

# Orchids of Rhodes

Mariposa Nature Tours trip report

7<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> April 2025

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Tour leaders Jon Dunn & Dr Richard Bate

Trip report by Jon Dunn

(Images, clockwise from top left: Ophrys sicula © Andy; Ophrys cretica © John;  
Ophrys regis-ferdinandii © Tracey; Orchis italica © Sharon)



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[Please note – while some of the orchids encountered in Rhodes have common, vernacular English names, many do not. Rather than impose our own clumsy vernacular names upon the latter, we've stuck with the scientific names in the interests of accuracy and clarity. However, where a widely-used vernacular name exists, it's used (suffixed with its scientific name) in the text that follows, e.g. Giant Orchid *Himantoglossum robertianum*. Similarly, where hybrids have known formal names, they are used – e.g. *Ophrys x kalteiseniana* to describe *Ophrys ferrum-equinum x reinholdii* – but where no such formal name could be found, we have simply described the presumed parents in question, e.g. *Ophrys ferrum-equinum x regis-ferdinandii*]

### Arrivals day, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April



*Ophrys ferrum-equinum* © Richard

This had to be something of a first on any tour in leader Jon's experience – all of the guests arriving the previous day before a tour was scheduled to begin! This meant we could all assemble shortly after breakfast time at our meeting point, transfer to our comfortable hotel in good time to drop off our luggage, and pick up our picnic lunches before heading straight out into the field!

In effect, this gave us an extra few hours orchid-hunting we otherwise wouldn't have anticipated having – and leaders Jon and Richard, having been on the island for days before our guests' arrival, intended to make the very most of this unexpected boon.

*Ophrys lucis* is one of the earlier flowering bee orchids on Rhodes, and is a delicate flower, prone to going over rather quickly, particularly if exposed to a day or two of hot sunshine. Fortunately we have found a special site, at elevation and in a sheltered gully, that seems to hold flowers in bloom for many days after the bulk of its kind have finished their flowering business elsewhere on the island, so it was here that we made our first stop of the tour to ensure we had the beautiful *lucis* safely under our belts before it was gone for good.

However, it was impossible to get to *Ophrys lucis* without encountering some other orchids in the very short walk from the vehicles, so *lucis* wasn't our first orchid of the tour – that honour went to *Ophrys ferrum-equinum*, quickly followed by the delight that's *Ophrys reinholdii*.



*Ophrys reinholdii* © Kirsty

The site is a little sensitive, being compact and on a slope, and we're always very mindful to avoid anyone accidentally treading on a non-flowering plant. To this end, we approached the flowering plants one at a time, with Richard standing by to ensure feet were placed with



Eastern Festoon © Richard

the utmost care. Everyone waited patiently for their turn at the altar of *lucis* – and we had plenty of butterfly distractions up slope to pass the time – a procession of gorgeous Eastern Festoon, and elegant Scarce Swallowtail.

With this entrée enjoyed mere minutes from our hotel, we travelled down to the southern end of the island. With Rhodes having enjoyed some

days of sunshine before our guests' arrival, we were aware that the low-lying south of the island had taken a bit of a baking, so we wanted to ensure we missed none of the emblematic species to be found there, not least the opportunity to enjoy *Ophrys cretica* in all its glory.

On either side of our picnic lunch we explored a network of ruderal fields near Kattavia, an extremely fruitful and productive site in every regard. The new orchids came thick and fast, with *Ophrys* bee orchids particularly appreciated,



Ophrys speculum © John

some fine examples of *cretica* amongst them. Mirror Orchid *Ophrys speculum* and King Ferdinand's Orchid *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii* were abundant, and unsurprisingly we also encountered *Ophrys x buttleri* their hybrid offspring.



Ophrys cretica © John

Another hybrid, of a significantly rarer parentage, was also present here – the lovechild of Mirror Orchid and the island's eponymous bee orchid, *Ophrys rhodia*. This great rarity was one we'd first seen in 2024, and were delighted to find it continued to prosper. Some distance away was another familiar face – a chlorotic, ghostly pale variation of *Ophrys rhodia*.

*Ophrys lutea* were enjoying an excellent year, painting areas of the fields yellow with their large flowers. Nearby we found *Ophrys umbilicata*, always a scarce species on the island, and one we were paying close attention to in order to ensure we didn't miss it. With a number of the group also keen birders, and with the island having enjoyed southerlies recently, conducive to migration, some good birds were also seen – notably Eastern Black-eared Wheatear, and a magnificent male Pallid Harrier that flew through, heading north with some determination. Nearer to our vehicles, prior to moving on, Jon found our first Lesser Fiery Copper of the week, a butterfly that was admired by all.

A few miles down the road we paid a visit to a roadside chapel site that guaranteed we'd see *Ophrys cornutula* with its fine, elongated 'horns', but also encountered our first tongue-





orchids here, the lush and deep burgundy flowers of *Serapias carica*. More flamboyant by far, we also bumped into our first Pink Butterfly Orchid *Anacamptis papilionacea* here, and paid our respects to the local geckos on the chapel walls too.

Before we left, we learned John had found *Ophrys iricolor* at the margin of our ruderal fields we'd visited earlier! With Jon's exhortation that we should never let an opportunity to see something new pass us by ringing in our ears, we made a pit-stop back at the ruderal fields to enjoy our first meeting with the large, blue and inky black flowers of this striking orchid, with a bonus sighting of Chukar for good measure!

The drive back towards Embonas also yielded a new bird for the week, for Crag Martin were to be seen in their usual rocky haunts on the coastal road. We had other things on our minds, however, with the chance to add one or two new orchids to our daily account before we retired to the hotel... A short walk up a track near the hotel proved good for Giant Orchid *Himantoglossum robertianum*, and our first *Orchis anatolica*, a delicate but richly coloured member of the *Orchis* tribe.

With half an hour to spare before we met for our first pre-dinner evening checklist, Jon and Richard headed out to the other side of the village on a short recce to prepare for the following morning. We leave



nothing to chance, and like to know if an additional stop during the day might be a productive option... and so it was to prove. Jon found a late-flowering but pristine example of *Ophrys sitiaca*, but this was significantly eclipsed by Richard spotting, at 50kph, a roadside *Ophrys cinereophila*. Jon had witnessed before Richard's uncanny eyesight and ability to spot orchids where others simply would not, but even by the latter's high standards, this was most impressive. The leaders returned to the hotel and checklist in high spirits – tomorrow was guaranteed to start strongly.

