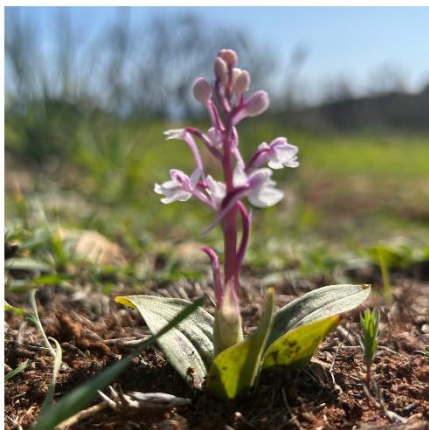


Orchids of Cyprus

Mariposa Nature Tours trip report 2nd-9th March 2026

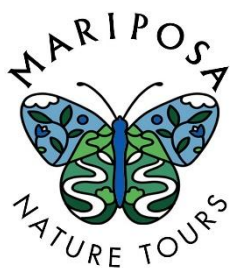


Tour leaders Dr Richard Bate & Dave Fairhurst

Trip report by Dr Richard Bate

(Images, clockwise from top left: *Ophrys lapethica* © Ian; *Orchis punctulata* © Ian;

Ophrys kotschy © Ian; *Orchis sezikiana* © Hazel)



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Introduction

Cyprus is an island located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, south of Turkey, west of Syria and Lebanon, northwest of Israel, and north of Egypt. Cyprus has a rather diverse geological composition, a reflection of the island's position at the complex boundary between the African and Eurasian tectonic plates. The landscape is dominated by the Troodos Ophiolite, created through tectonic processes. Cyprus also contains sedimentary rock formations, including limestone, chalk, marl, and sandstone, which were deposited in marine environments over millions of years.

The flora of Cyprus is strongly influenced by its extensive calcareous sedimentary rocks, that weather to form alkaline, calcium-rich soils that are often shallow, well-drained, and relatively low in nutrients. The varied topography created by limestone formations produces a range of microhabitats, supporting a high level of plant diversity and endemism.

Combined with Cyprus's Mediterranean climate of mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers, these calcareous landscapes support a rich diversity of terrestrial orchids, including several endemic and regionally important species.

Our Tour of Cyprus

The majority of Cypriot orchids typically peak earlier in the season than they do elsewhere in the Mediterranean, and in a good week we will usually see north of thirty species. As a primarily orchid-focussed tour, we will see the majority of species we encounter in abundance but there is a wealth of wildlife to be seen, as well as a handful of sites of cultural significance.

Arrival day

The arrivals day for our tour was a memorable one. Escalation of conflict between Iran and Israel led to other states across the Middle East becoming involved, and Cyprus was plunged into a state of heightened security alert. Whilst life on the ground was completely unaffected, travel to and from the island was suspended and this meant that half of our guests had their flights cancelled and could not fly out. This meant that only the guides and those who had travelled out in advance of the tour's start were able to join. Due to large numbers of people being present at the airport, we were treated to a somewhat chaotic scenes at the airport, but we were able to locate our guests and travel immediately into the field as planned.

A stone's throw from our hotel, we visited our first site on the edge of the Akamas National Park – a series of abandoned groves bordered by streams on both sides and pine forests.

Upon entry to the site, we were greeted by a fine sight – several examples of *Ophrys mammosa* and one plant sporting an opportunist predator, the mantis *Empusa pennata*. Our enthusiastic party was soon exploring the wider area and multiple finds ensued. Within minutes, we had all enjoyed fine examples of *Himantoglossum robertianum*, *Anacamptis*



Himantoglossum robertianum © Ian

syriaca and the endemic *Ophrys flavomarginata* – species that we would encounter ubiquitously throughout the tour.

