

# Spring Birding in Sicily

Naturetrek Tour Report

21st – 28th April 2022



Italian Wall Lizard



Collared Flycatcher



Pink Butterfly Orchid subsp. *expansa*



Sawfly Orchid

Tour report and images by Luca Boscain



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Tour participants: Luca Boscain & Taea Romagnuolo (leaders) with nine Naturetrek clients

## Day 1

Thursday 21st April

Catania airport, agriturismo Pozzo di Mazza, Pantano Morghella and Marzamemi

We landed in Catania at the Fontanarossa airport on time, at 10.30am, then everything went smoothly because we collected our baggage and we met Luca and Taea, our guides for the week, at the arrivals gate. We drove for about an hour along a comfortable motorway towards Syracuse and we reached the lovely agriturismo Pozzo di Mazza, our base for the whole trip, lost in the beauty and peace of the Sicilian countryside. We were welcomed by a flock of Bee-eaters on migration and by the songs of Serins and Goldfinches in a lovely ancient complex of rural buildings in original Sicilian style, surrounded by luxuriant gardens plenty of Mediterranean and exotic flowering trees, palms and flowerbeds.

In few minutes a self-service lunch was served in the court with fresh homemade blood-orange and grapefruit juices, local wine, *pizzette*, *saccottini* with broccoli, potatoes and ham, so we could chill out, sitting outside on the tables and enjoying the breeze.

At 1.45pm we left to head south for about 45 minutes to the brackish water lake called Pantano Morghella: the sky was cloudy and the water plumbeous when we spotted the first two young Greater Flamingos, still without any pink on their plumage, together with a lot of Coots and Shelducks. Because of the bad weather, flocks of Barn Swallows and Sand Martins were flying very low, just above the water surface.

In the dry grass, we soon noticed a variety of gorgeous flowers like Barbary Nut (*Moraea sisyrinchium*), Blue Statice (*Limonium sinuatum*), Mallow Bindweed (*Convolvulus althaeoides*), Blue Stonecrop (*Sedum caeruleum*), Italian Thapsia (*Thapsia garganica*), Crown Daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*), Rock Caper (*Capparis spinosa* subsp. *rupestris*), Narbonne Star-of-Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum narbonense*), Upright Yellow-flax (*Linum strictum*) and *Centaurea sicula*.

Sarah Jane, scanning the prairie with her telescope, noticed a Woodchat Shrike a tall thistle, followed by a couple of Whinchats, while Luca showed us 10 Caspian Terns, some Audouin's Gulls and Sandwich Terns that flew out of the pantano to go fishing to the very near rough waters of the Ionian Sea. Walking further, we could get a better view into some other pools, formerly part of some ancient saltpans, where were gathering a lot of Little Egrets, together with four Great Egrets and a Great Cormorant. Two Marsh Harriers suddenly appeared, causing a general flight of white birds. The water level was high, so there was just a narrow shore of naked mud suitable for waders: we observed there three Wood Sandpipers and two Ruffs with their distinctive bright orange legs, despite the distance. On the way back, a pair of Shelducks showed us its numerous family of 12 black-and-white chicks and we heard a Great Reed Warbler singing far away.

Later we transferred to the village of Marzamemi: the wind was blowing strongly when we walked along the seaside to a view point from a nice terrace, squeezed among the souvenir stores and restaurants that recently replaced the fishermen's houses. A number of Black-winged Stilts were feeding in the former saltpans, together with Greater Flamingos, some of them finally pink adults, and a nice Grey Heron with a surprisingly bright yellow bill.

After the field activities, we well deserved an Italian ice-cream at the don Peppinu gelateria: definitely the best gelato in the World, we could agree with the billboards!

In the evening the weather got worse with raindrops filled with Sahara sand that coloured the minibuses pale brown.

After the check-list time, we had a beautiful supper with pasta with potatoes, chicken, fennel and orange salad and strawberry mousse as pudding.

When we left the dining room, a Scops Owl was singing and the best ears could even perceive the Kuhl's Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus kuhlii*) calls, while in the distance was audible the loud noise of the stormy sea.

## Day 2

Friday 22nd April

### Cava Grande del Cassibile and Saline di Priolo

This morning we met at 7.15am for a pre-breakfast walk in the garden of Pozzo di Mazza. We went first to a terrace at the first floor that offered a wonderful view into the cultivated fields and a skyline with a masseria farmhouse, olive, cypress and palm trees and with the very distant silhouette of the Etna, still visible despite the haze. Then we walked in a sort of orchard till some solar panels, nearby which we spotted two female flycatchers, one Pied and one Collared, and a Spotted Flycatcher, while only Luca could see a Common Nightingale that emerged for few seconds from the hedge of cypresses.

Coming back, we stopped for an amazing male of Collared Flycatcher that hopped for a while in the branches of an Olive Tree and on a stone wall where we spotted a Moorish Gecko (*Tarentola mauritanica*) as well.

The breakfast took place on the small tables outside, with fruit juices, ricotta cheese, yogurt and delicious cakes all freshly homemade. We left at 9am, stopping in Avola, the town of the famous grape *nero d'Avola*, to feel a bit in Paris because of an odd Eiffel tower copy and to shop for the picnic lunches, then we climbed along a bendy road between two walls of colourful flowers till a view point. From here the panorama, with the clear air, spaced from Avola to the turquoise Ionian Sea, to the terracing slopes of the Hyblean hills, once all cultivated.

We stopped again, after crossing a scattered village of summer houses, on the top of the plateau, hoping for the Sicilian Rock Partridges seen the week before, but possibly because of the strong wind, we could only spot a couple of Rock Sparrows and a number of nice flowers in the meadow like Ploughshare (Long-lipped) Serapias (*Serapias vomeracea*), Purple Salsify (*Tragopogon porrifolius*), Branched Asphodel (*Asphodelus ramosus*) and Bearded Iris (*Iris × germanica*), these last ones almost over.

Later, Luca drove us to a place that was new also for him, despite leading so many tours in Sicily in the past: we visited in fact a patch of countryside lost in the peaceful nowhere of the Hyblean upland, to look for flora, especially rare species of orchids. We went by foot along a dirty road, admiring the impressive variety of colourful flowers along the road sides: Poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*), Field Marigold (*Calendula arvensis*), Crimson Pea (*Lathyrus chymenum*), Borage (*Borago officinalis*), Dyer's Alkanet (*Alkanna tinctoria*), Perfoliate Alexanders (*Smyrniium perfoliatum*), etc. We left the road to explore an abandoned quarry area where, here and there, a number of lovely orchids appeared: Naked-man Orchid (*Orchis italica*), Yellow Bee Orchid (*Ophrys lutea*), Sawfly Orchid (*Ophrys*

*tenthredinifera*), Sombre Bee Orchid (*Ophrys fusca*), Pink Butterfly Orchid (*Anacamptis papilionacea* subsp. *expansa*), *Ophrys exaltata* and the endemic Moon Orchid (*Ophrys lunulata*), *Ophrys holoserica* subsp. *oxyrrhynchos*, *Ophrys sphegodes* (subsp. *panormitana*), and *Serapias orientalis* (*siciliensis*), all peculiar of Sicily, although the latter two are not always recognised as a separate subspecies. A true garden of Eden!

