

Trip report: Cyprus, April 15-21, 2003

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A family (me, my wife and our two daughters, 12½ and 14 years old) holiday with birding on my own in the early mornings. We stayed in an apartment in central Larnaka (Atrium Zenon) and we bought the arrangement, including a rental car from Sixt, from Ving in Sweden.

This was our third trip to Cyprus, the previous were in April 1997 (Protaras) and in April 2001 (Limassol).

Everything but the rental car and some cockroaches in the bedroom was just fine, but I will not bore you stiff with details! The weather was somewhat unsettled during the week with regular showers and some thunder. The air temperature hardly reached 20° C. Perfect conditions for birding, and perfect conditions for shopping as well...

I didn't go far from Larnaka at any time. My longest trip was to Achna Dam in the east one morning (16 April) and we also made a family trip to Cape Greko in the afternoon on 20 April. I visited Larnaka Sewage Works, and the salt lakes and pools in the area, every morning throughout the week. Kiti Dam was visited daily 17-20 April. A short stop at Oroklini Marsh on 16 April and just passing there on 20 April. Two of these spots aren't described in any guide I've seen. So here are short descriptions of how to get there.

Larnaka Sewage Works are two "plastic" pools close to Spiro's Pool, described in various guides. From Larnaka you drive south-west to the village of Meneoú where you turn left to "beach" (signposted). When you reach the beach area turn left at the t-junction. Then follow the road northwards a kilometre or so until you see a brown-painted hide (purpose-made for bird watching!) on your left side. Sometimes it's possible to drive right to it with a small car, sometimes not. If you visit the area this spot is simply a must! But beware of cavilling policemen! You are in the vicinity of an international airport and you better be as discrete as you can. Do not use camera (at least so they can see it)!

Oroklini Marsh. Go north from Larnaka on B3 (not the motorway) a few kilometres towards Agia Napa. Turn left at traffic signals and where "Oroklini" or perhaps "Voroklini" is signposted. Only a few hundred meters on your left you will see the marsh, immediately besides the road. The viewing distance is very comfortable but the vegetation is dense so therefore it can be difficult to see all the birds present.

Annotated species list

I follow the systematic adopted by

- Josep del Hoyo, Andrew Elliot & Jordi Sargatal. 1992-2002. *Handbook of the Birds of the World*. Vol. I – VII. Lynx Ediciones. Barcelona.
- Stanley Cramp & C. M. Perrins. 1988-1994. *Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa*. Vol. V – IX. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

