

Orchids of Rhodes

Mariposa Nature Tours trip report

4th-10th April 2026



Tour leaders Jon Dunn & Dr Richard Bate

Trip report by Jon Dunn

(Images (clockwise from top left) *Orchis italica* © Michael; *Ophrys speculum* © Jane & Trevor;

Limodorum abortivum © Sarah; *Ophrys leochroma* © Wendy)



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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*]

Day 1, 4th April

With most of the group having arrived in Rhodes the previous day, this greatly facilitated the start of the tour, allowing Jon and Richard to collect a little over half of the guests at 9:30am from Rhodes airport and its nearby environs, and to head straight to our hotel in Embonas for a smooth, quick check-in, and to be joined there by Trevor and Jane who'd made their way to the hotel independently. Sarah C, staying on for 24 hours for this purpose after the two tours she'd co-led here with Jon, would be collecting Tony, Richard and Judy from the airport later in the day.

These logistics all taken care of, the group set off for the south of the island. Mt. Attaviros, the mountain upon whose slopes our hotel nestles, was shrouded with cloud as we left, the remnants of Storm Erminio which had brought torrential rain and strong winds to much of the Mediterranean in the previous 48 hours, including Rhodes. The clean-up operation on the island had been swift and thorough, and while we saw evidence of it on our drive south towards Kattavia, there was no delay to our passage down the island, passing over roads coloured here and there red with the residue of soil from recent landslips.



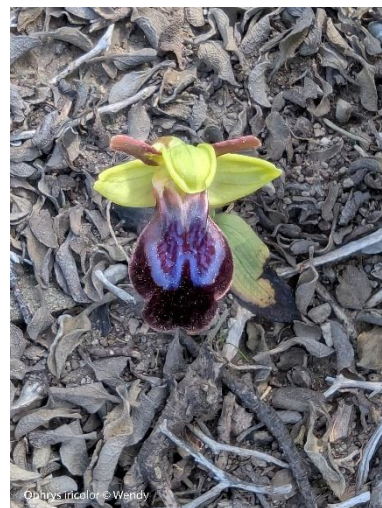
Ophrys speculum © Jane & Trevor

We passed through some heavy rain en route, but by the time we reached a system of ruderal fields beloved of our leaders for their orchid richness, the sun was shining once more. Mere steps from the vehicles, the orchids started! First to be seen were the eponymous *Ophrys rhodia*, their spotted lips and distinctive green sepals set to be a regular sight this week, appropriately enough here on Rhodes, the island that lent them their scientific name. Within a couple of feet of the first of these charming orchids were two more members of the *Ophrys* genus, Mirror Orchid *Ophrys speculum* and King Ferdinand's

Orchid *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii*. Close relatives of one another, their appearances are very different – Mirror Orchid having, when fresh, a shining blue speculum that covers most of its hair-fringed, broad lip; and King Ferdinand's Orchid having a long, thin lip that's duller in colouration, with small 'arms' protruding on either side, and tuft of hair at the very tip of the lip. Despite their close genetic relationship, both species exist on the island side by side, and

maintain their respective forms and identities, a challenging conundrum for those who contend they are merely ecotypes or subspecies of but one species. Here and there we found *Ophrys x butlerii*, the hybrid between the two species, its lip intermediate in form between them, shaped like a teardrop or a teaspoon, depending on one's interpretation.

Richard quickly found our first interesting non-orchid, the yellow and red, waxy flowers of *Cytinus hypocistis* emerging from the leaf litter beneath a pink-flowering *Cistus* rock rose. These fascinating plants are parasites, spending their entire lives within the tissue of the *Cistus*, emerging to the outside world only to flower. Right alongside this were some *Ophrys iricolor*, including one freshly opened flower, sporting its iridescent blue speculum.



Our passage across the fields was slow and measured, for there was much to distract us here. Our first examples of *Ophrys cretica* ssp. *beloniae* were, of course, set to stop us dead in our tracks, for these are a most attractive orchid, their dark brown, almost black lips accentuating the silvery-white patterns that adorned them, and their sepals a beautiful pale pink.



Jon and Sarah C's extended time on the island before this tour was to pay off handsomely for the group in the form of a number of special orchids they'd found across Rhodes. Having been on the island for three weeks by this point, they had some particularly exciting finds to share, and the first of these was nearby – one of four *Ophrys cretica* x *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii* hybrids that had been in flower the previous week was still in good condition, an extraordinary flower with the length of lip owed to its *regis-ferdinandii* parent, but the dark cherry-red sepals and lip pattern coming from the *cretica* influence.

Our first introduction to the mild headache that's the yellow bee orchids was nearby, with a huge swarm of clear *Ophrys sicula*, *Ophrys lutea*, and what morphologically might be described as *Ophrys phryganae* too. We would encounter all three taxa throughout the coming week, and get to grips with them through repeated encounters... at checklist that evening, Richard explained their convoluted taxonomy, and added a further caveat in the form of *Ophrys sicula* sometimes being considered to be something else entirely this far east in the Mediterranean – *Ophrys galilea*!

Back in the field, we kept on wandering, the new finds coming regularly. We were looking for *Ophrys umbilicata*, a close relative of *Ophrys rhodia*, but arguably a prettier species, for its sepals are a delicate coral-pink rather than *rhodia*'s apple-green. Jon and Richard stumbled across a small patch of five plants to begin with that were neither, and both, and

of those species – hybrids between the two, with green sepals washed dirty pink by the *umblicata* influence. Fascinating plants, and beautiful in their own right, and followed quickly by a glorious clump of pure *Ophrys umblicata* for comparison.

Wandering across the field system, Jon made a beeline for another hybrid from the previous week – and this one something utterly extraordinary, a superb find by Sarah C the previous week. While Storm Erminio hadn't been kind to it, the last remaining flower on the first known example of *Ophrys cretica* ssp. *beloniae* x *Ophrys speculum* was still recognisable for what it was. Surrounded by both parents, this was an incredible hybrid, proof that orchid pollinators sometimes mix things up in ways that nobody might conceive possible.



Another hybrid, this one found the previous week by Jon, wasn't in such good order, its flowers faded with age and weathering – this was *Ophrys rhodia* x *Ophrys speculum*. However, the plant still had several unopened buds on it, so we had reasonable hope that it would be in fresh flower when we returned later in the week.

Our first *Anacamptis coriophora* proved a brief distraction, the lowest flowers on their flowerspikes just opened – we would see a better example later in the afternoon and, as the week progressed and more flowers opened, a great many more besides.

With our eyes tuned in to the subtleties of *Ophrys*, we were soon seeing some lovely iterations of *Ophrys cretica* ssp. *beloniae*, some with ruby-red lateral petals, and one particularly striking example with amethyst purple sepals. An old favourite of ours, a plant we've known for some years, was also enjoyed – a chlorotic example of *Ophrys rhodia*, a pale wraith of a plant with flowers bearing snow-white sepals. These truly are the fields of dreams where orchids are concerned.

