

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KARLA AND YMITTOS

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1. SUMMARY

This report describes a 12 day trip to Greece. Three main sites were explored: Antikhassia mountains/Meteora (7 days), Lake Karla/Mavrovouni mountain (2.5 days) and Ymittos mountain (0.5 days). Some additional sightings were made 'en route'. In the first two sites we worked for the Hellenic Ornithological Society, mapping nests of Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and counting waterbirds. Most of the daytime was spent birdwatching but many other wild animals seen were recorded. Regarding target species, 9-11 pairs of Black Stork (4nests) and 5-6 pairs of Egyptian Vulture (2nests) were found. About waterbird counts, we highlight the number and diversity of breeding wildfowl, including Pintail (*Anas acuta*) and Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*) plus possibly Common Teal (*Anas crecca*) and Garganey (*Anas querquedula*). Overall, 153 species of birds, 10 of mammals, 11 of reptiles, 4 of amphibians and 4 of large insects were seen. According to current taxonomic criteria, the following 20 species very rare or never recorded in Iberia were seen (13 species for conservative birders): Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*), Rock Partridge (*Alectoris graeca*), Levant Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), Lanner Falcon (*Falco biarmicus*), Caspian Liliith's Owl (*Athene glaux indigena*), European Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*), Syrian Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos syriacus*), Black-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla feldegg*), Eastern Black-eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe melanoleuca*), Olive-tree Warbler (*Hippolais olivetorum*), Eastern Olivaceous Warbler (*Acrocephalus pallidus elaeicus*), Rüppell's Warbler (*Sylvia rueppelli*), Eastern Orphean Warbler (*Sylvia crassirostris*), Sombre Tit (*Poecile lugubris*), Western Rock Nuthatch (*Sitta neumayer*), Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*), Hooded Crow (*Corvus cornix*), Cretzschmar's Bunting (*Emberiza caesia*) and Black-headed Bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*). Interesting birds for Greece included Common Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) breeding in Antikhassia/Meteora and Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) seen in Volos. From other groups we highlight Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*), Wildcat (*Felis silvestris*), Yellow-bellied (*Bombina variegata*) and Green (*Pseudepidalea viridis*) toads, 10 species of reptiles absent from Iberia and Longhorn Beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*).

2. INTRODUCTION

Birding Greece is often synonym of visiting Lake Kerkini, Evros Delta, Rodopi Mountains, Lesvos Island and other famous sites. In this trip we went on a road less traveled. Most of the time was spent in Thessalia region where we focused on two main areas: Antikhassia mountains/Meteora and Lake Karla/Mavrovouni mountain. On my last morning in Greece I also did some birding in Ymittos mountain, near Athens (Attiki district), in search for some southern specialties that I add missed in central Greece.

In Thessalia we worked for HOS (Hellenic Ornithological Society) 69 IBA's project, focusing on two specific tasks:

1. Mapping occupied nests of Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*), Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and other cliff nesting birds of prey in Antikhassia/Meteora and Mavrovouni;
2. Counting waterbirds at Lake Karla (specially breeding ducks and their broods).

The above mentioned project aims to collect information about 69 areas spread throughout Greece in order to assess their suitability to become/continue part of the country's IBA (Important Bird Area) network and/or to (re-)define their limits. The first task was also designed to provide local data for the '2009 Assessment of the Egyptian Vulture Population in Greece'.

Antikhassia/Meteora is an old IBA (first no. 45, now GR053) famous for its richness in birds of prey (Hallmann 1989). It used to have 50 breeding pairs of Egyptian Vulture (the largest population in Greece), 10+ pairs of Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) and 3-5 pairs of Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*), but those species seem to be declining. Other birds, like Black Stork or Roller (*Coracias garrulus*), either are becoming more common or were poorly searched for in the 1980's. Mavrovouni is also an IBA from the first inventory (first no. 49, now GR060) but has lost some of its values (e.g. breeding Egyptian Vulture) and gained others (like breeding Black Stork). Mount Ymittos (Attiki district) is a recent IBA (GR126) from the last inventory (Bourdakis & Varelzidou 2000). According to the 2000 survey (1994 data for most species), Antikhassia/Meteora held 10 pairs of Egyptian Vulture (1996) and 6 to 8 pairs of Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*, just 1 pair in 1989) plus several pairs of White-backed Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*) and Cretzschmar's Bunting (*Emberiza caesia*) but no Black Stork

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

(SPEC2). For Mavrovouni the same inventory (Bourdakis & Varelzidou 2000, data from 1995) mentions Rock Partridge (*Alectoris graeca*), White-backed Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*), Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) and Cretzschmar's Bunting (*Emberiza caesia*) but, again, no Black Stork. Lake Karla was drained for agriculture in the late 1960's and remained dry for 40 years. Now an ecological restoration project for part of the area is being implemented so that, in the last four decades, 2009 is the first year in which part of the area is flooded. Because of on-going construction works, water level this year is rather low and conditions are excellent for birds. However there is some concern that, in the future, Karla will become a classic water reservoir and not the ecologically restored wetland advertised by the promoter. Nevertheless, when Karla was drained a few small neighboring reservoirs ('satellite dams' in the main text) remained and some waterbirds found refuge there. In the 2000 IBA inventory (based on 1996 data) those reservoirs were rated as an IBA (GR061), specially because of their importance to wintering Eurasian Teal (*Anas crecca*, up to 11.000) and migrant Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*, up to 40). Finally Ymittos was included in the Greek IBA network because of its importance for bird species associated with phrygana. Those include (Eastern) Black-eared Wheatear [*Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca*], Western Rock-nuthatch (*Sitta neumayer*), Rueppell's Warbler (*Sylvia rueppelli*), Cretzschmar's Bunting (*Emberiza caesia*) and Black-headed Bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*). According to 2008 assessment of Egyptian Vulture population in Greece, only 24-30 territories were left (Tzali 2008).

