



GREECE: SPRING BIRDING ADVENTURE (NORTHERN GREECE AND LESVOS) CUSTOM TOUR TRIP REPORT

21 – 31 MAY 2025

By Andrew Walker



*Our tour was timed to connect with **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** and many other migrant breeders to the eastern Mediterranean.*

Overview

This relaxed pace custom tour of northern Greece and Lesvos took place between the 21st and 31st of May 2025. The tour started in Thessaloniki and ended in Athens. We visited Lake Kirkini, Dadia Forest, and the Evros Delta in northern Greece, as well as Achladeri Forest, Kalloni saltpans, and Ipsilou Monastery on Lesvos. Also refer to the eBird trip report, [here](#).

A total of 176 birds were recorded (one heard only). Some of the non-passerine highlights included **Ruddy Shelduck, Red-crested Pochard, European Turtle Dove, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Alpine Swift, Spur-winged Lapwing, Collared Pratincole, Greater Flamingo, Scopoli's Shearwater, Yelkouan Shearwater, Black Stork, White Stork, Pygmy Cormorant, Little Bittern, Squacco Heron, Great White Pelican, Dalmatian Pelican, Slender-billed Gull, Egyptian Vulture, Cinereous Vulture, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk, White-tailed Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Long-eared Owl, Eurasian Scops Owl, European Bee-eater, European Roller, Syrian Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Grey-headed Woodpecker, European Green Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Red-footed Falcon, and Eleonora's Falcon.**



Dalmatian Pelican was a prominent feature at Lake Kirkini in northern Greece.

The list of passerine highlights was just as long and included some of the best birds in Europe, such as **Eurasian Golden Oriole, Masked Shrike, Lesser Grey Shrike, Sombre Tit, Eurasian Penduline Tit, Calandra Lark, Eurasian Crag Martin, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Olive-tree Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Eastern Orphean Warbler, Eastern Subalpine Warbler, Rüppell's Warbler, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, Krüper's Nuthatch, Western Rock Nuthatch, Rosy Starling, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Thrush Nightingale, Common Nightingale, Blue**

Rock Thrush, Eastern Black-eared Wheatear, Isabelline Wheatear, Tawny Pipit, Rock Sparrow, Spanish Sparrow, Black-headed Bunting, Cirl Bunting, Cinereous Bunting, Cretzschmar's Bunting, and Ortolan Bunting.



Western Rock Nuthatch gave some amazing views in beautiful rocky landscape during the tour.



The gorgeous Black-headed Bunting was seen well multiple times on the tour.

Detailed Report

Day 1, 21st May 2025. Arrival in Thessaloniki and travel to Lake Kirkini

After a noon arrival in Thessaloniki, following some pre-tour sightseeing in Athens, we set off to the north, as we travelled to the village of Lithotopos, at the southern tip of Lake Kirkini, our picturesque base for the next three nights. Along the drive we noted a few birds, such as nesting **White Stork**, some flyover **Glossy Ibises**, **Common Buzzard**, **Common Kestrel**, and **Eurasian Jay**.

After checking into our hotel we explored a nearby disused quarry (stopping briefly along the way to admire a flock of feeding **European Bee-eaters**), where we found two **Eurasian Eagle-Owl** chicks near their nest, though they were amazingly well camouflaged. The area was full of bird song and contact calls, some of the vocal species were seen, including **Eurasian Golden Oriole**, **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear**, and **Hawfinch**, while others, like **Common Nightingale** and **European Turtle Dove** remained hidden.

A pair of **White Storks** were busily foraging in the grass on the plentiful grasshoppers, as were a pair of **Woodchat Shrikes**. Several raptors were noted flying over, and included **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, and **Common Buzzard**. Both **Northern Raven** and **Hooded Crow** were also present. A brief stop near to our main birding area yielded **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**, **Eastern Subalpine Warbler**, and **Masked Shrike**.



*We were hoping to see **Masked Shrike** during the tour, and we were not to be disappointed!*

Driving back to our accommodation we noted **Spanish Sparrow**, had a brief **Red-footed Falcon** sighting, and a close **Black Stork**. Both **Dalmatian Pelican** and **Pygmy Cormorant** (both major

target birds of the trip) were seen briefly and distantly, but we would focus on getting proper and better views of those during the coming days. During a tasty Greek dinner, overlooking the lake and impressive snow-capped mountains, we saw **Common Cuckoo**, **Black-crowned Night Heron**, and **Syrian Woodpecker**. It had been an enjoyable first afternoon of birding.