Lunch was taken a few miles down the road from here, in the environs of a small chapel with low surrounding walls that provide a comfortable seat upon which to eat, and to contemplate the surrounding orchids – *Ophrys cornutula* with its impressively long horns on either side of the lip, and yet more *Ophrys cretica* ssp. *beloniae*, and *Serapias carica*, our first tongue-orchid and the arguably most impressive of



its kind in Europe, with enormous, long-lipped flowers of deepest burgundy.



From here we headed back towards an area of dry phrygana habitat that abuts another area of ruderal fields – a potent combination for the keen orchid hunter! Our arrival was heralded by a territorial Woodchat Shrike that checked us all out from a lofty vantage point on a nearby bush – surely a good omen? And so it proved...

We reacquainted ourselves with *Anacamptis coriophora*, seeing a much more developed flowerspike close to our parking place, and from there set off across the phrygana, wending a meandering path that took in Pink Butterfly Orchid *Anacamptis papilionacea*, Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, more *Ophrys iricolor* and *Ophrys*

cornutula, and new for the week *Ophrys parvula* and *Ophrys calypsus*, the former tiny and dark flowered, the latter more extravagantly large and particoloured. There were many more *Serapias carica* to enjoy here too, and Richard's curiosity for further wildlife was soon rewarded with a large European Green Toad, and a very compliant Egyptian Locust, while Jon spotted a Vagrant Emperor dragonfly that dashed through our midst, hawking small airborne insects as it went.

The day had been a great success, so we stopped for a cool drink at a favourite taverna in Apolakkia on the way back to the hotel, where we were reunited with Sarah C, and met our remaining three guests who'd joined her during the afternoon. A short orchid walk with her on the lower slopes of Mt. Attaviros had yielded three more species for the group's collective day-count – *Ophrys ferrum-equinum*, *Ophrys reinholdii*, and Giant Orchid *Himantoglossum robertianum*. Overall, between us we'd notched up 20 species in just under a day, a fine flying start to what already promised to be an excellent week. A fine dinner awaited us at the hotel, and the prospect of a full day of orchid-hunting to come.



Day 2, 5th April

With the day dawning milder than of late, and with the promise of settled and sunny weather to come in the days ahead, we needed to make the most of today to ensure we did not miss any of the earlier flowering species, *Ophrys* in particular. The first part of the morning focused on two such species, first of all *Ophrys lucis*, a dusky, pastel-shaded bee orchid that flowers late in a sheltered, north-facing gully near our hotel; and the latter *Ophrys sancti-isorii*, a more unassuming and subtle *fusca*-type that Jon had found a new station for on the northern outskirts of the village in the preceding weeks.

We took our time with *Ophrys lucis*, for the site in question is rather vulnerable and needs careful management to ensure that the population of orchids there are not inadvertently damaged. Over the past few years, with this careful approach, we've seen the *Ophrys lucis* population growing incrementally there. Everyone took their turn to see the best condition flower on the periphery of the site.



Ophrys lucis © Jon

From here, we moved on to our *Ophrys sancti-isidorii* site, a more extensive stony hillside just outside Embonas that supports a large variety of orchid species. On the lower slopes, on the banks of a drainage ditch, we found Giant Orchid approaching the end of its flowering period, and *Ophrys mammosa* just getting started, with some delightful fresh flowers to be enjoyed. Higher up the site, calls of delight heralded the discovery of fresh Pink Butterfly Orchid, more *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii* and *Ophrys speculum*, and some really fine examples of *Ophrys ferrum-equinum*.

Jon was pleased to find one of the previous week's *Ophrys sancti-isidorii* was still in good condition for all to see... while Richard's keen eye found a small hybrid swarm of *Ophrys x kaltesiana*, the offspring of *Ophrys ferrum-equinum* and *Ophrys reinholdii*. Nor was Richard done here, for nearby he found a recently emerged *Ophrys attaviria* in flower, allowing us all to appreciate this dark and distinctive orchid, named after the very mountain that loomed above us.

A twenty minute drive from here brought us to an olive grove outside Salakos, where we encountered many *Ophrys rhodia* and *Ophrys sicula*, among the latter of which was one particularly special plant, a *chlorantha* variation with pure golden yellow flowers. This was much admired, as were nearby examples of more colourful *Ophrys polyxo*, and Blue Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum creticum*.

It was time now to head up Profitis Ilias, a pine-clad mountain lower than Attaviros, but still high enough to necessitate a succession of switchback corners on the road that ascended its flanks. Once most of the way to its ridged peak, we parked up and sat in the sun to eat our picnics – visited by several fine butterfly species, including egg-laying Small Copper, fly-by Clouded Yellow, and several Eastern Festoon – the latter of which were to particularly bless us, for Richard found a much-admired mating pair of their kind.



Ophrys sicula var. *chlorantha* © Jane & Trevor

After lunch we explored our immediate surroundings, with flowering Rhodes Peony being a particular highlight, notable not only for their snow-white flowers but also their lovely scent. Anemones crowded the woodland floor, but the orchids that had been so numerous here in the past fortnight were thin on the ground. There was, however, plenty of signs that goats



had passed through the area... This dismal discovery was alleviated by seeing several primrose-yellow Provence Orchid *Orchis provincialis*, and Dense-flowered Orchid *Neotinea maculata* spared the munchings of hungry ruminants.

We moved a little uphill, and set off to see what we could find in the mountain's higher woodland reaches. Here the goats manifestly hadn't been,

for the orchid flora was demonstrably much richer – masses of Provence Orchid and Dense-flowered Orchid greeted us from the outset, while we also enjoyed our first Man Orchid *Orchis anthropora* here. Higher uphill we came across many Green-winged Orchid *Anacamptis morio* ssp. *caucasica*, and some delightful, fresh Milky Orchid *Neotinea lactea*, their flowers flecked with raspberry red markings. In the lower approaches, Richard also found a lovely example of Black Morel *Morchella elata*, a new fungus even for him.

More new *Ophrys* greeted us here too – *Ophrys omegaifera* were numerous, while we also found good examples of both *Ophrys dodecanensis* and *Ophrys oreas*, pleasingly side-by-side for comparative purposes.

Abandoning the mountain we weaved our way through the labyrinthine, narrow streets of Apollona and headed down the Gadouras river valley. We were stopped in our tracks by some fine roadside Naked Man Orchid *Orchis italica* and, once we started looking in the immediate vicinity, by our first *Ophrys bombyliflora* and *Ophrys apollonae*, and a particularly photogenic example of *Ophrys reinholdii* found by Judy.



Further south along the valley we stopped at a favourite site of ours, where we could confidently expect the queen of the underworld, *Ophrys persephona* – and, sure enough, there she was, her flowers dark and elegant, albeit rather soaked by a heavy rain shower that had swept the valley just before our arrival on site. Nearby we saw more *Ophrys bombyliflora* and our first *Serapias politsii*, and many delicate lemon and lime coloured Rhodes Fritillary *Fritillaria rhodia*. And all this to the liquid soundtrack of several Woodlark singing around us. Pure joy!

Our final stop of the day were the wet meadows on the outskirts of Laerma in which the island's population of Loose-flowered Orchid *Anacamptis laxiflora* is to be found. These were in exuberant full bloom, their rich purple flowerspikes standing tall and proud and visible from the road some

distance away from the meadows. Worth getting wet feet for, we all agreed... and we celebrated our first full day in the field with ice-creams back in Embonas as a treat for a superb day of orchid-hunting that had yielded 29 species, and had carried our weekly tally to a remarkable 41 species in the space of just two days!

