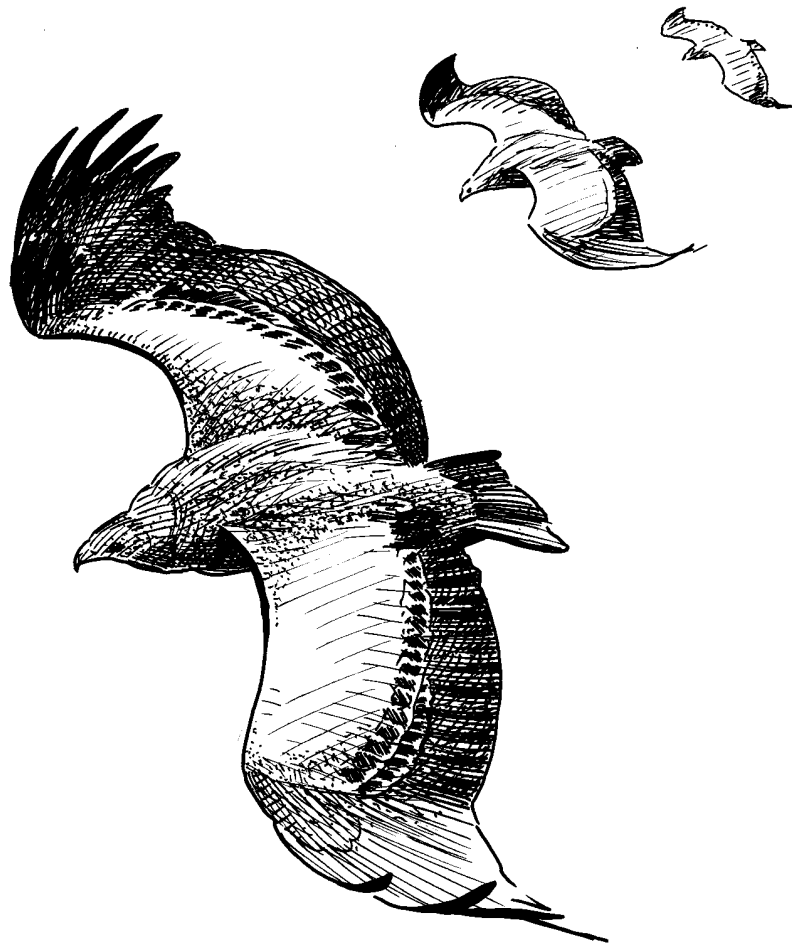


Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Crete
17 - 24 April 2003

Crete
17 - 24 April 2003

Holiday participants

Sylvia Dann Christopher Dann	Surrey
Shirley Awcock	E Sussex
Anthony Atkinson Brenda Atkinson	Northampton
Gill Page	London
Jane Elliott Mark Elliott Kate Elliott	Surrey
Keith White	Cheltenham
Chris Burnett Monica Dolci	Derbyshire
Roger Parkes Tessa Parkes	Maidenhead
Also travelling with the group and staying in Plakias	
Andrew Elliott Anna Elliott	Surrey
Leaders	
David Collins Howard Taffs	Bury St Edmunds Somerset

Report by David Collins

Illustrations by Rob Hume. Front cover: griffon vultures

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. £700 was given to HOS this year - £25 per person from the holidays in Crete and Lesvos. This brings Honeyguide's total contributions to HOS since the first Honeyguide holiday in Crete in 1995 to £3,745, and to conservation projects in Europe from all Honeyguide holidays to £29,800. A thank-you letter from HOS appears at the end of this report.

Crete 17 - 24 April 2003

Thursday 17 April – Gatwick to Plakias

We left England in glorious sunshine, but the weather was cool and windy when we arrived in Heraklion. Despite this, we noted several Swifts from the coach during the drive to Plakias, plus what were to be the only Black Kites of the week.

Heading south across Crete we passed through the spectacular Kourtaliotiko Gorge, where a few Griffon Vultures were seen. Then the south coast came into view, and we were soon arriving at the small resort of Plakias. White horses in the bay confirmed that the wind was strong, and we were all grateful for a reviving cup of tea on arrival at the hotel.

Despite the weather (it was also raining now), a few intrepid souls wandered down to the shore in the hour or so before dinner. We managed to find enough shelter behind a boat to look out into the bay, where a flock of 30 Garganey and 10 Shovelers was seen. Then returning to the comfort of the hotel, we met up with the rest of the group and proceeded to the Sofia Taverna for an excellent meal. We ate in various tavernas during the week, and they were all excellent: but the first meal together is always just a little bit special.

