

Cyprus trip report, 21st to 28th December 2013

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

Cyprus 2013



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#	DATE	LOCATIONS & NOTES
1	21 st December	Afternoon arrival and transfer to the Aphrodite Beach Hotel.
2	22 nd December	Baths of Aphrodite, walk round to Fontana Amorosa, then back to the hotel along the coast
3	23 rd December	Droutia and Pegeia Forest
4	24 th December	Paphos: Agios Neophytos, Tombs of the Kings, Paphos Headland
5	25 th December	Hillsides towards Neo Chorio. Aphrodite Beach
6	26 th December	Neo Chorio and Agios Georgios
7	27 th December	Episcopi and Ezousa Valley
8	28 th December	Return to UK.

Leaders

Yiannis Christofides: Cyprus

Brian Eversham: The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs & Northants

21st December. Arrival at Paphos airport and after meeting Yiannis transfer to our welcoming hotel at Latchi.

22nd December. Glorious weather greeted us on our first day in Cyprus and soon after breakfast and a briefing we set off towards the Baths of Aphrodite.

Even though this was late December a number of plants had already started flowering. *Chrysanthemum coronarium*, *Geranium rotundifolium*, *Erodium malacoides* and *E. cicutarium* were all flowering by the road verge. We soon found one of the early-flowering species we had come to see, the strange-looking *Arisarum vulgare* growing in shady areas along the road. A Common and a Long-legged buzzard were seen flying above us.

After reaching the end of the road we visited the botanical garden near the Baths where we saw many of the species that occur in the surrounding countryside. Growing through the plants in the *Cistus* bed was another shrub flowering at this time of the year, *Fagonia cretica* with its beautiful purple flowers. A hedge of *Bosea cypria* provided Yiannis with the opportunity to talk about this important endemic species found on Cyprus. Despite the dry autumn weather *Cyclamen persicum* had already started flowering in both the garden and the surrounding area.

After leaving the garden we visited the actual Baths of Aphrodite and then set off on the coastal walk on this northern edge of the Akamas peninsula with magnificent views down to the sea. Sardinian warbler was a common bird often seen. The coastal walk provides an excellent example of the geology and rocks found on Cyprus and Yiannis gave us a talk on the origin and geology of the island.

Brian observed a number of interesting lichens growing on the rocks along the path.

As it was getting late a number of people decided to turn back. Those that carried on for a little longer were rewarded with *Narcissus tazetta* growing on a steep slope above the track and a patch of the little endemic *Hyacinthella millingenii*.

23rd December. After breakfast on the terrace overlooking a calm sea the bus that we were going to use for the duration of the week picked us up and we were soon heading higher up the hill towards Droushia and then descending past the village Terra. A quiet country road provided us with specimens of the cultivated *Pistacia atlantica* in autumn colours, magnificent *Quercus infectoria* and *Q. coccifera*, along with *Styrax officinalis*. We soon started seeing the leaves of another *Cyclamen* and flowers were then found, confirming the autumn flowering endemic, *C. cyprium*. Another autumn flowering endemic was soon seen, *Crocus veneris*. Patches of the yellow *Ranunculus bullatus* brightened up the countryside along with *Bellis sylvestris*.

We were picked up by our bus and driven to the second location of the Peyia forest where we were to spend the rest of the day. *Spiranthes spiralis* was soon spotted, but only in fruit, but we were rewarded with more autumn flowering species such as *Narcissus serotinus* and *Colchicum pusillum*.

24th December. Another sunny day as we headed towards Paphos to visit the archaeological sites there. Our first stop was the Monastery of Ahios Neophytos on the outskirts of Paphos where we saw the 12th-16th century wall paintings in the caves near the monastery.

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We then drove to our first site in Paphos of the Tomb of the Kings, the impressive ancient burial chambers for the rulers of nearby Paphos. Our progress through the site was impeded by botanical findings such as *Ephedra fragilis* in fruit, *Cyclamen persicum* in flower coming out of the bare rocks and totally unexpected a patch of late-flowering *Muscari parviflorum*. Moving to the sand dunes we found *Thymus capitatus*, *Centaurea aegialophila* and *Pancratium maritimum* in fruit. Returning to our bus a patch of *Narcissus serotinus* was much enjoyed.