Day 3, 6th April

Today dawned fine and sunny and, after breakfast, we set off to spend the day at one of our favourite sites upon Rhodes, Windmill Hill. With the benefit of years of experience of the site, and three weeks recent experience, we knew that the recent cool weather had stayed the development of some early species, but warmer days should by now be accelerating into bloom the later flowering species also.

En route, we made a brief pitstop at a roadside layby for one species of *Ophrys* we might not meet thereafter should the last couple of sunny days have hastened their demise – the rather diminutive *Ophrys cinereophila*. Two plants retained flowers here in good condition, though they were rather overshadowed by the more obvious charms of *Ophrys reinholdii* and Pink Butterfly Orchid in the immediate surroundings!



From here we moved south towards Windmill Hill, taking the approach roads very carefully indeed – we were still seeing plenty of debris from the recent storm on the island's main roads, and the minor road to the hill was likely not to have seen much, if any, by way of attempts to clear it. Fortunately the road was passable, albeit there were some significant accretions of wet mud and fallen rocks to negotiate. At the wheels of our vehicles Richard and Jon made light work of it, and before too long we settled at the summit of the hill for the remainder of the morning. Here, having explained the boundaries of where was worth searching, and where might prove less fruitful, we began to slowly meander and wander through the spiny mounded bushes that carpet the hill, finding treasures at every step.



Foremost among the orchids were *Orchis anatolica*, and these were numerous in some hotspots, their delicate, rich purple flowers a delight. We had two members of the *tenthredinifera* 'Sawfly Orchid' group particularly in mind here, *Ophrys korae* and *Ophrys leochroma*, though to begin with we only found faded examples of their kind. Towards the end of the morning, however, Richard's discovery of a relatively fresh *Ophrys korae* was interrupted by a shout further down the hill – Jane had found a mint fresh *Ophrys leochroma*. This latter plant was an absolute beauty, sporting a sherbet yellow hairy mane around its chestnut lip.

Other *Ophrys* seen well during the morning covered a lot of species we'd already encountered in previous days – *reinholdii*, *ferrum-equinum*, *iricolor*,

omegaifera, *parvula*, *phryganae*, *polyxo* and, curiously, a small patch of three clearly struggling *Ophrys cretica* beside the track to the wind-turbines. Absent entirely from the rest of the site, Jon's theory is that they may owe their origin to aggregate used to form the track's surface, quarried and transferred uphill from a lowland site in the south of the island. Wherever they were from, they are clearly not happy at this greater, cooler elevation.

Jon had been ranging widely during the morning on a mission to find fresh *Ophrys koraë* or *leochroma*, and had staked out a couple of fine, newly-opened examples of the former species at a slightly lower elevation. Before lunch, we drove down to here to enjoy these plants, completing our set of immaculate *tenthredinifera* representatives. Naturally, with the addition of a dozen sets of further finely-tuned orchid-hunting eyes to the surroundings, there were further distractions to be found to delay our onward progress!

Ophrys halia began to put in an appearance, with its characteristic broad, colourful lip and green-tinged sepals; many *Ophrys bombyliflora* were also found; while Jane's fine run of form continued with the discovery of a lovely hybrid, *Ophrys x ionica*, the lovechild of *Ophrys ferrum-equinum* and *Ophrys mammosa*.



Ophrys x ionica © Jane & Trevor

It was time to move on to our final stop on the hill, a lower site again, and a particularly rich one for orchids. We parked up, and dispersed onto the hill to find a spot to sit and eat our picnics and/or continue to look for flowers... We planned to spend a couple more hours here, and knew they would be productive. Yet more *Ophrys halia* were found, while news that Sarah was sat next to a particularly fine example of its kind (that was set to attract admirers from across the hillside) was interrupted by a fine discovery by Richard – an immaculate *Ophrys samia*. This species has been recorded sparingly on Rhodes over the years, so was not entirely unexpected, but nonetheless was a species we would not guarantee seeing in any given year, so this was an excellent find. Guests and guides alike were torn between *halia* and *samia* now!

A little while later Richard found the first of two *Ophrys saliarisii*, completing a fine hat-trick of the large, colourful *holoserica* group *Ophrys* on the site. The site continued to deliver notable orchid after notable orchid – newly emerged *Ophrys attaviria*; some more understandably rather tired, given their earlier flowering period, *Ophrys apollonae*; still more *Ophrys polyxo*; and our first *Ophrys mammosa* of the day.



Ophrys halia © Jon Dunn

Jon had no sooner found our second *Ophrys x ionica* nearby, gathering guests to appreciate this hybrid's blended features, than the orchid-hunting gods signalled it was time to leave. Sarah saw an enormous fork of lightning dance down from the gathering clouds overhead and drop into the foothills below us... and a ringing clap of thunder sounded overhead. Richard and Jon, as one, shouted to the group to return to the vehicles. Everyone made their way back to the vans in a controlled and timely manner, and we set off straight away, heading downhill. The day had been fine and sunny hitherto, but the clouds had massed quickly in the space of minutes, and this promised to deliver not only thunder and lightning, but also heavy rain.

Sure enough, that started while we were still on the hill's tracks, which swiftly began to be covered in sheets of water pouring off the hill. It didn't take long to return to the asphalt road, however, where Jon and Richard were of one mind that it would be prudent to return to Apolakkia for a coffee via the longer route, rather than the road by which we'd come to Windmill Hill – we didn't want to encounter any problems with slipped mud or fallen rocks. Half an hour later, we were at our favourite taverna in the island's south end, and enjoying refreshments!

The afternoon was not, however, over... the journey home was broken with our first foray up onto Mt. Attaviros. Here the skies were blue and the sunshine warm and pleasant on our skin, and we allowed 40 minutes to a gentle wander looking for *Ophrys candica*. This is a lovely species famed for its variability of patterning on the lip, no two flowers ever quite the same, and we soon enough found several of the first of their kind to flower this year, much to everyone's enjoyment.

Nearby were still more *Ophrys reinholdii*, some gorgeous examples of *Orchis anatolica*, and some lovely Dense-flowered Orchid too. Adding still further to the day's tally, *Ophrys dodecanensis* put in an appearance, while Sarah found the purple spikes of Violet Limodore *Limodorum abortivum*, not yet in flower. We'd aim to put that omission right tomorrow... Evening checklist was a lively affair after such a colourful day of orchid-hunting, and we found we'd once again seen almost 30 species in the course of the day, and our week's tally now rested on a mighty 48 species after just three days.



Orchis anatolica © Michael

Day 4, 7th April

With the weather set to remain settled from now on, and hence a day of wall-to-wall sunshine ahead of us, we focused on seeing some of the final special early flowering species and their variations this morning, heading down to a site near Lardos where we hoped we

might encounter a couple of particularly special plants before the vicissitudes of time, rain, wind and hot sunshine did for them...



