

Butterflies and Birds of North Greece

Holiday Report 7 - 14 June 2014



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Introduction

The base for our holiday was the little village of Chrysohorafa, north Greece. It is located within Lake Kerkini National Park, and is one of the most magical areas in Europe for bird and butterfly watching. This internationally renowned wetland site has protected status under the Ramsar Convention and is also one of the best places in the world to see the globally endangered Dalmatian Pelican. The Park boasts around 130 butterfly species, over 300 bird species and a host of other wildlife. The main reason for this abundance is its richness in diverse habitats. These include lakes, rivers, flowery hillsides, alpine pastures and emerald green mountains covered in forests of beech, hornbeam, oak, black pine and oriental plane. It has been widely known for its avifauna since the beginning of the 20th century. To be sitting by the shores of the lake while being serenaded by the songs of Nightingales, Turtle Doves and Golden Orioles, is a magical experience. Our aim therefore was to spend a relaxing week exploring the area for butterflies, birds and other wildlife, in the hope of seeing around 80-100 butterfly species and a similar number of birds.

The twelve guests joining Greenwings were Gill, Yiannis, Phil, Chris T, Richard, Eileen, Matt, Tom, Helen, Chris C, Aidan and Emma. Matt and Tom had won their holiday with Matt's winning entry in a photography competition which was jointly run by Greenwings and Belvoir Fruit Farms, and which raised £8,000 for Butterfly Conservation. Steve Mills and Hilary Koll from the charity BirdWING, whose conservation efforts in north Greece Greenwings supports, led the birdwatching, while Julian Dowding led on butterflies and Amanda Borrows assisted with additional bird guiding.

We stayed at Hotel Limneo, which is owned and run by our host Nikos. Nothing was too much trouble for him. His rooms were all well-equipped, clean and modern, and each morning he prepared an excellent buffet breakfast from home-made or locally produced savours like Bougatsa, yoghurt, fresh bread and omelettes. He also created a sumptuous picnic lunch for us every day.



Group at Hotel Limneo © E. & A. Whitfield

Below is the programme for the week, followed by a description for each day, a gallery and a species list.

Day 1, Saturday 7th June: Arrival in Thessaloniki and transfer to hotel.

Day 2, Sunday 8th June: Sites around Lake Kerkini.

Day 3, Monday 9th June: Limnochori.

Day 4, Tuesday 10th June: Mt. Orvilos.

Day 5, Wednesday 11th June: Kapnofito.

Day 6, Thursday 12th June: towards Mt. Vrodou

Day 7, Friday 13th June: Boat Trip on Lake Kerkini, and visit to an undisclosed mountain.

Day 8, Saturday 14th June: return to UK.



Day 1, Saturday 7th June

Our group arrived at Thessaloniki Airport late in the afternoon and after meeting our guests, we made the relatively short journey to Kerkini and our hotel. After meeting Nikos and settling in, we set out for our first Greek dinner at one of the local tavernas. The range of food at Savvaz' was excellent and included a selection of shared mezedes style meals with plates of local speciality meats cheeses and vegetables. These included lamb chops, chicken and pork souvlaki, buffalo kouzoukaki, baked feta, aubergine, tomato and Greek salads, all washed down with iced water, local wine or beer. After dining we retired to the hotel, the dark shape of Mount Belles (Mt. Kerkini) in the distance providing an impressive backdrop. From our rooms, you could see Little Owls on the telephone wires and hear Nightingales in the distance.

Day 2, Sunday 8th June

Stop1: Following breakfast, we headed out to the lake after meeting up with Steve and Hilary our birdwatching guides from BirdWING. At the first stop by the lake we were greeted by a singing Great Reed Warbler, its chattering song echoing out from the reeds, whilst in the background, we could also hear a Cuckoo.

Stop2: We moved to an embankment and watched a party of Red-rumped Swallows flying over us. Steve pointed out how they could be differentiated in flight from the Barn Swallows by their long needle-like tails which made the birds appear even more streamlined and by their pale creamy rumps which actually don't appear particularly red at all! Not far away, we were also able to watch a flyover of Spoonbills, Night Herons and then Grey Herons, and Hilary was able to show us the extraordinary nest of some Penduline Tits constructed in one of the many riverside willows.



Red-rumped Swallows © G. Pullinger

Butterflies included Clouded Yellow, Wall, Sooty Copper and two unusual forms of Small Copper; the dark summer form and the variety 'caeruleopunctata', with its wonderful little blue studs above the orange submarginal bands of the hind-wings. We also saw our first Black-veined Whites, Clouded Yellows, Common Blues and Holly Blues.



Meadow by the lake © G. Pullinger

Stop 3: Our next stop was Mandraki Harbour, which lies at the northern end of the lake. Steve and Hilary explained to us the significance of the lake to the wider area and gave us a flavour of the bird life in Kerkin National Park which was to be our home for a week. In this useful introduction, we learned that it is principally the lake which lies at the heart of everything, providing not only an important source of income for farmers and fishermen but more recently a significant development in ecotourism due to the sheer diversity of wildlife reliant upon the lake and the wider environs.

Our guides also informed us that unfortunately there were still some considerable conservation concerns, particularly the problem caused by extreme changes in water levels, e.g., water abstraction for irrigation and the use of the lake as a sump for mountain melt water, all leading to unfavourable changes in habitat for certain birds. The marsh nesting Terns have lost many of their breeding places because the floating lilies upon which they nest cannot cope with the fluctuation in water levels, and the 'drowned forest' which so many of the birds breed in, may one day be gone. Luckily, some of the problems are being addressed by the Greek conservation authorities together with BirdWING; for example, islands are being built on the lake for nesting birds and Tern nesting rafts have been built along with Dalmatian Pelican nesting platforms. Furthermore, the greater water levels throughout the year have benefited some species, creating better fishing for Cormorants and Great White Pelicans. Steve mentioned that this magnificent bird, whose wingspan measures around 10 feet, flies 200km here from Lake Prespa every day, to feed on the rich fishing of the lake. From the harbour, we could see the Dalmatian platforms in the far distance and the Tern rafts only a hundred metres or so away. The rafts and platforms have been successfully utilised for a number of



Perching Sandwich Tern © J. Dowding

years now, resulting in increasing numbers of species, particularly Dalmatian Pelicans, which were successful in fledging over 200 young in 2013. In fact, Lake Kerkini is the only place in the world where this enigmatic bird has actually increased in numbers since the second half of the nineteenth century. Following this success, BirdWING have assisted in the creation of Dalmatian platforms at Evros Delta in north east Greece, to try and help increase numbers there too.



After our talk we approached the small jetty and caught sight of many of the birds using the Lake, such as Night Heron, Common Terns and Sandwich Terns, including a juvenile of the latter species. The terns were utilising some of the many sticks and perches poking up out of the lake. Further out over the lake, Great Cormorants and Pygmy Cormorants were occupied with parental duties and our guides pointed out the differences between these two species, the latter having a much more rapid wing beat and looking a fair bit smaller and stockier. We also heard a Great Reed Warbler singing very loudly from some reeds very close to the harbour wall; so close in fact that we could see the deep orange colour inside its throat as it sang.

Dalmatian Pelicans could be seen along with Great White Pelicans (also known as Rosy Pelicans)



flying off to feed upon Carp fry in the shallows, along with the Cormorants that do all the hard work corralling the fish, which the Pelicans then cleverly pick off. In the reed beds we were able to watch a very secretive Little Bittern doing its best to stay out of sight. This was the cue to start searching a little harder and soon a Night Heron appeared along with a beautiful adult Squacco Heron moving deftly across some Lily pads. In the background whilst all this was going on, we could hear the soft purring calls of Turtle Doves and one or two of us heard a booming Bittern.

Butterfly-wise, we recorded a few interesting species, with Small White and European Swallowtail flying low over the harbour vegetation. Their busyness suggested they were looking either for mates, nectar, or some plant on which to deposit their eggs. This was clearly the case with a rather worn-looking female Short-tailed Blue seen egg-laying on a species of clover just by the harbour wall. A number of Dragonfly species were seen here too including Broad Scarlet (Scarlet Darter), Keeled Skimmer and Black-tailed Skimmer.





Tessellated Water Snake © E. & A. Whitfield

The reality of what Steve and Hilary had said about the importance of the lake was beginning to dawn on us with all kinds of creatures appearing everywhere we looked. Soon, we were both watching and listening to some very noisy Marsh Frogs whose heads were peeping up out of the water as they called and Aidan and Emma photographed a Dice Snake swimming in the lake .

Stop 4: We moved on to a small taverna in Platanos, just beyond the northern shores. Here we stopped for refreshments and what we thought would be a little time out from the intensity of the morning's wildlife watching. However, the wildlife and in particular the birds, had other ideas. In this beautiful setting with good views of the lake to the south and the shade of Oriental Plane trees to keep us cool, we discovered Syrian Woodpeckers nesting in one of these massive, ancient trees. The bird is remarkably similar to the Great Spotted Woodpecker but lacks the black line linked to the moustachial stripe of the latter and also has greenish legs and little spotting on the outer tail feathers. We were also able to briefly watch a Levant Sparrowhawk dashing through.

A number of Violet Carpenter Bees were buzzing about the flowers and Amanda pointed out a Sickle-bearing Bush-cricket and a Goldenring Dragonfly, all of this before we'd even sat down! When refreshments came, the owners announced that a pair of Tawny Owls had taken up residence in one of the Oriental Planes growing beside the taverna. This was fabulous as it gave us a good chance to photograph one of the birds. At our tables a Small Pincertail dragonfly landed on one of the drinking glasses, posing beautifully for a photo.



