

A Birding Trip to

Cyprus



19th to 29th March, 2023

Tuesday, 21 st March	Cape Draparon
Wednesday, 22 nd March	Paphos Lighthouse & Archaeological Site
Thursday, 23 rd March	Anarita Park
	Asprokremmos Dam
Friday, 24 th March	Baths of Aphrodite
Sunday, 26 th March	Aphrodites Rock
Monday, 27 th March	Mandria Fields
	Asprokremmos Dam
	Paphos Lighthouse
Tuesday, 28 th March	Cape Draparon



CYPRUS

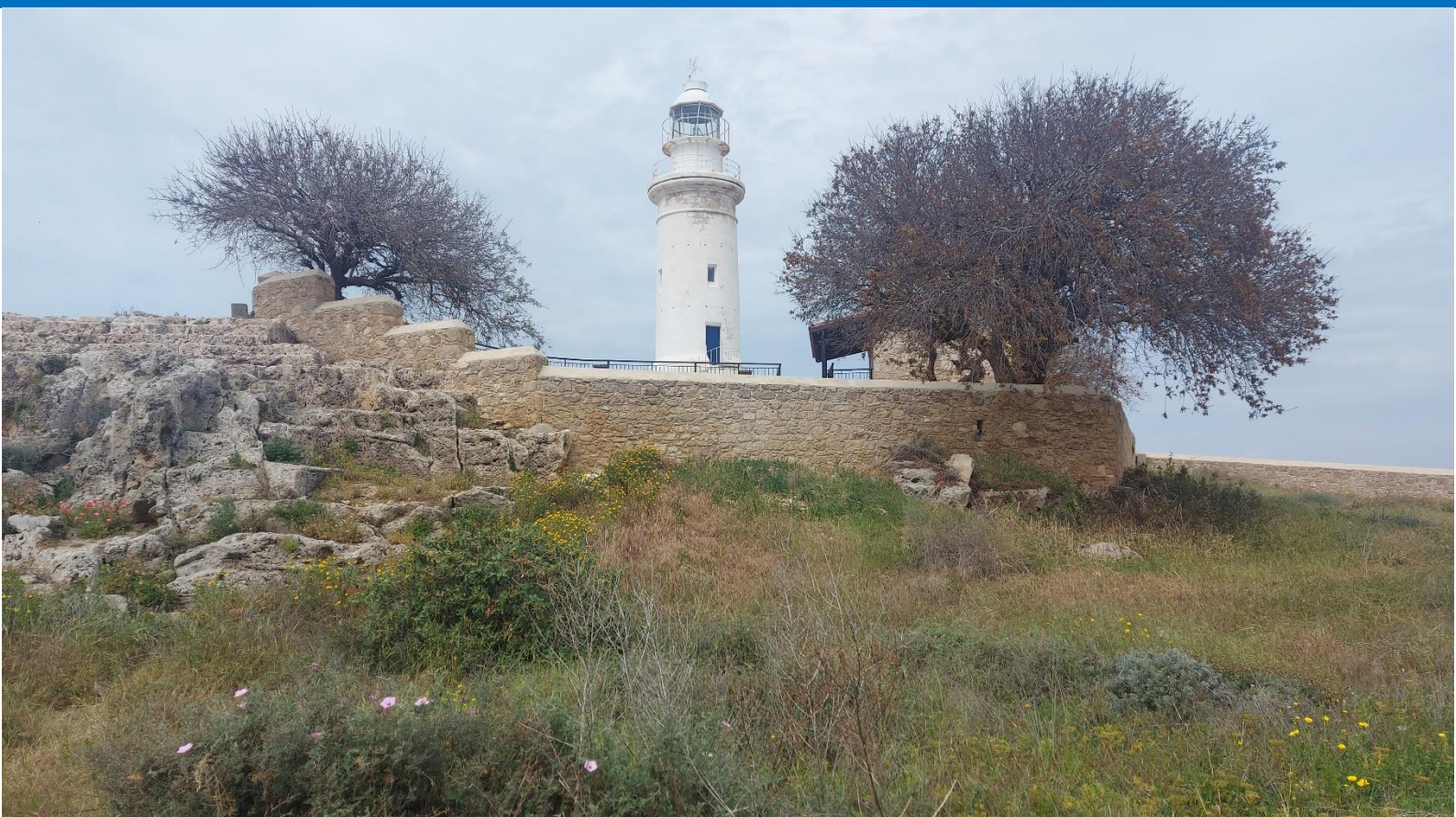
19th to 29th March, 2023

This trip was a family one, based in the town of Paphos itself. We hired a car so birding was not just limited to the lighthouse area, but I resisted the temptation to go any distance to build up a list or twitch “rare” birds on the island (such as the Diederik Cuckoo that had been in the Paralimni area for a day or two – a 4 hour round trip to the East). Instead, birds were seen on the walks that we did anyway, and a couple of pure birding mornings were conducted within a short distance of the apartment – ie. just beyond the airport to the East. The intention was to see what migrants March would throw up in the area, and this proved to be enjoyable in itself.

March is arguably one of the best times of the year for northward migration, as I had found over 35 years ago when my work company had a conference based in Paphos, leading to one of my earliest memories of non UK based birding. This was evident on this trip as well, with the mix of birds changing from day to day. For those based in Paphos and with no transport, the lighthouse area and greater archaeological site with the town in itself gives a very good migration experience.

It’s worth noting that the specific birding areas visited were not always on “paved” roads, so the ancient Hyundai that we were allocated by the car hire firm was not best designed for off-roading. The ones I did negotiate were done with care, and I did have the backing of extra insurance covering the underneath of the car, but occasional water sculpted ruts were inevitably found.

Paphos Lighthouse





Cretzchmar's Bunting

For any birders staying in Paphos during Spring/March migration, this was always a must to visit on a morning, due to its attraction for visible migration. This was curtailed somewhat some time ago by the fencing in of the historical archaeological site, which also contains the lighthouse area. Access is now by the official visitors gate next to the harbour car park, and it doesn't open doors until 8:30am (first light is just after 6am in March!). The good news is that the entrance fee is €4.50, and since most of us birders are over the hill, over 65's are