

Explore the Akrotiri Peninsula



Funded by the Darwin Initiative through UK Government funding (Darwin Plus, the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund)



Birdwatching

Migration

Surrounded by three Continents, Cyprus is an important migratory junction for birds, while the Akrotiri Peninsula is located on one of the primary migratory routes across the island!

Spring migration begins mid-February and lasts until mid-May (depending on prevailing weather conditions). Autumn migration starts early in August for most species, and lasts until the end of October.



© M. Apostolidou



Endemic Species

Here you can find Cyprus' two endemic bird species, the Cyprus Wheatear and the Cyprus Warbler.



Cyprus Warbler © M. Gore



Cyprus Wheatear
© A. Stoecker



What you can see and when!

Spring

Cyprus Warbler, Cyprus Wheatear, Black Francolin, Cretzschmar's Bunting, Masked Shrike, Red-backed Shrike, Woodchat Shrike, European Roller, Griffon Vulture, Red-footed Falcon, Pallid Harrier, Montagu's Harrier, Citrine Wagtail, Collared Pratincole, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Ferruginous Duck, Little Egret, Black-winged Stilt.

Summer

Cyprus Warbler, Cyprus Wheatear, Black Francolin, Cretzschmar's Bunting, Cyprus Scops Owl, Masked Shrike, European Roller, Griffon Vulture, Alpine Swift, Eleonora's Falcon, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish Plover.

Autumn

Glossy Ibis, Purple Heron, Honey Buzzard, Red-footed Falcon, Demoiselle Crane, White Stork, Cyprus Scops Owl, European Bee-eater, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Montagu's Harrier, Squacco Heron, Citrine Wagtail, Greater Sand Plover.

Winter

Greater Flamingo, Shelduck, Wallcreeper, Griffon Vulture, Long-legged Buzzard, Eurasian Penduline Tit, Moustached Warbler, Blue Rock Thrush, Bluethroat, Greater Sand Plover.



Nature, Culture, Tradition

are waiting for you in **Akrotiri Peninsula**

Following a scenic route through shady citrus plantations and tall cypress trees you reach the Akrotiri Peninsula. This southernmost part of Europe is full of unique surprises: ancient temples and chapels, extremely rare and endemic plants, a multitude of bird species, hidden beaches where turtles nest and classic Mediterranean landscapes. The Peninsula also holds 12,000 year-old traces of pygmy elephants and pygmy hippopotamuses, which once lived here but were probably driven to extinction by the first human inhabitants of the island. The geological history of the area proves that the Peninsula was once a small island, which later merged with the rest of Cyprus.

A single visit to Akrotiri Peninsula is not enough to explore all its natural and cultural wealth. On the Peninsula, every season offers something unique and different. In spring, orchids and breeding birds add life to the landscape. In summer, the sea turtles lay their eggs on the beach. In autumn, the sky over the Peninsula fills with hundreds of migratory birds while in winter, the Flamingos add colour to the Salt Lake. After all, this is where the largest wetland complex of Cyprus is found.

In this corner of Cyprus, you can come closer to nature, history, Cypriot tradition and cuisine and experience unique holidays in the heart of a relatively untouched Peninsula.

Taste authentic Cypriot and Mediterranean cuisine at the restaurants and taverns of the Akrotiri village.

The Akrotiri community is ready to welcome you and show you their hospitality.

To learn about accommodation options please contact the Akrotiri Community Council at (+357) 25952361 or by email at koinotikosymvoulioakrotiriou@cytanet.com.cy.

Respecting the natural and cultural environment ensures that future visitors will also be able to enjoy this unique area.



© M. Apostolidou



© P. Charilaou



© A. Stoecker

Not to be missed!

Chapels and Churches

Picturesque chapels and temples dating from the 9th all the way to the 20th century are found across the Peninsula – but mostly on the western side of it – and await to be discovered.



Agios Georgios Chapel

© P. Charilaou



Agios Dimitrianos Chapel

© P. Charilaou



Basketry

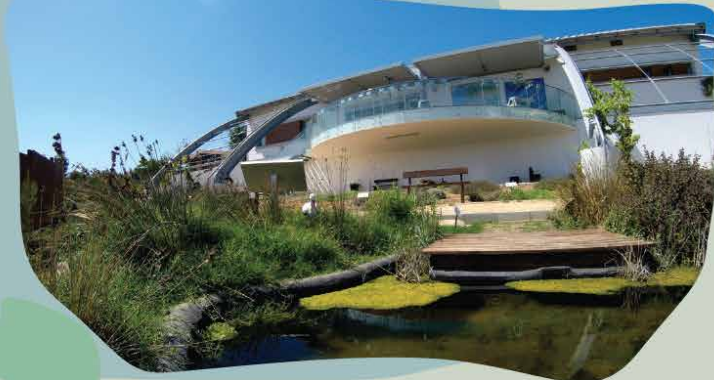
Here is where one of the oldest handicrafts still survives: basketry. For a more immersive experience of this traditional art, visit one of the houses bearing the relevant sign in Akrotiri village.

