

BirdWING Newsletter

Issue 11 Autumn/Winter 2011

In this issue news from:

- SPP at Prespa
- Axios/Aliakmon/Loudias
- Lake Kerkini
- WWF in Dadia
- The HOS



The Birdwing Newsletter

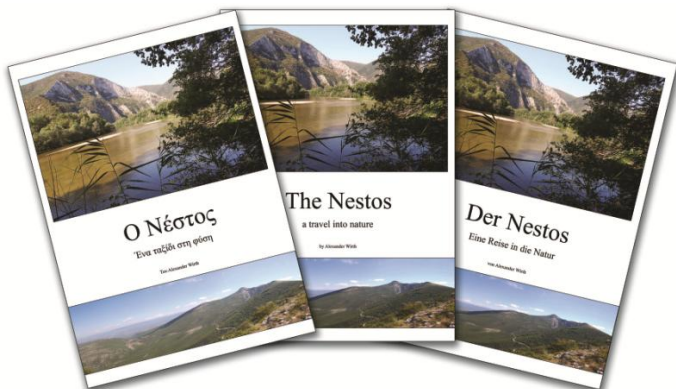
...brings you regular news about birds and issues affecting them in Northern Greece. The newsletter is published in English and Greek and is distributed via email. Visitors' Centres print copies to be given to visitors.

Great news!

The last few weeks and months have been full of surprises and successes and we're excited about bringing you news of recent developments. We've even had to extend the number of pages in this newsletter! Following our last issue we received so many encouraging emails and letters of support, together with generous donations and positive feedback.

We have also been overwhelmed by your comments following Steve's recent win at the Veolia Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2011. Whilst his winning photo was not taken in Greece the award ceremony and the aftermath has given us many opportunities to raise the profile of Birdwing and of Greece as a fabulous place to photograph birds. More on page 7.

In this issue we also want to introduce you to a new member of Birdwing, Alexander Wirth of Germany, who, through his own initiative and efforts, has written, translated and printed a book highlighting the wonders of the Nestos region of Northern Greece. Read more about Alex and his book on page 5.



Autumn/Winter 2011

Thanks for all your donations!

Our thanks for generous donations go to David Tomlinson from Gourmet Bird Tours, Alexander Wirth and his father from Germany, Linda Paisley from UK, John Barclay from UK and Stefan Schlick from the USA. Thanks too to the Hotel Erodios in Lithotopos, Lake Kerkini.

Famous artist and illustrator, Paschalis Dougalis has made a fantastic donation to Birdwing of six original paintings in watercolour, acrylic and gouache. This beautiful Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) is one of them.



Win this original painting!

Don't miss the opportunity to win this spectacular original acrylic painting of a Short-toed Eagle and to help Greek birds at the same time! **See pages 3 and 4.**

Birdwing News - 1

Bird news round-up

September at Lake Kerkini had several hundred Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) and White Pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) much in evidence, Squaccos (*Ardeola ralliodes*) and Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) were everywhere, as were both egrets. We spent a wonderful hour outside a taverna near Mandraki watching 2 adult White-tailed Eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), 3 Golden (*Aquila chrysaetos*) - both parents and their youngster, 3 Lesser Spotted (*A. pomarina*) and 1 Short-toed (*Circaetus gallicus*).



October was eventful with the arrival of several family parties of Common Crane (*Grus grus*), reaching 26 in all, 11 Bewick's Swans, a single Ruddy Shelduck, the first 64 White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*) of the winter along with 21 Lessers (*A. erythropus*). Over 1500 Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) were on the lake with 8 Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) on the old riverbed. The variety of eagles was impressive, with 3 White-tailed (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), 8 Spotted (*A. clanga*), a lingering Lesser Spotted (*A. pomarina*) and 3 Golden (*A. chrysaetos*).

Other raptors include a single Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), 12 Common Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*), 10 Marsh Harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*), 2 Peregrines (*Falco peregrinus*), 3 Merlins (*F. columbarius*), several Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*) and Goshawks (*A. gentilis*) and the first Hen Harrier (*circus cyaneus*) of the winter. Other birds of note included an impressive 44 Ravens (*Corvus corax*) and the first Great Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) of the winter which arrived as the last Red-backed (*L. collurio*) departed on the 18th.



November opened with great news - **69 Lesser White-fronted Geese** (*Anser erythropus*) at the river mouth on the 7th, which is the highest number counted in Greece in over 20 years and the most ever seen at Kerkini.

