

BirdWING Newsletter

Issue 13 Autumn 2012

In this issue news from:

- Axios/Aliakmon/Loudias
- Lake Kerkini
- Evros Delta
- Prespa Lakes



The Birdwing Newsletter

brings you regular news about birds and issues affecting them in Northern Greece.

Dalmatian Pelican Project



We have delayed bringing out this newsletter so that we could will bring you exciting news of a new Birdwing project in collaboration with the

National Park of the Evros Delta, made possible by your donations and sales of our books.

We are very pleased to announce the details of this new project to encourage the breeding of Dalmatian Pelicans (*Pelicanus crispus*) on the delta. Find out more on **page 2**.



Donations to Birdwing

Since our last newsletter we have received generous donations and contributions from people all around the world, some of whom wish to remain anonymous. Thanks to SM and TM, AW and JW, AK and to Paschalis Dougalis for contributing paintings that were sold. Thanks to all of you for your support and generosity. We really do appreciate it.

BIRDWING BIRDBRAIN COMPETITION

Also, we bring you details of an exciting competition with great prizes, which we hope will raise further money towards this project.

National Parks and Birdwing at the Birdfair

For a weekend in August representatives from the National Parks of Lake Kerkini, Koronia/Volvi and the Axios/Aliakmon/Loudias region, hoteliers from Lake Kerkini and Steve and Hilary from Birdwing visited the British Birdfair in Rutland Water, England.

In an event that saw around 60 000 visitors and exhibitors from around the world we met many interesting people and were able to inspire potential visitors to come to Greece and see all it has to offer.



The fabulous prizes include **5 nights in a luxurious hotel near Lake Kerkini** with free bed and breakfast!

Read more on **page 3!**



New Project to encourage breeding of Dalmatian Pelicans at the Evros Delta

A two-phase project, put forward by Birdwing, has been approved by the board of the National Park of the Evros Delta to encourage breeding of Dalmatian Pelicans (*Pelicanus crispus*). The project, to be funded by Birdwing, is only possible due to your donations and support.

Until 1962 there were 40-50 pairs of Dalmatian Pelicans nesting at the Evros Delta but this colony was destroyed by local fishermen. There have been no reports of breeding since.

The species is classed as Vulnerable in both the Greek and IUCN red list categorisations. Indeed the world population is only around 14 000. Dalmatian Pelicans are present almost all year at the Evros Delta and it is hoped that by altering habitat and providing nesting materials for them (Phase 1) or, if necessary, building a nesting platform similar to that at Lake Kerkini (Phase 2) breeding may be re-established.

The project will begin this autumn and is scheduled to run until June 2014.



Currently the island is covered with dense vegetation and work in Phase 1 will be done to clear an area of the vegetation for the nest site.



A suitable island in Drana lagoon has been identified as it is relatively free from disturbance and the area is no longer used as a fishery. This location is close to a winter roost site that the Dalmatian Pelicans use and it is hoped will be a good potential breeding site.



To find out more details about the project, please go to the Resources page of our website www.birdwing.eu and download the project document.

Our thanks go to the Evros Delta Management Body for agreeing to undertake this project and we hope that members of Birdwing will support us in this exciting venture.

Birdwing relies upon your support for funding such projects and if you wish to make a donation towards this please go to www.birdwing.eu and click the Donate button.





BIRDWING BIRDBRAIN COMPETITION



First prize 5 nights in a luxurious hotel close to Lake Kerkini with free bed and breakfast!

Second prize An original bird painting by Paschalis Dougalis.

Third prize A Birdwing pack including a mug, T-shirt & car-sticker.

Simply answer these questions to enter our free prize draw...

1. What is the Latin name of the heron seen for the first time in Greece and in Europe this year?

2. What is the bird in this photo which was photographed at the Evros Delta in May?

3. Which bird bred for the first time at Lake Kerkini this year?

4. Which falcon, of which Greece holds the majority of the world population, delays breeding until August in order to feed its young on migrating songbirds?

5. In which two wetland locations in Northern Greece has Birdwing financed tern rafts?



This is a free prize-draw so why not pass this newsletter on to your friends to give them a chance to win?

