

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Crete
2 – 9 April 2002

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Holiday participants

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

Leaders

David Collins	Bury St Edmunds
Chris Durdin	Norwich

With commiserations to Keith and Joyce Ball who had to pull out just before the holiday

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

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

**Crete
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Tuesday 2 April – Gatwick to Plakias

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

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

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

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

Wednesday 3 April – walk to Mirthios

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thursday 4 April – Kourtaliotiko Gorge and Spili

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Friday 5 April – Faestos and Ayia Triada

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sunday 7 April – Moni Preveli and Kotsifou Gorge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Monday 8 April – Frango Castello and Imbros Gorge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tuesday 9 April – Plakias to Gatwick

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

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

David Collins

Nominations for wildlife of the week

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

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

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

BUTTERFLIES

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

18 species



Other notable insects

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

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

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

CRUSTACEAN: land crab

MAMMAL: eastern hedgehog

Crete: 2-9 April 2002 Bird List

Little Grebe. 40 at Agia Reservoir on 6th.

Black-necked Grebe. 2 at Lake Kournas on 6th.

Cory's Shearwater. 1 west past Rethymno on 6th.

Shag. 1 in Plakias Bay on 5th.

Night Heron. One or two seen daily around Plakias. One west over Frango Castello on 8th.

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

Cattle Egret. 12 feeding around livestock in Geropotamus valley below Faestos on 5th.

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

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

Purple Heron. A few migrants seen, with maximum of 11 over Plakias on morning of 3rd.

Mute Swan. 1 seen from the bus on the north coast somewhere between Iraklion and Rethmno on 2nd.
1 at Georgiopolis on 6th.

Mallard. Lake Kournas, Georgiopolis and Agia Reservoir.

Pintail. A pair at Agia Reservoir on 6th.

Garganey. In Plakias Bay, flocks of 50 on 3rd and 32 on 9th. 7 at Georgiopolis on 6th.

Shoveler. 4 at Agia Reservoir on 6th.

Black Kite. 1 at Mirthios on 7th.

Lammergeier. 1 over Spili 'bumps' on 4th.

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

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

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

Sparrowhawk. 1 over Plakias early morning on 6th.

Buzzard. Common.

Booted Eagle. 3 near Faestos on 5th. 1 over Agia Reservoir on 6th.

Bonelli's Eagle. Pair at Imbros Gorge on 8th.

Kestrel. Common.

Red-footed Falcon. Singles at Plakias on 3rd and 8th.

Peregrine. 2 over Spili on 4th.

Chukar. 1 calling and seen well at Moni Preveli on 7th and 8th.

Quail. 1 calling in fields by Spili 'bumps' on 4th.

Little Crake. At least 6 at Agia Reservoir on 6th, with some showing very well at close range.

Moorhen.

Coot

Black-winged Stilt. 2 at Agia Reservoir on 6th.

Stone-curlew. 1 on Plakias beach early morning on 8th.

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

Little Stint. 1 at Plakias on 3rd and 3 at Agia Triada on 5th.

Ruff. 4 on river at Agia Triada on 5th.

Snipe. 1 on stream just north of Plakias on 3rd.

Redshank. 1 at Agia Triada on 5th.

Marsh Sandpiper. 2 at Agia Triada on 5th.

Greenshank. 1 at Agia Triada on 5th.

Green Sandpiper. 1 at Agia Triada on 5th and 1 at Agia Reservoir on 6th.

Wood Sandpiper. 2 at Agia Triada on 5th.

Common Sandpiper. Small numbers on beach in Plakias throughout the week. Maximum on 5 on 3rd.

Lesser Black-backed Gull. 1 at Rethymno on 6th.

Yellow-legged Gull. Common.

Rock Dove. Rather impure stock at Kourtaliotiko Gorge etc.

Woodpigeon. Common.

Collared Dove. Common.

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

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

Swift. A few seen most days.

Pallid Swift. Breeding colony of about 20 birds In Rethymno on 6th.

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

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

Hoopoe. One in at Plakias on 3rd, and 2 at Frango Castello on 8th.

Wryneck. One at Plakias on 8th and 9th.

(Calandra Lark). One in a cage in Rethymno on 6th had presumably been caught locally?

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

Crested Lark. Common.

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

Skylark. Four in fields by Spili 'bumps' on 4th.

Sand Martin. Small numbers at Plakias throughout, and 20 at Agia Reservoir in 6th.

Crag Martin. Kourtaliotiko Gorge only.

crested lark

Swallow. Passage throughout the week. Highest number was 200 at Agia Reservoir on 6th.

Red-rumped Swallow. 1 flying north through Kotsifou Gorge on 7th.

House Martin. Small numbers passing through all week.

