

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

36 Thunder Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0PX
Telephone: 01603 300552 evenings & weekends
www.honeyguide.co.uk E-mail: honeyguide@tesco.net



Northern Cyprus
6 – 13 April 2008

**Northern Cyprus
6 – 13 April 2008**

Holiday participants

Malcolm and Helen Crowder
George Malcolm and Sonia Donaghy
John Rumpus & Rosemary MacDonald
Ken Leggett
Colin Taylor
Lyn Guy
Richard & Jill Crum
Jenny Loring
Tim and Sandra Williams

Leaders

Brian & Eileen Anderson
Chris Gibson

Report by Chris Gibson, plant notes by Brian Anderson.

Line drawings: collared flycatcher by Szabolcs Kokay from Gerard Gorman's *Woodpeckers of Europe* (Bruce Coleman Books) and reprinted here with their kind permission. All others by Rob Hume.

Photos of scops owl (cover) and masked shrike by Chris Gibson; cheque presentation photo by Jenny Loring.

This holiday, as for every Honeyguide holiday, also put something into conservation in our host country by way of a contribution to the wildlife that we enjoyed. The conservation contribution this year of £30 per person towards Kuşkor was supplemented in two ways. Firstly, by gift aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust. Secondly, by a donation of £250 from Roger Jordan and friends in the Wildlife Outreach Network based in Essex, leading to a total of £770, our first donation to Kuşkor.

There is a thank you letter from Martin Marancos of Kuşkor at this end of this report, which explains more about how the funds will be used. The total conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays since 1991 has already topped £50,000 with more still to come this spring/summer 2008.

Northern Cyprus 6 – 13 April 2008

Sunday 6 April: the way there...

Those on the first flight successfully gathered at a snowy Stansted – fortunately not bad enough for any delays. Cyprus Turkish Airlines duly transferred us to Antalya, for a stifling hour on the tarmac, enlivened only by house martins, until we departed on the short flight to Ercan. Leaving the plane, it was very warm (23°C) with strange yellowish clouds indicative of an ongoing Sahara dust storm.

As dusk fell, our transfer to Riverside took us through a worryingly arid landscape – we were arriving in the middle of an extended drought, with obvious implications for what we were likely to see (or not) during the week. Swallows and hooded crows were among the few birds noted.

After meeting up with Brian and Eileen and checking in, it was up to the restaurant for the first of many lovely meals, an array of *mezze* dishes, followed by a selection of cooked items, and plenty of local wine! Towards the end of the meal, the final five members of the group arrived from their later flight: at last we were complete. Despite an increasing wind, there plenty of signs of nocturnal activity around the hotel – scops owls and tree frogs calling, and Egyptian fruit bats and a nightjar flying around the trees and lights.

And so to bed, full of anticipation...

Monday 7 April: Geçitköy Reservoir and Cape Koruçam

After a wild, blustery but mild night, dawn broke with the wind still raging, revealing the magnificent backdrop of the Besparmak mountain range. A few folk were out and about early to get a first taste of the bird life. Gardens full of blackcaps pointed towards ongoing migration, and the chirruping of house sparrows was a welcome memory of times past back home.

After breakfast, we all assembled for an introductory meeting to outline the daily routine, and plan the details of the day ahead. First challenge – collect the ‘packed’ lunches, or as they turned out, plates of salad, covered in cling-film. Fortunately, there was plenty of space on the coach to make sure they survived the morning! Heading westward, a superb roller flew past, giving everyone a flash of its electric blue plumage, somewhat incongruous in the rather despoiled landscape of seemingly unregulated development, a race to cash in on the dividend from any future reunification of the island, set among depressing amounts of general litter.

As soon as we disembarked, overlooking Geçitköy Reservoir, the first of Cyprus’s special birds made itself known, a black francolin calling from the nearby hillside. Colin soon earned his colours as super-spotter by locating it perching on a low bush – like a blackish, short-tailed pheasant. And so it continued to call, its rhythmical crowing soon becoming the ever-present motif for the holiday. Other birds adding to the soundscape included Cetti’s warblers and a zitting cisticola, while small parties of alpine swifts scythed through the air overhead.

The reservoir itself was rather quiet, with just single little egret, grey heron, common sandpiper and greenshank on the margins, and a few coots on the water. Brian and Eileen then led us along the track in search of flowers but almost immediately we ground to a halt as a singing male Cyprus warbler, the second island speciality, gave brief but good close views, showing its barred underparts to advantage. This species, breeding only in Cyprus was subsequently seen in many locations, to some extent occupying the Sardinian warbler niche, so familiar elsewhere in most other parts of the Mediterranean.

Despite the dry conditions, we were soon among the orchids – bug orchid, *Ophrys attica*, *O. hystera* (the late-flowering early spider orchid), *O. sicula*, some magnificent *O. kotschyi*, and another endemic *O. lapethica*, named after a nearby village Lapta. Most obvious among the other flowers

were the extensive patches of *Scabiosa prolifera*, a creamy-yellow scabious. As we walked, red-rumped swallows flew past, and a few butterflies appeared, including the diminutive local form of orange tip, and the well-marked race *syriacus* of swallowtail. Several southern emperor dragonflies hawked around, taking advantage of the shelter from the winds afforded by the scrub and trees. Unfortunately, we could not avoid the gusts so effectively, one of which blew over my 'scope, putting it out of action for the rest of the week.

As we passed through the scrubby landscape, dominated by all three species of *Cistus* found on Cyprus – large flowered, pink *creticus*, smaller, paler *parviflorus* and white *salvifolius* – interspersed with worrying (if picturesque) amounts of alien *Acacia*, we came upon a few examples of the endemic, so-called black tulip *Tulipa cypria*. Yes, it is a rather deep red colour, with black basal blotches, and as the flowers age, so they do become progressively darker; the walk culminated at a clearing studded with dozens of the flowers.

Back at the coach, it was time for lunch, to the aural accompaniment of black francolin and Cyprus warbler.

After lunch, it was out onto the Güzelyurt Peninsula, windswept at the best of times, and especially so today. Several common buzzards, presumably migrants, were spotted as we travelled, and a short stop at Sadrazamköy produced a splendid male black-eared wheatear with a whinchat. A concrete water tank proved to be an irresistible draw for birds; among the ever-present goldfinches, greenfinches and blackcaps were two beautiful black-headed wagtails and several Spanish sparrows, both species looking very smart in the bright sunlight.

Heading out towards the Cape, there were further signs of migration in the form of a flock of 40 black-headed wagtails, and a male redstart in the lee of a hedge-line. At the end of the road, the wind was ferocious and the breaking waves impressive. But typically of many Mediterranean areas, absolutely no birds out at sea, although a common swift swept past, oblivious to the gale. Windswept and salt-sprayed, the vegetation at the point was rather sparse, but included some lovely flowering patches of purple *Anchusa undulata* and bright blue *A. humilis*, and sea-heath and both purple and white forms of *Centaurea aegialophila* in more sheltered pockets. An extreme, skeletal environment perhaps, but one which certainly repaid closer investigation.