How to enter:

Send us your answers, together with your name, address and email. Those with correct entries will be entered into the free prize draw on 30th November. The winners will be contacted in the first week of December and winners' names will be posted on our website.

You can send us answers:

via email:

via email to: birdbrain@birdwing.eu

via our website:

Go to www.birdwing.eu and subscribe, if you are not already on our mailing list. Then use our contact form to send us your answers.

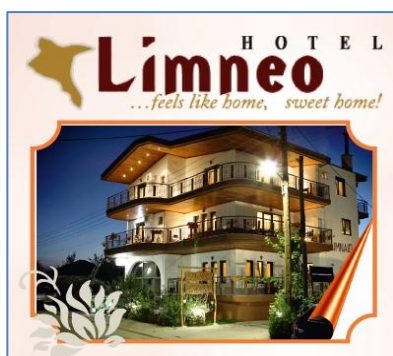
via Facebook:

Go to the Friends of Facebook group at:

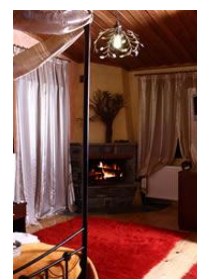
facebook | join our group +

Join the group and then send a personal message to Steve Mills with your answers. Please do NOT post your answers in the group as these will be visible to other competitors.

The first prize for our competition has been generously donated by Nikos Gallios of the Limneo Hotel, in Chrysohorafa, Lake Kerkini.



To see more about the hotel go to the website www.limneokerkini.gr/en and read more about Nikos's efforts to encourage eco-tourists to Kerkini on page 10.

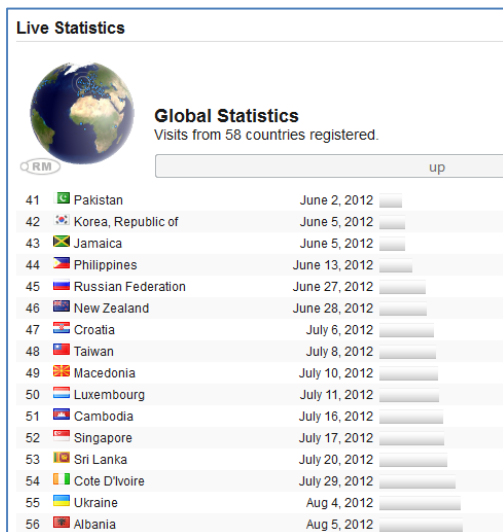




Birdwing website

The new Birdwing website has been visited by people from over 57 countries all around the world, including places, to name a few, such as Cambodia, Cote D'Ivoire, Cyprus, China, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic and Columbia.

If you'd like to see the full list of countries go to:
www.revolvermaps.com/?target=enlarge&i=9as4242k4wq&color=007eff&m=8&ref=null



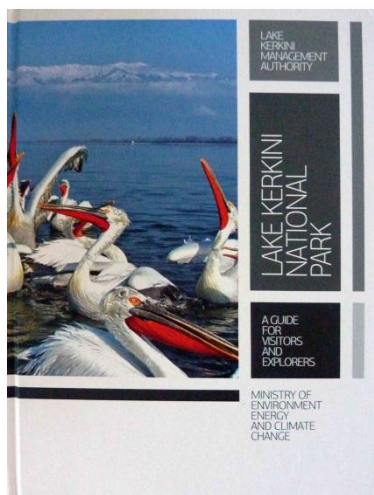
Go www.birdwing.eu to keep updated with our news!

New free book about the wonders of Kerkini

The Management Body of the National Park of Kerkini has just brought out a new book in both English and Greek featuring information on the history, flora and fauna of the National Park.

Packed with stunning photographs of birds, landscapes and other natural wonders the book will tempt you to visit again this wonderful area.

The book is available, while stocks last, for free!



For more information on obtaining a copy please contact the Lake Kerkini Management Body at info@kerkini.gr

New birds for Greece

This year has seen some new visitors to Greece. During June Greece's bird list increased by two. The more significant record is of a Black Heron (*Egretta ardesiaca*) at Messolonghi wetland on the west coast. Not only a first for Greece, this African bird is also a first for Europe. See a video at: www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=eRJArmHR_MQ



Following close behind is a female Hooded Wheatear (*Oenanthe monacha*) found on the Nestos Delta.

