

## **PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS**

### **CYPRUS AND LIMNOS**

**1<sup>st</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

#### **TOUR REPORT**

**LEADER:** Chris Doughty

The geographical position of Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean and the Greek island of Limnos, in the northern Aegean, place both islands on one of the major bird migration routes in Europe. In spring, many hundreds of tired migrants are making their way from their wintering grounds in Africa, to their breeding grounds in Europe and eastern Asia. A proportion of these birds, stop to feed and rest in Cyprus or Limnos, and these birds were to be the main focus of the tour. Visible migration, is rarely encountered in Australia, and we were hoping to find a fall of fairly major proportions, at least once during the tour. The tour produced a very good cross-section of Europe's splendid birdlife, including both Cyprus Warbler and Cyprus Wheatear, which breed only in Cyprus. Throughout the tour we enjoyed the spectacle of visual migration, however, the weather was particularly good during the whole of the tour, which was great for the birds, but not so great for the bird watchers. Inclement weather, particularly overnight and particularly for long periods, makes it impossible for the birds to migrate, and this is known as a fall. We experienced one such fall, (a grid-lock of migrating birds) at Port Plaka on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, and it was indeed particularly exciting. We also enjoyed a couple of surprise finds, in the form of rare vagrants to Cyprus, which included an immature Menetrie's Warbler and an adult Rook, which were the second and fourth sightings for Cyprus.

Following a long and tiring flight from Australia, we arrived at Larnica Airport, on Cyprus, in the early afternoon. Around the airport terminal, we found a number of Barn Swallows, large numbers of Common House Martins were actually nesting in the building, along with a few House Sparrows, and Hooded Crows were foraging along the edge of the runways. After we cleared customs, we met up with our local guide Engin. We then drove to the nearby Larnica Salt Lake, where we found a small flock of Greater Flamingos, a stunningly beautiful Lesser Kestrel, several Black-winged Stilts, a flock of Ruffs, several Black-headed Gulls, Common Wood-Pigeon, White Wagtail, Blackcap, Spectacled Warbler, Great Tit and European Greenfinch. We then headed north, to Girne, the capital city of the Turkish Republic of Cyprus. During the drive, we added Feral Pigeon, as we drove through Larnica, a single Western Cattle Egret was seen along the roadside, close to Nicosia, and there were lots of Common Swifts flying around the buildings in Nicosia. On our arrival at our very fine hotel, we unpacked, and then did a little birding in the grounds of the hotel, where we added Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Eurasian Collared Dove, Red-rumped Swallow and Common Magpie.

The following day we spent the morning birding at the Gecitkoy Reservoir. The reservoir had been recently greatly increased in size, as water is in short supply in Cyprus, this was all funded by the Turkish Government. It was still very new, which is not ideal for birds, however, we did find a good selection of birds on the reservoir and in the surrounding woodlands. During the drive to the

reservoir, we made a birding stop along the coast at Guzelyali, where we very much enjoyed watching a small flock of Spanish Sparrows and a charm of European Goldfinches. At the reservoir, we added Little Grebe, Mallard, a Western Marsh-Harrier, a Common Buzzard, a Common Kestrel, several Crested Larks, the much sought after Cyprus Wheatear, a Sardinian Warbler, the uncommon Eastern Orphean Warbler, Western Jackdaw and our first of many Corn Buntings.

We spent the afternoon birding at Cape Kormakitis, at the extreme north-western end of the island. Here we saw a kettle of a dozen or so Common Buzzards, which were spiralling around in circles, gaining height as they did so, before heading off across the northern part of the Mediterranean and on to the European mainland. New birds at the cape included several Yellow-legged Gulls, a large migratory flock of Western Yellow Wagtails, of two different races, a small migratory flock of Lesser Whitethroats and the surprise find of an adult Rook, only the fourth record for Cyprus. On the drive back to our hotel, we stopped close to Guzelyali, for a look at a beautiful Black-eared Wheatear, which we spotted along the roadside.

We spent the following morning birding at Arapkoy Reservoir, one of the best reservoirs for birds in Cyprus. Here we added a great many new birds, which included a Grey Heron, a delightful Purple Heron, a few Eurasian Moorhens, several Eurasian Coots, a pair of stunning Great Spotted Cuckoos, a charming Little Owl, Northern Wheatear, we saw the shy Cetti's Warbler particularly well, saw several Eurasian Reed-Warblers, a male Ruppell's Warbler, on territory, this is a very uncommon breeding bird in Cyprus, and last but by no means least, good scope views of the particularly attractive, Masked Shrike.

In the afternoon, we made a quick stop at the much smaller Acapulco Reservoir, where we found a few Little Egrets, and a birding stop at the small Besparmak Reservoir, provided us with good looks at the rather shy, but much sought-after, Cyprus Warbler. Much of the afternoon was spent birding in the five Fingers Mountains, where we enjoyed great looks at two new species of birds, the wonderful Peregrine Falcon and the decidedly uncommon, Common Raven.

We spent the following morning birding in the superb forests of the Five Fingers Mountains, where we enjoyed good looks at a Western Osprey, had a very quick look at a Bonelli's Eagle, a very rare bird in Europe, we had unusually good looks at a splendid Chukar, and this was followed by a very good sighting of a female Blue Rock-Thrush.