The first of these had hung on, remarkably, a week into April, an unheard of event in the usual course of things, for Pink Butterfly Orchid at low altitudes tend to go over rather quickly, and this particular plant was more tender than most... for the Pink Butterfly Orchid in question was a white *alba* variation of the usually rose or cerise pink-flowered species. Our site this year boasted no fewer than five examples of this extremely rare variation, and we were delighted to find one of them remained in good condition.

Ophrys rhodia, *Serapias bergonii*, and a Naked Man Orchid all vied for our attention as we wended our way through a succession of olive groves, heading towards a secluded old

quarry. A more dramatic distraction also awaited us en route – a small colony of Violet Limodore, boasting flowering plants in its number. Alas some had succumbed to the predations of hungry goats, which appear to find the species particularly delectable, but there were some fine flowering examples to enjoy, particularly for those prepared to scramble a little way up a steep bank to join them beneath their sheltering pine trees.

On we moved to the old quarry, and swiftly found the second of our orchid variation specialities of the day – a golden form of *Ophrys phryganae* surrounded by its normally-marked brethren. The quarry also boasts a population of the Rhodes scarcity *Ophrys episcopalis*, discovered here by Jon and Sarah C during their weeks on the island before our tour's arrival – but the ravages of goats and time appeared to have robbed us of them for a while, for all we could find were chomped stalks or faded flowers. An *Ophrys calypsus*, found by Richard G and Judy, briefly distracted us, but where was *Ophrys episcopalis*? Richard and Jon scoured the shady corners of the quarry, Richard spotting our first *Ophrys blitopertha* as they went, and eventually found four *Ophrys episcopalis* that were still in good condition, and had somehow gone overlooked by the hungry herbivores of the area.

Pressure off, of course we then found another *Ophrys episcopalis* growing near to an *Ophrys calypsus*, allowing a side-by-side comparison of their respective forms. We took some time to enjoy those first *Ophrys blitopertha* before heading uphill, hoping for more Pink Butterfly Orchid variations. Alas the past week's weather had not been kind to them, and where Jon had seen bi-colored flowers the previous week, now there were just crisped husks. This minor disappointment aside, we'd done extremely well this morning, *Ophrys episcopalis* being our 50th species of the week.



We moved to some olive groves near Gennadi for our lunch, eating in the shade of the trees surrounded by lush examples of *Serapias carica* and *Ophrys polyxo*. A little wander in the area after lunch was rewarded by Jon proving, once again, an irresistible snake-totem for Tony, who enjoyed seeing his first Black Whip Snake of the tour as it darted for cover past an oblivious and snake-phobic Jon.



From here we headed just a couple of miles inland to another olive grove, and a particularly rich one for *Ophrys*. Jon swiftly found the first of dozens of *Ophrys attaviria* we would go on to enjoy between us here, their velvety black lips surmounted by silvery speculums, a most attractive endemic to Rhodes. *Ophrys blitopertha* were abundant here, and we moved from tree to tree searching beneath them for rarer fare – specifically, for *Ophrys lindia*. With so many

Ophrys species present, there were inevitably intermediate forms that we could ascribe with some confidence to hybrid origin – *Ophrys attaviria* x *blitopertha*; *Ophrys blitopertha* x *phryganae*; and *Ophrys blitopertha* x *lindia*. We found a handful of decent candidates for *Ophrys lindia* before Stephen found a stone-cold classic plant, with a pleasingly wide, flat lip sporting a good orange margin.

Buoyed by our success, we headed back to Embonas in time for ice creams and cold drinks before checklist and dinner, our weekly tally now sitting comfortably on 52 species, with three full days still ahead of us.

Day 5, 8th April

Another day of sunshine lay ahead of us, so some of the group decided to stay back at Embonas to enjoy the settled weather and pursue their respective passions – Richard G and Judy with an eye to watercolour painting, and Stephen to his 3D photography. The remainder of us set off with a string of sites in mind, aiming for more encounters with some of our favourite species of the past week.

Our first stop, near Loutani, was thin on the ground for orchids, with *Serapias bergonii* and *Ophrys dodecanensis* the only notable sightings, but we could scarcely complain for Europe's largest flowering plant was in magnificent force – Dragon Arum *Dracunculus vulgaris* were flowering in some profusion beneath the pine trees. Those of us brave enough took a sniff of their foul odour. Sarah was first to sample their dubious delights, giving a large specimen a fulsome inhale... she looked a little chastened when she surfaced! "It reminds me of something..." she said, pausing thoughtfully before adding, "...my mum's cooking!"



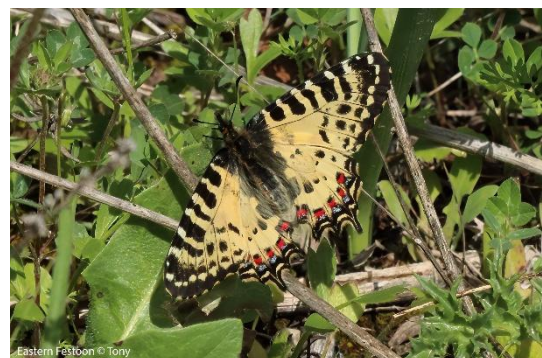


We enjoyed the carpets of all wildflowers beneath the trees here, most mercifully less malodorous than the arums, before moving a couple of miles away to a valley where Richard knew we should find conveniently placed and fully blooming Violet Limodore beside a footpath. This proved to be the case, with some fine and pristine specimens of this strange orchid readily seen. Walkers on the footpath gave our party some curious glances – maybe we carried the taint of Dragon Arum with us, or perhaps most tourists to Rhodes simply aren't there for the wildflowers...

In the late morning we decamped up onto Profitis Ilias, searching two meadows for the possibility of an *Anacamptis x gennarii* the hybrid between Pink Butterfly Orchid and Green-winged Orchid. We'd seen the hybrid in both meadows in the past, but this year there were none to be found – but we did very well for further species. Jane and Trevor, and Sarah, found *Ophrys oreas* in great condition, while many *Ophrys reinholdii* continued to delight. We were pleased to find Man Orchid in a new station for us, showing the species is in good health on the mountain and conquering pastures new. Milky Orchid continued to be seen in fair condition, testament to the cool spring, while many Provence Orchid were also in fine form still. Lunch was a leisurely affair, with many Eastern Festoon butterflies sailing through the sunny air around us.

After lunch, we came down off the mountain and revisited our favourite site for *Ophrys persephona*, allowing all to enjoy this dark beauty in dry conditions. Even then, the cameras struggle to make the best of this particular species, so dark is the lip. *Serapias politsii* was also seen in good numbers, and Bumblebee Orchid too. Non-orchid interest was supplied by a mantid, a large female huntsman spider, singing Woodlark, and an ovipositing Eastern Dappled White.

We headed back to Embonas in the mid-afternoon, there to divide our forces. Jon took Michael and Susan around Mt. Attaviros, giving Susan a chance to enjoy some orchids in the field after a few days of rest at the hotel – they found a good array of species, including some magnificent *Ophrys halia*, *Ophrys saliarisii*, *Ophrys mammosa*, and Pink Butterfly Orchid. Richard, with the balance of the group, went to explore some tracks and olive groves, enjoying *Ophrys cinereophila* and *Ophrys sancti-isorii*, and with the final roll of the dice for the day, another new species for the week – the warm weather having brought on the flowering of our first Small-flowered Tongue-orchid *Serapias parviflora*. The latter species brought our weekly tally to 53 species, at the end of a most enjoyable day that had recorded a superb 33 species in total.