Five Cattle Egret chicks (*Bubulcus ibis*) fledged for the first time at Lake Kerkini this spring, following an increase in sightings over the last few years. Already an established breeder at Kalamas in the west of the country, it looks like the eastward march is on.



Last issue's quiz!

Last issue's birds were identified by a number of people, including those who noticed that the file names showing the bird names were visible in the pdf! Oh dear!

The first bird was a Sanderling (*Calidris alba*).



The second picture showed a Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) being mobbed by a Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*).



Well done to all entrants - we won't list all of them here this time!

Bird news round-up

There were plenty of birds along the rivers and coastline of the **Axios/Aliakmon area** throughout June, with a count on the 12th producing 27 Dalmatian Pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*), 52 Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), 19 Purple Herons (*Ardea purpurea*), 410 Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), 298 Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), 311 Black-winged Stilts (*H. himantopus*), 7 Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedicephalus*), 107 Collared Pratincoles (*Glareola pratincola*), 110 Black-tailed Godwits (*Limosa limosa*) and 7 Spur-wings (*Vanellus spinosus*).



Terns included 300 Gull-billed (*Sterna nilotica*) and around 40 Common (S.

hirundo) using the newly-installed Birdwing raft. Raptors included a single Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and 2 Long-legged Buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*).



July in the region saw 96 Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) present, along with 102 Dalmatian Pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*), 68 Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), 27 Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), 38 Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) and 24 Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*). Waders included 99 Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), 2 Spur-wings (*Vanellus spinosus*), 351 Black-winged Stilt (*H. himantopus*), 488 Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and 10 Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedicephalus*). In August 45 Glossy Ibis were still present on the 8th, together with Collared Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*), Slender-billed Gull (*Larus genei*) and Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilotica*).

News of birds in Evros and Kerkini on page 6.

Bird news continued..!

June counts at the Evros Delta included 10 Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), 88 White (*Ciconia ciconia*) and 15 Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*), 23 Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), 31 Spur-wing Plovers (*Vanellus spinosus*), 19 Dalmatian (*Pelecanus crispus*), and 340 White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*), 18 Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*), 328 Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*) and 71 Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*).



Maximum counts in July showed good numbers of birds using the delta, including 605 Garganey (*Anas querquedula*), 38 Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*), 22 Black Stork, (*Ciconia nigra*), 90 Dalmatian (*Pelecanus crispus*) and 230 White Pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and 590 Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*). Wader passage was already underway with 1145 Spotted Redshank, (*Tringa erythropus*), 60 Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*), 590 Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), 260 Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), 50 Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*) and, last but not least, 42 Spur-winged Plovers (*Vanellus spinosus*).



Photos by Steve Mills

At Kerkini, together with the Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) there was evidence of 12-15 nesting pairs of Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) that benefitted from the more extensive wet meadows resulting from a very wet May. Casualties of the heavy rains were any birds nesting in the lower branches of trees in the drowned forest and Great Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*) whose anchored nests were swamped. Despite this many pairs succeeded in raising young. Around 60 pairs of Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) have bred, using the Birdwing platform and part of a pelican platform.

Around 25 Eleonora's Falcons (*Falco eleonora*) were along the river on the 14th June, two pairs of Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) together with Honey Buzzard, (*Pernis apivorus*) Lesser Spotted (*Aquila pomarina*), Short-toed (*Circaetus gallicus*) and Golden Eagles, (*Aquila chrysaetos*) were above Kroussia and Beles mountains.

Thanks to the Evros, Kerkini and Axios Management Bodies for providing additional data. Photos: Steve Mills.

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



Editor's comment

We're really pleased to tell you about the Dalmatian Pelican Project (see page 2) in this issue. If we can get them breeding again at the Evros Delta it will be one of the very few instances anywhere of a breeding range expansion for this spectacular and iconic bird. The project has so far involved identifying what seems to be a good possible site.



Work will begin later this year to clear the site and then to provide plenty of reeds for nest material which will be cut and then transported by boat. After that, we will have to wait until the late winter to see what interest there is.

