

**THE BOCA CENTINAR Y TOUR TO EUROPE
THE BEST OF EAST AND WEST**

24th APRIL – 13th MAY 2005

TOUR REPORT

LEADERS: CHRIS DOUGHTY and RUSSILL NISBET, in SCOTLAND.

The aim of the BOCA Centenary tour to Europe was to enable clients to enjoy a good cross-section of Europe's splendid birdlife. In order to do this, we concentrated on two destinations; Lesvos, in the Greek Islands of eastern Europe and the highlands and islands of Scotland, in western Europe. Lesvos is an island of outstanding natural beauty, situated just a few kilometres from the coast of Turkey. We arrived at the islands' airport at mid-morning, collected our baggage and found there would be a slight delay before our taxis arrived, to take us to Skala Kalloni, which would be our base for the next 8 nights. As the airport is on the coast, we did a little birding whilst waiting for the taxis; there were plenty of Yellow-legged Gulls in Mytilini Bay, a pair of Common House Martins were nesting in the airport building, large numbers of Barn Swallows were flying overhead, House Sparrows were actively feeding along the roadside along with a solitary Crested Lark. Once the taxis arrived we set off through the maze of winding roads that is Mytilini and then drove on to the Malemi Hotel in Skala Kalloni, where we met our gracious hosts George and Effy Kapsalis, who were to look after us very well indeed.

After some time to freshen up from the long flight from Australia we did a little birding in the grounds of the hotel, which proved quite rewarding. We saw a White Stork fly overhead and a little later a pair of Collared Pratincoles did the same, there was the ever present Feral Pigeons and Eurasian Collared Doves, together with Common Blackbird, Blackcap, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Great and Blue Tits, Hooded Crow and Spanish Sparrows, which were nesting colonially in a large pine tree in the grounds of the hotel. There was also European Goldfinch, European Greenfinch and a bird that was to prove very common, the rather sombre, Corn Bunting. We then spent some time at Kalloni Pool, literally just next to the hotel. Sadly, these pools are desperately in need of management to prevent them from being totally overgrown by Tamarisk and other undergrowth. Even so, we had a great time birding there, where we added several Little Egrets, a solitary Purple Heron, a small flock of Glossy Ibis, a pair of very late Eurasian Teal, several superb drake Garganey, all in full breeding plumage, our first of many Marsh Harriers and a few Common Moorhens and Eurasian Coots. Large numbers of Sand Martins were flying over the pools, a few Yellow Wagtails were present, we enjoyed tracking down a surprisingly obliging Cetti's Warbler, we saw a Eurasian Jay and best of all, enjoyed super looks at a male Little Crane, in splendid breeding plumage. A quick look at Kalloni Bay produced a solitary Black-necked Grebe, a couple of Little Grebes, a pair of Black-headed Gulls in full breeding plumage, several Common Terns, our only Caspian Tern of the tour and good numbers of Common Swifts. We had a quick look along the East River before spending some time at the mouth of the river. Along the river we found Black-winged Stilt, Wood and Green Sandpipers, Common Greenshank

and Common Stonechat. At the mouth of the river we added Great Cormorant, Little Ringed Plover, Little, Sandwich and Gull-billed Terns and last but not least a small flock of Greater Short-toed Larks. On the walk back to the hotel we enjoyed super looks at a Common Nightingale, in full song. All in all, it was a nice relaxing start to the trip, and we fell asleep that night and every night of our stay here, to the sound of singing Common Nightingales!

The following day, a pre-breakfast excursion to Kalloni Inland Lake, produced a solitary European Turtle-Dove sat on telegraph wires, superb views of a Little Bittern, a Grey Heron, gorgeous Black-eared Wheatears and best of all good close looks at a flock of 5 pairs of Red-footed Falcons. Overnight, there had been a large fall of Sand Martins and Yellow Wagtails. We returned to the hotel for breakfast (fruit juice, ham, fetta cheese, home made bread, hard-boiled eggs, olives, fresh yogurt, toast and marmalade and tea and coffee.) Following breakfast, we went birding in the Potamia Valley, which turned up Ruddy Shelduck, several Long-legged Buzzards, an elusive Eurasian Hoopoe, a nesting Western Rock Nuthatch, exquisitely plumaged Woodchat and Masked Shrikes, Chaffinch and stunning Cirl and Black-headed Buntings. We also enjoyed good looks here at Persian Squirrel. In the afternoon we had a quick look at Kalloni Bay, where we added Squacco Heron in full breeding plumage and a solitary Great Egret. A quick stop at Kalloni Pool added European and Great Reed-Warblers. Our final destination for the day was the Kalloni Saltpans a very bird-rich area, where we added a huge flock of Greater Flamingos, large numbers of nesting Pied Avocets, a few Kentish Plovers, a solitary Temminck's Stint, a few Little Stints, one or two Common Sandpipers, a small party of Ruffs and a small flock of absolutely stunning White-winged Terns, in full breeding plumage. We also added a small flock of equally stunning European Bee-eaters, one or two Red-rumped Swallows and a small number of Whinchats. At the back of the saltpans, in an area commonly referred to as the sheep fields we saw a pair of beautiful Common Shelducks and a flock of approximately 10 Red-throated Pipits, all in breeding plumage sporting lovely red throats. At dusk Soprano Pipistrelles, a diminutive species of bat could be observed flying around our hotel.

A pre-breakfast visit to Kalloni Inland Lake added the first of several Sedge Warblers. Following breakfast we drove to the mini soccer field, thanks to Elva's wonderful navigating. Elva volunteered to be the navigator on the first day of the tour and did such a great job that we all voted she should be navigator for the rest of our time in Lesvos! There goes the popular myth that women can't navigate, Elva did a great job for us throughout our time in Lesvos. At the mini soccer field a team effort managed to successfully locate the two target species, a Long-eared Owl with two large chicks and an incredibly camouflaged Eurasian Scops-Owl, but failed miserably to get my 14 Euros back from King Richard!. We then continued on to the Achladeri area, in search of the very range restricted Kruper's Nuthatch. This beautifully wooded area was a real treat to bird in and Jock found the main target bird, a pair of nesting Kruper's Nuthatch. It was great to watch them coming into and out of the nest, however, a little later in the day we were able to watch a bird foraging in a tree, climbing along the branches, which was even better. While watching the nest site we added a pair of Spotted Flycatchers and a family party of Short-tailed Treecreepers. A long walk up a mountain trail produced the first of

several Common Buzzards and some members of the party observed a Peregrine Falcon on the way down. A second long walk in the `Derbyshire` area, produced the first of several Short-toed Eagles. On our drive back to Skala Kalloni, a quick stop at Kalloni Salt pans produced a few Whiskered Terns, in full breeding plumage.