Tawny Owl © J. Dowding

After refreshments, we looked up at the impressive Mount Belles to the north and caught sight of a Golden Eagle sailing above the mountain. It displayed the classic narrow tuck to the wings by the body which helps differentiate it from other eagles. Hilary informed us that in this area these birds include Spur-thighed and Herman's Tortoises in their diet. This may appear a little strange given their prey in other parts of the world but in this part of Greece, tortoises are fairly widespread and perhaps make easier quarry than mammals. While watching the eagle, we noticed a couple of Black Storks drifting lazily back to their nesting area in the forested slopes. These birds are a little more secretive than the White Storks which nest all around the villages of the National Park, so it was a good sighting. Butterfly-wise, we saw a few Eastern Dappled Whites and Clouded Yellows. Chris C also found and photographed a Brown Hairstreak. This was quite a find as the insect had not previously been recorded in the area. The record was subsequently submitted to relevant conservationists. Well done Chris!



Little Tiger Blue © C. Tracey

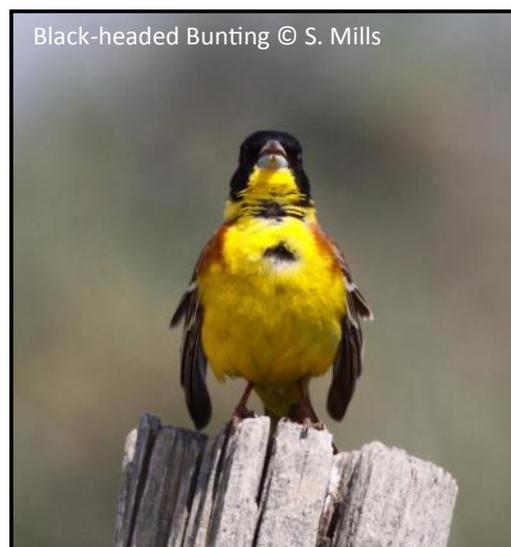
Stop 5: We proceeded to an old quarry for lunch, a short distance from lake Kerkini and arrived to find dozens of Nettle Tree Butterflies puddling at a little ford on the road, along with three Silver-washed Fritillaries and a Large Tortoiseshell. In the trees by the road we saw a Spotted Flycatcher and also heard a Golden Oriole singing. The latter bird is a species which appears to do very well in this area, presumably finding the abundant Poplar Trees around the lake to its liking, and using these for nesting. Its wonderful fluting song was a reminder of its presence on many of our excursions, even when we were not fortunate enough to see it.



Nettle Tree Butterfly © C. Tracey

As we walked up a track we scouted thickets of Christ's Thorn for Little Tiger Blues which choose this plant as their larval host. Chris T, Gill and others were fortunate to find and photograph the butterfly, which as its name suggests, is really rather small. We also found Southern White Admiral and its larval host-plant, Etruscan Honeysuckle, which was growing up among the bushes beside the little track leading to our picnic spot. Also noted were Large and Small White and Common Blue.

The picnic spot overlooks the lake to the south and gives stunning views. On our way up, we saw Black-eared Wheatear and Woodchat Shrike and heard the unmistakable song of a Nightingale. This is really good habitat for such birds, with rocks and scrub everywhere and the place teeming with small reptiles and insects upon which many of these birds feed. The Shrikes use the abundant Christ's Thorn as hooks on which to hang their prey. In the bushes around the quarry we heard a singing Black-headed Bunting and on the quarry face we were able to see Rock Nuthatch nests and Crag Martins whizzing about and occasionally flying into their nests.



Black-headed Bunting © S. Mills

From our high vantage point, we were able to gaze across the lake and appreciate its considerable size and importance. However, a huge storm way off to the south appeared to be coming our way so we offered up silent prayers, hoping to be spared a deluge. Below us, we caught sight of Sombre Tit, Cirl Bunting and more Black-headed Buntings. We soon became familiar with the song of the Cirl, likening this to a 'cheese-less' Yellowhammer song. Dear Yiannis was able to help us with the identification of some of the wonderful flowers which grew all around. His enthusiasm knows no bounds and it was a delight to have such an experienced botanical guide join us as a guest. He was



Watching a Tortoise - potential Golden Eagle food © J. Dowding

able to point out some beautiful legousias, campanulas and dianthus, all offering a banquet for butterflies (including Brown Argus and Common Blue) and also some stunning Rose Chafer Beetles, with their bright metallic green wing cases and isosceles-shaped scutella. We found a couple of Spur-thighed Tortoises; one just a shell. Steve explained again about Golden Eagles utilising these as a food source. After our lunch, we ambled back down the track to the vehicles, finding Sloe Hairstreak flitting about the Christ's Thorn and another specimen of the dark form of Small Copper, whilst Aidan found an Egyptian Locust.

Stop 6: Our last stop of the day was at another picnic spot by the River Strymonas. Fortunately the storm passed and temperatures rose. So much so in fact that some of the group dunked either their heads or feet under a cold tap located there in an attempt to cool off! Helen, Chris and Eileen stayed under the cool Poplars where benches and tables had been thoughtfully arranged, while the rest meandered along by the river. The grassy meadows alongside the river held a variety of fascinating birds including Glossy Ibis, Black-headed (Yellow) Wagtail (ssp. Feldegg), Squacco Heron, Purple Heron, White Stork and Little Egret. Bee-eaters, were seen in some of the bushes along the track and from the riverside vegetation we could hear another very noisy, Great Reed Warbler. After an hour or so, we made our way back to the other guests at the picnic spot for the short drive back to our hotel, passing a flock of twittering Swallows in the overhanging trees on the way. We also noticed Pond Terrapins in the river and a good number of Eastern Green Lizards basking on the rocks. Here we found our first Small Heath butterfly of the trip. Other birds seen today included Little Grebe, Ferruginous Duck, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Rock Dove, Kingfisher, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Grey Wagtail and Olivaceous Warbler.



Penduline Tit nest z© E. & A. Whitfield

Day 3, Monday 9th June

Stop 1: Over breakfast, we learned that Richard had been out early taking photos of the Little Owls and Tree Sparrows which reside in Chrysohorafa; a good start to the day! Once we'd all eaten, we set off just after 9 am passing through the village where White Storks had constructed an enormous nest on top of a church tower. The structure swamped the tower, making it look incredibly top-heavy. The White Storks are doing really well in the National Park, with the bountiful insects, frogs, toads, tadpoles, fish, rodents, snakes, lizards, earthworms, molluscs and crustaceans which make up their diet, and also because local people offer nesting platforms for them in virtually every village. It was a wonderful sight. Afterwards we mused on the possibility of one day seeing something like this, in the UK, with Storks in every village.



Wall Brown © C. Cobb

Stop 2: The following stop was by the river and embankment, and according to Tom, the rocks were made many years ago from metamorphic rock containing glistening silicates. On one side we had the lake, and on the other the wet meadows and dykes, often filled with Common Reeds or Poplars. Our first birds were Cuckoos and Turtle Doves which were heard calling from the trees. As the ground was warming up in the morning sunshine, a number of butterflies were in evidence including Wall Brown, Small Copper, Common Blue, Holly Blue, and finally, Painted Lady, which Emma drew our attention to.

The bushes on the lakeside, including many flowering brambles, were alive with a huge variety of wildlife including hundreds of crickets and dozens of Wall Lizards and Eastern Green Lizards. Dragonflies were hawking insects and Richard found a White-tailed Skimmer to go with the Black-tailed Skimmer, Broad Scarlet (Scarlet Darter) and Broad-bodied Chaser we'd already seen.

Below us in the reed-fringed dyke, a Cetti's Warbler erupted into its characteristic rattling song, and sounded much louder than all the other birds. Moving along the top of the embankment, we heard the lovely babbling calls of Bee-eaters. Steve and Hilary soon pointed out their nest excavations in the bank and it wasn't long before the birds were seen flying around the Poplars. It was still early in the season so the birds had only just begun digging. Little Egrets were quite ubiquitous and Richard managed to get a photo of them in flight. As we were watching, someone yelled 'Pelicans' and we turned to see two Dalmatians flying over the lake. This, the largest of the Pelicans, with a wingspan averaging about ten feet - a little larger than the Great Whites - makes it one of the world's heaviest flying birds and its wingspan rivals that of the Great Albatross. They made an impressive sight. Fur-



Little Egrets in flight © R. Scantlebury

ther along we heard and then saw Penduline Tits and also a couple of their hanging pear-shaped nests, the structures made of cobwebs, feathers, plant down and other vegetation.

Stop 3: We moved off the track and drove around the south-western side of the lake. Here at the roadside, we were able to home in on two soaring Black Storks and a pale phase Booted Eagle. Steve mentioned that large birds which need thermals to hunt or travel are always on the lookout for other large soaring birds, since their presence gives away the location of the thermal. Thus, the Storks had attracted a Booted Eagle. We then had good views of 7 White Pelicans, presumably beginning their long flight back to Lake Prespa where they breed.

Stop 4: We arrived at a little track which was barely passable because of the previous night's storms but we managed to negotiate it and parked. Birds were superb, with one of the small trees hosting Corn Bunting, Cirl Bunting and Black-headed Bunting. Phil was enthralled because he'd previously mentioned that he would like to see all three in the same spot so this was something else! Eventually, raptors including Common Buzzard, Honey Buzzard, Black Kite and Short-toed Eagle appeared. We also saw Woodchat Shrike. Butterfly-wise, the late spring in the area this year meant that many flowers were still in bloom at low altitude. This nectar source attracted several butterfly species including Common Blue, Amanda's Blue, Clouded Yellow and Small Copper. Eastern Bath Whites were seen ovipositing on a yellow crucifer and then the call 'Large Tortoiseshell' went up and Chris T gave chase. In the Olive groves a Great Banded Grayling was seen. This species was also to become something of a feature during the week.

