



BIRDS OF THE MESAORIA PLAIN

LIFE - FORBIRDS
(LIFE 13 NAT/CY/000176)



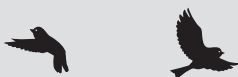


THIS LEAFLET WAS PREPARED UNDER THE PROJECT LIFE-FOR-BIRDS CO-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS WITH A VIEW TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE COMMON BIRDS OF MESAORIA. THE ARID PLAIN OF MESAORIA IS A VALUABLE HABITAT FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF BIRD SPECIES, PERMANENT RESIDENTS OF THE AREA AS WELL AS MANY MIGRANTS. BIRDS AND OTHER FAUNA SPECIES OF THE AREA FACE A LOT OF PRESSURE FROM VARIOUS HUMAN ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THE EXCESSIVE USE OF AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS, ILLEGAL TRAPPING, POACHING, HABITAT FRAGMENTATION ETC. THEIR PROTECTION IS OUR OBLIGATION AS IT CONTRIBUTES TO THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY OF THE ISLAND WHICH IS A MAIN PREREQUISITE FOR A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE.

Oenanthe cypriaca
– Cyprus wheatear

BM

The Cyprus Wheatear is considered an endemic species because it breeds only in Cyprus while spends winter in countries like Ethiopia and Sudan. It can be found throughout the entire territory of the island, while it nests almost everywhere especially in walls, drystones even on the ground from April until June. A targeted bird species of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project.



Sylvia melanothorax –
Cyprus warbler **PR**

The Cyprus Warbler is an endemic species of Cyprus although some individuals seem to hibernate in nearby countries such as Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. It prefers dense shrubby vegetation where it nests. It feeds mainly on insects. A targeted bird species of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project.



Athene noctua –
Little owl PR

This species is associated with ancient Greece. It is considered the sacred bird of the goddess Athena and is depicted in many ancient coins and sculptures. Unlike other species of owls, it is also active during the day especially in the breeding season. It can be found mostly in the plains and open areas, where it nests in abandoned buildings, rocks or cliffs..



Otus scops cyprius -
Scops owl PR

It is one of the four owl species found in Cyprus, and an endemic subspecies. It can be found on the island's forests, olive groves, farms and open spaces. It nests mainly in tree hollows or holes in walls. It feeds mainly on large insects, but also very small-sized mammals..



Buteo rufinus –
Long-legged Buzzard PR

A large sized bird of prey that lives permanently on the island. It nests mainly in low or high cliffs and more rarely on trees. It feeds mainly on large lizards and rodents, while it hunts also on foot searching for prey, thus deferring from other birds of prey.



Tyto alba – Barn owl PR

The barn owls have a wide spread throughout the planet except Antarctica. The species is considered as one of the best hunters of the Animal Kingdom due to its excellent hearing and vision. It is a beneficial bird species because its diet consists mainly of rodents. It nests mainly in abandoned buildings or cliffs.



Falco tinnunculus – Common
Kestrel PR

A very common bird of prey which breeds on trees, holes inside walls, bridges and even in towns. It feeds mainly on lizards, big insects and mice, and is affected in a European level by intensive agriculture practises.



Pica pica –
Magpie PR

A very common species of the island, especially in plains, parks and crops. It nests mainly on low trees, constructing a very specialized nest that consists of branches and mud, and a roof. It feeds on a wide variety of food, while its overpopulation can cause damage to eggs and chicks of several species of the avifauna of the region where it feeds on them.



*Corvus corone
cornix* –

Hooded Crow PR

A very common species of Cyprus which is found throughout the island. It feeds on a wide variety of animal and plant food. Large populations that have increased in the recent years affect negatively different bird species as well as agricultural production.



Carduelis chloris –
Greenfinch PR

While in previous decades this species was migratory that just passed or hibernated in Cyprus, during the last years it is considered a permanent resident. Outside the breeding season it creates colonies, while feeds on large hard seeds using its powerful beak.

Alectoris chukar –
Chukar PR

A fairly common species of Cyprus which can be found in a variety of habitats. It is the main game species of Cyprus. It nests on the ground and after hatching the young remain with their parents creating large herds.



Francolinus francolinus
– **Black francolin PR**

A species that is on the increase during the recent years has begun to rebound, while in the past it was considered quite rare. Cyprus is the westernmost range limit of its distribution. It prefers cultivated fields with reeds or other dense vegetation to stay hidden, while the male's call during mating season is typical and can be detected from a distance.



