

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

31st March to 7th April 2027 (1 week)

CYPRUS

Relaxed spring birding and natural history

"it definitely ticked all the boxes!"

"hotel a delight, superb position with beautiful views."
Cyprus 2025

Late March and early April is a great time to visit Cyprus: while things are still chilly and quiet back home, bird migration is well underway here, while the Cypriot countryside is ablaze with wild flowers, including numerous orchids.

Our base is a delightful 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 coastal scrub towards the Baths of Aphrodite, in search of birds, wild flowers and early butterflies. Spring migrants should be passing through in good numbers and variety at this time of year. Various warblers, wheatears and buntings could all be seen during the week, along with local specialities including the island's three endemics: Cyprus Warbler, Cyprus Wheatear and Cyprus Scops Owl. We will also look for the island's butterflies, amphibians and reptiles, with several species found only here including the Paphos Blue, Cypriot Water Frog and Troodos Wall Lizard.

We will also venture further afield, visiting various well-known migration hotspots, including the wetlands at Agia Varvara, the coastal fields around Mandria, the little-watched Cape Drepanum, the scrubby woodlands of Pegeia, and Paphos headland, well known both for its birdlife and for its archaeology.

Our itinerary gives us the opportunity for a relaxed exploration of the island's wildlife, while also having the flexibility to make sure we connect with some of the more exciting migrant sightings that may well turn up during the week.

We first visited Cyprus way back in 1991, and we are looking forward to returning to Aphrodite's island.



Price
£1,995

Single Room Supplement
£155

Full board

Day 1 flight to Paphos
Day 2 Baths of Aphrodite
Day 3 Paphos
Day 4 Pegeia Forest
Day 5 Agia Varvara
Day 6 Mandria & Asprokremmos
Day 7 Smygies
Day 8 return to UK

Leaders

Phil Saunders and James Lowen

Group size
min 4, max 14

spring birds, wild flowers,
endemic wildlife,
archaeological sites



ITINERARY

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

Day 1 Our flight takes us to Paphos, from where we transfer to our hotel (c.1hr 30mins). After settling in, there may be time for our first exploration of the hotel gardens and surrounding area: during our previous visits, the hotel grounds and nearby fields have played host to Collared and Semicollared Flycatchers, Savi's and Great Reed Warblers, five species of wheatear, Masked Shrike and singing Cyprus Scops Owl, so there is plenty to see without straying too far!

Day 2 We will start our week with a relaxed day, exploring the local area. After breakfast, normally 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 scenery is breath-taking, with high cliffs dropping steeply down to the sea. The endemic Paphos Blue should be amongst the early spring butterflies, while lizards scuttle about in the undergrowth, including the endemic Troodos Wall Lizard and Cyprus Starred Agama. Bird migration should be well underway, and there should be newly-arrived migrants flitting about the bushes, including warblers, wheatears, chats and flycatchers.

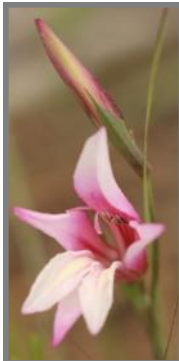
Day 3 Today we will head to the **Paphos World Heritage Site**. We will split our time between the **Tombs of the Kings**, dating back to the Ptolemite Cypriot Kingdoms, and the Paphos Peninsula, with its famous 'houses' of **Roman mosaics**. Aside from the interesting archaeology, this area is known 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, Desert Wheatear and Rüppell's Warbler regularly found on the Peninsula. Mixed flocks of 'flava' wagtails should include various forms amongst the expected Black-headed Wagtails, along with Red-throated Pipit. The nearby shoreline is a regular wintering site for Greater Sand-plover, with a chance of a late bird lingering here.

Day 4 Today we will explore **Pegeia Forest** where, beneath the scattered canopy of Calabrian Pine and Phoenician Juniper, we should find an interesting variety of orchids (depending on the season) and other wild flowers.

