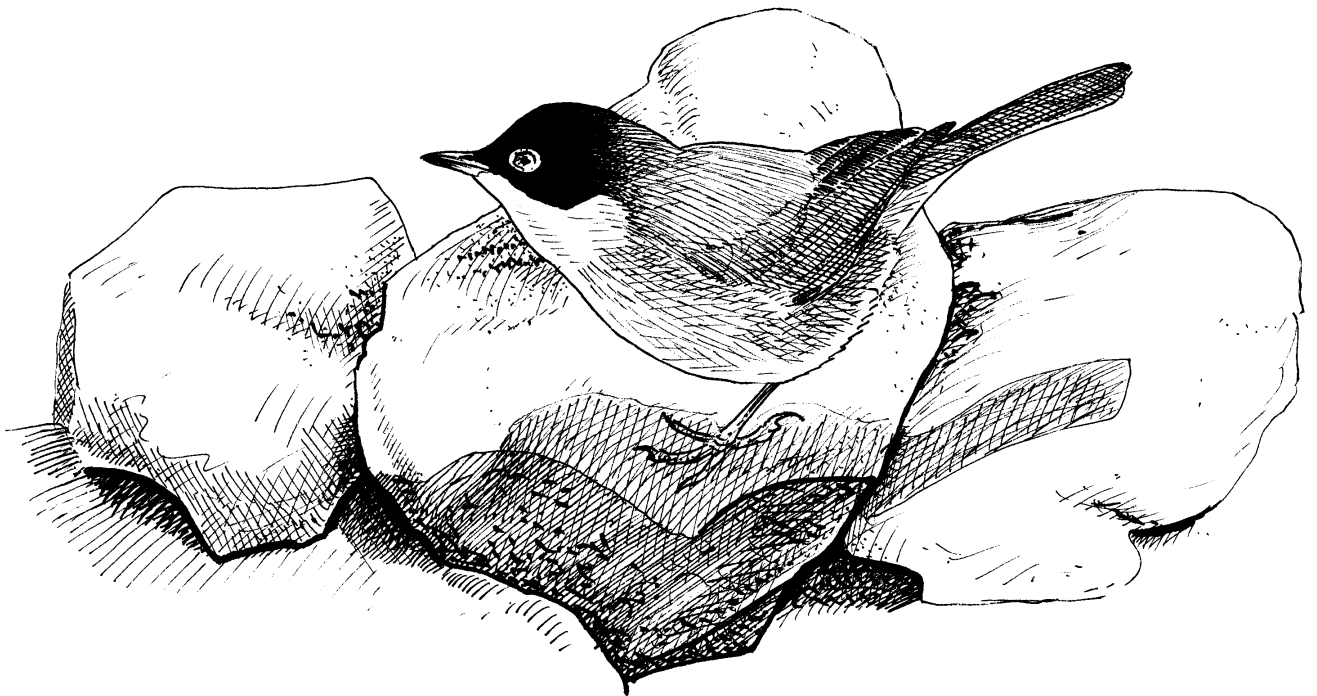


Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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Crete
13 - 20 April 2004

Crete
13 - 20 April 2004

Holiday participants

Sue Burge	Oxford
Peter Burge	
Dee Brown	Leeds
Shirley Carré	Sark
Roger Menhenett	Littlehampton, Sussex
David Barker	Fordham, Essex
Donald Bellhouse	Tring, Hertfordshire
Margaret Bellhouse	
Pat Fordyce	Cirencester
Kate Dalziel	Truro
Sarah Rejman-Greene	Ipswich
Malcolm Key	Woodbridge
Jane Key	
Jonathan Ross	East Grinstead

Leaders

Chris Durdin	Norwich
Ivan Nethercoat	Beverley

Report by Ivan Nethercoat, with minor additions by Chris Durdin. Plant list compiled by Chris Durdin – incomplete as I lost my annotated list.

*Illustrations by Rob Hume, except black-winged stilt flock by Gary Wright.
Front cover: Sardinian warbler*

As with all Honeyguide holidays, £25 of the price of the holiday was put towards a conservation project, in this case for the lammergeier project of the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), which is based in Athens but whose work covers the whole of Greece and its islands. £1200 was given to HOS this year - £25 per person from the holidays in Crete and two in Lesvos. This brings Honeyguide's total contributions to HOS since the first Honeyguide holiday in Crete in 1995 to £4,945, and to conservation projects in Europe from all Honeyguide holidays to £33,330. We usually include a thank-you letter from HOS, but this hadn't been received when the report went to print.

Crete 13-20 April 2004

In Greek mythology, Aiolos was the divine keeper of the Storm-Winds. He kept these violent sons of Typhoeus locked away inside his island of Aiolia releasing them on the command of the gods to wreak their havoc upon the world. He also had at his command the four Wind-Gods – Boreas, Zephyros, Notos & Euros.

Wind is a key feature of Crete. It defines the people and the landscape and leaves a lasting memory in the hearts of visitors. I have been to Crete four times now and each has been very different. Sometimes it is dry and hot with flowers just starting to come through or suffering through lack of rain. Sometimes it is very wet and thundery, great for birds but not so good for flowers. This year was the best combination with stunning flowers (16 + species of orchids) and fewer species but good quality birds (bee-eaters and lammergeier) and no rain to stop our travels. Our price though was to be in the playground of Aiolos. April 2004 it seems was the month when he and the four wind gods came out to play. It was however a price well worth paying for some great wildlife.

