

**Birdwatching in**  
**NATURA 2000**  
**network areas**  
**on Crete**



**A BIRDWATCHING GUIDE**

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# Birdwatching in NATURA 2000 network areas on Crete



## A BIRDWATCHING GUIDE

*Nature sculpted by time*

Be part of it, protect it!

- Operational Programme for Crete and the Aegean Islands
- Co-financed by Greece and the European Union





## Preface

Dear friends,

The past, present and future of Crete are inextricably bound up with its exceptional natural environment. Rich biodiversity, a significant number of endemic species, a variety of ecosystems and landscapes of outstanding natural beauty are what characterize our natural heritage.



In acknowledging the value of our natural environment's multiple functions as regards healthy living and quality of life, as well as in implementing our vision of sustainable development, Crete Regional Authority has made the protection, sound management and promotion of our island's nature its top priority

The NATURA 2000 Network protected areas have a significant role in realising that aim, given that they act as key reserves for nature conservation throughout Europe.

In publishing this guide "Birdwatching in NATURA 2000 network areas on Crete. A birdwatching guide" we present the NATURA 2000 areas on Crete, highlighting their characteristics and stressing both their value and their prospects for growth.

Sculpted by time and six thousand years of human history, our island's nature is a common good each of us can enjoy, while also being under the obligation to protect it.

We can only hope that through this guide we will all come to better know the NATURA 2000 protected areas, and understand the need to protect them.

Regional Governor of Crete

**Stavros Arnaoutakis**

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## Introduction



Lying in the middle of the Eastern Mediterranean, at the crossroads where three continents meet, Crete is regarded as one of the last refuges for European wild fauna and flora. Its geographical location, geomorphology and climate have created scattered habitat islands of various sizes, which have served as ideal places for a large number of plant and animal species to evolve, live and flourish. Many of them are endemic to Greece, the Aegean or the island itself.

Birds represent the largest group of vertebrates in the island's fauna. Whether permanent residents, summer visitors, overwintering species or wanderers lost in the vastness of the Mediterranean, they always find some space in Crete's hospitable embrace to feed, nest, hunt and mate or simply to rest for a few hours, before setting out for the countries of Northern Europe, North and Central Africa or Southeast Asia.

Almost half of all the bird species seen on Crete are seasonal visitors, which fly along the migration corridors from the countries of Northern Europe to Africa and back. Autumn and spring are the ideal seasons for amateur bird watchers to find and marvel at the flocks of herons, cranes, waterfowl and other species that pass over the island or land at various sites inland and on the coast, so as to shelter from the weather, gather their strength and continue on their arduous journey.

A relatively large number of species live permanently or breed on Crete. Pride of place among them is taken by the large raptors (eagles, vultures) that maintain healthy, sizeable populations as compared both to the rest of the country and to all of Europe.

This guide was published as part of the project entitled "Development and Promotion of NATURA 2000 Network Areas in Crete", ERGORAMA Integrated Information System Project Code 380448, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and national funding (2007-2013 Operational Programme for Crete and the Aegean Islands – Priority Axis 7: "Sustainable Development and Quality of Life in Crete Region").

In the guide, we have aimed to provide some general information on Cretan bird fauna (known recorded species, conservation status and presence on the island, and a summary description of representative species). We also briefly present the Special Protection Areas in the NATURA 2000 European Network, together with the birds to be seen within them.

This guide offers no more than a partial insight into the wealth of bird life on the island. We hope it contributes to informing permanent residents and visitors, and to highlighting the value of the protected areas on Crete incorporated in the NATURA 2000 European Network.

## Summary information on the NATURA 2000 network areas on Crete

The need to create a network of protected areas in the European Union arose when it was established that many ecosystems were deteriorating and being degraded, and that many species were thus becoming extinct.

The NATURA 2000 European Network of Protected Areas constitutes the basic legal and institutional framework for biodiversity conservation. It is based on two European Council Directives: 92/43/EC "On the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora" (or "Habitats Directive") and Directive 92/43/EC "On the Conservation of Wild Birds" (or "Birds Directive"), in replacement of initial Directive 79/409/EC.

The principal aim of Directive 92/43/EC is to protect biological diversity via the conservation of natural habitats in European territory. This has led to the establishment of NATURA 2000, an integrated ecological network of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). These derive from Sites of Community Importance (SCI), classified on the basis of priority habitats and the species of wild fauna and flora they host. In turn, the latter are listed in the appendices to the Habitats Directive.

The NATURA 2000 Network likewise includes the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds, which were established on the basis of the Birds Directive. Once classified by member states, SPAs are automatically incorporated into the NATURA 2000 Network.

These areas are subject to special management status. They are defined by each EU member state, bearing in mind their social, economic and cultural attributes. The Network's immediate aim is to promote environmentally friendly development, while also guaranteeing economic progress for society and biodiversity conservation, without jeopardising residents' jobs and living standards.

In Greece, the NATURA 2000 Network currently includes 419 areas: 178 are classified as SPAs and 217 as SACs, while 24 have dual protection status (SPA-SACs).

In addition, 196 sites nationwide have been classified as Important Bird Areas (IBAs). IBAs were established on the initiative of Birdlife International, the widest global collaborative effort for nature conservation. They were delineated by the Hellenic Ornithological Society, and account for approximately 26% of the country's entire area.



Bearded  
Vulture,  
*Gypaetus  
barbatus*



In conclusion, the large number number of SPAs and IBAs serves as confirmation of Greece's major importance to bird life on the regional, European and -for some species- global level. At the same time, however, it highlights the onus on our country to take effective measures to manage and protect birds and their habitats.

On account of Crete's important geographical location, large expanses of undisturbed natural environment and high degree of endemism, a total of 53 areas on the island have been incorporated into the NATURA 2000 Network. Of these, 27 have been classified as SACs and 25 as SPAs, while one area has dual protection status (SPA-SAC). 22 areas have also been classified as IBAs, and 228 coastal and inland wetlands have been recorded.

Crete has a highly varied avifauna, as over 300 species can be seen. This richness of bird life appears to be largely due to the island's geographical location, climate, rugged relief and agricultural character, as well as the wide variety of habitats and micro-environments.



Raptors have an important role to play, the most characteristic being the Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), the Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), the Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), the Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and a few Eurasian Black Vultures (*Aegypius monachus*). Furthermore, in the summer large populations of Eleonora's Falcons (*Falco eleonorae*) breed on the craggy shores of the islets north of Crete.

The island is also one of the most important points in the migration corridors to and from Africa, particularly during the spring migration, it being the first dry land encountered by migratory birds on their return to Europe. By the time they reach it, they have already crossed over between 1,800 and 2,500 km of desert and sea, spending 45 to 65 hours in flight!

Lastly, three (3) subspecies of birds have also been reported on the island: the Cretan Great Tit (*Parus major niethemmeri*), the Blackbird (*Turdus merula insularum*, distributed on Crete and Rhodes) and the Jay (*Garrulus glandarius cretorum*).

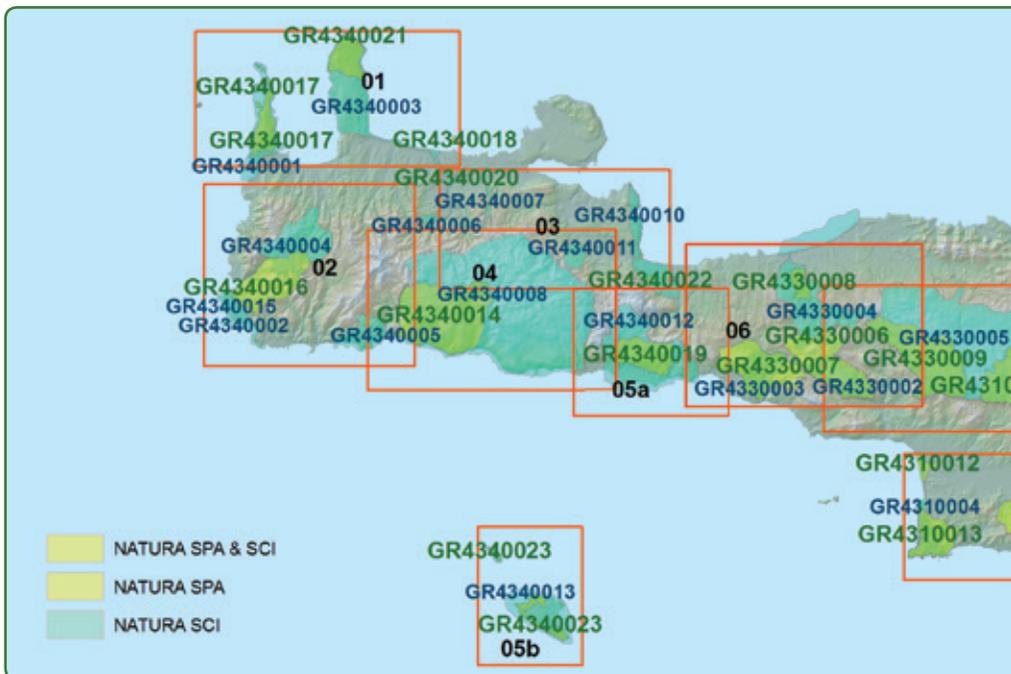
In sum, Crete's importance to European avifauna lies in:

- the permanent presence of threatened and protected species, with Crete hosting the largest insular population of some species worldwide (mainly raptors);
- its status as a stopover and refuelling point for migratory birds in the spring and autumn;
- its status at the edge of the species distribution range, southwards and eastwards;
- the existence of endemic subspecies.

## List of NATURA 2000 network Special Protection Areas on Crete

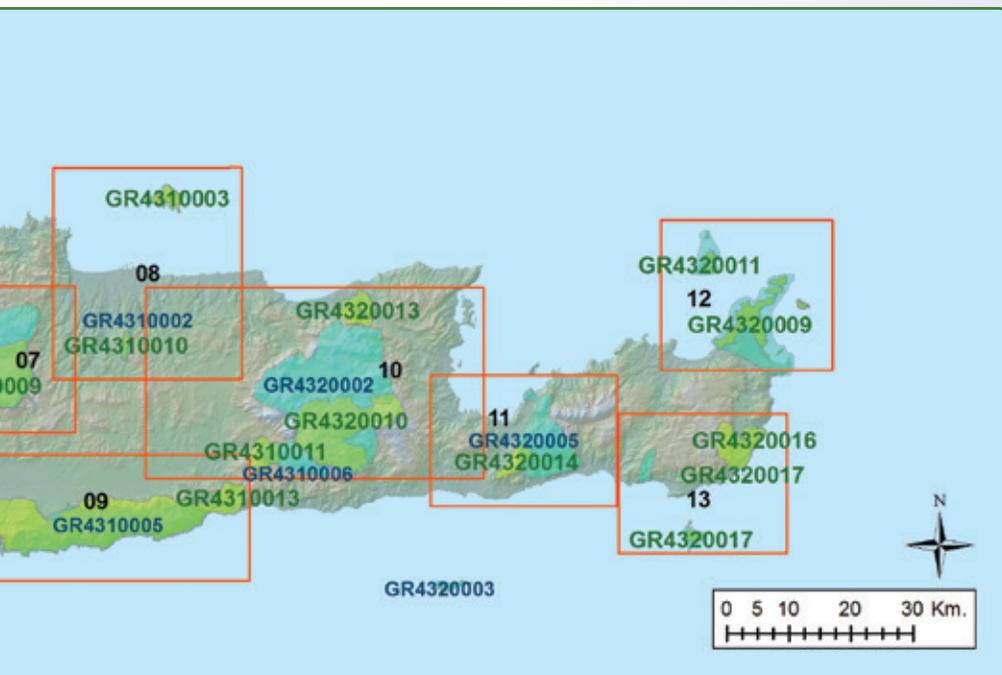
A/A	CODE	CAT.	AREA NAME	HECTARES	TRIGGER SPECIES AS PER DIRECTIVE 2009/147/EC
HERAKLION REGIONAL UNIT					
1	GR4310003	SAC-SPA	Nisos Dia	1188.02	<i>Falco eleonora</i> *
2	GR4310009	SPA	Krousonas - Vromonero Idis	7877.02	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> , <i>Gyps fulvus</i> , <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
3	GR4310010	SPA	Oros Giouchtas	411.94	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
4	GR4310011	SPA	Koryfh Koupa (Dytiki Kriti)	1993.16	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> , <i>Gyps fulvus</i>
5	GR4310012	SPA	Ekvoli Geropotamou Mesaras	684.52	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
6	GR4310013	SPA	Asterousia Ori (Kofinas)	28648.47	<i>Falco biarmicus</i> *, <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *, <i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>
LASITHI REGIONAL UNIT					
7	GR4320009	SPA	Voreioanatoliko Akro Kritis	3760.36	<i>Falco eleonora</i> *, <i>Falco naumanni</i> *
8	GR4320010	SPA	Lazaros Koryfi - Madara Diktis	13157.93	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> , <i>Gyps fulvus</i>
9	GR4320011	SPA	Dionysades Nisoi	532.22	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i> , <i>Falco eleonora</i> *, <i>Falco naumanni</i> *
10	GR4320013	SPA	Farangi Selinari - Vrachasi	2313.5	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> , <i>Gyps fulvus</i>
11	GR4320014	SPA	Notiodytiki Thrypti (Koufoto)	1617.29	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *
12	GR4320016	SPA	Ori Zakrou	3914	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i> , <i>Falco peregrinus</i>
13	GR4320017	SPA	Nisos Koufonisi, gyro nisides kai nisides Kavalloi	480.16	<i>Falco eleonora</i> *, <i>Falco naumanni</i> *