A pre-breakfast excursion to the `Derbyshire` area, produced good close looks at a Black Stork feeding along the East River, which we saw on the drive out there. The `Derbyshire` area resulted in two new species being added to our ever growing birdlist; we played hide-and-seek with a male Subalpine Warbler and Paddy, a man of many talents, was able to call in a Common Cuckoo, by imitating its call. The rest of the day was spent birding almost the entire western half of the island. Just after leaving Skala Kalloni a Blue Rock-Thrush was observed well on overhead telegraph wires. Our first birding stop was a small area known as Devil's Bridge. We pulled into a small lay-by at the side of the road and climbed up a fairly short, steepish track to a small chapel with a tall conifer beside it. It was not long before we were enjoying stunning looks at the beautiful and very range restricted Cretzschmar's Bunting. A Common Kestrel put in an appearance, hovering overhead and flying along the hillside searching for small voles, but this was soon forgotten as a very graceful female Montague's Harrier glided into view, approaching the group at fairly close quarters. As we were about to start down the hill another range restricted species the Sombre Tit, popped into view, allowing us to have a good look at it. At the bottom of the track, as we were preparing to get back into the van, when we spotted an Eastern Orphean Warbler, which we all saw well. Our next port of call was the small fishing village of Apothikes, nestled along the coast of Kalloni Bay. Just before reaching Apothikes we enjoyed watching a pair of Common Ravens flying to and fro. By now, the sun was high in the sky and we knew we were in for a hot day, so we stopped at a small taverna for a drink stop. After leaving the taverna a small group of Dutch birders, whom we had become friendly with, asked us to check a bird which they were watching in their telescope, the bird was sitting a good distance away, out in the bay. It was to prove to be the rarest bird that we saw during our time in Lesvos, we enjoyed great scope views at a superb Black-throated Loon. A quick stop at the fortified town of Agra proved very rewarding, we enjoyed super close scope views of a few Cinereous Buntings, another extremely range restricted species. North of Eroses, we stopped at a rocky outcrop to search for Rock Sparrows, which duly popped into view along with a migratory Willow Warbler. Continuing our journey, we approached Ipsilou Monastery, and stopped to search for Isabelline Wheatear at a well know stake out. We had not been there very long when we noticed a pair of falcons flying together and clashing talons, we were witnessing a territorial dispute between a Lanner Falcon and a Peregrine Falcon. Shortly afterwards we found a pair of Northern Wheatears and then a pair of Isabelline Wheatears. At the monastery itself, we enjoyed watching a Little Owl at close quarters. Some members of the group walked down the steep road from the monastery and were rewarded with good looks at a female Pied Flycatcher. From the monastery we drove back to Skala Kalloni.

The following day the pre-breakfast excursion was to West River, were great spotting by Paddy enabled us to enjoy good scope views of a pair of Stone-curlews. Following breakfast we headed north to Petra, driving through heavy rain. On our arrival in Petra we

checked out the small harbour, it was still raining hard and there was only one bird in the harbour, fortunately, it was a male Mediterranean Gull, in full breeding plumage! A short time later, we pulled into a large lay-by, which was a well known area for Ruppell's Warbler, which duly obliged and we all enjoyed good close looks at yet another range restricted species. A walk along the coast produced a quick look at a solitary Red Fox. Our next stop was at Molivos, which has a beautiful castle and is the main tourist area of Lesvos, along the coast we added European Shag and as we were leaving Molivos Castle we jumped out of our vehicles to enjoy good looks at a flock of Alpine Swifts flying overhead. Driving inland from Molivos, we drove to a small reservoir, where we enjoyed our picnic lunch. Birding in the farmland around the reservoir proved rewarding with a flyby Eurasian Hobby and prolonged looks at a Eurasian Sparrowhawk flying overhead. Malcolm observed Sardinian Warbler here and as we were leaving the area we enjoyed great looks at a Red-backed Shrike, sitting in the top of a bush. On the drive back to Skala Kalloni, we passed a small quarry which had a few nesting pairs of Eurasian Crag-Martins. As we were having a good look at them a solitary Booted Eagle flew overhead, this is a very uncommon passage migrant in Lesvos.

Our pre-breakfast excursion was to the Potamia Valley, where we had frustratingly brief flight views of Middle Spotted Woodpecker. Following breakfast we headed west once again and our first destination was the Fossilised Forest, not far from Sigri. As we were passing Ipsilou Monastery, we enjoyed good looks at a pair of Linnets. On arrival at the Fossilised Forest, great spotting by Paddy enabled the group to enjoy good close scope views of a pair of Chukars. We continued on to Sigri, where we found Jackdaws to be very common, surprisingly, this is the only place in Lesvos where this species occurs. Following lunch we headed for Faneromeni Ford, where we enjoyed good close looks at a male Collared Flycatcher in full breeding plumage. At Faneromeni Beach we enjoyed watching a small flock of Lesser Kestrels, very distant flocks of Levantine Shearwaters off shore and great looks at a very attractive Spotted Crake. As we were walking back to our vehicles we spent some time watching a delightful pair of Tawny Pipits, just a few metres away from us.

On our way to Agiasos we had a quick look at the Kalloni Saltpans, where we had distant looks at three Black-tailed Godwits in full breeding plumage. Continuing to our destination, we spent most of the day enjoying a very pleasant walk in Sweet Chestnut forest above the small picturesque town of Agiasos. While eating our picnic lunch we enjoyed good looks at Winter Wren and European Robin. We then heard Eastern Bonelli's Warbler singing and we were very pleased when one allowed us to watch it closely in a nearby tree. It had been suspected that this extremely range restricted species had nested in this forest, but it had never been proved. Chris then watched the bird fly into a nest on the ground and Xenia actually photographed the bird inside the nest, presumably sitting on eggs. This is the first time that this species has been proven to nest on the island.

A pre-breakfast excursion to Kalloni Bay, produced great looks at a Great Crested Grebe in full breeding plumage. Most of the day was taken up with a pleasant walk through the Napi Valley, north of Kalloni. At last, we enjoyed good looks at a family party of Middle

Spotted Woodpecker and to round our walk off perfectly, we enjoyed good close looks at a superb Lesser Grey Shrike.

I am sure we all enjoyed our time on Lesvos, we will remember it for many things: the incredibly narrow winding roads, the crazy local drivers, the fields of dark red poppies and wild flowers, the dead fridges and washing machines along the roadside, the cool mornings and the hot afternoons, the men sitting on benches, sipping strong coffee and playing cards and the older women, dressed in black, working in the fields, but most of all for the fantastic looks at some of Europe's most colourful birds.

Reluctantly leaving the island of Lesvos we flew to Athens, where we connected with a flight to London and then another flight to Edinburgh, in Scotland. At Edinburgh airport we met our local guide Russell, who was to drive and guide us throughout our time in Scotland. From the airport we drove to Carberry, where we stayed at a very grand house, surrounded by woodland. A walk around the grounds produced our first Scottish birds, which included Common Woodpigeon, Common Magpie, Rook, Carrion Crow and Common Starling. We also picked up two new mammals, Rabbit and Grey Squirrel.

The following day we spent a very pleasant morning birding in the nearby Pentland Hills. There were new birds aplenty and included Greylag Goose, complete with goslings, Mallards with ducklings, resplendent Common Pheasants, nesting Eurasian Oystercatchers, heaps of Meadow Pipits, a few White Wagtails, as well as a couple of Grey Wagtails. A brief encounter with a White-throated Dipper and great looks at more common birds which included Dunnock, Song and Mistle Thrushes, Common Chiffchaff, Goldcrest, Coal and Long-tailed Tits, Eurasian Treecreeper, Yellowhammer and Malcolm's favourite bird, the Eurasian Bullfinch. However, the bird of the morning was undoubtedly the great scope views of Red Grouse, once again, spotted by Paddy. We also saw our first Roe Deer of the tour. Following a very pleasant lunch at a local bakery we headed off to Musselburgh Lagoons, where the tide was perfect, high tide, pushing the birds close to us. In a sometimes frantic couple of hours, with new birds coming at an incredibly fast rate we added a whole range of species which included the following: Horned Grebe, Mute Swan, masses of Common Eider, Common Scoter, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Common Ringed and Grey Plovers, Red Knot, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, many in full breeding plumage, Dunlin, Common Redshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew, a host of gulls which included Common, Herring, Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gulls, Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Guillemot, Razorbill, Stock Dove, Common Skylark and Common Reed Bunting. We also enjoyed good looks at two far less common species of birds, small numbers of Velvet Scoter and two pairs of Long-tailed Ducks, all in full breeding plumage. We also enjoyed good looks at a Brown Hare and at dusk Common Pipistrelles were flying around the stately home where we were staying.