August and September 2011 at Evros - saw good wader numbers, including 53 Spur-winged Plovers (*Hoplopterus spinosus*), 650 Black-tailed Godwits (*Limosa limosa*), 1572 Spotted

Redshanks (*Tringa erythropus*), 123 Marsh Sandpipers (*T. stagnatilis*), along with several Temminck's Stints (*Calidris temminckii*) and three Broad-billed Sandpipers (*Limicola falcinellus*).

Raptors were prominent, and a juv Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) and an adult Saker (*Falco cherrug*) were special, along with 31 Marsh Harriers



(*Circus aeruginosus*), 14 Black Kites (*Milvus milgrans*) and 2 Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*).

Data from late September and October showed continued wader passage, including 268 Curlew Sandpipers (*Calidris ferruginea*), 276 Marsh (*C. stagnatilis*) and 2 Tereks (*Xenus cinereus*). Totals of 281 Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), 283 Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and 102 Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilotica*) were also counted. The first geese of the winter - a pair of White-fronts (*Anser albifrons*) - arrived on October 5th.

November saw White-front numbers rise to 159 and swan numbers reach unusually high levels for November, with 722 Bewick's (*Cygnus columbianus*) and 340 Whoopers (*C. Cygnus*). Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*) numbers reached 1604 and Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) 2278. A pair of Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) was found on the 22nd. Raptor numbers include 20 Spotted Eagle (*A. clanga*), 3 White-tails (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), and 32 Marsh Harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*).

October at Axios - top birds were three Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and a Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) around the riverine forest of



Aliakmonas and a Common Crane (*Grus grus*) in the Gallikos estuary. Other counts include 60 Great White Egrets (*Ardea alba*) and 156 Dalmatian Pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*). Further south, at Alykes Kitrous, 344 Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) were counted before, later in the month, around 180 birds arrived in the Axios and Gallikos estuaries.

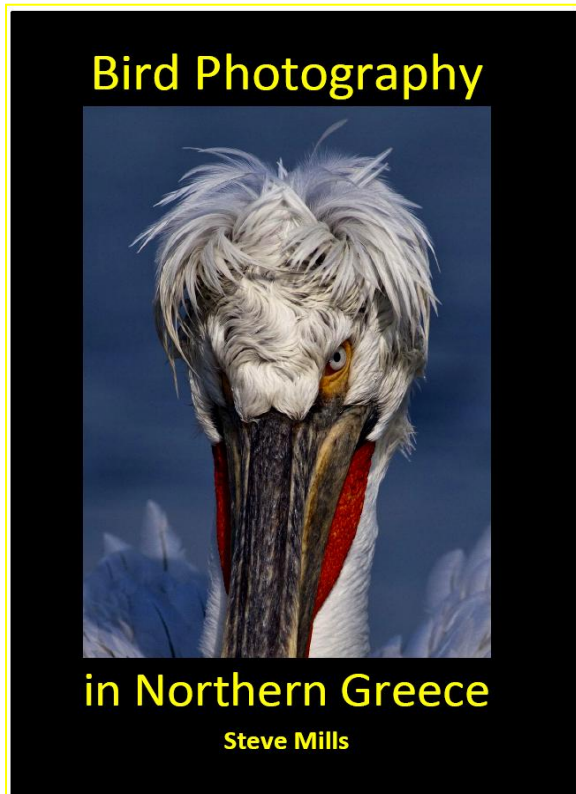
Photos by Steve Mills

Thanks to the Evros, Kerkini and Axios Management Bodies for providing additional data.

Keep up to date with sightings at our website, www.birdwing.eu

Bird photography in Northern Greece

We are pleased to announce that Birdwing will shortly be publishing a new book 'Bird Photography in Northern Greece'. The book contains information for photographers about the best places in Northern Greece to take photos of birds.



We hope that the book will be available in Spring 2012. Bird Photography in Northern Greece will then be available via our website www.birdwing.eu. As with our other Birdwing titles, all money raised will go towards helping birds in Northern Greece.



Where is your favourite birdwatching or photography spot in Northern Greece?

We would like to include some caption boxes throughout the Bird Photography book with comments from you about your favourite location. For example:

There is nothing more special than sitting on Loutros Hill towards the end of a bright winter's day. Overlooking the whole of the Evros Delta watching large numbers of raptors passing on their way to their roosting place – just perfect!

