

LESVOS - 2012

26th April – 03rd May 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

Either for rarity value, excellent views or simply a group favourite.

- Krüper's Nuthatch
- Dalmatian Pelican
- Collared Pratincole
- Red-breasted Flycatcher
- Scopoli's Shearwater
- Sombre Tit
- Isabelline Wheatear
- Baillon's Crake
- Lesser Grey Shrike
- Western Rock Nuthatch
- Red-footed Falcon
- Roller
- Rüppell's Warbler
- Cinereous Bunting
- Collared Flycatcher
- Citrine Wagtail
- Eleanora's Falcon
- Middle Spotted Woodpecker
- Yelkuoan Shearwater
- Black-headed Bunting
- Little Crake
- Masked Shrike
- Thrush Nightingale
- Long-eared Owl
- Scops Owl
- Eurasian Nightjar
- Inky Skipper
- Eastern Festoon
- Holy Orchid
- Violet Bird's-Nest Orchid
- Orphanides' Orchid
- Goblet-market Damselfly
- Dark Spreadwing
- Broad-bodied Chaser
- Black-tailed Skimmer
- Spur-thighed Tortoise
- Persian Squirrel
- Glass Lizard
- Starred Agama

Leaders: Steve Bird and Gina Nichol

SUMMARY:

The island of Lesvos really is a magical place, enriched with culture that hasn't changed for centuries and a beautiful scenic countryside that we hope stays that way for many years to come. If you add to this rare butterflies, dragonflies, orchids and flowers plus a profusion of wonderful birds then it's no wonder people come back time and time again. Our tour was once again timed to get a good variety of the spring migrants that are heading north from their wintering grounds. We were not disappointed and enjoyed superb views of most of the birds we saw. The two star birds, Krüper's Nuthatch and Cinereous Bunting were easily seen, and a wealth of other sought after species duly obliged. Several rarities such as Dalmatian Pelican and Baillon's Crake showed well and all in all it was a wonderful holiday enriched by the camaraderie of many of our fellow birders. We intend to return next year to see what wonderful surprises await us. Zoothera currently offer the very best price for their inclusive tour to this fabulous Greek Island.

26th April 2012

Most of our group arrived before the official start day so we were all ready to go shortly after breakfast on our first day. The weather had been clear and sunny for several days and consequently no big falls of birds but there were plenty of interesting species around to keep us busy. As we finished our breakfast, we heard the news that a **Dalmatian Pelican** had been seen on the Kalloni Salt Pans. This added a sense of urgency to our departure and we were soon on our way to try



One of many highlights of our fabulous tour was this superb Krüper's Nuthatch attending its nest



Always great to see this party of Bee-eaters lit up a tree – photo Gina Nichol

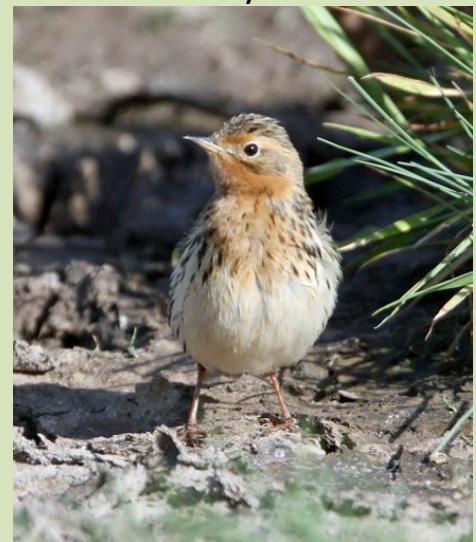
and see this rare bird. We arrived on the scene and set up our scopes to zoom in on the pelican which was floating on a distant pool. Over time, it moved more into the open offering great, albeit distant views. There were, of course, plenty of other species to look at including 60+ **Greater Flamingos**, **Common Shelduck**, **Gull-billed**, **Common** and **Little Terns**, a flock of **Ruff** with several **Curlew Sandpipers** in the salt pans. We enjoyed views of **Greenshank**, **Kentish Plover**, two **Grey Plovers**, **Black-winged Stilts**, many elegant looking **Pied Avocets**, and a few **Little Stints**. What a morning and great start to our trip! We departed the area and a few minutes later Judy S. spotted a **Little Owl** perched on a post near the road. We got out and enjoyed superb views of the little gem. In a nearby dyke, we had good looks at a **Dark Spreadwing**, (damselfly) while opposite we heard, then found a **Stone Curlew** resting on a sandbar. Overhead, our first of many **Black Storks** flew over as we boarded the vehicles to continue on along the edge of the salt pans. The very common **Crested Larks** and **Corn Buntings** were easily seen (as was the case every day of the trip), an **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** sang from the top of a Tamarisk Bush. A small patch of boggy water held **Wood Sandpipers** and some nice **Black-headed Wagtails**. At another spot overlooking some wet pools we had **Ruddy Shelduck**, **Glossy Ibis**, a **Purple Heron**, **Ruff** and a **White Stork**. Further along a female **Pochard** took flight as a **Marsh Harrier** cruised through. A **Sedge Warbler** was heard and eventually seen rummaging around a Tamarisk on the corner, and then in the sheep fields we saw **Whinchat** and a few **Greater Short-toed Larks** and nearby a **Black-necked Grebe** was seen just offshore. We headed out to Achladeri Forest and enjoyed our first of several picnic lunches serenaded by the ubiquitous **Chaffinch**. As we finished eating, Gina and Steve heard an interesting call from the back of a pine tree. We investigated and found a **Krüper's Nuthatch** foraging in the top of the pine. We enjoyed great views of this specialty and were amazed that it presented itself to us so easily! The bird flew off and we walked up into the forest and found a lovely looking **Violet Bird's Nest Orchid** growing under the pines. A little further on, we staked out the nest hole of a pair of **Krüper's Nuthatches**. We had a short wait before the first adult appeared with food and over the next 45 minutes we enjoyed fantastic views of the birds as they came into the nest with food for their hungry chicks and carried out waste. On the way back down toward the cars, we heard a **Short-toed Treecreeper** and **Subalpine Warbler** and Judy F found that a rather large **Stick Insect** had hitched a ride on her shoulders. As we got back to the vehicles a **Short-toed Eagle** flew over and we began to get to grips with the field marks of this massive bird in flight. We continued on with a quick roadside stop for **Red-backed Shrike**. Further on along the coast, we had **Little Ringed Plover** and at the bridge over the Vouvaris River, we checked the marsh and