Day 6, 9th April

Ophrys calypsus © Jon

Sunshine greeted us once more this morning, albeit with the caveat that some rain might materialise as the day wore on. We hoped to avoid that if at all possible, and headed to the east coast with the Colossus of Rhodes firmly in mind.

Ophrys colossaea is a late-flowering and impressive species, with large, colourful and distinctive flowers. We had consciously left this as late as possible in the week to allow some of the first examples of its kind time to flower, hopeful that the recent warm days would have hastened the first flowers to pop.

Before this, we stopped near Lardos at a lovely small fragment of phrygana bordered by a thin strip of pine trees and an old olive grove. Here we knew we should find *Ophrys calypsus*, another large and colourful bee orchid, and a

potential trap for the unwary when looking for *O. colossaea*. Spending an hour in their company was instructive and a delight alike, for there were a great many flowering plants that we could enjoy and use to familiarise ourselves with them. Nor were they the only orchids present here – Sarah found the first of several beautiful examples of Violet Limodore in bloom, which were much appreciated, and many *Serapias bergonii* and *Ophrys rhodia* were also seen; little did we know how these would figure later in the day...

Onwards we hastened to an extensive coastal olive grove near Charaki. Here Richard summarised the key features of *Ophrys colossaea*, and we set off into the olive trees in search of our quarry. More *Serapias bergonii* and *Ophrys*



Serapias bergonii © Michael



Ophrys colossaea © Jon

calypsus greeted us, Michael discovering a yellow-lipped example of *S. bergonii*, and Richard an *Ophrys* with intermediate features between *O. calypsus* and *O. colossaea*. Surely a hybrid, albeit a subtle one, but we were undeterred. It was Glenys who found our first *Ophrys colossaea*, and what a beautiful example it was – not only a classic of its kind, with a broad, deep, trapezoidal lip sporting intricate markings, and elongated lateral sepals too, but right beside an *Ophrys calypsus* for comparative purposes.

The pressure off now, we scattered beneath the trees to find more *Ophrys colossaea*, and to see what further orchids of interest we might discover. Pyramidal Orchid proved to be numerous, just starting to flower in earnest, and pleasingly including many snow-white examples in their number. Tony

found a fine *Ophrys polyxo* too, while *Ophrys rhodia* was also numerous, and *Ophrys mammosa* was seen sparingly.

We gathered back at the vehicles for lunch, taking our picnics into the shade beneath the olive trees where we could eat surrounded by orchids. Jon, however, was distracted by Sarah and Jane with news of an intricately patterned *Ophrys* that Sarah had found – an *Ophrys calypsus* with wonderful yellow hieroglyphics across its lip. It was nearby, so they took Jon and Trevor to see it. The orchid was every bit as satisfying as it had been promised to be, and the four of them began to search the immediate surroundings to see if there were any further plants of similar interest.



Jon, habitually examining every *Ophrys rhodia* in search of unusual forms and varieties, made a good discovery in the form of a peloric plant, the pattern of the lip being repeated on the lateral sepals, giving the flower in question something of a leopard-print effect. Sarah kindly returned to the vehicles to gather the rest of the group to come to enjoy both her *Ophrys calypsus* and this unusual further orchid. As the group returned to where Jon awaited them, we were aware of some rumbles of thunder in the distance inland... and the sky had begun to turn black on the horizon.

Our next anticipated stop was further north up the coast, a speculative exploration of a new site Richard had identified. Checking the weather radar, it looked like we would pass through the gathering rain and into dry conditions, so we elected to return to the vehicles and head up the coast before the rain reached us. Our walk back to the vehicles was interrupted in the best possible way, however, by Wendy spotting an unusual plant at the side of the track. Jon was briefly rendered uncharacteristically incoherent before able to articulate that this was a fully hypochromic *Serapias bergonii*! The plant was truly exceptional, all the flowers totally lacking any red pigments. Exceptional both in its rarity, and its beauty. Needless to say, our move up the coast was somewhat delayed...

The drive, when we finally commenced it, was memorable, for the heavens opened and we passed along some rapidly inundated roads. Due caution was exercised and the drive passed uneventfully. We arrived on a headland near Falaraki to the rather surreal sight of numerous Peacock perched on fences and buildings, their gaudy feathers dripping wet after the rain had passed through. Jon joked that these were clearly migrants, brought down by the fall conditions here in the promising coastal habitat!



Jokes aside, the habitat looked ideal for orchids, albeit we didn't find any great rarities – magnificent limestone boulders interspersed a sea of *Cistus* rock roses and, in between them, we found *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii*, *Ophrys mammosa*, *Serapias bergonii*, and Pyramidal Orchid all in flower. A very pleasant site, and the views were stupendous along the coast, but we had plans to fulfil on the way back towards Embonas, so we moved on.



We paused for another dose of the glorious water meadows at Laerma, enjoying numerous Loose-flowered Orchid *Anacamptis laxiflora* here, and Bumblebee Orchid *Ophrys bombyliflora*. Jon stumbled across a pale, rose-pink flowered example of the former species, an uncommon colour variation on the species' usual deep, royal purple hues.

A further stop on the drive home was made to follow up a discovery one of our German friends had made the previous week, and kindly shared with us. This was a very distinctive plant that had flowers quite different to the usual markings of *Ophrys mammosa*, with a caramel-coloured basal field, green pseudo-eyes, and hairless 'shoulders' – were this plant on Samos, one would not hesitate to call it *Ophrys herae*. As we had already seen in *Ophrys samia* earlier in the week, orchid taxa can exist sparingly at the edges of their range, and this plant certainly seemed to conform to its type. Nearby, a further flourish for the day awaited us – it was Jane's moment to shine once more when she alerted us to a small, unusual *Ophrys* she'd found... and what a star this small-flowered orchid was – a hybrid between *Ophrys bombyliflora* and *Ophrys rhodia*!

Nor were we finished for the day. Near to Embonas we made a final stop at a strip of phrygana which Jon and Richard had assiduously recce'd in the early mornings before breakfast, finding several notable *Ophrys*, and carefully 'caging' them in dead, spiky branches to ensure the local Brown Hare, Fallow Deer, and goat populations could not browse them before they reached their flowering zenith. While the walk through the phrygana was a little prickly on the calves, it was worth it for magnificent examples of *Ophrys saliarisii*; an intricately patterned and green-sepalled *Ophrys halia*; and an *Ophrys candica* with a ruby red labellum.



We arrived back at the hotel at half past five, later than usual, after a day filled with spectacular orchid species, varieties and hybrids – a very Mariposa sort of day, we agreed. Our weekly total now matched our previous record of 55 species. Could this possibly be bettered?

Day 7, 10th April

We had a final full day stretching ahead of us and, as we set off in the morning after breakfast, the prospect of wall-to-wall sunshine in which to enjoy it. Our destinations today

would be two of our favourite sites, Windmill Hill and the ruderal fields of Kattavia, with a further new site for the week sandwiched between them in the hope of finding an early *Anacamptis sancta* in bloom.