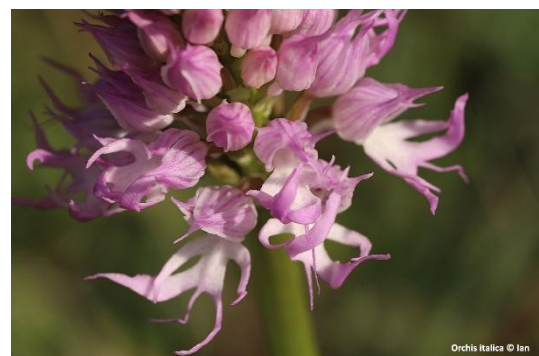
We left the open field and worked our way into the pine forests behind, where we encountered Hazel's surprise example of *Ophrys elegans*, another endemic species to the island but one we had not encountered at this site before. A fine-looking bee orchid, its name means 'elegant', and that beautifully sums up its sophisticated look. Small in stature, its mirror takes the form of a blue bowtie set against a chestnut brown labellum. Further finds included Gaby and Graham's patch of *Ophrys galilaea*, a yellow-bordered bee orchid from the *lutea* complex.

Within a couple of hours, we had explored the surrounding area and made multiple wildlife finds including a European Yellow Scorpion *Buthus occitanus* and come across more orchid species – *Ophrys israelitica*, a *fusca*-complex bee orchid with dull markings; and a few examples of an attractive bee orchid, clearly part of the *Ophrys umbilicata* complex. This small-flowered plant appeared to be typical of *Ophrys umbilicata* itself, possessing small flowers with a short lip.

Ophrys umbilicata is the type species of one of the major *Ophrys* species complexes, its distribution centred on the Eastern Mediterranean. Originally described from Mt Carmel in Israel, closely related species have been recorded from Greece and Cyprus through Southern Turkey to the Levant. Cyprus is regarded as one of the principal centres of diversity for this species complex, and much variation is seen among the taxa present.

Whilst some authors have replaced *Ophrys umbilicata* on Cyprus with other taxa, some maintain that the variation is due to the presence of a complex of closely related species, all of which are worthy of recognition in the Cypriot flora.

Before we left the site, we caught sight of several Naked Man Orchid *Orchis italica*, that were coming into flower. This delightful species is one of the so-called anthropomorphic orchids, whose flowers resemble humanoid figures. In this case, the labellum has a small lip present between its 'legs' – bestowing it with a rather characteristic appearance that leads to its vernacular name.



Orchis italica © Ian

We returned to our hotel having seen nine species on our first afternoon, a welcome antidote to the chaos that had arisen as a result of the previous night's events. Situated near the Aphrodite Springs on the Paphos district coast, our base is the ideal location for a peaceful rendezvous with the natural world. That evening, we all enjoyed a hearty meal and the famous hospitality of this family-owned hotel.

Day 2

Our first full day was a celebration of the local area, exploring the region behind the hotel before a short trip in the vehicle to a circular walk less than a mile from the hotel that took us across a variety of habitats.



The grounds of the hotel play host to some spectacular views and we were treated to something very special when we congregated above the beachfront. In the distance we could make out the snow-capped mountains of Southern Turkey, remarkably clear given their considerable distance from where we were standing.

There are a large number of orchids present on the short turf overlooking the beaches here, and in addition to many examples of *Ophrys flavomarginata* we were treated to our first examples of *Ophrys astarte*. Both of these taxa are fairly distinct in appearance; *O. flavomarginata* has quite a large flower that is typically endowed with a prominent luteal border whereas *O. astarte* has smaller, darker flowers.

Where these species coincide, intermediate plants inevitably spring up and all but the best and most 'classic' examples become difficult to determine – underlying one of the perennial issues in *Ophrys* taxonomy.

Shortly after arriving at the start of the walk, the sharp eyes of Ian drew our attention to a new species – one of the tongue orchids, another near-endemic species in the form of *Serapias levantina*. This medium-sized species' origins are probably hybridogenous in nature, and because it favours a variety of habitats, can be variable in appearance – though typically intermediate between the widespread Mediterranean species *S. orientalis* and *S. vomeracea*.

In the same region, we saw many examples of *Ophrys flavomarginata* before we crossed some arable land and found ourselves exploring the abandoned areas either side of a track that led to some remote properties. In this area we again encountered *Ophrys astarte*, *Ophrys flavomarginata* and further examples of *Serapias levantina*, and further examples of *Ophrys mammosa*. Despite the intensity of the morning sunshine, the temperatures remain pleasant at this time of year and there were many semi-torpid invertebrates scurrying through the grass, most notably Budak's Skink *Ablepharus budaki*, a small and slender lizard found across Cyprus.