Tawny Pipit. Singles at Spili 'bumps' on 4th, Faestos on 5th, and Frango Castello on 8th.



Tree Pipit. Small numbers of migrants throughout the week. Maximum of 20 at Plakias on 3rd.

Meadow Pipit. Presumed late wintering birds at Plakias on 3rd (2) and 5th (1).

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

Grey Wagtail. One in Kourtaliotiko Gorge on 4th.

White Wagtail. Common.

Wren. Kourtaliotiko Gorge on 4th.

Robin. One at Frango Castello on 8th.

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

Black Redstart. In Spili on 4th.

Redstart. 1 in Plakias on 4th, 2 at Moni Preveli on 7th and 1 there on 8th.

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

Stonechat. Common.

Wheatear. A few seen most days. Maximum of 10 at Frango Castello on 8th.

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

Blue Rock Thrush. Common in rocky habitats.

Blackbird. Common.

Song Thrush. 2 seen on 4th (location not noted).

Cetti's Warbler. Heard each day.

Sedge Warbler. 1 at Agia Reservoir on 6th, and 1 at Plakias on 8th and 9th.

Great Reed Warbler. 1 singing at Plakias on 8th.

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

Sardinian Warbler. Common.

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

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

Blackcap. In Plakias on 3rd – 5th only.

Bonelli's Warbler. 2 at Moni Preveli on 7th, and 1 still there on 8th.

Willow Warbler. 2 at Moni Preveli on 7th and 1 still there on 8th.

Spotted Flycatcher. 1 at Faestos on 5th.

Collared Flycatcher. A male at Faestos on 5th.

Pied Flycatcher. 2 at Moni Preveli on 7th and 1 still there on 8th.

Blue Tit. Common.

Great Tit. Common.

Woodchat shrike. One or two at Plakias from 5th. 4 at Frango Castello on 8th.

Jackdaw. 10 at Kotsifou Gorge on 7th.

Hooded Crow. Common.

Raven. A few seen every day.

House Sparrow. One male at Plakias on 8th.

Italian Sparrow. Common.

Spanish Sparrow. Four males at Plakias on 8th, and at least 1 still on 9th.

Chaffinch. Common.

Serin. The only one was a male singing near Lake Kournas on 6th.

Greenfinch. Common.

Goldfinch. Common.

Linnet. Fairly common.

Ortolan bunting. Male at Moni Preveli on 7th.

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

CRETE PLANT LIST 2– 9 April 2002

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

* Endemic to Crete

Introduced and not native to Crete and cultivated or planted species

1 SPERMATOPHYTES

i) Gymnosperms

***Cupressaceae* - Cypress Family**

Cupressus sempervirens forma. *horizontalis* Cypress

C. sempervirens forma. *sempervirens* Funeral Cypress

***Ephedraceae* – Joint pines**

Ephedra distachya Joint pine

***Pinaceae* – Pines**

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

ii) Angiosperms

a) Dicotyledons

Aizoaceae - Aizoon Family

Carpobrotus edulis Hottentot Fig

Anacardiaceae - Pistacio Family

Pistacia lentiscus Mastic Tree

Apocynaceae - Oleander Family

Nerium oleander subsp. *oleander* Oleander

Boraginaceae - Borage Family

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

Borago officinalis Borage

Cerinthe major Honeywort

Cynoglossum cherifolium A Hound's Tongue

Cynoglossum creticum Blue Hound's Tongue

Echium angustifolium Narrow-leaved Bugloss

Echium italicum subsp. *biebersteinii* Pale Bugloss

Echium plantagineum Purple Viper's Bugloss

Onosma erecta A Golden Drop

Symphytum creticum (*Procopiana cretica*) Procopiana

Cactaceae - Cactus Family

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

Campanulaceae - Bellflower Family

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

Caprifoliaceae - Honeysuckle Family

Sambucus nigra Elderflower

Caryophyllaceae - Pink Family

Silene colorata subsp. *colorata*

Cistaceae - Rockrose Family

Cistus creticus Cretan Cistus

Cistus salvifolius Sage-Leaved Cistus

Fumana laevipes

Fumana thymifolia Thyme-leaved fumana

Compositae - Daisy Family

Anthemis rigida subsp. *rigida* Rayless Chamomile

Asteriscus aquaticus Yellow sea aster

Asteriscus spinosa (*Pallensis spinosa*)