Alison Sanders, UK

I had an amazing morning sitting in my car beside a small pool at Kalamas photographing Glossy Ibis. They gradually got used to me and came so close you could see every stunning feather detail. A magical morning!

Stefan Kohl, Germany

For me, nowhere is as wonderful as Kapsalo at dawn!

Ron van Oosten, Netherlands

Which birdwatching site is special to you?

Where did your favourite photographic moment take place?

Which wild place in Northern Greece has captured your heart?

Is it at:

Prespa? Dadia? Axios?
Porto Lagos? Kerkini?
Paggeio? Ismarida? Agras?
Evros?

Turn to the next page to see how your comments can feature in the book and how you could win a fantastic prize in the process.

Send us comments on your favourite site

Send us your caption or comments and a small fee for a chance to win this excellent original painting - and help birds too!

Write up to 60 words on your favourite birdwatching location in Northern Greece. Comments will be selected to appear with full credits in 'Bird Photography in Northern Greece' and all who enter will go into our prize draw.

The winner will receive this fantastic original acrylic painting of a Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gall-icus*) generously donated by famous wildlife artist **Paschalis Dougalis**.



Paschalis Dougalis is an internationally-known and award-winning wildlife and bird illustrator. A Greek, he now lives in Munich, Germany, where he works as a freelance nature book illustrator. More of his work can be seen at: www.dougalis-art.com

Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity! In order to raise funds for birds in Greece we ask you to pay a small minimum entry fee of £5 or €6.

Rules:

1. Email your 'favourite site' comments/caption to caption@birdwing.eu (no more than 60 words). Please give your name and be as precise as you can about the location of your favourite site. The closing date for entries is: **10th January 2012**.

2. To be entered into the prize draw you must also pay your entry fee (minimum of £5 or €6). Go to www.birdwing.eu and click the Donate button. Please provide your name, address and email. Please note that all proceeds go towards helping birds in Greece so please be generous, if you can.

3. The draw will be made on 1st February and we will notify you of the winner at that time.

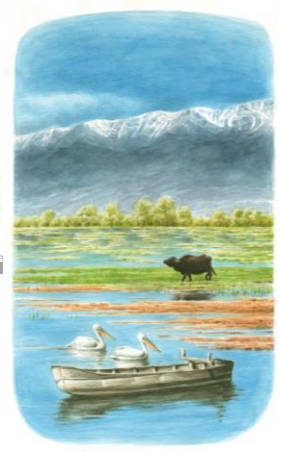
4. By entering, you agree to allow the comments to appear, with full credit, in Bird Photography in Northern Greece. We will contact you to approve any edits necessary.

The book will be in English but we are happy to receive captions in any language which we will then translate into English.

We are really grateful to Paschalis Dougalis for donating this prize and hope that we receive many entries from you all! We look forward to hearing from you!

Next issue of the newsletter

In our next issue there will be an opportunity to obtain more of Paschalis' original paintings. He has kindly donated a range of stunning works including these shown here.



New book about Nestos

A Birdwing supporter, Alexander Wirth, has recently written and had printed a book about the Nestos region of Northern Greece in three languages, Greek, English and German.

Alex, a biochemist currently doing a PhD at Hannover Medical School, had an interest in science from an early age. In his teens he and his father took walks and he began to appreciate the plants and wildlife around them. At 20 he became interested in photography and came to Keramoti, Greece, for the first time with friends.



Unaware of the nature of the Nestos area it was not until 2 years later that Alex saw a documentary on German TV. In the documentary Hans Jerrentrup revealed the beauty and ecological diversity of the region. During their next visit they met with Hans and so began Alex's love of the area. "It was really amazing. I had never seen flamingos or pelicans in their habitat before. This was a great feeling," Alex said.

"We were really interested in this area, because we didn't expect such biodiversity. So I started looking for information about the Nestos Delta and the regions nearby. I could only find a few things and even on the Internet there was not much I could find (particularly when searching in German)".