Time to leave, we headed back along the coast road, with dramatic views all round – at least for those who were still awake! After dinner, we sampled the night-life; the fruit bats put on a good show but we had to be content with only distant calls of scops owl.



Tuesday 8 April: Hisarköy

A sunny and calmer start saw several of us searching for the early birds. I located an eastern olivaceous warbler, apparently singing on territory close to the hotel, and a couple of migrant orphee warblers, while Colin pulled a confiding masked shrike (*left*) out of a nearby field, a bird which was to remain a firm favourite for the rest of the week.

After breakfast, we headed for the hills, the arid southern slopes of the Besparmak mountains, which dominate this part of Cyprus. We met up in Hisarköy with our hosts for the day, Maureen and Tony Hutchinson, who run an organic smallholding in the village. Maureen led us, and a couple of visiting Canadian geologists, on a fascinating ramble around the area, highlighting the plants,

from carob to fennel and the ‘TCP plant’ *Lagoecia cuminoides*, which are used in local cooking and natural remedies. Overlooking the valley, Tony showed the cliff in which rollers usually nest, although all that was currently residing in the holes were jackdaws and a little owl, watching us watching it. Pushing through the spiny, scrubby slopes, numerous Paphos blues were on the wing, and two species of lizard skittered around in the developing warmth – snake-eyed lizard, a common, slender species, and fringe-toed lizard, larger and sandier. Several tree pipits flew over, and one dropped in to be scrutinised through the scopes. Giant fennel was a dramatic feature of the landscape, and we found several endemic plants, including *Onosma fruticosum* and *Anthemis tricolor*, growing among more widespread, but hugely attractive nonetheless, plants such as the shrubby gromwell *Lithodora hispidula*, with flowers on each bush in all colours – white, pink and blue. Meanwhile, a nightingale struck up in song, frustratingly but typically remaining out of sight, and those who had stayed at the top of the slope were treated to a fly-past great spotted cuckoo.

A delightful lunch of home-made, organic quiches, cheesecake, lemonade and sage tea (ok, the last was an acquired taste, a bit like very watery gravy) was provided in the welcome shade of Maureen and Tony’s garden. Entertainment was laid on, in the form of several agamas, sunbathing and squaring up to each other on the garden wall, and Helen came up trumps with a Lang’s short-tailed blue, a new garden record. A few *Cyclamen persicum* were still in flower, and the lettuce patch was almost visibly being destroyed by the bean broomrape. There was also plenty of the smaller branched broomrape – on Cyprus it appears to be adapting its host range to include the much-despised alien Bermuda buttercup.

Walking out again in the afternoon, we reached a small grassy area, a bit damper, and teeming with orchids, especially tongue-orchids. Other plants included thyme broomrape, living up to its scientific name *alba* (unlike British examples which are reddish-brown!), and the squat, endemic star-of-Bethlehem *Ornithogalum pedicellare*. The return leg brought us through the village, taking in local architecture, church and shop, finally back to the garden for tea and carrot cake. All in all, a fascinating day, much appreciated by all.



In the evening, Martin Marancos from Kuşkor, the North Cyprus Society for the Protection of Birds and Nature, came to the hotel to talk about their work, in particular the uses to which the holiday contributions will be put. Some is to be spent on the programme of monitoring lime-sticking, which targets blackcaps for the pickle-jar, but also results in a considerable by-catch. A second recipient will be a project to protect ancient olive trees, and the remainder will support an education scheme, introducing local children to the idea of recycling, and seeking to get them involved. All very

worthy and deserving of our support; although only £770, this is a significant sum for them – as Martin said, he was ‘gobsmacked’ when Chris offered to direct funds in their direction. Malcolm, as a trustee, made the presentation, bringing the total of Honeyguide conservation contributions over the past 15 years to more than £50,000: truly, green tourism in action.

Wednesday 9 April: Karaman, Ilgaz and Green Heights Park

A thankfully windless and sunny day dawned, although it was immediately apparent that most of the passerine migrants of the past two days had taken the opportunity to move on overnight. Our masked shrike failed to appear, but the early birders were rewarded with a splendid, close view of a little owl, and at least fleeting glimpses of eastern olivaceous warbler.

As we set out after breakfast though, the cloud started to come down the mountains, and so it remained for much of the day; nevertheless another four folk joined me in the shorts club! Our first stop was at the Bronze Age tombs of Karaman, rather impressive holes in the ground, especially as many were adorned with the flimsy fronds of maidenhair fern. A large wall brown flitted along the track, another excellent black francolin was seen across the valley, and everyone was encouraged to savour the aroma of the leaves of the red peppercorn tree *Schinus molle* in a nearby garden.

Back on the coach, we had travelled barely ten metres before Colin (him again!) spotted something striking on the top of a bush. Our first Cyprus (pied) wheatear, (*right*) the third of our hit-list of island specialities, and perching there only five metres away! Then it was off to Karaman itself, a short walk through the delightful, well-maintained, litter-free village followed by a longer wander towards Ilgaz on a track across the hill slopes. Just outside the village, a couple of Cretzschmar's buntings flew up, and eventually showed themselves to most of the group. At the foot of the towering cliffs and rocks, a pimple on the skyline resolved itself into a male blue rock thrush, especially when it undertook a series of display flights; several more Cyprus wheatears were in evidence; and Jenny surpassed all reasonable expectations by spotting a wonderful pair of Bonelli's eagles, dropping out of the cloud, as she was searching for orchids!! The orchids themselves were also abundant, including a number of new 'species' (or as I like to think of them, 'minor variants given names by those with too much time on their hands'), including *Ophrys bormuelleri*, *morio* and *flavomarginata*, *Orchis anatolica*, and the ladies' favourite, the naked-man orchid *Orchis italica*. The hillside was covered in *Cistus* bushes, interspersed with eastern strawberry trees, in full flower, their sensuous smooth orange bark peeping out from the foliage.



After a short drive to Ilgaz (normally a walk, but not at the Honeyguide pace!) we were duly fed and watered at Hoots restaurant. The enclosed courtyard would have been idyllic were it not for the caged goldfinches and greenfinch: old habits die hard...

The afternoon walk took us up the road behind Hoots, at quite a challenging gradient, into the valley above. Two groups of three Eleonora's falcons swept over the hilltop, wheeled around with unparalleled aerobatic qualities, and then without further ado swept away, presumably towards Turkey. A pair of masked shrikes, side by side for easy comparison, hunted around the bushes. Alliums were very obvious next to the path – particularly *A. neapolitanum* at lower levels, and the smaller, pinker *A. trifoliatum* higher up. And the stately white umbellifer with feathery foliage *Zosima absinthiifolia* was in good flower all over the grassy and rocky slopes, alongside turban buttercups, here predominantly the bright yellow form rather than the white, cream and occasionally pink or red forms seen elsewhere.