\* Priority species





A/A	CODE	CAT.	AREA NAME	HECTARES	TRIGGER SPECIES AS PER DIRECTIVE 2009/147/EC
RETHYMNO REGIONAL UNIT					
14	GR4330006	SPA	Soros - Agkathi - Kedros	8128.93	<i>Gypaetus barbatus*</i> , <i>Gyps fulvus</i> , <i>Aquila fasciata*</i>
15	GR4330007	SPA	Kourtaliotiko Farangi, Farangi Preveli	7595.21	<i>Gypaetus barbatus*</i> , <i>Gyps fulvus</i> , <i>Aquila fasciata*</i>
16	GR4330008	SPA	Prassano Farangi	1121.5	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
17	GR4330009	SPA	Oros Psiloreitis (Notiodytiko tmima)	10632.24	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> , <i>Gyps fulvus</i> , <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
CHANIA REGIONAL UNIT					
18	GR4340014	SPA	Ethnikos Drymos Samarias - Farangi Trypitis - Psilafi - Koustogerako	13979.76	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> , <i>Falco peregrinus</i> , <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
19	GR4340016	SPA	Meterizia - Agios Dikaios - Tsounara - Vitsilia Lefkon Oreon	6875.01	<i>Gypaetus barbatus*</i> , <i>Gyps fulvus</i> , <i>Aquila fasciata*</i>
20	GR4340017	SPA	Chersonisos Gramvoussas kai nisides Imeri kai Agrfa Gramvoussa, Pontikonisi	2839.56	<i>Falco eleonora*</i>
21	GR4340018	SPA	Nisida Agioi Theodoroi	81.52	<i>Falco eleonora*</i>
22	GR4340019	SPA	Farangi Kallikratis - Argouliano Farangi - Oropedio Manika	4232.53	<i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>
23	GR4340020	SPA	Limni Agias (Chania)	66.71	<i>Aythya nyroca*</i> , <i>Ergetta garzetta</i>
24	GR4340021	SPA	Chersonisos Rodopou	2920.24	<i>Falco biarmicus*</i>
25	GR4340022	SPA	Limni Kourna kai Ekvoli Almyrou	199.7	<i>Aythya nyroca*</i> , <i>Ergetta garzetta</i>
26	GR4340023	SPA	Notiodytiki Gavdos kai Gavdopoula	1563.73	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*</i>



## Summary presentation of bird species on Crete - Species list

Greek avifauna currently includes approximately 450 species (442 official entries), of which 354 have been recorded on Crete. In total, 273 species are regularly encountered on the island (58 residents, 34 summer visitors, 43 overwinterers, 139 migrants) and 79 as rare or chance visitors. However, over 100 species have been documented as regular or occasional nesters.

In this guide we have made the effort to present as many species as possible. Birds were selected for inclusion on the basis of their status on the island (mainly nesting species), their distribution, ease of observation and representativeness, and the priority

accorded by European and Greek legislation to protecting and conserving them depending on their rarity.

Summary descriptions of all the SPAs on Crete are also given, either individually or in groups of two or three areas, provided that they are similar with regard to bird life and ecology or are adjacent to each other.

Bee-eater,  
*Merops apiaster*



Blackbird,  
*Turdus merula*

### Key

#### Status on Crete :

**R-Resident**

**B-Breeder**

**P-Passage Migrant**

**W-Winter Visitor**

**AV-Accidental Vagrant**

#### Conservation status:

**EX:** Extinct

**CR:** Critically endangered

**EN:** Endangered

**VU:** Vulnerable

**NT:** Nearly threatened

**LC:** Least concern

**DD:** Data deficient

**NE:** Not evaluated

Critically endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable species are listed and regarded as threatened.

\* Priority species according to the list in Annex I of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC).



a/a	Scientific name	Common name	Status on Crete	International/ European (IUCN)	Greek Red Data Book
1	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>	Levant Sparrowhawk	P	LC	NE
2	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	(Northern) Goshawk	P, W	LC	NE
3	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	(Eurasian) Sparrowhawk	B, P, W	LC	NE
4	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	Great Reed Warbler	B, P	LC	NE
5	<i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>	Moustashed Warbler	P, W	LC	VU
6	<i>Acrocephalus paludicola*</i>	Aquatic Warbler	P	VU	NE
7	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	Marsh Warbler	P	LC	NE
8	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Sedge Warbler	P	LC	NE
9	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	(Eurasian) Reed Warbler	B, P	LC	NE
10	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper	P, W	LC	NE
11	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	Black Vulture (Cinereous Vulture)	R	NT	EN
12	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	(Eurasian) Skylark	B, P, W	LC	NT
13	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	(Common) Kingfisher	P, W	LC	DD
14	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	Chukar	R	LC	NE
15	<i>Anas acuta</i>	(Northern) Pintail	P, W	LC	NE
16	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	(Northern) Shoveler	P, W	LC	NE
17	<i>Anas crecca</i>	(Eurasian) Teal	P, W	LC	NE
18	<i>Anas penelope</i>	(Eurasian) Wigeon	P, W	LC	NE
19	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	R	LC	NE
20	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	Garganey	B, P	LC	VU
21	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Gadwall	P, W	LC	VU
22	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Greater White-fronted Goose	W	LC	NE
23	<i>Anser anser</i>	Greylag Goose	W	LC	CR
24	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	Tawny Pipit	B, P	LC	LC
25	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	Red-throated Pipit	P, W	LC	NE
26	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow Pipit	B, P, W	LC	NE
27	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	Water Pipit	P, W	LC	NE
28	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Tree Pipit	P, W	LC	NE
29	<i>Apus apus</i>	(Common) Swift	B, P	LC	NE
30	<i>Apus melba</i>	Alpine Swift	B, P	LC	NE
31	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	Pallid Swift	P	LC	NE
32	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Golden Eagle	R	LC	EN
33	<i>Aquila clanga*</i>	Great Spotted Eagle	P	VU	EN
34	<i>Aquila fasciata*</i>	Bonelli's Eagle	R	LC	VU
35	<i>Aquila heliaca*</i>	(Eastern) Imperial Eagle	P, W	VU	CR
36	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	Steppe Eagle	P, W	LC	NE
37	<i>Aquila pomarina*</i>	Lesser Spotted Eagle	P	LC	EN
38	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Grey Heron	B, P, W	LC	NE
39	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Purple Heron	P	LC	VU
40	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Squacco Heron	P	LC	VU
41	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Ruddy Turnstone	P, W	LC	NE
42	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Short-toed Owl	P, W	LC	DD
43	<i>Asio otus</i>	Long-eared Owl	R, P	LC	NE
44	<i>Athene noctua</i>	Little Owl	R	LC	NE
45	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	(Common) Pochard	P, W	LC	LC
46	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Tufted Duck	AV	LC	NE
47	<i>Aythya nyroca*</i>	Ferruginous Duck	B, P, W	NT	VU
48	<i>Botaurus stellaris*</i>	(Great) Bittern	P, W	LC	EN
49	<i>Branta ruficollis*</i>	Red-breasted Goose	AV	EN	VU
50	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	(Eurasian) Eagle Owl	R (?)	LC	LC
51	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Cattle Egret	P, W	LC	NE
52	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	(Eurasian) Stone-curlew	R	LC	NT
53	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Common Buzzard	R	LC	NE
54	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Rough-legged Buzzard	AV	LC	NE
55	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	Long-legged Buzzard	R	LC	VU
56	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	(Greater) Short-toed Lark	B, P, W	LC	NE



a/a	Scientific name	Common name	Status on Crete	International/ European (IUCN)	Greek Red Data Book
57	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sanderling	P	LC	NE
58	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Dunlin	P, W	LC	NE
59	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper	P	LC	NE
60	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Little Stint	P, W	LC	NE
61	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	Temminck's Stint	P	LC	NE
62	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	Cory's Shearwater	B, P	LC	LC
63	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	(European) Nightjar	B, P	LC	LC
64	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	(Common) Linnet	R	LC	NE
65	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	(European) Goldfinch	R	LC	NE
66	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	(European) Greenfinch	R	LC	NE
67	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	(Eurasian) Siskin	P, W	LC	NE
68	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	Red-rumped Swallow	B, P	LC	NE
69	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	Rufous Bush Robin	P	LC	NE
70	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	Short-toed Treecreeper	R	LC	NE
71	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Cetti's Warbler	R	LC	NE
72	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Kentish Plover	P, W	LC	LC
73	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Little Ringed Plover	P, W	LC	NE
74	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	(Common) Ringed Plover	P, W	LC	NE
75	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Greater Sand Plover	P	LC	NE
76	<i>Charadrius morinellus</i>	(Eurasian) Dotterel	W	LC	NE
77	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	Whiskered Tern	P	LC	EN
78	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	White-winged Tern	P	LC	NE
79	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	Black Tern	P	LC	EN
80	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	White Stork	P	LC	EN
81	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Black Stork	P	LC	VU
82	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Short-toed (Snake) Eagle	P, W	LC	NT
83	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	(Western) Marsh Harrier	P, W	LC	VU
84	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Hen Harrier (Northern Harrier)	P, W	LC	NE
85	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Pallid Harrier	P	NT	DD
86	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Montagu's Harrier	P	LC	CR
87	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	Fan-tailed Warbler	R	LC	NE
88	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	Great Spotted Cuckoo	P	LC	NE
89	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Hawfinch	P, W	LC	NE
90	<i>Columba livia</i>	Rock Dove	R	LC	NE
91	<i>Columba oenas</i>	Stock Dove	B, P, W	LC	NT
92	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	(Common) Wood Pigeon	R	LC	NE
93	<i>Coracias garrulus*</i>	(European) Roller	P	NT	VU
94	<i>Corvus corax</i>	(Northern) Raven	R	LC	NE
95	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	Hooded Crow	R	LC	NE
96	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Rook	AV	LC	NE
97	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	(Western) Jackdaw	R	LC	NE
98	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	(Common) Quail	R	LC	NE
99	<i>Crex crex*</i>	Corn Crane	AV	NT	DD
100	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	(Common) Cuckoo	P	LC	NE
101	<i>Cursorius cursor*</i>	Cream-coloured Courser	AV	LC	NE
102	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Whooper Swan	AV	LC	NE
103	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Mute Swan	B, P, W	LC	LC
104	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	(Common) House Martin	B, P	LC	NE
105	<i>Egretta alba=Ardea alba</i>	Great Egret	P, W	LC	VU
106	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	P, W	LC	LC
107	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>	Cretzshmar's Bunting	P	LC	LC
108	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	Cirl Bunting	R	LC	NE
109	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	Ortolan Bunting	R	LC	LC
110	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	Black-headed Bunting	P	LC	NE
111	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	(Common) Reed Bunting	W	LC	NE

