

Preface

Wherever you go in Cyprus, it is easy to be reminded of the many different kinds of birds that can be seen on our island. This book can help you give a name to those you come across in your neighbourhood or garden, as you visit the mountains or the beach, or even as you peer out from the window of the bus or car taking you to school. We are all familiar with the Swallow and the Flamingo that visit us at different times of the year, but what is that little black-and-white bird that wags its tail as it runs along the side of the road? Or the pink bird with the black-and-white crest and wings that just floated off into the olive trees?

How can these creatures fly? What makes some of them fly thousands of kilometres each year so as to spend the summer in Europe, and then return to Africa for the winter? And how do they manage to fly so far? How does a bird spend the day? What will happen to the birds that use an area if a big hotel is built there? How can I protect the birds that rest in Cyprus during their migration?

These are just a few of the questions that BirdLife Cyprus often gets asked when it visits schools or arranges events to introduce people to the birds of Cyprus. This book hopes to provide the answers to these and many other questions. Birds are an important part of our natural environment. If they are allowed to flourish and play their role in the ecosystem, that is the best way to ensure that the ecosystem will remain healthy, for the benefit of all.

BirdLife Cyprus hopes that this book will encourage all of you to learn more about Cyprus' fantastic birds. We also hope it will encourage readers to help ensure these birds can visit and live on our island in safety.

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BirdLife Cyprus would like to thank the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation for providing the financial backing for this project and the Foundation's officers, who have provided valuable assistance. Finally, we would especially like to thank our president, Mr Tassos Leventis and members Dave Nye, Michael Gore, Stavros Christodoulides, Michael Miltiadou, Gwen Crabtree and Jane Stylianou, who allowed us to use their wonderful collection of photographs—the pictures that bring this book to life!