

Dalyan

Wildlife at Leisure

A Greentours Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive Dalaman and to Köyceğiz

Our flights arrive in Southwest Turkey in the early evening. It is just a forty minute transfer from Dalaman's Airport to our base for the first three days, delightful Köyceğiz.

Day 2

Köyceğiz – Hamitköy Marshes & Köyceğiz Liquidambar Forests

We'll be able to see Hamitköy's marshes and liquidambar forests even from our hotel and it takes only a few minutes to drive out there. Masses of tall egg-yolk yellow *Iris xanthospuria* dominate the meadows here in a spectacular show with the tall fluffy paler wands of *Thalictrum flavum* for company. This is migrant bird heaven with an unimaginable variety of warblers, as well as Wryneck, and lots of Shrikes – Woodchat, Red-backed and Masked. The warblers include Eastern Orphean Warbler, Rüppell's Warbler, Lesser Whitethroats which can be abundant, Common Whitethroats, the occasional Subalpine Warbler, Wood Warblers, Icterine Warblers, Olivaceous Warblers, sometimes Olive Tree Warblers, and an assortment of 'reed' types including Marsh Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler and both Cetti's and Savi's Warblers. It is quite possible to see a dozen species of warbler here in a morning! Bee-eaters and Hoopoes will now be passing through and we'll enjoy the various forms of Yellow Wagtail, especially the local Black-headed one. This is the best area in southwest Turkey to find White-throated Kingfisher, several pairs breeding in the area.

The Lake Köyceğiz basin is home to one of the rarest habitats in Turkey, indeed anywhere in the Mediterranean. Some 90% of the world's *Liquidambar orientalis* is found within a few kilometres of the lake's shores and almost all the rest is scattered along streams in the area. Lianas, notably the Silk Vine and *Vitis sylvestris*, trail through the trees. Middle Spotted Woodpecker and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker are common and so too are Green Woodpeckers. Migrant Common Redstarts and Collared, Pied and even Semi-collared Flycatchers stop-off in these woodlands. The lovely Small Red-eye Damselfly favours well-vegetated pools within the woodland, and Lesser Emperor and Violet Dropwing perch on iris leaves. Marshy pools and reedbeds next to the Liquidambar woods are home to Eastern Willow Spreadwing and the rare Turkish Red Damsel *Ceriatagrion georgifreyi*.

Day 3

The Mountains – Ağla, Sandros Mountain & Eagle Mountain Lake

Inland of Lake Köyceğiz the mountains rise steeply behind the town. A road winds swiftly up to the yayla (summer village) of Ağla situated nine hundred metres above sea level where a small fast-flowing stream drops from the bare limestone slopes above. The village is a delight set amongst a streamside woodland of Calabrian Pine and Oriental Plane trees. The magical toy-trumpet calls of Krüper's Nuthatch resonate through the trees and we'll also see Sombre Tit, Green Woodpeckers, Short-toed Treecreepers and maybe even White-backed Woodpeckers here. Southern Commas, Great Banded Graylings and Nettle-Tree Butterflies are among a number of butterflies on the wing. Spurred Helleborines and the lovely deep red-pink '*rubra*' form of Violet Limodores are common under the trees. The open slopes above the village are full of flowers and often have small flocks of both Ortolan Bunting and Cretzschmar's Bunting, these swirling up as a Long-legged Buzzard passes overhead.

Later we'll head up onto the highest, almost alpine areas of Sandros Mountain where we'll look for Black Woodpeckers, Goshawk and Krüper's Nuthatch around a small lake where snow may still be lying and *Colchicums*, *Merendera attica*, *Crocuses* and *Gageas* are in bloom.

Days 4

Hamitköy Marshes and Tepearası Liquidambar Forests

This morning we'll again explore Hamitköy's marshes, seeing what's stopped overnight – every day is different and the selection of migrants always intriguing. Whinchat and Stonechats can be common, and various Wheatears too. We'll keep an eye out for passing Harriers, Marsh are reasonably frequent but all of the Western Palearctic harriers pass through this area.

After lunch on the lake shore we'll drive coastwards towards Dalyan, our base for the rest of the holiday. Colourful cliffs beset with Lycian Rock Tombs dominate this pleasant little town, nestled against a bend in the Dalyan (ancient Calbys) River. Dalyan could hardly have more diverse habitats. Within a few kilometres are reedbeds, lakes, beaches, limestone maquis, pine forests, globally important Liquidambar Forests, mountains and cliffs. Not surprising then that Dalyan is so rich in wildlife.

Close to Dalyan we'll explore more Liquidambar Forest. The trees have exquisitely shaped leaves and a very rough bark which in some places in the forests is still tapped for the sap which has been used as an insect repellent by the locals for centuries. Horseshoe Ophrys and Yellow-Wort grow along the track edges while Southern White Admirals and Southern Swallowtails are a common sight cruising up and down these tracks. Hawfinches, Golden Orioles, Rollers and Syrian Woodpeckers also make these emerald-green woodlands their home.

For the next four days we will be staying at the excellent Dalyan Resort by the river in Dalyan. Like most of Dalyan the hotel is single storey, a result of enlightened low-

impact development regulations imposed two decades ago by the local authorities. The well-equipped rooms are very comfortable and are spread through the grounds. The restaurant produces great fare, and there's a good-sized swimming pool and even a hamam or Turkish bath and sauna. The centre of Dalyan is a ten-minute stroll, and an excellent place for a bit of Turkish carpet shopping!