- Little Grebe /Smådopping/** *Tachybaptus r. ruficollis* (PALLAS 1764). C. 10 at Achna Dam 16/4; c. 10 at Oroklini Marsh 16/4; up to 3 at Kiti Dam 17-20/4; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 18-21/4.
- Great Crested Grebe /Skäggdopping/** *Podiceps c. cristatus* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 in breeding plumage at Achna Dam 16/4; 1 in breeding plumage at Kiti Dam 17-20/4.
- Grey Heron /Gråhäger/** *Ardea c. cinerea* LINNAEUS 1758. 1 at Achna Dam 16/4; 4 at Kiti Dam 18/4.
- Purple Heron /Purpurhäger/** *Ardea p. purpurea* LINNAEUS 1766. 2 at Larnaka Salt Lake 14/4; 4 at Kiti Dam 17/4; 1 at Kiti Dam 18/4.
- Great White Egret /Ägretthäger/** *Egretta a. alba* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 at Kiti Dam 18/4.
- Little Egret /Silkeshäger/** *Egretta g. garzetta* (LINNAEUS 1766). 4 at Larnaka North Pools 15/4; 1 at Achna Dam 16/4; 1 at Oroklini Marsh 16/4; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 17/4; 10 at Spiro's Pool 18/4; 1 at Kiti Dam 20/4.
- Cattle Egret /Kohäger/** *Bubulcus i. ibis* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 in breeding plumage at Kiti Dam 20/4.
- Squacco Heron /Rallhäger/** *Ardeola ralloides* (SCOPOLI 1769). 1 at Kiti Dam 17-18/4; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 19/4; 2 at Kiti Dam 19/4.
- Black-crowned Night-heron /Natthäger/** *Nycticorax n. nycticorax* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 at Achna Dam 16/4 came in from south searching roost; 1 at Kiti Dam 17/4 and 19/4.
- Glossy Ibis /Bronsibis/** *Plegadis falcinellus* (LINNAEUS 1766). 4 resting on Spiro's Beach early in the morning 15/4; 13+1 at Spiro's Pool 15/4; 6 at Spiro's Pool 17/4; 9 at Kiti Dam 17/4; 3+4 Kiti Dam 18/4; 2 at Spiro's Pool 19/4; 6+16+22 at Kiti Dam 19/4; 45 came in for roost at Kiti Dam 20/4 09:50 and 13 more 10:10.
- Greater Flamingo /Större Flamingo/** *Phoenicopterus ruber roseus* PALLAS 1811. Seen regularly at Larnaka Salt Lake and Larnaka South Pools throughout the week, on 15/4 I counted to 219 birds in the area; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works daily 15-21/4; 2 at Oroklini Marsh 16/4.
- Common Teal /Kricka/** *Anas c. crecca* LINNAEUS 1758. Seen daily 15-20/4 at Larnaka Sewage Works, up to 2 males and 3 females present.
- Mallard /Gräsand/** *Anas p. platyrhynchos* LINNAEUS 1758. Recorded at Larnaka Sewage Works (maximum 10), Achna Dam (c. 5) and Oroklini Marsh (c. 5).
- Northern Pintail /Stjärtand/** *Anas a. acuta* LINNAEUS 1758. Seen daily 17-21/4 at Larnaka Sewage Works, up to 2 males and 1 female present.
- Garganey /Årta/** *Anas querquedula* LINNAEUS 1758. Seen daily 15-21/4 at Larnaka Sewage Works, up to 30 present on 18/4; 2 males and 1 female at Oroklini Marsh 16/4; seen daily 17-20/4 at Kiti Dam, up to 6 present on 18/4; 1 male and 1 female at Oroklini Marsh 20/4.
- Northern Shoveler /Skedand/** *Anas clypeata* LINNAEUS 1758. Seen daily 15-21/4 at Larnaka Sewage Works, up to c. 30 present on 15/4.
- Common Pochard /Brunand/** *Aythya ferina* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 female at Larnaka Sewage Works 19-21/4.
- Western Marsh Harrier /Brun kärrhök/** *Circus ae. aeruginosus* (LINNAEUS 1758). Eight sightings involving possibly 10 different individuals (2 males, 8 females): 1 female at Spiro's Pool 15/4; 1 male and 1 female at Kiti Lighthouse 17/4; 1 female at Larnaka Sewage Works 17/4, 18/4 and 21/4; 1 female at Kiti Dam 18/4 and 20/4; 1 male and 1 female at Larnaka Sewage Works 19/4.
- Common Kestrel /Tornfalk/** *Falco t. tinnunculus* LINNAEUS 1758. Common, but my notes are incomplete. A pair seemed to have nest under the dam bridge at Kiti Dam.
- Red-footed Falcon /Aftonfalk/** *Falco vespertinus* LINNAEUS 1766. 1 male at Meneoú Beach 15/4; 1 female at Achna Dam 16/4.

