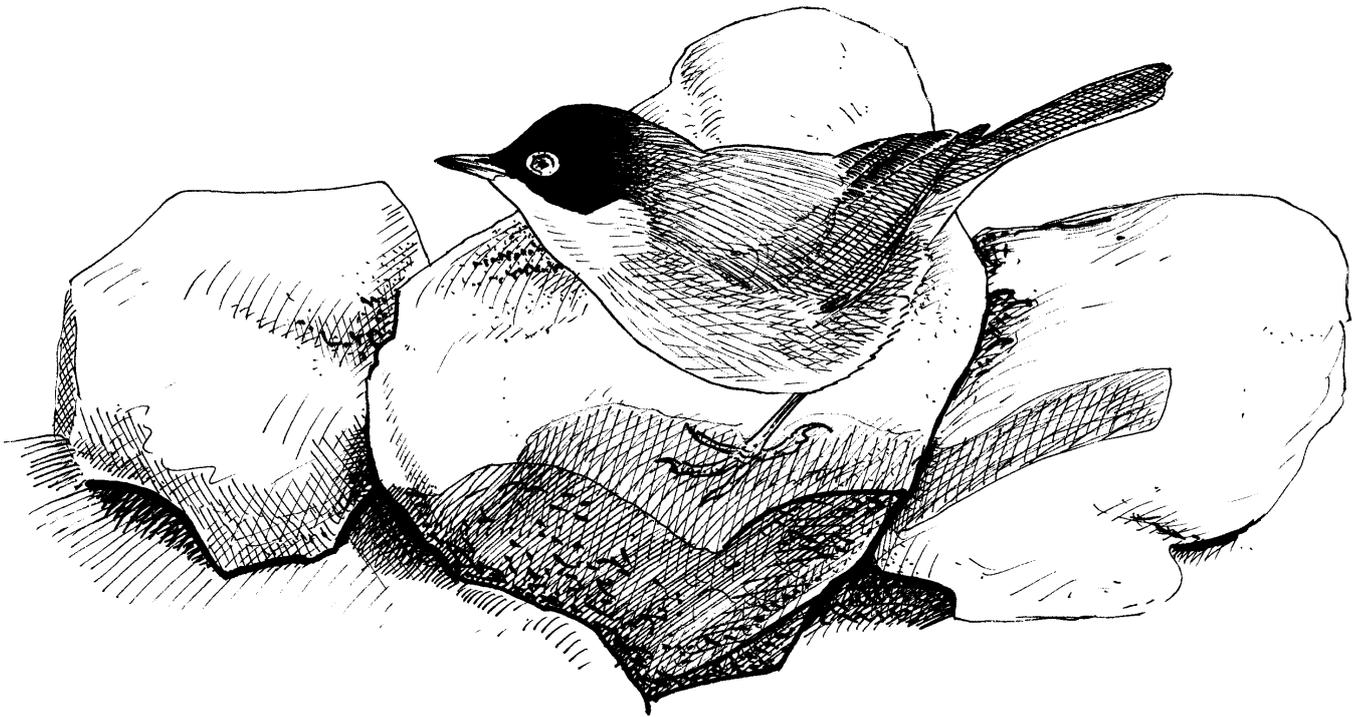


# *Honeyguide*

**WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS**

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



**Crete**  
**9 - 16 April 2002**

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**Holiday participants**

Jean Connor Dorothy Iveson	West Lothian Carlisle
Elizabeth Crawley	Winchester
Helen Willison	Worksop
Bill Simmonds Margaret Chilvers	Huntingdon
Peter Morley	Pinner
Hazel Manners	Rustington, W Sussex
Martin Miller Susan Miller	Wivenhoe, Essex
Derek Boughton	Canterbury
Pam Orr Edna Howard	Uckfield Barnes
Alan Greengo	Ipswich
<b>Leaders</b> Rob Macklin Kathy Macklin	Suffolk coast

Report written by Rob and Kathy Macklin.

Illustrations by Rob Hume. Cover: Sardinian warbler

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 9 - 16 April 2002

### **Tuesday 9 April – the Journey**

Warm and sunny conditions greeted us as we landed at Heraklion on the north coast of Crete. We met Chris Durdin and David Collins at the airport and so were able to get a quick report on the preceding week, which had been a little on the cool side – how lucky we were! Then it was in the bus and off to Plakias; on the way we spotted a mute swan (quite a rarity!) and a coot on a pool at Panormos, while swifts and collared doves were seen at local towns and villages. The first raptors included distant griffon vultures, buzzards and a black kite, which went right over the bus. The journey was pleasant once Heraklion was behind us; everywhere looking lush and flower-bedecked – even the roadsides, with oleander just coming into flower against the stunning blue of the sea.

George greeted us at the Hotel Sophia with a very welcome cup of tea, before we settled into our rooms. Dinner was at the Sophia taverna, which allowed Rob & Kathy to renew acquaintances with Nikos and to introduce the group to the delights of Greek food. We started off with a meze for all before the first of many briams was consumed.

### **Wednesday 10 April – Plakias to Mirthios**

A pre-breakfast walk proved very interesting with a common sandpiper on the outlet of the Kotsifos river plus several whinchats and wheatears in the fields at the eastern end of the town. The only marsh sandpiper of the trip flew in from the sea, a grey heron floated past and a great white egret headed west over the beach. It was good to see a swallow, and we were all admiring a whitethroat when Jean noticed a group of 15 alpine swifts in the air above Korifi rock. Quite an introduction to the birds of the area!