free. The archaeological site covers a decent area, and an hour or two at least is needed to dig out most of the migrant hideaway spots. However, while I did see birds such as Black Redstart and Hoopoe around the park, the most productive locale was quite easily around the lighthouse (and adjacent odeon/ampitheatre). As soon as I arrived there and started looking into the bushes, I found Ruppell's & Eastern Subalpine Warblers and Cretzchmar's Bunting around the bushes near the fence. More Ruppell's Warblers were in the scrub below the lighthouse, and on returning to the area after covering the rest of the park a couple of Northern Wheatears were accompanied by Black-eared and a Black Redstart around the ampitheatre. A birding friend from back home had visited a couple of times during his stay the week before and had a different set of birds, so demonstrating the fluid nature of the migrants here.





Hoopoe

Black Redstart

My second visit was later in the morning, just before lunchtime, and the mix of migrants was even better than the first earlier visit. All the birds seen last time were present, with seemingly more Ruppell's Warblers, and even though I only covered the lighthouse area this time, I added Wryneck, feeding Hoopoe, more Ortolan Buntings in a small flock, Willow Warbler, and Common as well as Black Redstarts. While the benefit of being able to gain access would have been far less if any annoying tourists, there is still a great deal of activity later in the day.

Anarita Park

I wasn't aware of this location until I looked on the birdingplaces.eu website, where they rate it as worth a visit. It doesn't seem to be a park as such, more a fairly picturesque hilly area with farmland slightly lower down. It is accessed from a good tarmac road progressing to much rougher unpaved tracks. As usual with a hire car, these had to be driven carefully, although there weren't many places where small gullies had been created by running water. Overall, I was happy to take the car there. The habitat is mainly open, with scattered bushes in the minority. Apparently it is best to visit here during one of the migration seasons, since there aren't too many birds around outside of this. My visit seemed to indicate that it was worth looking for Wheatears here, of which the Cyprus ones I saw may well breed (two looked like a pair), although the Black-eareds were more than likely just passing through. Lesser Kestrels are indicated as having been seen, but the pair of Kestrels I saw were Common. Regular species seen here were Sardinian Warbler, Zitting Cisticola and Corn Bunting.