We found a number of fabulous orchids including this beautiful Orphanide's Orchid – photo by Mike Lockyear



A rare migrant we had stunning views of this male Baillon's Crake – photo by Mike Lockyear



Red-throated Pipits look fantastic in their brick red breeding plumage

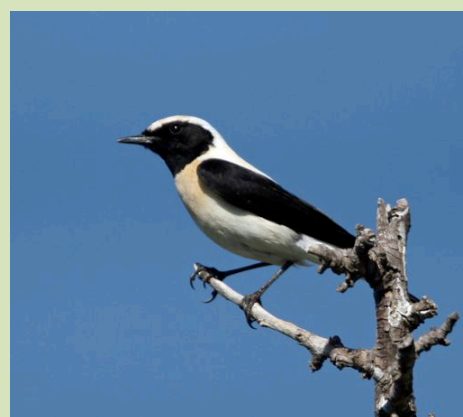
found **Squacco Heron** and **Stonechat**, while a **Common Kestrel** flew over the distant fields. Some members of the group wanted to rest so we dropped them back at the hotel and drove to the lower section of the Tsiknias River where a **Black Stork** was exhibiting nicely. Our first **Black-headed Bunting** showed well and we picked up three **Temminck's Stints**, several **Yellow Wagtails**, **Greenfinch**, **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**, **Reed and Sedge Warbler**, and a showy **Nightingale**. We continued out toward the salt pans stopping for some close **Red-throated Pipits**. At the salt pans, we had 31 **Collared Pratincoles** flying overhead some very close and lit up by the afternoon sun showing their chestnut underwings. **Whiskered**, **Gull-billed** and **White-winged Terns** also looked great in the afternoon light. We headed back to the hotel for a nice dinner and review of the sightings of the day.

27th April 2012

A few of us were up and out to check the Kalloni Pond just outside our hotel before breakfast. **Squacco Herons** were present as were **Yellow-legged Gulls** and a few **Barn Swallows** flying around. A **Reed Warbler** was seen and the loud, explosive song of the **Cetti's Warbler** helped us get this confiding bird in our sights. **Common Swifts** were seen flying over Skala Kalloni village and we saw **White Wagtails**, **Common Terns**, and **Black-winged Stilts** around the pond. After breakfast, we made our way along the Kalloni-Petra Road up to the Kalloni Raptor Watch Point. A singing **Cretzschmar's Bunting** greeted us and our first **Cirl Bunting** and **Black-eared Wheatear** showed very well. Raptors included **Eurasian Sparrowhawk**, two distant **Goshawks** and two **Red-footed Falcons** seen flying over the distant ridges. **Short-toed Eagles** soared above the hills as well offering the chance to practice our identification skills with that and **Long-legged** versus **Common Buzzard**. Over the valley, a lone **Eurasian Bee-eater** flew by. We continued on toward the north coast of the island, past Petra to Kavaki where some **Rüppell's Warblers** eventually showed amazingly well for us. While we were waiting for the **Rüppell's**, a **Blue Rock Thrush** made an appearance and we saw three **Mediterranean Gulls** flying just offshore. A **Black-eared Wheatear** posed for photos on top of a very close shrub as camera shutters clicked like mad. A **Long-legged Buzzard** flew over and there was a tussle between a **Collared Dove** and a **Turtle Dove** on the power line behind us. At the last minute, the **Rüppell's Warbler** returned to the same shrub as the **Wheatear** allowing stonking views and photos! We continued along the coast to Efthalou and then eastward toward Skala Sikaminias. The landscape was stunning here and we could see Turkey a few miles away across the Aegean. We stopped to watch a feeding frenzy of at least 600 **Yelkouan Shearwaters** moving west down the channel. There were a few dolphins in with them as well as