This small report has eight sections, including the above summary and the present introduction. First we present a short, day-by-day, description of the trip itineraries; this is followed by even shorter accounts of the local weather conditions during the 12-day period considered and of the flora seen in the main areas visited. Section six is the most informative, including five systematic lists – birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects. All lists include a collection of detailed records for each species cross-referenced with section three and some comments outlining the possible interest of a few of them. Current, up-to-date taxonomic criteria and species sequence are tentatively used for every group (van den Berg 2009, SHH 2009, herpetofauna.gr 2009, SEM 2009). For place names our main reference was Michelin 1:700,000 national map to Greece (No. 737), corrected by field data or better reference (e.g. Handrinos & Akriotis 1997, Bourdakis & Varelzidou 2000) whenever possible. In section seven I acknowledge the help of

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

seven friends that contributed to a successful trip. Finally, in section eight, several references that backup statements made throughout the text are listed. Images from this trip will be available soon at www.flickr.com/photos/lgordinho 'Greece (Astrapi Gordinhopoulos)' album collection (80 of 750 photos obtained, plus sonagrams from a few of the 35 recordings made).

3. DATES, PLACES & LOCAL TIME

12-Jun-2009: Portela, Lisbon, 8:35 → Barajas, Madrid, 11:40 → Venizelos, Athens, 16:10 (Iberia flights) → Exarchion Hotel, Themistokleuous Street (Taxi) → HOS offices (on foot) → Meeting with Tasos Dimalexis and Thanos Kastritis → Dinner → Hotel

13-Jun-2009: Exarchion Hotel, 3:00 (major riot with special police using pepper gas on mob, some of which entered hotel through air conditioned system) → Exarchion Hotel, 5:00 (picked up by Tasos in HOS Nissan Serena) → Lamia, Northern Sterea Ellada (picking up Apostolos Christopoulos) → Karla reservoir, Eastern Thessalia (**A**), 8:00 – 12:00 → Larisa → East of Taxiarches/ Megalochori (**B**) → Trikala → Theopetra (**C**), 14:30 (problem with car ignition) → Kalampaka Auto Service → Vasiliki Rooms, Kastraki (**D**), 15:30 → Rubish tip near Pineios river (**E**) → Meteora (**F**)

14-Jun-2009: Vasiliki Rooms, Kastraki → Meteora (**F**) → Gavros - Dimitrios (**G**) → Elati (**H**)

15-Jun-2009: Vasiliki Rooms, Kastraki → South of Psiloma (**I**) → Fotino (**J**), 17:45 → Kastraki, 21:30

16-Jun-2009: Vasiliki Rooms, Kastraki → Agnadia area (**K**), 8:20 → Kakopleuvri (**L**) → St. John Monastery (**M**) → Rocks above Krya Vrysi (**N**), 18:30

17-Jun-2009: Vasiliki Rooms, Kastraki → Area between Psiloma and Agia Triada (**I**), 8:50 → Aliakmonas river (**O**) → Church of Ayia Paraskevi area (**P**) → Quarry above church (**Q**) → Zavorda, Monastery of Osios Nikanoras (**R**) → Monastery of Evagelismos (**S**) → Kamvounia Mount (about 1.000 m), Krania Village (**T**) → Holy Trinity of Giannota village (**U**) → Giannota (**AQ**) → Elassona (**V**) → Area after Mesohori village (**W**), 19:30

18-Jun-2009: Vasiliki Rooms, Kastraki → Meteora, area west from Katalima/ Kopetanios (**X**), 8 h → Meteora, area between Triadha and Rousanou monasteries (**Y**), 14h → Visit to Meghalo Meteoro Monastery, 15h → Ipapanti Monastery (**Z**), 18:30 → Area below Rousanou monastery

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

- 19-Jun-2009:** Vasiliki Rooms, Kastraki → Dimitrios (**G**), 8:30 → Road to Skepari (**AA**), 10:00 → Area between Skepari and Vlachava (**AB**), 10:30 → Paleopanagia (**AC**) → Antichasia (**AD**), 14:30 → Monastery of Langadia (**AE**), 16:30 → Gorge 1.5 km east of Langadia Monastery (**AF**) → Peristera (**AG**) → Metamorfofi Monastery, Mount Kerketio/ Kaziakas (**AH**) → Ipapanti Monastery (**Z**), 20:45
- 20-Jun-2009:** Vasiliki Rooms, Kastraki → 2 km NW of Dimitrios (**G**), 8:00 → 1.5 km SW of Gavros (**G**), 9:30 → Agia (Karla reservoir area - **AI**), 13:30 → Stefanodikeio (**AJ**), 14:00 → Karla reservoir (**A**), 16:20 → Hotel Giouli, Antigonis Street, Aliko (near the beach road, south of Volos)
- 21-Jun-2009:** Hotel Giouli, Aliko → Mavrovouni Mountains (máx. 1054 m, **AK**), 8:30 → Karla reservoir and satellite dams, 10h → Glafki village pinewood heron colony, 13h → Goritsa Hill, Volos (**AL**), 16:00-17:00 → Seawatching from Aliko, 21:00-22:00
- 22-Jun-2009:** Hotel Giouli, Aliko → Nia (**AM**, between Volos and Lamia), 8:00-9:00 → Area above Sourpi → Pteleos (**AN**) → Sperchios Delta and rice fields (**AO**), 11:30 → Lamia, 15:30 (left Apostolis in train station) → Chelmou Street, Pentelis, Athens, 19:00
- 23-Jun-2009:** Chelmou Street, Pentelis, 6:40 → Attiki Odos highway → Ymittos ring → Kareia Street, 7:00 (joined Lefteris Stavrakas for 2:30 birding) → Mount Ymittos (**AP**), 7:30-13:30 → Pentelis (left the Nissan Serena and used suburban train to get to the airport) → Venizelos, 17:00 → Barajas, 19:45-23:30 (30 min delay!) → Portela, 23:40

4. WEATHER

On the 12th in Athens maximum temperature was around 37° C dropping to about 25° C at night. Strong rain and drop in temperature on the 18th from 19:00, but cooler and damper weather was over the next day. Overall we had a clear sky, warm temperatures and little or now wind – a true, old-school, Mediterranean summer (not like the ones we are having in Iberia this last years). Most of the time weather conditions were such that large soaring birds (*Ciconia nigra*, *Neophron percnopterus*, etc.) had a first peak of activity around 9:40.

