

Rhodes (Rhodos): 4-11 April 2007

I went to the Greek island of Rhodes (Rhodos) during the week from 4 to 11 April 2007. It was just me and my girlfriend Luisa, and we took a rather relaxed holiday, surely not a 6 am – 8 pm birding thing!

Before going, I checked the available web resources, but I did not purchase any specific book, apart from a 1:100.000 map (Road Editions, nr. 202). It was clear that there are not dozens of report or other useful infos, in fact Rhodes seems to be pretty ignored by most birders. I was in touch with [Jos Rutten](#) and I even met him twice during our stay (the first one... by chance!). He's from Belgium and he seems to be the most expert birder for that island; he gave me an interesting Rhodes check list which turned out to be very useful.

In my small web site there's a [gallery](#) of sites and some birds mentioned in this report. I also had, but actually never used, a brochure from www.rodosisland.gr which contains information on many walking trails on the island, including small photos and maps; the pages were originally by Graf Editions (2004); this document anyway is not at all about birdwatching.

We stayed in Sun Beach hotel which is in the Ialysos area, in the NW side, between the airport and Rhodes town. Actually I suggest to choose an accommodation in the opposite side of the island, which is more or less just north or south of Lindos. In April (even during Easter) tourism is not too developed and all the sites can be visited very easily.

Birding sites

I admit it's rather easy going around the island by car for birding, even though many roads are not paved. It's often easy to (suddenly) stop and park for a better viewing, and also private property is generally not a big issue.

Unfortunately, in the island many people seem really not to care at all about the environment, including archaeological sites and the landscape in general. I saw the sad and typical "Mediterranean" way of ruining places with lots of awful buildings and all kinds of rubbish everywhere, from bottles to... air planes (take a look just north of the airport!) and small abandoned army tanks (2 at the Kremasti river, look at [my page](#)). Here is some information about some of the most interesting birding sites I visited, I'm mainly adding something to the web page Jos Rutten already wrote for the [Fatbirder web site](#), which is the page where there are the most useful infos and links to external reports. I recommend to check out and bring a printed copy of that page too, along with the [report](#) by Georges & Mireille Oliosio about their very fruitful 20 day birding holiday in April 2003.

Also take a look at my bird list to see where I saw (or heard) them.

Places are listed from north to south.

Kremasti river

I had this very good place near my hotel in Yalisos. Amazingly, unless the Road Editions crew will update it, in the map I mentioned before this river is not present at all. By the way, it's clear in Google Earth, i.e you can find the river mouth at 36°24'59.49"N 28°6'42.50"E.

Actually there are various places where is possible to scan the area, at first I'd suggest to park the car near the "Kremasti river bridge" as it's mentioned in various reports. Leaving the airport and going north, follow for Rhodes, avoiding the road in the right for Faliraki and Lindos... a few hundred meters after this crossing the main road suddenly goes right, well this is the place, in fact the main road here goes parallel to the Kremasti river. It's a good idea to park here (36°24'31.17"N 28°6'40.11"E) and to go on foot towards the sea and the river mouth. A nice alternative it's to scan the reed beds and the river walking SE, near the main road. It's possible to walk near large tracts of the river, on both sides. The river mouth is absolutely worth a visit and actually is (as usual,

and it's a very strange phenomenon to me) a pond, not connected to the sea.

Rhodos town

I went twice in the extreme north side of the island - town, which is where the Aquarium is placed. The first time there were dozens of migrating birds (passerines and a few terns), surely a very close and exciting view.

Also Monte Smith turned out to be very interesting, actually just on one of the two occasions I visited it, mainly for passerines.

Afandou

This area is rather large to explore, it's not really the Afandou town anyway, but the area located between the main N-S road and the sea, just SE of Afandou.

Using the car or your own feet I think it's good to scan the various roads, bushes, reeds, scrubs, small riverbeds and more or less uncultivated lands. About the golf course (36°17'48.19"N 28°10'52.09"E), I did not enter it but it seemed to be interesting, besides it seemed to be open in case someone wanted to take a look inside, there were many passages in the borders; this area is located immediately in your left side if driving from Rhodes, even before meeting the Afandou town road (in the right side).

River Gadouras

When I visited the place, it was not so interesting, but beware, I was there at mid day! Like all the other "rivers", it had just a little water... I can't imagine the situation during summer!

Appolakia Reservoir

This place (36° 5'59.79"N 27°47'42.66"E) is interesting, and I think it'd be so even in winter; I wonder how many birders went here during the bad season.

It's right to recommend driving until the north side of the reservoir, where there's the best birding area with marsh and reed beds.