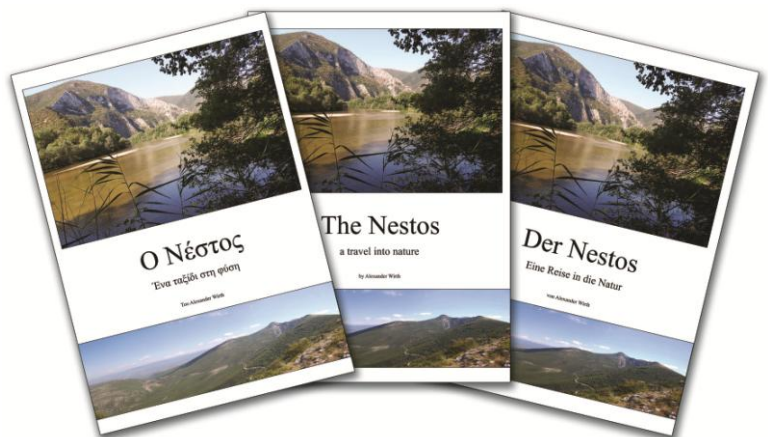
Each year since, they have returned to a small house in Proastio and taken photos of the region.

"A while ago when I showed some of my pictures to friends and relations many of them said "These pictures are too good to be only saved on your hard disk" and then I started to create a book, with photos."

In 2010 Alex and his father met Yiorgos Emfietzis in the Information Centre in Keramoti. They discussed the problem of finding information on the region in other languages than Greek. So they decided to publish the photo-book themselves. Alex has already made a poster about jackals for the exhibition in the Centre (also in three languages).

"Because we want to support the work of the Centre or at least support anything which saves this beautiful nature, we decided to pay for the printing of the first 60 books ourselves, to raise money from the sales for the centre."

"The idea behind this book is to give a first impression to visitors and tourists, who are interested in nature. I think many people are looking for alternatives to the "big all-inclusive hotels" and this region has the potential to be great for ecotourism, BUT only if they know what's here. Otherwise they leave Greece without knowing the beautiful parts (as we did in 2006)."



"I love this region of Greece - its amazing nature, beautiful landscapes and the animals and plants. I like to photograph these animals, because it's challenging - if you get a nice picture of a wild animal, a wonderful feeling rises up."

Alex's book is available for 10€ from the both the Keramoti and Porto Lagos Information Centres. It is available in English, German or Greek.

Prespa's prize-winning writer

Writer and Birdwing supporter Julian Hoffman was the winner of this year's Terrain.org Non-fiction Prize for an article highlighting the work of the Society for the Protection of Prespa (the SPP) in an Albanian village.

The excellent article 'Faith in a Forgotten Place' can be read (and/or listened to) at: www.terrain.org/essays/28/hoffman.htm

Julian has also recently heard that the article has now also been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Congratulations to him!

Read more of his writing at: www.julian-hoffman.com/

Egyptian Vulture monitoring

This year a monitoring programme of the local Egyptian Vulture population in conjunction with an identification of breeding performance was carried out by the WWF team (Evros Project). The study area was located in Evros and Rhodope prefectures.

In general during the monitoring, around 18 possible Egyptian Vulture territories were controlled (known, possible and abandoned nests of the last decade). Nine occupied territories were confirmed and one possible territory with unknown status. Seven occupied nests were detected where in six of them the incubation phase occurred. During this phase only one pair failed and the ones that succeeded hatched 7 chicks. The chicks fledged well and let's hope that now all of them spend winter in warm Africa.

Recently Egyptian vulture populations have decreased dramatically over a large part of their European and African range mainly due to human persecution, poison baits, and changes in livestock rearing. As a consequence, the Egyptian Vulture is classified as internationally endangered species by IUCN.

In Greece, the Egyptian vulture population is about 20-25 pairs with the highest territory concentrations situated between rivers Nestos and Evros. The Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park and adjacent areas are considered as the last stronghold of this species in the country.

Elzbieta Kret

www.wwf.gr

More on related projects can be found at:
<http://newthraciangold.eu/cmsnews.php?nid=80&searchin=&search=&lng=en>



Photos by Petros Babakas

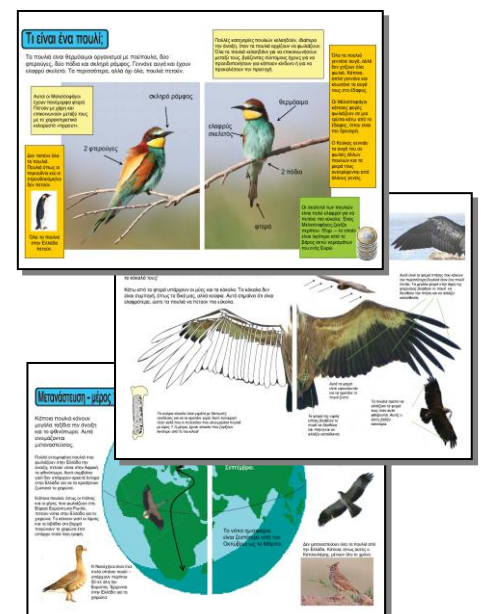
Free books for schools

Are you based in Greece? Do you know of a local school that you think would benefit from a set of books about birds?