In the afternoon, we went birding at the Kanlikoy Reservoir, probably the best of the reservoirs in Cyprus for birds, and here we saw a pair of Eurasian Teal, a beautiful drake Common Pochard, a splendid Black Francolin, Cyprus is the only place in Europe where this species occurs, we found several pairs of beautiful Spur-winged Lapwings, this species has only recently self-colonised Cyprus, and apart from Cyprus, it only occurs in Europe, in a small area in the Balkans. We also found good numbers of migratory Wood Sandpipers, a few migratory Common Greenshanks, a couple of migratory Common Snipe, a small flock of simply stunning European Bee-eaters and a couple of Eurasian Hoopoes.

The following day we drove eastwards along the north coast of Cyprus, to a small village in the northeast corner of Cyprus, at the base of the beautiful Karpaz Peninsula. During the drive, we made three extended birding stops; the first, was close to the small town of Kaplica, where we birded an area of agricultural land, carpeted with a large variety of wild flowers. On the nearby beach, we found a solitary Greater Sandplover, and in the farmland we found a few Tree Pipits, several attractive Whinchats, a few very obliging Zitting Cisticolas and a flock of four Ortolan

Buntings, with a male Cretzschmar's Bunting tagging along with them. At the nearby Kaplica Headland we ate our picnic lunch, while enjoying scope views of a small group of European Shags. Our final birding stop for the day, was at Cape Isik, where we found a large group of migratory passerines, who were all busily feeding, in preparation for their night-time flight northwards, to various parts of Europe. New birds for the tour included a pair of Tawny Pipits, a male Common Whitethroat, several Willow Warblers and a stunning Woodchat Shrike. We then drove to our accommodation, which would be home for the next three nights. The rooms were built of local stone and had formally housed the priests of the Greek Orthodox faith, who worked in the area. Since the partition of Cyprus, it had been converted into a very comfortable small hotel, which served very fine local food.

We spent the whole of the following day birding at Cape Zafer, on the beautiful Karpaz Peninsula, situated at the extreme north-eastern end of Cyprus. It was here that we hoped to find large flocks of migratory birds. Unfortunately for us, but fortunately for the birds, the weather was very still and sunny throughout our whole stay, and the birds migrated northwards every night, with no back log of birds at the cape. Even so, each day we were greeted by a new assortment of migrating birds, with some flocks numbering up to the hundreds. One of the most impressive of the migrants, was an adult female Pallid Harrier, which we enjoyed prolonged looks at, other new birds for the tour included a pair of Eurasian Thick-knees, a Little Ringed Plover, a couple of Green Sandpipers, a Common Sandpiper, a small number of range-restricted Audouin's Gulls, who were breeding on offshore islands off the point, others included a Common Cuckoo, we enjoyed super looks at the very attractive Common Kingfisher, a Eurasian Skylark, a couple of very uncommon Water Pipits was a nice surprise, a male Common Redstart was a very welcome splash of colour, there was a single Isabelline Wheatear, a female Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush, several attractive Wood Warblers, a handful of Common Chiffchaffs and a small flock of Common Linnets. It had been a very productive day out at the cape.

The following day we were back at the cape, checking if any new birds had arrived during the night. A large percentage of the birds had departed during the hours of darkness, and there were far fewer birds at the cape, but even so, we managed to find a few new birds for our ever increasing bird list. A very fine Northern Goshawk, shot past us on one occasion, we found a newly arrived flock of Greater Short-toed Larks, which were most appreciated, we also found a small flock of freshly arrived Meadow Pipits and best of all, a juvenile Menetries's Warbler, which was only the second record for Cyprus. The bird typically skulked around in thick cover, just in from the beach, but the tell-tale distinctive habit of cocking its tail and waving it from side to side, clinched the identification. In the middle of the afternoon, we drove to Avtepe, another migration watch-point, and here we added a small flock of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, migrating along the coast, and an extremely skulking Eurasian Wryneck.

The next day we reluctantly left Cape Zaffer and began the drive back to Larnica. We had plenty of time to do some birding along the way, and our first prolonged birding stop was at the wetlands at Silver Beach. New birds here included a small flock of Garganey, all in magnificent breeding plumage, there were several Kentish Plovers on the salt-flats, as well as a few Little Stints, and Rob saw a Common Shelduck. We spent most of the day birding at the extensive Gazimagusa Freshwater Lake, where we once again found new birds to look at. We saw a few Squacco Herons, a couple of Black-crowned Night-Herons, a large flock of Glossy Ibis, a European Honey-buzzard flew past us, and we had a quick look at an adult male European Pied Flycatcher. We then drove to Larnica, where we spent the night in seaside apartments.

The following day we had time to make a second visit to Larnica Salt lake, before driving to the

nearby airport for our flight to Athens, the capital city of Greece. We added two very fine species to our Cyprus birdlist, a single Red-necked Phalarope in full breeding plumage, and a small flock of Slender-billed Gulls, some of which, were also in full breeding plumage, showing a pink suffusion on their breasts. We also found our only mammal of the tour, a brown colour morph Black Rat! It was a fitting end to a wonderful time in Cyprus.

We spent a very comfortable night in Athens, at a splendid hotel. We had a very early start the following morning, in order to make the flight from Athens, to Limnos Island. It all went very smoothly, and on our arrival in Limnos, we picked up our self drive mini-bus and drove to our nearby accommodation, at the wonderful Varos Village Hotel, which would be our very fine base, for our seven nights on the island. Once we had settled in to our hotel, we were keen to begin our birding on Greek soil. Our first birding stop was at the nearby Airport wetlands, where we found several Common Shelducks, which only Rob had seen, during our time in Cyprus. Amongst a large assortment of migratory waders, new birds for the tour included a few Curlew Sandpipers, a couple of very fine Marsh Sandpipers, sporting freshly acquired breeding plumage, and a solitary Gull-billed Tern, also in full breeding plumage. We then continued on to nearby Lake Aliko, which also held new birds for us. We enjoyed watching several Northern Shovelers, and a few Eurasian Wigeons, the beautiful Pied Avocet proved to be common here, and we saw a pair of very attractive European Turtle-Doves. We then stumbled upon a small flock of beautiful Red-throated Pipits, with stunning brick-red throats. We also saw our first of many, European Rabbits.