Thanks again to all of you who have made donations and especially to some, who wish to remain anonymous, for their fantastic efforts on our behalf.

Steve Mills

Prespa news



The SPP (Society for the Protection of Prespa) recently announced that only Greece is now delaying implementation of the International Prespa Park Agreement.

On 23rd July 2012, the Parliament of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia approved – with no negative votes – the draft law on the ratification of the International Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park, which had been signed by Greece, Albania, the FYR of Macedonia and the European Commission on 2 February 2010.

Nevertheless, today, 30 months after its signature, the Agreement remains inactive since Greece has not yet ratified it, despite the fact that the initiative for signing the Agreement was then taken by the Greek Government. However, the draft ratification law has been the object of many months of preparation by the competent services of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change of Greece, but has since been sat the desk of successive Ministers awaiting their political decision to be take it forward.

In the meantime, the stakeholders of transboundary Prespa are mobilizing to prepare implementation of the Agreement. In June the designated members of the Prespa Park Management Committee (PPMC) gathered at an informal meeting in the FYR of Macedonia.

The PPMC is the main body foreseen to be established under the Agreement. All the participants stressed the deep commitment of their respective organisations to transboundary collaboration in the Prespa basin and their desire for the bureaucratic processes of ratification of the Agreement to be accelerated so that the PPMC might formally begin its work.

The Society for the Protection of Prespa calls upon the Greek Government to abide with the commitments it has undertaken when signing the 2010 Agreement for building a common future in the Prespa basin and proceed promptly with ratification. Implementation of the Agreement is the only way forward for the effective protection of the natural environment and economic development of the Prespa area, through transboundary cooperation and dealing with problems in a uniform approach.

The coordinator of policy actions of SPP, Vivi Roumeliotou, noted: “The expectations created two and a half years ago, when the Ministers of the three countries and the EU Commissioner came to Prespa to sign the Prespa Park Agreement, must not be thwarted. The Greek Government should push forward the draft ratification law. The local stakeholders have repeatedly stated that they are ready to work and support implementation of the agreed. Any further delay would be inexcusable.”

For more information:

Vivi Roumeliotou, 23850-51211

Marianna Vlassi, Communication
Coordinator of SPP, 6947-692357

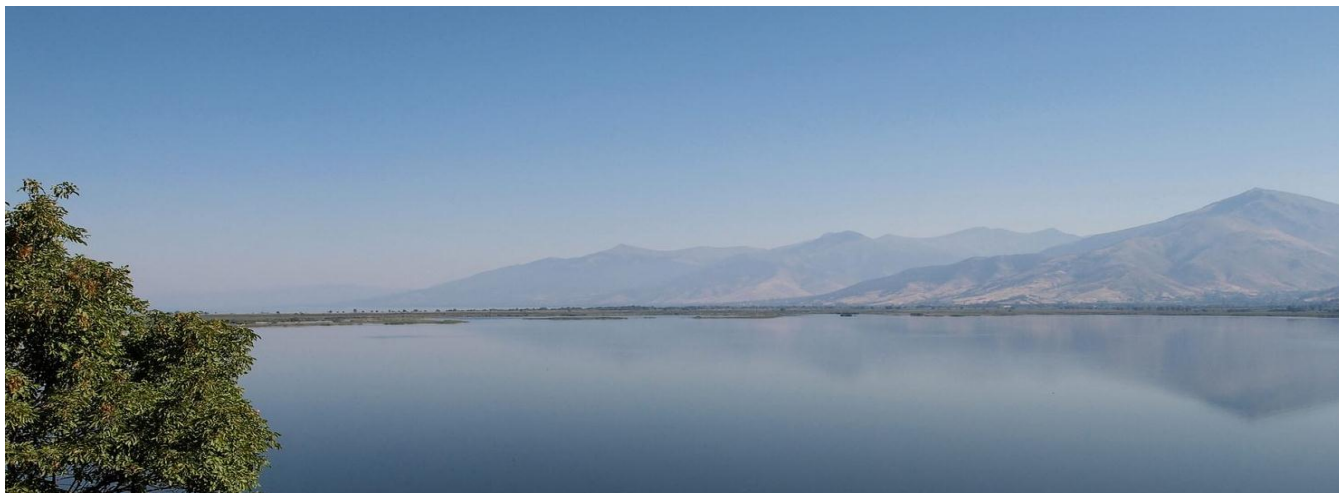


Photo by Julian Hoffman

Top writing award for Prespa writer



Birdwing member, amateur naturalist and writer **Julian Hoffman** has recently won another prestigious award! His book manuscript, *The Small Heart of Things: Being at Home in a Beckoning World*, has won the 2012 AWP Award Series for Nonfiction.