Tuesday 13 April – Gatwick to Plakias

An early gathering at Gatwick for a 0930 flight to Heraklion. The Monarch flight was on time and went without a hitch, transporting us from post-Easter spring sunshine to a overcast but very warm Crete. All passengers accounted for but not seen. One eluded the leaders until turning up as the last passenger on the plane. Not because of bad timing but because she had been chosen for the big inspection. So with bags searched, binoculars tested for traces of explosives and a few searching questions they were allowed onto the plane, the authorities no doubt expecting the news of their efficiency to be rapidly spread among the rest of the passengers.

The road along the north coast does not show Crete at its best but thankfully the route soon takes us south into a calmer, greener world. The sun was occasionally breaking free of its grey prison to highlight hillsides of giant fennel and fields of asphodel. Birds of prey gave brief tantalising views whetting the appetite for what the rest of the trip would offer.

Soon the views disappeared behind the high imposing walls of the Kourtaliotiko gorge before greeting us again with sunshine over the South coast before dropping down into Plakias.

After a short walk to the hotel our host, Geroge Dimakis, greeted us with tea before allocating rooms. While the group were emptying bags a pair of golden eagles hunted on the ridge while in the wet scrub at the back of the hotel a great reed warbler skulked through the bushes and into a patch of giant reed as a large flock of swallows fed among the olives. Below them the spikes of loose-flowered orchid added bright purple to the fresh grass.

An excellent meal at the Sophia taverna set us up for the rest of the night and we left wondering what tomorrow might bring.....

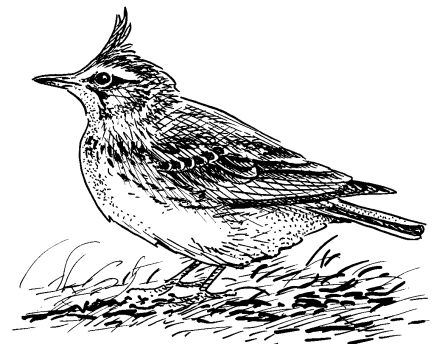
Wednesday 14 April – walk to Mirthios

An overcast but warm morning. A pre-breakfast walk was pleasant but a little quiet. A small flock of short-toed larks fed on the beach and stonechats and crested larks (*right*) gave good telescope views while a common sandpiper bobbed and dipped in the stream.

After breakfast we set off for Mirthios, a small village overlooking Plakias, where lunch had been booked in the taverna.

Bermuda buttercups carpeted any undisturbed area but remained closed in the overcast weather. Again migrant birds were apparently absent except for the buzzards that kept our attention skyward while chaffinches seemed everywhere. Tongue orchids and dragonarum poked out from the vegetation.

The path eventually left the track and became more uneven as it started to climb up the valley side. at this point the group split with those in need of a more gentle approach took the road and the remainder



battling on to a Venetian mill; used for olive pressing many years ago, it now echoes to the calls of blue rock thrush.

The sun appeared and rapidly the day became very warm with a gentle breeze. From here the path should have been a roughish but easy climb. Instead it became a major task as much of the track had become impassable due, perhaps to very heavy snow a few months before that had pushed trees and bushes down onto the footpath. My earlier reassurance that we would not be going on all fours or over very steep terrain was proved dramatically wrong. However the group did not want to go back so we pressed on, eventually reaching the track to Mirthios and a welcome beer and spectacular view. By now the sun was blazing and the walk downhill to Plakias was a hot and dry but very pleasant experience. A quiet time for birds but butterflies were on the wing and the plants provided plenty of visual excitement. Egyptian locusts exploded and lizards scuttled away from heavy feet. Meanwhile, Kate took the slightly longer and less steep route along the road, and reported a collared flycatcher in the olive grove

Thursday 15 April – Kourtalioitiko gorge and Spili bumps

Clear skies but a strong wind. A pre-breakfast drive along the coast to Souda proved a worthwhile trip. Despite the wind, the smaller birds were more obvious with plenty of corn buntings, telescope views for everyone of Sardinian warbler but also migrants such as woodchat shrike, wood warbler and pied and spotted flycatchers.

After breakfast, we did the short drive to Kourtalioitiko Gorge. The wind in the gorge was ferocious but where we stopped it was a little more sheltered, allowing excellent scope views of griffon vultures on the nest with young; raven and kestrels were fighting in spectacular aerial tussles while below a male blue rock thrush was claiming his territory. A wonderful male black-eared wheatear landed in front of us long enough for most of the group to see him well.

The botanists descended the gorge in strong wind, finding local specialities including Cretan cyclamen, procopiana (an endemic comfrey) and fragrant storax trees. Those preferring a more gentle stroll took the long track below the road. Eastern festoon butterflies were patrolling the path as a pair of chukars made their way among the rocks on the far side of the gorge.