The following morning we had planned to sail out to Bass Rock, to enjoy close encounters with nesting Northern Gannets, but unfortunately there was a very strong wind blowing and it was too rough for the boat to leave the harbour. This was disappointing, but not a disaster, as we enjoyed good close looks at Northern Gannet in

Dunbar Harbour. However, if this weather continued it would put our trip to the Isle of May in jeopardy, and this would be a disaster. In the harbour at Dunbar we also enjoyed good looks at Northern Fulmar. In the afternoon it was bitterly cold, with strong winds and rain showers. Undaunted, we visited the RSPB reserve at Aberlady Bay, where we enjoyed good looks at Tufted Duck and Northern Lapwing.

The following morning, the wind had dropped and with fingers crossed we drove to Crail Harbour, from where we would take the boat out to the Isle of May. We spoke to the skipper of the boat and to our relief, it was all systems go and we enjoyed a somewhat bumpy ride out to the Isle of May. As we approached the island, a solitary Great Skua flew past the boat; small numbers of Grey Seals loafed on the rocky shoreline, together with a small flock of Purple Sandpipers. We were even able to make a landing on the island, where we enjoyed a walk around the sea cliffs on the western side of the island which is home to over 200,000 nesting seabirds. We enjoyed very close encounters with Northern Fulmars, European Shags, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Common Guillemots, Razorbills and best of all many pairs of delightful Atlantic Puffins. Following the boat trip we made a quick visit to the Eden Estuary, where we added Eurasian Wigeon to our ever-growing European birdlist.

Following a very hearty breakfast, with wonderful Black Pudding, which all seemed to end up on Chris' plate! We went for a walk along the Crail coastal walk, where we enjoyed a very pleasant walk. It was here that we enjoyed our best ever sighting of a pair of Great Black-backed Gulls, which were devouring a large crab. We also observed our only Rock Pipits of the trip, during the walk. Leaving Crail behind, we headed for the RSPB reserve at Lock Leven. On the way the bus came to a screeching halt and we were able to enjoy a pair of Grey Partridge in a ploughed field. Lock Leven has one of the largest breeding populations of ducks in Britain. We were not to be disappointed, new birds here included Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Common Pochard, Scaup and a surprise flock of Pink-footed Geese, which should have left for Iceland a few weeks earlier. Apparently, the weather in Iceland had been appalling and somehow, the geese knew about it and had decided to delay their departure for a while, which we very much appreciated. Heading north we made a quick stop at a small Loch, where we added the introduced Ruddy Duck. Leaving the lowlands behind we entered the famous Scottish Highlands and where surprised to find a couple of Red-legged Partridge along the roadside. This introduced species has been steadily spreading north, only recently reaching the Scottish Highlands. We settled in at our accommodation in Speyside and went for a late afternoon walk in the ancient Caledonian pine forest of Abernethy Forest. Here we had a quick look at a male Common Redstart and good long looks at a pair of Eurasian Siskins.

Today we had a very early start, we had to be at the Loch Garten RSPB reserve at 0530 in the morning, where we could enter the hides and hope to see lekking Capercaillie. We were very fortunate, we all enjoyed good scope views of a male Capercaillie, this is not the case every morning. On the bird feeders around the hide, we enjoyed super close looks at Great Spotted Woodpecker and the superb Red Squirrel. The long term weather forecast was not good, the weather was to steadily deteriorate. We made the decision to

make the walk to the top of the Cairngorm Mountains, after breakfast. Our main target bird was the Rock Ptarmigan. In appalling conditions of heavy snowfalls, strong winds and piercing hail-storms, we trudged steadily upwards and onwards in our quest for the elusive and highly camouflaged Rock Ptarmigan. During a very heavy hail-storm, the decision was made to shelter on the leeward side of some large rocks. To our great relief, a Rock Ptarmigan had decided to do the same! We enjoyed very good close looks at a female bird in fresh spring plumage. In deteriorating weather we trudged slowly back down the mountain, where we enjoyed our packed lunch. In the afternoon we stopped to do some birding at Loch Morlich where we added Red-throated Loon, Goosander and a quick look at an Osprey.

A pre-breakfast walk along the River Nethy, provided us with excellent looks at White-throated Dipper. After breakfast a walk through ancient pine forest at Carr Bridge, finally produced good looks at Crested Tit. After lunch we enjoyed a very good afternoons birding in the Findhorne Valley, in half decent weather. Here we found nesting European Golden-Plover, displaying Common Snipe and best of all a superb male Ring Ouzel, singing from the top of a large scree slope. We also enjoyed distant views of Red Deer. A late afternoon visit to Lochindorb Loch, produced a Merlin in flight, which momentarily perched on a wooden post, unfortunately it flew off again, just as Chris was getting it in his scope. After dinner most of the group went to a floodlit hide, where food scraps are put out in order to attract native mammals. We enjoyed superb close looks at two nocturnal species of mammals, the notoriously difficult to observe Pine Marten, complemented by three Eurasian Badgers.

On the following day we spent the morning birding in Abernethy Forest, searching the ancient Caledonian Pine Forests, in search of Britain's only endemic bird the Scottish Crossbill. While searching for this bird we enjoyed great looks at a pair of Tree Pipits. As we were walking back towards the bus, Russell heard Scottish Crossbills calling, unfortunately, as we approached the tree they were feeding in, they flew off and we only saw them in flight. Leaving the Highlands behind we headed south, to do some birding in the splendid woodlands at Killecrankie Pass. We very much enjoyed watching a pair of Pied Flycatchers investigating several nest boxes and it was a real treat for us to observe another new bird for the trip list, the very attractive Wood Warbler, who sang his heart out for us. Leaving Killecrankie behind, we drove to our overnight accommodation at Kengrogon. On the way we broke the journey at Moulan Moors, where we were very pleased to find a group of 7 cock Black Grouse lekking, on the open moors. At dusk we went for a walk along the road with forest on one side and farmland on the other. We were hoping to find roding Eurasian Woodcocks. As we walked along the road we enjoyed good looks at an adult female Fallow Deer. Arriving at an open field surrounded by forest we waited for it to get dark. We were not to be disappointed, a Woodcock flew in level, direct flight over the tree tops and about 10 minutes later it flew back in the opposite direction. While walking back to the lodge, Tawny Owls were calling from the forest; Russell called back to them, using his voice to imitate their calls. To our great surprise, a Tawny Owl flew into the tree just ahead of us, along the side of the road and in the twilight we all saw it very well.

On the final day of the tour, we spent the morning walking through a mixture of farmland and mixed woodland. Some members of the group were rewarded with flight views of a pair of Common Crossbills. As we neared the lodge Russell heard a Garden Warbler singing from dense cover, close to the track. We stopped and peered into the dense cover for some time and a couple of the group enjoyed a quick look at this rather shy and skulking species.

On this very enjoyable tour, we observed 226 different species of birds and 14 species of mammals. The tour had achieved its goal; we had indeed observed a good cross-section of Europe's splendid birdlife and had a very enjoyable time while doing so.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

GAVIIDAE

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata* An uncommon breeding migrant in Scotland, we saw it well on a couple of occasions.

Black-throated Loon *Gavia arctica* A very uncommon winter visitor, to offshore areas of Lesvos. Indeed, this was the least common bird we saw throughout our time in Lesvos. We enjoyed good scope views of a bird in Kalloni Bay, thanks to our Dutch birding friends.

PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A common breeding bird throughout both Lesvos and Scotland.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* A regular but uncommon winter visitor to offshore areas of Lesvos, we saw a solitary bird in full breeding plumage in Kalloni Bay. In Scotland, where we saw it on a couple of occasions it is an uncommon breeding bird.

Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus* We enjoyed super looks at this attractive species, which is an uncommon breeding resident and restricted to the Highlands of Scotland.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* A regular winter visitor to Lesvos in small numbers, mainly wintering offshore. One bird was present in Kalloni Bay.

