

WILDLIFE TRAVEL



20th-27th November 2024 (1 week)

CYPRUS

autumn wildlife and ancient sites

"very successful trip... leaders were brilliant, nothing was too much trouble"

Cyprus 2024

"a varied holiday... the visit to the monastery and mosaics was particularly special "

Cyprus 2023

From our base in a friendly, family-run hotel on the Akamas peninsula, out on the western end of the island, we will explore the surrounding hillsides, fields and meadows in search of autumn bulbs, the earliest of the islands' many orchids and other interesting wild flowers, along with the resident bird life of the area.

We will be staying in the comfortable and friendly Aphrodite Beach hotel, situated right on the beach on the Akamas Peninsula, not far from Polis, looking out over Chrysochou Bay. From here we will explore the local area, looking for 'autumn' flowering bulbs including *Narcissus tazetta* and some lovely endemics: *Crocus veneris*, *Colchicum pusillum* and *Hyacinthella milingenii* alongside the first of the 'spring' flowers, with splashes of colour from *Anemone coronaria*, *Cyclamen persicum* and the first of the island's many orchids: *Anacamptis collina* and *Ophrys israelitica*.

Whilst paying plenty of attention to the wonderful wild flowers, we won't be missing out on the other wildlife this island has to offer. Resident birdlife includes Bonelli's Eagle, Chukar and Black Francolin, with winter visitors to the island including two regional specialties: Finsch's Wheatear and Greater Sand-plover both travel from the high Anatolian plateau to spend their winter in select spots. Sunny spells should reveal the local herptiles, including the endemic Troodos Wall Lizard and Cyprus Starred Agama.

Cyprus has a rich history, and we will spend time at a variety of historical sites including the Paphos World Heritage Site on the Paphos Peninsula.

We first visited Cyprus way back in 1991, and have been back more than 30 times since... we are looking forward to returning to Aphrodite's island for a relaxing escape.



Price
£1850

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
Sarah Lambert
and 2nd leader tbc

Group size
min 4, max 14

winter bulbs, wild flowers,
ancient sites



ITINERARY

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

Day 1 20th November Our morning flight takes us to Paphos, from where we transfer to our hotel (c.1hr 30mins). After settling in, there will be time to relax at the hotel or take a local walk in the afternoon, before an introduction to our holiday over drinks before dinner.

Day 2 21st November After breakfast, taken on the terrace overlooking the sea, we walk along the coast from the hotel to the **Baths of Aphrodite** and onwards, towards **Fontana Amorosa**. The field edges and track sides should feature colourful annuals and we may find the first flowers of *Cyclamen persicum* growing in the rockier areas, alongside autumn-flowering *Muscari parviflorum* or Autumn Squill *Prospero autumnale*.

The scenery is breath-taking, with high cliffs dropping down to the sea. Sunny spots should hold some of the island's resident butterflies, with Clouded Yellow, Painted Lady and the large Plain Tiger all likely to be on the wing, while lizards scuttle about in the undergrowth, including Snake-eyed Lacertid and the endemic Troodos Wall Lizard. Chukar and Black Francolin are two shy gamebirds of the area, which we are more likely to hear than spot.

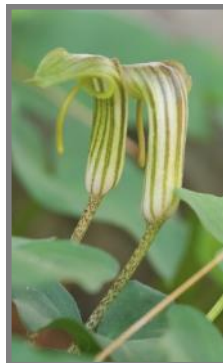
Day 3 22nd November Today we will explore the Pegeia Forest, on the west side of the Akamas. The shallow soils here support one of the best preserved forests of Calabrian Pine and Phoenician Juniper, forming a scattered canopy beneath which we will find an interesting variety of plants, including *Romulea tempskyana*, the winter-flowering *Ranunculus cytheraeus*, Autumn Lady's Tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* and *Colchicum pusillum*.

We will also inspect some interesting seasonal rock pools where local rarities can be found, including the diminutive Least Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum lusitanicum*. Reptiles could include Starred Agama, the tiny Snake-eyed Skink or even European Chameleon.