The drive up onto Windmill Hill was as dramatic as ever, with the narrow road showing yet more signs of the heavy periods of recent rain in the form of freshly deposited mud and some more minor rockfalls, both of which we navigated without incident. The final approach onto the hill was marked by the first Hoopoe of the day, a bird species we'd enjoyed practically daily sightings of from the vehicles, and always a pleasure whenever encountered.

We set up camp at one of the lower sites on the hill, this being the station we'd been rudely interrupted at by the arrival of the electrical storm some days ago. We had unfinished business here... The entire morning would be devoted to the site, and we set off on our purposeful, if meandering, orchid-hunting walks through the low scrubby bushes. Almost every step yielded an orchid of one kind or another, chiefly myriad *Ophrys*, but also *Orchis anatolica* still in good condition, and Pink Butterfly Orchid approaching peak flowering at this higher elevation.

Ophrys halia and *Ophrys saliarisii* were both seen in greater numbers than hitherto, their large and colourful flowers always a great joy, but we also found a handful of *Ophrys korae* in pristine condition too, their flowers much smaller and rather less flamboyant. A shout came across the slopes, alerting us all to a find by Richard – several more examples of *Ophrys samia*. We'd speculated, after finding the species in previous years, that it seemed unlikely that it existed in isolation on Windmill Hill and, as we have expanded our searches along the hill's ridges, it seems we have started to touch upon a scattered colony of it.



Further firm favourites from earlier in the week were again seen – *Ophrys attaviria*, *Ophrys parvula*, and sparkling blue *Ophrys iricolor*. Two more examples of *Ophrys apollonae* were found, late now in their flowering period, the cold weather and elevation helping to hold them back for us. Just getting started, however, were *Ophrys polyxo*, and we found many of these with their first one or two flowers now fully open. *Ophrys samia* apart, arguably the most pleasing find of the morning, however, were approaching double figures of *Ophrys x ionica*, the hybrid between *Ophrys mammosa* and *Ophrys ferrum-equinum*, both of which we also found in bloom during the morning.

We ate our picnic lunch enjoying the commanding views of Rhodes from high on Windmill Hill one final time, before beginning our descent down to head towards the coast and the



Anacamptis pyramidalis © Michael

Kattavia area of the island. The track off the hill, having given us one Hoopoe on the way up, bid us adieu to the hill with three Hoopoe on the way down – surely a sign that the spirit of place approved of our orchid-hunting!

Our first afternoon foray took us onto a low headland near Kattavia upon which we hoped to find *Anacamptis sancta* in bloom. During the previous three weeks Jon had monitored their slow progress, from rosettes of leaves to incipient flower-spikes, but on none of his visits had a plant been seen in bloom. Surely this week, after days of warm sunshine, we might find some that had crossed the finishing line?

Curiously, given the much-advanced progress we would see of *Anacamptis coriophora* and *Anacamptis pyramidalis* today, both found now well in bloom, *Anacamptis sancta* seemed to have paused and not advanced noticeably in the space of the last week.

While plenty of other *Anacamptis* and also our first *Serapias carica* of the day were, of course, delightful to see, the signs weren't looking good for a record-breaking final species in flower. This, of course, reckoned without Richard, who finally uncovered a plant with just one incipient pink, jagged flower opening. Not, of course, as magnificent as a fully-emerged and resplendent *Anacamptis sancta*, but a flowering plant nonetheless, and therefore qualifying as our 56th species of the week! Our own record, set in 2025, had just fallen.



European Green Toad © Tony

We moved on, briefly distracted by another large European Green Toad found by Richard, towards our favourite system of ruderal fields outside Kattavia, making a brief pitstop at a site at which we had seen, in 2025, incipient *Ophrys apifera* days from flowering. While the



Ophrys rhodia x speculum © Jon

cool spring of 2026 probably suggested we would not find a flowering specimen this year, we certainly would not see one if we didn't try... so we did. Sure enough, there were none to be found flowering yet, but we could scarcely complain for there were some fine examples of *Ophrys cornutula* with long horns to be enjoyed in the area.

Finally, to the ruderal fields. Here we divided forces, Jon heading into a new field to follow up some information provided to us by one of our Hungarian friends alerting us to the presence of a dramatically peloric *Ophrys rhodia*, and Richard leading the group to see the new *Ophrys rhodia* x *Ophrys speculum* plants Jon had found in the preceding weeks. The latter had only faded flowers on them when we

last visited the site earlier this week, but also some unopened buds, so we were optimistic they would by now have some fresh flowers – and so it proved. Richard also found Small-flowered Tongue-orchid nearby, adding the species to both our day's tally, and to the site's credit as a whole.

While Jon had found not one but two peloric *Ophrys rhodia* at the coordinates he'd been given by our Hungarian friend, they proved not to be needed, for Wendy found a dramatically peloric plant near to the *Ophrys rhodia* x *O. speculum*! This site never fails to deliver surprises, and today was no exception. Nor was it done with us, for Jane discovered two gorgeous hypochromic *Ophrys rhodia*, their flowers all deliciously honey-coloured.



Ophrys rhodia peloric variation © Wendy



Ophrys rhodia hypochromic variation © Jon

The fields continued to supply further old favourites – *Ophrys cretica* ssp. *beloniae*, *Ophrys regis-ferdinandii*, and pleasingly many mint-fresh *Anacamptis coriophora*. It was hard to tear ourselves away, but we reluctantly had to do so. All good things, even the Orchids of Rhodes, must finally come to an end... so we headed back to Embonas for a final rendezvous in the ice cream parlour, and then another of Mama's delicious evening meals.

Jon and Richard would like to thank all our group for their great company throughout the week – your keen eyes and orchid-finding skills contributed to the success of the tour, and we all enjoyed special orchids that we might otherwise

have missed had everyone not been so alert and on top form – 56 species recorded stands firm testament to some top-notch orchid-hunting and teamwork. The good humour and camaraderie of the group was a particular joy, and the stories swapped in the vehicles and over meals were terrific and ever-entertaining. We loved having you with us, and look forward to sharing new adventures and orchids with you in the future.