PROCELLARIIDAE

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* A hundred years ago, Northern Fulmars barely had a toehold in Britain. They bred only on the island of St. Kilda, the furthest north island of the Outer Hebrides. It is now a common breeding bird throughout the whole of Britain, with the exception of the southeast corner. We enjoyed super close looks at this species nesting on sea cliffs in Scotland.

Levantine Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan* The Mediterranean Shearwater has recently been split into 2 species, the Balearic Shearwater, of the western Mediterranean and the Levantine Shearwater, of the eastern Mediterranean. In Lesvos, it is a resident species which is seen offshore in small numbers throughout all months of the year. It is more common off the north coast; we saw small distant flocks off Faneromeni Beach.

SULIDAE

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* A common breeding summer visitor to offshore islands of Scotland. We saw it well on several occasions, off the east coast of Scotland.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* This species is a regular winter visitor in small numbers to Lesvos. It is a common breeding resident throughout Scotland.

European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* This species is a fairly common breeding resident throughout both Lesvos and Scotland.

ARDEIDAE

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* The Grey Heron is a fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant in Lesvos. In Scotland it is a common resident.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* This attractive species is an uncommon spring passage migrant to Lesvos, we saw it well on three separate occasions.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* An uncommon winter visitor to Lesvos, we saw it well on several occasions.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* This species is a common passage migrant throughout Lesvos, we also saw it well on several occasions, with up to 12 birds together at 'Derbyshire'.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* This species is a common spring migrant in Lesvos, we saw it very well on a few occasions.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* This species is an uncommon spring migrant in Lesvos, we enjoyed splendid close looks at this species on a few occasions.

CICONIIDAE

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* This species is mainly a passage migrant in Lesvos, but it does breed in small numbers in the more remote parts of the island. We saw this species well on a few separate occasions.

White Stork *Ciconia Ciconia* The White Stork is an uncommon passage migrant and an uncommon summer breeding bird in Lesvos. We enjoyed watching this species on three occasions.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* A fairly common spring passage migrant throughout Lesvos, where we enjoyed a few small flocks.

PHOENICOPTERIDAE

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* A fairly common winter visitor to Lesvos, with large flocks of non-breeding birds frequenting the Kalloni Saltpans.

ANATIDAE

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* A common breeding resident in Scotland, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* A common winter visitor to Scotland. We were very much surprised to find a large flock of this species still wintering at the RSPB Reserve at Loch Leven, this species should have already left for its breeding grounds in Iceland. Apparently, there had been very bad weather in Iceland, and the birds somehow sensed this, delaying their migration.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* A common breeding resident in Scotland, we enjoyed watching adults with goslings, on several occasions.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* In Lesvos, this species is resident in small numbers, is also a passage migrant and also winters in small numbers. We enjoyed watching this very attractive species on a few occasions.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* In Lesvos, this species winters in small numbers,

usually no more than a couple of dozen birds are present, however, we saw them well on a few occasions. In Scotland it is a common resident, which we also saw well on a few occasions.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* In Britain this species is mainly a winter visitor, from breeding grounds in Iceland, Russia and Siberia. In the Scottish Highlands it breeds in small numbers on isolated lochs, where we saw it well on a few occasions.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* In Britain this species is also mainly a winter visitor, from breeding grounds in Iceland and continental Europe. It breeds in small numbers in southeastern Scotland, where we saw a pair very well at the RSPB Reserve at Loch Leven.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* In Lesvos this species is an uncommon winter visitor and a very scarce spring and autumn passage migrant, we were very fortunate to observe a pair of birds on Kalloni Pool, on the first day of the tour. In Scotland it is a resident breeding species, where we saw a few birds.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* This species is a very common resident throughout Scotland.

Garganey *Anas querquedula* The Garganey is a common spring migrant in Lesvos; there were up to 6 birds present on Kalloni Pool, during our stay on the island.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* An uncommon resident in Scotland, a pair of birds were observed very well from one of the hides at the RSPB reserve, at Loch Leven.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* This species is also an uncommon resident in Scotland and once again, a pair of birds was observed very well from one of the hides at the RSPB reserve at Loch Leven.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* A common resident species in Scotland, which we saw well on many occasions.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* An uncommon winter visitor to Scotland, which we were very fortunate to observe; by early May, most birds have returned to their breeding grounds in Iceland, northern Europe and Siberia. We enjoyed good looks at a pair of birds from one of the hides at the RSPB reserve, at Loch Leven.

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima* A common resident species along the coasts of Scotland, which we saw on many occasions.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* This species is an uncommon winter visitor, mainly to coastal areas of Scotland. By May, most birds have left Britain for their breeding grounds, which are mainly on the lakes of northern Scandinavia. We were very fortunate to observe two pairs in full breeding plumage at Musselburgh Lagoons.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* Mainly an uncommon winter visitor to Scotland, we were very fortunate to observe small flocks of this species at Musselburgh Lagoons.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca* This species is an uncommon winter visitor off the coast

of Scotland and is the least common species we saw, during our stay in Scotland. Small numbers winter amongst the flocks of Common Scoter, this was the case when we observed approximately half a dozen birds amongst flocks of Common Scoters at Musselburgh Lagoons.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* Mainly a winter visitor to Britain, up to 10,000 Common Goldeneye spend the winter there, as they were doing at Musselburgh Lagoons. Small numbers now regularly breed on lochs in the Scottish Highlands and we also saw them here too.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* An uncommon resident bird throughout Scotland, we saw it well on a few occasions.

Goosander *Mergus merganser* Another uncommon resident of Scotland, we enjoyed distant looks on Loch Morlich and then much closer looks at a pair of birds swimming on the river in the Findhorne Valley.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* Introduced from North America, this species now has breeding feral populations on some of the Scottish lochs, where we saw a few birds.

PANDIOIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* In Britain the Osprey nests only in the Highlands of Scotland,

in very small numbers. We had glimpses of this species, on three separate occasions but unfortunately, we never saw it well.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* This species is an uncommon summer visitor and nesting bird in Lesvos. We saw it well on several occasions.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A common spring passage migrant throughout Lesvos, we saw adult males, adult females and immatures on several occasions.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* This very beautiful species of harrier is an uncommon spring passage migrant throughout Lesvos. We were very fortunate to enjoy good close looks at a female bird at Devil's Bridge and a very quick look at a male bird near Faneromeni Ford.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* In Lesvos, this species is mainly a common winter visitor, however, a few pairs almost certainly breed on the island. We enjoyed a prolonged look at a bird flying overhead, close to the reservoir near Molivos. In Scotland, this species is a common resident, which we saw well on a couple of occasions.

Common Buzzard *Buteo Buteo* In Lesvos, this species is a fairly common winter visitor, small numbers pass through in both spring and autumn and it also breeds in small numbers. We observed this species on a few occasions during our stay in Lesvos. In Scotland, this species is a very common resident, which we saw on most days of the tour.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* Small numbers pass through Lesvos in both spring and autumn, however, good numbers stay to breed and it was these birds that we saw on almost a daily basis during our time in Lesvos.

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennatus* A very uncommon spring passage migrant in Lesvos, the second rarest bird we saw during our time there. While we were watching Eurasian Crag-Martins, which were nesting at a small disused quarry, we were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at a pale morph bird flying overhead, close to the village of Stipsi.

FALCONIDAE

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* This very interesting species of falcon is a summer visitor to Lesvos, breeding on small offshore islands near Sigri. Small flocks can be regularly observed hunting over farmland close to Sigri. We enjoyed watching a small flock of 6 or so birds hunting over farmland close to Faneromeni Beach, near Sigri.