Our final destination of the day was Green Heights Park, back in the developed coastal plain. This is an oasis of green, planted with a range of exotic trees and shrubs, most noticeably flame trees in full flower, their bright red blooms making an arresting sight. However, the main purpose of the visit was the café serving fresh pomegranate juice, very welcome in the heat.

For a change, we ate dinner at the farmhouse restaurant, close to the hotel, a welcome variation to our usual fare, and made all the more special as it was Tim and Sandra's 25th wedding anniversary, duly celebrated with cake, bubbly and brandy. A fine and fitting end to the meal!

Thursday 10 April: Girne, Bellapais, Ozanköy and Alagadi

It was calm and overcast first thing, and the wind had turned right round to the east, with spits and spots of rain in the air. A recipe for new migrants? Sadly not – the early crew searched in vain for anything other than a whitethroat. The masked shrike could not be located, nor could the roller glimpsed by Jenny from the coach the previous evening. However, Colin had wandered down towards the beach, and came back with tales of an excellent Cretzschmar's bunting.

While waiting for the coach to arrive after breakfast, a hobby put in a fleeting show overhead. Then it was off to Girne (Kyrenia), for a couple of hours of retail therapy/coffee/staring at an empty sea. We tried...but all on offer was a single Mediterranean shag and a common sandpiper flying past. Not even a yellow-legged gull in the harbour, and to cap it all, down came the rain in quite a heavy shower. With the lowering skies, several parties of swifts came through, though none could be picked out as pallid. On the impressive fortifications, two yellow-flowered plants gave a welcome splash of colour – golden henbane, and the mullein *Verbascum levanticum*.

Then it was up to Bellapais – a quick look at the abbey (from the outside) and excellent views over Girne, before we headed down the Crusader Path a couple of kilometres to Ozanköy. Drizzling for much of the way, it was at least away from the dusty environs of the villages and the ubiquitous house sparrows and great tits, albeit of the dusky eastern Mediterranean island race *aphrodite*. Two eastern olivaceous warblers were singing against each other, their sedge warbler-like songs coming surprisingly from the plainest, pale warbler you are likely to see. A chukar was also spotted, parading itself on the opposite side of the small valley. Botanically, the relatively moist conditions in the valley produced a few more trees – *Styrax* in beautiful flower, *Acer obtusifolius*, with its red keys, *Quercus infectoria*, its leaves just bursting – and some splendid clumps of *Cyclamen persicum* put its cultivated derivatives to shame with its perfect, petite flowers and marbled leaves. Rather less impressive, but interesting, there were clumps of the endemic shrub *Bosea cypria* just coming into flower: this is a Tertiary relict species, whose only close relatives are also restricted range endemics, from the Atlantic Islands and north-west Himalaya respectively.

And so to lunch, another fine spread, this at the Five Fingers restaurant, named after the distinctively shaped mountain behind (although Five Knuckles may have been a better descriptor). Afterwards we were shown into an amazing, small, early 16th century Byzantine church, which is being restored by a local man, who was on hand to explain the project and point out the well-preserved frescoes therein. In the churchyard, there was a dramatic, purple-spotted *Arum dioscorides* in full flower, while just outside, there was a tree covered in amazing pink blooms, later identified as the introduced *Bauhinia variegata*, together with an old lady, taking advantage of the numerous snails, themselves responding to the rain, collecting bagfuls for the pot.

Driving eastwards, past Girne, we came to Alagadi. The plan was to walk to a reservoir then back to the beach, one of the renowned turtle breeding beaches later in the season, although time caught up with us and we never made it back to the beach. The first hundred metres looked promising – every bush with its blackcap, numerous Cyprus warblers and Cyprus wheatears, and a few whinchats. But as walked, the vegetation become more sparse, and the birds evaporated, a situation undoubtedly exacerbated by the fact that the official shooting season had only just ended. The ground was littered with spent cartridges, even cartridge boxes labelled with the brand name 'Turdus shooting' – which no doubt do as they say on the tin. What turned into a dusty route march was enlivened only by a nosed grasshopper, basically a bundle of dead grass stems brought to life.

Even at the reservoir, the same story – nothing! Not even any water to speak of. Returning seaward along a parallel valley, it was just as we neared the main road that once again birds reappeared. First was a lovely isabelline wheatear spotted by Sandra, who was only slightly miffed to find that Tim, out in front, had found his own at about the same time. For good measure, it was feeding with five northern wheatears and a similar number of Cretzschmar's buntings, hopping around one of the few

green patches on the parched hillside. Just as we waited for the coach to pick us up, a red-rumped swallow (*right*) swept past, allowing most to see its salient points.

After dinner, the fruit bats again showed well down by the swimming pool, and we located three Kotschy's geckoes on an illuminated outbuilding.

Friday 11 April: St Hilarion Castle, Kozan and Geçitköy Reservoir

The masked shrike again performed well for the early birders, feeding and preening as close as at any time during the week.

Today's trip to the mountains promised much, and given perfect weather could hardly fail. A drive to St Hilarion Castle, a stupendous feat of historical engineering, perched at three levels on near vertical slopes, was followed by a 22km drive along the ridge road, the newly metalled and highest road on the Besparmak mountains.

Despite its obvious tourist attractions, St Hilarion Castle was surprisingly good for birds: blue rock thrushes were seen from above and below, along with spectacled warbler, willow warbler, chiffchaff, and singing Cyprus wheatears and nightingale. Best of all, a male collared flycatcher was watched at length, as it made feeding forays at close range. A little raptor movement was in evidence, with a Montagu's harrier and a few buzzards drifting past.