This Black Stork was a regular siting at the Ford on the Tsiknias River



Black-eared Wheatears were plentiful in the right habitat

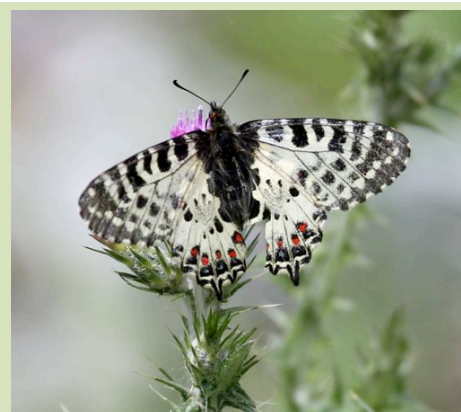


This male Rüppell's Warbler gave a wonderful performance as we waited for it to appear on its favourite song perch

a few larger **Scopoli's Shearwaters**. It was quite an exhibition! We checked several valleys along the Efthalou Road and it was very quiet. Still the scenery was worth the drive and soon we arrived at the lovely fishing village of Skala Sikaminias. We enjoyed our picnic lunch on the waterfront and had some time to look around the quaint village. Then we drove up toward Mount Lepetimos stopping for **Subalpine Warbler** along the way. We stopped at a pool full of gulls and found a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*fuscus* subspecies) among the many **Yellow-legged Gulls**. A **Grey Heron** standing in the back of the pond got little notice and then a **Raven** flew over. A **White Wagtail** flitted around on top of the rocks on a little island and we had lovely scope views of this little beauty. In Mandamados, we stopped to look at an active **White Stork** nest on a chimney on the edge of town. We continued toward the top of the Napi Valley stopping along the road in an area overlooking some hills that turned out to be quite productive. Among the trees and up on the hillsides we saw **Woodchat Shrike**, **Masked Shrike**, at least three **Golden Orioles**, a **Hoopoe**, and a **Rock Nuthatch**. At one point, a **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** flew over the ridge carrying prey and all at once a **Eurasian Hobby** came through and in mid-flight stole the prey from the Sparrowhawk! Nina discovered a **Middle Spotted Woodpecker** on a tree and we scoped our first views of this beautiful bird. There were several **Eurasian Jays** around and we enjoyed birding the area for an hour or so before heading back toward Kalloni. Along the road, we passed several locals walking north to get to a weekend festival. We, however, headed in the opposite direction to end the day at the Kalloni Salt Pans. The afternoon light was gorgeous and lit up **White-winged** and **Whiskered Terns** extremely well. **Little Stints** were seen as were **White** and **Black Storks** and we once again admired the rufous colored **Ruddy Shelducks** on the ground while a **Common Shelduck** flew over. Our last stop of the day was to see a **Baillon's Crake** that performed very well allowing great views as it foraged along the edge of a pond.

28th April 2012

A pre-breakfast visit to Metochi Lake yielded Dan's life **Little Crake** perched high up in a bush soaking up the warmth of the morning sun. **Common Swifts** were flying low over the pond while a **Little Grebe** was diving for food. Several **Great Reed Warblers**, **Sedge Warblers** and showy **Cetti's Warblers** were seen in the reeds surrounding the pond and a nice **Masked Shrike** looked great in the morning light as it perched up on top of a small tree at the edge of a field. In the trees between the fields, we had **Spotted Flycatcher** and in the next field a **Pied Flycatcher** was seen. After breakfast we set off heading west along the coastal road. A roadside stop produced a **Rock Nuthatch** and a nice **Cinereous Bunting** in addition to **Red-backed Shrike**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Pied Flycatcher**, and a



Eastern Festoons were seen just about everyday during our fabulous tour



We saw 5 different races of Yellow Wagtail but the smart Black-headed was by far the commonest