3 Summary presentation of bird species  
on Crete - Species list



a/a	Scientific name	Common name	Status on Crete	International/ European (IUCN)	Greek Red Data Book
112	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	(European) Robin	P, W	LC	NE
113	<i>Falco biarmicus*</i>	Lanner Falcon	R, P	LC	EN
114	<i>Falco cherrug*</i>	Saker Falcon	P	EN	CR
115	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Merlin	P, W	LC	NE
116	<i>Falco eleonora*</i>	Eleonora's Falcon	B	LC	LC
117	<i>Falco naumanni*</i>	Lesser Kestrel	B, P	VU	VU
118	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	R	LC	LC
119	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	(Eurasian) Hobby	P	LC	NE
120	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	(Common) Kestrel	R	LC	NE
121	<i>Falco vespertinus*</i>	Red-footed Falcon	P	NT	DD
122	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	Collared Flycatcher	P	LC	NE
123	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	(European) Pied Flycatcher	P	LC	NE
124	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	Red-breasted Flycatcher	P	LC	DD
125	<i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>	Semicollared Flycatcher	P	NT	DD
126	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	(Common) Chaffinch	R	LC	NE
127	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Brambling	P, W	LC	NE
128	<i>Fulica atra</i>	(Eurasian) Coot	R	LC	NE
129	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	Crested Lark	R	LC	NE
130	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	(Common) Snipe	P, W	LC	NE
131	<i>Gallinago media</i>	Great Snipe	P	NT	DD
132	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	(Common) Moorhen	R	LC	NE
133	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	(Eurasian) Jay	R	LC	NE
134	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	Collared Pratincole	P	LC	VU
135	<i>Grus grus</i>	(Common) Crane	P	LC	DD
136	<i>Gypaetus barbatus*</i>	Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture)	R	LC	CR
137	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Griffon Vulture	R	LC	VU-CR
138	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	(Eurasian) Oystercatcher	P	LC	NE
139	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	White-tailed Eagle	P	LC	CR
140	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>	Booted Eagle	P, W	LC	EN
141	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Black-winged Stilt	P	LC	LC
142	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	Icterine Warbler	P	LC	NE
143	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>	Olive-tree Warbler	P	LC	NT
144	<i>Hippolais pallida</i> = <i>Iduna pallida</i>	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	B, P?	LC	NE
145	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn Swallow	B, P	LC	NE
146	<i>Hoplopterus spinosus</i>	Spur-winged Plover	AV	LC	VU
147	<i>Ichthyaeetus audouinii</i> *= <i>Larus audouinii</i>	Audouin's Gull	B	NT	VU
148	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	Little Bittern	P	LC	LC
149	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	(Eurasian) Wryneck	B, P, W	LC	NE
150	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	Red-backed Shrike	P	LC	NE
151	<i>Lanius minor</i>	Lesser Grey Shrike	P	LC	NT
152	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>	Masked Shrike	P	LC	NT
153	<i>Lanius senator</i>	Woodchat Shrike	B, P	LC	NE
154	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	P, W	LC	NE
155	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	Mediterranean Gull	P, W?	LC	EN
156	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	Yellow-legged Gull	R	LC	NE
157	<i>Larus minutus</i> = <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	Little Gull	P, W	LC	NE
158	<i>Larus ridibundus</i> = <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	(Common) Black-headed Gull	P, W	LC	NE
159	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Black-tailed Godwit	P	LC	NE
160	<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	River Warbler	P	LC	NE
161	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	Savi's Warbler	P	LC	NE
162	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	(Common) Grasshopper Warbler	P	LC	NE
163	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	Woodlark	R, P	LC	LC
164	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	Thrush Nightingale	P	LC	NE



a/a	Scientific name	Common name	Status on Crete	International/ European (IUCN)	Greek Red Data Book
165	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	(Common) Nightingale	B, P	LC	NE
166	<i>Lyminocryptes minimus</i>	Jack Snipe	P, W	LC	NE
167	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	Calandra Lark	B, P	LC	VU
168	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>	Smew	AV	LC	NE
169	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	Red-breasted Merganser	AV	LC	NE
170	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	(Eurepean) Bee-eater	B, P	LC	NE
171	<i>Merops persicus</i>	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	P	LC	NE
172	<i>Miliaria calandra</i> = <i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Corn Bunting	R	LC	NE
173	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Black Kite	P, W	LC	CR
174	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Red Kite	AV	NT	DD
175	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	(Rufous-tailed) Rock Thrush	P	LC	NE
176	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	Blue Rock Thrush	R	LC	NE
177	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	White Wagtail	R	LC	NE
178	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Grey Wagtail	R	LC	NE
179	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Yellow Wagtail	B, P	LC	NE
180	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Spotted Flycatcher	B, P	LC	NE
181	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i> *	Egyptian Vulture	P	EN	CR
182	<i>Netta rufina</i>	Red-crested Porchard	P, W	LC	NE
183	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	(Eurasian) Curlew	P, W	NT	LC
184	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Whimbrel	P	LC	NE
185	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	(Black-crowned) Night Heron	P, W	LC	NT
186	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	Black-eared Wheatear	B, P	LC	NE
187	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	Isabelline Wheatear	B, P	LC	NT
188	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	(Northern) Wheatear	B, P	LC	NE
189	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	(Eurasian) Golden Oriole	P	LC	NE
190	<i>Otus scops</i>	(Eurasian) Scops Owl	R	LC	NE
191	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey	P	LC	LC
192	<i>Parus ater</i> = <i>Periparus ater</i>	Coal Tit	P	LC	NE
193	<i>Parus caeruleus</i> = <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	(Eurasian) Blue Tit	R	LC	NE
194	<i>Parus major</i>	Great Tit	R	LC	NE
195	<i>Parus palustris</i> = <i>Poecile palustris</i>	Marsh Tit	R	LC	NE
196	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	R	LC	NE
197	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	Spanish Sparrow	B, P, W	LC	NE
198	<i>Passer montanus</i>	(Eurasian) Tree Sparrow	R	LC	NE
199	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	Great White Pelican	P	LC	VU
200	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	(European) Honey Buzzard	P	LC	LC
201	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	Rock Sparrow	AV	LC	NE
202	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii</i> *	(European) Shag	R	LC	NT
203	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	(Great) Cormorant	P, W	LC	NE
204	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Ruff	P	LC	NE
205	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	Greater Flamingo	P, W	LC	LC
206	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Black Restart	P, W	LC	NE
207	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	(Common) Redstart	P, W	LC	NE
208	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	(Common) Chiffchaff	P, W	LC	NE
209	<i>Phylloscopus orientalis</i>	Eastern Bonelli's Warbler	P	LC	NE
210	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Wood Warbler	P	LC	NE
211	<i>Phylloscopus trochillus</i>	Willow Warbler	P	LC	NE
212	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	(Eurasian) Spoonbill	P	LC	VU
213	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Glossy Ibis	P	LC	CR
214	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Grey Plover	P, W	LC	NE
215	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Great Crested Grebe	P, W	LC	NE
216	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Black-necked Grebe	P, W	LC	NE
217	<i>Porzana parva</i>	Little Crane	P	LC	DD
218	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	Spotted Crane	P	LC	DD
219	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	Baillon's Crane	P	LC	NE

3 Summary presentation of bird species  
on Crete - Species list



a/a	Scientific name	Common name	Status on Crete	International/ European (IUCN)	Greek Red Data Book
220	<i>Prunella collaris</i>	Alpine Accentor	R	LC	NE
221	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Dunnock	W	LC	NE
222	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	(Eurasian) Crag Martin	R	LC	NE
223	<i>Puffinus puffinus (yelkouan)</i>	Yelkouan Shearwater	B, P	NT	NT
224	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	Alpine Chough	R	LC	NE
225	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	(Red-billed) Chough	R	LC	EN
226	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	Water Rail	B, P, W	LC	NE
227	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	(Pied) Avocet	P	LC	VU
228	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	Firecrest	R	LC	NE
229	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Goldcrest	R	LC	NE
230	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	(Eurasian) Penduline Tit	R	LC	NE
231	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Sand Martin	P	LC	NE
232	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Whinchat	B, P	LC	NE
233	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	(European) Stonechat	R	LC	NE
234	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	(Eurasian) Woodcock	P, W	LC	NE
235	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	(European) Serin	R	LC	NE
236	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	Little Tern	P	LC	NT
237	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common Tern	P	LC	LC
238	<i>Sterna nilotica=Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	Gull-billed Tern	P	LC	VU
239	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	Sandwich Tern	P, W	LC	VU
240	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	(Eurasian) Collared Dove	R	LC	NE
241	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	Oriental Turtle Dove	AV	LC	NE
242	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	(European) Turtle Dove	B, P	LC	NE
243	<i>Strix aluco</i>	Tawny Owl	AV	LC	NE
244	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	(Common) Starling	P, W	LC	NE
245	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	(Eurasian) Blackcap	R	LC	NE
246	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	Garden Warbler	P	LC	NE
247	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	Subalpine Warbler	B, P	LC	NE
248	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	(Common) Whitethroat	B, P	LC	NE
249	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	Spectacled Warbler	AV	LC	NE
250	<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>	EasternOrphean Warbler	P	LC	NE
251	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	Lesser Whitethroat	P	LC	NE
252	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	Sardinian Warbler	R	LC	NE
253	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	Barred Warbler	P	LC	NT
254	<i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>	Ruppell's Warbler	B, P	LC	NT
255	<i>Sylvia sarda</i>	Marmora's Warbler	AV	LC	NE
256	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Little Grebe	R	LC	NE
257	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	(Common) Shelduck	W	LC	VU
258	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Spotted Redshank	P	LC	NE
259	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wood Sandpiper	P	LC	LC
260	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	(Common) Greenshank	P	LC	NE
261	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Green Sandpiper	P, W	LC	NE
262	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Marsh Sandpiper	P	LC	NE
263	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	(Common) Redshank	P, W	LC	NE
264	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	(Winter) Wren	R	LC	NE
265	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Redwing	P, W	LC	NE
266	<i>Turdus merula</i>	(Common) Blackbird	R, P, W	LC	NE
267	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song Thrush	P, W	LC	NE
268	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Fieldfare	P, W	LC	NE
269	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	Ring Ouzel	P, W	LC	NE
270	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Mistle Thrush	P, W	LC	NE
271	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl	R	LC	NE
272	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Hoopoe	B, P	LC	NE
273	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	(Northern) Lapwing	P, W	LC	VU

## Bird species typical of Crete

### 1. Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*)



This relative of the albatross winters in the South Atlantic Ocean, migrating to nest in colonies on the rocky islets of the Mediterranean from April to October. Nests are built in rock crevices or hollows in the ground, and only one egg is usually laid. This species spends most of its life out at sea, hunting for fish, cephalopods and shellfish. The largest population documented in Crete is in the Dionysades Islands (900 pairs); during the spring migration over 2500 pairs have been recorded.

### 2. European Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*\*)

Found mainly in coastal areas with steep, inaccessible rocky shores, as well as on islets. The Shag feeds in the coastal zone, hunting fish, and nests in small numbers on rock ledges. Gavdos hosts the species' southernmost European population, numbering 80-110 pairs.



### 3. Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)



This species is particularly common throughout the Mediterranean. It is found in coastal areas, as well as in inland wetlands. Cormorants nest in colonies, mainly in trees and reed beds, as well as on coastal cliffs. In Crete it has been recorded on the satellite islets, as well as in the ports of major urban areas. Fish form the greater part of its diet.

### 4. Audouin's Gull (*Ichthyaeetus audouinii*\* = *Larus audouinii*\*)

A Mediterranean endemic, relatively rare and locally sedentary in Greece. The Audouin's Gull breeds in small colonies (5-85 breeding pairs), usually on uninhabited islets and more rarely on inaccessible shores, building its nest on the ground. In Crete it is mainly to be found on the islets off the eastern coast. It feeds mainly on pelagic fish, but also on discards from trawlers.





#### 5. Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*\*)



Large scavenging raptor. 70-90% of its diet consists of livestock bones, mainly of sheep and goats. A mountain species, on Crete it is mainly to be found in areas of medium to high altitude (600-2.500 m.). The Bearded Vulture is seen alone or in pairs, and usually nests in small caves in isolated canyons and steep cliffs. A very rare species, it is distributed throughout the mountainous massifs of Crete, although the highest density of individuals is in the Lefka Ori. Its population numbers 6-7 breeding pairs, making it the only breeding population in southeastern Europe.

#### 6. Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*)

Found almost everywhere on Crete, which is home to the healthiest population of the species in Greece and the largest island population in the world (over 1,000 individuals). A colonial species, the Griffon Vulture is found in open areas with sparse vegetation, usually nesting on steep cliffs at low altitudes. It feeds on medium or large size livestock carrion, such as horses and cattle, showing a distinct preference for soft parts.



#### 7. Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)



The principal predator on Crete, with a population of around 22 to 26 breeding pairs. This species is found in mountainous areas with rocky outcrops, where it also nests. Its diet consists of small to medium-sized birds and mammals, reptiles and carrion, especially in winter. Newborn lambs occasionally form part of its diet.

