

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

2nd to 9th May 2027 (1 week)

LESVOS

Spring in the Aegean

"fantastic flowers,
unspoilt countryside,
easy walking"

"leaders were excellent"

Lesvos 2023 and
2026

Carpets of flowers, olive groves and birding on the beautiful island of Lesvos in the Aegean Sea.

Lesvos is still an **undiscovered island** for many, despite being the third largest in Greece and close to the Turkish mainland. It is relatively undeveloped and retains its rural culture, interspersed with a few attractive towns and villages. In early-May, the tourist season is just beginning and there is a **pleasant, relaxed atmosphere at a time when the flowers and birds are at their best.**

The countryside is covered in a colourful display of shrubs, perennials and annuals and the birdsong adds a delightful background to quiet walks through olive groves, meadows and woods or along the coast. Our search for the island's wildlife will take us to some interesting landscapes and historical sites.

The island is justifiably famous for its birdlife, with local breeding specialities including Krüper's Nuthatch, Cinereous Bunting and Masked Shrike. We have timed this holiday to catch the best of the northwards **spring migration**, as well as the wonderful **carpets of spring flowers.**

During the week we will be visiting many parts of the island - the rolling hills, pastures and rocky landscapes of the west, and the sweet chestnut and pine woods of the southern mountains. We will explore the rivers, lagoons and reedbeds around Skala Kalloni, and the coastal 'shrublands' full of orchids and birdsong.

Our first hotel is within walking distance of the Kalloni wetlands, which contain the prime birding spots on the island, while our second hotel is right on the harbour in the scenic town of Molyvos, on the north coast. They both provide a great base from which to explore the island.



Price

£2,195

**Single Room
Supplement**
£185

Full board

Day 1	flight to Mytilene
Day 2	Skala Kalloniis
Day 3	Mesa, Kalloni Salt Pans
Day 4	Metochi, Limonos
Day 5	Achladeri, Agiasos
Day 6	Ypsilou, Sigi
Day 7	Petri, Kavaki
Day 8	return to UK

Leaders

Mike Russell
and
Philip Precey

Group size

min 4, max 12

relaxed birding,
spring flowers



ITINERARY

Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.

Day 1 Our flights take us to Mytilene, the main town on Lesbos, from where we transfer to Skala Kalloni (c. 1 hour) where we will settle in to our hotel before our first exploration of the local birdwatching sites. o/n Skala Kallonis

Day 2 Today will be spent exploring the countryside around Skala Kallonis. Walking out from the hotel, we amble through the village lanes and fields, where we will familiarise ourselves with more of the local wild flowers of the pathsides, waterways and marshes.

Eastern Olivaceous Warblers sing from the tamarisk bushes, newly-arrived Bee-eaters hawk over head, Little Bittern and Squacco Heron feed along the river margins, and all sorts of migrant birds might turn up as they head north. o/n Skala Kallonis

Day 3 We will visit the wetlands around Mesa and the Kalloni Salt Pans today, where Greater Flamingos feed alongside elegant Avocets, Glossy Ibis and Black-winged Stilts, and a variety of migrating waders and wildfowl, gulls and terns may be seen. o/n Skala Kallonis

Day 4 We bid farewell to Skala Kallonis, and head to the north of the island, stopping along the way at Metochi Lake, where we will look for Balkan Terrapin and various dragonflies, and take a wander through the olive groves, checking for the lovely *Iris orientalis* and the Hairy Birthwort, while keeping our eyes out for Masked Shrike that nest in the older trees, and Western Rock Nuthatch and Starred Agamas amongst the rocks.

From here we will travel on to explore the picturesque chapels and wild olive groves of Limonos Monastery, looking for Sombre Tit amongst the olive trees. It is then a short journey to the attractive fishing village of Molyvos, and our hotel overlooking the fishing harbour, where we will stay for the rest of the week. o/n Molyvos

Day 5 Today we travel around to the eastern side of the Gulf to visit the pine woodlands at Achladeri, home to Krüper's Nuthatch, another local speciality for which Lesbos is the only European outpost.

From here we head up, through the town of Agiasos and onto the slopes of Mount Olympus. Here we visit the beautiful sweet chestnut woods and limestone hillsides looking for many flowers including *Fritillaria pontica* and bright splashes of colour in the form of *Paeonia macula*, *Tulipa orphanidea* and the beautiful Peacock Anemone *Anemone pavonina*. We will look for several species of orchids, including Sword-leaved Helleborine, Toothed Orchids and Holmboe's Butterfly Orchid. o/n Molyvos

Day 6 Today we set off west, to explore the dryer habitats and volcanic landscape. We will visit the hillsides below Ypsilou Monastery, famous for a local speciality, Cinereous Bunting, which sings from the oak trees. Isabelline and Eastern Black-eared Wheatears feed on the rocky slopes, with the lovely pink *Crepis rubra*, *Euphorbia rigida* and Large Venus's Looking



-glass amongst the floral highlights.