Anyway, avoid driving away from the reservoir going further north, towards the town of Siana, unless you have a very strong 4x4 car!

Bird list

1. *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* - European Shag - 1 at Rhodes aquarium area, 1 near Pefki, 1 at Kiotari, 3 at Apolakkia lake
2. *Ardea cinerea* - Grey Heron - 1 at Kremasti river (9 apr)
3. *Egretta garzetta* - Little Egret - 1 at Rhodes harbour (5 apr), 1 at Kremasti river (9 apr)
4. *Buteo buteo* - Common Buzzard - 1 north Soroni (6 apr)
5. *Buteo rufinus* - Long-legged Buzzard - 1 at: Kremasti river + west Ataviros + near Masari + Afandou Beach + Ialysos + Asklipio + Kalithea
6. *Falco tinnunculus* - Eurasian Kestrel - Common everywhere
7. *Alectoris chukar* - Chukar - (probably) heard between Kritinia castle and the sea (6 apr)
8. *Porzana parva* - Little Crake - 1 at Kremasti river (6 apr + 9 apr)
9. *Gallinula chloropus* - Common Moorhen - 1 at Kremasti river (6 apr)
10. *Fulica atra* - Eurasian Coot - 1 at Kremasti river (9 apr)
11. *Burhinus oedicedemus* - Stone-curlew - 1 at Mount Smith (5 apr)
12. *Vanellus spinosus* - Spur-winged Lapwing - 1 at Kiotari beach (9 apr)
13. *Charadrius dubius* - Little Ringed Plover - 1 at: Ialysos beach + Kremasti river + Kiotari beach + Apolakkia lake
14. *Tringa totanus* - Common Redshank - 1 at Apolakkia lake (9 apr)
15. *Tringa glareola* - Wood Sandpiper - 3 at Apolakkia lake (9 apr)
16. *Larus michahellis* - Yellow-legged Gull - Common
17. *Sterna sandvicensis* - Sandwich Tern - 1 near Rhodes aquarium (5 apr), 1 at

- Kremasti river (6 apr)
18. *Columba livia* - Rock Dove - Common
 19. *Columba palumbus* - Woodpigeon - Just heard once below the Kamiros area (6 apr)
 20. *Streptopelia decaocto* - Eurasian Collared Dove - Common
 21. *Clamator glandarius* - Great Spotted Cuckoo - 1 from the road between Apolakkia and Monolithos (9 apr)
 22. *Cuculus canorus* - Common Cuckoo - 1 in Petaloudes (10 apr)
 23. *Otus scops* - European Scops Owl - Just heard, always during the day: near Siana (Ataviros, 6 apr) + Lindos (7 apr) + Petaloudes (10 apr, maybe 2 birds)
 24. *Tachymarptis melba* - Alpine Swift - 2-3 in Lindos (7 apr)
 25. *Apus apus* - Common Swift - Common
 26. *Apus pallidus* - Pallid Swift - At least 1 in Lindos (7 apr)
 27. *Merops apiaster* - European Bee-eater - 1 at Kremasti river (6 apr)
 28. *Upupa epops* - Hoopoe - 1 near Rhodes aquarium + 1 at Mount Smith (5 apr)
 29. *Jynx torquilla* - Eurasian Wryneck - 1 at Kiotari (9 apr)
 30. *Calandrella brachydactyla* - Greater Short-toed Lark - Kremasti river (6 apr), Gadouras river (8 apr)
 31. *Galerida cristata* - Crested Lark - Very common, especially in the S & E
 32. *Riparia riparia* - Sand Martin - Afandou beach (8 apr)
 33. *Hirundo rupestris* - Eurasian Crag Martin - 1 at Rhodes town (5 apr), Haraki Castle (8 apr)
 34. *Hirundo rustica* - Barn Swallow - Common
 35. *Hirundo daurica* - Red-rumped Swallow - 1 at Kremasti river (6 apr)
 36. *Delichon urbica* - Common House Martin - 1 at Haraki (8 apr), 1 at Kremasti river (9 apr)
 37. *Motacilla alba* - White Wagtail - Common
 38. *Motacilla flava* - Yellow Wagtail - Common in different places, often in large flocks
 39. *Anthus trivialis* - Tree Pipit - near Rhodes aquarium + Mount Smith (5 apr)
 40. *Anthus cervinus* - Red-throated Pipit - near Rhodes aquarium (5 apr)
 41. *Monticola solitarius* - Blue Rock Thrush - near Siana (Ataviros, 6 apr), 1 at Lardos & various in Lindos (7 apr)
 42. *Turdus merula* - Blackbird - Common in small numbers
 43. *Cettia cetti* - Cetti's Warbler - Kremasti river (6 apr)
 44. *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* - Sedge Warbler - Kremasti river (6 + 9 apr)
 45. *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* - Reed Warbler - Very common in Kremasti river
 46. *Acrocephalus palustris* - Marsh Warbler - Heard at Kremasti river (6 apr)
 47. *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* - Great Reed Warbler - Kremasti river (6 + 9 apr)
 48. *Hippolais pallida* - Eastern Olivaceous Warbler - 1 at Afandou beach (8 apr)
 49. *Phylloscopus trochilus* - Willow Warbler - Heard SE of Asklipio (9 apr)
 50. *Phylloscopus collybita* - Common Chiffchaff - Common in small numbers
 51. *Sylvia atricapilla* - Blackcap - Kremasti river (6 apr)
 52. *Sylvia curruca* - Lesser Whitethroat - 1 at Kalithea (10 apr)
 53. *Sylvia rueppelli* - Rüppell's Warbler - 1 at Feraklos Castle, Haraki (8 apr)
 54. *Sylvia melanocephala* - Sardinian Warbler - Common
 55. *Luscinia megarhynchos* - Common Nightingale - Heard in Lindos (7 apr) & Mount Smith (11 apr)
 56. *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* - Common Redstart - 1 in Lardos (7 apr)
 57. *Saxicola rubetra* - Whinchat - Common in small numbers
 58. *Saxicola rubicola* - European Stonechat - 1 in Pefki (7 apr)
 59. *Oenanthe oenanthe* - Northern Wheatear - Common in small numbers
 60. *Oenanthe hispanica* - Black-eared Wheatear - 1 in Mount Smith (5 apr), 1 in Pefki (7 apr), 1 at Haraki (8 apr)
 61. *Oenanthe isabellina* - Isabelline Wheatear - 1 near Rhodes aquarium (5 apr), 1 at Afandou beach (8 apr)

