



LESVOS

TRIP REPORT

April 24 – May 03, 2026



And here we are after seeing a lovely pair of Krüper's Nuthatch !



2026 LESVOS Trip Report

By Steve Bird

Our now famous, spring tour to the magical island of Lesvos, Greece was once again a wonderful insight into the northward spring migration of birds from Africa heading up to their breeding ground in northern Europe. And what a wonderful week we had! The water levels in wetlands near the Kalloni Salt Pans were probably the best we have seen in over 20 years. Some years these wetlands are dry, but most years there are a few small pools of water that rapidly dry up. Not this year. The water from the spring rains remained and the birds came. It was a fantastic birding experience with herons, bitterns, ibis, pelicans, storks, shorebirds and terns all giving us incredible views. The salt pans themselves held the usual flocks of Flamingos, Pied Avocets, and a few gulls. Further afield, we got to see the star bird of the island, a pair of Krüper's Nuthatch coming in and out of their nest hole and allowing excellent views. Then, in the rocky hillsides of the west, we enjoyed Cinereous and Cretzschmar's Buntings, lots of wheatears, Middle Spotted Woodpeckers, Sombre Tits, and a wealth of raptors. The big numbers of Eleanora's Falcons was a thrill as was watching hunting Red-footed Falcons and Lesser Kestrels. Then, there was the color! European Bee-eaters, European Rollers, Hoopoes, Golden Orioles, Black-headed Buntings, and Yellow Wagtails all offered their brightest plumages. In the ponds we found Little Crakes and Little Bitterns, while roosting owls included Long-eared Owl and Eurasian Scops Owl. To top it off this year, we had two mega rarities, a Lesser Flamingo and a Mediterranean Monk Seal. Lesvos never fails capture everyone's hearts. There is so much to see and such a beautiful island full of lovely people, amazing scenery and culture, flowers, and of course the Greek Yoghurt and Olive Oil.

HIGHLIGHTS

Either for rarity value, excellent views or simply a group favorite.

- Lesser Flamingo
- Long-eared Owls
- European Bee-eater
- Middle Spotted Woodpecker
- European Scops Owl
- Citrine Wagtail
- Little Owl
- Eleanora's Falcons
- Red-throated Pipit
- Little Crakes
- Eurasian Spoonbill
- Little Gull
- White-winged Tern
- Collared Pratincole
- Spur-winged Lapwing
- Pied Avocet
- Long-legged Buzzard
- Eurasian Bittern
- Mediterranean Monk Seal
- Kruper's Nuthatch
- Cinereous Bunting
- Dalmatian Pelicans
- European Roller
- Levant Sparrowhawk
- Alpine Swifts
- Sombre Tit
- Masked Shrike
- Short-toed Treecreeper
- Mediterranean Shearwater
- Common Kingfisher
- Red-footed Falcon
- Eurasian Golden Oriole
- Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin
- Black-headed Bunting

Our tour began with a visit to the Alykes Wetland, which was looking better than it had for many years with flooded pools that were attracting all sorts of birds, even a Dalmatian Pelicans! We would visit this area most days as things were constantly changing, and there was always something different or new to see.



There were plenty of Black Storks to see, in fact up to 25 on one day. And here's a closer look at that Dalmatian Pelican. It was unusual to see one here and so well as they are often now seen at distance on the Kalloni Salt Pans.



Knowing that if a Eurasian Bittern turned up, it probably wouldn't hang around more than a day or two, we made a quick dash to the area it had been spotted. And sure enough, we got some great looks at this bird, which was gone the next day.



A few other things seen on the wetlands including nice close views of Gull-billed Terns and a huge hatch of thousands of Dark Spreadwing Damselflies.



Another big target today was to see some roosting owls we had found before the tour started. And yes, they were all there. A pair of Long-eared Owls, and also a tiny Eurasian Scops Owl. Perfect !



One of our favorite morning spots, the inland lake of Metochi offers fabulous light in the morning. Here a Purple Heron blends in nicely with the reedy background.

We also had great views of a nesting pair of Ruddy Shelducks and an amazing 5 Little Crakes.
Here is one of the nicely colored males.



For one of the island's star birds, the Kruper's Nuthatch, we visited one of our secret sites where we watched a pair of the exquisite birds coming back and forth to their nest hole.



One day we went for the 4th record for the whole of Greece - a Lesser Flamingo had turned up at one of the Salt Pans. We don't usually chase birds on the island as we are normally the ones to find the rarities, but this was special.



Here the much smaller, dark billed Lesser Flamingo seen in direct comparison the larger Greater!