Little Bitterns seen most days and this one by the Tsiknias Ford was particularly friendly and posed for photos most days – photo by Mike Lockyear

quickly disappearing **Tree Pipit**. Keith found a nice **Loose Flowered Orchid** just before a **Long-legged Buzzard** flew overhead carrying prey. Also overhead were a couple of **Alpine Swifts** and further on a pair of **Short-toed Eagles** were seen. At Skala Eresou we had several glimpses and eventually nice views of **Common Nightingale** as well as **Eastern Olivaceous** and **Cetti's Warblers**. At one point, a **Hobby** flew low overhead and there were several **Red-rumped Swallows** around. Continuing on, we stopped in the middle of a bee swarm to look at a **Black-headed Bunting**. We moved up the road to avoid the swarm and there Julie spotted the fifth **Little Owl** of the morning. Some **European Bee-eaters** flew over perhaps attracted by the bee swarm but they never came in close. We moved on and stopped at Ipsilou Monastery where we set up lunch on the overlook and scanned for birds as we ate. On the large boulders down the hill, we scoped a **Rock Nuthatch** going in and out of its nest. Above it, on the top of the boulder, there was a singing **Rock Sparrow** which stayed for several minutes allowing good scope views, and also seen were **Blue Rock Thrush**, **Common Raven**, **Wood Warbler**, and **Black-eared Wheatear**. Up at the monastery itself, Mike saw a **Persian Squirrel** and except for a **Woodlark** singing down the hill, it was pretty quiet so we pressed on. As we travelled toward the west coast, we stopped to watch four **Lesser Kestrels** catching insects in a field. They put on quite a performance, kiting and searching the ground for prey and then descending on it. Then they'd lift up and eat on the wing making for a nice show! Our next stop was Faneromeni Ford where a fairly unperturbed **Little Bittern** was seen at very close range near to where our vehicles were parked. An adult male and three female **Citrine Wagtails** were seen foraging along the stream bed and we had great views of them. The Ford also offered **Little Egret**, a couple of **Little Ringed Plovers**, the perpetual **Wood Sandpiper**, and a **Black-crowned Night Heron**. On the other side of the ford, a flock of 30 or more **Yellow Wagtails** descended on the stream and proceeded to bathe creating a fabulous spectacle as we studied them to determine which subspecies were in attendance. It turned out there were *feldegg*, *thunbergi*, *flava* and *superciliaris*, plus a *superciliaris* with a yellow not white stripe above the eye? Once the flock disbanded, a lone **Spotted Flycatcher** was left behind. Then a **Little Bittern** walked out of the reeds on the left and as we watched it, a **Spotted Crake** came out behind it and quickly disappeared back into the reeds. Over the course of the afternoon, the crake appeared several times, even allowing a few photos. Amazing! As we got ready to leave, a few **Eurasian Goldfinches** descended on the Ford, perhaps to drink or bathe. Heading back toward Kalloni, we added **Cirl Bunting** for the day and picked up a nice **Isabelline Wheatear**. Another great day!



Short-toed Eagles gave us many good sightings throughout the tour



Another great orchid this time a Holy Orchid found by the coast



Cretzschmar's Buntings could be found on any rock strewn hillside

29th April 2012

This morning we were out to witness the gorgeous red sunrise over the Salt Pans. The **Black Stork** was once again in the Tsiknias River below the ford as we travelled to the sheep fields next to the Salt Pans. A **Great Cormorant** flew along the sea coast and a pair of **Common Shelducks** winged by. We walked into the sheep fields and immediately found **Greater Short-toed Larks** feeding on the grasses on the right. Looking toward the Salt Pans, we found **Glossy Ibis** and a pair of **Stone Curlews** and a **Common Kestrel** surveyed from above. There were a few **Red-throated Pipits** around, as well as **Yellow Wagtails**, **Kentish Plovers**, and of course, **Wood Sandpipers**. We moved back to the wetlands adjacent to the salt pans and were greeted by two **Eastern Olivaceous Warblers** as we parked the vehicles. The wetlands held **Glossy Ibis**, **Black Storks**, **Grey Herons**, several **Squacco Herons**, and **Black-winged Stilts**. The stars of the morning though were two superb **Garganey** lit up perfectly by the morning sun. After breakfast, we drove to the “Grand Canyon” where several **Crag Martins** were seen as well as male and female **Blue Rock Thrush** which showed well. We continued on and stopped in the shadow of Ipsilou Monastery to get good views of **Isabelline Wheatear**. We then continued on to Faneromeni Ford where we once again got close views of male and female **Citrine Wagtails**, a **Little Bittern**, and **Cetti’s Warbler**. It was quiet so we walked up the track which held little more than a **Pied Flycatcher** and a quickly disappearing **Collared Flycatcher**. We then took a side track to find several samples of petrified wood and a good sized tree growing out of a large piece of petrified wood. It was time for lunch so we moved over to Faneromeni Beach and set up our picnic next to a large outcrop of quartz. A **Little Ringed Plover** foraged on the beach and after we ate we scanned the offshore waters for **Scopoli’s Shearwater** and **Yelkouan Shearwater**, both of which were present. A female **Red-footed Falcon** cruised along the shoreline and as we were getting ready to leave, Ann spotted a flock of 20+ **European Bee-eaters** heading our way. They came in and performed their aerobatics for us and then landed on the power lines for superb scope views. It seems no matter how many times you see these birds, they always seem to evoke wonder. We made our way around Sigri to the coast road where a naked man on the beach earned the name “Willy Wagtail”. Not letting ourselves get too distracted, we found **Red-backed Shrike**, **Whinchat**, **Stonechat**, and a nice male **Northern Wheatear**. **Black-headed Buntings** were now common, and a **Woodlark** was seen close to the road, while a **Lesser Grey Shrike** delighted us as it perched on a power line and hunted insects in a field. **Pied** and **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen as we moved along the road out of the barren landscape of the west to a fig orchard. As we arrived, a **Sombre Tit** was seen flying back into the fig trees. This oasis produced a **Red-breasted Flycatcher**,