## Day 2 – 8<sup>th</sup> April

The day dawned grey and overcast, with some spots of rain to be seen marking the road outside while we ate breakfast. We had all seen the weather forecast, and knew what was in store for us – the day was meant to be wall-to-wall heavy rain on the island. It was, then, something of a relief that for the first two hours in the field we were spared and, sensibly, we had chosen to start orchid-hunting on the very outskirts of Embonas, near to the hotel, thereby maximising the comfortable time we had rather unexpectedly at our disposal.

Our first stop was at the roadside site where Richard had found his drive-by *Ophrys cinereophila* the previous evening – the plant was still where we'd left and, nearby, we were treated to several fresh Pink Butterfly Orchid, a Giant Orchid (albeit rather a small giant!), our first beautiful *Ophrys polyxo* of the week, and further examples of *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii*, *ferrum-equinum*, and *reinholdii*. Not bad for a stretch of roadside margin... A little way into the pine woodland that flanked the road we duly recorded the *Ophrys sitiaca* the leaders had found the previous evening, while Richard, ranging in the woodland, found a large Huntsman Spider.



A couple of miles away we parked in a quiet off-road location in the midst of a colony of lovely fresh *Ophrys mammosa* – the new *Ophrys* were coming thick and fast, a trend that would continue throughout the day ahead. A very pleasant walk along a track heading towards the coast yielded more *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii* and *reinholdii* at the woodland edges and, in a lovely olive grove with views towards cloud-swathed Mt. Attaviros, our first *Ophrys sancti-isidorii*. Nearby we found single examples of *Ophrys iricolor* and *cinereophila*, the latter plant a more luxuriant example than that seen earlier in the morning.



We walked back to our vehicles, pausing to enjoy the opportunity for more photos of the trackside orchids we found, but with the rain now beginning to fall lightly upon us. We'd made the most of the dry spell of the day, a couple of stolen hours we were not necessarily expecting given the weather forecast.

A short drive took us up the slopes of Profitis Ilias and, as expected, the rain was now falling with serious intent. It was time to don our raincoats and umbrellas, and continue orchid-hunting undaunted. New orchids came thick and fast on the open woodland floor, with *Ophrys oreas* found in quick order, with Dense-flowered Orchid *Neotinea maculata*, Provence Orchid *Orchis provincialis*, and Naked Man Orchid *Orchis italica* all seen nearby. We'd be seeing more of all three of the latter species during the day...



A little way uphill we found a small colony of Man Orchid *Orchis anthropophora* sheltering by the roadside, and our first individuals of the dusky pink colour morph of Dense-flowered Orchid. We walked up onto the ridge of the mountain that overhung us, to discover a closely packed mixed colony of Green-winged Orchid *Anacamptis morio* ssp.



*caucasica*, Provence Orchid, and Milky Orchid *Neotinea lactea*. These provided much distraction, though the slopes beneath us held further treasures – our first *Ophrys omegaifera*, and *Ophrys sicula*. Richard's keen eyes spotted a far rarer prize – *Anacamptis x gennarii*, the hybrid between Green-winged Orchid and Pink Butterfly Orchid. This was just beginning to flower, with only one flower fully open on the flowerhead, making the discovery all the more impressive.



Michael spotted our first *Ophrys dodekanensis* near the ridge-top as we were leaving – while we were of course hopeful we'd seen plenty more of this in the coming days, the old adage of a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush sprang to mind, so several folk elected to walk back uphill to enjoy this before we moved on.

Dropping down from the mountain top took us out of the cloud, but not the rain that swathed the entire island today. We sensibly elected to eat our picnics inside the vehicles, before moving down the Gadouras River Valley towards the first of two main sites for the afternoon. We made a pit-stop at the Italian Bridge for its fine colony of Naked Man Orchid

– they were looking very fine indeed, and elicited some humour – Kirsty noting that it was raining naked men!

Nearby, we explored an area of hillside that held a particular prize, the *Ophrys* named after Persephone, queen of the underworld of Greek mythology. *Ophrys persephoneae* was showing well in some numbers, her dark beauty marvellously offset by the rich buttery yellow of many surrounding elegant Rhodes Fritillary *Fritillaria rhodia*. Persephone smiled upon us, the rain finally pausing for a while, allowing us an hour to explore with some degree of abandon. We soon found many delicate *Serapias politisii*, and a colony of Bumblebee Orchid *Ophrys bombyliflora*. Jon and Richard found our first *Ophrys apollonae* nearby too – there was a dawning sense that we'd done rather well now for new species, though until we gathered for checklist later we'd have no idea of just how well...



A short drive brought us into the vicinity of the village of Laerma, and here we found many more Bumblebee Orchids, sharing a water meadow (in a very literal sense after today's torrential rain) with two new species for us – Loose-flowered Orchid *Anacamptis laxiflora*, and *Serapias bergonii*. The Loose-flowered Orchids were really magnificent, with John finding the finest stand of them in a hidden ditch, with one flowerhead measuring easily 10 inches in height. *Ophrys rhodia* was found nearby, adding to the day's tally, while several more beautiful *Ophrys polyxo* were flourishing in the meadow's drier areas, including a dark, hyperchromic example of their kind.

We'd done well today, but with the rain falling again with both persistency and volume, we elected to head back to the hotel to dry out. Once we'd changed into dry sets of clothes, the guides took the group to the village's lovely ice-cream parlour, where we all enjoyed welcome hot drinks and some crepes.

And what of the day's final scores on the doors? When we gathered in the evening to work our way through the day's sightings, we discovered we'd seen 29 species of orchid during the day, and a great many of them were new for the week. Testament to how orchidaceous the island is, after just two days we'd seen 38 species in total! With the weather forecast to be dry for the rest of the week, we could look forward to reacquainting ourselves with many of them in more comfortable conditions in the days to come...

### Day 3 – 9<sup>th</sup> April



Dawn at Embonas © Kirsty

Awakening to find our hotel bathed in golden sunlight was definitely an improvement on the preceding day, though a strong northerly wind was an unwelcome development. It's testament to the good spirit and determination of our group that we didn't let it deter us, but it did make for some trying orchid-hunting conditions.

On the one hand, logic would suggest that a windy day wasn't the day to go looking for orchids on a hilltop but, on the other hand, we were also acutely aware that two of our target orchids for the coming week were coming towards the end of their flowering season – a day of intense sunshine and strong wind upon them, coming after a day of persistent heavy rain, was unlikely to do the condition of those remaining flowers much good. Every day would count in terms of finding examples of *Ophrys koraë* or *Ophrys leochroma* in good condition.