Anne-Marie provided a marvellous breakfast, which some intrepid souls enjoyed out in the courtyard. Then we all set off on our expedition through the olive groves and up the steep, narrow track to the hillside village of Mirthios. Before we left the hotel area we saw a woodchat shrike in the scrub where a few sheep were grazing, and the first of hordes of Sardinian warblers was singing his rattly machine-gun-like song. We found the attractive golden-drops and similar honeywort, as well as wild salsify and the much-admired bellardia. We had barely left this area before we found a slope covered in pyramidal orchids. A scramble up here revealed a naked man orchid and a few mambose orchids, and the fabulous, tall blue *Petromarula pinnata*, or Cretan wall lettuce (actually a bellflower and not a wall lettuce at all).

Cetti's warblers were singing all along the valley and we estimated at least 11 singing males. Several buzzards were in the air throughout the morning along with a pair of kestrels, while a passing raven harassed a lone griffon vulture. Butterflies began to take to the wing as the day warmed up and 10 species were soon added to the list; these included the eastern dappled white, southern speckled wood, clouded yellow, dingy skipper and the more unusual mallow skipper – which perched up well for all the group to see. Perhaps the butterfly highlight of the morning was a Cretan festoon in the olive groves – this spectacular species was evident throughout the area as the week wore on. Other insects included a stunning banded demoiselle and many Egyptian locusts, which sprang out of the vegetation on approach. Flowers carpeted the olive groves, with glorious crown daisies and swathes of purple viper's bugloss. The poppies looked particularly stunning against the Bermuda buttercups, which were parasitised by the attractive, blue branched broomrape.

The wonderfully scented Jerusalem sage dominated the hillsides and clumps of spiny burnet (chicken-wire plant), Greek spiny spurge and beautiful cistus, just coming into flower. Wood warblers called from the olive groves while a splendid male blue rock-thrush performed magnificently in song-flight above the abandoned Venetian mill. Quite incredible to think that grain was carried all the way up here. We found it quite a scramble, especially in the heat, but the views made it all worthwhile and we felt quite a sense of achievement by the time we reached the village.

A well-earned lunch at the taverna in Mirthios consisted of plates of briam (the best of the trip!), Greek salads, cold beers and freshly-pressed orange juice – absolute heaven!! The descent from the village took us past the most incredible stand of giant fennel, then down through the olive groves where we

found masses more tongue orchids, shrubby thyme, Barbary nut, and a single swallowtail was on the wing. The buzzards and kestrels continued to keep us company before we arrived hot and tired back at Plakias. The evening meal was at the Gio-Ma taverna, where some of the starters were enough to feed all sixteen of us! On the way home Susan & Martin saw a beech marten clambering around a drainpipe – very odd!

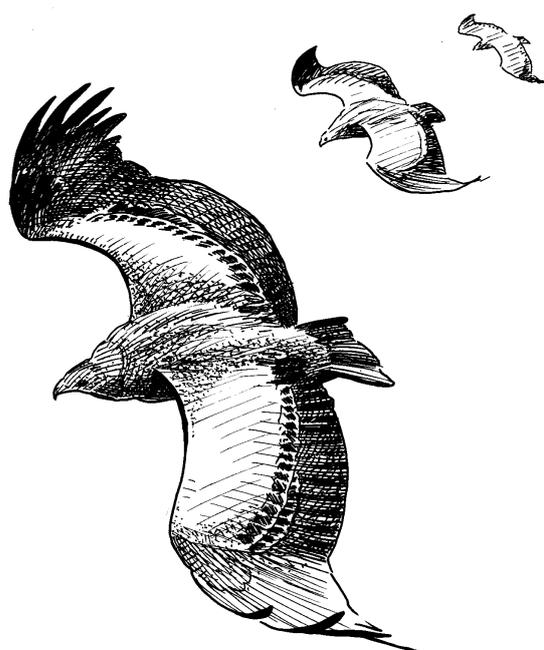
#### **Thursday 11 April – Kourtaliotiko Gorge & the Kedros foothills above Spili**

There were several whinchats in the fields at the eastern end of the town before breakfast and forty Spanish sparrows in the scrub behind the hotel. Jean and Dorothy came in to breakfast full of smiles after finding a hoopoe in the hills behind Plakias.

We boarded our snazzy new minibuses gratefully – the old ones on previous trips left rather a lot to be desired! Our first stop of the day was at the impressive Kourtaliotiko gorge, where a blue-rock thrush was singing, until he was buzzed by a male kestrel. We estimated there were at least three pairs of kestrels within the gorge.

A single raven flew over cronking and three griffon vultures (*right*) drifted slowly along the rim. Amplified wrens sang from deep within the gorge, several crag martins zoomed around and at least four “genuine” rock doves were found. A family party of goats impressed us with their climbing skills, and attracted attention to a precarious cave/tent where a young girl appeared to be living. Several butterflies on the wing here included wall brown, red admiral, holly blue and southern speckled wood.

The natural rock gardens all the way down the gorge were a delight, with crown anemones and yellow asphodel growing among the neat clumps of spiny spurge and burnet, and the endemic Cretan cyclamen sheltering in shady hollows. Down by the river, the white flowering styrax tree was beautiful, and the hanging mullein impressive. Endemic Procopiana and Cretan valerian grew actually on the steps, while the brilliant yellow Cretan viper’s grass high on the rock-face was not missed by our eagle-eyed group.



