



Sunrise Birding, LLC

PO Box 274, Cos Cob, Connecticut 06807 USA

THE MAGIC OF LESVOS!

Private Tour: April 14-21, 2011

The Greek Island of Lesvos or Lesbos (and also known as Mytilene), is renowned for its ancient history, incomparable natural beauty and tradition of hospitality. Situated just a few miles off the Turkish coast in the Aegean Sea, this stunning island has become known by birders as one of the best locations in Europe to witness spring migration. Our base in the small fishing village of Skala Kalloni is perfectly located



beside some wonderfully bird rich habitats, including a reed-fringed pool next to our hotel. The rest of the island with its varied countryside, historic villages and friendly people can be easily explored. Whether searching out the island's special birds, such as **Kruper's Nuthatch** and **Cinereous Bunting**, or marveling at the continual stream of fabulous eastern migrants, or enjoying some of the island's 70 species of orchid, you will soon be captivated by the magic of Lesvos. From the slopes of Mount Olympus, to the island's sparkling rivers and lakes, to picturesque fishing villages alongside beautiful golden beaches, this island with its wealth of resident and migrant birds will have you longing to return.

Some target species on this tour:



Kruper's Nuthatch, Cinereous Bunting, Sombre Tit, Rock Nuthatch, Little Crake, Black-headed Bunting, Yelkouan Shearwater, Levant's Sparrowhawk, Pallid Harrier, Eleanora's Falcon, Collared Pratincole, Great Snipe, Little Bittern, Collared Flycatcher, Olive Tree Warbler, Scops Owl, Isabelline Wheatear, Ruppell's Warbler, Masked Shrike and many more plus orchids, butterflies, and dragonflies.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1, April 14 – On arrival at Mytilene (airport code MJT), the capital of Lesvos, we will set off toward Skala Kalloni, a fishing village on the Gulf of Kalloni in the centre of the island.

Days 3 – 7, April 15-20:

Our hotel at Skala Kalloni is an ideal base from which to explore this beautiful island. Right outside the hotel is a wonderful reed fringed pool where marsh terns such as White-winged, Black and Whiskered can be seen hawking for insects, sometimes in huge flocks. Elegant Black-winged Stilts, groups of Garganey, Glossy Ibis and skulking Little Bitterns should help to make our first look at this magnet for migrating birds quite special.



We will only have short distances to travel with some of the best sites literally on our door step. The east and west rivers with their weedy Tamarisk lined banks can hold a whole host of interesting species. Squacco Herons, White and Black Storks, Little and Great White Egrets, many different terns and the elegant Ruddy Shelduck can all be found, as can Olivaceous, Great Reed and Cetti's Warblers, the superb **Black-headed Bunting** and flocks of dazzling European Bee-Eaters.

The nearby salt pans attract many wading birds with Wood, Curlew and Marsh Sandpipers often present, as well as Little and Temminck's Stints, Black-winged Stilt, Avocet, glorious **Collared Pratincoles** and huge Greater Flamingos. The surrounding fields are worth looking at with Lesser Grey Shrike, Red-footed Falcon and European Roller all taking advantage of the telegraph wires. All four species of harrier are possible in this area and we have a chance for exceptionally close views of several Pallid Harriers.



At the inland lake, with patience we could find Little, Spotted or even Baillon's Crake creeping around the weedy edges. Moving on to the Napi Valley, with its many olive and oak trees, we will search for the large but elusive **Olive Tree Warbler**. In so doing we should also encounter Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Hoopoe, Woodchat and Masked Shrikes, Golden Oriole and Sombre Tit.

The wild rocky western side of the island with its arid volcanic hillsides is home to one of the birds everyone wants to see, the rare Cinereous Bunting. Lesvos represents one of the best places in the world to see this little-known species, and we hope to find them singing from wires and rocks. Here too are Cretzschmar's Bunting, Rock Sparrow, Isabelline and Black-eared Wheatears, **Blue Rock Thrush** and another great bird, Rock Nuthatch.



One of the islands other star birds is the diminutive but delightful Kruper's Nuthatch. It is not always easy to see, but we will make a special effort to catch up with this highly localised bird, which here, is on the western edge of its range. Sigri, a very fertile area near the coast, can be exceptionally good for migrants with incredible numbers present on a good day. Flocks of Red-footed Falcons and Lesser Kestrels hunt over the fields, while Long-legged Buzzard, Montagu's Harrier and Short-toed Eagle can also put in an appearance. We have seen a good variety of other raptors in the past including Griffon Vulture, Golden Eagle, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite, Lanner Falcon and Goshawk, and there is always the chance of a Lesser or Greater Spotted Eagle. Migrants can appear anywhere and other species we could find include Golden Oriole, Rufous Bush Robin, Barred, Orphean, Savi's and River Warblers, Collared, Semi-collared and Red-breasted Flycatchers, Red-rumped Swallow, Tawny and Red-throated Pipits and sometimes literally hundreds of Red-backed Shrikes.



Ipsilou Monastery is one of our favourite picnic stops, and here we can enjoy superb scenery as well as amazing falls of migrant birds; we saw a flock of 27 **Levant Sparrowhawks** very low over our heads on one tour! With the rocky north coast producing Crag Martin, Ruppell's Warbler, Audouin's Gull, flocks of Yelkouan Shearwaters and even the possibility of the potential 'new' Scopoli's Shearwater, as well as the first of the years Eleonora's Falcons, this holiday will leave you buzzing with excitement.

Day 8: April 21 - After some morning birds, we will depart the area heading back to Mytilene for international flights out.

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TOUR PRICE:

\$1850.00 USD per person from Mytilene, Greece based on double occupancy. Price based on current exchange rate and subject to change.

Single Supplement: \$335.00 USD based on availability

Minimum Group Size: 6 plus leader(s)
Maximum Group Size: 12 plus leader(s)



Included in cost: Transport throughout the tour by minibus or car, hotel accommodation based on twin rooms en-suite, all meals from dinner on Day 1 until breakfast at hotel Day 8, including picnic lunches and services of leaders.

Not included: Insurance, drinks, and items of a personal nature.

Final payment is due by December 14, 2010.

Cancellations and Refunds: Refunds, less a cancellation fee of \$300 per person will be made only if Sunrise Birding, LLC is notified in writing of intent to cancel on or before December 14, 2010. No refunds will be made after December 14, 2010. All cancellations must be made in writing. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other trip features.



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