

# *Honeyguide*

**WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

36 Thunder Lane Thorpe St Andrew Norwich NR7 0PX  
Telephone and Fax 01603 300552 Evenings and weekends



**Crete**  
**2 – 9 April 2002**

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**Holiday participants**

Tony Summers Harvey Wood	Leicestershire
Ruth Matthews	Faversham, Kent
Sarah Roantree	Deal, Kent
Martin Jordan Daphne Jordan	Romford, Essex
John Rumpus Rosemary MacDonald	Deal, Kent Isle of man
John Davis Carla Davis	Deal, Kent
Angela Turner Ann Suckling	Norfolk

**Leaders**

David Collins Chris Durdin	Bury St Edmunds Norwich
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With commiserations to Keith and Joyce Ball who had to pull out just before the holiday

Report and bird list written by David Collins, with plants and other lists by Chris Durdin.  
Illustrations by Rob Hume. Cover: lammergeier

As with all Honeyguide holidays, £25 of the price of the holiday was put towards a conservation project, in this case for the lammergeier conservation project of the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), which is based in Athens but whose work covers the whole of Greece and its islands. £650 was given this year - £25 per person from the two holidays in Crete. This brings Honeyguide's total contributions since the first Honeyguide holiday in Crete in 1995 to £3,045, and to conservation projects in Europe to £25,700. A thank-you letter from HOS appears at the end of this report.

**Crete  
2 – 9 April 2002**

Tuesday 2 April – Gatwick to Plakias

No hold-ups and the coach was ready and waiting at Heraklion Airport, so as soon as we had cleared customs we were on our way to our hotel at Plakias.

At first we headed west along the north coast of the island, which is heavily developed and not very attractive. After an hour or so, though, the scenery became more rugged, and snow-capped mountains lined the horizon. We kept a sharp lookout for birds and even flowers. There is a limit to what you can identify from a coach, but plants included Tree Spurge and swathes of the yellow-flowered Jerusalem Sage, while birds included plenty of Buzzards and, rather surprisingly, a Mute Swan.

At Rethimno the coach turned inland towards the south coast. Beyond the watershed we passed through the spectacular Kourtaliotiko Gorge, which we would visit later in the week. Then the south coast came into view, and we were soon arriving at the small resort of Plakias.

After a reviving cup of tea at the Sofia Hotel, we were shown to our rooms, and had just enough time to settle in before dinner at the Sofia Taverna.

#### Wednesday 3 April – walk to Mirthios

At the crack of dawn (which is at a civilised 7am here), a few hardy souls braved the surprisingly cold morning air, and joined Chris and me on a pre-breakfast bird-walk along the shore.

There were quite a few birds coming in over the sea; mainly Purple Herons, but also two Squacco Herons, a Night Heron and a single Hoopoe. In the meadows just inland from the beach there were good numbers of recently arrived Tree Pipits and Wheatears, and a group of five Corn Buntings gave good views. Perhaps best of all, though, was a male Subalpine Warbler.

After breakfast we walked up through the olive groves towards the hill village of Mirthios. The first stop was at the little marsh by the hotel where Loose-flowered Orchid grows. Next was another damp area where Tongue-orchids were numerous. As we continued up the track we stopped frequently to admire a wide range of wayside flowers which included such attractive species as Wild Gladiolus, Salsify, Dragon's Teeth, Blue Hound's-tongue, Hairy Yellow Vetchling, Long-beaked Storksbill and Large Mediterranean Spurge.

At one point we were able to look down from the track to a fast flowing stream. Here we had excellent views through the telescopes of a Snipe feeding at a muddy edge, and nearby was a Stripe-necked Terrapin. Now and again we spotted migrant birds heading up the valley, including more Purple Herons, Marsh Harriers, and a male Red-footed Falcon.

Chris explained that the last leg of the walk to Mirthios is steep and slightly tricky to negotiate, so we now split into two groups. Those who were keen for the challenge followed Chris, whilst the rest of the group doubled back with me and completed the walk to Mirthios via an easier route. Chris's group was rewarded with good views of an Eastern Festoon butterfly and one or two extra orchids – but nothing we didn't see again later in the week. My group was rewarded by finding a species of Skullcap endemic to Crete (*Scutellaria sieberi*).

At around 2pm, after a brief shower, we regrouped at a taverna in Mirthios for lunch. The taverna overlooks the valley we had just climbed, with lovely views to the sea at Plakias. Lunch was interrupted somewhat when a mixed group of Montagu's and Marsh Harriers flew over.

After lunch we strolled slowly back down to Plakias, taking in more new plants as we went.

#### Thursday 4 April – Kourtaliotiko Gorge and Spili

The early morning bird walk was something of a non-event today. With a cold wind and the threat of rain, we drove the minibuses along the sea front, then continued west to a little valley at Souda in search of Ruppell's Warbler. No luck, but we did see the endemic Cretan Palm and several fine spikes of Italian Man Orchid.

After breakfast, we drove to Kourtaliotiko Gorge, where we spent the morning. It was very atmospheric, with the almost sheer walls of the gorge rising high above us, disappearing into misty low clouds. From time to time huge Griffon Vultures loomed out of the mist, and Crag Martins skimmed silently past in search of insects.

We descended into the gorge by means of well-maintained steps, stopping frequently to admire a range of attractive flowers. These included a number of endemics such as white flowered Cretan Tulip and Cretan Cyclamen, and more colourful species such as Ricotia (pink) and Procopiana – an unusual looking, blue flowered member of the borage family.

At the bottom of the gorge is an attractive little chapel and a waterfall – a fine setting for a plant hunting expedition. Here we found more of the Cretan Cyclamen, Maidenhair Fern, and a white-flowered tree was identified as Storax.

An unusual fern *Cheilanthes fragrans* – Scented Cheilanthes, named from the smell of coumarin on its leaves – provided interest as we headed back to the minibuses, and we had superb views of a male Blue Rock Thrush. It appeared to be nesting in a large cave on the far side of the gorge, and perched for all to see through the telescopes, showing its luminous blue plumage. In my experience, this is not an easy bird to see well: it is usually silhouetted against the sky, or simply a dark blur disappearing across a mountainside.

At lunchtime we drove on to the village of Spili. No clouds here, so we sat in the sunny square eating delicious giros (not a cheque but a kind of pitta bread filled with all kinds of tasty things), followed by our first yoghurt and honey or, in Chris's case, an overlarge ice cream! During this feast some saw a Cleopatra butterfly, and two Peregrines were seen high overhead. After eating we admired the artwork inside the local church, and various souvenirs were purchased.

Having rounded the group up we then drove the short distance to the Spili 'bumps'. These appeared to be two rather uninspiring looking mounds – but how misleading first appearances can be! Even before we had completed the two hundred yards between van and bumps we had stopped to admire flowers such as Orange Wild Tulip, and two species of iris: the small blue Cretan Iris, and the green and black Widow Iris. While admiring these, we spotted a fine pair of Balkan Green Lizards, which allowed close inspection.

The bumps themselves are a remarkable botanical spectacle, and the whole group later named this as a highlight of the week. There were more irises, lovely patches of pink Rock Tulip, Crown Anemone and a whole host of other attractive plants. However, it was the extraordinary range and profusion of orchids that made the place so special. The yellow spikes of Few-flowered Orchid were so numerous that it was almost impossible to walk without crushing them. Interspersed among these were species such as Yellow Bee Orchid, Rainbow Orchid, Sawfly Orchid, Bumblebee Orchid, Marengo Orchid, and Toothed Orchid.

The setting for the 'bumps' is a splendid one. Beyond there are lush fields and in the distance a small, whitewashed chapel; beyond that, snow-capped mountains. It seemed as splendid a setting as any in which to see a spectacular bird of prey – and we were not disappointed. The cry 'Lammergeier' went up from Martin, and we looked up in time to watch it drifting effortlessly past at close range. A few languid flaps and it passed out of sight behind the hill. There was a brief pause, then gasps of excitement from the whole group. Then, the excitement over, attention switched once more to the dazzling array of orchids.

As the afternoon began to cool off, we took a short walk along a track back to the road, passing fields full of anemone. By the road itself was a Sand Crocus *Romulea bulbocodium*. Then we returned to Plakias for another fine meal, this time in the Gio-Ma taverna overlooking the sea where a bemused flock of 60 Little Egrets passed to and fro as the light faded, presumably trying to decide how to continue their northward migration.



### Friday 5 April – Faestos and Ayia Triada

Today's pre-breakfast walk rather set the scene for the rest of the week. At the little bridge in town a Kingfisher perched on the wall, allowing close prolonged views: it did so every day thereafter. Just under the bridge a Night Heron was feeding, and this also proved to be a regular. Farther along a superb Woodchat gave good views, and was also still around until the last but one day. So all three birds were seen well by all the group in the course of the week. A Whinchat was also seen this morning: the first of many.

After breakfast we drove east towards Faestos, an important Minoan archaeological site. En route we stopped to watch a flock of about a hundred Alpine Swifts close to the road.



At Faestos, Chris explained that last year they had visited the site in heavy rain, so had seen little of interest. In contrast, we arrived in hot, sunny weather, and saw plenty. Indeed, between the car park and the visitor centre we saw so much of interest that the 200 metres or so took most of the rest of the morning! Chief distraction was a lovely male Collared Flycatcher, but a pale phase Booted Eagle low overhead was a close second. The butterflies were out enjoying the heat, including both Swallowtail and Scarce Swallowtail (*pictured, left*), several Clouded Yellows and a Holly Blue.

Having finally made it to the café, we enjoyed light refreshments as we sat looking out over the valley towards the snowy mountains beyond. In the valley, there were 12 Cattle Egrets around a goat farm.

Part of the group opted for a tour of the archaeological site. The rest of us made do with views over the site from a lookout area, then explored the hillside by the car park. We were rewarded with a good range of flowers, including several of the species we had seen at Spili yesterday, but also Italian Man Orchid, Monkey Orchid, and best of all, Cretan Bee Orchid. By the road was a very attractive, red-flowered bugloss, the Narrow-leaved Bugloss, and a small white butterfly caught in the net proved to be Eastern Dappled White. In the butterfly pot it clearly showed the spangled green underwing markings.

After eating our packed lunches, we drove a few kilometres down the lane to Agia Triada, close to the ruins of the Minoan summer palace. On the hillside by the car park we came upon yet more orchids: this time Giant Orchid and Fan-lipped Orchid, as well as more Cretan Bee Orchids, Yellow Bee Orchids, Italian Man Orchids and so on. Tearing ourselves away, we continued down the track to the river. Here, a small white butterfly this time proved to be an Eastern Bath White, with more uniform green markings below.

Finally, we came to the river itself: rather messy with dumped rubbish, but good for birds nevertheless. The shallow, muddy margins of the river proved very popular with migrant waders, and there was a good selection. There were several each of Little Stint and Ruff, plus both Wood and Green Sandpipers. Best of all though were two Marsh Sandpipers with delicate bills and speckled upperparts.

### Saturday 6 April – Lake Kournas, Agia Reservoir, Georgioupolis and Rethymno

The usual mix of birds was seen before breakfast, but also good views of about 20 'Yellow' Wagtails, mostly the blue-headed race.

Our longest drive today took us north to a variety of wetland habitats. First stop though was at Souda, where we again saw the Cretan Palm but no Ruppell's Warbler. Then on to the gorge at Kotsifou, where low cloud and rain prevented exploration – we decided to continue to Lake Kournas.

Two Black-necked Grebes were found amongst the Little Grebes. Otherwise there were, as expected, few birds to be seen. A heavy shower forced a retreat to the shelter of a taverna for more yoghurt and honey. Once the yoghurt had gone and the rain had stopped we had a short walk by the lake to take in

the fine scenery and search out a few more plant species for our ever-growing list. Best was a lovely pink daisy like flower which appeared to be Pink Hawksbeard.

We pressed on to the reservoir at Agia. About 200 Swallows were feeding over the lake, but there were no Red-rumped Swallows among them. Two Black-winged Stilts and a Green Sandpiper gave good views on an artificial island. But it was the siting of a crane on the edge of the reeds to our left that got the adrenalin flowing. We identified first a male, then a female Little Crane – a new bird for many, including Chris.

Well satisfied with this as we were, food never seems to be far from the thoughts of Honeyguiders, and we decided it was now time to eat our packed lunches. I took mine along the dam to the edge of the reeds, hoping for closer views of Little Cranes. Sure enough, after a short while, one then two male cranes came out on the edge of the reeds no more than 20m away. The rest of the group joined me, and we all had good close views through the telescopes. Perhaps not as good as a Lammergeier, but certainly one of the highlights of the week.

At Georgioupolis Lake we had good views of four male and three female Garganeys, and there was another Mute Swan. After that we continued along the north coast to the town of Rethymno. Here the group was free to wander around the narrow streets of the old quarters, visit the Venetian fort, or wander along the picturesque harbour front. Pallid Swifts were identified first by call, and then by rigorous examination of plumage. A single Cory's Shearwater out to see was the only one of the week. More surprising than either, and certainly a low point of the week, was a bemused Calandra Lark in a cage outside a café, found by Sarah.

The group had opted for a meal in Rethimno, so we adjourned at 7.30 for the evening feast, then headed back to Plakias, arriving at around 10.30. A long but very satisfying day.

#### Sunday 7 April – Moni Preveli and Kotsifou Gorge

Early morning around Plakias produced the usual Kingfisher, Night Heron and Woodchat, and the Yellow Wagtails included at least two of the grey-headed Balkan race.

The morning was spent near the monastery at Moni Preveli. The trees and bushes below the monastery held a number of migrant birds. Amongst the first to be seen was a Bonelli's Warbler singing from conifers close to the car park. It was reluctant to show itself, but finally did so. Another one sang lower down. Also much admired was a fine male Black-eared Wheatear, our first of the week, perched on top of a rock and contrasting beautifully with the blue sea beyond. Perhaps best of all though was a male Ruppell's Warbler which gave good views for some, but was sadly missed by others, despite prolonged efforts to relocate it. There were also good views of a male Ortolan Bunting, a male Redstart and a pair of Subalpine Warblers. Overhead both Woodlark and Short-toed Lark sang.

For those who had missed the Eastern Dappled White at Faestos, another was caught and displayed in the butterfly pot.

Quite a hot day today, so we withdrew to the café around noon for a drink or ice cream. Some then visited the monastery before the minibuses made their way independently to a rendez-vous at the taverna in Mirthios where we had lunch. No Montagu's Harriers this time, but a single Black Kite drifting past was the only one of the week.

In theory this was to have been a free afternoon, but none of the group was keen to head for home. After lunch, we therefore made the short journey to the top of the Kotsifou Gorge for a bit of botanising. This event had been rained off the day before. By the road we caught a fine Eastern Festoon for all to see in the butterfly pot, and plants included yellow Tree Flax on the cliffs. A lone Red-rumped Swallow heading north over the pass was a new bird for several of the group, and our only one of the week.

A bit farther up, we came to a flower rich slope where both Early Spider Orchid (*pictured, right*) and Sawfly Orchid were growing.

On the way back, we were surprised to see a large land crab nonchalantly crossing the road. We got out for a closer look and to take photographs. It proved quite a feisty individual!



## Monday 8 April – Frango Castello and Imbros Gorge

Our last full day was the hottest of the week, and probably also the best for birds.

The dawn run split into two groups. Sarah was keen to try again for the Ruppell's Warbler at Moni Preveli, so I took her and Martin back for another try. The rest made the usual walk along the beach at Plakias.

Sadly, the Ruppell's Warbler could not be refound; perhaps it had been a migrant bird. However, good views of a Chukar Partridge, a new bird for both Martin and Sarah, was some compensation. There were also six Black-eared Wheatears. Meanwhile, the Plakias contingent found a Stone-curlew on the beach, and a Woodchat shrike had taken up residence by the little marsh next to the hotel.

After breakfast we drove west along the coast through more lovely scenery, finally pulling up by the Venetian castle at Frango Castello. From here we walked along the top of low cliffs, with the fine sandy beach below. Chris explained that this is a good spot for migrant birds, and although conditions were not right for large numbers of birds, there were certainly a few migrants to be seen.

Whinchats and Wheatears were most numerous, with a few Black-eared Wheatears mixed in. Two Hoopoes gave reasonable views and a single Robin was a bit of a surprise. Even more surprising were two Short-eared Owls: one apparently coming in off the sea, and the other flying around close by. Butterflies included both Small and Holly Blue. Plants were by no means spectacular, but included new additions to the list such as White Horehound, Mandrake and Rayless Chamomile.

We had lunch along the road just inland from the castle where Spectacled Warblers can sometimes be found. No luck today, but we did see a flock of 39 Grey Herons flying in off the sea, a single Night Heron flying west, and there were good views of a Hoopoe. Also of interest was a Brown Argus butterfly, which was caught in the net.

In the afternoon we drove a little farther along the coast to the Imbros Gorge, which was to be our last site of the holiday. We stopped at the first lay-by to have a look around in the low 'hedgehog plant' scrub and to watch for raptors overhead. Although it looked anything but the ideal spot for birdwatching, we were delighted to find a pair of Ruppell's Warblers. We had given up all hope of finding this bird for the unlucky ones who had missed it yesterday, and it was therefore particularly pleasing to come upon an obliging pair at the last. While we were watching these, a pair of Bonelli's Eagles were spotted over a distant mountain. They came closer and closer, and finally flew right over head, showing the characteristic black and white patterned underparts very well. A fine finale to the week we thought, but it proved not quite to be the end of our birdwatching excitement!

Back at the hotel, the Woodchat shrike was still perched on wires by the marsh, so some of the group decided to investigate the area more closely. The reward was good views of a Wryneck and four superb male Spanish Sparrows (the only ones of the week), while Martin also had brief views of a Red-footed Falcon flying over.

## Tuesday 9 April – Plakias to Gatwick

Sadly, the week was suddenly over, but the coach was not due until late morning so there was time for us all to try again for the Wryneck by the hotel, which eventually perched for all to see. A Nightingale also gave unusually prolonged views, the Woodchat shrike was joined by a second bird and a brief snatch of song confirmed that a Great Reed Warbler was lurking somewhere in the small reedbed.

Finally, while we waited for the coach to arrive, five Squacco Herons flew in and perched on a rock just offshore. No sooner had they continued on their migration than four tired Little Egrets flew in to rest on the same rock. I wondered how many herons and egrets had used that rock over the centuries.

David Collins

### **Nominations for wildlife of the week**

Not in the least scientific, but an interesting insight into the mix of wildlife that makes Crete special.

Martin	lammergeier
John R	migrating little egrets
Ruth	Ruppell's warbler and orchids
Rosemary	black-eared wheatear and flowers at Spili bumps

Angela	lammergeier and the urban kingfisher
Ann	lammergeier
Daphne	lammergeier and Cretan bee orchid
Sarah	Ruppell's warbler and lammergeier
John D	early spider and loose-flowered orchids
Carla	black-eared wheatear, Cretan bee orchid and turban buttercup
Harvey	Ruppell's warbler, wild tulips
Tony	Cretan bee orchid, garganey
David	Orchids at Spili especially Cretan bee orchid; migrants at Moni Preveli
Chris	lammergeier (despite little crane being a 'lifer'), giant fennel

#### BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail  
 Scarce Swallowtail  
 Eastern Festoon ( ssp.cretica )  
 Large White  
 Small White  
 Bath white  
 Dappled White  
 Clouded Yellow  
 Cleopatra (*pictured, right*)  
 Painted Lady  
 Red Admiral  
 Southern Speckled Wood  
 Wall Brown  
 Small copper  
 Small blue  
 Holly Blue  
 Brown Argus  
 Common Blue

18 species



#### Other notable insects

*Acerdia ungarica*, a stick-insect like grasshopper  
 Egyptian locust  
*Graphasoma italicum*, a red and black shield bug  
 ['Millwall bug', as David describes it]  
 Violet carpenter bee

#### AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Marsh frog (heard)  
 Stripe necked terrapin  
 Balkan green lizard  
 Erhard's wall lizard

CRUSTACEAN: land crab

MAMMAL: eastern hedgehog

### Crete: 2-9 April 2002 Bird List

**Little Grebe.** 40 at Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-necked Grebe.** 2 at Lake Kournas on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Cory's Shearwater.** 1 west past Rethymno on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Shag.** 1 in Plakias Bay on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Night Heron.** One or two seen daily around Plakias. One west over Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Squacco Heron.** 2 flying in at Plakias on morning of 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 1 there on 4<sup>th</sup>. Again at Plakias, 5 flew in on 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Cattle Egret.** 12 feeding around livestock in Geropotamus valley below Faestos on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Egret.** Migration through Plakias all week, with highest numbers on 3<sup>rd</sup> (90) and 4<sup>th</sup> (60).

**Grey Heron.** Mainly seen in ones and twos, but flock of 39 in off sea at Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Purple Heron.** A few migrants seen, with maximum of 11 over Plakias on morning of 3<sup>rd</sup>.



**Mute Swan.** 1 seen from the bus on the north coast somewhere between Iraklion and Rethmno on 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
1 at Georgioupolis on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Mallard.** Lake Kournas, Georgioupolis and Agia Reservoir.

**Pintail.** A pair at Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Garganey.** In Plakias Bay, flocks of 50 on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 32 on 9<sup>th</sup>. 7 at Georgioupolis on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Shoveler.** 4 at Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Kite.** 1 at Mirthios on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Lammergeier.** 1 over Spili 'bumps' on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Griffon Vulture.** Seen every day. Up to 6 in Kourtaliotiko Gorge.

**Marsh Harrier.** A few migrants over Plakias etc. each day up to 6<sup>th</sup>, but not thereafter. Maximum of 10 on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Montagu's Harrier.** 4 over Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1 near Spili on 4<sup>th</sup>, 1 over Faestos on 5<sup>th</sup>, and 1 at Plakias on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Sparrowhawk.** 1 over Plakias early morning on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Buzzard.** Common.

**Booted Eagle.** 3 near Faestos on 5<sup>th</sup>. 1 over Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Bonelli's Eagle.** Pair at Imbros Gorge on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Kestrel.** Common.

**Red-footed Falcon.** Singles at Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Peregrine.** 2 over Spili on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Chukar.** 1 calling and seen well at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Quail.** 1 calling in fields by Spili 'bumps' on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Crake.** At least 6 at Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>, with some showing very well at close range.

**Moorhen.**

**Coot**

**Black-winged Stilt.** 2 at Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Stone-curlew.** 1 on Plakias beach early morning on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Ringed Plover.** 3 on Plakias Beach on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4 on the river at Agia Triada on 5<sup>th</sup> and 1 at Plakias on 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Stint.** 1 at Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 3 at Agia Triada on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Ruff.** 4 on river at Agia Triada on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Snipe.** 1 on stream just north of Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Redshank.** 1 at Agia Triada on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Sandpiper.** 2 at Agia Triada on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenshank.** 1 at Agia Triada on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper.** 1 at Agia Triada on 5<sup>th</sup> and 1 at Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Wood Sandpiper.** 2 at Agia Triada on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Sandpiper.** Small numbers on beach in Plakias throughout the week. Maximum on 5 on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull.** 1 at Rethymno on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow-legged Gull.** Common.

**Rock Dove.** Rather impure stock at Kourtaliotiko Gorge etc.

**Woodpigeon.** Common.

**Collared Dove.** Common.

**Cuckoo.** 1 flying north at Faestos on 5<sup>th</sup>, 1 near Lake Kournas on 6<sup>th</sup>, and 1 heard at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Short-eared Owl.** 2 at Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>, with one apparently flying in off sea.

**Swift.** A few seen most days.

**Pallid Swift.** Breeding colony of about 20 birds In Rethymno on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Alpine Swift.** A few seen every day, but large flocks seen on 5<sup>th</sup>, including a flock of about 100 near Agia Galini.

**Kingfisher.** Two in Plakias throughout. One perched on bridge in town every morning.

**Hoopoe.** One in at Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 2 at Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Wryneck.** One at Plakias on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

**(Calandra Lark).** One in a cage in Rethymno on 6<sup>th</sup> had presumably been caught locally?

**Short-toed Lark.** One singing over Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup> and 5 at Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup> (two singing).

**Crested Lark.** Common.

**Woodlark.** Singing birds at Spili 'bumps' and Moni Preveli.

**Skylark.** Four in fields by Spili 'bumps' on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Sand Martin.** Small numbers at Plakias throughout, and 20 at Agia Reservoir in 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Crag Martin.** Kourtaliotiko Gorge only.

*crested lark*

**Swallow.** Passage throughout the week. Highest number was 200 at Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-rumped Swallow.** 1 flying north through Kotsifou Gorge on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**House Martin.** Small numbers passing through all week.

**Tawny Pipit.** Singles at Spili 'bumps' on 4<sup>th</sup>, Faestos on 5<sup>th</sup>, and Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>.



**Tree Pipit.** Small numbers of migrants throughout the week. Maximum of 20 at Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Meadow Pipit.** Presumed late wintering birds at Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup> (2) and 5<sup>th</sup> (1).

**Yellow Wagtail.** Seen most days at Plakias, with a maximum of 20 on 6<sup>th</sup>. Mainly the Balkan race, but Grey-headed also seen.

**Grey Wagtail.** One in Kourtaliotiko Gorge on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**White Wagtail.** Common.

**Wren.** Kourtaliotiko Gorge on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Robin.** One at Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Nightingale.** Heard each day, including in Plakias, but never common.

**Black Redstart.** In Spili on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Redstart.** 1 in Plakias on 4<sup>th</sup>, 2 at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup> and 1 there on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Whinchat.** Not seen until 5<sup>th</sup>, when 1 in Plakias and 3 near Faestos. Seen around Plakias etc in small numbers every day thereafter.

**Stonechat.** Common.

**Wheatear.** A few seen most days. Maximum of 10 at Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-eared Wheatear.** Single male at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup>, then 6 there on 8<sup>th</sup> plus another 10 at Frango Castello.

**Blue Rock Thrush.** Common in rocky habitats.

**Blackbird.** Common.

**Song Thrush.** 2 seen on 4<sup>th</sup> (location not noted).

**Cetti's Warbler.** Heard each day.

**Sedge Warbler.** 1 at Agia Reservoir on 6<sup>th</sup>, and 1 at Plakias on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Reed Warbler.** 1 singing at Plakias on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Subalpine Warbler.** 1 seen most days in scrub behind Plakias beach. Male singing at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Sardinian Warbler.** Common.

**Ruppell's Warbler.** Male at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup>, and pair in low scrub by Imbros Gorge on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Whitethroat.** 1 at Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. 4 at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup>, and 6 at Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Blackcap.** In Plakias on 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> only.

**Bonelli's Warbler.** 2 at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup>, and 1 still there on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Willow Warbler.** 2 at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup> and 1 still there on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Flycatcher.** 1 at Faestos on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Collared Flycatcher.** A male at Faestos on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Pied Flycatcher.** 2 at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup> and 1 still there on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Blue Tit.** Common.

**Great Tit.** Common.

**Woodchat shrike.** One or two at Plakias from 5<sup>th</sup>. 4 at Frango Castello on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Jackdaw.** 10 at Kotsifou Gorge on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Hooded Crow.** Common.

**Raven.** A few seen every day.

**House Sparrow.** One male at Plakias on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Italian Sparrow.** Common.

**Spanish Sparrow.** Four males at Plakias on 8<sup>th</sup>, and at least 1 still on 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Chaffinch.** Common.

**Serin.** The only one was a male singing near Lake Kournas on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenfinch.** Common.

**Goldfinch.** Common.

**Linnet.** Fairly common.

**Ortolan bunting.** Male at Moni Preveli on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Corn Bunting.** Five at Plakias most days, and a few at other scattered locations.

## CRETE PLANT LIST 2– 9 April 2002

**Key and nomenclature:** Latin names of plants follows those used in *Flora of the Cretan Area* (Turland et al 1993), any alternative names as used in *Mediterranean Wild Flowers* (Blamey & Grey-Wilson 1993) follow in brackets. Also used as references: *The Orchids of Crete and Karpathos* by Albertis Antonis (a photoguide) and *Wild Flowers of Crete* by George Sfikas

\* Endemic to Crete

# Introduced and not native to Crete and cultivated or planted species

### 1 SPERMATOPHYTES

#### i) Gymnosperms

##### ***Cupressaceae* - Cypress Family**

*Cupressus sempervirens* forma. *horizontalis* Cypress

*C. sempervirens* forma. *sempervirens* Funeral Cypress

##### ***Ephedraceae* – Joint pines**

*Ephedra distachya* Joint pine

##### ***Pinaceae* – Pines**

#*Araucaria araucana* Norfolk Island pine (widely planted)

#### ii) Angiosperms

##### a) Dicotyledons

**Aizoaceae - Aizoon Family**

# *Carpobrotus edulis* Hottentot Fig

**Anacardiaceae - Pistacio Family**

*Pistacia lentiscus* Mastic Tree

**Apocynaceae - Oleander Family**

*Nerium oleander* subsp. *oleander* Oleander

**Boraginaceae - Borage Family**

*Anchusa italica* (*A. azurea*) Large Blue Alkanet

*Borago officinalis* Borage

*Cerinthe major* Honeywort

*Cynoglossum cherifolium* A Hound's Tongue

*Cynoglossum creticum* Blue Hound's Tongue

*Echium angustifolium* Narrow-leaved Bugloss

*Echium italicum* subsp. *biebersteinii* Pale Bugloss

*Echium plantagineum* Purple Viper's Bugloss

*Onosma erecta* A Golden Drop

*Symphytum creticum* (*Procopiana cretica*) Procopiana

**Cactaceae - Cactus Family**

# *Opuntia ficus-barbarica* (*O. ficus-indica*) Prickly Pear

**Campanulaceae - Bellflower Family**

\* *Petromarula pinnata* Cretan Wall Lettuce (on Venetian mill under Mirthios, but not in flower)

**Caprifoliaceae - Honeysuckle Family**

# *Sambucus nigra* Elderflower

**Caryophyllaceae - Pink Family**

*Silene colorata* subsp. *colorata*

**Cistaceae - Rockrose Family**

*Cistus creticus* Cretan Cistus

*Cistus salvifolius* Sage-Leaved Cistus

*Fumana laevipes*

*Fumana thymifolia* Thyme-leaved fumana

**Compositae - Daisy Family**

*Anthemis rigida* subsp. *rigida* Rayless Chamomile

*Asteriscus aquaticus* Yellow sea aster

*Asteriscus spinosa* (*Pallensis spinosa*)

*Bellis annua* Annual daisy

*Calendula arvensis* Field Marigold

*Chrysanthemum coronarium* var. *coronarium* Crown Daisy

*C. coronarium* var. *discolor* Crown Daisy

*Chrysanthemum segetum* Corn marigold

*Galactites tomentosa* Mediterranean Thistle

*Helichrysum stoechas* Curry plant

*Phagnalon rupestre*

*Silybum marianum* Milk thistle

*Tragopogon sinuatus* (*T. porrifolius*) Wild Salsify

**Convolvulaceae - Bindweed Family**

*Convolvulus althaeoides* Mallow-leaved Bindweed

*Cuscuta epithimum* Dodder

**Crassulaceae - Stonecrop Family**

*Umbilicus parviflorus* Small-Flowered Navelwort

**Cruciferaeae - Cress Family**

*Biscutella didyma* Buckler Mustard  
*Capsella bursa-pastoralis* Shepherd's purse  
*Matthiola tricuspidata* 3-horned stock  
\**Ricotia cretica* Ricotia  
*Sinapsis arvensis* Charlock

**Cucurbitaceae - Cucumber Family**  
*Ecballium elaterium* Squirting cucumber

**Dioscoraceae - Yam Family**  
*Tamus communis* Black Bryony

**Euphorbiaceae - Spurge Family**  
*Euphorbia acanthothamnus* Greek Spiny Spurge  
*Euphorbia characias* Mediterranean Spurge  
*Euphorbia dendroides* Tree Spurge  
*Euphorbia helioscopia* Sun Spurge  
# *Ricinus communis* Castor Oil Plant  
*Mercurialis annua* Annual mercury

**Gentianaceae - Gentian Family**  
*Blackstonia perfoliata* Yellow-wort  
*Centaurium sp* An unidentified tiny pink centaury

**Geraniaceae - Geranium Family**  
*Erodium gruinum* Long-beaked Storksbill  
*Erodium moschatum* Musk storksbill  
*Geranium dissectum* Cut-leaved Cranebill  
*Geranium lucidum* Shining Cranesbill  
*Geranium molle* Dovesfoot cranesbill  
*Geranium purpureum* Little robin  
*Geranium rotundifolium* Round-leaved cranesbill

**Guttiferae - Hypericum Family**  
*Hypericum empetrifolium subsp. empetrifolium* Shrubby St. John's Wort

**Labiatae - Mint Family**  
*Coridothymus capitatus (Thymus capitatus)* Shrubby Thyme  
*Lamium amplexicaule* Henbit hemp-nettle  
*Marrubium vulgare* White horehound  
*Phlomis fruticosa* Jerusalem Sage  
*Oreganum microphyllum* Note: in Sfikas, not in Blamey Grey-Wilson  
*Prasium majus* Spanish Hedge-nettle  
*Salvia fruticosa* Three-Leaved Sage  
\**Scutellaria sieberi* A skullcap

**Leguminosae - Pea Family**  
# *Acacia spp* Mimosa  
*Anthyllus vulneraria ssp.praepropera* Red (Mediterranean) Kidney Vetch  
*Bituminaria bituminosa (Psoralea bituminosa)* Pitch Trefoil  
*Calicotome villosa* Hairy Thorny Broom  
*Cercis siliquastrum* Judas tree  
*Ceratonia siliqua* Carob Tree  
\* *Ebenus creticus* Shrubby Sainfoin (Cretan ebony)  
*Hippocrepis multisiliquosa?* A horseshoe vetch  
*Hymenocarpus circinnatus* Disk trefoil  
*Lathyrus aphaca* Yellow vetchling  
*Lupinus micranthus* Hairy Lupin  
*Medicago arabica* Spotted Medick  
*Medicago marina* Sea Medick  
*Medicago orbicularis* Large Disk Medick  
*Onobrychis caput-galli* Cockscomb sainfoin  
*Robina pseudacacia* False acacia

*Spartium junceum* Spanish Broom  
*Tetragonolobus purpureus* Asparagus Pea  
*Trifolium campestre* Hop trefoil  
*Trifolium stellatum* Star Clover  
*Trifolium uniflorum* One-Flowered Clover  
*Tripodion tetraphyllum (Anthyllis tetraphyllum)* Bladder Vetch  
*Vicia hybrida* Hairy yellow vetchling  
*Vicia sativa agg* Common vetch

**Linacea - Flax Family**

*Linum arboreum* Tree Flax (=shrubby flax)  
*Linum bienne* Pale Flax

**Lythracea - Loosestrife Family**

*Lythrum junceum*

**Malvaceae - Mallow Family**

*Lavatera cretica* Lesser Tree Mallow  
*Malva sylvestris* Common Mallow

**Moraceae - Fig Family**

*Ficus carica* Fig  
# *Morus alba* White Mulberry

**Myrtaceae - Myrtle Family**

*Myrtus communis subsp. communis* Common Myrtle

**Oleaceae - Olive Family**

*Jasminum fruticans* Wild jasmine  
*Olea europaea subsp. europaea* Olive

**Orobanchaceae - Broomrape Family**

*Orobanche ramosa* Branched Broomrape

**Oxalidaceae - Sorrel Family**

# *Oxalis pes-caprae* Bermuda Buttercup

**Papaveraceae - Poppy Family**

*Glaucium flavum* Yellow-Horned Poppy  
*Papaver rhoeas* Common Poppy

**Pittosporaceae – Pittosporum family**

# *Pittosporum tobira* Pittosporum

**Platanaceae - Plane Tree Family**

*Platanus orientalis* Oriental Plane

**Polygalaceae - Milkwort Family**

*Polygala venulosa* Eastern Milkwort

**Primulaceae - Primrose Family**

*Anagallis arvensis* Scarlet Pimpernel (Scarlet and blue forms)  
\**Cyclamen creticum* Cretan Cyclamen

**Punicaceae – Pomegranate family**

*Punica granatum* Pomegranate

**Ranunculaceae - Buttercup Family**

*Anemone coronaria* Crown Anemone  
*Anemone hortensis ssp. heldreichii*  
*Ranunculus asiaticus* Turban Buttercup

**Resedaceae - Mignonette Family**

*Reseda alba* White Mignonette  
*Reseda lutea* Wild Mignonette

**Rosaceae - Rose Family**

*Pyrus amygdaliformis* Almond-leaved pear  
*Rubus sanctus* Bramble  
*Sarcopterium spinosum* Thorny Burnet

**Rubiaceae - Bedstraw Family**

*Sharardia arvensis* Field Madder

**Rutaceae - Rue Family**

# *Citrus limon* Lemon  
# *Citrus sinensis* Orange

**Scrophulariaceae - Figwort Family**

*Bellardia trixago* Bellardia  
*Linaria pelisseriana* Jersey Toadflax  
*Misopates orontium* Lesser Snapdragon (= weasel's snout)  
*Parentucellia latifolia* A bartsia  
*Parentucellia viscosa* Yellow Bartsia  
*Scrophularia lucida* Shining Figwort  
*Scrophularia peregrinum* Nettle-leaved Figwort  
*Verbascum sinuatum*  
*Verbascum pulverulentum* Hoary mullein

**Solanaceae - Potato Family**

*Hyoscyamus albus* White Henbane  
*Mandragora autumnalis* Mandrake  
*Solanum nigrum* Black nightshade

**Styracaceae - Storax Family**

*Styrax officinalis* Storax

**Tamaricaceae - Tamarix Family**

*Tamarix smyrnensis* Tamarisk

**Thymelaeaceae - Daphne Family**

*Daphne sericea*  
*Thymelaea hirsuta* Thymelea

**Umbelliferae - Carrot Family**

*Bupleurum sp* A thorow-wax (at Spili)  
*Daucus carota* Wild Carrot  
*Ferula communis subsp. communis* Giant Fennel  
*Oenanthe globulosa* Mediterranean water dropwort  
*Scandix pecten-veneris* Shepherd's needle  
*Smyrniium olusatrum* Alexanders  
*Tordylium apulum* Mediterranean Hartwort (equally 2-lobed petals)  
*Tordylium officianale* a hartwort (with unequally lobed petals)

**Urticaceae - Nettle Family**

*Parietaria judaica* Pellitory of the Wall  
*Urtica urens* Annual nettle  
*Urtica pilulifera* Roman Nettle

**Valerianaceae - Valerian Family**

\**Valeriana asarifolia* Cretan Valerian  
*Valeriana sp* A small pink valerian  
*Valerianella sp (discoidea?)* A Corn Salad

**Verbenaceae - Verbena Family**



*Verbena officinalis* Vervain

**Vitaceae - Vine Family**

*Vitis vinifera* subsp. *vinifera* Grape Vine

**b) Monocotyledons**

**Agavaceae - Agave Family**

# *Agave americana* Century Plant

**Amaryllidaceae - Daffodil Family**

*Pancratium maritimum* Sea Daffodil (leaves only)

**Araceae - Arum Family**

*Arisarum vulgare* Friars Cowl

*Arum creticum* Cretan Arum

*Dranunculus vulgaris* Common Dragon Arum

**Graminaceae - Grass Family**

*Arundo donax* Giant Reed

*Briza maxima* Giant Quaking Grass

*Lagurus ovatus* Hare's-tail

*Phragmites australis* Reed

**Iridaceae - Iris Family**

*Gladiolus italicus* Field Gladiolus

*Hermodactylus tuberosus* Widow Iris

*Iris cretensis*

*Iris pseudocorus* Yellow Flag

**Liliaceae - Lily Family**

*Asphodeline lutea* Yellow Asphodel

*Asphodelus aestivus* Common Asphodel

*Drimia maritima* (*Urginea maritima*) Sea Squill

*Gagea graeca*

*Muscari comosum* Tassle Hyacinth

*Ornithogalum collinum*

*Ornithogalum umbellatum* Star of Bethlehem

*Romulea bulbocodium* A sand crocus

*Ruscus aculeatus* Butcher's broom

*Smilax aspera* Common smilax

\* *Tulipa cretica* Cretan Tulip (whitish, at Kourliotiko)

*Tulipa doerfleri* (red, Spili)

*Tulipa rupestris* Rock tulip (pink, Spili)

**Orchidaceae - Orchid Family**

*Aceras anthropophorum* Man Orchid

*Anacamptis pyramidalis* Pyramidal Orchid

*Barlia robertiana* Giant orchid

*Ophrys bombyliflora* Bumble Bee Orchid

*Ophrys doerfleri* (*O. cretica*) Cretan Bee Orchid

*Ophrys fusca* Sombre bee orchid

*Ophrys heldreichii* (*O. scolopax* ssp. *heldreichii*) Marengo Orchid

*Ophrys iricolor* Rainbow Orchid

*Ophrys lutea* v *galilaea* Yellow bee orchid E. Med

*Ophrys mammosa* (*O. sphegodes* ssp. *mammosa*) Mammosa Orchid

*Ophrys sphegodes* Early spider orchid

*Ophrys tentredinifera* Sawfly Orchid

*Orchis boryi*

*Orchis collina* Fan-lipped orchid

*Orchis italica* Italian Man Orchid

*Orchis lactea* Milky Orchid

*Orchis laxiflora* Loose-flowered orchid  
*Orchis pauciflora* (*O. provincialis* subsp. *pauciflora*) Few-flowered Orchid  
*Orchis quadripunctata* Four-spotted Orchid  
*Orchis simia* Monkey orchid  
*Serapias bergonii* (*S. vomeracea* ssp. *laxiflora*) Bergon's Tongue-orchid  
*Serapias (vomeracea) orientalis*  
*Serapias parviflora* Small tongue-orchid  
+ Plus hybrid sawfly x marengo orchid at both Spili and Kotsiphos gorge  
+ Also fragrant orchid reported seen: not sure at the time of writing if this was the fragrant bug orchid *Orchis coriophora* ssp. *fragrans* or Fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*

***Palmae* – Palm Family**

*Phoenix theophrasti* Cretan Palm  
#*Phoenix canariensis* Canary date palm  
#*Washingtonia filifera* Washingtonia

***Pteridophyta* – Ferns**

*Adiantum capillus-veneris* Maidenhair fern  
*Ceterach officinarum* Rustyback fern  
*Cheilanthes pteridoides* Scented cheilanthes