The judge, **Terry Tempest Williams** said: *The Small Heart of Things* is an elegant ecotone between people in place; culture and landscape among the borderlands of Greece. To labor; to place one's hands in the furrows of the field; to stand against the sky among flocks of finches and redstarts is to feel at home in the world. This writer is a seeker and seer among those who work the land within the cycles of time. He knows how to listen and not simply catalog nature, both human and wild, but create a tapestry of embodied stories born out of the intimate wisdom, of sweat and hunger and an earthly intelligence. At a time when we wonder where hope resides, this is a book of faith in the natural histories of community, broken and sustained. Not only does the language honor the encountered beauties along the way, it explores a complexity of ideas that reminds us we are not strangers in the world if we remain open to awe and respectful of the tenacious spirit required to live in place. *The Small Heart of Things* is a book of patience.

Julian Hoffman was born in England and grew up in Canada. In 2000, he and his partner Julia moved to the Prespa Lakes in northern Greece where, after some years as market gardeners, they now work as ornithologists, monitoring birds in sensitive upland areas where wind farms have been built or proposed. His essay 'Faith in a Forgotten Place,' which is taken from the manuscript of *The Small Heart of Things*, won the 2011 *Terrain.org* Nonfiction Prize.

Julian's book will be published by the University of Georgia Press in 2013. Read more of his writing and see his excellent photographs at www.julian-hoffman.com

See more about the award at: www.awpwriter.org/contests/awp_award_series_previous_winners/2012

Spring 2013 wildlife tours – helping birds in Northern Greece



Greenwings wildlife and photo tour company will be offering trips to Greece next spring, focusing on birds and butterflies of the region. Greenwings have agreed to work in collaboration with Birdwing.

They will donate a proportion of the profits to Birdwing and to another non-profit organisation that they are involved with, Butterfly Conservation. We, Steve and Hilary, hope to be involved with some guiding, and trips will visit some of the main sites, such as Kerkini, Evros, Prespa and Dadia.

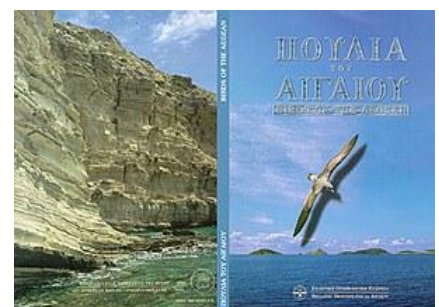


For more information see www.greenwings.co or contact us at info@birdwing.eu with any questions.

New HOS book out now!

The Hellenic Ornithological Society has recently published 'Birds of the Aegean', packed with photos and information on birds of the sea. Written in both Greek and English it is available in paperback or can be read online at:

www.minenv.gr/4/41/4107/e410700.html



Axios/Aliakmon/ Loudias news

There is a weekend of eco-celebration at the Gallikos River, Kalohori on **22nd and 23rd September 2012.**

With workshops and games for all ages, with tours of the lake north of the mouth of the river together with nature walk and horse and bike rides. These will be days of fun and contact with nature and hence the motto for this year is "Discover nature in a day of celebration."

The event will take place on Saturday 22 and Sunday, September 23, from 10 am to 6 pm and is organized by the Management Body Axios - Loudias - Aliakmonas Delta and the municipality. Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about this valuable natural area located within walking distance from the city of Thessaloniki.

In the park in the Kalohori area the Park are two beautiful natural lagoons, where one can see many, and rare species of birds: prey (buzzards, long-legged buzzard, marsh harriers, osprey during the migration), herons, flamingos, pelican and hundreds of ducks in winter.



