Tripreport Samos 2015
From the 23d - 30th April 2015 my wife and I visited the Greek island of Samos. We had booked a room in hotel Niki in Iréon, about 5 km from the airport.

I had prepared myself by reading some trip reports on the internet. Especially the one Terry Fenton made of his trip in May 2006 gave a lot of information.

I also bought the book “Birdwatching on the Greek island of Samos” by Roger Butts and read it a few times.

I went four times to Lesvos in the springtime and was fully aware that on Samos I would not see so many birds as on Lesvos.

Besides less birds there were also less birders and birdphotographers. I didn’t see one.

On the other hand we saw European Rollers on several occasions, which so far I didn’t on Lesvos.

Apparently we were too early for the European Bee-eaters and Black-headed Buntings. I only heard a few Bee-eaters but didn’t see them.

Despite that we had a great vacation. Only the first day of our stay it was cold and there was a strong wind. The rest of the week the weather was quiet and warm. The island is beautiful, there were plenty of flowers, the people were very friendly and the food and wine were great.
Thursday 23d April:

We left Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam at 05:55 and arrived at Samos Airport at 10:25 uur (Greek time). Because of turbulation we had a very rough landing. We received our luggage within a few minutes. Because we were the only guests staying in Iréon we were brought to our hotel with a taxi.

We arrived at our hotel at 11:00 uur and met Marianthe, the owner of the hotel. She’s a great lady. Very friendly and hospitable. We got a room on the second floor with views over the sea, the river and a part of the village.

While my wife was unpacking I took a stroll to the Imvresos River. On the banks were some Stripe-necked Terrapins. I heard a Cetti’s Warbler sing and at sea I saw a large group of Yellow-legged Gulls.

My wife wanted to sleep for a while so I went for a walk to Asprókarvo, where there are beautiful white cliffs and you have great views at the sea.

On the rocks were two Ruddy Shelducks.

When I walked back to the village I saw a Masked Shrike in an Olive-grove.

We then walked together in a beautiful valley that runs from Iréon to Pagóndas, but we didn’t go that far.

We wanted to go to Papa Beach to eat something, but the kitchen wasn’t open yet so we just had a drink. We didn’t stay very long, because it was 12° C. with a strong wind. At La Luna we bought something to eat and ate it in our room.
Birds of the day:


Friday 24th April:

The strong wind was gone and we had our breakfast outside in the garden. Our rental car arrived and we went to the Old Salt Lake near Psili Ámmos.

We walked near the old salt works buildings. In the lake we saw Black-Winged Stilt, Common Coot, Greater Flamingo, Little Egret, Ruddy Shelduck and Squacco Heron.

Around the buildings we saw Chukar, Crested Larks and Fan-tailed Warbler.

Then we went to the Ágia Triáda Monastery in the mountains above Pythagóreio. When we got out of the car we saw our first European Roller on the wires. The monastery was closed so we went to Pythagóreio. Along the way to the city we saw a Little Owl, a Eurasian Jay and a few European Rollers.
My wife wanted to go back to the hotel. I dropped her there and went on in the direction of Míli and Pagóndas and all the way up to a viewpoint where you can look at Nísi Samiopoúla.

After that I took a walk near the bridge at Míli. This is a breeding area for European Rollers and I saw a couple of them.

Then I went walking near the so called Potokaki Pools and Marsh, between Potokaki and Iréon. In the marsh the waterlevel was still quite high, but the pools were almost dry.

After a good birding day, we had dinner that evening at restaurant Taurus, that’s is owned by a German couple. Very friendly people that offered good food.

**Birds of the day:**


**Saturday 25th April:**

After breakfast we visited the Heraion, the classical temple in honour of the goddess Hera. Parts of this area were flooded, because of the heavy rains of last winter. Among the ruins were Wood Sandpipers. A Cetti’s Warbler showed very well.
Then we drove along the beach to Pythagóreio. We went for a walk in the area of the old city walls. Beautiful area with great views, a lot of flowers and my first Rüppell’s Warbler of this trip.

Then we bought something for lunch in Pythagóreio and visited the Panagía Spilianí Monastery.

After dropping my wife at the hotel, I went for a walk in the valley that runs from Iréon to Pagóndas. There were still signs of the heavy forest fires of 2000. I also walked in the pine forest behind the village.

That evening we had dinner at O Voúros.

**Birds of the day:**

*Barn Swallow, Blackbird, Cetti’s Warbler, Chukar, Collared Dove, Common Buzzard, Common Swift, Crested Lark, Eurasian Jay, European Roller, Fan-tailed Warbler, Great Reed-Warbler, Great Tit, Grey Heron, Hooded Crow, House Martin, House Sparrow, Little Egret, Little Owl, Little Ringed Plover, Marsh Warbler, Moorhen, Red-rumped Swallow, Rüppell’s Warbler, Sardinian Warbler, Spanish Sparrow, Squacco Heron, White Wagtail, Wood Sandpiper, Wren and Yellow-legged Gull.*

**Sunday 26th April:**

After breakfast we went to Potámi Beach. When we drove through Karlóvassi, there was a single Glossy Ibis in the Megalo Rema River. After visiting the viewpoint near the church, we took a walk in the Potami Valley. Eventually you reach a point where you have to choose whether to take the stairs or go through the water. We took the stairs but in the end we still didn’t see the waterfall. To do so we had to go through the water but the water was very cold so we went back. Near the old chapel I saw a Starred Agama on a rock.
Then we drove though the Valley of the Nightingales to Manolátes, high in the mountains. We had lunch at AAA Taverna and then we took a walk in the mountains.

