

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Birds of Cyprus – An annotated checklist.

By Dick Yates.

First of all, this book is not a Field Guide; it is much more than that. Furthermore, I suggest that it is more than just an ordinary run-of-the-mill annotated checklist.

This book is an update of the two previous editions of 1983 and 1992 by Peter Flint and Peter Stewart. For this update Peter Flint has been joined by Colin Richardson. Colin has been a leading player in Cyprus ornithology since he arrived in Cyprus in 2003. He was the Bird Recorder for Birdlife Cyprus from 2004-13, Editor of the Birdlife Cyprus Bird report from 2004-11 and as a member of the Birdlife Cyprus Council he was Chairman of the Rare Birds Committee from 2004-15. He has also co-authored, with Richard Porter, the Helm Field Guide “The Birds of Cyprus” published in 2020. Finally, and by no means least, he has been a good friend of and great help to RAFOS, and me in particular, during the two bird surveys that the Society ran in Cyprus in 2008 and 2010. RAFOS also gets a mention in the acknowledgements for the data that we gathered and was incorporated into this book.

Returning to the book’s contents. Before one gets to the species list the first 40 pages or so are a comprehensive introduction to Cyprus, its history, geography, climate, vegetation and an overview of the environmental changes that have occurred and their impact on the island. There is a brief account of the history of ornithology in Cyprus and an overview of the avifauna, the breeding, migration and movement of birds and their change in status, and finally an assessment of the status of conservation measures past and present.

Now we come to the meat of this book, the systematic species list. This section starts with a few pages covering the abbreviations used, a list of the observers and collectors of the data and a general outline on the presentation of the species accounts. These species accounts provide information on a birds sub-species, its status, range and abundance in Cyprus, its breeding range, habits and habitats if applicable and abundant information on when, where and by whom sightings were made. In the middle of this section is a collection of photographs (67) depicting various locations and habitats on Cyprus and some excellent pictures of a variety of birds. Following the species list is an Addendum of 3 species new to Cyprus that were identified after the book was compiled and 9 species whose sightings are unconfirmed.

Four Appendices round off this highly informative new book. Appendix 1 is A gazetteer of Cyprus place names; App 2 is a list of plant names mentioned in the text; App 3 is a list of biometrics taken from the measurements of live birds ringed on

the Island: and App4, and probably the most interesting, contains descriptions of sites of ornithological interest and what birds you might expect to see there.

In conclusion, this is a hefty tome packed with information about Cyprus ornithology. It also comes at a fairly hefty price, £45. However, if you are a lover of Cyprus and its bird life I expect that you would want to make room on your bookshelf for this one. I do! Might drop a hint to my children around Christmas time