As we approached the village of Spili, we spotted several ravens and buzzards, while the village was already hosting swallows. We found another good taverna for coffee/lunch, while some of the group ate their lunch by the handsome stone lion fountains. As we sat there our first Cleopatra butterfly of the trip flew by. After lunch we headed off to the Kedros foothills above Spili, one of the most famous areas for orchids in Crete. As soon as we crossed the fallen tree, we were in a botanical paradise, where it was difficult to plant our feet without treading on something beautiful! There were Cretan irises and widow irises, Cretan tulips and wild tulips, but the stars of the show were the orchids – sixteen species at least, and then our heads started to spin! (Well, it was very hot...)

Some of the group walked on to explore the open area beyond the “orchid hills”. Four ravens flew over, then Bill & Margaret found a tawny pipit lurking among a pair of crested larks. Twenty alpine swifts seemed to be passing straight through while a quail called from the surrounding fields. A single linnet flew over and then we tracked down a super singing woodlark at the top of a nearby valley – fantastic views all round! On the way back to the buses we found the first lesser whitethroat of the trip. Many griffons drifted along the surrounding peaks but we were unable to pin down an elusive lammergeier.

We settled on the Kri-Kri taverna tonight, where we had an excellent meal – rounded off for some by giant ice cream sundaes decorated with whole gardens of sparklers, complete with gnomes!

### **Friday 12 April – Phaestos and Aghia Triada**

The pre-breakfast walk turned up the usual whinchat and a couple of wheatears, with the more unusual bonus of a male Montagu's harrier flying swiftly inland.

The long drive to Phaestos on the south coast took us through the Friday market in Timbaki and the amazing plastic greenhouse-covered Mesara plain. We arrived at the Minoan site in time for a well-earned coffee. The view from the coffee bar was quite stunning and we soon picked up 12 cattle egrets feeding in the fields below with, would you believe it, several cattle. After this we all went into the palace and several of us were fortunate enough to encounter a very knowledgeable teacher (from a girls' school in Kent) who abandoned her students and favoured us with a fascinating history lesson instead! She recommended Mary Renault's books very highly for a historically correct insight into the area and culture in Minoan times. "Bull from the Sea" would be the most relevant to Phaestos, she said, as well as "The King Must Die", "The Praise Singer", the Alexander trilogy and "Last of the Wine" – about the Peloponnese war. Phaestos is the greatest Minoan palace after Knossos, and it is quite awe-inspiring, though we did regret finding a handy little pop-up guide after our visit rather than before. Alpine swifts hunted through the valley and both swallowtail and scarce swallowtail butterflies graced the ruins. The only down side was an official telling Bill and Rob that having the tripod up was "verboten" – oops, luckily we weren't spotting planes!

By this stage we were wilting in the heat, so we retired to the taverna for lunch, just as a great spotted cuckoo flashed by. Over lunch with the local cats, Peter discovered the only Queen of Spain fritillary butterfly of the trip. After this we strolled down the road to the summer palace of Aghia Triada, with Alan and Helen (the walkers) leading one group and the rest of us bringing up the rear. Birds were hard to find along this superb valley although a tawny pipit was seen briefly, two ravens flew over and a chukar partridge was heard. One of our few mammals, a hare, dashed off across the hillside! Flowers adorned the roadsides, setting off the gorgeous view down across peaceful almond groves to the sea. Masses of the endemic Cretan ebony vied with wild gladioli, the beautiful narrow-leaved bugloss and a grassy area thick with orchids (and orchid admirers!) We learned from the leader of the botany group that "The Flowers of Crete" by Marjorie Blamey and Christopher Grey-Wilson is just about to be published – well worth knowing for anyone planning a return trip.

As we approached Aghia Triada, a woodchat shrike perched up on the top of a bush, a flock of approximately 200 garganey flew into the Kolpos Messaras bay, c.100 alpine swifts bolted through and a superb red-footed falcon gave some of us just the briefest of views. Butterflies were chased and some caught along the road, including Bath white, Lulworth skipper and baton blue.

### **Saturday 13 April –Georgioupoli Marsh, Lake Kournas, Ayia Reservoir**

The day dawned overcast with spots of rain, ideal for migrating birds to drop in. After breakfast we took the buses along to the eastern end of Plakias hoping for action and were not disappointed. Helen spotted a white blob on the far side of the bay, which turned turned out to be 46 little egrets perched up on the rocks. Closer inspection revealed two squacco herons with them. Three swallows then came in off the sea, a woodchat shrike hunted in the scrub and three yellow wagtails included one black-headed form of the race *feldegg*. As we were congratulating ourselves on our good fortune a huge flock of 270 glossy ibises circled the bay before moving off to the east. What a start to the day!

We then drove north through the Kotsifou gorge where we encountered a fierce rainstorm so declined to disembark. We moved on to the marsh at Georgioupoli where we met up with Doug Ireland and his party from Island Holidays. Here we saw several little grebes, a 'rare' immature mute swan and a Cetti's warbler, who obligingly showed himself to the whole group. Several stripe-necked terrapins were hauled out on the lakeside.