Stop 5: After a couple of hours, we made our way to a taverna near the dam at Lithotopos for refreshments and were fortunate to find seating as it was a very busy bank holiday. Greek hospitality



knows no bounds and the waiters soon moved tables together for us so that we were able to sit as a group and enjoy our drinks together whilst listening to a little modern Greek music.



Stop 6: Our sixth location was a picnic spot by the lake where we enjoyed a sumptuous salad prepared by Nikos. It wasn't long before we saw another Booted Eagle. Here by the shores of the lake, Steve and Hilary told us about the fishermen who still use the lake, as evidenced by a small fishing hut. Fortunately for the birds though, there was not much commercial interest in the relatively small fish which thrive in the lake and so the birds still find plenty to eat.

Stop 7: After lunch, we made our way to the Korafori marshes on the western shores. This is a hotspot for all manner of birds and is featured in Steve's book, 'Birdwatching in Northern Greece', so we hoped it would prove productive. The area was alive with birds, all going about their daily business of gathering food to feed hungry young. A fantastic Great White Egret stood tall amongst the Little Egrets, looking nearly twice their size, and a flock of six or seven Spoonbills were feeding there too, occasionally raising their heads to watch us watching them. There were also Coots, Grey Herons, White Storks, and Moorhen present and out on the lake a Mute Swan was seen.

Stop 8: After Matt and Tom got a few photos of an obliging Grey Heron, we moved on to another spot. There were some huge clumps of tall brambles in full flower, attracting Silver-washed Fritillaries and Small and Large Whites there. Excitement gripped us with the sight of a resting Camberwell Beauty, a butterfly some of our group had really wanted to see. Aiden, Emma, Gill and Chris T managed to get close enough to take photos. Meanwhile Helen and Chris C also homed in on the

first Marbled Fritillary of the holiday and Chris T photographed a male Lesser Fiery Copper, as discovered by later inspection of the photos. Other birds seen included Corn Bunting, Golden Oriole (flying across the road and into the Poplars), Squacco Heron, Night Heron and White Storks. One of the latter was perched upon an old nesting platform erected in the marshes.



Spoonbill © G. Pullinger

Stop 9: After an hour or so we moved onwards to the village of Kerkini for a look at some more nesting White Storks and also to take afternoon refreshments. Our plan was to wait for the bill clapping display of the returning adults. We waited and waited! The behaviour didn't actually happen until we'd decided to leave. It seemed that the birds had been playing a game with us. Nevertheless, we were able to see a family of Red-rumped Swallows which were busy on the overhead wires and soon we discovered their nests in an old building. They were marvellous birds and had very interesting 'adobe' nests, similar to those of Barn Swallows which we were all more familiar with, but with a tunnel entrance constructed at the front. Floating past, a European Swallowtail put in an appearance. We also saw Spanish, Tree and House Sparrows, all utilising the White Storks' nests in which to make their own smaller dwellings.



Swallowtail © R. Scantlebury

Stop 10: Our proposed final stop of the day was a disused quarry by the north-western shores of the lake. It yielded yet another Booted Eagle, a Nightingale sing-

ing from within a dense bramble right beside us, and another bird sounding much like a Thrush Nightingale. As we didn't get a visual identification and with the bird not having been recorded breeding there, which it was likely to have been doing in June, we would not add it to our list. Moving on, Amanda pointed out a Woodchat Shrike on one of the bushes above the quarry. The area contained an interesting mix of habitats including marsh, scrub, meadow and flowery slopes. Flower species included Serapias, Pyramidal Orchid and a white variety of Selfheal, Prunella laciniata. The flowers attracted many interesting butterflies including Spotted Fritillaries, the males being the deep orange colour form, Wood White, Marbled Fritillary, and Common and Chapman's Blues.



Stop 11: Travelling along the west side of the lake on the way back to our hotel, we made an impromptu stop at the marshes again, having caught sight of a Black Stork standing right alongside a White Stork, giving us a nice comparison of the two species. There was also a small flock of Pygmy Cormorants sitting in some old weathered branches. On the way home a Hoopoe was photographed by Gill. Other birds recorded today included White Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Reed Warbler, Olivaceous Warbler, House Martin, Sand Martin, Syrian Woodpecker, Crested Lark, Swift, Subalpine Warbler, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Collared Dove, Black-headed Gull, Glossy Ibis, Little Grebe, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Kingfisher, Blackbird, and Levant Sparrowhawk.



Day 4, Tuesday 10th June

Our focus this day was an area in the foothills of the Mount Orvilos. We'd said goodbye to Steve and Hilary the day before and so the birdwatching aspect of the holiday was now guided solely by Amanda with Julian attending to the butterflies.

Stop 1: Here we stopped at a picnic spot overlooking yet another quarry. As we pulled up, some of us had the misfortune to see an Eastern Green Lizard measuring nearly a foot in length getting run over by a passing car. Not perturbed, we continued our quest for birds and butterflies and were rather amazed to hear Nightjars churring, as they are often thought of as nocturnal birds. We also saw a charm of Goldfinches, a 'tinkle' of Serins and a Red-rumped Swallow fly-by. Our first butterflies included Great



Great Banded Grayling © E. & A. Whitfield

Banded Grayling, Swallowtail, a dusky-coloured female Spotted Fritillary, Chapman's Blues (identified by lack of cell spot), an egg-laying Bath White and Wood White.



Mount Orvilos landscape © C. Tracey



Crested Lark © G. Pullinger

Stop 2: We moved off to our next spot, which was a track leading up to the mountain. We were greeted by innumerable Crested Larks, their song by now becoming quite familiar. The birds perched on every outcrop of rock or bush it seemed. Not to be outdone, Red-backed Shrikes were also very visible, utilising some of the scrubby bushes and trees as perches. They were a sight for sore eyes, having once been quite widespread but now all but disappeared from the UK. Amanda and some of the guests also managed to home in on Calandra Lark, a great find for the group. It was located first by its calls.

As we moved higher two Lanner Falcons flew towards us with a very shallow wing beat. With scopes and bins trained on them, we could see the light tips of their tails and they appeared quite different to Peregrines, with

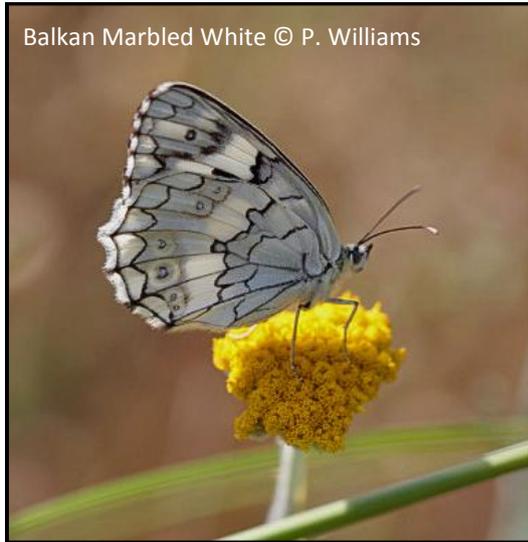
lighter caps and not appearing at all masked. The habitat certainly seemed right for them as they came to rest on a cliff face. After this wonderful find we decided to split the group, with some moving down into a quarry and others moving across the lower slopes. Later, Matt and Tom found the Lanners again together with a juvenile bird.

Stop 3: The group which moved into the foothills traversed some abandoned fields and could hear Common Quails with their characteristic 'wet your lips' calls giving away their presence. Yiannis photographed a Balkan Grayling as waves of Painted Ladies flew by and freshly emerged Large Tortoiseshells dispersed down the mountain and flew over our heads, never really stopping. Moving up the slopes, we soon found Osiris, Chapman's and Small Blue, Eastern Baton Blue, Eastern Dappled White, Eastern Bath White, Mountain Small White, Clouded Yellow, Berger's Clouded Yellow, Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Black-veined White, Mallow Skipper and Yellow-banded Skipper. Flowers were abundant with a number of Bee Orchid species including *Ophrys oestrifera* ssp. *bicornis*. The foothills were filled with Kidney Vetch and Sainfoin, larval food plants of Small Blue and Osiris Blue respectively. Hummingbird Hawk-Moths were widespread, feeding on the abundant nectar and we were able to photograph them. On the way down, we recorded another Woodchat Shrike and Short-toed Eagle.



Yellow-banded Skipper E. & A. Whitfield

As we moved higher up the slope but with lunch beckoning, it was really hard to leave the place as there were still more butterflies to be found, including a probable Large Blue, which prompted Chris



Balkan Marbled White © P. Williams

T to search the aromatic Thyme flowers for eggs, and find them! This gave us the opportunity to have a look at its perfect structure under her hand lens. Also found were Green-underside Blue and Balkan Marbled White, the latter offering a chance to see how different it was from Marbled White, having dark grey suffusions in the basal area of the wings and dark striae across the fore-wing cells. Good numbers of 'probable' Balkan Grayling were seen rushing down the slope.

In the sward, a Balkan Green Lizard posed beautifully and in the field near the vehicles, Aiden found a very large and obliging Spur-thighed Tortoise. We were able to study its spurs, which it was suggested might have aided it in rock climbing!

Stop 4: The party moving into the gorge were also fortunate. Gill finally managed to find a basking Large Tortoiseshell which helpfully presented itself for a photo. Also present were Adonis Blue, Mazarine Blue, Green-underside Blue, Eastern Baton Blue and Southern White Admiral. One of the latter fluttered around Eileen and Helen and then landed on Eileen for a photo. Bird-wise, we also recorded two Ravens, Linnets, Cirl Buntings, Corn Bunting and Black-headed Bunting.



Eastern Baton Blue © R. Scantlebury

With a good morning behind us, we returned to the vehicles and ate the tortillas lunch that Nikos had provided, musing over the morning's experiences.