#### 8. Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*\*)

20 to 25 breeding pairs are found on Crete, scattered across the island. The Bonelli's Eagle lives at low altitudes (300-500m.), usually nesting on the sides of gorges skirting the main mountain massifs. Its territory is small compared to that of other eagles. A shy, lightning-fast flyer, it is difficult to spot and generally avoids humans. It feeds on small mammals, especially on rabbits and hares, but will also take birds such as partridges, wood pigeons and crows when they are in abundance.





### 9. Eleonora's Falcon (*Falco eleonora*\*)

This migratory species winters in Central Africa and Madagascar, migrating principally to the Aegean Sea and elsewhere in the Mediterranean in early spring. Every summer, 10% of its Greek population breeds on the rocky satellite islets of Crete; Greece hosts 80% of the world population.

It feeds mainly on insects, but during the breeding season, which coincides with the autumn migration, it predated also small birds that are passing by.



### 10. Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*\*)



The Red-footed Falcon is a migratory species, more commonly seen during the spring migration. It is usually spotted in large groups, congregating in open areas with scattered clumps of trees or tall shrubs. Its diet include large insects, invertebrates, small birds, reptiles or amphibians, small mammals and small rodents, which it usually hunts from late afternoon to dusk. This falcon nests in colonies in abandoned rookeries.

### 11. Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

A small migratory falcon of skilled, irregular flight.

It usually hunts its prey usually at low altitude, on open hilly ground with mixed vegetation. The Merlin usually nests in areas with grass or heather, as well as in abandoned crows' nests in trees. It is considered an aggressive and fearless hawk, capable of hunting prey larger than itself. It feeds on birds of all kinds, small mammals (typically rodents and bats), reptiles, and sometimes on several insect species.



### 12. Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)



A relatively common species of falcon, found almost everywhere on Crete, mainly in canyons and coastal cliffs or on the slopes of rocky islets. The Cretan population is estimated to be around 80-100 breeding pairs.

In winter the Peregrine Falcon is seen in wetlands. It nests in rock cavities, tree tops and occasionally on the ledges of tall buildings. It feeds on other birds up to the size of a dove, which it always takes on the wing, plunging almost vertically down on its prey. It is considered one of the fastest animals in the world, reaching up to 350km per hour.



### 13. Stone-curlew (*Burhinus oedicnemus*)

In the past, this was referred to as a common nesting species on Crete, and is probably still an occasional breeding visitor to some of the island's habitats. It breeds in fallow, bare or sparsely vegetated open areas, in dry riverbeds or in traditionally farmed cereal fields. The Stone-curlew is encountered on islets off the coast, feeding on invertebrates. It builds its nest on the ground.



### 14. Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)



A regular winter visitor, seen in Crete from November to March. The Woodcock breeds in mixed or deciduous forests, but in the winter is to be found in dry scrubland, orchards and tall maquis. It builds its nest in hollows on the ground, under thin bushes. By preference, it feeds on earthworms, insects and insect larvae (mainly beetles), as well as on vegetation.

### 15. Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

One of the most typical birds to pass through Crete, it has been recorded in wetlands during both migration periods, and is known to overwinter in coastal areas. Its mating plumage is impressive. The Ruff feeds on the worms, insects and seeds it finds in wet meadows and swamps.



### 16. Rock Dove (*Columba livia*)



A common sedentary species, found in caves and cliffs on Crete, from the coast up to an altitude of 1,000m. The Rock Dove is often to be seen in farm fields. It nests in small groups, in crevices and rock cavities, feeding mainly on seeds and fruits. In some cases it also eats caterpillars and worms.

### 17. Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

A sedentary species of Southern Europe, and a permanent resident of Crete. The Long-eared Owl prefers forests and stands of trees near open areas and farmland. It is active at night and dusk, but during the day can be seen in tree clumps, where it remains inactive. Rodents form its staple diet. A gregarious species, it forms flocks in winter, when many individuals roost together in tall trees near olive groves.





**18. Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)**

Found in fields, gardens, scattered woods and villages, and also in urban areas. A nocturnal species, it nests in tree holes, buildings, ruins, rocks and caves. Its staple diet consists of rodents and nocturnal insects.



**19. Scops Owl (*Otus scops*)**



Despite being a migratory species, the Scops Owl is a permanent resident of Crete, due to the mild climate and the presence of large insects even in winter. It breeds in open forests, in thickets near crops, and also in urban areas. It usually builds nests in tree holes, or uses the abandoned nests of other birds.

**20. Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*)**

A summer visitor to Crete, the Nightjar is seen in a variety of open areas with sparse trees. It has been observed on sand dunes and islets, and as far up as alpine meadows. The Nightjar lays its eggs on the bare ground or in places with sparse vegetation, on the fringes of forests and in clearings. It feeds on insects taken in flight, usually at dusk, often hunting in wetland areas. It is a territorial species. In Crete the Nightjar is often observed on the ground, hunting for insects near livestock facilities.



**21. Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)**



An easily recognizable summer visitor to Crete. The Hoopoe spends most of its time on the ground, on bare ground or in areas with low grass, where it feeds on insects and worms. Seen in open rural areas with crops and shrubs, in pastures, but also on open greenery in cities. It nests in tree hollows, stone walls and elsewhere.

**22. Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)**

A characteristically colourful bird, found from April to August in crops, pastures and riparian areas. A skulking species, the Bee-eater nests in colonies, in hollows dug out of sandpits and banks, and also on level ground. It is seen in open rural areas, as well as near streams and rivers, where it finds nesting places more easily. It feeds exclusively on bees and other winged insects.





**23. Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)**

A summer visitor, though some individuals overwinter in Crete.

On the island it breeds in open orchards and old trees in olive groves. It builds its nest in natural tree hollows, but also uses self-made nests. The Wryneck looks for food on the ground by hopping with its tail raised, and also by climbing on tree trunks, like all woodpeckers do. It includes ants in its diet, which is why in Greek it also goes by the name of Anteater.



**24. Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)**



A migratory bird that also overwinters on Crete. The Skylark breeds in open fields, meadows, and mountain areas (pastures, etc.).

It nests on the ground in tufts of grass. Seeds of wild and cultivated plants, leaves, shoots, worms, insects, spiders and snails form its diet.

**25. Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*)**

A widespread sedentary bird characteristic of the Cretan landscape. The Crested Lark can be seen on farmland, fallow land, roadsides, empty lots in urban areas, dry salt marshes, and dunes, and has been observed up to an altitude of up to 1,200 m. It feeds on the seeds of weeds and nests on the ground.



**26. Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*)**



A common species, which is a sedentary bird of Greece.

It breeds in various types of habitat, such as coniferous or broadleaved open woodland, clearings and brushwood, as well as in sandy areas with heather and scrubland where extensive or nomadic stockbreeding is practised. The Woodlark builds its nests on the ground. Its basic needs in terms of food, nesting areas and roosting sites are catered for by a combination of low shrubs with sparse herbaceous or woody vegetation, alongside bare uncultivated land. It feeds on seeds and tree fruits, but mainly on cereals, fruits, insects and worms.

**27. Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*)**

Found at all altitudes, mostly from mid-March to late August. The Short-toed Lark breeds in open areas, cultivated fields, and arid plains or flat areas in the mountainous zone. It builds its nest on the ground. A characteristic species of the traditional rural landscape, it feeds on the seeds and insects it finds on farmland.





### 28. Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra* = *Miliaria calandra*)

A typical rural species, with permanent and migrant populations in Crete. The Corn Bunting is found in brushwood, upland grain crops and plateaus with scattered trees or shrubs, from sea level up to 1.600 m. It has been observed near settlements. Primarily a seed-eating species, it also feeds on insects. It nests under bushes, in tall grasses or in hedges.



### 29. Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*)



A migratory species that nests on the island.

The Tawny Pipit is a characteristic species of the semi-mountainous pasture zone.

Its habitat needs include rangeland areas with scrub and bare ground.

It appears in phrygana ecosystems, feeding mainly on invertebrates.

### 30. Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

This species overwinters on the island. Relatively large numbers pass over Crete during the migration periods, mainly from late February to mid-April in the spring, and from October to November in the autumn. Meadow Pipits build their nests on the ground, out of dry grass and moss lined with feathers. In the summer they mainly feed on insects and arthropods of all kinds, while in winter they also add seeds to their diet.



### 31. Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)



This species is Crete's most common resident.

It is encountered almost everywhere, from the forests to the mountain tops. During the breeding period the male builds at least 6-7 nests, leaving the female choose to choose the best one. The Wren nests in wall cracks or rocks, tree trunks, in the corners of buildings or in dense bushes. It is a primarily insectivorous bird, feeding on parasites, flying insects, spiders and insect larvae.

### 32. Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

A common summer visitor, this species breeds in the island's mountainous brushwood, migrating to Africa in the autumn. It is mainly located in areas with low vegetation and rocks, and builds its nest in earth and rock hollows. The Wheatear feeds on insects and spiders, either by foraging on open ground or by catching them in flight.





**33. Black-eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*)**

A common summer visitor, the



Black-eared Wheatear breeds mainly in brushwood. It lives in a variety of wooded or shrubland habitats, such as rocky slopes, steep eroded surfaces, open fields, pastures, by rivers, in stone walls, ruins and gardens. It feeds on insects and seeds, showing a special preference for locusts.

**34. Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)**



The Whinchat passes over the island in both migration periods, it relatively large numbers. It is found in places with low vegetation such as grasslands, on hillsides and shrubland. Insects, worms, seeds, and mature fruits make up its diet.

**35. Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)**

A common resident of Crete, though large numbers of migrants have been recorded crossing during the spring migration. In winter the local population is boosted by individuals coming from Greece and northern areas. Phrygana, shrublands, sparse forests, seasonal water ponds and crops are the Stonechat's preferred habitats. Insects forms its staple diet. Nests are built on the ground, especially at the base of shrubs.



**36. Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*)**



A permanent resident, the Blue Rock Thrush appears in relatively small concentrations in the west and southwest of the island. It lives and breeds in expansive rocky areas. It usually nests in rock cavities. Its diet includes a wide variety of insects, small reptiles and wild fruits.

**37. Sardinian Warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*)**

A very common sedentary species, found in areas with dense vegetation, in open forests with tall shrubs, and also near gardens and parks. The Sardinian Warbler is an insectivorous bird, with a preference for spiders. It looks for its food beneath foliage and in bushes.



**38. Ruppell's Warbler (*Sylvia rueppelli*)**



A summer visitor to Crete, it migrates to sub-Saharan Africa in the winter. The Ruppell's Warbler nests in several places on Crete, the densest population being in the Asterousia Mountains. It prefers extremely sparse dry maquis consisting of lentisk, carob and spiny broom, and usually builds its nest in gorse. It is a skulker, though males are less cautious. It feeds on insects and fruit.



#### 39. Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

A summer visitor, common during migratory periods. The Whitethroat lives in open landscapes and nests in thorny bushes or fences. It prefers to feed on insects, and occasionally fruits and seeds.



#### 40. Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*)



A relatively common and permanent resident species in Crete, seen mainly in the winter. Found in habitats with dense bushes, almost always near water, but frequently in atypical habitats such as vineyards. Not readily visible. Its cupped nest is built in bushes. The Cetti's Warbler feeds mainly on insects and their larvae, arthropods, molluscs and other small invertebrates, and occasionally on the seeds of various plants.

#### 41. Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) & Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)

Migratory and/or sedentary species, considered amongst the best songbirds. It breeds in temperate regions, migrating in winter to the Mediterranean and tropical Africa. In Crete the Reed Warbler is mainly encountered in the summer, near marshes, ponds, rivers and wetlands with reed beds. Its diet includes insects, small fruits, grapes, etc.



#### 42. Eastern Olivaceous Warbler (*Induna pallida*)



A summer visitor which also a resident species of Crete. Its preferred habitats are Mediterranean landscapes that provide water, and points near the coast. The Eastern Olivaceous Warbler builds its nest in bushes or small trees. It feeds on spiders, snails and insects collected from tree branches and leaves.

#### 43. Short-toed Treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*)

A permanent resident, mainly seen in western Crete (Chania). The Short-toed Treecreeper prefers deciduous forests, parks and gardens with plenty of fruit trees. It looks for insects, larvae and spiders in tree bark. It builds its nest in crevices in the bark, using branches, stems, moss, animal hair and feathers.





**44. Great Tit (*Parus major*)**

A common permanent resident of the island, appearing in a variety of habitats. The greatest altitude at which it has been observed is 950 m. Although the Great Tit on Crete is an endemic subspecies, it is commonly seen throughout the island. Its natural habitats are all forest areas regardless of the dominant trees species, parks, groves and gardens. It even appears in villages. The Great Tit is a highly adaptable species, nesting anywhere. During the breeding period it prefers insects, vermin and insect larvae, but also consumes fruit seeds.