Our next destination was nearby Lake Kournas, where we all partook of the most sublime yogurt and honey. The taverna owner responded by bringing us a whole tray of raki, even though it was still morning! It seemed churlish to refuse, so a couple of people managed to force themselves. Meanwhile, a purple heron was spotted on the far side of the lake and duly positioned in the telescope. We then took a short walk along the edge of the lake and, in spite of very noisy Greek schoolchildren racing boats on the lake, managed to find 11 night herons drifting in to roost amongst the lakeside trees. On the way back to the buses we found a goat tied up in the hot sun and fetched her four litres of water, which she siphoned up in seconds.

After lunch on the lakeshore, getting quite involved in the rowing competition, we headed off towards Chania. On the motorway a maniac swerved across the road and almost crashed into the lead bus, but a cool head from our driver averted any problems – though it was quite traumatic for the bus behind! We dropped Derek off at the British war cemetery at Souda Bay, to fulfil a promise to his cousin to visit the grave of a young soldier from his home village.

As we pulled up at Ayia reservoir, where we met up with Doug and his group again, the scent of orange blossom was overwhelming. The reservoir is an artificial wetland but looks very natural with reedy fringes and scrub along three sides; we were able to watch from the dam although it was pretty hot on the concrete! Heaps of alpine & common swifts were feeding over the water and were later joined by two sand martins. Wildfowl were well represented, with a pair of pintail, five shoveler and three male mallards swimming amongst the masses of coots and little grebes. The wildfowl highlight was definitely the four ferruginous ducks, which appeared from one of the channels on the far side of the lake. At the far end of the dam several waders had dropped in and closer inspection revealed two splendid wood sandpipers and an unusual curlew sandpiper. As we were watching these up to six little crakes came out of the reeds and showed well to the whole group. A possible spotted crake could not be confirmed! This area continued to astound with several brown blobs on the far side of the lake turning out to be nine purple herons. A night heron then flew into the surrounding trees and two little egrets emerged from the lakeside vegetation.

Just when we thought it couldn't get any better the raptors arrived! First on the scene was an immature marsh harrier quartering the reeds, followed by two pale phase booted eagles directly overhead. As we were watching these superb raptors a massive brown shape loomed into view and was a very obvious golden eagle. As the first one was soaring quite low over the lake, it was joined by another – unbelievable! To cap it all a dark-phase booted eagle drifted in, and an osprey, which started fishing right in front of us, completed the excitement. Several of the group were heard to 'gibber' at this point! Needless to say, the large flock of yellow-legged gulls made themselves very scarce apart from one bird that remained on the lake to catch and kill an unfortunate moorhen! Turning round to listen to the very loud marsh frogs, we noticed the lovely clumps of French lavender and shrubby St. John's wort, with nesting Sardinian warblers. After all this we located a spotted flycatcher as we approached the buses, feeling very sorry for Derek for missing it all, as well as being kept waiting so long.

We drove into Rethimnon on the way home for a quick look (by bus!) round the Venetian fort. The ornithological excitement wasn't over yet, as 170 little egrets and 80 garganey flew into Plakias at dusk to spend the night in the safety of the bay. What an amazing day!



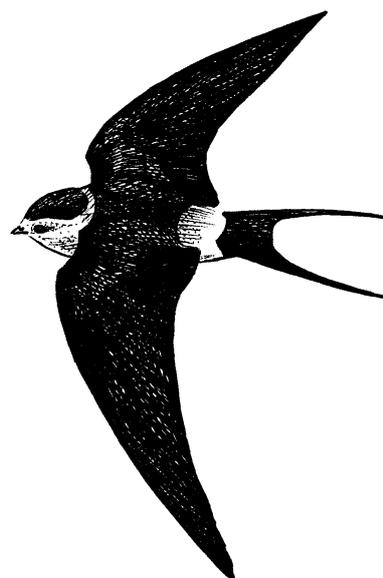
*Osprey, black-winged stilt and little egret*

### **Sunday 14 April – Moni Preveli and Plakias**

Back to normal conditions with another hot and sunny day. Before breakfast Bill located 60 sand martins over the town and a kingfisher along the front. After breakfast we headed off to Moni Preveli and on the way picked up a female marsh harrier soaring with a buzzard and two nightingales singing from the trees. We stopped off at the older monastery where we saw alpine swifts and house martins in the air, four ravens flying over croaking and a woodlark singing. This little valley and headland are a tranquil paradise, one of the loveliest parts of Crete.

We moved on to the main monastery and were greeted by a resplendent black-eared wheatear perched up on the rocks singing. After a coffee some of the group went into the monastery and were treated to an impromptu recital in the chapel from a visitor with an incredible baritone – very moving. We found a fabulous male collared flycatcher in the grounds below the monastery, and a female hunted with him from the olives. Corn buntings sang as we potted down the track and a woodchat shrike, two spotted flycatchers a male pied flycatcher completed the picture. As we headed back towards the car park a playful party of ravens called and rolled across the sky, two turtle doves flew past and an Eleonora's falcon screamed into the valley before disappearing around the headland. Two crag martins flashed by, and Dorothy amazingly found a chukar partridge perched up on a rock.

By popular demand, we decided to have lunch at Mirthios again, where one of the taverna owners told us about the night herons in his garden by the old mill. As we enjoyed our briams and fresh orange juices, two red-rumped swallows (*pictured, right*) flew over and Dorothy found a singing blue rock thrush. I think we could have stayed there forever, gazing down over Plakias to the sparkling Libyan Sea.