Day 5

Sulungur Lake, Dalyan Beach & The Turtle Protection Site

Dalyan means 'fishery' in Turkish and not surprisingly water plays an important part in local life. There is a maze of channels downstream from the small town and the huge Köyceğiz Lake upstream, both surrounded by reedbeds and marshes. At this time of year the wetlands are very rich in birdlife as there are plenty of migrants about. We shall see Little Egrets, Squacco Herons, Spoonbills, Pygmy Cormorants and Little Bitterns passing through as well as small groups of waders and terns. Today we'll start by heading down to the coast, with the possibility of Red-footed Falcons on the wires, White Storks in the air, or maybe a Great Spotted Cuckoo or two in the small trees separating the pomegranate orchards. Sulungur Lake itself doesn't hold much birdlife, maybe the odd egret or two, but it's the cliffs behind that offer us the chance of seeing Rollers 'rolling' and Rock Nuthatches building their nests.

Long-legged Buzzard and Short-toed Eagles drift overhead as we visit Dalyan's four-kilometre long beach. Loggerhead Turtles will be just beginning their nesting season so the Turtle protection project will be in full swing. They keep the beach closed from dusk until eight in the morning. However the Loggerhead Turtles are of course there and we can see them basking in waters just off Dalyan's gently shelving sandy beach. There's plenty of migrants about as well sometimes including large flocks of Yellow Wagtails.

Day 6

Kaunos Ruins and Ortaca's Canyons & some serpentinite!

A walk past the famous Lycian rock tombs takes us to the ancient ruins at Kaunos. Along the track we can find the spectacular Dragon Arum and both Holy Orchid and *Ophrys sicula*. Butterflies are abundant with Eastern Festoon and Scarce Swallowtail prominent among them. At the ruins we will see Red-rumped Swallows and Rock Nuthatches nesting in the old walls and Balkan Green Lizard and Agama Lizards amid the many flowers. The Thread Lacewing, *Nemoptera sinuata*, emerges among these ruins, looking something like a cross between a dragonfly and a butterfly with long-tailed cream and black wings. Spur-thighed Tortoises munch their way through a rich herbage of bellflowers, campions and boraginaceae allowed to grow amongst the rocks of ancient temples, flushing up butterflies such as Blue-spotted Hairstreak and Loew's Blue.

We'll head inland a little in the afternoon to a convoluted landscape of limestone gorges and gravelly serpentinite ridges. This is botanically exceptional with many

unusual plants. Prime amongst them are the red goblets of *Tulipa undulatifolia* and the strange green flowered *Fritillaria bithynica*.

Day 7

Köyceğiz Lake and Hot Springs

We'll use one of Dalyan's many boats to explore the river system and Lake Köyceğiz, a wonderfully relaxing trip, and with plenty of birds; Purple Herons, Squacco Herons and Great Egrets, Whiskered Terns and White-winged Black Terns, Black-winged Stilts and Pygmy Cormorants. We'll see groups of Little Egrets and Glossy Ibis migrating through as well as a good scattering of Marsh Harriers. Lesser Emperor Dragonflies and Slender and Small Skimmers race by, or perch on the boat's rails. The loud yet somehow somnolent croaking of Great Reed Warblers is sometimes joined by an orchestra of Marsh Frogs. We'll also hope to see the Nile Soft-shelled Turtles – over a metre long with extraordinary leathery shells and tube noses.

There are many thermal springs near Dalyan. These range from pools of warm aquamarine water, through mud baths to a large mosque-like building where you can alternate between cold lake water outside, and almost scalding sulphurous water inside! There will be a chance to visit both the big mud baths and the sulphurous hot pools, perhaps followed by ice creams under the shade of olive and pistachio trees, or you can look for migrant birds in the trees as Egyptian Vultures and Alpine Swifts fly overhead. The trees are often loaded with migrant birds including Eastern Orphean Warblers, Blackcaps, Common Whitethroats and Olivaceous Warblers. Crakes are occasionally spotted by secluded pools. The beautiful Indigo Dropwing visits these pools too.

Day 8

Departure

As our return flight isn't until the evening we'll have a chance to catch up on whatever has eluded us this morning, or to concentrate on whatever has most interested us. Maybe a trip down to the beach to look again for turtles and migrant birds, or perhaps a boat trip up the river and into Lake Köyceğiz. Maybe it'll be the rare and lovely dragonflies of the Liquidambar woodlands that will draw us for a final visit, or perhaps we'd prefer to just go and relax by the hot springs, before enjoying a final slap-up meal in one of the many very good restaurants in Dalyan.

Call 01298 83563 or visit www.greentours.co.uk for the latest trip report from our previous tours to Dalyan. If you would like to ask about any other aspect of this holiday, please call 01298 83563 or email us at enquiries@greentours.co.uk.

To Book a on this Holiday please fill in the booking form which you can download from www.greentours.co.uk (also found in the Greentours brochure) and post/email to Greentours, 8 Eliot Close, Armitage, Rugeley, WS15 4UP, UK. Tel +44 (0) 1298 83563. After booking your place you'll receive a confirmation letter and a

detailed information pack will be dispatched twelve weeks prior to departure.
Bird, dragonfly and butterfly checklists are available.