

# Go Slow in Corfu

Naturetrek Tour Report

9th – 16th September 2022

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Angelokastro, photo by Mirjan Topi

Tour report by Mirjan Topi



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Tour participants: Mirjan Topi, Giannis Gasterators, Elena Papadopoulou (leaders) with 15 Naturetrek clients

## Day 1

Friday 9th September

### Arrival in Corfu

Our party arrived at Corfu airport on several different flights but we were all together by 17.30 and we made our way to the pleasant Iliada Beach Hotel, situated in the area of Gouvia in Corfu. We gathered for dinner at 19.30 where the local guide Elena joined us as well. We introduced each other and explained the plan for the coming day.

## Day 2

Saturday 10th September

### Korrision Lagoon and Lefkimmi Saltpans

After breakfast at 08:00, we left the hotel at 09:00. The day was hot and humid so we ensured we had plenty of water available in the bus for everyone.

We drove towards the Korrision Lagoon (situated on the south of the island), through Kastellani Achillion, going through a hilly area of Corfu, that offers fantastic landscapes. We made a comfort stop at a coffee shop on the way, where we had some really good views of few interesting species such as the Long-legged Buzzard, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Common Buzzard, Red-rumped Swallows etc. After this stop we continued to drive towards the southern part of the Korrision Lagoon, where the sand dunes can be seen well.

We walked for around 10 minutes until reaching a bird watching hide and had some really good views of several water birds such as: Grey Heron, Little Egret, Black-winged Stilt, Greenshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Kentish Plover, Ringed Plover, Dunlin etc. We also had some very good views of a very obliging Spotted Flycatcher just few metres away. We spent around an hour here then got in to the bus to move towards the Lefkimmi Saltpans, where we had our picnic lunch and welcome cold drinks from the cooler.

The saltpans were actually empty of waders, this probably because of the heat of that day and also because of the peculiarities of the migration season. Here we only had, Grey Herons, Little Egrets, Yellow-legged Gulls and around 150 distant Slender-billed Gulls – probably! There were at quite some distance. We had also a White Wagtail here.

After Lefkimmi Saltpans, we moved back to the hotel and arrived at 16.15.

## Day 3

Sunday 11th September

### Ropa Valley

We left the hotel at 09:00 after breakfast. The day was hot and humid again but the Ropa Valley is a rather vast area that offers opportunities to walk in a shade. We selected a trail on the shade and walked there.

Ropa Valley is never disappointing. We had some very good views of Red-backed Shrikes, Lesser-grey Shrikes, Black-eared Wheatear, Northern Wheatear and some people had a very good view of an Icterine Warbler. In terms of birds of prey, we had few Common Buzzards staying quite close and offering great views. European Bee-eater was heard by everyone but we could not really spot them. In addition, as we had Red-rumped Swallows, Barn Swallows, House Martin and other common birds.

It was a good place also for butterflies, where we saw few species of them, such as Wall Brown, Painted Lady, Large White etc.

After Ropa Valley, we drove towards Angelokastro. A place that offers fascinating landscapes that people enjoyed a lot. We had our picnic lunch and cold drinks in a garden under the shade of an olive tree. After that, some people climbed to the castle and the others enjoyed a drink in the nearby bars here. We saw several Crag Martins there, a very nice male of Black-eared Wheatear, several Common Buzzards and Common Kestrels and few Barn Swallows.

After Angelokastro, we drove back to the hotel and reached it at 15.30.

## Day 4

Monday 12th September

### Pantokrator Mountain

As usual we started breakfast at 8.00 and departed at 9.00. Today was really a fresh day, with a lot of fresh breeze in the mountains. We made a first stop on the way and walked around an orchard site where it was a good and open trail.

We had fantastic views of Short-toed Snake Eagle there, few Common Buzzards, few Northern Ravens, plenty of Jays and few rather common birds such as Blue Tit, House Sparrow etc.

Even though few birds here, we still had some very good butterflies, such as: the Large Wall Brown, Silver Washed Fritillary, Delatinn's Grayling, Southern White Admiral, Powdered Brimstone, Meadow Brown, Lang's Short-tailed Blue, Common Swallowtail, Painted Lady, Small White and also Sage Skipper and Small Heath.

After this stop we drove towards the Pantokrator peak. After visiting the peak, we dropped down and found a place with shade where we enjoyed the lunch. Here we had few individuals of Black-eared Wheatear, Common Kestrel and we also heard the Rock Nuthatch.

## Day 5

Tuesday 13th September

### Korrision Lagoon and Airport Lagoon

We started the day at our usual time and drove towards the northern part of the Korrision Lagoon. We reached the place after around 40 minutes. We saw there over 300 individuals of Greater Flamingo, Kentish Plover, Ringed Plover, Kingfisher, Sparrowhawk etc. In addition, we made some sea watching where we had several individuals

of the Scopoli's Shearwater. Moreover, the place was quite interesting also for butterflies. We had there: Cleopatra, Meadow Brown, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Small Cooper, Small White, and Violet Dropwing dragonfly.