We then drove to Port Plaka, in the far northeast of the island, and it was here, that we found a fall of tired migrants, of fairly major proportions. There were literally migrants popping up in every bush, sat on every fence, running around on the ground and perching on small boats in the car park. It was very much a case of 'all hands on deck', as we sifted through the birds, picking out the new birds for the tour. It was frenetic and very exciting; amongst the forty or so birds, crammed into a very small area, there was an assortment of 20 or so, different species of birds. New birds for us, included Garden Warbler, Spotted and Red-breasted Flycatchers, and a few Common Terns, flying along the coast. This was a wonderful start to our birding on Limnos.

The following morning we returned to the Airport wetlands, where we enjoyed good close looks at a Eurasian Curlew. A spot of birding in farmland close to Kallilopi, produced three new birds for the tour, an adult female Montagu's Harrier, which we watched for an extended period, the first of many Long-legged Buzzards and a flock of a dozen or so Lesser Short-toed Larks.

In the afternoon we visited the Hortalimni wetland, where we were rewarded with two new species for the tour. We found three Great Egrets and a pair of attractive Ruddy Shelducks.

The following morning, in the grounds of our hotel, we observed three Pallid Swifts, flying around, within a flock of Common Swifts. In the afternoon, at a small swamp close to Plaka, we flushed a Little Bittern from cover.

We spent most of the following day, birding Fragma Dam, and more importantly, in the beautiful woodlands, in the valley above the dam. The only new bird actually on the dam, was a group of four Great Cormorants. However, we fared better in the woodland, where we enjoyed very good looks, at the often skulking Common Nightingale, along with a small flock of Eurasian Golden Orioles, and a male Cirl Bunting, in full song, perched on a telegraph wire. We also visited the disused gravel pits, at Varos, and here we saw a Grass Snake, swimming in the water.

The majority of the next day, was spent birding in the northwestern highlands of the island, which

produced two new species of birds, a fine looking Subalpine Warbler and an adult female Collared Flycatcher. In the afternoon, close to Diapori Marsh, we watched a large flock of Alpine Swifts flying overhead.

On the last birding day of the tour, we added no less than seven new species of birds, to our now large birdlist for the tour. There had been a large influx of birds overnight, and at the disused gravel pits, close to Varos village, we saw a splendid Eurasian Hobby, a flock of 12 or so Common Sand-Martins, a few Sedge Warblers and a couple of Great Reed-Warblers. Later in the day, our final visit to the Airport Wetlands, produced a Common Redshank, two Spotted Redshanks and a Whimbrel. We also found a dead Caspian Whip Snake, on the road.

We had very much enjoyed our time in both Cyprus and Limnos, we had indeed seen a good cross section of European birds, and we had seen lots of visible migration, including one particularly good fall of migrants, at Port Plaka.

## **SYSTEMATIC LIST**

GREBES *PODICIPEDIDAE*

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A common resident and winter visitor, we observed small numbers at a few of the wetlands we visited, in both countries.

#### CORMORANTS *PHALACROCORACIDAE*

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* A scarce winter visitor to Limnos, we found a flock of four birds, fishing on Fragma Dam.

**European Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* A fairly common resident, in both countries, we observed small numbers scattered around the coast.

#### HERONS, EGRETS and BITTERNES *ARDEIDAE*

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* A common winter visitor, and passage migrant, to both countries, which occasionally breeds there during the summer months. We observed small numbers throughout the tour.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* This attractive species is an uncommon passage migrant in both countries. We observed a few birds, in both countries.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* This is a very uncommon bird in Europe, it is also an uncommon passage migrant, in both countries. We saw three birds together, at the Hortalimni Wetlands, in Limnos.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* A fairly common passage migrant in both countries, small numbers were observed at a number of the wetlands we visited, throughout the tour.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* This species is an uncommon passage migrant, in both countries. We saw small numbers in both countries.

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* This species is a resident breeding species in Cyprus, where we saw small numbers throughout our time there. It does not occur in Limnos.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* In both countries this species is predominantly an uncommon passage migrant, but it does occasionally breed in Cyprus, during the summer months. We observed small numbers at Gazimagusa Freshwater Lake, in Cyprus, where it probably breeds, and a single individual at a small reedbed, at Plaka, in Limnos.

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus* A very uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw a single adult along the edge of a reedbed, at Plaka, it was the same reedbed where we observed the Black-crowned Night-Heron.

#### IBIS and SPOONBILLS *THRESKIORNITHIDAE*

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* A fairly common passage migrant, we saw up to 20 birds at the Gazimagusa Freshwater Lake in Cyprus, and this was followed by a sighting of half a dozen or so birds, at the Airport Wetlands, on Limnos.

#### FLAMINGOS *PHOENICOPTERIDAE*

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* This wonderful bird is an uncommon passage migrant and uncommon breeding bird, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw small numbers at Larnica Salt Lake, in Cyprus, and much larger numbers, of up to 100 birds, at Lake Aliko, on Limnos.