We simply had to go up Windmill Hill today. The drive there is the longest of the week, a little over an hour long, not on account of distance, but simply due to the increasingly narrow and winding roads one traverses. The final few miles are on graded gravel roads, slowing one down still further, though the latter stages of the journey are extremely picturesque as the gathering elevation yields some spectacular views of the island as a whole, while the roadsides are painted pink and white by the flowers of the abundant *Cistus* rockroses that flourish here.

By mid-morning we had parked near the summit of the hill, the first of three sites we would explore at different elevations during the course of the day. Giving ourselves two hours to work with here at the first site, we began to see what we could find. Jon had been here the previous week,



*Ophrys koraë* © Jon



Ophrys colossaea © Jon

and knew the location of one target, a good example of *Ophrys koraë*, the smaller of the two *tenthredinifera*-type sawfly orchids to be found up here. It remained in good condition, its rich brown lip contrasting beautifully with its bubblegum pink sepals. Nearby, among carpets of delicate *Orchis anatolica*, we found another new *Ophrys* for the week, *Ophrys phryganae*, with yellow-fringed flowers and a distinctively kinked lip when seen in profile.

Richard meanwhile had not strayed far from the vehicles, and had found a magnificent example of *Ophrys colossaea*, an endemic species for the island – with large and elaborately patterned flowers, this was truly the Colossus of Rhodes! It contrasted starkly with surrounding diminutive *Ophrys polyxo* and, nearby, there was yet another new

species to be seen – several examples of *Ophrys saliarisii*. Good numbers of Pink Butterfly Orchid also abounded here. The site, being on the ridge of the hill, had the wind accelerating as it rushed up the northern face of the hill, so these particular orchids demanded some determination and grit from their admirers. Poor Jo was literally swept off her feet! Nearby, on a sheltered slope, we enjoyed many diminutive but elegant *Ophrys parvula*, with sparkling speculums set upon an inky dark lip with a fine lime-green border – Tracey made a strong case for these being the most attractive of all the orchids seen thus far.

Ralph and Andy, wandering along a track in the lea of the hill, found smart male Cretzschmar's Bunting, adding to the small but high quality bird list we were building alongside our orchids. Butterflies too were present here, proving as tenacious as our group in the windy conditions – Green Hairstreak were ubiquitous, posing nicely on the leaves of



Cretzschmar's Bunting © Andy

the *Cistus*, while our first Green-underside Blue were also duly admired.

For our picnic lunch we dropped down to a lower elevation, to an area in which Jon had found a good colony of *Ophrys halia* the previous week. They were still present and in good condition, further burnishing our daily haul of large-flowered and colourful bee orchids. *Halia* is a

really attractive species, with green-suffused sepals and a strongly-patterned lip – these plants were much admired, but little did we know something better still awaited us at our final destination on Windmill Hill...



Ophrys parvula © Tracey



We'd no sooner started exploring this new area than Jon spotted a flower spike bearing three striking flowers. He called the group over to what, at a glance, seemed set to be another *Ophrys halia* but, as he knelt to examine the plant more closely, doubts immediately set in. "I think this could be *Ophrys samia*..." The lip of this gorgeous orchid's flowers were a rich rufous tone, with a dusting of golden hairs. Caution set in – we didn't want to set any hares running before we were sure of our identification. Calling Richard over for a second opinion, our confidence grew as we considered what we had before us. (And, upon cross-checking with the literature, we had no lingering doubts whatsoever – this was indeed *Ophrys samia*, a great rarity on Rhodes).

We dispersed to explore the area still further after this initial flurry of excitement, somewhat distracted by Alpine Swift and a passing Hobby overhead. Kirsty called Jon over to see what she'd got... she had found a colourful *Ophrys* which, to our collective delight, was an immaculate and fresh *Ophrys leochroma*, the only one of its kind we would see – this is an earlier flowering species, and one that 'goes over' quickly. A little way uphill Jon spotted our first *Ophrys attaviria*, while nearby Michael found a lovely example of *Ophrys iricolor* – this was the site that just kept on giving!



While it was with some reluctance that we left a site this richly endowed with orchids, there was also an undeniable sense of relief to be leaving the strong wind behind us. We stopped in a village nearby for a welcome break at a taverna to recharge our batteries...



En route for home we headed to a series of abandoned terraces that proved fruitful last year, but arrived to find a work crew and heavy machinery clearing scrub and trees from nearby power lines. With good grace, and most apologetically, the foreman asked us if we could move on – of course, we were only too happy to do so. We had another alternative site in mind, and it was to prove to be a good one – on the lower slopes of Mt. Attaviros we wandered for half an hour, finding a great many lovely *Ophrys reinholdii* with their velvety black and white lips, some scented Dense-flowered Orchid, several *Orobanche* (honorary orchids!) and, just as we were about to head back to the hotel, our first *Ophrys candica*. We knew we'd see hundreds more examples of *candica* in the coming days, but this singular example was a cherry on the cake of what had been a very fruitful day in the field.

At checklist before another delicious dinner, we realised that after just three days we were now sitting on a quite incredible total of 48 species seen. The coming days would afford

many more opportunities to revisit many of the species, but there would still be some new additions to come. Could we better last year's record tally of 53 species?

#### Day 4 – 10<sup>th</sup> April

We make a particular point of our leaders being well-connected within their fields of interest, and Jon and Richard are no exception in this regard. Every year while we're orchid-hunting in Rhodes we expect to find friends also on the island on the lookout for exceptional orchids, and we happily exchange news with trusted confidantes – it's a mutually beneficial relationship, and ensures more people see special plants. This collaborative approach paid off this morning in the form of news of a rare *chlorantha* form of *Ophrys sicula* found by friends a little east of Embonas. Jon and Richard headed out before first light to pin down the plant's exact whereabouts, so by the time they'd returned and joined the group for breakfast, it was with the happy news that we'd added a special bonus orchid to our day's itinerary.

The *Ophrys sicula* var. *chlorantha* was growing at the perimeter of a strip of rough uncultivated land on the edge of an olive grove, surrounded by scattered regularly-marked individuals of its kind, a few *Ophrys polyxo*, and a great many *Ophrys rhodia*. We each took our turn to admire and photograph this very special plant – the lip of each flower a golden green in hue. Neither of our leaders had seen a *Pseudophrys* of any kind expressing itself in a *chlorantha* form, so this was quite a red letter day for all concerned.