**45. Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)**



A small passerine that appears in Crete in March, staying almost all of the summer. In October the Spotted Flycatcher migrates to Africa, where it overwinters. Easily observable as it stands alone on dry branches, fences or power lines, where it can locate its prey (insects). It prefers to build its nest in tree cavities, climbing plants or ruins.

**46. Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)**

A common sedentary species, widespread both in villages and woodlands. The Blue Tit prefers deciduous and mixed forests primarily of oak, but it is not uncommon in parks, orchards and gardens, nesting easily anywhere. It is mostly insectivorous, with a particular preference for insects, bugs and parasites considered harmful to crops and plants.



**47. Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*)**



A relatively common breeding visitor to Crete, found over a large altitude range, from sea level up to 1,600m. During the spring migration the numbers of Woodchat Shrike increase noticeably. A typical species in open, low altitude Mediterranean areas dotted with trees and bushes. It is also encountered in olive groves, vineyards and small pine or oak groves. An aggressive hunter, it preys on insects, lizards, small rodents and small birds, which it often hoards by nailing them on thorny bushes, sharp twigs or wires.



**48. Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)**

A rare sedentary species, found in the forests of west Crete. Its habitat primarily includes areas of coniferous and broadleaved woodland, particularly oaks. In winter it can be found in wooded parks and orchards, always near trees. A discreet and suspicious bird, it usually skulks amongst the branches and rarely comes down to the ground to forage. The Jay hoards its food, which mainly consists of berries and the seeds of cereals and legumes. To a lesser extent it feeds on insects, caterpillars, lizards and invertebrates.



**49. Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)**



A common species in Crete, found in a wide variety of habitats such as forests, open areas with scattered trees and low bushes, meadows, farmlands, coastal areas, steep coastal cliffs, as well as urban areas. The Jackdaw is a social species with a hierarchical structure and monogamous behaviour, which builds its nest in tree cavities, steep cliffs or dense tree foliage. An omnivorous species, it feeds on insects, snails, spiders, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, and also on garbage.

**50. Red-billed Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*)**

Found at altitudes ranging from 1,000 m to 2,300 m, almost exclusively in the highest mountains of Crete. During winter the Chough can be seen at lower altitudes (down to 400 m), even close to crops, especially in very bad weather. It nests in rock crevices, steep outcrops and canyons. Its foraging habitat includes rocky areas with fallow fields, alpine meadows interspersed with steep cliffs, plateaus and mountain pastures with sparse vegetation cover. It feeds on invertebrates (especially flying insects, and worms). Favoured by livestock farming, since grazing keeps vegetation low and several invertebrates thrive in animal manure.



**51. Alpine Chough (*Pyrrhocorax graculus*)**



A common species in Crete, with a preference for mountain areas above 1,500 m and relatively uneven terrain. During winter the Alpine Chough can be seen at lower altitudes, even near cities and villages where it looks for food. It lives in large flocks, especially after the breeding season. Its diet varies depending on the time of year. In summer it feeds on caterpillars, insects, beetles, crickets, locusts, ants, small vertebrates and smaller birds. During winter it mainly consumes plant matter such as fruits, leaves, buds and lichens.



**52. Raven (*Corvus corax*)**

A common sedentary species. It appears in pairs, though also in large groups in the mountains, especially in the mountain pastures during autumn. Its population has increased in Crete in recent years. The Raven is an omnivorous, territorial species, nesting in rock hollows, preferably on the sheer sides of canyons.



**53. Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)**



A relatively common migratory species, passing through during spring (April-May) and autumn (September-October), while remaining on the island in large numbers during the summer. The Golden Oriole is a very active arboreal bird, although relatively shy. Its natural habitats are dense deciduous forests, riverine forests, parks with trees rich in foliage, groves, gardens and orchards. Its food mainly consists of small insects, and to a lesser extent fruit such as berries, cherries and figs, belying its Greek name ("Fig Eater").

**54. Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*)**

A relatively common resident species throughout Crete, though also a migrant, it is found in large numbers in both rural and residential areas. The Spanish Sparrow's familiarity with humans makes it easy to approach and observe. It builds its nest in tree and house cavities, low bushes, fences or trees, using grass, straw, twigs, leaves and other plant materials. Amongst other things it feeds on cereal grains, sprouts, insects and human food leftovers.



**55. Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)**



A common sedentary species. Large flocks (from a few dozen up to 200 individuals) have been observed crossing over western Crete. During winter its population is boosted by individuals coming from continental Greece and even further north. The Linnet lives and breeds in mountainous and coastal areas. It prefers to nest in dense bushes of brushwood and heather, and likes to fly in open landscapes with thorny bushes and cedars. It spends most of its time foraging on the ground, feeding on a variety of seeds and weed sprouts, insects, worms, aphids, etc.



### 56. Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*)

Despite being a migratory species, the Ortolan Bunting maintains satisfactory populations on Crete and breeds in several areas of the island. The European population has fallen substantially in recent decades, while a significant reduction of breeding pairs has been recorded in Greece. It is a species typical of traditional Mediterranean farmland, since it colonizes areas with extensively farmed cereal crops, including scattered trees and bushes. It prefers upland scrub, pastures, fences, open meadows with sparse trees and forest clearings often near wetlands.

The Ortolan Bunting builds nests hidden in the ground or between crops and weeds. It feeds on small seeds and insects.



### 57. Coot (*Fulica atra*)



A regular winter visitor to Crete, also referred to as an occasional nesting species. Some individuals are believed to remain year round, nesting in at least three of the island's wetlands. A highly adaptable waterbird, the coot is found in various habitats such as lowland permanent waters (freshwater lakes, marshes, etc.) but also in brackish bays, near coasts, etc. It prefers areas with abundant riparian vegetation, and is very rarely observed in high altitude areas. Its diet includes small crustaceans, molluscs, insects and their larvae, seeds and aquatic plants stems, aquatic beetles, small fish and snails.

### 58. Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

The most typical waterbird in Cretan wetlands, the Moorhen is considered to be a permanent nesting species. Abundant in April and to a lesser extent in January; relatively widespread cases of it nesting in the island's wetlands have been reported.

A shy skulker, it consumes crustaceans, molluscs, insects, stems of aquatic plants, cereals, fruits, and seeds, occasionally feeding on aquatic beetles, small fish, snails, etc.



### 59. Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)



A common species during migration periods. Nesting has not been reported, but some individuals may live in southern and eastern Crete. The Quail suffers intense pressure from hunting, especially during the autumn migration. It feeds on seeds, leaves and flowers, and less on insects, worms, beetles, ants, snails and insect larvae.



**60. Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*)**

A species that prefers rocky slopes of variable altitude, with grass, scattered bushes and upland grain crops. As a skulker under great pressure from hunting throughout the island, the Chukar feeds on plants and insects. It usually nests on the ground, under thick bushes or rocky cavities. Population density is higher in the Lefka Ori and south Psiloritis.



**61. Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*\*)**



A local, uncommon summer visitor to Crete, with a distinct preference for mainland wetlands (lakes, freshwater marshes) or coastal wetlands thick in reeds or other emergent vegetation. The Ferruginous Duck nests on the ground, in dense reeds or other aquatic vegetation. It is an omnivorous species, feeding on the leaves and roots of aquatic plants, molluscs and other invertebrates.

**62. Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)**

Much more widespread in the past, the Garganey population has suffered a clear decline in recent years, but still appears to nest on Crete. It prefers wetlands with shallow fresh water and dense vegetation. During migration it can be observed in almost all types of wetlands, though most frequently in coastal ones. Large flocks also migrate along the coastline (over closed, shallow bays, etc.), but often fly offshore and go unnoticed.



**63. Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)**



Considered the most common heron during migration and winter on Crete. Its presence peaks during March-April. In addition to fish, the Grey Heron has been observed feeding on frogs and locusts, and in one case on a water snake. During winter there are only a few individuals in Crete, mainly on beaches and harbours where there is food and minimal disturbance.

**64. Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)**

A type of heron known for its abundance during migration from Crete. Fewer individuals are observed in winter, mainly on beaches and harbours such as Souda, Almyros in Heraklion, etc. Smaller groups are seen during the spring migration than in the autumn one.



## Special Protection Areas and observation points on Crete

### 1. Gramvousa Peninsula and the islands of Imeri Gramvousa, Agria Gramvousa and Pontikonisi (SPA GR4340017), Rodhopos Peninsula (SPA GR4340021), Islet of Agioi Theodoroi (SPA GR4340018)

The uninhabited islet of Agioi Theodoroi lies off the north coast of Chania, opposite Platanias. It is mainly covered in phrygana. The Crete Region Forestry Directorate is responsible for managing it, and unauthorised access is forbidden.

The Rodhopos and Gramvousa Peninsulas, together with the islands of Imeri and Agria Gramvousa and Pontikonisi, are located at the north-western tip of Crete. They mainly consist of steep-sided rocky limestone outcrops with sea caves. Phrygana is the dominant vegetation throughout, with sparse patches of maquis. The archaeological site at Dictynnaeon lies in the northern part of the Rodhopos Peninsula.

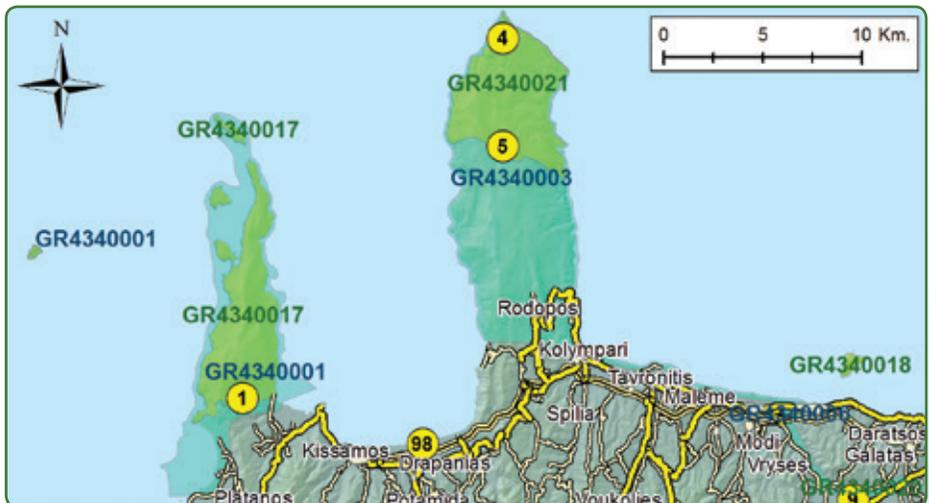
The lack of a good road network beyond the village of Rodhopos restricts intensive human activities. Limited farming, shepherding and tourism take place in the area. All driving beyond Afrata is on unsurfaced roads.

The Gramvousa Peninsula is sparsely populated, but sees a lot of tourism in the summer season. Access from Chania and Kissamos is via a tarmac road as far as Falassarna, and an unsurfaced road to Tigani Peninsula and Balos Lagoon.

The islets of Imeri and Agria Gramvousa and Pontikonisi are uninhabited, but receive visitors by tour boat from Kissamos in the summer.

Five reptiles, one amphibian and two mammals have been recorded on both of the peninsulas in West Crete (Gramvousa and Rhodopos), the most significant presence being that of the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*\*).

Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *)	1
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	1, 4, 5
Eleonora's Falcon ( <i>Falco eleonora</i> *)	1, 4, 5
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	1, 4, 5
Bonelli's Eagle ( <i>Aquila fasciata</i> *)	1
Montagu's Harrier ( <i>Circus pygargus</i> )	1, 4, 5
Little Egret ( <i>Egretta garzetta</i> )	98
European Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis d.</i> *)	4, 98
Imperial Eagle ( <i>Aquila heliaca</i> *)	1, 98
Black-eared Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i> )	1, 4, 5
Woodlark ( <i>Lullula arborea</i> )	1
Black Restart ( <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> )	1, 4, 5, 98





## 2. Meterizia, Agios Dikaïos - Tsounara - Vitsilia Lefkon Oreon (SPA GR4340016)

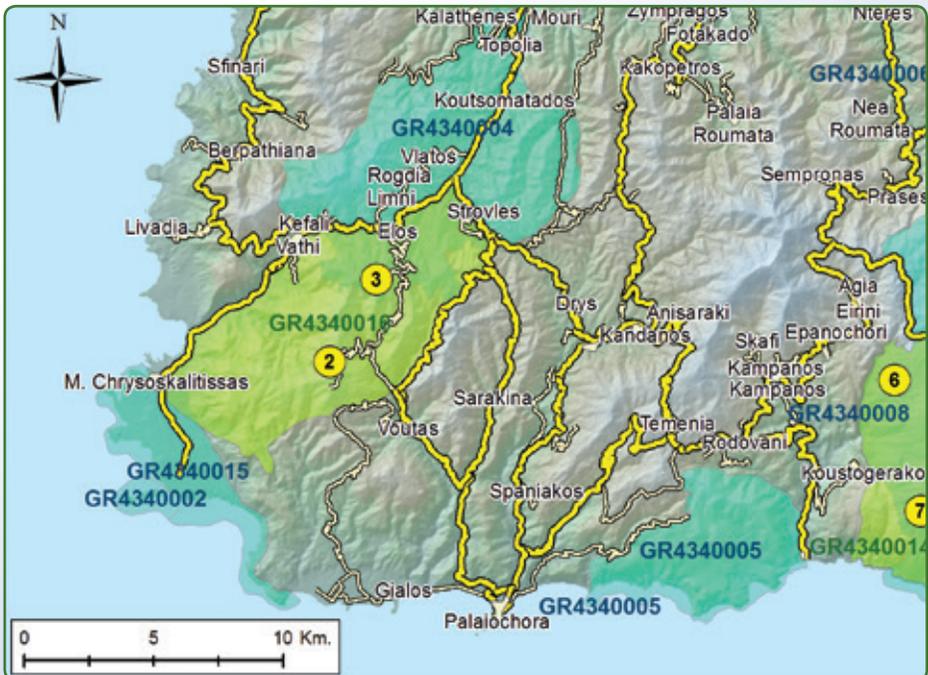
This area lies west-southwest of Chania. It is a mountainous and semi-mountainous site criss-crossed by a large number of torrents and seasonal rivers, and also features seasonal bogs and marshes, all habitats of vital importance to bird life.

There are scattered villages and farms. The area is home to the only strawberry tree maquis on Crete, as well as to rare chestnut groves. In addition to being included in the NATURA 2000 network, the area is protected as a Wildlife Sanctuary and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Elafonisos, Polyrhena, Rogdia, Voutas). The observation points are over an hour's drive from Chania on tarmac roads, followed by unsurfaced roads in most cases (e.g. access to the raptor feeders at Agios Dikaïos).

The remaining fauna includes all but one of the nine reptile species encountered on the island (the

*Mauremys rivulata* terrapin being the exception), 3 species of amphibian and 16 of the 35 mammals. The area is also noteworthy as being home to 23 species and 1 subspecies of invertebrate endemic to Crete.

Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *)	3
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	3
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	2
Imperial Eagle ( <i>Aquila heliaca</i> *)	2
Pallid Harrier ( <i>Circus macrourus</i> )	2, 3
Barn Owl ( <i>Tyto alba</i> )	2,3
Stonechat ( <i>Saxicola torquata</i> )	2,3
Girl Bunting ( <i>Emberiza cirius</i> )	3
Blackcap ( <i>Sylvia articapilla</i> )	3
Nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> )	2,3
Crag Martin ( <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i> )	2,3





### 3. Agia Lake (Chania) (SPA GR4340020), Lake Kournas and Almyros Estuary (SPA GR4340022)

Agia Lake lies to the south-west of Chania. Despite being an artificial lake, the wide variety of wetland plant communities it supports is possibly the richest on Crete. In addition to a number of underground sources of the Keritis River to the west, its catchment basin includes the slopes north of Vathypetro. The area around the lake is predominantly given over to fruit farming.

Kournas Lake and the Almyros Estuary lie to the east of the city of Chania. Kournas is the only natural freshwater lake on Crete: the riparian vegetation is exclusively hydrophilic, consisting of reeds, chaste trees and other damp-loving plants.

The entire area around Lake Kournas lies within a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Almyros Estuary combines hydrophilic vegetation with active or abandoned farmland and isolated Cretan palms (*Phoenix theophrasti*). The observation points are easily accessible from both Chania and Rethymnon.

Both areas support significant populations of terrapins (*Mauremys rivulata*), leopard snakes (*Elaphe situla*) and lesser horseshoe bats.

The loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*\*) and Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*\*) have also been recorded in the Almyros area.

Species	Observation points
Garganey ( <i>Anas querquedula</i> )	9, 21
Wood Sandpiper ( <i>Tringa glareola</i> )	9, 21
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	9, 21
Ferruginous Duck ( <i>Aythya nyroca</i> *)	9, 21
Glossy Ibis ( <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> )	9, 21
Squacco Heron ( <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> )	9, 21
Little Egret ( <i>Egretta garzetta</i> )	9, 21
Great Spotted Eagle ( <i>Aquila clanga</i> *)	9, 21
Little Crake ( <i>Porzana parva</i> )	9, 21
Temminck's Stint ( <i>Calidris temminckii</i> )	9, 21
Whiskered Tern ( <i>Chlidonias hybrida</i> )	9, 21
Coot ( <i>Fulica atra</i> )	9, 21
Chaffinch ( <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> )	9, 10, 21
Wren ( <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> )	8, 9, 10, 21
Mallard ( <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> )	9, 21
Baillon's Crake ( <i>Porzana pusilla</i> )	9
Short-toed (Snake) Eagle ( <i>Circus gallicus</i> )	10
Merlin ( <i>Falco columbarius</i> )	9, 21
Little Grebe ( <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> )	9, 21





#### 4. Samaria National Park - Trypiti Gorge - Psilafi - Koustogerako (SPA GR4340014)

This area forms part of the larger Lefka Ori range, which has a rich geomorphological relief.

The Samaria Gorge is the largest coastal gorge in the Balkans, at a depth of over 500m. Geologically speaking, it consists of limestone and massive dolomites. The greater part of the area is covered in cypress forests and expansive pine forests, with a small percentage covered in tall stands of prickly oak. Mountain phrygana dominates higher altitudes.

The natural environment is in general undisturbed, having very little infrastructure and low impact farming; settlement density is low and human presence limited. Approximately half of the area is an official Wildlife Sanctuary.

Birdwatching can be done throughout the mountain massif, but calls for lengthy and at times demanding hill walking. The observation points suggested here are accessible via tarmac routes and passable unsurfaced roads.

Apart from the 199 recorded bird species, the Lefka Ori are also home to all 3 amphibian species on Crete, 11 reptiles and 32 of the 35 island's mammals – the wild goat (*Capra aegagrus cretica*) being the most important– and all 11 recorded species of bats.

Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *)	7, 8, 11
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16
Bonelli's Eagle ( <i>Aquila fasciata</i> *)	11, 14, 15
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	8, 11
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16
Red-billed Chough ( <i>P. pyrrhocorax</i> )	8, 12, 14, 16
Alpine Accentor ( <i>Prunella collaris</i> )	8, 16
Blue Rock Thrush ( <i>Monticola solitarius</i> )	6, 7, 14, 18
Woodlark ( <i>Lullula arborea</i> )	8, 15
Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> )	8, 16
Tawny Pipit ( <i>Anthus campestris</i> )	8
Grey Wagtail ( <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> )	11
Hoopoe ( <i>Upupa epops</i> )	15





## 5. Kallikratis Gorge - Argoules Gorge - Manikas Mountain Plain (SPA GR4340019), South-west Gavdos and Gavdopoula (SPA GR4340023)

The geomorphology of the Kallikratis area is complex. Gorges and mountain plains are typical features of the limestone mountain massif. Phrygana and maquis combine with an large oak forest on the Kallikratis and Manikas mountain plains. Human presence is limited in the area, as the few villages are sparsely populated. Part of the area is under protected status as a Wildlife Sanctuary. Apart from the 217 recorded bird species, this area is also home to all 3 of the island's amphibians, 8 of the 12 reptiles and all Cretan mammals (except for bats). The uplands are accessible via tarmac roads from Rethymnon or Chania.

Gavdos and Gavdopoula lie 21 miles south of Crete. Geologically speaking they mainly consist of limestone. Maquis is the dominant vegetation on Gavdos, which also has a sparse pine forest and limited farmland. The uninhabited island of Gavdopoula is covered in phrygana, with very little maquis.

A handful of permanent inhabitants share the few villages on Gavdos. Access is via regular ferry service from Sfakia or Palaiochora and Sougia.

Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus*</i> )	19, 20, 23, 99
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	19, 20, 22, 23, 99
Bonelli's Eagle ( <i>Aquila fasciata*</i> )	23, 99
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	99
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	13, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 99
Booted Eagle ( <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i> )	13, 17, 20, 100
Ruppell's Warbler ( <i>Sylvia rueppelli</i> )	13, 17, 22
Meadow Pipit ( <i>Anthus pratensis</i> )	13, 17, 20, 100
Lanner Falcon ( <i>Falco biarmicus*</i> )	23
Jay ( <i>Garullus glandarius</i> )	19, 20, 99
Skylark ( <i>Alauda arvensis</i> )	13, 17, 100
European Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*</i> )	13, 17, 100
Cory's Shearwater ( <i>Calonectris diomedea</i> )	13, 17
Yelkouan Shearwater ( <i>Puffinus yelkouan</i> )	13, 17
Kestrel ( <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> )	13, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 99
Chukar ( <i>Alectoris chukar</i> )	13, 17, 22, 99
Common Sandpiper ( <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> )	13, 17, 100
Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> )	19, 20, 23
Black-eared Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i> )	13, 17, 99
Spotted Flycatcher ( <i>Muscicapa striata</i> )	13, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 99
Woodchat Shrike ( <i>Lanius senator</i> )	19, 20, 22, 23





**6. Prasses Gorge (SPA GR4330008), Soros, Agkathi, Kedros (SPA GR4330006), Kourtaliotis Gorge, Preveli Gorge (SPA GR4330007)**

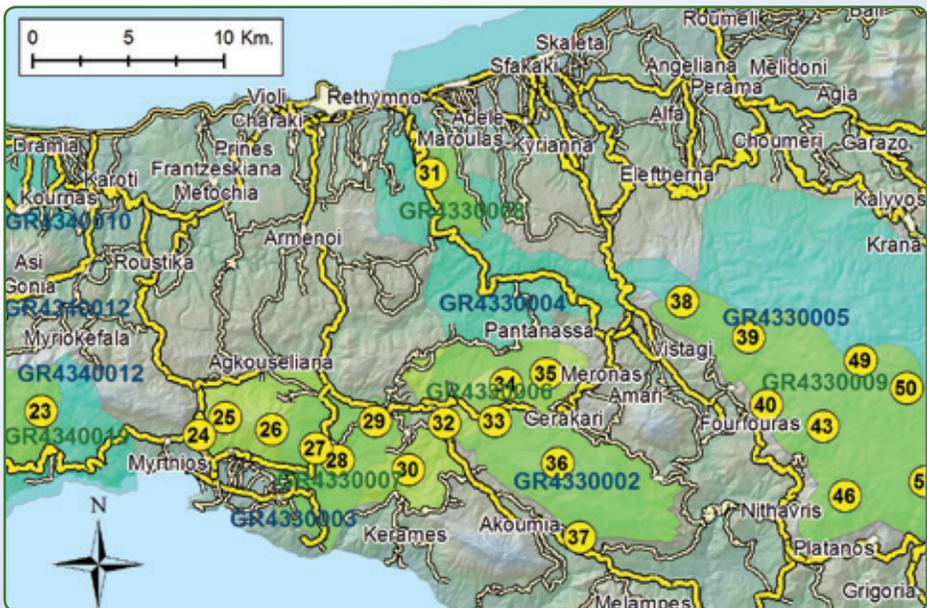
These three Special Protection Areas lie in the centre of Rethymnon RU, running north to south so as to create a virtually uninterrupted complex of habitats for bird fauna.

Prasses Gorge opens out to the north. Though relatively small in area, its steep sides show high biodiversity as regards both flora and fauna. The slopes of Mounts Kedros, Agkathi and Soros are gentler, but bare. They are mainly covered in phrygana, with maquis in few places at lower altitudes. Around the mountains and up to an altitude of 600 m there are scattered villages, whose inhabitants are farmers and shepherds.

The Kourtaliotis and Preveli Gorges open out to the south. One of the area's most important features is the second largest palm forest on Crete, which grows at the mouth of the Preveli Gorge. The observation points are accessible from Rethymnon via narrow tarmac roads, with driving on unsurfaced routes only occasionally required.

Apart from the rich bird fauna, 1 amphibian, 8 of Crete's 12 reptiles and 7 mammals have been recorded in these areas.

Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *)	36
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	24-37
Bonelli's Eagle ( <i>Aquila fasciata</i> *)	27, 28
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	25, 36, 39
Short-toed (Snake) Eagle ( <i>Circaetus gallicus</i> )	31, 32, 38
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	24, 30, 31, 36, 37, 38, 40
Sparrowhawk ( <i>Accipiter nisus</i> )	24, 37
Common Buzzard ( <i>Buteo buteo</i> )	23-37
Jackdaw ( <i>Corvus monedula</i> )	24, 27, 31
Ortolan Bunting ( <i>Emberiza hortulana</i> )	26, 32
Wryneck ( <i>Jynx torquilla</i> )	33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler ( <i>Iduna pallida</i> )	24, 27, 31
Crag Martin ( <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i> )	24-37
Hoopoe ( <i>Upupa epops</i> )	28, 31, 40
Blue Rock Thrush ( <i>Monticola solitarius</i> )	24-37





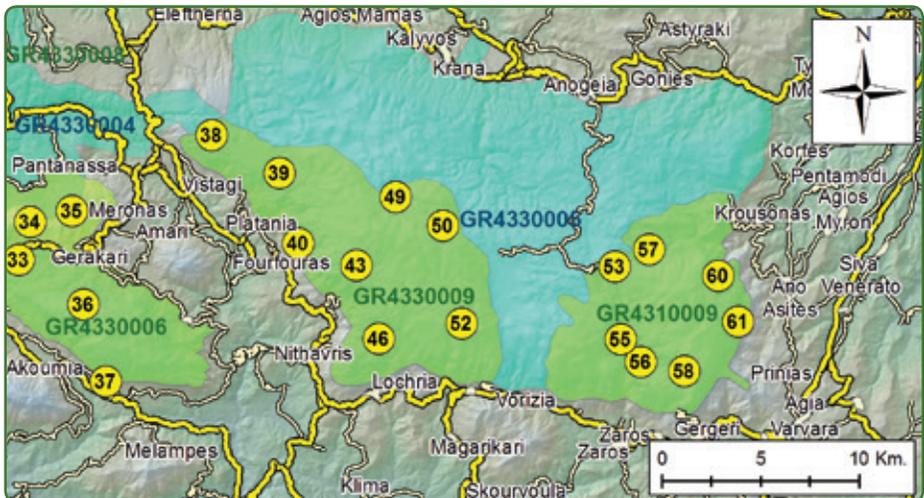
## 7. Psiloritis (south-west section) (SPA GR4330009), Krousónas - Vromonero Idís (SPA GR4310009)

Psiloritis is one of Crete's three main mountain ranges. The highest peak is Timios Stavros (the Holy Cross, 2,456 m). The range's eastern, southern and western sides are steep. The dominant rocks are heavily eroded limestone, dolomites and gneiss. Both Special Protection Areas are known for their wide variety of landscapes, high biodiversity and the presence of numerous flora and fauna species endemic to Greece, or more specifically to Crete. Plant cover combines forests of pine, cypress, maple and prickly-oak up to an altitude of 1700 m, with patchy maquis at lower and middling altitudes and phrygana on the peaks.

Despite the mountainous terrain there are numerous villages and farmlands at middling and low altitudes. Parts of the area are protected as Wildlife Sanctuaries, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Nature Monuments. In addition to the 155 bird species, all 3 of Crete's amphibian species have been recorded on Psiloritis, as well as 8 of the 12 reptiles, all the mammals (except bats), and a large number of invertebrates. The entire mountain massif is easily accessible via tarmac roads from Heraklion or Rethymnon.

Driving on unsurfaced roads or gentle walking is required at a few points.

Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *)	40, 43, 46, 50, 53
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	33-61
Bonelli's Eagle ( <i>Aquila fasciata</i> *)	52
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	33-61
Imperial Eagle ( <i>Aquila heliaca</i> *)	38, 40, 46, 58, 60, 61
Hen Harrier ( <i>Circus cyaneus</i> )	38, 40, 46, 55, 58, 60
Short-toed (Snake) Eagle ( <i>Circus gallicus</i> )	40, 46, 60, 61
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	33-61
Common Buzzard ( <i>Buteo buteo</i> )	38, 40, 46, 55, 56, 58, 61
Sparrowhawk ( <i>Accipiter nisus</i> )	38, 40, 46, 55, 56, 58, 61
Red-billed Chough ( <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> )	50, 52, 53
Alpine Chough ( <i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i> )	43, 49, 50, 52, 53
Nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> )	38
Tawny Pipit ( <i>Anthus campestris</i> )	50
Dotterel ( <i>Charadrius morinellus</i> )	50
Wren ( <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> )	33-61
Short-toed Lark ( <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i> )	50
Woodlark ( <i>Lullula arborea</i> )	33-61
Blue Tit ( <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> )	33-61
Chukar ( <i>Alectoris chucar</i> )	33-61





**8. Mt. Yuktas (SPA GR4310010), Dia Island (SAC-SPA GR4310003)**

The main feature in this area is Mount Yuktas (altitude 811 m). The south and western sections are extremely rocky, with sheer sides on a limestone base. The mountain is known for its high biodiversity, due to the presence of numerous flora and fauna species endemic to Crete and Greece.

It is surrounded by an extensive network of villages, with intensive viticulture and olive farming. Yuktas is protected as a Wildlife Sanctuary, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an Archaeological Zone. Accessing the observation points is relatively easy, as the nearby town of Archanes is 20 km south of Heraklion, and offers a wide range of visitor facilities.

The access route includes a 4 to 5 km forestry road. At Chosto Nero there is a traditional feeder for raptors.

In addition to the 60 recorded bird species, Yuktas is also home to 10 of Crete’s 35 mammals, 7 reptile species and 2 amphibians. There are over 60 species of invertebrates.

The island of Dia (together with the islets of Paximadi and Petalidi) lies 14 km north of the coast at Heraklion, but is administrated by the Municipality of Hersonissos.

It consists mainly of limestone, which forms sheer sea cliffs, land and sea caves, and small gorges. Hard-leaved vegetation is predominant, with a few stands of lentisk in the western section.

Dia is uninhabited, with limited facilities for fishermen, visitors and the Forestry Department, which manages the area as a controlled hunting area. It is an important stopover point for migratory bird species during the autumn migration.

Species	Observation points
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	66
Black Kite ( <i>Milvus migrans</i> )	66
Lesser Spotted Eagle ( <i>Aquila pomarina</i> *)	66
Kestrel ( <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> )	66, 101
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	66, 101
Long-legged Buzzard ( <i>Buteo ruffinus</i> )	101
Common Buzzard ( <i>Buteo buteo</i> )	66
Blue Rock Thrush ( <i>Monticola solitarius</i> )	66, 101
Raven ( <i>Corvus corax</i> )	66, 101
Eleonora's Falcon ( <i>Falco eleonora</i> *)	66, 101
Cory's Shearwater ( <i>Calonectris diomedea</i> )	101
European Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis d.*</i> )	101
Yellowlegs Shearwater ( <i>Puffinus puffinus yelkouan</i> )	101
Alpine Swift ( <i>Apus melba</i> )	66, 101
White Wagtail ( <i>Motacilla alba</i> )	66, 101
Nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> )	66
Red-backed Shrike ( <i>Lanius collurio</i> )	66
Marsh Harrier ( <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> )	66





## 9. Asterousia Mountains (Kofinas) (SPA GR4310013), Geropotamos Estuary (SPA GR4310012)

The Asterousia mountain range runs along the south coast of Heraklion Regional Unit, effectively delimiting the Messara plain and the Libyan Sea. It is a mountainous area of limestone rocks, with a large number of gorges mainly on its southern slopes. The main cover consists of phrygana and a thin pine forest on the southern slopes. On the coastline, sandy beaches alternate with rocky headlands, sea caves and seaside villages, while the slopes to the north are gentler, surrounded by farming and shepherding villages at both lower and higher altitudes.

The entire massif is dotted with archaeological sites and religious monuments. The Geropotamos River is fed by an extremely large catchment basin to the south of Psiloritis; having crossed the plain it flows out into the northern side of the Gulf of Messara. The estuary includes marshes and coastal wetlands rich in riverine vegetation, as well as an

expansive sandy beach that is one of the three most important breeding sides for loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*\*) in Greece.

In the past the Geropotamos Estuary was a great deal larger, making it the biggest wetland on Crete, but continued human pressure and intervention have restricted it to its current size. Nevertheless, it still remains an important area for migrant waders and waterfowl.

In addition to being included in the NATURA 2000 Network, the area includes Wildlife Sanctuaries, Archaeological Zones, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Insular Coastal Wetlands.

Access from Heraklion is via the three north-south roads (through Arkalochori, Pyrgos and Moires). The route to most observation points is on unsurfaced roads.



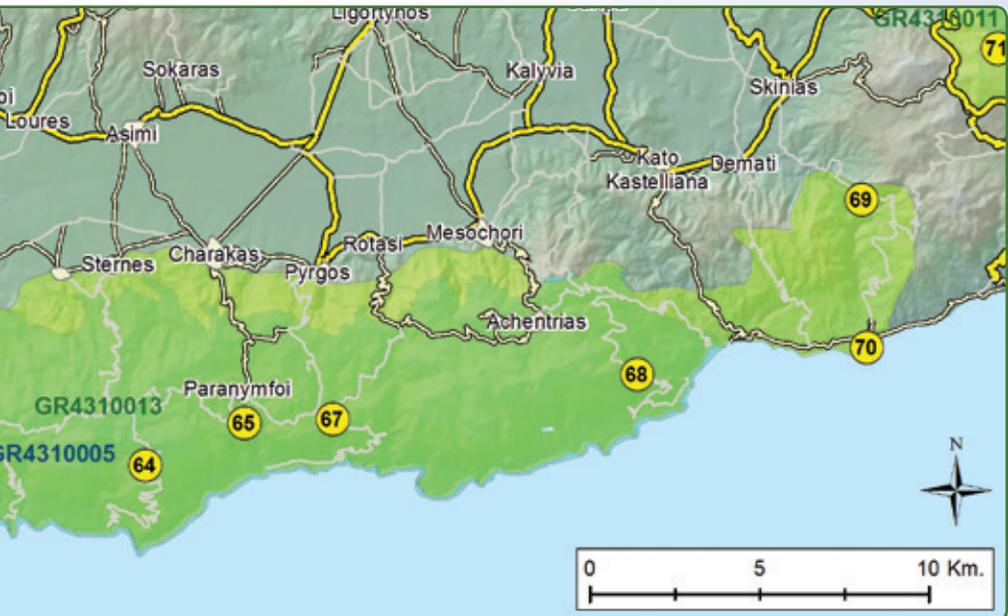


Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus*</i> )	64, 65, 67
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	41, 44, 47-69
Bonelli's Eagle ( <i>Aquila fasciata*</i> )	47, 48, 59, 65
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetus</i> )	41-70
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	41-70
Eleonora's Falcon ( <i>Falco eleonora*</i> )	41, 42, 45, 47, 48
Red-billed Chough ( <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> )	64, 65, 67, 69
Woodlark ( <i>Lullula arborea</i> )	47, 48, 54-69
Ruppell's Warbler ( <i>Sylvia rueppelli</i> )	47, 51, 59, 65

Eight species of reptiles live in these two areas, including the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta\**), which uses the expansive beach at Messara for breeding.

Living alongside them are 3 species of amphibians, 12 mammals (excluding bats) and several species of invertebrates, as well as the 210 bird fauna species recorded to date.

