



## **BIRDING TOUR GREECE: SPRING BIRDING IN THE NORTH**

**29 APRIL – 06 MAY 2027**

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*Spectacular looks at **Dalmatian Pelican** on picturesque Lake Kirkini will be a tour highlight.*

Greece has the highest diversity of bird species in Eastern Europe, and our tour targets the best avifauna this beautiful country has to offer, as well as the fascinating culture and history of one of the oldest civilizations on Earth. This eight-day, small group birdwatching tour visits the finest birding sites in northern Greece and is well timed to coincide with the peak of the spring migration and start of the breeding season, when the country is filled with many spectacularly plumaged species, and alive with birdsong.

Our tour starts in Thessaloniki, from where we head east along the Aegean coastline to spend the first two nights of the tour close to the spectacular wetlands of the Nestos Delta. The lagoons, beaches and lakes provide an excellent introduction to spring birding in Europe. Here we will enjoy a high diversity of waterfowl, shorebirds (waders), terns, and gulls to kick off the tour, all while enjoying many colorful and striking migratory species such as **European Roller**, **European Bee-eater**, **Lesser Kestrel**, **Eastern Subalpine Warbler**, and **Black-headed Bunting**. Departing east for Dadia Forest, we first stop in the Mediterranean woodlands, vineyards and olive groves of the Rhodope Mountains for top targets including **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin**, **Olive-tree Warbler**, and **Eastern Orphean Warbler**.



*Lesser Kestrel* is one of several long-distance migrants that come to Greece to breed during the northern summer.

Dadia Forest is one of Europe's premier locations for birds of prey. An impressive 35 out of 38 diurnal raptors thrive here, such as the beautiful **Pallid Harrier**, alongside seven owl species, and we have the opportunity to visit a vulture feeding station to observe these species in action. We then visit the Evros Delta, arguably Greece's most important delta system, which is comprised of an interesting mix of habitats which together host more than 320 bird species. Highlights include

breeding **Spur-winged Lapwing**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Montagu's Harrier**, **Eurasian Penduline Tit**, and **Moustached Warbler** to name a few. With luck, we might see some of the rare mammals that live in the delta, such as **European Wildcat** and **Grey Wolf**.

From here we drive west to the brilliant **Lake Kerkini** for the final three nights of the tour. En route we will explore the impressive **Nestos Gorge** and its limestone cliffs, searching the rocky slopes, woodland and alpine meadows for high-altitude species including the localized and secretive **Rock Partridge**. At Lake Kerkini, we bird by foot and boat, to enjoy the massive diversity of waterbirds on offer here including the iconic **Dalmatian Pelican** and **Pygmy Cormorant**, which we will put special effort to enjoy close views of. At night we have the chance to look for the characterful **Eurasian Scops Owl** and impressive **Eurasian Eagle-Owl**. During our stay at Lake Kerkini, we also explore the forests on the Bulgarian border, where seven species of woodpecker can be found, along with **Sombre Tit**, **Western Rock Nuthatch**, and **Semicollared Flycatcher**. Across coastal wetlands, Mediterranean scrub, beautiful leafy woodlands, high-altitude meadows to extensive lake systems, this tour offers an unforgettable spring birding experience with a remarkable array of colorful, impressive and sought-after European species.



*Western Rock Nuthatch can be found in rocky places in parts of Greece.*

We will finish this tour by returning to Thessaloniki, though, we highly recommend joining our five-day **Birding Tour Greece: Lesvos in Spring Extension** which runs immediately after this tour. This extension offers several different resident species as well as further interesting migrants, with tour highlights including **Eleonora's Falcon**, **Krüper's Nuthatch**, **Western Rock Nuthatch**, **Cinereous Bunting**, and much more, including the opportunity of observing the spectacle of migration as thousands of birds cross Greece on their way north to their breeding areas.

## Itinerary (8 days/7 nights)

### Day 1. Arrival in Thessaloniki

Welcome to our Greece spring birding tour. We will meet around midday at Thessaloniki Airport, where you will be greeted by your Birding Ecotours tour leader and our local Greek bird guide. From here, we transfer east along the northern Aegean coastline on a scenic three hour drive to the peaceful village of Fanari. Upon arrival, we will check into our hotel, which will serve as our base for the next two nights. This evening, we will enjoy our first authentic Greek dinner together while discussing the itinerary and the many exciting target species we hope to find over the coming week.