Afterwards, we will drop down to Cape Drepanum, a well known migrant trap, where we will check the shrubs for warblers, with larks and pipits to be looked for in the open areas.

Day 5 We head back to the Paphos area today, with birds very much on our mind. We will visit the pools at **Agia Varvara**, where the permanent water attracts a variety of migrants: Little, Baillon's and Spotted Crake may all turn up, along with the chance of various waders, herons, wagtails and pipits. The dry hillsides nearby are a regular wintering site for Finsch's Wheatear, and we will keep our fingers cross for a late bird hanging on into April.

Day 6 Today we expect to head for **Mandria beach**, another famous migration hotspot, where we will be hoping to coincide with a good arrival: Bimaculated Lark, Caspian Plover,



Pallid Harrier, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater and Caspian Stonechat are just some of the mouthwatering species that are regularly found here.

Depending on the latest migration news, we will maybe check nearby Asprokremmos Dam, or visit the water treatment works close to Paphos airport, where the handsome Spur-winged Lapwing can usually be found.

Day 7 Today we stick close to home. After breakfast we will drive up to the ridge in the heart of the **Akamias**. Amongst the pines we will look for wild flowers, including more orchids, while making sure we get to see both Cyprus Warbler and Cyprus Wheatear. After a stop for lunch in a local taverna, a leisurely walk downhill will take us back to the hotel.

Day 8 We have one last morning to check the bushy hillsides close to the hotel for migrants, before we must gather our things and bid fond farewell to Cyprus and head home.

Accommodation, meals and travel

The **Aphrodite Beach Hotel** is a wonderfully welcoming family-run hotel, located on a beautiful coastline. We are catered full board, from dinner day 1 to lunch day 8. 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).

Local travel will be by small coach, with a driver.

Leaders

Phil Saunders, a professional ecologist and all-round naturalist. Phil studied for his PhD in Cyprus, and spent three years living on the island.

Phil will be joined by **James Lowen**, expert photographer, naturalist and award-winning author. James is a frequent contributor to Bird Watching Magazine and author of eighteen books, most notably the recent *Much Ado About Nothing*. This will be James's fourth visit to Cyprus.

Between them, our leaders will ensure you enjoy the wildlife of Cyprus and get the most out of your time there.

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.



Group Travel

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

31st March **departs London Gatwick 09.15**, arrives Paphos 15.45
7th April **departs Paphos 16.30 arrives London Gatwick 19.30**

It should also be possible to fly direct from Manchester, Leeds Bradford, East Midlands, Stansted, Edinburgh and Bristol. For those flying from other airports, we can arrange individual transfers to or from the hotel. Contact us to discuss options.

Cyprus 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 can travel to Cyprus for up to 90 days in total in any 180-day period without a visa: Cyprus is not part of the Schengen area, and visits to Cyprus do not count towards your 90-day visa-free limit in the Schengen area.

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/cyprus

Weather

In general we should expect warm, sunny weather, even hot down near the coast, although showers and cooler, windier conditions are possible.

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 £400 (to cover committed costs) BALANCE DUE BY 30/12/2026

INCLUDED: Return flight London Gatwick to Paphos, 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. Gratuities. Travel insurance. ETIAS and associated costs. Entrance fees to archaeological sites (€20 in total).

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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Photos (all taken on previous Wildlife Travel holidays to Cyprus): front (clockwise from top): Cyprus Wheatear (JLowen), Cyprus Warbler, Paphos Blue (JLowen), Hoopoe (JLowen), Paphos. **Page 2** (from left): Eastern Tongue Orchid, Collared Flycatcher (JLowen), *Gladiolus triphyllus*, Agia Varvara (SLambert) **Page 3** (from top): *'superciliaris'* Yellow Wagtail (JLowen), Paphos Lighthouse (SLambert), Ruppell's Warbler, Eastern Festoon, Creztschmar's Bunting (JLowen).

A trip report from our recent Cyprus holidays can be found on our website.