Friday 18 April – Damnoni Bay and Moni Preveli

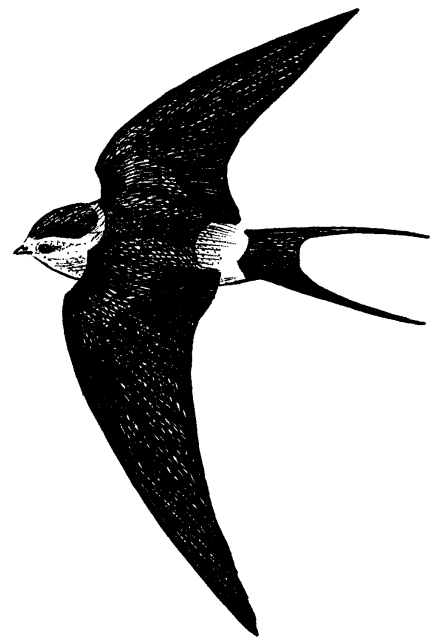
Overnight the wind blew mercilessly, approaching storm force. Howard and I had arranged to lead an early morning bird walk, starting at 7am. At that time it was still blowing hard and raining, so it was no surprise that only Chris B emerged. Ann-Marie provided much needed coffee to bolster our spirits, but we rapidly realised that a walk along the shore at Plakias would not be very pleasant! Hence we decided to do our birdwatching from the comfort of one of the minibuses.

Four Glossy Ibises battling in over the beach against the wind provided an excellent start, but it soon became clear that we would need to find a sheltered area if we were to stand any chance of seeing much. So we headed out along the headland east of Plakias, and eventually found ourselves in Damnoni Bay. Here was a covered alcove where we could stand out of the wind and rain and look out over the bay with telescopes.

At first it seemed as though there were few birds around, but then we noticed two Little Terns battling against the wind close inshore, as well as what was probably a Gull-billed Tern much further out. Then a Hobby came in low over the water and continued inland. Meanwhile, on the road close to where we were standing we noticed two diminutive waders feeding on an area where water was flowing across it. After some debate we agreed that they were Temminck's Stints.

Emboldened by all this excitement we braved the weather (it was only drizzling now, and the shore area is well protected from northerly winds) and walked a hundred yards or so along the road. There were birds everywhere, including 6 Wood Sandpipers roosting on the road; at least 10 Red-rumped Swallows (*pictured, right*) in among hundreds of House Martins and Sand Martins; 10 assorted 'Yellow' Wagtails including several superb males of the Black-headed race; Woodchat Shrike, Nightingale, five Whinchats and several Spotted Flycatchers.

All that in an hour and a half before breakfast! With no sign of a let-up in the weather (even the ever cheerful Ann-Marie could not give us a positive weather outlook!) we abandoned the planned walk up the hill behind Plakias to the village of Mirthios. Instead, we drove the short distance to Damnoni Bay in the hope of showing the rest of the group the birds we had seen before breakfast.

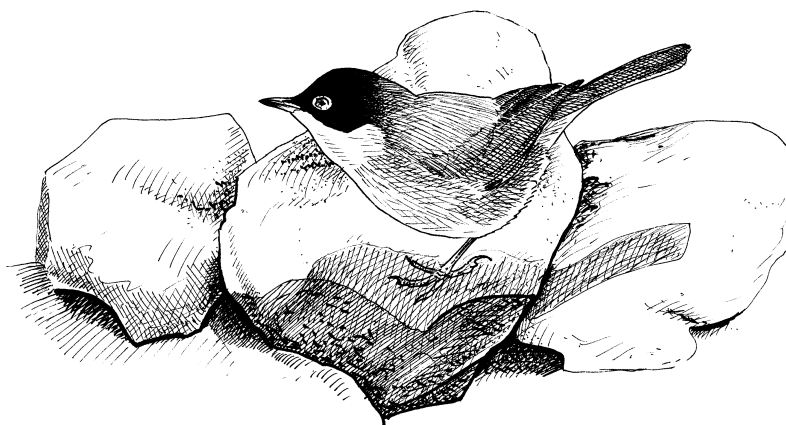


Fortunately, the Temminck's Stints were still feeding on the road, and there were still plenty of migrants sheltering in the area. Whinchats and both Spotted and Pied Flycatchers seemed to be everywhere. There was a wonderful flock of 25 Little Egrets at the pool in the bay, 4 Squacco Herons gave excellent views, and two Purple Herons and a Glossy Ibis also flew close by.

After a couple of hours of intensive birdwatching, we decided to retire to the shelter of the café, which nestles amongst a small grove of trees just behind the beach. Shortly after ordering our coffees Howard spotted a superb male Collared Flycatcher. This bird entertained us greatly, first by perching among the flower pots, then appearing briefly on one of the café's chairs, and then finally (and most decoratively) on a small rowing boat parked on the grass to one side of the café. Here it finally gave excellent close views for the whole group. Just when it seemed we might finish our coffees, a Little Bittern flew in and landed in scrub just behind the café. Add to that the two Wood Warblers and several Pied Flycatchers around the café, and it is no surprise that this was the longest cup of coffee I can ever remember having!

Well pleased with our morning we headed up the hill to the taverna at Mirthios for lunch. The taverna overlooks the valley and gives good views in better weather! Despite the weather, two Golden Orioles were seen briefly flying over the woodland below, although most of the group missed them.