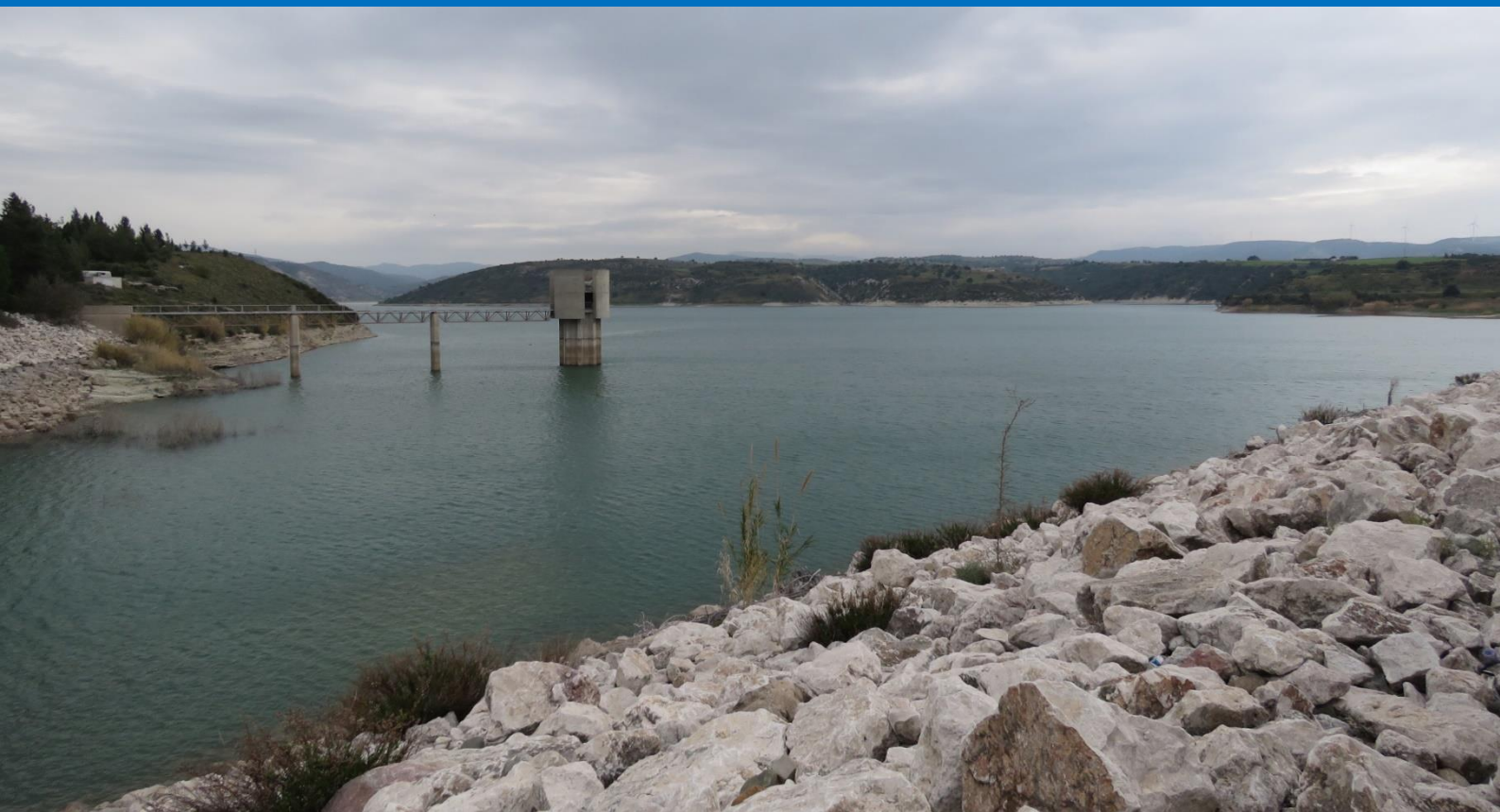




Sardinian Warbler

Cyprus Wheatear

Asprokremmos Dam



This well known site is not far from both Anarita Park (above) and the airport to the South-west. It was previously a good spot for pools and migrant bushes below the dam itself, but those heady days are long gone by some decades, since the area below the dam doesn't seem to hold the pools any more, being left with an almost dry trickle. There is also still no access via the western end of the dam where the track is gated. The dam is quite long, and there is a well sized expanse of open water within the reservoir, with the hills framing this to the rear (this is purportedly where it is useful to scan for raptors). I parked up in the car park at the western end of the dam, and had a couple of noisy Great Spotted Cuckoos as I exited the vehicle. This location has a stand of mainly coniferous trees, and there is some quite interesting open land adjacent to this, where I had a pair of Chukar flying over. The top end of the copse opened on to some clear land that was good for many Sardinian Warblers and Corn Bunting, singing Serins, a dapper Black-eared Wheatear, and very interesting Stonechat. Glaring white rump and limited deep rufous-orange bib pointed to Siberian Stonechat (full black tail ruled out *variegatus* form). Over the trees, and a



Siberian Stonechat

quintet of Black-crowned Night Herons kept a tight formation before landing on the opposite side of the copse (presumably inward bound migrants), and a single Eastern Bonelli's Warbler was feeding at the edge of the copse.

The area below the dam can be reached quite easily by parking on the rough ground on the eastern end of the dam and walking down the rough track. Cyprus Warbler had been reported at the base of the dam, where there is a good section of rocky scrub with broom, but I only had a multitude of Sardinian Warblers here, along with plenty of Chukar and Cetti's Warblers. Returning to a view over the dam on this second visit added a couple of Alpine Swifts to the haul, along with a single Great White Egret at the reservoir edges.



Eastern Black-eared Wheatear

Mandria





Crested Lark

This birding locality is not the village of Mandria itself, but the fields and coastal area to the South. It's not an area that is well noted on the birding guides, but I became aware of it when some decent birds were reported there while on holiday, including Black-bellied Sandgrouse and various interesting although more expected migrants. It seems to be recognised as a good spot for open area species and migrants such as larks and wheatears (hence one area called "Lark Corner" next to the sea, with a picnic area just West of there also noted for migrants. The problem was that I didn't have much to go on as to where the best places to bird were, and when I did arrive, many of the fields were agricultural and had