In the bushes, time to time, an Eastern Subalpine Warbler popped out, while in the sky we saw some Pallid Swifts, definitely identified through the characteristic call. On a stone wall, among a number of bee orchids of many species, Luca used his telescope to show us a stunning male of Sicilian Wall Lizard (*Podarcis wagleriana*), with its bright green throat, while a Cleopatra (*Gonepteryx cleopatra*) delighted us with its lemon yellow and orange wings in flight.

For the lunch, we drove a dozen of minutes to the edge of the Cava Grande del Cassibile gorge, where we sat at a café: Luca had with them, in fact, an agreement, so we bought the drinks or an ice-cream having in return some comfortable tables to eat in the shade. Luca and Taea arranged a variety of cheeses, pizzette, ham, pickles vegetables, salad and strawberries in a kind of self-service picnic.

After lunch, we looked out into the impressive 400-metre-deep gorge and a male Cirl Bunting came to perch very close to us, showing perfectly. Sadly, the grass of the dry meadow where many species of orchids could be find the week before, had been mowed, but luckily we could find many more ones along the dirty road we went through: Mirror Orchid (*Ophrys speculum*), Lesser Yellow Bee Orchid (*Ophrys lutea* subsp. *galilaea*, formerly *O. sicula*), Dark Bee Orchid (*Ophrys sphegodes* subsp. *atrata*), Man Orchid (*Orchis anthropophora*) and the endemic Long-spurred (Green-winged) Orchid (*Anacamptis morio* subsp. *longicornu*) and *Ophrys holoserica* subsp. *biancae*.

After we prudently left a crazed herd of cows to run out from the gate, we entered in the terrain of a derelict restaurant, looking out from a terrace. From here, the green pools of the Cassibile river, so popular among the tourists in summertime, where clearly visible, on the bottom of the gorge, while in the sky some Ravens, a Peregrine Falcon and a Common Buzzard passed.

We climbed in a Mediterranean maquis of Sage-leaved (*Cistus salvifolius*) and Pink Cistus (*Cistus creticus*), *Calicotome infesta*, Hawthorn, Manna Ash (*Fraxinus ornus*) and Mastic (*Pistacia lentiscus*), but the wind was strong once again, leaving few hopes to see any passerine... but instead, incredibly, we finally managed to find a cracking male of Spectacled Warbler, singing on the top of a bush!

Happy with the observation, we descended the Hyblean plateau, driving about 45 minutes to the coastline, where we admired a deep blue sea whipped by the wind in a triumph of foam. So, we visited the reserve of Saline di Priolo, learning about its interesting history. The ancient salt pans were in fact heavily polluted by the nearby industrial area and an oil pipeline used to cross the wetland, while now, with a great recovery plan of LIPU, the Italian Birdlife International partner, the quality of the water had increased strongly, allowing the Flamingos to start to breed for the first time in Sicily. The bad news was that most of the reserve had been burnt by a criminal fire in July 2019 and the vegetation was still recovering.

From the only hide to survive to the fire, the water level was high, so the Greater Flamingos had to dive with all the head and the neck to reach the bottom, shaking their butts in a ridiculous way. Very cute, even if rather ugly in the truth, were two Coot chicks, while two male Shoveler were swimming nearby the tamarisks of the shore.

Coming back to the entrance of the reserve, we noticed a nice male of Pied Flycatcher, chasing flies in the middle of the road.

In the evening, we celebrated the a birthday and a golden wedding with a banquet to remember: a mix of vegetables as starter, then *gnocchi* with fish sauce, fried swordfish, *cassata* and prosecco, kindly offered by our guides.

## Day 3

Saturday 23rd April

### Mount Etna

Luca had run, during the night, a moth trap on the terrace, so we met there at 7.30am to see the “harvest”. The view to the huge shape of the Etna was even better than yesterday, but in the trap there wasn’t too much: a couple of Ipsilon Darts (*Agrotis ipsilon*), a rustic (*Hoplodrina* sp.), Cypress Carpet (*Thera cypressata*) and the fascinating Jasmine Moth (*Palpita vitrealis*), a rather large silky white micro moth. Carol met by the Olive Tree the same male Collared Flycatcher of yesterday, while at breakfast time we were entertained by the weird calls of the Jays and by Bee-eaters, Greenfinches, Serins and Crested Larks on passage in the deep blue sky.

Later, we drove one hour and half towards the foothills of the Etna, testing different qualities of Sicilian asphalt and thick traffic, and we saw on the way a Hoopoe and six White Storks, nesting on the electric posts nearby the Simeto river.

Arrived at the Monti Rossi area, a secondary volcanic cone, we had to climb first for few hundred metres a steep path, made sweeter by the view of tens of Green-winged Orchids of the Sicilian subspecies *longicornu* and few Branciforti’s Orchids (*Orchis branciforti*), also endemic. We struggled to get some decent views of Firecrest, Coal Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper, Rock Bunting and Sicilian Long-tailed Tit, but our efforts in birding were finally awarded by the unexpected view of a lemon-yellow male Golden Oriole perched in the open on an Umbrella Pine.

When the trail got flatter, we walked crossing the slope of the crater, where the fertile terrain of ash and pumices, was literally covered by an impressive variety of colourful flowers in full bloom: Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), Narrow-leaved Lupin (*Lupinus angustifolius*), Field Marigold, Annual (*Centranthus calcitrapae*) and Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*), etc.

With such a pollen self-service restaurant, there were also a lot of butterflies like Common (*Papilio machaon*) and Scarce Swallowtail (*Iphiclides podalirius*), Eastern (*Anthocharis damone*) and Common Orange Tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*), Wall Brown (*Lasiommata megera*), Eastern Bath White (*Pontia edusa*) and Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*). On the way back, we heard a Great Spotted Woodpecker, then a Nettle-tree Butterfly landed in front of Dave’s feet and three more Sicilian Long-tailed Tits showed well their typical pale brown head while hopping on an Etna Broom (*Genista aetnensis*).

We moved with the minibuses higher in altitude, having a short stop in the Sweet Chestnut groves of Monte Concilio to see a lovely flower of Roman Orchid (*Dactylorhiza romana*) of the purple form, while in the air we heard Common Cuckoo and Short-toed Treecreeper.

We climbed among a succession of dark lava fields and Etna Broom or Downy Oak patches, to the Rifugio Sapienza at about 2,000 metres; in truth a very touristy settlement, with plenty of restaurants, souvenir stores and car parks, but still surrounded by stunning secondary craters and volcanic ash fields. We had our lunch in a nice self-service restaurant where we could choose a *tris di primi* and starters, among which cannelloni with mushrooms, lasagne, pistachio pasta and *melanzane alla parmigiana* aubergines.

We caught a cable car to ascend to an altitude of 2,500 metres, admiring the panorama and seeing a Northern Wheatear and some Common Swifts on migration. Then we had to wait for a while to catch some huge 4x4 coaches to go higher, through the ash fields, to a short trail at an altitude of about 2,700 metres that leads to a view point into the Valle del Bove, the valley where, during most of the eruptions, the lava flows peacefully, luckily far from any settlement. On the surface of few remaining patches of snow, we observed the steam sublimating, with the bright high-altitude sunshine, and Luca told us the differences in between effusive and explosive eruptions, comparing them with a Coca cola bottle with or without the cap: both, coke and magma, are in fact formed by a liquid and an aeriform fraction. If the second can easily break free from the liquid, the eruption is not dangerous and the lava flows quietly as the faded coke in a glass, while if it can't, like a shaken Coca cola bottle with the cap, when the impediment is removed, the eruption is explosive. Unfortunately, the view point faced into thick clouds, so we couldn't see too much, but we could still admire the top of the Etna, with its three summit craters.

