

Cyprus

Wildlife at Leisure

A Greentours Itinerary

The Troodos separated from the mainland just over 5 million years ago when waters suddenly fill the previously dry Mediterranean basin. In that time new forms of many plants have developed and thus Cyprus has a rich endemic flora, notably amongst the orchids.

Day 1 to the Akamas Peninsula

After our arrival at Paphos Airport we'll travel up to the Akamas Peninsula – it is a little over an hour from the airport to our hotel.

Day 2 The Baths of Aphrodite and Akamas Coast

We start at the botanical garden at the Baths of Aphrodite and then walk along a beautiful coastal path on high cliffs with the sea below. We go through *Pistacia lentiscus* and *Juniperus phoenicea* maquis and then *Pinus brutia* forest with much *Arbutus andrachne*. The route is lined with *Cyclamen persicum* and *Asphodelus ramosus*. We will see *Bellevalia trifoliata* and *Bellevalia nivalis* as well as orchids such as *Anacamptis syriaca* and *Himantoglossum robertianum* amongst others. Many colourful annuals such as *Lathyrus blepharicarpus*, *Vicia hybrida* and *Vicia sativa* will be in flower. Orange tip, Cleopatra and the endemic Paphos Blue will be on the wing. Sardinian Warblers are common and Cyprus Warbler should start arriving at this time. The hotel garden is full of birds such as Black Restart and various finches, and Hoopoe is commonly seen.

Day 3 Paphos Forest

Our route through the Paphos forest takes us through several changes in geology and habitats, from garigue through maquis into *Pinus brutia* forest. We will stop at Peristerona Gorge to look for raptors and also to see *Romulea tempskyana*, *Gagea peduncularis*, *Salvia fruticosa* and the rare (on Cyprus) red form of *Anemone coronaria*. The fields below are ablaze with Giant Fennel, *Ferula communis*. We then continue towards Stavros tis Psokas stopping to see *Orchis troodi* and *Dactylorhiza romana* and to examine the verges for the plants that grow on igneous rocks such as *Senecio leucanthemifolius* and *Andrachne telephiodes*. At Stavros tis Psokas we will take a walk round the Moufflon enclosure. Here we'll also see the endemics

Cyclamen cypricum and *Quercus alnifolia* in their natural habitat. A little higher up, across the valley, we will be able to see the endemic Cedar Tree *Cedrus brevifolia*.

Day 4 Smygies

This morning we'll explore the fields right above our hotel. We will find many orchids including *Ophrys mammosa*, *Ophrys morio*, *Ophrys flavomarginata* and in particular we shall look for the unusual yellow-orange and green *Orchis punctulata*. *Cyclamen persicum*, *Bellevalia trifoliata*, *Lotus purpureus*, *Anchusa undulata* subspecies *hybrida*, *Geranium* and *Erodium* species will be in flower. We also expect to see Eastern Festoon, Cleopatra, and the endemic Paphos Blue. We will make a circular route via an area of rock pools with interesting plants and also see some sea-shore plants such as *Anthemis rigida*.

Day 5 to Paphos via the Pegeia Forest and Episkopi Environmental Centre

We'll start in Pegeia forest where there are many orchids such as *Ophrys levantina*, *Ophrys elegans*, *Ophrys iricolor*, *Ophrys sicula*, *Ophrys flavomarginata* and *Anacamptis morio*, these all occurring in profusion. We will also look at the specialist habitat of vernal pools and their associated flora such as *Ranunculus peltatus*. After visiting the Episkopi environmental centre we will look at the chasmophytes that grow on a most impressive cliff below the centre. *Verbascum orientale*, *Polypodium cambricum*, *Arisarum vulgare* and *Bosea cypria* grow here on the African Reef limestone cliffs where Peregrines nest.

Day 6 Diarizos Valley

Orchis italica and *Orchis sezekiana* should be out in force along with many other orchids in the picturesque Diarizos Valley. We should see the pretty *Convolvulus coelesyriacus* and also other common Mediterranean plants such as *Cistus creticus*, *Fumana arabica*, *Pistacia terebinthus* and *Quercus coccifera*. The interesting *Aristolochia parviflora* should still be in flower here. We will make stops to look at the field plants and will end up in Omodos, a mountain wine village with characteristic architecture and a most impressive wine press.

Day 7 The Tombs of the Kings and Paphos Archaeological Area

We'll visit the Tombs of the Kings and Paphos archaeological area. These are a World Heritage Site but are also excellent areas for plants such as *Cyclamen persicum*, the endemics *Helianthemum obtusifolium* and *Ornithogalum pedicellare*, *Moraea sisyrinchium*, *Ephedra foeminea*, *Convolvulus althaeoides*, *Fumana arabica*, *Fumana*

thymifolia, *Ruta chalepensis*, *Ricinus communis* and many others. *Glebionis coronaria*, Crown Daisy, dominates the fields along with *Papaver rhoeas*. The coastal sands at the Tombs of the Kings are host to an interesting flora of *Medicago marina*, *Paronychia argentea*, *Echium angustifolium*, *Centaurea aegialophila* and *Thymus capitatus*.

Day 8

Mandria Beach and departure

Before departing we'll visit Mandria beach where we'll see a nice coastal flora with plants such as *Glaucium flavum*, *Eryngium maritimum*, *Echium angustifolium*, *Medicago marina* and *Limonium sinuatum*.

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