

Trip Report

By Bob Shiret

Introduction

I have to confess that before embarking on this year`s trip I doubted whether I would be constructing a report afterwards as it could be too similar to previous years and not of interest. However I could not have been more wrong! I was lucky enough to be the finder of a very rare (in Cyprus) **Asian Desert Warbler** and also made contact (after some effort!) with a **Namaqua Dove** (found by others) which is similarly rare. In addition to this were three further lifers and two new Cyprus birds for me. Our trip was booked through Thomsons as a half board package and our hotel was the Pioneer Beach where the food can be classed as a five star buffet! Cost was around £900 each and this year we hired a car from the Elephant Car Hire Company who dropped off and picked it up from the hotel for 162 euros, about thirteen pounds a day. For brevity I have not included location instructions that have appeared in previous reports on this website. One important factor affecting birdwatching was that there had been no discernible rainfall over the past twelve months so reservoirs were very low and rivers completely dried up. In fact the river at Geriskipou Beach had no water and now has trees and shrubs growing in the riverbed. Other areas such as the Anarita Dung Heaps and Mast areas have been somewhat degraded by mineral workings and the Phassouri Reedbeds were completely burnt out during our visit. The net result of the above was that the remaining reliable birding sites had many more birders than normal, which was not a major problem as most were considerate and helpful with sharing information.

Birdwatching Sites

Pioneer Beach Headland



Hotel Green Waste

This site has been further degraded since last year by the dumping of green waste from hotels over large parts of the headland and an archaeological dig where the spoil is spread over the small amount of natural scrub remaining. Plenty of birds were seen however including:- twenty **Yellow Wagtail** (*feldegg*), several **Isabelline Wheatear**, **Northern Wheatear**, **Black-eared Wheatear**, **House Sparrow**, **Swallow**, **Swift**, **House Martin**, **Great Tit**, **Hooded Crow**, **Collared Dove**, **Wood Pigeon**, **White Wagtail**, **Tawny Pipit**, **Meadow Pipit**, **Black Redstart**, **Crested Lark**, **Kingfisher**, four migrating **Glossy Ibis**, one hundred migrating **Pintail**, twelve migrating **Cormorant**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Little-ringed Plover**, **Spur-winged Lapwing**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Fan-tailed Warbler**, **Kestrel**, & **Yellow-legged Gull**.



**Spur-winged Plover**



**Kingfisher**



Black-eared Wheatear

### Mavrokolympo Dam

For directions see March 2014 report. This site appears to be good for raptors as this year we found a **Peregrine** and **Goshawk** (lifer) flying at high level over the dam end, where in previous years we have had *Bonelli's Eagle*. Also seen here was a **Kestrel** (mobbing the **Peregrine**) one **Woodchat Shrike**, one **Greater Spotted Cuckoo**, a pair of **Rüppell's Warbler**, one **Cyprus Wheatear** and two **Magpie**.



Rüppell's Warbler



Goshawk

### Aspro Dam - Dam End

The water level here was massively down on previous years so there were no weedy shallows for Herons etc but we did manage to find two **Cyprus Warbler**, **Fan-tailed Warbler** and **Corn Bunting**. For information the area on the side of the road from the opposite side of the dam to the car park up the hill to the track on the left seems reliable for Cyprus Warbler.





Cyprus Warbler

### Geriskipou Beach River

This was completely dry and the only birds seen here were a Buzzard, several Cetti's and Sardinian Warblers.

### Anarita Mast

This area which had been very fruitful in the past is now heavily degraded due to mineral workings, unfortunately (as usual!) the spoil from this is being heaped on the surrounding pristine scrub so the Spectacled Warbler pictured below will probably not be here next year.