After lunch, and with the need for shelter still in mind, we headed a little further along the coast to Moni Preveli. A walk down below the monastery produced two more Collared Flycatchers, an Alpine Swift flew over and one or two Black-eared Wheatears were noted. A large tree in a sheltered gully, which was just coming in to leaf, was alive with Wood Warblers (we estimated at least 10), plus three Willow Warblers. We also had good views of a male Sardinian Warbler (*right*).



With so many good birds to see, it is not surprising that the plants received rather scant attention, but we did stop to admire some of the finer ones, including a group of the little blue iris known as Barbary Nut, and the peculiar Small-flowered Tongue Orchid.

The whole group visited the monastery, as much to get out of the wind as anything, and it certainly did provide a peaceful break. As we headed for home, a Chukar Partridge flew across in front of us, and we then stopped to watch a flock of 14 Red-footed Falcons making their way slowly inland against the wind. An excellent sighting indeed, but nothing compared to the flock of 24 we stopped to watch just before Plakias! These were performing superbly, perching on telegraph wires very close to where we had parked, and flying all around us in the sunlight with black clouds and a rainbow for a backdrop! In close to 40 years of birdwatching, I don't think I have ever seen anything more breathtaking. A flock of 34 Glossy Ibises flying over added to the excitement.

Having finally had our fill of these beautiful birds, we headed back into Plakias, but the excitement of the day was not quite over. In the bay a flock of 6 Gull-billed Terns was flying this way and that, with a single Whiskered Tern in close attendance. Also, a single Black Tern flew in over the town.

That evening we ate at a taverna on the sea front, and it became evident that tired migrants were still arriving. A Spotted Flycatcher attempted to catch a last meal just outside the window even as our starters were being served, and a fluttering at the window after dark alerted us to an exhausted warbler. Having picked it up we first confirmed its identity – a Garden Warbler - before placing it in a nearby bush.

What an amazing first day.

Saturday 19 April – Kourtalioitiko Gorge and Spili

After yesterday's high excitement, the pre-breakfast trip was to Damnoni Bay again. Many of the same birds were still around, including the Temminck's Stints and Collared Flycatcher. However, in place of the flock of Little Egrets there were now 22 Squacco Herons at the pool. In scrub on the nearby headland a male Subalpine Warbler was the first of the trip, and two different Wrynecks were seen. Back in Plakias, a Great Reed Warbler was in scrub by the hotel, and both Bee-eater and male Montagu's Harrier flew over.

After breakfast we drove to Kourtalioitiko Gorge, where we spent the morning. We descended into the gorge by means of well-maintained steps, stopping frequently to admire a range of attractive flowers. These included a number of endemics, including the white flowered Cretan Tulip and Cretan Cyclamen, pale pink Cretan Valerian, and more colourful species such as Ricotia (pink) and the similar but much smaller *Malcolmia chia*. Down in the gorge there were a few butterflies including several Eastern Festoons, one of which Howard caught for all to admire.



Griffon Vultures were frequently seen overhead, whilst Crag Martins buzzed up and down the gorge and Blue Rock Thrushes perched on nearby rocks from time to time. Best of all though was a Lammergeier flying over (*left*).

We then drove on to the village of Spili for a taverna lunch and a bit of shopping. Having rounded the group up we then drove the short distance to the Spili 'bumps'. These are two rather uninspiring looking mounds – but how misleading first

appearances can be! Even before we had completed the two hundred yards or so we had stopped to admire flowers such as Orange Wild Tulip, and two species of iris: the small blue Cretan Iris, and the green and black Widow Iris.

The bumps themselves are a remarkable botanical spectacle due to an extraordinary range and profusion of orchids. The yellow spikes of Few-flowered Orchid (yes, they do look a bit like cowslips at first glance) were so numerous that it was almost impossible to walk without crushing them. Interspersed amongst these were twelve other orchids including Yellow Bee Orchid, Cretan Bee Orchid, Rainbow Orchid, Italian Man Orchid, Sawfly Orchid, Bumblebee Orchid, Marengo Orchid, Milky Orchid and the delicate Four-spotted Orchid. Also noted were the low, pink-flowered evergreen clumps of *Daphne sericea*.

Just beyond the bumps, Anthony spotted a group of six small, rather non-descript birds which turned out to be Short-toed Larks. Then, with a cold wind and rain coming on, we headed back to the hotel with just enough time for a two-day log call before the evening meal.

On the way home, though, we could not resist a quick stop at a viewpoint in the Kourtalioitiko Gorge to watch the Griffon Vultures. We counted 11, but better still were an immature Golden Eagle and further sightings of the Lammergeier.

Sunday 20 April – Faestos and Ayia Triada

With rather better weather, our best turn out of the week joined the pre-breakfast walk along the front at Plakias. A Tawny Pipit on the shore was a good find amongst the Yellow Wagtails, as was a flock of 50 or so Spanish Sparrows in an orchard above the bay.

After breakfast we drove east towards Faestos, an important Minoan archaeological site. En route the snow-capped mountains to the north were much admired, and with a bit of mental arithmetic we estimated that the height of the highest summit as about 100,000 inches! It's quite amazing what conversation turns to when there are no birds to look at!