We have decided to give away a limited number of free copies of *Ο παιδικός οδηγός για τα πουλιά της Ελλάδας* (The Children's Guide to Birds of Greece) to schools nominated by our members.

The book is packed with information about information about migration, beaks, feet, wings and feathers, habitats, food, birdsong and many other aspects of birds' lives.

For more information about how to nominate a school email us at info@birdwing.eu

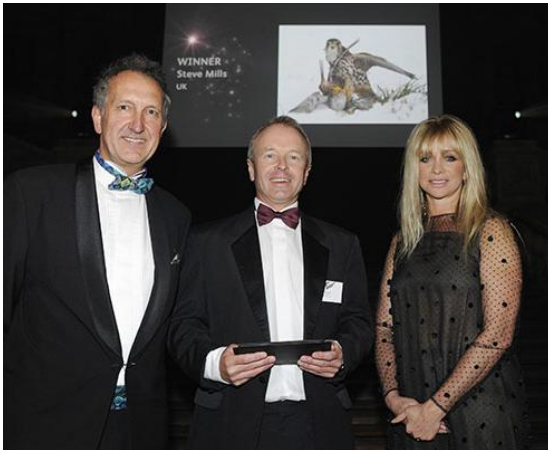


Veolia Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2011



Editor's comment

You may have heard recently of Steve's success in winning the Birds Behaviour category at the prestigious Veolia Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition 2011, which takes place at London's Natural History Museum. With over 41 000 entries from 95 countries, Steve was really honoured to be a winner and the exhibition will be seen by over 3 million people this year, both in London and on its worldwide tour.



His winning photograph of a Merlin killing a Snipe was taken near our home in North Yorkshire, England, despite the fact that much of his photography is done in Northern Greece.

We hope the award will raise awareness of the beauty and drama of the natural world and encourage more people to protect and conserve it.

Another winning image in the exhibition was taken at Kerkini using a special floating camera by Bence Máté from Hungary.



If you would like to read more about this award and other winning entries go to: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/>

Read a double-page Athens News article about Steve on our Downloads page at www.birdwing.eu/index.php?PID=6

Or go to Steve's photography website at www.stevemills-birdphotography.com

Firstly I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your comments and congratulations. It was a great honour to win this award and during my time in London at the week of events I was able to promote Birdwing and Northern Greece as a fabulous place for getting close to birds.



I'd also like to express our thanks for your support generally. The response to our last newsletter was very encouraging and your gifts, both financial and practical, were generous. I hope that you will take the opportunity to enter our caption prize draw to help raise further money. Many thanks again to Paschalis Dougalis for donating the prize.

My recent focus has been on writing the photography book mentioned on page 3. It has been challenging trying to choose my favourite photography locations in Northern Greece as there are so many of them! I look forward to hearing of your own experiences. It will be wonderful to include Birdwing supporters' comments in the book and I hope these will help to create an interesting and varied read, alongside practical data and site information.

We have a number of practical projects we are hoping will begin in 2012 in Northern Greece, working with Management Bodies in several of the Ramsar Sites. Such projects would not be possible without your continued support and donations. Also, after the lengthy delays with government policies regarding charities, we trust that 2012 will see our registration as a CIO which should allow us to move forward more effectively and have additional facilities such as GiftAid etc.

So the future for Birdwing is looking bright. At this difficult financial time in our world we hope we can continue to support the protection of the environment in Northern Greece. Our belief is that eco-tourism in Greece can bring a vital economic income to these areas whilst at the same time encourage those in the region to see the importance of the environment and seek to protect and improve these habitats.

Steve Mills



Lesser White-fronted Goose LIFE Project

One of the most threatened European birds

More than thirty participants from five different countries gathered in November at Lake Kerkini to participate in the first meeting of the new LIFE+ Project run by the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS) regarding the conservation of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (LWfG) *Anser erythropus*.



The project will run for five years and aims to address the recent crash of the European (Fennoscandian) population of the LWfG, focusing on the species' wintering grounds as well as throughout the entire flyway. In order to achieve this, eight partners representing four countries (Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland), are joining forces together with organisations from Norway, to follow the LWfG and to implement effective conservation actions.