It was beautiful. Great views, a lot of flowers and we heard two Tawny Owls calling.

We drove back via Kokkári, Samos-stad, Mitilíni and Chóra.

After dropping my wife at the hotel I went to the Old Salt Lake near Psíli Ámmos and to the Ágia Triáda Monastery.

That evening we had a burger with fries on the terrace of La Luna.

_Birds of the day:_


_Monday 27th April:_

Today we took the route Míli, Pagóndas, Spatharéi till the viewpoint on Nísi Samiopoúla. We sat a while there whilst enjoying the great views. About 50 metres back there’s a road into the mountains, signed Bournias. We parked the car there and went for a walk. Again it was beautiful with plenty of birds, a lot of flowers and great views.
Within a couple of minutes we saw a Lesser Kestrel and a Short-toed Eagle. On the route we saw several Black-eared Wheatears, Blue Rock Thrushes and Rüppell’s Warblers. A Golden Oriole flew by.

We walked till we reached the chapel of Profitis Ilías and after resting for a while we took the same route back. In the pinetrees around the chapel was a Common Cuckoo.

Around a mountain top we saw a large group of Alpine Swifts. We also saw some Cretzschmar’s Buntings like the one on the picture.

When driving to Spatharéi a cat jumped before the car. We could hear him under the car, but when I looked in my rear mirror I saw him walk on so it survived.

After dropping my wife at the hotel, I went to Papa Beach for a beer. After that I walked to Asprókarvo. Then I went by car to the Potokakipools.

There I saw this Woodchat Shrike, Corn Bunting and Great Reed Warbler.

That evening we had dinner again at restaurant Taurus.

Today was the most successful birding day of this vacation.
**Birds of the day:**


**Tuesday 28th April:**

This morning we visited the Megáli Panagía monastery. After that we drove to Votsalákia and went walking in a valley that leads to Pythagoras' Cave.

We walked to the end of the valley, but didn’t go up to the cave. The track to the cave was very steep, it was very warm and we both had no energy left.

We saw very little birds. We did see Subalpine Warbler.

Then we drove along the coast to Kallíthéra. We drank a Greek coffee in an old kafeneion and went back to Iréon.

That night I wanted to eat fish and we went to O Voúros again.

**Birds of the day:**

Wednesday 29th April:

This morning we visited the Timióu Stávrou monastery near Mavratzéi.

When we drove out of the village there was a dead Glass Lizard on the road.

We wanted to go for a walk in a valley near Mavratzéi, but the weather wasn’t that good in the mountains. There were dark clouds and we were walking for about five minutes, when we heard thunder. We decided to go back to the car.

We then drove to Pythagóreio and walked to the big church and around the harbour. After eating a pita Gyros we went to the old salt lake near Psili Ammos. We saw the same birds as during previous visits, but this time the Ruddy Shelducks had already ducklings.

After that we wanted to go for a drink in the Taverna Panorama along the road from Míli to Pagóndas, because this is a breeding area for European Bee-eaters. The taverna was closed and there were no Bee-eaters so we drove to Papa Beach for a drink.

After dropping my wife at the hotel I went for the last time to the Potokakipools.

At the parking place of the Heraion I saw the Little Owl on the photo.

The pools were now completely dry.

In the bushes along the beach was a large group of Spanish Sparrows.
Then I went for a walk near the bridge at Míli, where I saw five European Rollers at the same time.

For our last night on Samos we wanted to go out for dinner at restaurant Taurus, but it was closed.
We had dinner at Taverna Karavópetra and the food was great.

**Birds of the day:**


**Thursday 30th April:**
I took an early walk along the beach to the Heraion and back along the main road.

Near the Imvresos River I saw a Pallid Swift. A Cetti’s Warbler and a Reed Warbler showed very well. I also saw a Whinchat.

We said goodbye to Marianthe, the owner of hotel Niki and thanked her for her great hospitality.

At 09:15 uur we were picked up for transport to the airport. Near the airport we saw a Marsh harrier.
There were only 49 passengers in the plane. At 13:20 uur we landed at Schiphol Airport. At 15:15 we were back home.

*Birds of the day:*

*Barn Swallow, Blackbird, Cetti’s Warbler, Collared Dove, Eurasian Jay, Hooded Crow, House Martin, House Sparrow, Marsh Harrier, Pallid Swift, Reed Warbler, Spanish Sparrow, Whinchat and Yellow-legged Gull.*