We made our way down the track to the base of a small valley, and pitched up for our lunch stop. The eagle-eyed among our group easily spotted the large number of large yellow orchids in the scrub, an orchid at the edge of its range here in Cyprus and one of Europe's

rarest. *Orchis punctulata* is an impressive species, with large cylindrical inflorescences sometimes bearing hundreds of yellow humanoid flowers, the extremities of which can be yellow, green or a sharply contrasting brown in colour. We enjoyed our first views of the endemic Paphos Blue butterfly *Glaucopsyche paphos*. Further butterflies seen today included Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui* and the remarkable Cleopatra *Gonepteryx cleopatra*.

As we made our way further along the track, we caught view of further species including another interesting bee orchid from the *Ophrys mammosa* group, the somewhat cryptic *Ophrys morio*. Sporting longer sepals and petals than *O. mammosa*, closer examination reveals the “beak” on the column being longer than it is in other taxa, and it usually sports green pseudo-eyes. Another interesting find was a group of plants coming into flower that appeared similar to typical *O. mammosa* but bore long labella and very pale basal fields, that could be attributed a taxon described as *Ophrys posteria* by Baumann & Baumann in 2005.



We enjoyed a little excitement as we approached the end of the track. To the surprise of many guests, a small pale snake made its way across the path in front of us, hissing as it did so. In order to allow those at the front to make their way back to view it, Richard cautiously ushered it along a longer path before it disappeared into the scrub behind us. What had initially appeared to

be a small Cat Snake was in fact a very small and recently hatched Cypriot Blunt-Nosed Viper *Macrovipera lebetina lebetina* and was the only view we managed of this marvellous species on the tour.

The fields at the end delighted us with more species. Numerous examples of *Ophrys galilaea* and *Himantoglossum robertianum* were present in fine form, as well as several Rugged Oil Beetles *Meloe rugosus*. In previous years, the limestone rock crevices towards the end of our circular has been home to numerous Cypriot Agama *Laudakia cypriaca* but we only saw a couple, and this was probably due to the cool and wet winter experienced by much of the Mediterranean in the months prior to our visit.

Our group was intrigued by a number of plants seen growing on the limestone here. Clearly part of the *O. umbilicata* group and probably attributable to one of the known endemic species *O. astarte* they were morphologically inseparable from *Ophrys rhodia*, a taxon known from Rhodes. Debate rages as to whether these species should



be regarded as synonymous, or whether they are separable and if so, whether *O. rhodia* is present on Cyprus.

We returned to the hotel for late afternoon, but not before stopping for ice cream at a local beach bar and enjoying a spot in the sunshine.

Day 3

Our third day started with a short drive across the western coastline towards Gialia, another nature hotspot dominated by swathes of mature pine forest. Passing many of the beaches famous for visiting sea turtles later in the season, we eventually found ourselves on a quiet road that led up to one of the island's many monasteries in the mountains.



Our first stop would see us enjoy two new species for the tour, the first of which is the island's only *Dactylorhiza* species, *D. romana*. Part of the *D. sambucina* complex, this species is widespread across the Mediterranean and can be found in two colour forms (both purple and yellow), but on Cyprus only the yellow form can be found.

In the same area, we also encountered several fine examples of *Orchis troodi*, a plant more commonly seen at altitude in the Troodos mountains later in the year. Experienced travellers across the Mediterranean will be familiar with *Orchis anatolica*, a species that *O. troodi* is closely related to. It differs by usually being a robust plant, with a lax inflorescence and pale flowers with lateral sepals that are heavily green-veined.

Working our way along a trail below the trees, we started coming across some fine bee orchids *Ophrys elegans*, though eagle-eyed members of the group spotted something new among them – a handsome plant bearing a number of chestnut-coloured square flowers with broad shoulders and a minimal mirror. *Ophrys levantina* is a species named after the Levant, a region of the Middle East that has been recognised since the medieval period.