We eventually tore ourselves away and meandered back to Plakias, where some of us lazed away the rest of the scorching afternoon. Many of the group walked along to the western end of Plakias and were rewarded with 12 squacco herons showing really well on rocks in the bay. Eighty of the little egrets were still there too! A white wagtail was also on the rocks and we estimated six singing Cetti's warblers in the hillside scrub. Susan, Martin, Dorothy and Peter elected to walk a little farther than the rest of us and were ecstatic to find six bee-eaters on telephone wires around the western headland.

### **Monday 15 April – Frangokastello and Imbros Gorge**

The last full day of the trip and some foreboding as overnight rain and thunder continued on and off throughout the day. Before breakfast, a hoopoe was singing in the hills behind the hotel; this was probably the same bird that Dorothy and Jean had seen on the first day. After breakfast we headed off to the western end of Plakias to catch up with the six bee-eaters, who were exactly where they were the evening before.

Our next stop was on the edge of the Kotsifou gorge where we searched the scrub for Ruppell's warblers, albeit without success. However, we did find two splendid black-eared wheatears and a blue rock thrush. Two griffon vultures drifted over and a peregrine flashed across the sky. We drove down to the beach at Rodakino in the hope of seeing shearwaters out to sea but sadly there were no fishing boats in view and so we were unlucky. We did see 13 griffon vultures drifting along the mountain ridge and experienced a really eerie yellow light effect, thanks to heavy brown clouds filled with sand from the Sahara. There was an earthquake about that time too, Anne-Marie informed us on our return, but we didn't notice it!

Our main destination of the day was the fort at Frankokastello, the scene of a heroic fight by native Cretans against the occupying Turkish army. Just before we arrived there, we watched a distant raptor disappear behind the mountains, which some of us are still convinced was a lammergeier! While we deliberated, we admired some absolutely enormous (and smelly) dragon arums. Then, even more

frustratingly, a big eagle drifted by – undoubtedly a Bonelli’s, but not accepted by the rarities committee, I’m afraid!

After coffee we explored the plain and immediately encountered another, really close up black-eared wheatear on the rocks. Swifts and alpine swifts wheeled overhead and both red-throated and tree pipits could be safely identified on call as they sped through. A black line coming from the west turned out to be a splendid flock of 21 glossy ibis who gave us all great views as they flew by. There was a weird and beautiful blue light on the water, which must have been phosphorescence – quite lovely. (Do hope the naked swimmers appreciated it!) We searched the open grassy plains and turned up at least six short-toed larks amongst a small flock of sheep. Another flock of sheep across the main access road held approximately 40 yellow wagtails although we were unable to split them down into races. Three birds on the telephone wires turned out to be turtle doves and as we walked back to towards the fort, 30 garganey and four shoveler flew west offshore. As we walked to our taverna along the beach another two glossy ibis flew low overhead, two purple herons drifted over and a kingfisher sped across an area of dry marsh.

After another excellent lunch we had a quick look round the empty shell of the fort, now filled with poppies and an attractive but poisonous white henbane. Our final destination was the top of the magnificent Imbros gorge. It takes 33 hairpin bends to drive up – congratulations to all for holding on to your stomachs! (and thanks to Pam for counting!) Unfortunately the cloud was still very low and the resident Bonelli’s eagles could not be found. A woodlark was in song and a raven called from the ravine.

We stopped off in Mirthios to buy local honey, herbs and crafts to remember our holiday by. Our last meal was at the Sophia taverna where we enjoyed another excellent meal, and were treated to free puddings and Metaxa instead of raki – hooray!

### **Tuesday 16 April – homeward bound**

A very windy day, which made us appreciate just how lucky we had been with our weather. A look around the fields in Plakias yielded absolutely nothing, but it was still good to get a last feel of Crete before driving back to Heraklion. Unfortunately our plane “broke” – to quote the Monarch captain – and we had to endure a three-hour delay before finally boarding for Gatwick. Many of our group had onward connections to worry about and had to make a dash for it on arrival, so we didn’t all manage to say our goodbyes properly, which was a great shame. Everyone had hit it off really well and it seemed as if we had known each other for ages. Thanks to you all for being such delightful company and making it such a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable week.

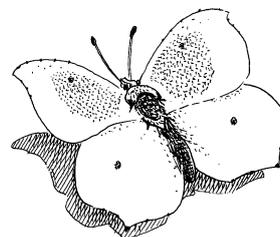
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### **BUTTERFLIES**

Swallowtail  
Scarce Swallowtail  
Eastern Festoon ( ssp.cretica )  
Large White  
Small White  
Eastern Dappled White  
Clouded Yellow  
Cleopatra (*pictured, right*)  
Wood White  
Comma  
Painted Lady  
Red Admiral  
Cardinal  
Queen of Spain Fritillary  
Meadow Brown  
Southern Speckled Wood  
Wall Brown

Baton Blue  
Holly Blue  
Brown Argus  
Common Blue  
Lulworth Skipper  
Mallow Skipper  
Dingy Skipper