The view from our hotel dining area at Lake Kirkini was impressive and gave us some great birding opportunities too.

Day 2, 22nd May 2025. Lake Kirkini birding and Beles Mountain

We had a relaxing start to the day to catch up with sleep after all the previous travel. After a late traditional Greek breakfast we headed out birding.

Our first stop was in the northeast corner of Lake Kirkini and it was difficult to know where to look first! Scanning along the lake edge gave us some incredible views of a **Little Bittern** standing right out in the open, quickly followed by several (the first of many) gorgeous breeding plumaged **Squacco Herons**. The area was full of the bubbling sound of **European Bee-eaters** as they hawked insects and gave excellent close views, while colorful **European Turtle Dove**, **Eurasian Hoopoes**, and **European Green Woodpeckers** added to the spectacle. A pair of **Lesser Grey Shrikes** were flying back and forth taking food to their nest, affording excellent views, and many common and widespread waterfowl were present, such as **Great Crested Grebe**, **Little Grebe**, **Eurasian Coot**, and **Common Moorhen** etc.

Not quite as colorful as some of the other birds we were seeing, but just as sought after, were the many **Pygmy Cormorants** on display, dwarfed by their plentiful **Great Cormorant** cousins. Large wading birds were numerous, with countless **Grey Herons** and **Little Egrets**, with lower numbers of **Black-crowned Night Herons**, **Purple Heron**, **Great Egret** (birds in breeding and non-breeding plumage), **Eurasian Spoonbill**, and **Glossy Ibis**. Bizarrely, we also found a rather

odd-looking Purple x Grey Heron hybrid, something you don't see every day! Several elegant **White Storks** were flying around, as were **Great White Pelicans**. **Dalmatian Pelicans** were showing better and closer than the **Great White Pelicans**, which were mainly seen in flight. A few duck species were present, with **Red-crested Pochard** being the most notable species. The only terns seen were two attractive **Whiskered Terns**.



The surprise of the morning was seeing a Purple x Grey Heron hybrid!

An interesting mix of passerines were noted as we made our way along our Lake Kirkini birding route, including **Red-backed Shrike**, **Eurasian Golden Oriole**, **Eurasian Penduline Tit**, **Great Reed Warbler**, **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**, **Common Nightingale** (one perched nice and open for a change), and a flock of stunning **Rosy Starlings** busily feeding in a Mulberry tree (a nice surprise for the tour). On our route around this section of the lake we also found **Hermann's Tortoise**, **European Pond Turtle**, and the introduced **Coypu**, with all seen well. The area was also full of attractive butterflies feeding in the bountiful wildflowers.

Driving around the small lakeside villages we couldn't help but notice the giant **White Stork** nests, many with recent hatchlings being tended to. At the stork nests we also found many nesting **Spanish Sparrows**. Our chosen lunch spot was a good choice, the traditional Greek food was excellent and there was an **Eleonora's Flacon** zooming around overhead too – no wonder the Barn Swallow was quite content to sit inside the restaurant with us!

During the afternoon we drove up a narrow, forested mountain track to try and find some new species. The views of the lake were sensational and it was hard to look away from it. Several raptors were noted here, including **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Booted Eagle**, **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Black Kite**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **European Honey Buzzard**, **Common Buzzard**, and **Peregrine Falcon**. Several interesting non-raptor species were also found, such as **Common**

Cuckoo, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Short-toed Treecreeper, Eastern Subalpine Warbler, European Robin, Marsh Tit, Long-tailed Tit, and Eurasian Chaffinch. Along the mountain road we found our first **Common (Greek) Tortoise** of the tour.



Eleonora's Falcon was hunting over our chosen lunch spot.



The vista looking down from the mountain with our morning birdwatching area clearly in view.

We ended the day with more tasty traditional Greek food, overlooking Lake Kirkini and then, afterwards, watching a rather cute **Little Owl** on a fence right outside our rooms.

Day 5, 25th May 2025. Birding Lake Kirkini

We spent the morning on a fantastic boat trip in the northern section of Lake Kirkini. As we were making our way to the port to catch our boat, we had a couple of flocks of **Rosy Starlings** fly through and, as we pulled in to our parking space, an adult male **Levant Sparrowhawk** was sat out in the open, which was a fantastic start to the day.