Back at Rifugio Sapienza, we stopped for a coffee before moving to the nearby Piano Vetore: here we had a short loop in a quiet grassy flat area, surrounded by woodlands and lava fields. Most of the grass was still yellow, after the winter snow, but we still noticed the first spring flowers like the endemic Etna Pansy (*Viola aethnensis*) and Etna Wallflower (*Erysimum etnense*), plus the thorny leaves of Sicilian Milk-vetch (*Astragalus siculus*), among some trees of Etna Broom. The Woodlarks were singing in the sky, while particularly obliging was a Rock Bunting that we could enjoy perfectly through the telescope: what a great day!

We did a last try for the Sicilian Rock Partridges in a lava field, but with no success, then we drove back towards Syracuse. When Luca stopped a minute in the roadside to wait for Taea, he spotted a clump of Gren-winged and Giant Orchids, finally perfectly in bloom. We came back to Pozzo di Mazza at 7.15pm.

For the supper, chef Pippo offered pasta with cherry tomatoes, meatballs and a chocolate cake.

## Day 4

Sunday 24th April

### Penisola Magnisi, Saline di Priolo and Syracuse archaeological park

For the second time we didn't find too much in the moth trap: Large Yellow Underwing (*Noctua pronuba*), Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*), Lustrous Least Carpet (*Idaea filicata*) and Rusty Dot Pearl (*Udea ferrugalis*).

After breakfast, we went shopping in the suburbs of Syracuse, then we drove to the Penisola Magnisi, an interesting prairie peninsula with an history that dates before the arrival of the Ancient Greeks in Sicily, hosting the remains of a Neolithic settlement and a number of Second World War bunkers, surviving so far to the modern building speculation. The colour of the sea was absolutely fantastic, and the temperature made enjoyable by the breeze, despite the clear sunshine.

We encountered large flocks of Spotless Starlings, Italian and Tree Sparrows along the isthmus, then in the vast meadows of the peninsula abounded only the Crested Larks. Going through an ocean of thistles, over our heads flew Pallid Swifts, Sand Martins and at least three Red-rumped Swallows, a rather infrequent species in Italy. Luca pointed us the distinctive black under-tail coverts, to distinguish the species from the commoner Barn Swallows.

When we reached the low limestone cliffs nearby the lighthouse, we heard the calls of the Stone-curlew, that were later flushed by some cyclists. We could also find one of those birds briefly standing out of the grass with the telescope, but unfortunately not for all the members of the group.

Here and there, on the flowers, we noticed a lot of butterflies like Common Swallowtail, Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*), Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*), but also Six-spot Burnet (*Zygaena filipendulae*), Ragusa's Nine-spot Moth (*Amata marjana*) and *Synaphe moldavica*.

Despite the efforts, we weren't able to find Tawny Pipit and Caladra Lark, usually breeding in the area, but nearby a rectangle of prickly-pears we spotted Woodchat Shrike, Spotted and Pied Flycatcher, Sardinian and Subalpine Warbler.

Coming back to the minibuses, we had a nice view of some Bee-eaters, flying around us in perfect light, and we observed a Zitting Cisticola perched in the open, nearby the XV-century cylindrical Magnisi tower.

For the lunch, the LIPU friends of the Saline di Priolo hosted us their lovely picnic spot in the shade, so we could eat listening to the ungraceful calls of the Flamingos and with some curious Italian Wall Lizards (*Podarcis siculus*) walking on the table.

In the afternoon, we came back to Syracuse, where we went to visit the Ancient Greek and Roman new town, Neapolis, that is now protected by an archaeological park. The Greeks, that colonized Southern Italy in the VIII century BC, first established in the island of Ortigia, now the city centre of Syracuse, and started to bury their dead in a quarry area out of the city walls. Later this area became not only a town for dead people, but also for alive ones, because here were built a theatre and an amphitheatre. Coming to the site, we walked in the shade of some huge Holm Oaks where we saw some Jays and a male Collared Flycatcher was perched on the twigs of a tree.

We descended to the *latomie*, the ancient quarries, with a cooler temperature than in the sunshine, and we explored the Ear of Dionysus, a weird shaped artificial cave that was interpreted by the painter Caravaggio as the tyrant's tool to listen the lamentations of his prisoners. A pair of Jackdaws had decided to nest right on the top of the entrance of the *Orecchio di Dioniso*.

Then we visited the Greek Theatre: still used in summertime, the stone sits were now covered with timber and in the scene was settled a large staircase for shows. In the crevices of the limestones, there were a lot of colourful Italian Wall Lizards and interesting tiny plants like Dwarf Sorrel Broomrape (*Orobancha nana*), Ground-pine (*Ajuga chamaepitys*), Small-flowered Viper's-bugloss (*Echium parviflorum*), Small Restharrow (*Ononis reclinata*) and Sicilian Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum siculum*). From the upper part of the theatre cave, we noticed in the clear sky both Common and Pallid Swifts, while in the Nymphaeum, with a refreshing waterfall, the ceiling was covered by a lot of Maidenhair Ferns (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*). We had another loop around the Ara di Gerone altar and the

Roman Amphitheatre, elegantly oval, so we deserved a stop in the shade of a café, having a beer or a gelato, listening the beautiful song of a Blackbird and observing some more Bee-eaters on migration.

The supper offered *parmigiana di melanzane*, swordfish and cherry tomato sauce pasta, swordfish rolls, fennel and orange salad, orange jelly and the inevitable limoncello shot: what a pain the Sicilian food...!

Telling one each other goodnight, Luca's bat detector detected some Kuhl's Pipistrelles while everybody could hear the distant calls of Scops Owl and Stone-curlew.

## Day 5

Monday 25th April

### Southern lakes and Portopalo di Capopassero

This early morning we left the moth-trapping, dedicating ourselves once again to birding in the garden, but as usual during the sunny days, there wasn't too much: the lonely male Collared Flycatcher was still in its Olive Tree after four days and four Moorish Geckos enjoying the sunshine on the walls. The best observation we had were two Greater Flamingos that crossed the sky in flight.

The breakfast included an incredibly tasty Carmen's cake with strawberries, then we drove for about an hour towards south, till the southern brackish water lakes called pantani.

Unfortunately we couldn't enter in the restricted parts of the Pantano Cuba and Pantano Longarini, because the worker Paolo that usually hosts us, got the Covid-19, so we could only admire from outside the amazing project of a German no-profit foundation, the Stiftung pro Artenvielfalt, that had invested here almost 3.5 million euros in order to buy the territory of the two lakes and surrounding areas enclosing them with a fence in order to exclude every poacher, and to re-wild the habitats, once covered in garbage, green houses and even an illegal horse racecourse. The area forms one of the crucial migratory stop overs of the European birds. However, we visited the northern side of the Pantano Longarini, stopping first by a little pool in the reeds where we found a pair of noisy Black-winged Stilts and a Wood Sandpiper. By telescope, we scanned the main lake spotting a male Garganey and some Greater Flamingos, but were unsuccessful in finding the endemic Sicilian Pond Turtles.