Curiously, *Ophrys levantina* is considered by some taxonomists to be part of the *Ophrys bornmuelleri* group of the *Ophrys fuciflora* (Late Spider) complex, but genetic analysis of plants from Cyprus placed it in the *Ophrys umbilicata* complex. It is a good example of how deducing phylogenetic relationships based on traditionally-minded morphometric approaches can be tricky, let alone doing so based on the increasingly arbitrary treatments that some authors run with.



We travelled deep into the forest before arriving at the excavation site of an old monastery, where we encountered some fabulous herpetofauna – Mediterranean House Gecko *Hemidactylus turcicus* and the endemic Schreiber's Fringe-fingered Lizard *Acanthodactylus scheriberi*.

Next on our itinerary was a trip east, to the Pegeia Forest, a popular inland destination for walkers. After enjoying lunch, we came across numerous orchid species including *Ophrys levantina*, *Ophrys elegans*, *Ophrys sicula*, *Anacamptis syriaca*, *Himantoglossum robertianum* and rosettes of *Neotinea maculata* and *Spiranthes spiralis*. At this site, many of the examples of *Ophrys levantina* displayed some rather exaggerated forms, suggestive of hybridisation but we did not encounter the species likely to have been responsible for this.



After a tour of the circular route in the Pegeia forest, we stopped briefly at a newly-opened coffee bar and enjoyed a refreshing drink before making our final stop of the day. An abandoned field along a track leading to active arable land, this site is home to large numbers of orchids that are barely managing to exist on the poor soils present. We encountered superb examples of *Ophrys israelitica* and *Ophrys flavomarginata*, as well as *Ophrys astarte* and diminutive *Ophrys cinereophila* in the very short scrub. Stunted examples of *Ophrys levantina* and *Ophrys elegans* were also present at the scrub margins, along with a single example of *Orchis punctulata* found by Gabi – the first we had observed at this site.

Heading back to the hotel, our group strongly petitioned for a stop at the ice cream parlour near the hotel and, keen to please, our tour leaders were only too happy to acquiesce!

Day 4

Cyprus is an incredibly safe country to travel around, and we had considered ourselves well-insulated from world events on the west of the island in the Akamas peninsula. We'd planned to visit the Akrotiri region earlier in the tour but had given it a wide berth due to security concerns. However, by this point of the tour flights in and out of Cyprus had recommenced and it had been made clear that travel to this area was no longer being discouraged.

We started by visiting the edge of a recently developed golf complex north of Paphos, an outstanding site for the Rainbow Bee Orchid *Ophrys iricolor*. At this site we enjoyed several hundred gorgeous plants, and although this is a species that can be found across the Eastern Mediterranean, it is the opinion of the tour leaders that this species is particularly impressive in Cyprus and



this is where the best examples can be found. With large flowers – one of the largest of any *Ophrys* species – with a strong violet mirror set against a deliciously dark background it is as enticing to a human admirer as it is to its pollinator.



Akrotiri is a well-known site for Kotschy's Bee Orchid *Ophrys kotschyi* but our pre-tour recce had highlighted poor numbers in one of the locations that is usually considered reliable. We instead hit another region further along the coastline that boasted large numbers of sturdy plants, as well as some putative hybrids with other members of the *O. umbilicata* complex. *O. kotschyi* is a particularly attractive species and one that many orchid lovers place high on their list of species to see. Its flowers are dark in colour, ranging from black to a violet-tinged indigo, divided by a reticular mirror of pure white that forms an umbilical pattern.

Also at this magnificent site was our only sighting of *Serapias bergonii*, a tall and slender tongue orchid found in damp meadows. Generally paler than other *Serapias* species, this species is frequently found in the Mediterranean and easily recognised by these features alone. Elsewhere we found examples of *O. astarte* and *O. levantina*, as well as *O. galilaea*.

Whilst the fieldcraft of our guests was exemplary – helping and guiding each other – it was clear that this site had been visited by at least one group whose motives revolved around securing a tick than enjoying the plants or offering them any form of respect. It is not uncommon to come across sites where plants have been trampled or grazed by livestock or inadvertent human traffic, but unfortunately we occasionally come across sites where ignorance has triumphed over responsibility.