Stop 5: After the mountain slopes, we set off to a small village north of Serres, to look at the huge colony of House, Spanish and Tree Sparrows in the village square. The birds were extremely noisy as they went about their business in the large Oriental Planes. We were also able to watch the many House Martins that nest there on the buildings. It was strangely peaceful in this busy little place, where the noise of the birds was so loud it drowned out the sound of passing vehicles. We took more refreshments before moving off to our next stop.

Stop 6: We arrived at the next little village, parking the vehicles by a roadside verge. A very friendly bee-keeper was busying himself but still eager to show us his bees. With a 'tray' in one hand, he pointed out the family structure and then showed us the Queen, which is 'Vassilissa' in Greek. It was no surprise that he was there with his colony because there were so many flowers. Yiannis was delighted with it all, especially at the discovery of a variety of huge Lizard Orchids (*Himantoglossum caprinum*) in fabulous condition, along with some very fresh Pyramidal Orchids. We also saw Levant Sparrowhawk (again), Buzzard, White Stork, Lesser White-throat, Starling, Hooded Crow and Golden Oriole.

With the abundant flowers, the butterflies were naturally just as numerous. The many species included Silver-studded Blue, Lesser Spotted Fritillary, Spotted Fritillary, Queen of Spain, Marbled Fritillary, and Great Banded Grayling. Chris C found Balkan Copper and soon everybody was off in different directions finding and photographing all manner of things. There were dozens of Threaded Lacewings (Thread-winged Antlion), an insect measuring nearly 3 inches in length with long corkscrew tails. They appeared at every turn, often nectaring on *Helichrysum* and attracting much attention. There were a number of scrubby Ilex Oaks growing on the verges, and these attracted a number of Sloe and Ilex Hairstreak butterflies. Julian decided to use the opportunity to point out



Hungarian Skipper © P. Williams



Queen of Spain Fritillaries © C. Tracey

their characteristic features, including the black abdominal tip which female Sloe Hairstreaks have, and the grey spot behind the orange lunules on the hind-wing undersides. The area also afforded the opportunity to differentiate Lesser Spotted from Spotted Fritillary. We also had a lot of fun watching Balkan Marbled Whites sallying back and forth between flowers as we tried to photograph them. Other butterflies included Eastern Baton Blue, found by Aiden, Small and Essex Skippers and Lattice Browns, the latter often flitting around the bushes and then darting for cover to rest out of sight and in the shade. Yiannis here found a mantid species in the process of devouring a Balkan Marbled White and Matt duly photographed it.

Stop 7: We decided on one last stop for the day where we investigated a large patch of delightfully coloured vetches. The plants were drawing the attentions of a number of quite large blue butterflies, and the suspicion that these were Amanda's Blues was quickly proved correct. Matt dashed out of the minibus to try and get a quick photo and soon everyone had evacuated the buses intent on the same thing. As it turned out, we spent a good half an hour here. So much for a quick stop! There were at least five Amanda's Blues engaged either in nectaring or mating; they made a real spectacle against the violet hues of the vetches. Someone said they thought they'd seen Large Blue and it was here that Chris C photographed an adult, clearly displaying its bold underside ocelli against a grey and blue background.



Here also, Eileen and Aidan found the pupa of a Black-veined White and Chris C and Chris T photographed a Camberwell Beauty larva. There were also more adult Black-veined Whites and Sloe Hairstreaks, the latter found on and around the Sloe bushes as well as a number of black shiny Sloe Emperor Moth (*Saturnia spini*) caterpillars, at varying stages of development. The skins of these caterpillars appeared as if they were made of a thin rubber that had been stretched over a tiny frame. We hadn't quite finished with this spot yet though. A very large, impressive, armour-plated looking cricket, *Bradyporus dasypus* was discovered by Matt and Tom. The creature had an ovipositor measuring nearly 2 inches in length. It could also bite. This was the last action of the day, before heading back to our hotel to relax and prepare for another wonderful Greek dinner.

Day 5, Wednesday 11th June

Stop 1: After a hearty breakfast we arrived at a beautiful site just outside Kapnofito, where a roadside lined with Bramble was drawing in Marbled Fritillaries. This species benefits from the plant as both nectar source and larval host-plant. As spring had come late to the area after persistent rains through April and May, it was mainly the males we discovered, usually identified from females by their smaller size and slightly less rounded wings. Most of the males were diving into the Bramble and Clematis to find females with which to pair. At the roadside a number of Silver-studded and Chapman's Blues were taking minerals and we were able to see the furry androconial patches of the latter, a tell-tale feature which helps distinguish them from Common Blue. Spur-thighed Tortoise was also seen.



The nectar-rich flowers on the roadside banks included many vetches, knapweeds, thistles, scabious and salvia species. The array of butterflies included Balkan Marbled White, Mountain Small White, Black-veined White, Marbled Skipper, Small Copper, Sooty Copper, Nettle Tree Butterfly, Great Banded Grayling, Ilex Hairstreak, Meadow Brown, Small and Essex Skipper, Eastern Knapweed Fritillary, and Marbled Skipper. Julian had asked the group to keep a look out for Cardinals on the Thistles and it wasn't long before most of the group had sightings of these beautifully coloured fritillaries.

The find of the morning had to be an Eastern Festoon at the Brambles. Several of us managed to get good photos of this beautiful insect. In an adjacent meadow, a pair of Clouded Yellows, Swallowtails and many Ilex and Sloe Hairstreaks were seen too. Phil also

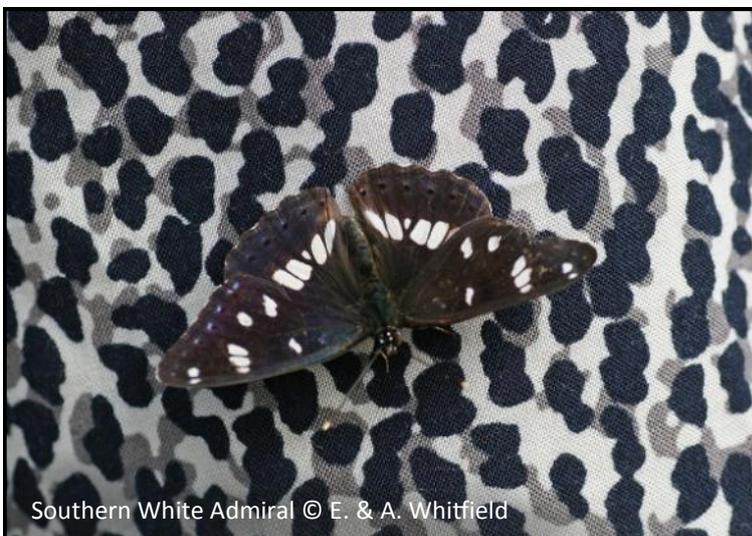
found Yellow-banded Skipper and a probable Powdered Brimstone, which fluttered away too soon for a definitive identification. Matt and Tom, ever on the lookout for interesting beasties, went for a walk to the bridge and watched Beautiful Demoiselles. Bird-wise, Amanda saw White-tailed Eagle and we saw Ravens and hear purring Turtle Doves. Gill and Emma also photographed a 9-spotted Tiger Moth (*Amata phegea*).



Eastern Festoon © G. Pullinger

Stop 2: After lunch, we moved off to small taverna in Kapnofyto for refreshments away from the heat of the sun, the helpful staff arranging our tables and chairs in the shade and providing us with a free dish of fresh cherries. Yiannis and Julian walked down to the village meadow by a stream and found both Scarce and European Swallowtails, and also a solitary Short-tailed Blue.

Stop 3: We then moved to the E6 hiking trail, beginning near the little church in the village. The flowers, including sedums, thymes and vetches, were again spectacular and so we were optimistic of finding some wonderful butterflies. We'd hoped to find Southern Comma in the village but alas, none were seen. However, Large Tortoiseshells were again quite common, as were Great Banded



Southern White Admiral © E. & A. Whitfield

Graylings, Meadow Browns, Small Skipper, Small Heath, Black-veined Whites, 6-spot Burnet, and Painted Ladies. Eileen again demonstrated her ability to tempt Southern White Admirals to alight upon her before we watched one taking minerals from the track, along with Nettle Tree Butterflies.

The temperatures were now into the low 30's, perhaps making up

for the 'slow' spring but a thunderstorm in the distance threatened to come our way and spoil the fun. It did indeed reach us but only for a short while and we managed to stay dry. The cooling effect was actually most welcome and the butterflies seemed to appreciate it too. Lattice Browns began to take off and fly in and out of the trees and other species settled on the track.

Higher up, we found at least two Eastern Baton Blues and Balkan Grayling. Just as we were getting to grips with these, Phil yelled out that he'd found a female Large Blue egg-laying. He fired off a couple of shots but as the rest of the group assembled, the insect disappeared. A strange fritillary gave Julian and Chris T the run around but eventually identified itself as Heath Frit. Further along the track Eileen and Emma found some wonderful Lizard Orchids (*H. caprinum*) growing to a height of at least two feet, while at the fishing lake, Matt and Tom dipped their toes into the cool water and indulged in a fish pedicure. Here they were finally able to get photos of the Demoiselles they'd been hoping for. As we gathered together for the return back to Chrysohorafa, Aidan was alerted to some fabulous Yellow Bellied Toads (*Bombina variegata*) due to the constant calls the creatures were making. The amphibians had set up home in small holes in one of the stream banks. It was a great discovery and a pleasant note to finish the day on.



Eastern Baton Blue © C. Tracey



Yellow-bellied Toad © E. & A. Whitfield

Day 6, Thursday 12th June

After breakfast, we journeyed out on a drive which would take us east in the direction of Serres, before turning north into the pine forested mountain slopes.