Spectacled Warbler

## Anarita Park

This area was heavily populated with birders this year with occasionally up to eight cars parked in a 200m stretch. This area was so well populated with good birds that it was not an issue. For directions to the most productive area follow the instructions in the 2015 report and at the massive rocks crossroad turn left and the immediate shrubby area to the right for 200m and a further 200m after turning right at the next junction comprised truly fantastic birding. I was very fortunate here to be the finder of a very rare **Asian Desert Warbler** (lifer) one evening which unfortunately only one other birder made contact with a few days later. Another lifer that I was lucky to see was a **Rock Thrush**, I had stupidly forgotten my binoculars but a very kind lady lent me hers whilst she held my camera, unfortunately the bird was gone by the time the camera was operational! Other birds seen in this shrubby area were:- **Blackcap**, **Whitethroat**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Eastern Orphean Warbler** (lifer), **Eastern Subalpine Warbler**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Rüppell's Warbler**, **Chiffchaff**, **Spectacled Warbler**, **Song Thrush**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, **Redstart**, **Cyprus Wheatear**, **Eastern Race Black-eared Wheatear**, **Corn Bunting**, **Stonechat**, **Little Owl**, **Wryneck** and **Chukar**. Other birders did make contact with *Finch's* and *Desert Wheatear* here but alas not me! One bird I did connect with however which was quite interesting was the "Black" Warbler pictured below, possibly a melanistic **Sardinian**; apologies for the poor pictures but it never came out of the bushes! To my knowledge no one else made contact with this bird during my trip. One point of note here - all birds were seen whilst viewing from within the car, allowing close views without spooking the birds.



This interesting warbler had me thinking it was something exotic, but probably not the case



**Asian Desert Warbler** (lifer)

(14 previous Cyprus records, last seen 2011)





Eastern Orphean Warbler (lifer)



Eastern Subalpine Warbler



Chukar



Little Owl



Wryneck



Whitethroat

## Agios Georgious - Coral Bay

For directions see 2015 report. Twenty **Night Heron** were seen migrating and a group of ten **Yellow Wagtail** bathed in a rare puddle whilst we sat perhaps 5m away, also seen on this walk were many **Chiffchaff** and a **Black Francolin**.



**Yellow Wagtail** (*feldegg*)

## Zakaki March

For directions see 2015 Report. From the hide a **Squacco Heron** was seen in flight, a **Little Egret** hunted below the hide and on the scrape were a **Flamingo**, **Shoveler**, **Coot**, **Moorhen** and a **Little Grebe**.

## Ladies Mile

Continue along the road from the hide and you come to Ladies Mile, a long stretch of sandy beach with some scrub behind. We only found **Little-ringed Plover** here but others have connected with terns, gulls, warblers etc.

## Kato Acourdaleia

For directions see 2015 report but for better walk just retrace your steps after a nice coffee/cake at the Herbs Garden Café. Seen on this superb walk were: **Bonelli's Eagle**, two **Long-legged Buzzard**, three **Greater Spotted Cuckoo**, one **Serin**, fifty **Jackdaw**, two **Kestrel** and many **feral pigeons** in the gorge below.



**Long-legged Buzzard**

## Avidimou Beach

There seemed to be more warblers on the walk this year including **Ruppell's** and **Sardinian** plus many **Chukar**. Also seen here was a raptor that I have spent time deliberating on, and now think it may be a **Honey Buzzard**. Be careful here with bins and cameras as there is a British Garrison on this walk.



Honey Buzzard (probable)



Ruppell's Warbler

### Mandria

In the week before we left the UK a very rare **Namaqua Dove** was found on farmland here, fortunately it was still there when we arrived and after several attempts (and hours!) we made contact with it. Interestingly the small patch of felled fig trees and twigs it favoured held a surprising number of other species including **Nightingale**, **Spanish Sparrow**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Blackcap** and **Black Francolin**. Down on the beach and Larks Corner were a **Steppe Buzzard**, **Fan-tailed Warbler**, **Pallid Harrier**, **Marsh Harrier** and two **Greater Sand Plovers** almost invisible on the beach.



**Namaqua Dove**

(four previous Cyprus records)





Nightingale

I did consider **Thrush Nightingale** for this skulking bird but not enough info for good id.



Greater Sand Plover

## Currium

In this large archaeological site behind the Kensington Cliffs were an **Alpine Swift**, two **Cretzschmar's Bunting**, one **Cyprus Wheatear**, one **Blue Rock Thrush** and one **Eastern Race Black-eared Wheatear**.