© V. Michael

Environmental Education Centre

Is it possible to fit all the natural elements of Akrotiri Peninsula under one roof? At the Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre, in Akrotiri village, you can learn about the unique biodiversity of the Peninsula: from the rare and endemic plants of the area to the endangered *Monachus monachus* seal. Inside the building you can find exhibits, a lab, a lecture room and a library, while in the grounds outside there are birdwatching facilities with a great view of the Salt Lake, a botanical trail and a playground.

© P. Charilaou



Archaeological sites

In the north-western end of the Peninsula one can find one of the most notable archaeological sites in Cyprus, Kourion. Among the most important monuments of ancient Kourion is the Theatre which was constructed at the end of the 2nd century B.C. at an impressive location. Today, the Theatre is a popular venue for a number of cultural activities and theatrical performances, especially during the summer.



© with the permission of the
Department of Antiquities



© M. Apostolidou

The Apollo Hylates nature trail is suitable for all ages and offers a walk in nature near the archaeological monuments of Kourion.



© M. Apostolidou

Akrotiri Marsh

The Akrotiri Marsh is a unique area in Cyprus that hosts rare flora and fauna species, especially birds. The traditional Cyprus cattle that graze here help with the management of the area's vegetation. You can enjoy the Marsh's wildlife from the birdwatching hides.

This brochure was created as part of the “Akrotiri Marsh Restoration: a flagship wetland in the Cyprus SBAs” project, funded by the Darwin Initiative through UK Government funding (Darwin Plus, the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund).

This 2-year project (April 2015 – March 2017) implemented management and restoration actions at Akrotiri Marsh, aiming to create habitats for wildlife and restore the biodiversity value of this important wetland. At the same time, through promotional, educational and awareness raising actions, the project aimed to create new socio-economic opportunities for the local community of Akrotiri.

The infrastructure found at the Marsh was created as part of this project.
Find out more: www.akrotirimarsh.org.



© M. Apostolidou

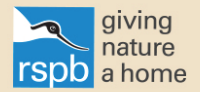


Funded by the Darwin Initiative through UK Government funding (Darwin Plus, the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund)

Project partners:



Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre
Κέντρο Περιβαλλοντικής Εκπαίδευσης Ακροτιρίου



Publication

BirdLife Cyprus
www.birdlifecyprus.org
P.O. Box 12026, 2340, Nicosia, Cyprus
Tel./Fax: +357 - 22 455072 / +357 - 22 455073
birdlifecyprus@birdlifecyprus.org
Editor: Melpo Apostolidou

Front cover photos:

M. Apostolidou, A. Stoecker, P. Charilaou

Πτηνολογικός
Σύνδεσμος Κύπρου



BirdLife Cyprus works to protect the wild birds of Cyprus, their habitats, and wider biodiversity, through monitoring, conservation and education, and by developing people's appreciation of nature.

© BirdLife Cyprus, 2017

EXPLORE

THE AKROTIRI PENINSULA



Birdwatching area



Archaeological site



Nature trail



Church Chapel Monastery



Birdwatching hides open to the public, at all hours, with free entrance



Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter



Photographs: Thomas Hadjikyriakou, with the permission of the Department of Antiquities, Melpo Apostolidou, Pantelis Charilaou, BirdLife Cyprus, Christos Mousikos, Albert Stoeker.



Kourion Archaeological Site

One of the most important ancient cities of Cyprus. The Theatre, the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates and the The Early Christian Basilica are perhaps the most impressive monuments of the site. For opening hours visit the Department of Antiquities website www.mcw.gov.cy/da. Disabled access available.



Agios Dimitrianos Chapel

Small vaulted chapel dating back to the period of the Arab raids (9th – 10th century).



Episkopi Cliffs

Overlooking Zapalo beach, with the right equipment, one can see the only Griffon Vulture breeding colony in Cyprus.

Attention: Cliff edge unsafe!
Species Highlights: Griffon Vulture, Peregrine Falcon, Eleonora's Falcon, Blue Rock Thrush, Wallcreeper, Cyprus Warbler.