After this cause for celebration we made our way across the island to another uncultivated area bordering an olive grove near Lardos. Here, both beneath the olive trees themselves and in the general surroundings, were dozens of fine *Ophrys calypsus*, a new orchid for the week, and one with large, colourful flowers. Amidst them were several var. *scolopaxoides*



forms, with noticeably elongated and characterful lips. We noted our first Clouded Yellow butterflies of the week and, beneath them, also *Serapias bergonii* and Naked Man Orchid.

Our next site was further north, a large and extensive network of olive groves that are greatly beloved by us. Beneath the ancient trees here we found many of the largest of all the Rhodian *Ophrys*, *Ophrys colossaea*, including some flowers bearing intricately patterned speculum markings. Here the *Serapias bergonii* were expressing themselves exuberantly, with some very large and prolific stands of their kind beneath the trees.

Further orchids seen in the area included *Ophrys mammosa* and *Ophrys rhodia*, and a couple of large Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*.

We stayed here for our picnic lunch, eaten sitting on the grass in the olive grove. Overhead, we could see bird migration happening before our eyes. After a day of intense northerly winds that had slammed the door in their faces, the conditions today were much less prohibitive for northerly-bound birds coming out of Africa. Hirundines and swifts fed low overhead, the hirundines sometimes taking insects from just above the grass in which we sat. We enjoyed stellar views of Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, House Martin, Swift, Pallid Swift, and Alpine Swift. In the space of just 20 minutes two Short-toed Eagles came in off the sea and headed north higher overhead.

Migrants of another kind remained our constant companions – the dragonflies we'd been seeing daily were still very much in evidence here. We suspected they must be Vagrant Emperor *Anax ephippiger*, and so it proved when we finally managed to patiently stalk settled insects and take some images that allowed definitive identification. Jon even found one roosting low on a *Serapias bergonii*, hidden from view by the surrounding grass.



After lunch we headed south towards Gennadi, and made the first of two stops amidst still another extensive network of olive groves. Here we found Man Orchid, and much *Serapias carica* and *Ophrys polyxo*, often growing side by side. An area of olives here is regularly inundated by floodwater from a nearby watercourse, depositing rich silt from the hills on the ground. We know of nowhere else on the island where *Serapias carica*, already a big, chunky tongue orchid, grows so large and impressively. Sure enough, some vast examples of it were there to be seen, including one knee-high specimen that, wonderfully, sported a bee-mimic robberfly, *Laphria aurea*, waiting on its uppermost flower for an opportunity to ambush some hapless passing insect



Just a couple of minutes from here found us exploring our last olive grove of the day, and to immediate good effect. Richard quickly found our first *Ophrys blitopertha* near to the track on which we'd approached the grove – deeper into the trees, we found many more of this beautiful orchid. Nearby Jon had already located two *Ophrys lindia* in the previous week, and these remained in flower to be enjoyed by us all. Nearby, the group found several more examples of this rare and localised orchid. *Ophrys attaviria* was also present here in

good numbers, albeit not as prolific as *Ophrys blitopertha*. Richard found an excellent hybrid here between the latter two species, a distinctively different plant that grabbed our attention.

Our new orchids today had been *Ophrys calysus*, *Ophrys blitopertha*, and *Ophrys lindia* – taking us over the 50 species threshold, to our collective joy. The law of diminishing returns



was biting now, not that we cared – today had been a truly lovely day, spent exploring olive groves both coastal and inland, and we had seen a tremendous array of both orchids and other wildlife besides.

### Day 5 – April 11<sup>th</sup>

Oh no, rain again?! We sat down to breakfast with the heavens opening again outside, and occasional flashes of lightning and thunderclaps adding some further drama to proceedings. We had a plan for today, but modified it accordingly. Invariably when it's raining in one area of Rhodes it seems to be dry elsewhere, so we reversed the day's site visits, taking us to the north-east coast in the morning, and back to Profitis Ilias in the afternoon. This worked splendidly, and we spent the day orchid-hunting in sunshine.

Well, not just orchids... everything was grist to our mill this week, so at our first stop near Kolimbia we were on the look-out for the perfect, large and foetid Dragon Arum. There were plenty of their kind in flower, but many were either tiddlers, more wyvern than dragon, or not fully unfurled in their burgundy, velvety glory. It was extremely pleasant to wander the open woodlands and limestone pavements of the area searching for our perfect dragon, and we had some distractions in the form of *Serapias politisii* and *Cyclamen rhodium*, the latter much sweeter-smelling than the arums, whose odour of decomposing flesh is designed to lure their pollinators, flies, to sample their supposed delights.



Soon enough we found the perfect specimen, a marvellous creature whose flower was spangled with silvery raindrops from the showers that had finished before we arrived on site. As the sun warmed it, its odour started to intensify, and while we were photographing it we could see flies beginning to arrive upon it, attracted by the heady perfume of dead deer.



Nearby, and after a short search, we found a marvellous stand of the day's new orchid, Violet Limodore *Limodorum abortivum*. These other-worldly orchids look exotic and out of place in a European context, but were very welcome indeed for us. The cool spring had slowed down the emergence of some species, Violet Limodore among their number, so it was a species that casual visitors might struggle to find in flower. Our usual sites all had emergent plants, but none in flower, but fortunately in this out of the way corner of the island we knew there would be some waiting for us, and sure enough, here they were.

We made a speculative stop to see if any peonies were still in flower, but this early flowering species had already done its business at this location, and all we found were plants forming seeds. This site did have a surprise up its sleeve for us –

Robert found a lovely Rhodes Freshwater Crab *Potamon rhodium* that posed obligingly for us.

With a taverna just a few minutes' drive away, it seemed rude not to take advantage of the opportunity for a late morning coffee. We recharged our orchid-hunting batteries ready for the afternoon while Jo, an accomplished needle-worker, was delighted to find the walls of the taverna displaying intricate embroideries that owner's grandmother had made many decades ago.

We ate our picnic lunch a little while later sat in the sun-bathed pine woodlands of Profitis Ilias, before commencing our second orchid-hunting foray on the mountain. It had been raining so heavily the last time we were up there, hence we felt it would be productive to spend some time there again in more enjoyable conditions. A small hidden meadow, encircled by large boulders, was our first site, and it was fairly carpeted with Green-winged



*Ophrys dodekanensis x oreas* © Tracey

Orchid – we trod carefully, not wishing to accidentally crush these delicate things. Among them were *Ophrys rhodia*, *Ophrys sicula*, and *Ophrys reinholdii* – the latter including a handful of lovely pale examples, with much white frosting on their lips – and some nice examples of rich magenta *Orchis anatolica*.