Greece has proven to be the most important country in European LWfG migration, as 15 years of LWfG observations together with the use of colour ringing, have shown that almost the entire European population winters here from the end of October until the beginning of March every year. In Greece, the LIFE project includes actions in all the sites visited by the LWfG, which are the Evros Delta, Lake Kerkini, Lake Ismarida and the Nestos Delta.

During the meeting, which was organised by HOS together with the Management Authority of Lake Kerkini, 69 LWfG were observed, out of the 74 that were counted following the breeding season in Norway; a record number for the last 2 decades in Greece and the highest number ever recorded in Kerkini!

The LWfG is one of the most threatened bird species in Europe, and it is therefore a trademark species for the conservation of our natural heritage. The European LWfG population nests in the northern sub-arctic tundra of the Scandinavian Peninsula, and has undergone a crash since the middle of the 1950s, resulting today in a mere 20-30 pairs. Due to the coordinated efforts of all parties dedicated to the protection of the species, 2011 has been the first in the last 20 years that such a successful breeding season was recorded for this very small and isolated population. Last July, 13 families together with their young, ventured on their long journey, in order to arrive in Greece by the end of October and to winter here until the time is right for them to return to the tundra once again.

The new LIFE+ Project is the expected continuation of all the efforts that have been happening the past 20 years, in Greece as well as in Europe. "One of the biggest challenges that we all face is to give the Lesser White-fronted Geese their living space back, and to redefine our own place in it as well, for the benefit of both", highlights Manolia Vougioukalou, Project Manager.

Roula Trigou

**Public Awareness Projects Coordinator
Hellenic Ornithological Society
rtrigou@ornithologiki.gr**



The LIFE+ Nature Project «Safeguarding the Lesser White-fronted Goose Fennoscandian population in key wintering and staging sites within the European flyway» (LIFE10 NAT/GR/000638) is coordinated by the Hellenic Ornithological Society, from 2011 to 2016, in collaboration with the Forest Research Institute of the National Agricultural Research Foundation - Greece, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change - Greece, the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), the Hortobágy National Park Directorate - Hungary, UNEP/ African - Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement Secretariat (AEWA), World Wild Fund (WWF) Finland and the Natural Heritage Services of Metsähallitus - Finland, with the financial support of the European Commission and the co-financing of the Directorate of Nature management (Norway).





Prespa news

On Tuesday 4th October the final approval of the 'International Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park' by the EU Council of Ministers was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. The decision was unanimously agreed upon by all sides, thus concluding the official process at EU level that will allow this vital Agreement to be put into practice.



It should be remembered that the Agreement was signed on 2nd February 2010, on the occasion of World Wetlands Day. Today, 20 months later, the Agreement remains inoperative due to the labyrinthine bureaucracy that has presided over its approval process. This final endorsement by the European Union now gives the three countries (Greece, FYROM and Albania) the green light to begin the ratification process at a national level. More specifically, the Agreement must now be ratified by the national parliaments, in order to clear the way for the comprehensive commitment of all parties and finally bring its provisions into full effect.

It is with pleasure and optimism that the Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) welcomes the decision and now calls on the three states to expedite the ratification

process at a national level and fulfill the obligations they undertook as signatories to the Agreement in 2010 to build a common future in the Prespa basin.



Photos by Julian Hoffman

The area's problems need to be addressed as a matter of urgency and any bureaucratic delay puts the region at risk. Bringing the Agreement into operation is the only way to both effectively protect the natural environment and develop the region economically, through cross-border collaboration and by dealing with the issues within a unified framework.

The SPP's Policy and Sustainable Development Coordinator, Ms Vivi Roumeliotou, stressed: "The expectations which were raised a year and a half ago, when the Ministers of the three countries and the European Commissioner came to Prespa to sign the Prespa Park Agreement, must not be disappointed. Now that the bureaucratic hurdle of EU approval has been overcome, the three states are able, and obliged, to bring bills before their national parliaments to ratify the Agreement as soon as possible. Local organizations have repeatedly indicated their readiness to work together and carry out the agreed commitments."

For more information go to www.spp.gr

Our thanks go to Savvas Papadopoulos from the Hotel Erodios in Lithotopos, Lake Kerkini,

for his generous donation to Birdwing of 200€. Thanks for your support!