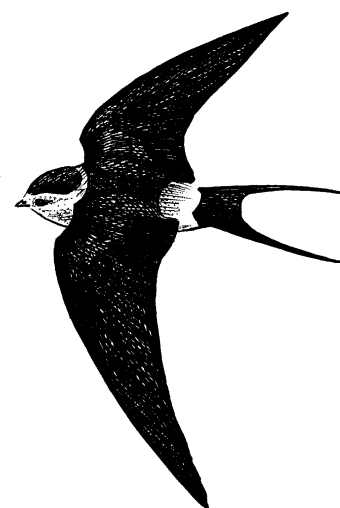
Our lunch was the now traditional stop for gyros in Spili town, now a little less congested with traffic than in the past due to new off-steet parking. Then on to the Kedros foothills, more often known as "Spili Bumps". Here the clouds obscured the sun and the wind seemed even stronger but nothing can lessen the experience of this (unprotected) botanical treasure. Carpets of Italian man and few-flowered orchids could be seen from the road: the day's tally included thirteen species of orchid, three species of iris and wild tulips galore.

Hooded crows, a small flock of skylarks and northern wheatear fed in the fields nearby. A few score yards up the road, Kate left the party to, well, find a bush, and again came back with a report of a collared flycatcher. Not that anybody had doubted yesterday's report, you understand, but a search along the river found superb male collared flycatcher that sat and posed for the telescope, before disappearing out of the wind.

Friday 16 April – Phaestos and Agia Triada

A fierce gale took hold during the night and kept going into the morning, often gusting with enough force to push one forward. Thus the early morning crew set forth. Damnoni provided brief shelter for us and three swallows, among them a red-rumped swallow (*right*). The sea was being whipped up into water spouts and flying through the turbulence, two wood sandpipers struggled to find a calm resting place after their departure from Africa.

Heading back to the hotel for breakfast Chris prompted a quick test of the braking efficiency of the bus by calling out "land crab". As we got out, this enigmatic crustacean was heading for the shadow of the bus as it attempted to cross the road. Land crabs are seldom seen except as crushed shells on



the roads in the autumn so this was a very lucky find and a real highlight for the week.

Our journey to the Minoan palace at Phaestos proved a good choice as the area provided shelter and sunshine. The walk up to the palace gave good views of alpine swift, Sardinian warblers and stonechats feeding young. David and Dee stayed watching the area while the rest of us made use the cafeteria and came up to tell us we had missed what the believe was a semi-collared flycatcher. It was, however, not seen again and we made our way down the road – along which there are many bushes of Cretan ebony – to Agia Triada. The botanists took to the hillside while the birders kept to the road. Dragonarums in full flower were a stunning sight while below a Sardinian warbler was feeding three very small chicks.

Lunch was spent overlooking the valley of the river Geropotamus. Alpine swifts cruised overhead while buzzards displayed in front of us. Far below in the valley a cuckoo sped through the olive groves and a squacco heron flew to a new fishing spot along the river. In the distance the sound of bee-eaters calling to each other drifted tantalisingly to our ears but no bird could be seen.

After lunch we took a stroll down the track to the river. As we approached the olive grove, four bee-eaters suddenly appeared over the trees and then disappeared behind the foliage. Feeling lucky, a few of us took a convenient track off through the grove that led us to a calm ridge where below us the birds were feeding, occasionally coming into view. Eventually three of them were found perching on dead trees giving brief but fantastic telescope views for the few that came. As the rest of the party joined us they took to the air to be joined by 13 companions, all calling to each other as they set off down the valley.

In the river area were little ringed plover, common sandpiper and greenshank but star bird was a very obliging hoopoe that allowed everybody to get a good telescope view of this often elusive species.

Saturday 17 April – Agia reservoir and Rethymnon

Calmer weather and bright skies: today's destinations were Agia reservoir and Rethymnon on the north of the island. The route took us via the Kotsiphou Gorge and Lake Kournas.

The first stop, approaching Kotsiphou Gorge, gave us a calm look back over the bay of Plakias and a sky full of swallows and martins. A stunning blue rock thrush perched in perfect light and tree pipits called as they made their way through the gorge. Onto the narrowest point of the gorge and through the other side a nightingale flew across the stream as we left the vehicles, its rusty tail betraying its identity as it disappeared into the undergrowth. Eventually, all who persevered had good views of this notoriously elusive bird. On the cliffs and edges of fields wild Cretan arum grew, a yellower plant than the brilliant white domesticated varieties in the village gardens, and shrubby flax here clings to the gorge's rock-face. Up on the hillside Chris spotted more delightful flowers including a Bishop's ophrys *Ophrys episcopalis* or *Ophrys holoserica*. [This late spider-orchid type, which isn't illustrated in Collins 'Mediterranean Wild Flowers', had been put down in previous years as a hybrid of woodcock and sawfly orchids, but there are photos in the 'Orchids of Crete and Karpathos' and in 'The Flowers of Crete', glossy books available locally. It is named as *Ophrys episcopalis* in the former and *Ophrys holoserica* in the latter.]

Lake Kournas was a welcome stop for coffee and local yoghurt and honey, a Greek speciality. Across the lake a very distant squacco heron, with its yogurt-and-honey plumage, was perched giving unspectacular views, even in the telescope. We left the lake to the little grebes and headed to the reservoir at Agia.