We returned to the hilltop meadow in which some of us had seen a saturated *Ophrys dodekanensis* earlier in the week, and spent the remainder of the afternoon here to great effect. A couple of *Neotinea lactea* were just about hanging

on here, so we were glad we'd visited earlier in the week when they were still in good condition; while Green-winged Orchid remained numerous, as did some really fine examples of primrose yellow Provence Orchid *Orchis provincialis*. Our *Anacamptis x gennarii* hybrid hadn't advanced any further, but nearby we started to find more *Ophrys dodekanensis* and *Ophrys oreas*, and it wasn't long before Richard had spotted a fine hybrid between the two of them, displaying a suite of characters intermediate between both parents.

This plant, understandably, distracted us for a while. John, meanwhile, had found something to drag us away from it – an extensive colony of Dense-flowered Orchid *Neotinea maculata*, including some extremely heavily marked plants with leaves densely mottled with deep aubergine markings, marked like the coat of a leopard.



*Ophrys reinholdii* © Jon



*Neotinea maculata* © Richard



Nearby still more Provence Orchid were to be seen, while the irrepressible Robert continued to find excellent other wildlife – two *Calais parreysii* click beetles were particularly admired by all. We returned to our hotel with enough time to enjoy a celebratory ice cream in the nearby ice cream parlour before it was time for checklist and yet another delicious dinner. Our orchid species total for the week had increased by one, in the form of

the Violet Limodore, to 52 species. One more would equal the record we'd set in 2024. We had a few targets in mind for that...

### Day 6 – April 12<sup>th</sup>

This was more like it – waking up to a fine sunny morning that meant we could go orchid-hunting without having to modify our plans in any way due to the weather. However, thanks to Richard undertaking a dawn orchid recce, we needed to amend our plans slightly from an orchid perspective – we always make room for orchids, after all, on these tours!

Richard had found a pristine example of *Ophrys sancti-isidorii* a few miles from the hotel, so we were keen to improve upon our previous sighting of this scarce and localised species. We headed here after breakfast and, in little time, we were all enjoying this lovely flower beneath olive trees with a view of Mt. Attaviros in the near distance, with just a few wispy white clouds around the summit in an otherwise unblemished cerulean sky. This was the life! After most folk had taken their time to photograph *sancti-isidorii* we wandered the rest of the olive grove, finding flowering *Ophrys cinereophila*, *Ophrys iricolor*, and *Ophrys polyxo*; and a good many Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* that were on the cusp of colouring up and blooming. A little later, upon reviewing images, Richard noted one plant that was intermediate between *Ophrys cinereophila* and *Ophrys sancti-isidorii*, indicating some hybrid shenanigans had occurred here.







Ophrys rhodia x speculum © Jon

Leaving this rich and beautiful spot, we noted *Ophrys mammosa* at the roadside before heading south to explore a new hillside for us near Kattavia. Predominate in this warmer, southerly area were many Pyramidal Orchid in full bloom and, as we'd hoped, good numbers of Bug Orchid *Anacamptis coriophora* too, their heavily spotted and jagged vermillion flowers a delight to see. To our surprise, we found an *Ophrys cretica* with an immaculate flower, a very late individual of its kind indeed. Not only late, but doubly interesting for with its green sepals it resembled the nominate form of the species rather than the Rhodian *beloniae* subspecies. Bird passage was clearly under way again today, and those with binoculars noted White Stork

among others passing overhead. A highlight of the morning was more earthbound – Richard found a stunningly beautiful Mediterranean Ocellated Skink *Chalcides ocellatus* that posed calmly for the appreciative admirers who gathered to see it.

We moved a couple of miles away to revisit a site we'd explored earlier in the week – the passage of time had, of course, meant that many *Ophrys* bee orchids had finished their flowering business for another year, but others were still very much in evidence or, indeed, now at their peak. While we ate our picnic lunch Jon and Richard were prowling restlessly and finding, respectively, another example of the *Ophrys rhodia x speculum* hybrid, and our first *Cytinus hypocistis* of the week – the latter is a fascinating plant vampire that lives inside the roots of *Cistus* rock roses, emerging only to flower every now and again – the flowers emerging from the leaf litter beneath the rock roses as waxy red buds before opening to reveal shiny yellow and red flowers, to be pollinated in time by ants.



Cytinus hypocistis © Roger



Ophrys polyxo x rhodia © Andy

Our wanderings here after lunch revealed still more *Ophrys cretica* ssp *beloniae* in surprisingly good condition, a great many *Ophrys lutea* and *Ophrys rhodia*, and a lush clump of a vigorous hybrid between *Ophrys polyxo* and *Ophrys rhodia*, with sullied aubergine and green sepals initially suggesting a hybrid origin before closer examination demonstrated the flowers to be intermediate between the parents. Nearby, Richard found a *chlorantha* form of *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii* that had, unfortunately, not fully formed its flowers. One to keep an eye on next year, perhaps!

Eastern Black-eared Wheatear had been keeping a watchful eye on us here while we orchid-hunted slowly through the fields. The area was known to have Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*

records in the near past, and we wondered whether we might find an early-flowering example. Alas, it wasn't to be... (Sorry, terrible pun!)

We headed towards our final site for the day, planning to spend the late afternoon up on Mt. Attaviros, but stopping en route for a coffee break at our favourite taverna in the south of the island. Suitably refreshed, we headed up Attaviros... Our plan here was to enjoy the many faces of the incredibly variable *Ophrys candica*, and they certainly didn't disappoint – hundreds of flowers were out in the area, and we were able to meander through the pine forest enjoying each and every one we met. Inevitably, sharp eyes spotted some variations – Jon found a *lusus* form with an extra labellum, and Richard a fine var. *flavescens*. *Ophrys reinholdii* was also numerous here and still in great condition. Other orchids encountered included *Ophrys omegaifera* and *Orchis anatolica*, and a really lovely Pink Butterfly Orchid.



*Ophrys candica* var. *flavescens* © Jon



Distant thunder far away © Tracey

In the distance we could hear ominous rumbles... another storm was brewing far away. We were unhurried by it, and made our way back to the vehicles as planned. Just as we were leaving the woods Jon found a single tall, spindly, dark-flowered *Ophrys*. Those nearby took a few images, and we dismissed it as 'just' *Ophrys attaviria*. It was only an hour later, at checklist, that the penny dropped – reviewing those images, and checking them against the literature, and we realised we'd stumbled

across a very scarce orchid indeed – *Ophrys eptapigiensis*! We resolved that we'd return to see it again first thing in the morning, to ensure everyone had ample opportunity to enjoy this rarity. The mood over dinner was celebratory – we'd now equalled the 53 species record. Could we beat it?