Our lunch stop was rather memorable, as we stopped at one of the larger monasteries on the island. At this particular site, the monks tend to a large population of rescue cats that are neutered, well-treated and also well-fed. It prevents cats living wildly and helps to keep the population in check, as well as dutifully providing intelligent animals with a home. This approach is not unique to the monastery and similar approaches are widespread across the island – Cyprus appears to be a nation of cat lovers where a significant proportion of the population tries to do their best to manage things as best they can. Our group was able to enjoy the grounds, the cats, or both, and then explore the region behind the monastery for more wildlife. A number of interesting plants were on display, notably very strongly marked examples of *Ophrys astarte*.



Our journey home was via a number of sites involving short stops, where we hoped to add to our species roster. Firstly, we travelled through part of the island that had been strongly

hit by forest fires in previous summers. Although this can be devastating for some wildlife, it can also have a seemingly minimal impact on other species – or even a beneficial one.

We first came across a putative hybrid taxon, known as *Orchis x sezikiana*. It has features of both *Orchis quadripunctata* and *Orchis anatolica*, but the former is not present on Cyprus and the latter's status on Cyprus is contested. Regardless of its origins and how it came about, *O. x sezikiana* is morphologically distinct and quite delightful for it. A particularly dainty plant, with small spotted flowers that vary between magenta and very pale, it is usually found on rocky areas near woodland – sometimes apparently growing from fissures within the rock.



Further along the road we made an impromptu stop when we caught sight of a verge packed with large examples of *Himantoglossum robertianum* – some of them as tall as guests sitting beside them. We then became aware of a multitude of species in the area, such as *Orchis italica*, *Ophrys flavomarginata* and also a new species in the form of the endemic *Ophrys alasiatica*.

O. alasiatica is one of the more recently described species from Cyprus, although it is so distinct that one wonders why. Bearing more than a superficial resemblance to the Greek mainland specialty *O. aesculapii*, it takes the visual form of *O. mammosa*, with a strongly marked mirror and a prominent

luteal border surrounding a labellum that often tapers to a point.

At this spot overlooking much of the Paphos district we had gained considerable altitude. In the local fields we enjoyed fine examples of species that had long faded elsewhere, such as *Anacamptis collina* that was present in strong numbers and in fine form.

Sadly, it was at this point that we came to encounter another senseless act of plant vandalism but one that we have become all-too familiar while leading tours. *Ophrys tenthredinifera* is a fairly common species in parts of the Mediterranean but is a plant on the edge of its range in Cyprus, restricted to just a handful of sightings over the years. We visited the site where it is known from, and Richard had witnessed a plant coming into flower on his pre-tour recce, but we found the plant to have been dug up and the protective cage around it destroyed. Whether the plant manages to reappear at this site remains to be seen in future years but incidents such as this – all too common – raise questions about what local authorities should be doing to limit the impact of such selfish wildlife crimes, and what we can do individually as responsible conservationists to minimise such occurrences.



Our journey home involved one last stop, and we visited a small village overlooking a valley in Northern Paphos. On a slope at the edge of this village, below a row of conifers grows a large population of *Ophrys lapethica*, a colourful species with a yellow and brown flower complimented by large pink sepals - superficially resembling the Woodcock Bee Orchid *Ophrys scolopax*. However, close examination reveals the classic pattern of *O. umbilicata* that this species is closely related to. In the vicinity were many other bee orchid species, including *Ophrys iricolor*, *Ophrys alasiatica*, and *Ophrys flavomarginata*.

Day 5



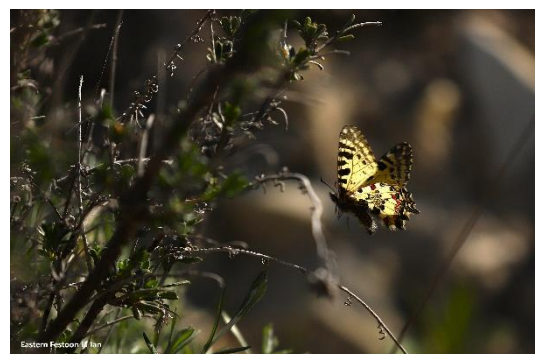
After a couple of days travelling East, our plan for this day was to remain local and explore further into the Akamas peninsula by heading into the forests on the far South West of the island.