Since our last visit a new taverna has appeared on the edge of the lake and was making its trade from visiting birdwatchers, a welcome state of affairs that might help to keep the lake a safe haven for birds. For here was a host of birds seen both very close and in excellent light. Several garganeys, very confiding wood sandpipers and ruffs, marsh harriers were a good start but this terrific site also went on to give us great views of a collared pratincole hawking insects and several little crakes leaping across a small channel and feeding on the edges of the reeds. Overhead came a large eagle, initially assumed to be golden but wing shape and tail length were not right; an assertive cry of "lesser spotted eagle" came up from a Danish birder and the puzzle was solved. The white in the tail and across the wings was perfect and the distinctive flying position all fitted. He had seen another earlier in the day and also the

day before. Crete is not the normal route for these birds so this was a lucky appearance. In the meantime, two squacco herons appeared across the water and gradually made their way to our side, eventually sitting right out in the open, still looking miserable but allowing really good views. In the mountains a thunderstorm was head and as the skies over the hills darkened the lake suddenly had a swarm of house martins.

On route to Rethymnon we stopped at a small wetland at Georgiopoulos, but here the wind was again severe and the water almost devoid of birds. So we headed on to Rethymnon, where it had been raining and was distinctly cool and overcast. A taverna was booked we headed off to the Fortezza and harbour. Squinting cucumber and both varieties of Hottentot figs grew on the embankments. In the harbour, pallid swifts were flying low but the distinction between these and common swifts was not easy to make in the fading light.

Sunday 18 April – Moni Preveli

Calm but overcast. The rain had reached Plakias yesterday and now the fields behind the beach had several whinchats and flocks of corn buntings. At Damnoni, all was calm except for a great reed warbler clambering about through reeds and bushes.

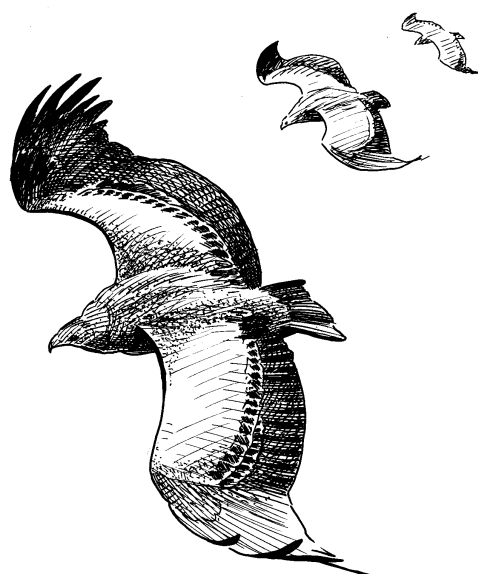
Moni Preveli was our destination, a monastery at the head of a valley made famous during the war as the site from which allied troops were evacuated from the island while under German occupation. A pied flycatcher watched us drive by while farther up Kate's acute distant vision brought us to a stop as we checked out tow birds of prey. They turned out to be buzzards but while we stopped a woodlark called and a red-rumped swallow flew in front of us. Sarah asked what the birds were "with chestnut on their back" and David followed this up with "bee-eater"! Flying among the trees below us, hawking insects alongside house martins it was a great site but when it perched in a dead tree with 13 companions it made a perfect picture.

At the monastery, there was the most extradinarily tame pair of ortolan buntings feeding just over the low wall round the car park. Wood warblers were feeding in the trees but among the scrub in the valley were many 'pied' type flycatchers with at least four of these collared, three splendid males and a female. Here too were turtle doves and wood warbler, and over the ridge a Montagu's harrier appeared briefly before continuing north.

Lunch was taken in the taverna with a view at Mirthios. The afternoon was free time but as lammergeier had eluded us it was back to Kourtaliotiko Gorge for maybe the last chance to see one. Low cloud was still clinging to the tops of the first ridge so signs were not good. However the griffon vultures were airborne, frequently disappearing into the cloud they did not seem too bothered by the moisture, using the constant updrafts to keep airborne instead of thermals.

We watched many griffons coming and going when suddenly there was a large dark bird on the ridge with a long tail: a lammergeier, quite different to the griffons nearby. It disappeared into the cloud before reappearing and crossing the gorge at speed as if to land out of site. A brief and rather unsatisfying view if truth be told, but we moved on down the gorge in the hope of catching another glimpse. Here it was darker and colder but the air was still a dynamic place with crag martins and vultures making frequent appearances, a pair of buzzards displaying by dropping sticks and diving down to catch them in breath taking aerobic control while a lone male Montagu's harrier battled north against the wind.

Meanwhile, down on the beach, migration was in evidence as five squacco herons flew in off the sea and landed alongside Peter. Still looking miserable (the herons that is).