Stop 1 : Our first stop on the road north to the mountain was at about 750m. Here Yiannis gave us a little talk about some of the flora and fauna of this very rich area. He told us how the area extended into Bulgaria and named some of the more enigmatic species such Red Squirrel, Boar, and Greek Brown Bear. He also explained how many birds and animals were probably still to be recorded. The rock here is mainly acidic and the Scot's Pines that grow



Spotted Fritillary © G. Pullinger

here are an unusual species for Greece. While Yiannis was speaking, we could hear the unmistakable song of Tree Pipit, Chiffchaff, Chaffinch and Hoopoe. Our 'short roadside stop' turned into an hour as we explored a little meadow at the roadside. The temperatures were still relatively cool but the butterflies were already on the wing. Among those seen, were Chapman's Blue, Peacock, Amanda's Blue, Ilex Hairstreak, Spotted Fritillary, Lattice Brown, Brown Argus, Clouded Yellow and Large Tortoiseshell. Matt and Tom found a huge European Glass Snake, gingery brown in colour and



Yiannis addressing our group © E. & A. Whitfield

around three feet in length. A woodpecker was seen and heard and finally identified as a Middle Spotted Woodpecker. Hoopoes were again heard calling in the distance.

Stop 2: We then moved towards the mountain, venturing into what appeared to be a storm. Pressing on regardless we arrived at our site and waited to see what the weather would do. As the rain seemed to be holding off, we decided to stay and make the most of it. Slowly the weather improved and temperatures rose, making the ascent of the ski slope quite pleasant.

The first butterflies were some rather attractive Woodland Ringlets; dark chocolate colours fluttering over the grassy slope. Close up, it was easy to see the orange ocelli with black and white centres. We quickly found Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, Large Tortoiseshells, Small Tortoiseshells and Heath Fritillaries too. A Northern Wall Brown posed beautifully on the ground enabling close examination for the discal line on the hind-wings, the classic identification feature. Here too, Chris C found Southern Comma to add to our list. The slope contained a number of interesting plants including varieties of speedwell and strawberry, no doubt larval host-plants for the Heath Fritillaries and Grizzled Skippers respectively. After lunch the weather brightened, so we decided to spend another hour at the site and found Balkan Grayling, Sooty Copper and two Blue Arguses. These dazzling butterflies were a real bonus for our efforts and led us a merry dance trying to get photos.

Stop 3: Our final stop of the day was a beautiful site just below the tree line, back on the way down towards Serres. The scene was set with an impressive backdrop of the Rhodopi Mountains in the distance but more importantly, it was a little paradise for wildlife. Goat paths wound around the slopes making access to the multitudinous banks of vetches and thymes slightly easier than they would otherwise have been and in any case, butterfly enthusiasts are often distracted and soon a

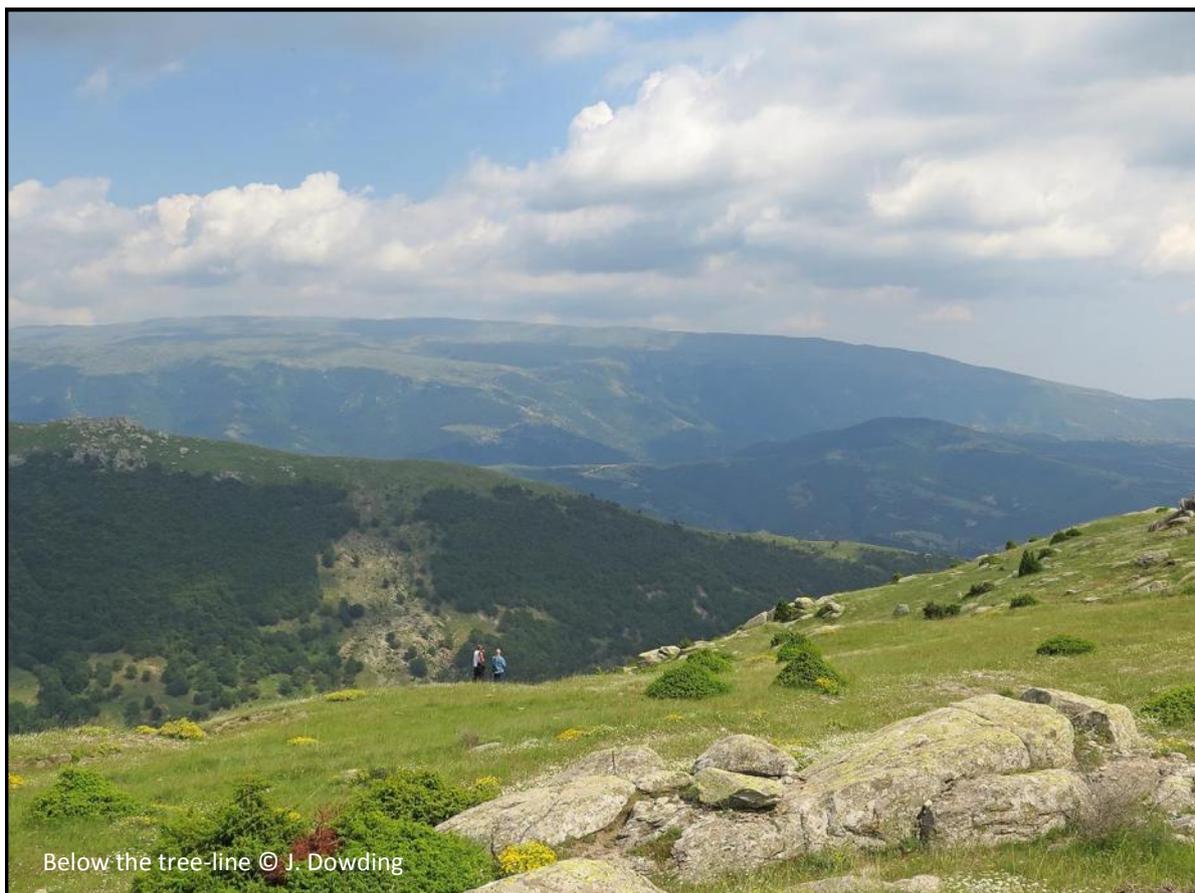


Northern Wall Brown © E. & A. Whitfield



Woodland Ringlet © E. & A. Whitfield

number of us were scrambling down the slopes, finding Silver-studded, Amanda's and Large Blues. Chris T sighted a copper, possibly Purple-shot or Balkan but unfortunately it disappeared from view before a positive identification could be made. Also found were Clouded Yellow, Balkan Marbled White, Common Blue, Chapman's Blue, Woodland Ringlet, Large Tortoiseshell and Large Wall Brown. Tom and Matt, ever on the lookout for something unusual, trumped us all with a Nose-horned Viper! Other birds seen this day included Greenfinch, Nuthatch, Long-tailed Tit, Golden Oriole, Raven and Redpoll.



Day 7, Friday 13th June

The aim this day was to spend a morning on a boat investigating Lake Kerkini and its drowned forest for birds, and in the afternoon, time permitting, exploring one of the mountains behind the lake. Stop 1: After a hearty breakfast prepared by Nikos, we set off at 9am for our appointment with the captain. En route, a Hedgehog was seen crossing the road and photographed.

After arriving at the harbour we put on our lifejackets, boarded the boat and glided out onto the mirror-like lake. We were immediately greeted by Grey Herons and Cormorants which were perching on some of the pontoons and buoys as we slid by. Our first Dalmatian was seen shortly afterwards and described as more like a battle cruiser, such was its size and wake. Making our way out into the middle of the lake we saw more Pelicans, both White and Dalmatian, and then a couple of White-winged and Black Terns which were settled on an old branch poking up. As we moved further



across the lake we arrived at the deep channel over the course of the old river and saw lots of Great Crested Grebes with striped young on their backs. The flight calls of Whiskered Terns drew our attention as did a few Common Terns flying back to their rafts, their bills full of fish.

Stop 2: We then made our approach to the drowned forest, the clamouring of the birds growing louder and louder as we drew near. Night Herons and Squacco Herons flew by the boat, the dazzling blue bills and sandy white feathers of the Squaccos were quite breathtaking at such close quarters. The Cormorants, (also known as Great Cormorants) were by far the most numerous species, flying back and forth to their nests, some of them almost touching the water with their wing tips. Because of their proximity we could appreciate their large size and slightly reptilian appearance. Some launched themselves from the overhanging branches, flapping their wings quickly to avoid hitting the water and in so doing made quite a commotion, crashing through the branches and almost hitting the water before gaining height and propelling themselves away. Little Egrets were also seen perching on the branches of the half submerged trees and Pygmy Cormorants were



seen too, often mixed in with the Great Cormorants. It was easy to appreciate their smaller stockier build and their beautiful brown head plumage.

Stop 3: At a couple of places, the skipper brought the boat to a standstill so that we could get an even better appreciation of the forest. It was amazing. All around us nesting Cormorants, Grey Herons and even Spoonbills could be seen and heard. A little later, Amanda pointed out a dozen Spoonbills which were engaged in feeding behaviour, characterised by head bobbing and nodding and the occasional strange call. A herd of Water Buffalo were safely observed from a distance, crossing the river which feeds the lake with melt water from the mountains. As we watched, we could see a few Starlings sitting on the backs of these large beasts, which are now a real feature of Lake Kerkini. The birds were picking ticks and other insects off their backs, much like distantly related Oxpeckers do with large herbivores living in sub-Saharan Africa in an act which is beneficial to both creatures.