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Orchids of Rhodes 4 – 10 April 2026										
	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
	GENUS OPHRYS									
	Ophrys iricolor group									
1	<i>Ophrys iricolor</i>	✓		✓	✓			✓		
	Ophrys fusca group									
2	<i>Ophrys cinereophila</i>			✓		✓	✓			
3	<i>Ophrys parvula</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
4	<i>Ophrys sancti-isidorii</i>		✓			✓		✓		
	Ophrys attaviria group									
5	<i>Ophrys attaviria</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
6	<i>Ophrys eptapigiensis</i>									
7	<i>Ophrys Lindia</i>				✓					
	Ophrys blitopertha group									
8	<i>Ophrys blitopertha</i>				✓					
9	<i>Ophrys persephonae</i>		✓			✓				
	Ophrys lutea group									
10	<i>Ophrys lutea</i>	✓		✓	✓			✓		
11	<i>Ophrys phryganae</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
12	<i>Ophrys sicula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Ophrys omegaifera group									
13	<i>Ophrys basilissa</i>									
14	<i>Ophrys apollonae</i>		✓	✓				✓		
15	<i>Ophrys omegaifera</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
16	<i>Ophrys sitiaca</i>									
	Ophrys speculum group									
17	<i>Ophrys regis-ferdinandii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
18	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>	✓	✓	✓						
	Ophrys tenthredinifera group									
19	<i>Ophrys leochroma</i>			✓						
20	<i>Ophrys korae</i>			✓				✓		
21	<i>Ophrys bombyliflora</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
	Ophrys apifera group									
22	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>									
	Ophrys holoserica group									
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>		✓			✓				
	Ophrys oestrifera group									
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	
	Ophrys heldreichii group									
31	<i>Ophrys calyptus</i>	✓			✓		✓			
32	<i>Ophrys calyptus</i> var. <i>pseudoapulica</i>									
33	<i>Ophrys calyptus</i> var. <i>scolopaxoides</i>									
34	<i>Ophrys polyxo</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Ophrys umbilicata group									
35	<i>Ophrys rhodia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
36	<i>Ophrys umbilicata</i>	✓								
	Ophrys reinholdii group									
37	<i>Ophrys reinholdii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
38	<i>Ophrys cretica</i> ssp. <i>beloniae</i>	✓		✓				✓		
	Ophrys argolica group									
39	<i>Ophrys lucis</i>		✓							
	Ophrys mammosa group									
40	<i>Ophrys ferrum-equinum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
41	<i>Ophrys mammosa</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
	GENUS EPIACTIS									
42	<i>Epipactis densifolia</i>									
	GENUS CEPHALANTHERA									
43	<i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>									
	GENUS LIMODORUM									
44	<i>Limodorum abortivum</i>				nf	✓	✓	✓		
	GENUS SPIRANTHES									
45	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i>									
	GENUS SERAPIAS									
46	<i>Serapias bergonii</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓			
47	<i>Serapias carica</i>	✓			✓			✓		
48	<i>Serapias parviflora</i>					✓		✓		
49	<i>Serapias politisii</i>		✓			✓				
	GENUS ANACAMPTIS									
50	<i>Anacamptis collina</i>	nf								
51	<i>Anacamptis laxiflora</i>		✓				✓			
52	<i>Anacamptis morio</i>		✓			✓				
53	<i>Anacamptis papilionacea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
54	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	✓			✓		✓	✓		
55	<i>Anacamptis sancta</i>						nf	✓		
56	<i>Anacamptis coriophora</i>	✓						✓		
	GENUS NEOTINEA									
57	<i>Neotinea maculata</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓		
58	<i>Neotinea lactea</i>		✓			✓				
	GENUS ORCHIS									
59	<i>Orchis anatolica</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
60	<i>Orchis anthropophora</i>		✓		✓	✓				

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
61	<i>Orchis italica</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓			
62	<i>Orchis provincialis</i>		✓			✓				
63	<i>Orchis simia</i>									
	GENUS HIMANTOGLOSSUM									
64	<i>Himantoglossum robertianum</i>	✓	✓			✓		✓		
#	<i>Ophrys episcopalis</i>				✓					
#	<i>Ophrys herae</i>						✓			
	Daily total:	20	29	28	23	33	23	31		
	Running total:	20	41	48	52	53	55	56		
	HYBRIDS									
	<i>Ophrys cretica ssp. beloniae x regis-ferdinandii</i>	✓								
	<i>Ophrys rhodia x umbilicata</i>	✓								
	<i>Ophrys cretica ssp. beloniae x speculum</i>	✓								
	<i>Ophrys x kalteiseniana (ferrum-equinum x reinholdii)</i>		✓							
	<i>Ophrys x ionica (ferrum-equinum x mammosa)</i>			✓				✓		
	<i>Ophrys attaviria x blitopertha</i>				✓					
	<i>Ophrys blitopertha x Lindia</i>				✓					
	<i>Ophrys blitopertha x lutea</i>				✓					
	<i>Ophrys bombyliflora x rhodia</i>						✓			
	<i>Ophrys calypsus x colossaea</i>						✓			
	<i>Ophrys rhodia x speculum</i>							✓		
	BUTTERFLIES									
	Eastern Festoon <i>Zerynthia cerisy</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Swallowtail <i>Papilio machaon</i>	✓					✓	✓		
	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>									

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
	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>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Large White <i>Pieris brassicae</i>				✓	✓	✓			
	Eastern Dappled White <i>Euchloe ausonia</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓		
	Clouded Yellow <i>Colias crocea</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Brimstone <i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>			✓			✓	✓		
	Aegean Meadow Brown <i>Maniola telmessia</i>						✓			
	Pygmy Skipper <i>Gegenes pumilio</i>									
	Mallow Skipper <i>Carcharodus alceae</i>									
	MAMMALS									
	Fallow Deer <i>Dama dama</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
	Northern White-breasted Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus roumanicus</i>									
	Red Fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i>									
	REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS									
	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>							✓		
	Roughtail Rock Agama <i>Laudakia stellio</i>					✓		✓		
	Levant Skink <i>Heremites auratus</i>					✓				
	Mediterranean House Gecko <i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i>	✓						✓		
	Balkan Terrapin <i>Mauremys rivulata</i>									
	European Green Toad <i>Bufo viridis</i>	✓		✓				✓		
	NOTABLE MISCELLANEOUS FLORA & FAUNA (noted first day recorded)									
	Rhodes Fritillary <i>Fritillaria rhodia</i>	✓								
	Greek Yellow Scorpion <i>Mesobuthus gibbosus</i>	✓								
	Egyptian Locust <i>Anacridium aegyptium</i>	✓								

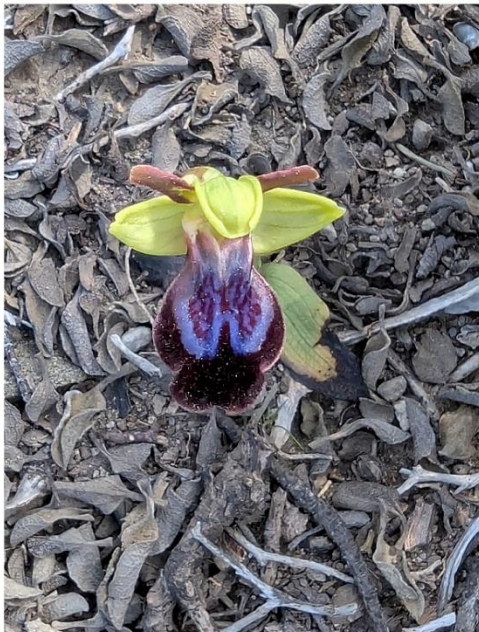
	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	
	<i>Cytinus hypocistis</i>	✓								
	Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>	✓								
	Crested Lark <i>Galerida cristata</i>	✓								
	Vagrant Emperor <i>Anax ephippiger</i>	✓								
	Rhodes Cyclamen <i>Cyclamen rhodium</i>		✓							
	Rhodes Peony <i>Paeonia clusii ssp. rhodia</i>		✓							
	Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>		✓							
	Black Morel <i>Morchella elata</i>		✓							
	Eurasian Bee Beetle <i>Trichius fasciatus</i>		✓							
	Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>		✓							
	Blue Hound's-tongue <i>Cynoglossum creticum</i>		✓							
	<i>Cytninus ruber</i>			✓						
	Meloe sp. (oil beetle)			✓						
	Collared Earthstar <i>Geastrum triplex</i>			✓						
	Wood Blewit <i>Collybia nuda</i>			✓						
	Fasciated Conehead Mantis <i>Empusa fasciata</i>				✓					
	Conehead Mantis <i>Empusa pennata</i>					✓				
	Walckenaer's Huntsman Spider <i>Eusparassus walckenaeri</i>					✓				
	Dragon Arum <i>Dracunculus vulgaris</i>					✓				
	European Hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>					✓				
	<i>Lycosa praegrandis</i>					✓				
	Eastern Subalpine Warbler <i>Curruca cantillans</i>						✓			
	Scops Owl <i>Otus scops</i>						✓			
	Chukar <i>Alectoris chukar</i>							✓		