- Eurasian Hobby /Lärkfalk/** *Falco s. subbuteo* LINNAEUS 1758. 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 17/4.
- Peregrine Falcon /Pilgrimsfalk/** *Falco peregrinus brookei* SHARPE 1873. 1 with unidentified prey at Spiro's Beach 20/4.
- Chukar /Berghöna/** *Alectoris chukar cypriotes* HARTERT 1917. Not uncommon, but my notes are very incomplete. A few seen daily at Larnaka Sewage Works.
- Black Francolin /Svart frankolin/** *Francolinus f. francolinus* (LINNAEUS 1766). Occasionally heard at Spiro's Pool 15/4 and at Oroklini Marsh 20/4.
- Common Quail /Vaktel/** *Coturnix c. coturnix* (LINNAEUS 1758). 2 heard singing at Achna Dam 16/4; 2 heard singing near Kiti Dam 17/4; 1 heard singing near Kiti Dam 18/4.
- Common Moorhen /Rörhöna/** *Gallinula ch. chloropus* (LINNAEUS 1758). Recorded at Achna Dam, Oroklini Marsh and Kiti Dam, about 10 at each place.
- Common Coot /Sothöna/** *Fulica a. atra* LINNAEUS 1758. Recorded at Larnaka Sewage Works (8-10), Achna Dam (c. 30), Oroklini Marsh (c. 10) and Kiti Dam (c. 30).
- Black-winged Stilt /Styltlöpare/** *Himantopus h. himantopus* (LINNAEUS 1758). Up to 50 at Spiro's Pool 15-20/4; c. 50 at Oroklini Marsh 16/4; 11 at Kiti Dam 17/4.
- Collared Pratincole /Rödvingad vadarsvala/** *Glareola p. pratincola* (LINNAEUS 1766). 5 at Larnaka Sewage Works 15/4; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 19/4; 2 at Larnaka Sewage Works 20/4; 2+7 at Larnaka Sewage Works 21/4.
- Spur-winged Lapwing /Sporrvipa/** *Vanellus spinosus* (LINNAEUS 1758). 4 at Oroklini Marsh 16/4, one of them chased a Crow; 1 at Oroklini Marsh 20/4.
- Common Ringed Plover /Större strandpipare/** *Charadrius hiaticula tundrae* (LOWE 1915). 1 Larnaka Sewage Works 20/4; 4 at Larnaka Sewage Works 21/4.
- Kentish Plover /Svartbent strandpipare/** *Charadrius a. alexandrinus* LINNAEUS 1758. Seen regularly around Spiro's Pool and Beach and at Larnaka Sewage Works (3-4), but my notes are incomplete. 1 male and 1 female with at least one downy young at Spiro's Beach on 17/4; c. 25 at Spiro's Pool 15/4.
- Whimbrel /Småspov/** *Numenius ph. phaeopus* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 18/4.
- Spotted Redshank /Svartsnäppa/** *Tringa erythropus* (PALLAS 1764). 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 19/4.
- Common Redshank /Rödbena/** *Tringa t. totanus* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 16/4, 19/4 and 21/4.
- Marsh Sandpiper /Dammsnäppa/** *Tringa stagnatilis* (BECHSTEIN 1803). Recorded four times at Larnaka Sewage Works: 8 on 15/4; 3 on 19/4; 1+1 on 20/4; 8 on 21/4.
- Common Greenshank /Gluttsnäppa/** *Tringa nebularia* (GUNNERUS 1767). Recorded four times at Larnaka Sewage Works: 1 on 15/4; 1 on 18/4; 10 on 19/4; 3 on 20/4.
- Green Sandpiper /Skogssnäppa/** *Tringa ochropus* LINNAEUS 1758. 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 15/4.
- Wood Sandpiper /Grönbena/** *Tringa glareola* LINNAEUS 1758. Small groups, up to 5-6, recorded at Larnaka Sewage Works, Achna Dam, Oroklini Marsh and Kiti Dam.
- Common Sandpiper /Drillsnäppa/** *Actitis hypoleucos* (LINNAEUS 1758). Singles or couples recorded at Achna Dam, Kiti Dam and Larnaka Sewage Works.
- Little Stint /Småsnäppa/** *Calidris minuta* (LEISLER 1812). Seen daily at Larnaka Sewage Works, up to 40 on 18/4; 2 seen on a couple of occasions at Spiro's Beach; 20 at Oroklini Marsh 16/4.
- Curlew Sandpiper /Spovsnäppa/** *Calidris ferruginea* (PONTOPPIDAN 1763). 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 20/4; 4 at Larnaka Sewage Works 21/4. All of them had commenced body moult.