We found three Scops Owls in one day and this was the one that showed best – photo by Gina Nichol



This particular Spotted Crake gave great views in the same place on two days – photo Mike Lockyear



One of the many superb Poppy Fields that make Lesvos such a beautiful place – photo Mike Lockyear

another **Lesser Grey Shrike**, **Pied Flycatcher**, **Golden Oriole**, **Tree Pipit**, and a quickly disappearing **Icterine Warbler** seen only by Judy S and Steve. We continued on passing another **Red-breasted Flycatcher**, and several **Cretzschmar's Buntings** close to the road. On a big, hairpin bend overlooking a sprawling valley, we got out to look for **Cinereous Bunting** which we soon found singing on a lichen covered rock. As we were about to get the scope on it, an **Eleanora's Falcon** flew through quickly diverting our attention temporarily. We got good views of the **Cinereous Bunting** and much discussion ensued about the attendant **Stonechats** and **Black-eared Wheatears**. Heading back along the Kalloni gulf coast, an amazing six **Little Owls** were seen!

30th April 2012

Before breakfast, we made another attempt at seeing **Scop's Owl**, this time near the Kalloni School. This time we were in luck and one was seen on its regular perch on a tree along the road and Julie found a second in a Eucalyptus tree on the other side. Pleased with our victory we worked our way back along the Tsiknias River which held at least five **Temminck's Stints**, two **Little Bitterns**, **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**, **Black-headed Bunting**, **Whinchat**, and **Little Ringed Plover**. After breakfast, we headed back toward the pool in meadow by salt pans. On the way, Steve spotted a female **Montagu's Harrier** coursing over a field. Another flock of **European Bee-eaters** entertained us, this time flying close to us picking up the morning light and a **Marsh Harrier** made an appearance. At the marsh, the two **Garganey** were showing well and there was a smart, breeding plumage **Spotted Redshank** in attendance. Two **Marsh Sandpipers** were also seen among the many **Ruff** and there were **Greenshank**, **Little Stints**, at least ten **Collared Pratincoles**, and several **White-winged Terns**. We continued on to the Achladeri area to admire and photograph the brilliant red poppy fields. Above us in the evergreens were several **Serins** and with patience, we finally got views of one out in the open! We drove to Vatera and found another charming spot for lunch on the coast. A small beachside park offered shade and seats and a lovely view of the sea. A **Shag** was spotted on the water and finally made it on to our trip list. Just as we were getting lunch set up, a pod of **Bottle-nosed Dolphins** swam by close to shore offering great views as they porpoised along. During lunch, Steve heard **Sardinian Warblers** nearby so we investigated and soon found a male and female in a bush close to the road. A nearby **Greenfinch** paled by comparison and even the **Goldfinches** were ignored for this thinly distributed species. Then Steve heard what he thought was a **Thrush Nightingale** singing. It came from deep within a bush and when Steve investigated it was indeed a **Thrush Nightingale** which flew into the tree right in front of us offering fairly good views of this legendary skulker.



The other star bird of this island is the rare Cinereous Bunting and we found it easily on the west of the island – photo by Gina Nichol



It took us a while to find this Long-eared Owl perched high in a pine tree



More close up views of the wonderfully colourful Bee-eater

Remarkable! A quick beach stop produced another Willy Wagtail and an ice cream stop produced numerous smiles! We headed back to Kalloni and checked the Mini-soccer field site and got great views of a single **Scop's Owl** perched out in the open. In the late afternoon, we drove up Napi Valley where we found **Inky Skipper** and **Masked Shrikes**. The rough road took its toll on one of the vehicles which required rescue, with a broken chassis! No problem, while we waited we scanned the trees and found **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**, **Hoopoe**, **Alpine Swift** and a few others.