#### SWANS, GEESE and DUCKS *ANATIDAE*

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* This species is a rare breeding bird in Limnos, and a very rare passage migrant in Cyprus. We saw small numbers at scattered locations, on Limnos.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* In Cyprus, this species is an uncommon passage migrant, Rob saw one at Silver Beach, on the south coast of Cyprus. On Limnos, it is a common resident, which we saw on a daily basis.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* This species is an uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw a small flock of half a dozen birds, at Lake Aliko, on Limnos.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* In both countries, the Mallard is predominantly a common winter visitor, an uncommon passage migrant, and also breeds in small numbers. We observed good numbers in both Cyprus and Limnos.

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* This small species of duck, is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw small numbers at Kanlikoy Reservoir and Silver Beach, in Cyprus.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula* This attractive species, is an uncommon passage migrant, to both countries. We observed a small flock at Silver Beach, in Cyprus, and we also observed a small flock at Lake Aliko, on Limnos.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* This species is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a small flock at Lake Aliko, on Limnos Island.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* This very attractive species, is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to both countries. We observed a single drake, at Kanlikoy Reservoir, in Cyprus.

#### OSPREY *PANDIONIDAE*

**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* This species is an uncommon passage migrant in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a single bird very well in the Five Fingers Mountains, and this was followed by a second, even better sighting, of a bird migrating along the coast, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula, both sightings took place in Cyprus.

#### KITES, HAWKS and EAGLES *ACCIPITRIDAE*

**European Honey-buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* This species is an uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. A single bird flew past us while we were driving in the bus, at Gazimagusa Freshwater Lake, in Cyprus.

**Western Marsh-Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* In Cyprus and Limnos, this species is a fairly common passage migrant. We enjoyed several good sightings throughout the whole tour.

**Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* This species is an uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed an adult female at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula, on two consecutive days, we saw it quartering farmland, and perched on a fence. We also saw a second adult female, in flight, at Plaka, in Limnos.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* This stunning species is a particularly uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed an adult female, for an extended period of time, as it hunted over farmland, close to Kallilopi, in Limnos. This was followed by a second sighting, of a superbly plumaged, adult male, at the disused gravel pits, close to Varos village, also on Limnos. Colonel George Montagu (1751-1815) was a soldier and natural history writer and served as a lieutenant-colonel in the English army during the American revolution. He was later court-martialed for what was referred to as '*provocative marital skirmishing*'! He then devoted his life to ornithology and following a long and distinguished career in the south of England, at the age of 64, he unfortunately died of lockjaw (tetanus), after stepping on a rusty nail.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* In Cyprus, the Eurasian Sparrowhawk is both a fairly common resident and passage migrant. On Limnos, it is a fairly common passage migrant. We observed it on a regular basis during our time in Cyprus, but failed to observe it, on

Limnos.

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* This species is a very scarce passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. Therefore, we were extremely fortunate to have a bird fly right past us, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* This species is a common passage migrant and winter visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw small numbers very well, on a couple of occasions, in both countries.

**Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* This attractive species is a resident, a winter visitor, and a passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We failed to find it in Cyprus, but on Limnos, we observed good numbers on a daily basis.

**Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciatus* In Cyprus the Bonelli's Eagle is a very scarce breeding bird, we glimpsed a bird, on one occasion, in the Five Fingers Mountains. It is absent from Limnos. Franco Andrea Bonelli (1784-1830) was an ornithologist and collector. In 1811 he was appointed curator of the Turin Museum and it was during this time he officially described Bonelli's Eagle and Bonelli's Warbler.

#### CARACARAS and FALCONS *FALCONIDAE*

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* In Cyprus this beautiful falcon is an uncommon passage migrant, that may breed in small numbers, during the summer months. We observed a few birds at scattered locations throughout Cyprus. In Limnos, it is an entirely different story; here the Lesser Kestrel is an exceptionally common, summer breeding visitor. We enjoyed dozens of sightings, on a daily basis, during our time in Limnos.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* In Cyprus this species is a common resident and a common passage migrant, which we observed almost daily. In Limnos, it is an uncommon passage migrant, and we did not have any sightings.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* In both Cyprus and Limnos this species is an uncommon passage migrant. A single bird flew right past the group, at great speed, while we were birding at the disused gravel pits, close to Varos village, on Limnos.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* In both Cyprus and Limnos, this species is an uncommon resident. We saw it well, on one occasion in Cyprus, while birding in the Five Fingers Mountains. We also saw one in flight, while birding in the northwestern highlands of Limnos.

#### PHEASANTS and PARTRIDGES *PHASIANDIDAE*

**Chukar** *Alectoris chukar* The Chukar is a common resident, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw it very well on several occasions, in both countries.

**Black Francolin** *Francolinus francolinus* This species is a common resident in Cyprus, we saw it very well, on several occasions. It does not occur anywhere else in Europe.

#### RAILS, GALLINULES and COOTS *RALLIDAE*

**Eurasian Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* This species is both a common resident and a common winter visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We encountered it on several occasions, in both countries.

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* The Eurasian coot is a fairly common resident and winter visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed it well in most of the wetland areas we visited, in both countries.

#### STILTS AND AVOCETS *RECURVIROSTRIDAE*

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* An uncommon resident and passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw a couple of small flocks at wetlands we visited, in both

countries.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* An uncommon passage migrant in Cyprus, and an uncommon summer breeding visitor and passage migrant in Limnos. We found small numbers, at wetlands we visited, in Limnos.

