

Paphos Trip Report 10-24th April 2013

By Bob Shiret



Cyprus Warbler

Introduction

This trip was our first to Cyprus when full migration was underway, this made a huge difference to the number of birds seen. Our 14 night holiday was booked through Thomsons and cost around £1000 each including half board and transfers. The hotel was the Pioneer Beach and I can comfortably say that this is the best hotel we have ever stayed in - bar none, food, staff and attention to detail was excellent. Weather on the trip was mainly in the 70 - 75 °f range with heavy rain on two days. We hired a car through the hotel for 7 days at around £350, interestingly a month earlier and this would have been almost halved. Arthur Stagg's "Birdwatching In Cyprus" book was used as a guide but is a bit out of date (15 years). I have split the report into areas visited and included time/distance from Paphos. All bird numbers given are for the most seen at a location on one visit.

Geriskipou Beach River

This location was 40 minutes walk/5 minutes by car from our hotel towards the airport, found by accident whilst looking for the E4 hiking path. The most accessible side of the river was on the airport side, but after heavy rain it was not possible to cross the river mouth on foot. Surprisingly this was one of the most productive areas of our holiday, with a wide variety of birds seen including :- Flyover **Marsh Harrier**, one **Steppe Buzzard**, ten **Squacco Herons**, two **Night Herons** six **Purple Herons**, twenty **Little Egrets**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Green Sandpiper**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Moorhen**, six **Little Crakes** and a **Black-eared Wheatear**.



Squacco Heron



Wood Sandpiper



Little Crake



Black-eared Wheatear

Anarita Park

To reach this rolling grassland area from Paphos (15 minutes) take the B6 road and after a few miles turn left on the road to Agia Vavara (E606), pass the village and a Chicken farm and take a track on the right. This location was visited on just one day, our last, but was truly exceptional for raptors including fifty **Red-footed Falcons** using telegraphs wires to feed on the extensive large insect supply in the long grass. Also seen were at least six different **Harriers**, three each of **Hen** and **Montagu's**, interestingly two of these were watched at length feeding on large ground insects. **Roller** and **Cyprus Warbler** were seen and **Bonelli's Eagle** and **Pallid Harrier** were seen by others.





Red-footed Falcon



Montagu's Harrier



Hen Harrier

Phassouri Reedbeds

This location on the Akrotiri Peninsular is 45 minutes from Paphos and here we saw:- twenty *Glossy Ibis*, six *Cattle Egrets*, four *Ruff*, *Marsh Harrier*, *Hobby*, ten *Red Footed Falcons* and twenty *Night Herons* in flight.



Cattle Egret



Ruff



Glossy Ibis

Paphos Harbour

A **Squacco Heron** and **Spur-winged Plover** were on the rocks by our hotel, twenty migrating **Little Egrets** rested on the rocks, twelve **Black Winged Stilts** were seen migrating at low level over the sea. Several **Common Sandpipers** and a **Kingfisher** were regular, thirty eight **Glossy Ibis** were seen inland migrating at high level. A **Black Francolin** was heard from our hotel room and almost every other location.



Spur-winged Plover



Squacco Heron



Black-winged Stilts

Coral Bay

We caught the bus to Coral Bay (30 minutes) and saw several **Sardinian** and **Fan-tailed Warblers** and both were abundant in many locations. Perhaps the most impressive sight of the whole trip was a flock of sixty **Purple Herons** migrating out to sea, next day a smaller flock of thirty was seen. Six **Short-toed Larks** were seen along with two **Linnets**.



Purple Herons



Short-toed Lark

Aspro Dam

This site is about 10 minutes on the B6 out of Paphos and signposted on the left. A flock of six **Night Herons** plus one juvenile bird was seen along with six **Alpine Swifts** and an **Ortolan Bunting**. At the "shallow end" two **Rollers** were seen.



Night Herons



Juvenile Night Heron



Roller

Other Locations

The Curium Archaeological site had a **Tawny Pipit**, the road behind Kensington Cliffs had three flyover **Griffon Vultures** and Akrotiri Gravel Pits had a **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Hoopoe**, two **Whinchat**, six **Stone Curlews** and two **Red-footed Falcons**. Two **Great Spotted Cuckoos**, **Black Kite** and **Marsh Harrier** were at Evretou Dam along with over a hundred **Spanish Sparrows**. Paphos Lighthouse area turned up several **Yellow Wagtails** species, **Merlin**, **Woodchat** and **Lesser Grey Shrikes** (both found by others). The hills at Petra tou Romiou (Aphodite's Rock) held two **Cyprus Warblers** and a juvenile **Black-eared Wheatear**.



Tawny Pipit



Great Spotted Cuckoos



Cyprus Warbler



Juvenile Black-eared Wheatear



Griffon Vulture

Butterflies

Pictured below are some of the butterflies seen on the trip:-



Long-tailed Blue



Lesser Fiery Copper



Lulworth Skipper



Paphos Blue



Millet Skipper

Summary

On an expertly guided trip many more birds than mentioned above would have been seen, but as ours was predominantly a walking holiday we were more than happy with the holiday and Paphos was the ideal centre to access a large number of locations. Many thanks to Mike King (The Gloster Birder) and Colin Richardson for their ID help.