24 species



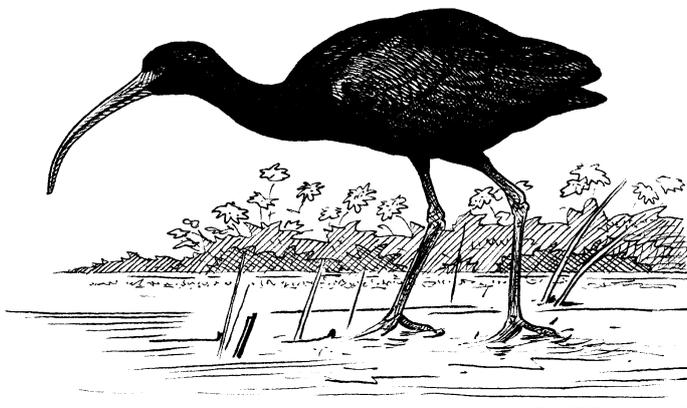
## BIRD LIST – CRETE April 9 – 16

- Little Grebe:** Good numbers at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup> with four at Giorgiopouli marsh.  
**Night Heron:** At least 11 at Lake Kornas on the 13<sup>th</sup> and another at Ayia reservoir.  
**Squacco Heron:** Two at Plakias on the 13<sup>th</sup> with 12 at the west end of the town on the 14<sup>th</sup>.  
**Cattle Egret:** On the 12<sup>th</sup> 12 birds were with cattle in the olive groves at Phaestos.  
**Little Egret:** Peak numbers were at Plakias on the 13<sup>th</sup> with 46 there in the morning and 170 on the rocks in the harbour in the evening. 80 birds remained at Plakias on the 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Great White Egret:** One came in off the sea at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Grey Heron:** One at Plakias on the 12<sup>th</sup>, two at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup> and one on the way to Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Purple Heron:** One at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>, six there on the 12<sup>th</sup>, one at Lake Kornas & nine at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup> then two at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Glossy Ibis:** 270 at Plakias on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 23 at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Mute Swan:** One at Panormos on the 9<sup>th</sup> and one at Giorgiopouli Marsh on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Mallard:** Three males were at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Pintail:** A pair were at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Garganey:** 200 at Aghia Triada on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 80 at Plakias on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 30 at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Shoveler:** Five at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup> and four offshore at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Ferruginous Duck:** Four at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Black Kite:** One on the way to Plakias on the 9<sup>th</sup>.  
**Griffon Vulture:** Relatively common with peak counts at Spili and Rodakino.  
**Marsh Harrier:** Three at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup> and one near Plakias on the 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Montagu's Harrier:** One came in off the sea at Plakias on the 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Common Buzzard:** Widespread and common.  
**Golden Eagle:** One at Kourtaliotiko gorge on the 11<sup>th</sup> and two at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Booted Eagle:** Two pale-phase and one dark-phase bird at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Osprey:** One at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Kestrel:** Widespread and common.
- Red-footed Falcon:** One at Aghia Triada on the 12<sup>th</sup>.  
**Eleonora's Falcon:** One at Moni Preveli on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Peregrine:** One at Plakias on the 13<sup>th</sup> and one at Kotsiphos gorge on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Chukar:** Recorded from Phaestos on the 12<sup>th</sup>, two at Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup> and Kotsiphos gorge on the 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Quail:** Heard at Spili on the 11<sup>th</sup>.  
**Little Crane:** A minimum of six at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Moorhen:** Widespread and common at wetland sites.  
**Coot:** Especially common at Ayia reservoir.
- Black-winged Stilt:** Two at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Curlew Sandpiper:** One at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Marsh Sandpiper:** One came in off the sea at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Wood Sandpiper:** Two at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Common Sandpiper:** Singles at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Yellow-legged Gull:** Widespread and common.  
**Rock Dove:** 10 at the Kourtaliotiko Gorge on the 11<sup>th</sup>.  
**Woodpigeon:** Singles on three dates.

**Collared Dove:** Widespread and relatively common.  
**Turtle Dove:** Peak of three at Frankocastello on 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Great-spotted Cuckoo:** One at Phaestos on the 12<sup>th</sup>.  
**Swift:** Widespread and quite common.  
**Alpine Swift:** Widespread and common with peak count of 200 at Phaestos on 12<sup>th</sup>.  
**Kingfisher:** One at Plakias on the 14<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> plus Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Bee-eater:** Six at Plakias on 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Hoopoe:** More often heard than seen but four on the 12<sup>th</sup>.  
**Crested Lark:** Widespread and common.  
**Woodlark:** Recorded at Spili on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup> and Imbros Gorge on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Sand Martin:** Peak of 100 at Plakias on the 14<sup>th</sup>.  
**Crag Martin:** Widespread and common in the mountainous areas.  
**Swallow:** Widespread and common.  
**Red-rumped Swallow:** Two at Myrthios on the 14<sup>th</sup>.  
**House Martin:** Just one at Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup> & two at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Tawny Pipit:** Singles at Spili on the 11<sup>th</sup> and Phaestos on the 12<sup>th</sup>.  
**Tree Pipit:** Minimum of six at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Red-throated Pipit:** Minimum of five at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Yellow Wagtail:** Peak of 40 at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**White Wagtail:** Relatively common.  
**Wren:** Two at Kourtaliotiko Gorge on the 11<sup>th</sup>.  
**Nightingale:** Occasional birds heard singing.  
**Whinchat:** Peak of four at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Stonechat:** Widespread and common.  
**Wheatear:** Peak of three at Plakias on the 12<sup>th</sup>.  
**Black-eared Wheatear:** Two at Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup> and two at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Blue-rock Thrush:** Recorded from several locations.  
**Blackbird:** Widespread and common.  
**Song Thrush:** One at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Mistle Thrush:** One at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Cetti's Warbler:** Widespread and common, peak of 11 singing males between Plakias and Myrthios on the 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Reed Warbler:** Heard at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Subalpine Warbler:** One at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Sardinian Warbler:** Widespread and common.  
**Lesser Whitethroat:** Singles at Spili on the 11<sup>th</sup> and Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup>.  
**Whitethroat:** One at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Wood Warbler:** Recorded at Plakias, Spili and Moni Preveli.  
**Spotted Flycatcher:** Singles at Ayia reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup> and Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup>.  
**Collared Flycatcher:** Pair at Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup>.  
**Pied Flycatcher:** One at Moni Preveli on the 14<sup>th</sup>.  
**Blue Tit:** Widespread and common.  
**Great Tit:** Widespread and common.  
**Woodchat Shrike:** Widespread but uncommon. Two at Plakias on the 9<sup>th</sup>.  
**Jackdaw:** Seen from the bus on the way to Plakias.  
**Hooded Crow:** Widespread and common.  
**Raven:** Widespread and common with 10 seen on the 11<sup>th</sup>.  
**House Sparrow:** One at Plakias on the 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Italian Sparrow:** Widespread and common.