#### THICK-KNEES *BURHINIDAE*

**Eurasian Thick-knee** *Burhinus oedicnemus* A fairly common summer breeding visitor and passage migrant, in both countries. We enjoyed a few good sightings in both Cyprus and Limnos.

#### LAPWINGS and PLOVERS *CHARADRIIDAE*

**Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* In both countries, this attractive species is a resident, a passage migrant and an occasional winter visitor. We observed small numbers, in both Cyprus and Limnos.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* This species is both a summer breeding visitor, and passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw small numbers, in both countries.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* In Cyprus this species is a fairly common resident, a passage migrant and a winter visitor. In Limnos, it is a fairly common resident and passage migrant. We saw small numbers, very well, in both countries.

**Greater Sandplover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* This species is a very uncommon passage migrant, in Cyprus. We were fortunate, to enjoy good close looks at a single individual, which was in full breeding plumage, on the beach, close to Kaplica.

#### SANDPIPERS and ALLIES *SCOLOPACIDAE*

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* The Common Snipe, is an uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We had sightings of individuals, on two separate occasions, during our time in Cyprus. One sighting took place at Kanlikoy Reservoir, and the other, at Silver Beach.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* This species is an uncommon passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We were fortunate to find a single individual, on consecutive days, at Lake Aliko, on Limnos.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* This species is also an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to both Cyprus and Limnos. We were fortunate to find a single bird at the Airport Wetlands, during our time in Limnos.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant to Cyprus, and a fairly common passage migrant in Limnos. We observed small numbers at a couple of wetlands, in both countries.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* This is an uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed small numbers in both countries.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* This particularly attractive species, is a very uncommon passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. Therefore, we were indeed fortunate to enjoy very good looks at a pair of birds, in full breeding plumage, at the Airport Wetlands, in Limnos.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* A fairly common passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed small numbers in the wetlands we visited, in both countries.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* This species is a very uncommon passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We were fortunate to find a small flock, all in full breeding plumage, at the Airport Wetlands, in Limnos.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* This species is a common passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed several small flocks, at wetlands, in both Cyprus and Limnos.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* This species is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a single bird, very well, at the Airport Wetlands, in Limnos.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* An uncommon passage migrant to Cyprus and Limnos. We found small numbers of birds, at wetlands, in both Cyprus and Limnos.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* This species is a very uncommon passage migrant to both Cyprus and Limnos. We were fortunate to find a few individuals, of which several, were in partial breeding plumage, and one in almost full breeding plumage, at the Airport Wetlands, in Limnos.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax* The Ruff is a common passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a couple of small flocks, in partial breeding plumage, in both countries.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* This stunning species, is a very uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. Therefore, we were fortunate, to find a single individual, amongst a flock of waders, at the Larnica Salt Lake, in Limnos.

#### GULLS *LARIDAE*

**Audouin's Gull** *Larus audouinii* This beautiful species of gull, is a summer breeding visitor, to the Mediterranean Sea, and winters along the coasts of northern and northwestern Africa. In Cyprus, we found small numbers close to their breeding islands, at Cape Zaffer, on the Carpez Peninsula. On Limnos, we found a few birds, in the harbour at Plaka. Jean Victoire Audouin (1797-1841) was a French naturalist, born in Paris, where he studied medicine, natural history and pharmacy. He was appointed assistant at the Musee National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris in 1825 and in 1833 became professor of entomology there.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* This species is an uncommon winter visitor, and passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We found a small flock of seven birds, flying along the coast, close to Avtepe, in Cyprus.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis* A common breeding species, and winter visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw small numbers along the coast in Cyprus, and huge numbers throughout Limnos, both inland and along the coast.

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* An uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw small numbers, at wetlands, in both countries.

**Slender-billed Gull** *Chroicocephalus genei* This delightful species is an uncommon passage migrant to both Cyprus and Limnos. We found a flock of eight birds, at the Larnica Salt Lake, on Cyprus. Some were in full breeding plumage, showing a beautiful pink suffusion to their breasts.

#### TERNs *STERNIDAE*

**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* This species is an uncommon passage migrant to both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a single bird, on three consecutive days, which was in full breeding plumage, while birding at the Airport Wetlands, on Limnos.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* This species is an uncommon passage migrant, that also breeds in small numbers, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We found a small breeding colony of this species, on a large buoy, in Aliko Lake, on Limnos. We also found small numbers flying around the coast of Limnos Island.

#### PIGEONS and DOVES *COLUMBIDAE*

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* A common resident, we saw many feral birds in the towns and villages we visited, in both Cyprus and Limnos. However, we also saw a few genuine Rock

Pigeons, in rocky gorges, in the Five Fingers Mountains, in Cyprus.

**Common Wood-Pigeon** *Columba palumbus* This common resident was observed daily, during our time in Cyprus. It is absent from Limnos.

**European Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* This species is an uncommon summer breeding visitor and passage migrant, to Cyprus and Limnos. We saw this bird on three separate occasions, in Limnos, but all were of birds in flight.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* An abundant resident throughout Cyprus and Limnos, it was particularly common in the towns and villages.

#### CUCKOOS *CUCULIDAE*

**Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* This very attractive species of cuckoo, is a common passage migrant throughout Cyprus and Limnos. It is also a summer breeding visitor, in very small numbers. We saw it very well, in both countries.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* This species of cuckoo is an uncommon passage migrant to both Cyprus and Limnos, and may also be a summer breeding visitor, in very small numbers. We saw it in both countries, on three different occasions, but all sightings, were of birds in flight.

#### OWLS *STRIGIDAE*

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua* We enjoyed multiple sightings of this beautiful resident, in both Cyprus and Limnos.

#### SWIFTS *APODIDAE*

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba* This very large species of swift, is an uncommon passage migrant, and a summer breeding visitor, in very small numbers, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw a very large flock numbering 90, or so birds, flying overhead, close to Diapori Marsh, in Limnos.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus* In both Cyprus and Limnos this species is a common passage migrant and summer breeding species. We saw it on almost every day of the tour.

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus* The Pallid Swift is an uncommon passage migrant, which also breeds in very small numbers, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a couple of birds flying amongst a flock of Common Swifts, in the grounds of our hotel, at Varos, on Limnos Island.

#### KINGFISHERS *ALCEDINIDAE*

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* This stunning looking bird, is an uncommon resident and an uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a single bird on two consecutive days, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula, in Cyprus. This was followed by a second sighting in Limnos, when Rob observed a single bird, at the disused gravel pits, at Varos.

#### BEE-EATERS *MEROPIDAE*

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* Another stunning looking bird; which is a common passage migrant, and also a summer breeding visitor, in very small numbers, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw a small flock of approximately 10 birds, whose behaviour would indicate that they were on migration, while birding at the Kanlikoy Reservoir, in Cyprus.

#### HOOPOES *UPUPIDAE*

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* We enjoyed many widespread sightings of this fairly common, but very beautiful, summer breeding visitor, while birding in both Cyprus and Limnos.

#### WOODPECKERS and ALLIES *PICIDAE*

**Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla* This aberrant species of woodpecker, is truly, a wonderful bird. It was such a pity, that our two observations of this species, were just fleeting glimpses. We first stumbled across one, at a small pool of water, close to Avtepe, in Cyprus. Our second sighting, took place at Port Plaka, in Limnos.

#### LARKS *ALAUDIDAE*

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* An uncommon passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We found a small flock of eight or so birds, feeding together on the ground, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula, in Cyprus.

**Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella rufescens* This species is a very scarce passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. Therefore, we were very fortunate, when we stumbled upon a small flock of half a dozen or so birds, while birding in farmland, close to the village of Kallilopi, on the island of Limnos.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* An abundant resident, in both Cyprus and Limnos, where we saw it, on almost every day of the tour.

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* This species of lark, is an uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor to both Cyprus and Limnos. We found a single individual, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula, in Cyprus, and this was followed by a second sighting, also of a single bird, along the edge of Lake Alike, in Limnos.

#### SWALLOWS *HIRUNDINIDAE*

**Common Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* This species is an uncommon passage migrant in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a fairly large flock of approximately 12 birds, hawking for insects above the disused gravel pits, at Varos, on Limnos.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* An abundant summer breeding visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos, which we saw on every day of the tour.

**Common House-Martin** *Delichon urbicum* A common passage migrant and breeding summer visitor, we encountered nesting birds, at scattered localities throughout Cyprus and Limnos.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* This species is an uncommon passage migrant and breeding summer visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We found small numbers scattered here and there, in Cyprus.

#### WAGTAILS and PIPITS *MOTACILLIDAE*

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris* In both Cyprus and Limnos the Tawny Pipit is an uncommon summer breeding visitor and passage migrant. We saw small numbers, in both Cyprus and Limnos.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* This species is a common winter visitor and an uncommon passage migrant, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed a small flock of half a dozen birds, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* This species is a rather uncommon passage migrant in both Cyprus and Limnos. We were fortunate to observe three separate flocks, during our time in Limnos. All the birds were in superb, breeding plumage.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* This species is a common passage migrant in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw small flocks, at regular intervals, throughout the tour.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta* The Water Pipit is a very uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. Therefore, we were extremely fortunate, to observe a pair of birds, two days running, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula, in Cyprus.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* In both Cyprus and Limnos, the White Wagtail is an uncommon resident, winter visitor, and passage migrant. We saw it very well in both countries, on a few occasions.

**Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* In both Cyprus and Limnos the Western Yellow Wagtail is a common passage migrant. We saw large flocks of migrating birds at Cape Kormakitis and at Cape Zafer, in Cyprus, and smaller flocks, elsewhere in Cyprus and in Limnos. The majority of the birds we saw, were of the race *feldeg*, which breed in the Balkans, with smaller numbers of the race *flava*, which breed in central Europe.

#### THRUSHES and ALLIES *TURDIDAE*

**Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis* This stunning species, is a very uncommon passage migrant to both Cyprus and Limnos. We were indeed fortunate, to find an adult female, right at the tip of Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula.

**Blue Rock-Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* This species is an uncommon resident and winter visitor in Cyprus, and an uncommon resident in Limnos. We were fortunate to find two adult females, during our time in Cyprus; one in the Five Fingers Mountains and a second bird, at Cape Zafer, on the Carpez Peninsula.

#### CISTICOLAS and ALLIES *CISTICOLIDEAE*

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* A fairly common resident and passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. Somewhat surprisingly, our only sighting was of a small party of birds, in farmland, close to Kaplica, in Cyprus.