growing crops where the visibility for birds was poor. A walk around the coastal section, including Lark Corner and the picnic area was reasonable, although mix of species must vary daily at this time of the year. Larks were all represented by Crested Lark, and Wheatear by a single Northern, with a large flock of Spanish Sparrows roaming the area. Best bird was Black Francolin, with at least 3 calling, and one of these seen flying from its nearby hidden calling point to another hidden point in the grassy field.



Spanish Sparrow

LIST OF SPECIES

Black Francolin

Francolinus francolinus

27 Mar 2023 Mandria (At least 2 calling, one of which was seen flying from cover)

Chukar Partridge

Alectoris chukar

23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (2)

24 Mar 2023 Baths of Aphrodite (2)

27 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (11 – largest flock of 6, rest in singles or pairs)

European Nightjar

Caprimulgus europaeus

23 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (2 heard churring, with additional bird calling)

Alpine Swift

Tachymarptis melba

27 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (2)

Common Swift

Apus apus

20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (Large numbers each day ~40+)

27 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (4)

Great Spotted Cuckoo

Clamator glandarius

23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (2 in area of roadside car park at East end of dam)

Rock Dove

Columba livia

26 Mar 2023 Aphrodites Rock (2 birds which appeared to have plumage of origin)

Common Wood Pigeon

Columba palumbus

20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (~10)

22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (~15)

23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (5)

24 Mar 2023 Baths of Aphrodite (~30)

26 Mar 2023 Aphrodites Rock (4)

Eurasian Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (~15)

23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (3)

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam

Yellow-legged Gull

Larus michahellis

21 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (~100)

26 Mar 2023 Aphrodites Rock (~20)

27 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (3)

28 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (~30)

European Shag

Gulosus aristotelis

21 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (2)

Glossy Ibis*Plegadis falcinellus*

22 Mar 2023 Paphos (Flock of 15 flew over the harbour area from the sea)

Black-crowned Night Heron*Nycticorax nycticorax*

23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (Flock of 5 flew over the wood from the South then landed in the vicinity)

Grey Heron*Ardea cinerea*

20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (3 overhead)

25 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (Flock of 20 overhead looking to land in vicinity)