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* This species is a scarce resident throughout Lesvos, even so, we saw it well on 3 separate occasions. In Scotland, it is a common resident which we also saw well on a few occasions.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* This very attractive species of small falcon is a common spring passage migrant in Lesvos. We enjoyed many sightings of small flocks performing ariel maneuvers in pursuit of large insects and then flying to overhead telegraph wires to eat them. It was one of the most memorable birds of the trip.

Merlin *Falco columbarius* Unfortunately, this diminutive species of falcon is declining rapidly throughout the British Isles. A bird of open areas on mountains and moorlands, we were very fortunate to observe an adult female which landed on the top of a post at Lochindorb Loch. Unfortunately, it only rested momentarily on the post, before flying off again.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* A fairly common spring passage migrant throughout Lesvos, which we saw on only one occasion. A bird was observed quite well in Flight at the reservoir, close to Molivos.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* This large species of falcon is a scarce resident which breeds in small numbers in the uplands, in the western part of the island, particularly around Ipsilou Monastery. This is exactly where we enjoyed our only sighting; a bird was engaged in a territorial dispute with a Peregrine Falcon.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* An uncommon resident throughout Lesvos, certainly commoner than Lanner Falcon. We enjoyed a few good sightings during our time in Lesvos. In Scotland, it is an uncommon resident, which we saw well on the last day of the tour at Kengrogon.

TETRAONIDAE

Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus* In Scotland, this species is a fairly common resident; we saw it twice, once in the Pentland Hills, followed by exceptionally close views of a pair of birds during our walk in a snow storm in the Cairngorm Mountains.

Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus* In Britain this uncommon resident is confined to the highest mountains of Scotland, where they occur only on the highest, most barren mountain tops and are seldom seen below 750 metres. We were very fortunate to find a female bird in newly acquired spring plumage, sheltering behind the same

group of rocks that we were!

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* In Britain this species is confined to pine forests in the Scottish Highlands. We were very fortunate to enjoy good scope views of this most elusive and aggressive bird, viewed from the hides at the Loch Garten RSPB Reserve.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix* An uncommon bird of Scottish moorlands. Their remarkable courtship ceremonies take place at communal display grounds, known as leks. We were very fortunate to observe 7 males at a lek on Moulan Moors, in central Scotland.

PHASIANIDAE

Chukar *Alectoris Chukar* A scarce and localised resident of Lesvos, favouring rocky hillsides to the west of the island. Great spotting by Paddy enabled the group to enjoy good scope views of a pair of these attractive birds at the Fossilised Forest Reserve, not far from Sigri.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* Ancestors of the British stock were introduced into southern England, from France, over 200 years ago. Since that time, they have been spreading slowly northwards and have only recently reached the Highlands of Scotland; where we enjoyed brief sightings of a couple of birds, before enjoying excellent sightings of a very patient pair of birds, feeding in a farmer's field. It was very close to the area where we saw the tallest hedgerow in Britain, **SIX TIMES!**

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix* A fairly common resident throughout Scotland. We all jumped out of our bus in farmland, not far from Crail and enjoyed great looks at a pair of birds feeding in a farmer's field. What great people those farmers are. (I only put this in for Jock).

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* Introduced into Britain a few years before the Norman Conquest. Every year, gamekeepers release thousands of reared pheasants into woods in preparation for the shooting season, which begins on the 1st October. We enjoyed daily sightings throughout our time in Scotland, of what is, without doubt, one of the world's most beautiful birds.

RALLIDAE

Spotted Crake *Porzana Porzana* A very uncommon spring passage migrant in Lesvos. Our patience at the reedbed at Faneromeni Beach, finally paid off, with superb looks at this very uncommon and easily overlooked species.

Little Crake *Porzana parva* A fairly common spring passage migrant in Lesvos, we saw it on two separate occasions. The first, was a male bird at Kalloni Pool, followed by a female bird at Kalloni Inland Lake. We were fortunate to observe this elusive species so well.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* A common resident throughout both Lesvos and Scotland, which we saw on many occasions.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* In Lesvos, this species has always been a winter visitor in variable numbers. However, since 1998 good numbers of birds have begun to linger well into the summer months and have begun to breed in very small

numbers. We enjoyed several good looks at this species during our time in Lesvos.

In Scotland it is a common resident, which we saw well on many occasions.

HAEMATOPODIDAE

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* A common resident throughout Scotland, which we saw on every day of the tour. Often nesting in the most bizarre places, none more so than the pair nesting on the side of a chimney, on a small cottage at Nethy Bridge, in the Scottish Highlands.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* A fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant to Lesvos. We saw them on almost every day in Lesvos.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* In Lesvos some birds are winter visitors, some passage migrants and others stay to breed. There was a large nesting colony on a low-lying island in the Kalloni Salt pans.

BURHINDAE

Stone-Curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus* A summer visitor to the island of Lesvos, with perhaps 20-30 breeding pairs, with their strong hold in the Kalloni area. We enjoyed great scope views along the West River and again, near the mouth of the East River.

GLAREOLIDAE

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* An uncommon spring passage migrant in Lesvos; we saw it on two occasions, firstly, flying over our hotel in Skala Kalloni and secondly, flying close to the Kalloni Salt pans.

CHARADRIIDAE

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* A fairly common, though declining resident throughout Scotland, which we saw on most days.

Eurasian Golden-Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* An uncommon resident of Scotland, which breeds mainly on the open moorlands. We however, found a small flock nesting in farmland, in the Findhorne Valley, in the Scottish Highlands.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* A winter visitor and passage migrant in Scotland, we were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at this species both at Musselburgh Lagoons and at Aberlady Bay. Most birds were in full or partial breeding plumage, as they were just about to depart to their breeding grounds in Arctic Russia and Siberia.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant in Lesvos, we saw it on most days of the tour, during our time in Lesvos.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* Widespread resident and passage migrant to all suitable coastal wetlands in Lesvos, where we enjoyed many good sightings.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* This species is an uncommon and seldom seen resident of Scotland. At dawn and dusk in spring and summer, male woodcock fly

above the tree tops in their 'roding' flight; a territorial display in which the bird flies around the boundary of its woodland domain. We were extremely fortunate to witness a bird doing this at dusk one evening, while overnighing at Kengrogon.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* As in the above species, the Common Snipe is cryptically camouflaged and is an uncommon resident throughout Scotland. We only observed this species on one occasion, in the Findhorne Valley, in the Scottish Highlands. We were very fortunate to watch a small group known as 'wisps' performing courtship display flights, known as 'drumming'. Males fly to height of approximately 100 metres and then dive down at a 45 degree angle with wings beating and tail fanned, with the outermost feather on each side of the tail visibly standing clear, these feathers effected by wing movement produce the drumming sound.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* An uncommon passage migrant through Lesvos, we recorded three birds in full breeding plumage at the Kalloni Salt pans. In Scotland this species is an uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. We saw a large flock of approximately 100 birds at the Eden Estuary, many of which were in full breeding plumage.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* In Scotland this species is a common passage migrant and winter visitor, from breeding grounds in northern Scandinavia and northern Russia. We enjoyed good close looks at several birds while they were feeding on mudflats at Musselburgh Lagoons, all were in non-breeding plumage.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* In Scotland this species is a common resident and we saw it on many occasions both in farmland and on open moorland.

Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus* Once again, this species is a common resident throughout Scotland, we saw it on many occasions.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* A fairly common spring and autumn passage migrant in Lesvos, we saw it well on several occasions.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* In Lesvos this species is a winter visitor and uncommon spring passage migrant, mainly passing through Lesvos in late March to mid April. So we were very fortunate to observe this species on two occasions; the first on the East River and the second at Faneromeni Ford.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* This species is a very common spring passage migrant throughout Lesvos, we saw it on every day of the tour during our time in Lesvos. On one occasion there was a flock of approximately 50 birds in a flooded field close to Kalloni Salt pans.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* In Lesvos this species is a common passage migrant in both spring and autumn and we saw it on several occasions. In Scotland this species is a common summer breeding bird, which we saw well on several occasions.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* This very attractive species is a common winter visitor to all coastal areas of Scotland. We saw it particularly well at Musselburgh Lagoons, where most birds were in full or partial breeding plumage.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* In Scotland the Red Knot is a common winter visitor, we enjoyed good looks at small numbers at Musselburgh Lagoons, all were in non-breeding plumage.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* In Scotland the Sanderling is a common winter visitor and passage migrant along the east coast. Once again we enjoyed good close looks at small numbers at Musselburgh Lagoons, all were in non-breeding plumage.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* In Lesvos this species is a common spring passage migrant and an uncommon autumn passage migrant. We had good looks at several birds during our stay in Lesvos, all were showing partial breeding plumage.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* In Lesvos this species is an uncommon spring passage migrant and a scarce autumn passage migrant. Even so, we enjoyed a few good looks at this species, all sightings were along the East River and all birds were in non-breeding plumage.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* In Scotland this species is a common resident, we enjoyed good close looks at Musselburgh Lagoons and more distant views at the Eden Estuary, all birds were in full breeding plumage.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* In Scotland this species is an uncommon winter visitor from Iceland and Spitzbergen, wintering along rocky coastal areas. We were very fortunate to observe a small flock along the rocky coastline of the Isle of May.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Throughout Lesvos this species is a common spring and autumn passage migrant. We enjoyed many close looks at this species in and around the Kalloni Salt pans. On the 2nd May there was a large fall of Ruffs, with a flock of 300 plus birds present in the sheep fields, just to the south of the Kalloni Salt pans.

STERCOARARIIDAE

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua* In Scotland this species is an uncommon summer breeder, chiefly in the Orkneys and the Shetland Islands. These birds spend most of the year on the ocean, only coming to land to breed. In common with other species of skuas, the Great Skua is a pirate; who harries gulls and other seabirds until its victims disgorge their last meal. We were very fortunate to observe a bird fly past our boat as we neared the Isle of May.

LARIDAE

Common Gull *Larus canus* In Scotland this species is a common resident, which we saw well on many occasions.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* As in the above species, this is a common resident throughout Scotland, we saw it well on many occasions.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans* This is an abundant resident throughout the whole of Lesvos, recorded on every day during our stay in Lesvos.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* A common summer breeding bird to Scotland, which we saw well on several occasions.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* In Scotland this species is an uncommon resident, which we saw well on a few occasions. We saw it particularly well, when a pair of birds were feeding on a large crab, in Crail Harbour.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* In Lesvos this species is an uncommon winter visitor. We were fortunate to observe two birds in full breeding plumage, flying along the edge of Kalloni Bay, at Skala Kalloni. In Scotland, this species is an

abundant resident, which we saw on most days of the tour.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* In Lesvos this species is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. We were very fortunate to enjoy good close looks at a solitary bird in the harbour at Petra.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* In Scotland this species is a common resident of sea cliffs and rocky islands, which we saw well on many occasions.

STERNIDAE

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica* In Lesvos, this species is an uncommon spring passage migrant, we were fortunate to observe this species on two occasions, both times the sightings were at the mouth of the East River.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* In Lesvos, this species is a very scarce and irregular passage migrant, passing through in both spring and autumn. On the first day of the tour a bird flew by us, along Kalloni Bay and there were another couple of birds present at the mouth of the East River.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* In Lesvos, this species is an uncommon winter visitor and spring and autumn passage migrant. We were fortunate to enjoy good scope views of this species on two separate occasions, both sightings were at the mouth of the East River. In Scotland this species is an uncommon summer breeder, we enjoyed good looks at a few birds at Musselburgh Lagoons and Aberlady Bay.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* In both Lesvos and Scotland this bird is a common summer visitor and passage migrant, we saw it on almost every day of the tour.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* In Lesvos, this species is a fairly common summer visitor and spring passage migrant. We enjoyed many good sightings during our time there.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* In Lesvos, this species is an uncommon passage migrant in both spring and autumn. We enjoyed several good looks at small flocks of this species, all were in full breeding plumage.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* This most beautiful of birds is a common spring passage migrant through Lesvos. We spent a great deal of time watching these graceful birds feeding over the Kalloni Salt pans. They were without doubt, one of the highlights of the trip and all birds were in immaculate full breeding plumage.

ALCIDAE

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge* In Scotland this bird is a common resident, we first observed them sitting on the sea, at Musselburgh Lagoons. However, we saw them much better at their cliff nesting sites, on the Isle of May.

Razorbill *Alca torda* Not quite as common as the above species, however, it is a common resident throughout Scotland. We first observed them sitting on the sea, at Musselburgh Lagoons but saw them much better at their cliff nesting sites, on the Isle of May.

Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica* This very comical but attractive species of auk is a fairly common resident of coastal areas of Scotland. We very much enjoyed watching them at their nesting colonies on the grass-covered cliff tops, on the Isle

of May.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Dove *Columba livia* Feral pigeons were very much in evidence in both Lesvos and Scotland. However, wild populations of Rock Doves were also breeding on rocky cliffs in both Lesvos and Scotland.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* In Scotland, this species is an uncommon resident, we saw one individual in flight, at Musselburgh Lagoons.

Common Wood-Pigeon *Columba palumbus* In Scotland, this species is an abundant resident, which we saw on every day of the tour.

European Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia turtur* In Lesvos, this species is a common passage migrant in both spring and autumn, with small numbers staying to breed. We observed it well on several occasions.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* This species is an abundant resident in virtually all locations throughout Lesvos and Scotland, it is especially common near human habitation.

CUCULIDAE

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* In Lesvos, this species is a fairly common passage migrant in both spring and autumn, with small numbers staying to breed. We saw it very well on a few occasions. In Scotland, it is a fairly common summer breeder, which we saw well in Abernethy Forest, in the Highlands.

STRIGIDAE

Eurasian Scops-Owl *Otus scops* A fairly common resident of Lesvos, but very easily overlooked. We enjoyed great close looks at a bird at its daytime roost, not far from Kalloni.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* In Scotland, this species is a common resident. Dot and Paddy saw it in the grounds of our lodge at Carberry and we all saw it very well close to our lodge at Kengrogon.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* In Lesvos, this species is a widespread resident, often occurring around human habitation, where it frequently roosts and nests in old stone walls, cattle sheds etc. We enjoyed a few good sightings of this small species of owl, which is active in daylight hours.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* This uncommon species, is a very scarce resident in Lesvos. However, we were able to watch an adult bird with two well grown chicks, on the outskirts of Kalloni.

APODIDAE

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* In Lesvos, this large species of swift is a summer visitor and spring and autumn passage migrant. It has not been proven to breed on the island, but probably does so. We observed it on two occasions, we had particularly good looks at a small flock of birds flying over open land, close to Molivos Castle.

Common Swift *Apus apus* A very common breeding summer visitor throughout both Lesvos and Scotland. It was seen on most days of the tour.

MEROPIDAE

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* In Lesvos, this most attractive of all the bee-eaters is an uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant. We enjoyed good close looks at several small flocks during our time in Lesvos and this bird was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the tour.

UPUPIDAE

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* In Lesvos, this very attractive species is a fairly common summer visitor and passage migrant. We did manage to see this species on two or three occasions, but only in flight. It seemed particularly wary here and I suspect that they may be persecuted on the island.

PICIDAE

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius* In Lesvos, this range restricted species is an uncommon resident of olive groves and orchards. We had a few frustrating sightings of birds in flight, in the Potamia Valley, before enjoying good looks at a family party, in an olive grove in the Napi Valley.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* A fairly common resident of Scotland,
we saw it particularly well attending the bird feeding station at the RSPB Reserve at Loch Garten, in the Scottish Highlands.