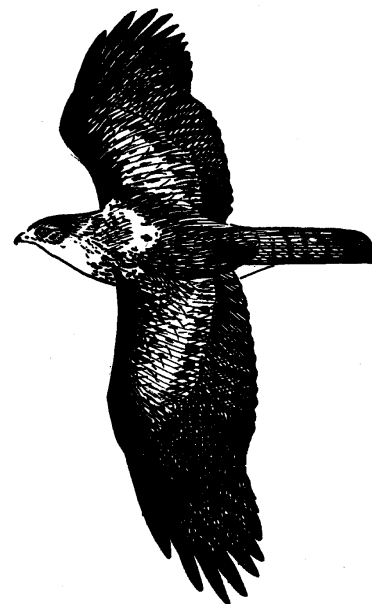
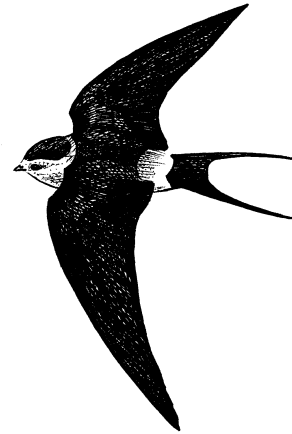
The plants too were rather good, if a little past their best, and our pressing lunch engagement restricted the time we had to enjoy them. Even so, we found pink *Arabis cypria* in flower, patches of the beautiful *Vicia cypria*, white flowers with a blue blotch, and *Onosma caespitosum*, an endemic herbaceous golden-drops. Butterflies were also on the wing, with large wall and Cleopatra at lower levels, and several 'ordinary' wall browns at the very top of the hill, these and the wonderful views giving a welcome opportunity for us to recover after the steep climb.

Heading along the ridge road, we stopped in a couple places, as military restrictions allowed. Sadly, neither coincided with the groups of falcons we glimpsed while travelling. But the second stop, by an old tank, a relic of the 1974 troubles, produced at least two, and possibly as many as four, rollers, flying, perching and rolling, albeit at quite some distance. And Cyprus wheatears were everywhere, testament to the breadth of their ecological niche, from coastal plain to mountain top, city centre to dense forest.

At Kozan, our lunch stop, we could not have had a more idyllic situation; mountains above, pine forests around, views down to the coast, and great food, even though the smell of the barbecue left us wanting more! All this, and a smart male Montagu's harrier which drifted north above us.

Raring to go, I led a single file walk into the forest, down to a valley – almost silent – until we came to a clearing where we sat down for a grandstand view. And before long, the main act appeared – one, then a second Bonelli's eagle (*right*), over the hillside, which floated across the valley towards us, before veering off into the next valley, probably where they are thinking of breeding. Yes, I knew this was a favoured spot, but it could hardly have been better timed if we had paid the eagles to perform.

Walking back to the coach, we realised that on the way down, we must have been concentrating skywards, as we had passed some superb patches of one of the loveliest Cypriot endemic plants, *Ononis*



venosa, with cream flowers veined with wine-red, among pinnate, beautifully white-marbled leaves.

We still had a little time to spare, so we decided to give Geçitköy Reservoir another go, in less windy conditions, and after a day when visible migration was clearly under way. Alpine and common swifts were wheeling and calling overhead in substantial groups, and a distant wood sandpiper stalked the margins. But apart from distant singing reed and great reed warblers, all we could manage was a bathing corn bunting and the quacking calls of marsh frogs (or Levantine frogs, if recent authors are to be believed).

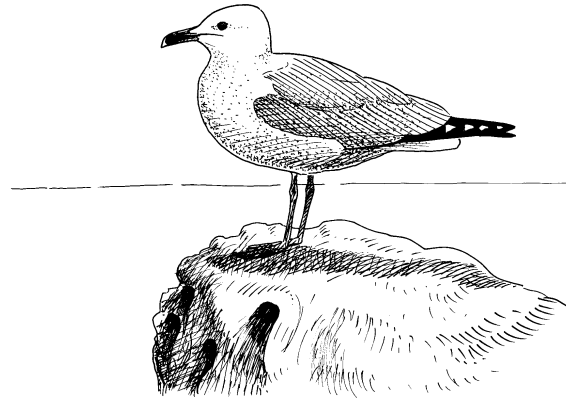
Friday night is cock fighting night ... at Riverside at least. It went on until the early hours, and was the only downer on an excellent day. Cockfighting, captive goldfinches, thrush shooting and the lime-sticking we had heard about but thankfully not witnessed: to some perhaps a flavour of the local culture, but a flavour that many of us find totally unpalatable. Roll on accession to the EU and hopefully the enforcement of a few of the basic rules of civilisation. If our trip in some small way helps to change attitudes, then it will have been most worthwhile.

Saturday 12 April: Famagusta, Glapsides, Silver Beach and Salamis

It was a calm, hazy morning, which produced a fly-past hoopoe, and a male blackcap with a striking yellow face, no doubt pollen from the flowers in which it had been feeding.

A longer drive today, to Famagusta (Gazimağusa) on the south coast, was dusty, arid and enlivened only by a brief view of a bee-eater. In Famagusta, we parked near the harbour, an hour for shopping, coffee and cakes, a look at the fortifications or birdwatching. Large numbers of swifts circling over the town were all apparently common swifts, and a Cyprus wheatear was in full, shivering song from the top of one of the only trees in the vicinity. The harbour, at first sight birdless, eventually yielded a little egret on the breakwater, and four distant Audouin's gulls (*right*), the dark red beaks of the adults contrasting well with the yellower bill of the yellow-legged gull which helpfully flew in for comparison.

A few kilometres up the coast, the semi-tidal wetland basins still held a little water, and a good selection of birds despite the almost visible incursion of tourist development. As we disembarked, a kingfisher flashed past, then landed to give a superb, extended view, vibrant in the strong sunlight. Four black-winged stilts waded gracefully in the shallows on ridiculously long legs, and couple of spur-winged plovers stalked their way through the short salt marsh vegetation; more careful searching eventually produced common sandpiper, a couple of little ringed plovers, mallard, moorhen and coot. A black francolin and black-eared wheatear flirted with us, teasing by appearing on the edge of the military zone, pointing scopes at which was not advisable, although a singing calandra lark was in a 'safe' direction, a bulky little bird with dark underwings, high overhead. Despite the saltiness of the water, several dragonflies were also apparent, including both scarlet darter and common emperor, keen to show off their striking colours at close range.



A little further north, at Silver Beach, the lagoon was virtually dry, and the only bird was a distant, heat-hazed black francolin. We descended on the beach taverna, not yet fully open for the summer, to eat our picnics, on the understanding we would buy drinks. Well, sometimes you just have to! The owner seemed interested in us, especially as we were the second such group in a week; he was also able to give a first hand account of the severity of the drought – it has rained there only four times this year! But of course some wildlife is naturally adapted to drought, especially the plants on

freely-draining sand dunes, so nothing seemed untoward as we took a short walk on the low dunes – the plants seemed quite happy. Sea holly, sea spurge and golden-samphire were familiar from home territory, but the Mediterranean influence was apparent in the numerous strap-like leaves and shed, shiny black seeds of sea daffodil (this beach must be a picture in the summer when the fragrant white blooms are out), and both *Silene colorata* and sea medick in flower, the latter with yellow flower clusters amidst a creeping mat of silvery, densely-hairy leaves.