Faestos was windy but not cold. Around 100 Alpine Swifts gave wonderful views close overhead and an unexpected find was a Short-toed Eagle over the valley beyond the café. Best of all though were the Golden Orioles, several of which were seen in flight, with most of the group (but not me!) enjoying close views of three in trees. It was warm enough for a few butterflies to emerge, including Clouded Yellows.

Most of the group then visited the famous Minoan ruins before we continued the short distance along the road to a picnic spot above Agia Triada. This was a lovely flower-filled hillside with Cretan Sainfoin and Red Vipers Bugloss growing amongst patches of Jerusalem Sage. Howard caught a Bath White, and there were more Clouded Yellows.

After lunch we walked down to the nearby river. There were not very many waders, just a few Common and Wood Sandpipers. Plenty of other good birds though, including a magnificent male Montagu's Harrier, a pale phase Booted Eagle seen by a few, a very bedraggled Squacco Heron and a Tree Sparrow. A Purple Heron flew in and, uncharacteristically, perched on the very top of a giant reed for all to view in the telescopes. Best of all, though, was a party of ten Bee-eaters, of which we had magnificent close views.

Back at Agia Triada, there was a quick stop to look at a Giant Orchid before heading back. But the day had one more surprise for us – just before Faestos Chris spotted a Roller perched on the top of a tree. It stayed long enough for most of the group to get good views before a car flushed it. We tried to relocate it but to no avail.

Monday 21 April – Mirthios and Moni Previli

With so many birds to see, the pace had thus far been relentless. So we decided to have an easier day today. In the morning we did the postponed walk to Mirthios. In the late afternoon there was an optional second visit to the Moni Previli area.

Pre-breakfast we returned to our old stamping ground at Damnoni Bay, this time concentrating on the area just inland from the bay itself where there are patches of Giant Reed and weedy areas. A Bonelli's Warbler sang briefly but could not be located. There were good views of two Great Reed Warblers, and both Collared and Pied Flycatchers.

After breakfast, the olive groves above Plakias were full of migrants. There were Spotted and Pied Flycatchers at every turn, plus Tree Pipits, Wood Warblers and Turtle Doves. Also single Great Reed Warbler and Golden Oriole. Best of all though was a Nightingale. First of all it gave sub-song from Thistles (odd behaviour for a Nightingale), but it then flew up into an olive tree where persistence produced fairly good views for most of the group.

Plants included Golden Drops, Three-leaved Sage and an un-opened but still impressive spike of Dragon Arum.

We somehow failed to find the track to Mirthios, so dropped back down to Plakias for a leisurely lunch in a beach-side taverna. Not many birds here, but two Shags (adult and immature) flew into the bay.

Most of the group crammed into one minibus for the optional excursion to Moni Previli in the late afternoon. This gave me the chance to view life from the back of the bus, and to indulge in a little back-seat driving! On the way we stopped to watch a female Montagu's Harrier. In scrub below the monastery some of the group had good views of a Subalpine Warbler, there were several fine male Black-eared Wheatears, Red-rumped Swallow, and for some, good views of a Nightingale. Several Chukar Partridges calling below us on the hillside proved elusive until Roger finally spotted one. This stayed in view long enough for all to get good views through the telescopes.

Finally, we made a quick stop at the 'Roman' bridge before returning to Plakias.

Andrew and Anna, Anthony, Brenda and Monica had driven to the famous Minoan ruins at Knossos in a hire car, and came back full of excitement, having chanced on three Hoopoes by a taverna somewhere on the north coast.

Tuesday 22 April - Lake Kournas, Agia Reservoir, Georgioupolis and Rethymno

No early morning bird walk today, to allow an earlier start for the long drive to the north of the island to visit wetland habitats. First stop though was at the Kotsifou Gorge to look at the Cretan Arums.

Continuing towards Chania, we then turned off at a village called Dramia to visit Lake Kournas. As we did so, a high-pitched noise proved to be a singing Fan-tailed Warbler, and not just the squeaky wheels of our minibus! At first it was perched on a Giant Reed some distance from us, but it then flew directly towards us and landed in vegetation close by. Frustratingly it remained hidden for some time, but eventually gave good close views. Meanwhile, Howard had spotted a superb Red-throated Pipit in the field on the other side of the road. Which way to look? It was proving to be just one of those weeks!



Lake Kournas is a wonderfully scenic spot, and it provides a welcome stop on the way to Agia Reservoir. The speciality is Black-necked Grebe, but we could only spot two Little Grebes. However, during coffee, a small flock of Alpine Swifts entertained us by swooping to drink from the water's surface. Finally, a Hoopoe flew past, the only one of the week for most of us.

We pressed on to the reservoir at Agia, where we had lunch on the dam. It was a rather disturbed lunch, though, because Little Crakes were everywhere, including a female very close to where we were eating. On top of that, up to four female Marsh Harriers passed to and fro, and there were several fine male Garganeys out on the lake. Perhaps best of all though was a Little Bittern, which we got close to just after lunch. Then there was a Glossy Ibis perched with Little Egrets in a tree, and finally a pale phase Booted Eagle to make amends for the one that most of the group missed earlier in the week.