ALAUDIDAE

- Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* This species is an uncommon summer visitor to Lesvos, which we saw very well on a few occasions.
- Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* This species is an abundant and widespread resident, throughout the whole of Lesvos.
- Common Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* A fairly common but declining species throughout Scotland, which we saw well on a few occasions.

HIRUNDINIDAE

- Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* A common passage migrant throughout Lesvos, there were particularly large falls of this species on the 26th April and the 2nd May, when large flocks were present on the island. In Scotland it is a common summer breeding species, which we recorded on several occasions.
- Eurasian Crag-Martin** *Hirundo rupestris* In Lesvos, this species is an uncommon breeding summer visitor. We were very fortunate to find a few birds nesting in a small disused quarry, close to the village of Stipsi, in northern Lesvos.
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* An abundant summer visitor and passage migrant to both Lesvos and Scotland.
- Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica* The Red-rumped Swallow is a fairly common summer visitor to Lesvos, which we saw well on several occasions.
- Common House Martin** *Delichon urbica* This well known species is a very common summer visitor to both Lesvos and Scotland.

MOTACHILLIDAE

- White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* This is a very common species throughout Scotland, we recorded it every day, during our stay in Scotland.
- Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* This species is an abundant passage migrant in Lesvos, the race *feldegg* is both a widespread migrant and breeds in reasonable numbers around Kalloni Saltpans. Other races which we recorded on passage in Lesvos, included *flava* and *thunbergi*.
- Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* This very attractive species of wagtail is a fairly common resident species in Scotland. We often encountered it perching on boulders along mountain streams.
- Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris* This species of pipit is a very uncommon summer visitor to Lesvos. We were fortunate to enjoy good close looks at a pair of birds which had taken up a breeding territory at Faneromeni Beach.
- Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* A spectacular song-flight and parachute display makes up for the rather dull plumage of this fairly common summer visitor to Scotland, from wintering grounds in tropical Africa. We witnessed the spectacular parachute display on a few occasions.
- Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* A very common resident throughout Scotland, which we saw on many occasions. It is the favorite host of the Common Cuckoo.
- Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* A fairly common spring and autumn passage migrant in Lesvos, we saw small flocks on a few occasions.
- Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus* A fairly common resident and breeding bird of rocky shorelines throughout Scotland. We only saw this species on one occasion, when a bird was observed along the shoreline at Crail.

REGULIDAE

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* Lively and fearless, the Goldcrest is Scotland's smallest bird,
it proved to be fairly common in conifer woodlands throughout Scotland.

CINCLIDAE

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* This species is a fairly common resident of Scotland and one of the highlights of the tour was watching this species tumbling in and out of fast-flowing mountain streams.

TROGLODYTIDAE

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* In Lesvos, this diminutive species is a scarce and localised resident, with numbers increasing in winter, because of an influx of migrants from northern Europe. We enjoyed watching a bird in full song, during our picnic lunch in the Sweet Chestnut forest, above Agiasos. In Scotland, it is a common and widespread resident.

PRUNELLIDAE

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* This species of accentor, is a common and widespread resident in Scotland, which we saw well on a few occasions.

TURDIDAE

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* A fairly common resident throughout Lesvos, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* This species is an uncommon summer breeding bird in Scotland, it winters mainly in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco and in countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. We were very fortunate to enjoy scope views of a singing male perched high up on a scree slope in the Findhorne Valley.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* Common and widespread throughout Lesvos and Scotland.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* This is a very common resident in Scotland, where we enjoyed many good observations.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* The largest of Britain's breeding thrushes, it is a fairly common bird throughout Scotland, we saw it well on several occasions.

SYLVIIDAE

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* An uncommon resident of Lesvos, which we saw surprisingly well, for such a sulking species.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* A fairly common passage migrant in Lesvos, which we saw well on a couple of occasions. In Scotland, it is a common summer visitor, which we saw on a few occasions.

European Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* In Lesvos, this species is an uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor. We saw it well at Kalloni Pool and again at Kalloni Inland Lake.

Great Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* A fairly common summer visitor to Lesvos. Once again we saw this species well at Kalloni Pool and again at Kalloni Inland Lake.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* This beautiful songster is a common and widespread summer visitor to the island of Lesvos, we saw it well on every day of our stay on Lesvos.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* In Lesvos, this species is an uncommon passage migrant, we only recorded it on one occasion. A bird was seen very well a little to the north of Erosos, where we saw the Rock Sparrows. In Scotland, it is a very common summer visitor, which we recorded on every day of our visit there.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* Very similar in appearance to the above species, fortunately, the songs are very different. This is a fairly common summer visitor to Scotland, which we saw well on a couple of occasions.

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis* This species of *Phylloscopus* warbler is a very scarce passage migrant in Lesvos. Each summer a few birds are heard singing in the Sweet Chestnut forest above Agiasos and breeding has been suspected. While enjoying our picnic lunch in this area, a bird began to sing close by, in a nearby tree. Chris saw it fly from the tree and enter a nest on the ground amongst some tussocks. Xenia photographed the bird, presumably sitting on eggs. This is the first proven sighting of this species nesting in Lesvos. This species always nests on the ground and is known for being very tame.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* In Scotland the Wood Warbler is an uncommon summer visitor which inhabits mature woodland with a closely knit canopy of leaves and sparse undergrowth. We observed a male in full song in forest at Killiecrankie Pass.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* In Lesvos this species is a common passage migrant and winter visitor, which we saw well on a few occasions. In Scotland it is a very uncommon summer visitor, so we were very fortunate to observe a male bird at the entrance to a helligoland trap, at the Isle of May Bird Observatory.

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris* This species is an uncommon summer visitor to Lesvos. We saw it very well at Devil's Bridge and again close to the reservoir near Petra.

Ruppell's Warbler *Sylvia rueppelli* This extremely range restricted species is also an uncommon summer visitor to Lesvos. We had great looks at a couple of males in full song, close to Petra.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* This species of warbler is a common summer visitor to the scrub-covered hillsides of Lesvos. We saw it well on a few occasions.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* This species of flycatcher is a common passage migrant through Lesvos and probably small numbers breed here. We saw it well on a few occasions.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* This is an uncommon passage migrant through Lesvos. We saw a female very well on the wooded slopes of the Ipsilou

- Monastery. In Scotland, this species is a recent coloniser, with small numbers now breeding in southern and central Scotland. We very much enjoyed watching a pair checking out a variety of nest boxes, in woodland at Killiecrankie Pass.
- Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* This species is a very uncommon passage migrant through Lesvos. We were very fortunate to observe a male in full breeding plumage, at very close quarters, close to Faneromeni Ford.
- European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* In Lesvos this species is an abundant winter visitor. Very small numbers stay to breed in Sweet Chestnut forest, above Agiasos. This is exactly where we observed a male in full song, during our picnic lunch there.
- Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos* Best known as the world's most accomplished songster, this species is a common summer visitor to Lesvos. We saw it very well on a few occasions, on other occasions however, it sang from dense cover without showing even a glimpse of itself.
- Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* An uncommon summer visitor to Scotland, we only recorded this species on one occasion. A male in full song, was seen briefly in the Abernethy Forest, in the Scottish Highlands.
- Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* A common passage migrant throughout Lesvos, which we saw well perched on fence wires, on a number of occasions. In Scotland, it is a common summer visitor, we only observed it on one occasion, a couple of birds were present at Musselburgh Lagoons.
- Common Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola* In Lesvos the stonechat is a scarce resident, however, we saw it well on a few occasions. In Scotland, this species is a fairly common resident, which we saw well in the Pentland Hills.
- Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* In Lesvos, the Northern Wheatear is a fairly common passage migrant and uncommon breeding summer visitor. We only saw it on one occasion, where a breeding pair had taken up residence close to Ipsilou Monastery. In Scotland, this species is a common summer visitor, which we saw from the shoreline right up to the highest mountains of the Cairngorms.
- Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica* This species is an abundant summer visitor to Lesvos, it is a very attractive species, which we saw every day during our time in Lesvos.
- Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* This rather plain coloured wheatear is a very uncommon summer breeding bird in Lesvos. We saw the same breeding pair on two separate occasions, close to Ipsilou Monastery.