We had barely arrived before the sharp-eyed guests were spotting orchids in abundance at this site famed for its orchid flora. Dotted among the slopes beneath the pine trees were numerous examples of *Anacamptis syriaca* and *Dactylorhiza romana*, as well as scattered collections of *Ophrys levantina*, *Ophrys lapethica*, *Ophrys elegans* and *Orchis x sezikiana*.

After much searching, we encountered more new species in a glade where the sunlight broke through a little more strongly. *Neotinea maculata* is an easily overlooked orchid that is found across most of the Mediterranean, with outlying populations found in unusual locations such as the southern Ireland. The flowers are very small and usually condensed into a dense, lop-sided inflorescence that is sometimes less noticeable than its attractive rosette of finely spotted leaves.

Deep in the pine woodland, we came across a pair of fine examples of the endemic *Serapias*, *Serapias aphrodite*. We had come across possible examples of this species earlier in the tour, but the identity of these were without question. Typically a large plant, good specimens have an excessively long labellum and the length of these was almost comically so. Tongue orchids are often viewed as ones that are enjoyed by the purists above all, but this striking species has bags of charm.

Our group split in multiple directions to seek further species, and we encountered numerous examples of *Orchis troodi*, *Orchis x sezikiana*, *Ophrys lapethica*, *Ophrys elegans*, *Ophrys levantina*, *Dactylorhiza romana*, *Ophrys mammosa*, *Ophrys galilaea*, and *Serapias levantina*.



We were not just captivated by the orchid flora, but also by the general flora that included *Cyclamen cyprum*, *Gagea juliae* and the diminutive *Ophioglossum lusitanicum*. Multiple

butterflies were seen on the wing, including Paphos Blue, Painted Lady, Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*, Cleopatra and Eastern Festoon *Allancastris cerisyi*.

After lunch beneath the trees, we made our way up some of the slopes in search of an elusive species, an endemic relation of the Middle Eastern orchid, *Ophrys bornmuelleri*. At the top of a chalky slope where the density of orchid species was a diverse mixture of *Ophrys cinereophila*, *Ophrys israelitica* and *Ophrys levantina* we found our prize – the beautiful *Ophrys aphrodite*. A tall plant with delicate flowers that appear a touch smaller than they should be, the flowers are a mixture of contrasting colours and varying textures. The labellum is decorated with a complex pattern of broken yellow lines and curves, with a



prominent central mirror that resembles a capital “H” sitting between prominent lateral horns. Its borders are strongly villose, that turn from a deep chestnut brown to bright yellow. It is not every year that we would expect to find this species in flower in early March, but we came across more than a handful of examples of this one and counted ourselves extremely lucky for doing so.

Towards the end of our afternoon, we encountered an unusual form of *Ophrys lapethica* with multiple labella; a peloric form with considerable symmetry. We also came across large populations of *Ophrys israelitica* and *Ophrys cinereophila* as well as more plants that resembled *Ophrys rhodia* and typical *Ophrys umbilicata*. After a day in the field, we passed a nearby donkey sanctuary and retired to the beachside ice cream parlour.

Day 6

As a tour progresses, we are struck by the law of diminishing returns when it comes to experiencing new species but that rarely detracts from experiencing good numbers of the crowd-pleasing species that guests have come to see.

We returned to the fields above Paphos for our first stop of the day, where we visited a site set up for herpetofauna. Curiously, numbers of herps were well down across the island and we didn't encounter much more than a few Kotchy's Gecko *Mediodactylus kotschy* and Mediterranean House Gecko *Hemidactylus turcicus*. This site delivered well for orchids, and we saw pristine examples of *Ophrys iricolor*, *Ophrys flavomarginata*, *Ophrys galilaea*, *Ophrys mammosa*, *Himantoglossum robertianum* and *Anacamptis syriaca*. Of the non-orchid flora present, the Mandrakes *Mandragora officinarum* that dotted the paths drew particular intrigue from our group.