### Day 7 – April 13<sup>th</sup>

With *Ophrys eptapigiensis* almost on our very doorstep, it seemed rude not to go back to appreciate it more knowingly this morning after breakfast. We duly returned up Attaviros, where *eptapigiensis* was waiting for us and our appreciative cameras. With the benefit of knowing what we were looking at, this was a very educational orchid indeed.



This diversion aside, we headed back to the south of the island and Windmill Hill for the morning. Our logic in returning here was to see if further examples of the large and dramatic *Ophrys* species (*halia*, *samia*, and *saliarisii*) were to be found – and, indeed, *halia* and *saliarisii* were both to be found in addition to, most pleasingly, more colourful examples of both *Ophrys korae* and *leochroma*. Exploring the far side of the hill also yielded good numbers of *Ophrys mammosa* for those willing to walk downhill a way; while for others, the lure of Cretzschmar's Buntings on the higher ridges was too powerful to resist!

After lunch, we headed to the southern tip of the island to a site that we knew, from prior experience, should be the first at which *Anacamptis sancta* would come into flower. The cross-country journey was punctuated by some essential stops for a little birding – who could resist the turquoise and chestnut loveliness of a Roller hunting few metres away from us in a roadside field? Certainly not us. With Bee-eater and Woodchat Shrike also hunting insects on this stretch of road, we were spoilt for birding choice.

A short walk at our *sancta* site soon yielded our first flowering plant. Others were not immediately forthcoming, so we spread out to search for more. Again, the birds were a distraction, with an outrageously showy male Ortolan Bunting impossible to ignore. Jon eventually found some more flowering *Anacamptis sancta*, so we left the site well-satisfied – with this, our 54<sup>th</sup> species of the week, we'd now beaten our 2024 record!

We returned to the hotel in triumphant mood – this had been a fabulous week of orchid-hunting in great company, and we'd seen not only a large number of species, but had fully appreciated the beauty of both individual plants and orchids en masse in their different environments. And we'd seen other myriad wildlife besides – between us we boasted a wide range of wildlife-watching interests, skills and knowledge, and so everybody had benefited from one another's keen eyes and passion.

We arranged to meet for our final pre-dinner checklist, and parted company with an hour spare to freshen up. And, of course, Richard and Jon headed out once more to look for orchids! There was one more possibility we thought we should stand a chance of seeing – Small-flowered Tongue-orchid *Serapias parviflora*. Alas, the flower Jon had seen the previous week proved to be no more, presumably grazed off – and to guides' chagrin, no further plants had advanced in that particular colony to a state of flowering.







The Fates had other plans for the group, however. On the drive back into Embonas, Richard did it again – a drive-by orchid discovery, seeing a large example of what would prove to be *Ophrys mammosa* from the moving vehicle. Upon stopping to explore the area on foot, Richard hit the jackpot one final time for the week – finding a flowering Small-flowered Tongue-orchid nearby! Gilding the lily just a little, there were also *Ophrys attaviria* within a few feet of it...

Jon and Richard dashed back to the hotel. Checklist would have to wait a while... Our guests, dressed for dinner rather than the field, gamely joined us for the five minute drive for one final orchid-hunt, and one final new species for the week.

And not just any species – this was number 55 for the ultimate Orchids of Rhodes tour! What a way to bring the week to a close.

### Day 8, departures day

Our final day in this orchid-hunter's paradise dawned fine and sunny once again. With our flights home at civilised hours (for those of heading home today – some were staying on for an extended holiday), we were able to start the day at a gentle pace. Some ambled down into the village for one last look around; others took the opportunity to take in one or two final orchids within a few minutes walk of the hotel; and Kirsty put us all to shame by running halfway up Mt Attaviros!

Our drop-off at the airport went as seamlessly as we expected in this well-organised island, and we bid sad goodbyes to one another... and laid plans for future orchid-hunting reunions.

Jon and Richard would particularly like to thank all of our group for joining us this year in Rhodes – we made a terrific team, and all of us came away with some wonderful wildlife memories to cherish and, in particular, some very special orchid encounters indeed. Everybody found plants (and birds, and reptiles, and invertebrates, and even crustaceans...) that contributed to the overall success of the week and the pleasure and enjoyment of the group as a whole. We couldn't have wished for a finer orchid-hunting team – thank you, one and all! We really look forward to seeing you again soon.

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Orchids of Rhodes 7 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> April 2025										
	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
	<b>GENUS OPHRYS</b>									
	<b>Ophrys iricolor group</b>									
1	<i>Ophrys iricolor</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓			
	<b>Ophrys fusca group</b>									
2	<i>Ophrys cinereophila</i>		✓				✓			
3	<i>Ophrys parvula</i>			✓				✓		
4	<i>Ophrys sancti-isidorii</i>		✓				✓			
	<b>Ophrys attaviria group</b>									
5	<i>Ophrys attaviria</i>			✓	✓			✓		
6	<i>Ophrys eptapigiensis</i>						✓	✓		
7	<i>Ophrys lindia</i>				✓					
	<b>Ophrys blitopertha group</b>									
8	<i>Ophrys blitopertha</i>				✓					
9	<i>Ophrys persephona</i>		✓							
	<b>Ophrys lutea group</b>									
10	<i>Ophrys lutea</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
11	<i>Ophrys phryganae</i>			✓				✓		
12	<i>Ophrys sicula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	<b>Ophrys omegaifera group</b>									
13	<i>Ophrys basilissa</i>									
14	<i>Ophrys apollonae</i>		✓	✓						
15	<i>Ophrys omegaifera</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
16	<i>Ophrys sitiaca</i>		✓							
	<b>Ophrys speculum group</b>									
17	<i>Ophrys regis-ferdinandii</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓		
18	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>	✓					✓			
	<b>Ophrys tenthredinifera group</b>									
19	<i>Ophrys leochroma</i>			✓				✓		
20	<i>Ophrys korae</i>			✓						
21	<i>Ophrys bombyliflora</i>		✓					✓		
	<b>Ophrys apifera group</b>									
22	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>									
	<b>Ophrys holoserica group</b>									
23	<i>Ophrys candica</i>			✓			✓	✓		
24	<i>Ophrys colossaea</i>			✓	✓					
25	<i>Ophrys samia</i>			✓						
26	<i>Ophrys halia</i>			✓				✓		
27	<i>Ophrys saliarisii</i>			✓				✓		
28	<i>Ophrys oreas</i>		✓			✓				
	<b>Ophrys oestriifera group</b>									
29	<i>Ophrys cornutula</i>	✓			✓					
30	<i>Ophrys dodekanensis</i>		✓			✓				