We then moved to the Paphos archaeological site where we saw the wonderful mosaics and then walked around the site looking for flowers and birds. New species included *Asparagus stipularis* in flower.

25th December. After breakfast on the terrace overlooking the sea we set off towards the hills above our hotel. The road verges provided some early-flowering spring flowers until we climbed up to the ridge. We soon started finding wonderful patches of *Anemone coronaria* in many colours. The real surprise came soon with a specimen of *Anacamptis collina* in full flower. *Cyclamen persicum* was in flower near rocks and under bushes. A mass of *Narcissus tazetta* was then discovered in site track, with *Ranunculus bullatus* providing a nice backdrop. More *Anacamptis collina* in flower was discovered. After lunch amongst the *Narcissus* we followed the path down to the main road where Neil had found a specimen of *Romulea tempskyana* a few days earlier. We were soon rewarded with several specimens in flower as well as other plants such as *Veronica polita* and *Anchusa aegyptiaca* by the roadside.

26th December. Our first destination this morning was the forest area above Neochorio. A good patch of the endemic *Hyacinthella millingenii* was soon found, followed by the second orchid of the holiday in flower, *Ophrys israelitica*. *Spiranthes spiralis* in fruit was also seen. We were then picked up by our bus for the journey to Agios Georgios on the west coast of the Akamas. *Taraxacum aphrogenes* was the special plant here, an endemic dandelion growing in the rocky limestone areas near the sea. A flower was also found on *Silene fruticosa* growing below the cliffs. We then drove along the coastal track on the west coast and soon stopped for lunch. A perfect plant of *Mandragora officinalis* was much photographed as was a specimen of Ocellated skink found under a rock.

After lunch we walked along the beach exploring the coastal habitat with species of *Limonium*. Good patches of *Narcissus serotinus* still in flower were seen.

27th December. Our destination this morning was the village of Episcopi in the Ezousa valley to visit the new environmental centre there. We stopped en-route to see some of the phrygana plants. The visit to centre begun with a short film showing the fauna and flora of the area, after which we went round the exhibits followed by walk round the botanic garden where we were lucky to see *Centaurea akamantis*, *Stachys cretica* and *Calamintha incana* in flower. We then walked to the local restaurant for our midday meal, seeing some of the plants that grow on the impressive rock dominating the area.

Verbascum levanticum was found in flower and *Polypodium cambricum* was seen growing in the cracks in the huge rocks. We then boarded our bus for the drive over the hill and down the parallel valley where we searched and found the rare winter visitor Finsch's Wheatear and more *Crocus veneris*. Our day was complete with good views of many Chukar in a field.

28th December. All too soon, our week has come to an end! After a quiet morning around the hotel, we bid farewell to Gregoria and headed back to Paphos and our flights home.

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E = endemic species. e = endemic sub-species

	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	NOTES	Seen
FERNS				
	<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	Maidenhair Fern		X
	<i>Anogramma leptophylla</i>	Annual fern		X
	<i>Asplenium ceterach</i>	Rustyback Fern		X
	<i>Cheilanthes pteridioides</i>			X
	<i>Polypodium cambricum</i>			X
Selaginellaceae: clubmosses				
	<i>Selaginella denticulata</i>	Mediterranean Clubmoss		X
CONIFERS				
Cupressaceae				
	<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>			X
	<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i>	Phoenician Juniper		X
Ephedraceae				
	<i>Ephedra fragilis</i>	Jointed Pine		X
Pinaceae				
	<i>Pinus brutia</i>	Calabrian Pine		X
DICOTYLEDONS				
Amaranthaceae				
E	<i>Bosea cypria</i>			X
Anacardiaceae				
	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Mastic Tree		X
	<i>Pistacia terebinthus</i>	Turpentine Tree		X
	<i>Pistacia atlantica</i>			X
Apiaceae				
	<i>Crithmum maritimum</i>			X
	<i>Daucus carota</i>			X
	<i>Eryngium creticum</i>			X
	<i>Eryngium glomeratum</i>			X
	<i>Ferula communis</i>			X
	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>			X
	<i>Opopanax hispidus</i>			X
	<i>Scaligeria cretica</i>			X
	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>			X
Aristolochiaceae				
	<i>Aristolochia parviflora</i>			X
Asteraceae				
	<i>Anthemis palaestina</i>			X
	<i>Anthemis tricolor</i>			X
	<i>Aster squamatus</i>			X
	<i>Asteriscus aquaticus</i>			X
	<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>	Autumn Daisy		X
	<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Corn Marigold		X
	<i>Centaurea akamantis</i>			X
	<i>Carlina aegialophila</i>			X
	<i>Centaurea hyalolepis</i>			X
	<i>Chrysanthemum coronarium</i>			X
	<i>Crepis aspera</i>			X
	<i>Dittrichia graveolens</i>	(was Inula)		X
	<i>Dittrichia viscosa</i>	(was Inula)		X
	<i>Echinops spinosissimus</i>			X
	<i>Hedypnois rhagadioloides</i>			X
	<i>Helichrysum conglobatum</i>			X
	<i>Leontodon tuberosum</i>	Tuberous Hawkbit		X