Finally, we went into the nearby extensive archaeological site of Salamis. Agamas were very obvious features on the ruined buildings, basking in the hazy sunlight, but birds again were few and far between, perhaps not surprising given the aridity of the surroundings, but several Cyprus warblers showed well, together with a masked shrike, and after a short wait, a wood warbler revealed itself in a belt of eucalyptus trees. George spotted a Cyprian hare coursing across the track, and Helen produced a couple of new butterflies, Lulworth skipper and the delightful, stripy, tiny small tiger blue. The few plants in flower included the spiny asparagus and winged sea-lavender, while insects included an Egyptian locust and veritable orgies of the flower chafer *Oxythrea funesta*, rather unusually gorging themselves on the ripe fruit of spiny tea-tree instead of the more usual (and solitary) diet of pollen.

Few eyes remained open on the trip back to the hotel, but all were present for a final meeting and last dinner together. A review of the week revealed that, despite the overall lack of birds, we had seen between us a total of 86 species, including all the island specialities, a triumph of quality over quantity and a remarkable total given the natural and human environmental pressures. After dinner, all seemingly reluctant to leave and perhaps close proceedings down, we took the opportunity to note down everyone's holiday highlights.

Sunday 13 April: local walk from Riverside, and the way home.

Again bright and sunny, Colin pulled off a final coup at breakfast with a male collared flycatcher from the terrace, while Lyn relocated 'our' masked shrike, just a little way from its usual haunts. Then as we packed, a couple of bee-eaters flew over the hotel.

Given our evening flight, there was still time for a last local walk, through old Alsancak and up the dry valley behind the village, at least for those who didn't opt for a dip in the swimming pool. The oriental plane trees, indicating at least the historical presence of water, harboured a cuckoo, a wood warbler, singing sub-song, and a final Cyprus warbler which sang conveniently from the top of a cypress tree.

Taking a light lunch under the orange and loquat trees by the pool, even then there was no chance to wind down: suddenly a scops owl hooted, and Tim eventually located it only four metres above our heads, a fantastic view, allowing all to appreciate its diminutive size and the dark grey plumage of this distinctive Cypriot race. Success after nights of searching!

And so to the airport. As our wheels left the runway, the final sighting was of a male black francolin bidding us farewell, as we sped off, via Dalaman, homewards. A special bird to round off a fascinating trip.

The best bits

Colin – finding our old friend, the masked shrike

George – our masked shrike, in evening light; the church with frescoes and the *Arum* outside; the food, especially the taverna lunches

Helen – the day with Maureen and the Bonelli's eagles

Jenny – our first view of Bonelli's eagles; *Vicia cypria* at Hilarion; Martin's enthusiasm and efforts on behalf of Kuşkor

Jill – Maureen's walk and her knowledge of the plants and their uses

John – St Hilarion Castle and its unbelievable engineering; fruit bats; black francolins, and Cyprus warbler – it took a long time, but great views on the last day

Ken – black francolins, especially the first one, and Cretzschmar’s buntings

Lyn – ‘the silence in the mountains’; seeing Bonelli’s eagles and Audouin’s gulls, two very rare birds

Malcolm – Bonelli’s eagles and spur-winged plovers; St Hilarion Castle, Bellapais, and the small church with frescoes; the cathedral converted into a mosque in Famagusta

Richard – St Hilarion Castle – and reaching the top!; Maureen’s day

Rosemary – all the orchids, collared flycatcher; fruit bats and the scent of the *Datura* bushes in the hotel grounds

Sandra – their silver wedding party; isabelline wheatear; *Coronilla rostrata*; and finding their own masked shrike at Salamis

Sonia – the carob mill in Karaman, and being invited for tea by a villager; scarlet darter at Glapsides

Tim – actually getting up at 6 am on four occasions!; masked shrike at dawn, and the Bonelli’s eagles appearing right on cue

Brian – black francolins, seen and not just heard

Eileen – the wonderful day with Maureen, and actually seeing black francolins

Chris – the smartest of the smart collared flycatcher (*right*), and the lovely endemic *Onobrychis venosa*; our final flourish of a lunchtime scops owl.



LISTS

The lists below include most of the plants and animals we saw during the trip. Localities are given for those which were found only in one or two places.

Key to localities:

R – Riverside, and its surroundings at Alsancak

G – Geçitköy Reservoir

K – Koruçam and Sadrazamköy

H – Hisarköy

Ka – Karaman

I – Ilgaz

Gi – Girne

B – Bellapais to Ozanköy

A – Alagadi

SH – St Hilarion Castle

Ko – Kozan

F – Famagusta, Glapsides and Salamis

PLANTS

‘It was the best of times, it was the worst of times’ to quote Mr Dickens but this was simply the tale of one island. Spring weather was absolutely the best this year with abundant sunshine, temperatures well above normal and rarely below 23 centigrade throughout March while reaching 27/28 around the third week and virtually no rain. Holidaymakers must have been truly delighted. It was a very different spring for the birds and flowers. The drought conditions which had prevailed all winter, reduced the number of annual plants on show and restricted the growth of many others. This included the orchids which were present in good numbers but smaller than usual. The season was early too and appeared to peak around second half of March. In spite of the drought conditions,

there were a pleasing number of flower species to be found but perhaps not in the numbers that might have been expected. The drought conditions had an unexpected effect on certain red flowers, the common poppy, *Papaver rhoeas*, for example for much less intense in colour. Cyprus is one of only a few locations where the turban buttercup, *Ranunculus asiaticus*, can be found in all its colour forms, red, white and yellow but not this year, the red forms were nowhere to be seen. Similarly, the red form of *Anemone coronaria*, which normally follows a little later than the blue, pink and white forms, was another red flower conspicuous by its absence.

North Cyprus has a rich orchid flora, many of which are easily identified. Amongst the Ophrys species, the bee orchids, the *O. mammosa* group is the most complex. Here on Cyprus it has been divided into four different species. We were able to find three of them, *O. mammosa* with its well rounded or oval lip, the newly designated *O. morio* with a lip markedly narrowing towards the apex and looking pinched and *O. hystera* which is taller and distinctly later flowering. We found a number of plants of this last species which were just coming into flower. The fourth member of this group, which we didn't find, is an early flowering species, flowering from early February into March.

Brian Anderson

The list below includes mainly those species seen in flower, with a few more distinctive non-flowering ones. Non-native, planted trees, shrubs and garden plants are not included. * indicates a species or subspecies which is endemic to Cyprus.

