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MUCH MORE THAN A CHECKLIST: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BIRDS AND NATURE OF CYPRUS

BOC CHECKLIST SERIES: 28

The Birds of CYPRUS



An Annotated Checklist

Peter Flint and Colin Richardson

Flint P. & Richardson C., 2024. The Birds of Cyprus. An annotated Checklist. BOC Checklist Series: 28. British Ornithologists' Club. Tring, UK, 492 pp.

The Birds of Cyprus is the 28th volume of a renowned series of checklists dating back to 1976. Checklists are invaluable tools for ornithological research as they allow organising and synthesising observations under the supervision of experienced researchers. They allow monitoring populations and highlighting variations that may indicate environmental change; they facilitate research and conservation and, last but not least, they share information in a synthetic and standardized way. Not surprisingly, Avocetta regularly publishes the checklist of Italian birds redacted by the Italian Ornithological Commission (COI) and the Italian Centre for Ornithological Studies (CISO). Authored by Peter Flint and Colin Richardson, this third edition of the checklist of the birds of Cyprus is published by the British Ornithologists' Club (BOC) and updates two earlier checklists compiled in 1983 and 1992, the latter published as the 6th volume of the same series by the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU).

The series aims to document the status of birds in various regions of the world. Each volume contains a systematic list of the species recorded in that area accompanied by extensive notes on the status, movements, records and other relevant

information specific to the area. Of particular interest for Italian readers is the only volume in the series dedicated to Italy, the 11th volume titled “The Birds of Sicily”, edited by Carmela Iapichino and Bruno Massa, former Editor-in-Chief of Avocetta.

The Birds of Cyprus includes about 60 pages of introduction providing detailed information on the history of ornithology in Cyprus, the geology, climate, vegetation and environment of the island, its biogeographical location and the migratory movements that interest it. This extensive introduction gives a great overview of Cyprus’ nature and its recent changes, which is particularly relevant for putting the information on the single species into a broader context. In this part, I found a discussion on the species/area relationship and the equilibrium theory particularly interesting. It shows, for example, that Cyprus avifauna includes fewer species than expected given the island’s area compared to the other major Mediterranean islands, which the authors relate to the greater aridity and geographical isolation of Cyprus.

Appendices at the end of the book provide condensed information on biometric measures of birds trapped for ringing in Cyprus and sites of ornithological interest. Birders will find the information in this book invaluable to find the correct time and location to maximise chances of finding a target species.

To produce this list, the authors not only reviewed publications of the islands’ past and present bird societies and searched

ringing encounters and citizen science databases like eBird, but also included results from tracking data, which revealed fascinating insights into bird origins and destinations. This book summarizes tons of literature (including the often difficult grey one) and is extremely relevant to anyone interested in the birds of Cyprus and the wider Middle East.

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