

Cyprus trip report, 11th to 20th March 2015

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

Cyprus 2015



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Cover: *Ophrys cinereophila*

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11th March. Arrival at Paphos airport and after meeting Yiannis transfer to our welcoming hotel in the Akamas peninsula.

A short walk in the late afternoon (shortly after arriving at the hotel), set the scene for much of the birding that was to come. The hotel gardens and neighbouring fields held many familiar species found commonly in the UK including Swallow, House Martin, Collared Dove, House Sparrow, Great Tit, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Corn Bunting, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Hooded Crow and Jackdaw for example. All these species were widespread and seen on almost every day of our trip. Of more interest were the Hawfinches seen by the chicken coop across the road (the species winters in Cyprus), the Serins heard twittering nearby, and the first of many Sardinian Warblers and Zitting Cisticolas.

A distant singing Black Francolin hinted that despite recent housing developments we would get to see this strikingly beautiful but often elusive game bird that, in Europe, breeds only in Cyprus. We also heard the second of Cyprus's game birds, the Chukar – a bird very similar to the better known Red-legged Partridge.

12th March. After breakfast we set off on our first excursion towards the Baths of Aphrodite. Many interesting plants were found by the roadside, including *Prasium majus*, Carob, *Gladiolus italicus*, *Bellevalia trifoliata* and our first orchids; *Ophrys flavomarginata* and *Ophrys sicula*. The Botanical garden at the Baths was our next stop, where we saw collections of plants of different habitats and Yiannis talked to us about *Bosea cypria*, an interesting endemic plant. Other plants of interest included the strange parasite *Cytinus hypocistis* and *Ornithogalum pedicellare*. We then went along the coastal path to enjoy the scenery and the masses of *Cyclamen persicum* and *Ranunculus asiaticus*. Several butterflies were seen, including the endemic *Glaucopsyche paphos* (Paphos blue).

In bird terms, today was all about familiarising ourselves with the local avifauna. Staying close to the hotel we took an early morning walk, and a later walk down to the Aphrodite Baths and the coastal path along the Akamas Peninsula. Common and familiar birds abounded, and we logged some interesting bird species, including three Hoopoes foraging in the hotel garden, Serin and Hawfinch in the hotel garden again, and large numbers of Sardinian Warblers and a few Spanish Sparrows in the hedges and fields.

We again heard the francolin calling, as well as a distant Common Quail giving its 'wet-my-lips' call from deep within tall grass. A female Black Redstart was seen in a nursery near the baths, but the day's real highlights were two migrants, neither of which all the group saw unfortunately! The first was a superb and showy male Ruppell's Warbler on the walk back towards the Aphrodite Baths, the second a stunning male Masked Shrike which was perched on bushes near to the start of the Adonis Trail (and which we later discovered was perhaps the first of the species recorded this spring).

13th March. Another early start saw some of us exploring the hotel garden and just across the road again. A Hawfinch gave unforgettably good views, possibly the same Quail called in the distance, and the Hoopoes were again showing well.

After another breakfast out on the terrace, the rest of the day was spent largely in the Ezousa valley, with a visit first to the Minthis Hills and then onto to the Episkopi Environmental Centre.

At our first stop (near a golf course) some of our group saw a singing male Spectacled Warbler, a pair of Crested Larks were present, and a Northern Wheatear perched on the skyline. Hidden amongst the small spiny and aromatic bushes here were a good number of orchids and we saw *Ophrys cinereophila*, *Ophrys sicula*, *Ophrys iricolor*, *Ophrys israelitica* as well as *Himantoglossum robertianum*. *Sideritis perfoliatus* was common in the area, though not in flower.

We continued our journey to the Episkopi Environmental Centre, where we watched an excellent video on the fauna and flora of the valley and were then guided through the exhibits at the centre. Walking to the base of the impressive rock nearby, we watched the resident Peregrines and found *Verbascum levanticum*, a typical chasmophyte of the area.

Lunch was taken at Anarita to the backdrop of a colony of noisy Spanish Sparrows. Crossing the river of the Ezousa valley, we spent some time in an area of dry hillsides, a special habitat where we were to search for Finsch's Wheatear, the only species of wheatear that winters on Cyprus (before heading north and east into Turkey and the Caucasus to breed). Alas, the Finsch's sadly was nowhere to be seen, but we did have marvellous views of our only Eastern Black-eared Wheatear of the trip, as well as a very brief view of a Wryneck and three Tawny Pipits in a ploughed field as we drove back to the main road. In search of what migrant birds there might be we headed to Mandria Beach, and found good numbers of both Isabelline and Northern Wheatears, a small flock of Short-toed

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Larks, and plenty of Crested Larks and White Wagtails: however there were no Yellow Wagtails of any form (we could have expected at least three forms or subspecies), and no pipits – perhaps suggesting that migration was not really under way yet. Some of the plants growing on the shore were *Hypocoum procumbens*, *Cakile maritima*, *Matthiola tricuspidata*, *Centaurea aegialophila* and *Medicago maritima*.

