Dam for the endemic Cyprus Warbler.

Day 3: We drive to Paphos and then to the Akamas area and Evretou Dam. Villages en route are used by hunting Bonelli's Eagle and Long-legged Buzzard. Then we travel to the Polis-Latchi area, stopping at Polis Reed Beds and the Baths of Aphrodite searching for Masked Shrike, Common and Thrush Nightingale, Red-rumped Swallow and Savi's Warbler. Migrating raptors may be possible, including Lesser Spotted Eagle. Inland, we visit Neochorio village and the Smyies area including Agias Minas. Return to Limassol via Kannaviou Dam and Forest where we may find the endemic Cyprus Wheatear and breeding Cretzschmar's Bunting.

Day 4: This will be spent on the eastern end of island as we travel to Cape Greco and

Agia Napa Sewage Works. The scrub vegetation here holds many migrants including Ruppell's and Subalpine Warbler, Eurasian Wryneck, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, European Roller and several races of Yellow Wagtail. This is a good spot for the resident Spectacled Warbler. Migrating raptors include Pallid and Montagu's Harrier. Paralimni Lake and Sotira Pools attract crakes and herons. On the way back to Limassol, we stop at Oroklini Marsh, one of the island's best sites for Spur-winged Lapwing.

Day 5: Today, we head west to explore the Paphos Plain and Asprokremmos Dam area. We visit the Paphos Sewage Works, Ezousas Pools, and Mandria. All can hold surprises during migration with Mandria a good place to check for Bimaculated and Calandra Larks. Asprokremmos Dam and its surrounds will be checked for migrant herons, crakes and waders while the wooded utility area often has passerines – Ortolan Bunting, Pied, Collared, and, on occasions, Semi-collared Flycatchers. Nearby, Anarita Park is a site used by migrating Lesser Kestrel and resident Bonelli's Eagle.

Day 6: We visit the Troodos Mountains for the endemic subspecies – Cyprus Coal Tit, Eurasian Jay, Short-toed Treecreeper and Cyprus Scops Owl (the latter almost certainly a full species). We travel via Souni, Omodhos and Pachna with stops at Platres, Troodos Square, Livadhi tou Pashas and Kannoures Track which holds Masked Shrike, Olivaceous Warbler, Pallid Swift and Common Crossbill. Eurasian Crag Martin is also possible. Returning to the coast, we visit Kensington Cliffs and nearby Curium Stadium to search for the few remaining Griffon Vultures on the island. Eleonora's Falcon could be present as should Alpine Swift together with both Sardinian and Cyprus Warblers.

Day 7: We start today at Paphos Headland for a morning walk around this famous migration area. Wheatears, shrikes, warblers, several yellow wagtail races and Greater Short-toed Larks use the area during spring. Another migration staging point to be checked further north is Cape



Eurasian Wryneck Photo: Jane Stylianou

Drepanum. A probable return to either Mandria or Akrotiri is scheduled for later in the day to check for the arrival of new migrants into the area.

Day 8: Checking out of our Limassol base, we drive to Larnaca via Kivisilli fields where we should find Lesser Kestrel, Red-footed falcon and Montagu's Harrier. Nearby Kiti Dam will be checked for waterbirds and its wooded areas usually hold Great Spotted Cuckoo, Golden Oriole, Wood and Eastern Bonelli's Warbler. The rest of the day will be spent around Larnaca Salt Lake and the Larnaca Sewage Pools and their surrounds to check for White-winged and Whiskered Tern as well as possible Greater Sand Plover. Transfer to Larnaca Airport for an evening flight and return to the UK.

Prices

Ground Price: £1,295

Single room: £125

Deposit: £150

*Air Fare: £320

This tour is fully inclusive of accommodation and meals, transport, park entrance fees and permits, guidance, tips and taxes.

Not included: drinks, insurance, and items of a personal nature, air passenger duty taxes and fuel surcharges.

**Please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights*