

Systematic List of Species within the Survey Area

For taxonomy, order and sequence RAFOS follows:

DICKINSON, EC. 2003. *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world. 3rd edn.* Christopher Helm. London. UK. **NB** The published results of many research papers since 2003 are considered for amendment of the 4th edition. The Recorder (MB) maintains an informal correspondence with Edward Dickinson on proposed updates.

For English names RAFOS follows and recommends:

GILL, F, AND M WRIGHT. 2006. *Birds of the World: Recommended English Names.* Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, USA/Christopher Helm. London. UK. And

IOC. 2008. *World Bird List – V1.7.* IOC website www.worldbirdnames.org provides summaries of updates on proposed/accepted taxonomy and English name changes.

Key to Place names:

AVC = Akrotiri Village Church
AGP = Akrotiri Gravel Pits
ASL = Akrotiri Salt Lake
ASLNT = Akrotiri Salt Lake North Track
AV = Akrotiri Village
BP = Bishops' Pool
BPE = Bishops' Pool East
CG = Cape Gata
CZ = Cape Zevgari
HV = Happy Valley
KC = Kensington Cliffs
LM = Lady's Mile
PRB = Phasouri Reedbed
QB = Quarry Beach
TB = Tunnel Beach
ZM = Zakaki Marsh

Chukar Partridge

Alectoris chukar

A common gamebird seen regularly on the peninsula throughout the survey. The Cyprus Game Fund raise and release 30,000 of these birds every year for the hunters.

Recorder's Note: Prominent and easily heard & seen in April, more covert in May: adult moult?

Black Francolin

Francolinus francolinus

Heard daily during the period at all survey locations. However, as usual, it was rarely seen. This bird seems to be doing well and it would appear that the protection afforded by the fenced enclosures of the aerial farm are working particularly well in its favour.

Recorder's Note: Much more widespread than in previous visits. Game Fund policies for protecting this species out of season appear to have worked.

Common Quail

Coturnix coturnix

Four reports of this species on 10th, 15th and 18th Apr and 2nd May from BPE, TB, the Akrotiri aerial farm and Akrotiri cliffs respectively.

Recorder's Note: No evidence of migration, so those seen were likely summer breeders, but nocturnal migration makes the tracking of this species difficult.

Gadwall

Anas strepera

A pair was observed at PRB on 4th Apr.

Recorder's Note: These two behaved as a pair, but not seen again.

Eurasian Wigeon

Anas penelope

A single female Wigeon was on ZM on 30th Apr.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Present at PRB and ZM throughout in numbers up to 30. Breeding by this species was confirmed at both locations.

Recorder's Note: All seemed to be resident birds with very few showing hybrid characteristics of domestic stock.

Northern Shoveler

Anas clypeata

Regular sightings of 1 or 2 birds at PRB and ZM throughout the survey. Mixed sea raft on 10th Apr held 13 males and 13 females. Shoveler X Mallard hybrids observed at ZM on 15th & 16th May. Female adult had characteristics of both Shoveler and Mallard; the young birds were a mixture of both characters, but all appeared to have Shoveler type bills.

Recorder's Note: Apart from the migrant flock on 10th Apr, it is likely most birds were on long stopovers. With regard to the birds seen on 15th & 16th May; solving the puzzle took considerable working out, but there is little doubt that a male Shoveler and the female Shoveler X Mallard cross had bred and raised at least 6 ducklings. The 2 adults occasionally paddled together, but the male, as expected, showed no interest in the ducklings. The anomaly was not noticed until the ducklings had grown beyond the fluffy stage, when their bills were very different from those of true Mallard ducklings. Revision of feral breeding status needed?

Northern Pintail

Anas acuta

A pair of Pintail was present at PRB from 7th to 23rd Apr.

Recorder's Note: This pair showed courting behaviour, but the drop in water levels doomed any out-of-area breeding attempt.

Garganey

Anas querquedula

Two to four birds present on most days at PRB. Occasional sightings of 1 or 2 birds at ZM and BP. The mixed sea raft north of PRB on 10th Apr held 5 male and 5 females.

Recorder's Note: No evidence either of females disappearing or on nests at Phasouri.

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

PRB held 10-20 Teal between 4th and 10th Apr. On 10th Apr 30 birds were part of a mixed 'sea raft' just north of the reed bed. There were no further sightings of Teal after 18th Apr.

Recorder's Note: It seems that we just caught the end of the return migration - probably birds heading for the northernmost breeding range in NE Europe.

Common Pochard

Aythya ferina

Two birds were at ZM on 4th May and a singleton at the same location on the 14th. Probably late migrants.

Ferruginous Duck

Aythya nyroca

This was one of our target species and evidence of breeding was earnestly sought. Between 2 and 10 birds were present at PRB and ZM throughout the survey. Unfortunately no evidence of breeding could be obtained.

Recorder's Note: Any breeding attempt at Phasouri probably failed due to dropping water levels. At Zakaki, 2-3 females could have been on nests; incubation mostly occurs in May, fledged young not appearing until June. This is a very secretive species when breeding, as I know from Hungary.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Four at ZM on 4 Apr.

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Seen daily at PRB and ZM and nearly every day at BP. Numbers varied from 10-25 at ZM and 2-10 at PRB and BP.

Recorder's Note: Numbers at ZM remained consistent throughout; at PRB numbers diminished with reducing water level. At BP, possible indication of migration on 11th & 28th Apr, but the latter date was possibly just movement from PRB before dispersal further north.

Greater Flamingo

Phoenicopterus roseus

All bar a few strays, flamingos had left Cyprus by 22 Apr. About 100+ were present on the Salt Lake from 14th – 17th Apr and on 22nd a flight of 51 came in from the sea to the west of the Akrotiri Peninsula, flew past the aerial farm and departed to the east.

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Regularly reported at PRB, less frequently at ZM and BP. At PRB 41 were roosting on 17th Apr and flights of 47 and 28 were seen on 2nd and 8th May. At the other locations numbers were below 10 and usually below 5.

Recorder's Note: A few birds were on long stopovers (individuals with different missing flight feathers; males larger than females, noticeable also in flight); these observations were punctuated by irregular migrant flocks. More flocks reported to us by other birdwatchers.

Eurasian Spoonbill

Platalea leucorodia

A single bird seen at BP on 10th Apr and again at PRB on 14th and 15th. Another singleton was at ZM and PRB on 10th May, possibly the same bird. Also at PRB on the 11th and 13th May; again, most likely to be the same bird.

Recorder's Note: Most were singletons, identified as separate individuals on size and on extent of breeding plumage.

Eurasian Bittern

Botaurus stellaris

One seen on 9th Apr from the tower in Akrotiri Salt Lake compound.

Recorder's Note: The bird was first seen at over 350m altitude, gliding north presumably after coming in from the sea, when it began a steep descent. At first, its wings were held in two deep, almost semi-circular arcs, but as the angle of descent increased to almost vertical, these arcs became almost circles, the drag gained preventing any speed increase, but the annular shape of each wing kept the airflow smooth, so avoiding a stall. The bird disappeared into the trees, at a site where the map indicates a pond now surrounded by very dense undergrowth. On this date, the track was flooded close to this point.

Little Bittern

Ixobrychus minutus

Seen on 18 days between 8th Apr and 16th May mostly at PRB and ZM, but with 3 sightings at BP on 8th Apr and 5th & 8th May. Numbers mostly 1-4 but with 7 on 13th May and 6 on 16th May at

ZM.

Recorder's Note: At both Phasouri and Zakaki, birds were seen regularly in certain areas. We suspect this was related to breeding and feeding territories; certainly there were more individuals in the reed-beds, particularly at Phasouri.

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Seen almost daily throughout the survey most regularly at BP. Numbers peaked between 10th and 17th Apr with flights of 20+ seen at PRB on 14th and 15th and at ZM on 17th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Fluctuating numbers evidence of migration 6-17 Apr, with rear-guard on 8 May.

Squacco Heron

Ardeola ralloides

Seen daily throughout the survey in most suitable locations. Numbers usually 1-5, occasionally 6-10. Maximum count of 20+ at PRB on 24th Apr and counts of 10+ on 14th, 27th and 30th Apr.

Recorder's Note: With its curious mixed pattern of behaviour, sometimes skulking and sometimes in the open for long periods, an accurate estimation of numbers is difficult. Higher counts are not necessarily evidence of migration, and while some birds were undoubtedly on a long stopover, and some, in splendid breeding plumage, might have attempted to breed; many others, were certainly migrants.

Western Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Small number, 1-4, seen from 7th Apr to 9th May mainly at PRB but with occasional sightings at other sites. Maximum number was 16 at PRB on 24th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Indian Cattle Egret *B. coromandus* now separated. Records are of migrants and birds stopping over briefly.

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Seen regularly between 6th Apr and 7th May at most suitable locations. A flight of 24 was seen at BPE on 17th Apr, 12 were roosting at PRB on 23rd Apr and flight of 9 and 7 were observed at TB and Curium respectively on 14th and 15th Apr. Otherwise, numbers were 1-5.

Recorder's Note: Mainly a wintering bird, but some passage off the sea from the south (Egypt?) was observed.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

Reported daily throughout the survey from all suitable locations. A flight of 30 was seen over KC on 26th Apr and 31 were at roost at PRB on 27th; possibly the same flock. Other sightings of 10+ birds were at PRB on 7th, 15th, 16th and 22nd; BP on 6th Apr and HV on 12th May. On other days numbers were less than 10.

Recorder's Note: Persistent migration observed throughout the period. Other flocks were reported to us by other birdwatchers on the Island.

Western Great Egret

Ardea alba

Seen on 8th, 23rd, 24th Apr and 2nd, 4th and 15th May; mainly at ZM, PRB and BP; maximum daily number 2.

Recorder's Note: Most birds were restless, under the spell of *Zugunruhe* (migratory restlessness) and did not settle for long.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Seen daily at most locations usually in small numbers 1-7, odd days of 10-20 and the maximum number 43, on 10th Apr split between LM and PRB.

Recorder's Note: All birds seen had yellow feet, although several had dark mud obscuring the colour. All were checked to eliminate Western Reef Heron; the one bird with dark smudges was just a bird with faded oil markings. One individual seen at Phasouri had immersed its head and neck in red muddy water to the extent that it resembled a Reddish Egret, *E. rufescens*.

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Seen in coastal locations on 10 days between 7th Apr and 13th May in numbers from 1 to 9.

Recorder's Note: On coast, non-breeding and immature birds possibly loafing and wandering locally. Numbers about the same order of magnitude as for European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*.

European Shag

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

Coastal locations on 13 days from 8th Apr to 16th May, numbers from 1-7.

Recorder's Note: Fewer birds than anticipated. Suspect one pair attempting to breed.

Lesser Kestrel

Falco naumanni

Again only 2 sightings; the first at TB on 15th Apr, when the bird appeared to come in straight from the sea and perch on the cliff face; the second was over Akrotiri Cliffs on 24th Apr where it was observed hawking with bee-eaters.

Recorder's Note: Surprisingly, there were only two confirmed records of this species, although one 'runt' male Common Kestrel *F. tinnunculus* holding territory N of the Phasouri Reed bed fooled several observers. From the attitude of its female, size didn't matter!

Common Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

A common resident breeder and passage migrant this species was daily throughout the peninsula.

Recorder's Note: With hindsight, perhaps this should have been treated as an 'infinity' species and numbers not recorded. Truly widespread.

Red-footed Falcon

Falco vespertinus

Not very often seen during the spring migration and there was only one sighting of 3 birds at HV on 9th May.

Eleonora's Falcon

Falco eleonora

The first of this species was seen on 13th Apr at Akrotiri Cliffs. As the survey progressed it was seen in increasing numbers both at Akrotiri and QB/KC. By early May counts at Akrotiri were in the low 20s and on the last count on 13th May had reached 40. At QB/KC the final count on 16th May was 22.

Recorder's Note: A steady build-up of numbers spread thinly across suitable breeding habitat until 1 May, individuals wandering widely for several km inland. Main body began arriving around 10 May, around 80 counted on cliffs at Akrotiri, Curium, Quarry Beach and Kensington cliffs. Given the activity and mobility of this species, this number probably represents a breeding population in these locations of 110-140 birds.

Eurasian Hobby

Falco subbuteo

Singleton birds seen on 7 days, on all but 2 occasions at BP. Three sightings at BP by independent observers on 24th Apr are probably the same bird.

Recorder's Note: With the preponderance of Eleonora's Falcon *F. eleonora*, continuous awareness was needed to look for Hobby.

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

At least two, and possibly three, pairs hold territories on the sea cliffs within the SBA. The first pair at TB was confirmed as breeding and 4 juveniles were seen to fledge during the survey. Another pair held a territory near the radar tower on the Akrotiri cliffs. It is also possible that a third pair hold a territory at QB. The max number of this species seen in the air at any one time was 5.

Recorder's Note: Early breeding at Tunnel Beach with the brood almost able to fly on 15 Apr. Up to 5 juveniles were present, but one may have been a late hatchling from 2007.

Western Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Two sightings; the first over AV on 10th Apr, this bird was being mobbed by crows; the second over PRB on 24th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Both birds proceeded with steady migrant purposefulness. NB Eastern Osprey is *P. cristatus* of the Far East.

European Honey Buzzard

Pernis apivorus

Three birds at BP on 8th Apr was the only sighting of this species during the survey. One was seen over Akrotiri Salt Lake on 4th Apr before the survey started.

Recorder's Note: Although far fewer raptors appear in Cyprus in spring on their return migration than do so in autumn, recording only two European Honey Buzzards is a little unexpected.

Eurasian Griffon Vulture

Gyps fulvus

This species has become very scarce on the Island over recent years. The Cyprus Game Fund estimates that there only between 9 and 15 resident birds remaining. Sightings during the survey were: 1 immature over TB on 14th Apr; 2 birds – 1 adult and 1 immature over TB on 27th Apr; 2 over HV on 9th May and again on 12th May; finally 2 were seen roosting on KC on 16th May.

Recorder's Note: Given that Tunnel Beach and possibly Kensington Cliff as well have probably been deserted as breeding sites, and the recent decline in numbers, the number of sightings was better than expected. However, only 4 different individuals were identified positively - there may have been more.

Western Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

Seen regularly, but not daily, at either PRB and/or ZM and occasionally at other locations.

Unusually, never more than two birds were seen at the same.

Recorder's Note: Absolutely no sign of pairing, let alone breeding. Following the fire, the early stage of so much of the Phasouri Reed bed re-growth may be part of the reason, although by May 20, the green reeds were well over 2m high. NB Eastern Marsh Harrier is *C. spilonotus*; occurs east of Iran.

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

A single bird was seen flying over Akrotiri Village on 10th Apr.

Recorder's Note: The relative bulk of this bird and its flight in the rather gusty wind quickly eliminated Pallid and Montagu's Harriers.

Pallid Harrier

Circus macrourus

There were six sightings of Pallid Harrier during April. On 10th Apr a male was seen at BP and another at ZM. From the timings of these sightings it is assessed that it was probably the same bird. Other reports came from BP, ZM, PRB and CG on 18th, 22nd, 24th and 29th Apr.

Recorder's Note: All singletons that passed through quickly.

Montagu's Harrier

Circus pygargus

There were only two confirmed sightings of this species during the survey on the 10th at PRB and 20th Apr at BP. However, there were four other sightings of 'ringtail' Harriers on 10th, 11th and 27th Apr and 3rd May.

Recorder's Note: Fortunately, both were fairly straightforward to identify, thanks to Dick Forsman's book! Note that on 10th Apr a group of 6 ringtails were seen approx 5km further east at about the same time. Lack of confirmed ID on these and the other 'ringtails' reported was due to distance and to the relative unfamiliarity of observers with the species.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

Three sightings only: 8th Apr at KC; 29th Apr at ZM and 1st May over Akrotiri Village.

Recorder's Note: Definitely not Levant Sparrowhawks; underwing barring too prominent.

Common Buzzard

Buteo buteo buteo

Seen widely and regularly throughout the peninsula mostly in ones or twos. Maximum sighting was or four on 9th Apr at PRB. This species was not as common as expected.

Recorder's Note: Nearly all observations were of singletons.

Steppe Buzzard

Buteo buteo vulpinus

Two confirmed sightings, both at BP on 23rd and 27th Apr.

Long-legged Buzzard

Buteo rufinus

Only one sighting within the survey area, at BPE on 10th Apr.

Booted Eagle

Aquila pennata

One sighting at PRB on 24th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Several hundred Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* rose from the reedbed to mob this individual, as did several Hooded Crows *Corvus cornix*. It paid no attention and continued steadily northwards. It was originally seen as a dot approaching from the south, and appears to have come in off the sea; certainly its flight was that of a bird with a long way to go. First identified from its 'landing lights' on the leading edge of the wing. The Barn Swallows never reacted in this manner to such as Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* or Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*.

Water Rail

Rallus aquaticus

Single birds reported from PRB and ZM on 9 occasions from 14th Apr to 8th May.

Recorder's Note: Although recorded as singletons, calling suggested disputes between males. Likely present in good numbers deep in the reedbeds.

Corncrake

Crex crex

A single sighting on the ASLNT on 27th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Seen by an entire Ringing Team from the Land Rover, after nets had to be taken down in increasing wind.

Little Crane

Porzana parva

Reported on 6 days all at PRB over the period 14th Apr to 10th May. On 8th May 3 separate individuals were recorded.

Recorder's Note: Vocal. Numbers present likely to be much higher than just those seen.

Spotted Crake

Porzana porzana

Three reports from PRB and one from ZM on 9th and 17th Apr and 9th and 10th May.
Recorder's Note: This species probably passed through in reasonable numbers. First two records from calls, but birds were seen later. It is likely that many more were present.

Common Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Common at PRB and ZM throughout the survey and occasionally at BP. Numbers declined at PRB as it dried out. Maximum numbers were; ZM – 12 on 10th May (including 5 chicks); BP – 13 on 11th Apr and PRB – 21 on 10th May.
Recorder's Note: Bred successfully at Zakaki Marsh, but probably not at Phasouri where water levels dropped; two nests known to have been abandoned.

Eurasian Coot

Fulica atra

A common Cyprus waterbird. Seen daily, in good numbers, at PRB and ZM and occasionally at BP. Evidence of breeding at PRB and ZM. Maximum numbers were 50+ at PRB on 18th Apr and 27 at ZM on 8th May.
Recorder's Note: As the large numbers at Phasouri diminished with loss of water; there was some compensatory increase at Zakaki Marsh, but resident pairs were hostile. Successful breeder at Zakaki Marsh.

Eurasian Stone-curlew

Burhinus oedicephalus

One at Cape Gata 8th Apr, two there on 9th. One at happy Valley 12th May.
Recorder's Note: Known to breed on the Akrotiri Peninsula, most probably on the base.

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

Seen daily at PRB and BP and occasionally at other sites. Maximum numbers were 24 at PRB on 22nd Apr, 16 at BP on 20th Apr and 6 at ZM on 12th Apr. The species was seen intermittently at other sites around the Peninsula.
Recorder's Note: Although courtship and attempted mating were observed at Phasouri, there was no evidence of breeding.

Pied Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

Over 20 birds were reported at BP on 13th Apr, after that numbers were 3 or less. Two to 3 birds were at BP from 25th to 28th Apr and on 4th May 2 birds were at BP and a singleton was seen over-flying at PRB and ZM, possibly the same bird.
Recorder's Note: Generally scarce and none stayed for long.

Spur-winged Lapwing

Vanellus spinosus

A pair of Spur-winged Lapwing (Plover in old money) was recorded at PRB from 15th Apr to 14th May and on 23rd Apr were seen displaying, however, we recorded no successful breeding. Individual birds were seen at ZM on 7 occasions and at TB once.
Recorder's Note: Suspect breeding attempt at Phasouri, but failed due to diminishing water level & the attentions of Hooded Crows *Corvus cornix*.

Common Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

Seen regularly from in numbers from 1-4 from 22nd Apr onwards, mainly at PRB and LM but occasionally at other locations.
Recorder's Note: Seemingly mostly non-breeders dawdling on migration, but some apparent pairs that stayed only briefly.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

Regularly recorded in numbers from 1-3 at most wetland locations throughout the survey.
Recorder's Note: Probably a combination of trickle migration and extended stopovers.

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

Recorded mainly on the pools along LM, occasionally in significant numbers. Counts in excess of 20 were made on 7 days; with 49, including 6 young, recorded on 4th May, and 60 on 15 May.
Recorder's Note: In previous springs, after normal winter rainfall, this species bred beyond the edge of the salt marsh near the edge of the water at ASL (N&E sides), but in 2008, they appear to have bred in the scrub around the Eastern Aerial Farm, perhaps concentrating on the slightly damp scrub areas in the basins along Lady's Mile. The low number of immature birds recorded perhaps reflects early breeding, most such birds being almost full-grown. **NB** A lone Caspian Plover *C. asiaticus* occurred on LM in May, but was not seen by any of our party.

Jack Snipe

Lymnocyptes minimus

Two recorded, both at PRB on 9th and 14th Apr. The second of which was ringed.
Recorder's Note: Probably far more birds passed through than were seen.

Great Snipe

Gallinago media

Reported twice, from the ASLNT on 21st Apr and PRB on 2nd May. Both single birds.
Recorder's Note: Strongly site-faithful to small stopover areas en route to and from their breeding areas. First record in a shallow flooded pool beside a track; the 2nd from a damp reed bed edge, typical, in the observers' experience, of the species in Cyprus, Austria and Hungary.

Common Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

Regularly recorded in small numbers throughout the survey and exclusively at PRB. Maximum count was 6 on 9th Apr.
Recorder's Note: Most observations are likely to have been of long-staying individuals.

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

A singleton stayed at PRB from 24th Apr until 4th May – probably a 2nd year non-breeding bird. Another was seen at PRB on 9th May and was distinguished from the long-stayer by its very pale colouration.
Recorder's Note: Both records were of unusual individuals, the first with an extraordinarily long bill (probably a female: up to 5% larger than male), and the other of an apparently leucistic bird, all normally dark plumage being 'greyed', including the diagnostic tail marking.

Common Redshank

Tringa totanus

Surprisingly, there were only 2 reports of this species: the first from the AGP on 2nd May and the other from PRB on 4th May. Possibly the same bird.
Recorder's Note: Surprisingly scarce.

Marsh Sandpiper

Tringa stagnatilis

Reported regularly throughout the survey mainly from BP and PRB, but with occasional reports from other locations. Maximum number for this species was at least 4 at BP 12th Apr.
Recorder's Note: A mixture of trickle passage and long-stayers.

Common Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Seen on 19 days at various locations throughout the Peninsula but most often at BP and PRB. Maximum daily number 4.
Recorder's Note: Trickle passage.

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

Reported 21 times, numbers from 1 – 3, between 7th Apr and 6th May mainly from PRB and BP but occasionally ZM.

Recorder's Note: Trickle passage with a few long-stayers.

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Seen daily from most locations throughout the survey. One of the most common birds recorded, daily numbers ranged from 1 – 20+. Numbers built up from around 22nd Apr until the second week of May.

Recorder's Note: Suspect that the movements through were masked by seemingly consistent numbers, but exchange between Bishops' Pool and Phasouri possible.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Seen almost daily in most locations in ones or twos.

Recorder's Note: Some migration evident, but most birds seemed to be long-stayers; occasional display flights witnessed at Zakaki Marsh, but breeding unlikely.

Sanderling

Calidris alba

Only 3 records of this species, all at LM. A singleton recorded on 23rd Apr was followed by 3 on 3rd and 4th May.

Recorder's Note: Scarce, but May birds were in almost full breeding plumage.

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

Little Stint started arriving in numbers on 16th Apr and numbers peaked on 25th Apr with 80+ recorded at BP. From late Apr until the end of the survey the birds regularly frequented PRB and ZM in numbers from 10-20 and were also seen in most other locations.

Recorder's Note: Suspect a mixture of long stop-overs and groups on passage, the latter evident from the intensity of *Zugunruhe*.

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

First seen on 23rd Apr this species was reported in numbers up to 4 on 12 occasions, mainly at PRB.

Recorder's Note: Identification became easier with time, as Little Stints *C. minuta* increasingly adopted rufous-tinged breeding plumage.

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

Seen in small numbers from 17th Apr to 16th May at PRB, ZM and BP with peak numbers at BP on 23rd, 24th and 25th Apr with 8, 17 and 10+ reported. A melanistic bird was seen at PRB on 30th Apr and when it flew the identification of Curlew Sandpiper was confirmed by the retained white wing-bar.

Recorder's Note: Some later birds were in bright, near-complete breeding plumage. The long-staying melanistic individual had the appearance of a miniature Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*.

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Only five records of this species: 3 on LM, one on the AGP and one at BP. These five sightings were, all bar one, singletons.

Recorder's Note: Surprisingly scarce.

Broad-billed Sandpiper

Limicola falcinellus

A single bird of this species was recorded at BP on the first day of the survey, 7th Apr, when it hit a mist net but was not entangled.

Recorder's Note: Rare and enigmatic; this species has a dispersed and individual migration strategy.

Ruff

Philomachus pugnax

A common migrant throughout the survey mainly at BP and PRB where, on occasions, numbers were in the 20s and 30s.

Recorder's Note: From mid-Apr onwards, showed tendency to form proto-leks on grassland at Phasouri; some males attempted half-hearted displays, but none had any 'ruff' in evidence. Became very restless in mid-May.

Collared Pratincole

Glareola pratincola

Seen on 10 days between 14th Apr and 13th May at PRB only. Peak migration was between 24th Apr and 2nd May when over 40 birds passed through.

Recorder's Note: Omitted in the official record are 2 informal (verbal) reports to us of 50+ and 60+ pausing briefly in the air at Phasouri on 30 Apr & 1 May respectively.

Slender-billed Gull

Chroicocephalus genei

A single report of a 2nd calendar year bird at ZM on 27th Apr.

Recorder's Note: This is the only satisfactory RAFOS record. All other reports were immature Common Black-headed Gulls *C. ridibundus*, which in Cyprus have longer bills than those in UK.

Common Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus ridibundus

Recorded regularly at ZM and occasionally at PRB always in small numbers, three or less. Most birds were immature.

Recorder's Note: Individuals of this species in Cyprus have longer bills and more variable ear-spots than those in UK. In 1st-year plumage, this gives a different shape to the head, leading to confusion with Slender-billed Gull *C. genei* (whose 1st-year plumage also retains an ear-spot). Furthermore, the leg colour of such individuals is paler than in UK, again leading to the same confusion.

Mediterranean Gull

Larus melanocephalus

Single birds seen on 10th and 17th Apr at ZM. The first was a 2nd calendar year and the second an adult.

Great Black-headed Gull

Larus ichthyaetus

A single bird seen at ZM on 25th and 30th Apr and 1st May. This bird was coming out of 1st year plumage and recognizable because it had a deformed right leg and foot.

Yellow-legged Gull

Larus michahellis

A common species recorded daily and in good numbers, especially from the Akrotiri Cliffs where 60+ were recorded on 8th Apr. Counts of 30-50 were achieved regularly. Evidence of breeding at Akrotiri.

Recorder's Note: A few pairs along the cliffs at Akrotiri had nests. Most birds appeared to be loafers, non-breeders, or 3cy or younger. However, adults were in a considerable majority.

Baltic Gull

Larus fuscus fuscus

Recorded on 10th, 16th and 28th April at ZM and in the HV, TB/QB area. On 16th Apr 8 birds were at TB.

Recorder's Note: Until proven otherwise, I suggest this taxon be treated as satisfying the 75% rule, *i.e.* that at least 75% of all individuals in the population can be identified by sight.

Gull-billed Tern

Gelochelidon nilotica

A single bird was at PRB on 24th Apr. This species was unexpectedly scarce, but the drought conditions may have spurred over-flight at altitude.

Recorder's Note: An unexpected scarcity of tern species in general, but drought conditions may have spurred over-flight at altitude.

Caspian Tern

Hydroprogne caspia

Reported on 21st Apr and 13 May from ZM; a single bird on each day.

Recorder's Note: Fewer records than expected.

Whiskered Tern

Chlidonias hybrida

Reported on 8 days between 27th Apr and 10th May from BP and ZM. Maximum count was 5 at BP on 3rd May.

Recorder's Comment: None stayed more than 48 hours.

White-winged Tern

Chlidonias leucopterus

Seen mainly at PRB but also at ZM and BP from 22nd Apr onwards. Largest numbers reported from PRB, 15 on 22nd and 14 on 23rd Apr.

Recorder's Note: Only two small groups on passage. Other individuals stayed only a day or so.

Rock Dove

Columba livia

Recorded in reasonable numbers, up to 20-25, from suitable cliff locations.

Recorder's Note: The birds populating the coastal cliff faces clearly have a significant proportion of domestic and show pigeon genes; very few are clearly 'wild' Rock Doves. Many flocks of domestic and show pigeons were noted, but not recorded. There is a useful project awaiting a Cypriot studying for a biology degree or PhD - the distribution of Rock Doves, feral and show pigeons to establish exactly what is happening; the DNA research results might just be surprising.

Stock Dove

Columba oenas

Observed on 4th, 15th, 16th Apr and 5th May from the Akrotiri area and HV, where 25 were recorded on 16th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Fitful passage.

Common Woodpigeon

Columba palumbus

A ubiquitous species recorded daily from many locations

Recorder's Note: Has the spread of this species in Cyprus been documented? A worthwhile project for a university student.

European Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur

Reported from most locations and in reasonable numbers up to 40. This represented a reasonable passage over an extended period. There was little evidence of birds being shot at in the WSBA, but there were plenty of spent cartridges in evidence.
Recorder's Note: A reasonable passage over an extended period.

Eurasian Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Another ubiquitous species seen daily in all locations associated with human habitation.
Recorder's Note: Is this species now stable in Cyprus, or is any decline noticeable? Another worthwhile project I believe.

Great Spotted Cuckoo

Clamator glandarius

A migrant breeder, the first birds had obviously arrived before the survey. The 16 records of this species, from various locations, were spread throughout the survey period. Usually only single birds but occasionally pairs were reported.
Recorder's Note: The presence of a pair (reported also by others) in scrub with few sizeable bushes where there were no species suitable for parasitising was rather a puzzle. Were they early migrants that had already found host Magpie *Pica pica*, were they late migrants yet to seek a host, or were they just young birds not yet ready to breed?

Common Cuckoo

Cuculus canorus

Recorded on eleven survey days mainly from the BP area.
Recorder's Note: The record of 3 hepatic females from only 17 sightings, of which 4 were males, poses interesting questions of abundance or route preference.

Western Barn Owl

Tyto alba

Only one record, a fresh road-kill at PRB on 11th May.
Recorder's Note: The paucity of records possibly indicates that small mammals were in short supply, although small reptiles were not.

Eurasian Scops Owl

Otus scops

Heard only on 6 occasions in HV, PRB and the BP area.
Recorder's Note: Scops Owl was absent from many expected locations – the calling season may have been over, but where were the birds hunting to feed a hungry brood?

Little Owl

Athene noctua

One bird seen on 3 occasions near nest hole in a carob tree in HV. Also one report from TB.
Recorder's Note: Surprisingly few records of this diurnal owl; ssp *indigena* has been suggested (by Charles Vaurie, cited in Flint & Stewart 1992) for the darker birds on Cyprus but note recent elevation of *lilith* (which most authors assign as sole Cyprus taxon) to species status (König & Wieck 2008); ssp *indigena* breeds in much of Turkey with overlap in SE Turkey with Lilith Owl *A. lilith* (whose overall distribution is Cyprus, SE Turkey to W Iran, and around the Arabian peninsula). Away from Cyprus, *lilith* is noted for displaying little variation except to very pale. Because the taxonomic position in Cyprus is less than clear, provisionally I have allocated the three Happy Valley/Tunnel Beach records (relatively dark birds with distinct caps and facial discs; one photo) as *A.n. indigena(?)* and the Upper Asprokremnos Valley record as *A.[n.] lilith(?)*.
ID characteristics of *indigena*: larger than *lilith* (although smaller than UK *vidalii*); contrast between pale facial disc and crown striking; on rather plain back, lacks grey undertone of UK *vidalii*, appearing warm to light brown, but always darker than *lilith*. Cere yellow, chest and upper belly quite heavy vertical brown streaking. Voice: little variation between ssp, but regularly with upward inflection.

For information, ID characteristics of *A. lillith* (seen only once outside the survey areas – see separate abbreviated systematic list) are: smaller than Little Owl *A. noctua*, with smaller talons and smaller eyes that are paler lemon-yellow (Little Owl eye colour ranges from lemon-yellow to sulphur-yellow). Facial disc rather indistinct. Paler crown and nape (sometimes whitish) than any desert population of Little Owl. Cere black, back mottled or streaked pale brown; chest lightly streaked vertically, pale-brown markings. Voice lacks upward inflections of Little Owl.

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

One in off sea BPE 10th Apr. o

Alpine Swift

Tachymarptis Melba

Seen throughout the survey at most locations, usually in small numbers, but 26 were counted at KC on 8th Apr, some apparently prospecting for nest sites, and over 20 were recorded at PRB on 16th May.

Recorder's Note: Given that this species often makes long migration journeys at height, the numbers recorded are of interest.

Common Swift

Apus apus

A ubiquitous species classified as 'background' by BirdLife Cyprus. Often seen in numbers of 100+, the ringing team ringed 215 Common Swifts.

Recorder's Note: Perhaps a useful schools project would be to record the phenology and daily numbers of this species. For details of the birds ringed, see Ringing Report.

Pallid Swift

Apus pallidus

Seen at BP, PRB and ZM, 8 individual birds were recorded on 5 separate days.

Recorder's Note: Given the ID difficulties and that 5 of the 8 records are of ringed birds, this species is very probably far commoner than its recorded history suggests. NB. On about 10 occasions, MB needed a suspected Pallid Swift to make one just more pass for confirmation or rejection of identification, but no such luck.

European Roller

Coracias garrulus

Seen occasionally at various sites around the Peninsula throughout the survey; never common. Largest number on wires near Sylvana's Restaurant and in Akrotiri Village on 12th and 28 Apr when 5 and 6 respectively were recorded.

Common Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

Recorded on 7 occasions between 7th and 24th Apr from BP and ZM, with one record from PRB. One sighting was of a bird roosting on the shingle beach just north of PRB.

Recorder's Note: Wintering birds mostly use the sea to find fish, an aspect that appears unknown to many birdwatchers.

Pied Kingfisher

Ceryle rudis

A single female was recorded at ZM on all but 3 days from 5th to 16th May. It continued to be reported by BirdLife Cyprus members until the end of May.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

Merops persicus

Recorded at BP on 7th Apr (2) and 9th Apr (6) and from PRB on 8th Apr (2) and the 22nd & 23rd Apr (2 on each day).

Recorder's Note: Several other observers reported small parties elsewhere in Cyprus during the survey period.

European Bee-eater

Merops apiaster

A common passage migrant, and migrant breeder at higher altitudes, this species was recorded almost daily from 22 Apr. The ringing team targeted this species from 26th Apr onwards and had ringed over 500 by the end of the survey.

Recorder's Note: Widespread passage reported from Paphos to Larnaca, sometimes in large numbers. Many calls of birds passing at altitude, again, often in good numbers, and many similar reports from other parts of the island, from birders and local people.

Eurasian Hoopoe

Upupa epops

Recorded intermittently in numbers up to 4 from various sites on the Peninsula.

Recorder's Note: Scarcer than expected, probably because of lack of soft, relatively damp soil where large grubs normally occur.

Eurasian Wryneck

Jynx torquilla

Seen between 7th and 22nd Apr at AVC and AGP area and the BP area in numbers up to five.

Recorder's Note: Never common and despite its skulking nature sightings were fewer than expected.

Red-backed Shrike

Lanius collurio

Recorded from most locations but only in small numbers (1-3) from early May onwards.

Recorder's Note: Seemingly a late migrant in the Eastern Mediterranean - a mixture of local breeders and those heading for northernmost & easternmost breeding ranges?

Lesser Grey Shrike

Lanius minor

A single record of one bird near Akrotiri Village on 1 May.

Woodchat Shrike

Lanius senator

Eleven records of this passage migrant and occasional breeder mainly in April and from a wide range of habitats.

Recorder's Note: Birds appeared to set up territories on southern Akrotiri Peninsula, but soon moved on. Was this practice; awaiting a female; or lack of prey (large insects, migrant songbirds) due to drought?

Masked Shrike

Lanius nubicus

Only 6 records of this species from within the survey area and only up to the 3rd week in Apr.

However, it was reported from other locations well into May.

Recorder's Note: Up to mid-Apr birds on the Akrotiri Peninsula were very territorial, but disappeared later - winter territory proving unprofitable in early spring? Lack of large insects and migrant songbirds?

Eurasian Golden Oriole

Oriolus oriolus

Recorded on approx 20 days of the survey. Golden Oriole was thinly widespread after mid-April.

Recorder's Note: IOC name Eurasian Golden Oriole; now separated from Indian Golden Oriole *O. kundoo*.

Eurasian Magpie

Pica pica

Whilst common on the Island, the Magpie is quite scarce on the Akrotiri Peninsula with only 12 records during the survey period from an area to the west of Episkopi Garrison.

Recorder's Note: Widespread across farmland, but usually away from the littoral.

Western Jackdaw

Corvus monedula

Recorded on all visits to QB, KC and HV where there are large breeding colonies. Reported in numbers up to 120.

Recorder's Note: Remarkably abundant in suitable canyons or where cliffs were eroded. Some desultory interaction with Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae*, but aggressively so with Common Kestrel *F. tinnunculus*.

Hooded Crow

Corvus cornix

Widespread and common in the survey area and recorded daily.

Recorder's Note: Intelligent and much more co-operative in behaviour than Carrion Crow *C. corone* (more like Rook *C. frugilegus*), they have exploited the increased tree cover, including citrus groves and windbreaks, to present a threat to nearby ground-nesting birds. They also raid crops, and so are regarded as a pest. The RoC decision to allow shooting of Hooded Crows is understandable at first sight, except for the fact that cynical misuse of such permission to shoot any bird species is guaranteed.

Now separate as *Corvus cornix* ssp *sharpii* (*sardonicus* now subsumed in *sharpii*) from Carrion Crow, but note putative splits of Oriental Crow *C. orientalis* from Carrion and Mesopotamian Crow *C. capellanus* from Hooded.

Great Tit

Parus major aphrodite

A common and widespread species reported almost daily throughout the survey from appropriate habitat.

Recorder's Note: Widespread in most wooded or dense shrubby areas. Many birds very grey, lacking blue; ssp *aphrodite*.

Eurasian Penduline Tit

Remiz pendulinus

With only one record of 5 birds on 4 May this species was almost certainly under-recorded.

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

Considered to be a background species, there was a steady daily migration throughout Apr tailing off into May. Recorded from most suitable locations. See Ringing Report for numbers ringed.

Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

A background species and an abundant passage migrant and summer breeder recorded from all locations throughout the survey.

Recorder's Note: There was a good passage on 10th and 11th Apr, and on 14th Apr 30 were ringed from a roost of circa 200 at PRB. See Ringing Report. Passage died to a trickle 1st week in May.

Common House Martin

Delichon urbicum

A background species with a steady stream of migrants daily throughout Apr with many staying to breed.

Red-rumped Swallow

Cecropis daurica

Reported regularly from most locations throughout the survey; usually in ones or twos but occasionally up to 6. On 26th Apr a pair was seen constructing a nest above Asprokremnos Dam.

Calandra Lark

Melanocorypha calandra

A single sighting at PRB on 9th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Although expected to be scarce in spring, one record only is surely an indication that the drought caused a food shortage in the grasslands, and so many migrants did not stop.

Bimaculated Lark

Melanocorypha bimaculata

Two sightings, one at 1030 and the other at 1540 on 13th May at AVC and BP possibly of the same bird? Both sightings by MB (Recorder) whose notes follow:

1st sighting - Distinct rufous back (suggesting *rufescens* of Central Turkey), white-tipped tail, 'long-winged' appearance in flight directly away, gave impression of large lark quite unlike dumpy Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*. Perched on straggly scrub some 400m away, at which range narrow black chest marking visible through Nikon telescope. Departed eastwards towards southern edge of Akrotiri Salt Lake, where it disappeared from sight, but dark grey underwings were visible. Late date perhaps due to general disrupted migration patterns affecting several species (movement dates poorly known - BWP) but perhaps just a late straggler from northern Ethiopia, where recorded in winter.

2nd sighting - Seen briefly from track on southern side of Bishops' Pool as bird rose on my right from grassy sediment deposit exposed by falling water level. Long-winged, large rufous lark, quite dark underwings, white tip to tail, but then silhouetted against sky before disappearing over the trees. Colour and jizz gained by naked eye, but only silhouette seen in binoculars. Suspect this was same bird as seen 5 hours earlier; widespread aridity of Cyprus in May 2008 had been concentrating migrants at the few accessible water sources.

Greater Short-toed Lark

Calandrella brachydactyla

Two sightings on 12th & 13th May at AGP and PRB.

Recorder's Note: Again, scarcity probably due to dry conditions.

Crested Lark

Galerida cristata

Ubiquitous in the right habitat and seen daily, but not in large numbers. Only eleven ringed.

Recorder's Note: This species is in decline in its northernmost range and in C Europe.

Eurasian Skylark

Alauda arvensis

Only three records on 8th, 9th and 24th Apr from BP, Akrotiri Village and BPE respectively.

Recorder's Note: Very scarce; all three records were from bursts of song drawing attention to birds in the air; listened for every day.

Zitting Cisticola

Cisticola juncidis

Recorded almost daily at PRB, regularly at BPE and ZM, and occasionally from other locations. PRB has a significant breeding population.

Recorder's Note: Ubiquitous at lower altitudes, possibility another 'infinity' species candidate.

Cetti's Warbler

Cettia cetti

A ubiquitous background species reported daily from all suitable locations. We did not record numbers of this species but its distribution and density appear to be increasing significantly.

Savi's Warbler

Locustella luscinioides

Recorded twice at PB and once at PRB between 9th and 16th Apr. The two birds at BP were ringed.

Recorder's Note: Possibly bred at PRB; scarce on migration.

Great Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus arundinaceus

An intermittent passage migrant during Apr, it was then recorded almost daily from the wetland sites in small numbers up to 5. Birds were in full song by second week in May.

Recorder's Note: Re large *Acrocephalus* warblers: note Oriental Reed Warbler *A. orientalis* (Israel 2 records) split from Great Reed. Note also that Clamorous Reed Warbler *A. stentoreus* now split; *stentoreus* resident Egypt to Levant; Indian Reed Warbler now *A. brunnescens* – ringing in Israel now to revised criteria and so *brunnescens* may turn up. Finally, Basra Reed Warbler *A. griseldis* recorded Syria & Israel.

Moustached Warbler

Acrocephalus melanopogon

Recorded on four occasions at ZM on 10th, 11th, 17th and 21st Apr.

Recorder's Note: Always at the bottom of the reeds, particularly older growth. Very clearly marked in comparison with the many Sedge Warblers. Very late records.

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

A common passage migrant and recorded almost daily at ZM and PRB and regularly from other suitable habitat.

Recorder's Note: Much singing and display was witnessed and perhaps a few remained to attempt to breed; but most had departed by the second week in May.

Eurasian Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Another very common passage migrant and summer breeder. Recorded daily at all suitable locations.

Recorder's Note: Scale of the migration movement was hidden among numerous summer breeders. 184 were ringed. One bird was controlled with Israeli ring - Tel Aviv University. See Ringing Report.

Marsh Warbler

Acrocephalus palustris

Two recorded at BP on 9th and 14th Apr, one ringed.

Recorder's Note: None recorded in habitat bordering track north of ASL, where previously encountered by MB - perhaps drought too severe.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler

Iduna pallida

A common passage migrant and migrant breeder, it was recorded regularly at BP, BPE, HV and ASLNT, and occasionally from other locations throughout the survey. On several occasions the numbers recorded exceeded 10 -15.

Recorder's Note: Quick to respond to playback; found in quite high densities. Formerly in *Hippolais*: its genetic identity appears to be midway between *Hippolais* and *Acrocephalus*; ssp *elaica* on passage. Western Olivaceous Warbler *I. opaca* unlikely to occur in Cyprus, though recorded as a vagrant in Egypt.

Icterine Warbler

Hippolais icterina

Recorded on 6 days during the survey at ASLNT and ACGP. Of the 9 birds recorded 5 were ringed.

Recorder's Note: Although mainly skulking on passage, some birds are prone to sing.

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

Passage showed two peaks, the first from 7-11th Apr and the second from 24th Apr to 4th May, then none. Of the 60 birds reported 45 were ringed.

Recorder's Note: bursts of song were not uncommon.

Common Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita

Recorded in fairly low numbers until 28th Apr, mainly from BP and BPE.

Recorder's Note: Much singing or bursts of song noted. IOC name of Common Chiffchaff helps distinguish meaning from Iberian *Phylloscopus ibericus*, Siberian *P. tristis* and Mountain *P. sindianus*.

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler

Phylloscopus orientalis

Six records between 7th and 17th Apr, mainly from BP. Was the bulk passage of this species only up to late March?

Recorder's Note: Western Bonelli's Warbler is *P. bonelli*, which has occurred in small numbers in Egypt.

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Recorded throughout the survey mostly at BP, where a significant proportion was ringed. See Ringing Report.

Recorder's Note: There was trickle passage of this species from the first day of the survey. Ringing to observation ratio demonstrates its skulking nature, but song was heard once.

Eurasian Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

By far the most common passage migrant, it was abundant at times. Peak passage was 7th to 23rd Apr, tailing off but never drying up until the end of the survey. A total of 541 were ringed.

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

First record on 12th Apr and then again on 23rd. After that it was reported daily in May with 10 at BP on 8th.

Recorder's Note: After a slow start, steady passage in May; the ratio of observations to ringed birds suggests the species behaves covertly on migration - no singing heard.

Barred Warbler

Sylvia nisoria

A single bird caught and ringed at AVC on 13th Apr.

Recorder's Note: A long-distance migrant – this single record is a bonus.

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

Reported from most favourable locations from 7th to 26th Apr, most common at BP and BPE. Peak migration days were 10th and 11th Apr when 22 and 76 were ringed at BPE.

Recorder's Note: A steady passage in April and none in May. Given the occurrence in nearby countries, especially in autumn, of wandering Desert Whitethroat *Sylvia minula* and Hume's Whitethroat *S. althaea*, perhaps birders should be on the alert!

Eastern Orphean Warbler

Sylvia crassirostris

Recorded 4 times at BPE, twice along the ACT and once at AVC. Of the 12 birds recorded 9 were ringed. Most records around mid Apr but a last one on 2nd May.

Recorder's Note: A long-distance migrant, its occurrence in Cyprus possibly reflected the persistent strong westerlies forcing it along a hypotenuse route rather than a N-S Libya-W Turkey route. Note that Western Orphean Warbler is *S. hortensis*; one Israel ringing record.

Common Whitethroat

Sylvia communis

Reported from most favourable locations until 13th May. Sixteen were ringed at BPE on 11 Apr. Recorder's Note: Good passage until mid-April, trickle passage in May.

Spectacled Warbler

Sylvia conspicillata

Reported on 6 days during the survey, 3 times from ACGP, twice from ZM and once from BPE. One bird was ringed.

Recorder's Note: A renowned skulker in the salt marsh during the breeding season, which is rather early, but fewer than expected records were obtained.

Eastern Subalpine Warbler

Sylvia albistriata

One female ringed at BP on 7th Apr. No other records.

Recorder's Note: Perhaps more records were expected, but the recently-split species is probably likelier inland or in Akamas. Note that migrants are from the Turkish breeding population. Western Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* is highly unlikely in Cyprus.

Sardinian Warbler

Sylvia melanocephala

Recorded intermittently throughout the survey, mainly from HV, TB and BP. Breeding activity was confirmed in HV.

Recorder's Note: Although migration through southern Cyprus was noticeable, it was not difficult to find territorial behaviour. A few apparently isolated pairs were probably or definitely breeding. The Happy Valley pair would not break cover in response to playback, quite unlike birds on nests in the Akamas, suggestive of a fledged brood.

Rüppell's Warbler

Sylvia rueppelli

Seen daily from 9th to 14th Apr at six different locations in the survey area. Maximum number was three at BP on 10th Apr, two of which were ringed. None recorded after mid-April.

Recorder's Note: On two occasions, birds were seen carrying food, but likely it was simply pair-bond reinforcement behaviour.

Cyprus Warbler

Sylvia melanothorax

Easy to find and widely reported throughout the survey area for the whole period. Southern Cyprus is the stronghold for this species where it is still far more common than Sardinian Warbler.

Common Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

A single encounter at PRB on 1st May.

Common Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

Recorded in small numbers, up to 5, throughout Apr from the BP area, AVC and one record each from TB and Bloodhound Camp.

Recorder's Note: Passage migrants or long-stayers throughout.

NB1. The split of Eastern Nightingale will make most birds recorded in Cyprus *Luscinia golzii*.

NB2. The traditional use of *hafizi* for this taxon is now invalid, due to precedence of publication date of *golzii* as name.

NB3. Some rearrangement of the official Cyprus list will be needed.

Western Black Redstart

Phoenicurus ochruros

Most of these passage migrants and winter visitors had departed. Only three records were made, one each at AGP, TB and the CG to CZ track on 10th and 28th Apr and 2nd May respectively.

Recorder's Note. All three sightings of birds viewed for ample time.

Common Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

Regularly reported in small numbers, mainly from the BP area until the end of Apr. The last record was of male ringed at BP on 6th May.

Recorder's Note: A steady passage in small numbers.

Whinchat

Saxicola rubetra

Recorded in small numbers from many locations throughout the survey.

Recorder's Note: Thinly widespread throughout.

European Stonechat

Saxicola rubicola

Only 2 records of this winter visitor and passage migrant. Two females were at BPE on 16th Apr and a single female at Dreamers Bay on 5th May.

Recorder's Note: The perils of confusing female Stonechats with Whinchat *S. rubetra* were well publicised. Formerly, European Stonechat was treated as *S. torquatus*, which name now relates only to the 13 ssp of African Stonechat.

NB Siberian (*S. maurus*) and Caspian (*S.m. armenicus*) Stonechats are likely rarities in autumn in Cyprus. IOC name Eurasian Stonechat.

Isabelline Wheatear

Oenanthe isabellina

Nine birds recorded on 7 occasions between 13th Apr and 8th May. Three records each from the CG to CZ track and PRB, and one from AVC/AGP area. Three birds, 1 male and 2 female, were seen on 1st May near the hospital on CZ.

Recorder's Note: Somewhat scarcer than hoped for.

Northern Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

Widely but thinly recorded from 7th Apr to 10th May from most locations. Numbers generally two's and three's but seven were seen on the CG to CZ track on 1st May.

Recorder's Note: During this steady, small-scale passage, areas of ideal habitat were usually devoid of wheatears, probably because of the drought.

Cyprus Wheatear

Oenanthe cypriaca

First recorded on 8th Apr, numbers rapidly built up and by early May most of the summer breeding population seemed to have arrived. It should be noted that numbers at the lower altitudes of the survey area remained quite low, probably because of the drought.

Eastern Black-eared Wheatear

Oenanthe melanoleuca

This species was much less common than expected and was reported in only 1s and 2s from AGP, CG to CZ track and BPE from early Apr until 1st May.

Recorder's Note: Western Black-eared Wheatear is *Oenanthe hispanica*, which may well occur in Cyprus, individuals concerned being from the easternmost population of *hispanica* that breeds in Croatia.

NB dark- and pale-throated morphs occur in populations of both *hispanica* and *melanoleuca*.

Desert Wheatear

Oenanthe deserti

One record at TB on 14th Apr.

Recorder's Note: This bird remained close to the observation post for approx 3 hours.

Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush

Monticola saxatilis

A single record from the fly-tipping area just behind PRB on 13th Apr.

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

Recorded throughout the survey from most locations and in steady numbers, with 20+ reported from BP on 30th Apr and 3rd May. These occasional increases that lasted for no more than a day or so – possibly brought on by wind conditions?

Pied Flycatcher

Ficedula hypoleuca

Recorded in small numbers up until the end of Apr, again BP and BPE were the main locations. Recorder's Note: A trickle passage from the start of the survey that straggled on into mid-May, with three records. Again, were the main stopover locations the damp areas of Troodos?

Collared Flycatcher

Ficedula albicollis

Seen in fairly small numbers mainly from BP and BPE. Isolated peaks on 11th and 17th Apr and 3rd May, after which there were no more records.

Recorder's Note: Recorded in fairly small numbers overall. Possibly the main stopover locations were in the damp areas in Troodos?

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Widespread and abundant.

Spanish Sparrow

Passer hispaniolensis

Widespread and common in quite large numbers up to 200, often in association with House Sparrows *P.domesticus*.

Recorder's Note: The advice to the ringers from the Cyprus Ringing Co-ordinator was not to ring female Spanish Sparrows because they 'hybridise' with House Sparrows; we are not aware of the extent of evidence for this assertion, but MB failed to find any males that clearly showed intermediate characters. Note that the classic 'hybrid' of these two species is 'Italian Sparrow' *Passer* × *italiae*, which in Italy is a stabilised hybrid that in the north is clearly identifiable as different, but a southward cline morphs into full-blown 'Spanish' characters south of Naples. In Cyprus, Spanish Sparrow is breeding, usually in joint colonies with House Sparrow. Migrant groups, however, were also recorded.

Yellow Wagtail sp.

Motacilla flava

Recorded throughout the survey at BP, PRB, ZM and other suitable locations, often in significant numbers; e.g. 300+ at PRB on 14th Apr and another 150 on 16th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Populations of many Yellow Wagtail taxa contain many individuals whose identity cannot be assigned by sight or even in the hand. However, applying Pierre Yésou's rules (90% or 75% of individuals are diagnosable, representing a separable population), several taxa can be treated individually. For a list of those taxa and for more explanation, see OSME

Regional List at www.osme.org. OSME general name is Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, Eastern being *M. tschutschensis*, but Blue-headed is *M (f) flava*.

Blue-headed Wagtail

Motacilla flava flava

Recorded regularly throughout the survey in the same locations as the 'generic' Yellow Wagtail above. Maximum concentration on 24th Apr with 100+ at PRB.

Grey-headed Wagtail

Motacilla flava thunbergi

Two records from PRB on 4th and 14th May. A single bird on 4th and 2 on 14th.

Black-headed Wagtail

Motacilla flava feldegg

Commonly reported from all wetland habitats throughout the survey. Maximum number recorded, 52, at BP on 10th Apr.

Citrine Wagtail

Motacilla citreola

One bird was recorded on five days during the period of the survey. A male, ssp *citreola*, was at BP on 20th Apr; lone males at PRB on 22nd Apr, 7th and 11th May were ssp *werae*; as was a male at BP on 5th May.

Recorder's Note: At least six individuals. Not all male Citrine Wagtails are diagnosable to ssp.

Grey Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

One record of a single bird at PRB on 24th Apr.

Recorder's Note: This species is much more likely near running water in Troodos

White Wagtail

Motacilla alba

Reported in good numbers, 20-150, from PRB and BP up to mid Apr. The migration tailed off after that, but the species was still widely recorded in small numbers.

Recorder's Note: None resembled *yarrellii* in the slightest.

Richard's Pipit

Anthus richardi

Two records on 10th and 13th Apr from BPE and CG to CZ track.

Tawny Pipit

Anthus campestris

A group of 15+ were seen on 5th Apr, prior to the start of the survey, on turf field near Phasouri. Subsequently only one other record near AVC on 13th May.

Recorder's Note: Suspect this nocturnal migrant flew directly to Turkey.

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Reported on 7th, 8th, 9th and 11th Apr from Bloodhound Camp (7), KC (1) and BP (1) and (8).

Recorder's Note: Like Tree Pipit, the few reports suggest it may have been overlooked.

Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

Recorded on 7 days during Apr and on 8th May exclusively in the area of BP. Usually in numbers up to 3, on 10th Apr a flock of 15+ was seen by the ringing team.

Recorder's Note: The scarcity of reports suggests that this species may have been overlooked.

Red-throated Pipit

Anthus cervinus

Reported mainly from PRB and in good numbers up to 23rd Apr and then significantly fewer; e.g. 14th Apr (75+), 15th (30+), 16th (20+) and 23rd (40+). After that the numbers were never greater than 5.

Recorder's Note: A visiting birdwatcher at Phasouri on 13th Apr reported a flock of 'several hundred' flying over.

Water Pipit

Anthus spinoletta

Two reports from PRB on the 4th and 14th May. It is possible that others of this species were present but not recorded.

Recorder's Note: Another species that may well have been overlooked.

Common Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

Treated as a background species, Chaffinch is usually widespread and common being particularly abundant in the HV area. However, this year it was conspicuous by its relative scarcity during the survey. It appeared that many birds had fled to higher ground to escape the worst of the drought conditions as all records of larger numbers (10+) were on our forays to Troodos etc.

Recorder's Note: Although known as a common to abundant inhabitant of the Troodos, the area along the track N of ASL and the woodland S&E of the Forestry Nursery is a minor stronghold.

European Serin

Serinus serinus

Reported sporadically throughout the survey in relatively small numbers Serin was more widespread than Chaffinch and a flock of 25+ was reported from the ASLNT on 12th May.

Recorder's Note: As with Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, this species has a minor stronghold N of ASL, but it is more widespread than Chaffinch at low altitudes where tree cover is adequate.

European Greenfinch

Carduelis chloris

Normally another abundant species, it was scarcer than expected during the survey, but more common than Chaffinch. Greater numbers were seen at higher altitudes.

European Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

More widespread than either Chaffinch or Greenfinch, and locally common, Goldfinch was recorded in small numbers (up to 8) throughout the survey from most suitably wooded areas.

Common Linnet

Carduelis cannabina

Widespread throughout the survey period usually in numbers from 1 – 6.

Recorder's Note: Scattered pairs or family parties in open scrub.

Trumpeter Finch

Bucanetes githagineus

Two females recorded by ringing team at PRB on 15th Apr; unfortunately they escaped the nets.

Corn Bunting

Emberiza calandra

Reported regularly between 8th and 24th Apr. Fifty-five were reported from BPE on 10th and 20+ from AV on 15th Apr. No reports after 24th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Migration evident, but almost all birds recorded initially as attempting to hold territory in Akrotiri Peninsula moved on - we noted that the dead grass stems held no seeds and

that very little grass had seeded the previous year due to lack of water.

Ortolan Bunting

Emberiza hortulana

A steady trickle peaked in mid April with 20+ birds on 12th at AGP, a similar number at Curium on 17th and 10 at PRB on 23rd.

Recorder's Note: Mid-Apr peak. Between 12th – 17th Apr birds appeared slender, lacking fat, but did not linger in strong westerlies.

Cretzschmar's Bunting

Emberiza caesia

Only recorded on 3 occasions within the survey area with 6 seen at AVC on 12th Apr.

Recorder's Note: Elusive and few in number.

Common Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus

Recorded only from PRB, with three on 9th and one on 14th Apr, which was ringed.

Recorder's Note: No evidence of courtship or breeding