Not very much to see when we arrived at Georgioupolis Lake. Until, that is, Howard spotted another Little Bittern stalking small fish right out in the open. Most of the group then opted to return to Plakias, whilst I took the remainder on a quick sight-seeing/shopping excursion to Rethimnon. Unfortunately, Tessa's much sought after olive wood bread bowls proved more elusive than either Little Crakes or Little Bitterns, and she returned empty handed.

Wednesday 23 April – Frangocastello and Imros Gorge

Sadly, our last day had arrived already. The dawn run was to Damnoni again. This time there were three Cory's Shearwaters by a small fishing boat offshore, but otherwise rather few birds to be seen. Many of the migrants had departed

After breakfast we drove west along the coast through lovely scenery, finally pulling up by the Venetian castle at Frangocastello. From here we walked along the top of low cliffs, with the fine sandy beach below.

Close inspection of a flock of swifts paid dividends when a Pallid Swift was located. Attention then turned to the plants and butterflies. A Dragon Arum in full flower was a truly magnificent site amongst piles of rubble, and a Swallowtail Butterfly was much admired. Pretty flowers along the tracks included Rayless Chamomile, Yellow Pheasant's-eye and an attractive little Centaury, while White Henbane grew by the castle entrance.

The café on the cliff-top proved just too attractive an option, and we spent a pleasant hour or so there over coffee and snacks. While we did so, Chris spotted a line of birds over the sea in the distance. As

they came closer to shore they proved to be a flock of 13 migrating Purple Herons. Round the café itself a Scarce Swallowtail on clover showed spectacularly well through telescopes.

We then drove a little farther along the coast to the Imros Gorge. We stopped at the first layby to have our packed lunches, keeping a look out for birds as we did so. It was very windy though, and there was little to be seen, although Howard had a fleeting glimpse of an Eleonora's Falcon. Pressing on further up the gorge the wind became too strong for birdwatching, and we decided to head back down to Frangocastello. A female Golden Oriole flying in brought us to a halt, and nearby we chanced on a marshy area just below a small chapel. Eight Glossy Ibises tried to make progress inland against the strong wind, at least three crakes (presumed Little) darted in and out of cover, and four Wood Sandpipers were accompanied by our only Ruff of the week.

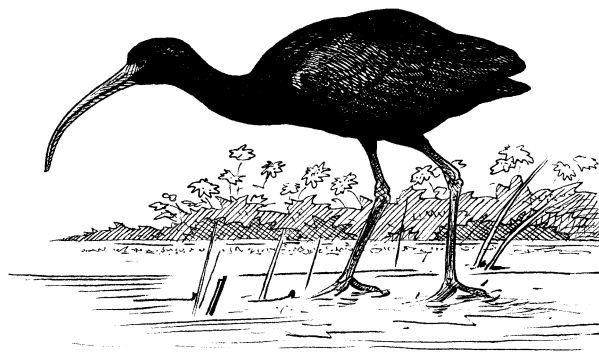
On the way back Chris spotted another Eleonora's Falcon, but it was just a dot by the time the rest of us had got onto it. Well, you do have to keep something back for the next visit!

Thursday 24 April – Plakias to Gatwick

Before breakfast there was a good turn out for our last trip to Damnoni Bay. Few migrants, but good views of Blue Rock Thrush and Black-eared Wheatear on the headland east of the bay, and a male Montagu's harrier was hunting over the hill to the west. Tantalisingly, I had brief views of a singing Ortolan Bunting, but it flitted out of sight before anyone else could see it. We spent a good half hour looking for it, but to no avail.

The coach duly arrived to take us to the airport, but there was to be one last flurry of excitement just as we were taking our luggage down. Two Little Stints were feeding just below the bridge, completely oblivious to us watching them at ten metres. Then a Dice Snake appeared in the river for all to see.

A truly remarkable week.



Nominations for highlight of the week

Anthony Atkinson	Little Bittern and Little Crake together at Agia Reservoir, especially the stealthy movements of the Bittern
Brenda Atkinson	Collared Flycatcher and Little Bittern
Shirley Awcock	Red-footed Falcons on wires
Chris Burnett	Male Montagu's Harrier near Faestos; Agia Reservoir
Monica Dolci	Bee-eaters and Roller; Minoan ruins
Christopher Dann	Red-footed Falcons on wires; Little Bittern
Sylvia Dann	close views of birds through telescopes, especially the Bee-eaters
Jane Elliott	Golden Orioles in trees at Faestos; Howard with his butterfly net!
Gill Page	Male Montagu's Harrier near Faestos; flowers at Kourtaliotiko Gorge
Roger Parkes	Red-footed Falcons on wires
Tessa Parkes	all the birds, but Stonechats in particular
Keith White	Seeing Griffon Vultures, Golden Eagle and Lammergeier in Kourtaliotico Gorge
David Collins	Red-footed Falcons on wires
Howard Taffs	finding his first Collared Flycatcher