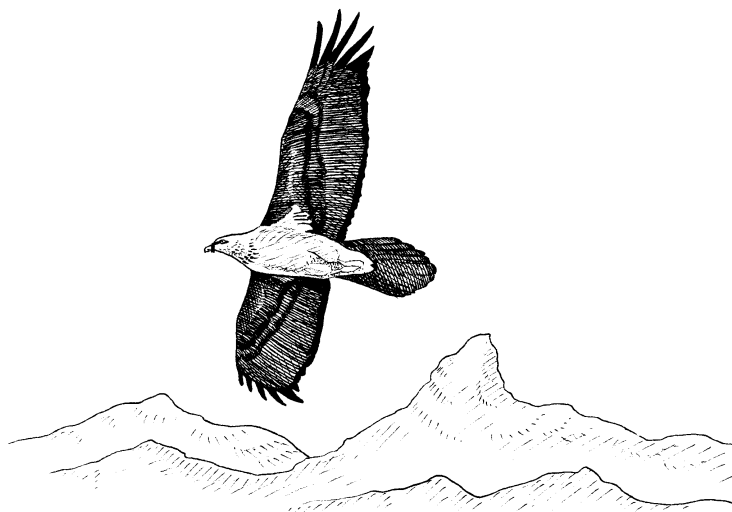
Monday 19 April – Frangocastello and Imbros gorge

Clear, calm and hot. Not the best weather for Frangocastello where a good thunderstorm is often needed to bring the migrants down onto the coast. However, it was good to be warm and without a gale force wind pushing us along. Six purple herons appeared off the sea as we left the vehicles but they did not stay. On the coast several common sandpipers were feeding on the rocks but inland things were a little quiet. A quail, disturbed by accident gave a brief flypast for those lucky enough to be looking in that direction and on the fields several northern wheatears were feeding. Star of the area was the magnificent flowers of dragonarum bursting forth from the cliffs. It was very hot in this exposed shadeless area so we did not wait too long before retreating to the taverna.

Walking to an area of low, coastal scrub, a woodchat shrike was perched, sentinel-like, on the low bushes. Alongside it was a Sardinian warbler looking very agitated. As shrikes are really small birds of prey they are not welcomed by breeding warblers. The Sardinian was followed to a bush where she was carrying food to a nest, also in the bush were what appeared to be a pair of spectacled warblers, just out of site enough to be difficult. They soon showed much better and later Kate discovered a very clear female bird as she squeaked along the track. Pishing shoes, now there's an idea.

As the weather was good we took the road west to Imbros gorge. From the first layby we were greeted with yellow asphodels as far as we could see and woodlarks carrying food to a nest close to the road. High overhead the griffons continued to sail past in a heat haze. The second stopping point took us much higher. Here we spent sometime soaking up the sun while enjoying a spectacle of birds of prey. Griffons were still sailing by, but now they were joined by others. Kate again picked up some distant specs and as we all concentrated our gaze toward the apparently empty sky the birds came closer. One took the form of long wings and clear black and white underparts, with white on the back of the bird as it turned. A Bonelli's eagle, a rare bird over much of Europe and always hard to find. However not everybody had followed the same bird and a confused cry came up from Roger who was following something very different, a lammergeier! The bird drifted across in the company of griffon vultures, its huge long tail and different shape very clear.

Chris then picked up a small bird flying through the gorge and just got a long enough view to shout "golden oriole" before it disappeared out of view (his second for the week). As is often the case the skies quietened down for a while and then picked up again with another Bonelli's eagle showing briefly but eventually returning with mate for a good view before they both landed on a very distant tree. The lammergeier sailed back again and then a distant male Montagu's harrier appeared, presumably fresh in off the sea and heading north.



So a good afternoon, topped off nicely with a fine show of wild lupins on the way back before some fine evening views over Plakias for the photographic record.

Tuesday 20 April – Plakias to Gatwick

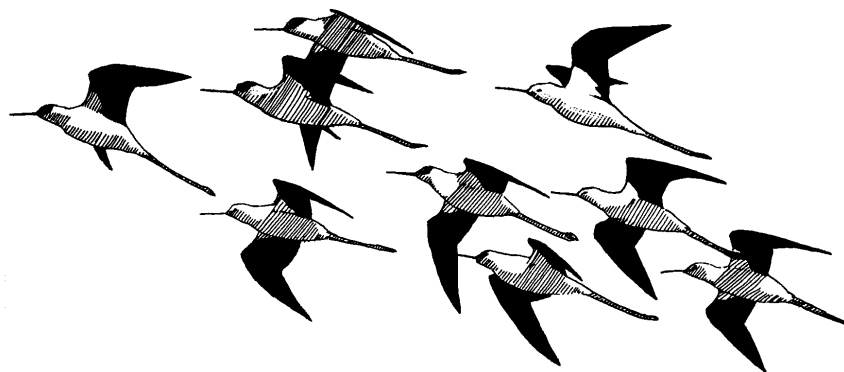
Our last morning, but with our coach due at 11.30 still time for a pre breakfast trip to Moni Preveli's valley. Not long into the valley and a golden oriole flew over the bus and into a roadside tree. Thanks to Malcolm's eyes (again) this highly camouflaged bird was spotted and seen by all of us before moving on out of site. A stop at the Venetian bridge for small birds by the river produced a wonderfully aesthetic purple heron perched atop a pine tree.

From the car park, chukars could be heard calling across the valley while a buzzard rested on rocks before continuing its northern migration. Below us some dogs were coursing the valley and eventually put up a hare and pursued it through the bushes so we headed back. A fantastic black-eared wheatear

was waiting round the corner and by the old monastery a redstart caused us to stop the vehicle. From this unexpected stop we also saw wood warbler willow warbler and two stunning male golden orioles. Back to the hotel for breakfast and packing. Keeping the binoculars handy, a trip to the bakers for lunch proved productive with 12 black-winged stilts flying around the bay, unsure of where to rest. On the edge of the bay 24 little egrets perched, sentinels wishing us farewell.