Overnight: Nero Seascape Suites, or similar, Fanari



*One of the stars of the spring migration is the **European Roller**. This species is simply an explosion of color. It is amazing to see these gorgeous birds along the roadsides as we drive around the picturesque landscapes of northern Greece.*

### Day 2. Birding the Nestos Delta

After a relaxing breakfast we will start our birding in the brilliant Nestos Delta, with its series of lagoons supporting a huge number of migrant and resident species each year. Through the day, we will explore several important bird areas such as Lake Vistonida and Lake Ismarida, among other impressive sites. At the beautiful wild beach of Porto Lagos, we will watch for an impressive diversity of waders, gulls, and terns, with some of the highlights being **Kentish Plover**, **Little Tern**, **Caspian Tern**, **Slender-billed Gull**, and **Mediterranean Gull**, alongside the threatened and localized **Yelkouan Shearwater** out at sea. By birding the lagoons, marshes, and lakes in the

area, we expect to see a high diversity of wetland species, with top targets including **Garganey**, **Common Pochard**, **Common Goldeneye**, **Black-necked Grebe**, **Greater Flamingo**, **Eurasian Stone-curlew**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Pied Avocet**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Curlew Sandpiper**, **Broad-billed Sandpiper**, **Collared Pratincole**, **Little Gull**, **Glossy Ibis**, and **Great White Pelican**.

We will stay close to our base in Fanari today. The mix of wetland habitats in the local area will provide an excellent introduction to spring birding in Greece, at a relaxed pace. Some of the many species we will look for include **Little Owl**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **European Roller**, **Common Kingfisher**, **European Bee-eater**, **Syrian Woodpecker**, **Lesser Kestrel**, **Woodchat Shrike**, **Red-backed Shrike**, **Eurasian Penduline Tit**, **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**, **Eastern Subalpine Warbler**, **Whinchat** and **Black-headed Bunting**. The delta is also an excellent area for raptors, drawn here by the volume of prey on offer. Key species possible include **Greater Spotted Eagle**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, and **Eurasian Hobby**. While in the delta we will keep our eyes peeled for **Golden Jackal**, an interesting canid species that ranges widely from Southeast Asia to southeast Europe.

Overnight: Nero Seascapes Suites, or similar, Fanari



*Black-headed Bunting is one of many attractive buntings possible on this tour.*

### Day 3. Dadia Forest

With an early start, we will head east along the coast, stopping in the woodlands of Maroneia. This village lies at the southern end of the Rhodope Mountains, and we will explore the peaceful Mediterranean shrubland, woodlands, vineyards, olive and almond groves in search of a top tour target, the **Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin**. Other species we might encounter include **Chukar Partridge**, **Masked Shrike**, **Olive-tree Warbler**, **Eastern Orphean Warbler**, **Rüppell's**

**Warbler, Common Nightingale, Eastern Black-eared Wheatear, and Cirl Bunting.** Watching the sea we might add **Audouin's Gull, Scopoli's Shearwater, and Yelkouan Shearwater.**



*Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin is usually quite the skulker, but we will hope to find this migrant during the tour.*

By late morning we will continue further east, towards the Turkish border, where we will spend the rest of the day enjoying the amazing Dadia Forest. This mountainous area is one of the best places in Europe for watching birds of prey. An outstanding 35 out of 38 diurnal raptors occurring in Europe have been recorded here, along with seven out of nine owl species. Some of the raptor species regularly recorded here include **European Honey Buzzard, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Booted Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Eurasian Goshawk, Pallid Harrier, Black Kite, Long-legged Buzzard, and Eurasian Hobby**. If we are lucky, we may even observe **Eastern Imperial Eagle and Golden Eagle**, two spectacular apex predators. While in the Dadia Forest area we will also have the experience of visiting a vulture feeding station where we can watch the spectacle of these birds as they come to feed. This should give us some great views of **Griffon Vulture**, with other species such as **Egyptian Vulture and Cinereous Vulture** possible too.