Dicotyledons

Aceraceae

Acer obtusifolium R B

Amaranthaceae

**Bosea cypria* R B

Anacardiaceae

Pistachia lentiscus Mastic tree
P. terebinthus Turpentine tree
P. vera Pistachio tree H

Apiaceae

Bupleurum lanceolatum G
Eryngium creticum
E. maritimum Sea-holly F
Ferula communis Giant fennel
Foeniculum vulgare Fennel
Lagoecia cuminoides TCP plant
Pseudorhiza pumila F
Smyrniolum olusatrum Alexanders
Tordylium aegyptiacum H
Zosima absinthifolia H I SH

Apocynaceae

Nerium oleander Oleander
Vinca major Greater periwinkle

Araliaceae

Hedera helix Ivy

Asteraceae

Anthemis pseudocotula rotata K
A. rigida R
 **A. tricolor* H

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| <i>Asteriscus aquaticus</i> | | K A F |
| <i>Bellis sylvestris</i> | | |
| <i>Calendula arvensis</i> | Field marigold | |
| <i>Carduus argentatus</i> | | |
| * <i>Carlina involuocrata cypria</i> | | A |
| <i>Centaurea aegialophila</i> | | K |
| <i>Chrysanthemum coronarium</i> | | |
| <i>Crepis fraasii</i> | | SH |
| <i>Crupina crupinastrum</i> | | |
| <i>Ditrichia viscosa</i> | Stink aster | |
| <i>Filago pyramidata</i> | Broad-leaved cudweed | R |
| <i>Helichrysum conglobatum</i> | | |
| <i>Inula crithmoides</i> | Golden-samphire | F |
| <i>Launaea residifolia</i> | | K |
| <i>Notobasis syriaca</i> | | |
| * <i>Onopordum cyprium</i> | | A |
| <i>Pallenis spinosa</i> | | |
| <i>Phagnalon rupestre</i> | Shrubby cudweed | |
| <i>Picnomon acarna</i> | | |
| * <i>Ptilostemon chamaepeuce cypria</i> | | Ka SH |
| <i>Rhagadiolus stellatus</i> | Star hawkbit | |
| <i>Silybum marianum</i> | Milk thistle | |
| <i>Tragopogon hybridum</i> | | |
| <i>T. sinuatus</i> | | |
| Boraginaceae | | |
| <i>Anchusa humilis</i> | | K H |
| <i>A. italica</i> | Large blue alkanet | |
| <i>A. undulata hybrida</i> | | |
| <i>Borago officinalis</i> | Borage | |
| <i>Cynoglossum creticum</i> | Cretan hound's-tongue | |
| <i>Echium angustifolium</i> | Red viper's-bugloss | |
| <i>E. plantagineum</i> | Purple viper's-bugloss | F |
| <i>Lithodora hispida</i> | Shrubby gromwell | |
| * <i>Onosma caespitosum</i> | | SH |
| * <i>O. fruticosa</i> | Shrubby golden-drops | |
| Brassicaceae | | |
| * <i>Arabis cypria</i> | | SH Ko |
| <i>Arabis verna</i> | | SH |
| <i>Biscutella didyma</i> | | I |
| * <i>Brassica hilarionis</i> | | SH |
| <i>Cakile maritima</i> | Sea rocket | F |
| <i>Malcolmia flexuosa</i> | | K |
| <i>Rapistrum rugosum</i> | Bastard cabbage | |
| <i>Sisymbrium officinale</i> | Hedge mustard | |
| <i>S. irio</i> | London rocket | |
| Caryophyllaceae | | |
| <i>Kohlruschia velutina</i> | | I |
| <i>Paronychia argentea</i> | | F |
| <i>Silene colorata</i> | | K F |
| <i>S. vulgaris</i> | Bladder campion | |
| Chenopodiaceae | | |
| <i>Arthrocnemum macrostachyum</i> | | F |
| <i>Suaeda vera</i> | Shrubby sea-blite | F |

Cistaceae*Cistus creticus**C. parviflorus**C. salvifolius*

Sage-leaved cistus

Fumana thymifolia

H

**Helianthemum obtusifolium*

H Ka

Convolvulaceae*Convolvulus althaeoides**C. pentapetaloides*

R G SH

Crassulaceae**Rosularia cypria***R. pallidiflora*

I SH

SH

Umbilicus horizontalis

Navelwort

Cucurbitaceae*Ecballium elaterium*

Squirting cucumber

Dipsacaceae*Scabiosa prolifera*

Carmel daisy

Ericaceae*Arbutus andrachne*

Eastern strawberry-tree

Ka SH Ko

Euphorbiaceae*Euphorbia helioscopia*

Sun spurge

E. paralias

Sea spurge

F

E. peplus

Petty spurge

Mercurialis annua

Annual mercury

Fabaceae*Acacia cyanophylla**Calicotome villosa*

Spiny broom

Ceratonia siliqua

Carob

Cercis siliquastrum

Judas tree

Coronilla rostrata

Ka

C. securidaca

B

Hymenocarpus circinnatus

Ka

Lathyrus aphaca

Yellow vetchling

L. cicera

Ka

*L. sphaericus**Lotus cytisoides*

K

Medicago marina

Sea medick

F

M. polymorpha

Toothed medick

*Melilotus indicus**M. sulcatus**Onobrychis caput-galli**O. crista-galli***O. venosa*

