

Tour Report Lake Kerkini in Spring 12 – 16 May 2025

Dalmatian pelican



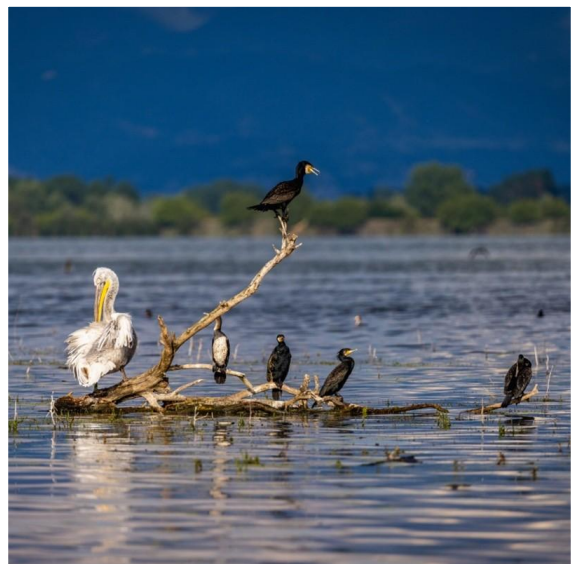
European bee-eater



Four spotted chaser



Dalmatian pelican



Compiled by Sean Weekly

Monday 12 May 2025

Day 1:

From Gatwick to Kerkini – With Lizards, Pelicans & a Splash of Wind

The group gathered bright and early at Gatwick, all bleary-eyed but buzzing with excitement—bags checked, cameras packed, and ready for takeoff. Our direct flight to Thessaloniki was on time (miracle!), and a couple of coffees later, we touched down just past schedule, greeted by mild spring air and a few hopeful breaks in the cloud cover.

Spirits were high, though I gave everyone a quick heads-up: the forecast was looking a bit moody. Rain was on the cards for the days ahead, and we'd need to stay flexible—ready to tweak the itinerary based on where the weather decided to play ball. No complaints from the group, just a collective nod and a “let’s see what we get.”

From the airport, we made our way north to the village of Kerkini, our home base for the next four nights. The drive itself was a gentle intro to the Greek landscape—rolling hills, olive groves, and the occasional stork perched proudly on roadside poles. We pulled into the village in good time, checked in, and then regrouped in the lounge for a very welcome round of drinks and nibbles—olive tapenade, fresh bread, and the kind of feta that ruins supermarket cheese forever.

In classic “tour leader luck”, the clouds parted just after lunch, and with a bit of sun breaking through, I made a snap decision: before our boat trip, we’d stick close to the harbour area to photograph some of the European green lizards that sun themselves along the warm stone walls. Within minutes we had eyes on our first glistening green tail flicking through the undergrowth and it wasn’t long before everyone was on the ground, lenses down, shutters clicking. The lizards didn’t disappoint. Some bold, some bashful, all incredibly photogenic in that glowing warm Greek light.



Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



As the afternoon moved on, it was time for our first boat trip out onto Lake Kerkin—*and wow, what an intro.* We made a beeline for the mouth of the Struma River, one of the lake’s most bird-rich areas. The atmosphere changed instantly: cormorants zipped low over the surface, Dalmatian and great white pelicans glided like ancient flying boats, and the trees along the banks were alive with movement—spoonbills, egrets, herons, and a constant chorus of calls in the air.



Find out more about our [Lake Kerkin in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

The light, for a short while, was magical—soft, golden, and perfectly directional, casting clean shadows and making those white feathers pop against the reeds. Cameras were clicking non-stop. I kept the mood relaxed, letting everyone settle into their rhythm, take it in, get familiar with the boat, and enjoy the overwhelming abundance of birdlife. And as a bonus surprise, we even caught our first glimpse of a coypu swimming in the distance—plenty more of those to come.



Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

Just as the group was getting into the groove... the lake turned. A big weather front blew in fast, sending gusty winds skimming across the surface. The water turned choppy, and birds hunkered down. Time to call it.

The ride back to the harbour got a little... Let's say "adventurous". Splashy waves, cold wind in our faces, and a slightly louder-than-usual silence from a few guests gripping the boat railings. But we made it back in one piece, a little damp and windswept—but also buzzing with everything we'd seen.

Not a bad first day at all. Pelicans, spoonbills, a few bold lizards, and even a coypu sighting to start us off. Despite the forecast, we squeezed every bit of sunshine we could out of the afternoon and there's plenty more to come.



Tuesday 13 May 2025

Day 2:

"From Boat Hiccups to Baby Coypus: Kerkini Keeps Delivering"

We were up and out early for our first full morning on the lake, and what a difference a night makes. The water, which just yesterday had been whipped into a frenzy by high winds, now lay like glass—calm, reflective, and perfectly still. The kind of morning where you can hear your own camera shutter echo across the water.

But, as always, nature had a few curveballs to throw. Not long after we set off, our boat decided it had other plans—the engine gave out just outside the harbour. After a bit of head-scratching and boat-side diagnostics, we were towed back in, swapped boats (big thanks to our ever-calm captain), and were soon back out chasing the morning light and the calls of nesting birds.



