

Tour Report Pelicans of Lake Kerkini 5 – 9 January 2026

Dalmatian pelican



Dalmatian pelican



Dalmatian pelican



Dalmatian pelican



Compiled by Sean Weekly

Monday 5 January 2026

Day 1:

Heathrow → Frankfurt → Thessaloniki

Day one kicked off *very* early, with a 4:30 am meet at Heathrow for our 6:30 am flight to Frankfurt. Bleary eyes all round, but excitement was already in the air. Kerkini was calling!

Once through security, I caught up with two familiar faces over the all-important airport coffee. We've shared plenty of adventures before (including Kerkini trips in the past), so it was great to have a proper catch-up before heading to the gate. Another guest soon joined us, and before we knew it, it was time to board. Fingers crossed we'd catch up with the rest of the group during the Frankfurt transfer.

The flight was delayed slightly, nothing dramatic. Everyone was buzzing and clearly ready to get going. The Frankfurt transfer was... let's call it *sporty*. A bit of a mad dash, but we made it just in time. I even managed to meet another guest while queueing, which felt like a bonus round of "spot the tour group".

We landed in Thessaloniki at around 2 pm, stepping off the plane into fairly mild conditions for the time of year about 9°C and cloudy, but perfectly comfortable. We were warmly greeted by our guide and very good friend, Babis, who whisked us off toward Kerkini Lake.

There was a small hiccup along the way with a vehicle breakdown, but it was quickly sorted with a replacement car, and we were soon back on track. The drive took roughly two hours, and just before sunset, we passed by the lake. Despite the thick cloud, there was still enough light for everyone to take in the scenery, a lovely first glimpse of what lay ahead.

Two guests sadly missed their connection due to their Manchester flight leaving late, so they'll be joining us later this evening, fingers crossed for smooth travels from here on in.

Once at the hotel, we checked into our rooms and gathered for dinner. I gave the group a briefing on what to expect over the coming days and shared some of my photos to spark a bit of photography inspiration. With a big few days ahead and an early start planned, it wasn't long before everyone headed off to bed, tired but excited for what Kerkini had in store.

Tuesday 6 January 2026

Day 2:

Pelicans, Coffee & Kerkini

The morning started at a *leisurely* 6:30 am (luxury after day one!), meeting in the hotel lounge for some seriously strong Greek coffee. With less than six hours' sleep under most belts, that coffee was doing some heavy lifting. It was also great to finally meet the two guests who had arrived late the night before, slightly bleary-eyed but full of enthusiasm.

Once suitably caffeinated, we jumped into the vehicles for the short drive down to Kerkini harbour, where we boarded our traditional wooden Greek fishing boat, a vessel we were about to become *very* well acquainted with over the coming days. Onboard, we were greeted by our captain, George, as the weather made its intentions very clear: heavy overcast, gloomy skies, and rain threatening at any moment. Let's just say... it wasn't exactly postcard conditions.

That said, Kerkini doesn't waste time. Before long, we were surrounded by pelicans who promptly decided we looked like a floating fish delivery service. They stuck with us, circling the boat hopefully, and the cameras came out almost immediately.

I made it clear to the group that today wasn't about being bombarded with settings, compositions, and

Find out more about our [Best of Botswana](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

technical overthinking. Day one is for getting it *out of your system*, shooting freely, enjoying it, making mistakes, and just soaking it all in. We'd slow things down later and start creating images with real thought and feeling.

At first, it was simply a case of waiting for the light to improve enough to shoot comfortably. We focused on pelican portraits, getting nice and low to the water. Portraits are far more forgiving in low light, and it allows everyone to ease into the conditions without fighting shutter speeds too much.

Eventually, the light lifted just enough for us to start capturing some in-flight shots. While the conditions were far from bright, the soft, even light was actually ideal, no harsh shadows, just beautiful tonal transitions. Sometimes "bad" weather really is your friend.

Then, looking toward the horizon, we noticed something promising: small breaks forming in the cloud. Good light still seemed doubtful at best... until Kerkini did what Kerkini does. A brief but magical opening appeared, bathing the scene in gorgeous light. Sun rays broke through, creating some truly special moments and reminding us all why this place is so addictive.

Not long after, the clouds split again, sending dramatic rays across the landscape. I asked George to reposition the boat so we could use the light as a backdrop, and for a short window of time, we were rewarded with some spectacular images. Blink and you'd miss it, but we didn't.



Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

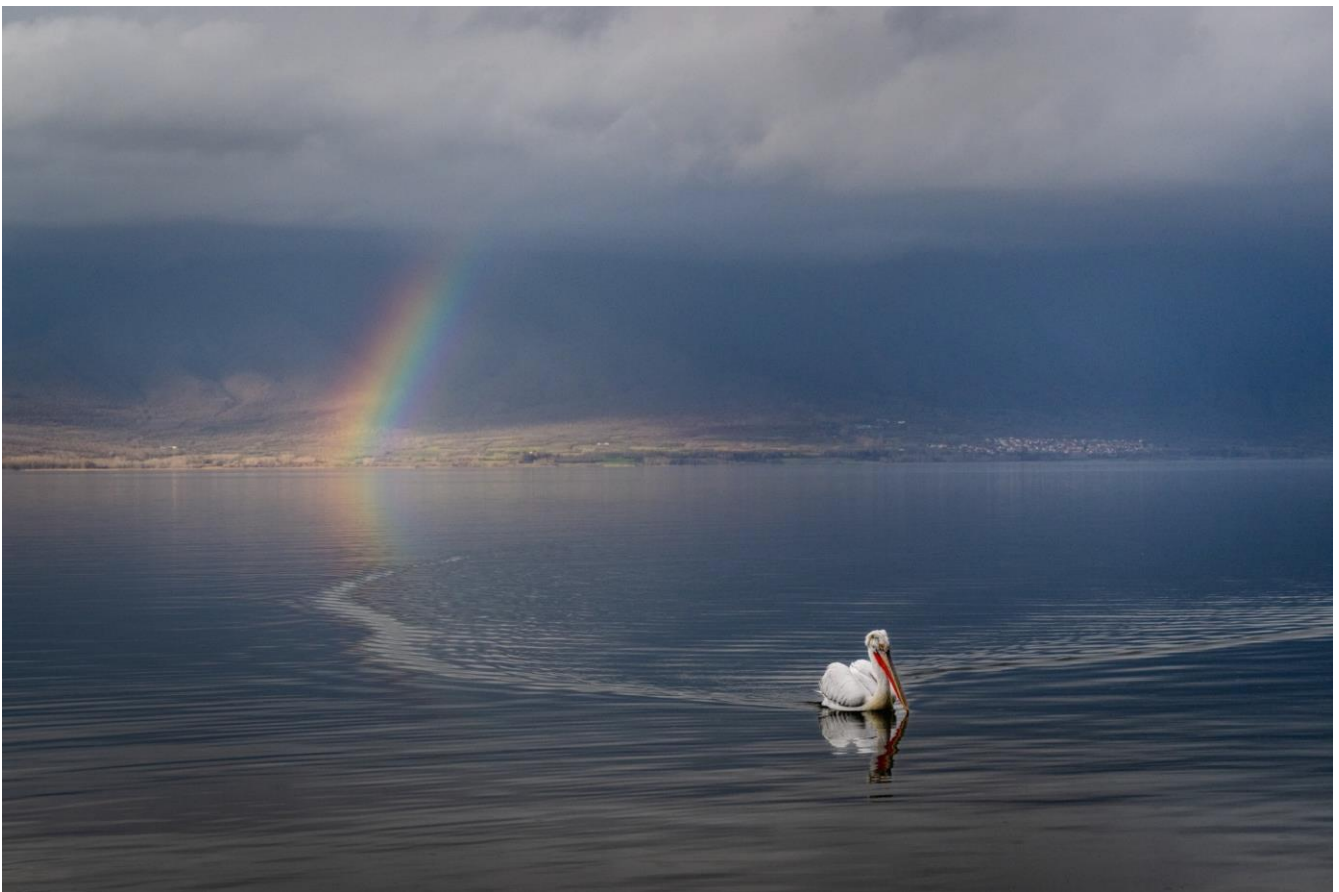
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

Eventually, it was time to head back to the hotel, where a very welcome traditional Greek buffet breakfast awaited. Omelettes, spinach pies, feta, pastries, and yes, more coffee. Always more coffee.

The group then enjoyed a couple of hours of downtime to relax, warm up, and download images... before, of course, eating again. Lunch was a delicious homemade cauliflower soup, courtesy of chef Zhackos, comfort food done properly.