*We enjoyed some good sightings of **Levant Sparrowhawks** in northern Greece.*

It was a really enjoyable and relaxing trip out on the boat and the list of highlights from the boat trip was long. Some of the species that gave the best views, including some good photographic opportunities, included **Dalmatian Pelican**, **Great White Pelican**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, and a host of herons and egrets (the **Squacco Herons** in particular were looking spectacular in their full breeding plumage). **Great Crested Grebes** were abundant and we enjoyed seeing a pair of pretty **Black-necked Grebes** too. Although not good for photos, we saw **Little Gull**, **Black-headed Gull**, **Yellow-legged Gull**, **Common Tern**, and **Whiskered Tern**. We had some pretty excellent views of **Great Reed Warbler** singing from the reeds and had a brief look at **Common** (Eurasian) **Reed Warbler**. Getting close views of the pelicans and cormorants was a real tour highlight.

As we took a scenic drive around the lake we picked up **White Stork**, **Common Buzzard**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **European Bee-eater**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **Red-backed Shrike**, **Crested Lark**, **Spanish Sparrow**, and a gorgeous male **Black-headed Bunting**.



*One of our main targets at Lake Kirkini was **Dalmatian Pelican**, and we were not to be disappointed!*



***Pygmy Cormorants** gave very close and relaxed views, several pairs were noted to be nesting.*

After a siesta during the heat in the middle of the day we took a walk along a nearby river where we saw **Grey-headed Woodpecker**, **Eurasian Golden Oriole**, **Cetti's Warbler**, **Eastern**

Olivaceous Warbler, Common Nightingale, Thrush Nightingale, Cirl Bunting, and Black-headed Bunting. As we left the site a pair of **Black Storks, Western Marsh Harrier,** and huge adult **White-tailed Eagle** flew over.

Over dinner enjoying one final look at the beautiful evening light over Lake Kirkini, we had a **Syrian Woodpecker** fly in and finally perch up, giving good views, and a **Sardinian Warbler** joined the local **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** scolding from the bushes nearby.



*Considering our tour was not timed for the best season for seeing woodpeckers, we did very well during the tour, notching up many species, including this **Grey-headed Woodpecker**.*

Day 4, 24th May 2025. Birding Lake Kirkini area and travel to Alexandroupoli via Kavala

We had a brief early morning birding session at a quarry near Lake Kirkini, where we again saw the young **Eurasian Eagle-Owl** and also saw a vocal **Olive-tree Warbler**. The area was busy with quality birds, including **European Turtle Dove, Woodchat Shrike, Masked Shrike, Red-backed Shrike, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Hawfinch,** and **Cirl Bunting**.

After switching locations to a different quarry site (seeing two pairs of **European Rollers** along the way), we found a new and exciting set of birds, including **Alpine Swift, Black Woodpecker, Eleonora's Falcon, Sombre Tit, Eurasian Crag Martin, European Red-rumped Swallow,** (distant) **Western Rock Nuthatch, Black Redstart,** and several pairs of **Eastern Black-eared Wheatears**.

After a later breakfast and time to relax, we set off on our journey to Alexandroupoli. We called in to the coastal town of Kavala along the way for a coffee shop visit, where we noted **Common Swift, Pallid Swift, European Shag, Yellow-legged Gull,** and **Grey Wagtail**. In the late

afternoon we arrived at our comfortable hotel, with both **Scopoli's Shearwaters** and **Yelkouan Shearwaters** offshore.

Day 5, 25th May 2025. Birding Dadia Forest

Over breakfast we observed a number of **Scopoli's Shearwaters** offshore, along with a few **Yellow-legged Gulls** and **European Shags**. We left our hotel in Alexandroupoli after breakfast and drove north towards Dadia National Park for the morning.

Along the way to Dadia, we observed the giant **Cinereous Vulture**, along with other birds of prey including **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Common Buzzard**, **Booted Eagle**, and **Western Marsh Harrier**. Once we arrived at the national park visitor's center, we took a walk nearby, where we found new trip birds in the form of **Woodlark**, **European Serin**, and **Ortolan Bunting**, the latter showing particularly well. Overhead was a constant presence of **Cinereous Vultures**, with one or two individuals of **Egyptian Vultures** and **Griffon Vultures**, along with a **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Booted Eagle**, and **Black Stork**. Other birds seen, that we had previously enjoyed watching on the trip, included **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **European Turtle Dove**, **Red-backed Shrike**, **Common Nightingale**, **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear**, and **Cirl Bunting**. A shockingly bright **Green Lizard** proved photogenic and was well received.



