

Paphos 5th - 19th March 2015

Trip Report

By Bob Shiret



Aspro Dam Shallow End

Introduction

Our trip this year was a week earlier than last year and produced a good number of different birds and we visited four new locations. I have included directions to these; other location directions can be found on my previous reports on the www.realbirder.com website.

Our hotel as usual was the Pioneer Beach (superb) and booked as a half board package for around £950 each. Car hire for twelve days was through SIXT and cost was around £17 per day with no excess for a new Megane.

Prior to our trip there had been plenty of rain in Cyprus so rivers that were dry last year were now flowing. The weather on our trip was in the 60°-70°F bracket and the sun worshippers around the pool were able to use loungers on about five days.

Bird Watching Sites

Pioneer Beach Headland

About two years ago the natural scrub of the headland was ploughed in and a crop of Barley planted; this has now been abandoned and natural vegetation is taking over again, alas of course not the original scrubland but it is providing a good habitat for a wide

selection of birds not seen by me here before. On the opposite side to the headland from Pioneer Beach on the fringes of the next hotel are some taller trees and bushes which held three **Cretzschmar's Bunting**, two **Sardinian Warbler**, two **Chiffchaf**, two **Blackcap** and two **Meadow Pipit**. Also seen on the headland were sixty **Greenfinch** (just in off the sea), two **Serin**, one **Hoopoe**, one **Tawny Pipit**, one **Sparrowhawk**, twenty **Corn Bunting**, six **Northern Wheatear**, two **Isabelline Wheatear**, one **Alpine Swift**, ten **Barn Swallow**, four **House Martin**, two **Fan-tailed Warbler**, one **Kingfisher**, three **Stonechat**, seventy six migrating **Cormorant** at high level, ten **House Sparrow**, two **Collard Dove**, one **Kestrel**, one **Lesser Whitethroat**, six **White Wagtail**, four **Magpie**, six **Hooded Crow**, ten **Crested Lark**, six **Feral Pigeon**, one **Black Redstart** and a **Common Sandpiper**.



Meadow Pipit



Cretzschmar's Bunting

Anarita Mast Dung Heaps

This new site is on the left hand side of the gravel track overlooked by the mast (for directions see March 2014 report); it is made up of large piles of dung from a nearby farm. Birds seen here were a flock of eighty **Serin**, one **Black-eared Wheatear**, four **Red-throated Pipit**, one **Cyprus Warbler**, one **Chukar** and one **Isabelline Wheatear**.



Serin



Black-eared and Isabelline Wheatears

Mavrokolympos Dam

For directions see March 2014 report. Birds seen here were ten **Chukar**, three **Ruppell's Warbler**, two **Subalpine Warbler**, one **Whitethroat**, one **Cyprus Wheatear** and one **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear**.



Ruppell's Warbler

As we sat having a break at the dam this little bird popped out of a bush ten metres away and landed next to us feeding contentedly, these pictures are not cropped.



Subalpine Warbler

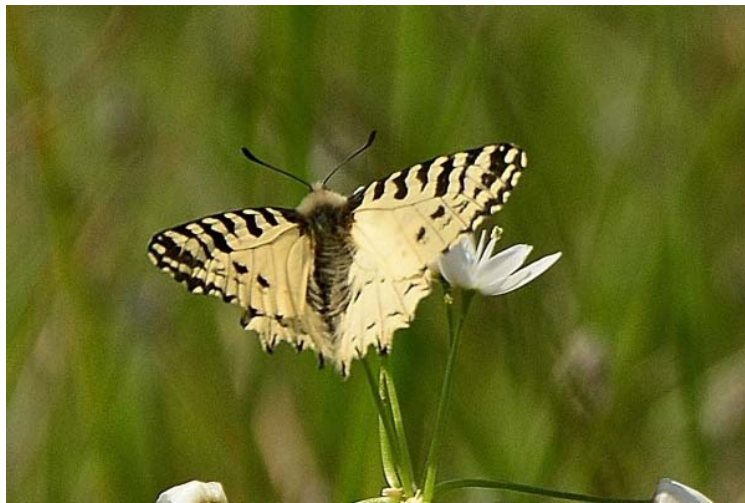


Whitethroat



Eastern Black-eared Wheatear

This site was very good for butterflies with many [Swallowtail](#), [Orange Tip](#), [Blues](#), [Large Wall Browns](#) and a few [Eastern Festoons](#) which was a first for us.



Eastern Festoon

Aspro Dam - Dam End

Birds seen here were one [Alpine Swift](#) and one [Red-rumped Swallow](#).

Aspro Dam - Shallow End

We had intended to walk to Foinikas Village (see March 2014 report) but the river was flowing too deep near the village so we waded across the river higher up using our ultra lightweight wellington boots (www.nauticalia.com) and walked up a track between the hills opposite. Birds seen were one [Hen harrier](#) (m), one [Long-legged Buzzard](#), two [Greater Spotted Cuckoo](#) and one [Eastern Bonelli's Warbler](#) (lifer).



Long-legged Buzzard

This bird initially flew over our heads at medium height over the hill into the next valley, it then started to soar to a great height until it was only visible through binoculars, we were then astonished to see it close its wings and drop at fantastic speed to the ground. I have seen **Peregrines** do this and this seemed at least as fast, it then came over our valley where I took this shot.