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	NOTES	Seen
	<i>Pallenis spinosa</i>			X
	<i>Phagnalon rupestre</i>			X
	<i>Ptilostemon chamaepeuce</i>			X
	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>			X
E	<i>Taraxacum aphrogenes</i>			X
	<i>Taraxacum cypricum</i>			X
Boraginaceae				
	<i>Anchusa aegyptiaca</i>			X
	<i>Cordia myxa</i>	Assyrian Plum		X
	<i>Echium angustifolium</i>	Narrow-leaved Bugloss		X
	<i>Heliotropium hirsutissimum</i>	Hairy Heliotrope		X
	<i>Lithodora hispidula</i>			X
Brassicaceae				
	<i>Brassica nigra</i>			X
	<i>Sinapis alba</i>			X
Caryophyllaceae				
	<i>Silene fruticosa</i>			X
Chenopodiaceae				
	<i>Beta vulgaris</i>			X
	<i>Noaea mucronata</i>			X
	<i>Chenopodium murale</i>			X
	<i>Chenopodium opulifolium</i>			X
	<i>Salsola kali</i>			X
Cucurbitaceae				
	<i>Ecballium elaterium</i>			X
	<i>Bryonia cretica</i>			X
Cistaceae				
	<i>Cistus creticus</i>			X
	<i>Cistus monspeliensis</i>	Narrow-leaved Cistus		X
	<i>Cistus parviflorus</i>	Small-flowered Cistus		X
	<i>Cistus salvifolius</i>	Sage-leaved Cistus		X
	<i>Cistus ladanifer</i>			X
Convolvulaceae				
	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>			X
	<i>Convolvulus althaeoides</i>			X
Dipsacaceae				
	<i>Pterocephalus multiflorus</i>			X
Ericaceae				
	<i>Arbutus andrachne</i>	Eastern Strawberry Tree		X
Euphorbiaceae				
	<i>Euphorbia dimorphocaulon</i>			X
	<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>			X
E	<i>Euphorbia veneris</i>			X
Fabaceae				
	<i>Calycotome villosa</i>	Spiny Broom		X
	<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i>	Carob		X
	<i>Genista sphacelata</i>			X
	<i>Lathyrus ochrus</i>			X
	<i>Medicago marina</i>			X
	<i>Medicago orbicularis</i>			X
	<i>Scorpiurus muricatus</i>			X
	<i>Vicia sativa</i>			X
Fagaceae				
	<i>Quercus coccifera</i>	Kermes Oak		X
	<i>Quercus infectoria</i>	Deciduous or Royal Oak		X

