

# WILDLIFE TRAVEL

23rd to 30th March 2020 (1 week)

## CYPRUS

### Spring wildlife on Aphrodite's island



"lovely to have breakfast on the terrace"

**Cyprus 2013**

"the orchids were fantastic...  
the Akamas Peninsula stunning"

**Cyprus 2012**

**We first visited Cyprus way back in 1991, and we are looking forward to returning to Aphrodite's island once again, our 33rd holiday to this friendly country.**

The wildlife of Cyprus has elements from both Europe and Asia, with familiar western species alongside eastern specialities such as Turban Buttercup and Persian Cyclamen, Black Francolin and Starred Agama, while it has been isolated long enough to also support its own range of endemic plants, birds, reptiles and butterflies.

March is the best month to enjoy the island's wild flowers, particularly the orchids, with just a handful of late- and early-flowering species being missed. There will also be a good selection of other flowers to enjoy, from colourful bulbs and herbaceous species to attractive shrubs, including endemics from various families. Whilst paying plenty of attention to the wonderful wild flowers, we won't be missing out the other wildlife this island has to offer.

Our base is a pleasant family-run hotel on the coast on the Akamas Peninsula not far from Polis, looking out over Chrysochou Bay. From here, we will explore the surrounding hillsides, fields and meadows in search of wild flowers, early spring butterflies and migrant birds which should be passing through in good numbers and variety at this time of year. Various warblers, flycatchers, wheatears, larks and buntings could all be seen during the week, along with local specialities including both Cyprus Warbler and Cyprus Wheatear, endemic to the island. During our visit we will learn about the conservation challenged facing the island, and the work of BirdLife Cyprus.

Cyprus has a rich history, and we will spend time at a variety of **historical sites** including the World Heritage archaeology of the Paphos peninsula.



#### Price

£1485

#### Single Room Supplement

£125

#### Full board

- Day 1** flight to Paphos
- Day 2** Baths of Aphrodite
- Day 3** Pegeia Forest
- Day 4** Paphos
- Day 5** Latchi
- Day 6** Paphos
- Day 8** Smygies
- Day 9** return to UK

#### Leaders

Philip Precey  
and Phil Saunders

#### Group size

min 5, max 14

spring birds, wild  
flowers, ancient sites

**Wildlife and culture holidays**



All our profits are donated to the **Wildlife Trusts**



## Focus of interest

This holiday is one of our '**Mixed Natural History**' trips, having a very general natural history focus including birds, plants, and other wildlife. Other aspects such as landscape and geology, habitats and ecology are also sometimes included - the topics covered are describe in this leaflet. Cultural highlights are also included.



## ITINERARY

**The itinerary may change to suit practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.**

**Day 1 23rd March** Our morning flight takes us to Paphos, from where we transfer to our hotel (c1hr 30mins). where we will be welcomed 'home' by our delightful hosts. After settling in, there will be time to relax at the hotel or take a local walk in the afternoon.

**Day 2 24th March** The day will start with an optional pre-breakfast bird walk near the hotel, during which we will become familiar with the song of the Sardinian Warbler and the territorial call of the Black Francolin.

After breakfast, normally taken on the terrace overlooking the sea. we walk along the coast from the botanic garden at the **Baths of Aphrodite** towards **Fontana Amorosa**. The scenery is breathtaking, with high cliffs dropping steeply down to the sea. During the walk we should see an abundance of *Cyclamen persicum* and *Ranunculus asiaticus*, with the endemic Paphos Blue amongst the early spring butterflies, and migrant birds flitting amongst the bushes, hopefully including flycatchers, warblers and shrikes.

**Day 3 25th March** Today we will explore **Pegeia Forest**. Beneath the scattered canopy of Calabrian Pine and Phoenician Juniper we will find an interesting variety of orchids: depending on the season we could find ten species, including *Ophrys fusciflora* subsp *levantina*, *O. argolica* subsp *elegans* and the delicate *Neotinea maculata*. We will also inspect some interesting seasonal rock pools where local rarities can be found, including the diminutive Least Adder's-tongue Fern. Reptiles could include the impressive Starred Agama, Kotschy's Gecko, the tiny Snake-eyed Skink or even European Chameleon.

**Day 4 26th March** Today our attention will turn to the history of the island, visiting several sites around Paphos. We start with a visit to the monastery of **Ayios Neophytos**, the grotto retreat where the hermit St Neophytos made his home and famous for its byzantine frescoes. From here we move to the **Tombs of the Kings**, dating back to the ptolemite Cypriot Kingdoms, where we will find interesting coast-loving plants and migrant birds among the archaeology. Finally, we will spend our afternoon on the Paphos Peninsula, part of the **Paphos World Heritage Site**, with 'houses' of **Roman mosaics**. Aside from the well preserved mosaics, this site is also known as a migrant hot spot, and after soaking up the history we will check to see what birds we can track down: almost anything is possible at this time of year, with Cretzschmar's Bunting, Eastern Black-eared Wheatear and Eastern Orphean Warbler all likely during the afternoon.



**Day 5 27th March** A local day after our exertions yesterday. In the morning we will return to the intricacies of orchid identification during a **walk in the meadows** nearby. Here, we hope to find three forms of tongue orchids, including the delicate locally endemic *Serapias 'aphroditae'*. After lunch at the hotel (hopefully on the terrace) the afternoon is free to explore the area at your own pace, or just relax around the hotel.