BIRD LIST CRETE 17-24 April 2003

Little grebe:	2 Lake Kournas and 20+ Agia reservoir on 22 nd .
Cory's shearwater:	Up to 5 off Damnoni on 23 rd .
Shag:	2 Plakias on 21 st and a first summer off Damnoni on 24 th .
Little bittern:	One by Damnoni café on 18 th , one Agia reservoir and another at Georgeopolis on 22 nd .
Squacco heron:	Several each day with a flock of 22 at Damnoni on 19 th .
Little egret :	Largest flock was 25 in Damnoni Bay on 18 th . Groups of up to 5 each day with 12 passing Frangocastello on 23 rd .
Grey heron:	3 singles at the wetlands on 23 rd , 1 at Frangocastello marsh on 23 rd .
Purple heron:	7 on first morning at Damnoni then 2-4 each day and 13 passing Frangocastello on 23 rd .
Glossy ibis:	Four flying in over Plakias and 1 at Damnoni on the first day were eclipsed by a flock of 34 under a rainbow (and behind the perched Red-footed falcons) near Plakias that afternoon. Later one at Agia and 8 at Frangocastello marsh on 23 rd .
Mallard:	A few at both Lake Kournas and Agia on 22 nd .
Gargany:	30 in Plakias bay as we arrived on 17 th then 10 on the wetlands visited on 22 nd .
Shoveler:	10 in Plakias Bay on 17 th and 6 on Agia reservoir on 22 nd were the only ones seen.
Black kite:	Just 3 from the coach to Plakias on 17 th .
Lammergaier:	One bird seen several times in the Koutaliotiko gorge on 19 th .
Short-toed eagle:	One flying past Faestos on 20 th .
Marsh harrier:	The first was over the river near Agia Triada, Faestos on 21 st followed by one at Moni Preveli the next day and then at least 6 over the wetlands on 23 rd , all were females!
Montagu's harrier:	2 high over Kourtaliotiko gorge on 19 th were followed by excellent views of single birds at the river near Agia Triada, Faestos on 20 th and near Moni Preveli on 21 st .
Buzzard:	Common and widespread.
Golden eagle:	An immature over the Kourtaliotiko gorge on 19 th .
Booted eagle:	Pale phase birds at Faestos on 21 st and Agia on 22 nd with a dark phase at Frangocastello on 23 rd .
Kestrel:	Common and widespread.
Red-footed falcon:	About 60 were seen at various places between Plakias and Moni Preveli on 18 th with the largest flocks being 14 and 24. The latter gave astonishingly good views as they settled on wires above the road.
Hobby:	1 flying in at Damnoni and another seen while travelling to Moni Preveli on 18 th only.
Eleonora's falcon:	One seen from the minibuses on 23 rd but only briefly.
Peregrine:	2 high over the hills at Damnoni on the last morning.
Chukar:	4 at Moni Preveli on 21 st .
Little crane:	At least 9 at Agia reservoir on 22 nd with another 3 at Frangocastello marsh on 23 rd .
Moorhen:	One at Moni Preveli on 21 st and lots at Agia on 22 nd .
Coot:	Many at Agia reservoir on 22 nd .
Little ringed plover:	Seen in small numbers each of the first 4 days with two getting very close at Damnoni on 18 th .
Little stint:	2 feeding in the river at Plakias whilst we boarded the coach home on 24 th were the only ones found.
Temminks stint:	2 feeding on the road at Damnoni gave excellent views on 18 th and 19 th .
Ruff:	The sole individual was at Frangocastello marsh on 23 rd .
Green Sandpiper:	Seen from the minibus on 18 th near Plakias.
Wood sandpiper:	Seen at Damnoni, Plakias and Faestos and Frangocastello with a maximum of 6 at Damnoni on 18 th