So we drove for few hundred metres more in between the two walls of flowers, like Red and Opium Poppy (*Papaver somniferum*), dandelions and daisies of many species, Mallow (*Malva sylvestris*), Purple Viper's-bugloss (*Echium plantagineum*), Hairy Vetch (*Vicia villosa*) and Field Gladiolus (*Gladiolus italicus*), that sided the narrow road, to reach a bank that penetrated among the lagoons. We continued there by foot to get a better view of the lakes: the Greater Flamingos seemed to be intentioned to nest on a couple of mud islets, all surrounded by smaller birds. Every time we looked with the telescope to those islands, there were different birds, with a very exciting turnover: first Slender-billed Gulls, Sandwich Terns, Little Terns, Pied Avocets... then Little Stints, Curlew Sandpipers... finally Greenshanks and a Black-tailed Godwit in reddish breeding plumage.

At the end of the canal in front of us, further away, Luca noticed the first two Marbled Ducks, probably subjects of the reintroduction project that is helping the only one Italian breeding population to grow from the initial couple of pairs, then two Spotted Redshanks appeared, staying for few seconds in the open before flying.

In the Pantano Bruno, much less attainable, we kept safely on the side of the road to avoid the cars: even if the access wasn't the best, it was worth to have a look to this lake among the Giant Reeds (*Arundo donax*), because there were five Ferruginous Ducks very near. In the largest lake, with deeper waters, we added two male Common Pochard among the Coots.

Before lunch, we explored the two mouths of the Pantano Longarini emissaries at the Granelli beach, observing four Little Ringed Plovers, seven Ringed Plovers and a gorgeous Squacco Heron, then we had a picnic in the shade of the yellow flowered Coojong trees (*Acacia saligna*), an invasive plant from Australia, facing the turquoise sea.

We were having a pudding or a biscuit that an unexpected Collared Pratincole passed in flight, following the coastline: really a lovely bird with a very special call!

We had a last stop along the road to have a look to the southern side of Pantano Longarini: there were in fact tens of Shelducks among which Luca spotted first a male Wigeon and then five more Marbled Ducks, a good percentage of all the Italian population!

In the Pantano Baronello, further east, the water level was so high to make seem swans the Greater Flamingos and to not allow to a flock of Curlew Sandpipers to find a site where to land. A Marsh Harrier passed in the distance, while three Ferruginous Ducks reached in flight the other three that were feeding on the edge of a reedbed.

The heat was noticeable early in the afternoon, so we had a refreshing stop at the bar sport of Portopalo di Capopassero, having an ice cream or a local Messina beer. In the harbour, among the more or less derelict fishing boats, there were tens of Yellow-legged Gulls, waiting for the discarded fish, and behind, on a beach, four lovely adult Audouin's Gull, two of them in courtship. We could appreciate clearly, through the scope, the differences in size, colour and shape of the bill, tinge of the grey of the back and of the white of the under parts of the two species of gull.

Looking to the transparent waters of the port, we could notice a number of nice fishes like Saddled (*Oblada melanura*) and Two-banded Seabreams (*Diplodus vulgaris*), colourful youngsters of Ornate Wrasse (*Thalassoma pavo*) but above all a fascinating Sooty Sea-hare (*Aplysia fasciata*).

Along the coastline, there were no shearwaters, only two Shelducks on passage and Woodchat Shrike and Spotted Flycatcher in the garigue of the promontory, but the flora was once again extremely colourful with Blue Statice, Crown Daisies and Three-horned Stocks (*Matthiola tricuspidata*).

In the evening, we had the typically Sicilian *capponata*, pasta and pork, before a beautiful *cannolo* filled with chocolate.

## Day 6

Tuesday 26th April

## Vendicari and Capo Murro di Porco

During the night the moth-trap this time in the garden, helped by the increasing temperatures, managed to attract something more: two Four-spotted Moths (*Tyta luctuosa*), Pale Shoulder (*Acontia lucida*), Porter's Rustic (*Athetis hospes*), White-speck (*Mythimna unipuncta*), Delicate (*Mythimna vitellina*) and the attractive micro Cone Tortrix (*Blastesthia tessulatana*), with pink spots.

After the breakfast we drove south 45 minutes to the reserve of Vendicari, that protects some brackish water lagoons and rich patches of Mediterranean maquis. At the entry, we saw a Turtle Dove singing from a Eucalyptus, then we walked to a hide that offered a spectacular view into former salt pans now populated by tens of Greater Flamingos, Shelducks, Black-winged Stilts and many more waders. Among the nearest ones, Wood and Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stints, Ringed Plovers and Ruffs, while in the distance there was a derelict house with egrets and two Spoonbills perched on the walls. We continued going through a reedbed, where we heard a Common Reed Warbler singing and we observed a Hoopoe in flight. In the clear water among the reeds, Luca noticed some small fishes with blue striped flanks and yellow fins: they were Mediterranean Killifish (*Aphanius fasciatus*), a species endemic of the Mediterranean brackish waters, especially of the salt pans.

In the maquis of Large-fruited Junipers (*Juniperus macrocarpa*), Olive Trees and Mastic, grown on the sand dunes behind the beach, we noticed some stunning flowers like Common Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*), Small-flowered Tongue Orchid (*Serapias parviflora*), Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*), A catchfly (*Silene colorata*), Rosy Garlic (*Allium roseum*) and Southern Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*).

On an islet in the lagoon, Little and Sandwich Terns gathered to have rest, with obviously different sizes, together with Slender-billed Gulls. Not far from the ancient tuna factory, now restored and looking like a roofless church, a second hide allowed to have other very good views of the waders, often almost in perfect breeding plumage even if still on the way to their Nordic breeding grounds: Kentish Plovers and again Ruffs, Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stints plus a very pink breasted Slender-billed Gull that fished in front of us, offering amazing photo opportunities. When Luca and Taea returned to the minibuses to prepare the picnic, they found a Mediterranean Painted Frog (*Discoglossus pictus*) and an Italian Festoon (*Zerynthia cassandra*), but unfortunately nobody was with them. We had our last picnic in the shade with the self-service settled in the minibus boot, enjoying a great mix of pecorino, goat cheese, gorgonzola and pickles.

We were by the junction with the main road to Syracuse when Carol spotted from the minibus nine White Storks and three Common Buzzards circling in the clear sky, then we moved to the Murro di Porco promontory, not far from our agriturismo.

We had there a walk, with a splendid afternoon light and some marine breeze, among a garigue with Mediterranean Dwarf Palms (*Chamaerops humilis*), the only native species of palm in Europe, and meadows covered by hundreds of Barbary Nuts and Blue Statice. With the heat there were many Clouded Yellows (*Colias crocea*), Ragusa's Nine-spot Moths and Six-spot Burnets on the flowers, while running in the grass were a mix of Italian and Sicilian Wall Lizards.

There were few birds around, with no signs of migration happening, but three Caspian Terns flying above the sea surface, and the resident birds included Crested Larks and Sardinian Warblers. On the limestones eroded by the combination of sea waves and wind, we found two elegant Tawny Pipits, distinguished from the Richard's Pipit, also often reported in the area, by the dark bridles between bill and eye. At the lighthouse, the sea-watching by telescope was productive, because we saw two Sandwich Terns, Audouin's Gull and a number of Yelkouan and Scopoli's Shearwaters. Walking in the grass, Val encountered a Western Whip Snake (*Hierophis viridiflavus carbonarius*), while nearby the minibuses we had, on some Aleppo Pines, a Wood Warbler and, in the middle of the road, another Spotted Flycatcher.

For dinner, we celebrated another wedding anniversary with a bottle of Trentodoc Blanc de blancs, plus slices of pizza, *pasta capuliatu*, filled sardines and gelato.

