



TOUR INFORMATION FOR LESVOS

These notes are designed to help you prepare for your tour. Please read carefully.

ENTERING GREECE: United Kingdom citizens will need a passport, which is valid for six months beyond the intended length of stay. No visa is required. Citizens of other nations should contact their nearest Greek Consulate for entry requirements.

It is always a good idea to take a photocopy of your passport and air ticket with you when travelling abroad. They can prove invaluable in helping you get replacements if your originals are lost or stolen. Obviously you should keep the photocopies in a separate bag to the originals.

TIME DIFFERENCE: Lesvos is two hours ahead of British Summer Time.

CURRENCY: The currency in Greece is the Euro (EUR). The easiest way to take money is to buy Euros before you depart, or use ATM machines out there. As the tour price includes all travel, hotel and main meal costs, you need only bring enough money to cover items of a personal nature.

LANGUAGE: Greek is the official language but English is widely spoken.

CLIMATE: It is generally warm and pleasant in late April with temperatures ranging between 15°C and 23°C in the daytime, but cooler in the early morning and evenings. However, the weather is unpredictable at this time of year and we could experience rain during our stay.

PACE OF TOUR AND DAILY ROUTINE: Most days will start with an optional pre-breakfast excursion, lasting between one and two hours, to one of the many excellent birding spots close to the hotel. After breakfast we will usually head out for the day and provided the weather is fine we will have a picnic lunch. If it is unusually hot, or very wet, and we are in the area, we may return to the hotel for a break in the afternoon, but generally we will be out birding until about an hour before dinner/log call at around 20.00.

The tour is not a strenuous one but in a couple of places we will walk on stony ground and up rocky valleys. Leisurely walks of up to 1 or 2 km over easy terrain will be all that is required.

HEALTH: It is essential that you contact your own doctor to obtain the latest information on the regions you are visiting. Please contact your doctor well in advance of your tour's departure as some medication must be initiated weeks before the period of possible exposure.

No specific immunisations are required, unless you are coming from areas where yellow fever is endemic. There is no malaria in Greece. You should have an up-to-date tetanus booster. Minor intestinal problems are possible, so we suggest bringing Imodium in case of an upset stomach. Generally, insects shouldn't be a problem but it might be wise to bring a repellent in case we encounter a few mosquitoes.

The sun may be strong and it is easy to become sunburnt so bring a few long-sleeve shirts and a broad-brimmed hat. On particularly hot days be sure to increase your intake of fluids.

Tap water is generally safe to drink and bottled water will be available throughout the day, as required. It may be difficult to obtain any special medication during the tour, so bring all you are likely to need.

LESVOS: Tour Information...2

For further information on health advice refer to the Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad website www.masta-travel-health.com

In the unlikely event of you requiring medical attention of any kind while you are away, it is wise to carry a European Health Insurance Certificate card (EHIC) with you <http://www.nhse111-ehic.org.uk>

ACCOMMODATION: Throughout the tour we will be staying at a comfortable, good quality hotel. All rooms have a private bathroom with a shower. Hairdryers not provided so bring your own if you think you need one.

There is a nice (outdoor) swimming pool at the hotel, and guests are welcome to use this, but we are seldom if ever at the hotel at a time of the day when the temperature is conducive to swimming. Alternatively, the sea is just in front of the hotel, less than a minutes' walk away.

LAUNDRY: There are no laundry facilities available at the hotel, but should a service be required it may be possible to use one in nearby Kalloni village.

ELECTRICITY: 220V AC 50Hz. An international travel plug is useful and can be bought in most airport departure lounges. You may find the following website useful: <http://www.powerplugs-sockets.com>.

FOOD: Meals at the hotel are a buffet consisting of a variety of local foods. Our picnic lunches are based around a Greek salad provided by the hotel augmented by local cheeses, cold meats, and fruit purchased by the leaders. On our final evening we will head into the nearby coastal village for a meal at a local restaurant. Vegetarians are well catered for.

Sunbird tours are all-inclusive, and no refunds can be issued for any tour meals participants choose to miss. While we will try to do all we can to accommodate the requirements of all participants, please note that we cannot guarantee all causes of food allergies can be avoided at every destination. Our tours are carefully scheduled to insure the best possible birding experience and although the leaders will do all they can to make sure the group eats at a reasonable time, sometimes early or late lunches and/or evening meals cannot be avoided. Any participants who need to eat at specific times may need to bring supplemental food with them.

DRINKS: Bottled water, a soft drink, beer or wine are provided at meals, as is coffee or tea. In addition, we keep a supply of bottled water on the tour vehicles.

INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE ACCESS: Our hotel has a reasonably good Wifi connection and guests can use this on their own devices free of charge. Mobile phone access is very good throughout most of the island.

DRESS: Dress will be informal throughout the tour.