Before long, it was time to head back out for the afternoon session. The original plan was a shoreline feed, photographing pelicans from the lake edge. However, bird numbers were a bit low, and I didn't want to risk spooking them. Pelicans prefer the safety of open water unless they're in big groups. So, Plan B it was.

We headed back out on the boat and picked up where the morning left off, but this time, the mood had completely changed. Dark, grey, dramatic skies rolled in, with a proper rainstorm building. And then... luck struck again. A brief rainbow appeared, my first time ever photographing pelicans *with* a rainbow, which was pretty special.



As the weather worsened, the photography only got better. Dark, moody backgrounds added contrast and punch to the images, creating a completely different feel to the morning session. Same subject, same location, totally different atmosphere.

Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



Eventually, the light faded, the rain arrived properly, and it was time to call it a day and head back to the hotel.

After a short rest, it was straight into dinner. Later in the evening, I shared a few images I'd edited from the morning to give everyone some ideas and inspiration for the day ahead. I also helped a few guests fine-tune camera settings and tweak setups, ready for another early start.

Finally, it was time to sleep, a well-earned rest after a cracking, moody, magical Kerkini day.

Wednesday 7 January 2026

Day 3:

Day three meant *another* early start, and if Lionel Richie had been with us, he'd have confirmed it had indeed been raining all night long. Heavy rain hammered down through the night and was still falling steadily when we met for our pre-dawn coffee in the lounge.

Spirits were high, though, caffeine in hand, waterproofs on, and a shared acceptance that we were heading out into what felt like a biblical amount of rain.

Fully suited up and ready to embrace our inner Noah, we headed down to the harbour to begin the morning session. And then, almost as if Kerkini felt sorry for us... the rain eased off remarkably quickly. Thick clouds still dominated the sky, but at least we were no longer being actively soaked, which felt like a small but important victory.

With the rain backing off, we set out onto the lake. Sunrise was never really on the cards with such heavy cloud cover, but that didn't dampen the mood. Finding pelicans took a little longer than usual; the weather

Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

had been fairly mild for this time of year, meaning the birds could fish independently and didn't need to rely as heavily on the boats for supplementary feeding.

Eventually, patience paid off, and we found a small group of around 15–20 pelicans. Not huge numbers, but more than enough to work with. We spent the early part of the morning focusing on portraits in the pre-sunrise light, taking advantage of the soft, flat conditions to capture detail, expression, and character.

As the morning progressed, we waited for the sun to rise, not that we could see it, before shifting our attention to some in-flight photography. The light remained beautifully soft and diffused, and although the surrounding landscape was wrapped in fog and barely visible, it created a clean, minimalist backdrop that worked perfectly for flight shots.



The thick cloud stubbornly refused to disperse, but rather than feeling disappointed, we leaned into it. The even light made life far easier for shooting action, and the results really showed it. To top things off, a few particularly curious pelicans decided to land right on the boat canopy, giving everyone fantastic opportunities for close-up images. One bold individual even landed right on the front of the boat, which could only mean one thing... pelican selfies all round. Easily a trip highlight.

Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



After another productive morning, we headed back for some well-earned food and a bit of rest before heading out again in the afternoon.

The plan for the afternoon session was to finally attempt a shoreline feed. However, much like earlier, we struggled to gather enough birds in one place to make it work safely and effectively. Rather than force it, we regrouped and came up with a new plan, pushing further north across the lake to search for more birds.

Once again, Kerkini rewarded patience. We eventually found a better number of pelicans, and the skies remained dark, moody, and dramatic, perfect for adding variety to the images we'd already captured over the past couple of days. The changing conditions kept things fresh and exciting, proving that even without sunshine, there's always something new to create here.

Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



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

All in all, despite the lack of sun and the earlier rain, it had been a fantastic day. Great moments, great images, plenty of laughs.

Thursday 8 January 2026

Day 4:

Another morning, another early start, same routine, same schedule, and by now those early alarms were definitely starting to catch up with us. That said, there was still plenty of excitement as we geared up and headed out, keen to see what the lake had in store for us today.