Stop 4: After a while we returned back up the river and managed to get close views of a Glossy Ibis, its deep burgundy and green colours gleaming in the light. Our final stop was in the direction of the Dalmatian Pelican nesting platforms. We kept a re-





spectful distance of about 200metres so as not to disturb the birds while we watched their comings and goings. The platforms were crammed full with birds utilising every square inch, adults and juveniles alike. At this point we all realised just how important the work of BirdWING and the local conservation authorities is in the conservation of the Dalmatians and other birds in the area. It was a real privilege to have seen this work at first hand. We didn't linger too long and soon set off in the direction of the harbour, slowing on the way to observe Yellow-legged Gulls with their young, and a few more Squacco Herons and Great Crested Grebes which were seen close to the shore.

Stop 5: After disembarking, some of our guests bought ice creams while Julian scouted the bushes and found Lang's Short-tailed Blue butterfly ovipositing on a shrubby legume. Chris and Gill took a few photos before it disappeared.



Stop 6: We set off to our next stop, a small mountain village almost bordering Bulgaria. Here we ate lunch. The delightful village has rushing mountain water constantly running through, creating a wonderful atmosphere. Its huge, ancient Oriental Planes also offer much shade, and here we found Lattice Browns and Large Torts. After lunch, some of our group tried a delicious dessert made from buffalo milk while a few others enjoyed a beer or coffee.

Stop 7: We then made our way up the track leading into the un-named mountain. The butterflies were amazing, with Balkan Marbled White, Great Banded Grayling, Clouded Yellow (including helice female form), Queen of Spain Fritillary, Small Copper, Brown Argus, Eastern Baton Blue, Chapman's Blue, Common Blue, Mountain Argus, Black-veined White, Wood White, Eastern Bath White, Large White, Scarce Swallowtail, Swallowtail, Dingy Skipper, a possible Olive Skipper, Nettle Tree Butterfly, Brimstone, Cleopatra, and Painted Lady. The flowers here included Lizard Orchid amongst



Nettle Tree Butterfly © P. Williams

masses of Spurge, Helichrysum and other nectar sources. By mid-afternoon though, conditions were rather warm to say the least, with the lower reaches of the mountain devoid of much in the way of trees and therefore exposed to the heat of the sun. Because of this, we adopted a strategy of short walks and then vehicle rides, accompanied by plenty of liquid intake to avoid overheating. By this method we gained height and soon encountered more trees and

the beginnings of the Beech, Elm and Pine Forests. The cooler conditions gave us a good opportunity to stop and stretch our legs again. Here we found Delattin's Grayling, Holly Blue and Cleopatra.

Stop 8: The last leg of the journey was a drive up to two sub-alpine plateaux, often grazed by livestock. The areas contained both wet and dry meadows and scrub, surrounded by Beech and Alder. Here we searched for Purple-shot Copper, Dark Green Fritillary and anything else which might turn up. The group split up to maximise our chances. Eventually, Eileen, Julian, Chris and Helen found a male Purple-shot Copper and gave a yell so that others could see. We also found their larval food-plant, a variety of sorrel which Yiannis helped to identify. Also seen were Heath and Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Silver-studded Blue, Sooty and Small Copper, Wood White and Purple Hairstreak. Our final butterfly of the day was Clouded Apollo, something we hadn't seen before on the trip. The birds here included Red-backed Shrike, Cirl Bunting, Chiffchaff, Jackdaw, Linnet, Cirl Bunting, Buzzard, Green Woodpecker, Song Thrush and Hoopoe. We also found the shell of a Tortoise, presumably one which had fallen prey to a Golden Eagle. Unfortunately, Dark Green was not found, but the number of different species and the wonderful location more than made up for it.

With the day over, we made our way back down the mountain. On the return, we caught tantalising glimpses of Camberwell Beauties flying along the track and into the trees. Although they never really stopped long enough to enable us to get out of the vehicles and take photos, they were still a welcome sight and a reminder of how rich this mountain is in terms of species. Arriving back at our hotel in preparation for dinner, dear Nikos was already well on the way to preparing our 'last supper' together. He cooked a delicious home-made Moussaka, served with salad and we had no problems at all in polishing it off, especially as it was accompanied by a glass or two of local wine and ice-cold beer. It was a fitting end to a marvellous holiday in delightful company.



Silver-studded Blue © P. Williams



Purple-shot Copper © P. Williams

Day 8, Saturday 14th June, return to UK.

An early morning flight home to the UK called for an early start. Nikos prepared a quick breakfast so that we were able to leave in good time to catch the flight back to the UK from Thessaloniki.



Footnote:

A total of 85 butterfly species and 118 bird species were seen on the holiday. Not all species were seen by every guest. For example, Lesser Fiery Copper was only discovered upon looking at Chris T's photos after arriving home and only Amanda saw the Sea Eagle. We were also confident that Powdered Brimstone and Chequered Blue were seen but unfortunately we were unable to see the diagnostic features so these have not been added to the list. That said, most of the group should have seen around 80 butterflies and 100 or so bird species.

Acknowledgements:

Greenwings would like to thank all the guests on this trip for their wonderful support, good humour and enthusiasm throughout the holiday, and also for their help in compiling species lists and for the use of their photographs. Special thanks must also go to Steve and Hilary and Amanda, for their expert guiding, and Yiannis, for his help with the flowers.