The Dadia Forest is not just about the birds of prey, and the area is home to a huge diversity of other species which adds to its reputation as one of Europe's top birding locations. Other key species here include **Common Swift, Common Cuckoo, European Turtle Dove, Black Stork, White Stork, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, Short-toed Treecreeper, Hawfinch, and Ortolan Bunting**. The woodland is home to many widespread and common European species, like **Eurasian Jay, Northern Raven, Eurasian Blue Tit, Great Tit, Crested Lark, Common Firecrest, Goldcrest, Eurasian Wren, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Common Blackbird, European Robin, Black Redstart, Eurasian Chaffinch, European Greenfinch,**

**Common Linnet, European Goldfinch, and Eurasian Siskin.** After a short drive we will check in to our hotel near Lake Tychero for the next two nights.

Overnight: Hotel Thrassa, or similar, Tychero

#### Day 4. Evros Delta

Today we have a full day birding in the fantastic Evros Delta, exploring the interesting mosaic of habitats in the area. The huge Evros Delta is arguably Greece's premier birding site, offering the chance to see real European rarities due to its eastern location on the border with Turkey. The River Evros is the Balkan Peninsula's second largest river, and this, combined with the diversity of habitats, makes it a highly attractive area for migrant birds. Around 320 bird species have been recorded here, and the delta is also home to several rare mammals such as European Wildcat, (European) Grey Wolf, and Wild Boar, which we hope to be lucky enough to see.



*European Bee-eater is one of many beautifully colorful targets of this tour.*

Our local guides will arrange special permits so we can enter a fantastic and wild area under military control. This is set to be a major highlight of the tour, as throughout the day we will encounter a long list of exciting Eurasian species. We will take time to look through the many herons, shorebirds (waders), gulls, terns, and waterfowl. There will be some overlap with the species encountered in the Nestos Delta on Day 2, but other possible highlights in the Evros Delta include **Ruddy Shelduck, Ferruginous Duck, Water Rail, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Northern Lapwing, Eurasian Curlew, Common Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank, Ruff, Little Stint, Collared Pratincole, Gull-billed Tern, Whiskered Tern, Black Tern, White-winged Tern, Sandwich Tern, Eurasian Spoonbill, Eurasian Bittern, and Purple**

**Heron.** The Evros Delta is Europe's only site with a stable population of breeding **Spur-winged Lapwing**.



*The tiny **Pygmy Cormorant** is an important tour target.*

Over the course of the day we will explore many different sites within the wetland oasis and, depending on water levels, we might use a boat for some of the birding. The delta's varied habitats results in a vast bird list and this should lead to some unforgettable experiences during our time here. Other impressive species we will be looking out for here include **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, **Levant Sparrowhawk**, **Montagu's Harrier**, **White-tailed Eagle**, **European Roller**, **Red-footed Falcon**, **Eurasian Penduline Tit**, **Bearded Reedling** (Bearded Tit), **Cetti's Warbler**, **Great Reed Warbler**, **Moustached Warbler**, **Spanish Sparrow**, **Western Yellow Wagtail**, **Tawny Pipit**, and **Black-headed Bunting**.

Overnight: Hotel Thrassa, or similar, Tychero

### **Day 5. Nestos Gorge and transfer to Lake Kerkini**

After checking out we drive west, bound for the infamous Lake Kerkini, where we will overnight for the last three nights of the tour. This transfer will take up half of the day, but we will split the journey with an important stop in the breathtaking Nestos River gorge. This is a beautiful location to spend some time in, as we search the limestone cliffs which tower up to 3,280 feet (1,000 meters) high over the meandering river, and oak and cedar scrub forests for **Alpine Swift**, **Griffon Vulture**, **Black Woodpecker**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **Woodlark**, **Eurasian Crag Martin**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, and **Grey Wagtail**. On the rocky slopes and alpine meadows we will search for one of Europe's most elusive species, the shy and retiring **Rock Partridge**. Once we have had our fill, we will transfer to our guesthouse at Lake

Kerkini where, after checking in, we will settle in and enjoy the local specialty cuisine at a nearby restaurant.

Overnight: Limneo Guesthouse, or similar, Lake Kerkini

### Day 6. Lake Kerkini and the Dalmatian Pelican

Lake Kerkini is simply magical. An early morning sitting by the shore, watching pelicans, egrets, and herons, while being serenaded by **Common Cuckoo**, **European Turtle Dove**, **Eurasian Golden Oriole**, and **Common Nightingale** is such a pleasure. We will spend the full day exploring the Lake Kerkini area, which boasts a bird list of over 300 species.