5. FLORA

The flora of the three sites visited is far too diverse to be described here. The extensive oak woodlands of Italian Oak *Quercus frainetto* and Downy Oak *Q. pubescens* and the large riparian corridors of Oriental Plane *Platanus orientalis* seen around Meteora are probably among the most impressive. The phrygana scrubland (local 'garrigue') of Mount Ymittos is also worth mentioning, as is the harsh rocky landscape of Mount Kamvounia peppered by just a few *Juniperus* trees. From an Iberian point of view, the oddest plants recorded were certainly Smoketree *Cotinus coggyria* near Zavorda and a very large Mullein *Verbascum* sp. (2m tall!) south of Psiloma (see photos).

6. SYSTEMATIC LISTS

BIRDS (153 SPECIES)

Anatidae ducks

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*– Flock of 7 birds regularly moving between Karla reservoir and satellite dams (photo).

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*– One pair of adults seen in Karla reservoir.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*– 100+ birds seen in Karla reservoir.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*– 40+ birds seen between Karla reservoir and satellite dams, including some broods of small and unfeathered juveniles. A large flock of chicks recorded (around 15) could have been two broods together attended by a single female.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*– 30+ birds seen in Karla reservoir.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*– 20+ birds seen in Karla reservoir.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*– 50+ birds including several full grown juveniles seen at Karla reservoir mostly in SW margin.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*– About five pairs breeding in Karla reservoir where small tight flocks of seven or eight full grown juveniles each were seen swimming.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*– 10+ birds seen at Karla reservoir mostly in SW margin.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*– 50+ birds seen in Karla reservoir.

Phasianidae pheasants

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*– Searched for without success in AL, where the species is seen often (A.Christopoulos pers. comm.). Common in AP where ca. 25 were seen (inc. 2 + 6 juvs.). Many photos and sound recordings (inc. alarm from flock of 6 birds in flight). Often on tracks dusting and feeding. Structure at times looked a trifle different from that of red-legged partridge (*A.rufa*), including perhaps a smaller head and a larger body, especially when seen from behind.

Rock Partridge *Alectoris graeca*– 1male singing for a short time near N, in spite of extensive low power (100mW!) playback by LG (photo) we were unable to see it!

Phalacrocoracidae cormorants

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* – 10+ birds seen in Karla reservoir. 2 in AO on muddy/sandy delta islets. Distant birds, impossible to tell if Atlantic Great Cormorant *P.c.carbo* or Continental Great Cormorant *P.c.sinensis* (the most likely ssp. here?).

Ardeidae herons

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*– 2 in flight over the reed beds of Karla reservoir satellite dams.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – 100+ pairs in the heron colony of Glafki village small pinewood, south of Karla reservoir (photos). Many birds feeding at Karla.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* – 2 ads. in the heron colony of Glafki village small pinewood (south of Karla reservoir). 1 ad. in one of Karla satellite dams.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* – ca. 50 birds around Karla reservoir.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* – 200+ between Karla reservoir and satellite dams; 1 in small stream near G; 200+ pairs in the heron colony of Glafki village small pinewood, south of Karla reservoir (photo). Ca. 75 in AO, inc. 50 roosting in small saltpan.

Western Great Egret *Casmerodius albus* – ca. 25 birds at Karla reservoir, especially around NW margin.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* – 200+ birds seen at Karla reservoir mostly in SW margin; 2 flying over river near I, 200+ pairs in the heron colony of Glafki village small pinewood (south of Karla reservoir).

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* – 2+ in Karla reservoir near heron colony in *Tamarix* sp., 5+ in AO.

Ciconiidae storks

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* – ca. 50 birds seen at Karla reservoir, mostly in SW margin, and including many non breeders, I think. Regarding breeders, nine to eleven pairs and four nests were found, one in Mavrovouni mountain and all others in or around Antikhassia mountains/Meteora. In two nests were the (2-3) chicks could be seen all were big, but downy in one nest and feathered in the other. Due to conservation concerns no detailed records of this species are presented in the on-line version of the trip report, just in the one submitted to HOS.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* – 200+ birds seen around Karla reservoir including some nests with big but not fully feathered juveniles; 1 near E.

Threskiornithidae ibises

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* – flock of 7 in Karla reservoir, near heron colony in *Tamarix* sp.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* – Six birds in Karla reservoir.

Podicipedidae grebes

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – 30+ birds seen between Karla reservoir and satellite dams; 4 in small saltpan at AO.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* – 40 birds seen between Karla reservoir and satellite dams, including many juveniles.

Accipitridae hawks

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* – Not uncommon in oak forests at medium altitude. Recorded at several sites, including (single birds unless stated otherwise): C, G, L (1ad.+1juv.), U (2), X (5, photos), AD and G (2 birds 2 km NW of Dimitrios).

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* – Uncommon bird, just seen at a few locations (single birds unless stated otherwise): G, X (molting inner primaries), AB, AG and AH (2).

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* – Overall five to six pairs and two nests were seen, all in the Antikhassia mountains/Meteora area. One nest looked empty; the other had three small chicks. Due to conservation concerns no detailed records of this species are presented in the on-line version of the trip report, just in the one submitted to HOS.