Another site we visited was to try and see Alpine Swifts coming to drink. They never actually came right down but we got superb views alongside a singing Eastern Olivaceous Warbler



A little further afield, we enjoyed seeing birds like this male Eastern Subalpine Warbler and a smart looking Masked Shrike



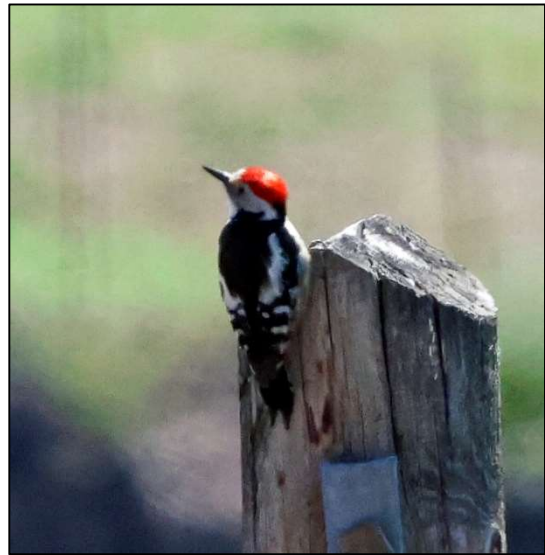
Other birds included the common Eastern Black-eared Wheater and we also had this striking Lesvos Bush Cricket, an endemic and not seen every year.



One of everyone’s favorites is the European Bee-eater, and we saw plenty with fabulous views



A great find by us was this Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, the first one of the year! We were also lucky to find this Middle-spotted Woodpecker visiting its nest hole in a telephone pole.



Among the buntings are these two special birds the Cretzschmar's Bunting and the very localised Cinereous Bunting.



And what happens in the evening? We enjoy a drink while going through our wildlife checklist together.



Our day out West was nothing short of magical. Starting with a Little Owl peering at us over a rock, it just got better – European Rollers at last !



And some more shots of the fabulous Rollers



To add to the color, we found several Eurasian Golden Orioles. They normally hide inside the foliage of trees. Not today!



We had more Golden Orioles and some Lesser Grey Shrikes to add to this exceptional day.



Another top highlight of this day was watching up to 10 Red-footed Falcons hunting over a coastal hill.



Moving up to the North Coast it was quiet for migrants, but this was made for by the fabulous lunch in a beautiful little fishing village.



In rocky areas, we found our target Sombre Tit as well as Western Rock Nuthatch.



On a tiny little pond near our hotel, we saw 55 Black-crowned Night Herons roosting, until some senseless photographers decide to try and get too close.



Here are the Night Herons before they were disturbed. Left photo by Frank Nicoletti.



The Short-toed Snake Eagle was a regular sight during our tour. Including close ones like this.



And here are just a few of the other things we saw.



This Mediterranean Monk Seal caused the biggest twitch on the island with around 100 people turning up to seal this incredibly rare mammal just outside our hotel.



This pair of White Storks have been nesting on a pole in the center of Kalloni Town for many years – Photo Frank Nicoletti

Here are two more photos from Frank Nicoletti – one of 6 Red-throated Pipits and a beautiful Collared Pratincole in flight.



WILDLIFE LIST for Lesvos 2026

A = Number of species recorded on tour

B = Number of days out of 07 recorded C = Highest daily count

H = Heard Only N/C = No Count C=Common

This list is in line with the new AviList and as such names may be different than some of the field guides and other taxonomy's – any additional notes see appendix *

A	BIRD SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	B	C
1.	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	5	8
2.	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	5	10
3.	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	1	1
4.	Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>	5	3
5.	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	1	1
6.	Scopoli's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	3	3
7.	Mediterranean Shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>	2	60+
8.	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	4	3
9.	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis</i>	1	1
10.	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	6	250
11.	Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	1	1
12.	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	6	25
13.	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia ciconia</i>	6	2
14.	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	6	20+
15.	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	1	4
16.	Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	4	8
17.	Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	1	1
18.	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus minutus</i>	3	2
19.	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax</i>	1	55
20.	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	7	10
21.	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea cinerea</i>	6	25
22.	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea purpurea</i>	7	10
23.	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba alba</i>	4	2
24.	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	7	20
25.	European Shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis desmarestii</i>	5	10
26.	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>	3	3
27.	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	1	2
28.	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus gallicus</i>	6	3
29.	Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Tachyspiza brevipes</i>	1	1
30.	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus nisus</i>	2	2
31.	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus</i>	6	3
32.	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	1	1
33.	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus rufinus</i>	3	3
34.	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo buteo</i>	6	6
35.	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	1	H
36.	Little Crake	<i>Zapornia parva</i>	1	5
37.	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus chloropus</i>	6	4
38.	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra atra</i>	7	2
39.	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	7	10

40.	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	5	30
41.	Grey (Black-bellied) Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola squatarola</i>	3	1
42.	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius</i>	2	2
43.	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius curonicus</i>	3	2
44.	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus</i>	4	1
45.	Spur-winged Lapwing	<i>Venellus spinosus</i>	3	2
46.	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata arquata</i>	1	2
47.	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	4	200
48.	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	2	1
49.	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	3	17
50.	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	2	3
51.	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	3	30
52.	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago gallinago</i>	3	2
53.	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	4	1
54.	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	3	2
55.	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	3	3
56.	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	7	100
57.	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	3	10
58.	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola pratincola</i>	1	3
59.	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	1	3
60.	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>	1	4
61.	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>	1	1
62.	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis michahellis</i>	7	C
63.	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons albifrons</i>	4	10
64.	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	6	20
65.	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo hirundo</i>	6	50
66.	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida hybrida</i>	1	6
67.	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	1	1
68.	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	7	12
69.	Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia domestica</i>	7	N/C
70.	Common Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus palumbus</i>	1	1
71.	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur turtur</i>	4	10
72.	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	7	20
73.	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	1	2
74.	Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	1	1
75.	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus canorus</i>	1	2
76.	Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops scops</i>	1	1
77.	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua indigena</i>	1	1
78.	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	1	3
79.	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba melba</i>	3	300+
80.	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus apus</i>	6	60
81.	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	1	1
82.	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	6	30
83.	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	3	2
84.	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	1	3
85.	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1	1
86.	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>	3	2

