

Southern Turkey 19th July-2nd August 2012

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Brown Fish Owl, nr Oymapinar 20th July 2012

This is a brief trip report of a family holiday based near Serik, between Antalya and Side on the southern coast of Turkey. We stayed at Villa Aden – for details see <http://www.villaaden.com/>. Car hire was arranged through First Rent-a-car – see <http://www.firstrentacar.info/eng/>.

Highlights included specialities such as **Brown Fish Owl**, **Krüper's Nuthatch** and **White-throated Kingfisher**.

Brown Fish Owl:

We arranged an early morning trip with Özcan Kilic at Vigotours – see [http://www.vigotour.com/?Brown Fish Owl](http://www.vigotour.com/?Brown+Fish+Owl)

The tour cost us 500 TL (about £180), although Özcan informs me that increased permit costs may cause prices for subsequent tours to rise. However if you can find more birders to form a group then obviously it becomes more reasonable per person! We were picked up promptly by Hamza at 4am from the Total petrol station at the D400 Side junction, and after a brief stop to pick up breakfast we headed up to the Oymapinar reservoir. A **Scops Owl** was seen through the car headlights flying across the road just before the entrance gate to Oymapinar, and two **Tawny Owls** were heard at from the car park by the boat dock. Upon arrival at the “Grand Canyon”, Hamza spotted a juvenile **Brown Fish Owl** on a low rocky

ledge, and two adult birds were subsequently located. Hamza also thought that a 4th bird was possibly present although I did not see it. We got great views of the birds although the light was a little dark for photography – a wonderful experience nonetheless. Özcan later told me that strong north-east winds in the previous few days had made the birds more elusive, so we were perhaps a little fortunate to see the birds so well. A fourth species of owl was seen back at Villa Aden, where a family of **Little Owls** were regular companions for the holiday around the complex.

Akseki (Krüper's Nuthatch etc.):

Krüper's Nuthatch were found easily in the pinewoods north of Akseki (about 1h 45 from Serik), near the White-backed Woodpecker site described in Rich Bonser's report: <http://www.birdtours.co.uk/tripreports/turkey/turkey23/turk-july-04.htm>.

Although I didn't see White-backed Woodpecker, I found several **Eastern Bonelli's Warblers** and a **Lanner Falcon** here, as well as **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and the only **Chaffinches** of the trip. The Akseki graveyard produced 2 **Syrian Woodpeckers** and 2 **Masked Shrikes**, and the Walled Garden area yielded another **Syrian Woodpecker**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Western Rock Nuthatch**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, **Sombre Tit**, **Short-toed Eagle** and **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear**. Olive-tree Warbler has been seen here in recent weeks but I failed to locate any. Note that the Walled Garden itself is barely visible from the road due to the large earth embankment which has been constructed as part of a new road carriageway, but by climbing over the embankment I was able to walk around the Walled Garden.

We also passed through some very likely-looking habitat for **Krüper's Nuthatch** north of Tasigil on the way to Beskonak for a white-water rafting trip along Koprulu Canyon – exploration of this area might be fruitful although the winding road was rather hairy.

White-throated Kingfisher:

Probably the biggest surprise of the trip, as I wasn't expecting to see this species in this part of Turkey, although the Collins guide does have an isolated spot on the distribution map for this species here. I was checking out some drainage channels and canals southeast of Serik when one of these fabulous birds was found fishing along a channel. The site is near the

village of Denizyakat about 25-30 mins west of Side and 10 mins east of Serik. From the D400 take the road south to Denizyaka (the turning is between the Tasigil and Belkis/Aspendos turnings on the D400. Take the road for Denizyakat for about 6.5km, following signs for Lykia World, ignoring the first bridge over a drainage channel. Just after Denizyakat village the road takes a sharp s-bend then a gentle right hand bend. Park on the right after a couple of hundred metres just at the bridge over the canal, by the signpost Kanala Yaklaşmayınız. The bird was fishing in the channel about 50m west of the bridge; by standing on the bridge you get a good view along the channel on both sides of the road. However a second short visit produced only a **Common Kingfisher** and a juvenile **Purple Heron**. **Graceful Prinias** and **Yellow-vented Bulbuls** were seen well on both occasions.