**Spanish**

- Sparrow:** 40 at Plakias on the 11<sup>th</sup> & 80 on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Chaffinch:** Widespread and common.  
**Greenfinch:** Widespread and common.  
**Goldfinch:** Widespread and common.  
**Linnet:** Six at Spili on the 11<sup>th</sup> and two at Frankocastello on the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Cirl Bunting:** One near Rethymnon on the 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Corn Bunting:** Widespread and common.



*glossy ibis*

**HONEYGUIDE WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS  
CRETE 9-16 APRIL 2002  
PLANT LIST**

The following list comprises the more obvious plants seen and identified during the week.

**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.

\* 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

***Pinaceae* – Pines**

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

**ii) Angiosperms**

**a) Dicotyledons**

***Aizoaceae* - Aizoon Family**

# *Carpobrotus edulis* var. *rubescens* 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 creticum* Blue Hound's Tongue

*Echium angustifolium* Narrow-leaved Bugloss

*Echium italicum* subsp. *biebersteinii* Pale Bugloss

*Echium plantagineum* Purple Viper's Bugloss

*Onosma erecta* Golden Drops

\* *Symphytum creticum* (*Procopiana cretica*) Procopiana

**Cactaceae - Cactus Family**

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

**Campanulaceae - Bellflower Family**

\* *Petromarula pinnata* Cretan Wall Lettuce

**Caprifoliaceae - Honeysuckle Family**

# *Sambucus nigra* Elderflower

# *Lonicera periclymenum* Honeysuckle

**Caryophyllaceae - Pink Family**

*Petrorrhagia velutina* (*Kohlrauschia velutina*)

*Silene bellidifolia*

*Silene colorata* subsp. *colorata*

**Cistaceae - Rockrose Family**

*Cistus creticus* Cretan Cistus

*Cistus salvifolius* Sage-Leaved Cistus

**Compositae - Daisy Family**

*Anthemis chia* Mayweed

*Anthemis rigida* subsp. *rigida* Rayless Chamomile

*Asteriscus aquaticus* (*A. maritimus*) Yellow sea aster

*Asteriscus spinosa* (*Pallensis spinosa*)

*Bellis annua* Annual daisy

*Helichrysum stoechas* Curry Plant

*Calendula arvensis* Field Marigold

*Calendula suffruticosa* Marigold

*Chrysanthemum coronarium* var. *coronarium* Crown Daisy

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

*Galactites tomentosa* Mediterranean Thistle

*Scorzonera cretica* Cretan vipers grass

*Phagnalon graecum* (*P. rupestre*) Shrubby Cudweed

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

*Reichardia tingitana* Reichardia

**Convolvulaceae - Bindweed Family**

*Convolvulus althaeoides* Mallow-leaved Bindweed

*Cuscuta epithimum* Dodder

**Crassulaceae - Stonecrop Family**

*Umbilicus parviflorus* Small-Flowered Navelwort

**Cruciferaeae - Cress Family**

*Cakile maritima* Sea Rocket

*Capsella bursa-pastoralis* Shepherd's purse

\**Ricotia cretica* Ricotia  
*Sinapsis arvensis* Charlock

**Dioscoraceae - Yam Family**

*Tamus communis* Black Bryony

**Euphorbiaceae - Spurge Family**

*Euphorbia acanthothamnus* Greek Spiny Spurge  
*Euphorbia characias* Mediterranean Spurge  
*Euphorbia helioscopia* Sun Spurge  
# *Ricinus communis* Castor Oil Plant

**Geraniaceae - Geranium Family**

*Geranium dissectum* Cut-leaved Cranebill  
*Geranium molle* Dovesfoot cranesbill  
*Geranium purpureum* Little robin  
*Geranium rotundifolium* Round-leaved Crane's-Bill

**Guttiferae - Hypericum Family**

*Hypericum empetrifolium* subsp. *empetrifolium* Shrubby St. John's Wort

**Labiatae - Mint Family**

*Lavandula stoechas* French Lavender  
*Coridothymus capitatus* (*Thymus capitatus*) Shrubby Thyme  
*Phlomis fruticosa* Jerusalem Sage  
*Salvia fruticosa* Three-Leaved Sage  
\* *Scutellaria sieberi* A Skullcap (like shrimp plant)