The night walk around the agriturismo produced some calls of Scops Owl and Stone-curlew, unfortunately rather distant, and four Moorish Geckos, but possibly there were too many lights to find any Turkish Gecko.

## Day 7

Wednesday 27th April

### Catania airport

Being earlier than usual, today we had a lightbreakfast, with just coffee, a savoury cake and a strawberry and lemon crostata, then we left at 8am to drive to Catania. We saw once again four White Storks on the nests and we arrived at the Fontanarossa airport at 9am, with plenty of time to say goodbye to Luca and to catch our flight.

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## Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

Common name	Scientific name	April 2022						
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	30				30	20	
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>					1		
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		2					
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>					1		
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	1				15	5	
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>					1		
Marbled Duck	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>					5		
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>					2		
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>					19		
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>		1					
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>		20	✓	✓		1	
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>			h				
Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>					2	3	
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					5h		
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2	h			3		
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	100	10			✓		
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	1	h			5		
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	2				10	4	
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	50	150		100	200	150	
Eurasian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedecnemus</i>		h		5		h	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	10				10	20	
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>					3		
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>						3	
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>					7	7	
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>						5	
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>					1		
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>	2				23	15	
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>					25	30	
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>						4	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>					1	30	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>					4		
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	3				2	2	
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>					2	3	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					1	2	
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>					1		
Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>					2	5	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	10			1			
Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus audouinii</i>	3			1	4	3	
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	70	✓		✓	100	10	
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	10					3	
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	1				1	5	
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>					5	6	
Scopoli's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>						3	

Common name	Scientific name	April 2022						
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Yelkouan Shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>						15	
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>			6			9	4
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>	2				1		
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>						3	
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	1				1		
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>					8	3	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1				3	2	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	4				2	2	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	15			1	10	10	
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	3	1		1	4		
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	1	1	4	1	3	6	
Eurasian Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>	h	h	h	h	h	h	
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		1	1			1	
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	20	30	✓	5	✓	20	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			2h				
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	2	5	2	1	5	3	1
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		1					
Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	1			1	1		
Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1	1	1				
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius albipectus</i>		1	8	2	3		
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	3	5	5	10	10	10	
Western Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>			1	2			
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	5	3	2	5	5	3	
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		2	3				
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>			5				
European Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		3	3				
Great Tit	<i>Parus major aphrodite</i>	h	5	2	3	3	5	
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>			3				
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata apuliae</i>	5	1	1	15	5	10	
Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>					1		
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	10	5	1	10	1		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	10	
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	5	✓	✓		2		✓
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>				3			
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	2h	5h		2h	3h	h	
Sicilian Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus siculus</i>			4				
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>		1				1	
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita collybita</i>			h				
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	h						
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>				10h	3	2	
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	h	5	2h	5	10	3	
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		h	3h	1		2	
Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>	2	5	2h	5	10	3	
Eastern Subalpine Warbler	<i>Curruca cantillans cantillans</i>		2	1	1			
Spectacled Warbler	<i>Curruca conspicillata</i>		2					
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>			1				
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		h	2h	h			
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			h				
Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>			3				
Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	10	✓	✓	20	✓	10	✓
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	2	2	3	3	2	1	

		April 2022						
Common name	Scientific name	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1	1		1	1	1	
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			h				
Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>		2					
European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>		2		1			
Collared Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>		2	1	1	1	1	
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>			1				
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>		1					
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>		1					
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	2	1		3			
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		1					
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			2				
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>		2					
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Italian Sparrow	<i>Passer italiae</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	h		h		2h		
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>						2	
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			2h				
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		2		2		h	
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		5	3	h	2	5	
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	5	10	5	✓	10	10	✓
European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	1	5	5	2h	3	2	1
Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		2h		2	5	h	
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>			2				
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>		2	h				
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	1						

## Other vertebrates

		April 2022						
Common name	Scientific name	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<b>MAMMALS:</b>								
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>				s			
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>			s			s	
Kuhl's Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus cfr. kuhlii</i>	h	h	h	h	h		
<b>AMPHIBIANS &amp; REPTILES</b>								
Painted Frog	<i>Discoglossus pictus pictus</i>						1	
Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>		d					
Italian Edible Frog	<i>Pelophylax cfr. hispanicus</i>				h			
Italian Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis siculus</i>	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sicilian Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis wagleriana</i>		3		5		3	
Moorish Gecko	<i>Tarentola mauritanica</i>		3	1		4	5	
Western Whip Snake	<i>Hierophis viridiflavus carbonarius</i>				1		1	
<b>FISH</b>								
Two-banded Seabream	<i>Diplodus vulgaris</i>					1		
Saddled Seabream	<i>Oblada melanura</i>					✓		
Ornate Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma pavo</i>					2		
A wrasse	<i>Symphodus</i> sp.					1		

Common name	Scientific name	April 2022						
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27
A goby	<i>Gobius</i> sp.					✓		
Mediterranean Killifish	<i>Aphanius fasciatus</i>						3	

## Invertebrates

		April 2022						
Common name	Scientific name	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
BUTTERFLIES:								
	Papilionidae							
Italian Festoon	Zerynthia cassandra						1	
Swallowtail	Papilio machaon			1	1	1		
Scarce Swallowtail	Iphiclides podalirius			1				
	Pieridae							
Large White	Pieris brassicae			3	1			
Small White	Pieris rapae		1	1	10		1	
Eastern Bath White	Pontia edusa			1				
Eastern Orange Tip	Anthocharis damone			2				
Orange Tip	Anthocharis cardamines		2	2				
Clouded Yellow	Colias croceus	2		3	5		10	
Cleopatra	Gonepteryx cleopatra		1	1				
	Lycaenidae							
Small Copper	Lycaena phlaeas		2	3				
Small Blue	Cupido minimus		1					
Austaut's Blue	Polyommatus celina		2	1				
Brown Argus	Aricia agestis				1			
	Nymphalidae							
Painted lady	Vanessa cardui	1				1		
Red Admiral	Vanessa atalanta			1	1			
Nettle-tree Butterfly	Libythea celtis			1				
Wall Brown	Lasiommata megera		2	2				
Small Heath	Coenonympha pamphilus		1		2		1	
MACRO MOTHS:	[T - in the trap, F - in the field]							
Pale Shoulder	Acontia lucida						1T	
Ipsilon Dart	Agrotis ipsilon			2T				
Ragusa's Nine-spotted	Amata marjana				3F		10F	
Porter's Rustic	Athetis hospes						1T	
Silver Y	Autographa gamma				1T		1F	
Double-striped Pug	Gymnoscelis rufifasciata					1F		
Uncertain/Rustic	Hoplodrina sp.			1T				
Lustrous Least Carpet	Idaea filicata				1T		1T	
White-speck	Mythimna unipuncta						1T	
The Delicate	Mythimna vitellina						1T	
Large Yellow Underwing	Noctua pronuba				1T			
Cypress Carpet	Thera cupressata			1T				
Four-spotted	Tyta luctuosa						2T	
Six-spot Burnet	Zygaena filipendulae		1F		2F	1F	5F	