Photo gallery and species list overleaf



Clouded Apollo © P. Williams



Purple-shot Copper © P. Williams





Large Tortoiseshell © A. & E. Whitfield



Sooty Copper © A. & E. Whitfield



Small Copper © P. Williams





Pelican take-off, Lake Kerkini © C. Tracey



Grey Heron and Dalmatian Pelican © C. Tracey



Black-veined White © A. & E. Whitfield



Queen of Spain © P. Williams



Woodland Ringlet © P. Williams



White Storks and Spanish Sparrows © A. & E. Whitefield



Spanish Sparrows © G. Pullinger



Squacco Heron © G. Pullinger



Purple Heron © S. Mills



Squacco © S. Mills



Lattice Brown © G. Pullinger



Marbled Fritillary © C. Tracey



Little Owl © C. Tracey



Queen of Spain © C. Tracey



Large Tortoiseshell © C. Tracey



Chapman's Blue © C. Tracey



Eastern Fестoon © C. Tracey



Male Amanda's Blue upperside © C. Tracey



Male and female Amanda's Blues undersides © C. Tracey



Longhorn Beetle and Cricket © C. Tracey



Great Banded Grayling © C. Tracey



Mountain Small White © C. Tracey



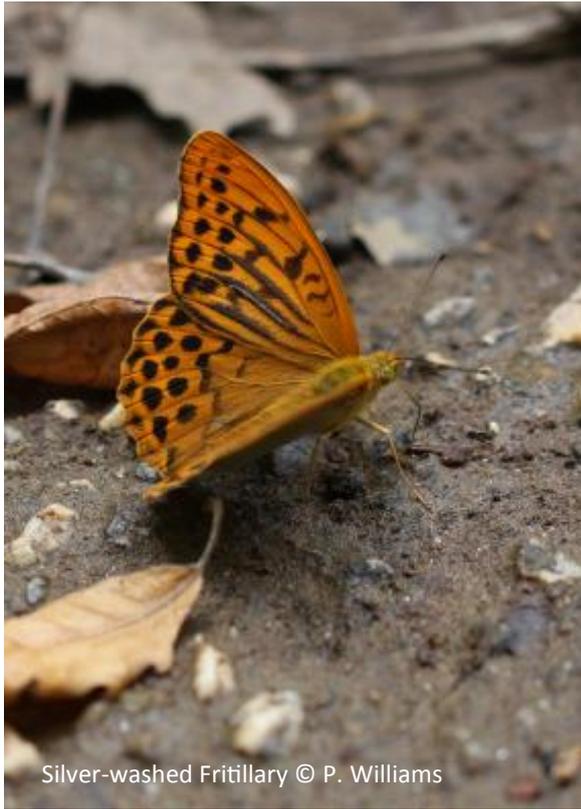
Lesser Fiery Copper © C. Tracey



Cardinal © G. Pullinger



Blue Argus © C. Tracey



Silver-washed Fritillary © P. Williams



Blue Argus © P. Williams



Eastern Baton Blue © G. Pullinger



Small Skipper © P. Williams



Hummingbird Hawk-Moth © G. Pullinger



Sooty Copper © P. Williams



Mountain Small White © P. Williams



Clouded Yellow © P. Williams



Holly Blue © P. Williams



Small Skipper © P. Williams



Pyramidal Orchid © G. Pullinger



Lizard Orchid © G. Pullinger



Poppies © G. Pullinger

Scarce Chaser © G. Pullinger



Broad-bodied Chaser © G. Pullinger



Eastern Green Lizard © G. Pullinger



Swallow nestlings © G. Pullinger



Clouded Apollo © C. Tracey



Camberwell Beauty larva © C. Cobb



Eastern Knapweed Fritillary © C. Cobb

Juvenile Dalmatian Pelican and Cormorant © G. Pullinger





Landscape © G. Pullinger



Cardinal © C. Cobb



Camberwell Beauty © A. & E. Whitfield





Anchusa © A. & E. Whitfield



Salvia © A. & E. Whitfield



Spotted Fritillary © A. & E. Whitfield

Tortoise © A. & E. Whitfield



S.W. Admiral © G. Pullinger



Beekeeper © C. Tracey



Meadow flowers © E. & A. Whitfield



Pelican and other Kerkini birds © E. & A. Whitfield



Nettle Tree Butterfly on Spurge © J. Dowding



White Stork at nest © G. Pullinger



Amanda & guests owl-watching © J. Dowding



Eileen & Julian © C. Tracey



Richard, Matt, Tom and Phil © C. Tracey



Chris T. © G. Pullinger



Aidan, Emma, Chris and Helen © G. Pullinger



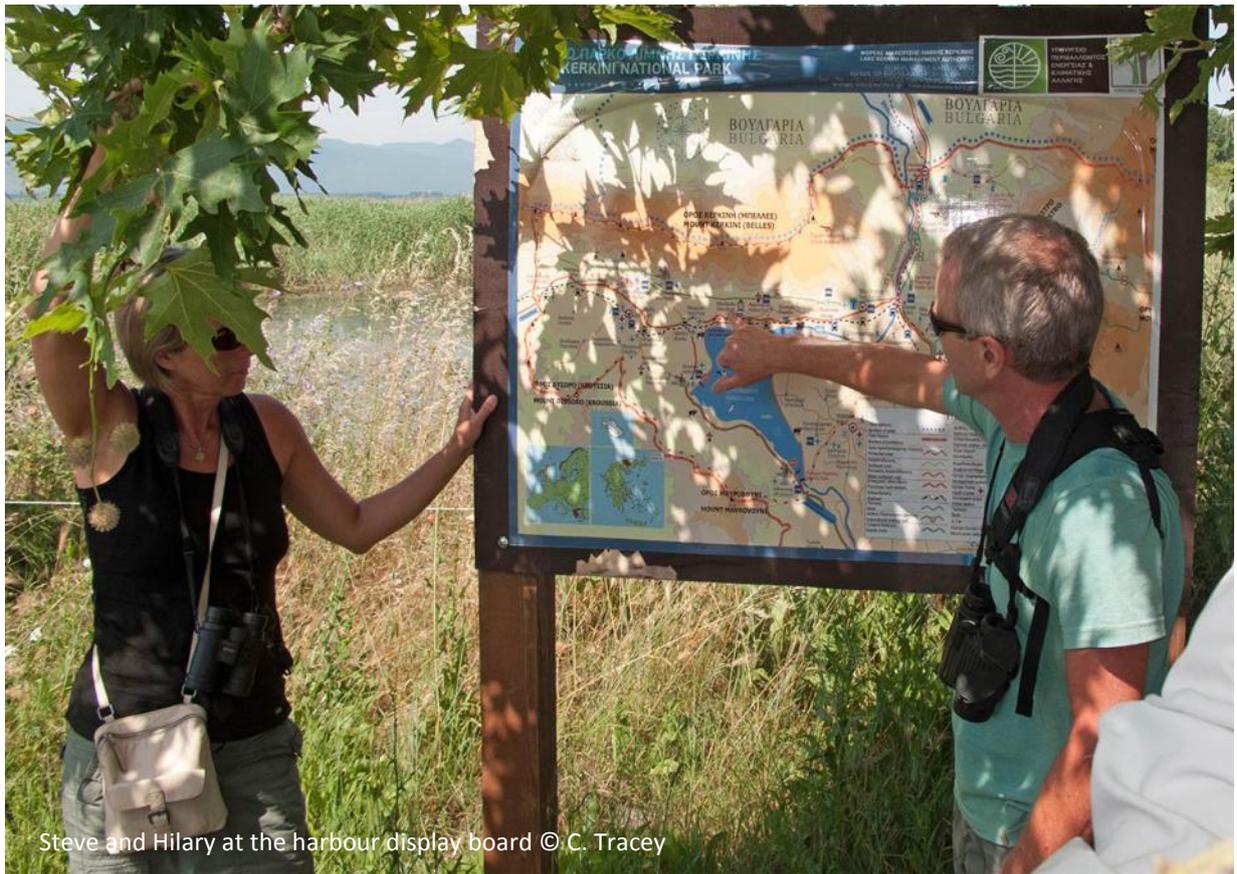
Gill © C. Tracey



Drinks at Kerini © J. Dowding



Steve & Hilary © J. Dowding



Steve and Hilary at the harbour display board © C. Tracey



Afternoon refreshments with Yiannis, Kerkini © E. Whitfield



Ready for the boat trip © A. & E. Whitfield



Watching with Amanda © E. & A. Whitfield



Watching the butterflies at Achladochori © J. Dowding



Off the Port bow © J. Dowding



Phil, Chris T & Richard © J. Dowding



Yiannis © G. Pullinger



BVW Pupa © J. Dowding



Silver-washed Fritillary © G. Pullinger



Purple-shot Copper © G. Pullinger



Marbled Frit © R. Scantlebury









Black-headed Bunting © G. Pullinger



Black Stork © G. Pullinger



Rose Chafer © G. Pullinger



Little Owl © R. Scantlebury



Tree Sparrow © R. Scantlebury

Species list - Butterflies

	Skippers	Family - HesperIIDae	Notes
1.	Mallow Skipper	<i>Carcharodus alceae</i>	Widespread
2.	Yellow-banded Skipper	<i>Pyrgus sidae</i>	10/6 Orvilos and 11/6
3.	Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>	scarce
4.	Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>	widespread
5.	Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>	common
6.	Hungarian Skipper	<i>Spialia orbifer</i>	Orvilos, scarce
7.	Lulworth Skipper	<i>Thymelicus acteon</i>	9/6 scarce
8.	Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineolus</i>	widespread and common
9.	Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	widespread and common
10.	Marbled Skipper	<i>Carcharodus lavatherae</i>	11/6 1-2 only
	Blues	Family - Lycaenidae	
11.	Lang's Short-tailed Blue	<i>Leptotes pirithous</i>	13/6 Mandraki
12.	Little Tiger Blue	<i>Tarucus balkanicus</i>	8/6 Vironia
13.	Mountain Argus	<i>Aricia artaxerxes</i>	10/6
14.	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>	widespread and common
15.	Blue Argus	<i>Ultraaricia anteros</i>	v.scarce
16.	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	widespread
17.	Small Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>	10/6 common
18.	Osiris Blue	<i>Cupido osiris</i>	10/6 common
19.	Large Blue	<i>Maculinea arion</i>	3 sites but low numbers
20.	Green-underside Blue	<i>Glaucopsyche alexis</i>	10/6
21.	Adonis Blue	<i>Lysandra bellargus</i>	10/6 and 11/6
22.	Eastern Baton Blue	<i>Pseudophilotes vicrama</i>	widespread
23.	Short-tailed Blue	<i>Everes argiades</i>	8/6 and 11/6 scarce
24.	Silver-studded Blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>	widespread and common
25.	Mazarine Blue	<i>Polyommatus semiargus</i>	10/6 scarce
26.	Greek Mazarine Blue	<i>Cyaniris semiargus helena</i>	10/6 and 11/6
27.	Amanda's Blue	<i>Polyommatus amandus</i>	9/6 and 10/6
28.	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	widespread
29.	Chapman's Blue	<i>Polyommatus thersites</i>	widespread
	Coppers	Family - Lycaenidae	
30.	Purple-shot Copper	<i>Lycaena alciphron</i>	13/6 one location
31.	Small Copper + dark summer form	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	Widespread + caeruleopunctata form
32.	Sooty Copper	<i>Lycaena tityrus</i>	widespread
33.	Balkan Copper	<i>Lycaena candens</i>	10/6 1 seen + possible 2nd
34.	Lesser Fiery Copper	<i>Lycaena thersamon</i>	1 only seen by one person
	Hairstreaks	Family - Lycaenidae	
35.	Purple Hairstreak	<i>Neozephyrus quercus</i>	11/6 and 13/6
36.	Sloe Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium acaciae</i>	widespread
37.	Ilex Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium ilicis</i>	widespread
38.	Brown Hairstreak	<i>Thecla betulae</i>	1 only seen by one person
	Fritillaries	Family - Nymphalidae	
39.	Knapweed Fritillary	<i>Melitaea phoebe</i>	widespread
40.	Lesser Spotted Fritillary	<i>Melitaea trivia</i>	widespread
41.	Spotted Fritillary	<i>Melitaea didyma</i>	common
42.	Heath Fritillary	<i>Melicta athalia</i>	widespread
43.	Cardinal	<i>Argynnis pandora</i>	11/6
44.	Marbled Fritillary	<i>Brenthis daphne</i>	widespread
45.	Queen of Spain Fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>	widespread and common
46.	Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Bloloria euphrosyne</i>	12/6 and 13/6 common
	Aristocrats	Family - Nymphalidae	
47.	Southern White Admiral	<i>Limenitis reducta</i>	common

48.	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	scattered
49.	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	common
50.	Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>	scattered
51.	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urtica</i>	common
52.	Comma	<i>Polygonum c-album</i>	common
53.	Southern Comma	<i>Polygonia egea</i>	scarce
54.	Large Tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis polychloros</i>	common
55.	Camberwell Beauty (+larva)	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	scattered but seen on 4 days
Family Libethyidae			
56.	Nettle Tree Butterfly	<i>Libythea celtis</i>	common
57.	Swallowtails and Apollos	Family - Papilionidae	
58.	Eastern Festoon	<i>Zerynthia cerisy</i>	11/6 only 1 seen
59.	Scarce Swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>	widespread
60.	Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>	widespread
61.	Clouded Apollo	<i>Parnassius mnemosyne</i>	13/6 only 1 seen
Whites & Yellows			
Family - Pieridae			
62.	Black-veined White	<i>Aporia crataegi</i>	Widespread and common
63.	Berger's Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias alfacariensis</i>	10/6 scarce
64.	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>	common
65.	Cleopatra	<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	scarce 2 only
66.	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	common
67.	Wood White	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>	scattered
68.	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	scattered
69.	Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>	scattered
70.	Eastern Bath White	<i>Pontia edusa</i>	common
71.	Eastern Dappled White	<i>Euchloe ausonia</i>	scarce 10/6 and 12/6
72.	Southern Small White	<i>Pieris mannii</i>	common on one day
73.	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	common
74.	Mountain Small White	<i>Pieris ergane</i>	12/6
(formerly Satyridae)			
Family - Nymphalidae			
75.	Lattice Brown	<i>Kirinia roxelana</i>	common
76.	Great Banded Grayling	<i>Brintesia circe</i>	widespread and common
77.	Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	common
78.	Large Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata maera</i>	common
79.	Northern Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata petropolitana</i>	scarce,
80.	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	scattered
81.	Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	common
82.	Woodland Ringlet	<i>Erebia medusa</i>	common
83.	Balkan Marbled White	<i>Melanargia larissa</i>	common
84.	Balkan Grayling	<i>Hipparchia senthes</i>	common
85.	Delattin's Grayling	<i>Hipparchia volgensis</i>	scarce
Species list - Moths			
Burnets			
Family - Zygaenidae			
1.	New Forest Burnet	<i>Zygaena vicae</i>	12/6
2.	Southern six-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena transalpina</i>	11/6
Family - Tortricidae			
3.	Arched Marble	<i>Olethreutes arcuella</i>	
Hawk-Moths			
Family - Sphingidae			
4.		<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	widespread and common
Family - Geometridae			
5.		<i>Lythria cruentari</i>	
6.	Black-veined Moth	<i>Siona lineata</i>	common
Family - Crambidae			
7.	White-spotted Black	<i>Eurrhypis pollinalis</i>	