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	Frankeniaceae			
	<i>Frankenia hirsuta</i>			X
	Geraniaceae			
	<i>Erodium moschatum</i>			X
	<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>			X
	<i>Geranium purpureum</i>			X
	Lamiaceae			
	<i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i>	Ground Pine		X
	<i>Calamintha incana</i>	Grey Calamint		X
	<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>			X
	<i>Origanum majorana</i>			X
	<i>Prasium majus</i>			X
	<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	Wild Clary		X
	<i>Sideritis perfoliata</i>			X
	<i>Teucrium divaricatum</i>			X
	<i>Teucrium creticum</i>			X
	<i>Thymus capitatus</i>			X
E	<i>Thymus integer</i>			X
	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	Chaste Tree		X
	Linaceae			
	<i>Linum bienne</i>			X
	Meliaceae			
	<i>Melia azedarah</i>	Persian Lilac		X
	Myrtaceae			
	<i>Myrtus communis</i>	Myrtle		X
	Oleaceae			
	<i>Olea europaea var. sylvestris</i>	Wild Olive		X
	Oxalidaceae			
	<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>			X
	Plantaginaceae			
	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>			X
	<i>Plantago major</i>			X
	Platanaceae			
	<i>Platanus orientalis</i>	Eastern Plane		X
	Plumbaginaceae			
	<i>Plumbago europaea</i>	Common Leadwort		X
	<i>Limonium albidum</i>			X
	<i>Limonium virgatum</i>			X
	<i>Limonium sinuatum</i>			X
	Polygonaceae			
	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>			X
	Primulaceae			
E	<i>Cyclamen cyprium</i>	Cypriot Cyclamen		X
	<i>Cyclamen persicum</i>	Persian Cyclamen		X
	Ranunculaceae			
	<i>Anemone coronaria</i>	Crown Anemone		X
	<i>Clematis cirrhosa</i>			X
	<i>Ranunculus bullatus</i>	Autumn Buttercup		X
	Resedaceae			
	<i>Reseda orientalis</i>			X
	Rhamnaceae			
	<i>Rhamnus oleoides</i>			X
	Rosaceae			
	<i>Crataegus azarolus</i>			X
	<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat		X

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	NOTES	Seen
	<i>Prunus dulcis</i>	Almond		X
	<i>Pyrus syriaca</i>			X
	<i>Rubus sanctus</i>	Holy Bramble		X
	<i>Sarcopoterium spinosum</i>	Thorny Burnet		X
Rubiaceae				
	<i>Asperula cyprum</i>			X
	<i>Rubia lauræ</i>			X
	<i>Rubia tenuifolia</i>	Narrow-leaved Madder		X
	<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>			X
Scrophulariaceae				
	<i>Veronica cymbalaria</i>			X
	<i>Veronica polita</i>			X
	<i>Verbascum levanticum</i>			X
	<i>Verbascum sinuatum</i>			X
Solanaceae				
	<i>Solanum mammosum</i>			X
	<i>Solanum villosum</i>			X
	<i>Lycium schweinfurthii</i>			X
	<i>Mandragora autumnale</i>			X
Styracaceae				
	<i>Styrax officinalis</i>			X
Verbenaceae				
	<i>Verbena officinalis</i>			X
Urticaceae				
	<i>Parietaria judaica</i>			X
	<i>Urtica pilulifera</i>			X
Verbenaceae				
	<i>Verbena officinalis</i>			X
Zygophyllaceae				
	<i>Fagonia cretica</i>			X
MONOCOTYLEDONS				
Amaryllidaceae				
	<i>Narcissus serotinus</i>			X
	<i>Narcissus tazetta</i>			X
	<i>Pancratium maritimum</i>			X
Araceae				
	<i>Arisarum vulgare</i>	Friar's Cowl		X
Asparagaceae				
	<i>Drimys maritima</i>	Sea Squill		X
E	<i>Hyacinthella millingenii</i>			X
	<i>Muscari parviflorum</i>	Lesser Grape Hyacinth		X
	<i>Scilla autumnalis</i>	Autumn Squill		X
Iridaceae				
E	<i>Crocus veneris</i>	Cyprus Crocus		X
	<i>Romulea tempskyana</i>			X
Liliaceae				
	<i>Colchicum pusillum</i>			X
Smilacaceae				
	<i>Smilax aspera</i>	Smilax		X
Xanthorrhoeaceae				
	<i>Asphodelus ramosus</i>	Common Asphodel		X
	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>			X

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	NOTES	Seen
Orchidaceae				
	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i>	Autumn Lady's Tresses		x
	<i>Anacamptis collina</i>	Fan-lipped Orchid		x
	<i>Ophrys israelitica</i>			x
Poaceae				
	<i>Oryzopsis miliacea</i>			x
	<i>Lagurus ovatus</i>			x