Common sandpiper:	Seen in ones and twos every day often in fields as well as more typical habitat.
Yellow-legged gull:	Common and widespread.
Gull billed tern:	One at Damnoni and 6 in Plakias bay on 18 th were followed by just one at Damnoni the next day.
Little tern:	Two at both Damnoni and Plakias on 18 th – probably the same birds.
Whiskered tern:	One in Plakias bay on 18 th .
Black tern:	One went inland from Plakias on 18 th .
Rock dove:	Several at Koutaliotiko gorge on 19 th could just have passed for wild.
Wood pigeon:	Surprisingly only one or two were seen on the way to Faestos on the 21 st .
Collared dove:	Common and seen most days in ones and twos.
Turtle dove:	Up to 10 a day seen every day.
Cuckoo:	The only sighting was of one from the minibus on 22 nd .
Swift:	Seen in good numbers each day.
Pallid swift:	Only confirmed at Frangocastello where a few (at least 2) mixed with the other 2 species on 23 rd .
Alpine swift:	Up to 100 seen each day often giving very good views at low level.
Kingfisher:	One elusive individual on Plakias beach was seen 3 to 4 times.
Bee eater:	Distant ones and twos early in the week then stunning views of 10 perching in nearby trees at the river near Agia Triada, Faestos on 20 th .
Roller:	A surprise find on 20 th perched by the road between Agia Triada and Faestos.
Hoopoe:	Hard to find with singles at Faestos on 20 th and Lake Kournas on 22 nd but three together found by the “Knossos party” somewhere on the north coast between Rethymnon and Haraklion on 21 st .
Wryneck:	Just 2 early morning at Damnoni on 19 th .
Short-toed lark:	A flock of six at Spili bumps on 19 th and a male singing at Frangocastello on 23 rd .
Crested lark:	Common and widespread.
Woodlark:	One on each of the first three days at Damnoni and Moni Preveli.
Sand martin:	Several flocks every day.
Crag Martin:	10 or more in Koutaliotiko gorge on 19 th and seen from minibus each time we passed through the gorge.
Swallow:	Many flocks each day passing through.
Red-rumped swallow:	Up to 8 each day but never in view for long.
House martin:	Many hundreds passing through.
Tawny pipit:	Singles at Moni Preveli on 18 th , and at Plakias on 19 th and 20 th .
Tree pipit:	Several each day with some particularly good views at Damnoni.
Red-throated pipit:	One near Lake Kournas on 22 nd .
Yellow wagtail:	More than 10 most days with several forms including Blue-headed, Black-headed and Grey-headed identified.
White wagtail:	Common and widespread.
Wren:	Only one, which was heard in the Koutaliotaki gorge on 19 th .
Nightingale:	One or two each day with some singing and a few showing well.
Black redstart:	One singing in Spili on 19 th .
Whinchat:	Very numerous. Never more than 10 in view at a time, but rarely less than 3!
Stonechat:	Seen well most days.
Wheatear:	Only seen in small numbers on first 2 days.
Black-eared wheatear:	Seen most days from 19 th , when 10 seen between Damnoni and Moni Preveli.
Blue rock thrush:	5 in Koutaliotaki gorge with ones and twos elsewhere, especially Damnoni.
Blackbird:	Common and widespread.
Cetti's warbler:	Up to 5 a day singing but rarely seen.

Fan-tailed warbler:	One seen very well and at least 2 more singing in fields at Dramia, near Lake Kourmas on 22 nd .
Sedge warbler:	Up to 3 a day.
Great reed warbler:	Between 2 and 4 most days at various locations, with one singing and another bird present behind the hotel in Plakias from 19 th onwards.
Subalpine warbler:	One at Damnoni on 19 th and one at Moni Preveli on 21 st , both only seen by a few of the group.
Sardinian warbler:	Common and widespread.
Whitethroat:	A few seen each day.
Garden warbler:	One flew into the restaurant window on the evening of 19 th .
Wood warbler:	The commonest warbler seen, in almost every possible habitat. Maximum of 10 in a single tree at Moni Preveli on 18 th . 3 at Moni Preveli on 19 th .
Willow warbler:	The commonest bird, even outnumbering Whinchat.
Spotted flycatcher:	Far too many to count, with good numbers right through the week.
Pied flycatcher:	A wonderful male in the café grounds at Damnoni on 18 th was followed by 4 at Moni Preveli the same day, 2 at Damnoni on 20 th and 6 or 7 more, at least at Plakias and Faestos.
Collared flycatcher:	Common and widespread.
Blue tit:	Common and widespread.
Great tit:	Common and widespread.
Golden oriole:	Frequent brief “fly-by” views each day, but excellent views of dazzling males at Spili on 19 th and Faestos on 20 th .
Woodchat shrike:	Good views of several every day.
Jackdaw:	Common in gorges.
Hooded crow:	Common and widespread.
Raven:	Seen in every gorge and often during journeys.
Starling:	Only seen from coach between airport and Plakias.
House sparrow:	One at Damnoni on 18 th .
Italian sparrow:	Common and widespread.
Spanish sparrow:	50 at Plakias on 20 th .
Chaffinch:	Common and widespread.
Greenfinch:	Common and widespread.
Goldfinch:	Common and widespread.
Linnet:	A few on each day from 20 th to 22 nd .
Ortolan:	One at Damnoni on 23 rd sang briefly.
Corn bunting:	Locally common.

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail
 Scarce Swallowtail (*right*)
 Eastern Festoon (*ssp cretica*)
 Large White
 Bath White
 Clouded Yellow
 Painted Lady
 Red Admiral
 Southern Speckled Wood
 Wall Brown
 Holly Blue
 Common Blue



OTHER NOTABLE INSECTS

Egyptian Locust
 Violet Carpenter Bee
 Hummingbird Hawk-moth

CRUSTACEANS

Land Crab

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Tree Frog many heard in orange trees at Agia Reservoir
Stripe-necked Terrapin
Balkan Green Lizard
Erhard's Wall Lizard
Dice Snake

MAMMALS

Beech Marten (dead on road)
Eastern Hedgehog (dead on road)
Bat sp.

PLANTS

The main interest of this group was definitely the birds, but the following flowers were noted during the week.