Species	Observation points
Nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> )	41-70
Ortolan Bunting ( <i>Emberiza hortulana</i> )	54, 59, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69
Fan-tailed Warbler ( <i>Cisticola juncidis</i> )	42, 45
Gull-billed Tern ( <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> )	42, 45
European Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*</i> )	41, 70
Tawny Pipit ( <i>Anthus campestris</i> )	42, 45, 64, 65
Subalpine Warbler ( <i>Sylvia cantillans</i> )	41, 44, 45
Marsh Sandpiper ( <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> )	42, 45
Black Stork ( <i>Ciconia nigra</i> )	65
Imperial Eagle ( <i>Aquila heliaca*</i> )	42, 45, 68, 69
Montagu's Harrier ( <i>Circus pygargus</i> )	42, 45, 54, 59
Squacco Heron ( <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> )	42, 45
Wood Sandpiper ( <i>Tringa glareola</i> )	42, 45
Ferruginous Duck ( <i>Aythya nyroca*</i> )	42, 45
Glossy Ibis ( <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> )	42, 45
Lesser Kestrel ( <i>Falco naumani*</i> )	45
Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> )	42, 45
Short-toed Lark ( <i>Caladrella brachydactyla</i> )	42, 45, 65, 70





**10. Lazaros Peak - Madara (SPA GR4310011), Selinari Gorge - Vrachasi (SPA GR4320013), Koupa Peak (Dytiki Crete) (SPA GR4320010)**

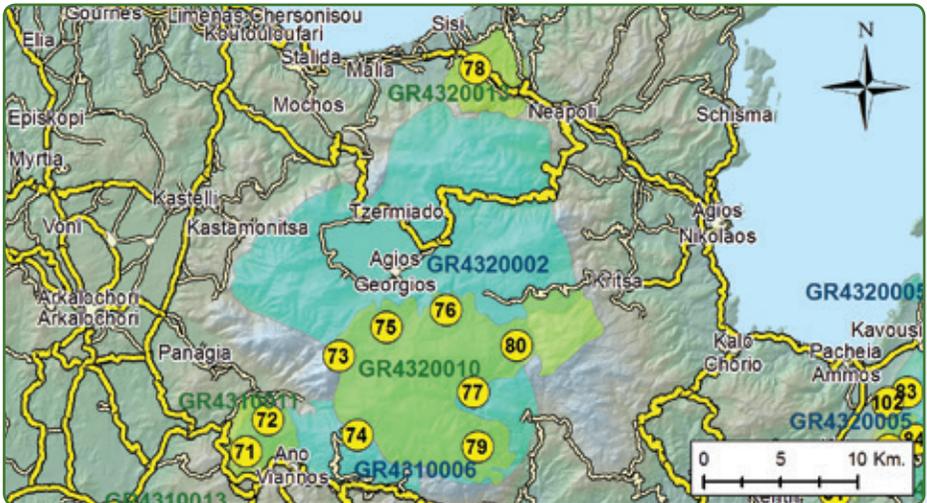
The Dhikti mountain range, with Spathi (2,148m) as its highest peak, is one of the three main mountain massifs on Crete. It lies in the eastern part of the island, straddling the Regional Units of Heraklion and Lasithi. The Selinari Gorge is on the semi-mountainous northern side of the range, while Koupa Peak extends to the south-west.

Mountain plains, dolines, steep-sided peaks, gorges, seasonal wetlands, torrents and caves are features of the main massif, which is heavily karstified due to its underlying limestone geology. Pine forests and maquis predominate in the surrounding area. Numerous villages are to be found both in the mountainous section and at lower altitudes.

Access is facilitated by a dense network of tarmac roads, as well as unsurfaced roads leading to the main observation points. Large parts of the region are protected as Wildlife Sanctuaries, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Insular Wetlands and Archaeological Sites.

All 3 species of amphibians on Crete, 8 of the 12 reptiles and 18 of the island's 35 mammals should be added to the 175 bird species encountered on Dhikti and in the surrounding area.

Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *)	71-77, 79-81
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	71-81
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	71-77, 79-81
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	71-81
Booted Eagle ( <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i> )	72, 77, 78, 80
Bonelli's Eagle ( <i>Aquila fasciata</i> *)	72
Red-billed Chough ( <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> )	72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79, 80
Chukar ( <i>Alectoris chukar</i> )	71-81
Scops Owl ( <i>Otus scops</i> )	71-81
Alpine Accentor ( <i>Prunella collaris</i> )	78, 80
Tawny Pipit ( <i>Anthus campestris</i> )	76
Woodchat Shrike ( <i>Lanius senator</i> )	72, 76, 77
Song Thrush ( <i>Turdus philomelos</i> )	71, 72, 76, 77, 78, 80
Short-toed Treecreeper ( <i>Certhia brachydactyla</i> )	73-77, 79, 80
Firecrest ( <i>Regulus ignicapillus</i> )	74, 77





### 11. South-west Thryпти (Koufoto) (SPA GR4320014)

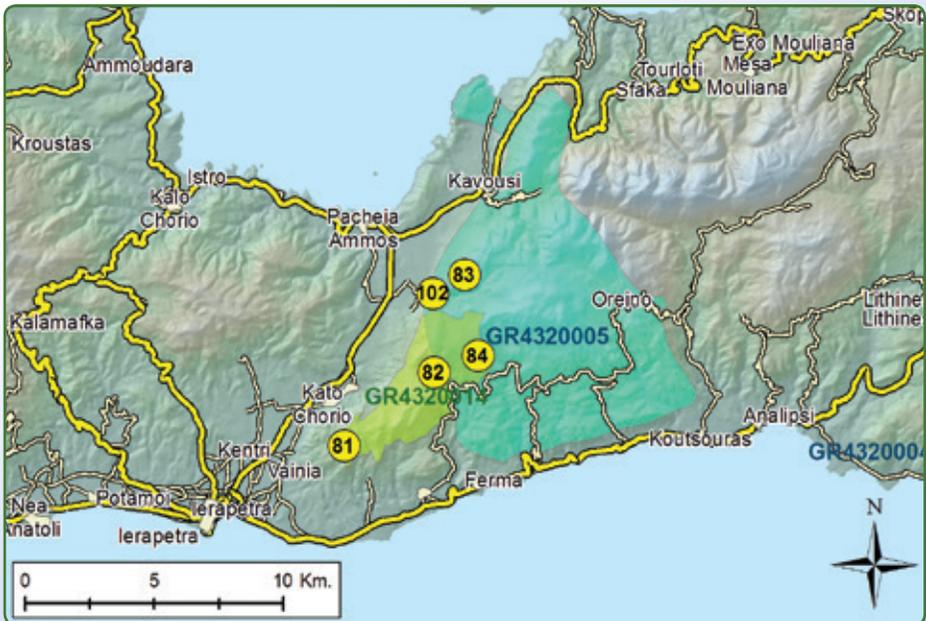
The Thryпти massif lies in the eastern part of Crete, between Ierapetra and Siteia.

Its main features are cliffs, chasms, scree and gorges - above all the Ha Gorge, which is regarded as one of the most impressive on Crete. Limestone predominates, with dolomites appearing from place to place.

In the southern part of the protected area there are small valleys with springs and seasonal rivers. The vegetation is a mixture of sparse pine forest, phrygana, maquis and farmland. The handful of villages scattered across the massif can be accessed relatively easily from Ierapetra (in the main, unsurfaced roads lead to the observation points).

Part of the area is protected as a Wildlife Sanctuary.

Species	Observation points
Lammergeier ( <i>Gypaetus barbatus*</i> )	83, 102
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	81-84, 102
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	83, 102
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	81-84, 102
Red-billed Chough ( <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> )	83, 102
Marsh Harrier ( <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> )	81, 102
Sparrowhawk ( <i>Accipiter nisus</i> )	82, 84, 102
Hen Harrier ( <i>Circus cyaneus</i> )	81-84, 102
Short-toed (Snake) Eagle ( <i>Circaetus gallicus</i> )	81, 83
Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> )	83
Corn Bunting ( <i>Emberizza calandra</i> )	83
Great Tit ( <i>Parus major</i> )	81-84, 102
Alpine Swift ( <i>Apus melba</i> )	83
Golden Oriole ( <i>Oriolus oriolus</i> )	82, 84, 102
Red-rumped Swallow ( <i>Cecropius daurica</i> )	82, 84, 102
Jackdaw ( <i>Corvus monedula</i> )	102





## 12. North-eastern tip of Crete (SPA GR4320009), Dionysades Islands (SPA GR4320011)

The north-eastern tip of Crete includes Cape Sidero, the Vai palm forest, the coastal wetlands of Palekastro and the nearby Dionysades Islands, Elasa and Grandes.

The Dionysades is a complex of four islands (Yanisada, Dragonada, Paximada and Prassonisi) to the north of Siteia, Dragonada being the largest.

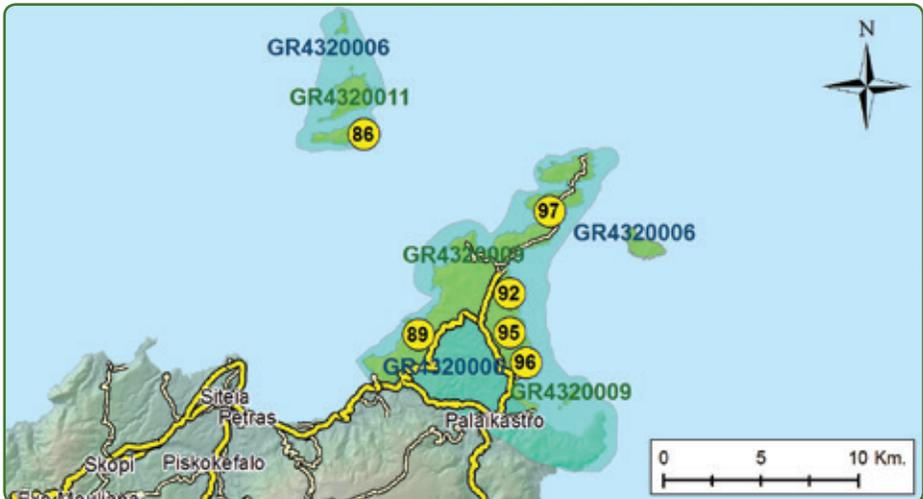
Limestone, dolomites, phyllites and alluvial deposits enrich the landscape's geology, which is complemented by phrygana vegetation with a few patches of maquis and, of course, the renowned palm forest at Vai.

This is a sparsely populated area, with low impact tourism and human activity. None of the islands are inhabited, while access to the northern part of the cape is prohibited, as it serves as a military base. In addition to the area's floristic significance, the protected species of amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates and other animal species are of considerable ecological value.

The Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*\*) and bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) are both present in the marine zone.

Parts of the region are protected as Wildlife Sanctuaries, Archaeological Zones and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Species	Observation points
European Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii</i> *)	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Cory's Shearwater ( <i>Calonectris diomedea</i> )	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Yelkouan Shearwater ( <i>P. puffinus yelkouan</i> )	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Audouin's Gull ( <i>Ichthyaeetus audouinii</i> *)	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Red-footed Falcon ( <i>Falco vespertinus</i> *)	92
Red-backed Shrike ( <i>Lanius collurio</i> )	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Cetti's Warbler ( <i>Cettia cettia</i> )	92
Red-throated Pipit ( <i>Anthus cervinus</i> )	92
Willow Warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> )	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Semicollared Flycatcher ( <i>Ficedula semitoquarta</i> )	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Icterine Warbler ( <i>Hipollais icterina</i> )	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98
Black-eared Wheatear ( <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i> )	89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98





### 13. Zakros Mountains (SPA GR4320016), Koufonisi Island, surrounding islets and Kavalli Islets (GR4320017)

This site lies at the south-eastern extremity of Crete, and includes the Zakros Mountains, the shore area from Xerokambos to Kato Zakros, Koufonisi and the Kavalli Islets.

There are several gorges in the area, the best known being the Gorge of the Dead, and significant caves. The beach at Xerokambos is the site of the Alatsolimni salt marsh wetland, and also has a small area of sand dunes.

Koufonisi has dunes and a large beach, whereas the Kavalli Islets are rocky outcrops. Geologically speaking, the greater part of this area consists of limestone. Phrygana dominates throughout the entire region, which is sparsely populated.

Picturesque villages and scattered archaeological sites lie among the expansive olive groves at lower altitudes, while most of the mountain villages have been abandoned. Koufonisi and the Kavalli Islets are uninhabited and not served by any ferry.

Accessing the observation points from Siteia, Zakros and Xerokambos is easy, and rarely involves taking unsurfaced roads.

Part of the region is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Alatsolimni and the marsh at Kato Zakros are protected under the Presidential Decree on Insular Wetlands.

Species	Observation points
Griffon Vulture ( <i>Gyps fulvus</i> )	85-94
Bonelli's Eagle ( <i>Aquila fasciata</i> *)	90, 94
Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )	85, 87, 88
Eleonora's Falcon ( <i>Falco eleonorae</i> *)	85-94
Pallid Harrier ( <i>Circus macrourus</i> )	85-94
Honey Buzzard ( <i>Pernis apivorus</i> )	85-94
European Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis d.*</i> )	91, 93
Cory's Shearwater ( <i>Calonectris diomedea</i> )	91, 93
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater ( <i>Merops persicus</i> )	88, 91
Greater Flamingo ( <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i> )	93
Black-winged Stilt ( <i>Himantopus himantopus</i> )	93
Collared Pratincole ( <i>Glareola pratincola</i> )	93
Pallid Swift ( <i>Apus pallidus</i> )	91, 93



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<http://www.poulia.info/>

General information on priority species in Greek avifauna:  
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