Great Egret*Ardea alba*

27 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (1 fishing on shoreline on reservoir side of eastern dam)

Little Egret*Egretta garzetta*

26 Mar 2023 Aphrodites Rock (group of 3 on the rock itself)

Eurasian Sparrowhawk*Accipiter nisus*

20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (1 chasing Common Swift)

22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (1 flew from rocks)

23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (1)

Long-legged Buzzard*Buteo rufinus*

23 Mar 2023 Kathikas Hills (1)

Common Buzzard*Buteo buteo*

24 Mar 2023 Baths of Aphrodite (Group of 4 overhead heading North)

Eurasian Hoopoe*Upupa epops*

22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (2)

24 Mar 2023 Baths of Aphrodite (1)

25 Mar 2023 Pachyammos (1)

27 Mar 2023 Mandria Coast (2); Asprokremmos Dam (1); Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)

Eurasian Wryneck*Jynx torquilla*

27 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (1 flew from ground into bushes)

Lesser Kestrel*Falco naumanni*

26 Mar 2023 Aphrodites Rock (1 carrying lizard)

Common Kestrel*Falco tinnunculus*

22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (2)

23 Mar 2023 Anarita Park (1 pair); Asprokremmos Dam (2)

27 Mar 2023 Mandria (1)

28 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (1)

Masked Shrike*Lanius nubicus*

24 Mar 2023 Baths of Aphrodite (1 around Pyrgos tis Rigenas ruins on Adonis Walk)

Eurasian Magpie*Pica pica*

- 20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (2)
- 23 Mar 2023 Anarita Park (4); Asprokremmos Dam (1)
- 27 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (2)

Western Jackdaw*Coloeus monedula*

- 21 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (~20)
- 23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (~20)
- 26 Mar 2023 Aphrodites Rock (4)
- 27 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (3)
- 28 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (8)

Hooded Crow*Corvus cornix*

- 20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (4)
- 21 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (~20)
- 22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (~30)
- 23 Mar 2023 Anarita Park (3); Asprokremmos Dam (~20)
- 26 Mar 2023 Aphrodites Rock (~30)
- 27 Mar 2023 Mandria Coast (6); Asprokremmos Dam (15); Paphos Lighthouse Area (6)

Great Tit*Parus major*

- 20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (2)
- 22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (5)
- 23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (Wood – 5)
- 24 Mar 2023 Baths of Aphrodite (4)
- 27 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (3)

Crested Lark*Galerida cristata*

- 21 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (~25)
- 22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (6)
- 27 Mar 2023 Mandria Coast (6); Asprokremmos Dam (2); Paphos Lighthouse Area (2)
- 28 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (4 including nest with eggs)

Barn Swallow*Hirundo rustica*

- 20 Mar 2023 Paphos Paradise Apartments (1)
- 21 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (~30)
- 22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (~20)
- 23 Mar 2023 Asprokremmos Dam (1)
- 24 Mar 2023 Baths of Aphrodite (~20)
- 26 Mar 2023 Aphrodites Rock (10)
- 27 Mar 2023 Mandria Coast (4); Paphos Lighthouse Area (12)
- 28 Mar 2023 Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (3)

Common House Martin*Delichon urbicum*

- 22 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (~10)
- 27 Mar 2023 Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)

Cetti's Warbler*Cettia cetti*

- 20 Mar 2023** Paphos Paradise Apartments (1 singing)
- 23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park (1 singing); Asprokremmos Dam (1 singing)
- 24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (5 singing)
- 26 Mar 2023** Aphrodites Rock (1 singing)
- 27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1 in flight, 3 more singing)

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler*Phylloscopus orientalis*

- 23 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1)
- 27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1); Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)

Willow Warbler*Phylloscopus trochilus*

- 27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)

Common Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita*

- 20 Mar 2023** Paphos Paradise Apartments (1)
- 23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park(1); Asprokremmos Dam (2)
- 27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1); Paphos Lighthouse Area (2)

Zitting Cisticola*Cisticola juncidis*

- 21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (3)
- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (4)
- 23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park (3); Asprokremmos Dam (3)
- 27 Mar 2023** Mandria Coast (3); Asprokremmos Dam (2)
- 28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (1)