Hotel Erodios, Lithotopos, Kerkini

The 23 rooms and wedding suite in our hotel all are recently renovated and offer a panoramic view of Lake Kerkini. The unique interior design combined with the magnificent natural landscape offer a true sense of tranquillity to its visitors, thus making their stay an unforgettable experience. All rooms have air conditioning, TV and heating and Wi-fi is available.



ΕΡΩΔΙΟΣ
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Lake Kerkini news

We have been happily surprised by the presence of a Cuckoo and three Hoopoes at the North part of our lake in recent weeks. We also have 26 Cranes (*Grus grus*). Five of them are a family feeding separately from the rest of the birds but that always return to the lake at the end of the day. We have also noticed the presence of an Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) or possibly two.



The first 10 Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) have appeared to the lake as the temperature is falling. Small flocks of swans (mainly Bewick's Swan and in smaller numbers Whooper Swan and Mute Swan) have also started to come to the lake due to low temperatures.

Our Management body has taken steps in building roost places for terns near the breeding platform at Mandraki.

On 14th of November we were conducting a stakeout along with a warden from KOMAΘ in the northwestern part of the national park.



Around noon we came across a man from Thessaloniki who had spread nets with tied birds on them, and who had cages and other paraphernalia that I don't even want to remember as they send shivers down my spine and make me nervous. He proved to be quite a 'professional' bird catcher. He had a lot of equipment but he lost it as the game warden confiscated everything. We freed all the birds (16 Goldfinch and 2 Greenfinch). Thankfully he hadn't managed to catch a lot of birds. Legal charges have been made against him.

A Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) has been upsetting the water buffaloes! On 18th November 2011 in the area of Strymonas River, very close to the bridge of Vironia, we came across a Griffon Vulture among the water buffaloes. When we approached it we realised that the bird was in a very bad condition. It looked frail and exhausted. We brought it some food with the help of some friends.

Birdwing News – 10

Last issue's quiz!

Last issue's birds were a male Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*). The second bird was a Little Tern (*Sternula albifrons*)

Well done to
Jack Ursem
Leo Tukker
Johan Debuck
Stefan Wegleitner
Francois Turrian
John Barclay
Paschalis Dougalis
Ad Wittgen

Apologies to any who entered and are not listed here. A slight glitch with our email may be some have been overlooked.

See page 11 for this issue's quiz!



According to the tags and leg band we concluded that the bird may be one of those transported to Bulgaria probably from Spain under a re-introduction programme for the

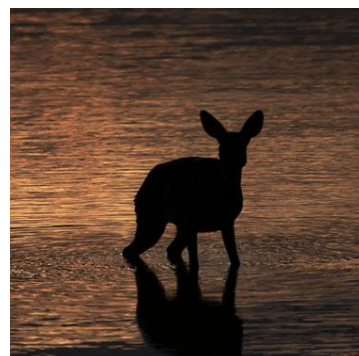
Kresna Gorge area. We contacted the Bulgarian representatives who visited our area. We managed together to spot the vulture and now we are observing its development. Up to now it is in a quite good condition, lively and able to fly short distances.

On December 7th two Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) were seen at the NE part of the lake.

Before closing I couldn't but mention the rescue of a Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) that we found in the lake exhausted and scared. We presume it had been chased by dogs and found shelter in the water of the lake. My colleague Panayiotis Hatzigiannides and I approached it, caught it and took it to a safe place (as safe as the mountain can be). It disappeared in a flash!

Kostas Papadopoulos

info@kerkini.gr



Autumn/Winter 2011

Advance apologies!



Birdwatching In Northern Greece

We are in the process of designing a new-look Birdwing website and wish to apologise in advance that the site might be off-line for a few days in January as we make the transfer.

We are excited about new features and facilities that will be available on our new site and will contact you to let you know when it is ready to be launched.



We hope it will make it much easier for you to keep up-to-date with recent bird sightings and news and, at the same time, be accessible and useful for new visitors who do not know about the wonders of birdwatching in Northern Greece!

New interactive maps, weather information and links to Facebook and Twitter will also be included. We hope the new site will attract many more visitors and encourage more of you to regularly go to the site for information and news.

We are also considering a change to using 'MailChimp' which will allow us to manage our emails and correspondences more effectively. If any of you have used this service before we would love to hear your views on it.

Many thanks to the Nastou View Hotel, in Ano Poroia, Kerkini, for their support for Birdwing.