The first half of the trip focused on smaller species, especially the ever-charismatic squacco herons. There were plenty to go around—posing on reedbeds, flicking through shallows, and occasionally showing off with a flashy fly-by. Alongside them, a healthy crowd of little egrets was busy commuting back and forth, many carrying beakfuls of nesting material like miniature airborne florists.

Conditions were absolutely dreamy for a bit of high-key photography—that bright, soft light with just enough cloud diffusion to really isolate subjects against the sky. Some of the perched cormorants gave us prime opportunities: clean silhouettes, wide wingspans, and minimal background clutter. A few guests took full advantage, shooting abstract frames that looked more like ink sketches than bird photos.



Later in the morning, our attention was pulled east of the lake, a sudden eruption of activity near the bank! We trained our binoculars and lenses in that direction and saw it: thousands of cormorants and great white pelicans stirred up in what looked like a serious feeding session.

Sadly, we couldn't get in close. A dense carpet of lily pads blocked our path, and any attempt to push through would've caused more disturbance than it was worth. Still, from a respectful distance, we watched the drama unfold and managed a few images, splashing wings, circling birds, and that unmistakable buzz that comes with communal feeding. It really is the ultimate spectacle on the lake at this time of year!

Eventually, the birds drifted out further and we called it a morning, heading back to shore for a well-earned (and fashionably late) buffet breakfast. Coffee never tasted so good!

After lunch and a short regroup, we packed up and headed toward a quiet, lesser-known wetland patch called 'The Triangle' near Megalochori—a known haunt for coypus, especially in spring when they've got young.

On the way, a moment of roadside magic, a golden jackal, bounding parallel to the riverbank like a ghost, quickly seen before vanishing into the reeds. No photo, but plenty of excited chatter.

The weather? Rough. Heavy, relentless rain. But instead of scrapping the plan, we turned it into a vehicle-based stakeout, scanning the embankments from the dry comfort of our cars. It didn't take long—our first coypu family appeared across the water, tails swaying and little ones huddled close.

In total, we tallied eight separate individuals—including one mother with five babies and another with a slightly older trio. One particularly curious individual even approached close enough for some fantastic portraits through the drizzle. Everyone got shots, despite the challenging light, and morale was sky-high.



The rain let up just enough for a quick wander, and we struck macro gold. A vibrant European tree frog was spotted clinging to a wet reed, practically glowing neon green in the soft light—a textbook macro subject. We also spotted damselflies drying their wings, and one sharp-eyed guest caught a glimpse of a reed warbler flitting through the grassline.



Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

A tricky day today due to the weather, but full of subtle, rewarding encounters. From engine failure to feeding frenzies, baby coypus to macro frogs, Kerkini reminded us that even on the soggy days, there's always something to see in this incredible place, if you're just willing to wait, watch, and wade through the rain.

Tomorrow? Hopefully drier skies and another shot at those pelicans...

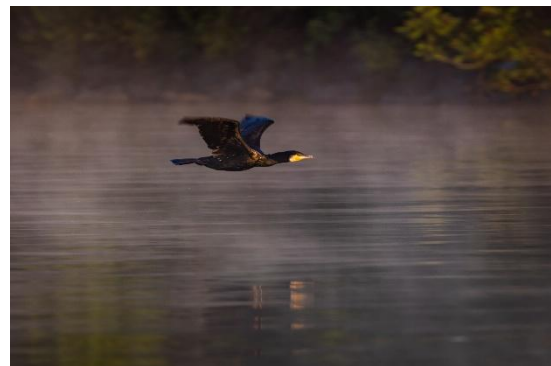


Wednesday 14 May 2025

Day 3:

"From Dawn on the Water to Dusk with Winged Rainbows"

Another early start (coffee firmly in hand) as we headed back out on the lake for our morning boat session. The light was soft and subtle again with even a light mist rising off the lake. We had a short encounter with a dalmatian pelican in the soft light. The morning was perfect for silhouette work, and the cormorants were absolutely playing their part. We found plenty perched against the glow of the rising sun, wings outstretched in that classic drying pose, and some beautiful reflection opportunities where the lake's surface turned to polished silver.





Today's target species was the elusive night heron. We scanned the riverbanks, the low-hanging branches, and the thickets with full attention. While the herons remained mostly hidden (as they do), we did manage a few quick glimpses, just enough to keep the excitement alive and remind us that nature often rewards patience... eventually.



Once again, we were treated to an impressive aquatic ballet: a massive mixed flock of cormorants and great white pelicans gathered en masse to fish. This time, the light was stronger, the birds more animated, and the action unfolded much closer to us. There was a genuine sense of tension and energy, the pelicans lunging in sync, the cormorants darting like torpedoes beneath the surface. We held our position and just let the cameras rip.

Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



Back on land and headed toward the hotel for a well-earned breakfast. We then decided to meet up sometime later to go for a walk back to the harbour for some more lizard action. Whilst walking to the harbour nature, had other plans. Just off the path, we spotted something moving in the grass near a pond. Four baby coypus!