14th March. After breakfast, our first new birds actually flew over us as we gathered to get on the bus for our trip out: remarkably a small flock of six swifts flew over which contained 4 Commons, a single Pallid (seen very well and all the features noted), and a single Alpine! All three regular Cypriot swifts in the same binocular view.

Our destination today was the Monastery of Agios Neophytos with its interesting wall paintings and then the archaeological areas of Tombs of the Kings and the Paphos Mosaics. On the sandy beaches we saw *Senecio glaucus* and *Anthemis tomentosa* in flower.

At both the Tombs of the Kings and the Paphos Archaeological Site our group split up so not everyone saw everything, but while birds weren't especially numerous, interesting sightings did include Eastern Subalpine Warbler, Blue Rock Thrush, Isabelline Wheatear, Tawny Pipit, and Hoopoe. The once renowned migrant 'hotspot' around the Paphos Lighthouse was extremely disappointing though: the cropped turfs once so attractive to pipits, wagtails, and wheatears are now overgrown and unsuitable – a Common Quail calling from thigh-high grass summed up the changes that barring goats from the area has had. The arrival of a very large thunderstorm proved what the site must have been once like, as – before we ran for cover – flocks of Meadow Pipits almost literally dropped out of the darkening skies: what might have landed there if the grass has still been short? We will never know of course as the rain ended the birding for the day, save for the odd sight of a small flock of Cormorants wheeling over the harbour as we waited for the bus to arrive.

15th March. With the halfway point of the trip on top of us, our regular early morning walk really needed to show that birds were on the move... Unfortunately not yet it seemed, although a small flock of Red-rumped Swallows which appeared briefly on telegraph wires by the hotel before moving on again were perhaps fresh in. We did however find *Glaucium corniculatum* as well as more orchids.

Our destination today was the Pegeia forest. Orchids were immediately seen on arrival, the first being *Anacamptis syriaca*, *Ophrys sicula*, *Ophrys levantina* and *Ophrys elegans*. *Ophrys cinereophila* was seen further down the track, as well as *Cistus monspeliensis* and *Cistus salviifolius*. We then visited an area with rock pools to see *Sedum caespitosum*, *Telmisssa microcarpa* and *Ranunculus peltatus*. The delicate, rare endemic *Serapias aphrodite* was also seen near here.

Turning over some stones we saw Kotschy's Gecko and a big Scolopendra centipede. Bee-flies were watched patrolling the sandy soil looking for the nests of *Andrena* solitary bees, which they parasitise (their larvae eating the larvae of the smaller solitary bees). The day was completed with a beautiful specimen of *Ajuga chamaepithys* and the interesting small fern *Ophioglossum lusitanicum*.

16th March With the Masked Shrike still present the evening before it made sense to walk down in the morning to check whether it was still there. To the delight of several of the group it still was, and showing well in perfect light. A very beautiful bird indeed.

Our excursion after breakfast took us to the fields on the hillsides behind the hotel, where we were lucky to see the early-flowering *Orchis punctulata* still in good flower. Good views were also had of the endemic Paphos Blue and fleeting glances of Eastern Festoon, Swallowtail and Cleopatra. Further exploration of the fields produced the first *Ophrys morio*, *Ophrys flavomarginata*, *Ophrys astarte* and *Serapias bergonii* and *S. levantina*. The highlight was to come a little later with *Ophrys kotschy*.

Interesting members of the Fabaceae were also seen with *Lathyrus gorgonei* and *L. annuus*. Moving higher up the hill we walked on the ridge finding flowers along the verge. The pretty *Scrophularia peregrina* was spotted for the first time along this route as well as lots of *Cyclamen persicum* and *Ranunculus asiaticus*.

The group found the undeniably odd but striking Cottony Cushion Scale Insect (an introduced pest of citrus trees). Sardinian Warblers were, as always, absolutely everywhere (as were Great Tits and Corn Buntings). We had good views of a circling Long-legged Buzzard, and a Sparrowhawk shot over while we had lunch, but while (again) the plants were wonderful the birding was a little slow. Of note though was a splendid male Ruppell's Warbler that (eventually) showed well to the whole group as it hopped about near the rock pool area by the coast where we looked for – but didn't find – Blunt-nosed Viper before making our way back to the hotel.

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17th March. Our journey today took us towards the stunning Troodos mountains.

Our first stop was near the village of Peristerona, overlooking a gorge. We saw our first Chuckar, albeit from a long distance, but also good views of Long-legged Buzzard. In the field below we saw the endemic *Helianthemum obtusifolium* and *Ajuga chamaepitys*. We then visited the Byzantine museum in the village to see the icons kept there.