- Dunlin /Kärrensnäppa/** *Calidris a. alpina* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 2nd year at Larnaka Sewage Works 20/4; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 21/4.
- Ruff /Brushane/** *Philomachus pugnax* (LINNAEUS 1758). Seen in good numbers at Larnaka Sewage Works, up to 300 on 15/4 and 200 on 21/4; c. 50 Oroklini Marsh 16/4. Moreover singles or small groups seen here and there, e.g. 2 at Kiti Dam 17/4.
- Yellow-legged Gull /"Kaspisk trut"/** *Larus cachinnans michahellis* J. F. NAUMANN 1840. Common, almost all of them immatures.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull /Silltrut/** *Larus f. fuscus* LINNAEUS 1758. 1 ad. at Larnaka Sewage Works 19/4 and 21/4.
- Common Black-headed Gull /Skrattmå/** *Larus ridibundus* LINNAEUS 1766. Seen daily at Larnaka Sewage Works, up to 10 present.
- Slender-billed Gull /Långnäbbad må/** *Larus genei* BRÈME 1839. 1 ad. at Larnaka Sewage Works 15-20/4; 6 at Larnaka South Pools 15/4; 4 at Larnaka Sewage Works 19/4.
- Little Gull /Dvärgmå/** *Larus minutus* PALLAS 1776. Seen daily at Larnaka Sewage Works, 13 on 15/4 and 17/4, 7-9 the other days. No one was in breeding plumage, though they were moulting. Mixed ages, probably all of them were in their 2nd or 3rd calendar year.
- Gull-billed Tern /Sandtärna/** *Gelochelidon n. nilotica* (GMELIN 1789). 2 ad. at Larnaka Sewage Works 20/4; 5 ad. at Larnaka Sewage Works 21/4, stayed 06:20-08:00.
- Caspian Tern /Skräntärna/** *Hydroprogne caspia* (PALLAS 1770). 1 ad. at Larnaka Sewage Works 18/4; 1 ad. at Kiti Dam 18/4, an hour or so later. Probably the same individual.
- Common Tern /Fisktärna/** *Sterna h. hirundo* LINNAEUS 1758. 2 ad. at Larnaka Sewage Works 17-21/4. Display and courtship feeding seen.
- Little Tern /Småtärna/** *Sterna a. albifrons* PALLAS 1764. 2 at Larnaka Sewage Works 18/4; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 19/4.
- Whiskered Tern /Skäggjärna/** *Chlidonias h. hybridus* (PALLAS 1811). 1 in breeding plumage Larnaka Sewage Works 15/4 and 19-21/4; 1 in winter plumage Larnaka Sewage Works 16-21/4; 35 (!) in breeding plumage came in from south and stayed at Kiti Dam on 18/4 09:15-09:30; 3 in breeding plumage Larnaka Sewage Works 20/4; 1 in breeding plumage Kiti Dam 20/4.
- White-winged Black Tern /Vitvingad tärna/** *Chlidonias leucopterus* (TEMMINCK 1815). 1 in breeding plumage at Larnaka Sewage Works 20-21/4.
- Common Woodpigeon /Ringduva/** *Columba p. palumbus* LINNAEUS 1758. 1 heard singing near Achna Dam 16/4; 1 seen near Dhypotamos Dam 19/4.
- European Turtle Dove /Turturduva/** *Streptopelia t. turtur* (LINNAEUS 1758). 10 near Kiti Dam 18/4 and 20/4.
- Eurasian Collared-dove /Turkduva/** *Streptopelia d. decaocto* (FRIVALDSZKY 1838). Common in towns and villages.
- Great Spotted Cuckoo /Skatgök/** *Clamator glandarius* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 near Mazotos 19/4; 1 at Kiti Dam 20/4.
- Common Swift /Tornseglare/** *Apus a. apus* (LINNAEUS 1758). Common.
- Common Kingfisher /Kungsfiskare/** *Alcedo a. atthis* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 at Achna Dam 16/4.
- European Roller /Blåkråka/** *Coracias g. garrulus* LINNAEUS 1758. 1 near Dhypotamos Dam 19/4.
- Eurasian Hoopoe /Härfågel/** *Upupa e. epops* LINNAEUS 1758. 1 at Larnaka airport 18/4; 1 at Kiti Dam 20/4.
- Calandra Lark /Kalanderlärka/** *Melanocorypha c. calandra* (LINNAEUS 1766). 2 (1 singing, 1 calling, both seen) at Spiro's Pool 15/4; 2 singing in display flight at Spiro's Pool 19/4.