Ortolan Bunting was vocal in Dadia Forest and gave a prolonged display.

In the late morning we walked along a river in a different, more open area of the park, here we saw more birds of prey, such as **Cinereous Vultures** (a flock of 15 of them!), **Griffon Vulture**, **Egyptian Vulture**, **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **Booted Eagle**, **Common Buzzard**, and **Black Kite**. The river attracted a range of species, and some of these included **Little Egret**, **Little Ringed**

Plover, **Grey Wagtail**, **White Wagtail**, and **Western Yellow Wagtail** (*feldegg* subspecies). The riverine vegetation was full of drab but vociferous **Eastern Olivaceous Warblers**, with stunning **Black-headed Bunting** singing and showing well too (rather outdoing its **Corn Bunting** cousin that was perched nearby!). Woodland here gave us a pair of **Great Spotted Woodpeckers**, a large family party of **Great Tits**, and the ever-present **Common Nightingale**. In the farmland we got a very close view of a **European Glass Lizard**, which took us rather by surprise. An array of butterflies and wildflowers added a further splash of color.

We had a nice traditional Greek salad lunch in Dadia village square, while watching a pair of **White Storks** on their nest containing three young, as well as holding a colony of **Spanish Sparrows**. A pair of **European Honey Buzzards** came low over the village square giving great views and a **Booted Eagle** also put in an appearance.



*A low-flying **European Honey Buzzard** distracted us over our lunch break.*

Driving back to our accommodation we noted a pair of displaying **Short-toed Snake Eagles**, a pair of **European Rollers**, and a couple of **European Bee-eaters** at breeding colonies, along with a range of more regular roadside birds. The remainder of the afternoon was spent relaxing around our comfortable hotel with private beach. **Scopoli's Shearwater**, **Yelkouan Shearwater**, **European Shag**, **Yellow-legged Gull**, **Mediterranean Gull**, **Sandwich Tern**, and **Little Ringed Plover** were noted from the vicinity of our rooms.

Day 6, 26th May 2025. Birding the Evros Delta

We spent the majority of the morning birding at the impressive Evros Delta, covering a range of habitats, each with an interesting assortment of birds.



With Turkey in the background, the Evros Delta along the border is a must-visit birding stop.

Our first stop was for a pair of **Great Spotted Cuckoos**, which lead us to observe **European Turtle Dove**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Little Owl**, **European Bee-eater**, **European Roller**, **Syrian Woodpecker**, **Common Kestrel**, **Eurasian Golden Oriole**, **Common Whitethroat**, **Cetti's Warbler**, **Thrush Nightingale**, **Common Nightingale**, and several **Black-headed Buntings**. As we continued along the way we added **Western Caspian Turtle** and then found a field full of **European Bee-eaters**. As we were photographing these, we also found **Northern Lapwing**, **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **European Roller**, **Syrian Woodpecker**, **Red-backed Shrike**, **Calandra Lark**, and another **Levant Sparrowhawk**.

As we moved into wetland habitats we found **Common Shelduck**, **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, **Spur-winged Lapwing**, **Collared Pratincole**, **Yellow-legged Gull**, **Little Tern**, **Common Tern**, **Pygmy Cormorant**, **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **European Roller**, **Eleonora's Falcon**, **Eurasian Skylark**, **Crested Lark**, **Calandra Lark**, **Western Yellow Wagtail** (*feldegg*), **Tawny Pipit**, and **Black-headed Bunting**. One of the highlights from our drive was seeing two **Golden Jackals**, one of which showed nicely and at close range. We also saw a few **Common (Greek) Tortoises** along the road which, as always, was a nice treat.

The afternoon was spent at leisure relaxing around our comfortable hotel and packing up for our flight to Lesvos the following day.

Day 7, 27th May 2025. Flight from Alexandroupoli to Mytilene (Lesvos) via Athens

A travel day as we left Alexandroupoli in the mid-morning for our flight to Mytilene on Lesvos, where we arrived in the late afternoon. Our flight took us via Athens and we arrived at our hotel in Skala Kallonis in time for a wonderful traditional Greek dinner in the village.