As we climbed higher up we could see the change in geology from sedimentary chalk to igneous pillow lavas and the infamous sheeted dykes. We stopped for a short walk and found *Tuberaria guttata*, *Orchis troodi* and *Dactylorhiza romana*. Further on we saw the first plants of *Astragalus lusitanicus*. We reached Stavros tis Psokas and we went round the (rather grassless) Moufflon enclosure, where several of these beautiful mountain sheep are held for breeding purposes. We saw the endemic *Quercus alnifolia*, *Viola alba* and the nicely marked leaves of *Cyclamen cyprium*.

As we climbed higher we saw the plants of *Arabis purpurea* dotted over the roadside slopes. Cyprus's second endemic tree, *Cedrus brevifolia* soon came into view on the slope across the valley. We continued our journey towards Panagia, stopping to search for more *Orchis troodi* and a few were found on a slope. On our return journey *Orchis sezikiana* was spotted from the bus, adding another species on our orchid list.

Bar the replacement of Great Tits with the Cypriot race of Coal Tit no new birds were seen. This pine specialist was everywhere once we reached the mountains, its musical call similar to its more colourful cousin but slightly more melodic. Difficult to see they may have been but they were obviously very common. The switch back to Great Tit was abrupt: as soon as we left the pines and crossed back into the chalk areas the Coal Tits vanished. The oddest sighting of the day, however, was a Black-necked Stilt standing on the shingle beach at Latsi, a clearly disoriented migrant and miles way from the muddy lagoons the species normally occupy.

18th March. With our trip drawing to a close we really needed to see some of the migrants we'd been missing. A brisk early morning walk to the Aphrodite Baths suggested some movement had taken place. The Masked Shrike was nowhere to be seen, but our first Cyprus Wheatear, an endemic breeder which winters in the Horn of Africa, was found (by Clare) in the nursery.

Our walk today began near the village of Droushia, below which huge monoliths dominated the landscape. We soon started finding the first orchids such as *Ophrys sicula* and *Ophrys flavomarginata*. *Pyrus syriaca* and *Crataegus azarolus* were in flower all along the track and the verges were full of *Bellevalia trifoliata*. A field produced the small *Romulea ramiflora* and in a rock pool *Crassula vaillantii* was seen. After a search the first flowers of the beautiful *Vicia cypria* were found ('dabbed with blue paint' as Yiannis colourfully described it). We continued along the path round the top of the hill finding *Dactylorhiza romana*, *Anemone coronaria*, *Styrax officinalis*, *Phlomis lunariifolia* and *Geranium tuberosus*. Later in the afternoon *Ophrys cinereophila*, *Ophrys sicula*, *Ophrys iricolor* and *Ophrys israelitica* were found. For a number of people the single specimen of *Bongardia chrysogonum* was the highlight of the day.

19th March. Our final morning walk was under largely blue skies and seemed to indicate that many of the area's wintering birds had moved north (no sign of the Hawfinches, Song Thrushes, or Black Redstarts we'd been seeing occasionally for example). 'Our' flock of Corn Buntings had moved a few hundred yards down the road and we had excellent views of a large flock sitting in the fruit orchard, joined at one time by a Tree Pipit or two and good numbers of Spanish Sparrow. Blackcaps and Sardinian Warblers were again common, and another male Ruppell's Warbler gave an agonisingly brief view before – like so many birds before it – disappearing never to be seen again.

Hirundines were very plentiful with large numbers of House Martins hawking over the fields with Barn Swallows, smaller numbers of Red-rumped Swallows (which showed very well, allowing the distinctive shape and flight to be seen at close hand), and the very occasional Common Swift. No sign though of the Masked Shrike or the Cyprus Wheatear, both of which had presumably moved onto more suitable breeding areas.

For our last full day we took our bus for the short trip into the Akamas peninsula to see the local endemics of *Alyssum akamasicum* and *Centaurea veneris*. Other plants seen included *Tuberaria guttata*, *Minuartia picta* and *Linum nodiflorum*. We then followed the forested track beyond Neo Chorio to see many of the orchids we had already seen and to add a few more such as *Orchis intacta*, *Ophrys bornmuelleri* and *Ophrys lapethica*. Yiannis gave Charlie an impromptu botany lesson which concluded with the unforgettable quote that to really get to know plants you had to "delve into their doo-dahs"! A single specimen of the beautiful endemic *Gladiolus triphyllus* was spotted by Charlie, flowering unusually early. The white *Gagea graeca* was everywhere, growing on top of seemingly bare rocks.

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As we were walking back down to the village we had wonderful views of Cyprus Wheatear at the picnic site and another Long-legged Buzzard. At lunchtime we tasted delicious local Cypriot dishes at a restaurant in Neochorio, then continued our walk back to the hotel.

20th March. A leisurely morning today in preparation for our early afternoon departure.

After saying goodbye to our host Gregoria and Yiannis we set off to the airport via the Stavros tis Minthis, hoping to catch any new migrant birds, but nothing new was seen. However we were lucky to observe the partial solar eclipse – which of course was all due to a very carefully arranged break in the clouds which Wildlife Travel engineered just as the group was out of the bus on a quick break before ending a wonderful trip to the beautiful island of Cyprus!