- Greater Short-toed Lark /Kortttålräka/** *Calandrella b. brachydactyla* (LEISLER 1814). C. 60 in a newly harvested cereal field close to Spiro's Pool 15/4; 6 at Larnaka Sewage Works 19/4.
- Crested Lark /Tofslärräka/** *Galerida cristata cypriaca* BIANCHI 1907. Common.
- Sand Martin /Backsvala/** *Riparia r. riparia* (LINNAEUS 1758). Recorded daily in moderate numbers.
- Barn Swallow /Ladusvala/** *Hirundo r. rustica* LINNAEUS 1758. Recorded daily in high numbers, increasing the last two days
- Common House Martin /Hussvala/** *Delichon u. urbica* (LINNAEUS 1758). Recorded daily in low numbers.
- Tawny Pipit /Fältpiplärräka/** *Anthus c. campestris* (LINNAEUS 1758). 2 near Spiro's Pool 15/4.
- Tree Pipit /Trädpiplärräka/** *Anthus t. trivialis* (LINNAEUS 1758). Recorded daily in low numbers.
- Red-throated Pipit /Rödstrupig piplärräka/** *Anthus cervinus* (PALLAS 1811). C. 50 in a cereal field close to Spiro's Pool 15/4; 1 at Achna Dam 16/4; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 20/4.
- Yellow Wagtail /Gulärräka/** *Motacilla flava* LINNAEUS 1758. 5 at Achna Dam 16/4. *M. f. flava*: 1 male and 2 females at Larnaka Sewage Works 20/4. *M. f. feldegg* MICHAELLES 1830: c. 50 at Spiro's Pool 15/4.
- White Wagtail /Sädesärräka/** *Motacilla a. alba* LINNAEUS 1758. Recorded daily in small numbers.
- Common Redstart /Rödstjärräka/** *Phoenicurus ph. phoenicurus* (LINNAEUS 1758). 2 males at Larnaka Sewage Works 15/4.
- Whinchat /Buskskvätta/** *Saxicola rubetra* (LINNAEUS 1758). Recorded four days at Larnaka Sewage Works: 2 males and 1 female 15/4; 1 female 19/4; 1 male and 1 female 20/4; 1 female 21/4.
- Isabelline Wheatear /Isabellastenskvätta/** *Oenanthe isabellina* (TEMMINCK 1829). 1 at Me-neoú Beach 15/4.
- Northern Wheatear /Stenskvätta/** *Oenanthe oenanthe subsp.* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 male and 1 female at Larnaka Sewage Works 15/4.
- Pied Wheatear /Nunnestenskvätta/** *Oenanthe pleschanka cypriaca* (HOMEYER 1884). Not more than half a dozen of sightings, but none in the vicinity of Larnaka Sewage Works. By most (?) authors now considered an own species: *Oe. cypriaca*.
- Black-eared Wheatear /Medelhavsstenskvätta/** *Oenanthe hispanica melanoleuca* (GÜLDENSTÄDT 1775). 1 male, light-throated morph, at Larnaka Sewage Works 15/4.
- Cetti's Warbler /Cettisångare/** *Cettia c. cetti* (TEMMINCK 1820). Rather common in suitable habitat. I have notes from Achna Dam and Dhypotamos Dam.
- Zitting Cisticola /Grässångare/** *Cisticola juncidis neurotica* MEINERTZHAGEN 1920. Common.
- Sedge Warbler /Sävsångare/** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 seen and heard singing on the same spot at Larnaka Sewage Works 19-21/4.
- European Reed Warbler /Rörsångare/** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus* (HEMPRICH & EHRENBURG 1833). One or twos heard singing at Achna Dam 16/4 and Kiti Dam 17-20/4.
- Olivaceous Warbler /Eksångare/** *Hippolais pallida elaeica* (LINDERMAYER 1843). Rather common.
- Spectacled Warbler /Glasögonsångare/** *Sylvia c. conspicillata* TEMMINCK 1820. Common in suitable habitat, e.g. at Larnaka Sewage Works where adults were seen feeding at two sites, one very close to the hide.
- Lesser Whitethroat /Ärtsångare/** *Sylvia c. curruca* (LINNAEUS 1758). 1 at Kiti Dam 17/4; 3 at Kiti Dam 19/4.