The Nastou View Hotel

Ano Poroia, Lake Kerkini

Our hotel offers panoramic views of incomparable beauty of Lake Kerkini and is nestled at the foothills of Mount Belles. Our rooms offer the luxury of tradition, each with a different character and décor. See our website for more details!



www.nastouview.gr
info@nastouview.gr
0030 23270 51586
0030 23270 51587

Discover it!

This issue's quiz!

Can you identify these birds taken in Greece?



Email your entries to quiz@birdwing.eu
The answer to last issue's quiz can be found on page 10.



Apologies!

We had planned to include an exhibition of photos sent in by some of our supporters. This will appear in the next newsletter as we have run out of space in this issue. If you would like a photo of your own to appear in the exhibition please email your photo to: exhibition@birdwing.eu.

Please include your name, date and location of photo in Northern Greece and any other interesting information.

In the meantime why not look at Birdwing supporter Frank Schulkes' images at www.birdpix.nl/album_page.php?pic_id=285991 and at www.birdpix.nl/album_page.php?pic_id=288421



Axios, Aliakmon, Loudias News

The Management Authority of the region will soon have its own radio show! A radio frequency (100.6) is being made available to operators in the city of Thessaloniki for community information and news and already broadcasts are starting.



The Management Authority of Axios will broadcast two Fridays a month at 3 pm. The show will describe the habitats for those who have never visited, discuss news, events and volunteer activities and, of course, explore some of the problems facing the region. Tune in if you can!

Photographic events

In early December a photographic weekend was held at Kalohori with Greek bird photographer Chris Vlachos. Chris is one of the most acclaimed wildlife photographers in the country, specializing in birds. He presented images of his twenty-year photographic career and described his adventures and encounters with wildlife. He also shared tips for taking successful wildlife images. The following day Christos conducted a guided tour to observe and photograph birds in the National Park Axios - Loudias - Aliakmonas. The tour was fully booked.

The events were the first of a series of activities organized by the Group of Friends and Volunteers of the National Park Axios - Loudias - Aliakmonas with the region's Management Body.

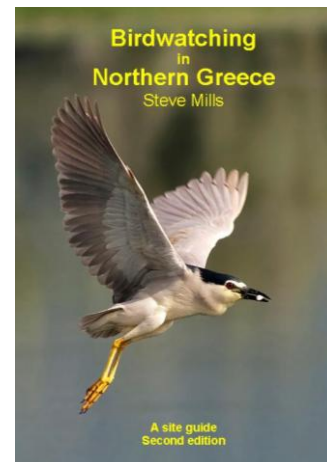
The group aims to inform and raise awareness and action to protect the National Park, starting with the Kalochori area, which is under most pressure because of its proximity to the Thessaloniki.

More recent sightings at Axios

Recent sightings include 1 White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), 2 Black-throated and 2 Red-throated Divers (*Gavia artica* and *G. stellata*), 2 Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serator*), 1 Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*) and 3 Slavonian Grebes (*P. auritus*). They were seen in Kalohori area, which always gives us rarities on migration times, and coastal part Kalohori – Axios delta. Four White-fronted Geese were seen on December 5th in Nea Agathoupoli marsh.

Can you help?

Do you come into contact with people who might be interested in buying a copy of Birdwatching in Northern Greece?



If you would like to help us sell copies of Birdwatching in Northern Greece please contact us. Remember that all money raised goes towards helping birds in Greece and that the books help to promote eco-tourism in Northern Greece

We would like to thank Nikos Gallios from the Limneo Hotel, Chryssohora Kerkini for helping us to sell our books to his guests.



Can't get to see birds in Greece at the moment?

Why not go to You Tube and type in some of your favourite areas. There are an extensive number of videos showing the stunning sites of Northern Greece to whet your appetite and keep you going until your next visit!

And finally thanks ...

Thanks to **Lia Papadranga** from Axios, **Angeliki Dimaki**, **Kostas Papadopoulos**, **Theodoros Naziridis** at Kerkini, **Julian Hoffman**, **Julia Henderson** and the staff of the SPP from Prespa, **Roula Trigou** from the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), **Elzbieta Kret** and **Dora Skartsi** from WWF Dadia, **Eleni Makrigianni** and **Ioannidis Panagiotis** at the Evros Delta, and all the staff members at the Centres across Northern Greece who have provided us with information. And, as always, thanks to anyone else we have failed to mention.