Top row, l to r: *Ophrys flavomarginata*; *O. mammosa*; *O. morio*
Bottom row, l to r: *Serapias aphrodite*; *Thymus integer*; *Vicia cypria*

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E = endemic species. e = endemic sub-species

	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	Notes	
FERNS				
	<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	Maidenhair Fern		X
	<i>Anogramma leptophylla</i>			X
	<i>Asplenium ceterach</i>	Rusty-back Fern		X
	<i>Ophioglossum lusitanicum</i>	Small Adder's Tongue		X
	<i>Equisetum ramosissimum</i>			X
Selaginellaceae: clubmosses				
	<i>Selaginella denticulata</i>	Mediterranean Clubmoss		X
CONIFERS				
Cupressaceae				
	<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>			X
	<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i>	Phoenician Juniper		X
Ephedraceae				
	<i>Ephedra fragilis</i>	Jointed Pine		X
Pinaceae				
	<i>Pinus brutia</i>	Calabrian Pine		X
E	<i>Cedrus brevifolia</i>	Cyprus Cedar		X
DICOTYLEDONS				
Amaranthaceae				
E	<i>Bosea cypria</i>			X
Anacardiaceae				
	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Mastic Tree		X
	<i>Pistacia terebinthus</i>	Turpentine Tree		X
Apiaceae				
	<i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant Fennel		X
	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel		X
	<i>Opopanax hispidus</i>			X
	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Shepherd's Needle		X
	<i>Scaligeria cretica</i>			X
	<i>Smyrniium olusatrum</i>	Alexanders		X
	<i>Smyrniium perfoliatum</i>			X
	<i>Tordylium aegyptiacum</i>			X
Aristolochiaceae				
	<i>Aristolochia sempervirens</i>	Dutchman's Pipe		X
Asteraceae				
	<i>Anthemis palaestina</i>			X
	<i>Anthemis rigida</i>	Rayless Chamomile		X
	<i>Anthemis tomentosa</i>			X
	<i>Anthemis plutonia</i>			X
	<i>Asteriscus spinosa</i>	Spiny Pallenis		X
	<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>	Autumn Daisy		X
	<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Field Marigold		X
	<i>Centaurea akamantis</i>			X
	<i>Centaurea aegialophila</i>			X
	<i>Centaurea veneris</i>			X
	<i>Filago eriosphaera</i>			X
	<i>Geropogon hybridus</i>			X
	<i>Glebionis coronarium</i>	Crown Daisy		X
	<i>Helichrysum conglobatum</i>			X
	<i>Leontodon tuberosum</i>	Tuberous Hawkbit		X
E	<i>Senecio glaucus cyprius</i>			X
	<i>Silybum marianum</i>			X
	<i>Tragopogon sinuatus</i>	Goat's Beard		X

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	Notes	
	Berberidaceae			
	<i>Bongardia chrysogonum</i>			X
	Boraginaceae			
	<i>Anchusa aegyptiaca</i>	Eastern Alkanet		X
	<i>Anchusa azurea</i>	Large Blue Alkanet		X
	<i>Anchusa undulata</i>	Undulated Alkanet		X
	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage		X
	<i>Buglossoides arvensis</i>	Corn Gromwell		X
	<i>Buglossoides tenuifolius</i>			X
	<i>Cynoglossum creticum</i>	Cretan Hound's-tongue		X
	<i>Echium angustifolium</i>	Narrow-leaved Bugloss		X
	<i>Lithodora hispidula</i>			X
	Brassicaceae			
E	<i>Alyssum akamasicum</i>			X
E	<i>Arabis purpurea</i>			X
	<i>Biscutella didyma</i>			X
	<i>Cakile maritime</i>	Sea Rocket		X
	<i>Enarthrocarpus arcuatus</i>			X
	<i>Erucaria hispanica</i>	Spanish Mustard		X
	<i>Matthiola tricuspidata</i>	Three-horned Stock		X
	<i>Sinapis alba</i>	White Mustard		X
	<i>Malcolmia chia</i>			X
	<i>Turritis laxa</i>			X
	Campanulaceae			
	<i>Legousia hybrida</i>			X
	Caryophyllaceae			
	<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>			X
	<i>Kohlrauschia velutina</i>	Childling Pink		X
	<i>Minuartia hybrida</i>			X
	<i>Minuartia picta</i>			X
	<i>Minuartia montana</i>			X
	<i>Paronychia argentea</i>			X
	<i>Silene behen</i>			X
	<i>Silene colorata</i> var. <i>decumbens</i>			X
	<i>Silene papillosa</i>			X
	<i>Silene vulgaris</i>			X
	<i>Stellaria media</i>			X
	Cistaceae			
	<i>Cistus monspeliensis</i>	Narrow-leaved Cistus		X
	<i>Cistus parviflorus</i>	Small-flowered Cistus		X
	<i>Cistus salviifolius</i>	Sage-leaved Cistus		X
	<i>Fumana arabica</i>	Arabian Rock-rose		X
	<i>Fumana thymifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Rock-rose		X
E	<i>Helianthemum obtusifolium</i>			X
	<i>Helianthemum salicifolium</i>	Willow-leaved Rock-rose		X
	<i>Tuberaria guttata</i>	Spotted Rock-rose		X
	Convolvulaceae			
	<i>Convolvulus coelestyriacus</i>			X
	<i>Convolvulus pentapetaloides</i>			X
	<i>Convolvulus siculus</i>			X
	Crassulaceae			
	<i>Crassula vaillantii</i>			X
	<i>Crassula alata</i>			X
	<i>Sedum caespitosum</i>			X
	<i>Telmisssa microcarpa</i>			X