Bellis annua Annual daisy

Calendula arvensis Field Marigold

Chrysanthemum coronarium var. *coronarium* Crown Daisy

C. coronarium var. *discolor* Crown Daisy

Chrysanthemum segetum Corn marigold

Galactites tomentosa Mediterranean Thistle

Helichrysum stoechas Curry plant

Phagnalon rupestre

Silybum marianum Milk thistle

Tragopogon sinuatus (*T. porrifolius*) Wild Salsify

Convolvulaceae - Bindweed Family

Convolvulus althaeoides Mallow-leaved Bindweed

Cuscuta epithimum Dodder

Crassulaceae - Stonecrop Family

Umbilicus parviflorus Small-Flowered Navelwort

Cruciferaeae - Cress Family

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

Cucurbitaceae - Cucumber Family
Ecballium elaterium Squirting cucumber

Dioscoraceae - Yam Family
Tamus communis Black Bryony

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Linacea - Flax Family

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

Lythracea - Loosestrife Family

Lythrum junceum

Malvaceae - Mallow Family

Lavatera cretica Lesser Tree Mallow
Malva sylvestris Common Mallow

Moraceae - Fig Family

Ficus carica Fig
Morus alba White Mulberry

Myrtaceae - Myrtle Family

Myrtus communis subsp. communis Common Myrtle

Oleaceae - Olive Family

Jasminum fruticans Wild jasmine
Olea europaea subsp. europaea Olive

Orobanchaceae - Broomrape Family

Orobanche ramosa Branched Broomrape

Oxalidaceae - Sorrel Family

Oxalis pes-caprae Bermuda Buttercup

Papaveraceae - Poppy Family

Glaucium flavum Yellow-Horned Poppy
Papaver rhoeas Common Poppy

Pittosporaceae – Pittosporum family

Pittosporum tobira Pittosporum

Platanaceae - Plane Tree Family

Platanus orientalis Oriental Plane

Polygalaceae - Milkwort Family

Polygala venulosa Eastern Milkwort

Primulaceae - Primrose Family

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

Punicaceae – Pomegranate family

Punica granatum Pomegranate

Ranunculaceae - Buttercup Family

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

Resedaceae - Mignonette Family

Reseda alba White Mignonette
Reseda lutea Wild Mignonette

Rosaceae - Rose Family

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

Rubiaceae - Bedstraw Family

Sharardia arvensis Field Madder

Rutaceae - Rue Family

Citrus limon Lemon
Citrus sinensis Orange

Scrophulariaceae - Figwort Family

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

Solanaceae - Potato Family

Hyoscyamus albus White Henbane
Mandragora autumnalis Mandrake
Solanum nigrum Black nightshade

Styracaceae - Storax Family

Styrax officinalis Storax

Tamaricaceae - Tamarix Family

Tamarix smyrnensis Tamarisk

Thymelaeaceae - Daphne Family

Daphne sericea
Thymelaea hirsuta Thymelea

Umbelliferae - Carrot Family

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

Urticaceae - Nettle Family

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

Valerianaceae - Valerian Family

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

Verbenaceae - Verbena Family

Verbena officinalis Vervain

Vitaceae - Vine Family

Vitis vinifera subsp. *vinifera* Grape Vine

b) Monocotyledons

Agavaceae - Agave Family

Agave americana Century Plant

Amaryllidaceae - Daffodil Family

Pancratium maritimum Sea Daffodil (leaves only)

Araceae - Arum Family

Arisarum vulgare Friars Cowl

Arum creticum Cretan Arum

Dranunculus vulgaris Common Dragon Arum

Graminaceae - Grass Family

Arundo donax Giant Reed

Briza maxima Giant Quaking Grass

Lagurus ovatus Hare's-tail

Phragmites australis Reed

Iridaceae - Iris Family

Gladiolus italicus Field Gladiolus

Hermodactylus tuberosus Widow Iris

Iris cretensis

Iris pseudocorus Yellow Flag

Liliaceae - Lily Family

Asphodeline lutea Yellow Asphodel

Asphodelus aestivus Common Asphodel

Drimia maritima (*Urginea maritima*) Sea Squill

Gagea graeca

Muscari comosum Tassle Hyacinth

Ornithogalum collinum

Ornithogalum umbellatum Star of Bethlehem

Romulea bulbocodium A sand crocus

Ruscus aculeatus Butcher's broom

Smilax aspera Common smilax

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

Tulipa doerfleri (red, Spili)

Tulipa rupestris Rock tulip (pink, Spili)

Orchidaceae - Orchid Family

Aceras anthropophorum Man Orchid

Anacamptis pyramidalis Pyramidal Orchid

Barlia robertiana Giant orchid

Ophrys bombyliflora Bumble Bee Orchid

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

Ophrys fusca Sombre bee orchid

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

Ophrys iricolor Rainbow Orchid

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

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

Ophrys sphegodes Early spider orchid

Ophrys tentredinifera Sawfly Orchid

Orchis boryi

Orchis collina Fan-lipped orchid

Orchis italica Italian Man Orchid

Orchis lactea Milky Orchid

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

***Palmae* – Palm Family**

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

***Pteridophyta* – Ferns**

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