	Tiger Moths	Family - Arctidiidae	
8.	Wood Tiger	<i>Parasemia plantaginis</i>	12/6
9.	9-Spotted Moth	<i>Amata phegea</i>	widespread and common
10.	Cream-spot Tiger	<i>Epicallia villica</i>	12/6
11.	Feathered Footman	<i>Spiris striata</i>	
	Noctuids	Family - Noctuidae	
12.		<i>Euclidia triquetra</i>	
	Emperor moths	Family - Saturniidae	
13.	Sloe Emperor Moth (larva)	<i>Saturnia spini</i>	
		Species list - Birds	
	Hawks, Eagles and Allies	Family - Accipitridae	Notes
1.	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	8/6
2.	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	only 1
3.	Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	widespread
4.	Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	8/6 and 10/6
5.	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>	common around lake
6.	Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	scattered
7.	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	common around lake
8.	Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	9/6 only 1
9.	Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>	4 seen
10.	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	8/6 1 seen
	Falcons	Family - Falconidae	
11.	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	10/6 2 adults 1 juv
12.	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinunculus</i>	widespread
	Owls	Family - Strigidae	
13.	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	1 seen at Platanos
14.	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	common around villages
15.	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	11/6
	Cuckoos	Family - Cuculidae	
16.	Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	widespread
	Nightjars	Family - Caprimulgidae	
17.	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	10/6 and 11/6
	Swifts	Family - Apodidae	
18.	Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	common
	Kingfishers	Family - Alcedinidae	
19.	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	around lake
	Bee-eaters	Family - Meropidae	
20.	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	widespread
	Hoopoe	Family - Upopidae	
21.	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	widespread
	Woodpeckers	Family - Picidae	
22.	Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>	1 seen
23.	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	1 seen
24.	Syrian Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>	pair nesting at Platinos
25.	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos medius</i>	Road side stop
	Larks	Family - Alaudidae	
26.	Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	10/6
27.	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	widespread and common
28.	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	10/6 Orvilos and 12/6
	Swallows and Martins	Family - Hirundinidae	
29.	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	common around lake
30.	Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	widespread and common
31.	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	widespread and common
32.	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	widespread and common

33.	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	common
	Wagtails and Pipits	Family - Motacillidae	
34.	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	12/6
35.	Black-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>	8/6, 10/6, 13/6
36.	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	common around lake
37.	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	common
	Thrushes and Chats	Family - Turdidae	
38.	Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	common
39.	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	8/6, 10/6, 12/6
40.	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	common
41.	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	13/6 only
	Sylvia Warblers	Family - Sylviidae	
42.	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	common around lake
43.	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	9/6
44.	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	heard singing 9/6
45.	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	10/6, 11/6
46.	Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	heard singing 8/6 seen 11/6
	Phylloscopus Warblers	Family - Phylloscopidae	
47.	Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	12/6, 13/6
	Acrocephaline Warblers	Family - Acrocephalidae	
48.	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>	common
49.	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	common around lake
50.	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaeus</i>	9/6, 12/6
51.	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	9/6
52.	Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	common throughout
	Old World Flycatchers	Family - Musciapidae	
53.	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	8/6, 13/6
54.	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	scattered
	Tits	Family - Paridae	
55.	Sombre Tit	<i>Parus lugubris</i>	8/6 1 recorded
56.	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	9/6
57.	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	9/6, 10/6
	Bush Tits/Long-tailed Tits	Family - Aegithalidae	
58.	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	11/6, 12/6
	Penduline Tits	Family - Remizidae	
59.	Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	seen and heard around lake
	Nuthatches	Family - Sittidae	
60.	Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>	nest seen Vironia
61.	Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europea</i>	12/6
	Orioles	Family - Oriolidae	
62.	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	widespread
	Shrikes	Family - Laniidae	
63.	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius colluria</i>	widespread
64.	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	widespread
	Crows	Family - Corvidae	
65.	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	widespread
66.	Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	10/6, 11/6
67.	Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	11/6, 13/6
68.	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	widespread
69.	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	10/6, 11/6, 12/6
	Starlings	Family - Sturnidae	
70.	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	widespread and common
	Old World Sparrows	Family - Passeridae	
71.	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	common

72.	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	common
73.	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	common
	Finches	Family - Fringillidae	
74.	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	widespread
75.	Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	8/6, 10/6, 11/6
76.	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	common
77.	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	10/6, 12/6, 13/6
78.	Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	12/6
	Buntings and New World Sparrows	Family - Emberizidae	
79.	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	common
80.	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	common
81.	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	common
	Rails	Family - Rallidae	
82.	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	scarce, 1 seen
83.	Moorhen	<i>Callinula choloropus</i>	common around lake
84.	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	common around lake
	Gulls	Family - Laridae	
85.	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	8/6, 9/6, 13/6
86.	Less Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	12/6
87.	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	common around lake
	Terns	Family - Sternidae	
88.	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	8/6 around lake
89.	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	8/6 around lake
90.	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	13/6 boat trip
91.	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	13/6 boat trip
92.	White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	13/6 boat trip
	Pigeons and Doves	Family - Columbidae	
93.	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	8/6
94.	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumba</i>	scattered
95.	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	widespread and common
96.	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	widespread, more often heard
	Pheasants and Partridges	Family - Phasianidae	
97.	Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	10/6 Orvilos only
	Grebes	Family - Podicipedidae	
98.	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	around lake
99.	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	around lake
	Cormorants	Family - Phalacrocoracidae	
100.	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	common around lake
101.	Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmeus</i>	common around lake
	Pelicans	Family - Pelecanidae	
102.	Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	around lake
103.	White Pelican (Rosy Pelican)a	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	around lake
	Hérons	Family - Ardeidae	
104.	Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	8/6 heard
105.	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minimus</i>	common around lake and dykes
106.	Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	common around lake and dykes
107.	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	common around lake and dykes
108.	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	common
119.	Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	8/6 Korafori Marshes and 13/6
110.	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	common around lake
111.	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	around lake
	Storks	Family - Ciconiidae	
112.	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	widespread and common
113.	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	8/6, 9/6, 13/6 marsh and Mt. Belles

	Spoonbills and Ibises	Family - Threskiornithidae	
114	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	8/6, 9/6, 13/6
115	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	widespread around lake
	Wildfowl	Family - Anatidae	
116	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	1 seen at lake
117	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	scattered
118	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	2 seen 8/6, 9/6
		Species list - Dragonflies	
1.	Broad Scarlet	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>	common around lake
2.	Small Pincertail	<i>Onychogomphus uncatus</i>	taverna foothills of Mt. Belles
3.	White-tailed Skimmer	<i>Plathemis lydia</i>	common around lake
4.	Keeled Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i>	2 seen around lake and dykes
5.	Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	lake
6.	Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	river and embankment
7.	Scarce Chaser	<i>Libellula fulva</i>	2 or 3 seen around wetlands
8.	Golden Ring Dragonfly	<i>Cordulegaster helladica</i>	taverna foothills of Mt. Belles
		Species list - Reptiles and Amphibians	
1.	Spur-thighed Tortoise	<i>Testudo graeca</i>	widespread
2.	Nose-horned Viper	<i>Vipera ammodytes</i>	12/6 one seen
3.	Whip Snake	<i>Platyceps najadum</i>	11/6 very large
4.	Dice Snake	<i>Natrix tessellata</i>	8/6 Mandraki Harbour
5.	European Glass Lizard	<i>Ophisaurus apodus</i>	large
6.	Eastern Green Lizard	<i>Lacerta viridis</i>	widespread
7.	Balkan Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis taurica</i>	widespread
8.	Marsh Frog	<i>Pelophylax ridibundus</i>	around lake and dykes
9.	Yellow-bellied Toad	<i>Bombina variegata</i>	E6 hiking trail
10.	European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>	lake and river channel
		Other notable Flora and Fauna	
1.	European Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	13/6 road
2.	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus moreoticus</i>	8/6
3.	Rose Chafer	<i>Cetonia aurata</i>	widespread on flowers
4.	Thread-winged Antlion	<i>Nemoptera sinuata</i>	piebald Antlion species
5.	Violet Carpenter Bee	<i>Xylocopa violacea</i>	large blue/violet bee
6.	Pyramidal Orchid	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	scattered
7.	Lizard Orchid	<i>Himantoglossum caprinum</i>	scattered
8.	Bee Orchid species	<i>Ophrys oestrifera ssp. bicornis</i>	Orvilos
9.	Bush Cricket species	<i>Bradyporus dasypus</i>	large bronze coloured cricket
10.	Selfheal	<i>Prunella lasciniata</i>	white variety
11.	Christ's Thorn	<i>Paliurus spina-christi</i>	common shrub,