Apollo Hylates nature trail

Linear, easy walking, distance 2 km
Start: Opposite the archaeological site of the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates at ancient Kourion.
Points of interest: The visitor goes through lentisc and juniper scrub with sparse pines. The trail goes through the ancient Kourion stadium and ends at an elevated point which offers a panoramic view of Episkopi beach and of the ancient settlement found.



Kolossi Castle

One of the most important forts of Medieval Cyprus. The imposing castle is located at the core of the fertile valley at the mouth of Kouris River.



Panagia Galaktotrofousa

Simple church with a wooden roof. During restoration work undertaken by the Department of Antiquities, it was discovered that the temple makes up the Third architectural phase of a monument with a long history going back to the late 11th century.



Zakaki Marsh

This natural marsh hosts important bird species, especially during winter and spring when Herons, Egrets and Glossy Ibis can be seen from the birdwatching hide. In the late summer afternoons one can enjoy Swallows and House Martins as they gather there in large numbers to roost.

Species Highlights: Ferruginous Duck, Purple Heron, Eurasian Penduline Tit, Moustached Warbler, Bluethroat, Squacco Heron, Little Egret.



Lady's Mile pools

During autumn and winter, waders visit these pools which are located between the Salt Lake and Lady's Mile beach.

Species Highlights: Little Egret, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish Plover, Citrine Wagtail, Greater Flamingo.



Lady's Mile Beach

One of the longest beaches in Cyprus. It is an organised bathing beach which is very popular during the summer months, even though quieter spots can be found along its length.



Akrotiri Marsh

A unique wetland that is part of the Akrotiri Peninsula wetland complex. The complex is a Ramsar site, an Important Bird Area and designated as a Special Protection Area, and a Special Area of Conservation equivalent to the EU designation, according to the mirror law in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas.

Species Highlights: Ferruginous Duck, Little Bittern, Collared Pratincole, Red-footed Falcon, Jack Snipe, Bluethroat, Moustached Warbler, Black Francolin.



Merras Area

This gravel pits area, found behind Akrotiri village, is extremely interesting for birdwatching.

Species Highlights: Greater Sand Plover, Cream-coloured Courser, Greater Short-toed Lark, Red-backed Shrike, Woodchat Shrike, Collared Pratincole, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Kentish Plover, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Montagu's Harrier, Citrine Wagtail.

Around the Agios Georgios chapel one can observe important species such as the Cyprus Warbler, Cyprus Wheatear, Rüppell's Warbler, Isabelline Wheatear, Eurasian Hoopoe.



Agios Georgios Chapel

Single space chapel with arched roof of the 15th – 16th century. It is always open.



Turtle Nesting Beach

In the summer, the threatened sea turtles *Chelonia mydas* and *Caretta caretta* visit this beach to lay their eggs. Baby turtles hatch and run to the sea up until the autumn months. Experts mark the location of the nests which are protected until all eggs have hatched. These important turtle species are extremely sensitive to lights and disturbance on the beach.

Aetokremmos

The Peninsula's archaeological sites should not be missed. Here you can find the first area in Cyprus that was inhabited by humans, Aetokremmos. Humans lived at this site 12,000 years ago. This is also the only area in Cyprus where humans were found to be connected to pygmy hippopotamuses and pygmy elephants. Bone findings indicate that the pygmy hippopotamuses did not exceed 75 centimetres in height. Learn more at the Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre.



Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre

The Centre provides an excellent view of the Akrotiri Salt Lake where thousands of Flamingos winter. Additionally one can observe rare autumn migrants such as Demoiselle Cranes and Honey Buzzards.

In the projection room you can watch documentaries about the Peninsula and its biodiversity.
Opening Hours: Weekdays 08:00 – 17:00 & Sunday and Public Holidays 10:00 – 17:00
www.akrotirienviroment.com



Funded by the Darwin Initiative through UK Government funding (Darwin Plus, the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund).



If you enjoy sports, note that the east side (Kourion beach) and west side (Lady's mile beach) is suitable for windsurfing and kitesurfing (given suitable wind conditions and with your own equipment).



The rich biodiversity of the area also extends to the underwater environment of the Peninsula. With proper training and by always following the basic safety rules and principles of diving, you can enjoy the seabed of the area safely.

Akrotiri

In this southernmost village of Cyprus, visitors can find traditional coffee shops, restaurants and accommodation options. Here, one can purchase traditional basketry products and also learn more about this handicraft by visiting one of the houses bearing the sign "Basket maker". The Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre can also be found here.