Serik c.5km



Approx 6km to D400



Sharp S-bend after Denizyaka village



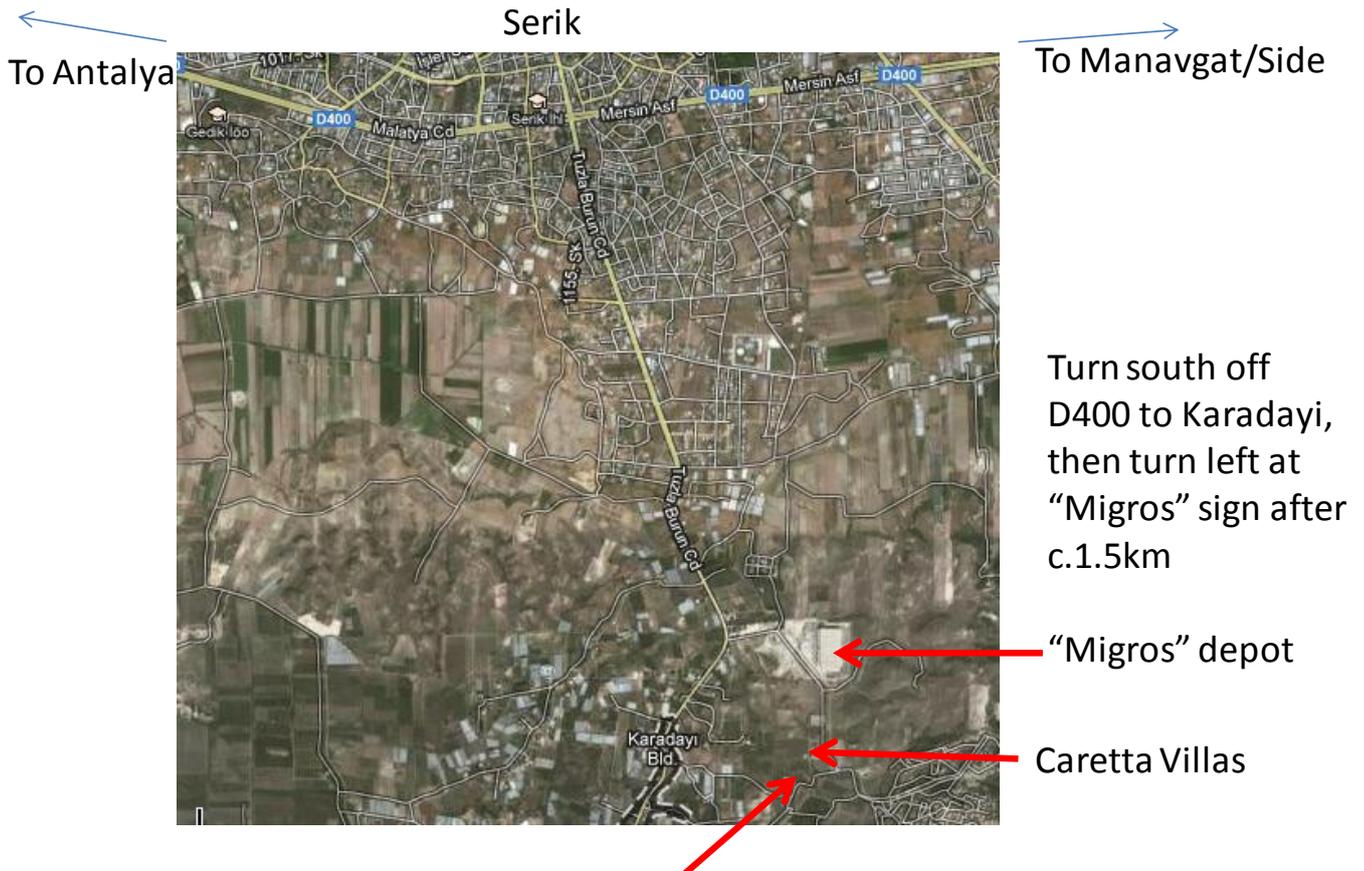
White-throated Kingfisher along channel here on 31/7/12



Park here by bridge and sign for "Kanala Yaklaşmayınız"

Other birds:

Birding at this time of the year in Turkey is quite tough, with temperatures exceeding 40 °C and many species having finished breeding – very little birdsong was heard during the trip. For instance, on my first visit to the Tasigil Olive-tree Warbler site, I failed to see or hear a single bird for over 30 minutes! For this reason I didn't make any effort to go for any of the higher-altitude specialities e.g. around the Korkuteli hills, deciding to leave it for another visit at a more suitable time of year. However the area around Villa Aden at the Caretta Villas near Karadayi (just south of Serik) was quite productive on early morning reccies; bushes around a small rocky outcrop just southwest of the villa yielded an **Eastern Orphee Warbler**, **2 Eastern Olivaceous Warblers**, a family of **Yellow-vented Bulbuls**, and **Rufous Bushchat**. A superb male **Levant Sparrowhawk** was seen circling low around the villas on one date, and 3 other sightings of a distant Accipiter during the fortnight may also have been this species. A family of **Little Owls** were on almost constant view, sheltering under the solar panels of the roofs of the villas; **Barn** and **Red-rumped Swallows** skimmed the pool, often while we were in it, and **Crested Lark**, **Hoopoe** and **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear** were all seen from the villa. Small parties of **Bee-eaters** were seen and heard from the villa on a couple of dates, and a **Short-toed Eagle** drifted over.



Rocky outcrops and bushes: Yellow-vented Bulbul, Eastern Orphean Warbler, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Rufous Bushchat. Levant Sparrowhawk also seen here

All in all despite the unfavourable time of year we saw some great birds, and I look forward to returning to Turkey in the near future.

Please feel free to contact me at i.d.broadbent@Trgu.ac.uk about any aspect of this report.