Photo by Lia Papadranga



At the mouth of the river you are likely to encounter the impressive herd of water buffalo. The area is included in the network of protected areas in the European Union's Natura 2000 and belongs to the zone of absolute protection of the National Park Axios - Loudias - Aliakmonas.

Representatives of the National Park also visited the Birdfair in England in August.



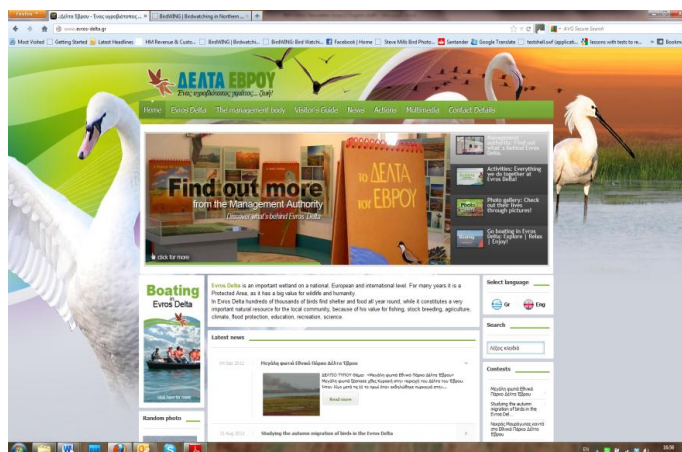
For more information on the eco-celebration weekend go to their facebook page at:
www.facebook.com/events/414903395234011/

or visit their website at www.axiosdelta.gr for more information about the region.

New Evros Delta website

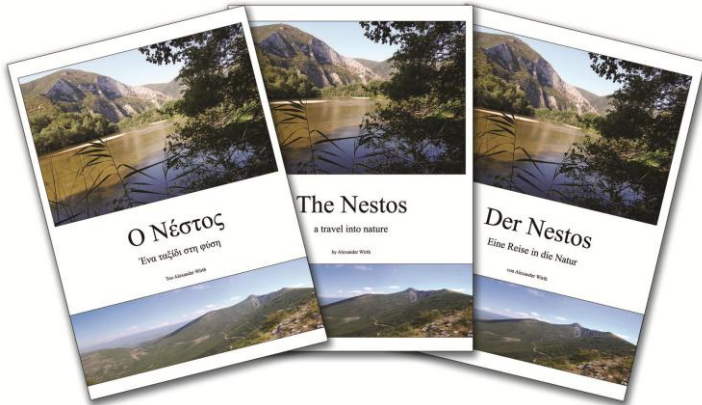
The Evros Delta Visitors Centre has recently launched a new website featuring news, a photo gallery and information for visitors.

Go to: www.evros-delta.gr



Birdwing member in the news!

Birdwing member Alexander Wirth has recently appeared in a local Greek newspaper, Thraki, to promote his books about the nature and wildlife of the Nestos region. Alex, from Germany, featured in the Birdwing newsletter last year.



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



If you would like to read the full newspaper article, in Greek, it is available for download on the **Resources** page of our website together with Issue 11 of the Birdwing newsletter which contains the feature on Alex.

Go to www.birdwing.eu/resources

Nikos Gallios

The first prize of our Birdwing Birdbrain competition has been generously donated by Nikos Gallios of the Limneo Hotel, in Chrysohora, Lake Kerkini.

Nikos has visited the British Birdfair for several years to promote his hotel and help to attract eco-tourists to Lake Kerkini. This year he again visited the fair in August to distribute leaflets, talk with potential tourists and meet with tour companies.



He also generously donated free nights at his hotel to the Birdfair auction to help raise money for international conservation projects.

And finally thanks ...

Thanks to **Lia Papadranga, Eva Katrana, Christos Panagiotidis** from Axios, **Angeliki Dimaki, Kostas Papadopoulos, Theodoros Naziridis** at Kerkini, the staff of the SPP from Prespa, **Roula Trigou** from the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), **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. Thanks also to **Alexander Wirth, Julian Hoffman** and **Nikos Gallios** for their contributions to this newsletter and for their support for Birdwing.

And, as always, thanks to anyone else we have failed to mention.