## Paphos Headland Archaeological Site

We visited this site twice and many birders spend a whole day here as it is a good place for stopover migrants. This year we saw seven **Hoopoe**, several **Fan-tailed Warbler**, **Sardinian Warbler**, many **Northern Wheatear**, one **Red-throated Pipit**, two **Tawny Pipit**, one **Tree Pipit** and **Meadow Pipit**, one **Blue Rock Thrush** and many **Greenfinch**, **Goldfinch** and **Chaffinch**.



Tree Pipit



Red-throated Pipit



Hoopoe

### Paphos Sewage Works

On my one short visit here were two **Spur-winged Plover** and a **Green Sandpiper** flushed from a puddle outside the works.

### Larnaca Pools

This was a first time we have visited the salt lakes here and I have included a location map below. These maps are available from tourist offices and hotels. We only had a couple of hours here but a whole day would be well rewarded. The smaller lake adjacent to the runway was quite rewarding and contained **Flamingo**, **Black Headed Gull**, **Mediterranean Gull**, **Slender-billed Gull**, **Black-winged Stilt**, two **Ringed Plover**, two **Little Stint** and a **Mallard**. On the far bank were many more waders of unknown identification, unfortunately we did not have time to explore. We had a walk on the banks of the large salt lake but any birds were a very long way off.



The lake to the right of the "B4" sign on the map was our most productive, but this lake and the big salt lake were the only ones visited on our trip. For info the "A5" road on the map is the motorway from Paphos about 90 minutes away.

### [Birdlife Cyprus](#)

Birds in Cyprus face many constant threats, some of which I have noted above, Birdlifecyprus is an organisation that is constantly fighting for the wildlife of the island against a background of illegal hunting, trapping, development and ignorance. For the visiting birder it can be an invaluable resource being a member as well as helping them in their battles, I can thoroughly recommend joining to get the most out of a visit.

[www.birdlifecyprus.org.cy](http://www.birdlifecyprus.org.cy)

### Summary

A holiday dedicated to birdwatching would see more birds than us, but as ours is primarily a walking holiday (my wife is a non birder) the only dedicated birdwatching by me is a couple of hours before dinner so we were well pleased to see such a wide variety of birds.

## Species List

Isabelline Wheatear

Black-eared Wheatear

Eastern Race Black-eared Wheatear

Northern Wheatear

Cyprus Wheatear

Stonechat

Black Redstart

Redstart

Blue Rock Thrush

Rock Thrush

Song Thrush

White Wagtail

Yellow Wagtail

House Sparrow

Spanish Sparrow

Corn Bunting

Cretzschmar's Bunting

Black Francolin

Chukar

Collared Dove

Namaqua Dove

Feral Pigeon

Wood Pigeon

Greater Spotted Cuckoo

Serin

Chaffinch

Goldfinch

Greenfinch

Wryneck

Tree Pipit

Meadow Pipit

Red-throated Pipit

Tawny Pipit

Crested Lark

Sardinian Warbler

Fan-tailed Warbler

Chiffchaff

Blackcap

Whitethroat

Lesser Whitethroat

Spectacled Warbler

Eastern Orphean Warbler

Eastern Subalpine Warbler

Asian Desert Warbler

Ruppell's Warbler

Cyprus Warbler

Cetti's Warbler

Jackdaw

Hooded Crow

Magpie

Great Tit

Hoopoe

Buzzard  
Steppe Buzzard  
Long-legged Buzzard  
Honey Buzzard  
Marsh Harrier  
Pallid Harrier  
Bonelli's Eagle  
Goshawk  
Kestrel  
Peregrine  
Little Owl  
Alpine Swift  
Swift  
House Martin  
Barn Swallow  
Woodchat Shrike  
Kingfisher  
Green Sandpiper  
Common Sandpiper  
Kentish Plover  
Ringed Plover  
Little-ringed Plover  
Greater Sand Plover  
Little Stint  
Spur-winged Lapwing  
Northern Lapwing  
Black-winged Stilt  
Night Heron

Little Egret  
Squacco Heron  
Purple Heron  
Glossy Ibis  
Flamingo  
Cormorant  
Pintail  
Mallard  
Shoveler  
Little Grebe  
Coot  
Moorhen  
Lesser Black-backed Gull  
Mediterranean Gull  
Black-headed Gull  
Slender-billed Gull  
Yellow-legged Gull  
Caspian Gull

Total = 96 + 2 distinct sub-species