Galleries

All images that follow were kindly shared by tour participants



Images © Wendy



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Images © Jane & Trevor



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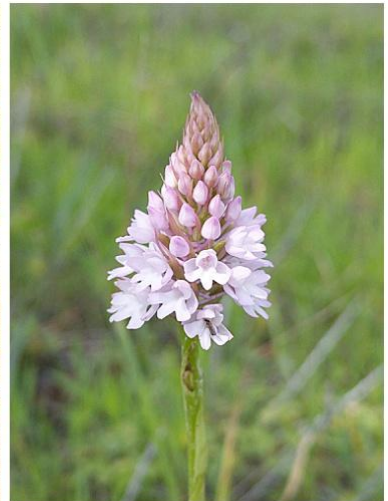
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Images © Judy & Richard



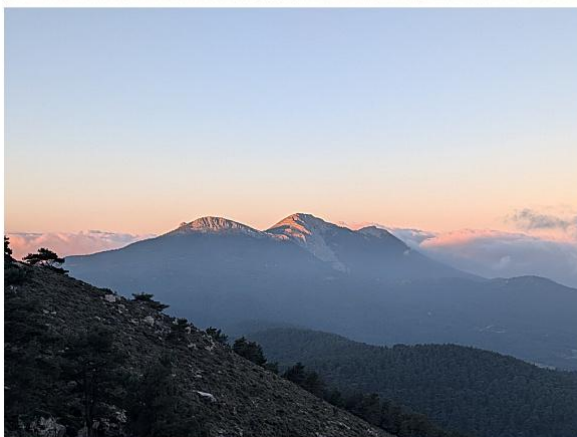
Images © Michael



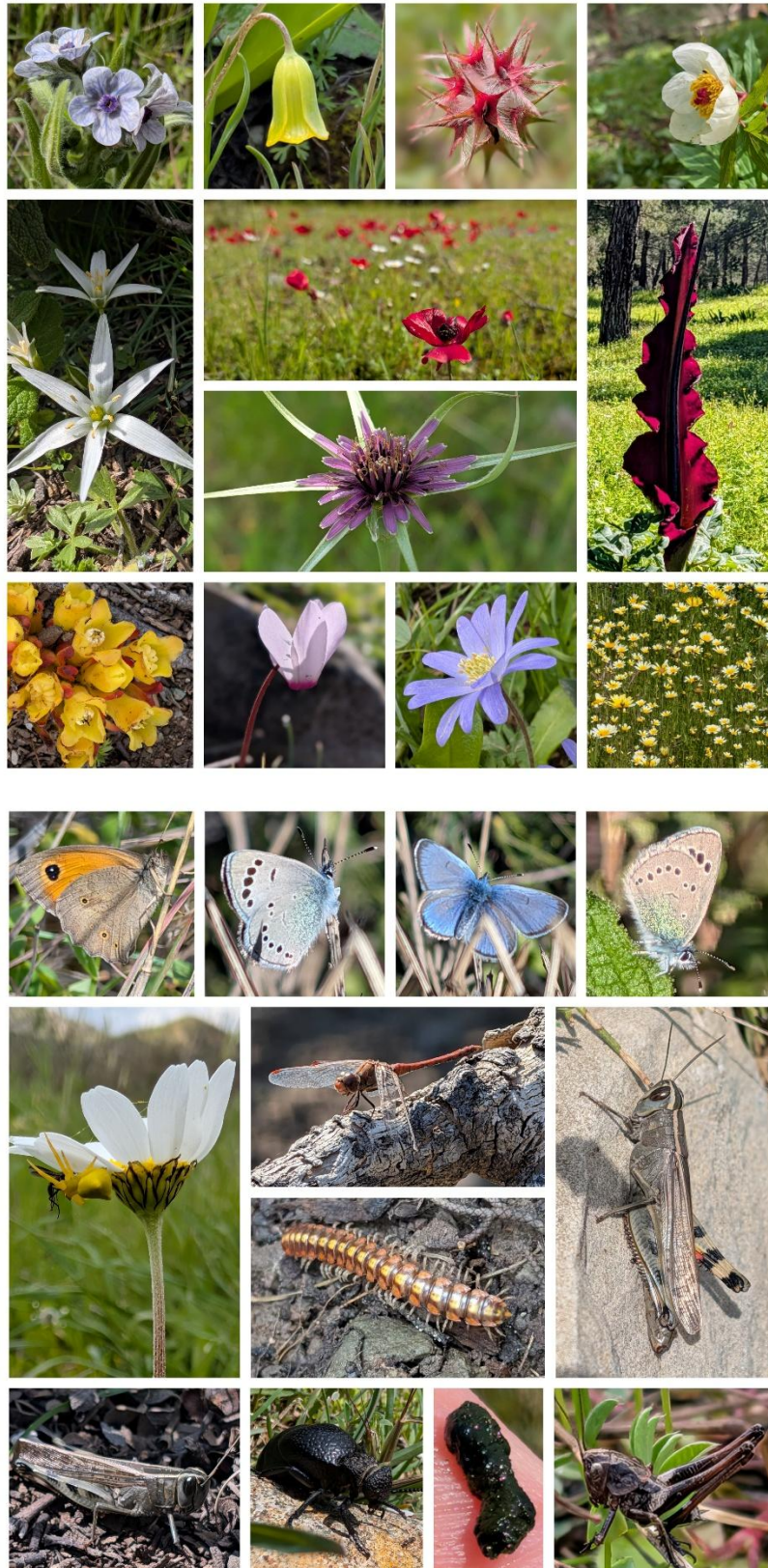
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And finally... Our Orchids of Rhodes tours for 2027 and 2028 are already fully booked – we're not too surprised, as we're confident our knowledge of the island's orchids, their distribution, and where to find their interesting variations and hybrids is unsurpassed. We've other orchid tours in 2027 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 2028 – watch this space!

[Orchids of Tenerife](#)

[Orchids of Cyprus](#)

[Orchids of the Gargano Peninsula](#)

[Orchids of Sardinia](#)

[Orchids of Crete](#)

[Orchids of Sicily](#)

[Summer Orchids of the French Alps](#)