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# The Premier Birdwatching Site in Cyprus: Kukla



During 2010-2011 KUŞKOR managed an EU funded bi-communal project aiming to determine IBAs of Cyprus. One result of this project, which is key, was that a part of Eastern Mesaoria Plain including Kukla (Köprülü) Reservoir was accepted as an IBA by Birdlife International.

Kukla in particular, homes a great number and diversity of bird species (around 190 to date) and throughout the year tens of thousands of birds can be present at any one time. Locals, however, have very limited knowledge of these facts or their international weight, and hence they are not considering the valuable natural heritage at their doorstep.

Consequently, Kukla Reservoir has never been an attraction point for tourists. In recent years KUŞKOR have drawn attention of it, and now there are birdwatchers who are regularly visiting the site as it is one of the best birding locations on the island. These visitors generally suffer from lack of facilities and general information and without a guide, even finding the wetland is difficult.

In 2014 KUŞKOR initiated an EU funded project called "Kukla Wetlands Birdwatching Center". With this project, we aim to create a hotspot that all of the local and international bird-watchers would visit with priority in Cyprus. A huge effort has been made to direct winter the rain water to the site and keeping the area in good state for the birds.

As a result, not only has it served as an important nesting site for some threatened species such as Ferruginous Duck and Roller, but also hundreds of Black-winged Stilts, 10s of Spur-winged Plovers and a Red-crested Pochard pair breed. Moreover, the first record of Collared Pratincole nesting in Cyprus since 1913 was from the site this year, as was the first ever record of Lesser Flamingo which rested in the area for about 2 weeks. These rare sightings with many more exemplify how important the site is and what potential is holds for birds and bird-watchers.

Objectives of the project include establishment of two hides and to create islands to encourage more breeding.