Eastern Bonelli's Warbler

Geriskipou Beach River

This year the river was in full flow but no Herons were seen. Birds seen were five **Hawfinch**, one **Buzzard**, one **Black Frankolin**, ten **Cetti's Warbler**, one **Willow Warbler**, five **Black-winged Stilt** and one **Moorhen**.



Hawfinch

Anarita Park

This site was visited early (7th) during our holiday as we hoped to see **Finsch's Wheatear** which is known to overwinter in a few areas in Cyprus. We were very fortunate and found one individual; in discussion with a local birder later he mentioned that where we had seen the bird is one of the usual haunts, so I have given precise directions below. Take the B6 out of Paphos, turn left onto the E606 and 2.3 km past the motorway bridge turn right onto a track and immediately turn left. Follow this track on a winding route until a crossroads with some massive rocks, turn left and after a short distance you will reach a large flat area to your right. Park here and walk towards the slope ahead; the farm buildings will be on your left and the **Finsch's** were seen on the scree straight ahead. Be warned they are very shy! Also seen here were three **Blue Rock Thrush**, five **Kestrel** and one **Greater Spotted Cuckoo**.





Finsch's Wheatear

Agios Georgious - Coral Bay

This walk is about six miles long and takes around three hours; we park at Coral Bay and get the local bus to Agios Georgious and walk back. Birds seen were fifty **Jackdaw**, one **Hoopoe**, one **Yellow-legged Gull**, seventy migrating **Cormorant**, one **Black Frankolin**, two **Sand Martin**, two **Wood Pigeon**, one **Blue Rock Thrush** and twenty **Spanish Sparrow**.

Zakaki Marsh

To get to this site take the B6 from Paphos to Limassol and follow the signs to Ladies Mile on the edge of Limassol. There is a hide overlooking a marsh on the right and further along on the road are some gravel pits. Seen here were three **Green Sandpiper**, three **Little Ringed Plover**, eight **Black Winged Stilt** and one **Moorhen**.

Kato Acourdaleia

This new site is reached by taking the E709 road from Paphos, turning right at Kathikas and parking by the church in Kato Acourdaleia. Walk back up the hill 100 yards and take the path signposted to the right, this path continues past a left fork to finish at Pano Acourdaleia. We finished the walk by returning to the car along the road which has few cars. This area has lovely countryside with great views and a nice coffee shop in Pano Acourdaleia. Birds seen were one **Long-legged Buzzard**, one **Hoopoe**, one **Corn Bunting**, two **Linnet** and six **Rock Dove** on the rock face below; these birds appear pure. Apparently later in the year this area is good for **shrikes**, **buntings**, **Rollers** and **flycatchers**.

Avidimou Beach

For some reason this area appears very good for **Marsh Harrier**; on our visit three were seen over the farmland. Also seen were two **Hoopoe**, three **Swift** and ten **Chukar**.



Hoopoe

Mandrai

Birds seen here were two **Little Ringed Plover**, six **Meadow Pipit**, twenty **Spanish Sparrow** and three **Northern Wheatear**.



Little Ringed Plover

Kensington Cliffs

Travelling from Paphos towards Limassol on the B6 road, on reaching the main garrison complex look out for a bus stop/lay-by ahead and turn right down a track just before the bus stop. Drive as far as possible, park and continue the short distance to the cliffs on foot. Star birds here are the **Griffon Vulture** which nest on the cliffs, what a fabulous display these six birds put on for us. The easiest way to describe it is that it was like being at a Red Arrows display; they started off in a complete circle then glided into a straight line with one slightly underneath the one on front, then they broke off in pairs and did some "formation" flying. This went on for around twenty minutes and then they disappeared to the cliffs only to reappear a few minutes later. My favourite moment was when a **Hooded Crow** tweaked one of the Vulture's tail in mid flight. The timing of our visit was around 2 pm and I suspect they return to the cliffs from their feeding station most days around this time. Also seen here were one **Cyprus Wheatear** and three **Alpine Swift**.



Griffon Vultures

Oroklini Marsh

Seen here were three **Cattle Egret**, thirty **Flamingo**, four **Spur Winged Plover**, two **Mallard**, ten **Coot**, four **Little Grebe**, three **Red-crested Pochard**, fifty **Black Headed Gull**, one **Caspian Gull** (lifer), six **Shoveler** and two **Teal**.



Caspian Gull with Black Headed

Phassouri Beach

Walking along the coast were seen one **Hoopoe**, one **Steppe Buzzard**, one **Marsh Harrier**, one **Ruppell's Warbler** and one **Grey Heron**.

Currium

In the ruins there were two **Hoopoe**, four **Blue Rock Thrush** and one **Tawny Pipit**.

Paphos Headland

On this year's visit we saw eleven migrating **Cormorant**, one **Linnet**, two **Kestrel**, six **Feral Pigeon**, two **White Wagtail**, ten **Goldfinch**, six **Northern Wheatear**, one **Chukar**, twenty **Stonechat**, two **Great Tit** and twenty **House Sparrow**.

Pano Archimandrita

This area is reached by taking the B6 from Paphos towards Limassol, turning left at Kouklia on the 616 route and following the winding, hilly route to the village. Seen here strangely were the only **Blackbird** and **Robin** of our whole trip; also seen were a tiny **Chiffchaf**, three **Serin**, one **Cyprus Wheatear** and two **Sardinian Warbler**.

Summary We were lucky to enjoy some really outstanding wildlife moments and new locations on this holiday which made it one of our best ever in Cyprus. Many thanks to Colin Richardson for his invaluable help and patience with ID's.