Day 4 23rd November 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 birding hot spot, and after soaking up the history we will check to see what birds we can track down.

Day 5 24th November A local day after our exertions yesterday. We will take a walk across the local hillsides, where we hope to find more of the island's interesting winter flowers, amongst which should feature a couple of species of Narcissus and perhaps the first flowers of Crown Anemone *Anemone coronaria*.



Day 6 25th November We head back to the Paphos area today, with birds on our mind. We will visit several local sites, hoping to find two local specialities at their wintering sites: Finsch's Wheatear in the dry hills, and Greater Sand-plover on the Paphos shoreline.

On our way home, we will visit the Byzantine ruins of Agios Georgios tis Pegeias and look for the endemic *Taraxacum aphrogenes*, an autumn-flowering dandelion.

Day 7 26th November Today we drive up to the ridge in the heart of the Akamas. We will start our walk among the pines on the ridge running along the centre of the peninsula, with views over to the west side, where we will look for some of the plants endemic to the serpentine rocks of the area. We will walk down through the pine forest into the olive and carob groves. Bulbs we may come across during the day may include the endemic *Hyacinthella millingenii* and perhaps the first 'spring' orchids of the year, *Anacamptis collina* or *Ophrys israelitica*.

After a stop for a lunch and a coffee in the village of Neo Chorio, a leisurely walk downhill will take us back to the hotel.

Day 8 27th November After a last breakfast on the sunny patio, we must bid fond farewell to the Aphrodite Beach and head homewards.

Accommodation and 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 (dinner day 1 to lunch day 8).

Local travel will be by small coach.

The weather should be pleasant, perhaps even still hot down near the coast. In general we should expect warm, sunny weather. Showers and colder conditions are always possible.

Health and fitness

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 excursions are optional.



Leaders

Our leader for this trip is **Sarah Lambert**, an expert botanist and keen photographer, with a good knowledge of other wildlife. After several years with English Nature she now works as a freelance ecologist based in Peterborough, undertaking habitat and plant surveys throughout England. Since 2012 she has been the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland recorder for South Lincolnshire. Sarah joined Wildlife Travel in 2019 and has led several trips for us, including two recent visits to Cyprus.

Dependent on final group size, Sarah will be joined by a second Wildlife Travel leader.

Flights

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

20th November	Departs London Gatwick 07.00, arrives Paphos 13.30
27th November	Departs Paphos 14.20 arrives London Gatwick 17.20

It is also possible to join this holiday with direct flights from Manchester, Stansted, Birmingham and Bristol. For those flying from other airports, we can arrange individual transfers to or from the hotel. Contact us for options.

Passport and Entry Requirements

For up to date information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cyprus

Your passport must be issued less than 10 years before the date you enter the country (check the 'date of issue') and valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date').

If you hold a British passport, you can travel to Cyprus for up to 90 days in total in any 180-day period without a visa.

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 £850 PER PERSON, BALANCE DUE BY 21/08/2024

INCLUDED: Return flight London (Gatwick) to Cyprus, as above. Local transport as specified in itinerary. Seven night's accommodation, all meals from dinner day 1 to lunch day 8. Services of leaders. **NOT INCLUDED:** Drinks with evening meal and refreshments. Entrance fees to archaeological sites (€20 in total). Gratuities. Travel insurance. Covid tests and associated costs.

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: Brian Eversham, Philip Precey, Michael Russell, Dr Tim Upson
Wildlife Travel Ltd. Reg. No 2237697; (for Registered Charity numbers, please contact us)

Photos: front (clockwise from top): Sardinian Warbler, *Cyclamen persicum*, *Narcissus tazetta*, *Anacamptis collina*, Paphos headland archaeological site.

Page 2 (from left): Paphos mosaics, *Hyacinthella millingenii*, *Arisarum vulgare*, Akamas coastline.
Page 3 (from top): Cyprus Starred Agama, Greater Sand-plover, *Crocus veneris*, Paphos lighthouse.

All photos taken on previous Wildlife Travel trips to Cyprus. Trip reports from our previous Cyprus holidays can be found on our website.