Aizoaceae

Carpobrotus edulis Hottentot Fig

Anacynaceae

Pistacea lentiscus Mastic Tree

Apocynaceae

Nerium oelander Oleander

Araceae

Arisarum vulgare Friar's Cowl
Arum creticum Cretan Arum
Arum italicum Large Lords-and-Ladies
Dracunculus vulgaris Dragon Arum

Boraginaceae

Anchusa italica Large Blue Alkanet
Cynoglossum creticum Blue Hound's-tongue
Echium angustifolium Red Viper's Bugloss
Echium plantagineum Purple Viper's Bugloss
Onosma erecta Golden Drop

Cactaceae

Opuntia ficus-indica Prickly Pear Cactus

Caryophyllaceae

Silene colorata A campion
Silene gallica
Silene greuteri pink-flowered catchfly in Kortaliotico Gorge

Cistaceae

Cistus creticus Cretan Cistus

Compositae

Anthemis rigida Rayless Chamomile (Frangocastello)
Bellis annua Annual Daisy
Calendula arvensis Field Marigold
Chrysanthemum coronarium Crown Daisy
Galactites tomentosa Mediterranean Thistle
Helichrysum stoechas Curry Plant
Tragopogon sinuatus Wild Salsify

Convolvulaceae

Cuscuta epithimum Dodder

Cruciferae*Malcolmia chia**Ricotia cretica*

Ricotia

Euphorbiaceae*Euphorbia acanthothamnus**Euphorbia characias**Euphorbia dendroides**Mercurialis annua*

Greek Spiny Spurge

Mediterranean Spurge

Tree Spurge

Annual Mercury

Gentianaceae*Centaurium* sp

unidentified pink centaury (Frangocastello)

Geraniaceae*Geranium purpureum*

Little Robin

Graminiae*Arundo donax**Briza maxima*

Giant Reed

Giant Quaking-grass

Iridaceae*Gladiolus italicus**Hermodactylus tuberosus**Iris creticus**Iris pseudacorus**Gynandriris monophylla*

Field Gladiolus

Widow Iris

Cretan Iris

Yellow Flag

Barbary Nut

Labiatae*Phlomis fruticosa**Salvia fruticosa*

Jerusalem Sage

Three-leaved Sage

Leguminosae*Psoralea bituminosa**Ebenus creticus**Lathyrus sphaericus**Trifolium stellarium**Tetragonolobus purpureus*

Pitch Trefoil

Cretan Sainfoin

Star Clover

Dragon's-teeth

Liliaceae*Asphodeline lutea**Asphodelus aestivus**Muscarea comosum**Romulea bulbocodium**Tulipa cretica**Tulipa orphanidea*

Yellow Asphodel

Asphodel

Tassel Hyacinth

Sand-crocus

Cretan Tulip

an orange tulip

Linaceae*Linum bienne*

Pale Flax

Malvaceae*Lavatera cretica**Malva sylvestris*

Tree Mallow

Common Mallow

Moraceae*Ficus carica*

Fig

Oleaceae*Olea europaea*

Olive

Orchidaceae

<i>Aceras anthropophorum</i>	Man Orchid
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Orchid
<i>Barlia robertiana</i>	Giant Orchid
<i>Ophrys bombyliflora</i>	Bumble-bee Orchid
<i>Ophrys cretica</i>	Cretan Bee Orchid
<i>Ophrys fusca</i>	Sombre Bee Orchid
<i>Ophrys haldereichii</i>	Marengo Orchid
<i>Ophrys iricolor</i>	Rainbow Orchid
<i>Ophrys lutea</i>	Yellow Bee Orchid
<i>Ophrys tenthredinifera</i>	Sawfly Orchid
<i>Orchis boryi</i>	
<i>Orchis italica</i>	Italian Man Orchid
<i>Orchis lactea</i>	Milky Orchid
<i>Orchis laxiflora</i>	Loose-flowered Orchid
<i>Orchis pauciflora</i>	Few-flowered Orchid
<i>Orchis quadripunctata</i>	Four-spotted Orchid
<i>Serapias vomeraceae</i>	Tongue-orchid
<i>Serapias parviflora</i>	Small-flowered Tongue-orchid

Orobanchaceae

<i>Orobanche ramosa</i>	Branched Broomrape
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Oxalidaceae

<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Bermuda Buttercup
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Papaveraceae

<i>Glaucium flavum</i>	Yellow Horned Poppy
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy

Platanaceae

<i>Platanus orientalis</i>	Oriental Plane
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Primulaceae

<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet Pimpernel
<i>Cyclamen creticum</i>	Cretan Cyclamen

Ranunculaceae

<i>Anemone coronaria</i>	Crown Anemone
<i>Anemone heldreichii</i>	
<i>Adonis microcarpa</i>	Yellow Pheasant's-eye
<i>Ranunculus asiaticus</i>	Turban Buttercup

Rosaceae

<i>Sarcopoterium spinosum</i>	Thorny Burnet
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Solanaceae

<i>Hyoscyamus albus</i>	White Henbane
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Styracaceae

<i>Styrax officinalis</i>	Storax
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Thymelaeaceae

<i>Daphne sericea</i>	(low, evergreen shrub with pink flowers at Spili bumps)
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Umbeliferae

<i>Bupleurum</i> sp.	A throw-wax at Spili
<i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant Fennel

Valerianaceae

<i>Valeriana asarifolia</i>	Cretan Valerian
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