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	Notes	
	<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort		X
Ericaceae				
	<i>Arbutus andrachne</i>	Eastern Strawberry Tree		X
Euphorbiaceae				
	<i>Euphorbia dimorphocaulon</i>			X
	<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun Spurge		X
	<i>Euphorbia peplus</i>	Petty Spurge		X
E	<i>Euphorbia veneris</i>			X
	<i>Mercurialis annua</i>	Annual Mercury		X
Fabaceae				
	<i>Astragalus lusitanicus</i>			X
	<i>Calycotome villosa</i>	Spiny Broom		X
	<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i>	Carob		X
	<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judas Tree		X
	<i>Coronilla scorpioides</i>	Scorpion Vetch		X
	<i>Hymenocarpus circinnatus</i>			X
	<i>Genista sphacelata</i>			X
	<i>Lathyrus annuus</i>			X
	<i>Lathyrus blepharicarpos</i>			X
	<i>Lathyrus cicera</i>	Red Vetchling		X
	<i>Lathyrus gorgonei</i>			X
	<i>Lathyrus ochrus</i>			X
	<i>Lotus edulis</i>			X
	<i>Lotus halophilus</i>			X
	<i>Lupinus micranthus</i>	Dwarf Blue Lupin		X
	<i>Medicago marina</i>	Sea Medick		X
	<i>Medicago polymorpha</i>			X
	<i>Onobrychis crista-galli</i>			X
	<i>Ornithopus compressus</i>			X
	<i>Physanthyllis tetraphylla</i>			X
	<i>Pisum sativum</i>	Wild Pea		X
	<i>Scorpiurus muricatus</i>			X
	<i>Tetragonolobus purpureus</i>	Asparagus Pea		X
	<i>Trifolium argutum</i>			X
	<i>Trifolium campestre</i>			X
	<i>Trifolium clypeatum</i>	Shield Clover		X
	<i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Star Clover		X
	<i>Trifolium tomentosum</i>	Woolly Clover		X
	<i>Vicia hybrida</i>	Hairy Yellow-vetch		X
	<i>Vicia cassia</i>			X
	<i>Vicia cypria</i>			X
	<i>Vicia narbonense</i>			X
	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common Vetch		X
Fagaceae				
	<i>Quercus coccifera calliprinos</i>	Kermes Oak		X
E	<i>Quercus alnifolia</i>	Golden Oak		X
	<i>Quercus infectoria veneris</i>	Deciduous or Royal Oak		X
Geraniaceae				
	<i>Erodium gruinum</i>	Long-beaked Stork's-bill		X
	<i>Erodium malacoides</i>	Soft Stork's-bill		X
	<i>Erodium moschatum</i>	Musk Stork's-bill		X
	<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill		X
	<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Little Robin		X
	<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved Crane's-bill		X
	<i>Geranium tuberosum</i>	Tuberous Crane's-bill		X

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	Notes	
Lamiaceae				
	<i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i>	Ground Pine		X
	<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit		X
	<i>Micromeria nervosa</i>			X
E	<i>Origanum majorana</i>			X
E	<i>Phlomis cypria</i>			X
	<i>Phlomis lunariifolia</i>			X
	<i>Prasium majus</i>			X
	<i>Salvia dominica</i>			X
	<i>Salvia fruticosa</i>			X
	<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	Wild Clary		X
	<i>Salvia viridis</i>			X
	<i>Teucrium kotschyannum</i>			X
	<i>Thymus capitatus</i>			X
E	<i>Thymus integer</i>			X
Linaceae				
	<i>Linum bienne</i>	Pale Flax		X
	<i>Linum nodiflorum</i>			X
Malvaceae				
	<i>Lavatera cretica</i>	Small-flowered Tree Mallow		X
	<i>Malva nicaeensis</i>			X
Myrtaceae				
	<i>Myrtus communis</i>	Myrtle		X
Oleaceae				
	<i>Olea europaea</i>	Olive		X
	<i>Olea europaea var. sylvestris</i>	Wild Olive		X
Orobanchaceae				
	<i>Orobanche ramosa</i>	Branched Broomrape		X
Oxalidaceae				
	<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Bermuda Buttercup		X
Papaveraceae				
	<i>Glaucium corniculatum</i>			X
	<i>Hypecoum procumbens</i>			X
	<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Corn Poppy		X
Plantaginaceae				
	<i>Plantago afra</i>	Branched Plantain		X
	<i>Plantago cretica</i>			X
	<i>Plantago lagopus</i>	Hare's-tail Plantain		X
Plumbaginaceae				
	<i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	Sea Lavender		X
Polygalaceae				
	<i>Polygala venulosa</i>			X
Primulaceae				
	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Blue Pimpernel		X
	<i>Asterolinon stellatum</i>			X
E	<i>Cyclamen cyprium</i>	Cypriot Cyclamen		X
	<i>Cyclamen persicum</i>	Persian Cyclamen		X
Rafflesiaceae				
	<i>Cytinus hypocistis</i>			X
Ranunculaceae				
	<i>Anemone coronaria</i>	Crown Anemone		X
	<i>Ranunculus asiaticus</i>	Turban Buttercup		X
	<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i>	Corn Buttercup		X
	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>			X
	<i>Ranunculus peltatus</i>	Pond Water Crowfoot		X