01st May 2012

This morning we checked the Kalloni School again this time, Steve found a **Long-eared Owl** perched high against a pine trunk. This bird showed exceptionally well and was the subject of many photos. Then we drove to the Tsiknias River which offered up **White Stork**, **Wood Sandpiper**, several **Squaccos**, **Eastern Olivaceous Warblers**, **Spanish Sparrows**, **Little Bitterns**, and **Common Nightingale**. Most extraordinary was the **Spotted Crake** which skulked along the shore and then climbed up to an open branch to take in the morning sun! It was a wide open view for us and much appreciated. Further downstream, we had **Temminck's Stint**, **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Black-headed Bunting**, **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** and a female **Blackcap**. After breakfast, we went up to the Raptor Watch Point which was quite busy when we arrived with **Cirl Bunting**, **Chaffinch**, and **Subalpine Warbler**. Raptors, however, were in short supply except for a **Short-toed Eagle** so we moved on up to Eftalou and drove the bumpy track along the coast. **Subalpine Warblers** seemed to be everywhere as were **Cretzschmar's Buntings**, **Corn** and **Black-headed Buntings**, and **Black-eared Wheatears**. We made our way to Skala Sikaminias for lunch and this time the town was buzzing with visitors off for the May Day holiday. We had a short break after lunch during which Nina and Ann walked beyond town and found a **Common Kingfisher**. Later on, we continued on up over the mountain and found **Red-backed Shrike**, **Hoopoe**, a few **Alpine Swifts**, **Rock Nuthatch**, **Cirl Bunting** and **Turtle Dove**. It was mid-day and quiet so we stopped at a little pond off the road to look for dragonflies and butterflies. There were a few dragons and damsels present including **Broad-bodied Chaser**, **Black-tailed Skimmer**, **Common Bluetail** and **Goblet-marked Damselfly**. As we worked back toward the vehicles, Ann was motioning us to look at a power pole which indeed had an active nest of a **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**. We enjoyed scope views of the bird bringing food in and then poking its head out of the hole. Continuing on we picked up a **Hobby** flying over the hills and down by a stream we had **Collared Flycatcher** and **Red-footed Falcons**. On the way back toward Kalloni, we stopped for a flock of **European Bee-eaters** perched in a



Black-headed Buntings showed very well along the Tsiknias River as well as many other areas – photo by Mike Lockyear



This Chukar was on look out in the barren west of the island – photo by Mike Lockyear



Three lovely Garganey posed for us on the flooded meadow beside the salt pans – photo Mike Lockyear



This rare "xanthophrys" type Yellow Wagtail was seen at Sigri

tree. It was the best views yet and we took it in via scopes and cameras.

02nd May 2012

This morning before breakfast we bid farewell to Judy S and Dan who were heading back to California. We said our goodbyes and then went and checked for **Long-eared Owl** again and Julie found it high in a eucalyptus. We then continued onto the Tsiknias River where we found **Black** and **White Stork** and the **Spotted Crake** was in exactly the same spot as yesterday. Judy F. spotted a **Common Snipe** alongside several **Temminck's Stints**. Two **Black-crowned Night Herons** flew in and we saw five **Little Bitterns** although not so showy as previous days. Driving back for breakfast, we got some very close **Black-headed Buntings**. After breakfast we drove to the salt pans passing several very nice **European Bee-eaters** perched close on the fence. At the flooded meadow, we had superb light and enjoyed perfect conditions as we watched a flock of **Ruff** mixed in with forty **Little Stints**, several **Glossy Ibis**, three **Garganey**, and many **Squacco Herons**. A few **Whiskered Terns** hawked over the water right in front of us and at least four **White-winged Terns** performed the same. We then headed up into the hills stopping near Filia and a small patch of Oak forest. **Subalpine Warblers** gave us our best views ever as they sang from wires and a pair collected gossamer to build a nest. On to Andissa, where Keith and Mike found a gorgeous **Orphanides' Orchid** and an **Eleanora's Falcon** was seen. Our lunch today was at the famous Petrified Forest, a unique place in the world to see petrified trees. Needless to say, Nina was in her element here. The barren landscape even offered a few birds including **Willow Warber** and **Eastern Orphean Warbler**. Heading back, we stopped at the Sigri Sanatorium where Nina spotted a gorgeous **Roller** perched on a distant rock. There was a tree full of **Black-headed Buntings**, a **Golden Oriole**, **Woodlarks** doing their flight songs, several shrikes and a **Spotted Flycatcher**. Steve found another **Thrush Nightingale** which promptly hid from everyone else and then he came across a **European Nightjar** in the dried up stream bed, which flew up and landed in the open for scope views and photos. We then took the coast road back to Skalla Kalloni.

03rd May 2012

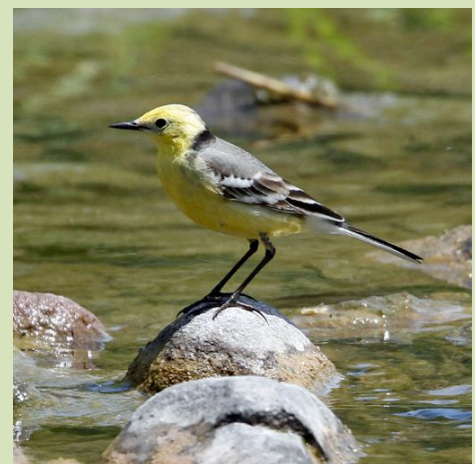
After an early breakfast we set off to Mytelline airport for our flights home. It was a great week full of good birds, butterflies and orchids, good food, picturesque villages and some wonderful sunshine!