*A boat trip should give us some close views of **Dalmatian Pelican**.*

Lake Kerkini is home to two of Europe's most iconic species, the Near Threatened (BirdLife International) **Dalmatian Pelican** and the odd-looking **Pygmy Cormorant**, both top targets. The surrounding area holds a wonderful diversity of shrikes and warblers, including **Masked Shrike**, **Lesser Grey Shrike**, **Eastern Bonelli's Warbler**, **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**, **Eastern Orphean Warbler**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Eastern Subalpine Warbler** (a total stunner), **Common Whitethroat**, and **Lesser Whitethroat**. At night we have a chance to try for **Eurasian Scops Owl**, and impressive **Eurasian Eagle-Owl**.

Overnight: Limneo Guesthouse, or similar, Lake Kerkini

### Day 7. Lake Kerkini boat cruise and woodpeckers

After an early breakfast we will wrap up our lakeshore birding, before departing for a morning boat cruise on Lake Kerkini, where we will witness an incredible diversity of waterbirds. We will visit the special raft where **Dalmatian Pelicans** breed, allowing for wonderful close-up views and sensational photographs. The extensive number of waterbird species here includes **Great Crested Grebe, Greater Flamingo, Yellow-legged Gull, Black Stork, White Stork, Pygmy Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Glossy Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Little Bittern, Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Egret, Squacco Heron, Purple Heron, Great White Pelican**, and if we are lucky, perhaps **Little Crake**.

After a picnic lunch we will spend the afternoon birding in the forests on the Bulgarian border, where we have the opportunity to see seven different woodpecker species, these being **Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Syrian Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, European Green Woodpecker, Grey-headed Woodpecker**, and the huge **Black Woodpecker**. Other interesting birds to be found here include **Sombre Tit, Marsh Tit, Western Rock Nuthatch, Eurasian Treecreeper, Short-toed Treecreeper, Semicollared Flycatcher**, and **Eurasian Bullfinch**.

Overnight: Limneo Guesthouse, or similar, Lake Kerkini

### Day 8. Drive to Thessaloniki and departure

If time allows, we will enjoy some final birding at Lake Kerkini before departing for Thessaloniki Airport. Here the group parts ways, or continues onto our short 5-day **Birding Tour Greece: Lesvos in Spring Extension**. On this extension we focus on the island specials such as **Cinereous Bunting**, and **Krüper's Nuthatch**, as well as enjoying the spectacular migration of a high diversity of beautiful, and sought-after migrants.

Overnight: Not included (unless continuing on the Lesvos tour).

*Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides, and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.*

<b>Duration:</b>	8 days / 7 nights
<b>Group Size:</b>	6 - 8
<b>Dates:</b>	29 April – 06 May 2027 29 April – 06 May 2028
<b>Start:</b>	Thessaloniki International Airport, Thessaloniki, Greece
<b>End:</b>	Thessaloniki International Airport, Thessaloniki, Greece

**Prices:** €3,490 per person sharing – based on 6 - 8 participants (2027)  
€3,840 per person sharing – based on 6 - 8 participants (2028)

**Single Supplements:** €350 (2027)  
€385 (2028)

**Price includes:**

All accommodation based on two sharing (Day 1 until Day 7, as shown)  
Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 8)  
Drinking water – please bring a refillable water bottle  
Expert tour leader and local guides  
Birdwatching site entrance fees and travel permits  
All entrance fees to national parks, nature reserves, etc.  
Lake Kerkini boat trip  
All ground transport and tolls/taxes while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

**Price excludes:**

International flights to Thessaloniki International Airport  
International flights from Thessaloniki International Airport, or domestic flight if joining the Lesvos extension (estimated at between €75-120 per person in 2026)  
Expenditures due to flight cancellations/delays or other causes beyond our control (force majeure)  
Airport transfers if you arrive before the tour starts or depart after the tour ends  
Departure tax and visas if required  
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions  
Alcoholic, soft drinks, teas, coffees etc. unless provided as part of a meal package (e.g. with breakfast)  
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.  
Personal travel insurance  
Gratuities (please see our [Tipping guidelines for birding tours](#))

**Useful information:**

During our tour, your guide will be driving you in a comfortable vehicle. The tour does not require a great deal of walking or steep hiking to see the bulk of the birds, however a basic level of fitness is required including the ability to walk on rough terrain.