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	Notes	
	<i>Ranunculus paludosus</i>			X
Rosaceae				
	<i>Crataegus azarolus</i>	Mediterranean Hawthorn		X
	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Common Hawthorn		X
	<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat		X
	<i>Prunus dulcis</i>	Almond		X
	<i>Pyrus communis</i>	Wild Pear		X
	<i>Sarcopoterium spinosum</i>	Thorny Burnet		X
Rubiaceae				
	<i>Rubia tenuifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved Madder		X
	<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>	Field Madder		X
	<i>Valantia hispida</i>			X
Rutaceae				
	<i>Ruta chalepensis</i>	Rue		X
Santalaceae				
	<i>Thesium humile</i>			X
Saxifragaceae				
	<i>Saxifraga tridactylites</i>			X
Scrophulariaceae				
	<i>Bellardia trixago</i>			X
	<i>Linaria chalepensis</i>			X
	<i>Misopates orontium</i>	Weasel Snout		X
	<i>Parentucellia latifolia</i>	Southern Red Bartsia		X
	<i>Scrophularia peregrina</i>			X
	<i>Verbascum sinuatum</i>	Waxy-leaved Mullein		X
	<i>Verbascum levanticum</i>			X
	<i>Veronica cymbalaria</i>	Pale Speedwell		X
Styracaceae				
	<i>Styrax officinalis</i>			X
Tamaricaceae				
	<i>Tamarix tetragyna</i>			X
Valerianaceae				
	<i>Valerianella sp</i>			X
MONOCOTYLEDONS				
Amaryllidaceae				
	<i>Allium neapolitanum</i>	Naples Garlic		X
	<i>Allium trifoliatum</i>			X
Araceae				
	<i>Arisarum vulgare</i>	Friar's Cowl		X
Asparagaceae				
	<i>Asparagus acutifolius</i>			X
	<i>Bellevalia trifoliata</i>	Three-leaved Bellavalia		X
	<i>Bellevalia nivalis</i>	Snowy Bellavalia		X
	<i>Drimys maritima</i>	Sea Squill		X
	<i>Muscari comosum</i>	Tassel Hyacinth		X
	<i>Muscari inconstictum</i>			X
E	<i>Ornithogalum pedicellare</i>			X
E	<i>Scilla morrisii</i>			X
Dioscoreaceae				
	<i>Tamus communis</i>			X
Iridaceae				
	<i>Gladiolus italicus</i>	Field Gladiolus		X
E	<i>Gladiolus triphyllus</i>			X
	<i>Moraea sisyrrinchium</i>	Barbary Nut		X

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	Notes	
	<i>Romulea ramiflora</i>			X
Liliaceae				
	<i>Gagea graeca</i>			X
	<i>Gagea peduncularis</i>			X
Smilacaceae				
	<i>Smilax aspera</i>	Smilax		X
Xanthorhoeaceae				
	<i>Asphodelus ramosus</i>	Common Asphodel		X
	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>			X
Orchidaceae				
	<i>Anacamptis syriaca</i>			X
	<i>Himantoglossum robertianum</i>	Giant Orchid		X
	<i>Dactylorhiza romana</i>	Roman Orchid		X
	<i>Orchis intacta</i>	Dense-flowered Orchid		X
	<i>Orchis italica</i>	Naked Man Orchid		X
	<i>Orchis punctulata</i>	Punctate Orchid		X
	<i>Orchis sezikiana</i>	Four-spotted Orchid		X
E	<i>Orchis troodi</i>	Troodos Orchid		X
E	<i>Serapias aphrodite</i>	Aphrodite Serapias		X
	<i>Serapias levantina</i>	Levant Serapias		X
	<i>Serapias bergonii (laxiflora)</i>	Long-lipped Serapias		X
Ophrys: elegans group				
	<i>Ophrys elegans</i>			X
Ophrys: mammosa group				
	<i>Ophrys mammosa</i>			X
	<i>Ophrys morio</i>			X
Ophrys: umbilicata group				
	<i>Ophrys astarte</i>			X
	<i>Ophrys flavomarginata</i>			X
E	<i>Ophrys kotschyi</i>			X
E	<i>Ophrys lapethica</i>			X
	<i>Ophrys umbilicata</i>			X
Ophrys: bornmuelleri group				
	<i>Ophrys bornmuelleri (O. aphrodite)</i>			X
	<i>Ophrys levantina</i>			X
Ophrys: fusca group				
	<i>Ophrys cinereophila</i>			X
	<i>Ophrys iricolor</i>			X
	<i>Ophrys sicula</i>			X
	<i>Ophrys israelitica</i>			X