From here, we passed via Akrotiri again and stopped at a roadside site along one of the military roads to catch a glimpse of another orchid at the very edge of its range – the Eastern Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis veratrifolia*. This lovely species is found in greater abundance in the Troodos Mountains though at such altitude it rarely flowers before mid to late June. Near sea-level at this particular site, it often flowers in early March though it is rare for the flowers to be in good condition here.



Orchis punctulata © Ian

We travelled further north and east to the hilly regions above Larnaca, where we explored some scrubland adjacent to abandoned farmland. Here we encountered the best examples of *Ophrys alasiatica*, as well as further examples of *Ophrys iricolor* and a large population of *Orchis italica*. It was not long before further exploration of the region revealed large numbers of *Orchis punctulata*, *Ophrys flavomarginata*, *Ophrys astarte*, *Anacamptis syriaca*, and a handful of *Ophrys lapethica*. Of particular intrigue was large numbers of pink peppercorn plants *Shinus molle*.

We ended the day in a coffee house in preparation for the lengthy drive back to the hotel in the west, but not before visiting our final site of the day – an open pine forest above the banks of a river immersed by the calls of Cyprus Water Frogs *Pelophylax cypriensis*. At this special location is an immense population of *Ophrys elegans*, where much variation is present among the plants present. Also present here are multiple other *Ophrys* species, that occasionally hybridise – including good candidates for *Ophrys cinerophila* x *Ophrys israelitica*; one that we are not aware has been historically described.

Day 7

For our final day of the tour, we revisited sites from earlier in the week. We explored the region behind our hotel again and were surprised by how far the orchids had advanced in just a few days – including the emergence of another fine species.

Ophrys orientalis is a species closely related to *Ophrys umbilicata* but is separated by virtue of its large flowers and longer labellum. Whilst some authors consider these species to be synonymous, and others consider *O. orientalis* to have replaced *O. umbilicata* as the nominate taxon on Cyprus, others maintain that these are distinct species that coincide on the island. Whatever the situation, it is clear that plants that fit the description of both of these taxa can be identified at different locations across the island, in the same way that *O. astarte* and *O. rhodia* can also be similarly observed, along with the particularly distinct *O. lapethica*, *O. flavomarginata*, *O. kotschyi*, and *O. levantina*.

Following a lengthy (but healthy) debate about the nature of the plants we'd seen on the tour, we returned to the forests in the southwest of the Akamas peninsula and our group

split up to tread new ground. Multiple new finds were made, including populations of *Ophrys aphrodite* high up in the hills where the views were spectacular.

As we approached mid-afternoon, we made our way back to the site our tour started with – the fields near the hotel. The season had visibly progressed and multiple plants had emerged. A final spectacular find was in store for us, when Ian spotted an African Green Mantis *Sphodromantis viridis* in the scrub bordering the woodlands.

A final trip to the ice cream parlour was a fine way to finish the tour, before we returned to the hotel to recount our favourite parts of the holiday. The following morning, we returned our travelling guests to the airport and departed for home ourselves, though many of our guests had booked flights returning home a few days after our tour finished – and stayed behind to further enjoy the delights of this fantastic island.