Eurasian Blackcap*Sylvia atricapilla*

- 24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (1)
- 26 Mar 2023** Aphrodites Rock (1)
- 27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)

Lesser Whitethroat*Curruca curruca*

- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)
- 23 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1)
- 24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (1)
- 27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (2); Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)

Rüppell's Warbler*Curruca ruppelli*

- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (3)
- 26 Mar 2023** Aphrodites Rock (2)
- 27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (a minimum of 6 – they were all around the vicinity of the Lighthouse with other Warbler species, redstart, and cretzmars buntings)

Sardinian Warbler*Curruca melanocephala*

- 21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (12)
- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (5)
- 23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park (5); Asprokremmos Dam (6)
- 24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (7)
- 26 Mar 2023** Aphrodites Rock (10)
- 27 Mar 2023** Mandria Coast (2); Asprokremmos Dam (18); Paphos Lighthouse Area (4)
- 28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (8)

Eastern Subalpine Warbler*Curruca cantillans***22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)**27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)**Common Whitethroat***Curruca communis***27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)**European Robin***Erithacus rubecula***24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (1)**Common Nightingale***Luscinia megarhynchos***26 Mar 2023** Aphroditis Rock (1 subsong)**27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1 subsong); Paphos Lighthouse Area (1 seen briefly)**28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (2 subsong)**Black Redstart***Phoenicurus ochruros***22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (3)**24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (1)**27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (3)**Common Redstart***Phoenicurus phoenicurus***27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1 male, 1 female)**28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (1 male)**Blue Rock Thrush***Monticola solitarius***21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (1 male on rocks next to church)**Siberian Stonechat***Saxicola maurus***23 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1 male in open bushes next to wood)**Northern Wheatear***Oenanthe oenanthe***21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (1)**22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (4)**26 Mar 2023** Aphroditis Rock (1)**27 Mar 2023** Mandria Coast (1)**28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (1)**Isabelline Wheatear***Oenanthe isabellina***26 Mar 2023** Aphroditis Rock (1)**28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (2)**Eastern Black-eared Wheatear***Oenanthe melanoleuca***22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)**23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park (2); Asprokremmos Dam (1)**Cyprus Wheatear***Oenanthe cypriaca***23 Mar 2023** Anarita (3 – 1 distant singing male & 1 close pair)**Spanish Sparrow***Passer hispaniolensis***21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (~40)**27 Mar 2023** Mandria Coast (~100)

House Sparrow*Passer domesticus*

- 20 Mar 2023** Paphos Paradise Apartments (3)
- 21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (10)
- 23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park (10)
- 27 Mar 2023** Mandria Coast (6)
- 28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (15)

White Wagtail*Motacilla alba*

- 20 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)
- 21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (2)
- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (2)
- 27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (2)
- 28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (1)

Meadow Pipit*Anthus pratensis*

- 21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (2)
- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area(1)
- 23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park (1)
- 27 Mar 2023** Mandria Coast (2); Asprokremmos Dam (2)

European Greenfinch*Chloris chloris*

- 20 Mar 2023** Paphos Paradise Apartments (1)
- 21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (8)
- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (4)
- 23 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (2)
- 24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (8)
- 26 Mar 2023** Aphrodites Rock (2)
- 27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1); Paphos Lighthouse Area (2)

Common Linnet*Linaria cannabina*

- 23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park (3)
- 27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (2)
- 28 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (2)

European Goldfinch*Carduelis carduelis*

- 20 Mar 2023** Paphos Paradise Apartments (1)
- 21 Mar 2023** Cape Drepanon (Agios Georgios) (2)
- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (2)
- 23 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (2)
- 24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (10)

European Serin*Serinus serinus*

- 23 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (1)
- 24 Mar 2023** Baths of Aphrodite (4)
- 27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (2)

Corn Bunting*Emberiza calandra*

- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)
- 23 Mar 2023** Anarita Park (7); Asprokremmos Dam (2)
- 26 Mar 2023** Aphrodites Rock (2)
- 27 Mar 2023** Asprokremmos Dam (6)

Cretzschmar's Bunting*Emberiza caesia*

- 22 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (1)
- 27 Mar 2023** Paphos Lighthouse Area (6)