PARIDAE

- Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus* This species is a fairly common resident in Scotland, we enjoyed one or two family parties.
- Sombre Tit** *Poecile lugubris* This range restricted species is an uncommon resident on the island of Lesvos. We saw it very well on a few occasions.
- Coal Tit** *Periparus ater* Common and widespread in conifer plantations throughout Scotland.
- Crested Tit** *Lophophanes cristatus* Extensive felling of woodland in Scotland during the 17th and 18th centuries drove the Crested Tit into a small area of the Scottish

Highlands. Due to recent re-afforestation the species is slowly moving back into areas to which it was once lost. After a great deal of searching, on a bitterly cold day, we enjoyed great looks at pair of birds in mixed woodland at Carr Bridge, in the Scottish Highlands. This was undoubtedly another of the highlights of the trip.

Great Tit *Parus major* Common and widespread throughout both Lesvos and Scotland, we saw it on almost every day of the tour.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* This closely related species is also common and widespread throughout both Lesvos and Scotland and once again we saw it on almost every day of the tour.

SITTIDAE

Krueper's Nuthatch *Sitta krueperi* This extremely range restricted species, is limited in occurrence to coastal areas of Turkey. In Lesvos it is a very scarce and localised resident, largely confined to upland pine woods above Agiassos. We enjoyed great looks at this attractive bird both at the nest and foraging in a nearby tree, in the Achladeri area.

Western Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer* A fairly common resident of rocky hillsides, throughout Lesvos. We saw it well on a few occasions, including a pair nesting in the Potamia Valley.

CERTHIIDAE

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* In Scotland, this species is a common resident, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* In Lesvos, this species is an uncommon resident. We very much enjoyed watching a family party, close to the Krueper's Nuthatch nest site, in the Achladeri area.

LANIIDAE

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* Mainly a common passage migrant in Lesvos, but small numbers stay to breed. We enjoyed a few good looks at this attractive species.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* An uncommon passage migrant through Lesvos, with small numbers staying to breed. We only observed this attractive species on one occasion. However, we did see it very well, this was during our walk in the Napi Valley.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* An uncommon summer visitor to Lesvos. We enjoyed a few good looks at this attractive species of shrike, all sightings were in the Potamia Valley.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* This has to be one of the most beautiful birds in the world. We saw this common summer visitor and passage migrant on many occasions during our time in Lesvos. The last time I saw this species, was on its wintering grounds, in Cameroon.

CORVIDAE

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Another attractive species, it is a common resident

throughout Lesvos, these birds are of the black crowned race *atricapillus*, which is restricted in distribution to the Balkans.

Common Magpie *Pica hudsonia* A fairly common resident in southern and eastern Scotland, which we saw well on several occasions.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* An extremely localised resident on the island of Lesvos, largely confined to the area of Sigri, where we found it to be common. In Scotland it is extremely common and widespread.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* We saw a large number of feeding flocks during our time in Scotland.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* Common and widespread throughout the whole of Scotland.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* A common resident of Lesvos, which we saw on every day of our stay. In Scotland, it is common in the west, but not in the east, where we spent most of our time. However, we did see this species on a couple of occasions in the Highlands.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* In both Lesvos and Scotland this species is a localised resident in small numbers. We saw it well in both areas, on a few occasions.

STURNIDAE

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* In Scotland this species has become an inescapable part of life, even in the largest of cities.

PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Common and widespread throughout both Lesvos and Scotland.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* A common resident throughout Lesvos, there was a communal nesting tree in the grounds of our hotel in Skala Kalloni.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* An uncommon resident in rocky areas of Lesvos. We did manage to see it fairly well on two occasions.

FRINGILLIDAE

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* An abundant and widespread species throughout both Lesvos and Scotland.

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica* Britain's only endemic bird, it is confined to the ancient Caledonian Pine Forests of the Scottish Highlands. Unfortunately, we only observed a pair in flight.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* An uncommon resident of Scotland, once again we only observed a pair in flight, while birding in farmland, close to Kengrogon.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* Common and widespread throughout both Lesvos and Scotland.

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus* A fairly common resident of conifer plantations in Scotland, we saw it well on a few occasions.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* Common and widespread throughout both Lesvos and Scotland.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* An uncommon resident of Lesvos, which we saw well on one occasion, at the foot of Ipsilou Monastery. In Scotland, it is a widespread and common species, which we saw particularly well at Musselburgh Lagoons.

Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* In Scotland, Malcolm's favourite bird is a fairly common resident, which we saw well on a few occasions, we saw it particularly well in the caravan park, close to Aviemore.

EMBERIZIDAE

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* Unfortunately, this attractive species is declining rapidly throughout Britain. In Scotland it is now an uncommon resident. We only glimpsed this species in farmland in the Pentland Hills, close to Edinburgh.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* A fairly common resident throughout Lesvos, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea* This extremely range restricted species is a fairly common resident in suitable habitat on Lesvos. We enjoyed good scope views of this species on a couple of occasions.

Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia* Another range restricted species, it is a common summer visitor to Lesvos, which we saw well on several occasions.

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala* Surely, one of the world's most beautiful birds, it is an abundant summer visitor to Lesvos and each day during our stay there, numbers slowly increased.

Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* A common and widespread resident throughout the whole of Scotland, we enjoyed several good looks at this attractive bird.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* An abundant resident throughout Lesvos. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Scotland. This species is declining rapidly throughout the whole of the British Isles. We did see it on one occasion, a male bird was in full song sat on a fence post in farmland, on the outskirts of Crail.

MAMMALS

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* The small species of bat flying around our lodge at Edinburgh and the ones flying around at dusk at Kengrogon, were of this species.

Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* The small species of bat flying around our hotel in Lesvos, is thought to be this species.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* Malcolm and Chris saw one of these during the walk on the coastal headland at Petra. We all enjoyed a second sighting from one of the hides at the RSPB reserve at Loch Leven. A fox was crouching low in the grass, attempting to get close to a pair of Greylag Geese with small goslings. However, the geese spotted the fox and marched the goslings into the loch, where they swam off.

Pine Marten *Martes martes* The highlight of the trip for me, watching a female just a few feet away was a very special event.

Eurasian Badger *Meles meles* The three badgers that came to the hide to be fed, along

with the Pine Marten, were a real treat.

Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus* Good numbers loafing on the rocks at the Isle of May.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* A few observed in the scope during our time in the Scottish Highlands.

Fallow Deer *Dama dama* Introduced to Britain hundreds of years ago, this species still has difficulty competing with the native species of deer and as a result it is still fairly uncommon. We were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at an adult female, just prior to observing the 'roding' Eurasian Woodcock, at Kengrogon.

Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus* Many sightings enjoyed during our time in Scotland.

Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* Introduced to Britain from the Americas, it is slowly spreading north and we saw several in southern Scotland.

Persian Squirrel *Sciurus anomalus* A very common inhabitant of the forests on Lesvos, this is the only place in Europe where this species occurs.

Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* Unfortunately, this species has experienced a huge decrease in numbers, since the introduction of the Grey Squirrel. However, the stronghold in Britain for this species, is the ancient Caledonian Pine Forests, in the Scottish Highlands, where we enjoyed good close looks at this very attractive species of squirrel.

Brown Hare *Lepus capensis* We enjoyed two sightings of this fairly common mammal, during our time in Scotland.

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* An abundant and widespread mammal throughout Scotland.