Back to Blighty and a distinctly cooler climate. Thanks for a great week, a mix of good birds, stunning flowers and great people.

Ivan



Nominations for wildlife highlights of the week

Jonathan: Agia reservoir and collared pratincole

Roger: orchids

Sarah, Peter, Donald: ortolan buntings

Sue, David: dragonarum (despite Sue's enthusiasm for identifying medicks ...)

Jane: bee-eaters

Pat: dragonarum, bee-eaters

Kate: carob, orange blossom scent

Margaret: 'orchid hill', woodchat shrike

Malcolm: orchid hill, ruffs with wood sandpipers at Agia reservoir

Shirley: squacco heron, woodchat shrike, lammergeier's 'Mexican wave' wing flap

Dee: ortolan buntings, dragonarum and asparagus pea

Ivan: land crab

Chris: collared flycatchers and *Ophrys holoserica*

BIRD LIST CRETE 13-20 April 2004

Little grebe:	4 Lake Kournas and 20+ Agia reservoir on 22nd.
Mediterranean shearwater:	3 seen very distant from Plakias beach
Squacco heron:	Flock of five on Plakias beach, on 18 th , 1 at Kournas, 1 at Geropotamus river
Little egret:	Largest flock was 24 in Plakias bay on 20th
Grey heron:	1 at Giorgiopoulos, 1 at Souda.
Purple heron:	1 at Agia , 6 at Frangocastello 1 Perched in trees by Venetian bridge en route to Moni Preveli
Mallard:	A few at Agia.
Garganey:	c 6 at Agia.
Lammergeier:	One bird seen very briefly and not well at Kourtaliotiko on 18th. Better views at Imbros Gorge on 19 th
Griffon vulture:	Seen regularly over hills. Birds on nest with young at southern end of Kourtaliotiko gorge.

Lesser spotted eagle	1 flying North over Agia reservoir on 17 th . Birders at Agia also reported them going over the same site the day before.
Marsh harrier:	One from the coach going to Plakias on 13 th . Male and 2 females at Agia on 19 th .
Montagu's harrier:	1 female at Moni Preveli, 1 at Kourtaliotiko gorge, 1 male at Imbros
Buzzard:	Common and widespread.
Golden eagle:	Two distant birds seen from Plakias on the first evening hunting on the hill above Mirthios.
Kestrel:	Common and widespread.
Hobby:	1 seen while traveling to Frangocastello
Eleonora's falcon:	Possible sighting in Moni Preveli valley
Peregrine:	1 at Kourtaliotiko, 1 from Taverna in Mirthios
Chukar:	Several at Moni Preveli, 2 at Kourtaliotiko.
Quail:	1 flushed from undergrowth at Frangocastello
Little crane:	At least 6 at Agia reservoir
Moorhen:	One at Giorgiopoulos and lots at Agia
Coot:	Many at Agia reservoir
Black winged stilt:	12 flying around Plakias bay on the morning of 20 th
Collared pratincole:	1 hawking insects at Agia on 17 th
Little ringed plover:	Plakias, Geropotamus,
Ruff:	Very close views at Agia reservoir.
Snipe:	1 flushed from puddle in rough ground in Plakias
Wood sandpiper:	Seen at Damnoni, Plakias and Agia
Common sandpiper:	Plakias beach and river, 7 on rocks at Frangocastello
Yellow-legged gull:	Common and widespread.
Rock dove:	Several apparently wild birds at Kourtaliotiko gorge
Woodpigeon:	Seen regularly below Mirthios
Collared dove:	Common and seen most days in ones and twos.
Turtle dove:	One or two at Moni Preveli.
Cuckoo:	The only sighting was of one from Agia Triada on 17 th flying among fields in the valley below.
Swift:	Seen in good numbers each day.
Pallid swift:	Only confirmed at Rethymnon harbour.
Alpine swift:	Seen most days often giving very good views at low level.
Bee-eater:	16 perching in nearby trees at the Geropotamus river near Agia Triada on 16 th . 13 perched in tree part way up the valley to Moni Preveli on 18 th
Hoopoe:	Hard to find with two birds 'fighting' at Phaestos on 16 th and one in Geropotamus river valley.
Short-toed lark:	A flock of six at Plakias beach on 14 th .
Crested lark:	Common and widespread.
Skylark:	Elusive small flock of c 15 birds at Spili bumps
Woodlark:	One on way up to Moni Preveli and one seen carrying food in a lay-by on the road up to the Imbros Gorge.
Sand martin:	Several at Agia
Crag martin:	Regular in Kourtaliotiko 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:	Good views at Damnoni, Moni Preveli.
House martin:	Many hundreds passing through.
Tree pipit:	Sightings become more common throughout the week.
Yellow wagtail:	Blue-headed at Plakias, black-headed at Agia
White wagtail:	Odd birds at Plakias and Kourtaliotiko.
Wren:	Only one, which was heard in the Kourtaliotiko gorge
Nightingale:	One at Kotsiphou, one at Moni Preveli, one at Souda..
Redstart:	1 at Frangocastello in olive grove 19 th , 1 in Moni Preveli valley 20 th
Whinchat:	Several at Plakias after rain and on reeds at Agia
Stonechat:	Seen well most days.
Wheatear:	4 at Frangocastello, individuals elsewhere.