After visiting this site, we moved towards the Airport Lagoon, but not before that we had a very nice coffee and comfort stop at a local restaurant with an orchard garden. This was very popular and a place that we will definitely visit again.

We reached the Airport Lagoon at around 13:00, took our picnic lunches there and started birding up to around 14.30 and drove back to the hotel. We had here: Curlews, Marsh Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Teal and few other species.

## Day 6

Wednesday 14th September

Leisure free day – Optional beach and Old City visits

Today it was a free leisure day. Some people decided to stay at the hotel and lie in the hotel beach. Most of the people chose to visit the old city of Corfu. We organized a transfer to the city from the hotel at 10.00 and organized to transfers from the city to the hotel, one transfer at 12.00 and one transfer at 15.00 in order to enable people to spend the amount of time they wanted in the city. We organized lunch at the hotel restaurant for all the ones who wanted to take lunch there. Nevertheless, some people chose to take lunch on their own in the old city.

## Day 7

Thursday 15th September

Butrint National Park in Albania

Today we had to start the day quite earlier than previous days. The breakfast was served at 7.30 and we departed from the hotel at 08.00 to catch our boat at 09.00. We spent not less than half an hour waiting for our passports to get checked from the border police as we were moving from an EU country to a non-EU country and the terminal to Albania is always very busy during this season. The boat was fast and reached Saranda in around 40 minutes. When we reached Albania we had to wait again for our passports to get checked again! In Saranda, we met Arkadi, one of the nicest drivers that I have worked with. This driver was very careful noticing when you were seeing some bird from the van and stopping the van without the need to tell him to do so. We made our first stop at the "Buka e Vivarit" balcony, where there is a very nice view of the whole Butrint Wetland. We had some good views of a flock of Spoonbills that were feeding in the area and other birds as well. After this first stop, we drove for three minutes and reached the park entrance where Alma, our historical guide was waiting from us. We had a comfort stop at the entrance of the park and then continued the guided tour there. Apart from archology, we had also some good wildlife species such as the Balkan Pond Terrapin, European Pond Terrapin, Epirus Frog, Balkan Marsh Frog, Grass Snake etc.

All the trails were shady which was welcome. After the guided tour in the Archeological Park, we took lunch at Livia Restaurant just nearby. People enjoyed a an excellent lunch here with lots of fresh produce. We had fresh fish and mussels and very nice fresh salad. After lunch we drove back to the harbor in Saranda. We traveled with a slow ferry and people had the opportunity to choose to stay inside or outside. The trip lasted 1.5 hours, nevertheless we saw Scopoli's Shearwater and also an individual of European Shag. We reached the hotel at 8 in the evening and took dinner at 8.30.

## Day 8

Friday 16th September

### Departures

People were departing in two different flights one was in mid-day and one was in the afternoon. We organized transfers for both groups. People were free to keep the rooms until mid-day and then stay at the hotel restaurant or bar as much as they wanted until the transfer time came.

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## Species lists

### Birds

	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>
1	Scopoli's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>
2	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
3	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
4	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
5	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
6	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
7	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
8	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
9	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
10	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
11	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
12	European Shag	<i>Golusus aristotelis</i>
13	Pygmy Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo pygmeus</i>
14	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
15	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
16	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
17	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
18	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
19	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo ruffinus</i>
20	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
21	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
22	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
23	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
24	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
25	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
26	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
27	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
28	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
29	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
30	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
31	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
32	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
33	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>

	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>
34	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>
35	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>
36	Audouin's Gull	<i>Larus audouinii</i>
37	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
38	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
39	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
40	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
41	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
42	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
43	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
44	European Bee-Eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
45	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
46	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
47	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius Collurio</i>
48	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>
49	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
50	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
51	Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
52	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
53	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
54	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
55	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
56	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
57	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
58	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
59	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
60	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
61	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
62	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
63	Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>
64	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
65	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>
66	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
67	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>
68	Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>
69	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>

	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>
70	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
71	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
72	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
73	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
74	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>
75	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
76	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
77	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>
78	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
79	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
80	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>

#### List of amphibians and reptile species seen in this tour

1. Dalmatian Algyroides
2. Grass Snake
3. European Pond Terrapin
4. Balkan Pond Terrapin
5. Epirus Frog
6. Balkan Marsh Frog

#### List of butterfly and dragonfly species seen in this tour

1. Large Wall Brown
2. Meadow Brown
3. Silver Washed Fritillary
4. Delatinn's Grayling
5. Southern White Admiral
6. Red Admiral
7. Painted Lady
8. Powdered Brimstone
9. Cleopatra
10. Common Swallowtail
11. Lang's Short-tailed Blue
12. Small White
13. Small Heath
14. Sage Skipper
15. Small Copper
  
16. Violet Dropwing