

A birdtrip to Lake Dystos 2016-06-19.

Preface:

During the period 16-23rd of June, me and my family had a holiday trip to Greece. We spent the first two nights in Athens (Pan hotel close to the Acropolis). During our full day in Athens we visited the Acropolis and the surrounding area.

The next morning we took the bus to Athens' airport and rented a car for transportation to the island of Evia. You can get to Evia with a bridge at the island's main town of Halkida or by ferry at several places.

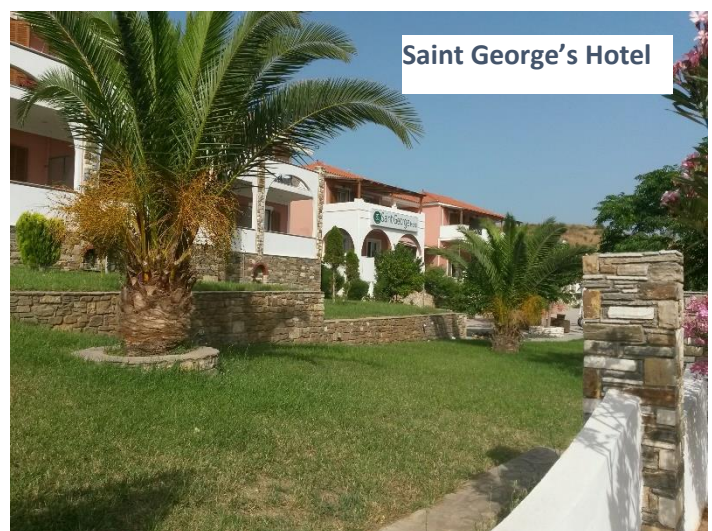
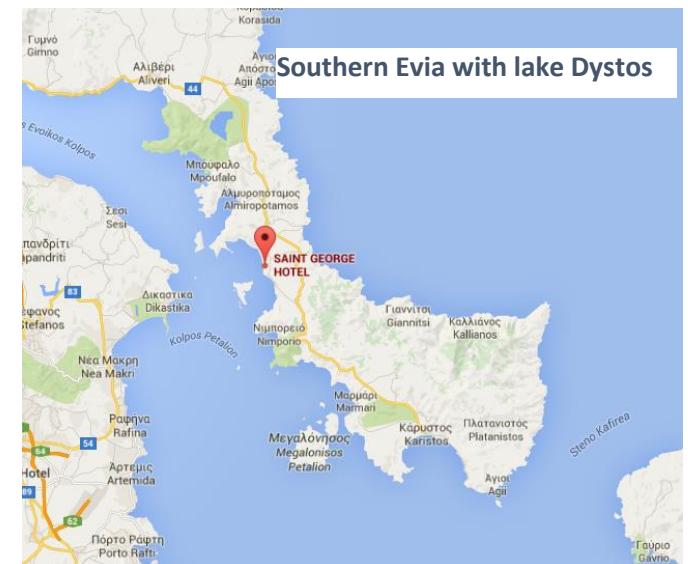
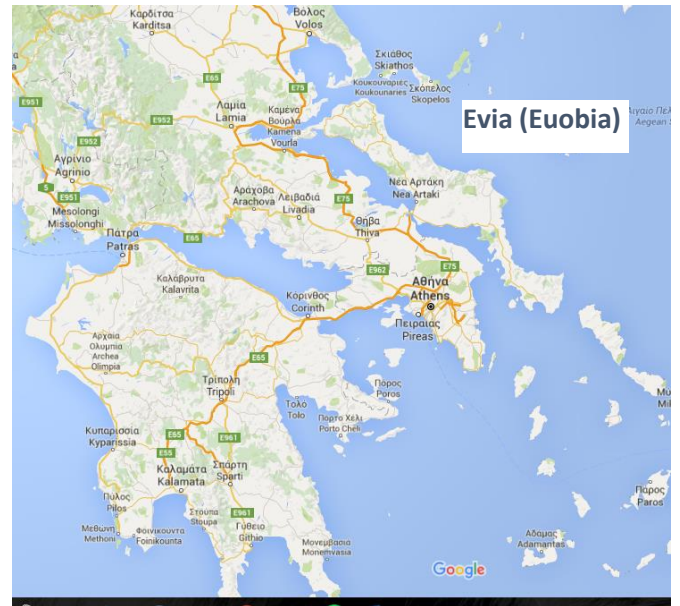
We drove there and took the ferry on the way back. The ferry is recommended if you plan to visit the southern part of the island (in our case from Nea Stira to Agia Marina).