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* – Not uncommon. Seen at several locations, including (single birds unless stated otherwise): C (3), G, I, L, X (2 ads. with stick – probable nest), AC (calling in flight), AI and A (2+).

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* – Uncommon, just two records: 1 in A, 1 in AO.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes* – Not uncommon in Meteora area. 9-10 birds recorded at several sites, including: 1ad. male in Platanus tree on the central square of Dimitrios village, 1ad. male (=?) above Dimitrios village and 1female 2 km to the NW; 1male 1.5 km SW of Gavros (G), 1female near H, 1 male near I, 1female near L, 1 male near N, 1 male in X and 1 female near AK.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* – The most common bird of prey in wooded areas, recorded in many places including: G (2), I, L (2), N, T, U (3), X, AA (2), AB (4), AD (4), AK and AM.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* (*B.r.rufinus* in Greece, *B.r.cirtensis* in N Africa occasionally reaching Iberia) – 3 birds around Karla reservoir, 1 ad. + 1 juvenile training for its 1st flight in AF (photo).

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* – 1 ad. in flight seen from X. Very dark, like small black vulture with eagle head and flight not so heavy, more maneuverability. Very broad wings and very short tail obvious. Probably a bird breeding in the area. 1 ad. just north of Karla reservoir, first on the ground in agricultural field, later on almond tree. Like an extra-heavy black kite (photos).

Pandionidae ospreys

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – 1 in AO, flying low over the delta.

Falconidae falcons

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* – Common bird in lowland agricultural areas, breeding in villages. Seen in several areas, including: 10+ in A, 5+ in V, 10+ in AJ, etc.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – The most common bird of prey around cliffs and rocks. Seen in several places, including: A (3), D (3), G, I, N, R, U, X, AA, AD, AH (nest with chicks), Z (2), AO and AP.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* – An uncommon bird. Just seen once, over large oak forest near Gavros.

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* – Not uncommon, usually around rocky areas. Individual records are listed here: 1 ad. pale morph near N, 1 - 2nd cy summer (see p. 480 in Forsman 1999; ID by very long wings, yellow legs & face pattern but juvenile lanner not easy to discard - photo) near I, 3 around X (2 pale morph, 1 dark morph), 1 pale morph near AC, 1 pale morph in flight near Z. These records of seven birds fit the pre-breeding distribution of the species: Eleonora's settles on continental Greece during three months (May-July) before moving to the islands to breed in August and September (Papaconstantinou 2007).

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* (*F.b.feldeggii* in Greece, *F.b.erlangeri* in N Africa occasionally reaching Iberia) – 1 ad. in C. When seen closely in flight from below against dark background very elegant with long wings and tail recalling pale morph Eleonora's. 2 ads in M, recalling Peregrine from above and, again, pale morph Eleonora's from below. Broad white tail tip very conspicuous (photo of bird in flight). Previous records probably relate to breeding pairs. 1 immature near AC (photo) could be far from breeding site.

Mediterranean Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus brookei* – 1 ad. in rock cliff NE of Kalampáka, 1 in flight near Z, 1 in flight near AM, 2 at AP (1juv. with broad pale tail tip obvious from above and 1ad. – photo).

Rallidae rails

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* – A few birds (5-10) seen along the reedy margins of Karla reservoir.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* – 30+ birds seen at Karla reservoir mostly in SW margin

Haematopodidae oystercatchers

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* – 1 in AO, on the delta mudflats. 1pair said to breed in one of Karla satellite dams (A. Christopoulos pers. comm.).

Recurvirostridae stilts

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* – 100+ in Karla reservoir, 8+ in AO most in a small freshwater lagoon.

Burhinidae thick-knees

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedichnemus* – About five birds seen in the muddy margins of Karla reservoir and in the neighboring agricultural fields.

Glareolidae pratincoles

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* – 15+ seen on the SW bank of Karla reservoir, 13+ at AO (colony in young cotton field).

Charadriidae plovers

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* - 6+ birds seen at Karla reservoir mostly in SW margin, 1 at AG.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* – 1 bird seen at Karla reservoir.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* – 2+ in flight over rice field at AO.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* – Five birds seen in Karla reservoir.

Scolopacidae sandpipers

(**Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* – 1 calling once over Karla reservoir but not seen. Rare bird in the area, so record is better considered unconfirmed)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* – 1-2 birds seen in the margins of Karla reservoir.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* – 7+ in Karla reservoir most keeping in a loose flock.

(**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* – 1 calling once over Karla reservoir. Not recorded previously in the area so record is better considered unconfirmed)

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* – One bird in one of Karla reservoir satellite dams, together with one redshank and one green sandpiper. Clearly smaller than redshank and clearly 'taller' than green sand (like wood sand *T.glareola*), but 'V' shaped white rump and diffuse pale tips to inner secondaries clinched the ID.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* – One bird in one of Karla reservoir satellite dams together with marsh and green sandpipers.

Laridae gulls

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* – 50+ seen in Karla reservoir

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* – 300+ in Karla reservoir; 200+ in AO, mostly in sandy/muddy delta islets and on a small saltpan (photo). Also seen in AK and AP (30+). The few photos obtained will be checked for possible Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*, as this species is supposed to occur in Greece during post-breeding dispersion (Olsen & Larsson 2004).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* – 1-1st summer bird with y-l gulls in the small saltpan we visited at AO.

Sternidae terns

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* – 1 ad. seen in flight over rice fields in AO. Said to breed in the delta on sandy/muddy islets (A. Christopoulos pers. comm.).