**Leguminosae - Pea Family**

# *Acacia* spp Mimosa  
*Bituminaria bituminosa* (*Psoralea bituminosa*) Pitch Trefoil  
*Calicotome villosa* Hairy Thorny Broom  
*Anthyllis hermanniae* (spiny broom-like bush)  
*Cercis siliquastrum* Judas tree  
*Ceratonia siliqua* Carob Tree  
*Coronilla cretica* Cretan Crown Vetch  
\* *Ebenus creticus* Shrubby Sainfoin (Cretan ebony)  
*Lupinus micranthus* Hairy Lupin  
*Medicago arabica* Spotted Medick  
*Medicago marina* Sea Medick  
*Medicago orbicularis* Large Disk Medick  
*Onobrychis caput-gallii* A 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 sepium* Bush vetch

**Linacea - Flax Family**

*Linum bienne* Pale Flax

**Malvaceae - Mallow Family**

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

**Moraceae - Fig Family**

*Ficus carica* Fig

**Myrtaceae - Myrtle Family**

*Myrtus communis subsp. communis* Common Myrtle

**Oleaceae - Olive Family**

*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

# *Papaver somniferum* Opium poppy

**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

**Ranunculaceae - Buttercup Family**

*Anemone coronaria* Crown Anemone

*Anemone hortensis ssp. heldreichii*

*Ranunculus asiaticus* Turban Buttercup

**Resedaceae - Mignonette Family**

*Reseda lutea* Wild Mignonette

**Rosaceae - Rose Family**

*Rubus sanctus* Bramble

*Sarcopoterium spinosum* Spiny Burnet

**Rutaceae - Rue Family**

# *Citrus limon* Lemon

# *Citrus sinensis* Orange

**Scrophulariaceae - Figwort Family**

*Bellardia trixago* Bellardia

*Linaria pelisseriana* Jersey Toadflax

*Parentucellia viscosa* Yellow Bartsia

*Parentucellia latifolia*

*Scrophularia lucida* Shining Figwort

\* *Verbascum arcturus* Hanging Mullein

*Verbascum sinuatum* Sinuous Mullein

**Solanaceae - Potato Family**

*Hyoscyamus albus* White Henbane

**Styracaceae - Storax Family**

*Styrax officinalis* Storax

**Tamaricaceae - Tamarix Family**

*Tamarix smyrnensis* Tamarisk

**Thymelaeaceae - Daphne Family**

*Daphne sericia* Daphne

**Umbelliferae - Carrot Family**

*Bupleurum gracile* A Thorow Wax (Spili)

*Smyrniololus atrum* Alexanders

*Scandix pecten-veneris* Shepherd's Needle

*Daucus carota* Wild Carrot

*Eryngium creticum* Cretan Eryngo

*Ferula communis* subsp. *communis* Giant Fennel

*Foeniculum vulgare* Fennel

*Tordylium apulum* Mediterranean Hartwort (equally 2-lobed petals)

**Urticaceae - Nettle Family**

*Urtica pilulifera* Roman Nettle

**Valerianaceae - Valerian Family**

\**Valeriana asarifolia* Cretan Valerian

*Valeriana rubra* Red Valerian (white form)

**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* 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

*Gynandriris sisyrrinchium* Barbary Nut

*Hermodactylus tuberosus* Widow Iris

\**Iris unguicularis* ssp. *cretensis* Cretan Iris

**Liliaceae - Lily Family**

*Allium commutatum* Wild Leek

*Allium roseum* Rosy Garlic

*Asphodeline lutea* Yellow Asphodel

*Asphodelus aestivus* Common Asphodel

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

*Gagea graeca*  
*Muscari comosum* Tassle Hyacinth  
*Ornithogalum narbonense* A spiked Star of Bethlehem  
*Smilax aspersa* Common Smilax  
\* *Tulipa cretica* Cretan Tulip  
*Tulipa sylvestris* Wild Tulip

**Orchidaceae - Orchid Family**

*Aceras anthropophorum* Man Orchid  
*Anacamptis pyramidalis* Pyramidal Orchid  
*Barlia robertiana* Giant Orchid  
*Ophrys apifera* Bee orchid  
*Ophrys doerfleri* (*O. cretica*) Cretan Bee Orchid  
*Ophrys heldreichii* (*O. scolopax* ssp. *heldreichii*) Marengo Orchid  
*Ophrys iricolor* Rainbow Orchid  
*Ophrys lutea* Yellow bee orchid  
*Ophrys mammosa* (*O. sphegodes* ssp. *mammosa*) Mambose Orchid  
*Ophrys tentredinifera* Sawfly Orchid  
*Orchis boryi*  
*Orchis coriophora* ssp. *fragrans* Bug Orchid  
*Orchis italica* Italian Man Orchid  
*Orchis lactea* Milky Orchid  
*Orchis pauciflora* (*O. provincialis* subsp. *pauciflora*) Few-flowered Orchid  
*Orchis anatolica* Anatolian Orchid  
*Orchis quadripunctata* Four-Spotted Orchid  
*Orchis simia* Monkey orchid  
*Serapia bergonii* (*S. vomeracea* ssp. *laxiflora*) Bergon's Tongue Orchid  
*Serapia orientalis* ssp. *orientalis* Eastern Tongue Orchid