*A highlight of Mediterranean birding is always the sight and sound of **European Bee-eaters**.*



*Often sighted along rural roads, **European Roller** is another attractive and highly desired bird.*

Day 8, 28th May 2025. Lesvos birding

We spent the morning birding in some forest not too far from Skala Kallonis, where we quickly found our main target, the highly sought-after **Krüper's Nuthatch**. We enjoyed prolonged and

good views of at least three birds as they fed in the pine trees. While observing and looking for the nuthatches, we also found another of our main targets, **Eastern Orphee Warbler**, with a very nice showy bird. Here we also saw **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Masked Shrike**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Eastern Subalpine Warbler**, **Short-toed Treecreeper**, **Great Tit**, **Blue Tit**, **Eurasian Chaffinch**, **European Greenfinch**, and **European Goldfinch**.



*Probably our main target on Lesbos and the mission for our first morning birding session on the island. What a treat to get such nice views of **Krüper's Nuthatch**.*

After our forest birding we changed locations and visited the salt pans and an area of saltmarsh, where we found numerous **Greater Flamingoes**, which are always a treat. Both **Black Stork** and **White Stork** were seen, as were both **Ruddy Shelduck** and **Common Shelduck**, along with several shorebird species, including **Pied Avocet**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Kentish Plover**, and **Little Stint**. Other birds noted included **European Bee-eater**, **Crested Lark**, **European Stonechat**, **Western Yellow Wagtail** (*feldegg* subspecies), **Black-headed Bunting**, and **Corn Bunting**.

We took a break during the heat of the middle of the day and then went out again later in the afternoon. A stop on the edge of the village yielded our main target, when we found a pair of migrant **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robins**, and eventually they even showed nicely (see cover image). **European Bee-eaters** here gave some great looks too, and we saw both **Sandwich Tern** and **Common Tern** from the beach.

A relaxed short walk along the nearby river was busy with birds, particularly **Common** (Eurasian) **Reed Warblers** and **Cetti's Warblers**, we also enjoyed our best views of the tour of male **Black-headed Bunting**, with a stunning individual giving prolonged close views as it sang from a small bush. Overhead, amongst the **Western House Martin**, **Barn Swallows**, **European Red-rumped Swallows**, and **Common Swifts**, we noted a pair of beautifully plumaged **Long-legged Buzzards**.

cruising around. A small group of **Gull-billed Terns** flew through, and we were amused by the **Yellow-legged Gulls** that were sensibly taking a shower under the sprinkler system of field adjacent to where we were birding, and we even saw a **Red Fox** run through the back of the same field.

After another wonderful Greek dinner we arrived back at our hotel as a **Great Egret** flew over. A **Peregrine Falcon** was also noted circling overhead, looking for dinner. During the night we could hear both **Eurasian Scops Owl** and **Long-eared Owl** calling from our rooms.



The beach at Skala Kallonis where we enjoyed some afternoon birding.

Day 9, 29th May 2025. Lesvos birding

We spent the morning birding at Ipsilou Monastery in the west of Lesvos island, which involved a lovely walk in some stunning mountain scenery. The birding was great and, as soon as we got out of the car, we were watching displaying **Northern Wheatears** and **Isabelline Wheatears**. While we were watching these we had an inquisitive family group of **Western Rock Nuthatches** pass right in front of us, giving excellent and prolonged views. During the course of the morning birding we saw over a dozen nuthatches well, with several family groups noted. Our progress was slow as we were distracted by the beautiful wildflowers, attendant numerous and pretty butterflies, and even a couple of new lizards (**Snake-eyed Lizard** and **Starred** (Roughtail Rock) **Agama**).

We saw several **Common Linnets**, **Cirl Buntings** and, eventually, the first of several pairs of **Cinereous Buntings** we were to see during the morning. As we continued our walk we also found **Black Stork**, **Eurasian Crag Martin**, **Northern Raven**, **Woodlark**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, **Eastern Subalpine Warbler**, **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear**, **Sombre Tit**, and **Rock Sparrow**. One of the most dramatic sightings of the day involved a hunting **Peregrine Falcon**, the bird stooped right past us at incredible speed before catching its prey well below us, it was a most impressive sight,

which distracted us temporarily from the pretty **Caucasian Squirrel** we had been watching up until that time!