		April 2022						
Common name	Scientific name	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
MICRO MOTHS								
Cone Tortrix	Blastesthia tessulatana						1T	
Carnation Tortrix	Cacoecimorpha pronubana						1T	
Privet Tortrix	Clepsis consimilana						2T	
A crambid	Crambidae sp.			1T				
European Pepper Moth	Duponchelia fovealis				1T			
A crambid	Euchromius sp.						1T	
A fairy longhorn moth	Nemophora raddaella				✓F			
Jasmine Moth	Palpita vitrealis			1T				
Diamond-backed Moth	Plutella xylostella				1T		5T	
A pyralid	Synaphe moldavica				1F			
Rusty Dot Pearl	Udea ferrugalis				1T			
OTHER INVERTEBRATES								
Damselflies and dragonflies								
Island Bluetail Damselfly	Ischnura genei					1		
Hairy Dragonfly	cfr. Brachytron pratense					1		
Blue Emperor	Anax imperator					1		
Red-veined Darter	Sympetrum fonscolombi	2	5		2		1	
Other insects								
Honey Bee	Apis mellifera		✓		✓	✓		
A bumblebee	Bombus sp.				1			
Greater Bee Fly	Bombylius major				1			
Littoral Tiger Beetle	Calomera littoralis				✓			
A froghopper	Cercopis sp.		1					
Seven Spot Ladybird	Coccinella septempunctata			1				
Ring-legged Earwig	Euborellia cfr. annulipes		1					
Daffodil Leaf-beetle	Exosoma lusitanicum	1						
A leafcutter bee	Megachile sp.			1				
A leafcutter bee	Megachile sicula sicula						✓	
Mammouth Wasp	Megascolia sp.				1	3		
Mediterranean Spotted Chafer	Oxythyrea funesta				✓			
A darkling beetle	Pimelia sp.		1	1				
A flea beetle	Psylliodes sp.						1	
European Firebug	Pyrrhocoris apterus		1					
A leafcutter bee	Rhodanthidium sp.		1		1		1	
A bee fly	Usia cfr. versicolor		✓					
Violet Carpenter Bee	Xylocopa violacea		1	2	2	1	2	
Other invertebrates								
Napoleon Spider	Synema globosum				1			
An ant spider	Zodarion sp.						1	
An harvestman	Metaphalangium sp.				1			
Marbled Crab	Pachygrapsus marmoratus					✓		
Chocolate-band Snail	Eobania vermiculata						1	
A leaf snail	Monacha sp.				1			
Sooty Sea-hare	Aplysia fasciata					1		
Common Cuttlefish	Sepia officinalis					1		

Common name	Scientific name	April 2022						
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Yellow-legged Pachyiulus (millipede)	<i>Pachyiulus flavipes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

## Plants

Common name	Scientific name	Family	Location (first or best)
<b>Ferns</b>	<b>Leptosporangiate ferns</b>		
Mediterranean Maidenhair Fern	<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	Pteridaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Dennstaedtiaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Southern Polypody	<i>Polypodium cambricum</i>	Polypodiaceae	Monte Concilio (Etna)
<b>Conifers</b>	<b>Gymnosperms</b>		
Common Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Cupressaceae	Piano Vetore (Etna)
Large-fruited Juniper	<i>Juniperus (oxycedrus) macrocarpa</i>	Cupressaceae	Vendicari
Aleppo Pine	<i>Pinus halepensis</i>	Pinaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Black Pine	<i>Pinus nigra</i>	Pinaceae	Piano Vetore (Etna)
Umbrella Pine	<i>Pinus pinea</i>	Pinaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
<b>Dicotyledon Flowering Plants</b>	<b>Dicot Angiosperms</b>		
Bear's Breeches	<i>Acanthus mollis</i>	Acanthaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Slender Iceplant	<i>Mesembryanthemum nodiflorum</i>	Aizoaceae	Capo Murro di Porco
Shrubby Sea-blite	<i>Suaeda vera</i>	Amaranthaceae	Pantano Longarini
Mastic	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Anacardiaceae	Vendicari
Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	Apiaceae	Saline di Priolo
Field Eryngo	<i>Eryngium campestre</i>	Apiaceae	Pantano Morghella
Eastern Ferulago	<i>Ferulago nodosa</i>	Apiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Perfoliate Alexanders	<i>Smyrniium perfoliatum rotundifolium</i>	Apiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Italian Thapsia	<i>Thapsia garganica</i>	Apiaceae	Pantano Morghella
Mediterranean Hartwort	<i>Tordylium apulum</i>	Apiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Oleander	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Apocynaceae	Saline di Priolo
Greater Periwinkle	<i>Vinca major</i>	Apocynaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Common Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Araliaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Corn Chamomile	<i>Anthemis</i> cfr. <i>arvensis</i>	Asteraceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A chamomile	<i>Anthemis</i> cfr. <i>secundiramea</i>	Asteraceae	Penisola Magnisi
Field Marigold	<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Asteraceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A thistle	<i>Carduus</i> cfr. <i>corymbosus</i>	Asteraceae	Pantano Morghella
Italian Thistle	<i>Carduus pycnocephalus</i>	Asteraceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Mediterranean Star Thistle	<i>Centaurea sicula</i>	Asteraceae	Pantano Morghella
A knapweed	<i>Centaurea sphaerocephala</i>	Asteraceae	Saline di Priolo
Chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Asteraceae	Penisola Magnisi
Artichoke Thistle	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	Asteraceae	Capo Murro di Porco
Purple Milk Thistle	<i>Galactites tomentosus</i>	Asteraceae	Pantano Morghella

Common name	Scientific name	Family	Location (first or best)
Crown Daisy	<i>Glebionis coronaria</i>	Asteraceae	Pantano Morghella
A strawflower	<i>Helichrysum</i> cfr. <i>scandens</i>	Asteraceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Golden Samphire	<i>Limbarda crithmoides</i>	Asteraceae	Granelli beach
Illyrian Thistle	<i>Onopordum illyricum</i>	Asteraceae	Penisola Magnisi
Spiny Starwort	<i>Pallenis spinosa</i>	Asteraceae	Pantano Morghella
Mediterranean Phagnalon	<i>Phagnalon saxatile</i>	Asteraceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Large-flowered Golden Thistle	<i>Scolymus grandiflorus</i>	Asteraceae	Penisola Magnisi
Oxford Ragwort	<i>Senecio</i> cfr. <i>squalidus</i>	Asteraceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Groudsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Asteraceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Milk Thistle	<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Asteraceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Slender Sowthistle	<i>Sonchus tenerrimus</i>	Asteraceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Purple Salsify	<i>Tragopogon porrifolius</i>	Asteraceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Pale Yellow Dandelion	<i>Urospermum dalechampii</i>	Asteraceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Etna Barberry	<i>Berberis aetnensis</i>	Berberidaceae	Piano Vetore (Etna)
Dyer's Alkanet	<i>Alkanna tinctoria</i>	Boraginaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Italian Bugloss	<i>Anchusa azurea</i>	Boraginaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Borage	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Boraginaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Honeywort	<i>Cerinthe major</i>	Boraginaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Blue Hound's-tongue	<i>Cynoglossum creticum</i>	Boraginaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Purple Viper's-bugloss	<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	Boraginaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Pale Bugloss	<i>Echium italicum</i>	Boraginaceae	Capo Murro di Porco
Small-flowered Viper's-bugloss	<i>Echium parviflorum</i>	Boraginaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Spring Cress	<i>Arabis verna</i>	Brassicaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
European Sea-rocket	<i>Cakile maritima</i>	Brassicaceae	Marzamemi
Etna Wallflower	<i>Erysimum aetnense</i>	Brassicaceae	Piano Vetore (Etna)
Woad	<i>Isatis tinctoria</i>	Brassicaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Sweet Alyssum	<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	Brassicaceae	Pantano Morghella
Three-horned Stock	<i>Matthiola tricuspidata</i>	Brassicaceae	Portopalo di Capopassero
Wild Radish	<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>	Brassicaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Hedge Mustard	<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	Brassicaceae	Pantano Morghella
Shell Mound Prickly-pear	<i>Opuntia</i> cfr. <i>stricta</i>	Cactaceae	Capo Murro di Porco
Rock Caper	<i>Capparis spinosa</i> subsp. <i>rupestris</i>	Capparaceae	Pantano Morghella
Annual Valerian	<i>Centranthus calcitrapae</i>	Caprifoliaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Red Valerian	<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Caprifoliaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
African Valerian	<i>Valeriana (Fedia) graciliflora</i>	Caprifoliaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Sweet Scabious	<i>Sixalix atropurpurea</i>	Caprifoliaceae	Penisola Magnisi
A catchfly	<i>Silene colorata</i>	Caryophyllaceae	Penisola Magnisi
White Campion	<i>Silene latifolia</i>	Caryophyllaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Bladder Campion	<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Caryophyllaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A chickweed	<i>Stellaria</i> sp.	Caryophyllaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Greater Chickweed	<i>Stellaria</i> cfr. <i>neglecta</i>	Caryophyllaceae	Monte Concilio (Etna)
Pink Cistus	<i>Cistus creticus</i>	Cistaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Sage-leaved Cistus	<i>Cistus salviifolius</i>	Cistaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Mallow Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus althaeoides</i>	Convolvulaceae	Pantano Morghella
Cantabrian	<i>Convolvulus cantabrica</i>	Convolvulaceae	Pantano Morghella