**Day 6 28th March** We head back to the Paphos area today, with birds on our mind. We will be joined by a conservationist from **BirdLife Cyprus** as we visit several local sites, hoping to find the endemic Cyprus Wheatear and Cyprus Warbler along with other interesting migrants and local specialities, while enjoying the flowers we find along the way.

**Day 7 29th March** Today we drive up to the ridge in the heart of the Akamas. Beneath the pines we will look for wild flowers, including more orchids, including *Ophrys umbilicata* subsp *lapethica* and *O. fusca* subsp *iricolor*. A week is a long time during spring and it will be interesting to compare the plants with those we saw during our first days and to find out what new migrant birds have arrived. After a stop for lunch and a coffee in the village of Neo Chorio, a leisurely walk down hill will take us back to the hotel.

**Day 8 30th March** After a last lazy breakfast on the sunny patio, we must gather our things and bid fond farewell to the Aphrodite Beach and head homewards.

### **Accommodation, meals, travel and weather**

The **Aphrodite Beach Hotel** is a wonderfully welcoming family-run hotel, located on a beautiful coastline. Meals, using fresh local produce, are taken in the lovely **dining room overlooking the bay**. Breakfasts can be taken on the terrace. Lunches will be mostly picnic packed lunches provided by the hotel: we will have one taverna lunch in the village of Neo Chorio (day 7). All meals are included in the holiday price.

Local travel will be by small coach.

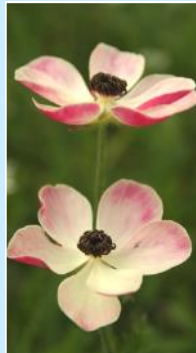
The weather should be pleasant, even hot down near the coast. In general we should expect warm, sunny weather. Showers are unlikely but possible.

### **Health and fitness**

Please see the General Information leaflet for health and fitness requirements. On most days, we are **walking for much of the day**, albeit at a relatively slow pace. The longest walk (day 7) will be just over 7km, mostly downhill. It is necessary to walk on **rougher ground and up some (gentle) slopes**, although **none of the walking is strenuous**. Good (light) walking boots are essential. All walks and excursions are optional.

### **Passport and visas**

If you hold an EU passport, you do not currently need a visa to travel to Cyprus. Should we leave the EU without a deal in place, before June 2020, you should have at least 6 months left on your passport from your date of arrival.



## Leaders

**Philip Precey** is a Director of Wildlife Travel and an expert naturalist. Philip has led many of our trips in recent years, including previous Mediterranean trips to the Crete, the Peloponnese, Lesvos, Turkey and six previous Wildlife Travel holidays to Cyprus.

Philip will be joined by **Phil Saunders**, a professional ecologist based in Dorset, with a particular interest in birds and invertebrates. Phil knows Cyprus and its wildlife well, having spent three years studying breeding Rollers in the Akamas peninsula for his PhD. Phil has led previous Wildlife Travel holidays in Norfolk, Devon and France. Between them, our leaders will introduce you to the wildlife of the island and ensure you have a well organised and enjoyable trip.

## Flights

The group flights are with Easyjet from London Gatwick, as follows:

23rd March Departs London Gatwick 07.10, arrives Paphos 13.40

30th March Departs Paphos 14.20 arrives London Gatwick 17.20

Cyprus is 2 hours ahead of UK time.

It is also possible to travel from Manchester with Easyjet, as follows:

23rd March Departs Manchester 12.30, arrives Paphos 19.15

30th March departs Paphos 20.05, arrives Manchester 23.15

For those flying from Manchester, we can arrange individual transfers to or from the hotel (about an hour's taxi ride, arranged by the hotel at reasonable cost)



---

## TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**DEPOSIT £500 PER PERSON, BALANCE DUE BY 23/12/2019**

**SEE GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLET ON HOW TO BOOK**

**INCLUDED:** Return flight Gatwick to Cyprus. Local transport as specified in itinerary. Seven night's accommodation, full board basis. Services of leaders.

**NOT INCLUDED:** Drinks with evening meal and refreshments. Entrance fees to archaeological sites (c€20). Gratuities. Travel insurance.

---

## WILDLIFE TRAVEL

**The Manor House, Broad Street,  
Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DH**

Tel: **01954 713575**

email: **wildlifetravel@wildlifebcn.org**

**www.wildlife-travel.co.uk**



*Directors: Christine Donnelly, Brian Eversham, Philip Precey, Michael Russell, Tim Upson  
Wildlife Travel Ltd. Reg. No 2237697; (for registered charity numbers, please contact us)*

**Front** (clockwise from top): Cyprus Wheatear, *Orchis italica*, Paphos Blue, *Serapias orientalis*, Paphos. **Back** (from top): Masked Shrike, Eastern Festoon, *Ophrys kotschy*. **Inside** (L to R): Paphos mosaics, Paphos lighthouse, *Ophrys fuciflora* subsp *bornmuelleri*, Spur-winged Plover, Black-headed Wagtail, *Cyclamen persicum*, *Ranunculus asiaticus*, Savigny's Tree Frog