Carduelis carduelis
– Goldfinch PR

A small sized bird with beautiful colors and a very melodic call. It lives in small or big groups. It is a permanent resident of the island that nests on trees and feeds mainly on seeds.



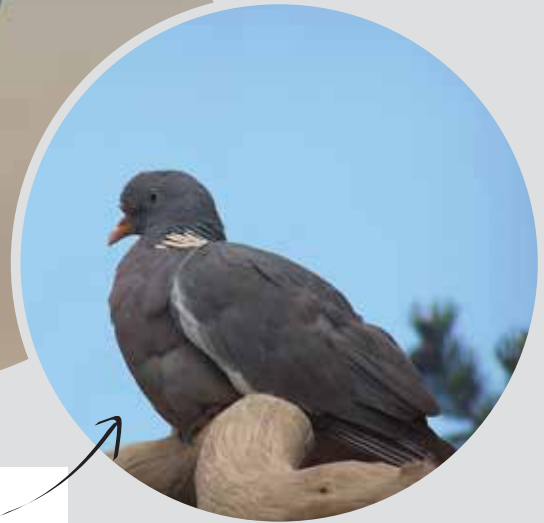
Galerida cristata –
Crested Lark PR

A very common bird, especially in plains and croplands while absent from mountainous regions. It nests on the ground, while the methodical walking motions of both parents protect the eggs, and later the chicks from predators.



Coracias garrulous – Roller **BM**

A migratory species which visits Cyprus between April and September. It nests in cliff holes or riverbanks, while Cyprus is considered as a very important destination for the species, whose populations are declining due to intensive farming practises. A targeted bird species of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project.



Columba palumbus – Wood pigeon **PR**

A fairly common species of the island which can be seen either in large groups, or individually especially during the breeding season. It lives either in forests or rural areas, as well as in urban areas. Several birds are visiting Cyprus from neighbouring countries to hibernate.

Hirundo rustica – Swallow **BM**

A very common European species which can be found in fields, villages and towns. It feeds exclusively on insects that catches while flying, and this is the reason that spends most of its life in the air.



Apus apus –
Swift **BM**

It is a migratory species observed to fly for long periods of time capturing insects in the air. It nests mainly in holes of buildings and roofs. It is quiet common in fields, lakes and generally in a wide variety of habitats and altitudes.

Sylvia atricapilla –
Blackcap PM

A migratory species that passes through Cyprus every spring and autumn. Each year its population faces a lot of pressure from illegal trapping, since several trappers sell it as delectable dish. The non-selective way of trapping by using mist nets and limesticks leads many other species to death, thus bringing a terrible blow in the avifauna of the island.



Upupa epops –
Hoopoe BM

It is one of the first migratory birds that someone can observe in the island after the passage of winter. It breeds mainly in tree hollows or drystone walls, in forests and mountainous areas. It feeds in open lands looking for worms and other prey in the ground using its long beak.





Pteroclis orientalis -
Black-bellied Sandgrouse
PM

It is a rare migratory species which previously constituted a common resident of the island. The flying looks like a Dove and the most of his life is spend on the ground. It feeds mainly on seeds and insects while the male with the female differs in colour after the first has more intense dark colours.



Burhinus oedicephalus -
Stone Curlew **PR**

A species that prefers plains and agricultural areas. It nests mainly on river banks, not constructing a nest, while the desired cover from predators comes from the colouring of the eggs and chicks that matches the surrounding environment. A targeted bird species of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project.



*Caprimulgus
europaeus* –
European Nightjar **PR**

Nocturnal endemic species which is found in both woodlands and shrublands. During evenings it can be found hunting near lights or sitting in the side of the road. It breeds in the island by laying 2 eggs on the ground (without building a nest) which colours provide a perfect camouflage with the surrounding environment. A targeted bird species of the LIFE-FORBIRDS project.

*Melanocorypha
calandra* –
Calandra Lark **PR**

A species found in open areas with low vegetation which feeds on seeds and insects. It nests on the ground while its population has declined in the recent years. The singing is quite attractive while it can imitate the singing of other birds.





Lanius nubicus –
Masked Shrike **BM**

It is a migratory species which visits Cyprus during spring where it breeds. It nests mainly in large bushes or trees, characterized by the habit to "pin" its prey (beetles and lizards) on thorns of bushes which then consumes.

A targeted bird species of the
LIFE-FORBIRDS project.



The Natura 2000 network is an EUwide network of nature protection areas for plant species, fauna species and habitats.

The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.



The project is co-funded by EU and it is implemented within the framework of the LIFE programme.

The LIFE programme is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout the EU.

PROJECT PARTNERS:



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