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* – 10+ birds seen around Karla reservoir.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* – ca. 30 birds seen in the NW section of Karla reservoir.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* – Up to 15 birds seen together with previous species.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* – 1ad. breeding seen and hear calling in flight over Karla reservoir. 30+ at AO flying over rice fields, said to breed in the delta on sandy/muddy islets (A. Christopoulos pers. comm.).

Columbidae doves

Common Pigeon *Columba livia* – Several in D, G, AP, etc. Most showing characters of domestic race.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* – 10+ around Karla, several in D, P, AJ (6+, photo), AP, etc.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* – Common bird in forest, tall scrub and agricultural areas with hedges. Some turtle doves were still singing. Recorded in several places including: G, I, K, N, P, Q, R, X, Z, AA, AF, AG and AK.

Cuculidae cuckoos

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* – Not uncommon, some birds still singing. Recorded e.g. in J and K.

Strigidae owls

Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops* – Just hear once, at 21:30 on the 15th, from the balcony of our room in Kastraki. No midwife toads (*Alytes* spp.) in Greece, so song ID straightforward.

Caspian Lilith's Owl *Athene glaux indigena* (*Athene noctua vidalii* Western Little Owl in Iberia, cf. *Dutch Birding* 31: 35-37 & <http://globaltwitcher.auderis.se>) – Not uncommon, mostly seen around old houses. On average looked slightly paler than Western Little Owl. Recorded at the following sites: G (2), T, AF and AK.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* – Birds singing briefly around 18:30 in Z and around 10:30 in AC. Also one roadkill seen (grey morph).

Apodidae swifts

Common Swift *Apus apus* – 10+ over A. Also recorded in L, Z, etc.

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* – Greek birders don't seem to pay much attention to this species, so a closer look could perhaps reveal new and important info. Since pallid swift is common in Portugal, I didn't pay much attention to them either (!). I just recorded the species at AL.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba* – ca. 50 in F, also recorded in I, D, etc.

Alcedinidae kingfishers

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* – One seen flying low over one of Karla reservoir satellite dams.

Meropidae bee-eaters

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* – Not as common as in southern Portugal but still seen in many areas, including: K, X, AA, AF and AG.

Coraciidae rollers

European Roller *Coracias garrulus* – Common in several agricultural areas. Also seen in large cultivated glades in oak forest and areas with scattered trees. Recorded in numerous locations, such as: G (4), I, O (4), X (4) and AA.

Upupidae hoopoes

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* – Not uncommon, recorded in several sites including: A (2), G, I, P, X, AA and AD.

Picidae woodpeckers

European Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* (Iberian Green Woodpecker *Picus sharpei* in Iberia) – Sounds different from Iberian, more like gull or like short-toed eagle. Common bird, recorded at many locations including: G (2 seen), I, L, N, X, Z and AA.

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus* – 3 birds on almond groves between Karla reservoir and Kanalia village, sometimes in wooden electricity/telephone poles. Also near AK, in *Platanus orientalis* riparian corridor.

Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius* – Very common in large oak forests. Territorial call sometimes sounds like the start of blackbird alarm call or like the start of red-legged partridge song. Recorded in many places, including: G (sound recording), I, K, N (photo), Q, X, AA and AC (sound recording).

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* – Uncommon, locally the rarest picidae seen.

A single record of a bird flying near I.

Alaudidae larks

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra* – Common between Karla reservoir and the agricultural land to the SW. On the 20th one rather large flock (80+15) was seen near the water edge in that area. 4+ seen in the agricultural area on the way to R, 1 heard and seen near AO.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* – Common in the Karla reservoir area, where 15+ birds were recorded. Also hear in AO.

Common Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* (*G.c.meridionalis* in Greece, *G.c.pallida* in Iberia, cf. Snow & Perrins 1998) – Recorded in several places, including: A, E, G, I, P, Q, T, U, AA (sound recording), AF, AG, AK and AO. One of the few birds seen at close range (at AO) had a very long bill.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea* – Not very common but recorded in several places, including: above Kastraki, J, L, T and AB.

Hirundinidae swallows

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* – A few (2+) seen over Karla reservoir on the 21st.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* – Not uncommon in rocky areas, recorded e.g. in: I, N, Q, S (2 occupied nests in monastery), X, Z and AC.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – Common. Recorded in many places, including: A, E, G, I, L, R, X, AC, AF, AG, AJ, AO and AP.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* – Common in A, D, G, I, L, R, AA and AP.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* – Seen in D, G, I, L, S (1nest), X, Z, AF and AG.

Motacillidae wagtails

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* – Uncommon bird at low and medium altitude, just recorded at G (1 calling).

Black-headed Wagtail *Motacilla feldegg* – Heard but not seen in the SW bank of Karla reservoir on the 12th. 3+ calling inc. 1 pair seen (male singing) in AO (photo). Very windy weather prevented me from digiscoping at high-power.

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* – Not uncommon; usually found near streams with or without riparian corridor, at medium altitude. Recorded at several sites, e.g.: E, G, I (juveniles near 'Psyrras bridge'), M and AK (pair with insects).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* – Not uncommon, recorded at a few sites, e.g. E, X and AG.

Turdidae thrushes

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* – Not common but recorded in several valleys with old trees and tall understorey in extensive oak forests. E.g. in K (3males singing), S and AB.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* – Birds heard (singing unless stated otherwise) in D, I, L, N, P, R, S, X (calling) and AC.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* – Uncommon bird at medium and low altitude, just recorded at G (1female seen).

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* – Uncommon in forest and agricultural areas. Just seen in scrubland patches in L, S, T and AP.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* – Very common in the stone dike around Karla reservoir where 20+ birds were seen, 1 male singing near H in area of tall scrub with just scattered rocks (interesting imitation of *Hirundo rustica* alarm call – sound recording). Also recorded in E, I, J (juvs.), T, AG and AK (juvs.).

Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe melanoleuca* (Western Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* in Iberia) – Not uncommon, sometimes side by side with previous species. Records in several sites, such as: I (1male), Q, T, U (1female – photo), AF (1black throated male – photo) and AK (juvs.).

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* – Not common but recorded in a few places, including: S (male, female & nest), AK and AP (2).

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* – Common. Recorded in many places, including: D, K, N, S, U, Z and AK.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* – Probably uncommon or very quiet at this time of the year. Song and alarm call from one bird heard 2 km NW of Dimitrios village (G).

Sylviidae warblers

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* – Not uncommon in streams with large riparian corridor and dams/reservoirs with reeds, rushes or sedges but these are scarce and scattered, so localized distribution. Heard in A, P, AO, etc.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* – Absent from Meteora and Karla. Common in AO.

Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum* – 2 or 3 birds near AM. 1 male delivering some kind of sub-song for a few seconds (perhaps in response to playback). 2 birds seen in flight or moving around quietly in the canopy of olive trees. Found not only of old olive trees in slopes, but also of tall and diverse scrub (photo). In flight recalls great reed warbler or a juvenile shrike (more likely in that habitat!).

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* – One singing from reeds near Karla reservoir, another one in rice field irrigation ditch near AO.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Acrocephalus pallidus elaeicus* (Western Olivaceous Warbler *Acrocephalus opacus* in Iberia) – Common in agricultural land with hedges, absent from oak forests in higher ground. Best sighting of male singing at very close range was near Gavros – very thin bill when seen head on obvious. Two other males singing in that area. Also 2 males singing and calling near I (sound recordings) and 1 singing near O.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* – 10+ males singing between Karla reservoir, satellite dams and irrigation ditches close by; 5+ singing from reeds in the rice field irrigation ditches of AO.

Eastern Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans albistriata* (Western Subalpine Warbler *S.c.cantillans* in Iberia, cf. Brambilla *et al.* 2008) – Common, recorded in many places including: near the easternmost monastery of Meteora, above Kastraki (sound recording), near G, L, N, R, X, AK and AP.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* – Not uncommon, recorded at a few sites, e.g. AK, AL, AM and AP.

Rüppell's Warbler *Sylvia rueppelli* – About 5 birds seen in AP, all in low dense shrubland above 400 m (the highest dust track in NW Ymittos). The area they favor now, a slope facing NW, was burned in 1998, during a forest fire (L.Stavrakas pers. comm.). Most birds were juveniles but 1 or 2 adult females seen (no adult male though...). Dusky markings in female throat and undertail

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

coverts conspicuous. Very grey overall tone and contrasting fringes to upperwing feathers of juveniles also eye-catching.

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris* (Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* in Iberia) – Probably uncommon or (most likely) very quiet at this time of the year. 1 singing NE of Karla and 1 singing briefly near I.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* – Not common, mostly in open areas with hedges at medium altitude. Recorded in J (3 males singing) and AC (1male singing briefly and seen).

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* – Not common but recorded in several places. Birds singing in D, P, below Y, etc.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* – A rare breeding bird in central and southern Greece (Handrinos & Akriotis 1997). Some 'above average' Greek birders are not familiar with its song and calls, so its status remains somewhat obscure. We recorded it in the few locations listed here: 1male singing and two birds seen near L (sound recording), 1 male singing near M, 1male singing and 1bird seen calling near S (sound recording). Most birds in extensive oak forest, often near glades, and using the same areas as other locally uncommon animals like robin, bear or wildcat.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* – Very quiet at this time of the year. Just a few birds calling from the canopy of *Platanus* trees between of Pyli's old bridge and Pyli village

Muscicapidae flycatchers

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* – Just recorded twice, inc. 1ad. carrying insect near J.

Aegithalidae long-tailed tits

Southern Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus alpinus/europaeus* group (like Iberia) – Common, recorded in several places including: above Kastraki, in I, N, P, X and AK (5+).

Paridae tits

European Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* – A common bird recorded in many places, including: G, I, K, X and AA.

Great Tit *Parus major* – Common, recorded in several places including: above Kastraki, G, I, L, N, P, X, AK and AP.

[European Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* – 1 bird near L, calling briefly from pine tree canopy but not seen. Rare bird in the area, so record is better considered unconfirmed.]

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Coal Tit *Periparus ater* – Not uncommon and recorded at several locations, including: H, N, X and AP.

Sombre Tit *Poecile lugubris* – Common, recorded in many places. Only most memorable records are listed: 2 seen well in Meteora near the easternmost monastery, also in G, I, K, X and AP.

[**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris* – 1 bird near 'Psyrras bridge', between Psiloma and Agia Triada, calling briefly from riparian tree canopy and not seen. Rare bird at medium and low altitudes (A.Christopoulos pers. comm.), so record is better considered unconfirmed.]

Sittidae nuthatches

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* (*S.e.caesia* in Greece, *S.e.hispaniensis* in Portugal) – Common bird in some mature oak forests, especially near glades and/or riparian. Commonest call in Greece seems to be a hard, whistled, abrupt 'fiisht – fiisht – fiisht - ...' repeated quickly for several times. 'Tu – tu – tu' calls, common in Iberia not heard in Greece. Recorded in several places, including: G (sound recordings), H, I, N, X, Z and AK (2).

Western Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer* – Common. Restricted to rocky peaks or outcrops in mountains dominated by extensive oak forests and in agricultural land. Everywhere in the bare rocky mountains around Athens. Commonest call recalls a cross between alpine swift and lesser spotted woodpecker (!). Many other calls, especially in the south (where perhaps more juveniles were out of the nests?!), including one similar to Dartford warbler (*S.undata*) alarm call and another resembling a singing wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*) running out of batteries (!!). 1 very accessible nest in small hill northeast of Karla reservoir (photo), 1 singing in C, 1 nest in N, Z (photo), AC (2 birds calling - sound recording), AE, AF (family of 5 around old mine building), AK and AP (10+ sound recordings).