Common name	Scientific name	Family	Location (first or best)
Morning Glory			
Blue Stonecrop	<i>Sedum caeruleum</i>	Crassulaceae	Pantano Morghella
Thick-leaved Stonecrop	<i>Sedum dasyphyllum</i>	Crassulaceae	Monte Concilio (Etna)
Wall Pennywort	<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Crassulaceae	Monte Concilio (Etna)
Squirting Cucumber	<i>Ecballium elaterium</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Avola
Many-flowered Heath	<i>Erica multiflora</i>	Ericaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Large Mediterranean Spurge	<i>Euphorbia characias</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Tree Spurge	<i>Euphorbia dendroides</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Corn Spurge	<i>Euphorbia segetalis</i> agg.	Euphorbiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Carnation Spurge	<i>Euphorbia</i> cfr. <i>terraccina</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Vendicari
Castor Oil Plant	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Annual Mercury	<i>Mercurialis annua</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Pantano Morghella
Coojong (Blue-leaved Wattle)	<i>Acacia saligna</i>	Fabaceae	Saline di Priolo
Kidney Vetch	<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> subsp. <i>maura</i>	Fabaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Sicilian Milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus siculus</i>	Fabaceae	Piano Vetore (Etna)
Hairy Thorny Broom	<i>Calicotome infesta</i>	Fabaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Carob	<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i>	Fabaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Mount Etna Broom	<i>Genista aetnensis</i>	Fabaceae	Piano Vetore (Etna)
Fodder Pea	<i>Lathyrus annuus</i>	Fabaceae	Saline di Priolo
Crimson Pea	<i>Lathyrus clymenum</i>	Fabaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Winged Vetchling	<i>Lathyrus ochrus</i>	Fabaceae	Pantano Baronello
Cretan Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus</i> cfr. <i>creticus</i>	Fabaceae	Pantano Baronello
Asparagus Pea	<i>Lotus tetragonolobus</i>	Fabaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Narrow-leaved Lupin	<i>Lupinus angustifolius</i>	Fagaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Little Bur-clover	<i>Medicago minima</i>	Fabaceae	Penisola Magnisi
Bur Clover	<i>Medicago polymorpha</i>	Fabaceae	Pantano Longarini
Cockscomb Sainfoin	<i>Onobrychis caput-galli</i>	Fabaceae	Pantano Morghella
Yellow Restharrow	<i>Ononis natrix</i> agg.	Fabaceae	Saline di Priolo
Small Restharrow	<i>Ononis reclinata</i>	Fabaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Common Pea	<i>Pisum sativum</i>	Fabaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Black Locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	Fabaceae	Priolo Gargallo
Spanish Broom	<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Fabaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Italian Sainfoin	<i>Sulla (Hedysarum) coronarium</i>	Fabaceae	Augusta
Hare's-foot Clover	<i>Trifolium arvense</i>	Fabaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Field Clover	<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Fabaceae	Penisola Magnisi
Small White Clover	<i>Trifolium nigrescens</i>	Fabaceae	Penisola Magnisi
Reversed Clover	<i>Trifolium resupinatum</i>	Fabaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Star Clover	<i>Trifolium stellatum</i>	Fabaceae	Pantano Morghella
Hairy Yellow-vetch	<i>Vicia hybrida</i>	Fabaceae	Saline di Priolo
Yellow Vetch	<i>Vicia</i> cfr. <i>lutea</i>	Fabaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Downy Vetch	<i>Vicia villosa</i> agg.	Fabaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile

Common name	Scientific name	Family	Location (first or best)
Sweet Chestnut	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Fagaceae	Monte Concilio (Etna)
Downy Oak	<i>Quercus pubescens</i>	Fagaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Yellow-wort	<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>	Gentianaceae	Vendicari
Little-Robin	<i>Geranium purpureum</i>	Geraniaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Round-leaved Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Geraniaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
A stork's-bill	<i>Erodium</i> cfr. <i>acaule</i>	Geraniaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Soft Stork's-bill	<i>Erodium malacoides</i>	Geraniaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Ground-pine	<i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i>	Lamiaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Southern Bugle	<i>Ajuga iva</i>	Lamiaceae	Vendicari
Prasium	<i>Prasium majus</i>	Lamiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Greek Sage	<i>Salvia fruticosa</i>	Lamiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Wild Clary	<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>	Lamiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
An ironwort	<i>Sideritis romana</i>	Lamiaceae	Pantano Morghella
Felty Germander	<i>Teucrium capitatum</i>	Lamiaceae	Pantano Morghella
Tree Germander	<i>Teucrium fruticans</i>	Lamiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Conehead Thyme	<i>Thymbra capitata</i>	Lamiaceae	Pantano Morghella
Upright Yellow-flax	<i>Linum strictum</i>	Linaceae	Pantano Morghella
French Flax	<i>Linum trigynum</i>	Linaceae	Capo Murro di Porco
Tree Mallow	<i>Malva arborea</i>	Malvaceae	Marzamemi
Mediterranean Mallow	<i>Malva cretica</i>	Malvaceae	Capo Murro di Porco
Cretan Mallow	<i>Malva</i> cfr. <i>multiflora</i>	Malvaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Common Mallow	<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Malvaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Royal Mallow	<i>Malva trimestris</i>	Malvaceae	Vendicari
Common Fig	<i>Ficus carica</i>	Moraceae	Pantano Morghella
A gumtree	<i>Eucalyptus</i> sp.	Myrtaceae	Vendicari
Manna Ash	<i>Fraxinus ornus</i>	Oleaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Olive	<i>Olea europaea</i>	Oleaceae	Vendicari
Green Olive Tree	<i>Phillyrea latifolia</i>	Oleaceae	Penisola Magnisi
Bellardia	<i>Bellardia trixago</i>	Orobanchaceae	Pantano Morghella
Amethyst Broomrape	<i>Orobanche amethystea</i>	Orobanchaceae	Penisola Magnisi
Common Broomrape	<i>Orobanche minor</i>	Orobanchaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Dwarf Sorrel Broomrape	<i>Orobanche nana</i>	Orobanchaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Bemuda Buttercup	<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Oxalidaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
White Ramping Fumitory	<i>Fumaria capreolata</i>	Papaveraceae	Pantano Morghella
Common Poppy	<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Papaveraceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Opium Poppy	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>	Papaveraceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Sicilian Snapdragon	<i>Antirrhinum siculum</i>	Plantaginaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A toadflax	<i>Linaria reflexa</i>	Plantaginaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Weasel's-snout	<i>Misopates orontium</i>	Plantaginaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Buck's-horn Plantain	<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Plantaginaceae	Penisola Magnisi
Thick-leaved Plantain	<i>Plantago crassifolia</i>	Plantaginaceae	Vendicari
Hare's-foot Plantain	<i>Plantago lagopus</i>	Plantaginaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Pale Speedwell	<i>Veronica cymbalaria</i>	Plantaginaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A sea lavender	<i>Limonium</i> cfr. <i>narbonense</i>	Plumbaginaceae	Pantano Longarini
Wavyleaf Sea Lavender/Statice	<i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	Plumbaginaceae	Pantano Morghella