Ko

Ononis reclinata

Ko

O. viscosa

A

Psoralea bituminosa

Pitch trefoil

*Scorpiurus muricatus**Tetragonolobus purpureus*

Asparagus pea

*Trifolium angustifolium**T. campestre*

Hop trefoil

*T. clypeatum**T. pilulare**T. resupinatum*

Reversed clover

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------|
| <i>T. stellatum</i> | Starry clover | |
| <i>Vicia cypria</i> | | SH |
| <i>V. villosa eriocarpa</i> | | |
| <i>V. hybrida</i> | | |
| <i>V. laxiflora</i> | | Ka |
| Fagaceae | | |
| <i>Quercus coccifera</i> | Kermes oak | G |
| <i>Q. infectoria</i> | | B |
| Frankeniaceae | | |
| <i>Frankenia hirsuta</i> | Hairy sea-heath | K |
| Gentianaceae | | |
| <i>Centaurium pulchellum</i> | Lesser century | |
| Geraniaceae | | |
| <i>Erodium ciconium</i> | | |
| <i>E. gruinum</i> | | R Ka |
| <i>Geranium lucidum</i> | Shining crane's bill | SH |
| <i>G. purpureum</i> | Little-Robin | Ka |
| Lamiaceae | | |
| <i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i> | Gound-pine | SH |
| <i>Lamium moschatum</i> | | |
| <i>Micromeria nervosa</i> | | |
| <i>Marrubium vulgare</i> | White horehound | |
| * <i>Phlomis cypria</i> | | |
| <i>Prasium majus</i> | | |
| <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> | Rosemary | R B |
| <i>Salvia fruticosa</i> | | |
| <i>Stachys cretica</i> | | |
| <i>Teucrium creticum</i> | | H |
| <i>Thymus capitatus</i> | | |
| Malvaceae | | |
| <i>Malva parviflora</i> | Least mallow | |
| <i>M. sylvestris</i> | Common mallow | |
| Meliaceae | | |
| <i>Melia azedarach</i> | Indian bead-tree | |
| Moraceae | | |
| <i>Ficus carica</i> | Fig | |
| Myrtaceae | | |
| <i>Myrtus communis</i> | Myrtle | Ka I |
| Oleaceae | | |
| <i>Olea europaea</i> | Olive | |
| Orobanchaceae | | |
| <i>Orobanche alba</i> | Thyme broomrape | H |
| <i>O. crenata</i> | Bean broomrape | H |
| <i>O. ramosa</i> | Branched broomrape | |
| Oxalidaceae | | |
| <i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i> | Bermuda buttercup | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------|--|-------|
| Papaveraceae | | | |
| <i>Papaver hybridum</i> | Rough poppy | | |
| <i>P. rhoeas</i> | Common poppy | | |
| <i>Roemeria hybrida</i> | | | SH |
| Plantaginaceae | | | |
| <i>Plantago lagopus</i> | | | |
| Platanaceae | | | |
| <i>Platanus orientalis</i> | Oriental plane | | R B |
| Plumbaginaceae | | | |
| * <i>Limonium albidum cyprium</i> | | | K |
| <i>L. sinuatum</i> | Winged sea-lavender | | F |
| Polygalaceae | | | |
| <i>Polygala monspeliaca</i> | | | Ko |
| Primulaceae | | | |
| <i>Anagallis arvensis</i> | Scarlet pimpernel | | |
| <i>A. arvensis caerulea</i> | Blue pimpernel | | |
| <i>Cyclamen persicum</i> | | | R H B |
| Ranunculaceae | | | |
| <i>Clematis cirrhosa</i> | Maiden's-bower | | |
| <i>Ranunculus asiaticus</i> | Turban buttercup | | |
| * <i>R. millefoliatus leptaleus</i> | | | SH |
| <i>R. paludosus</i> | | | Ka |
| Resedaceae | | | |
| <i>Reseda lutea</i> | Mignonette | | |
| Rhamnaceae | | | |
| <i>Rhamnus oleioides</i> | | | K SH |
| Rosaceae | | | |
| <i>Crataegus azarolus</i> | Mediterranean medlar | | |
| <i>C. monogyna</i> | Hawthorn | | |
| <i>Poterium verrucosum</i> | Salad-burnet | | R B |
| <i>Prunus dulcis</i> | Almond | | |
| <i>Rubus sanctus</i> | | | |
| <i>Sarcopoterium spinosum</i> | Spiny burnet | | |
| Rubiaceae | | | |
| <i>Rubia tenuifolia</i> | Wild madder | | Ka |
| <i>Sherardia arvensis</i> | Field madder | | |
| <i>Valantia hispida</i> | | | I |
| Rutaceae | | | |
| <i>Ruta chalepensis</i> | Fringed rue | | H SH |
| Scrophulariaceae | | | |
| <i>Antirrhinum majus angustifolium</i> | Snapdragon | | Ka B |
| <i>Bellardia trixago</i> | | | |
| <i>Misopates orontium</i> | Lesser snapdragon | | |
| * <i>Odontites cypria</i> | | | |
| <i>Scrophularia peyronii</i> | | | H |
| <i>Verbascum levanticum</i> | | | Gi F |

V. sinuatum
Veronica cymbalaria

Solanaceae

Hyoscyamus aureus Golden henbane Gi F
Lycium ferocissimum Spiny tea-tree H F
Mandragora officinarum Mandrake

Styraceae

Styrax officinalis Snowbell tree

Tamaricaceae

Tamarix tetragyna Tamarisk F

Urticaceae

Parietaria judaica Pellitory-of-the-wall
Urtica pilulifera Roman nettle I

Valerianaceae

Centranthus calcitrapae G
Valeriana italica I SH

Monocotyledons

Amaryllidaceae

Narcissus tazetta Ka
Pancreatium maritimum Sea daffodil K F

Araceae

Arum dioscorides B A
A. orientalis R

Iridaceae

Gladiolus italicus
Gynandriris sisyrrinchium Barbary nut G H

Liliaceae

Allium ampeloprasum Wild leek G
A. neapolitanum Naples garlic
A. trifoliatum
Asparagus stipularis F
Asphodelus aestivus
A. fistulosus
Bellevalia nivalis Ka
Gagea graeca
Muscari comosum Tassel hyacinth
Ornithogalum narbonense H
**O. pedicellare* H
O. umbellatum Star-of-Bethlehem
**Tulipa cypria* Black tulip G
Urginea maritima Sea squill

Orchidaceae

Anacamptis pyramidalis Pyramidal orchid H
Ophrys attica G
O. bornmuelleri Ka
O. flavomarginata Ka
O. fusca cinereophila I
O. hystera
**O. kotschyi* G

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| <i>*O. lapethica</i> | | |
| <i>O. mammosa</i> | | |
| <i>O. morio</i> | | Ka |
| <i>O. sicula</i> | | |
| <i>O. umbilicata</i> | | G |
| <i>Orchis anatolica</i> | | Ka |
| <i>O. coriophora frgrans</i> | Bug orchid | G |
| <i>O. italica</i> | Naked-man orchid | Ka Ko |
| <i>Neotinea maculata</i> | Dense-flowered orchid | G |
| <i>Serapias aphrodite</i> | | H |
| <i>S. bergoni</i> | | H |

Poaceae (very incomplete)

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--|
| <i>Arundo donax</i> | Giant reed | |
| <i>Briza maxima</i> | Large quaking-grass | |
| <i>B. minor</i> | Small quaking-grass | |
| <i>Lagurus ovatus</i> | Hare's-tail grass | |
| <i>Phragmites australis</i> | Common reed | |

Smilacaceae

Smilax aspera

Conifers

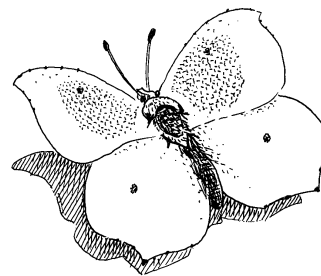
| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| <i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> | Cypress | |
| <i>Juniperus phoenicia</i> | Phoenician juniper | G |
| <i>Pinus brutia</i> | Calabrian pine | |
| <i>P. pinea</i> | Stone pine | F |

Ferns

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| <i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i> | maidenhair fern | Ka SH |
| <i>Cheilanthes pteridioides</i> | | SH |
| <i>Ceterach officinarum</i> | rustyback fern | |
| <i>Selaginella denticulata</i> | toothed club-moss | Ka SH |

