

# 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 Crane, Caspian Plover and Cinereous Bunting are among the less regular but almost 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 now accepted by some authorities as 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 in the coastal city of Larnaca.

■ 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. The rest of the day is spent around Larnaca Salt Lake and the Larnaca Sewage Pools and their surrounds to check for migrating waders including possible Greater Sand Plover. Transfer to our hotel in the Larnaca 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 Crane, Collared Pratincole, Little Bittern, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Collared Flycatcher and various wheatears. Interesting breeding birds include Black Francolin and Ferruginous 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

## Dates

Saturday April 7th - Saturday April 14th 2018

Leader: Jane Stylianou

Group Size: 8

Birds: 130-155

Polis Reed Beds and the Baths of Aphrodite to search 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 the 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 rap-



**Greater Sand Plover**

*Photo: Jane Stylianou*

tors 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 now accepted by some authorities as 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 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 hotel, we drive to 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. Transfer to Larnaca Airport for an afternoon flight to the UK.

## Prices

Ground Price: £1,495  
 Single room: £250  
 Deposit: £150  
 \*Air Fare: £400

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*