Near the coastal village of Sigri, we will visit the amazing Petrified Forest Geopark, where Cretzschmar's Buntings sing from among the fossilised trees and Holy Orchids flower at the trackside. o/n Molyvos

Day 7 Today we head a little way inland, for a gentle walk through the scenic village of Petri and out to explore the quiet lanes and hillside beyond the village. We will also include a stop at Kavaki to check the coastal scrub, which can attract migrant birds. o/n Molyvos

Day 8 We will have time this morning to explore the narrow lanes of Molyvos before we begin the return journey to Mytilene, stopping along the way for some more bird watching before our flights home.

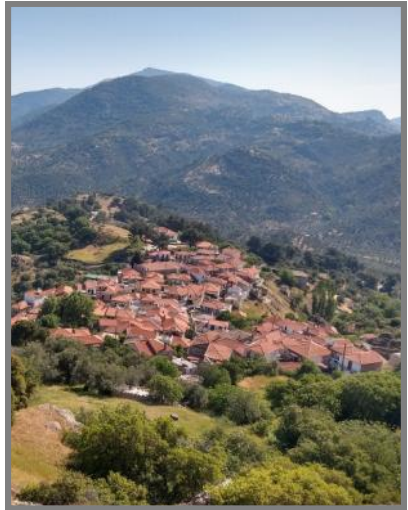
Accommodation and meals, transport and weather

We will be staying for the first three nights at the **Pasiphae Hotel**: only a few minutes walk from the wetlands of Skala Kalloni (handy for those pre-breakfast bird walks). From there, we move to the lovely **Sea Horse Hotel**, a family-run hotel situated at the quayside of the small fishing harbour of Molyvos. All rooms are en-suite. Evening meals will be at the hotel and we will take picnic lunches. We will travel by small coach or minibus.

At this time of year the weather is usually sunny but not too hot. There may be some cooler weather and some rain. We will adapt our excursions accordingly.

Leaders

Mike Russell is a Director of Wildlife Travel who has led holidays from Mull to Sri Lanka since 2006, including two previous Wildlife Travel trips to Lesvos. Mike will be joined by **Philip Precey** an excellent naturalist, who will be familiar to our travellers, having led over 100 of our holidays. This will be his fourth visit to the island.



Flights

The group flights will be from London Gatwick with Jet2.

2nd May depart London Gatwick 14.15, arrive Mytilene 20.00
9th May depart Mytilene 20.50, arrive London Gatwick 22.40

It may also be possible to fly from London Stansted or Manchester, with Jet2. Speak to us to discuss options. Lesvos is two hours ahead of the UK.

Passport and Entry Requirements

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

If you hold a British passport, you are able to travel to the Schengen area (including Greece) for up to 90 days in total in any 180-day period without a visa.

British passport holders will need to apply for the ETIAS European Travel Authorisation to visit Schengen countries. This must be applied for online prior to travel. Once granted, your ETIAS will be valid for 3 years.

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

Health and fitness

On most days, we are **walking for much of the day**, albeit at a relatively slow pace. In Molyvos, we may have to walk from the hotel to the bus each morning/evening, a distance of around 1km along the sea front. The longest walk will be around 8km, on the flat. On other days it is necessary to walk on rougher ground and up/down some slopes, although none of the walking is particularly strenuous. Good (light) walking boots are recommended. All excursions are optional.

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 £350 PER PERSON, SECOND INSTALMENT ON
CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY £500 (to cover committed costs)
BALANCE DUE BY 31/01/2027**

INCLUDED: Return flight from London Gatwick to Lesvos, as above. Local transport as specified in itinerary. Seven nights' accommodation full board (dinner day 1 to lunch day 8, with picnic lunches). Services of leaders. **NOT INCLUDED:** Refreshments. Gratuities. Travel insurance. ETIAS and associated costs.

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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Photos: all photos taken on previous Wildlife Travel holidays. Front (clockwise from top): Metochi, Eastern Black-eared Wheatear, *Iris orientalis*, Masked Shrike, Holy Orchid.
Page 2 (from left): Persian Squirrel, *Tulipa orphanidea*, Aegean Fritillary, Cinereous Bunting. **Page 3** (from top): Lesvos scenery, Peacock Anemone, European Bee-eater, Wood Sandpiper, Toothed Orchid, Eastern Festoon.

Trip reports from our most recent visits to Lesvos can be found on our website.