Yes, four. Out in the open, nibbling grass, waddling around without a care in the world. We approached slowly and quietly, and to everyone's amazement, they just stayed there, giving us an incredible close encounter. Some of the best photos of the trip were taken in those few spontaneous minutes—fuzzy fur, bright little eyes, and that clumsy, adorable charm only a baby rodent can deliver.





After a great encounter with the coypus we made a relaxed walk back down to the harbour, stopping every few metres to admire something new: European green lizards basking, geckos darting across stone walls, and even a few jumping spiders for the macro lovers in the group. It felt like the area was alive with activity. The sheer biodiversity packed into this tiny stretch near the water was such a bonus to the day.



For the afternoon session, it was time for some colour. We made our way to one of the local bee-eater colonies, hoping to catch the magic of these technicolour acrobats as they zipped through the air.

There were plenty around—we saw dozens swooping, calling, and engaging in aerial duels—but they kept their distance from the perch positioned in front of the hide. Typical.

However, just behind the hide, we were treated to a brilliant show: a pair engaging in courtship behaviour, including mid-air food passing and even a brief mating display. While it wasn't the textbook front-facing perch shot we'd hoped for, everyone still walked away with special moments and a whole new appreciation for just how dynamic and playful these birds really are.



From dramatic lake scenes to spontaneous baby coypus, and the flashes of jewel-toned wings from the bee-eaters, Day Three had a bit of everything. Not everything went to plan (it rarely does), but once again, Kerkini proved that flexibility and curiosity go a long way out here. Tomorrow? Who knows—but it's bound to be beautiful.

Thursday 15 May 2025

Day 4:

“From feathers to fangs, a day of the tiny and the mighty”

Another dawn, another glassy still lake. We kicked off Day Four with a morning boat trip, this time venturing a little further down the river for a change of scene. The moment we entered the treeline, we could hear the racket—a full-on turf war between nesting cormorants, all jostling for prime real estate in the branches. Wings flapped, beaks clashed, and twigs were hotly debated over. It was a chaotic but fascinating window into their nesting behaviour and great fun to photograph against the tangled, moody background of the trees.

As we drifted gently back toward the river mouth, the light turned golden, and we were rewarded with a small group of white pelicans fishing in a peaceful patch of still water. The light was soft, the water mirror-like, and for a while, everything just... slowed down. It was one of those moments where you didn't even need to press the shutter—just being there was enough (though of course, we all did)!



Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

After the boat trip, we returned to the hotel for a leisurely breakfast and some downtime before shifting gears. I ran a masterclass session on editing and workflow—a peek into how I approach culling, organising and post-processing images. We chatted through things like selecting the strongest compositions, using light and shadow effectively, and how to make colours pop without overcooking it. Plenty of questions, lots of "aha!" moments, and a really nice chance to pause and reflect on what we've already captured so far.

In the afternoon, we swapped big lenses for the close-up glass and headed out on a macro hunt. For two full hours, we explored the wild corners of the land, eyes scanning every blade of grass and patch of bark. The variety was mind-blowing. We found:

- Robber flies on the hunt
- Bright green bush crickets
- Delicate damselflies and shimmering dragonflies
- Grasshoppers, of course
- And a real crowd favourite—an emerald green huntsman spider crouched in wait, its colour so vivid it almost glowed.

It was one of those sessions where you don't even realise how many amazing things are hiding at your feet until you stop and look. Everyone got something unique to shoot, and the creative energy was buzzing.



Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



Just as we wrapped up the macro session, our drivers arrived to take us to Mandraki Harbour, about a 30-minute drive away. The aim? Marsh frogs and grass snakes.

Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

We arrived just as the light was beginning to dip and settled in for a patient watch. The frogs made themselves known almost instantly—croaking, jumping, and playing their part. The snakes, however, remained elusive.

But then, the moment of the evening: a female little bittern appeared at the water's edge, stalking delicately through the reeds. We watched in silence as she made several darting strikes, catching tiny fish with incredible precision. It was an unexpected treat and one of the best sightings of the trip so far. Everyone was glued to the action, and it made for a beautifully intimate wildlife moment to close the day.



Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



From the noisy canopy drama of the morning to the minute, camouflaged marvels of the macro world—and a bonus bittern in between—Day Four delivered surprises at every scale. The diversity here continues to surprise us, and with every session, the group’s connection to the gorgeous Kerkini deepens.

Friday 16 May 2025

Day 5:

And just like that, it’s departure day.

This morning, I said my goodbyes to Group One as we made the drive back to Thessaloniki Airport. There were tired eyes (blame those 5:30 am alarms), but also plenty of smiles, laughs, and stories being shared over coffee and suitcase juggling.

As we pulled up to departures and said our farewells, I felt that familiar mix of gratitude and nostalgia that always comes at the end of a trip like this. It’s incredible how quickly a group of strangers can become a tight-knit team—bonded by early mornings, shared sightings, camera settings, and those magical moments in nature that no photo can fully capture.



Sign up to our e-news

Sign up to our e-news to find out more about our tours, events, late availability, offers and tour reports at <https://www.wildlifeworldwide.com/subscribe>

Find out more about our [Lake Kerkini in Spring](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com