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A Quick Birding Overview: Cyprus March 2015
By Charlie Moores

Birding is as much about 'bird listening' as it is 'bird watching', and it quickly becomes apparent that from a birder's perspective Cyprus 'sounds' very much like the UK. The predominant bird calls around the hotel gardens, for example, are the chirping of House Sparrows, the triple coo of Collared Doves, the 'teacher teacher' of Great Tits, the wheezing of Greenfinches, and the buzzing of House Martins. Just over the road from the hotel the fields are full of the 'jangling keys' song of Corn Buntings and the calls of Goldfinches, there are Linnets and Jackdaws overhead, and (Barn) Swallows twitter from every wire.

All very 'UK', but in reality instead of Cyprus having similar birds to the UK, it's more that the UK has similar birds to Cyprus. As far as Europe's birds see it, the UK is just a small island on Europe's western edge, so of course we share much of the avifauna. Taking a wider view, Great Tits, for example, occur right across the western palearctic, there are (the same) Magpies in Korea and Japan as found across Cyprus (and at home), Barn Swallows breed right around the northern hemisphere, and the Collared Dove is really a middle eastern species that has undergone a remarkable expansion that has seen it reach the Shetland Isles!

So of course at first sight, or on first listen, the birds here seem very familiar. But as always the devil is in the detail. Look a little more closely, and there are many species that we rarely see at home: Red-rumped Swallows with the other hirundines, the occasional Alpine Swift powering overhead with 'our' Common Swifts, Spanish Sparrows mixed in with their more well-known relatives, and wonderfully exotic Hoopoes looking for insects under the orange trees. While both the familiar Chiffchaff and Blackcap are common passage migrants here too, the ubiquitous Sardinian Warbler is a Mediterranean-breeding species with just a handful of records in the UK. The explosive call of Cetti's Warbler is becoming more commonly heard in southern parts of England but the species is nowhere near as widespread as it is in Cyprus, where it can be heard from sea-level to the mountains. And while Yellow-legged Gull, Zitting Cisticola, Crested Lark, and Serin are all common just across the English Channel from us (and here in Cyprus) all four are either scarce or very rare in the UK.

Cyprus is of course right on the eastern boundary of Europe, and receives passage migrants making their way to breeding grounds further north from both East and southern Africa (most of the UK's summer migrants winter around the Med or in West or sub-Saharan Africa). Most migrants don't arrive until the latter parts of March or early April and this being a trip geared around flowering plants rather than birds of course we were too early for many of them. However we witnessed both the last individuals of some wintering species like Hawfinch (a real surprise in the hotel garden) and Song Thrush, as well as the first of the spring or summer breeding migrants like the endemic Cyprus Wheatear (plus Northern, Isabelline and Eastern Black-eared Wheatears), a beautiful adult male Masked Shrike, and a handful of other warblers including several male Ruppell's.

Of course some resident species that we saw (or heard) near the hotel or just a little further afield will never be found in the UK: Black Francolin and Chukar for example (the former while all but invisible to us is a Cypriot speciality, breeding here and nowhere else in Europe). And fame awaits the first birder to identify a Long-legged Buzzard soaring in British skies!

Outside of a rather narrow window of (especially Spring) migration, Cyprus will probably never be a truly important destination for hardcore birders looking for unusual species. It does have two endemic breeding birds (the aforementioned locally widespread Cyprus Wheatear and the more restricted Cyprus Warbler) and if visited at the right time of year is undoubtedly an easy place to see some very special breeding birds like Masked Shrike, Bonelli's Eagle, and Black-headed and Cretzschmar's Buntings, but it does have a rather limited avifauna – hardly surprising given its relatively small size, and the fact that it's an island with largely similar rocky or pastoral habitats from east to west (the lack of large, easily accessible bodies of freshwater and no extensive mudflats/tidal estuaries especially restrict the overall range of species likely to be seen here).

That's not to say though that its birds are not worth seeing. They fit extremely well into a wonderful package that include the beautiful orchids and other plants and some very striking butterflies. While probably not 'up there' in your affections alongside gems like *Ophrys kotschyi*, *Orchis trodii*, *Cyclamen persicum*, *Vicia cypria* or *Minuartia montana*, hopefully you enjoyed what we saw and some of my enthusiasm for our feathered friends rubbed off!