#### OLD WORLD WARBLERS *SYLVIIDAE*

**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti* A locally common resident, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We observed this particularly shy species, on only one occasion, although we did hear it in other areas we visited. Fortunately, we did enjoy a very good look at a single individual, while birding at the Arapkoy Reservoir, in Cyprus. Francesco Cetti (1726-1778) was an Italian Jesuit priest, zoologist and mathematician who wrote the *Storia Naturale di Sardegna*. The second volume (1776) deals with the birds of Sardinia.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* This species is an uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We found a couple of birds, singing away in the reedbeds, at the disused gravel pits, at Varos. You would have sworn they were on their breeding grounds, but the following morning, they had gone, they had continued northwards, to their true breeding grounds.

**Eurasian Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* In both Cyprus and Limnos this species is a fairly common passage migrant. We saw several birds in reedbeds at Arapkoy Reservoir, and at Kanlikoy Reservoir, during our time in Cyprus.

**Great Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* In Cyprus, this species is an uncommon passage migrant, and in Limnos, it is an uncommon summer breeding visitor, and passage migrant. We observed a couple of birds in the reedbeds, at the disused gravel pits, at Varos, in Limnos, and on the following day, we observed a couple more in reedbeds, at the Airport Wetlands.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* This species is a common passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We watched a fairly large flock at Cape Isik, in Cyprus, and later in the tour, we saw small flocks, at both Port Plaka, and in farmland close to Kallilopi, on Limnos.

**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* A common winter visitor and passage migrant throughout Cyprus, and a common passage migrant in Limnos. We found a few birds at Cape Zafer, in Cyprus, and a single bird amongst the mixed-species migratory flock, at Port

Plaka, on Limnos.

- Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* This attractive species, is a fairly common passage migrant, throughout both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw it very well, on several occasions, in both countries.
- Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* The Blackcap is predominantly a common passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. It also winters in small numbers and breeds, also in small numbers. We saw it on many occasions, in both countries.
- Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* This rather drab species, is an uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw it on only one occasion; there was a single bird, amongst the large mixed-species flock, at Port Plaka, on Limnos.
- Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia crassirostris* This large species of warbler, is a scarce passage migrant, and even scarcer, summer breeding visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. Judy and I, saw a single bird, in dense scrub, along the edge of Gecitkoy Reservoir, in Cyprus.
- Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis* This species is an uncommon passage migrant in Cyprus, and an uncommon passage migrant, and summer breeding visitor, in Limnos. We saw it very well, on a few occasions, in both countries.
- Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* The Lesser Whitethroat is a fairly common passage migrant in Cyprus, and an uncommon passage migrant, and summer breeding visitor, in Limnos. We saw it very well, on a few occasions, in both countries.
- Cyprus Warbler** *Sylvia melanothorax* As the name would suggest, this attractive species, breeds only on the island of Cyprus. However, during the winter months, it resides in a narrow strip of land along the edge of the Red Sea coast of Egypt and northern Sudan. We saw this species on two separate occasions; the first sighting occurred at Besparmak Reservoir, and the second, in the Five Fingers Mountains.
- Menetries' Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea* This species does not normally occur in either Cyprus or Limnos. However, we found an immature bird of this species, in dense brush, right along the coast, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula. It is only the second sighting for Cyprus. Edouard P Menetries (1802-1861) was a French zoologist who collected in Brazil from 1822-1824 and in Russia from 1829-1830. At one stage he was a Conservator of the collections of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia conspicillata* In Cyprus, this species is a common resident, which we saw very well, on a few occasions. It does not occur in Limnos.
- Ruppell's Warbler** *Sylvia rueppelli* This species is a scarce passage migrant, and even rarer, summer breeding visitor to Cyprus. We observed a single adult male, in full song, at Arapkoy Reservoir. It behaved as though it was marking out his breeding territory. It does not occur in Limnos. Wilhelm Peter Eduard Simon Ruppell (1794-1884) was a German collector. He made two extended expeditions to northern and eastern Africa in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although he brought back large zoological and ethnographical collections, his expeditions impoverished him. He was also a collector in the broadest sense of the word and presented his collection of coins and rare manuscripts to the Historical Museum of Frankfurt, his home town.
- Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans* This species is an extremely rare passage migrant in Cyprus, and a fairly common summer breeding visitor in Limnos. We saw a single adult male in the northwestern highlands of Limnos, and this was followed by a second sighting, also of an adult male, at Port Plaka.
- Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala* In both Cyprus and Limnos, this species is a common winter visitor, a very uncommon passage migrant, and small numbers are also summer breeding visitors. We enjoyed many good sightings of this attractive species, in both

countries.

#### OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS *MUSCICAPIDAE*

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* The Spotted Flycatcher is a common passage migrant in Cyprus, and a common passage migrant and summer breeding visitor in Limnos. Somewhat surprisingly, we only saw this species on one occasion, close to the village of Plaka.

**European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* This attractive species, is a common passage migrant in both Cyprus and Limnos, which we saw well in both countries.

**Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* This species is a fairly common passage migrant in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw an adult female, while hiking in the northwestern highlands of Limnos, and this was followed by a second sighting, also of an adult female, at the Airport Wetlands.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* This species is a fairly common passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw an adult female, very briefly, amongst the mixed-species flock, at Port Plaka, on Limnos.

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos* This species, which is a very accomplished songster, is an uncommon passage migrant, in both Cyprus and Limnos, and a scarce summer breeding visitor. We heard several calling in the heavily wooded valley, above Fragma Dam, in Limnos, before finally tracking one down, and enjoying a prolonged look at it.