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
	<b>Ophrys heldreichii group</b>									
31	<i>Ophrys calypsus</i>				✓					
32	<i>Ophrys calypsus</i> var. <i>pseudoapulica</i>									
33	<i>Ophrys calypsus</i> var. <i>scolopaxoides</i>				✓					
34	<i>Ophrys polyxo</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
	<b>Ophrys umbilicata group</b>									
35	<i>Ophrys rhodia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
36	<i>Ophrys umbilicata</i>	✓								
	<b>Ophrys reinholdii group</b>									
37	<i>Ophrys reinholdii</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
38	<i>Ophrys cretica</i> ssp. <i>beloniae</i>	✓					✓			
	<b>Ophrys argolica group</b>									
39	<i>Ophrys lucis</i>	✓								
	<b>Ophrys mammosa group</b>									
40	<i>Ophrys ferrum-equinum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
41	<i>Ophrys mammosa</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓		
	<b>GENUS EPIPACTIS</b>									
42	<i>Epipactis densifolia</i>									
	<b>GENUS CEPHALANTHERA</b>									
43	<i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>									
	<b>GENUS LIMODORUM</b>									
44	<i>Limodorum abortivum</i>					✓				
45	<i>Limodorum abortivum</i> var. <i>rubrum</i>									
	<b>GENUS SPIRANTHES</b>									
46	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i>									
	<b>GENUS SERAPIAS</b>									
47	<i>Serapias bergonii</i>		✓		✓			✓		
48	<i>Serapias carica</i>	✓			✓		✓	✓		
49	<i>Serapias parviflora</i>							✓		
50	<i>Serapias politisii</i>		✓			✓				
	<b>GENUS ANACAMPTIS</b>									
51	<i>Anacamptis collina</i>			nf			nf			
52	<i>Anacamptis laxiflora</i>		✓					✓		
53	<i>Anacamptis morio</i>		✓			✓				
54	<i>Anacamptis papilionacea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
55	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	✓			✓		✓			
56	<i>Anacamptis sancta</i>							✓		
57	<i>Anacamptis coriophora</i>	✓			✓		✓	✓		
	<b>GENUS NEOTINEA</b>									
58	<i>Neotinea maculata</i>		✓	✓		✓				
59	<i>Neotinea lactea</i>		✓			✓				



	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
	<b>GENUS ORCHIS</b>									
60	<i>Orchis anatolica</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
61	<i>Orchis anthropophora</i>		✓		✓					
62	<i>Orchis italica</i>		✓		✓					
63	<i>Orchis provincialis</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓		
64	<i>Orchis simia</i>									
	<b>GENUS HIMANTOGLOSSUM</b>									
65	<i>Himantoglossum robertianum</i>	✓	✓	nf			nf	✓		
	<b>Daily total:</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>		
	<b>Running total:</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>55</b>		
	<b>HYBRIDS</b>									
	<i>Ophrys x buttleri (regis-ferdinandii x speculum)</i>	✓								
	<i>Ophrys rhodia x speculum</i>	✓					✓			
	<i>Anacamptis x gennarii (morio x papilionacea)</i>		✓			✓				
	<i>Ophrys attaviria x blitopertha</i>					✓				
	<i>Ophrys dodekanensis x oreas</i>					✓				
	<i>Ophrys polyxo x rhodia</i>						✓			
	<i>Ophrys cinereophila x sancti-isidorii</i>						✓			
	<b>BUTTERFLIES</b>									
	Eastern Festoon <i>Zerynthia cerisy</i>	✓				✓				
	Swallowtail <i>Papilio machaon</i>				✓		larva			
	Scarce Swallowtail <i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>	✓								
	Common Blue <i>Polyommatus icarus</i>				✓		✓			
	Green-underside Blue <i>Glaucopsyche alexis</i>			✓				✓		
	Eastern Baton Blue <i>Pseudophilotes vicrama</i>						✓			
	Long-tailed Blue <i>Lampides boeticus</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓		
	Green Hairstreak <i>Callophrys rubi</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Small Copper <i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	✓				✓				
	Lesser Fiery Copper <i>Lycaena thersamon</i>	✓					✓			
	Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓			

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
	Large White <i>Pieris brassicae</i>	✓			✓			✓		
	Eastern Dappled White <i>Euchloe ausonia</i>	✓		✓			✓	✓		
	Clouded Yellow <i>Colias crocea</i>				✓		✓	✓		
	Pygmy Skipper <i>Gegenes pumilio</i>				✓					
	Mallow Skipper <i>Carcharodus alceae</i>						✓			
	<b>MAMMALS</b>									
	Fallow Deer <i>Dama dama</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
	Northern White-breasted Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus roumanicus</i>		✓							
	Red Fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>			✓						
	<b>REPTILES</b>									
	Black Whip Snake <i>Dolichophis jugularis</i>			✓						
	Eurasian Blind Snake <i>Xerotyphlops vermicularis</i>					✓				
	Balkan Green Lizard <i>Lacerta trilineata</i>				✓		✓			
	Snake-eyed Lizard <i>Ophisops elegans</i>	✓					✓			
	Starred Agama <i>Stellagama stellio</i>				✓		✓			
	Mediterranean Ocellated Skink <i>Chalcides ocellatus</i>						✓			
	Mediterranean House Gecko <i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i>	✓								
	Balkan Terrapin <i>Mauremys rivulata</i>						✓			
	<b>MISCELLANEOUS FLORA &amp; FAUNA</b>									
	Rhodes Cyclamen <i>Cyclamen rhodium</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Rhodes Fritillary <i>Fritillaria rhodia</i>		✓							
	Veratrum sp.					nf				
	Dragon Arum <i>Dracunculus vulgaris</i>					✓				
	<i>Dianthus crinatus</i>				✓					
	Rhodes Freshwater Crab <i>Potamon rhodium</i>					✓				
	Hummingbird Hawkmoth <i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>						✓			
	The Vestal <i>Rhodometra sacraria</i>					✓				
	Pale Shoulder <i>Acontia lucida</i>					✓				
	Wood Tiger <i>Arctia plantaginis</i>	✓								