During our stay at Evia, we stayed at Saint George's Hotel (<http://www.sgh.gr/index.php/en/>). It is beautifully situated a few km north of Nea Stira. A few hundred meters away from the hotel is a small beach. The hotel had a very friendly staff and each morning, they served a delicious breakfast.

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My nice and skilled guide Akis Gaitanakis from Greece Bird Tours (<http://www.greecebirdtours.com/>) picked me up at 05:15 in a four-wheel drive car, which is almost necessary in the area. Lake Dystos is not a lake any more, it is a huge area with reeds and small spots with open water. The lake is surrounded by farmland and hillsides with olive trees and at the very top of the hillsides, scrubs. We drove through the farmland and got nice views of Cretzschmar's Bunting, Black-headed Bunting, Woodchat Shrike, Lesser Kestrels mixed with Common Kestrels and the Turtle Doves were calling around us. It was a really nice morning.

After a while we drove up among the olive trees searching for the Olive-tree Warbler (a new bird species for me). They are very elusive during the summer and hard to spot. We worked hard and finally we found a group with mixed warbler species moving around us, they were Eastern Olivaceous,



Olive-tree (maybe 4 birds) and even an Orphean Warbler. After maybe 20 minutes I managed to spot a sitting Olive-tree Warbler.

Akis and I then started to look for another difficult species, the Rock-Partridge, and we drove all the way up to the mountain ridge. It was starting to get really hot and the birds were very quiet and although seeking eagerly we didn't find the Rock-Partridge. Despite the heat, we had many good observations on our way to the ridge; Black-eared Wheatear (both morphs), Sombre Tit, Western Rock Nuthatch, Blue Rock Thrush and a fantastic view of a Short-toed Snake Eagle coming just over the mountain ridge staring at us with its big yellow eyes.

Later in the afternoon Akis drove me to a special hill often preferred by falcons. This day we had three falcon species soaring around the top, Eleonora's Falcon, Lesser and Common Kestrel. When I arrived back at the hotel I was very tired but also very satisfied. We saw many good birds during this daytrip despite it being very hot.

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Akis and I outside the hotel

Species:

When I European Turtle Dove [sp] (*Streptopelia turtur*)
Alpine Swift [sp] (*Tachymarptis melba*)
Common Swift [sp] (*Apus apus*)
Grey Heron [sp] (*Ardea cinerea*)
Yellow-legged Gull [sp] (*Larus michahellis*)
Short-toed Snake Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*)
Eurasian Buzzard [sp] (*Buteo buteo*)
Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*)
Common Kestrel [sp] (*Falco tinnunculus*)
Eleonora's Falcon (*Falco eleonora*)
Peregrine Falcon [sp] (*Falco peregrinus*)
Greater Short-toed Lark [sp]
Crested Lark [sp] (*Galerida cristata*)
Barn Swallow [sp] (*Hirundo rustica*)
Red-rumped Swallow [sp] (*Cecropis daurica*)
Tawny Pipit [sp] (*Anthus campestris*)
Common Blackbird [sp] (*Turdus merula*)
Blue Rock Thrush [sp] (*Monticola solitarius*)
European Stonechat [sp] (*Saxicola rubicola*)
Northern Wheatear [sp] (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)
Black-eared Wheatear (Eastern) (*Oenanthe hispanica melanoleuca*)

Zitting Cisticola [sp] (*Cisticola juncidis*)
Cetti's Warbler [sp] (*Cettia cetti*)
Great Reed Warbler [sp] (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler [sp] (*Iduna pallida*)
Olive-tree Warbler (*Hippolais olivetorum*)
Orphean Warbler (Eastern) [crassirostris] (*Sylvia crassirostris crassirostris*)
Subalpine Warbler (Eastern) (*Sylvia cantillans albistriata*)
Sardinian Warbler [sp] (*Sylvia melanocephala*)
Sombre Tit [sp] (*Poecile lugubris*)
Great Tit [sp] (*Parus major*)
Western Rock Nuthatch [sp] (*Sitta neumayer*)
Woodchat Shrike [sp] (*Lanius senator*)
Common Magpie [sp] (*Pica pica*)
Eurasian Jackdaw [sp] (*Corvus monedula*)
Hooded Crow [sp] (*Corvus cornix*)
House Sparrow [sp] (*Passer domesticus*)
European Greenfinch [sp] (*Chloris chloris*)
European Goldfinch [sp] (*Carduelis carduelis*)
Common Linnet [sp] (*Carduelis cannabina*)
Corn Bunting [sp] (*Emberiza calandra*)
Cretzschmar's Bunting (*Emberiza caesia*)
Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*)
Black-headed Bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*)