We took a nice and productive birding walk around Ipsilou Monastery with some great birds seen too.



*The views of **Western Rock Nuthatch** were incredible, prolonged, and involved multiple birds.*



Cinereous Bunting was another big trip target and they showed well.



Eastern Subalpine Warbler was yet another key target bird that gave good views.

After another enjoyable local lunch we spent the afternoon relaxing, prior to heading back out for some more good Greek food! Both **Long-eared Owl** (very distant) and **Eurasian Scops Owls**

(very close) were calling from outside our rooms in the evening, while a **Common Nightingale** continued its nighttime singing routine.

Day 10, 30th May 2025. Lesvos birding

We took a morning drive to the southeast corner of Lesvos island for our birding. However, we got distracted along the way as we drove by the salt pans! An impromptu stop here gave us further sightings of three **Dalmatian Pelicans** and other waterbirds, while a nearby swampy area held some very showy **Zitting Cisticolas**. The morning light was wonderful and illuminated all the birds nicely, including **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Greater Flamingo**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Great Egret**, **Little Egret**, and **Common Tern**. Once we finally arrived at our intended destination, we walked along a quiet coastal road. It didn't take long to locate one of our main targets when we got some good views of an attractive male **Cretzschmar's Bunting**. Over the course of our walk we saw quite a few individuals, including several pairs carrying food to nests. **Sardinian Warblers** were abundant, with lots of birds seen and heard. Unfortunately, our other target for the morning, **Rüppell's Warbler**, was a leader only bird after a male jumped out into the open briefly, before getting chased off by some territorial **Sardinian Warblers**, and was not seen again! Other birds noted on our walk included **Masked Shrike**, **Woodchat Shrike**, and **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear**. It was a particularly hot day today, so we took a break for a nice traditional lunch, followed by a swim and a siesta.



*Another special bird of the region, **Cretzschmar's Bunting**, gave good and lengthy views for all.*

In the late afternoon, just before dinner, we called in to the salt pans briefly, where it was extremely windy. Despite the wind we had brief views of **Slender-billed Gull** and prolonged views of a few **White-winged Terns**, both new trip birds. Here we also picked up **Kentish Plover**, **Common**

Ringed Plover, Pied Avocet, Greater Flamingo, Black Stork, White Stork, Dalmatian Pelican, Western Marsh Harrier, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Common Tern, Little Tern, and European Bee-eater. After our birding we enjoyed a final tasty traditional dinner in our favorite Lesvos restaurant, sad in the knowledge we'd not be coming back here tomorrow!



Our birding sites throughout Greece were often rather beautiful settings, this was southeast Lesvos and was particularly pretty.

Day 11, 31st May 2025. Lesvos to Athens and tour concludes

Some of us went for a relaxing morning walk into the nearby village to enjoy a final slice of relaxed Greek life in a small fishing village before our departure and some of us went birding in the mountains near our accommodation. Those that went birding found **Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Masked Shrike, Sombre Tit, Woodlark, Garden Warbler, Eastern Orphean Warbler, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, Eurasian Wren, Short-toed Treecreeper, Mistle Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher, and Cirl Bunting.**

After a late breakfast we departed our accommodation and made our way to the airport to await our (as usual, delayed) flight to Athens, where our tour concluded. We'd enjoyed some fantastic birds on our relaxing tour, **Krüper's Nuthatch** was voted bird of the trip, with our incredible breeding plumage **Squacco Heron** experience bringing that species a close second. Other honorable mentions went to **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** and **Rosy Starling.** In addition to the great birds, we'd experienced some rather nice wildlife, beautiful landscapes, tasty Greek food, and, most importantly, wonderful company. Thanks to all for making it a great trip and I look forward to the next one!

Bird List – Following IOC 15.1 (February 2025)