Black-eared wheatear:	1 in Kourtaliotiko, 2 at Moni Preveli
Blue rock thrush:	A pair in Kourtaliotiko gorge; Kotsiphou Gorge, and Moni Preveli
Blackbird:	Common and widespread.
Cetti's warbler:	Regularly heard singing but rarely seen. 1 seen briefly from bridge behind Plakias.
Sedge warbler:	Several at Agia reservoir.
Great reed warbler:	One bird present behind the hotel in Plakias from 19 th , one showing well at Damnoni
Spectacled warbler:	At least two birds at Frangocastello
Sardinian warbler:	Common and widespread.
Blackcap:	1 singing in Spili car park
Wood warbler:	1 at Souda bay, several at Moni Preveli
Willow warbler:	1 at Moni Preveli on 19 th .
Spotted flycatcher:	Only 3 sightings
Pied flycatcher:	Several at Moni Preveli and other locations.
Collared flycatcher:	Several throughout the week, more than pied. 1 male below Mirthios on 14 th , 1 male in trees along river at Spili Bumps on 15 th , at least 6 at Moni Preveli 18 th . One male at Frangocastello, 18 th .
Semi-collared flycatcher:	A bird showing characteristics of this species was seen at Phaestos by two participants. However the conclusion of the observers was that they couldn't be definite about its identification.
Blue tit:	Common and widespread.
Great tit:	Common and widespread.
Golden oriole:	Excellent views at Phaestos on 20th. Singles also seen briefly on 14 th and 19 th
Woodchat shrike:	Singles at Plakias, Souda, Frangocastello.
Jay:	Two probable birds seen briefly in silhouette at Imbros gorge
Chough:	Distant views in Kourtaliotiko gorge
Jackdaw:	Common in gorges.
Hooded crow:	Common and widespread.
Raven:	Seen in every gorge and often during journeys.
Italian sparrow:	Common and widespread.
Spanish sparrow:	Seen at Plakias
Chaffinch:	Common and widespread.
Serin:	1 from car near Spili, 1 on Phaestos to Agia Triada road
Greenfinch:	Common and widespread.
Goldfinch:	Common and widespread.
Linnet:	A few birds at Spili only.
Cirl bunting:	1 singing briefly at Phaestos
Ortolan bunting:	Excellent close views of a pair of birds below the car park at Moni Preveli.
Corn bunting:	Locally common. Flock of 10 birds at Plakias on 18 th .

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail
Scarce swallowtail
Eastern festoon (ssp cretica)
Large white
Clouded yellow
Painted lady
Red admiral
Meadow brown
Southern speckled wood
Wall brown
Holly blue
Common blue
Baton blue



OTHER NOTABLE INSECTS

Egyptian locust
Violet carpenter bee
Oxythyrea funesta, a black and white chafer
Acrida ungarica, a grasshopper that looks like a stick-insect

CRUSTACEANS

Land crab *Potamon potamios* Damnoni

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Tree frog – many heard in orange trees and around the taverna at Agia Reservoir
Stripe-necked terrapin
Balkan green lizard
Erhard's wall lizard

MAMMALS

Hare being hunted by dogs below Moni Preveli car park

PLANT LIST

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

Key and nomenclature: Latin names of plants follows those used in *Flora of the Cretan Area* (Turland et al 1993) or 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

Pinaceae – Pines

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

ii) Angiosperms

a) Dicotyledons

Aizoaceae - Aizoon Family

Carpobrotus acinaciformis Red Hottentot Fig
Carpobrotus edulis Hottentot Fig

Anacardiaceae - Pistacio Family

Pistacia lentiscus Mastic Tree

Apocynaceae - Oleander Family

Nerium oleander subsp. *oleander* Oleander

Boraginaceae - Borage Family

Anchusa cretica An alkanet
Anchusa italica (*A. azurea*) Large Blue Alkanet
Borago officinalis Borage
Cerinth 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 graeca A Golden Drop
Symphytum creticum (*Procopiana cretica*) Procopiana or Cretan gorge comfrey

Cactaceae - Cactus Family

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

Campanulaceae - Bellflower Family

* *Petromarula pinnata* Cretan Wall Lettuce

Caprifoliaceae - Honeysuckle Family

Lonicera periclymenum Honeysuckle

Sambucus nigra Elder

Caryophyllaceae - Pink Family

Silene bellidifolia

Silene colorata subsp. *colorata*

Cistaceae - Rockrose Family

Cistus creticus Cretan Cistus

Cistus salvifolius Sage-Leaved Cistus

Fumana sp

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 (*P. graecum*) Shrubby cudweed

Scorzonera cretica Cretan vipers grass

Silybum marianum Milk thistle

Tragopogon sinuatus (*T. porrifolius*) Wild Salsify

Convolvulaceae - Bindweed Family

Convolvulus althaeoides Mallow-leaved Bindweed

Cuscuta epithymum Dodder

Crassulaceae - Stonecrop Family

Umbilicus parviflorus Small-Flowered Navelwort

Cruciferaeae - Cress Family

Biscutella didyma Buckler Mustard

Cakile maritima Sea rocket

Capsella bursa-pastoralis Shepherd's purse

Matthiola tricuspidata 3-horned stock

**Ricotia cretica* Ricotia

Sinapsis arvensis Charlock

Cucurbitaceae - Cucumber Family

Ecballium elaterium Squinting 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

