

WILDLIFE TRAVEL



24th to 31st March 2027 (1 week)

CYPRUS

Spring flowers and natural history on Aphrodite's island

"orchid-oholic's glory at every step"

"we all enjoyed ourselves and laughed a lot."

Cyprus 2024

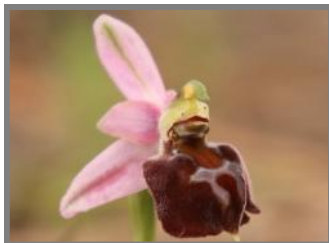
We first visited Cyprus way back in 1991, and more than 35 trips later it is still amongst our favourite destinations.

March is the best month to enjoy the abundant wild flowers of the Cypriot spring, most notably the great variety of orchids: the taxonomy of orchids seems to be in permanent flux, with little agreement from one year to the next on just how many species there are, but we can expect to find 25 or more different taxa in a week. Aside from the head-scratching orchids, we will also enjoy colourful displays of Crown Anemone, Turban Buttercups, Persian Cyclamen and numerous other botanical delights.

Spring migration is well underway in the eastern Mediterranean by mid March, and various warblers and wheatears, buntings and shrikes, waders and crakes could turn up, along with local specialities including both Cyprus Warbler and Cyprus Wheatear, while Cyprus Scops Owl sometimes calls from the hotel gardens.

Whilst spending most of our time admiring Cyprus's wildlife, it's impossible not to turn your attention at times to the history of the island: our visit will take in various historical sites, including the spectacular mosaics and famous 'Tombs of the Kings' of the Paphos World Heritage Site.

Many of our holidays are 'made' by our hosts, and Cyprus is no exception. From the moment we arrive at our friendly, family-run hotel out on the Akamas Peninsula, Gregoria and Yiannis make us feel like we've come back home. And there can't be many better ways to start the day than with breakfast on the terrace, looking out over the blue waters of Chrysochou Bay, enjoying the home made jams and local yoghurt, while Sardinian Warblers sing their scratchy hearts out from the shrubbery.



Price

£1,995

Single Room Supplement

£155

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 7	Smygies
Day 8	return to UK

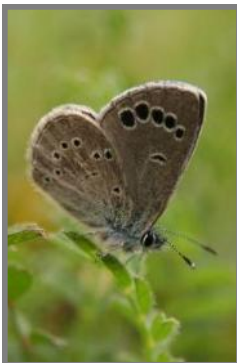
Leaders

Sarah Lambert
and Phil Saunders

Group size

min 4, max 14

spring birds, wild flowers,
ancient sites



ITINERARY

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

Day 1 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 After breakfast, normally taken on the terrace overlooking the sea, we walk along the coast from the hotel to the small botanic garden at the **Baths of Aphrodite** and onwards, towards **Fontana Amorosa**. The field edges and track sides will be full of interesting wild flowers, including colourful annuals and spring bulbs, with an abundance of *Cyclamen persicum* and *Ranunculus asiaticus* growing in the rockier areas.

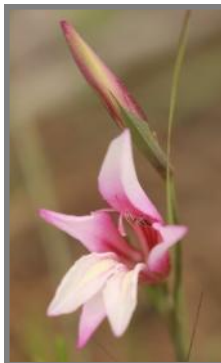
The scenery is breath-taking, with high cliffs dropping steeply down to the sea. The endemic Paphos Blue should be amongst the early spring butterflies, while lizards scuttle about in the undergrowth, including the endemic Troodos Wall Lizard. Bird migration should be well underway, and there should be newly-arrived migrants flitting about the bushes, including warblers, wheatears, chats and flycatchers.

Day 3 Today we will 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 we could find ten species, including *Ophrys fusciflora* subsp *levantina*, *O. argolica* subsp *elegans* and the delicate Dense-flowered Orchid *Neotinea maculata*. We will also inspect some interesting seasonal rock pools where local rarities can be found, including the diminutive Least Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum lusitanicum*.

Day 4 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 Ptolemaic 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 Rüppell's Warbler all likely during the afternoon.

Day 5 A local day after our exertions yesterday. We will return to the intricacies of orchid identification during a walk across the local hillsides. Here, we hope to find bewildering tongue orchids, various *Ophrys* orchids, and (fingers crossed) the stately yellow spikes of *Orchis punctulata*.

Day 6 We head back to the Paphos area today, with birds on our mind. We will visit several sites, hoping to find various interesting migrants and local specialities, including



Cyprus Wheatear and Cyprus Warbler, while enjoying the flowers we find along the way.

Day 7 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, perhaps including *Ophrys umbilicata* subsp *lapethica*, *Orchis anatolica* subsp *troodi* and the lemon-yellow *Dactylorhiza romana*. 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 downhill will take us back to the hotel.

Day 8 After a last leisurely breakfast on the sunny patio, we must gather our things and bid fond farewell to the Aphrodite Beach 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

Sarah Lambert is an expert botanist and keen photographer. Sarah joined Wildlife Travel in 2019 and has led several of our holidays including five previous visits to Cyprus.

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

Weather

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



Group Travel

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

24th March **departs London Gatwick 09.10**, arrives Paphos 15.40

31st March **departs Paphos 16.25 arrives London Gatwick 19.10**

It should also be possible to fly direct from Manchester, 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

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 23/12/2026

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. Gratuities. Travel insurance. ETIAS and associated costs. Entrance fees to archaeological sites (c€20 in total).

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, Laurie Jackson, Philip Precey, Michael Russell, Tim Upson
Wildlife Travel Ltd is registered in England & Wales, no. 2237697. c/o Azets, Westpoint, Lynch Wood PE2 6FZ

Photos (all taken on previous Wildlife Travel holidays to Cyprus): front (clockwise from top): *Ophrys argolica* subsp *elegans*, Cyprus Warbler, Paphos Blue, *Orchis punctulata*, Paphos. **Page 2** (from left): Paphos mosaics, *Anacamptis morio* subsp *syriaca*, *Gladiolus triphyllus*, Cyprus Wheatear. **Page 3** (from top): *Ranunculus asiaticus*, *Cyclamen persicum*, Eastern Festoon, Paphos lighthouse.

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