BUTTERFLIES

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------|--|
| Swallowtail ssp. <i>syriacus</i> | G | |
| Large white | | |
| Small white | | |
| Eastern bath white | | |
| Orange tip ssp. <i>phoenissa</i> | | |
| Cleopatra ssp. <i>taurica</i> | H SH | |
| Painted lady | | |
| Red admiral | | |
| Large wall brown | K SH | |
| Wall brown | SH | |
| Lesser fiery copper | | |
| Lang's short-tailed blue | H | |
| Little tiger blue | F | |
| Paphos blue | | |
| Common blue | H | |
| Mallow skipper | H | |
| Lulworth skipper | F | |



OTHER INVERTEBRATES

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| <i>Acrida ungarica</i> | Nosed grasshopper | A |
| <i>Anacridium aegyptiacum</i> | Egyptian locust | F |
| <i>Anax ephippiger</i> | Southern emperor | G |
| <i>A. imperator</i> | Emperor dragonfly | F |
| <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i> | Common darter | F |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| <i>Crocothemis erythraea</i> | Scarlet darter | F |
| <i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i> | Fire bug | |
| <i>Oxythrea funesta</i> | a flower chafer | |
| <i>Ammophila sabulosa</i> | Sand wasp | |
| <i>Xylocopa violacea</i> | Carpenter bee | |

AMPHIBIANS

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Green tree frog | R I |
| Marsh (Levantine) frog | G |

REPTILES

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Caspian terrapin | R G |
| Agama | |
| Fringe-toed lizard | H F |
| Troodos lizard | R |
| Snake-eyed lizard | |
| Snake-eyed skink | Ko |
| Kotschy's gecko ssp <i>fitzingeri</i> | R |

BIRDS

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Little grebe | G |
| Shag | Gi - Mediterranean race <i>desmarestii</i> |
| Little egret | F |
| Grey heron | G |
| Mallard | F |
| Pintail | G – a lingering winterer |
| Montagu's harrier | SH Ko – normally less frequent than pallid harrier |
| Common buzzard | K SH – probably migrants |
| Bonelli's eagle | Ka Ko – lovely to see these, as the 1992 avifauna reports its as extinct in the Besparmak range, due to shooting |
| Kestrel | |
| Hobby | R Ko |
| Eleonora's falcon | I |
| Chukar | ssp. <i>cypristes</i> (although not endemic) |
| Black francolin | |
| Moorhen | F |
| Coot | G F |
| Black-winged stilt | F |
| Little ringed plover | F |
| Spur-winged plover | F – appeared to be holding territory |
| Greenshank | G |
| Wood sandpiper | G |
| Common sandpiper | G Gi F |
| Audouin's gull | F – two adults and two sub-adults |
| Yellow-legged gull | |
| Rock dove/feral pigeon | |
| Woodpigeon | |
| Collared dove | |
| Great spotted cuckoo | H |
| Cuckoo | R B |
| Scops owl | R I A – endemic ssp. <i>cyprius</i> |
| Little owl | R – ssp. <i>lilith</i> |
| Nightjar | R |
| Common swift | |
| Alpine swift | |

MAMMALS

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Brown rat | |
| Egyptian fruit bat | R |
| Common pipistrelle | R |
| Cyprian hare | F |

| | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kingfisher | F |
| Bee-eater | R |
| Roller | R Ko |
| Hoopoe | R H F |
| Calandra lark | F |
| Crested lark | ssp. <i>cypriaca</i> , almost endemic, with a rather harsh call |
| Sand martin | |
| Crag martin | G |
| Swallow | |
| Red-rumped swallow | |
| House martin | |
| Tree pipit | the second commonest migrant, frequently heard flying over, though not settling often |
| Meadow pipit | R – a lingering winterer |
| Black-headed wagtail | K |
| White wagtail | |
| Nightingale | H SH |
| Redstart | K |
| Whinchat | K A |
| Isabelline wheatear | A |
| Northern wheatear | A |
| Cyprus wheatear | |
| Black-eared wheatear | K F |
| Blue rock thrush | I SH |
| Cetti's warbler | |
| Zitting cisticola (= fan-tailed warbler) | |
| Reed warbler | G |
| Great reed warbler | G |
| Eastern olivaceous warbler | R B |
| Spectacled warbler | SH |
| Sardinian warbler | A |
| Cyprus warbler | |
| Orphean warbler | R |
| Lesser whitethroat | SH |
| Whitethroat | |
| Blackcap | the commonest migrant, seen everywhere |
| Wood warbler | R F |
| Chiffchaff | |
| Willow warbler | |
| Collared flycatcher | R SH |
| Great tit ssp. <i>aphrodite</i> | |
| Masked shrike | R I F |
| Magpie | |
| Jackdaw | |
| Hooded crow | |
| Raven | |
| House sparrow | |
| Spanish sparrow | K |
| Chaffinch | |
| Greenfinch | |
| Goldfinch | |
| Cretzschmar's bunting | Ka A |
| Corn bunting | G |

Total : 86 species



Kuşkor

Kuzey Kıbrıs Kuşları ve Doğayı Koruma Derneği
North Cyprus Society for the Protection of Birds and Nature

Vakıflar Çarşısı KAT2 NO 3-4 PK 634 Mersin-10 Turkey
Tel: + 90 - 392 - 815 7337 Fax: + 90 - 392 - 815 1819

Chris Durdin
Honeyguide Tours

18th April 2008

Hello Chris,

To say I was “gobsmacked” by the amount of your donation would be an understatement. When you first contacted me I didn’t actually believe much would come of your correspondence and so I volunteered the Kalkanli Valley as the most inexpensive possibility. £770 will actually go a long way in satisfying at least part of three mini projects I have in mind.

Initially a clean up of the Kalkanli Valley, near the “Monumental” olive trees. This will involve at least 20 students and the local municipality. A number of bin liners and a dozen or so pairs of gloves plus lunch for all.

The second area where these funds will be utilized is in the Karpaz region of the island where we are investigating the extent of illegal bird trapping in the North, by using lime sticks and mist nets. An initial survey has been made and a part of the donation will fund one of the follow up visits.

Finally in an attempt to raise awareness among school children in the local area, Kalkanli, Guzelyurt and Lefke, we would like to instigate a pilot scheme to collect aluminium cans within the playgrounds of Primary Schools and then to sell them, donating back to the schools the monies collected. If this works we will have been able to show the profitability of recycling. We might even be able to reclaim our costs, over time, and hand over the administration to the teachers.

I was delighted to meet the Honeyguide group at Riverside and outlined the above three areas where the money would be spent. I believe all met with the approbation of those present and especial comment was made about the raising of “Environmental Awareness” among school children.

Having thanked those present at Riverside it is now my pleasure to thank you for organising it all. Thank you very much indeed. I’m not sure if you can truly understand the difference it will make to Kuşkor and our volunteers, but it will really show them that their work is appreciated. Once again, thank you very, very much.

Sincerely,

Martin Marancos,
Chairman, Kuşkor.