Birds ‘heard only’ are marked with (H) after the common name, all other species were seen. The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following BirdLife International: EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)	
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>
Swifts (Apodidae)	
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>
Cuckoos (Cuculidae)	
Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Pigeons, Doves (Columbidae)	
Rock Dove [Feral Pigeon]	<i>Columba livia [dom.]</i>
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
European Turtle Dove - VU	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Rails, Crakes & Coots (Rallidae)	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Grebes (Podicipedidae)	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Flamingos (Phoenicopteridae)	
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
Oystercatchers (Haematopodidae)	
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Stilts, Avocets (Recurvirostridae)	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Plovers (Charadriidae)	
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Spur-winged Lapwing	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>
Kentish Plover	<i>Anarhynchus alexandrinus</i>
Sandpipers, Snipes (Scolopacidae)	
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Couriers, Pratincoles (Glareolidae)	
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (Laridae)	
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>
Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus</i>
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Petrels, Shearwaters, Diving Petrels (Procellariidae)	
Scopoli's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>
Yelkouan Shearwater - VU	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>
Storks (Ciconiidae)	
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Cormorants, Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)	
Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmaeus</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
European Shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>
Ibises, Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)	
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Hérons, Bitterns (Ardeidae)	
Little Bittern	<i>Botaurus minutus</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Grey x Purple Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea x purpurea</i>
Pelicans (Pelecanidae)	
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>
Kites, Hawks, Eagles (Accipitridae)	
Egyptian Vulture - EN	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>
Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Tachyspiza brevipes</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>
Owls (Strigidae)	
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>
Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>
Eurasian Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>
Hoopoes (Upupidae)	
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
Rollers (Coraciidae)	
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>
Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)	
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Bee-eaters (Meropidae)	
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
Woodpeckers (Picidae)	
Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>
Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>
European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>
Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>
Caracaras, Falcons (Falconidae)	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Red-footed Falcon - VU	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>
Eleonora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonora</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Old World Parrots (Psittaculidae)	
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Figbirds, Old World Orioles, Piopios (Oriolidae)	
Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
Shrikes (Laniidae)	
Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>
Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>
Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Crows, Jays (Corvidae)	
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Tits, Chickadees (Paridae)	
Sombre Tit	<i>Poecile lugubris</i>
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Penduline Tits (Remizidae)	
Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>
Larks (Alaudidae)	
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>
Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>
Swallows, Martins (Hirundinidae)	
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
European Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis rufula</i>
Cettia Bush Warblers & Allies (Cettiidae)	
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
Bushtits (Aegithalidae)	
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Leaf Warblers (Phylloscopidae)	
Eastern Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus orientalis</i>
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Reed Warblers & Allies (Acrocephalidae)	
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Iduna pallida</i>
Olive-tree Warbler	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>
Cisticolas & Allies (Cisticolidae)	
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Sylviid Babblers (Sylviidae)	
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Curruca crassirostris</i>
Rüppell's Warbler	<i>Curruca ruppeli</i>
Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>
Eastern Subalpine Warbler	<i>Curruca cantillans</i>
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>
Wrens (Troglodytidae)	
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Nuthatches (Sittidae)	
Krüper's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta krueperi</i>
Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Treecreepers (Certhiidae)	
Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>
Starlings, Rhabdornises (Sturnidae)	
Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Thrushes (Turdidae)	
Song Thrush (H)	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Chats, Old World Flycatchers (Muscicapidae)	
Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>
Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
Eastern Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>
Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches (Passeridae)	
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)	
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>
Finches, Euphonias (Fringillidae)	
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
Buntings (Emberizidae)	
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>
Cinereous Bunting	<i>Emberiza cineracea</i>
Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
Cretzschmar's Bunting	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>
Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>

Total seen	175
Total heard only	1
Total recorded	176

Reptile List

Common Name	Scientific Name
Tortoises (Testudinidae)	
Hermann's Tortoise	<i>Testudo hermanni</i>
Common (Greek) Tortoise	<i>Testudo graeca</i>
Pond and Box Turtles (Emydidae)	
European Pond Turtle	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>
Eurasian Pond, River, and Neotropical Wood Turtles (Geoemydidae)	
Western Caspian Turtle	<i>Mauremys rivulata</i>
Dragons (Agamidae)	
Starred (Roughtail Rock) Agama	<i>Laudakia stellio</i>
Wall Lizards (Lacertidae)	
Green Lizard	<i>Lacerta viridis</i>
Snake-eyed Lizard	<i>Ophisops elegans</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Glass Lizards (Anguidae)	
European Glass Lizard	<i>Pseudopus apodus</i>
Total	8

Mammal List

Common Name	Scientific Name
Spiny Rats and Hutias (Echimyidae)	
Coypu	<i>Myocastor coypus</i>
Squirrels (Sciuridae)	
Caucasian Squirrel	<i>Sciurus anomalus</i>
Canids (Canidae)	
Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Total	4



Golden Jackal was the mammal highlight of the tour, with some brief but close views enjoyed while birding in the Evros Delta.