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
	Red-veined Darter <i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>				✓					
	Vagrant Emperor <i>Anax ephippiger</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Migratory Locust <i>Locusta migratoria</i>			✓	✓		✓	✓		
	Greek Predatory Bush-cricket <i>Saga hellenica</i>	✓								
	<i>Laphria aurea</i>				✓					
	<i>Trichodes alvearius</i>					✓				
	<i>Calais parreysii</i>					✓				
	Walckenaer's Huntsman Spider <i>Eusparassus walckenaeri</i>		✓	✓						
	Mouse Spider <i>Scotophaeus blackwalli</i>		✓							
	Flat-backed Millipede <i>Melaphe vestita</i>					✓				
	Mediterranean Banded Centipede <i>Scolopendra cingulata</i>	✓				✓				
	Common Yellow Scorpion <i>Buthus occitanus</i>				✓	✓				
	Fasciated Conehead Mantid <i>Empusa fasciata</i>				✓					

	BIRDS (with many thanks to Ralph for compiling this list on behalf of us all)
	Chukar <i>Alectoris chukar</i>
	Feral Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i>
	Wood Pigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>
	Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
	Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
	Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>
	Alpine Swift <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
	Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i>
	Pallid Swift <i>Apus pallidus</i>
	Stone Curlew <i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>
	Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i>
	White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
	Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
	Short-toed Eagle <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
	Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>
	Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
	Pallid Harrier <i>Circus macrourus</i>
	Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>
	Scops Owl <i>Otus scops</i>
	Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i> (heard)
	Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>
	Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>



	European Roller <i>Coracias garrulous</i>
	Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
	Hobby <i>Falco Subbuteo</i>
	Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
	Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>
	Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
	Hooded Crow <i>Corvus cornix</i>
	Common Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>
	Blue Tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
	Crested Lark <i>Galerida cristata</i>
	Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>
	Crag Martin <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
	Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>
	House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>
	Red-rumped Swallow <i>Cecropis rufula</i>
	Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i> (heard)
	Sardinian Warbler <i>Curruca melanocephala</i>
	Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>
	Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
	Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>
	Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> (heard)
	Semi-collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>
	Collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula albicollis</i>
	Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
	Stonechat <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
	Siberian (Caspian) Stonechat <i>Saxicola maurus</i>
	Northern Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
	Eastern Black-eared Wheatear <i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i>
	House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>
	Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> (heard)
	'Yellow' Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i> (heard =Black-headed?)
	White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>
	Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>
	Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>
	Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
	Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>
	Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>
	Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
	Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>
	Corn Bunting <i>Emberiza calandra</i>
	Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
	Cretzschmar's Bunting <i>Emberiza caesia</i>
	<b>TOTAL 64 species</b>

## Galleries

All images that follow were kindly shared by tour participants

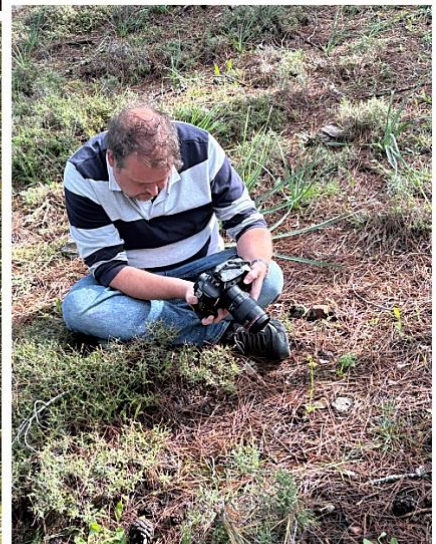


Images © Andy



Images © Tracey





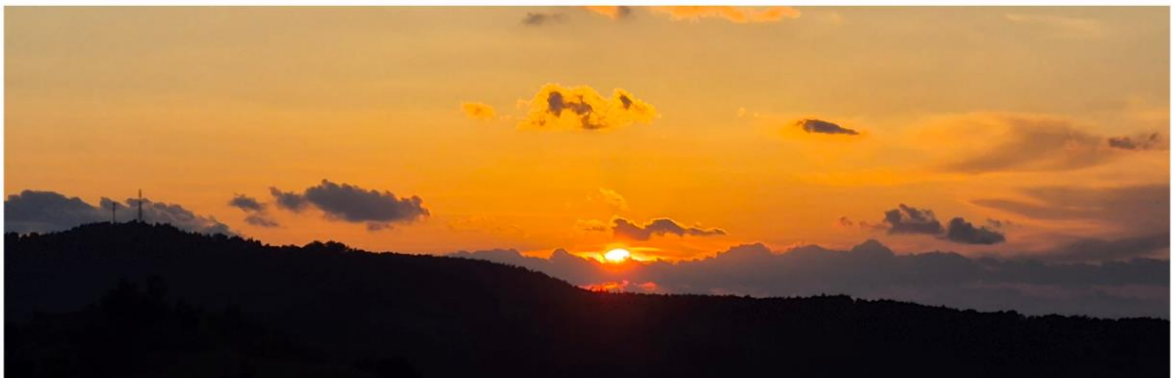
Images © Jo





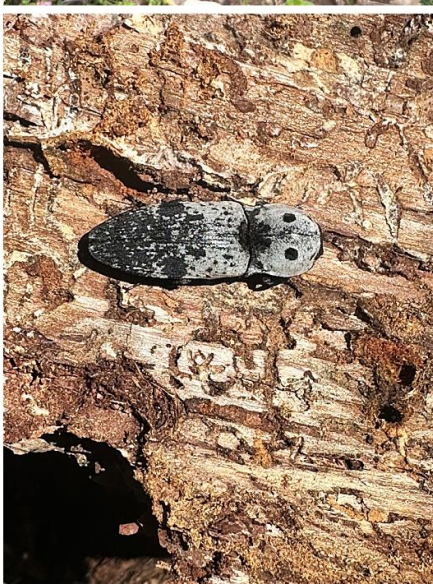
Images © John





Images © John







Images © Robert





Images © Sharon



Images © Roger





Images © Kirsty

**And finally...** Our Orchids of Rhodes tour for 2026 is already fully booked – we’re not too surprised, as we’re confident our knowledge of the island’s orchids, their distribution, and where to find their interesting variations and hybrids is unsurpassed. We’ve other orchid tours in 2026 visiting other species-rich areas of Europe with places still available to join us (see below), and have some further exciting orchid tours in the pipeline for 2026 and 2027 – watch this space!

[Orchids of Cyprus 2<sup>nd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> March 2026](#)

[Orchids of the Gargano Peninsula 22<sup>nd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> April 2026](#)

[Late Spring Orchids of Sicily 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> May 2026](#)