Geraniaceae - Geranium Family

Erodium cicutarium Storksbill
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
Lavandula stoechas French lavender
Marrubium vulgare White horehound
Phlomis fruticosa Jerusalem Sage
Prasium majus Spanish Hedge-nettle
Salvia fruticosa Three-Leaved Sage
Satureja thymbra Savory (Satureia in Blamey)
Stachys sp Clary sp

Leguminosae - Pea Family

Acacia spp Mimosa
Anthyllus hermanniae (spiny broom-like bush)
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
Coronilla cretica Cretan crown vetch
* *Ebenus creticus* Shrubby Sainfoin (Cretan ebony)
Hippocrepis multisiliquosa? A horseshoe vetch
Hymenocarpus circinnatus (*Medicago circinnata*) Disk trefoil
Lathyrus aphaca Yellow vetchling
Lupinus micranthus Hairy Lupin
Medicago arborea Tree Medick
Medicago arabica Spotted Medick
Medicago (intertexta) ciliaris a medick
Medicago coronata another medick
Medicago littoralis 'coastal' medick
Medicago marina Sea Medick
Medicago orbicularis Large Disk Medick
Medicago polymorpha toothed medick
Medicago scutellata snail medick, another large disk medick (with glandular hairs on pods)
Medicago truncatolata yet another medick
Onobrychis aequidentata
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 tomentosum Woolly Trefoil
Trifolium uniflorum One-Flowered Clover
Tripodion tetraphyllum (*Anthyllis tetraphyllum*) Bladder Vetch
Vicia hybrida Hairy yellow vetchling
Vicia lutea Yellow vetch
Vicia sativa agg Common vetch

Linacea - Flax Family

Linum arboreum Tree Flax (=shrubby flax)

Linum bienne Pale Flax

Lythraceae - Loosestrife Family

Lythrum junceum

Malvaceae - Mallow Family

Lavatera cretica Lesser Tree Mallow

Malva sylvestris Common Mallow

Meliaceae - Persian Lilac family

Melia azedarach Indian bead tree or Persian lilac

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

Primulaceae - Primrose Family

Anagallis arvensis Scarlet Pimpernel (Scarlet and blue forms)

**Cyclamen creticum* Cretan Cyclamen

Ranunculaceae - Buttercup Family

Anemone coronaria Crown Anemone

Ranunculus asiaticus Turban Buttercup

Ranunculus gracilis

Resedaceae - Mignonette Family

Reseda alba White Mignonette

Reseda lutea Wild Mignonette

Rosaceae - Rose Family

Pyrus amygdaliformis Almond-leaved pear

Rubus sanctus Bramble

Sanguisorba minor subsp. verrucosa Mediterranean Salad Burnet

Sarcopterium spinosum Thorny Burnet

Rubiaceae - Bedstraw Family

Sharardia arvensis Field Madder

Rutaceae - Rue Family

Citrus limon Lemon

Citrus sinensis Orange

Santalaceae- Sandalwood family

Osyris alba Osyris

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 arcturus* Hanging Mullein
Verbascum sinuatum
Verbascum pulverulentum Hoary mullein

Solanaceae - Potato Family

Hyoscyamus albus White Henbane
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 thoro-wax (at Spili)
Daucus carota Wild Carrot
Eryngium creticum Cretan eryngo
Ferula communis subsp. communis Giant Fennel
Foeniculum vulgare Fennel
Oenanthe globulosa Mediterranean water dropwort
Scandix pecten-veneris Shepherd's needle
Smyrniolum 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 rubra Red 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
Gynandris sisyrrinchium Barbary Nut
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 Tassel Hyacinth
Ornithogalum umbellatum Star of Bethlehem
Romulea bulbocodium A sand crocus
Ruscus aculeatus Butcher's broom
Smilax aspera Common smilax
Tulipa rupestris Rock tulip (pink, Spili)
Tulipa sylvestris Wild Tulip

Orchidaceae - Orchid Family

Aceras anthropophorum Man Orchid
Anacamptis pyramidalis Pyramidal Orchid
Barlia robertiana Giant orchid
Ophrys bombyliflora Bumble Bee Orchid
Ophrys cretica Cretan Bee Orchid
Ophrys fuciflora Late Spider Orchid
Ophrys fusca Sombre bee orchid
Ophrys (scolopax) heldreichii Marengo Orchid
Ophrys episcopalis/holosERICA Bishop's ophrys
Ophrys iricolor Rainbow Orchid
Ophrys lutea v galilaea Yellow bee orchid, E. Med
Ophrys (sphegodes) mammosa Mammoose Orchid
Ophrys sphegodes Early spider orchid
Ophrys tentredinifera Sawfly Orchid
Orchis anatolica Anatolian orchid
Orchis boryi
Orchis coriophora ssp. fragrans Bug orchid
Orchis italica Italian Man Orchid
Orchis lactea Milky Orchid
Orchis laxiflora Loose-flowered orchid
Orchis (provincialis) pauciflora Few-flowered Orchid
Orchis quadripunctata Four-spotted Orchid
Orchis simia Monkey orchid
Serapias (vomeraea) orientalis
Serapias parviflora Small tongue-orchid

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



early spider orchid