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ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th
Family Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants)											
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>				x						
Mediterranean Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii</i>				x				x		
Family Accipitridae (Hawks and Eagles)											
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>										x
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>			x			x	x	x	x	
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>						x				
Family Falconidae (Falcons)											
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			x							
Family Phasianidae (Pheasants and Partridges)											
Black Francolin	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>	H	H				H	H		x	
Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	H						x	x		
Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>		H	H	H	H				x	
Family Recurvirostridae (Avocets and Stilts)											
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>							(x)			
Family Laridae (Gulls)											
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	x	X		x	x	x		x	x	x
Family Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)											
Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	x		x	x	x		x	x		x
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Family Apodidae (Swifts)											
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	x			x	x			x	x	
Pallid Swift					x						
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>				x	x				x	
Family Upupidae (Hoopes)											
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		X	x	x	x	x	x			
Family Alaudidae (Larks)											
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>			x	x		x	x			
Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>			x							
Family Hirundinidae (Swallows and Martins)											
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	x			x	x	(x)			x	
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Family Motacillidae (Pipits and Wagtails)											
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>			x	x						
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>				x				x		
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			x	x	x			(x)		
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	x	X	x	x	x	x	x		x	xc
Family Muscicapidae (Flycatchers and Chats)											
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		h	x	x		x				
Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>					x					
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		x	x	x	(x)	x			x	
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	x		x	x		x				
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		x	x						x	
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>			x	x	(x)					
Eastern Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>			x							
Cyprus Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe cyprica</i>								x	x	
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>				x						

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	ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th
Family Turdidae (Thrushes)												
	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		h								
	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Family Sylviidae (Warblers)												
	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>		x		x						
	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Ruppell's Warbler	<i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>		x				x				
	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>			x							
	Eastern Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia albigristata</i>				x						
	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		x	x	x	x		H	x	x	
	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	
	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Family Paridae (Tits)												
	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater cypriotes</i>							x			
	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Family Laniidae (Shrikes)												
	Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>		x			(x)	x	x			
Family Corvidae (Crows)												
	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius glazneri</i>							x			
	Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Family Sturnidae (Starlings)												
	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>			x							
Family Passeridae (Sparrows)												
	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispanicus</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	x	xx	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Family Fringillidae (Finches)												
	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>		x	x	x				(x)		
	Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Serlin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	
	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	x	x	x	x	(x)	(x)	x			
Family Emberizidae (Buntings)												
	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	X	x	x	x	x	x		x		

	ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th
AMPHIBIANS												
	Green Toad	<i>Bufo viridis</i>		x						x		
	Savigny's Tree Frog	<i>Hyla savignyi</i>				x						
E	Cyprus Marsh Frog	<i>Pelophylax cf. bedriagae</i>			x							
REPTILES												
Family Agamidae (Agamids)												
	Starred Agama	<i>Laudakia stellio</i>						x	x	x	x	
Family Gekkonidae (Geckos)												
	Kotschy's Gecko	<i>Mediodactylus kotschy</i>					x					

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ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME		11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th
Family Lacertidae (Lizards)												
Snake-eyed Lacertid	<i>Ophisops elegans</i>			x			x	x		x		
Schreiber's Spiny-footed Lizard	<i>Acanthodactylus schreiberi</i>				x							
Troodos Wall Lizard	<i>Lacerta troodica</i>		x							x	x	
Family Scincidae (Skinks)												
Ocellated Skink	<i>Chalcides ocellatus</i>			x						x		

BUTTERFLIES

Family Papilionidae (Swallowtails)

Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon syriacus</i>				x	x	x	x				
Eastern Festoon	<i>Zerinthia cerisyi</i>					x		x				x

Family Pieridae (Whites)

Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		x	x			x	x		x	x	
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>			x					x			
Orange Tip	<i>Anthocaris cardamines phoenissa</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>				x		x					
Cleopatra	<i>Gonopteryx cleopatra taurica</i>				x		x	x				

Family Nymphalidae (Admirals and Fritillaries)

Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>		x	x	x	x	x					
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>			x			x		x			

Family Satyridae (Browns)

Southern Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria aegeria</i>		x									
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Family Lycaenidae (Blues & Coppers)

Paphos Blue	<i>Glaucopsyche paphos</i>		x	x			x	x	x	x	x	
Holy Blue								x				
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>			x								

OTHERS

e	Cyprus Mouflon	<i>Ovis musimon orientalis</i>	In the enclosure at Stavros tis Psokas										
	Hummingbird Hawk Moth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	x										
	Xylocopa violacea	<i>Violet carpenter bee</i>	x										
	March Moth	<i>Alsophila aescularia</i>	x										
	Violet Carpenter Bee	<i>Xylocopa violacea</i>	x										
	Giant Centipede	<i>Scolopendra cingulata</i>	x										
	Asian Palm Weevil	<i>Rhynchophorus ferrugineus</i>	x										