FIELD CLOTHING: Be prepared for generally warm to hot conditions – so reasonably lightweight clothing. A good sun hat is advisable. There may be some cooler conditions, especially in the early mornings, as well as a chance of rain so a field jacket would be useful. It is essential to have comfortable shoes with good support.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: You should bring the following:

Notebook and pencil

Small shoulder bag/rucksack

Small canteen/water bottle

Personal medication

Alarm clock

Sun glasses and suncream

Insect repellent

LESVOS: Tour Information...3

Optional: Telescope & tripod, camera, memory cards, spare binoculars and spare spectacles (in case of loss or damage), field guide, swimwear. A telescope would be very useful on this tour..

Note: The most effective insect repellents are those containing at least 35% of the active ingredient diethyltoluamide (DEET). The higher the percentage, the greater the effectiveness. However, care must be taken to avoid getting the repellent on to optical equipment as it dissolves rubber and plastic and can damage coated lenses. A reasonably effective alternative, which isn't corrosive, is Mosi-guard, produced by MASTA, and we recommend this. It is available in most high street chemist (including those at the airport). Camping supply stores sell a product containing permethrin 0.5%, which must be applied directly to clothing in advance of wearing and allowed to dry. This non-staining, odourless chemical is non-toxic to humans and protective on clothing through several launderings. Please make sure you never to spray insect repellent inside the vehicle or when you are standing close to other participants – it may drift on to their optical equipment.

LEADER'S EQUIPMENT: The leader will provide the following:

Telescope and tripod
Basic first-aid kit

Reference books

LUGGAGE: Our Final Information document, which will be sent to you approximately three weeks before departure, will give details about baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour.

As a general rule, in addition to using your luggage labels, it is a good idea to fix identification to the inside of each piece of luggage.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Scenery and memory shots will be plentiful and simple to obtain. Although there will be occasions when bird photography is possible, a birdwatching tour is not normally the best means of pursuing this aim. Bring all your memory cards with you as it may be difficult to find precisely what you need during the tour. Camera equipment should be packed in moisture- and dust-proof bags, as a precaution. "Digiscoping" is perfectly compatible with the tour, though it is recommended you bring your own telescope as the leader's telescope is not available for this activity.

There will be opportunities to take photos of birds, wild flowers, and scenery and the leaders will do all they can to accommodate anyone wishing to take photographs. However if you are a serious photographer please bear in mind that this is first and foremost a birdwatching tour. Please do not allow your photographic desires to conflict with other participants' birdwatching activities.

TRANSPORT: Transportation will be in a minibuses driven by the leaders. Bottled water is provided on the minibus. The leader will arrange a seating rotation. Participants should be able to ride in any seat in tour vehicles.

SMOKING: Smoking is not allowed in the vehicles or when the group is gathered for meals, checklists etc. If you are sharing a room with a non-smoker, please do not smoke in the room. If you smoke in the field, we ask that you do so well away and downwind from the group if possible.

LESVOS: Tour Information...4

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy, as most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage. Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be extremely expensive. Please note that Sunbird is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

If you wish, insurance can be arranged by Helen Fisher, Bullerwell Independent Insurance Brokers, 13 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY. Tel: 01234-866964. Please contact Helen for a quote and she will send the schedule directly to you.

TIPPING: All tour-based tips are included in the tour price. These include tips to local guides, drivers, hotel porters, and waiters and waitresses when we have group meals together in restaurants. You only need to pay tips for personal services such as room service or drinks from the bar.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: There are several field guides and reference books that cover Greece's birds.

Brooks, Richard. *Birding on the Greek Island of Lesvos*. 1998. Brookside Publishing. An excellent guide to the birds and the birding sites on the island, written by the man who has done more than anyone to popularise birding on Lesvos. Illustrated with many excellent photographs.

Dudley, Steve. *A Birdwatching Guide to Lesvos*. 2009. Arlequin Press. An excellent and more up-to-date alternative to the above title with good maps and very helpful information on all aspects of birding on the island. Photographs not as impressive as in the Brooks book but has a more authoritative and complete annotated checklist of the island's birds and, most importantly, employs the proper place-names throughout the text. **Highly recommended.**

Mullarney, Killian et al. *Collins Bird Guide*. 2010. HarperCollins. The 2nd edition is the latest, most up-to-date and portable field guide to the birds of Europe. This book has quickly become established as the standard field guide for the region. **Highly recommended**

Note: An excellent electronic version of this guide is available for digital devices at the Apple and Android "Apps" stores. Search for it under "Collins Bird Guide."

OBTAINING BOOKS: Most of the field guides and the major ornithological references in print are available by mail order from booksellers specialising in natural history titles.

Natural History Book Service Ltd
Tel: 01803 865913
www.nhbs.co.uk

Subbuteo Books
Tel: 0870 010 9700
www.wildlifebooks.com

LESVOS: Tour Information...5

WildSounds
Tel: 01263 741100
www.wildsounds.co.uk

MAPS: Maps of the region may be available from:

The Map Shop
Tel: 01684 593146
www.themapshop.co.uk

Stanfords
Tel: 020 7836 1321
www.stanfords.co.uk

FINAL INFORMATION: A Final Information sheet with instructions for meeting the group, hotel addresses, etc. and your flight tickets will be sent to you about three weeks before departure. If you have any questions about the tour please contact us.