When we arrived at the harbour, we were greeted by some rather menacing-looking clouds rolling across the sky. They didn't look particularly friendly, but we decided to push on and start the boat session as planned. It didn't take long at all, however, before the heavens truly opened. Heavy rain came crashing down, accompanied by strong, gusty winds that quickly made it clear this wasn't going to be a sensible place to be.

A quick decision was made, safety first, and we aborted the session, turning back toward the harbour and the comfort of the hotel. From there, we could keep an eye on the conditions and see how the morning might unfold.

Fortunately, patience paid off. After some time, the rain eased, and although the winds were still strong, things had calmed enough for us to head back out onto the lake. We took things carefully, mindful of the conditions. Tough weather like this often means pelicans stay hunkered down, conserving energy, so finding birds was never going to be easy, especially as we couldn't venture too far across the lake.

Eventually, we struck gold. We located a group of pelicans and, for the first time on the trip, were treated to clear views of the Kerkini mountains behind them. With the visibility finally opening up, we were able to photograph the birds against this dramatic backdrop, a real highlight and something we'd been waiting for all week.



Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

After an exciting and slightly adrenaline-fuelled morning, we headed back to the hotel for a very welcome breakfast, warm food never tasting quite so good.

The afternoon brought more challenges. With wind gusts reaching up to 29 knots, we had to forgo the shoreline feed entirely, crossing the lake in those conditions simply wasn't safe. Instead, we adapted once again and worked with what the lake allowed us.

It took a long time to find birds, and when we did, they weren't particularly interested in us. Having been fishing successfully on their own alongside the cormorants, they weren't exactly desperate for snacks.

Still, the time we spent with them was thoroughly enjoyable.

To top it off, we were rewarded with some gorgeous light breaking through, illuminating the pelicans beautifully against the moody mountain backdrop. It was another reminder that even on the toughest days, Kerkini always finds a way to deliver something special.



A challenging day, a rewarding day, and yet another chapter in our ever-growing Kerkini adventure.

Friday 9 January 2026

Day 5:

Our final morning on the water arrived all too quickly. As usual, the day began with a 6:30 am meet-up and our now much-loved kickstarter coffee in the lounge. Despite the early start and a few tired faces, there was a quiet excitement in the air, knowing this would be our last boat session of the trip.

We headed out to the harbour under the coldest conditions we'd experienced all week, with temperatures

Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

dipping to **-1°C**. Gloves were firmly on, breath visible in the air, and cameras carefully handled with slightly numb fingers.

There were still some blustery gales lingering, with gusts around 12–15mph making the water fairly choppy and tricky to navigate. Rather than fight the conditions, we made the sensible decision to push into slightly calmer waters and anchor up. It turned out to be exactly the right call.

For the first time on the trip, the sky was absolutely crystal clear. No cloud, no haze just clean, early morning light spilling across the lake. It gave us the kind of lighting we simply hadn't had all week, and it felt like Kerkini was saving something special for our final outing.

The timing couldn't have been better. The lighting workshop from the previous evening was still fresh in everyone's minds, and it was great to see the group putting those ideas straight into practice. Subtle use of light, careful positioning, and patience really started to show in the images being created.



The pelicans themselves were a little quieter than usual. With the lingering wind gusts, flying activity was minimal, and they preferred to stay grounded. Rather than fight it, we adapted once again, anchoring up and dedicating the morning entirely to portraits.

It turned into a wonderfully calm and focused session. The gentle swell on the water worked in our favour, adding movement and texture to the foregrounds and giving the images a real sense of atmosphere. It was a slower, more thoughtful way to end our time on the lake, fitting for the final morning.

Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com

Before long, it was time to head back to the harbour. Cameras packed away, we made our way back toward the hotel and prepared for the journey to Thessaloniki airport, where the group would begin their trip home. Goodbyes are never easy, especially after sharing early mornings, challenging weather, and some truly special moments on the lake.

As the tour came to a close, it felt like one of those trips where everything, the conditions, the challenges, the light, and the people came together to create something memorable. Not because everything was perfect, but because we worked with what we were given and made the most of every moment.

Kerkini once again did what it does best quietly, leaving its mark long after we'd left the water.



Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerkini](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



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



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



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



Find out more about our [Pelicans of Lake Kerini](#) trip or [contact us](#)
01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com



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 [Pelicans of Lake Kerkin](#) trip or [contact us](#)

01962 302086 sales@wildlifeworldwide.com www.wildlifeworldwide.com