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* In both Cyprus and Limnos, this species is an uncommon passage migrant. We enjoyed our first sighting, of a stunning adult male, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula, in Cyprus. This was followed by a second, unfortunately, very brief sighting, also of an adult male, in the mixed-species flock at Port Plaka, on Limnos.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* In both Cyprus and Limnos, this attractive species is a common passage migrant. We enjoyed many, very good sightings, in both countries.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* In Cyprus, this species is a common passage migrant, and in Limnos, it is also a common passage migrant, which also breeds in small numbers. We observed a steady trickle of migrants throughout the tour.

**Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca* As the name would suggest, this attractive species, breeds only on the island of Cyprus. However, during the winter months, it winters in the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Chad. Fortunately, this extremely range-restricted species, is a common bird in Cyprus, during the summer months, and we saw it extremely well, on many occasions.

**Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica* In Cyprus, this attractive species, is a common passage migrant. In Limnos, it is also a common passage migrant and a locally common summer breeding visitor. We enjoyed a few good sightings, in both countries.

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* This rather drab species, is a fairly common passage migrant, throughout both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw a single bird, on one occasion, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula, in Cyprus. Isabelline, the name refers to a dirty yellowish buff colour and is probably referable to Queen Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504) whose armies laid siege to Granada. Isabella who expected a quick victory vowed not to change her underwear until the city was won. This would have all been well and good, if the siege had not lasted for eight months!

#### CHICKADEES and TITS *PARIDAE*

**Great Tit** *Parus major* A common resident in both Cyprus and Limnos, which we saw on most days of the tour.

#### OLD WORLD ORIOLES *ORIOLEIDAE*

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus* In Cyprus, this very attractive species is an uncommon passage migrant. On Limnos, it is also an uncommon passage migrant, and summer breeding visitor. On Limnos, we saw a small flock in the heavily wooded valley, above Fragma Dam, as well as a single bird in flight, at the Airport Wetlands.

#### SHRIKES *LANIIDAE*

**Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus* This beautiful bird, is an uncommon passage migrant, and summer breeding visitor, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw it well, on several occasions, during our time in Cyprus.

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator* Another delightful species of shrike; this one is a common passage migrant, and summer breeding visitor, in small numbers, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We enjoyed a few, very good sightings during our time in Cyprus, of what must surely be, one of the most beautiful species of shrikes in the world.

#### CROWS, JAYS and MAGPIES *CORVIDAE*

**Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica* A common resident of Cyprus, which we saw every day, during our time there. It is absent from Limnos.

**Western Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula* A very common resident, of both Cyprus and Limnos, which we observed on most days of the tour.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus* This species does not normally occur in either Cyprus or Limnos. However, we found and photographed, an adult bird of this species, at Cape Zafer, on the Karpaz Peninsula. It is only the fourth sighting of this species in Cyprus.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix* An abundant resident, in both Cyprus and Limnos, which we saw on every day of the tour.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax* This very large corvid, is an uncommon resident, in both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw small numbers, in both Cyprus and Limnos.

#### OLD WORLD SPARROWS *PASSERIDAE*

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* An abundant resident in both Cyprus and Limnos, which we saw on every day of the tour.

**Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis* This attractive species of sparrow, is a common passage migrant, and summer breeding visitor, in small numbers, to both Cyprus and Limnos. We enjoyed many very good sightings during our time in both Cyprus and Limnos; We observed some particularly large flocks of several hundred birds, on the Carpez Peninsula, in Cyprus.

#### SISKINS, CROSSBILLS and ALLIES *FRINGILLIDAE*

**European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris* A common resident of both Cyprus and Limnos, which we saw well on many occasions, in both countries.

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* We also observed small numbers of this common resident, at widely scattered localities, in both Cyprus and Limnos.

**Common Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina* We also observed good numbers of this common resident, at widely scattered localities, in both countries.

#### BUNTINGS, SPARROWS, SEEDEATERS and ALLIES *EMBERIZIDAE*

**Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus* An uncommon resident of Limnos, we saw an adult male, in full song, in the heavily wooded valley, above Fragma Dam. It is absent from Cyprus.

**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana* This species is a common passage migrant in Cyprus, and a common passage migrant and perhaps, a summer breeding visitor in Limnos. Somewhat surprisingly, we only saw this species on one occasion, when we watched a flock of four birds, with a male of the following species, in farmland, close to the village of Kaplica, in Cyprus.

**Cretzschmar's Bunting** *Emberiza caesia* This very attractive species, is an uncommon passage migrant in Cyprus, and also an extremely rare summer breeding visitor. In Limnos, it is a rare summer breeding visitor. Somewhat surprisingly, we only saw this species on one occasion, when we found an adult male, amongst a flock of four Ortolan Buntings, in farmland, close to the village of Kaplica, in Cyprus. Dr Philipp Jakob Cretzeschmar (1786-1845) was a German physician who taught anatomy at the Senckenberg Institute in Frankfurt. He was the founder and second director of Die Senckenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft, which was a natural history society and he was also a founder of the Senckenberg Natural History Museum.

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra* A very common and widespread resident, of both Cyprus and Limnos, which we saw on most days of the tour.

## MAMMALS

**European Rabbit** *Oryctolagus cuniculus* The European Rabbit, has been deliberately introduced to both Cyprus and Limnos. Rabbit numbers are very low in Cyprus, as they are constantly hunted by the local people, and as a result, we failed to see any. On Limnos, they were only introduced in the 1990s, but now they are absolutely everywhere, and they are now a threat to the countries agricultural production. We saw them every day, while birding on Limnos.

**Black Rat** *Rattus rattus* Accidentally introduced to both Cyprus and Limnos. We saw one of the brown colour morph, at Larnica Salt Lake, in Cyprus.