87.	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	3	10
88.	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus</i>	5	2
89.	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	2	10
90.	Eleanora's Falcon	<i>Falco eleonorae</i>	2	3
91.	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	1	1
92.	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus brookei</i>	1	2
93.	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	5	60
94.	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	2	5
95.	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator senator</i>	5	12
96.	Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>	5	2
97.	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	3	4
98.	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius atricapillus</i>	3	2
99.	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula soemmerringii</i>	2	10
100.	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	6	N/C
101.	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	6	10
102.	Sombre Tit	<i>Poecile lugubris</i>	1	1
103.	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	3	2
104.	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	5	2
105.	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea pallida</i>	1	H
106.	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata meridionalis</i>	7	C
107.	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia riparia</i>	3	4
108.	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	1	5
109.	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica rustica</i>	6	60+
110.	European Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica rufula</i>	4	8
111.	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	8	20
112.	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti cetti</i>	1 + 4 H	1
113.	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	1	1
114.	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	1	1
115.	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus arundinaceus</i>	3	4
116.	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	1	1
117.	Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	1	2
118.	Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	1	H
119.	Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella lusciniodes</i>	1	H
120.	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Iduna pallida elaeica</i>	4	1
121.	Olive-tree Warbler	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>	1	1
122.	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis juncidis</i>	1	2
123.	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla atricapilla</i>	1	4
124.	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca curruca</i>	1	3
125.	Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>	1	1
126.	Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Curruca crassirostris crassirostris</i>	3	8
127.	Eastern Subalpine Warbler	<i>Curruca cantillans albistriata</i>	2	2
128.	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala melanocephala</i>	3	2
129.	Barred Warbler	<i>Curruca nisoria</i>	1	1
130.	Krüper's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta krueperi</i>	1	4
131.	Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer neumayer</i>	2	7
132.	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	1	2
133.	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula aterrimus</i>	5	4

134.	Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes syriaca</i>	1	1
135.	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	3	2
136.	Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	1	H
137.	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos megarhynchos</i>	2 + 6H	1
138.	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca hypoleuca</i>	1	1
139.	Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	1	1
140.	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	1	2
141.	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	3	1
142.	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola rubicola</i>	5	2
143.	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	1	4
144.	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	1	1
145.	Eastern Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>	6	4
146.	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus balearoibericus</i>	8	N/C
147.	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis hispaniolensis</i>	5	20
148.	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	2	1
149.	Western Yellow Wagtail (Blue-headed)	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>	3	2
150.	Western Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed)	<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>	3	3
151.	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola citreola</i>	1	1
152.	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	4	6
153.	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs coelebs</i>	5	3
154.	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	4	2
155.	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	2	3
156.	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	5	4
157.	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	1	2
158.	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra calandra</i>	7	C
159.	Cinereous Bunting	<i>Emberiza cineracea cineracea</i>	2	4
160.	Cretzschmar's Bunting	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>	5	10
161.	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	4	3
162.	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	3	20

A	Mammals	SCIENTIFIC NAME	B	C
1.	Caucasian (Persian) Squirrel	<i>Sciurus anomalus</i>	1	1
2.	Mediterranean Monk Seal	<i>Monachus monachus</i>	1	1
3.	Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	1	4

A	Reptiles & Amphibian	SCIENTIFIC NAME	B	C
1.	Starred Agama	<i>Laudakia stellio</i>	1	1
2.	Balkan Terrapin	<i>Mauremys rivulata</i>	5	50
3.	Levant Water Frog	<i>Pelophylax bedriagae</i>	5	8

A	Butterflies	SCIENTIFIC NAME	B	C
1.	Old World Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>	2	1
2.	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	4	6

3.	Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	2	2
4.	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	2	1
5.	Cleopatra	<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	1	1

A	Moths	SCIENTIFIC NAME	B	C
1.	Willowherb Hawkmoth	<i>Proserpinus proserpina</i>	1	1

A	Dragonflies & Damselfies	SCIENTIFIC NAME	B	C
1.	Dark Spreadwing	<i>Lestes macrostigma</i>	3	500
2.	Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	2	6

A	Flora	SCIENTIFIC NAME	B	C
1.	Pyramidal Orchid	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	2	10
2.	Holy Orchid	<i>Anacamptis sancta</i>	2	50

A	Other	SCIENTIFIC NAME	B	C
3.	Lesvos Bush Cricket	<i>Poecilimon mytelensis</i>	2	1



Just waiting for our taverna lunch to arrive. Excellent photo by Cheryl Blum!