Certhiidae treecreepers

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla* – Not uncommon, recorded at several sites, including: G, I, L, Z and AP.

Remizidae penduline tits

Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* – 5+ calling in Karla reservoir, 3+ calling in AO from reedbed and riparian trees.

Oriolidae orioles

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* – Not uncommon. Recorded at several sites, including: G, I, L and Q.

Laniidae shrikes

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* – Not uncommon in open areas with hedges at medium altitude. Recorded in several sites, including: I (1male - photo), J (2pairs - photo), L and AC (1male).

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* – Rare, just recorded once near J. Ad. male in open area with hedges at medium altitude, side by side with previous species. Said to occur in lowland agricultural areas (A. Christopoulos pers. comm.) but not seen there. Very contrasting plumage (compared with Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*) makes it look much bigger than it is.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* – Not uncommon in open areas with hedges at low altitude. Recorded in several sites, including: I, M, Q (2 ads.), AK and AM (old nest – photo).

[Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* – One hour of search and wait in AN, a known breeding area (A. Christopoulos pers. comm.), didn't produce any results. The site is a valley with orchards (mostly olive) and large Cupressus trees in the bottom and oak woodland in the nearby slopes (photo)]

Corvidae crows

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* – Common, recorded in several places including: near E, above Kastraki, G, I, K, N, X, Z, etc.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* – Very common even in villages and suburban areas near large cities. Recorded in many places including: E, AO, AP (imitating chukar!), etc.

Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* (*C.m.soemmerringii* in Greece, *C.m.spermologus* in Iberia) – Several in C, D, G, I, Z, etc. Very similar to Iberian birds - Disappointing.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* – Localized. Not uncommon in some specific areas. 1 in flight near B and 5+ near W (all juvs.).

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* – Very common almost everywhere. 50+ around Karla reservoir, several in D (1 attacking chicken without success!), G, I, K, N, R, T, X, AA, AD (15), AK, etc.

Northern Raven *Corvus corax* – 7 in A, 10 near I attracted to pieces of old horse/donkey carcass, 1 at L, 1 at AB, 7 at AC (2 ads. + 5 juvs. – sound recording) and 1 in AD.

Sturnidae starlings

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* – A few hundred east of Karla reservoir, resting in piles of metal mesh to be used in ditch foundations, including many juveniles (like chicken in cages!). Also seen in smaller numbers elsewhere, namely U and AB.

Passeridae sparrows

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* – Common. Recorded in many places, including: 50+ in A, 15+ in D, G, R, T, U (nest with juvs.), X (many eating grasshoppers!), AF, AG, AJ, AK (20+), AO and AP.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* – Several (5+) in stork nest at Karla reservoir, together with house sparrow. Large colony in dead poplar and nearby almond grove north of Karla (photo).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* – Not uncommon. Recorded at several sites, including D (4+ breeding), I, P and AA.

Fringillidae finches

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* – Common and singing a lot. Recorded in many places including: NE of Karla, E, above Kastraki, G, I, K, N, P, X, Z, AC (sound recording of call), AE, AK and AP.

European Serin *Serinus serinus* – Absent from Meteora and Karla, not uncommon in Athens. Singing at Pentelis Av. and seen at AP.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* – Recorded in many places, including: E, H, I, L, Q, AG, AJ, AK and AL.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* (*C.c.balkanica* in Greece, *C.c.parva* in Iberia, cf. Clement *et al.* 1993) – Common bird, recorded in many places including: Dimitrios village (photo), G, H, I, R and AC (sound recording).

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* – Not uncommon, recorded in several places including: S, T, AA and AK.

[**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus* – Strong hold of the species is Lykavitos Hill in eastern Athens (L.Stavrakas pers. comm.). Has been seen in Ymittos Mount, near parking space, in May but was not seen there on the 23rd June. Fond of big Cupressus trees. See habitat picture.]

Emberizidae buntings

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* – Very common and singing a lot. Recorded in most sites, including C, E, G, I, K, N, Q, R, U, X, Z, AB, AF, AK and AL.

Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia* – 3+ calling and 2 males seen (from front and back but no photo!) in AP. Often on the rocks or in the top of bushes, in slopes facing NW, above 400 m.

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala* – 10+ seen near Karla reservoir, especially near NE bank (see photo). Also in E, P, Q, AF and AG (2males).

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* – Common around Karla reservoir, especially in the agricultural land to the SW. Also near G, I, L, P, Q, U, AB, AG, AM and AO.

Introduced/escaped species

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* – One bird seen calling in flight over one of Volos main avenues (near one big hotel that rents rooms 'by the hour'...). Too small for *P.eupatria* but could, of course, be one of the other *Psittacula* species of similar size to *P.krameri* (cf. Juniper & Parr 1998).

MAMMALS (10 SPECIES)

Erinaceidae

Eastern hedgehog *Erinaceus concolor* – Several (3 to 5) roadkills seen, most in Antikhassia/Meteora area. All in poor condition so no decent photo of pale throat Vs brown underparts.

Rhinolophidae

Horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus* sp. – One seen briefly inside a cave near AC. Given the diversity of possible species (mostly the same as in Iberia, i.e. Blasius' horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus blasii*, Mediterranean horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus euryale*, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and Mehely's horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus mehelyi*) we have no guess about its specific identity.

Vespertilionidae

Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* sp. – A few very small bats were seen in villages around Antikhassia/Meteora area but, again, possibilities are diverse (Kuhl's pipistrelle *Pipistrellus kuhlii*,

BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Savi's pipistrelle *Pipistrellus savii*) so they are better left unidentified to species level.