- Blackcap /Svarthätta/** *Sylvia a. atricapilla* (LINNAEUS 1758). Rather frequent near Kiti Dam 17-20/4, at least 10 there on 17/4. Song heard from time to time.
- Wood Warbler /Grönsångare/** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* (BECHSTEIN 1793). 3 at Kiti Dam 19/4.
- Spotted Flycatcher /Grå flugsnappare/** *Muscicapa striata subsp.* (PALLAS 1764). 1 at Spiro's Pool 15/4; 1 at Kiti Dam 19-20/4.
- Collared Flycatcher /Halsbandsflugsnappare/** *Ficedula albicollis* (TEMMINCK 1815). 1 male and 1 female seen and 3 more specimens heard at Kiti Dam 19/4; 1 heard at Kiti Dam 20/4.
- Pied Flycatcher /Svartvit flugsnappare/** *Ficedula h. hypoleuca* (PALLAS 1764). 1 male at Kiti Lighthouse 18/4; 1 male and 1 female at Kiti Dam 19/4; 1 female at Kiti Dam 20/4.
- Great Tit /Talgöxe/** *Parus major aphrodite* MADÁRÁSZ 1901. Not uncommon.
- Woodchat Shrike /Rödhuvad törnskata/** *Lanius senator subsp.* LINNAEUS 1758. 1 at Spiro's Pool 15/4; 1 at Larnaka Sewage Works 16-17/4; 1 at Dhypotamos Dam 19/4.
- Common Magpie /Skata/** *Pica p. pica* (LINNAEUS 1758). Common.
- Western Jackdaw /Kaja/** *Corvus monedula soemmerringii* FISCHER 1811. Only seen near Dhypotamos Dam, where some 20 occupied nests could be seen in a cliff.
- Carrion Crow /Kråka/** *Corvus corone pallescens* MADARÁSZ 1904. Common.
- House Sparrow /Gråsparv/** *Passer domesticus biblicus* HARTERT 1904. Very common.
- Common Chaffinch /Bofink/** *Fringilla coelebs syriaca* HARRISON 1945. 1 female near Kiti Dam 18/4.
- European Greenfinch /Grönfink/** *Carduelis chloris muehlei* PARROT 1905. Only one sighting: 5 near Dhypotamos Dam 19/4.
- European Goldfinch /Steglits/** *Carduelis carduelis niedecki* REICHENOW 1907. 3 near Dhypotamos Dam 19/4.
- Ortolan Bunting /Ortolansparv/** *Emberiza hortulana* LINNAEUS 1758. 2 at Kiti Dam 18/4.
- Cretzschmar's Bunting /Rostsparv/** *Emberiza caesia* CRETZSCHMAR 1826. 1 singing at Dhypotamos Dam 19/4.
- Corn Bunting /Kornsparv/** *Miliaria c. calandra* (LINNAEUS 1758). Common.

Acknowledgements

First of all to my family who patiently let me pursue my studies of the avifauna. A great thank to Jeff Gordon for invaluable information. Cyprus Bird line (+357 26 270447), run by Jeff, is an invaluable resource! Please use it, but please also instantly report your sightings!

N.B.

I did not have any "ambitions" on this trip as you can see in the species list. I consequently am without some "easy" species such as Pallid Swift, Red-rumped Swallow, Cyprus Warbler and all the Troodos species such as Coal Tit, Short-toed Tree-creeper and others. This trip report is not either the most detailed, but I can refer to a previous report which you can find at <http://www.osme.org/osmetrip/cyptripb.html>

or

<http://www.club300.se/resedatabas/filer/Cyprus2001.pdf>

Please don't hesitate to contact me for further information if you like!