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ORCHIDS OF CYPRUS 2 nd -9 th MARCH 2026								
	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
	Anacamptis							
1	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>		nf		nf		nf	
2	<i>Anacamptis collina</i>				✓		✓	
3	<i>Anacamptis coriophora</i>		nf		nf		nf	
4	<i>Anacamptis syriaca</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	<i>Anacamptis laxiflora</i>							
	Himantoglossum							
6	<i>Himantoglossum robertianum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Dactylorhiza							
7	<i>Dactylorhiza romana</i>			✓		✓		✓
	Neotinea							
8	<i>Neotinea maculata</i>			nf		✓	nf	✓
	Orchis							
9	<i>Orchis italica</i>	✓			✓		✓	
10	<i>Orchis punctulata</i>		✓	✓			✓	
11	<i>Orchis sezikiana</i>				✓	✓		✓
12	<i>Orchis troodi</i>			✓		✓		✓
	Ophrys: elegans group							
13	<i>Ophrys elegans</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
	Ophrys: mammosa group							
14	<i>Ophrys alasiatica</i>				✓		✓	
15	<i>Ophrys mammosa</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
16	<i>Ophrys morio</i>		✓				✓	
	Ophrys: umbilicata group							
17	<i>Ophrys orientalis</i>					✓		✓
18	<i>Ophrys astarte</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓
19	<i>Ophrys flavomarginata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	<i>Ophrys kotschy</i>				✓		nf	
21	<i>Ophrys lapethica</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ophrys: bornmuelleri group							
22	<i>Ophrys aphrodite</i>					✓		✓
23	<i>Ophrys levantina</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
	Ophrys: fusca group							
24	<i>Ophrys cinereophila</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓
25	<i>Ophrys iricolor</i>				✓		✓	
26	<i>Ophrys galilaea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Ophrys omegaifera group							
27	<i>Ophrys israelitica</i>	✓		✓		✓		✓
	Epipactis							
28	<i>Epipactis veratrifolia</i>						✓	
	Serapias							
29	<i>Serapias parviflora</i>							
30	<i>Serapias bergonii</i>				✓			

	Species name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
31	<i>Serapias aphrodite</i>					✓		✓
32	<i>Serapias levantina</i>		✓					
#	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i>			nf		nf		nf
#	<i>Ophrys umbilicata</i>	✓				✓		
#	<i>Ophrys rhodia</i>		✓			✓		
#	<i>Ophrys transhyrcana</i>		✓				✓	
#	<i>Ophrys tenthredinifera</i>				v			
#	<i>Ophrys herae</i>						✓	
	Daily total:	10	11	12	14	16	19	18
	Running total:	10	16	19	26	29	31	31
	Miscellaneous flora & fauna recorded during the week							
	Small White <i>Pieris rapae</i>							
	Orange Tip <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>							
	Clouded Yellow <i>Colias croceus</i>							
	Paphos Blue <i>Glaucopsyche paphos</i>							
	Eastern Festoon <i>Zerynthia cerisy</i>							
	Painted Lady <i>Vanessa cardui</i>							
	Swallowtail <i>Papilio machaon</i>							
	Red Admiral <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>							
	Mallow Skipper <i>Carcharodus alceae</i>							
	Dark Grass Blue <i>Zizeeria karsandra</i>							
	Wall Brown <i>Lasiommata megera</i>							
	Lesser Emperor <i>Anax parthenope</i>							
	Common Darter <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>							
	Chukar <i>Alectoris chukar</i>							
	Black Francolin <i>Francolinus francolinus</i>							
	Long-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo rufinus</i>							
	Goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>							
	Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>							
	Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>							
	Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>							
	Cyprus Warbler <i>Curruca melanothorax</i>							
	Sardinian Warbler <i>Curruca melanocephala</i>							
	Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>							
	Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>							
	Hooded Crow <i>Corvus cornix</i>							
	Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>							
	White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>							
	Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>							
	Great Spotted Cuckoo <i>Clamator glandarius</i>							
	Laughing Dove <i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>							
	Coal Tit ssp. <i>Periparus ater cypriotes</i>							
	Common Crossbill <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>							

	Crested Lark <i>Galerida cristata</i>							
	Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>							
	Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i>							
	Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>							

Galleries

All images that follow were kindly shared by tour participants



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And finally... If you like the sound of Orchids of Cyprus, next year's tour is available to book on our website:

[Orchids of Cyprus](#)

Alternatively, we have other orchid tours in 2027 with our team of dedicated orchid-hunters that might take your fancy... Please note, our orchid tours are particularly popular, and tend to fill up well in advance – Orchids of Rhodes now regularly being fully booked two years in advance! – so if a tour appeals, don't wait too long to secure your place upon it...

[Orchids of Tenerife](#)

[Orchids of Sardinia](#)

[Orchids of the Gargano Peninsula](#)

[Orchids of Crete](#)

[Orchids of Sicily](#)

[Summer Orchids of the French Alps](#)

Meanwhile, our flagship Orchids of Rhodes tour is fully booked for 2027 and 2028 – but due to popular demand, we've arranged a second week for 2028:

[Orchids of Rhodes](#)