We can't wait to return.

Steve & Gina



We had super close views of Whiskered Terns feeding on a flooded meadow close to the salt pans



This male Citrine Wagtail was one of 4 birds seen well at Sigri



Collared Pratincole's gave wonderful fly-over views on several days as they hawked for insects near the salt pans

BIRDLIST FOR LESVOS 2012

A = Number of species recorded on tour D = Number of days out of 7 recorded
E = Highest daily count

A	SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	D	E
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	3	1
2	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	1	1
3	Scopoli's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea diomedea</i>	1	10
4	Yelkouan Shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>	4	600
5	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>	4	6
6	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii</i>	3	2
7	Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	1	1
8	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	7	Common
9	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	7	7
10	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	3	1
11	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius alba</i>	7	30
12	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	7	20
13	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	4	2
14	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	6	5
15	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	7	10
16	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	6	6
17	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	6	8
18	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	4	200
19	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	6	25
20	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	5	3
21	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	2	2
22	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	4	3
23	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	1	1
24	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	1	1
25	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	7	8
26	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	4	1
27	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	1	1
28	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	3	2
29	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	4	2
30	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	6	6
31	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	6	3
32	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	3	6
33	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	6	3
34	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	5	9
35	Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>	2	3
36	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	2	2
37	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1	1
38	Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	2	2
39	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	1	Heard
40	Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>	1	1
41	Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	1	1
42	Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	3	1
43	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	7	3
44	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	3	2
45	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	7	20+
46	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	4	200
47	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	3	3

48	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	3	31
49	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1	2
50	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	6	3
51	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	2	4
52	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	1	1
53	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	1	2
54	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	1	2
55	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	3	4
56	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	7	200
57	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	3	3
58	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	5	40
59	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	4	8
60	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	2	20
61	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	6	600+
62	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	7	C _{ommon}
63	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus fuscus</i>	1	1
64	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	1	3
65	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	2	40
66	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	6	12+
67	Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	6	6
68	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	4	35
69	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	5	40+
70	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	3	10
71	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	7	5
72	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	7	C _{ommon}
73	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	2	1+ Heard
74	Common Scops Owl	<i>Onus scops</i>	2	3
75	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	5	6
76	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	2	1
77	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	1	1
78	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	3	5
79	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	7	10
80	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1	1
81	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	7	30
82	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	1	1
83	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	6	2
84	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>	4	2
85	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	2	6
86	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	7	C _{ommon}
87	Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	3	1
88	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	5	20+
89	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Hirundo rupestris</i>	2	8
90	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	7	C _{ommon}
91	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	4	8
92	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	7	C _{ommon}
93	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	3	3
94	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	2	4
95	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	5	2
96	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	2	4
97	Yellow Wagtail species	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	6	30+
98	<i>Black-headed Wagtail</i>	<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>	6	20+
99	<i>Gray-headed Wagtail</i>	<i>Motacilla flava thunbergi</i>	2	3

100	Blue-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>	5	6
101	Russian Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava superciliaris</i>	1	1
102	Hybrid "xanthophrys" Type	<i>feldegg / lutea mix</i>	1	1
103	Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	1	H _{heard}
104	Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	2	1
105	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	6	4 + heard
106	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	6	12+
107	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	5	4
108	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	3	2
109	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>	5	30+
110	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	3	6
111	Blue Rock-thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	4	2
112	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	6	10
113	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	6	6
114	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	2	1
115	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	2	3
116	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	5	12
117	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais elaeica</i>	6	10
118	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	2	1
119	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	1	H _{heard}
120	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	2	1
121	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	1	2
122	Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>	2	3
123	Rüppell's Warbler	<i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>	1	3
124	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	1	2
125	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	5	8
126	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	1	1
127	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	1	H _{heard}
128	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	1	2
129	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	5	20+
130	Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	3	6
131	Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	4	2
132	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	1	2
133	Sombre Tit	<i>Parus lugubris</i>	2	1
134	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	7	8
135	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	5	3
136	Krüper's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta krueperi</i>	1	2
137	Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>	5	5
138	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	1	H _{heard}
139	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	4	3
140	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	5	12
141	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	2	2
142	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	6	15
143	Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>	3	3
144	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	6	5
145	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	2	8
146	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	7	C _{common}
147	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	5	3
148	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	2	1
149	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	7	C _{common}
150	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	7	C _{common}
151	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	1	1

152	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	7	C _{ommon}
153	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	1	4
154	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	4	3
155	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	7	8
156	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	4	6
157	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirius</i>	4	4
158	Cinereous Bunting	<i>Emberiza cineracea</i>	3	2
159	Cretzschmar's Bunting	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>	5	15+
160	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	6	100+
161	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	7	C _{ommon}

Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians

1.	Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	1	8
2.	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	2	1
3.	Persian Squirrel	<i>Sciurus anomalus</i>	2	2
4.	Eastern Hodgehog	<i>Erinaceus concolor</i>	2	D _{ead}
5.	Starred Agama	<i>Laudakia stellio</i>	6	C _{ommon}
6.	Snake-eyed Lizard	<i>Ophisops elegans ehrenbergi</i>	4	3
7.	Balkan Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis tauricus</i>	5	6
8.	Glass Lizard	<i>Pseudopus apodus</i>	4	2
9.	Balkan Green Lizard	<i>Lacerta trilineata</i>	3	3
10.	Eastern Montpellier Snake	<i>Malpolon insignitus</i>	1	H _{it by car}
11.	Spur-thighed Tortoise	<i>Testudo graeca</i>	1	1
12.	Stripe-necked Terrapin	<i>Mauremys rivulata</i>	6	C _{ommon}
13.	Marsh Frog	<i>Pelophylax ridibundus</i>	5	C _{ommon}

Butterflies, Moths & Dragonflies

No. Days recorded

1.	Common Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>	4
2.	Scarce Swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>	5
3.	Eastern Festoon	<i>Allancastris cerisy</i>	6
4.	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	6
5.	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	5
6.	Cleopatra	<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	1
7.	Eastern Dappled White	<i>Euchloe ausonia</i>	3
8.	Wood White	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>	2
9.	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>	3
10.	Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	2
11.	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	5
12.	Purple-shot Copper	<i>Lycaena alciphron</i>	2
13.	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>	4
14.	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	3
15.	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	2
16.	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	6
17.	Spotted Fritillary	<i>Melitaea didyma</i>	5
18.	Persian Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola telmessia</i>	2
19.	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	4
20.	Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	2
21.	Mallow Skipper	<i>Carcharodus alceae</i>	1
22.	Inky Skipper	<i>Erynnis marloyi</i>	1
23.	Orbed Red-underwing Skipper	<i>Spialia orbifer</i>	4
24.	Cream-spotted Tiger	<i>Arctia villica</i>	1
25.	Common Bluetail	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	1

26.	Goblet-marked Damselfly	<i>Erythromma lindenii</i>	1
27.	Dark Spreadwing	<i>Lestes macrostigma</i>	4
28.	Blue Emperor	<i>Anax imperator</i>	1
29.	Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	2
30.	Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	1
31.	Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	6
32.	Violet Carpenter Bee	<i>Xylocarpus violacea</i>	4

Flowers

1.	Buttercup sp.	<i>Ranunculus cornutus</i>	2
2.	Common Vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	4
3.	Corn Poppy	<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	6
4.	Field Gladiolus	<i>Gladiolus italicus</i>	1
5.	Fodder Vetch	<i>Vicia villosa</i>	6
6.	French Lavender	<i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	3
7.	Grape Hyacinth	<i>Nuscari neglectum</i>	2
8.	Hollow-leaved Asphodel	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>	7
9.	Hottentot Fig	<i>Carpobrotus acinaciformis</i>	3
10.	Kohlrauschia	<i>Kohlrauschia velutina</i>	1
11.	Large Blue Alkanet	<i>Anchusa azurea</i>	4
12.	Large Mediterranean Spurge	<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	4
13.	Lesser Broomrape	<i>Orobanche minor</i>	2
14.	Milk Thistle	<i>Silybum marianum</i>	6
15.	Pink Hawksbeard	<i>Crepis rubra</i>	5
16.	Pink Mediterranean Catchfly	<i>Silene colorata</i>	4
17.	Purple Viper's Bugloss	<i>Echium angustifolium</i>	6
18.	Ramping Fumitory	<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	2
19.	Red Pea	<i>Latyrus cicera</i>	4
20.	Roman Nettle	<i>Urtica pilulifera</i>	1
21.	Salsify	<i>Tragopogon porrifolius</i>	4
22.	Single-flowered Clover	<i>Trifolium uniflorum</i>	2
23.	St. Bernard's Lily	<i>Anthericum liliago</i>	4
24.	Whorled Spurge	<i>Euphorbia biumbellata</i>	3
25.	Yellow Asphodel	<i>Aphodeline lutea</i>	3
26.	Yellow Horned Poppy	<i>Glaucium flavum</i>	2
27.	Large Venus' Looking-glass	<i>Legousia speculum veneris</i>	1

Orchids

1.	Carican Serapias	<i>Serapias orientalis</i>	1
2.	Holy Orchid	<i>Orchis sancta</i>	3
3.	Loose-flowered Orchid	<i>Orchis laxiflora</i>	1
4.	Orphanides' Orchid	<i>Ophrys orphanidea</i>	1
5.	Ploughshare Serapias	<i>Serapias vomeracea</i>	2
6.	Violet Bird's-nest Orchid	<i>Limodorum abortivum</i>	1



Photos by Steve Bird, Gina Nichol and Mike Lockyear.

Violet Bird's-nest Orchid by Gina Nichol