Common name	Scientific name	Family	Location (first or best)
Scarlet Pimpernel	<i>Lysimachia (Anagallis) arvensis</i>	Primulaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Broad-leaved Anemone	<i>Anemone hortensis</i>	Ranunculaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Love-in-a-mist	<i>Nigella damascena</i>	Ranunculaceae	Pantano Morghella
Monte Gargano Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus millefoliatus</i>	Ranunculaceae	Monte Concilio (Etna)
White Mignonette	<i>Reseda alba</i>	Resedaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Italian Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus alaternus</i>	Rhamnaceae	Penisola Magnisi
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Rosaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Evergreen Rose	<i>Rosa</i> cfr. <i>sempervirens</i>	Rosaceae	Vendicari
Elmleaf Blackberry	<i>Rubus</i> cfr. <i>ulmifolius</i>	Rosaceae	Vendicari
Thorny Burnet	<i>Sarcopoterium spinosum</i>	Rosaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Rubiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Wild Madder	<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Rubiaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Field Madder	<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>	Rubiaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Black Poplar	<i>Populus nigra</i>	Salicaceae	Monte Concilio (Etna)
Australian Ngaio	<i>Myoporum</i> cfr. <i>insulare</i>	Scrophulariaceae	Pantano Baronello
Bittersweet	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Solanaceae	Vendicari
a Tamarisk	<i>Tamarix</i> cfr. <i>gallica</i>	Tamaricaceae	Saline di Priolo
Basil-leaved Pellitory	<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Urticaceae	Marzamemi
Mediterranean Nettle	<i>Urtica membranacea</i>	Urticaceae	Syracuse Archaeological Park
Etna Pansy	<i>Viola aethnensis</i>	Violaceae	Piano Vetore (Etna)
A grapevine	<i>Vitis</i> sp.	Vitaceae	Pantano Bruno

#### Monocotyledon Flowering Plants

#### Monocot Angiosperms

Rosy Garlic	<i>Allium roseum</i>	Amaryllidaceae	Pantano Longarini
A garlic	<i>Allium subhirsutum</i>	Amaryllidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Sea Daffodil	<i>Pancratium maritimum</i>	Amaryllidaceae	Saline di Priolo (leaves)
Italian Arum	<i>Arum italicum</i>	Araceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Mediterranean Dwarf Palm	<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>	Arecaceae	Pantano Morghella
Wild Asparagus	<i>Asparagus acutifolius</i>	Asparagaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Tassel Hyacinth	<i>Muscari (Leopoldia) comosum</i>	Asparagaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Arabian Star-of-Bethlehem	<i>Ornithogalum arabicum</i>	Asparagaceae	Pantano Longarini
Narbonne Star-of-Bethlehem	<i>Ornithogalum narbonense</i>	Asparagaceae	Pantano Morghella
Small Asphodel	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>	Asphodelaceae	Saline di Priolo
Branched Asphodel	<i>Asphodelus ramosus</i>	Asphodelaceae	Pantano Morghella
Sea Club-rush	<i>Bolboschoenus maritimus</i>	Cyperaceae	Pantano Longarini
False Fox-sedge	<i>Carex</i> cfr. <i>otrubae</i>	Cyperaceae	Vendicari
Italian Gladiolus	<i>Gladiolus</i> cfr. <i>italicus</i>	Iridaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Bearded Iris	<i>Bearded Iris</i> <i>Iris x germanica</i>	Iridaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Barbary Nut	<i>Moraea sisyrinchium</i>	Iridaceae	Pantano Morghella
Spiny Rush	<i>Juncus</i> cfr. <i>acutus</i>	Juncaceae	Penisola Magnisi
Green-winged Orchid	<i>Anacamptis morio</i> subsp. <i>longicornu</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Pink Butterfly Orchid	<i>A. papilionacea</i> ssp. <i>expansa</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Roman Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza romana</i>	Orchidaceae	Monte Concilio (Etna)

Common name	Scientific name	Family	Location (first or best)
Giant Orchid	<i>Himantoglossum robertianum</i>	Orchidaceae	Nicolosi (Etna)
Common Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Orchidaceae	Vendicari
Sombre Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys fusca</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A bee orchid	<i>Ophrys</i> cfr. <i>exaltata</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Moon Orchid	<i>Ophrys lunulata</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Yellow Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys lutea</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A beaked spider orchid	<i>Ophrys holoserica</i> subsp. <i>biancae</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A beaked spider orchid	<i>O. holoserica</i> subsp. <i>oxyrrhynchos</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Lesser Yellow Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys lutea</i> subsp. <i>galilaea</i> ( <i>sicula</i> )	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Mirror Orchid	<i>Ophrys speculum</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Dark Ophrys	<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i> subsp. <i>atrata</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
A late spider orchid	<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i> ( <i>panormitana</i> )	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Sawfly Orchid	<i>Ophrys tenthredinifera</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Man Orchid	<i>Orchis anthropophora</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Branciforti's Orchid	<i>Orchis brancifortii</i>	Orchidaceae	Monti Rossi (Etna)
Naked Man Orchid	<i>Orchis italica</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Small-flowered Serapias	<i>Serapias parviflora</i>	Orchidaceae	Vendicari
Eastern Serapias	<i>Serapias</i> cfr. <i>orientalis</i> ( <i>siciliensis</i> )	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Ploughshare (Long-lipped) S. Giant Reed	<i>Serapias vomeracea</i>	Orchidaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
An oat	<i>Arundo donax</i>	Poaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Greater Quaking Grass	<i>Avena</i> sp.	Poaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Common Soft Brome	<i>Briza maxima</i>	Poaceae	Cava Grande del Cassibile
Bermuda Grass	<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Poaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Wall Barley	<i>Cynodon</i> cfr. <i>dactylon</i>	Poaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Hare's Tail	<i>Hordeum</i> cfr. <i>murinum</i>	Poaceae	Saline di Priolo
Mediterranean Rye-grass	<i>Lagurus ovatus</i>	Poaceae	Pantano Morghella
Awed Canary-grass	<i>Lolium</i> cfr. <i>rigidum</i>	Poaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
Common Reed	<i>Phalaris paradoxa</i>	Poaceae	Pantano Longarini
Mediterranean Hair-grass	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Poaceae	Pantano Morghella
Neptune-grass	<i>Rostraria cristata</i>	Poaceae	Pozzo di Mazza
	<i>Posidonia oceanica</i>	Posidoniaceae	Marzamemi