62. *Cyanistes caeruleus* - Blue Tit - Common
63. *Lanius senator* - Woodchat Shrike - Common in small numbers
64. *Garrulus glandarius* - Eurasian Jay - Common in small numbers
65. *Corvus corone* - Carrion Crow - Common
66. *Corvus corax* - Common Raven - 1 at Kritinia Castle (6 apr) + 1 near Siana (Ataviros, 6 apr) + 1 Haraki (8 apr)
67. *Emberiza hortulana* - Ortolan Bunting - 2 at Mount Smith (5 apr)
68. *Emberiza calandra* - Corn Bunting - Common
69. *Ploceus melanocephalus* - Black-headed Weaver - 1 at Kremasti river (6 apr + 9 apr)
70. *Fringilla coelebs* - Chaffinch - Common
71. *Carduelis chloris* - European Greenfinch - Common
72. *Carduelis cannabina* - Linnet - Flock in Afandou beach (8 apr)
73. *Passer domesticus* - House Sparrow - Common

Missed birds

During spring, it can be easy to find many other interesting bird species, which unfortunately I miss (some of these 'd have been lifer fo me...). The main reason for most of them is that in the beginning of April is still too soon for many migrating species. I can list some of the missed species, but I am sure I could add many others:

- *Plegadis falcinellus* - Glossy Ibis
- *Hippolais olivetorum* - Olive-tree Warbler
- *Sylvia cantillans* - Subalpine Warbler
- *Sylvia crassirostris* - Eastern Orphean Warbler
- *Phylloscopus orientalis* - Eastern Bonelli's Warbler
- *Ficedula semitorquata* - Semicollared Flycatcher
- *Emberiza melanocephala* - Black-headed Bunting
- *Emberiza caesia* - Cretzschmar's Bunting

Other animals

I looked also for reptiles and amphibians, but actually without that much effort. The snakes have been disappointing, I just saw 1 dead and another... almost dead, it was caught by a buzzard-like raptor, I saw it just 2 seconds while driving the car, and the bird was flying away.

Frogs: from my place (Yalissos, just NE of airport) I heard many "regular-sounding" frogs from an unused pool inside a private and closed area. Also I saw and heard (but no photo) some weird sounding little toads, maybe *Pelophylax cerigensis*.

About lizards, *Laudakia stellio* is very common, especially in the east and south sides of the island. Also a few *Anatololacerta oertzeni*.

A few *Mauremys rivulata* have been the only turtles which I regularly saw in the Kremasti river.

In the roads, I saw an amazing amount of dead weasels.

That' all, ciao

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