Leporidae

Brown hare *Lepus europaeus* (*L.granatensis* in Iberia) – Droppings of a female (rounded not pointed like those of male) below Z (photo).

Gliridae

[**Fat dormouse** *Glis glis* – In Antikhassia/Meteora area dormouses are often seen inside old churches and monasteries, sometimes in crevices or climbing walls. We searched for this species in several places but, unfortunately, we were unable to see it on this trip.]

[**Common dormouse** *Muscardinus avellanarius* – Since this is one of my favorite mammals, I can't avoid mentioning that, as a child, Apostolos found a nest with several dormouses sleeping inside, presumably near his home town (Lamia) – we had no such luck on this trip!]

Canidae

Red fox *Vulpes vulpes* – Several road kills seen between Athens and Volos, but also two live animals by daylight: one resting in shallow cave near Gavros (G) around midday and the other patrolling a vineyard above Dimitrios (G) early in the morning.

Ursidae

Brown bear *Ursus arctos* – Probably not uncommon (!). Droppings seen at a few places like L or X (photo). Very typical, with lots of berry kernels and even some indigested berries (e.g. cherries). Juvenile chased by 4dogs crossing the road in the agricultural area before R.

Mustelidae

Beech marten, Stone marten *Martes foina* – A few road kills seen above Kastraki, in I, etc.

Felidae

Wildcat *Felis silvestris* – Two young wildcats mobbed by tits were seen on the oak forest ground among scattered shrubs near L.

Suidae

Wild boar *Sus scrofa* - Several rooted patches seen, especially in Antikhassia/Meteora area.

Cervidae

Roe deer *Capreolus capreolus* – A few tracks seen in Antikhassia/Meteora area.

AMPHIBIANS (4 SPECIES)

Bombinatoridae

Yellow-bellied Toad *Bombina variegata* – Probably uncommon, just one immature seen in a sheep drinking tank near AC (photo).

Bufo

Common Toad *Bufo bufo* – 1 or 2 roadkills, exact locations not recorded.

Green Toad *Pseudepidalea (Bufo) viridis* – 5 juveniles near the base of Mavrovouni Mountains, on the road to Karla reservoir (photo). 30+ in AK (at a small old quarry) the next day.

Ranidae

Greek Marsh Frog *Pelophylax kurtmuelleri* (= *Rana balcanica*) – Heard and/or seen at a few places, including A and I (near 'Psyrras bridge'). Ca. 5 caught in a sheep drinking tank near AQ (photo). About these last frogs, Dr. Petros Lymberakis commented as follows: 'Ranidae and especially the green frogs of the genus *Pelophylax* have few and uncertain morphological characters. However the record area indicates that you must have photographed a *Pelophylax kurtmuelleri*'.

REPTILES (11 SPECIES)

Geoemydidae

Balkan Terrapin *Mauremys rivulata* (*Mauremys leprosa* in Iberia, *Mauremys caspica* in Eastern Europe away from the coast) – 1 crossing a dust track between rice-fields and ditches near AO (photo).

Testudinidae

Hermann's Tortoise *Testudo hermanni* – Common, moving a lot especially late in the afternoon. Recorded in several places, including A (6+), E, H, I and AH (photo).

Marginated Tortoise *Testudo marginata* – Three big ones crossing the asphalted road NE of Karla reservoir. Very dark, huge spracaudal plates. Can move fast, cross the road and disappear into bramble hedge in less time than you get your camera ready – catch it first!

Anguidae

European Glass Lizard *Pseudopus (Ophisaurus) apodus* – 1 large adult on the asphalted road crossing almond groves between Karla reservoir and Kanalia village.

Lacertidae

Balkan Green Lizard *Lacerta trilineata* – Not uncommon. All large bright green lizards seen well had yellow throats, but that could not be checked in all cases, so some records listed may refer to Green Lizard *Lacerta viridis*. Seen in A (photo), J (2), etc.

Erhard's Wall Lizard *Podarcis erhardii* – Common, seen in several locations, including H and L (photos).

Colubridae

Leopard Snake *Zamenis (Elaphe) situla* – 1 near N, caught by me and photographed in the hand by Apostolos (photo).

Large Whip Snake *Dolichophis (Hierophis) caspius* (= *Coluber jugularis caspius*) – 1 in I, 1 large (160-170 cm) adult freshly killed on the asphalted road north of Karla reservoir (photos).

Balkan Whip Snake *Hierophis (Coluber) gemonensis* – 1 near N, on asphalted road, very quick and aggressive (photo).

Eastern Montpellier Snake *Malpolon (monspessulanus) insignitus* – A few roadkills (2 or 3), exact locations not recorded.

Water Snake *Natrix* sp. – A few (3-4) swimming in Karla reservoir and satellite dams. Seen from a distance, so no way to tell if *N. natrix* or *N. tessellata*.

INSECTS (4 SPECIES)

Cerambycidae

Great Longhorn (or Capricorn) Beetle *Cerambyx cerdo* – Uncommon, just two animals seen, both in the same area of oak forest (Z). One alive in flight and one dead (photo). Rain may have increased their activity.

Lucanidae

Stag Beetle *Lucanus cervus* – Not common, four animals seen in different areas, including: Z (dead), AC (male in flight) and 1.5 km SW of Gavros (G, 1male - photos).

[Several other big Coleoptera still unidentified where seen feeding on flowers near AD (photos)]

Tettigoniidae

Bush-cricket *Saga* sp. – 1 young female near Z (photo)

Cicadidae

Cicada *Cicada* sp. – Lots (25+) of recently metamorphosed large ones in the main tree trunk of almond trees on the orchard north of Karla reservoir where a large Spanish sparrow colony is situated.

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BIRDING THREE LESS-KNOW IBA'S OF GREECE: METEORA, KÁRLA AND YMITTOS 12-23JUN2009

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